

**MUSIC LISTENING PREFERENCE AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL
WELL-BEING AMONG URBAN YOUTH IN KLANG VALLEY,
MALAYSIA**

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**FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS
UNIVERSITI MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2021

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF PERFORMING ARTS
(MUSIC)**

**FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS
UNIVERSITI MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

2021

DEDICATION

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my parents, who has been my source of inspiration and who continually provide their moral, spiritual, emotional and financial support.

To my brothers, sisters, supervisor, and friends who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study.

Universiti Malaya

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Title of Project Paper/Research Report/Dissertation/Thesis ("this Work"):

"MUSIC LISTENING PREFERENCE AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG URBAN YOUTH IN KLANG VALLEY, MALAYSIA"

Field of Study: Music Psychology and Sociology

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Abstract

The main purpose of this is to investigate the youths' psychological well-being went expose to their music listening preference. The participants are six urban youths ages between 18 to 29 years old living within Klang Valley, Malaysia. The participants are categorized into two different groups, three musicians and three non-musicians. Data was collected through qualitative method semi-structure interview. Due to current global pandemic Covid-19, all the interviews were conducted using Zoom video call during MCO and PKP. The study contributes to the understanding of the relationship of music and urban youth. The findings suggest that the influencing factors of the music listening preference for urban youths are musical background, personality, and musical taste. Furthermore, the reason behind why the urban youths listen to their preference music is entertainment and emotion. Besides, the findings show that the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth are emotional impact and self-reflection. Future studies are recommended to explore various emotions that youths are feeling when they listen to music. From the methodological perspective, future studies are recommended to employ mixed method research with survey and questionnaire with a larger population.

Keywords: music listening preference, urban youth, psychological well-being, musicians, non-musicians

Abstrak

Tujuan utama ini adalah untuk menyiasat kesejahteraan psikologi para belia yang terdedah kepada pilihan mendengar muzik mereka. Peserta adalah enam belia bandar yang berumur antara 18 hingga 29 tahun yang tinggal di Lembah Klang, Malaysia. Peserta dikategorikan kepada dua kumpulan yang berbeza, tiga pemuzik dan tiga orang bukan pemuzik. Data dikumpulkan melalui temu ramah separa struktur kaedah kualitatif. Kerana pandemi global Covid-19 semasa, semua wawancara dilakukan menggunakan panggilan video Zoom semasa MCO dan PKP. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada pemahaman mengenai hubungan muzik dan belia bandar. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa faktor pengaruh pilihan mendengar muzik untuk belia bandar adalah latar muzik, keperibadian, dan rasa muzik. Tambahan pula, alasan mengapa belia bandar mendengar muzik pilihan mereka adalah hiburan dan emosi. Selain daripada itu, penemuan menunjukkan bahawa faedah keutamaan mendengar muzik terhadap kesejahteraan belia bandar adalah kesan emosi dan refleksi diri. Kajian masa depan disarankan untuk meneroka pelbagai emosi yang dirasakan oleh para belia ketika mereka mendengar muzik. Dari perspektif metodologi, kajian masa depan disarankan untuk menggunakan penyelidikan kaedah campuran dengan tinjauan dan soal selidik dengan populasi yang lebih besar.

Kata kunci: pilihan mendengar muzik, belia bandar, kesejahteraan psikologi, pemuzik, bukan pemuzik

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“In the name of Allah SubhanahuWa Ta’ala, the most gracious and the most merciful”

Alhamdulillah, all praises to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala for the strength and his blessings for giving me the courage and patient in enduring the challenges faced in completing this research. Without the blessings, this report would not been in this present form. The idea towards the creation of this writing began as early as I had stepped foot into my master’s programme, and it has indeed been inspiring and memorable journey. Working on this thesis has been a wonderful and often overwhelming experience. It is hard to say whether it has been grappling with the topic itself which has been the real learning experience, or grappling with the process of writing and proposal, nerve-wrecking moments during presentation, or staying up till the birds start singing in morning.

In any case, I am indebted to many people for making the time working on my master’s thesis an unforgettable experience. Firstly, I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr Cheong Ku Wing, for her supervision and constant support. To work with you has been a real honour and pleasure to me, with heaps of challenges and excitement, and you have always been patient and encouraging in times of new ideas and difficulties. Your invaluable help of constructive comments and suggestions throughout the research works have contributed to the success of the research. Thank you for being a mentor and a teacher, I really appreciate from the bottom of my heart.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Chairperson Dr Feng-Hsu Lee and panel member Dr Yi-Li Chang and Dr Poon Chiew Hwa for all the rightful comments on my proposal presentation and candidature defence presentation. Everyone’s comments have been very knowledgeable for me to push on writing my master research

to greater height. My acknowledgment also goes to the office staff of the faculty of creative arts, Universiti of Malaya for their co-operation.

Sincere thanks to all my friends, especially Yong Peyee, Lily Khoo, Aidi Ruslan, Ludwig Gaisbauer, Nuradlina Tasya, Izyan Yob, Ashley Sylvester, Ronny Phillips, and Asmadi Said for helping and contributing their time on my research thesis. Last but not least, my deepest gratitude goes to my beloved parents, Kordy bin Saleh and Dr Saladina Jaszle binti Jasmin, for taking the blows, financial aids and for their prayers and encouragement. To those who had indirectly contributed in this research, your kindness means a lot to me. Thank you very much. I sincerely hope that this research paper would not only benefit to me but also to those who will read it in the future.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Davis (2019) defined well-being as the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity. Further, Diener (2011) mentioned that well-being provides better health and longevity. It is the most important fundamental of being a human. Without well-being a person's life can lead to a spiral of misfortune, for example, prone to injury or sickness and even can lead to depression. There are many ways to obtain a good well-being. There varied ways to maintaining a good well-being. Life satisfaction and positive living are keys to well-being; as stated by Chan (2011), to have a good well-being is "to live life with full of satisfaction is to throw away the negativity and embrace the positivity emotion to have satisfaction" (p.1). Music can influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. Cherry (2019) mentioned that music has its function to "relax the mind, energize the body" and to "help people better manage pain" (p. 2). There are lots of interpretations in music that can impact a person's emotion. Some listen to the music without even understanding the language, rather they use their affective feeling to understand the music and some listen intensively to the words sung by the singers; the lyrics are powerful to elicit the feeling and meaning in music. Thus, inevitably, music is reckoned as the universal language. Now how can it effect a person well-being it is this when a person is sad or happy, they will tend to listen to music based on which ever their feeling, sad music for sad feeling and happy music for happy. As advocated by DeNora (2016), music can regulate feelings and ease anxiety, and "music helps to manage emotions and stress" which at the spur of moment, a sudden impulse, "distract and engage listeners in emotional ways" (p.1).

What defines youths? Youths have several definitions. Youth in general terms means a young person but in psychological terms youth means one is physical body being young and second is the mind. Besides those meaning youth also is the time life between childhood and adulthood. Youth according to gerontologist Dr Nancy M. Petry are between 18 to 35 years old of age. The word urban refers to the city. Youth faces a lot of challenges in their work or college life. From the literature, many studies have shown findings in youth violence, especially at urban areas. There are many possible causes from youth violence. As stated by Seal et al. (2014), “violence may due to street, family or interpersonal, children institution, bully and intolerance” (p. 4). Due to all the possible causes, youths may go negatively seek and exhibit strong emotion expressed through vehemence and violence as a solution or escape. Other than that, there are other findings also shown that youths also have other issues in urban area. For example, cost of living now days are getting expensive and salaries from jobs are not getting higher for a basic living. Other than that, jobs intakes are not increasing due to a lot of competition among the youth. Every year youths who graduated from university or college faced challenges on seeking and competing for jobs. As in now with current global pandemic Covid-19, according to International Labour Organisation youths tend be the first to lose their jobs, or will have to resort to lower quality, smaller salary and very dangerous and risky jobs. For that, there are always struggles, trials, and challenges for youths to seek and make a living in the city.

With the advancement of digital technology, this generation of the Millennials, as compared to previous generation have much easy access to music. Music plays a vital role in the daily life of the young people. In this digital age, whether going to or at work, studying or even sleeping, music is always available and presence regardless of time and space. Music is always a compelling desire among urban youths and has potent effect on their emotions in their daily life. In this digital era and advancement in

technology, music is very accessible to everyone such as YouTube and Spotify. The availability is evidenced at home and in the outdoor, public and the differences can be seen out in the open spaces. A person engaged in music listening, in various aspects of their daily lives. In the urban context, people may listen to music when they commute in the public transport, and public spaces. What this shows is the differences in era where back in the older days the only entertainment to accompany a person on their journey while traveling is something with reading, books, newspapers, or literature whereby in today's era is the technology and digital devices.

