The Role of Music in the Lives of Adolescent Learners

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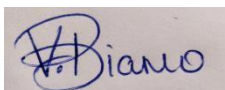
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Abstract

The aim of this small-sample study was to examine the potential of music as a resource used in PSCD to help adolescents develop emotional competencies and social skills. It explored the role of music in the lives of adolescents, as perceived by eight adolescents aged twelve to fourteen years. Qualitative data collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews was analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which yielded four themes with several sub-themes highlighting how music influences the psychosocial, emotions and cognitive aspects of the adolescents' lives.

The findings that emerged indicate that music is a necessity and that pervades adolescents' everyday life. Music serves as an emotional regulatory strategy and a utility that promotes social relationships. Through the self-exploration and empowerment features of music, adolescents have the means to develop their identity and reveal their personality traits. The findings have significant implications not only for the PSCD educators, but for all the professionals working with adolescents during this crucial and sensitive phase of life development.

Keywords: Music, Adolescents, PSCD, Psychosocial, Thematic Analysis.

Dedication

To my beautiful, strong, loving role model,

my mother.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Preamble

Music is at the centre of what it means to be human – it is the sounds of human bodies and minds moving in creative, story-making ways. (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2018, p.1)

This study revolves around the main interest of my life — music. Music is a vital part of being human, with an important status from the earliest stages of life to death (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015). People spend hours listening to music, and at this very instance music is being utilised in homes, cars, offices, restaurants, schools and even operating rooms (Rentfrow, 2012), with the music industry registering a market value of 19 billion dollars in 2018 (Mc Intrye, 2019). Maloney (2017) proposed that music is a practical resource used by listeners to enhance their cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physiological aspects, and conceptualised music like water; a basic utilitarian resource for all.

1.2 Music and Humanity

Navarro (2015) expressed that: "music moves the human beautifully" (p.24), and Miranda (2013) alluded to music as, "a resource of considerable intellectual, artistic, cultural, technological, and economical breadth and depth" (p.5). Listening to a melody or lyrics of a song can cause a person to weep, smile, or get angry. Literature on the psychology of music is saturated with the positive benefits of music in our lives, namely a source of pride, enjoyment and solace as it helps us to relax, think, celebrate, and grieve (Foran, 2009). Kreutz and Lotze (2007) stressed that the potential negative effects of musical malpractice, namely self-injurious behaviour and suicidal tendencies (North & Hargreaves 2009), can harm both individuals and society.

Langer (1942; 2009) stated that music has similar physical and mental aspects of human inner life, in the "patterns of motion and rest, of tension and release, of agreement and disagreement, preparation, fulfilment, excitation and sudden change" (para. 29). While Eerola and Eerola (2014) believed that every person regardless of talents and preferences can benefit from experiencing music, Maury and Rickard (2016), argued that music-making is a positive social-emotional activity and adaptive in helping individuals regulate emotions, self-expression and strengthen social bonds.

Inevitably, one might ask the question; What makes a collection of organised sounds and silences so universal and yet so individual, controversial, and neutral? Attempts to explain a "complex phenomenon like music to simple descriptions are as absurd as they are common", because music is "irreducible to a precise definition" (Elliott & Silverman, 2012, p.4).

1.3 The Philosophy of Music

Since antiquity, various definitions for this phenomenon have been generated – an art, science, mode of communication and expression, social bond (Rentfrow, 2012), cultural identity, therapeutic (Tervo, 2001), educational (Kreutz & Lotze, 2007), a language of emotions and an ubiquitous companionship (Schäfer et al., 2013). Philosophers have struggled to explain the definite and objective meaning of music evolution using mostly empirical tests (Konečni, 2007). Long standing philosophical speculations and debates on music have only been cleared in the last century using research methods in cognitive science, like psychological and neuroscience (Cochrane, 2010). Davies (2011) confirmed that analytic philosophy moved away from the aesthetics of music and scholars integrated philosophy with science. Schäfer et al. (2013) noted that the presumed evolutionary origin

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and functions of music may not be any longer valid to modern day perceptions and responses to music.

1.4 The Research Theme

This study investigates the significance of music in the life of adolescents and explores how this prominent aspect of adolescence can be effectively utilised by PSCD educators to help them develop their emotional competencies and social skills. The approach was fundamentally psychological but dips its toes in the social, cognitive and developmental domains. Falzon and Muscat (2009) declared that PSCD emerges "from the psychological rather than the educational arena" (p.9) whereas Camilleri et al. (2012) noted that "PSCD is different from other subjects in its birth, development, ethos, design, structure, pedagogy, methodology and implementation" (p.19). Adopting Ergur's (2009) assertion that, "schools are social places and learning is an intrinsically social process" (p.1023), this study explores the role of a "social phenomenon" (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, p.1236) music, from the perspective of a "social pedagogue" - as Smith (2019) preferred to call teachers.

The conceptual framework is based on the definition that pedagogy should be explored from the concept that educators; "look to accompany learners; care for and about them; and bring learning into life" (Smith, 2019, para.2), a viewpoint that correlates with the psychosocial phase of adolescence and the psychological nature of music. One of the objectives PSCD sessions is to address adolescents' developmental psychology during this emotionally laden phase of their lives, which according to North et al. (2000) coincided with the time when adolescents form their musical preferences and increase their music engagement considerably. Consequently, increasing the awareness of the nature of

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emotions aroused and expressed through music is vital and ties well with the adolescents'

social and emotional development (Elliott & Silverman, 2015). North et al. (2004)

acknowledged that, "music can now be seen as a resource rather than merely as a

commodity" (p.42).

1.5 Research Purpose

Based on Miranda's (2013) urgency that music should be regarded as a genuine

developmental resource for developmental psychology, I proposed a theoretical link

between music psychology, the psychosocial stage of adolescence and pedagogical

methodology of PSCD. The three theoretical frameworks were purposely intertwined

because my intention was to focus on their rich interplay rather than on their individual

complexities.

My personal and professional history prompted the research interest, framed the

research question, identified research subjects, and influenced the whole process. This

attachment and inevitable intimacy are what Clough and Nutbrown (2012) defined as, "the

inseparability of the researcher and research" (p.64). Literature proposes that neurological

and biological elements of musical experiences (Bosoa et al., 2006) do not only have a

positive influence on the social and emotional well-being of all human beings but are

especially compatible to the inherent processes of adolescence (Bunt, 2003). Adolescence is

characterised by a period of physical and psychological development, academic and career

trajectories, hormonal changes, emotional and social relationships that have long-term

effects on the rest of the individual's life (Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015).

1.6 Research Aims

The theoretical framework focuses on how the unique contributions and the multi-faceted features of music experiences can be integrated into various aspects of the cognitive, emotional, and social domains of adolescence.

This thesis is concerned with the importance of music being an integral phenomenon of many youths' lifestyles during one of the crucial transitional periods of their development. The principle aim of this study was to generate richer insights, therefore the design was influenced by the need to engage learners to explore their own music experiences and understand their perspectives of the meaning of music in their lives.

Therefore, the objective for this study poses the following question, 'Why not harness music's ability to influence adolescents' lives to create a readily available resource with psychosocial, cognitive and developmental benefits in the PSCD'? The primary focus is music listening, which is a key feature of adolescents' leisure time (Tarrant et al., 2000), but active music participation will be explored too. It is not the scope of this research to investigate music education or music training in Maltese schools.

The main goal of this study was for PSCD educators to utilise information generated to discover learner's identity, level of emotional competencies, and social behaviours/relationships, and as an interpersonal intervention to support the development of secure attachment relationships or replace those attachment needs which were not met. An attempt has been made to fully explore the interrelation of pedagogy, the role of PSCD educators, adolescence and music, all situated in an immediate social and cultural environment that supports human growth and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

I endeavoured to explore and interpret the participants' experiences, understandings, perceptions, and views using a qualitative methodology with the compatible method of Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA provides an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to interpreting various aspects of the research topic and to gain deeper understandings of the subject matter. The methodology and rationale are discussed in depth in Chapter 4.

1.7 Research Questions

In order to meet the study's aims, the main research question addressed was therefore:

a) What is the relevance of music in the lives of adolescents?

Sub-questions that this study generated and considered were:

b) What makes up a musical identity?

c) How are musical identities related to other aspects of the adolescents' experience?

d) What are the contexts in which adolescents typically listen to music?

e) How do adolescents use music in their daily lives?

f) Do adolescents believe that their music preferences reveal information about their character and personality?

g) How do adolescents identify with different music genres?

h) How do adolescents make sense of their music preferences?

1.8 Motivation for Research

In her essay, Korsakova-Kreyn (2010) posed a question similar to the sentiment that intrigued me from the conception of this study; "Considering that emotions are the evolutionary cradle of the human thought, what if music, as the language of emotion, is a

bridge to our understanding of human cognition?" (p.3). The concept combining music and adolescence was further cemented when I read the excerpt written by Kate Benson taken from an Australian newspaper in 2008, titled, "Music is key to unlocking teenage wasteland", cited by Lonie (2009) in her thesis on young people, music, and health. This article reported that studies indicated that determining the musical tastes in teenage patients could help doctors to diagnose mental illnesses and suicide tendencies. This pioneering notion spurred me to investigate how music can potentially be used as a diagnostic tool for social and emotional incompetence, and as a resource in the educational setting with adolescent learners.

I approached the relevance of music from several perspectives. Music is not merely a collection of sounds, but evokes deep sentiments which I can attest to, having studied music theory from a young age. And as a talented pianist, I regard music as a faithful companion, accompanying me through transitions until adulthood. Since this study is part requirement to a Master degree in Teaching and Learning in Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD), I am exploring how as a PSCD educator I will be able to accompany learners in their learning experiences at school.

As a graduate in psychology, I believe that music experiences can advance our understanding of the human mind. My ambition to study developmental psychology within the educational setting has fuelled my interest in learning how adolescents, with the numerous psychosocial changes and challenges, perceive and make use of music and how they are influenced by musical experiences. Musical experiences in this context will be referring to participation, as in playing a musical instrument, listening and musical preferences.

Lastly, I wanted to comprehend the true meaning of 'educator' as opposed to 'teacher', as many issues lingered in my mind about the confusion of 'education' and 'schooling' where the connotation of the latter is one of drilling subjects into learners according to pre-established curricula mostly drawn up by adults. The prospect of 'teaching' the PSCD syllabus, which is rooted in human nature, employing traditional methods is not inviting, therefore, my mentality needed to change from treating the learners as objects, to relating, caring, and acting with them.

1.9 Overview of the Following Chapters

Chapter 1 introduced the study, situated the researcher in context, discussed the purpose and motivation for the research study, and clarified the research aims and questions. In Chapter 2, background information is provided as a platform upon which I put forward my understanding of what the role of a PSCD educator entails; an exploration of the definition of pedagogy, an appraisal of the phase of adolescence, and how music plays an important role in the lives of human being. The literature review in Chapter 3 discusses the relevant research studies demonstrating the significance of music in the lives of adolescents. Chapter 4 presents the choice of methodology, methods of data collection, choice of the sample, and the ethical considerations involved in this study. It will discuss the criteria of trustworthiness employed, the author's positionality and the stages of analysis. Chapter 5 presents the findings with extracts from the participants' narratives. In Chapter 6, I will discuss my findings in relation to existing literature. Chapter 7 concludes with reflective thoughts following the presentation of limitations and recommendations of this study.

Chapter 2: Background

2.1 Overview

This chapter gives prominence to the theoretical frameworks interlinking the psychology of music, the developmental stages of adolescence, pedagogy and PSCD educators. I deemed it necessary to dedicate a chapter on background literature on the key components to orientate the reader. My thoughts and understandings on the textual knowledge presented were recorded in a self-evaluative journal that journeyed with me from the conception of the research question to the execution of this study. Thus, it starts by defining some terms in the light of, "re-awaking and re-emergence of interest in pedagogy" (Smith, 2019).

2.2 Defining Pedagogy

Pedagogy needs to be explored through the thinking and practice of those educators who look to accompany learners; care for and about them; and bring learning into life. (Smith, 2019, para. 2*)*

This definition posits pedagogy as an orientation, a set of processes and a way of thinking. Smith (2019) explained how "pedagogy is a way of being with people to bring flourishing and relationship to life (*animation*), being concerned about their, and others', needs and wellbeing, and taking practical steps to help (*caring*), and encouraging reflection, commitment and change (*education*)" (para. 5). To substantiate this orientation, Smith (2019) quoted from the Danish model of pedagogy:

Care (take care of), socialisation (to and in communities), formation (for citizenship and democracy) and learning (development of individual skills)… [T]he "pedagogical" task is not simply about development, but also about looking after… [P]edagogues not

only put the individual child in the centre, but also take care of the interests of the community (p. 8-9).

The Greek meaning of 'pedagogy' is, 'to lead the child,' while 'social pedagogue' relates to working with young people. I believe 'social pedagogy' succinctly defines PSCD; the meeting of education and care (Smith, 2019). Close and supportive relationships between educators and learners have the potential to soften the impact of negative outcomes of unsuccessful schooling (Driscoll and Pianta, 2010). Pedagogy is a complex activity which encompasses more than just delivering education. Education is easily and very often confused with schooling which paints the picture of educators drilling learning in line to curricula. Pedagogy governed by the learning outcomes frameworks concentrates too narrowly on the specification of what must be learned, whereas it should be concerned with the holistic development of the person as it is rooted in human nature (Smith, 2019). Freire (1972) called the depositing of knowledge into a learner at school, similarly to 'banking', "treating learners like objects, things to be acted upon rather than people to be related to" (para. 7). Thus, educators need to act *with* learners rather than *on* them, basing education on certain values and commitments, including respect for others. Smith (2019) described education as an intentional act and deliberate process of drawing out learning by encouraging and allowing discovery. Dewey (1963) called education, a social process, "where the individual is living the learning and not living in preparation for future, –a process of inviting truth and possibility".

Noddings (2005) believed that caring encounters in education are "the foundation for successful pedagogical activity" (p.1), arguing that establishing and maintaining caring relations is imperative for learning to take place. Noddings (2005) contested whether it is

enough for the educators to claim that they care for their learners without questioning if

the learners recognise if they are being cared for. Noddings's (1999) detailed process of

caring relationships in pedagogy could be a blueprint for PSCD educators with adolescent

learners:

> …… as we listen to our students, we gain their trust and, in an on-going relation of
>
> care and trust, it is more likely that students will accept what we try to teach. They
>
> will not see our efforts as "interference" but, rather as competence cooperative
>
> work proceeding from the integrity of the relation.......... as we acquire knowledge
>
> about our students' needs and realize how much more than the standard
>
> curriculum is needed, we are inspired to increase our own competences (p.4).

Adopting Smith's (2019) definition, my orientation that pedagogy is primarily about

teaching moved to the principles applied in the methodology of PSCD, requiring a

pedagogue to accompany learners, cares about them and brings learning to their life. In

view of certain discrepancies in the meaning of terms which have troubled me for some

time, I chose to use educator instead of teachers, learners instead of students and sessions

instead of lessons, throughout this work. My understanding of pedagogy links to another

component, the methodology of PSCD, in the conceptual framework of this study.

2.3 The PSCD Educator

> PSCD aims at empowering individuals to develop skills that enhance their wellbeing,
>
> by identifying and developing their potential thus enabling them to participate
>
> effectively in their social environment. (Ministry of Education, Youth and
>
> Employment, 2005, p. 3)

This quote encompasses the learning of emotional literacy and social competences that allows the learners to develop as valuable citizens in our society. From an educational and psychological perspective, Abela et al. (2001) explained that the aims PSCD reflect the physical, social, cognitive, moral and psychological needs of learners.

In the absence of a definite job description or specific skills required for a PSCD educator, I turned to the description of a study unit which I studied at University for an outline of the learning outcomes that PSCD student educators need to meet. The postgraduate module in Education Studies titled 'Understanding the Self and Others', defines the PSCD educator as a "vocation to enhance the social and personal development of pupils" and "a facilitator of group dynamics" to promote the idea of the PSCD classroom as "a learning community'" (University of Malta, 2020). The curriculum for the majority of grades, posits the PSCD educator as an 'enabler' for learners to understand, reflect and identify, recognise and be aware of the various objectives in line with the learning outcomes (Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, 2014). PSCD educators are introduced to the concept of how the personal and the social are interlinked and interrelated, however, the existing notion that education is a personal and social practice is frequently perceived as a separate and opposite concept. The broader implication of educational process involves the socialisation of the learner into the culture of the society with its traditions, beliefs, values, and accepted norms of behaviour:

> The necessity of socialisation, the process of becoming social, or of upbringing, indicates that the personal, or individual, or the self is also inevitably a social self. This means that individuals are only understood in a social context, in the context of their relationships, their living with others. (University of Malta, 2020)

Educators discover their learners' social competence and ability to engage in learning by interacting with them, observing their interactions with other adults and peers, and reflect their decision-making skills to solve academic and social problems. The PSCD classroom becomes an environment where learners explore the equally enriching contexts of social relationships and healthy, productive, and self-fulfilling individuality. The psychological implications of PSCD in addressing the personal and social growth during the scholastic years are attuned to the future needs and aspirations of the learners.

According to Steiner and Perry (1997), the basis of PSCD sessions is Emotional Literacy (EL), which they consider as the capacity to comprehend one's own emotions, to listen to and empathise with others, and to express emotions effectively and appropriately in a healthy manner for themselves and those around them. Steiner and Perry (1997) expressed that "emotional literacy improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes co-operative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community" (p.11).

The objectives of PSCD relate with elements in Vygotsky's (1980) sociocultural approach to human learning, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where sharing and cooperation is encouraged for the global development and success of the individual. Vygotsky´s theory applies mainly to cognitive development, such as thought, language and reasoning process, but the major aspects that underline ZPD consider that accomplishments and acquisition of skills developed through social interaction with adults or peer collaboration, exceed those attained alone (Chaiklin, 2003). According to Vygotsky (1980), the educator is the significant adult who guides the learner in step-by-step instructions towards the attainment of a task. With someone else's assistance called 'scaffolding', the learner moves from the unknown to the known in tailored instructions. A

school environment that provides important attachment relationships for adolescent learners also has the potential for cognitive development where the principles of the ZPD are actuated through social behaviour (Chaiklin, 2003). Learners who can channel their emotions in positive ways increase their learning potential in the classroom (Foran, 2009).

Cefai and Cooper (2009) borrowed the phrase, 'attachment to school' from Smith's (2006) study to explain a vital factor that determines learners' educational failure or success. Attachment to school (Smith, 2006) is the measurement of commitment and engagement the learners feel towards school. Like Bowbly's (1988) parent-child attachment theory, where attachment is crucial to children psychological wellbeing and is the foundation for personality development and socialisation, attachment with educators is associated with higher achievements. Understanding the "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (Bowbly, 1988, p.194) in the classroom will help educators to be more effective in educating sensitive topics in the PSCD syllabus, and instruct learners in tasks (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Strong attachment towards school and educators results in success during the school years and productivity in later life (Begin & Bergin, 2009). Conversely, scepticism towards school together with indifference and hostility towards educators is indicative of weak attachment which in turn leads to disaffection, alienation, and reduced life chances because of the impaired social and academic engagement. There is a direct connection between the need to facilitate and strengthen all learners' attachment to school and the psychological nature and relevance of the PSCD curriculum. Geddes (2006) described the learning relationship as a dynamic interaction between the educator, the learner, and the learning task. When learners gain trust and experience the teacher's sensitivity and understanding over time, they are more secure to seek help and reliable support when faced by

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uncertainty, anxiety, and challenges of 'not knowing'. Since emotional resilience and the ability to learn are inextricably linked, Bergin and Bergin (2009) strongly advocated that secure attachment influences learners' success and is associated with higher grades, with greater emotional regulation, social competence, and willingness to take on challenges.

The PSCD educator is exactly positioned to respond to the needs of those adolescent learners who have unmet attachment needs, regardless of their socio-economic, educational, or socio-emotional status (Smith, 2006). Bronfenbrenner's (1994) bioecological model of development places the environment of the classroom and school on equal par to the family in the powerful microsystem which supports and guides cognitive growth. Borg and Triganza Scott (2009) investigated how the PSCD educator and curriculum are impacting the Maltese learners, including aspects like the duration and frequency of PSCD sessions per week, and the size of class. But in order to relate their inquiry to my study on adolescent learners, I will focus on their findings regarding the PSCD topics and educators in secondary sector. Ninety-five per cent of grade 11 (Form 5) learners showed a high degree of enjoyment, thinking, sharing of ideas and participation, and stated they found the PSCD topics interesting and useful. A student expressed; "PSCD is a load of fun. It has helped me to strengthen my relationship with friends and I learn new skills" (Borg & Triganza Scott, 2009, pg.81).

Emotional wellbeing is considered a larger part of any learning, and by association, the educational agenda. Nagel (2009) believed that schools are the best locations to protect learners from stress, enhance their capacity for learning and help them build resilience. A structured environment together with the nurturing of empathic relationships allows for the formation of secure foundations for the development of social skills, self-esteem, emotional literacy, autonomy, and self-identity; elements which often challenge adolescent learners.

The PSCD syllabus and educators need to be in tune with the psychosocial and emotional needs of adolescent learners, during the most turbulent and difficult period of their development (Thomas, 2015). Noddings (1999) recommended that educators engage learners in dialogue, to learn about their needs, habits, interests, and abilities, and to gain important ideas from them about how to build sessions and plan for their individual progress.

The following sections exhibit further the theoretical linkage between the psychology of music and the psychosocial development of adolescents whilst giving a clearer picture to support the developmental importance of music in adolescence (Miranda, 2013).

2.4 The Psychology of Music

Psychology of music studies the extent of effects that music has on the lives of humans. Blacking (1995) encompassed the concrete relationship between humans and music eloquently:

> The function of music is to enhance in some way the quality of individual experience and human relationships; its structures are reflections of patterns of human relations, and the value of a piece of music is inseparable from its value as an expression of human experience (p.31).

Thompson and Balkwill (2011) stressed that, "music is a multimodal phenomenon" (p.757), while Schafer et al. (2013) regarded music listening as one of the most enigmatic of human behaviours and a popular leisure activity. Music psychology research is intrigued how individuals "show sophisticated abilities to acquire knowledge about musical syntax, and to understand (and enjoy) music without ever having formal musical training" (Koelsch & Siebel, 2005, p.582). This strongly supports the notion that musicality is a natural ability of

human beings. In the Greek civilisation, philosophers believed the physiology, behaviours and character of the individual could be influenced and altered during music listening (Kreutz & Lotze, 2007). However, unlike scholars of the past who were mainly concerned with the evolutionary origin of music, researchers in the field of psychology of music are more inquisitive *how* people use music and are affected by it. It is imperative to clarify the reasons as to why individuals listen to music, as understanding this is related to how it satisfies needs (Randall & Rickard, 2016). The "uses and gratification approach," concentrating on the needs and concerns of the listener, explains why and how music is selected, and the listener's responses (Arnett, 1995, p.520).

To investigate the construction of music, Thompson and Balkwill (2011) cited Merriam's (1964) aspects of music, sound, behaviour and concept. Thompson and Balkwill (2011) defined the sound aspect as auditory signals that are produced by performers and perceived by listeners; the behaviour aspect is associated with tangible activities like performance, dance and rituals, and is inseparable from perceptions and experiences of music.; while the concept of music has specific functions within any social group.

Without indulging on the technicalities and the configuration of melodic composition, music can be expressed as interwoven and complex structures of tone, pitch, tension, and time, with the "tonal attraction being the main morphological principle of music" (Korsakova-Kreyn, 2010, p.16). The tone in music has a direct relationship between music and speech, in which melodic phrases reflect expressions and tone as in oral communications and language. At the heart of any genre of melody there are tonal patterns with hidden dimensions that determine whether the music is relaxed or tense (Korsakova-Kreyn, 2010). Music can create desired narratives and evoke affective response without the need of words, although music psychologists are still unable to explain listeners' reactions to

music (Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008). We perceive music as waves of tonal tension and release, giving every melody energy levels of affective and emotional responses. Korsakova-Kreyn (2010) sustained that at the heart of music there is a melodic gravitational force field because different tones have different levels of attraction, like the sun exerts a gravitational force that bounds the Earth.

