

**WHY CHOOSE MUSIC?
A STUDY IN PARENTAL MOTIVATION
TOWARD FORMAL MUSIC LEARNING AND
THE CULTURAL BELIEFS REGARDING
ITS BENEFITS**

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For my parents

Who chose music for me

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the motivations of parents when choosing to engage their children in formal music learning, whilst exploring the cultural beliefs regarding its benefits. The study was conducted in two phases, including questionnaire distribution and a case study, involving the analysis of both numerical and verbal data. The results present four themes that emerged throughout the data collection process. These include parental opinions regarding music and academic ability, being a good parent (including aspects of opportunity and parental musical experience), the importance of a child's right to choose their own experiences, and the influence of a love of music. The results are indicative of a particular sample only, and there are numerous implications for future research. Results contribute to the growing literature regarding parental motivation toward formal music learning, and the importance of the role of the parent in a child's musical experience.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	II
ABSTRACT	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS	V
LIST OF TABLES.....	VIII
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
FOCUS OF THE STUDY	1
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	2
METHODOLOGY	3
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	4
THESIS OUTLINE	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6
JUSTIFICATIONS OF MUSIC EDUCATION	6
PARENTAL MOTIVATION	7
THE MOZART EFFECT AND ITS POPULARISATION.....	9
LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF MUSIC PARTICIPATION	10
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	12
THE QUANTITATIVE METHOD.....	12
THE QUESTIONNAIRE	13
<i>The present study: quantitative techniques</i>	<i>13</i>
THE QUALITATIVE METHOD	14
<i>The present study: qualitative techniques</i>	<i>14</i>
PARTICIPANTS	14
DATA ANALYSIS	15
CHAPTER FOUR: QUESTIONNAIRE PHASE.....	17
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	17
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS	17
DESCRIPTIVE DATA	17
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTIVATION STATEMENTS.....	18
<i>Categorical Relationships.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Inter-categorical relationships.....</i>	<i>20</i>
FACTOR ANALYSIS	21

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOTIVATION STATEMENTS ACCORDING TO PARENT GENDER.....	22
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTIVATION STATEMENTS AND PARENTAL MUSICAL EXPERIENCE	22
QUALITATIVE RESULTS	24
“PEOPLE SAY...”: PARENTAL OPINIONS REGARDING MUSIC AND ACADEMIC ABILITY	24
BEING A “GOOD PARENT”: OPPORTUNITY AND PARENTAL MUSICAL EXPERIENCE	25
<i>Opportunity</i>	25
<i>Parental Musical Experience</i>	26
“I DON’T WANT TO FORCE”: THE CHILD’S RIGHT TO CHOOSE	27
FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC.....	28
<i>Encouraging a child’s love of music</i>	28
<i>Parental values and the importance of music</i>	29
CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY PHASE	31
METHODOLOGY	31
<i>Case study recruitment</i>	31
<i>Kate</i>	32
<i>Vanessa</i>	32
<i>Amelia</i>	32
<i>The semi-structured interview</i>	32
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	33
“PEOPLE SAY...”: PARENTAL OPINIONS REGARDING MUSIC AND ACADEMIC ABILITY	33
BEING A “GOOD PARENT”: OPPORTUNITY AND PARENTAL MUSICAL EXPERIENCE	37
<i>Opportunity</i>	37
<i>Parental musical experience</i>	38
“I DON’T WANT TO FORCE”: THE CHILD’S RIGHT TO CHOOSE.....	40
FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC.....	42
<i>Encouraging a child’s love of music</i>	42
<i>Parental values and the importance of music</i>	43
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....	46
SUMMARY OF RESULTS	48
“ <i>People say...</i> ” <i>Parental opinions regarding music and academic ability</i>	48
<i>Being a “good parent”: Opportunity and parental musical experience</i>	48
“ <i>I don’t want to force</i> ”: <i>the child’s right to choose</i>	49
<i>For the love of music</i>	49
EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS	49
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	50
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	51
REFERENCES	52
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT	54

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM.....	56
APPENDIX C: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS	57
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE	58
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDES.....	66
APPENDIX F: LETTERS OF APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY HREC .	69
APPENDIX G: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING.....	72