Music is an important aspect that helps a person to improve their weaknesses and with modern technologies music have become more accessible. Music listening is vital in everyday lives; and it is “very important and universal in the modern lives of multi communication and socializing for adolescence” (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011, p. 98). Socializing is not the easiest thing to be accomplished. Some people have trouble in communication. Music helps to fill in the gap for them to socialize. Music helps them to set the mood or even just to elude outside noise. Earphone or headphone is most important essential needs for a youth. Can music influence one's emotion and well-being? Music helps to ease a person emotion. Their facial expression can be observed when music is played in the ears. Music brings them to their own space of thought. Usually, youth listen to music that suits their current mood. A recent study shows that marketing for music are targeting youth because youth are the future consumers. As stated by Robert et al. (2009), youth are the main consumers for the music industries, and have “invested in countless of time and money on music” (p. 1). What is meant by time and money is every concert perform by artist are mostly fill with youth and not just that all the artist album whether its digital or hard copy are bought by the youths. That is how the music industries are gaining much profit. Thus, there are some inquisitive

aspects of music listening preference and its relation to the youth's well-being to be enquired.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

DeNora (2016) emphasize that “music has a powerful vibe that does indeed influence a person mood to create scenery moment, new routine and occasion” (p. 1) which means music can easily manipulated someone's way of thinking or doing something. If music can really manipulate our emotion and psychological well-being, based on theoretical perspective of circumplex model of emotion music can trigger four values of emotion which is using the standard circumplex model are high, low, positive, and negative. How does this further and deepen our knowledge on how music effect or trigger emotion?

For this study, the participants are youth ages between 18 to 29 years old. This reason why this age is chosen is because during this period of age is the most impactful for any youth and other than that, this period of age is the starting point of any youth on their own future. In general, all studies in journal or articles on the internet or books in the library, the majorities write about music focussed on the older generation and the babies. Scarcity is observed in the studies about youth and music. A lot is going on when one reach adulthood especially those living in the urban area such as characteristic changes, life crisis, future uncertainty, and some are still searching and seeking their own identity of who they really are as a person and with those problem youth tend to be violence. Seal et al. (2014) alarmed the consequences of violence, as it can be “extensive and exorbitant to society” (p. 4). But there are some who use the violence to change who they really are. How can music help the youth through their daily challenge? Now till today not everyone understands how youth are feeling and what the challenges they are facing because every generation the problem and challenges keeps

on changing. Those are the knowledge gap between the older generation and the newer generation. Now during this year 2020 the world has gone into a lock down due to global pandemic Covid-19. Due to this problem, gathering data for this research proof to be a bit challenging.

Social psychology is a social interaction. In other words what are the possibilities of music in social psychology? In general, from the perspectives of sociology, music has varied effects and interpretation among different age groups on their musical development. The psychological impact can come in many different types of form but the most noticeable is the emotion. Recent study shows that when a person is sad, they tend to listen to sad music; not to make it sadder but to make us feel the pleasure of being sad. So, what is the feeling when an individual person is exposed to music? People are not keen on expressing their feeling with other people, due to that getting them to talk will prove to be difficult. There is paucity in research on why and how the urban youth listen to music and their music preferences; also, the limitation of study concerning the music listening preferences in relation to emotional impact and feeling among the urban youth.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on the music preference and its psychological impact towards youth generation living in Malaysia within Klang Valley area. The purpose of the research aims: (1) to investigate the influencing factor on the urban youth music listening preference; (2) the reason behind why the urban youth listen to their preference music; and (3) the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the influencing factors on the music listening preferences among the urban youth?
2. Why the urban youth listen to their preference music?
3. What are the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to investigate how can music benefit the youth generation on contributing to society within Klang Valley. Other than that, how can it contribute to the knowledge gap of the field in this research of psychological well-being of music on youth generation? Why their own music preference and is it an overly broad concept? If given a specific genre for example, metal music the result of this outcome a few will be anger and some maybe pleasure. For this study, the reason for music based on the choices of the participant is because to study what they are feeling in terms of emotion when exposed to their own musical preference. The method that is being used in this study is a semi structure in-depth interview to get a more specific answer from the participant. What this study can contribute to society is the better of understanding of youth's well-being when they listen to their music preference and when they face their daily challenge because music helps to ease the problem it is like an escape goat for the youth to run away from their problem and even use music to help them solve their challenges.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

For this study, the delimitation of music preference and its psychological well-being among the urban youth are narrow down. In this study the first delimitation is the geographical location with is Klang Valley area where the youth live within the city parameters. Other than that, this study is about youth well-being, but well-being is a broad topic so, for this study the variables is being narrow down to the youth emotion. Lastly, youth can be categorised in many ways due to its word youth meaning young people. For this study, the participant that participated in this study is delimited to the age 18 to 29 years old because during this period of age is where their journey into their future begins. For this study, a total of six participants were recruited to participate in the interview sessions. However, this study does not aim to investigate the types of music the youth preferred.

1.7 Definition of Terms

There are three key constructs that are related and relevant to the study which include music, youth, and well-being. For music, this study aims to focus on youth musical listening preference such as their favourite genre. According to American Academy of Child and Adolescent (2017), it was stated that the youth spend 2.5 hours of their time in listening to music. Every youth can have multiple of genre they like especially with now there are a lot of different music genre that can suit their own liking and feeling. Furthermore, Tanner et al. (2008) mentioned that youth are the prime consumers in music. What is the relationship of the urban youth musical preference and their emotion? The second key construct is the participant who is urban youth. For this study urban youth that will participate in this study are age 18 to 29 years old. Urban youth are facing with multiple challenges such as work problem, economic problem, and even psychological problem. According to Gross (2017), it was stated that the pace of life

within the city move faster than less populated areas. Finally, the third is well-being where a person can have a better understanding of the relationship between their musical listening preference and their emotion. In a previous study, Fisher (2019) stated that well-being is defined when a person has exercised several fundamental skills. The main goal of well-being is just not for emotional satisfaction but to help them for further improvements on themselves for the future. As stated, well-being is beyond mere satisfaction, but it is about “how a person is developed and how it can be beneficial to society” (Shah & Mark, 2004, p. 2). This relationship between people and music has been there and existed for centuries.

1.8 Conclusion

For the conclusion there are a few issues presented in this topic. Does music have a psychological impact towards the emotion of an individual and these individuals are youth generation. Music has a huge impact towards the psychological emotion of an individual and at this case is the youth. Music has a lot of benefits for a person well-being whether it is for medical or pleasure. There are many functions for music on a human being. As stated by DeNora (2013), the vitality of music is the function of “pairing or transmigration music is closely associated with memory and forms of emotion experience” (p.15) Music has the power to manipulate and heal a person embodiment. In general, listeners like to attach emotional memory in a particular genre and whenever they want to relive that moment they sit back and let the music bring them back to the memory they want remember.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contributes a discussion of the relevant constructs and research studies related to the purpose of this study. The general definition of music listening is a listening response indicating the degree to which a music is liked/disliked. According to Schafer (2016), music preference is the most mysterious phenomena in psychology. In this study the purpose on music listening preference of youths is to understand the emotion of the youths when they listen to their genre of music. Listening to music has its merit such as for enjoyment, mood regulation, or even socializing. Music also has its benefits in emotion. It helps the listeners to understand and regulate their mood. According to Gurgen (2016), an average person listens to music to regulate their emotion, and music has its function and power to be “a tool for activating, changing, empowering and alleviating emotions” (p. 238).

2.2 Music Listening Preference

Music listening preference refers to the type of music that the person is listening. Music preference is one of the most important aspects of a person to have in their life. According to Arnett (1995), musical listening is an intense activity that shapes the global view and cultivates spending habits, nurtures attitudes, relationships, and perception of who that offers hope and future.

Every youth have individual personal music preference. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent (2017), the youth spend 2.5 hours of their time in listening to music. Tanner et al. (2008) mentioned that youth are the prime consumers in music. It is part of their daily routine. Music preference varies and

changes according to our mood and feeling on the spur of the moment. It was assumed that when a person is sad, they listen to sad music. Popular singer Elton John once said that “When all hope is gone, sad songs say so much”. Millgram et al. (2015) indicated that people with emotional depression prefer to listen to sad music to regulate their emotion. Bicknell (2014) in her blog in *Psychology Today* suggested four reasons on why a person listen to sad music when they are emotionally down and sad. She listed the four reasons as: (1) connections; (2) message; (3) high aesthetic value; and (4) memory triggers.

The first is connection in music, what Bicknell (2014) meant when she listed connection as the reason is whenever someone listens to music; they seek identification on what they want to re-experience the emotion or “cognitive reappraisal” of their emotions. The second is message in the music; music has its message in it from love to life and it also depending on the artist on how he/she/they want to convey it. Songs like Lisa “Homura” meaning flame, and the message in this song based on the artist herself is about life on to “never give up no matter how hard things are”. Other example is song by Taylor Swift “Love Story” which is about love.

The third is the high aesthetic value, which is where one wants to listen to music to reassess the situation and make it as a distraction. Bicknell also mention that excessive use of a particular genre of music can have a poor psychological adjustment and always have a moderate in listening to any genre type of music. Finally, memory trigger. Music has its way around the brain to trigger a memory. For example, as stated by Bicknell (2014) people listen to sad music used the genre as a memory trigger, when the music had an interaction with past events or people, it retrieves memories from the past. Van Den Tol and Edward (2014) stated that the selection strategy in listening to sad music in adverse situations is much to self-regulatory of moods, the emotional effects of listening to music, and to enhance the mood.

On the contrary, Bogt et al. (2019) study on youth and listening to sad music indicated conflicting findings in which they concluded that the youths listen to music as “mood-congruent” (p. 1); when listening to sad music in a depressed state may aggravate their unhappiness. Likewise, it was also assumed that when a person is happy, they listen to something motivating or something hyper to boost the morale and happiness. In general, music listening is vital in mood regulation. There are few people who listen to music opposite on what they are feeling. For example, if a person is sad, they listen to happy music to prevent them from becoming more depressed and it is a psychology process to help reverse the mood. Researcher Chen et al. (2007) found that listeners whose mood is sad tend to seek out for joyful music. They mention in their article that the reason why listeners listen to music opposite of their emotion is because they do not want the sad emotion to linger too long and to provide a mood boost, so they do not become more depressed. Music listening preferences appear to be a “powerful indicator of later misconduct, indicating that music choice is a strong marker of later problem behaviour” (Bogt et al., 2012, p. 138). Now with the rise of modern technologies youths have a lot of access to music and some of them are free such as YouTube and Spotify. There are vast playlists from varieties of musical genres to choose from to match with the youth taste and emotion.