Trevarthen (1999) theorised that "musicality is a part of the natural drive in human socio-cultural learning, which begins in infancy" (p.194). Trevarthen (1999) supported the notion that children are born with innate communicative musicality that they use to relate with their caregivers. Music can sustain the well-being of humans by acting as sensitive playful companion to develop emotional and social resilience. Rhythmic melodic lullabies and singing are used by caregivers around the world to hold an infant's attention as it has proved to be more effective than speech (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015).

Music elicits a vast range of emotional experiences (Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007), and either explicitly or implicitly, music exerts a powerful influence on psychological and physiological states. Music's unique and universal power to generate emotions has been recognised by humans, as through the ages, music served as an emotional expression which varied and was dependent on the people's intellectual, cultural, and spiritual status, the country and the time period they lived in (Rucsanda, 2015). Music exerts a surprisingly strong and powerful presence of agency that affects us biologically, psychologically, and emotionally. However, a group of listeners can experience different emotions when exposed to the same music, meaning that a music experience can be a unique personal sensation which may not be experienced similarly by anyone else.

Brattrico and Jacobsen (2009) verified that humans exhibit subjective response to any complex affective experience and use judgment to assess stimuli and events as being

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good or bad. Juslin and Vastfjall (2008) lamented that although music is primarily valued because of the emotions it evokes, researchers have so far been unable to offer a satisfactory account of such emotions. "At the heart of all this controversy, we believe, lies the fact that researchers have not devoted enough attention to the question of how music induces emotions" (Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008, p.560). Brattrico and Jacobsen (2009) insisted that from the neuroscience's lens "a consensus on the nature of affective states during music listening has not been reached" (p.308). Advertently, Sloboda (2010) struggled to solve the scientific puzzle of *how* music means so much to people, although research gives a clearer picture of *what* music does to people. Rucsanda (2015) regarded music as, "the barometer for the psychology of a civilisation or a culture" (p.1) and explained that man's inner needs and the emotional aspect of music are related to one other, influencing each one alternatively in a cause-and-effect manner.

Schäfer et al. (2013) asserted claims that, "music evolved primarily as a means for promoting social cohesion and communication" (p.7). They revealed three major reasons why people listen to music, two of which are private ones; music offers a valued companion and maintains a pleasant mood in a comfortable private space. The third reason however, music's social function, commanded lesser importance (Schäfer et al., 2013). Saarikallio (2008) recognised music as an effective means of mood regulation but is not convinced that the specific regulatory processes are clearly understood.

Studying music as a potential therapy, Navarro (2015) recounted increased self-awareness, which encompasses; self-concept, self-regulation, self-control, self-evaluation, and self-esteem, making music an agent for a process of change. Being a cultural factor, music can facilitate interpersonal relationships in the sense of community and solidarity (Navarro, 2015).

Thompson and Balkwill (2011) reflected that research is currently focused on, "the perception of emotion in music (decoding) rather than the induction of affective states by music" (p.754). Juslin and Vastfjall (2008) deliberated on the listener's reaction to music, although most of the research indicates that primarily music's value lies in the evoked emotions. There seems to be a consensus that music is used to change, release and match emotions, to enjoy or comfort, and to relieve stress (Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008). Sloboda and Juslin (2001) highlighted the urgent need to focus research on the interaction between the individual, the music and the context to learn more about music and emotion. Marin and Bhattacharya (2009) manifested their reflection on music induced emotions with the following explanation:

Music psychologists have distinguished between emotion perception, which refers to the perception of emotions expressed by music without evoking affective responses in the listeners, and emotion induction, which refers to listeners' affective response to music (p.1).

Thompson and Balkwill (2011) opined that "the visual input from viewing the facial expressions and gestures of a music performer can profoundly influence a listener's emotional responses to music" (p.756). McGuiness and Overy (2011) proposed that, "the nature of the musical listening experience is a shared subjectivity between individual listeners and performers, underpinned by innate bodily responses to musical gestures" (p.245). They argued that music listening is more of a communion than a communication of specific messages because the intimately shared emotional experiences suggest elements of empathy (McGuiness & Overy, 2011).

Advances of cognitive neuroscience approaches, led to, "music being recognised as an important aspect of human intelligence" (McGuiness & Overy, 2011, p.246). Likewise,

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Koelsch and Siebel (2005) described music as, "an ideal tool to investigate the workings of the human brain and its underlying brain mechanisms" (p.578). Music is one of the oldest and most basic socio-cognitive domains of the human species as music perception involves complex brain and auditory functions, influences the autonomic nervous system, the hormonal and immune systems, and activates (pre)motor representation (Koelsch & Siebel, 2005). Learning to play a musical instrument requires the development of a range of complex and interactive cognitive, perceptual and action processes, and intrinsic musical motivation based on the power of emotional engagement (Davidson et al., 2009).

Walmark et al. (2018) used the allegory, "music is a portal into the interior lives of others" (p.1) to describe how music can become a social agent that helps the listener become more social attuned and develop empathetic relationships. Conversely, Walmark et al., (2018) expressed that although, "musical experience and empathy are psychological and neurophysiological neighbours", "the relationship between the two remains unexplored" (p.1).

2.5 Defining Adolescence

Research on adolescence has changed dramatically since Hall (1904) described the complex features of adolescence as 'storm and stress'. A definition of the developmental phase of adolescence needs to take in consideration not only the person, but the environments in which the person is living and growing (Sadowski, 2008), as this stage is culturally rooted and ecologically informed (McFerran, 2012).

Adolescence presents itself as a major transitional phase of growth and maturation that signals the end of childhood and the beginning of adulthood, spanning from 12 to 18 years of age (Bee & Boyd, 2010). Jaworska and MacQueen (2015) described it as "a period which is temporally confined but not fixed" (p.291), while Brookman (1995) commented, "it

appears much more challenging to define an age range for adolescence" (p.399). It is a

dynamic and complex stage of development (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011) that stimulates

various areas- biological; the experience of puberty, cognitive; the acquisition of the formal-

abstract reasoning, psychological and social; the starting of new interactions with peers and

changes that prepare adolescents for adulthood (Crocetti et al., 2014). Puberty can be

defined as a rapid set of biological events that are driven by a flood of hormonal activity

resulting in the secondary sex characteristics and physiological modulations in muscle and

fat (Jaworska & MacQueen, 2015). Arnett (2001) argued that this unique phase of the life

course with physical and psychological changes will affect the rest of the individual's life.

Jaworska and MacQueen (2015) conceptualised that adolescence is "a developmental

period rather than a temporal snapshot as it is highly variable behaviourally and

developmentally" (p.291).

Additionally, it is associated with a period of increased risk-taking behaviours as well

as increased emotional reactivity. Arnett (1995) expressed that adolescents tend to be

higher in sensation seeking than adults. Such behavioural changes are influenced by both

external environmental and internal factors that elicit and reinforce behaviours (Crosnoe &

Johnson, 2011). For Jaworska and MacQueen (2015), adolescence is a distinct time during

which the incidence of many psychiatric illnesses rises dramatically.

Besides being a turbulent time for most young people, adolescence is often equally

challenging for their parents, family and educators (Thomas, 2015), with schools being a

major ecological setting where adolescents spend a large proportion of their waking hours.

The adolescent years are characterised by a dramatic shift from being a caregiver-

dependent child to a fully autonomous adult. Changes in adolescents' social and school

environment mean an increase in autonomy and spending less time with parents and more

with friends. Adolescence is a time where social standing is judged by the quality and the quantity of relationships. There seemed to be a wrangle between parents and peer relationships with the latter taking primary focus in adolescence (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). Research is mainly concerned on how adolescents influence each other, the selection of friendships and the larger peer grouping in which these friendships are embedded.

The school environment and adolescents' investment in relationships and activities at school contribute enormously to the conceptualisation of identity. Schools become places where adolescents form healthy relationships with others that make them feel valued and good about themselves. Adolescents' choice of friends is greatly associated with a compatible group of individuals that share their values, attitudes and behaviours. Adolescents' peer choices affect academic motivation, future trajectories, after school activities, lifestyles and interests (Sadowski, 2008).

Adolescence is a critical period for identity development and an unclear sense of identity has been associated with harmful psychological and social outcomes (Bosch et al., 2012). According to Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory of personality development, adolescence is based on the central task of 'identity vs role confusion'. Erikson argued that identity becomes "unglued" at puberty due to the biological changes, with the old identity no longer sufficing and thus a new identity must be forged (Bee & Boyd, 2010, p.263). There is confusion about the life choices arising from the profusion of role opening in which peers and clique have a major influential role.

Many theorists argued that while adolescents are engaged in identity formation processes, intimacy is also evolving and intersecting this period of development (Kerpelman et al., 2012). Romantic relationships have a developmental significance, as adolescents experiment with different ways of being, behaving and discovering new things about who

they are as autonomous individuals. A typical aspect of adolescence is the centrality of peer

relationship which demonstrating itself as strong "clannishness" and "intense conformity"

to the peer group (Bee & Boyd, 2010, p.301). However, this conformity decreases to make

way for a sense of identity that is more independent of the peer group. Erikson (1968)

theorised that social identity is constantly evolving and shaped by new experiences and

interactions with others, which in turn can help or hinder the development of identity.

Although identity formation is the core developmental task for adolescents (Erikson,

1968), Berzonsky (2005) speculated that not all adolescents face this task in the same way

and formulated three social-cognitive strategies how adolescents address or avoid identity

issues. Berzonsky (2005) referred to these strategies as 'identity processing orientations'

namely, informational, normative, and diffuse avoidant. The preference for different

strategies impacts the extent to which adolescents are successful in finding their own

uniqueness and self-definition (Crocetti et al., 2014).

Developmental psychologists consider the formation of identity as a major centrality

and one of the most important developmental challenges of adolescence (Arnett, 2001).

"Identity serves as the conceptual framework within which people construe the purpose,

meaning, and direction of their lives" (Berzonsky, 2005, p.137). Wright (2018) wrote that

adolescents "seek unity of purpose and coherence" (p.1) by asking fundamental questions

about their past, present, and future life, the world around them, themselves and others.

This type of self-questioning in adolescence is purely a quest to answer critical life questions

of; 'Who am I?' and 'Where do I belong?' If a person fails to resolve any identity issues at

this period of development, their sense of self remains directionless and endures

throughout life (Phillips & Pittman, 2007).

Erikson's (1968) lifespan theory of personality development was further conceptualised by Marcia (1966), who described two key parts within the identity formation task: exploration or crisis and commitment. Briefly explained, exploration involves questioning different alternatives when faced with decision making crisis, whilst commitment involves life choices and trajectories. These two processes give rise to four different identity statuses: (a) Identity Achievement, (b) Moratorium, (c) Foreclosure and (d) Identity Diffusion. Cognitive changes bring about possibilities for psychosocial, emotional, and moral development, defined as increased capacity for abstract thinking described in Piaget's formal operational stages (Bee & Boyd, 2010). Piaget (1972) described adolescence as an "unfolding of cognitive structures" (p.16) linked to biological maturation and emphasised the individualistic nature of cognitive development. From Piaget's (1972) perspective, adolescents experience changes in their intellectual capacity and grow in the ability to think about themselves and their social world in an abstract, critical, inductive, and integrative way. Adolescents become more adaptive to meta-cognitive strategies to understanding oneself and others' perspectives through reason and emotion; thereby enter more intimate relationships with others (Sadowski, 2008; Mc Ferran, 2012).

Crosnoe and Johnson (2011) indicated that adolescence is best understood when viewed within the full life course, looking back to childhood, and looking forward to adulthood. The life course paradigm emphasises that development is lifelong, and that no life stage can be understood in isolation (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). Most importantly the phase of adolescence should not be regarded as a fixed definition with universal applications, because the multi-layered development renders a person as extremely individual and unique.

In the following quotation Brookman (1995), reflected that adolescence produces turning points and deflections in the life course of individuals which can affect themselves and society:

"I believe we must insist on defining the individual adolescent as uniquely as possible, whether as a patient or an object of teaching or a subject of research" (Brookman, 1995, p.340).

Having set out the background and context of all variables in this study, the next chapter will focus specifically on a literature review of music in the lives of adolescents.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

"We will do well to listen to what teens(sic) tell us about music as a common need and a constant presence in their lives" (Campbell et al., 2007, p.221)

This quotation is especially insightful and relevant as it describes the rationale for this literature review. The previous chapter highlighted the backdrop of the components in this study but since it cannot contribute a wider range of literature to each one, the following review is intended to feature the relevant research findings and debates leading to the formulation of the research question; What is the role of music in the lives of adolescents?

As a way of charting the picture for this literature review, I have established that during adolescence the individual seeks identity and self-exploring by trying to make sense of a world that often does not appear to make sense. For adolescents, music is a type of language that communicates their personality, interests, and their emotional expressions. Through music, adolescents embark on a journey of self-discovery where they explore different musical genres and bond with peers who enjoy the same music.

While the overarching aim of this literature review is to build theoretical bridges between the psychology of music and developmental psychology during adolescence, I hope that the reader will achieve a heightened awareness of how music has the potential to be a resource in a PSCD classroom. This chapter provides a concise, representative summary of the robust and contemporary literature findings and expands my discussion on how music impacts and influences important aspects of adolescents' development.

Maloney (2017) suggested that music should be conceptualised as "a resource similar to water" (p.57) especially in adolescents, because of the ubiquity and ever-increasing ease to access through technologically enhanced listening devices.

3.2 Overview

Music has been studied from a wide range of disciplines, domains, and perspectives; therefore, an initial review looks at some theoretical perspectives on music in the lives of adolescents. Next, the discussion will be directed on music engagement and its cognitive impact on adolescents and formal music education. A brief reference is made to the sensitivity towards music by adolescents with learning and behavioural challenges, and how music is used in therapy and counselling.

The focus will be on the four most notable functions for music engagement: musical preferences, changes in emotions, affirming one's identity, and establishing social relationships (Thompson et al., 2018). Although these functions will be presented in separate subheadings, I encountered a degree of difficulty when trying to extricate one function from the other, since emotions, preferences, identity, and social relationships are intricately reliant on each other during adolescence (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011).

3.3 Theoretical Perspectives

Perspectives from several academic disciplines are considered in this study in order to identify links between music and adolescents. The sociological perspective focused on the importance of musical identity, musical behaviour and interpersonal relationships within social contexts inside and outside home. Psychological approaches presented specific effects of musical making and listening on the brain and body. The social psychological standpoint looked at the social identity theory (Tajfel, 1970), highlighting the social context as the key determinant of self-definition, and the contribution of music preferences to the

sense of self. The developmental psychological perspective viewed the significance of music as an important constituent in the understanding of adolescence in general (Saarikallio, 2008). From a cognitive neuroscientific angle, Davies (2011) disputed the often-challenged idea that music affects the functional and structural brain plasticity which leads to an enhancement of higher brain functioning by impacting both hemispheres of the brain to render learning easier.

Grounded in a psychological and sociological stance, North et al. (2000) suggested that adolescents consume music at a great extent and view music as a 'necessary component' (Campbell et al., 2007) in their lives with effects in the formation of identities, relationships and socialisation. Psychophysiological research studied modes of relaxation, tension reduction and revival of new energy in the everyday use of music (Saarikallio et al., 2017). From an evolutionary perspective, Maury and Rickard (2016) argued that because music-making is adaptive in helping individuals regulate emotions and strengthen bonds, it can be utilised as a positive social-emotional activity, which augments educational programmes.

Arnett (1995) implored that music exerts a relevant and dominant role during the adolescence years when abilities for empathy, identity founding, and pro-social behaviours develop. From a cognitive approach, Thomas (2015) reasoned that passionate behaviours typical to the period of adolescence can be directed into music, where preferences and passion for music develop and extend into lifelong learning through musicianship and/or positive attitudes towards music. The psychoeducational research showed keen interest in the emotional and social aspects of learning linked with adolescents' active music engagement. Miranda (2011) lamented that although studies support the developmental

relevance of music in adolescence, developmental psychologists are not familiar with the findings, possibly due to lack of communication among researchers from various disciplines.

3.4 Formal and Active Music Participation

Musical engagement varies, "from passive listener through to active performer, with participation varying from being able to engage in a simple and direct manner to find self-expression through limited technical skill – like playing basic chords on the guitar or singing in a community group" (Davidson et al., 2009, p.1029). Since this study will mainly revolve around passive music engagement, namely listening to music, only a brief review on active music participation such as formal music education and training will be afforded.

Those who train and actively participate in music-making accrue a vast array of benefits (Sloboda, 1999; Schellenberg, 2005; Hallam, 2010), predominantly in learners' wellbeing in academic and educational contexts. McFerran (2013) attributed these benefits to music's ability to enhance positive relationships in the social context of schools. Schellenberg (2005) examined whether music listening and music lessons "confer intellectual advantages" (p.317). These two scenarios tell different stories, as cognitive tests showed that listening led to short-termed enhancement in performance, while lessons led to general and long-lasting intellectual benefits (Schellenberg, 2005). Hallam (2010) exalted the wider psychological benefits of music lessons and training but disclosed that "exploring the effects of music training on general intellectual skills has been controversial" (p.1017).

Investigating music education in the Maltese secondary schools' context, Buttiġieġ (2016) considered music "as a cross-curricular subject that enables students (sic.) to interact with various subject themes" (p.318) and "to develop their creative talents and skills" (p.319). Buttiġieġ (2016) encapsulated the importance of music education by citing Petress

(2005), "music is shown to be beneficial to students (sic.) in four major categories: success in society, success in school, success in developing intelligence, and success in life" (p.112).

The notion that listening to Mozart could improve spatial reasoning in children was very popular in the late 20th century, however, Hallam (2010) explained that these claims have proved difficult to replicate. Schellenberg's (2005) and Hallam's (2010) analysis indicated that positive benefits of music listening on cognitive abilities are most likely to be apparent when the music is appreciated by the listener rather than to the content in Mozart's compositions.

Miranda (2013) maintained that active music participation can be very influential in adolescents' development, especially in areas such as socialisation, emotion regulation, personality, motivation, and positive development. Hallam (2010) reflected that "positive effects of active engagement with music on personal and social development only occur if it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience" (p.2281). Hallam (2010) concluded that active music-making impacts the brain processes in many ways; developing spatial skills required in mathematics, the perception and acquisition of literacy, improves self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-perception and subsequently improves interpersonal skills. Musical instructions requiring multisensory motor skills, train a set of attentional and executive functions, which have both domain-specific and general consequences. Besides, music learners derive "greatest psychological needs satisfaction" (Davidson et al., 2009, p.1027). Ultimately, active participation in music affords adolescents meaningful opportunities as performers, composers, and intelligent listeners.

3.5 Music and Special Education

A line of research has concentrated on the advantageous use of music with regards to learners with special educational needs. Worth mentioning is the use of calming music in

the classroom attributed with favourable effects in performance and behaviour for learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties, "although further research will need to be undertaken over a longer period to eliminate the possibility of the effects being due to novelty or other antecedent factors" (Hallam & Price, 1998, p.90). Allen et al. (2009) found that high functioning individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) responded profoundly to music and showed considerable understanding of both music and its effects on them. Their participants with ASD experienced extensive practical benefits from music; from achieving improvements in mood together with improving personal and social integration (Allen et al., 2009), while Eren's (2015) findings showed improved social skills and less resistance in peer interactions during music sessions. Heaton (2009) explained that much can be learnt from the function and role of music in the lives of individuals with ASD as, "it provides a source of emotional experience when other sources are inaccessible" (p.1018).

3.6 Music as Therapy

Gold et al. (2004) found that the effects of music therapy for children and adolescents within psychopathology, "tended to be greater for behavioural and developmental disorders than for emotional disorders; greater for eclectic, psychodynamic, and humanistic approaches than for behavioural models; and greater for behavioural and developmental outcomes than for social skills and self-concept" (p.1054). DeDiego (2013) established that, "music has been used as a tool for emotional management in counselling for many years" (p.1). DeDiego (2013) examined how song lyrics tell a strong emotional story through the artist's theme and could be used as a processing tool for therapists and counsellors. Writing from a therapeutic angle, Tervo (2001) demonstrated that the prescription of music by psychoanalysts and psychotherapist can have positive changes in

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the psychological, physical, cognitive, or social functioning of adolescents with health or educational problems. Therapeutic use of music with adolescents promotes growth and development as it provides opportunities to experience closeness and isolation, and to explore their sexual fantasies and emotions (Tervo, 2001). Through music, especially rock music, adolescents are, "given the possibility to express, be in contact with and share among themselves feelings of anger, rage, grief, longing and psychological disintegration" (Tervo, 2001, p.81).

3.7 Music in School Settings

In school settings, Davis (2010) specifically focused on the advantages of using music in trauma group therapy, since music allows adolescents to express feelings that may otherwise be difficult to articulate. Vines (2005) advocated that music, being a creative intervention, touches the soul of adolescent learners and described how counselling sessions can benefit from this. The usefulness of music in guidance by school counsellors shared by Kimbel and Protivnak (2010), noted that song lyrics raise awareness about vital topics discussed with adolescent learners. This is done by leading a discussion about song lyrics from a wide variety of music styles and encouraging the learners to relate feelings and thoughts from the lyrics to the life skills covered in the session.

The following section reviews the line of investigation on the role of personality traits in the determination of adolescents' musical preferences, and conversely how music preferences contribute to adolescents' personality.

3.8 Music Preferences and Personality Traits

Vuoskoski (2012) conceptualised the term 'personality traits' or individual differences in human functioning as, "dispositions to behave in a particular way in a range of situations" (p.18). Adolescents' diversity in their preferences for musical styles is driven by

social factors such as ethnicity, social class, youth cultures, together with individual factors such as personality, physiological arousal, and social identity (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). The theory that music preferences could contribute to the understanding of an individual's personality was first put forward in the middle of the twentieth century by Cattell (1954). While other researchers viewed music preferences as an explicit manifestation of personality traits, Cattell's (1954) belief was that music preferences provided a window on the unconscious aspects of personality.

Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) conducted seminal research on how the individual's personality mediates musical preferences and conversely how music preferences communicate information about one's personality. Rentfrow and Gosling (2006) observed that music choices "carry unique information about personality that is not readily available from more observable cues" (p.241). Music preferences in relation to personality traits have been studied with a degree of reliability. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) listed four major music preferences; and attributed them to the Big-Five personality factors; (a) Reflective and Complex (classical, jazz, blues) and (b) Intense and Rebellious (alternative, rock, heavy metal) music both related to *Openness to Experience* factor. (c) Upbeat and Conventional (country, pop, religious) music related positively to *Extraversion, Agreeableness* and *Conscientiousness*, whereas (d) Energetic and Rhythmic music (hip-hop, rap, soul, funk, electronic, dance) related to *Extraversion and Agreeableness*. For example, listeners' characteristics of anti-conformists and preferences for heavy metal music corresponded with assertiveness and aggressiveness, lack of concern to others' feelings, moodiness, cynicism, over-sensitivity and discontentment, and increased likelihood to act on impulses. These individuals lacked both

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self-esteem and a stable sense of identity and felt disengaged, rejected, or misunderstood by others.

Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) theorised that, "if music preferences are partially determined by personality, self-views, and cognitive abilities, then knowing what kind of music a person likes could serve as a clue to his or her personality, self-views, and cognitive abilities" (p.1251). Delsing et al.'s (2008) similar findings provided compelling evidence that music preference, "serves as a clue to one's personality" (p.128) demonstrating that adolescents select music to reflect their personalities and associated needs, with the addition that music preferences become increasingly stable from early to late adolescence.

From a social-personality psychological perspective, Rentfrow (2012) reviewed evidence indicating that music has significant effects on cognition and emotion and serves various functions from emotion regulation to self-expression and social bonding. In broad summary, other findings by Rentfrow et al. (2011) signalled that music preferences shaped by culture and society are focused on the functions of music and are moderated by situational constraints and goals in interaction with the individual's personality traits. "Weddings, funerals, sporting events or relaxation, for example, constrain musical choices, and individual preferences operate within those constraints" (Rentfrow et al., 2011, p.1155).