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN RATES	15
TABLE 2: MY CHILD IS/HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN MUSIC BECAUSE.....	17
TABLE 3: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MOTIVATION STATEMENTS	19
TABLE 4: COMPONENTS EXTRACTED THROUGH FACTOR ANALYSIS (VARIMAX ROTATION)	21
TABLE 5: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MOTIVATION STATEMENTS AND PARENTAL MUSICAL BACKGROUND DESCRIPTORS	23
TABLE 6: PARTICIPANT RESPONSES TO MOTIVATION STATEMENT "MY CHILD IS/HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN MUSIC BECAUSE I FEEL IT WILL IMPROVE HIS/HER ACADEMIC ABILITY"	34

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The task of justifying the place of music education within the school curriculum, and likewise throughout the broader community, can be an arduous one. The value of music education, in and of itself, is often questioned. Educators may be forced to focus on the practical, extra-musical benefits of musical study, rather than rely on their belief in the significance of music as a dynamic art form, with the power to alter, for the better, the everyday experiences of the individual (Reimer, 1970).

Directly associated the justifications of music education are the motivations that may be experienced when parents decide to engage their children in formal music learning. How is it that parents come to believe that music is a worthwhile activity for their children? Are parents aware of the “human need for depth of experience, for a sense of meaningfulness and self-knowledge below the surface of everyday life” (Reimer, 1970, p. xi), to which music may contribute? Or, conversely, are parents purely concerned with the extra-musical values that often contribute to the justification of music education within our culture?

Focus of the study

The present study examines the primary motivations of parents toward engaging their children in formal music learning. This study aims to establish what these motivations are, as well as explore the relationships between them. Formal music learning, by its very nature, requires not only a substantial commitment on behalf of the child but a significant contribution of time, money, and energy from the parent or parents concerned. In conducting the present study I hoped to develop an understanding of the motivations of parents when choosing to engage their children in formal music learning, with particular interest in those motivations which may be derived from any extra-musical expectations of the parent.

As such, the study has been developed with reference to the following specific research questions:

1. What are the motivations of parents when engaging their children in formal music learning?
2. How do cultural beliefs regarding the extra-musical benefits of formal music learning influence parental motivation toward engaging their children in formal music learning?
3. What are the relationships between the various parental motivations?

The first research question has acted as a stimulus in the exploration of parental motivation, aimed at establishing the motivations that govern parents' choice to engage their children in formal music learning. The second and third questions are focused toward exploring these motivations in greater depth. The second question in particular has governed much of the study design, as examining the extra-musical expectations of parents has been a foundation for the project. It is interesting to explore the extent to which the popularisation of music education literature has influenced parental decision making. Literature regarding the Mozart Effect, in which researchers suggest that listening to a particular Mozart piano sonata may increase performance on non-musical tasks, is of particular interest. The study aims to determine the extent to which popularisation of such literature has influenced parental motivation toward engaging their children in formal music learning.

It should be noted that it is only parental motivation which has been explored. The motivations of children toward formal music learning are beyond the scope of the present study. However, it will be interesting to explore the importance that parents place on their children's choice to be involved in formal music learning.

Significance of the study

There has been much research stimulated by interest in the motivations of children toward music education, particularly in terms of continued participation in instrumental studies, and the motivation required to persevere with an activity that requires high levels of time and effort. Chapter Two of this thesis discusses child motivational research in greater detail. However, despite the wide literature regarding child motivation in music education, there appears to be little focus on parental motivation. This is particularly true of the area

of research with which the present study is most closely aligned, that of parental motivation in choosing to engage their children in formal music learning.

It is here, in what may be perceived as a gap between research focusing on child motivation and that of general parental motivation in relation to music education that the present study becomes particularly significant, attempting to address this gap, and in so doing, contribute to an emerging literature.

The significance of the study in relation to its educational implications lies in its potential to illuminate the cultural beliefs regarding educational benefits of formal music learning. Enhancing knowledge in relation to why parents believe music to be valuable will give educators greater insight in how to cater for their needs. Whilst it will never be the responsibility of parents to dictate to educators how to teach, it is certainly beneficial to be aware of parental beliefs and expectations, whether realistic or otherwise. It has long been accepted that individual students learn differently. Surely it will be beneficial to understand why parents have chosen to engage them in formal music learning in its initial stages. Understanding the cultural beliefs that govern parental motivation toward formal music learning is an important factor in furthering knowledge of how best to provide such education.