An article by Gottlieb (2019) who is Harvard correspondent, mention that music is a universal language for mankind. It is a cross culture medium. One’s music preference does not have to be in the same language that the youths are speaking. Music has no linguistic boundaries; it can be of any songs from Japan to all the way to Spain. As suggested by Mastrangeli (2013), music can be used as a tool “to discover and understand what others think or perceive and thus reflect in their musical acts” (p. 1). Music has the mystic power to match our emotion. It is like the music is speaking directly to one’s emotion.

Youth musical preference can be influenced by several factors such as social structure and even environment itself. Just by sharing with each other can expand a person's music preference. Rentfrow (2003) found that listening to music is one of the top leisure time activities for most of the people and he stated that music is very diagnostic for people to explore another person's personality. Behne (1997) reached a conclusion and stated that a person's characteristic of music appreciation towards music preference is interpreted in context of the person's history on the way they are "coping with life" (p. 145)

2.3 Urban Youth

The word urban itself means modern suburb or city. Living in the vast modern city is like living in the fast lane. According to Gross (2017) he stated that the pace of life within the city moves faster than less populated areas. There is always a competition in terms of who can secure a good salary paid job. What defines the urban youth generation is always portrayed as "unambitious", "egocentric" and "violence". Everyone has their own struggle in life whether it is money or even job related. As stated by Wade et al. (2014), the reason urban youths struggle to adapt in urban living is due to "family relationships", "community stressors", "personal victimization", "economic hardship", "peer relationships", and "discrimination".

Eisner (2005) mentioned that youth do not need to see a weapon of mass destruction to see that the world was a doubtful, scary place. They have another battlefield that they encounter which was their home, neighbourhood or even the playground, there is always an adult that stands to abuse them. Other than that urban youth has a positive side of the generation, which is they are "optimistic", and "encouraging".

Youth is the "most intelligent generation by far in history" (Eisner, 2005, p. 10). To compare the current to other generations is that they have better education success but

have minimum job wage due to world economics. In recent study, youth are also prone to violence as stated by Seal et al. (2014); and the reason of the violence is street, household, institution, and discrimination. This is the fundamental reason why youths living in urban areas in particular are very “violent”, but some witness violence tends to use violence to motivate them to “achieve a better life by achieving high education” (Seal et al., 2014, p. 4). In the year 2020, the world faces a global pandemic Covid-19, and the youths are the age group who are most effect. Why youth? According to the International Labour Organisation (2020), youths are the first to lose their job or resort to insecure or unsafe job. Due to that the youths are vulnerable to anxiety and depression. According to Kassid (2020), youth are the essential backbone of every society because they bring new energy and ideas.

Recent studies in the psychological perspectives in music have a huge impact on an individual emotional wellbeing in their everyday life. As stated by Dibben (2009) that, “most of the individual listen to music to help them boost working morale’s and some just to help them go on their everyday life” (p. 10). Music also has medical benefit for the brain it helps to jump start the neurons to produce positive thinking. According to Alban (2016) music helps to activate every “known part of the brain”. Other than that music is used in therapeutic interventions to help patients who seek psychological consultation. Music has its function to trigger emotional responses that helps its listeners to regulate their moods from being sad and being happy through music stimuli. According to Schafer et al. (2013), one of the most reported ways to “induce and control” emotions is music. In everyday life, music plays a prominent role, whether deliberately through deliberate music listening. It is also important for this research whether music can induce sad or happy emotional responses within listeners is a helpful stimulus for emotion regulation studies. According to White (2015), music can prompt changes in “emotion induction” and “emotion regulation” (p. 11).

According to Higgins (2012), in the study of music and emotion, metaphorically, music is described as universal language with its purpose and meaning to assist people in self-seeking, to understand and empathise with the emotion of the others and to realise thyself better. From the sociology perspective, music can be used as a tool or agent to socialisation where the youths share musical experience in playing a musical instrument, performing music together in an ensemble or just by sharing with each other's their music preference. These shared musical experiences enable the youths to get to know the other better and well enough to initiate a friendly conversation.

According to Fuld (2009), music plays a huge role in the socialization of youth. Listening to music is part of growing up based on sociology perspective. For some they can overcome this problem by just being bold and brave and gun their way to overcome this problem but for some it is difficult due to either mentally and physically attributes which later will lead to social anxiety and isolation. As stated by Boer (2009), people can create bonds with music, saying that an opening to begin a conversation can be created by sharing similar tastes in music.

2.4 Emotion

Emotion is a mental reaction that happens in our conscious mind such as anger, happy, sad, or even fear. Izard (2009) emphasize the word "feeling" in emotion is a phase of some what a neurobiological process to help with cognitive interaction. Other than that previous research claim that emotion trigger strongly with our own thought of previous or even at moment memory (Kensinger, 2009; Tyng, et al., 2017). Izard (2009) indicated that the stronger the memory so is the strength of the emotion. Furthermore, Izard also mention emotion schemes, dynamic emotion-cognition the most common on-going emotion interaction that may consist of what is briefly in the moment or specific that will emerge over time. Other than that, he suggested that the best way to convey the

true emotion is through music. Music can chain both emotions with memory together to get a perfect picture of what a person are really feeling.

There are a few methods on identifying emotion pattern. According to Mayo Clinic (2020) EEG (Electroencephalogram) is used to detects brain wave fluctuation when a person is exposed to something that can affect the emotion. EEG uses different channel ranged from a single channel to 256 channels to capture different pattern of emotion. One of the downfalls of EEG to get good result one may need to at least invest in a good EEG with a lot of channels to dive in deep to the emotion but the price range is not very affordable especially for student and it is a bit of a hassle to do an EEG report that involves in a lot of scientific methods and writing. Another method that is used to measure emotion is the circumplex model. Circumplex model basically is a representation of a set off data that correlate to another data. Circumplex model of emotion has a limit especially during data collection where the emotion is that can response to the circumplex if limited to the basic emotion such as arousal and valence dimension.

How does music trigger emotion? There are a few ways how music can trigger emotion. As indicated by Thorpe (2017), one can immerse deeply into emotion when listen to music intensely, assimilating and accommodating to the connectivity between music and emotion. Emotion has high consequential when it comes from our music preferences. Thorpe (2017) stated that there are “multi-level of reason why people listen to music” (p. 1) and thus been grouped into three different type of group which is first “examination of the mood” and “control”, second is “self-consciousness” and finally is “community affiliation”. Does a person really experience the “real” emotion when exposed to music? An argument between music experts argue that controversially suggest a person is not really experiencing any of the basic emotion. In theory, the real feeling that a person is feeling is it can be related to tension and relaxation. According

to Thorpe (2017), music preference and selection are often emotional driven, “a person listening to a sad music is because they are feeling sad but in their psychological mind, they are actually experiencing the pleasure of being sad” (p. 1).

Emotion is the most important aspect of a human being; and emotion is evoke through the responses of musical stimuli when listen to music. Composer Joel Douek (2013) stated that some of the composers, especially those in contemporary music “uses cue to evoke emotion to pull out what is called a primal response of a certain memory within the mind” (p. 2). Thorpe (2017) stated that “when the music is deemed to be pleasurable, the brain will light up a path call the dopaminergic pathway that rewards the brain of the pleasure feeling” (p. 1). According to Changizi (2011), music gives a response to the amygdala and hippocampus part of the brain. Music can trigger a lot of emotions; one of it is that certain music can trigger a specific memory within our brain to form a strong emotional centre.

Based on a research on emotion and music, Wells and Hakanen (1991) stated that emotion and music has two issues that focused on how the singers convey their emotion to their music and how the group of adolescents use music. There is a lot of argument stated whether music preference can trigger emotion from a person perspective. Most people listen to music just to help them understand their own feeling because emotion can be a tricky system till today there are a lot of research and argument about emotion and how do they really work.

Schubert (2013) hypothetical assumed that music listeners have to predisposition to concentrate, attentive, and elicit music regardless of the musical styles and genres. Further, Schubert (2013) also advocated that high-brow music genre like classical music are better in enhancing emotional expression as compared to contemporary music, whereas modern and contemporary music are better in provoking and evoking the emotion. Some music can trigger different type of emotion and some another different

type of emotion but for some can control those emotion and set it as any emotion they want.

From the review of the previous studies, a supposition of hypothesis for further investigation is that what really trigger the emotion? Is it based on the preference of music by the listeners themselves and what they listen to is what they are actually feeling?

2.5 Well-being

What does well-being mean? Well-being has a few different definitions towards it but based on the study by previous researcher they found that there are two approaches of definitions for well-being, the hedonic and eudaimonic. Past dissent concerning the nature and pursuit of happiness and well-being led to the creation of two opposing philosophical traditions: hedonic and eudaimonic (Grinde, 2012, p. 50). Both hedonic and eudaimonic comes from Greek philosophical text. For at least 2500 years, the hedonic-eudaimonic distinction has dominated well-being debates, starting with philosophical texts, and continuing in the writings of humanists, psychoanalysts, and researchers of psychology (Huta, 2015, p. 3).