Ekinci et al. (2012) commented that the bidirectional relationship between music preferences and psychological issues has not been thoroughly clarified, but research data suggests that the preferred music choice, like heavy metal and rap, may be associated with antisocial behaviour like substance usage, and psychiatric disorders like depression. Ekinci et al. (2012) explained that adolescents' music preferences can be correlated with their psychological profile, as an indicator of any underlying susceptibility to psychopathology. Tekman's (2009) study titled 'Music Preferences as Signs of Who We Are', used Turkish

university learners as participants to generate accurate estimations of personality characteristics of listeners to different genres. Contrastingly, data revealed that the ratings of the respondents did not match the self-rating of the listener, therefore, musical preferences may not always give information that characterised personality traits (Tekman, 2009). This concurred with North et al.'s (2000) findings that, "musical preferences may cue stereotypes that may not always be true or may be used to actively manage impressions that listeners create on others" (Tekman, 2009, p.595).

Thomas (2015) cautioned that what adolescents perceive as "school" music may not be "their" music (p.2), meaning that their music preferences may not be the same genre of music that they are studying. This perception corresponds to Delsing et al. 's (2008) when they did not rule out that their adolescent participants may have used impression-management motivation, where an individual failed to report an enjoyment in listening to classical music because classical music is considered as "uncool" (p.128).

The uses and gratifications approach serves as a framework to explain the connection between personality characteristics and music preferences as it focuses on the motive of the listener for the selection and consumption of music (Delsing et al., 2008). According to Arnett (1995), people prefer particular music because they have particular personality characteristics that the music satisfies.

Baker and Bor (2008) emphasised the feasibility and relevance of exploring music preferences in adolescents to professionals, as music preferences could reflect positive or negative psychological health and lifestyle. Preferences in music could reveal at-risk status of those adolescents who are unlikely to seek out help when needed (Martin et al., 1993). By extension, the notion that music preference is indicative of emotional vulnerability, makes it also a diagnostic indicator of emotional disorders (American Academy of

Paediatrics, 2009). Musical genres like rap, classic rock, hard rock, heavy metal, and techno are preferred by adolescents who are oppositional, defiant and diagnosed with mood disorders (Baker & Bor 2008; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). Thompson et al. (2018) questioned whether the tendency to enjoy music with violent themes is associated with certain personality attributes, since research findings indicated an association between engagement with violent genres of music and emotional and behavioural problems, which includes aggressive behaviours and drug and alcohol use.

Delsing et al. (2008) justified their sample of adolescent participants because according to them adolescence is a crucial period for the formation of music identities which are crystallised for later in life. Lamont and Webb (2010) agreed that "adolescence is a critical period for developing entrenched musical preferences" (p.224). Delsing et al. (2008) established the stability of adolescents' musical preferences in the short and long term, whilst indicating that "musical favourites are subject to rapid change and highly context-dependent" (p.224). Hargreaves et al. (2002) implied that musical preferences are frequently part of an adolescent's identity, are not solid or fixed but may be adopted, rejected or augmented differently and periodically, as they can change according to age, mood, social situation and other circumstantial influences.

This section highlighted the idea that one's personality impacts music preferences and music preferences serve as a clue to one's personality. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) reinforced the idea that music preferences appear to be shaped by self-views which will be reviewed in the next section on identity formation. Thomas (2015) regarded music preference in adolescents as an 'outward identifier' to others, a sort of platform where they can showcase their identity. Miranda and Gaudreau (2011) suggested that one of the motivations for musical preferences is to satisfy social needs, such as social or musical

identity. These claims bridge this part of the review to the next and demonstrate that it was not an easy task to demarcate music preferences from identity.

3.9 Identity Formation

Sadowski (2008) symbolised identity development as two pathways; an "inside out" personal and psychological project, and the "outside in" an interpersonal, social project, together with the parents, siblings, teachers (sic.), friends and classmates and romantic partners. Sadowski (2008) denoted music as highly influential in how adolescents form and express their cultural values, attitudes, and preferred identities. McFerran (2011) applied two metaphors to explain how adolescents engage with music, "music as a mirror that reflects self-knowledge, and music as a stage where identity is performed in relationship with others" (p.97).

Adolescents use both functions in the formation of their identity as music provides public and private opportunities for emotional engagement and expression. The mirror function presents an intrapersonal context in which music is portrayed as an external influence that allows the adolescents to see themselves from a distance. Music reflects and validates past and everyday experiences which enhance self-understanding and personal growth (De Nora, 1999; cited by McFerran, 2011). Williamson (2009) used the mirror metaphor to award music with the capability of engaging different emotions and meanings in different people, and recounted "a composer once told me that great music is built like a mirror, in which all listeners see themselves" (p.1025).

The 'stage' function of music provides adolescents a platform for the formation of their identity. Citing Ruud (1997), McFerran (2011) penned how adolescents use music choices as public expressions and as an exhibition of "what they want to be" and "what they really are" (p.102). Likewise, North and Hargreaves (1999) noted that adolescents might use

their musical taste as a social "badge" of identity and group membership through which they communicate their values, attitudes, and self-views. Frith (1981) used the same representation to describe the social function of music and coined the term 'badge of identity' to convey a concept of stereotyping individuals to certain genres of music, "music served as the badge of individuality on which friendship choices could be based" (p.208).

Individuals identify with those who share their musical tastes as more favourable than those who do not. According to Tajfel's (1970) social identity theory, self-concept is composed of two key parts: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity is about what makes each person unique, while social identity refers to how a person interacts within a collective social context. Individuals do not just have a personal selfhood, but multiple identities related to the groups they are affiliated to (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This link between social identity and the self, points to the social contexts and activities that individuals select to reinforce their self-views (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to the social identity theory, a person's self-concept partly originates from the groups to which that person belongs, and alternatively according to Lonsdale (2020), membership to social groups serves to enhance and maintain self-esteem. Shepherd and Sigg (2015) sustained that music plays a prominent role in defining social identity in young people and a relationship between music preference and self-esteem exists. Lonsdale's (2020) findings suggested that individuals who share musical taste are likely to identify with fellow fans, acquire an in-group status and will be benefit from in-group favouritism.

There seemed to be conflicting ideas regarding the powerful force of music on the individual (McFerran, 2011). Some researchers thought that music choices reflect the emotional turbulence typical of adolescence (North & Hargreaves, 2008; Gold, et al., 2011; Randall et al., 2014), another body of literature considered young people as encouraged to

behave in a particular manner by their musical choice (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003; Delsing et al., 2008; Baker & Bor, 2008). Interestingly, Epstein (2007) who radically challenged contemporary views on adolescence, speculated that many of the accepted beliefs about adolescence are reflected and reinforced by adult perceptions of adolescents' music.

Crocetti et al.'s (2014) investigation on identity styles found that adolescents' identity styles were strongly affected by gender stereotyping in music choices and adolescents' musical behaviours. North et al. (2000) explored the possibility that males and females utilise music for different reasons and discovered that females are more likely to utilize music to regulate their mood, whilst males are more likely to utilise music to create an impression with others.

Miranda and Claes (2009) observed that music listening as a form of emotional avoidance, was related to higher depression levels in females, but lower levels in males. These views on gender stereotyping is used here to connect the reader to the emotional aspect of music.

3.10 Emotions

The complex relationship between music and emotion is not a straightforward undertaking, as according to Robinson and Hatten (2012), "the emotions aroused by music are frequently not the emotions it expresses" (p.71). These authors made a succinct distinction between "the expression of emotions in music and the arousal of emotions in listeners" (p.71). Research revolves around the psychological mechanism that triggers the affective impact of music, with attention on concepts of; emotion induction, mood regulation and coping with stress. Juslin et al. (2008) expressed that although many musicians and listeners take the emotional powers of music for granted to better

understand how music evokes emotions, music listening must be studied in its natural

context since the goal of the listener varies depending upon the situation.

North and Hargreaves (2011) proposed a reciprocal feedback model, to capture the

connection that exists in the three main determining factors in music responses: (a) the

genre of music, (b) the social situation of the experience, and (c) the variables of gender,

age and musical talent of the listener. Reybrouk and Eerola (2017) considered the fact that

music triggers ancient evolutionary systems in the human body. However, although they

asserted that music is a powerful tool for inducing emotions, they admitted that studying

music adequately from an emotional domain is complicated due to lack of descriptive

vocabulary and encompassing theoretical framework (Reybrouk & Eerola, 2017).

Thomas (2015) provided a neuroscientific explanation of the intense connections

between music preferences and brain developments during adolescence, where emotions

surge and appeals for reckless behaviours abound, and music preferences often represented

in risky activities, arrogance, and moody emotional behaviours. Thomas (2015) clarified that

the maturation of the reward and pleasure centre in the limbic system in the adolescents'

brain associated to styles of music that concerns emotions, is coupled with the fact that the

prefrontal cortex, in charge of decision making and planning, continues developing into

adulthood.

Music for adolescents can be a versatile resource for mood regulation, as it increases

and restores their wellbeing, and makes their emotional life more varied and colourful.

Kreutz and Lotze (2007) considered that music provides interaction and communication of

emotional information between composer, performer, and listener. Aware of music's mood

enhancing qualities, composers and musicians have specifically created and played music to

get listeners in a good mood, enliven festive activities or to alleviate tragedy and loss (Ter

Bogt et al., 2016). Adolescents frequently make use of music's consolation function as a coping-strategy in their daily challenges and stress, and in mood management (Ter Bogt et al., 2016). The prevalence of music listening for consolation results from several aspects; the sound and texture of the music, the attribution of personal meaning to music's lyrics, and perceptions of proximity to artists and other listeners.

Bosacki and O'Neill (2015) affirmed that adolescents experience positive emotions from music listening and graded this everyday activity as extremely popular. Bosacki and O'Neill (2015) exemplified that adolescents with few friends prefer music with themes of loneliness and independence, while those who trust others and have music preferences independent from their peers, elicit positive emotional states, such as love and hope. Larson (1995) discussed the functions of solitary popular music listening in emotional lives of adolescents and suggested that music gives adolescents, "the opportunity to cultivate a newly discovered private self: teens use media to explore numerous possible selves including those that are desired and feared" (p.535). Larson (1995) proposed that adolescents internalise strong emotional images of themselves and deal with stress in a context of solitary music listening.

There is still much to be clarified on the effects of music listening as a coping-strategy for adolescents. McFerran et al. (2010) stated that although adolescents actively seek music to manage their feelings and to control moods, this unconscious process may not always yield successful results, especially to susceptible youths who tend to feel psychologically disturbed after listening to their preferred music (Martin et al., 1993). There is still much to be clarified on the effects of music listening as a coping strategy for adolescents. Baker and Bor (2008) recorded that music offers temporary escape from thoughts and feelings, validates them, and releases pent up emotions including anxiety and

anger. Schwartz and Fouts (2003) and Baker and Bor (2008) agreed that adolescents use music as an external stimulation to distract themselves and escape or avoid unwanted thoughts and emotions, as they tend to gravitate to popular music with lyrics that pronounce their feeling and experiences. Schwartz and Fouts (2003) specifically pointed to heavy music as the genre used by adolescents to regulate their emotions. While some studies do not negate the fact that music is a contributory factor for antisocial behaviours (Selfhout et al., 2008; American Academy of Paediatrics, 2009; Thomas, 2015), it is undeniable that popular music forms a vital role in the emotional and social world of adolescents and accompanies them in the journey of development and self-discovery (Arnett, 1995; Tarrant, 1999; Baker & Bor, 2008).

In the local context, Aquilina's (2012) research focused on understanding the importance of music to older adolescent learners attending a Sixth Form school, and how music holds mood regulatory meanings to them. Similar to previous theoretical models (Sarikalllio, 2007; Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007), Aquilina's (2012) findings showed that Maltese adolescents utilise musical activities to satisfy personal mood-related goals.

Referring to the use of music in contexts where adolescents' feeling of social connection is strengthened through a shared musical experience, Campbell et al. (2007) proposed that, "music is their social glue—a bridge for building acceptance and tolerance for people of different ages and cultural circumstance" (p.221). The intended scope of including the preceding analogy is to connect the discussion to social aspect of music.

3.11 The Social Function of Music

Buttiġieġ (2016) articulated that music is an expressive art, that shapes and develops young people's social and cultural identity. Interestingly, Delsing et al. (2007) calculated that, "the times spent listening to music approximate those spent in the classroom from

kindergarten through high school" (p.110). Extrinsic social influences are important when discussing how adolescents make use of music. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) expressed concern that scientific psychological studies on behaviour and personality tend to ignore social phenomena such as music, which is a "basic pervasive social activity" (p.1236). The interpersonal disposition during adolescence determines conformity to the social standards or divergence from them (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011), while groups of peers and friends who evolve in similar social environments are influential elements in the social network. Saarikallio et al. (2017) specified that music listening in adolescence acts as a personal resource for social development whilst supporting social relationships.

Rentfrow & Gosling (2003) perceived music as an essential component in most social gatherings and situations, as it is an interactive resource that is welcoming, accepting and inclusive. Social music activities like orchestras, choirs, bands and musical improvisation support group cohesion and human collaboration. Maloney (2017) considered music a utility within social groups for belonging and socialisation purposes, and to establish and maintain interpersonal relations. While music listening is considered as a predominantly individual activity, sociologists noted how it provides opportunities for shared group experiences and the creation of communities, thus giving the sense of belonging to a larger peer network (Epstein, 1994; Maloney, 2017; Saarikallio et al. 2017).

Tarrant et al. (2001) confirmed that adolescents' musical tastes are influenced by external opinions and are firmly related to peer influences. Zillmann and Gan (1997) found that adolescents choose their friends or reject others through what they called, "a declaration of allegiance to musical culture" (p.174). Furthermore, individuals select styles of music to shape and mould their social and physical environments in order to reinforce their dispositions and personality. According to Rentfrow and Gosling (2003), individuals

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who are aesthetically sensitive and are intellectually curious may prefer genres of music that portray an image of being artistic and sophisticated.

Adolescents identify with others who like similar music and tend to form social cliques based on music preferences. Many adolescents change their music preference according to the social situation because of the need to fit in and be socially accepted (Thomas, 2015). Nelson and Nelson (2010) postulated that the developmental stage of adolescence represents a unique culture that shares common values, challenges, and characteristics. Schwartz and Fouts (2003) linked the creation of adolescent subcultures with music styles that reflect the values, conflicts, and developmental issues adolescents must deal with. Mc Ferran (2011) inferred that troubled adolescents listen to more music as adolescence music contains issues like "sexuality, identity, drugs, religion, autonomy, individuality, family values, dancing, social change and drinking" (p.99).

Saarikallio (2011) also explained that adolescent participation in music is viewed as a tool towards social development and improvement of character. Adolescent's engagement in music, tends to lead to better self-regulation and acts as a vehicle towards ownership and independence in their social interaction. Thompson (1990) specified that psychologists and sociologists regard music as an excellent channel through which adolescents communicate information that enables them to function more effectively during personal and social challenges. The genres of music that adolescents listen to has vast implication on social relationships and social attitudes. Thompson (1990) exposed a difference in how music is used by female and male adolescents. Whereas females prefer light music as it reflects socialisation themes like emotional expressiveness and relationships; males prefer heavy music to reflect their socialisation themes of independence and dominance (Thompson, 1990).

Viewed from a sociological stance, music as a 'badge', that labels the individual's identity, created the theory of 'subcultures' in the 1980s (McFerran, 2011). As a bonding strategy, music communicates shared values and identity within peer groups, with the consequences that young people affiliate themselves with groups while distance themselves from others (North & Hargreaves, 1999). Affiliation and membership with a popular peer group allows adolescents to feel secure and appears to be beneficial for their social development as it bolsters their sense of belonging and affirms their sense of identity.

In the local context, sociological research by Bell (1991; 1994) showed how Maltese youth were not impartial to musical subcultures, especially to rock music in the post-war decades. The Maltese society was impacted in the 50s by rock music by means of the "teddy-boy youth subculture' which was considered 'rebellious and not white-collar material" (Bell, 1991, p.78). Although the rock subculture was replaced in the 60s by Beatlemania and the local hippy movement, the pervasive presence of rock bands retained their place among Maltese youths into the 21st century. In the late 70's and into the 80's, the punk rock subculture attracted Maltese youth to its musical style, behaviours and attire (Bell, 1991).

Baker and Bor (2008) reported that in the 1980s there were increased concerns on the link between music and 'youth subculture' (Epstein, 1994) in association with social behaviours including suicide, deliberate self-harm, violence, theft, promiscuity, risk taking and drug use. Epstein (1994) defined youth subcultures as the "distinct values, beliefs, symbols, and actions which certain youth employ to attend to, and cope with, their shared cultural experience" (p.xiii). Epstein (1994) argued that, "adolescents behave more or less homogeneously" (p.15), with popular music acting as the defining element of youth subcultures to create collective excitement, a sense of solidarity and a subcultural

consciousness. North et al. (2000) stated that often adolescents use music genres as a social

messenger to send implicit attitudes and values to their peers and parents. Selfhout et al.

(2009) recounted that their research participants tended to play classical rather than pop

music in order to please their parents or teachers (sic.). Adolescents may change their

musical preferences according to their social situation due to the strong need to fit in and

the necessity to be socially accepted (Thomas, 2015).

Selfhout, et al. (2009) provided empirical evidence that music is a factor in the

formation of friendships, peer groups and peer culture, by linking certain genres of music to

the development of externalising behaviour. Franken et al. (2017) believed that music

facilitates adolescents to befriend others with similar music tastes, consequently, be drawn

to specific crowds with externalising behaviour. Franken et al. (2017) cautioned that

externalising behaviour can impact adolescents positively or negatively, and the

development of such a behaviour can be predicted in genres such as rock, urban, and dance

music. Additionally, externalising behaviour within a crowd with similar music taste tends to

happen frequently and intensify rapidly. Selfhout, et al. (2009) linked engagement with

violent music with social behavioural problems, including aggressive behaviours, smoking,

drug, and alcohol use.

Music genres are defined by auditory features and social attributes that activate

certain psychological characteristics like sadness, enthusiasm, and aggression in individuals.

Adolescents within a group usually conform to the expectations, characteristics and images

portrayed by fans of that particular music genre (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006). Rentfrow et al.

(2011) provided evidence that music genres create stereotypical social and psychological

characteristics, and prototypical fans exhibit stereotypical traits. Schwartz and Fouts (2003)

illustrated that popular music and lyrics, which is mostly characterised by repeating

structures, sing-able simple melodies, and danceable rhythms, conveys developmental themes, including social relationships, autonomy and identity, and peer acceptance.

Popular music correlates with individuals that exhibit extraversion characteristics of values and attitudes such as: responsibility, role-conscious and conformity, and sexuality issue, peer acceptance, and keeping a balance between dependence and independence. Delsing et al. (2007) discussed how extroverts who generally enjoy socialising and interacting with others, tend to enjoy music that encourages social interactions with peers, like party music. Adolescents preferring light music appeared to stick to social norms and were emotionally stable while showing greater concern to their sexuality and peer relationship (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). Conflict and emotional disconnection within the family may result in these adolescents seeking other means of connection and validation in music cultures. Lull (1987) as quoted by Delsing et al. (2007) concluded, "young people use music to resist authority at all levels, ... and learn about things that their parents and the schools aren't telling them" (p.152). Parents and health professionals are often concerned about the influence of music on adolescents. American Academy of Paediatrics (2009) expressed paramount concern on adolescents' behaviour regarding certain music genres and their lyrics as they often contain explicit references to drugs, sex, and violence.

In summary, music engagement, be it listening or music making, provides powerful ways to help adolescents shape their social identity and opportunities to reflect on their place in the world. As could be detected from the above review, the effects of music in the lives of adolescents are so interrelated and even overlapping that it was very hard to delineate one function from the other.

3.12 Conclusion

The goal of this literature review was to make known the potential of music as a resource that contributes to adolescents' growth and education in ways that 'fit' this developmental stage. Music holds a significant role in the adolescent life, as it is influential in identity formation, fulfils their social needs, portrays personality traits through musical preferences, and reflects their emotional state. This chapter also showed that lifestyle trajectories can be influenced by music. The implications and consequences of music experiences can have far reaching effect on their social and psychological functioning.

The following chapter presents critiques and explains the qualitative methodology employed in this research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of music in the lives of adolescent learners. It is based on the premise that music is a practical resource used by listeners to enhance their cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and physiological aspects, therefore, a humanistic perspective was the foundation of my approach (Maloney, 2017). Since it commands a psychological perspective situated within social science, otherwise called, "studies of human lives" (Coles & Knowles, 2001, p.9), a qualitative methodology, which is dependent on interpretation, was deemed most appropriate. The complex and powerful nature of music experiences compelled me to choose a qualitative approach because quantitative methods seem to lack imagination (Scanlon, 2000).

4.2 Overview

This chapter seeks to discuss the rationale for choosing a qualitative methodology, the relevant research tool, and Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which is rooted in psychology and social research, and correlates with the aims of this study. The data collection and analysis will be explained, as will the recruitment process, and ethical considerations taken during the interview process. This chapter will outline the strategies I, as a qualitative researcher, adopted to ensure rigour in the process and credibility of the findings. Insights are given on the reflexivity process, researcher's positionality and how research questions gave the study shape and direction. This chapter provides a detailed description of how the data analysis was conducted in accordance with the stages of TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and shows how the themes and subthemes were extracted from the raw data.

4.3 Qualitative Approach

From the beginning, my goal was not to measure the casual relationship between the two variables of music and adolescence, through a quantitative methodology. Quantitative analytic findings and claims are done in value-free frameworks that produce sequences or statistics, but do not credit the value of the participants' experiences, insights and narratives as a "knowledge source" (Cohen et al., 2010, p.19). Qualitative research which "is a valued paradigm of inquiry" (Nowell et al., 2017, p.1), requires understanding and collecting diverse aspects and data on the relationship of different concepts. I was further convinced that a qualitative methodology fits the purpose for this study as it is a social construct within a real situation and with a relationship between the researcher and the inquiry. For this reason, I opted for a qualitative approach since it attempts, "to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002, p.3).

My choice of the methodology affirmed my concern with understanding the richness of the data from the participants' narratives, without predetermined expectations of findings, as this study did not set out to confirm a theory nor is it to prove a truth or hypothesis. According to Van Maanen (1983) qualitative methods include, "an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (p.9).

4.4 Positionality

My role in this research falls in the category described by Clough and Nutbrown (2012) as "social researcher" (p.5), whose aims are to convince readers of the significance of the participants' claims. The qualitative researcher is often regarded as the primary

instrument of data collection and analysis, by interpreting experiences and perceptions to uncovering meaning in a topical research. Ravitch and Riggan (2016) defined topical research as work that focuses on the researcher's interests. Agee (2009) posited that the creation of an effective research questions requires a reflective and interrogative process that continuously generates ideas and redefines the shape of the qualitative inquiry. Certainly, my research question and the concepts for this study ring true to the statement that qualitative research originates from questions, curiosities, or passions for a particular topic (Agee, 2009). As explained earlier, my passion for music fired my curiosity on the role of music in the lives of adolescents.

Therefore, my positionality in this work is of critical consideration (Ravitch & Riggan, 2016). The theoretical framework acquired from the literature review enthused my conceptual framework and provided me with knowledge on the topic. But the research question was inspired from my practical position as a PSCD educator exploring how to use music as a resource with adolescent learners.

Pillow (2003) acknowledged that subjectivities in research is never a simple matter but commended the importance of stating one's positionality and exercising self-reflexivity as these allow the researcher to experience great freedom to conduct qualitative studies with rigor. The research inquiry sets out to explore the role music plays in adolescent learners, by investigating how music helps adolescents discover and recognise their identity, emotional competencies, and social relationships. The main objective of this study is to gather, "new and richly textured understanding of experiences" (Sandelowski, 1995, p.183) from adolescent learners to be utilised by educators as a resource during PSCD sessions. I wanted to gain a deeper insight on how these adolescents experience music in their everyday lives. However, in accordance with a constructivist epistemology, I am aware of

the possibility that in this qualitative methodology there are different routes to acquiring

knowledge in the significant interaction between participant and researcher. Insights from

the data may also display subjective evidence accounted to my personality as a researcher

and may not be the same if obtained by another person.