Methodology

This study employs mixed methods research (Creswell, 2003), in which both quantitative and qualitative methodologies are utilised. As the study is exploratory in nature, and inclusive of a variety of research questions, mixed methods allows for substantial flexibility of data collection. The combination of some aspects of both quantitative and qualitative data may also result in the reduction of the limitations that may be implicit within any one method. Ideally, this results in the triangulation of data, enhancing their reliability (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

The quantitative method is utilised in the first phase of the study, involving the distribution of questionnaires. Questionnaires have been designed in order to collect data that may be categorised and analysed numerically at both the descriptive and inferential level (Burns,

2000; Howell, 2008). The specific methods of statistical analysis will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Qualitative methodologies will be employed within the questionnaire through the inclusion of a number of verbal response questions. In the case study phase of the study three semi-structured, informal interviews will also be examined, in order to explore the motivations of selected individuals in greater depth. Qualitative data will be analysed using the procedures of grounded theory (Creswell, 2003), and this will be discussed in greater detail in the third chapter.

Definition of key terms

There are a number of terms that will be used frequently throughout this thesis. Definitions of selected terms appear below:

Formal music learning: for the purposes of the present study, formal music learning is defined as any music lessons or ensembles that are not part of regular schooling, such as bands, orchestras, individual instrumental tuition, choirs, and group music learning.

Mozart Effect: the Mozart Effect is a term that has been utilised in the literature to refer to the specific phenomenon of increased performance on a spatial-temporal reasoning task, following exposure to a Mozart piano sonata. Throughout broader society, the term is often used in reference to the notion that music can ‘make you smarter’. It should be noted that the research on the Mozart Effect, involving the impact of direct exposure to music, is different to the literature that focuses on the extra-musical implications of long-term musical participation and instruction. Though the two areas of research may be broadly confused in contemporary culture, they will be treated throughout this thesis as distinct.

Extra-musical benefits: this term is used throughout the thesis in reference to any benefits derived from formal music learning that are not musical in nature. These may include benefits in academic performance, discipline, social skills, and memory.

Musical benefits: musical benefits are defined as any benefits derived from formal music learning that may be considered musical in nature. These may include benefits in musical skill, appreciation of music, or general musical aptitude.

Thesis outline

This thesis contains six chapters, this introduction being the first. The second chapter consists of a literature review, which presents the research that has influenced the present study. The third chapter outlines the methodology utilised throughout the questionnaire phase of the study, examining both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter provides a discussion of the results obtained throughout the questionnaire phase of the study. The fifth chapter includes both the methodology employed and discussion of results obtained throughout the case study phase of the project. The final chapter discusses conclusions, limitations and recommendations that have emerged throughout the research process.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature related to the present study is broad. As such, a number of areas of literature will be addressed throughout this review. These include discussion regarding the justifications of music education, both in terms of musical and extra-musical benefits, parental motivation, the Mozart Effect and its popularisation, and the long-term effects of music participation.

Justifications of music education

For a long time, music educators have been required to justify the place of music education within the school curriculum, and within broader society. As has been discussed in the introduction to this thesis, there are two schools of thought on this matter. The first, summarised by Bennett Reimer, bases the justification of music education solely on its musical benefits: that is to say, those which are directly associated with the study of music itself. The literature discusses the many musical benefits that its study may develop, such as pure enjoyment, emotional expression, communication, physical expression, and social involvement (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2002). These benefits are described as key elements of child development, contributing to their “intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual selves” (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2002, p. 4).

In this way it is vital, according to those who focus on musical benefits, to include music within the school curriculum. Rather than perceiving music as peripheral to education, it must be valued to the same extent as those subjects traditionally labelled “academic”. Subjects such as language, geography, science and history, justified because of their role in understanding the world, need not be separated from subjects such as music, and indeed other artistic areas. Music can also provide this basic knowledge, as Reimer (1970, p. 9) states: “Why should every person be given the opportunity to understand the nature of the art of music? Because the art of music is a basic way of ‘knowing’ about reality”.