Firstly, the hedonic approach which focuses on happiness. This notion of hedonic happiness was initiated by Aristippus, a Greek philosopher in about 400 BC. He advocated the ethic of pleasure is the goal of life. Kahneman et al. (1999) further define hedonic in wellbeing as pleasure attainment and pain avoidance. According to Bradburn (1969), he stated that hedonic is everything that is positive for the emotion in the mind. The hedonic perspective, often in contrast to eudaimonia, usually equates well-being with the positive emotional states that accompany satisfaction with desire (Diener, 2009). Hedonic well-being is used less frequently in life and research because in theoretical concept hedonism is difficult to “quantify” (Baselmans, 2018).

The second approach to the well-being definition is eudaimonic which means the condition of human flourishing or living well. Rogers (1961) stated that eudaimonic is another side of the positivity effect in a human development and psychological thinking. The eudaimonic view, first explained by Aristotle suggested that the path to well-being was the actualization of one's inherent potential in the pursuit of complex and meaningful goals. According to Fower (2016), eudaimonic is explored as an ethical concept that refers to the best kind of life, an outcome of the natural endowments of humans. Eudaimonic happiness was the basis of the “objectivist” theories of joy, because it is seen as reflecting happiness (Kashdan et al., 2008, p. 220). Rather than subjective psychological feelings, objective social values, how can a person understand what well-being mean? In general well-being is basically the happiness or psychological emotion. There are many ways how one can take care of their well-being, and one of them is music.

Based on recent article by Dickinson (2017) who is a music therapist specialise in cognitive analytic therapy, she mentioned that there are six ways music can improve well-being. The first being music can promote memory and life review. Second, music and movement is able to reduce anxiety, and the third is music can be treated as a form of therapy. Fourthly, learning a musical instrument can enhance and improve the mind, and fifth, music making with others can improve sociability and the sixth being that musical improvisation helps to improve mental health. In this article Dickinson discussed mostly on how a music therapist helps their patients and how she once was a music teacher teaching oboe. In a very recent article by Ollie Birchall (2020), he mentioned that the key to improve our mental health through music is relaxation. With right choice of music can help to relax ourselves from any depression or anxiety and to improve our well-being.

Carl and Kutsidzo (2017) conducted a study on music and well-being. A total of 20 participants volunteered for the experiments. The method the researcher use is ESM which stands for Experience Sampling Method; a “process to examine a development of a person daily routine in both quantitatively and qualitatively” (p. 31). Basically, ESM function as their daily electronic daily diary method. For 2 weeks they send messages on assigned at the given time, amounting 20 messages per day for two weeks. The result for research ended shows that music plays a huge role in a person life whether they are sitting idly by or even going to the gym and the researcher also gave them the response form included a few questions that the student needs to fill with their own word of their own experience and reason of the effect of the different type of musical situation they encounter.

How can music affect a person well-being? Music and well-being are one of the most important aspects for a person embodiment. As stated by DeNora (2013), sustaining musical practice can contribute to better quality of life. Ansdell (2016) stated that “music offers something to people challenged by all kinds of problem and in very different situation” (p. xii). Gouk et al. (2018) described music is somehow language of the emotions with an almost magical link to our state of mind.

There are a few elements in the music that helps youth channel their emotion to help improve their well-being. The most important element to have in a piece of music is the catchy melody and an incredibly good and memorable lyric that the youths can relate to. Further, Gouk et al. (2018) also mentioned that the key reason of a vast interest in the research in music, emotion, and well-being is because of our advancement in technology that helps understanding of the neuroscience in music over the past few decades. In contrary, Oliver (2006) shared a different view, indicating that it explicitly problematizes the relationship between past and current scientific thinking on music, emotions and well-being, using historical perspective to illuminate the

ideological and cultural roots of “contemporary musical” and “scientific concept” (p. 25).

In sum, many studies had studied on the relationship between music and wellbeing from the philosophical, psychological, and scientific perspectives.

Universiti Malaya

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The purpose of this study was to understand the music listening preference and the psychological well-being among urban youth. This chapter aims to provide a succinct description of the research methodology to address the research questions. The outline of this chapter will be organized as follows: (1) research method; (2) data collection procedures; and (3) data analysis procedures. The study discusses the methods used to examine and address the following research questions:

1. What are the influencing factors on the music listening preferences among the urban youth?
2. Why the urban youth listen to their preference music?
3. What are the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth?

3.2 Research Method

The following presents the research methods for the study. The first section provides a description of the research design employed in this study.

3.2.1 Research design

The study employed qualitative research method. Qualitative methods are primarily used to as mentioned by Farnsworth (2019) is to find and addition a top to bottom comprehension of individual encounters, musings, feelings, and patterns, and to dive further into the current issue. The psychology approach concerns itself with

understanding and interpreting the meaning that participants give to their music on everyday lives.

The reason why qualitative was chosen for this study is because to have a better understanding from a personal point of view on how the youth use music to overcome their daily challenge and emotion. On recent study on why some research use qualitative research is because “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2).

Qualitative research approach is used when factual data is required to answer research questions. Usually, the research question in qualitative study is about experience, meaning, and perspective. In this case, this study used a semi-structure interview to get a deeper understanding about the participant. Other than that, Porter and Bhattacharya (2005) also indicated that qualitative method is used to reveal the potential problem in the research.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection as stated by Levario et al. (2016) is an efficient way to deal with social occasion and estimating data from an assortment of sources to get a total and exact image of a zone of intrigue. For this study, the data collected are from: (1) interview; (2) participants; and (3) music material. The time frame for the data collection starts at 18 August 2020 till 29 September 2020. During this time stamp all interviews were done back and forth to have a better understanding of the study and the questions asked in the interviews.

3.3.1 Interview

Based on a research by Boyce and Neale (2006) on methodology interview they stated interview is a research method which involves “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation” (p. 3). There are three different types of interview. The first type of interview is structure interview which is an interview consists of pre-determined question. The second is unstructured interview which is an interview that has no prepared question and is done informal manner. The last type of interview is semi-structured interview which is a mix of both structured and unstructured interview.

In this study, semi structure in-depth interview is employed to collect relevant data to fulfil the research objectives. The semi-structured interview method combines some structured questions with some unstructured exploration. As stated by Wilson (2014), “semi-structured interview is useful for when the researcher knows something about a topic but want to give users an opportunity to raise new issues” (p. 23). Semi-structured interviews are especially useful when the researcher is working with a difficult problem and can use probes and spontaneous questions to discuss, deepen the understanding, and clarify answers to the questions.

The few examples of questions that was asked focussed on the influencing factors on the music listening preference among the urban youth; the reason why the urban youths listen to their preference music; and the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth. In-depth semi-structured was chosen for this study is that in-depth semi-structured interview is more flexible and is not a very rigid type of interview and able to understand the participant better and make the participants feel more at ease and comfortable to answer the questions set in the interview guide.

For the interview, there are two phases to the interview questions, first being demographic information where basic questions about the participant themselves was asked; and this followed by how the current situation in the global pandemic Covid-19 has its effect on their livelihood and jobs. The second phase is music listening preference, based on the three research questions.

3.3.1.1 Preparation

For this study the process to prepare the interview structure and the question takes a total of two months to construct. Every question that has been created for this interview has been created for the purpose of understanding the relationship between music and youths. Based on the first research question, this study aims to examine what are the factors that influence the youth's music listening preference and their taste in music. Everyone have their own specific music that they like and what make them different from one another is the different emotion and feeling that they have when they are listening to their music. That brings in the second research question in which the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the preference of music listening among the urban youth. Music is used to keep us company and also use to heal. From broken heart to psychological problem music is one of the solutions. The third research question, aims to address the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being among the urban youth, how is it a life changing event or even help to overcome their problem. Youth face a lot of challenges such as economic problem, job stress, and even education stress. For the third that is what I want to get out of it. All interview questions are rephrased for better clarity for the participants.

3.3.2 Participants

In this study, the participants are delimited to the urban youth, the millennial generation between 18 to 29 years of age living within Klang Valley. This study managed to recruit only six participants. Initially, this study intended for 10 participants. An invitation was sent to 10 participants, five are musicians and other five are non-musicians. From the five invitations to the musician only two replied with positive responses, and the other three did not respond at all. For the non-musicians, only one responded positively, two declined the invitation stating that they were not able to commit to the interview due to uncertainty in life and lacking confidence to share their experiences; and the other two did not respond at all. Consequently, a second invitation was sent to seven more participants; three for musicians and four for non-musicians. From the three musicians only one responded yes, two responded that they cannot participate in the interview because one of them has return to his hometown and in his parents' home there is no access to Wi-Fi and stable phone line, and the other one has psychological problem due to the loss of job during covid-19 MCO and PKP. For the non-musicians two responded yes and committed to participate in the interview and the other two did not responded to the invitation. Now with all the participants, all in all, this study has been limited to only six participants. Due to current pandemic situation of Covid-19, all interviews with the participants are done through online video call.

3.3.2.1 Demographic

There were six participants in this study, three males and three females with ages between 22 to 27 years old. Among the six participants, there were three “formally trained” musicians and the other three were “informally learned” musicians.