4.5 Defining Thematic Analysis (TA)

I sought an academically suitable method of analysis that demonstrates the

interconnectedness between people, credits the value of individual narratives, and shows

that the participants are unique, have a self-worth and can add value to life. It was not an

easy task to choose a method for analysis due to overlaps, in part, by utilising similar

strategies, particularly the oral interview and extraction of themes. Braun and Clarke (2006)

advocated that TA provides core skills and should be viewed as the foundational technique

for qualitative analysis, because "this method can be widely used across a range of

epistemologies" (p.78). TA provided me with a personal and meaningful method to carry

out an in-depth exploration of the research questions that captures the social experiences

of adolescent learners. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), TA is ideal for addressing

varied topics that entail understanding experiences, perceptions, practices, realities and

factors underlying phenomena. Fundamentally, TA engages in identifying organising,

describing and analysing patterns in qualitative data which is usually collected through

interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Although TA is a basic, flexible and widely used tool employed in the complex phase

of data analysis, it follows a set of six detailed descriptive stages, presented in the form of

linear model, which gave me confidence and a sense of efficacy to conduct this piece of

work. Interviews yielded various perspectives on the research questions and allow the

participants to reflect and give a deeper insight of their subjective experience into a social

phenomenon. This study approached TA in an inductive way, where coding and themes development were directed by the content of the data to highlight similarities and differences. Data generated unanticipated insights, and provided "nuanced and complex interpretations of data, to rework theoretical concepts, and to make arguments" (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.121). The goal of TA is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research question. Nowell et al. (2017) accounted the advantages of using TA, especially its usefulness for summarising data that aids the researcher to "a well-structured approach to handling data, helping to produce a clear and organized final report" (p.2).

4.6 Critique of Thematic Analysis

Despite the many advantages to using TA it is important to also acknowledge the disadvantages of this method. Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that although TA is widely used and appears simple to employ, it has "no particular kudos as an analytic method' as it is poorly demarcated and claimed" (p.97). One of the pitfalls of TA is not due to the method itself but to poorly conducted analyses or inadequate research questions. Another issue in TA is that it is very easy for the researchers to limit themselves to descriptive findings rather than offer interpretative claims.

Other disadvantages highlighted were that compared to other methods such as grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology. TA lacks substantial literature which may cause, "novice researchers to feel unsure of how to conduct a rigorous study" (Nowell et al., 2017, p.2). Whilst TA is renowned for its flexibility, it can lead to inconsistency and lack of coherence when extracting themes from the gathered data (Nowell et al., 2017), therefore it needs a constant, reflective process which develops gradually and necessitates a

constant back and forward movement between stages. Further down I outlined how this study confronted these disadvantages.

4.7 Quality Criteria

Embarking on this qualitative research I was faced with the question 'Can the findings to be trusted?' The degree of trust and confidence readers have in research findings reflects the trustworthiness of any study. "Trustworthiness refers to quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of findings of qualitative research" (Cypress 2017, p.255). Although TA is known for being a relevant qualitative research method, Nowell el al. (2007) explained how it does not provide enough guidance and information on how to plan and conduct a trustworthy analysis. Qualitative research without rigor, is worthless, useless, and fictitious, therefore, since this research generated knowledge grounded in human experiences, I was mindful of the importance of understanding the criteria of trustworthiness in my qualitative inquiry.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that it is an ignorant perception to suggest that "naturalistic inquiry is so much easier and less rigorous than conventional inquiry" (p.288). Although Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted that rigor is not a hallmark of naturalistic (qualitative) enquiry, they explained that the basis of trustworthiness in any research is for the researchers to persuade their readers and themselves that their findings and conclusions are worth paying attention to and worthy of consideration. Cypress (2017) raised the issue of "the persistent concern with achieving rigour in qualitative research" (p.253). In contrast to quantitative researchers, who apply rigorous statistical and quantification procedures to establish validity and reliability of research findings (Noble & Smith, 2015)**,** qualitative research involves using relatively unstructured and raw data, and it is prone to subjectivity, where data is shaped by personal characteristics of the researcher.

To avoid "being guilty" of conducting merely "subjective observations" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.289), I sought to incorporate strategies to enhance the trustworthiness during the research design and implementation of this qualitative study.

Reliability and validity are two overarching constructs which any researcher, whether qualitative or quantitative, should be concerned about while designing a study, analysing results and judging the study's quality (Cypress, 2017). Noble and Smith (2015) opined that achieving rigour in qualitative research can be a challenge, due to lack of standards by which such research ought to be judged. Reliability is a scientific measurement of the replicability of the process and the stability of results using objective methods to establish the truth of the findings (Cypress, 2017), however the process of reliability can be problematic and misleading given, "that human behaviours and interactions are never static or the same" (p 256).

Validity can be defined as the appropriateness of the tools, processes, and the precision in which the findings accurately reflect the data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Cypress (2017) established that validity, with its roots in positivist tradition, is controversial and highly debateable in qualitative research, as the universal laws that governs its, "empirical conceptions are evidence, objectivity, truth, actuality, deduction, reason, fact, and mathematical data" (p.256). In fact, Korstjens and Moser (2017) considered "quality criteria used in quantitative research, e.g. validity, generalisability, reliability, and objectivity, are not suitable to judge the quality of qualitative research" (p.121).

To safeguard this study's 'soundness' (Noble & Smith, 2015), I addressed the issues of rigour by incorporating strategies for reliability and validity at the onset and during the whole process (Cypress, 2017), rather than proclaimed only at the end of the inquiry. These strategies were minded while designing a study, considering the paradigm assumption,

choosing a small purposeful sample of participants relevant to the study using inductive analysis techniques as TA (Cypress, 2017).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) redefined the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability into a concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell el al., 2007). Noble and Smith (2015) adopted a trustworthiness criterion from the original and widely accepted quality criteria posed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), to show how a trustworthy TA can be conducted. This study subscribed to the criterion by Korstjens & Moser (2017) as a form of quality check and to enhance trustworthiness of its qualitative findings.

Credibility, equated with validity in quantitative research, and is concerned with the aspect of truth-value. Credibility establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). I had considered using the strategy of member check by asking one of the participants to provide feedback on the transcribed data, themes, interpretations, and conclusions, but due to unforeseen constraints this was not possible. This strategy would have strengthened the data, especially because the participants would have provided a different pair of eyes at the data. The exercise of external checking was carried out by an experienced qualitative researcher and tutor of this study. From the initial concept of the study design, I addressed credibility issue of biases and subjectivity, by keeping a reflective journal.

Transferability considers applicability of qualitative findings in other contexts, settings or participants, and how the researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by another researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). To enable the readers to assess transferability of my findings to their own setting, I provided comprehensive descriptions of

the participants and the whole process; sample size and recruitment, demographic and socio-economic characteristics, inclusion and exclusion criteria, interview procedure, any changes in interview questions based on the iterative research process, and excerpts from the interview guide.

Dependability includes the aspect of consistency and stability of findings over time ensured by keeping an audit trail that provides notes on decisions made during the research process, reflective thoughts, sampling, findings, and information about the data management (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). I made sure that the analysis process outlined in TA is in line with a qualitative design and by providing detailed information about the recruitment, ethical considerations, and data collection process.

Confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality regarding whether the findings could be confirmed by other researchers. Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are derived from the collected data not creations of the inquirer's imagination and biases (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). To attain confirmability, I recorded in a transparent way all the research steps taken from the start to finish of a research project.

Reflexivity considered by authors (Nowell el al., 2007; Cypress, 2017, Korstjens & Moser, 2017) an important quality criterion and integral part of ensuring transparency of qualitative research, will be discussed next.

4.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is used in qualitative research to legitimise, validate, and question research practices and representations (Pillow, 2003). Reflexivity, as a transparency strategy, identifies the experiences, motivations, perceptions, and opinions which either inspire the research process or taint the findings and conclusions (Pillow, 2003).

Transparency was achieved accounting the data collection process and following the guidelines for extracting codes and themes whilst coherence was accomplished by incorporating the research aims and questions in the data collection.

Qualitative studies require the researcher to actively engage in critical self-reflection about their potential biases and predispositions (Cypress, 2017). Although my musical experiences and knowledge stayed with me, I had to put aside my own strongly held preconceptions, and opinions, to truly listen to the participants' voices, stories, and experiences. I acknowledged the importance of being self-aware and reflexive about my role in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting the data. The interviews were supplemented with reflexive notes on my subjective responses to the setting and relationship that developed with the participants and were used while transcribing the verbatim data and analysis. I could not remain true to the trustworthiness obligations for this qualitative inquiry without acknowledging my subjectivity to determine the meanings behind what I was hearing.

Reflexivity is commonly facilitated by keeping reflective journal, where the researcher examines, "personal assumptions and goals" and clarifies "individual belief systems and subjectivities" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.122). A reflexive journal proved valuable during the whole duration of this study, especially in the analysis stage as it helped me "gain a deeper analytic insight into the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.122). Entries in the journal reflected my own values, perspectives, methodological decisions, and assumptions about the topic, together with how my biases, opinions and life experiences shaped how I interpreted the data. The journal enacted as an audit trail as it provided an account of all research decisions and activities throughout the study (Appendix Q).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), audit trails are principle criteria for establishing the 'confirmability' of qualitative findings.

Neubauer et al. (2019) believed that the descriptive and interpretive approach of TA employed in this inquiry, fits with, "Husserl's transcendental phenomenology" (p.92). Husserl's concept is the process where the researcher sets aside or 'bracket' off previous understandings, past knowledge, and assumptions about the phenomenon of interest (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Bracketing was conducted to separate the researcher's subjectivities and biases from the essences of the participants experiences to achieve an effective interpretation that is fair and free from prejudices. In my interpretive role, it was imperative to understand what preconceptions I brought to the analysis and to 'bracket' prior experience in order to prevent influencing the interpretation. Furthermore, I made my preconceptions explicit in my reflexive journal which acted as a sounding board during the process of analysis.

4.9 Recruitment of the Participants

A purposeful sampling strategy was adopted to recruit the participants four female and four male learners aged between 12 and 14 years. Two Maltese Church secondary schools were the gatekeepers. It was important to ascertain gender balance in the sample as the literature reviewed indicated that different gender perspectives can affect the data. Following the acceptance of my research ethics proposal by Faculty of Research Ethics Committee (FREC) (Appendix A), which included preliminary acceptance to disseminate, I obtained permission from the Secretariat of Catholic School (Appendix C) to contact the respective Heads of Schools for their permission to carry out my research in their school (Appendix D). Since this study's background is PSCD, I opted to ask the PSCD educators from each school to confirm their willingness to act as the 'gatekeeper' for the recruitment

process of the eight participants (Appendix E). In view of my past acquaintance with both church schools, the sample can be considered as an opportunistic sample.

I delegated the task of identifying potential participants to the gatekeepers as it was easier for them to select individuals. Although the inclusion criteria did not require the participants to be actively engaged with music, the gatekeepers deemed it best to enrol learners that were especially knowledgeable about and experienced with my inquiry. Braun and Clarke (2006) reminded that there are no specific requirements in the number of samples in TA but some degree of homogeneity in sampling is helpful in smaller studies. The eight participants are homogeneous, in that they are adolescents.

The participants' age necessitated a consent from the parents and an assent from the learners. Following the gatekeepers' acceptance, the information letters (Appendix F/G) together with the parental/guardian consent forms (Appendix J/K), and student information letter (Appendix H/I) and assent forms (Appendix L/M), were distributed. The assent form stated that the participants had understood all the requirements of the study and wished to participate. The information letter prepared for learners and parents described the purpose of my study, data collection process and the researcher's personal contact details in case they would require further information. The information letter highlighted anonymity issues outlined accessibility and ownership of interviews transcripts and who will listen to the recordings. A time limit of 15 days was given before I personally collected the signed consent and assent forms from the respective schools.

Before the interviews, I scheduled a meeting with the chosen participants for an informal meeting to introduce and acquaint myself and outlined the purpose and goals of my study. The interview dates were scheduled at a time and location convenient for the Heads of schools and the participants. A brief socio-demographic description of each

participant in the diagram below provides information in table 4.1. To protect the

participants' identity, a pseudonym name was given to preserve anonymity.

Although no inducement was offered, the participants expressed benefitting from the

opportunity to be self-aware of the role of music in their lives.

Table 4.1

Socio-Demographic Description of Participants

Boys' Secondary School	
John	John is 13 years old and plays the violin. He likes listening to Baroque and Classical music.
Paul	Paul is 13 years old. He plays the electric guitar and prefers to listen to Rock music. When he is in a happy mood, he likes to listen to Elton John.
Gabriel	Gabriel is 14 years old and plays the drums. He likes to listen to Classical music as it calms him down, and Rock music since drums is the main instrument in this style of music.
Julian	Julian is 14 years old and plays the piano. Julian is on the autism spectrum and likes to listen to Jazz and Classical music.

Girls' Secondary School	
Rebecca	Rebecca is 12 years old. She plays the guitar and her favourite type of music is Low-Frequency. Her favourite guitar player is Ed Sheeran and likes to listen to Billie Eilish.
Caroline	Caroline is 14 years old and plays the piano, guitar and violin. She likes to listen to Classical music because she can relate with the emotions that are conveyed through the music.
Eva	Eve is 13 years old. She plays the piano and enjoys listening to Modern pop and Classical music. Her favourite pop singer is Justin Bieber and Beethoven is her favourite Classical composer.
Julia	Julia is 15 years old and plays the guitar. Her favourite music is pop-rock and britpop. She likes to play Spanish music when she's in a good mood.

4.10 Ethical Consideration

Ethics require researchers to protect the dignity of their subjects and take the responsibility of publishing information that is related to their research (Nutbrown & Clough, 2012). I made sure to maintain an ethical standard such as written consent, confidentiality, anonymity, potential vulnerability, and sensitivity, to ensure a safe environment for the researcher and the participants. Ethical clearance was provided by the FREC of the University of Malta (Appendix A). As instructed by FREC, participants under the age of eighteen years are considered socially vulnerable and could be persuaded to participate in studies which they are not comfortable with or are uninformed about.

To maintain the ethical principles of respect and anonymity, it was clearly stated that they have the right to withdraw at any time during the interview and any request for the interview to be immediately and permanently destroyed will be respected. All audio-recorded data was securely stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher and physical data was destroyed once the study is completed. As Cole and Knowles (2001) discussed, qualitative research that involves participants talking and reflecting about their experiences, can result in the possibility of reliving painful experiences touched upon during conversations. In the event of distress, the interview would be stopped, the audio recording would be turned off, and no further questions will be asked.

Although it was not anticipated that the interview would evoke negative emotions or discuss sensitive topics, emotional support in the form of a short debriefing session will be offered to end on a positive note. In such an event, participants will be referred to a list of support services (Appendix P).

4.11 Data Collection

Data was collected through one-to-one audio-recorded semi-structured interviews. Before scheduling the interviews, I discussed the time and location for the interview with the Head of Schools and participants, to make sure that they would not miss out on any lessons. The interviews took place in free lessons in unused classrooms. A list of 15 open-ended and broad general questions (Appendix N/O) was prepared in English and Maltese to encourage the participants to share their insights.

On Cohen et al. (2010) suggestions, I enticed the participants to be more analytic and evaluative in their answers to afford them the opportunity to use their own words and talk about what really matters to them, and on insights not addressed by the interview questions. Probing questions like 'Tell me what happened next?', 'What was your reaction?' and 'How did that make you feel?' helped to clarify and elaborate on the topic. Through this, the participants were able to express their feelings more effectively regarding their relationship with music. Brief field notes summarising my personal feelings that emerged during the conversation were made immediately after each interview and developed in the reflexive journal.

All interviews, lasting approximately 45 minutes, were audio recorded in the participant's choice of language and verbatim data were immediately transcribed in English. However, verbatim extracts in Maltese had to be included in the findings.

4.12 Data Analysis

The thematic analysis of the transcripts enabled the effective classification of the participants' responses. The research questions were realist in nature as I was interested in the adolescents' views and accounts of the role of music in their lives. Braun and Clarke (2006) claimed that, "a worst example of thematic analysis" (p.85) is when researchers

extract themes deductively, a practice based on the interview questions, as opposed to the extraction and identification of emergent themes from the narratives; an inductive process driven by the data itself (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The realist nature of the study necessitated me to use theoretical thematic analysis or top-down and also a bottom-up or inductive one.

4.13 The Stages of Analysis

The analysis of the raw data gathered from the interviews largely followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) flexible approach proposed, namely a clear sequence in the analysis procedure to enable me to focus on the interpretation more than on the description. Although the six stages of analysis in the TA method are sequential, they are not rigid and they were not adhered to so rigidly (Nowell et al., 2017). The analysis of raw data in TA is described as, "a recursive process" (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.121), that "involved a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that are analysed, and the analysis for the data that is being produced" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.86).

Firstly, it was beneficial to read and reread the interview transcript to highlight important ideas whilst listening to the audio recording if necessary. This helped me "immerse in the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87), while noting down initial ideas from the readings. Braun and Clarke (2006) advised that this phase provides, "the bedrock for the rest of the analysis" (p.87). Secondly, line by line coding was conducted to generate the initial codes and relevant data extracts by "organising the data into meaningful groups" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 87). Coding allowed me to make connections between different parts of the data, reduce, simplify, and focus on its specific characteristics. Table 4.2 gives an example of the initial codes applied to a segment of the raw data.

Table 4.2

A Systematic Outline of the List of the Themes

Data extract	Initial codes
Paul: I play at home. I want to go and watch my favourite band play, they're a modern alternative rock called Muse. I've played in the school band as well. I haven't played outside of the school band. I play in front of my friends and family. I had gone to Rockestra last year, it was a really nice experience with the sound and the audience dancing and singing along. I want to perform with Rockestra someday to feel the energy from the stage. It's nice to bring classical and rock together. I like classical as well, but my favourite is rock.	Self- Reflection Motivation Embodied Experience Creativity Preferences

At this point I also extracted data that captured codes that addressed specific research questions rendering this phase as more deductive than an inductive one. Few codes combined to form an initial overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.89), while most codes fitted as sub-themes, with some codes that did not fall under themes, resulting in new themes being created. I did this coding both by hand and on computer, colour-coding through hardcopies of the transcripts.

The next stage involved organising the data in a systematic and meaningful way by refocusing the preliminary themes and making sure that broad descriptive themes correlate with the coded extracts. If specific themes were not well supported with enough concrete data, these were ultimately shifted to different themes. A theme is a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data but there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Most codes were associated with one

broad theme, although there was much overlapping, with some associated with more than one theme, and others not fitting in any.

During the fourth stage I reviewed and refined the themes by checking if they worked in relation to the codes extracted in the first stage, and code grouping in the second stage to generate a visual thematic 'map' of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.89). The codes started telling a convincing and compelling story about the data and began to define the nature of each individual theme (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.121). The final thematic map required a reviewing and refining of coding exercises repeated a number of times (going backwards and forwards in the stages), until I elicited a satisfactory map with themes and subthemes that fitted the data set and the participants' voices. Figure 4.1 is a final thematic map illustrating the relationships between themes and sub-themes. This analytic task established four overarching themes that encapsulated adolescents' perspectives.

Figure 4.1

Thematic Map

The fifth stage required the researcher to name the themes and write a detailed analysis of each in relation to overall story. The aim of this stage was to identify the "essence" in each theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92). It was essential to see how the themes related to each other and how the subthemes interacted with inevitable overlapping. Appendix R presents these themes with supporting quotes.

The sixth and final stage of the analysis involved the presentation of themes and findings. It entailed rigorous refining of the four themes that emerged to provide a true interpretation with vivid examples capturing the essence from participants' statements.

4.14 Conclusion

The data collected from the interviews highlighted the significance and relevance of music in the adolescents' lives. Similar to the positive influence and its pervasiveness in my adolescence, music permeates every aspect of the participant's lives to help them achieve goals and accompany them in everyday activities. I pondered on what would replace music's functions in the adolescents' lives if this medium did not exist. I was intrigued by the self-awareness and eloquence exhibited by these participants regarding their emotional, social and psychological development through music. Although the participants did not receive any incentives, they expressed gratitude for the opportunity to voice their experiences regarding their passion and positive attitudes for music. I was amazed at how music had the capability to open a window into these adolescents' diverse aspirations and ambitions.

This chapter explained why TA was deemed to be the most appropriate choice for the qualitative research question. I reflected on my positionality and rendered my study valid and trustworthy by employing reflexivity throughout. The principles of the chosen methodology, the strategies for ensuring rigour and the stages of the data analysis were

described in detail. The following chapter presents the findings from the analysis supported

by extract from the participants' own experiences.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give an in-depth presentation and interpretation of the adolescents' experiences with music, backed up with verbatim quotations from the participants' interviews. The four themes that emerged from the data analysis are presented in Table 5.1.

5.2 Findings

The qualitative methodology utilising TA focused on the researcher's explicit role in the understanding, and interpretation of data from the participants' responses. Illustrative verbatim extracts from the participants are weaved into each theme to support my analytic and interpretative account and to produce "a coherent and persuasive story" (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p.121). The four themes represented a collective view and are intended to recreate a version of reality of the participants' experiences. The themes and sub-themes will be interpreted separately, however there is a notable overlap amongst the themes. The extracts allow the reader to evaluate the researcher's interpretation and demonstrate that what the participants said has been preserved with integrity as far as possible. Extracts are labelled with the participant's pseudonym name (e.g., Julia, Caroline, Gabriel) to safeguard the participants' anonymity.

Table 5.1

The List of Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Sub-Themes
Music as a necessity in life	Music is everywhere Self-Actualisation Self-Reflection Aesthetics and creativity Embodied musical experience
Music as an emotion-regulatory strategy	Music enhances positive moods Calming and relaxing medium Distraction from negative feelings Emotional discharge Relieves boredom and loneliness Music as a stimulating and energising agent Music brings nostalgic memories
Music as a social utility	Parent musical relationships Selection of friendships/bonding Musical preferences and peer conformity Group cohesion/ distancing Enhancement of social and life skills
Music as a means for self-exploration and empowerment	Personality and musical preferences Self-esteem and satisfaction. 'Music is part of who I am'- self-identity

5.3 Music as a Necessity in Life

This theme showed the ubiquity of music in the lives of adolescents and how it is a consistent feature in all their activities. The participants' engagement with music was expressed as a necessity on various levels - appreciation, training, performance and listening.