Yet as clearly as the justification of music for its own sake is defended by one group of theorists, it is justified for opposing reasons by another. Those who justify music based on

its extra-musical benefits are keen to emphasise the non-musical outcomes that may be features of musical study. It is here that the areas of literature surrounding the Mozart Effect, and the long-term effects of music participation, begin to be most influential. Indeed, a statement by Mark (2002, p. 1045) suggests that some feel that the possibility of extra-musical benefits need be the only way to justify music's place within the school curriculum: "one who is familiar with it [the literature] might well ask what purpose music education serves other than non-musical values". The extent of these extra-musical benefits will be discussed further later in this review.

Parental motivation

A second area of literature which greatly influences the present study is that encompassing parental motivation. Clearly there are several ways in which scholars can justify musical study. What needs to be addressed is which of these justifications are most prevalent for parents. This is the focus of the present study.

The literature addressing parental motivation toward formal music learning is small. However, one study that is particularly related to the present study reported that parents support "intrinsic" reasons (that is, musical benefits) to a greater extent than "extrinsic" reasons (academic or other non-musical benefits) for engaging their children in music training (Dai & Schader, 2001). In addition to this, the study also acknowledged that there are a number of motivations toward formal music learning that are seen to be valuable for parents, including improvements in discipline, heightened academic performance and developed intelligence.

In regard to motivational theory, there is much to be learned from an analysis of the literature discussing child musical motivation. The significance placed on goal structures is of particular note. The two primary goal structures, being mastery goals and performance goals, though focused toward child motivation, may be useful when examining parental motivation. Students who employ mastery goals, with a focus on the intrinsic importance of learning, believe that effort increases competence, and are motivated to learn for the value of the task itself. In contrast, students who employ performance goals are often extrinsically motivated, with a focus on the external signs of success. These students will

desire public recognition for their achievements, and will often measure their success in terms of others' perceptions (Ames, 1992).

These two contrasting achievement goals can influence the ways in which parental motivation may be analysed. In the same way that children are driven by differing achievement goals, parents may be motivated to choose activities for their children based on varying degrees of mastery versus performance goals. Many parents will choose activities for their children because they desire to broaden their child's learning for the value of the learning alone. Conversely, many others will be driven by external expectations. In any case, it is important to be aware of the motivational processes employed by parents, in order to more broadly understand the crucial role that parents must play in regards to choosing, and supporting, children's educational activities.

In reference to choosing extra-curricular activities, it has been noted that parents are unlikely to choose activities for their children that they do not personally see as valuable (Jacobs, Vernon & Eccles, 2005). This is particularly true when examining extra-curricular musical activities, due to the fact that they are optional and often involve high levels of involvement, effort, and monetary support from parents. "Parents are unlikely to pay for lessons, buy equipment, or encourage their children to participate in activities that they find objectionable or that do not coincide with their perceptions of what is appropriate for their child's gender, social class, or age" (Jacobs et al., 2005, pp. 251-252).

When examining parental attitudes toward, and involvement in, a child's formal music learning, it is interesting to note the effects of high levels of parental participation. The primary focus of much of the literature is toward areas of achievement, practice, and self-esteem, and the links between parental attitude and improvement in such areas. One such study (Zdzinski, 1996) examined the effect of parental involvement on student performance achievement, attitude, and cognitive achievement. The findings illustrate some links between higher levels of parental involvement and improvement in all areas. Similarly, a second study (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002) investigates the relationship between parental involvement and self-esteem, and reports links between high levels of parental involvement and improved self-esteem.

The Mozart Effect and its popularisation

It is here that we come to the literature discussing the specific extra-musical benefits that may occur with the study of music. Literature regarding the Mozart Effect began to appear in 1993, in a study by Rauscher, Shaw and Ky. This paper has stimulated much of the successive research, and discusses a link between listening to music and increased performance on a spatial temporal reasoning task. The original study describes an experiment in which three groups of college students listened to 10 minutes of a Mozart piano sonata (K448), a relaxation tape and silence, respectively, before being tested on their spatial temporal reasoning. Students who listened to the Mozart sonata before participating in the task outscored students in the two control groups. The researchers translated these data into equivalent IQ scores and found that these were 8 to 9 points higher in the Mozart group than the control groups.