3.3.3 Music Materials

Materials are given to the participants to help them understand the study even better, for this study the material use is music. In this study, the participants were requested to provide their own musical listening preferences in term of genre. In this study the participants are urban youth. The music that they expose to themselves is generally their own music preference. Nowadays technologies are blooming with easy choices of access for music such as Spotify and YouTube. From there, the findings were evaluated with the set of interview questions given during the semi-structure interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Data collected was inspected, rearrange, and transform data to extract useful information from the procedure. Thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was employed to analyse the narrative data from the interview. The data analysis was carried with Braun and Clarke (2006) 6-step procedure. The first is to get familiarised with the data. The second is to assign preliminary codes to the data and further describe the content. The third is to search for pattern or themes in the codes across the different interviews. The fourth is to review the themes, follows by the fifth, to define and label the themes; and finally, the sixth is to produce the report. The interviews were arranged and conducted through online video chat interview via Zoom. The limited timing of the usage of Zoom within 40 minutes timeframe is suitable for the interviews. Further, the interview sessions can be reordered through the Zoom applications and further converted to audio data for further transcription and analysis.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology of this study. It included research design, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the data analysis from the interviews and a discussion of the research findings. This aim of this study is to understand how music preference effect or impact urban youth's withing Klang Valley, Malaysia psychological well-being. The findings are guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the influencing factors on the music listening preferences among the urban youth?
2. Why the urban youth listen to their preference music?
3. What are the benefits of music listening on the well-being of the urban youth?

4.2. Findings of the Study

This section discusses the findings of the study and organised according accordingly: (1) the influencing factors on the music listening preference among the urban youth; (2) urban youth preference in music listening; and (3) the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth.

In general, the findings of the study indicate that music play a huge role in an urban youth daily life. Youth faces a lot of life challenges and music is used as a way and mean for them to temporarily escape from their problem. Santiago (2017) mentioned that music is a vital aspect of their life and it helps them in overcoming their problems they face with their personal and social life. The following discuss the music preference in music among the urban youth.

4.2.1 The influencing factors on the music listening preference among the urban youths.

Every youth have their music preference that they like. For this research, what it meant by music preference is the genre they like to listen. There are many different genres in music. Every genre plays a crucial part in emotion. Even in music app Spotify the more one listen to one genre, it helps to arrange the home screen in the app with related genre with the one frequently listen to, and every end of the year data will be compiled data on what is the most listened to genre and artists. The participants in this study were grouped into two categories which are musician and non-musician. The participants indicated that their choice of music preferences is influenced by the following factors, which included: (1) musical background; (2) personality; and (3) musical taste.

4.2.1.1 Musical background

Musical background can be spilt into two explanation which is first musical means is to indicate something relates to playing or studying music and background in general term means what kind of family one came from and what kind of education one undergone. In this study, musical background refers to musical knowledge and experience acquired through formal music education and through informal musical and knowledge assimilated through the environment.

In this study, three participants received formal music education while the other three participants had formal education in other disciplines, with rich music experience from home and other music environment. But does formal music education have an influence on one's music choice? Among the three musicians, two of the participants disagreed that formal music education had an influence on their choice of music. Participant A, who is a musician, stated that:

To me it does not do much influence my choice of music; it just helps me to understand more about musical knowledge.

Having formal music education provides formal music knowledge to understand music in depth and in breadth. It is a privilege, as not all are fortunate to have the opportunity to pursue music professionally; and to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of music. As stated by Ashley, formal music education provides a foundation for the fundamental of music, and she gave an example like understanding musical structure and theoretical knowledge on how music works. Conversely, another participant B who is also formally trained as a musician shared that the musical training did not actually influence my choice of music. Nevertheless, she shared that progressive formal training as a musician and a pianist had contributed to the more advanced level of music appreciation on other musical genres such as orchestral music, instrumental music, and jazz.

Among the participants who are formally trained as musician, there is one who agreed that having formal musical education influence her music choice. Participant T, who is a piano major, stated that:

The instrument choice influences my choice of genres. The piano sounds soothing and relaxing, but at the same time it can be used to play different genres. Therefore, that is why I choose the piano.

She explained and expressed that the piano sound is soothing and relaxing for her. Further, piano is a good combination to other musical settings in other musical genres. Thus, she stated that piano is her preferred choice of musical instrument and piano music is her top choice.

Besides having a formal music education, the informal musical experience also plays a vital role in influencing the youth choice of music. The informal musical experience refers to the musical experience assimilated and accommodated from the musical environments around us such as our home place or even at work. Among the

six participants only one disagree with the notion stipulated above. Participant A, who is a taekwondo instructor, disapproved on the stipulation and stated that:

In terms of influence, no ... it depends on the situation if there is a particular place to enjoy suitable music maybe it can because if the music fits with the environment itself just maybe it can.

Musical background does not only have benefits for musicians, but even non-musicians also experienced the impact of musical background even though they do not notice and realised that it even influences their choice of music or musical behaviour. The five other non-musicians are in agreeable with the notion that other than formal musical education and training, musical environment plays a vital role in influencing their music choice. Participant I stated that:

Yes, by being at my workplace. Having colleagues that listen to same type of music that I prefer; and further my music knowledge and repertoire in music has also widened.

Music is a universal language that can be share with everyone. What this participant mention is that she can share the same appreciation of the same type of music with others. Through her assimilation of various types of music at workplace, she increased her knowledge in music listening lists and gaining a richer from of musical vocabulary. Participant L also shared the same thoughts:

I would say "Yes", because also by just being outside, we tend to discover more new things, we can be walking in a mall and suddenly hear a catchy tune that caught our attention and that's an easy way how we can discover new music.

Music is everywhere in our surroundings. It could be the sound of the wind or even when one is stuck in a traffic jam in the middle of the highway there is always some new sound to be discovered. By listening to the background music in the shopping mall or even shop outlet; the sonic experience often triggers listening to curiosity and yearn for a newly discovery of music that may contribute to the influence in the musical preferences and choices. Participant B also mentioned that:

Musical environment did influence my choice of music because it exposed me to more instrumental music. My choice of music expands. Workplace not much, but at home, my family did influence me a lot with ballad songs that's sentimental. Then they are nice to play on the piano.

Being exposed to various genres and styles of music is how a person knows which music is suitable to ourselves and by doing so learning the vast musical genres; one gets to expand their musical taste. For this participant she loves sentimental music due to her family influence at home and plus since she is a pianist the song sentimental sound superb on the piano. Participant A also stated that:

Environment does contribute to the factors that influence my choice of music. I grew up in a non-musical family but some of my close relatives are, some friends also influenced me as well. But learning new things, exchanging views with fellow musicians and professionals in university, it did help me change my perspective of music. So yes, environment does influence my choice of music.

Learning and exchanging view in terms of music is the best way to grow the influence of music choice. Due to the vast of genre of music it is impossible to know about them all. So that's the best way to meet different people to change point of view and share music knowledge to gain a bigger point of view in our musical sense and taste. Participant T also expressed that:

Environment I agree, workplace sometimes can be a stressful place therefore calming music is just what I need. Home, u would like to be energetic, so a song with happy words, works a lot for me. Hence, whenever I feel emotional, sad song literally works for me. So yes, the environment affects my choice of music.

Being a youth with a job is not easy due to economic problem and work stress; and often need a place for self-expression and self-reflection. For this participant, whenever she is at home after work she will put, and energetic and calm music is to boost the morale. Using the environment that is provided for us, it is essential to make the most benefits out of it. Mostly all of them agreed that musical environment plays a huge role in their music choice. In short, formal music education is irrelevant on the musical preference and choice of selection. Further, the surrounding environment is

vital in influencing the musical choices whether it is outside by the sea or even at home, there are musical inspirations everywhere.

4.2.1.2 Personality

Personality is what type of a person one is, and it is shown by the way one behave and think. North (2008) suggests that people do define themselves through music and use it to relate to other people. Personality might have or might not have an influence in our music choice depending on individual. But for some their personality changes when their age even older. Some from young age who is very energetic and when he or she grows older them become a quiet person. From their not just the personality changes but also their influence in music. Other than that, some personality maintains as they grow older. Personality and music are affected by factors such as culture and peer groups, and even possibly correlated by socioeconomic status (Yuan, 2020). All the participants stated their answer whether personality can influence music choice or not. According to participant I, she stated:

Yes. I'm always known as the hard to please person among my friends. Maybe that's why I always enjoy hard-core type of music. I always need something loud for my ears from my playlist. Any music that remotely trigger some negative emotion of anger; and deep emotion, that is definitely my daily lullaby.

Music can define a person personality. For this participant she defined herself as a hard person meaning the music of her choice is hard-core music. Music can reflect on ourselves to show us, our personalities. According to participant A, he stated that:

Yes, it does because it is like a representative on ourselves from the playlist people know our characteristic even the person does not know the other person but based on their playlist, we can get a hint on who is that person. By music we can know or discover our own inner self and characteristic.

Rentfrow (2003) stated people also use music to inform others about themselves.

For this participant he mentioned that music is his representative of himself. It is more

like an identity that one can share to other people so they will know from the playlist what type of person they are. According to participant L, he stated that:

Yes, there is always a type of music to listen to when we are sad, happy, angry because the lyrics and melody speaks to how we are feeling at that time. As for me when I'm moody or sad I like to listen to slow songs and deep lyrics.

Music is the best tool to express the emotion and from those emotions can shape one's personality. Nowadays, with modern technologies and application on the smart phone such as Spotify; music preference lists can be shared to others on was listened to, and to give an impression of one's mood of the day and personality. According to Participant A, he stated that:

This is quite difficult to determine because personalities changes between age groups. To me, personality does not have major influence in choices of music for adults but for youngsters, yes. From my point of view, it is rather the opposite, the choice of music shapes the personality of a person, and it is often reflected through youths.