5.3.1 Music is Everywhere

It is evident that music is present in every minute of the participants' everyday lives. They listen to it in a solitary manner and in the company of others. Music is used to fill in

time, to help the individuals concentrate and as a conversation starter. The adolescents in this study elaborated on how the presence of music is so important to them:

> I listen to music most of my days, when I am eating, scrolling through my phone. If there is silence, I will add music. I enjoy listening to music when I am alone in my room and also in company of my friends. On the bus, in the car, everywhere. (Julia

> I like listening to music when I am in the car. When I play the PS4 I listen to music in the background. (Paul)

> *Anke meta mmur mixja fil-kampanja, bilfors irrid jkolli l-mużika. (*Even when I'm on a hike in the countryside, I need to listen to music.) (Gabriel)

As explained by the interviewees, music is not solely a companion but a resource to help them study or provide an outlet for relaxation during demanding study periods:

> Sometimes I leave music in the background when I am doing my homework. Music gives me a pleasant atmosphere when doing boring homework. Music helps me remember more information when I am studying. (Julian)

> Music helps me focus and concentrate during homework and study. (Paul)

Furthermore, the participants expressed a certain dependence on music to achieve activities:

> When studying I cannot listen to music with lyrics, so I put on classical music. If I am doing my homework, I listen to the pop music with lyrics. For studying, I listen to classical with no lyrics as I do not manage to focus otherwise. (Julia)

5.3.2 A Concept of Self-Actualisation

Most participants explained what an integral part music is in their life and the drive it exerts to achieve everyday personal goals. Music seemed to give participants a sense of self-actualisation by making them realise and fulfil their talents and potentials:

*Ma nafx ngħix mingħajr mużika. Ma nkunx jien jekk ma niktibx jew nisma' l-mużika. (*I cannot imagine my life without music. I cannot function without making or listening to music.) (Eva)

I consider music is very important in my life, it helps me concentrate on what is going on around me. Music motivates me to dream and to continue to develop my talents. (Julian)

I always wanted to learn how to play the violin and I was very excited to start attending School of Music. I would like to learn how to play another musical instrument and my ambition is to have a career as a musician. My father encouraged me to start playing the violin and still gives me his full support because he believes that through music, I can achieve a lot in the future. (John)

5.3.3 Self-Reflections through Music

Participants' reflection on their relationship with music seemed to convey their thoughts on themselves, their social environment and on situational contexts:

I do not know if music helps me understand myself more, but sometimes I experience a scenario, or something happens and all of the sudden the lyrics of a song makes sense and I relate with the song. (Julia)

I remember being in a group of ten people, one of my friends started playing sad music, it was rap and recounting deep stories by the artist. Really quickly the group became sad, so we started opening more with each other. Even the tone of the music, we started sharing deeper life stories with each other. (Julia)

Dan l-aħħar qed inħoss li nista' nirrelata l-mużika li nisma' ma kif inkun qed inħossni dak il-ħin. Ninduna li l-mużika verament tgħinni nirrifletti u nifhem iżjed x'qed inħoss u r-raġuni għala qed inħossni hekk. Lately I am realising that I relate to songs and music according to my emotional state. (The music helps me reflect and understand what I am feeling at that moment and why.)(Gabriel)

I listen to Billie Eilish because she sings about deep personal stuff. This music makes me reflect more about myself and how I fit in what is going on around me. (Rebecca)

Caroline reflected deeply on the emotional messages elicited in her type of music. She conveyed an intelligent argument on music's effects on the listeners:

I think that classical music focuses on the structure and it shows exactly what the composer wanted to achieve and where he wanted to take the music and what emotions he wanted to produce from the music. Opera for example, what does the singer want to convey? What emotions does he want to show to the people? when there is a descriptive piece, you have to put an image to your mind so there are so much thought and depth, and so much you can think about and analyse. (Caroline)

5.3.4 Aesthetics and Creativity

Music engagement enhances creativity, particularly in music-making/improvisation and active participation in activities involving band/orchestra. Playing a musical instrument provides a means of artistic self-expression:

Music is my life and I spent many hours engaging with it by listening, improvising,

and playing the violin. (John)

I have been in a youth orchestra for a year and half now and it has been the best

decision ever made. It is an incredible experience. I am devoted to music and want a

career in music. (Caroline)

The participants expressed their views on the aesthetic aspect of music and what

constituted artistical compositions, creative improvisations, and beauty in musical pieces.

Appreciation for beautiful and famous pieces of music was shared. Participants evidenced a

mature appreciation and knowledge of what makes good music and the technicalities of

different types of music:

My music taste is a wide range of music that I listen to, from heavy metal to indie to

pop, completely different things. It has always been random, but normally depends

on if the song is catchy or if I like the flow of the musicality. I will get into the lyrics

and that is how I really chose songs. (Julia)

I spend many hours trying to master a piece of famous music and usually train with

recordings. I like elaborate classical music like Beethoven. Pop music is an ordinary

and cheap genre. It does not have any technicalities like classical genres. (Julian)

5.3.5 Embodied Music Experience

Musical engagement which includes taking part in active music performance,

listening to favourite music within a group or attending a concert, provides an embodied

experience that inspires and stimulates the adolescents greatly:

I used to play in the school orchestra for Christmas and Easter concerts, but lately I

play with the youth orchestra. It is such a wonderful experience to be part of an

orchestra and to hear all the other instruments playing together. When I play in front

of a big audience, I feel excited and proud. (John)

M'hemm xejn aħjar milli nara l-'band' favorita tiegħi ddoqq ġo kunċert, però miniex

tajjeb biex noqgħod fil-folla. Allura, minħabba f'hekk l-aħjar ħaġa hija li nara l-

kunċert fuq it-televixin, allavolja l-esperjenza ma tkunx l-istess meta tkun qed taraha

'live'. (There is nothing better than watching my favourite band play in a concert, but

I am not very keen on being in the crowds. So, I must content myself to watch them

on TV, although the experience is definitely not the same.) (Gabriel)

I play at home but would like to go and watch my favourite band play in a concert,

they are modern alternative rock called Muse. I went to Rockestra concert last year

and it was a really nice experience. I want to perform with Rockestra. It is nice to

bring classical and rock together. (Paul)

I strongly believe that learning how to play musical instruments is a rewarding

hobby. (Caroline)

5.4 Music-Related Emotion-Regulatory Strategies

The second theme presents participants' recollections of how they sought music as

an emotional self-regulation and how they maintained personal moods as adolescents. This

theme incorporates seven subthemes addressing how music seemed to fulfil the

participants' emotional needs. They were very eloquent in distinguishing their moods and

in matching their feelings, either to what the artists wanted to convey in the piece of music

or to the lyrics.

5.4.1 Enhances Positive Moods

Participants explained that primarily music helps maintain a happy mood for pleasure and enjoyment. Positive moods were achieved and enhanced by listening to music. Active engagement with music like playing an instrument, was regarded a fulfilling past time and created a pleasurable atmosphere. Music chosen for emotional refuge seemed to match the mood:

The music I listen to reflects my mood, so if I am happy it is going to be happy. It is generally indie, slow. (Julia)

*Meta nkun ferħana, inħobb nisma' l-mużika Pop għax għandha ħafna 'beats' u tgħaġġel, bħal ta' Justin Bieber. Hemm ukoll Owen Luellen għax għandu 'beats' iżjed kalmi u nħossni li nista' nikkalma mal-mużika tiegħu. (*When I am happy, I listen to pop music as it is more upbeat and fast usually, I listen to Justin Bieber. I also like Owen Luellen with slow beat music, which calms me down immediately.) (Eva)

It seems that the individual's emotional state dictates which type of music the participant listens to:

*Nirrelata d-diski li nkun qed nisma' mal-emozzjonijiet li nkun għaddej minnhom. Meta nkun irrabjat, nagħżel mużika rrabjata u li tgħajjat. B'din il-mużika nħoss li nista' nesprimi ruħi meta nħossni hekk u nifhem għala jien irrabjat. Meta nkun f'burdata tajba nisma' mużika kalma. (*My choice of music is mostly according to my emotional state. When I am angry, I listen to angry, loud music as if to express myself. When I am in a good mood I listen to soft music.) (Gabriel)

5.4.2 Calming and Relaxing Medium

Participants agreed that music provides a state of relaxation and calms the participants when they felt stressed, tired, or to quiet down before going to bed:

I end up listening to music without lyrics. I used to have bad insomnia where I could

not sleep or keep waking up during the night. (Julia)

*Nisma' mużika kalma qabel ma norqod ħalli nkun nista norqod. (*Before I go to bed, I

listen to calm music, so I will be able to sleep.) (Eva)

Meta nipprattika l-instrument tiegħi, inħossni verament irrilassat u l-burdata taqleb

għall-aħjar. Il-mużika qiegħda hemm faċilment disponibbli biex tbiddili l-burdata

tiegħi. (I relax when I practice my musical instrument and my mood always changes

for the better. Music is so readily available for any mood.) (Gabriel)

When I'm in a happy mood, I listen to Elton John. It reduces my stress levels

and relaxes me. (Paul)

Music helps me calm down and think rationally when things around me are chaotic.

(Caroline)

Julia explained that music is best experienced without the stress of exams in music:

I do not sit for any musical exams. Playing the guitar makes it stress free. It is just me

wanting to do it and not having someone pressurizing me study only for the music

exams. So, I play it when I do not have anything to do or when I am stressed, guitar is

the best way to feel relax. Music gives me freedom of my expressions. (Julia)

5.4.3 Distraction from Negative Feelings

Through music, the participants were able to divert and distract themselves from

negative thoughts and feelings. They tend to detach from worries by listening to music or

playing an instrument. Participants do not use music to reinforce sadness but to distract

them from the sad mood:

*Hemm ċertu diski li nismagħhom meta jkolli dwejjaq. Inħoss li l-mużika timlieni bil-kuraġġ li nibqa' għaddejja b'ħajti. Il-mużika tgħinni ninsa l-inkwiet tal-ħajja u nibqa' ngħix ħajja pożittiva. (*There are specific songs that I listen to in sad times. They instil in me courage to keep going strong. Music helps me to forget some of my worries and to live a positive life.) (Eva)

When I am sad, I listen to happy music and it makes me feel better. Music distracts me from family worries, from school exams worries and from squabbles I have with my friends. (Julian)

5.4.4 Emotional Discharge

The use of music as an emotional discharge for releasing and venting anger was regarded as a common occurrence among the participants. Listening to music also provided strong sensations and powerful emotional experiences:

*Meta nkun qed nipprattika, nesprimi r-rabja bil-mużika. Nagħżel mużika rrabjata meta nkun qed inħossni rrabjat. Bil-mużika nista' nifhem iżjed l-emozzjonijiet ta' persuni oħra u hija normali li nies oħrajn iħossu l-emozzjoni ta' rabja. Il-mużika tnaqqasli l-istress u żżommni kalm kif ukoll tgħinni nesprimi l-emozzjonijiet iżjed aħjar. (*When I practice, I express my anger in music. I tend to choose angry music to match my state of anger. Music makes me understand that other people have same feelings as myself and that feeling angry is something other people experience too. Music destresses me and keeps me calm. It helps me to give off steam and gives me courage to express my emotions.) (Gabriel)

When I get angry, I tend to start not thinking clearly. So, if I put some music on, I start rationalising things a bit more and put everything into perspective. (Caroline)

Music afforded the participants with an empathetic understanding of their emotional experiences. The lyrics of popular songs and music in general helped participants realise that they experienced emotions typical to other adolescents:

> *Il-mużika għenitni biex ngħaddi minn esperjenzi koroh, pereżempju meta sirna nafu li n-nannu għandu kanċer. Il-kliem fid-diski li kont nisma' għinuni naċċetta li n-nannu marid u li b'xi mod jew ieħor ħa jeqleb għall-aħjar. Nemmen li l-kliem fid-diski jirriflettu eżatt dak li nkun qed inħoss f'sitwazzjonijiet bħal dawn. (*Music helped me get through all the difficult experiences I have encountered, such as when finding out that my grandfather has cancer. Lyrics from a song helped me deal with my grandfather's illness and helped me believe he will get better. Some lyrics say exactly what I need to hear at the specific time I need to hear them.) (Eva)

John talks on how he distinguishes his emotions, process them and matches music to them:

> When I am sad, I listen to happy and exciting songs. It helps me understand why I am feeling sad or stressed. It reduces my stress levels and helps me concentrate on what I am doing. I feel stronger and capable to manage my feelings. The music I listen to tells me that other young people go through the same feelings that I feel, and this helps me not to despair or trouble myself too much. (John)

5.4.5 Relieves Boredom and Loneliness

Music also provided solace, like an accompanying friend in times of loneliness, and relieved boredom in participants' lives. Through music the participants found meaning for their loneliness. This connects to subtheme 5.5.1. as it provides reasons why music is so important for these adolescents:

> If there is silence which I really hate, I add music. (Julia)

*Kieku ma kinitx il-mużika, żgur inħossni waħdi u mdejjaq u 'depressed'. (*If it were not for music, I would feel alone, sad and depressed. Sometimes I am overwhelmed with not knowing what will happen in the particular situation or feel that no one understands why I am bored.) (Eva)

Music helps me understand why I am stressed and lonely. (John)

If I do not have music in my life, I would not know what to do. I will probably be bored or sad without it. Music is very important to me. (Rebecca)

5.4.6 Nostalgic Memories

A typical feature of emotional reactions relates to memories associated with a musical interaction in the past. Nostalgic memories mostly of happiness with special people and situations provided a calming and comforting atmosphere of safety and acceptance:

There are certain songs which I relate to memories that I had, a song that I remember listening with all my friends, they are fun moments for me. So, it reminds me of happy moments. (Julia)

*Hemm diska partikolari li tfakkarni f'meta l-familja tiegħi aċċettajna li n-nannu huwa marid. Kull meta nisma' din il-mużika, tfakkarni li s-sapport tal-familja tiegħi dejjem ħa tkun hemm u kemm hu importanti għalija. (*One particular song always reminds me of the time my family was made aware and accepted my grandfather's illness. This song comforts me because I know that my family's support will always be there.) (Eva)

5.4.7 Energising Agent

Music was also referred to as an energising agent because it helped uplift moods and raise energy levels for a physical activity, listening to energetic and fast music, either before or during activities such as sports and partying:

The time of the day affects the type of music I play. It depends on the time; I do not usually play an upbeat song during the night. During the day especially in the morning I need to some fast music to get me going. (Julia)

Before a water polo match, I play hype music to energise me. (Paul)

I listen to music whilst i clean my room or exercising. (Caroline)

5.5 Social Utility

This theme addresses how music contributes to and impacts social development. The social context is not only a crucial aspect of the adolescents' development but also an influential factor in adolescents' musical behaviour at interpersonal and intergroup levels.

5.5.1 Parent Musical Relationship

The adolescents reported different tastes in music from their parents. Music was hailed as a facilitator for positive parent-adolescent relationship and family interaction. Maintaining successful relationships with parents through music preferences appeared to be without too much of controversy or conflict:

My parents do not agree on the same music styles. We all have different style, I like indie, my dad likes pop, my mum likes Italian music and my brother likes techno music. In the car, we struggle a bit. There is a family playlist on Spotify and we

usually resort to that which has all different songs. Sometimes one of us who skips

some of the songs. (Julia)

Meta nkunu d-dar, ninduna li hemm differenza fl-istil ta' mużika li nisimgħu bejnitna.

Il-mamà u l-papà jisimgħu iżjed mużika kalma, bħal Klassika u Romantika. Allura,

naħseb ikun hemm xi tip ta' kunflitt meta jien u oħti nkunu rridu nisimgħu l-mużika

*Moderna jew Pop. (*At home there is always some differences with regards to musical

tastes. Mum and dad like calm music, like romantic and classical which causes some

conflict especially when my sister and I want to listen to modern and pop music.)

(Eva)

For John, music proves to be a common topic for family conversation during quality time at

home:

My favourite is Baroque, same as most of my family, although my mother often

listens to pop music which I am not much of a fan. Music helps us communicate as

a family and I participate in our discussions about music during mealtimes at

home. (John)

Music engagement at home provided common grounds for participants and their parents to

share quality time together. Music seemed to be a unifying agent in the family and a

conversation initiator:

My father listens to pop and rock and since I have a very spread-out style of music, I

do not mind listening to it with him. (Julia)

Togħġobni mużika Klassika u Rock. L-iżjed li nisma' hi l-mużika Klassika hi għax l-istil

*favurit tal-ġenituri tiegħi. (*I like classical and rock and frequently listen to classical

with my parents as it is their favourite too.) (Gabriel)

I like listening to rock. My family basically all like rock, it is not heavy metal rock. It is

more like Queen, Pink Floyd. These are some of my favourite bands. So, we have

that in common. (Paul)

5.5.2 Selection of Friends

Participants make use of music to select and forge friendships within their social

network. Some extracts hint that music is a common factor that brings adolescents together

and bonds them. It became evident that music preferences and friendships are greatly

intertwined:

Inħossa vera diffiċli biex nagħmel ħbieb ġodda, però l-mużika ttini l-kunfidenza biex

*niltaqa' ma' nies differenti li jħobbu l-istess tip ta' mużika bħal tiegħi. (*It is not easy

for me to make friends, but music gives me the confidence to approach people who

like the same type of music as me) (Gabriel)

Adolescents use music preferences to facilitate interpersonal relations by creating an

external impression of themselves for others, like a label to communicate their values,

attitudes, and self-views:

Music helps me find friends when we share this common interest between us. I

listen to songs together with my friend, it keeps our friendship going. Music can be

very personal and also reveals what one's thinking about what is going on around us,

so when we share it with each other it shows a deeper element in the friendship.

(Julia)

Bil-mużika nħossni żjed soċjevoli. Inħossni iżjed komda ma' nies li jħobbu l-istess stil

ta' mużika bħal tiegħi. Ħafna mill-ħbieb tiegħi jħobbu mużika Romantika u Klassika u

*naqblu li 'these types of music never get old'. (*I believe that through music I became

a more sociable person. I am able to relate better with those who like the same music as I do. Most of my friends like romantic and classical music and we agree that this type of music never gets old.) (Eva)

Għandi grupp ta' ħbieb u rnexxielna niffurmaw 'band' żgħira. Daqqejna flimkien f'kunċerti u allavolja qabel ma konniex nafu lil xulxin, bil-mużika sirna ħbieb tal-qalb. (I have a group of friends with whom I formed a small band. We have played in concerts together and although we did not know each other before, through music we became good friends.) (Gabriel)

To make new friends, you need to have something in common. When I meet someone, who understands music and the technicality, it is a really nice experience to share that type of understanding. Music becomes an intelligent subject to share with my close friends. (Paul)

I hang out with those friends who play the violin to share this common interest between us. (John)

Music helps me understand my friends more, making it easier to connect with them. Sometimes there is nothing in common between us except music. (Caroline)

5.5.3 Musical Preferences and Peer Conformity

Participants felt they had to demonstrate the appropriateness of their own musical preferences to potential friends. They sought friendships motivated by the need for approval from others when reporting their own musical preferences:

Music is not the first thing I mention when I meet someone new. But as we get to

know each other more, I start talking about my music and that then I mention that I

play the piano. (Julian)

Reluctance to conform to their friends' preferences did not seem to preoccupy some of the

participants and reported acceptance for others' musical preferences. Gabriel and Paul were

resolved to adhere to their musical preference despite constant opposition from their peers:

Hemm mumenti meta l-mużika toħloq kunflitt bejn il-ħbieb tiegħi, speċjalment meta

jgħiduli biex nieqaf nisma' l-mużika favorita tiegħi. Ġieli jagħmlu attaposta billi

jitfgħu mużika tagħhom biex iwaqqfuni nisma' l-mużika li rrid nisma'. Nipprova

nisma' l-mużika tagħhom 'with an open mind", però nħossa "very unfair" li ma

jippruvawx jirrispettaw l-istil ta' mużika li nħobb. (Music creates a type of conflict

with my friends, especially when they ask me to stop listening to my favourite music.

They put their own music on purpose to stop me. I try to listen to their music with an

open mind. It is very unfair that they do not respect my musical taste.) (Gabriel)

I do not need to conform to someone else's music because my music is part of who I

am. My friends often tell me to stop listening to rock on the school van because they

cannot understand why I like this genre of music. They put their own style of music

on purpose to annoy me. (Paul)

The participants' own preferences were defended and regarded as personal, however some

sort of compromise on music preferences can be achieved for the sake of keeping

friendships:

I would never change my music to be accepted by friends. Music has been there for

me when friends have not. so, it is something that is very close to me, my music is

very me, very personal. If I like their music, I will listen to it, although it would not be

my favourite kind of music. (Julia)

5.5.4 Group Cohesion/Distancing

The participants seemed to sustain their personal music preferences although these

were not necessarily shared by their friends. They did not consider themselves outsiders or

inferior because they deferred from their peer group's musical preferences:

Vera nħossni komda ma' dawk in-nies li jħobbu l-istess mużika li nħobb jien. Ikollna

ħafna affarijiet interessanti fuq xiex nitkellmu. Qabel kont nibża' ngħid l-opinjonijiet u

*kif inħossni mal-oħrajn għax kont nibża' li ħa jikkritikawni jew jaħsbu ħażin fija. (*I feel

more comfortable with those who love the same music as I do. It creates very

interesting conversations between us. I used to be very scared of sharing my

opinions with others because I used to think that they would criticise me or think

less of me.) (Eva)

In my friend group, we all listen to the same music and most of the times when we

are at someone's house, we listen to the same music everyone is listening. I would

not change my music taste even if they think my kind of music, classical, is for old

people like classical music, but I would try to adapt to what they like. (Rebecca)

Participants seemed to enhance their own self-evaluations by claiming that they prefer their

style of music more and would not change it for anyone. There were instances where music

preferences created conflict and may have caused distancing rather than conformity:

I do not make friends according to the type of music I like. For example, I am not

aware of anyone at school who plays or like Baroque music like me. (Julian)

I do not think of myself as needing to be someone's friend or change myself for others. If they are going to be my friends; they must either accept my musical style or else, they do not choose to be my friends. (Paul)

If I end up changing my music style just to be accepted in their group of friends, I expect them to do the same with my music style. (John)

The participants indicated that their closest friends were like-minded people regarding musical preferences:

I like the same musical style as my close friends. We understand each other through music and feel the same emotions when listening to music together. (Julia)

I think that the friends I found through classical music are the ones that I can be myself with them. Music is most important thing to me so if my friends are not willing to accept me for that, then I do not see the point of hanging out. (Caroline)

5.5.5 Enhancement of Social and Life Skills

Musical training and successful musical performances promote social and life skills such as assertiveness, decision-making, discipline, and teamwork. For some being involved in music performances is a means of overcoming shyness and lack of confidence. Other participants use music preferences as a form of self-evaluation to make social comparisons with their peers:

*Nixtieq li jkolli opportunitajiet fejn nista' ndoqq quddiem udjenza għax żgur ħa tgħinni kif naħdem ġo tim u nkompli niżvilluppa l-kapaċitajiet tiegħi fil-mużika.(*I aspire to perform in front of audiences more often, as I am sure it will help me learn how to be in a team and to develop my musical skills further.) (Gabriel)

My mother wants me to perform in front of my family but most of the time I am too shy to. I am a bit hesitant to do that. I see myself performing in front of an audience. I do not know if I want to play with other people (e.g., orchestra). But I do want to try to experience that if I am not the only one playing. (Rebecca)

Music gives the participants an opportunity to self-evaluate their strengths and weakness, which connects to subtheme 5.8.2. of empowerment and self-awareness.

I've played in the school band as well in front of my classmates. I have not played outside of the school yet. Sometimes it is a bit daunting to imagine playing in front of hundreds of people. For now, I play in front of my friends and family often. (Paul)

Gabriel will be benefitted from being an active contributor to the outcome of a musical group, band, or orchestra as he developed a strong sense of belonging and pride:

*Meta nkun qed indoqq quddiem udjenza u ninduna li qed jieħdu gost bil-mużika, inħossni sodisfatt u kburi. (*When I perform with the band and realise that the audience are enjoying themselves, I get a lot of satisfaction and pride.) (Gabriel)

Participants reported that active involvement in music helped them develop life skills such as discipline, determination, and concentration on tasks which they transferred to academic goals:

Through music I learned how to be part of a team, be self-disciplined and also how to persevere when challenged with difficult periods in my life. Likewise, I apply the same discipline at school. (Julian)

It helped me on an academic level, it helped me become a digilent, reponsible, hardworking person. I know I will be needing these skills more as I grow older, at university and at work. (Caroline)

For Caroline, music provided an opportunity to be altruistic towards other musicians:

> As a musician in a small string group, I make sure that I help the beginners to be
> better musician. I attend to new musicians separately to help them with the bowing
> and to tune their instruments. I help the conductor as well. (Caroline)

5.6 Self-Exploration and Empowerment

The final theme depicted music as a special empowering agent in the developmental phase of adolescence. Music helps them learn about themselves and reflect on what was going in the world around them. The adolescents talked about different ways that music empowered them and how music gives them a sense of self identity.