However, despite the emphasis placed on these original studies, not all of the research relating to the Mozart Effect has reported the same conclusions. Two very similar studies, both replicating the methodological conditions of Rauscher et al. (1993) claimed to have found little evidence for the existence of the Mozart Effect, and that any cognitive improvement that did take place was insignificant (Chabris, 1999; Steele et al., 1999). Indeed, Chabris (1999) concluded that any cognitive enhancement that does take place has a simple neuropsychological explanation involving arousal, mood, and the theory of positive affect. There has been much literature that suggests that high or low levels of arousal or anxiety affect performance on cognitive tasks, and many studies have set out to show that it is not Mozart that produces a positive response, but rather the fact that the participants are stimulated by the music, which improves their performance on cognitive tasks (Daniels Cassity, Henley, Markley, 2007; Thompson, Schellenberg, Hussain, 2001).

It is important to note that, despite the varied evidence for the existence of the Mozart Effect, it has nonetheless acquired the status of scientific fact. Bangerter and Heath (2004) suggest that high levels of media attention, combined with a parental desire to control the cognitive development of their children, have led to the popular diffusion of the Mozart Effect as scientific fact. Though the version of the Mozart Effect that is discussed

throughout the population may be based on the original theory, it has been manipulated to suit individual need.

It is this popularisation that is of most concern to some theorists. Reimer (1999) opposes the Mozart Effect phenomenon from a philosophical, rather than scientific perspective. He states that:

The dualism separating mind and body has pervaded Western beliefs and education. It has led to the assumption that there are “intellectual” or “cognitive” subjects such as math, science, and languages that require intelligence and are therefore “basic” and that other subjects such as the arts, being rooted in the bodily senses and attendant emotions, are decidedly not “intellectual” or “cognitive”, do not require intelligence, and are therefore not to be considered “basic”. Spatial-temporal reasoning is a foundational component for certain of these “basic” subjects. If particular kinds of music and particular kinds of music training can improve such reasoning, then the case can be made that music should be included in education because of its positive effects on math, science, and other such learning, rather than because of its own worth (pp. 39-40).

Reimer’s concerns about the Mozart Effect lie not in the scientific proof of such a phenomenon, but in the implications of its effect on the future of music education.

Long-term effects of music participation

Stemming from the research focusing specifically on the Mozart Effect is a wealth of literature regarding the impact of individual music instruction and ensemble participation on educational development. This literature, which focuses on a broader definition of extra-musical benefit than the studies of the Mozart Effect, contributes further to the diffusion of such ideas within popular culture. However, it must be noted that this literature emphasises long-term participation in music, rather than short-term exposure, as in the Mozart Effect studies.

One such study, focusing on long-term music participation and its effects on non-musical areas, involved the implementation of piano instruction programmes (Costa-Giomi, 2004). Though the results questioned a link between music participation and academic performance, the findings did suggest implications in terms of improved self-esteem.

Similarly, a second study reports links between participants' duration of musical study and increased performance in non-musical areas (Schellenberg, 2006). Here, positive associations were discovered between duration of musical activity and both intelligence and academic performance. It is emphasised that these positive associations could not be linked to confounding variables such as socio-economic status.

There are other, similar studies that have focused on the broader educational implications of formal music learning. Such studies emphasise links between musical participation and improvements in linguistic abilities (Patel & Iverson, 2007), perceptions of social, academic and psychological benefits (Adderley, Kennedy & Berz, 2003), and the potential for students to break through low socio-economic barriers to outperform students with high-income parents (Fitzpatrick, 2006).

The literature regarding the extra-musical benefits of music education is broad, as is that which defends music education for its purely musical benefits. The present study seeks to draw upon such literature, in an attempt to identify the reasons why parents choose to engage their children in formal music learning. It also seeks to address a perceived gap in this literature, between research focusing on the benefits of formal music learning, and that of child motivation. Chapter Three addresses the methodological processes involved in the development of the research project.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The present study is one that has explored both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, and as such may be defined as employing mixed methods methodologies (Creswell, 2003). Due to its exploratory nature, a mixed methods approach, in which triangulation becomes possible, seemed most appropriate. The concept of triangulation may be defined as the use of multiple data collection methods with the purpose of obtaining a higher degree of reliability of results. It is accepted that a higher degree of confidence may be established when different collection methods yield consistent results (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

Within the mixed methods approach, the study has employed a sequential procedure, whereby data may be initially examined using quantitative methods, specifically the use of the questionnaire, before being explored further through qualitative interviewing procedures. A sequential procedure is beneficial in that the researcher is able to “elaborate on or expand the findings of one method with another method” (Creswell, 2003, p. 16). As such, the study has been organised according to two distinct research phases: the questionnaire phase and the case study phase. This chapter will focus on the methodologies employed in the questionnaire phase.