Our music taste changes according to age. So does our personality because due to age and experience things tend to change some are good and some are bad. What this participant is stating is that for him rather than his personality that influences his music choice, but it is the music that really shape his personality and who he is today.

According to Participant B, she stated:

It does. In a way I prefer less "happening" music, maybe due to my introvert nature, I prefer minimal music (less simulative, and more like background music). Most of the time, the choice of music depends on the mood I have. Happy mood I normally prefer fast music, then moody will choose sentimental ones.

A person music choice changes from the current mood that person is in. For this participant, her music choice changes based on her mood rooted in her introvert personality. Music can have a variety changes based on our mood so does our personality. But to really make our personality more concrete it depends on the individual on how they see themselves.

4.2.1.3 Musical taste

Musical taste or taste of music is something that is tied to the term aesthetic. Musical taste can be related to musical preference. Everyone has a musical taste; it is like something that one like. Every genre has its fan behind it. No matter how it sounds, there is always a person who will like it. Musical genre is a vast concept because with the rise of technologies musician create a lot of new genres. The question that was asked was their musical preference. According to Participant A, he stated that:

I'm very interested in upbeat tempo music that gives passion. Upbeat tempo music mostly for lifting one passion for sports and when I put my headphone on, we are in our own world and when we listen, we try to be passionate, that is why everyone listen to music that suit to their own specific and for me is upbeat tempo music.

Music that gives passion is a music that can give to strength or lift up a person's spirit to start doing something. For this participant he listens to passionate music is because of his interest in sports. When doing an activity that consumes stamina or strength, the music that is suitable for it is something like upbeat or something fast to pump up the dopamine and give us more strength and spirit to finish the activity. According to Participant L, he stated that:

Yes, I listen to mostly pop and R&B. But my songs are mostly mixture of everything. Like every genre there is I listen to Spanish, English, Malay, Korean, Japan and basically everything. I get bored very easily.

Music can have two separate meaning for some people. Some use music merely for entertainment and some use to express themselves. For this participant the reason he listen to vast different type of music in different language is because he is the type that don't stick to one type of music that makes him constantly change his taste in music.

According to Participant I, she shared that:

I grew up with punk rock music but then now days I'm more to a universal type of genre.

Musical taste is an evolving process where even when as a child, one develops a sense of musical taste but when one progresses through age their taste keeps on changing. For this participant she grew up with punk rock and then in later years, her musical taste became a universal genre. What she meant by universal type of genre is she is the type where she can listen to any genre of music that is available to her. According to Participant A, he agreed that:

Yes, I would say I like many genres, but my main interest is folk acoustic music and ambient kind of sound. Why I choose this music is because the style of the music is quite peaceful for me. Folk music they use acoustic guitar, and they do not have a lot of layers of instruments. For me I like it minimal.

Folk acoustic music is a cultural popular music played without any electronic. Everything is natural based sound. What the participant meant by minimal is he like a music especially Folk acoustic music with less instrumentation. Usually when folk music is being played especially for festival or for study, they use a lot of instrumentation to make it feel fuller and the sound much bigger. But for minimal folk music make it smaller instrumentation to imitate the full-size band of the folk music. According to Participant B, she stated that:

I like instrumental and how to say. It's like the relaxing peaceful and soothing kind and then I listen to it more when I'm studying or when I want to sleep. So mostly I make it more minimal. Like its very minimal features and not too noisy.

For this participant she prefers instrumental music because it helps her with studying and when she wants to sleep. Instrumental music refers to music without vocal as its lead instead it replaces by another instrument to fill the role. Minimal is the best for a person who seeks out smooth and soothing sound because it is not heavily based instrumentation and due to its small instrumentation, it makes the song more soothing to listen and not too noisy. According to Participant T, she stated that:

I love listening to any classical ballad song especially the piano because I myself play the piano and I find that the song really helps me to balance my emotion.

For this participant, she likes classical ballad as she is a pianist. A lot of musicians now days like a certain type of music because of the instrumentation role in the music are like their own instrument that they played. Other than that, she mention it keep her emotion in balance. Having a specific type of music can help one to have a balance life because music is an essential part of our daily life especially the youth with the problem at work; and problem in the higher learning, they need a space to escape to reflect and resolve their problems to maintain a balance of their life and emotion.

In conclusion, musical preference does define a person who they are, and it helps to impact a youth daily life. Inspiration for their music preference can come in many ways such as musical background, personality, or even musical environment. Music can also affect the emotion.

4.2.2 The factors behind the urban youth listening to their preference music

Listening to music can be merely an entertainment, where a person just listen to music and nothing happen. But for some they like to attach emotion in their music listening. The purpose for that can be various, such as to lift the spirit, lift the mood or even just to remember nostalgic memory. Every time emotion is applied to the music if it is a happy music it triggers the dopamine in one's brain to help to release stress and boost the mood. In some cases, listening to music can trigger different type of emotion; it depends on the different type of genre that they listen to. As stated by Heshmat (2019), music is a hobby and is used in arousing emotional responses such as chills and thrills in listeners. The participants indicated that music and emotion include: (1) entertainment; and (2) emotion.

4.2.2.1 Entertainment

Entertainment is merely for amusement or enjoyment. Music way back in the first discovery of music was merely to entertain the audience. When a person listen to music is to enjoy ourselves away from the stress just for pleasure. According to participant I when ask about applying emotion into her music choice, she stated:

No not really, I just enjoy that type of music.

Music can have a lot of meaning towards a person. It is really depending on the person point of view on how they see what music really is. Some see it as their salvation and for some just merely entertainment. For this participant she only listens to her choice of music for the enjoyment. But for some music can evoke emotion.

4.2.2.2 Emotion

Emotion is a conscious mental reaction and feeling within. Izard (2010) emphasized the word “feeling” in emotion is a phase of some what a neurobiological process to help with cognitive interaction Most music have story in it to evoke the emotion. Composer Joel Douek (2017) stated, “several composers especially in modern music uses cue to evoke emotion to pull out what is called a primal response of a certain memory within the mind” (p. 2). The responses from the participants when ask about the emotion when they listen to their choice of music, here are their responses. According to Participant A, he stated that:

Yes, I do it really depends on the lyric and sometimes the lyric can relate to ourselves.

Lyric is one of the most important features in vocal music. Lyric helps people to understand the meaning and what the music is all about. Most of the people can relate the lyric of the music to themselves. From the lyric and the music can evoke emotion from the listeners. According to Participant L he stated that:

Yes, I do. Some music makes me happy, and some music makes me sad. It depends on the type of music like personally most of my song I like to listen to ballads because is slow and emotional.

Music plays a huge role to help us figure out our feeling. They type of music changes depends on our current emotion. When a person is sad, they tend to listen to music to accompany with the emotion. Thorpe (2017) stated that psychologically, a person have a tendency to select music for listening according to our mood; and listening to sad music is to enjoy the pleasure of being sad (p. 1). According to Participant A, he stated that:

Yes, because like I said I like the music because of the peacefulness and the minimalist so it gives me a moment of peace after like one hectic day of work and then I drive home I listen to the music inside the car and it gives me a calm situation.

Everyone has their hectic day at work. The stress of assignment or even customer can dial the nerves to ten. Everyone needs an escape now and then to get away from the stress and preventing it from piling up into even more stress. Like this participant said he listens to the music in the car on the way home to help him calm himself from the hectic day he experiences. According to Participant B she stated:

I do, especially at night will be more obvious because you're so tired and then you want to have a music that's related to what you're feeling.

Just as what was mentioned before, music plays a huge role for a person. Similarly, this participant she listens to music to help ease her tiredness. Music has a mystical power that can help ease when one are in pain or even stress. Music is one of the major factors in helping a person to go through their day. According to Participant T, she stated that:

It does make my life more meaningful when I put some emotion while listening to that one genre. So yes, I agree I do put some feelings.

Music helps to brighten our days and our lives with wonderful "musical colour" but in some cases, music can give a black and grey vibe towards a person. For this

participant music helps her life to be more meaningful. Music and emotion mix well with each other, the more a person listen the more they understand their emotion and what they are currently feeling. Music is the best companion that is always there in one's corner and now with modern technologies, music is everywhere from one's smartphone to the shopping mall. With all the emotion, there is also a benefit or impact in popular music for the youth to help them face their daily challenges and propel them towards a brighter and better future.

4.2.3 The benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth

Emotional impact can have many types of meaning for this research is the impact of popular music on the youth's well-being. Impact means the marked effect or influence. Youth face a lot of challenges especially now with financial problem due to country economic and plus now with pandemic Covid-19 slowing down their working progress and some have lost their job due to it. So, music helps to ease their problem to be like a scape goat for them to escape from their problems in life and reality. What are the impacts the music can give to the youth? The participants indicated that the benefits of music listening preference include: (1) emotional impact; and (2) self-reflection.

4.2.3.1 Emotional impact

Benefits are something helpful or good effect. Music can have multiple benefits such as medical benefits or even entertainment benefits. It really depends on a person view on the matter. As stated by Kontaris et al. (2020), music "has the power to change moods and help people process their feelings" (p. 1). The questions asked were what are the benefit music have on their well-being? The responds are as follow. According to Participant A, he stated that:

There is a benefit because sometimes music has an impact to everyone, that's my opinion because the impact mostly when we listen to music, it gives us, more passion for ourselves.