5.6.1 'Music is Part of Who I am'- Self-Identity

Music preferences seemed to help the participants develop their identity. They did not feel the need to portray themselves as conforming to a social ideal in their musical preferences, by creating an external impression to be popular or to please friends:

> Music helps me to express myself, like all arts. It also helps me form a relationship
> with myself and get to know who I am. (Paul)

> Music has helped me shape who I am as a person. I have always been that person
> who tries my best, keeps trying and praticising for hours on end, try to organise
> myself to get as much hours as I can in my day. (Caroline)

Caroline will not pretend to like all popular music, which is considered 'cool' among adolescents, just to look 'cool' among her friends:

> The popular music, I like some of it. But if there is some music which I do not like and
> which does not sound like music to me, I am not going to pretend to like it just to
> please other people and make them think I'm cool. (Caroline)

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Caroline's perceptions of her peers' attitudes towards her conveys self-dependence and sheds a light on how people make sense of their social world:

> Some of my peers, are silly people because they think it is not cool to listen to classical music. I do not take notice of that and will not let them deter me from listening to classical music. That is who I am. I experienced a situation where my friends will not let me share my music with others as they know that I have only classical music such as Mozart. It can be annoying because they do not understand me and what music is to me. (Caroline)

5.6.2 Sense of Self-Esteem and Satisfaction

It appears that success in music performance empowers and enhances overall feelings of confidence and self-esteem and increases motivation to learn and advance further. For one participant music helped him see himself as a unique individual with great potential:

> *Eżempju meta jkun hemm nies li jkellmuni fuq il-kapaċitajiet tagħhom fl-isports, ma nkunx "disadvantaged" għax miniex tajba fl-isports. Minflok sports, jien għandi t-talent tal-mużika u nħossni kburija ħafna li naf indoqq.* (I do not feel disadvantaged when talking with people who are good in sports for example, because I know that playing the piano is an achievement that I should be proud of.) (Eva)

> *Il-mużika ttellali self-esteem għax xi drabi nħoss li mhux dejjem inkun kunfidenti fija innifsi u fil-kapaċitajiet tiegħi. Naħseb dan kollu jiġri għax jien persuna li nistħi. Nemmen li l-mużika tgħinni nuri li jien uniku u mhux bħal ħaddieħor.* (Music boosts my self-esteem as I sometimes lack self-confidence and am very shy. Music also

helps me project myself as a unique individual rather than being one of the crowds.)
(Gabriel)

Since I was very young my family encouraged me to learn how to play a musical instrument although no one else plays in my family. Music is very important in my family. They did not influence me into choosing a musical instrument. (John)

I mostly play classical music on the violin in an orchestra but encouraged my co-musician to play different styles. (John)

Caroline's confidence and motivation as a musician broadens her ambition and career horizons:

From when I started, I was devoted to music. I want to pursue music as my career, which is my goal and plan. I'm already looking at universities where I can study music. So, it is very important for me. I am mostly interested in performance and I hope to study performance in the future and hopefully will be able to form part of a national orchestra. Then maybe work as a soloist in the future. (Caroline)

5.6.3 Personality and Musical Preferences

Participants did not form their musical preferences according to any personal traits but rather to the effect that music has on them indicating that musical preferences are not fixed in early adolescence. Knowledgeable participants who have formal training in music, showed better understanding of the role of music in their lives and intentionally preferred music based on their logical explanations.

Bħalissa ffissata fuq id-diska ta' 'Justin Bieber','Yummy', għax għandha 'beat' mgħaġġel u mhux għax għandi xi ħaġa għal Justin. Hemm ukoll il-mużika ta' Owen Luellen għax jogħġobni t-tip ta' beat u wkoll tgħinni nikkalma. Inħobb nisma' l-

'playlist' ta' Beethoven minn fuq 'Youtube' għax dan huwa l-iżjed kompożitur favorit

tiegħi u nagħżel lilu u mhux Justin. Ma jogħġobniex il-'lifestyle' tiegħu. Il-mużika ta'

Beethoven "never gets old" fil-fatt ta' Bieber taf li d-diska tagħmel tliet xhur tmur

*tajjeb imbagħad tintesa. Beethoven tibqa' popolari mas-snin kollha. (*I listen to Justin

Bieber's 'Yummy' because I like the fast beat and not because I like the artist or the

lyrics. I also like Owen Luellen for the beat in his music and how it helps me be calm.

I listen to a playlist of Beethoven from YouTube as this composer is my favourite, and

I'd choose him over Justin Bieber any day. Beethoven music never gets old whereas

Bieber's music is short lived, three months max. And I do not like his lifestyle either.)

(Eva)

Lo-Fi which means low frequency music and is like pop but slower, is my favourite

music. It makes me think more on important social issues such as what is happening

around me. (Rebecca)

I personally dont believe that you should listen to one genre only, so I listen to pop

music as well. I can appreciate what the artist puts into that music. I listen to other

genres such as musicals. Whilst I study classical, I enjoy listening to a variety of

styles. (Caroline)

Caroline revealed a knowledgeable understanding of what constitutes music structure and

how this affected her musical preference:

I listen to classical music because there is so much depth in the music than the music

that is being produced today. When the composer produces a piece of music it

shows that there is so much thinking in the structure of the music. Nowadays, many

artists are different. Some of them just simply crash out the records and songs that

people might like with no sophistication in its structure. I do believe that there are

still some artists that write music from their heart, and that is why I listen to some of

their music. (Caroline)

The above themes and subthemes provided a comprehensive account of how music

affects the lives of the eight participants in this study.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the four themes that emerged from the participants'

interviews with the literature reviewed earlier, to offer an understanding of the findings.

The themes are under separate headings, but there is much overlapping during

interpretation and discussion, signifying that subthemes are interrelated and influential on

each other.

As an initial insight, it is clear that music can contribute to the understanding of

many interrelated psychosocial and emotional phenomena in adolescents.

6.2 Music as a Necessity in Life

This theme indicated how music is especially ubiquitous, and increasingly accessible

in the media-socialising and multi-tasking lives of contemporary adolescents (Miranda,

2013). The utility of music highlighted by the participants, illustrated music's potential to

enhance various aspects of their everyday lives.

The pervasiveness of music in the participants' social and personal lives agreed with

North et al.'s (2000) comments on the great extent that adolescents consume music, and

with McFerran's (2011) observation on the remarkable amount of time adolescents spend

engaging with music. John reported spending hours listening, improvising, and playing the

violin. Bosacki and O'Neill (2013) rated music as the most popular indoor leisure activity for

this group of individuals.

The perceived necessity of music to achieve everyday goals concurred with

Maloney's (2017) conceptualisation of music as a resource similar to water. Participants

used music to fill in time, help them concentrate and as a conversation starter with friends

and family. It is fair to comment that if participants experienced the notion that they cannot

live without music, then it is easier to comprehend why Campbell et al., (2007) viewed music as a "necessary component" and a constant presence in adolescents' lives. Julia expressed that she must fill her dreaded silent moments with music, "if there is silence, I will add music". Music is present in every minute of the participants' everyday lives. Saarikallio (2008) signified that music is an important constituent in the understanding of adolescence in general.

The participants had freedom in their choice of musical instrument playing and made their own decisions about the kind of music they listened to. It shows that they engaged with music because they felt like doing so, and not because it was forced upon them, as John described "they [family] did not influence me into choosing a musical instrument". It can be inferred that music is a source of fulfilment and that learning how to play a musical instrument was a rewarding hobby that was stress free. In fact, the passion for musicianship and positive attitudes towards music engagement shown by the adolescents coincides with the typical passionate behaviour of adolescence (Thomas, 2015). Eva revealed that she "cannot function or imagine her life without music or listening", while Caroline talked about how she is "devoted to music".

Furthermore, through music-making, the participants can showcase their talents and dreams of potential career trajectories indicating a sense of self actualisation and self-efficacy. John aspires to learn how to play more musical instrument and dreams of becoming a professional musician, "my ambition is to have a career as a musician". Hallam (2010) highlighted how music impacts positively the individual's self-perception and interpersonal skills, while Arnett (1995) regarded music as an accompaniment in the adolescents' development and self-discovery.

Music engagement was reported to enhance creativity, particularly in music-making and improvisation, and in activities involving bands/orchestras. Playing a musical instrument provides a means of artistic self-expression and most of the participants showed a mature appreciation and knowledge of what makes good music and the technicalities of different genres of music. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) stated that individuals who are aesthetically sensitive to genre of music such as classical, are usually portrayed as artistic and sophisticated individuals. Julian eloquently described "pop music is an ordinary and cheap genre" whereas he exalted classical music as an elaborate genre. Caroline defended her love for classical music because she understands that the structure produces deeper messages, as opposed to contemporary music which she described it as having "no sophistication in their structure".

Miranda (2013) explained that aesthetics is how individual "develop their perception of beauty in many stimuli of life including music" (p.11). North et al. (2000) believed that adolescents listen to good music for aesthetic pleasure. Likewise, participants described 'good' music and defended their choices of their preferred genres. The participants' appreciation of beauty in music compares to Miranda's (2011) theory that "music may stimulate adolescents' autonomous originality and relatedness to real or perceived social norms in terms of what is considered to be artistically and creatively 'beautiful' in a given culture and at a given time in history" (p.11).

Evidence of embodied musical experiences was attested by the participants' accounts and descriptions of concerts attendance or musical activities, indicating that these occasions were special and unique occasions for them. Music can facilitate interpersonal relationships in the sense of community and solidarity (Navarro, 2015). Caroline described her participation in the youth orchestra as "an incredible experience", depicting that

engagement and participation in music seemed to be mostly pleasure oriented. Huron (2006) stated that adolescents are motivated powerfully to produce, listen to music and attend musical performance as these actual and virtual activities afford means for expression, sharing and musical emotional experiences, as described by Juslin and Vastfjall (2008) "chills and shivers" (p.561).

Music can create desired narratives and evoke affective response without the need of words, although music psychologists are still unable to explain listeners' reactions to music (Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008). Williamson (2009) used the mirror metaphor to award music with the capability of engaging different emotions and meanings in different people, and recounted "a composer once told me that great music is built like a mirror, in which all listeners see themselves" (p.1025). Caroline conveyed an intelligent argument on how music can convey emotions and psychological effects on listeners. She talked about how in opera the artists portray descriptive episodes of the story that conveys deep images to the audiences. Whilst Gabriel thought that there is nothing better than watching his favourite band play in a concert. Hallam (2010) discussed that positive music engagement affects the personal and social development of the adolescents only when the experiences are enjoyable and rewarding. John expressed the wonderful experience of being "part of an orchestra and hearing all the instruments playing together".

Hallam (2010) concluded that active music-making impacts the brain processes in many ways; developing spatial skills required in mathematics, the perception and acquisition of literacy, improves self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-perception and subsequently improves interpersonal skills. Participants reported that active involvement in music helped them develop life skills, such as self-discipline and concentration on task, and provided an outlet for relaxation during demanding study periods. Reflecting on group

music making activities, the participants reported enhancement of social skills, such as decision making, teamwork, assertiveness, as well as overcoming shyness. In fact, Gabriel pointed out how performing in front of audiences helps him work within a team. Julian revealed that music taught him to be self-disciplined and "to persevere when challenged with difficult periods in my [his] life", whilst Caroline expressed how music "helped me [her] become a diligent, responsible and hardworking persons" in academic matters. It seems that life skills learned and practiced through their formal training in music was being transferred to other aspects of their lives. Other social skills developed through music were altruism and a sense of leadership as was highlighted by Caroline, where she had opportunity to help and assist her fellow young violinists to become better musicians. This goes in line with Davidson et al.'s (2009) statement that music learners derive "greatest pscyhological needs satisfaction" (p.1027).

Music as a cultural factor in society, facilitates interpersonal relationships in the sense of community and solidarity (Navarro, 2015). Shepherd and Sigg (2015) sustained that a relationship between music preference and self-esteem exist, while Lonsdale (2020) stated that music plays a prominent role in defining identity in social groups and serves to enhance and maintain self-esteem. Having musical associations can make a profound effect in the young people's life. Music gives them skills that are useful beyond the world of music, teaches them self-discipline, strengthen their self-esteem, and opens all kind of doors on to history. One personal benefit in forming part of a musical group is they are able to make musical recommendations to others.

6.2 Music as an Emotion-Regulatory Strategy

This theme presents how music activates associations, memories, experiences, moods, and emotions. Van den Tol and Ritchie's (2014) declared that, "music is powerful

and versatile tool for regulating emotions" (p.4). Research findings (Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007; Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008; Saarikallio et al., 2017) agreed that music can regulate adolescents' moods. For the Maltese participants, music proved to be a versatile means for mood regulation as much as the Finnish participants in Saarikallio and Erkkilä's (2007) research.

The subthemes show how the participants' perceived music helped them process and regulate their emotions and moods, and how they consciously use music to regulate how they are feeling to enhance moods, to relax, as a distraction, and to improve motivation. The use of music is determined by specific needs that stem from various personal factors. Besides using music as entertainment, adolescents use music as a resource for increasing and restoring their well-being. Saarikallio and Erkkilä (2007) furthered that adolescents' emotional life also becomes more varied and colourful. It seems that adolescents' emotional state dictates which type of music they listen to. Julia listens to music that reflects her mood, for example if she is happy, she listens to happy music.

According to Clark and Tamplin (2016), music can be used both as a stimulant and relaxant to manage and regulate their energy levels for everyday purposes and situations. The verbatim extracts from the data highlighted that music can be an environmental modifier and motivator healthier lifestyle. For Eva happy music distracts her from worries and invigorates her "to live a positive lifestyle", whereas music energises Paul before a water polo match and Caroline before exercising. Music affects individuals differently, for some it motivates them to exercise whilst others help them unwind after a busy day. Both Julia and Eva use music before going to bed to help go to sleep. Whilst Caroline uses music to "calm down and think rationally when things get chaotic".

According to Juslin and Laukka (2004), personal and emotional needs determine the choice of music which may not be consciously intentional. Similarly, mood-related needs at a given moment dictated the choice of music to achieve specific goals. Excerpt from the data illustrated that these choices might not be their preferred genre of music, but still they satisfied the mood-related needs at a given time.

Another effective use of music seemed to be aimed at controlling and self-determining moods. The participants enhanced their existing happy mood by playing their favourite music louder, sing and dance along, or play a musical instrument. Expressive engagement during music-making and improvisation helps the participants with maintenance of positive moods, similar to what the participants in Saarikallio's (2010) study articulated. Eva explained that her choices of music was situational as it reflected her emotions or changes according to her mood.

Participants also recalled positive music-evoked memories and nostalgia for situations and people from their past. Ruud's (1997) argued that musical memories often include feelings of safety accepting and trustworthy relationships. Julia stated that particular songs remind her of past fun memories shared with her friends. Although the participants generally avoided negative emotional experiences, they reported to often enjoy listening to sad music as it appeals to their state of negative emotions. However, Vuoskoski et al. (2012) noted that "the dominant emotion evoked by sad music appears to be interpreted as sadness by the listeners, but such music also evokes a range of more positive, aesthetic emotions" (p.315). When Eva feels sad, she listens to particular songs that fills her with courage to carry on. Also, John understands his sadness, "feel(s) stronger and capable to manage my [his] feelings", when listening to happy music in sad moments.

Schwartz and Fouts (2003) and Baker and Bor (2008) agreed that adolescents use music as an external stimulation to distract themselves or to avoid unwanted thoughts and emotions, and they tend to gravitate to popular music with lyrics that pronounce their feeling and experiences. Because of music's mood-altering qualities, it can be used as a tool to cope with challenges and problems. For instance, listening to music can alleviate feelings of loss, sadness, and loneliness, and it helps one to calm down and to relax (Ter Bogt et al., 2016). Additionally, music listening is relevant particularly for the participants facing internalising and externalising problems (Ter Bogt et al., 2010). Gabriel stated that his choice of angry music reflects his internal anger, but also gives him courage to externalise his anger through a safe medium. The existence of angry music conveys to adolescents that they are not alone in feeling angry and other people experience the same emotions. The adolescents reflected that they do not feel alone in their development or in their sadness. The music that John listens to 'informs' him that "other young people are going through the same feelings that I [he] feels". This helps him not to despair or trouble himself too much. Music also helps Gabriel understand that other people have the same feelings as himself and that feeling angry is something others experience too. This insight proposes the notion that music listening is more of a communion with the elements of empathy, than a communication medium (McGuiness & Overy, 2011).

Ter Bogt et al. (2016) considered listening to music as a consolation or solace agent that comforts after a loss or disappointment. Likewise, the participants regarded music as a refuge in troubled times with the effect of increased psychological and physical well-being. For example, Eva is reminded of how her family overcame her grandfather's illness through a song that comforts her with the assurance that her "family's support will always be there". Foran (2009) confirmed the powerful functions of music as a source of pride in times of

celebrations and grieve. Eva goes as far as expressing that lyrics from songs externalise her thoughts at the specific times. Several interviewees talked about how music had helped them live through hard times providing solace, comfort, and empowerment. During counselling sessions in schools, Kimbel and Protivnak (2010), noted that song lyrics from a wide variety of music styles raise awareness about vital topics, and encourages adolescents to relate feelings and thoughts from the lyrics to their life experiences.Julia recounted how listening to sad rap music that dealt with deep stories resulted in her friends "opening more to each other" and "sharing deeper life stories".

There was consensus among the participants that music relieve stress. Participants narrated that although taking part in musical performances was initially stressful and caused them anxiety, they still regarded music as a destressing agent. For Julia, learning how to play guitar had to be exam free as she is adamant to enjoy and relax with her music and not be pressurised to study to pass exam. Some individual differences appeared in music ability for the distraction and diversion of negative thoughts. Participants stated that music helps them detach and forget their unwanted feelings and get rid of thoughts and worries by acting as a diversion. Through music others found the courage to face their problems and uncertainties typical to adolescence. Participants revealed that they either use music as an emotional discharge to release and vent anger or sadness, or music diverted their pent-up emotions and uplifted their mood. Julian expressed that music distracts him from "family worries", "school exams" and "squabbles" with his friends. Saarikallio and Erkkilä (2007) argued that these emotion-regulatory effects of music do not solely reflect the situational and mood-related needs, but also sheds a light on personality, life story and age-related demands.

6.3 Music as a Social Utility

This theme supports the social relevance of music. The subthemes of selection of friends, musical preferences and peer conformity and group cohesion will be seen as intricately related and influential on each other.

Schäfer et al. (2013) asserted that, "music evolved primarily as a means for promoting social cohesion and communication" (p.7), while Walmark et al. (2018) believed that "music is a portal into the interior lives of others" (p.1) to describe how music can become a social agent that helps the listener become more social attuned and develop empathetic relationships. The adolescents perceived their own musical preferences to correspond with those of their friends most of the time but were not particularly pressurised to conform to their peer groups' preferences. Adolescents become more adaptive to meta-cognitive strategies to understanding oneself and others' perspectives through reason and emotion; thereby enter more intimate relationships with others (Sadowski, 2008). Zillmann and Gan (1997) found that adolescents choose their friends or reject others through what they called, "a declaration of allegiance to musical culture" (p.174).

North et al. (2000) stated that adolescents often use music genres as a social messenger to send implicit attitudes and values to their peers and parents. In the subtheme addressing parental musical relationship there seemed to be two opposing views. John, Gabriel, and Paul share the same musical taste as their parents and music serves as a common ground for parent-child relations. For Julia and Eva, although their musical taste did not match those of the parents, this did not create a big conflict, and a successful family relationship was maintained as they tolerated each other's preferences. Selfhout et al.'s (2009) findings, on the other hand, alleged that adolescents play classical rather than pop

music in order to please their parents, or teachers. This was not the sentiment expressed by those who preferred classical music: Gabriel listens to classical music with his parents and Paul, whose family have a common preference of rock music, stating that "we [family] have that in common". The parents' input for their children's musical engagement is very important and appreciated by participants. Julia, Rebecca, and Julian showed appreciation for their parents and relatives for introducing them to music, musical instruments and supporting them in their musical performances and careers.

Another typical aspect of adolescence revolves around the importance of peer relationship and inclusion in peer groups. Bee and Boyd (2010) described this as stong "clannishness" and "intense conformity" (p. 301) to the peer group.The participants considered their musical preferences an important definition of their social identity even though at times their preferences did not conform with their peers and friends. Paul was adamant that he did "not need to conform to someone else's music because my [his] music is part of who I [he] is". Gabriel shared that music creates conflict with his friends, indicating that he felt disadvantaged because of his music preferences. Crosnoe & Johnson (2011) believed that the interpersonal disposition during adolescence can determine whether an individual conforms or diverge from social norms. Rentfrow and Gosling (2006) posited that adolescents usually conform to a group according to the expectations, characteristics and images portrayed by individuals with the same musical taste. Caroline will not pretend to like popular music, which is considered 'cool' among adolescents, just to look 'cool' among her friends. Participants' responses do not reflect a desire to be seen to have interests in music which is popular with peers.

Saarikallio et al. (2017) specified that music listening in adolescence acts as a personal resource for social development and supports social relationships. Participants

explained that they use music to form and bond friendships. Orchestras, choirs, bands and musical improvisation support group cohesion and human collaboration. Maloney (2017) considered that music utilities within social groups promote belonging and socialisation purposes and establish and maintain interpersonal relations. This consideration encompasses the theme of how music functions as a social utility for the participants during adolescence. For the sake of group conformity, Thomas (2015) believed that what adolescents perceive as "school" music may not be "their" music (p.2), meaning that their music preferences may not be the same genre of music that they are studying.

Music listening can be an individual activity, and also provides opportunities for shared group experiences and sense of belonging to a larger peer network. The findings indicate that music is regarded as a facilitator of interpersonal relationships with peers that affirms their sense of identity within a group. According to North and Hargreaves (1999), affiliation affords adolescence security and a sense of belonging. Distancing from a peer group due to lack of conformity in musical preferences did not preoccupy some of the participants. However, Gabriel and Paul were resolved to adhere to their musical preference despite constant opposition from their peers. In contrary, Julia was resolved not to change her kind of music for anyone and even personified that "music has been there for me [her]" when friends were absent.

North et al. (2000) regarded music preferences as a badge of identity, by which adolescents identify themselves as belonging to or desiring to belong to specific peer groups. On the other hand, Kaplan (2004) music is a symbol of a generation that allows adolescents to be drawn and bond to other youth with similar musical tastes. Eva believed that through music she is a more sociable person and relates better with those who like the same music as she does. Julian sought to establish a friendship before expressing his musical

preference by stating that "music is not the first thing I mention when I meet someone new. But as we get to know each other more, I start talking about my music". Kaplan's (2004) similarly argued that music's contribution in adolescence could be a form of entertainment and also a channel of communication with like-minded peers. For Caroline and her friends, the only common thing that connected and bonded them was music, making it an intelligent subject to share with friends. Paul reported his positive experience when meeting new friends who share the same understand of music and its technicalities.

The participants stated that music is the common interest that bonds friendships and promoting group cohesion. Julia indicated that sharing music with her friends shows a deeper element in the relationship and keeps the friendship going. Eva felt more comfortable with friends who had similar taste in music, as she had often refrained from sharing her music preferences for fear of criticism. This indicates that music preferences could cause distancing from a peer group. The participants fiercely defended their own music preferences and regarded them as personal, however some sort of compromise on music preferences can be achieved for the sake of keeping friendships.

Rebecca would not change her music preference even if her friends regarded classical music as old-fashioned. However, she would try to adapt to accommodate her friends' style in an attempt for group cohesion. Delsing et al. (2008) did not rule out that their adolescent-participants may have used impression-management motivation, where an individual failed to report an enjoyment in listening to classical music because classical music is considered as "uncool" (p.128). In contrast, Paul and John would rather distance themselves from their peer group than compromise their music preferences.

6.4 Music as means of Self-Exploration and Empowerment

This theme implies that music empowers adolescents where according to Erikson

(1968), is a phase where adolescents try to strike a balance between identity and role

confusion. If music preferences are partially determined by personality, self-views, and

cognitive abilities, then knowing what kind of music a person likes could serve as a clue to

his or her personality, self-views, and cognitive abilities. They seemed to identify with music

genres, music artist and various identities projected through music. However, the

participants exhibited a sense of maturity towards adopting unhealthy lifestyle of artists. For

example, Eva enjoys listening to Bieber's music because she likes the fast beat, but not the

artist or his lifestyle.