Using music can help us to understand our feeling even better. For this participant when he listen to music the benefit music gives to his well-being is, he feels more passionate for himself so it can help him improve to satisfy his life. According to Participant L he stated that:

Yes, it does have benefits and emotional impact in me because sometimes when I'm sad I listen to sad songs because it makes me feel better for some weird reason.

For this participant what he meant is the benefit of music helps his to understand the emotion he is feeling when he listens to music. Music is a powerful medium to help a person to understand what they are currently feeling, and it also helps people to connect with each other. According to Participant I, she commented that:

It helps me with my mental health and releases my stress that's all.

Mental health is important because it keeps us stable and healthy. If one keeps piling up stress, then their minds tend to be unstable which lead to a lot of illness and disorder. For this participant music benefits her by releasing stress and keeps her mental health healthy. According to Participant A, he agreed that:

Yes, it lifts up my feelings. So, my style if I'm frustrated or sad, I won't go to listen to sad music because it will add up to my sadness. So, I would listen to calming music to calm me down and to lift my spirit up. So that's the benefits.

For this participant what he is actually doing is he is doing a psycho to change his current emotion from sad to happy by listening to the opposite music rather than listening to sad music he listen to happy music because by doing that he avoid from being even more sad or even depress and that is what music benefits him. According to Participant B, she expressed that:

Yes, it does because like they say music is our companion. So, it's like it feels relatable to the music, it's like a sharing or a bond something like that. So, it does benefits because I do not feel as lonely, I guess because you can keep listening to it.

Music is the best companion for a person because by listening to the music they like; they can have a better understanding about ourselves. For this participant the benefit is that she feels relatable to the music she listens to, and it helps her to not feel lonely because one can listen to music anytime and anywhere. According to Participant T, she stated that:

Yes, by listening to classical ballad it helps me to sooth in my thinking especially because I am the kind of person who would think a lot because I am the eldest in my family, so I do think and reflect a lot. So, when I step into the house, the first thing I do is relax by switching on that one genre and it helps a lot.

Like what was mentioned earlier, music has a mystical power that helps ease one's stress and anxiety. For this participant what music benefits her on her well-being is that it helps to keep calm and relax her thinking from the hectic day she is going through. Music is more than just a tool as entertainment; it is a tool that helps us regulate our mood and helps us to ease up our feeling and stress.

4.2.3.2 Self-reflection

The question self-reflection is the question youth, or anyone constantly think about when they think of the future. It is always best to think about who one really are, so that in the future one can overcome their weaknesses for a better future. One of the most famous quotes by an inspirational American speaker, she quoted:

The journey into self-love and self-acceptance must begin with self-examination... until you take the journey of self-reflection, it is almost impossible to grow or learn in life. Iyanla Vanzant (2019)

Self-reflection means to observe or witness oneself to grow as a person. This study aims to seek what can music and the thought of self-reflect have on the participants. The question asked to the participants are when you listen to your specific music, do you have any self-reflection on yourself? According to Participant A, he stated that:

Yes. Sometimes we do not even realise when we reflect on ourselves but when we listen to music, like I said before when we feel the music and the tempo, the sound can influence ourselves because at some point the music is relate to our life.

What he meant by that is that sometimes a person listens to music their mind unintentionally has self-reflection about themselves. How music can relate to a person life depends on the song and the person listening to it. Life is like a cycle, what helps it to rotate and maintain it in us is our memory or mind and what helps the memory to give a good reflection is music. A person's mind is the most powerful parts of their body and it acts like the master control for the entire body, so sometimes it can do something intentionally and unintentionally. According to Participant L he stated that:

Yes, I do it shows what kind of a person I am. Like my taste of music. Basically, you can know the general idea of who that person is based on their music preference.

Music can reveal one's inner self if they have a bad impulse or if they have a kind nature. What this participant is saying that music helps him to self-reflect on who he really is in term of a person. Having a good self-reflect can really help a person grow to a better person. According to Participant I, she stated that:

Yeah, I do, well like how my friend use to describe me, they don't expect what I listen to by looking at me from the outside, like they expect me to listen to Siti Nurhaliza.

What she meant by this statement is that some people are very stereotypical if a person see someone with a hijab they tend to assume, she listens to this type of music but, it is not. For this participant she grew up with punk rock. The way she sees herself

whether in the past or future and this is what she is reflecting in her mind every time she listens to her music preference. That is what her self-reflect is. According to Participant A, he stated that:

Yes, I would reflect myself some instance of song like maybe when I'm sad and I will go to listen to sad music or some happy music, I would like to reflect myself inside the song. Find out a way to see myself from a different view and to improve myself and in the areas that require change and improvement.

For this participant music helps him to improve him in areas he needs to improve, and it is a good thing to do because knowing one's own weaknesses can help, they grow much better in terms of a person both mentally and physically. Not everyone can't overcome their weaknesses, there is always a wall or a mental wall what all psychiatrist will mention to prevent a person from overcoming their own weakness and those mental walls depends on the individual themselves on how they see it themselves. According to Participant B, she stated that:

I often think about identity and ponder on how music preference relates to each other because I realise like my professional identity is rather ambiguous ... as a dancer and classical pianist. Thus, I have a broader experience in various genre of music as a dancer is, I listen to upbeat music.

For this participant her perspective on self-reflect is split into two like she mentioned that she was a dancer and now a pianist. Her role on self-reflection is split into two different personalities when she thinks about music and self-reflection. Each time she listens to a specific type of music she constantly thinks about her two different personalities. According to Participant T, she stated that:

I do think so. One time when I started listening to music and try to understand what it is trying to interpret. I find myself to tell me that I'm actually a calm person and I do not like this so much problem going on in my life. So yeah, often after I got back from school or anything, I would refer back to the title of the one that I am listening.

Youth are always on the go in terms of finding any means of being calm and at peace. As stated by Collingwood (2018), the "soothing power of music is well-established. It has a unique link to our emotions, so can be an extremely effective stress

management tool” (p. 1). What she meant by this is that every time she listen to music, she tries to understand what the music is about and reflect it on to herself.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to answer the question myself as self-reflection. Being a youth myself I endure countless of challenges and difficulties, so music helps me to go through it all. I’m thankful to grow up with music being a part of me and has influence me to become a musician myself. What music helps me to understand is that every time I listen to music there is always something at the back of my mind thinking about who I am as a person, can I really make an impact myself to help other people understand music relationship on emotion. To me I don’t take music mainly as entertainment. Every time I play music, it aims to release my emotion to be free from all the hectic things I am going through. Other than that, music gives me courage to communicate to other people.

In conclusion, music helps the youth in many ways. Different types of music have diverse impact in a person and in this case a different thought on self-reflection. What music show to people that with the right emotion and music it can really have different results. Based on all the answers collected from the participant and myself is that the result have reach on the same agreement on when a person listen to music, they sometimes a thought on self-reflection to determined who they are.

4.3 Conclusion

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the data collected from all the participants; the answers and responses are all based on their own music preference. The reason behind this study is to reach an understanding on how music can affect youth’s life. Like what was mention before music plays a crucial part of a person’s life. It helps to fill our life with colour and meaning. Question like self-reflect really show how music can have an impact in a person well-being. Music can help us to feel joy or even sadness, it really

depend on the song and what a person is feeling in the moment. Based on all the data collected from the participant, the influencing factors such as musical background, personality and musical taste helps the urban youth in choosing their music listening preference. Besides, the preference in music listening among the urban youth is to serve as entertainment and to regulate emotion. Furthermore, this study has reached a conclusion that stating, music have a benefit such as the youth's emotional impact and self-reflect plays a crucial part in helping urban youth to face their daily challenge and also relieve the stress. Music is big part of one's life; everywhere a person go there is always music from the sound of the birds to the music in the shopping mall. Music is always there to be our companion through thick and thin. Everywhere one can see people with their earphone or headphone on with music blasting in their ear just to fill the void and just to go to our own world so they can escape the stress and their problem.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMEDATION

5.1 Overview

This chapter presents the discussion of the data collection process and summarise the research findings obtained from this study. The discussion will focus on the: (1) summary of the results: (2) discussion of findings of the study: (3) implication of the study: (4) recommendation for the future study: and (5) conclusions of the study. The discussions were based on the research questions of this study which were:

1. What are the influencing factors on the music listening preferences among the urban youth?
2. Why the urban youth listen to their preference music?
3. What are the benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth?

The purpose of this study aims to acquire an understating of music listening preference and its psychological well-being on urban youth living in Klang Valley. In this study based on the topic music and well-being and focussed on the emotion of the urban youth. Emotion plays a huge role in a person selection of personal music listening preference. For this study, the ages of participants are between 18 to 29 years old and narrative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Due to current global pandemic Covid-19, and the MCO, and CMCO, all interviews were conducted through online video call via Zoom. Each interview was recorded through the recording device in the Zoom's application.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

The following presents the findings and discussion. This study is to gain an understanding of the psychological impact of music on youth's well-being, and to seek the positive or negative effects of music on their well-being.

5.2.1 Influencing factors on music listening preference

Everyone have their own personal music preference that they have. How they choose their music is through few ways for example for mood regulation or even to be inspire. Music is everywhere around us, whether in the shopping mall or even in the public bus. What it meant by music listening preference is that what is their music genre that they like. As mention in the review of literature music preference can defies a person on who they really are in term of a person. To the youth it is not just a music preference for them but similar to what was stated by Arnett (2001) “an intense avocation that shapes their view of the world, their spending habits, their moods, their friendships, their notion of who and what is admirable, and their hopes for what they might become” (p. 1).