According to Tajfel (1970), the social context is a key determinant to self-definition,

and music preferences contribute to the social identity and sense of self. North and

Hargreaves (2008) suggested that not all adolescents become attached to the popular music

of their decade, but many musical preferences develop as they signify particular moments in

their live. Schwartz and Fouts (2003) specifically pointed to heavy metal music as the genre

used by adolescents to regulate their negative emotions. Thompson et al. (2018) suggested

that fan and non-fans of this genre of music are distinguished by their personality traits, and

"individuals with certain personality traits and music-listening motivations are drawn

toward aggressive music with violent themes, and their enthusiasm for this genre promotes

a range of positive emotional responses to this music" (p.1).

Although Julia listened to a wide variety of music genre including classical, she

enjoyed heavy metal music too. Paul distinctly distinguished rock from heavy metal rock,

indicating that the latter portrays violence and aggression. Julia's musical preferences

seemed eclectic and, according to Thomas (2015) and Schwartz and Fouts (2003), had less

difficult expressing her emotions and fewer social problems. Through rock music, adolescents are, "given the possibility to express, be in contact with and share among themselves feelings of anger, rage, grief, longing and psychological disintegration" (Tervo, 2001, p.81).

Larson (1995) suggested that listening to music in a solitary provides adolescent with a space to develop a private self. The participants reported they enjoy music in both a solitary manner and in the company of others. Gabriel confessed that music gives him the confidence he lacks when meeting new people.

The participants' perceived music preferences as revealing their personality. Rentfrow and Gosling (2006) observed that music preferences reveal unique information about the individual's personality that cannot be detected from more observable cues. Delsing et al. (2008) claimed that music preferences are a clue to one's personality and one's identity is one of the functions for music engagement (Thompson et al., 2018). Frith (1981) used the same representation to describe the public function of music and coined the term 'badge of identity' to convey a concept of stereotyping individuals to certain genres of music, "music served as the badge of individuality on which friendship choices could be based" (p. 208). Caroline confirmed how music helped shape her identity, whilst Paul confirmed that music helps him form a relationship with himself by getting to know more who he is.

Hargreaves et al. (2002) stated that musical preferences, which are frequently part of an adolescent's identity, are not fixed but may be adapted or rejected according to external circumstances and social situations. However, Caroline expressed how she will not pretend to like her friends' musical preferences, just to look cool among her friends. Frith

(1981) confirmed that "music served as the badge of individuality on which friendship

choices could be based" (p.208).

Schwartz and Fouts (2003) illustrated that popular music and lyrics, which is mostly

characterised by repeating structures sing-able simple melodies and danceable rhythms,

convey developmental themes, including social relationships, autonomy and identity and

peer acceptance. This study demonstrated that music has the potential to allow adolescents

to maintain successful social relationships and contributes to social development. Saarikallio

(2011) regarded active adolescent participation in music as a tool towards social growth and

development of character. Moreover, adolescents who study music can often identify

themselves by the instrument they play or by the music group they belong to (Thomas,

2015). Thomas (2015) regarded music preferences as being frequently part of the

adolescence identity, where adolescents often use musical preferences to indicate their

personality and ideals.

Music helped the participants understand themselves and what they are going

through whilst offering emotional refuge. They reflected on their relationship with music

and how it conveyed their thoughts on themselves, on their social environment and on

situational contexts. Julia clearly showed how occasionally she finds herself in situations

where music helped her understand what is happening and the type of emotions she is

going through. Confirming this, Baker and Bor (2008) recorded how music help validate

current thoughts and feelings. Rebecca mentions how she appreciates her favourite artist

Billie Eilish, by allowing her to explore deeps thoughts and emotions.

6.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, inferences and interpretations of themes that emerged

from the particiapants' narrartives, where made in light of conflicting and coinciding

literature. This discussion offered arguments in favour of the developmental impact of music and adolescent psychology. Music influences the aspects of adolescent development mainly, personality and motivation; aesthetics and creativity; identity; emotional regulation and coping; socialisation and general positive viewed development. It is apparent that the relationship between music and adolescents is complex with interplay among the person, music, and context. Furthermore, music can assist in the acquisition of emotional and social skills as it reflects and respect the adolescence process. Consequently, the concluding chapter will include limitations and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the journey of this research project presenting a conclusive summary of the process and findings. In addition, reference will be made to the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research, before presenting some reflective thoughts.

7.2 Concluding Thoughts

This study has presented an understanding of the role music in the lives of eight Maltese adolescent learners. It also acknowledges the importance of the qualitative approach of TA that assisted me to capture the richness of adolescents' perspectives which I believe would not have been easily assessed using a quantitative methodology. As this was my second attempt at using TA to analyse qualitive data, I was vigilant to bracket my subjectivity to try to truly present the participants' voices. Participants gave unique accounts of their experiences with music which revealed differences and similarities. However, the themes that emerged from the data collected show overall agreement. The main findings

Music pervades many aspects of adolescents' everyday life. An activity which consumes much of their time and attention, and a major component of their psychosocial development. It warrants consideration from all those professionals who care and accompany these young people through the many biological, psychological, and emotional changes of adolescence. The adolescents' perspectives on the impact of music in their lives provided data from which PSCD educators can begin to develop a better understanding of how music can be used as a pedagogical resource in Maltese secondary schools. This knowledge can enhance the educators' capacity to employ this diverse resource in a social

context that adolescents live in to increase communication and understanding of their world.

Finally, I suggest that these adolescents' perceptions can contribute to the development of future research on how music can contribute to the acquisition of emotional competencies and social skills. In summary, this study provided strong evidence that music can affect the direction of individuals' behaviours during adolescence giving them an outlet for emotional expression and regulate their moods; social opportunities to access rewarding activities and forge social relationships and interactions; and functions in their formation of identity through musical preferences. Moreover, music is a facet in adolescents' everyday lives that psychologists working in education, special education, counselling and therapy, and in all the social contexts, should integrate in their research as it will undoubtedly cast light on vital developmental processes in adolescence.

The fundamental conceptual inquiry guiding my study was, 'Why not harness music's ability to influence adolescents' lives in order to create more understanding, empathy, caring and support towards PSCD learners? Although the methodology of this concept was beyond the scope of this research, I attempted to shed light on the relevance of music in the emotional and social lives of adolescents. The first crucial step was to develop a conceptual framework based on the complex theoretical frameworks of pedagogy, the methodology of PSCD, psychology of music and the psychosocial phase of adolescents.

In summary, the findings point to a clear indication that music contributes to the understanding of many psychosocial and emotional phenomena in adolescents. The participants highlighted the necessity and pervasiveness of music in all their activities indicating music's significance in their lives. Music used as an emotional regulatory strategy helps adolescents to regulate their moods and expresses their positive and negative feelings

in personal and social context. Another theme showed music as a social utility by which adolescents forge friendships, maintain relationships and enhances social and life skills. The last theme indicated that personality traits and musical preferences are interdependent and influence the identity of adolescents. The findings strongly indicate that music being an integral feature of adolescents' lives could be used as an educational tool to enhance trusting and caring relationships based on the learners' needs, interests and talents.

7.3 Limitations

This small-scale qualitative inquiry carried out with Maltese participants who might have their own cultural characteristics, have limited the generalisability of the findings. The samples' positive attitudes about music, which may stem from the rewarding engagement with musical instruments, immediately placed them in a special group which may also have influenced the findings, further limiting generalisation. Although the participants in this study showed greater awareness of music because of their active engagement with music, they do not represent the general adolescent population.

Another area that was not adequately studied was gender differences and stereotypes in the use of music and musical preferences. In retrospect this may be due to the project being too ambitious and also because the interview questions were not penned to elicit such information.

This modest study also exposed the extensiveness of the role of music in the lives of adolescents, which due to space limitation was not sufficiently uncovered. It was rendered more complicated because it was viewed from a PSCD methodological stance and more than one theoretical framework was undertaken.

Since this research was based on the participants perceived role of music in their lives, it relied on them to think of abstract concepts such as feelings, emotions and

memories. Some participants admitted to finding it difficult to fully express their relationship with music perhaps, because of their limited descriptive vocabulary to describe such emotional and cognitive experiences.

7.4 Recommendations

Still, suggestions for future research is for a narrower inquiry which focuses more intensely on one element in the relationship between music and adolescents, despite the interconnectedness of the social, emotional, cognitive and psychological elements of music. For example, research in the local context could focus on the emotivists and cognitivists position of musical emotions following extensive studies by Juslin and Vastfjall (2008). More focused research on adolescent learners who are not actively engaged with music could provide quite interesting and varying points of view on the emotional response to music. Brattico et al. (2008) noted that comparing musicians and non-musicians did not show differences in this aspect.

There is a need for more investigations in this poorly studied topic in the local context. This project aspires to be an inspiration and a challenge for myself and other researchers to embark upon in the future. Nevertheless, I believe my study amassed valid insights and valuable knowledge about how music is a functional and meaningful feature in human lives, especially with adolescents. It can also act as a point of reference to understand the concept of music as a potential resource to educate adolescent learners about emotional literacy and social skills in a PSCD classroom.

7.5 Reflective Thoughts

This end project marks the end of my journey as a learner and the beginning of a life trajectory as a professional. This study evoked poignant memories and nostalgic associations with past educators and mentors that have influenced me and helped shape

who I am. Through music, I forged most of the significant relationships and friendships in my life. The most influential and stable companion has been music!

Researching the role of music enabled me to, "open a new window into people's everyday lives" (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, p.1252), when adolescents' windows are very often firmly closed during this phase. The way forward is to capitalise on the effects music had in my life and carry them with me in every life transition I will be blessed to reach. On a practical level this study has highlighted how a common liking for music could help adolescents accommodate better those adults working with them.

Finally, this study provided me with an opportunity to learn from the experiences of adolescents about their passion for music, a comparable passion during my adolescence, before I embark on a career as a PSCD educator with adolescent learners. As expressed by one of the participants (Caroline), I strongly believe that:

Music has helped me shape who I am as a person.

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Appendix A: Approval from FREC

L-Università
ta' Malta

Faculty of Education

University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 3058/2932
educ@um.edu.mt

www.um.edu.mt/educ

7th January 2020

RE: Application for Research Ethics Clearance 2901_02102019_Vittoria Bianco

Dear Ms Bianco,

With reference to your application 2901_02102019_Vittoria Bianco for Research Ethics clearance, I am pleased to inform you that **FREC finds no ethical or data protection issues in terms of content and procedure.**

You may therefore proceed to approach potential informants to collect data using the tools/documents outlined in this application.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility - under the guidance of your supervisor - to distribute Information Letters and Consent/Assent Forms that are written in appropriate and correct English and Maltese.

Yours sincerely

Prof Suzanne Gatt
Chairperson Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education

Appendix B: Permission Letter to the Secretariat for Catholic Education

Dear Director,

I am reading a Master's in Teaching and Learning at the University of Malta. As part of this course, I will be carrying out research in order to write a dissertation. My dissertation supervisor is Dr. Ruth Falzon and the co-supervisor Ms. Moira Barbieri.

The title of my dissertation is "The role of music in the lives of adolescent students". The aim of this research will be to explore the relationship between music and emotions, and how adolescents use music to form friendships and relationships with others. I would be grateful if you would give me permission to conduct this research study at St. Dorothy's School, Żebbuġ and Stella Maris College, Gżira.

Should permission be granted, I would ask the PSCD teacher of the chosen schools to distribute letters/assent/consent forms to all students who fit the criteria of playing an instrument or form part of a band. Once the students are chosen, the necessary information and letters together with the assent and consent forms will be handed out to them by the PSCD teacher. The name of the schools chosen to take part in this research will not be divulged. The interview will last 45 minutes and it will take place at a time and location that is convenient for the Head of Schools, making sure the students do not miss out on lessons. In order to process the data, I would need to audio-record and transcribe these interviews.

I will first ask the respective Heads of School for their kind permission to carry out the data collection in their schools. I would ask the PSCD teacher of the appropriate grade to disseminate the information letters, consent and assent forms as hard copies. Students will only be interviewed and recorded if assent and consent is given by themselves and their parents respectively. Students may choose not to take part in the interview. Students will be asked to choose a name of their choice. Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants/parents/guardians will suffer no negative consequence should they choose (to allow their son/daughter) not to take part in the interview. They would not need to provide a reason for withdrawal of their assent/consent. In the event of withdrawal, any data will be immediately destroyed.

Furthermore, the transcripts will be coded, so that even the identity of the participants will be anonymised. All raw data will be securely stored and accessed by myself only. The

audio-recordings and data obtained will be solely used for the compilation of my dissertation and will be destroyed after this research has been successfully completed.

I would like to assure you that I will abide by all the ethical guidelines issued by the University Research Ethics Committee of the University of Malta throughout the course of my research. Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor (please see contact details given below).

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Sincerely,

Vittoria Bianco

Contact details: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

_____

Supervisor: Dr Ruth Falzon

Contact details: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Appendix C: Approval Letter from the Secretariat for Catholic Education

Segretarjat għall-Edukazzjoni Nisranija
16, Il-Mall, Furjana FRN 1472
Num. ta' Tel. 27790060
Num. Tal-Fax 27790078

Secretariat for Catholic Education,
16, The Mall, Floriana FRN 1472
Tel. No. 27790060
Fax No. 27790078

The Head

15th November 2019

Ms Vittorja Bianco, currently reading for a Masters Degree in Teaching and Learning in PSCD at the University of Malta, requests permission to Conduct one-to-one recorded semi-structured interview with 6-8 students between the ages of 12-14 years old who play an instrument/play in a band at the above mentioned schools.

The Secretariat for Catholic Education finds no objection for Ms Vittorja Bianco, to carry out the stated exercises subject to adhering to the policies and directives of the schools concerned.

Rev Dr. Charles Mallia
Delegate for Catholic Education

Appendix D: Permission Letter to the Heads of School

Dear Head of School,

My name is Vittoria Bianco. I am currently a second-year student reading for a Master's in Teaching and Learning (Personal, Social and Career Development) at the University of Malta. As part of this course I will be carrying out research in order to write a dissertation. My dissertation supervisor is Dr. Ruth Falzon and co-supervisor Ms. Moira Barbieri.

I will be carrying out a research study entitled "The role of music in the lives of Adolescent Students". For this study, I am looking for participants who are willing to be individually interviewed about the role of music in their lives. The aim of this research will be to explore the emotional landscape of adolescents' engagement with music and the correlation between music and emotions.

I would be grateful if you would give me permission to conduct my research study at your school. Should you give me permission, I would ask the PSCD teacher of the chosen schools to distribute letters/assent/consent forms to all students who fit the criteria of playing an instrument or form part of a band. Once the students are chosen, the necessary information and letters together with the assent and consent forms will be handed out to the students and the parents by the PSCD teacher. The name of the schools chosen to take part in this research will not be divulged.

The interview will last approximately 45 minutes and it will take place at a time and location that is convenient for you, making sure the students do not miss out on lessons. In order to process the data, I would need to audio-record and transcribe these interviews. Students will only be interviewed and recorded if assent and consent is given by themselves and their parents respectively. Even if students agree to participate, he will not have to answer any questions should he wish not to answer.

A time limit of 15 days will be given for the collection of the consent forms. The researcher will collect all the signed parents/guardians consent forms and student assent forms personally from the school. The information letters contain the researcher's personal contact details in case the students or the parents/guardians require further information about the study.

I would appreciate it if you would allow the PSCD teacher to distribute the attached information letter and consent form with potential eligible participants so that they could make an informed decision whether they want to participate.

Kindly note that:

- Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants/parents/guardians will suffer no negative consequences should they choose (to allow their son/daughter) not to take part in the interview. They would not need to provide a reason for withdrawal of their assent/consent. In the event of withdrawal, any data will be immediately destroyed.

- Students will only be interviewed if assent and consent is given by themselves and their parents respectively.

- Anonymity will be respected at all times. There will be no direct reference to their name and information that may lead to identification will be eliminated.

- Upon completion, anyone interested in reading the dissertation would be able to access it from the UM library.

- Furthermore, the transcripts will be coded, so that even the identity of the participants will be anonymised. All raw data will be securely stored and accessed by myself only. The audio-recordings and data obtained will be solely used for the compilation of my dissertation and will be destroyed after this research has been successfully completed.

- Should the students show signs of distress, the interview will be stopped immediately, or the question at hand not pursued any further. The participants will be provided with a debriefing session to end the interview on a positive note, and a list of services such as the school's counsellor or PSCD teachers.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kindest Regards,

Vittoria Bianco   Contact details: ████████████████████

Dr Ruth Falzon   Contact details: ████████████████

Appendix E: Information Letter for PSCD Teachers

To whom it may concern,

I am currently a first-year student reading for a Master's in Teaching and Learning (Personal, Social and Career Development) at the University of Malta. As part of this course I will be carrying out a research in order to write a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Ruth Falzon and co-supervisor Ms. Moira Barbieri. The research study entitled "The role of music in the lives of Adolescent Students" will require student-participants who are willing to be individually interviewed about the role of music in their lives. The aim of this research will be to explore the emotional landscape of adolescents' engagement with music and the correlation between music and emotions.

Following ethical clearance, I would be grateful if you would act as an intermediator to help me in the recruitment of potential participants for this study. If you accept my request, I would ask you to distribute letters/assent/consent forms to all students who fit the criteria of playing an instrument or form part of a band. Once the students are chosen, you would need to hand out the necessary information and letters together with the assent and consent forms to students and the parents respectively. It is important to note that the name of the schools chosen to take part in this research will not be divulged to anyone. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes and it will take place at a time and location that is convenient for the Head of Schools, making sure the students do not miss out on lessons. In order to process the data, I would need to audio-record and transcribe these interviews. Students will only be interviewed and recorded if assent and consent is given by themselves and their parents respectively. Even if students agree to participate, s/he will not have to answer any questions should they wish not to answer.

A time limit of 15 days will be given for the students to return all the necessary letters/consent/assents forms to you. I will collect all the signed parents/guardians consent forms and student assent forms personally from the school. All information letters contain the researcher's personal contact details in case the students and/or the parents/guardians require further information about the study.

Should you choose to accept my invitation of acting as an intermediator to distribute the attached information letter and consent form to the eligible participants, so that they could make an informed decision, kindly inform me via email.

Kindly note that:

- Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants/parents/guardians will suffer no negative consequences should they choose (to allow their son/daughter) not to take part in the interview. They would not need to provide a reason for withdrawal of their assent/consent. In the event of withdrawal, any data will be immediately destroyed.

- Students will only be interviewed if assent and consent is given by themselves and their parents respectively.

- Anonymity will be respected at all times. There will be no direct reference to their name and information that may lead to identification will be eliminated.

- Upon completion, anyone interested in reading the dissertation would be able to access it from the UM library.

- Furthermore, the transcripts will be coded, so that even the identity of the participants will be anonymised. All raw data will be securely stored and accessed by myself only. The audio-recordings and data obtained will be solely used for the compilation of my dissertation and will be destroyed after this research has been successfully completed.

- Should the students show signs of distress, the interview will be stopped immediately, or the question at hand not pursued any further. The participants will be provided with a debriefing session to end the interview on a positive note, and a list of services such as the school's counsellor or PSCD teachers.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kindest Regards,

Vittoria Bianco   Contact details: ███████████████████████

Dr Ruth Falzon   Contact details: ███████████████████

Appendix F: Information Letter to the Parents/Guardians

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Vittoria Bianco. I am currently a second-year student reading for a Master's in Teaching and Learning (Personal, Social and Career Development) at the University of Malta. I am writing to invite your daughter/son to take part in my research study in which I will explore the role of music in personal and social life of your daughter/son. I will be needing participants who will be interviewed about the relationship between music and emotions, and how they use music to form friendships and relationships with others.

In order to collect the data I require, I would like to conduct a semi-structure interview with your daughter/son which should last no longer than 45 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded as I would need to transcribe all the discussion in order to analyse the students' response. An information letter together with the assent form for your son/daughter will be given should they be willing to participate in this study. It is important to note that even though your son/daughter agrees to participate, s/he will not have to answer any questions they do not wish to answer. Every effort will be made so that your son/daughter does not miss out on lessons. Therefore, the interview will be conducted at a time and place recommended by the Heads of School. The name of the schools chosen to take part in this study will not be revealed.

It is important that you understand why this research is being carried out, and what the research process will involve. To help you make a fully informed decision regarding the voluntary participation of your daughter/son study, kindly note that:

1) Participation is voluntary. You and your son/daughter have the right to change your mind about participating in this interview without there being any negative consequence. Your daughter/son would not need to provide a reason for withdrawal and any data collected would be immediately destroyed.

2) Anonymity will be respected at all times. There will be no direct reference to the name of your daughter/son, and information that may lead to identification will be eliminated. Participants are encouraged to choose their own pseudonym.

3) Audio recorded data will be securely stored and will be accessed only by myself. The recordings will be used for the purpose of transcription. Once the study is finished, data collected will be destroyed.

4) Should your son/daughter feel sad, the interview will be immediately stopped, and no further questions will be asked. Your son/daughter will be provided with a session to discuss any necessary information and s/he will be provided with a list of support provided.

Should you wish to give consent for your son/daughter to participate in this research, kindly fill in the attached consent form and attach it with your son/daughter's assent form. All the forms should be given to the PSCD teacher which will then be collected by myself. You will be given 15 days to fill in all the forms. Should you need further information about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor on the below contact details.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hear from you.

Kindest Regards,

Vittoria Bianco   Contact details: ███████████████████
Dr Ruth Falzon   Contact details: ████████████

Appendix G: Ittra ta' Informazzjoni għall-Ġenituri/Kustodja

Għażiż/a Sinjur/a,

Jien jisimni Vittoria Bianco u qegħda fit-tieni sena nagħmel kors ta 'Master's in Teaching and Learning (Personal, Social and Career Development)' fl-Università ta' Malta. Qed nikteb din l-ittra biex ninvita li t-tifla/tifel tiegħek biex tkun parti mir-riċerka tiegħi bl-isem ta "L-irwol tal-mużika fil-ħajja ta l-Adoloxxenti".

Qiegħda nfittex parteċipanti li għandhom ix-xewqa li jiġu intervistati individwalment dwar l-irwol tal-mużika fil-ħajja tagħhom. L-għan ta din ir-riċerka huwa li nesplora kif il-mużika tikkorrelata mal-emozzjonijiet different fl-adoloxxenti, u kif l-adoloxxenti jużaw il-mużika biex jifformaw relazzjonijiet differenti mal-ħbieb.

Biex niġbor l-informazzjoni li għandi bżonn, nixtieq nagħmel intervista ta' madwar ħamsa u erbgħin minuta mat-tifla/tifel tiegħek. L-intervista ħa tiġi awdjo irrekordjata b'*digital recorder* u tiġi transkritta biex inkun nista' niġbor kollox li ġie diskutt fl-intervista. Ittra t'informazzjoni flimkien ma formula ta' kunsens ħa jingħataw lit-tifel/tifla tiegħek jekk j/tkun interessat/a li j/tieħdu sehem f'din ir-riċerka. Huwa ta' importanza li tkun taf li anke jekk it-tifel/tifla j/tiddeċidi biex j/tipparteċipa, hi/hu għandu d-dritt li ma j/tirrispondix il-mistoqsijiet li qed jiġu mistoqsija. Kull sforz ħa jsir biex it-tifel/tifla tiegħek ma j/titlifx l-ebda lezzjoni. B'hekk l-intervista ħa ssir f'post u ħin konvenjenti għall-Prinċipal ta' l-iskola. L-isem tal-iskejjel li ħa jintużaw f'din ir-riċerka mhux se jiġu żvelati.

Huwa ta' importanza li tifhem għala din ir-riċerka qed issir u tkun taf b'kull proċedura li ħa tiġi użata. Sabiex ngħinek tieħu deċiżjoni infurmata b'mod sħiħ dwar il-parteċipazzjoni volontarja tat-tifla/tifel tiegħek f'dan l-istudju, jekk jogħġbok innota li:

1) Il-parteċipazzjoni hija volontarju. Kemm inti, kif ukoll it-tifla/tifel tiegħek għandkom d-dritt li tirtiraw minn dan l-istudju f'kwalunkwe stadju ta' din ir-riċerka, mingħajr ebda konsegwnzi. Mhux ser ikun hemm il-bżonn li j/tagħti spjegazzjoni għar-raġunijiet tiegħu/tagħha u kull informazzjoni miġbura tkun imħassra immedjatament.

2) L-anonimità ser tkun irrispettata f'kull ħin. Mhux ser ikun hemm referenza diretta għal isem it-tifla/tifel, u informazzjoni li tista' twassal għall-identità tiegħu/tagħha ser tkun eliminata. Il-parteċipanti huma mħeġġa li jagħżlu psewdonimu għalihom infushom.

3) Id-data miġbura ser tkun maħżuna f'post sikur u użata unikament għal dan l-istudju. La darba jkun komplut dan l-istudju, id-data miġbura tkun imħassra.

4) Jekk it-tifel/tifla jħossuhom emozzjonati jew imdejqin, l-intervista ser tiġi imwaqfa, u l-mistoqsijiet jieqfu. It-tifel/tifla tiegħek ser jiġu provduti b'informazzjoni neċċessarja dwar minn fejn jistgħu jsibu sapport.

Jekk tagħti l-kunsens lit-tifel/tifla tiegħek biex t/jieħu sehem f'din ir-riċerka, nixtieqek timla' l-formola ta' kunsens u tibgħata mal-formola ta' kunses tat-tifel/tifla tiegħek. Kull formola għanda tmur għand l-għalliema tal-PSCD biex imbagħad inkun nista' niġborhom jien. Ħa jkollokom ħmistax-il ġurnata biex timlew il-formoli. Jekk ikollok bżonn informazzjoni ulterjuri dwar dan l-istudju, jekk jogħġbok tiddejjaqx tikkuntatjani fuq id-dettalji t'hawn taħt.

Grazzi tal-ħin u l-kunsiderazzjoni tiegħek. Nistenna bil-ħerqa li nisma' mingħandek.

Tislijiet,

Vittoria Bianco

Dettalji fejn tista' tikkuntatjani: ████████████████████

Superviżur: Dr Ruth Falzon

Dettalji fejn tista' tikkuntatjaha: ███████████████

Dear student,

My name is Vittoria Bianco. I am currently a second-year student at the University of Malta, and I am studying to become a teacher. As part of my course, I am conducting a research study about the role of music in the lives of adolescent students. I would like a number of students to help me.

I am inviting you to take part in a 45-minute interview, where you will explain the role of music in your life. The interview will be audio-recorded. The aim of this research will be to explore the relationship between music and emotions, and how adolescents use music to form friendships and relationships with others. Your participation in this study would be truly appreciated.

To help you make a decision in taking part in this study, take note that:

1) If you agree to take part in the interview, you will be asked to answer the questions given. However, even if you agreed to participate, you can choose not to answer questions that you do not wish to answer. If you do decide to take part, you are free to stop whenever you want to, and the data collected would be immediately destroyed.

2) Your identity will be respected at all times. Your name will be not mentioned and information that may lead to your identification will be eliminated. You have the choice to choose your own name.

3) The data gathered will be stored safely and used only for this research. Once the study is finished, data collected will be destroyed.

4) Should you feel sad or any type of negative emotion, the interview will be immediately stopped, and no more questions will be asked. You will be provided with a session to discuss any information about where to receive support, and a list of support services will be provided to you.

If you would like to take part in this study, please sign the consent form and give it back to your PSCD teacher. You will be given 15 days to fill in all the forms. If you have any questions, please do ask! You can speak to me in person when I am at your school or ask the PSCD teacher or Head of school for more clarification. If you prefer, your parents can email or phone me.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest Regards,

Vittoria Bianco

(Contact details: ██████████████████████)

Għażiż/a Student/a,

Jien jisimni Vittoria Bianco u qegħda fit-tieni sena nistudja fl-Università ta' Malta biex insir għalliema. Parti mill-istudju tiegħi, qed nagħmel riċerka fuq l-irwol tal-mużika fil-ħajja tal-adoloxxenti u għandi bżonn numru ta' studenti biex jieħdu sehem f'din ir-riċerka.

Qiegħda ninvitak biex tieħu sehem f'intervista li ħa tieħu madwar ħamsa u erbgħin minuta fejn ħa titkellem fuq l-irwol tal-mużika fil-ħajja tiegħek. L-intervista ħa tiġi awdjo irrekordjata b'*digital recorder* u tiġi transkritta. L-għan ta din ir-riċerka huwa li nesplora kif il-mużika tikkorrelata mal-emozzjonijiet different fl-adoloxxenti, u kif l-adoloxxenti jużaw il-mużika biex jifformaw relazzjonijiet differenti mal-ħbieb kif ukoll magħhom infushom. Il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek f'din ir-riċerka tkun verament apprezzata.

Sabiex ngħinek tieħu deċiżjoni infurmata b'mod sħiħ dwar il-parteċipazzjoni volontarja tiegħek f'dan l-istudju, jekk jogħġbok innota li:

1) Inti ħa tieħu sehem f'intervista fejn ħa tirrispondi l-mistoqsijiet. Anke jekk tiddeċidi li tieħu sehem fl-intervista, tista' tagħżel li ma tirrispondix mistoqsijiet li ma tridx tagħti tweġiba. Għandek d-dritt li tirtira minn dan l-istudju f'kwalunkwe stadju ta' din ir-riċerka. Mhux ser ikun hemm il-bżonn li tagħti spjegazzjoni għar-raġunijiet tiegħek u kull informazzjoni miġbura tkun imħassra immedjatament.

2) L-anonimità ser tkun irrispettata f'kull ħin. Mhux ser ikun hemm referenza diretta għal ismek, u informazzjoni li tista' twassal għall-identità tiegħek ser tkun eliminata. Inti ħa jkollok l-għażla li tagħżel psewdonimu għalik innifsek.

3) Id-data miġbura ser tkun maħżuna f'post sikur u użata unikament għal dan l-istudju. La darba jkun komplut dan l-istudju, id-data miġbura tkun imħassra.

4) Jekk tħossok emozzjonat/a jew imdejjaq/imdejqa, l-intervista ħa tiġi mwaqfa u mhux ħa tibqa tiġi mistoqsi. Int ser tiġi provdut/a l-informazzjoni neċessarja dwar fejn tista' ssib għajnuna.

Jekk trid tieħu sehem f'din ir-riċerka, trid tiffirma l-formola ta' kunsens u tirritornhom lura lill-għalliema tal-PSCD. Ħa jkollok ħmistax-il ġurnata biex timla' l-formoli meħtieġa. Jekk ikollok xi mistoqsijiet, tiddejjaqx issaqsini! Tista' tkellimni meta inkun ġejt l-iskola tiegħek jew inkella kellem lill-għalliema tal-PSCD jew lil Kap tal-iskola. Jekk tippreferi li l-ġenituri tiegħek jkelmuni, jistgħu jagħmlu dan b'imejl jew jċempluli.

Grazzi tal-ħin u l-kunsiderazzjoni tiegħek. Nistenna bil-ħerqa li nisma' mingħandek.

Tislijiet,
Vittoria Bianco
(Dettalji fejn tista' tikkuntatjani: ███████████████████████)

Appendix J: Consent Form for Parents/Guardians

I have read the attached Parent/Guardian Information Sheet. I give consent for my son/daughter to participate in Ms. Vittoria's Bianco's study on the conditions that:

1) Myself and my son/daughter are free to withdraw our consent at any time throughout the course of study.

2) My son/daughter gives his/her assent to participate in the study.

3) The audio-recordings will be stored securely and will only be accessible to Ms. Vittoria. The recordings will be destroyed when Ms. Vittoria finishes her study.

4) The school and the identity of the students will be anonymised since Ms. Vittoria will use fictitious names (or the names chosen by the students) in her research.

I confirm that I want my son/daughter to participate in this research.

_____   _____

Son/Daughter's Name   Parent/Guardian's Name

_____   _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature   Researcher's Signature

Appendix K: Formula ta' Kunsens tal-Ġenituri/Kustodja

Jiena, li hawn taħt iffirmajt, nikkonferma li qrajt l-ittra ta' informazzjoni. Jien nagħti kunsens lit-tifel/tifla tiegħi biex j/tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju magħmul min Ms. Vittoria Bianco ibbażat fuq dawn il-kundizzjonijiet:

1) Jien u t-tifel/tifla tiegħi għandna d-dritt li nirtiraw l-kunsens tal-parteċipazzjoni tagħna f'dan l-istudju.

2) It-tifel/tifla j/tagħti l-kunsens tiegħu/tagħha biex j/tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju.

3) Id-data miġbura ser tkun maħżuna f'post sikur u użata unikament għal dan l-istudju minn Ms. Vittoria. Id-data miġbura ħa tiġi meqruda meta Ms.Vittoria tlesti dan l-istudju.

4) L-anonimità tal-iskola u l-identità tal-parteċipanti ser jkunu rrispettati f'kull ħin, billi Ms.Vittoria ħa tuża ismijiet fittizji (jew l-ismijiet li għażlu l-parteċipanti stess) fl-istudju tagħha.

Jien nikkonferma li qed nagħti kunses biex it-tifel/tifla tiegħi j/tipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju.

_____   _____
L-isem tat-tifel/tifla   L-isem tal-ġenitur/gwardjan

_____   _____
Firma tal-ġenitur/gwardjan   Firma tar-riċerkatura

Appendix L: Participant Assent Form

I, the undersigned, am willing to take part in Vittoria Bianco's dissertation entitled: 'The role of music in the lives of adolescent students'. I confirm that I have read and understood the attached *Participant Information Sheet* for this study and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study. I understand and am aware that:

1) Participation in this study is voluntary.
2) The audio recorded interview will take 45 minutes to complete.
3) I am free to withdraw at any time without having to explain why.
4) The audio recordings will be stored safely and accessed only by Ms. Vittoria.
5) My real name will not be used in this study. I may choose another name, should I wish to do so.
6) Should I feel sad during the interview, I will be provided with a session to discuss any necessary information about where I may receive support.

I confirm that I want to participate in this research and am able to answer questions about my experience during an audio-recorded individual interview.

_____   _____   _____

Student's Name   Student's Signature   Researcher's
                                                     Signature

_____

Date

Appendix M: Formula ta' Kunsens tal-Parteċipanti

Jiena, li hawn taħt iffirmajt, nixtieq nieħu sehem fit-teżi ta' Vittoria Bianco intitolata: 'L-irwol tal-mużika fil-ħajja ta l-Adoloxxenti'. Jien nikkonferma li qrajt u fhimt l-ittra ta' informazzjoni ta' dan l-istudju, u li kelli opportunita' biex insaqsi u niddiskuti dan l-istudju. Jien nifhem u konxju/a li:

1) L-parteċipazzjoni f'dan l-istudju hija volontarja.

2) L-intervista rrekordjata għandha tul ta' madwar ħamsa u erbgħin minuta u l-kontenut ta' dan il-materjal ser jintuża unikament għal din ir-riċerka akkademika.

3) Għandi d-dritt li nirtira minn dan l-istudju f'kwalunkwe stadju ta' din ir-riċerka u mhux ser inkun żvantaġġat/a bl-ebda mod. F'każ li nirtira, mhux ser ikun hemm il-bżonn li nagħti spjegazzjoni għar-raġunijiet tiegħi u kull informazzjoni miġbura tkun imħassra immedjatament.

4) L-anonimità ser tkun irrispettata f'kull ħin. Mhux ser ikun hemm referenza diretta għal ismi u informazzjoni li tista' twassal għall-identità tiegħi ser tkun eliminata. Bħala parteċipant/a nista' nagħżel psewdonimu għalija nnifsi, dejjem jekk inkun nixtieq.

5) Id-data miġbura ser tkun maħżuna f'post sikur u użata unikament għal dan l-istudju minn Ms. Vittoria.

6) Jekk ikun hemm il-bżonn, jien nista' niġi provdut/a l-informazzjoni neċessarja dwar fejn nista' nsib għajnuna.

Jien nikkonferma li ġejt infurmat/a dwar l-għan ta' dan l-istudju. Jien niddikjara li nixtieq nipparteċipa f'din ir-riċerka u li kapaċi nwieġeb mistoqsijiet dwar l-esperjenza tiegħi f'din l-intervista rrekordjata bl-awdjo.

Isem tal-parteċipant/a   Firma   Firma
                                     tal-parteċipant/a   tar-riċerkatura

---

Data

Appendix N: Interview Questions

The following are some questions that I intend to ask to my participants. Since the interview is semi-structured, the ordering of questions will not be considered as very important. Moreover, as an interviewer, I will feel free to probe interesting areas that arise and allow the interview to follow the participant's interests or concerns. I plan to encourage my participants to speak about the topic with as little prompting as possible to get as close as possible to them without leading them too much by my questions.

1. What is your personal definition of engagement with music? What are your experiences with music?

2. Do you share and listen to the same musical taste with your friends/family?

3. How many hours do you spend listening to music every day, whilst doing nothing else?

4. What is the role of music in your life?

5. What type of instrument do you play? What influenced your choice of instrument?

6. What do you think are the reasons why you listen to your favourite music?

7. How do you as an adolescent use music to help you navigate social relationships with yourself and peers?

8. How do you think the type of music influence your understanding of your emotional experiences?/ Do you think that the type of music helps you understand your emotions more?

9. Which genre of music do you like best? And why?

10. How do you experience music?

11. Where do you listen to music?

12. Do you listen to different genre of music according to your emotional state?/ Do you listen to music according to how you are feeling at the moment?

13. Does music help you? How and why?

14. Do you think that your taste in music creates conflict with your friends and family?

15. Do you listen to a particular type of music just to conform (be accepted in) to a group?

Appendix O: Mistoqsijiet ta' l-Intervista

Dawn t'hawn taħt huma xi ftit mistoqsijiet li jien għandi f'moħħi li nistaqsi lill-parteċipanti. Minħabba li l-intervista hi magħmulha minn mistoqsijiet semi-strutturati, l-ordni ta' dawn il-mistoqsijiet mhix se tkun meqjusa daqshekk importanti. Barra minn hekk, bħala l-persuna li se nkun qed nagħmel l-intervista, se nħossni libera biex insir naf aktar fejn ikun hemm il-bżonn u nippermetti li l-intervista ssewgi l-interessi u dak li jikkonċerna lill-parteċipanti. Jien bi ħsiebni ninkoraġixxi lill-parteċipanti biex jitkellmu fuq is-suġġett mingħajr ma nintervjeni wisq biex inkun nista' nersaq aktar qribhom mingħajr ma mmexxihom wisq bil-mistoqsijiet tiegħi.

1. Kif tfisser ir-relazzjoni tiegħek mal-mużika?

2. It-tip ta' mużika li tisma' hija l-istess bħall-familja u l-ħbieb tiegħek?

3. Fil-ħin liberu tiegħek, kemm tqatta' sigħat tisma' l-mużika?

4. X'inhu l-irwol tal-mużika fil-ħajja tiegħek?

5. X'tip ta' instrument iddoqq? X'ġegħlek tagħżel dan l-instrument?

6. X'taħseb li huma r-raġunijiet għala tisma' d-diski favoriti tiegħek?

7. Bħala żagħżugħ/a, kif tuża l-mużika biex tifforma relazzjoni mal-ħbieb u miegħek innifsek?

8. Taħseb li t-tip ta' mużika li tisma' tgħinek tifhem iżjed l-emozzjonijiet tiegħek?

9. X'tip ta' mużika tħobb tisma' l-iżjed? Għaliex?

10. Kif tesperjenzaha l-mużika?

11. Fejn tħobb tisma' l-mużika?

12. Ġieli tagħżel it-tip ta' mużika skont l-emozzjonijiet li tkun qed tħoss dak il-ħin?

13. Taħseb li l-mużika tgħinek? Kif u għala taħseb hekk?

14. Taħseb li t-tip ta' mużika li tisma' toħloq kunflitt mal-ħbieb jew mal-familja tiegħek?

15. Lest/a li tisma' mużika mhux tat-tip tiegħek biex tkun tista' tiġi aċċettat/a minn grupp ta' ħbieb?

Support Services/Servizzi ta' Sapport

Kellimni (24/7 online support service)

www.kellimni.com

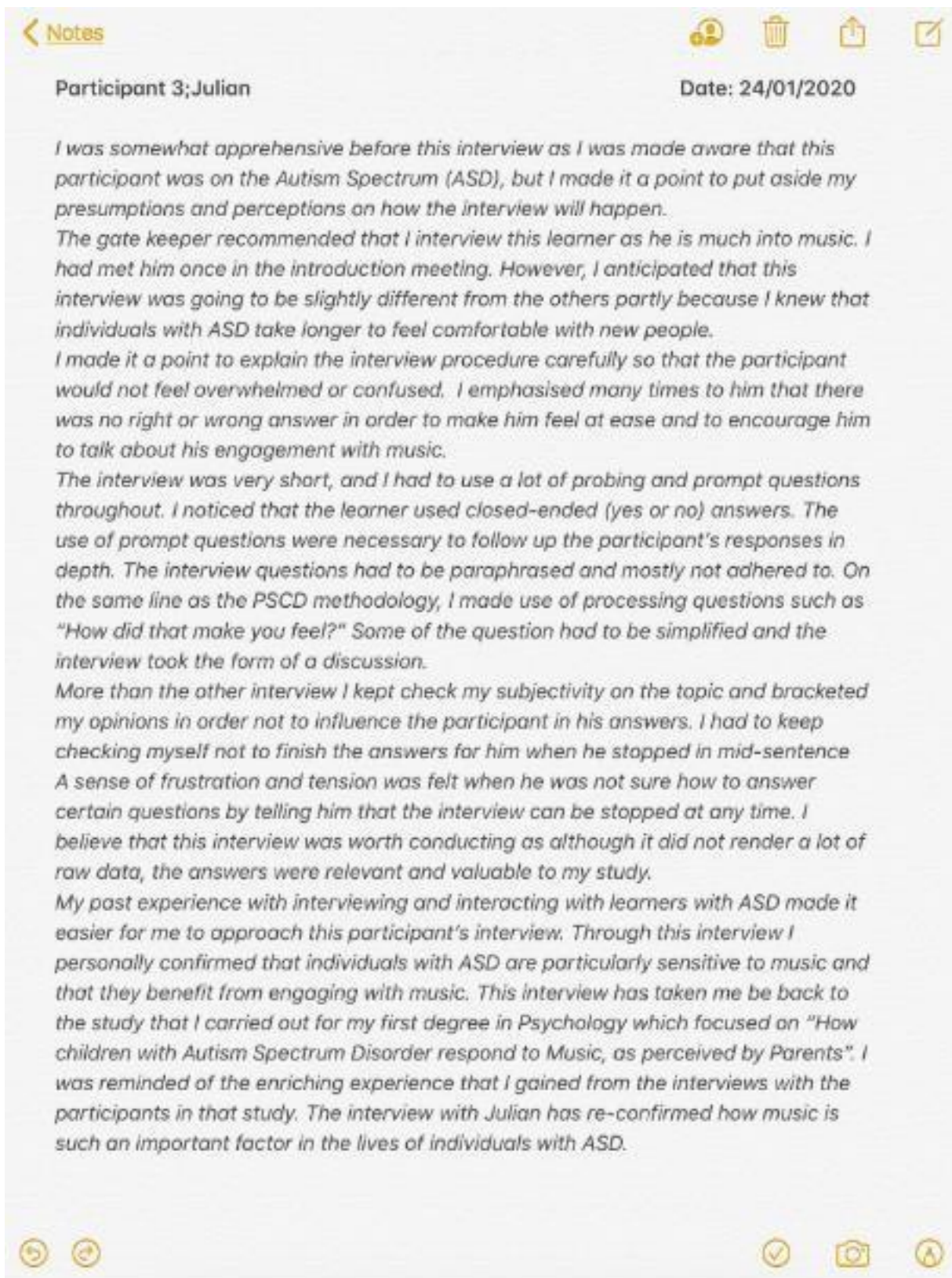## Support Line: 179

School Guidance Teacher

PSCD Teachers

Appendix Q: Excerpts from Reflexive Journal as an Audit Trail

Participant 3;Julian   Date: 24/01/2020

I was somewhat apprehensive before this interview as I was made aware that this participant was on the Autism Spectrum (ASD), but I made it a point to put aside my presumptions and perceptions on how the interview will happen.

The gate keeper recommended that I interview this learner as he is much into music. I had met him once in the introduction meeting. However, I anticipated that this interview was going to be slightly different from the others partly because I knew that individuals with ASD take longer to feel comfortable with new people.

I made it a point to explain the interview procedure carefully so that the participant would not feel overwhelmed or confused. I emphasised many times to him that there was no right or wrong answer in order to make him feel at ease and to encourage him to talk about his engagement with music.

The interview was very short, and I had to use a lot of probing and prompt questions throughout. I noticed that the learner used closed-ended (yes or no) answers. The use of prompt questions were necessary to follow up the participant's responses in depth. The interview questions had to be paraphrased and mostly not adhered to. On the same line as the PSCD methodology, I made use of processing questions such as "How did that make you feel?" Some of the question had to be simplified and the interview took the form of a discussion.

More than the other interview I kept check my subjectivity on the topic and bracketed my opinions in order not to influence the participant in his answers. I had to keep checking myself not to finish the answers for him when he stopped in mid-sentence A sense of frustration and tension was felt when he was not sure how to answer certain questions by telling him that the interview can be stopped at any time. I believe that this interview was worth conducting as although it did not render a lot of raw data, the answers were relevant and valuable to my study.

My past experience with interviewing and interacting with learners with ASD made it easier for me to approach this participant's interview. Through this interview I personally confirmed that individuals with ASD are particularly sensitive to music and that they benefit from engaging with music. This interview has taken me be back to the study that I carried out for my first degree in Psychology which focused on "How children with Autism Spectrum Disorder respond to Music, as perceived by Parents". I was reminded of the enriching experience that I gained from the interviews with the participants in that study. The interview with Julian has re-confirmed how music is such an important factor in the lives of individuals with ASD.

Appendix R: Examples of a Themes with Supporting Quotes from Interviews

7. **How do you as an adolescent use music to help you navigate social relationships with yourself and peers?**

- My music taste is a wide range of music that I listen, from heavy metal to indie to pop, completely different things. It always been random, but normally depends if the song is catchy or if I like the flow of the musicality. I will get into the lyrics and that is how I really chose songs. I don't know if music helps me understand myself more, but sometimes I have a scenario or something that happens and all of the sudden the lyrics makes sense which makes it easy for me to relate with the song. Music helps me find friends since we have common interest between us. I listen to songs together with my friend, it keeps our friendship going. Music can be very personal and also reveals what one's thinking about what is going on around us, so when we share it with each other it shows a deeper element in the friendship. Whenever we find new songs we get obsessed on, we send them to each other. I remember being in a group of 10 people, one of my friends started playing sad music, it was rap and deep stories by the artist. Really quickly the group became really sad, so we started opening up more with each other. Even the tone of the music, we started sharing deeper stories with each other.

> Commented [VB6]: Aesthetic/ Creativity

> Commented [VB7]: Reflections through music

> Commented [VB8]: Selection of friends

> Commented [VB9]: Reflections through music

3. **How many hours do you spend listening to music every day, whilst doing nothing else?**

- I listen to music in my free time and play the piano. I spend many hours trying to master a piece of famous music and usually train with recordings. I like elaborate classical music like Beethoven. Pop music is an ordinary and cheap genre. It does not have any technicalities like classical genres. Sometimes I leave music in the background when I am doing my homework. Music gives me a pleasant atmosphere when doing boring homework. Music helps me remember more information when I am studying

> Commented [VB1]: Aesthetics/Creativity

> Commented [VB2]: Music is everywhere

4. **What is the role of music in your life?**

- I consider music very important in my life, it helps me concentrate on what is going on around me. Music motivates me to dream and to continue to develop my talents.

> Commented [VB3]: Self-Actualisation