The findings show that all participants have their own preference of music genre. Each music preference they choose has different meaning to them. The questions asked based on the research question were categorised into 3 different factors which are: (1) musical background; (2) personality; and (3) musical taste.

Firstly, the findings indicated that the formal music education and training have an influence on their music listening preference and secondly, the findings also indicated that informal musical experiences assimilated through the environment have the influence on the music listening preference. Based on the narrative data collected from the participants, there were dialectic views on the influence of formal music education and training on their music listening preference.

Most of the musician participants have negative opinion that formal music training has an influence for their music listening preference. Only one of the musician participants indicated positive influence. As stated by Droe (2006), having a music education is just to “expand knowledge of music” (p. 29). Becker (2004) mentioned about formal music training and stated that it is a discipline in addressing the concepts of “embodiment of experience” (p. 275).

On the other hand, informal training where learning music in an unofficial education system. For someone who that did not undergo formal education will rely on personal choice, enjoyment, and familiarity with the music. Green (2002) explained that people who did not undergo formal training tend to rely on “recorded music as their principle and self-teaching” (p. 20). Further, Ruismaki and Tereska (2006) also concurred that environment helps to broad up their “experience in learning music” (p. 115). This supports the findings of this study, in which the informal musical background such as environment have an influence on their music listening preference.

The second is personality which was ask does their own personalities have an influence on their music listening preference. A person knows for a fact that their personalities change when they start to age from child to adult and so does our music preference. From this based on the data collected from the participants, they all agreed that their personalities do have an influence in their own music listening preference. Having a music preference based on one’s personalities has its merit because it is easier to engage in a conversation with another person. Nave (2018) challenged that “when people want to get to know each other, music is one of the first things that they tend to talk about”; thus, bond is created between two different individuals.

The third is musical taste. What is meant by musical taste is like for example like food a person want to like that taste then they will like the food, it is the same for music the taste of sound from the music determines whether to like it or not. Based on

the data collected from the participant, they do agree having a musical taste does indeed influence their music listening preference. Omigie (2019) stated that “musical taste is often paired together with musical preferences” (p. 1). Musical taste as an influencing factor in choosing the music preference helps one to enjoy the music better.

5.2.2 Urban youth preference in music listening

Emotion is one of the most important psychological and wellbeing aspects for human being. Emotion is a mental state within us such as happy, angry, pleasure, affection or even sadness. Music helps to regulate and understand those emotions. Music can have a purpose for a person. As indicated by Heshmat (2019), “music is a hobby and is used in arousing emotional responses such as chills and thrills in listeners” (p. 3). Based on the findings of this study, the question ask from the second research question are categorized into two factors which is (1) entertainment and (2) emotion.

Thorpe (2017) stated that in music listening persuasion one get to know the tie bond between music and emotion. This was also mentioned that when listening to music intensely, one can dive deeply into emotion: assimilating and accommodating the connection between music and emotion.

From all the participants, only one participant when ask about when they apply any emotion in their music listening, she replied she listen to music merely for entertainment purposes only. Music back in ancient time music is merely to entertain people, nothing more and nothing less. Recognizably music entertainment appears to have been noticeable in every known culture on this planet, with ancient roots extending back 250,000 years or more (Peretz, 2001, p. 554) But further into a different era music became something that needs emotion to really understand and express ones feeling towards another person. Based on the data collected among the six participants, five of them agree that they apply emotion into their music listening. Music plays a huge role

in term of helping one to understand and regulate their emotion, having “both emotion and music bond together create pleasure that is beyond measure” (Juslin, 2019, p. 78).

5.2.3 Benefits of music listening preference on the well-being of the urban youth

As mentioned before music and emotion plays a huge role in a person daily life. There are a few ways that music has benefit or impact towards a person emotional well-being. Based on the data collected from all the participants, the results are categorized into two factors which include: (1) emotional impact; and (2) self-reflect.

What are the benefits or emotional impact does music preference give to the youth well-being? Based on data collected, all the participant agree that their music listening preference have a benefit in their psychological well-being. Some mention it helps in their daily routine. As stated by DeNora (2013), sustaining musical practice can contribute to better quality of life. There are studies which indicated that music could influence and improve our brain cells. Recording artist Barry Goldstein (2020) who has studied the vibrational effect of music on human brain for 25 years, he stated that music has a profound impact on the brain to help to enhance brain function and to help to regulate a person emotion. Juslin (2010) postulated seven mechanism music can aroused emotion in listeners which is brain stem reflexes, rhythmic entertainment, evaluative conditioning, contagion, visual imagery, episodic memory, and musical expectancy. Each mechanism has its own unique characteristic that influences emotion of the listeners in music.

The second is self-reflect. Self-reflect is a thought about one own characteristic, other than that is also used to find any weaknesses to overcome to help them grow better and it can be define as a “meditation or critical thinking about one’s character, actions, and motives” (Kennedy, 2021, p. 1).

In this study, a question was asked about if they self-reflect when they listen to their music preference and all six participants answer yes they do, and it helps them to grow overcome their weaknesses and to be a better person. One of the few reasons' music works in self-therapy is because, in music itself, it is full of reflections of "human nature such as our behaviour, our longings, our discourse, our beauty" (Coleman, 2020, p. 1). Having a self-reflect in music is like viewing oneself in a mirror to see the flaw in oneself and hope to improve in the future.

5.3 Limitation of the Study

This study has its limitation which is due to the relatively small sample of participant and with only six participants may not address properly about the entire youth in Malaysia, but it can provide enough insight about how music listening preference can have a psychological impact on the urban youth's well-being. For future study that choice to build on result of this study, therefore to would need a bigger sample size more than six participants. If there is more participant involve in the study, then the result will get bigger and more accurate towards the youth population.

5.4 Conclusion

A summary of the research is presented, and findings of this study were discussed and interpreted. Music has a huge impact in a youth well-being. It does not only provide pleasure but also sense of escape from their problem. The aim for this research is to see how music preference can influence the youth psychological well-being. So, going back to the statement of problem does music manipulate person and what do they feel when they are exposed to our favourite music. Now with current crisis Covid-19 youth around the world has lost their jobs and any way to gain income to survive. According to the International Labour Organisation, youth are the first to lose their job or will resort to

insecure or unsafe job. As mentioned in the statement of problem, DeNora (2016) emphasize “music has a powerful vibe that does indeed influence a person mood to create scenery moment, new routine and occasion” (p. 1).

This study aims to gain deeper understanding on the effect of music on a youth well-being. Based on all the data collected from the participant, the influencing factors such as musical background, personality and musical taste helps the urban youth in choosing their music listening preference. Besides, entertainment and emotion are the main reasons why urban youths choose to listen to their preference music. Furthermore, this study based on data from the participants, the benefits that music listening preference on the urban youth’s well-being is emotional impact and self-reflect. The justification of this study with two different groups of participants is because the responses from a non-musician and a musician have different perspectives.

Music is just not mainly for entertainment or something to listen when a person is bored, well for some it is but for other people music is more than that. What is meant by that is music is like being in a relationship the more a person invest in it, the deeper the bond they have with it and how music can relate to their emotion. Being said that music is a universal language where one does not have to understand to lyric to the song but the emotion that the artists aim to convey in their music. Music is not just about the lyric is also about the message of emotion, the way the singer express themselves and even the band itself show different meaning in term of emotion.

5.5 Implication of the Study

Music is an endeavour. Listening to music is one of the essential to a person daily life. One of the few ways to keep a healthy lifestyle and one of it is using music. Music has been linked to “health and healing in shamanic traditions for more than 30,000 years” (Moreno, 1991, p. 2). There are a few people uses music as a pain relief in terms of

medication or emotional relief. North and Hargreaves (2008) stated that some have emphasized the role of “distraction and competing stimuli” and increases of “perceived control” in explaining pain relief through music listening (p. 307).

This study provides the understanding on how music can have a psychological impact on the urban youth’s well-being. Based on the three key constructs of this study, music preference, urban youth, and well-being the findings indicated that music could have benefits such as for entertainment and some use music to help the youth to improve their health. Every youth gone through hardship in their life such as economic problem or work and study stress, they should try to use music as a key essential to help to relax their body and mind to avoid getting stress and depression. Further, music is vital and important to the psychological wellbeing.

Music is powerful tools to help a person change their perspective in making a good or a bad decision, so in short “music has the power to culturally, morally, and emotionally influence a person daily life” (Hsu et al., 2016, p. 1)

5.6 Recommendation for Future Study

In the future, researchers are recommended to be more precise about which genre of music that they should use on their participant also are recommended to explore the various emotion that the youths are feeling when they listen to music. The reason why this topic should be research in the future is because one like was mentioned before is that there are less article, journal and thesis about the relationship or benefits of music towards youth well-being and youths are the future for any industries whether in technologies or even music industries. From the methodological perspective, future studies are recommended to employ mixed method research with survey and questionnaire with a larger population. Having a better understanding need time and knowledge and it is “important to have a right amount of exploration and research”

(Sloboda, 2010, p. 495). Youth are the legacy to help continue and maintain the foundation when the older generation retired.

5.7 Closing Comments

Overall, the study contributes to the understanding of the relationship of music and urban youth. Other than that, it also evidenced that music plays a huge role in the urban youth daily struggle. Music is one of the best companions for a person to bring anywhere they go. Everywhere a person goes, they are accompanied by sound and music in the surrounding, be it on the bus to work on even in shopping malls, music in everywhere.

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