The quantitative method

Creswell (2003) describes the quantitative method as focusing on a scientific basis for knowledge, yet challenging the notion that we can ever be positive of truth when we are studying human behaviour. Early quantitative research involved experiments, quasi-experiments and correlational studies. This has progressed towards more complex research design, traditionally including an experiment or – as with the present study – a survey, collecting data which may be analysed numerically.

The questionnaire

The research questionnaire, as utilised in the present study, enables the collection of data to be used in analysis. Aimed towards a particular population, the purpose of a questionnaire is to collect information of both factual and attitudinal nature: often, questionnaires contain an opportunity for participants to disclose both facts and opinion (Denscombe, 1998).

Often utilised within the research questionnaire is the Likert-scale grading system (Burns, 2000). The system requires a participant to rate their feelings on particular statements according to a series of descriptors such as ‘strongly agree’ ‘agree’ and so on. The benefits of the Likert-scale system include its relative ease in regard to preparation and use, its sole reliance on empirical data, and the emphasis on validity and reliability through the use of a homogenous measurement.

The present study: quantitative techniques

The present study utilises elements of the quantitative method through the use of a questionnaire (see APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE). The questionnaire was addressed to parents, and includes four main sections. The first section relates to demographic information regarding both the parent and child. The second section was aimed toward parents who have, or have had in the past, a child engaged in formal music learning. A series of statements regarding certain motivations toward choosing music were presented to the parent. These statements were developed in relation to three hypothesised categories of motivation: musical, academic and recreational. Parents were required to score each statement in accordance with a Likert-scale grading system. Two short answer questions were also included.

The third section was directed toward parents who have not enrolled children in formal music learning. Questions were designed similarly to those in section two, with a Likert-scale response, and two short answer questions. The fourth section included general response questions, and was used in order to allow for further comment by the participants.

The qualitative method

The qualitative method is one which emphasises humanistic, rather than scientifically focused procedures. These include ethnographic research, in which a particular culture is studied longitudinally in the natural context; grounded theory, in which a group of participants are observed and studied in order to establish a general trend or theory regarding the group; and case studies, involving the in-depth study of a single group or event (Creswell, 2003). The method rejects the quantitative notion of the researcher as objective observer, rather emphasising the researcher as a subjective, and in some cases participatory, observer. This is seen as particularly the case in such areas of social science as education (Cohen & Manion, 1994).

The present study: qualitative techniques

The general response section of the questionnaire, as well as the short answer questions at the conclusion of both section two and section three, allowed for the employment of the qualitative method of enquiry. These questions were designed in order to encourage greater freedom of response, as well as provide a frame of reference in which to analyse all responses (Burns, 2000).

Participants for the case study phase of the project, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, were chosen according to the procedures of purposive sampling from amongst those parents who completed the questionnaire.

Participants

The questionnaires were distributed to students in years three, five and seven at four comprehensive, co-educational schools, including two primary schools, one secondary school, and one K-12 school. Each is situated in either the western or northern suburbs of Sydney.

Questionnaires were distributed by class teachers to students in grades three, five and seven, who were then required to pass on the questionnaire to their parents. Parents were invited to voluntarily complete the survey, and return it to the school for collection.

The return rate data for each of the schools is outlined in Table 1. A total of 103¹ questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 13.4 percent.

Table 1: Questionnaire return rates

Description of school	Number of distributed questionnaires	Number of returned questionnaires
Primary, Western suburbs	136	10
Primary, North-Western suburbs	165	24
Secondary, Northern suburbs	191	49
K-12, North-Western suburbs	278	18
Total	770	101

Data analysis

As the present study has utilised both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, it has been necessary to employ various methods of data analysis.

Quantitative data, collected through the use of the questionnaire, were initially categorised and analysed at the descriptive level (Burns, 2000). Descriptive statistics allow large quantities of data to be summarised in order to appear meaningful to an observer. This involved summarising the Likert-scale responses in order to establish which were most frequent. In this way, it has been possible to determine those parental motivations that are most common, and those that are least. Correlations between motivations were also examined.

The second level of statistical analysis that has been employed, in regard to quantitative data, is that of inferential statistics, most commonly used to draw inferences about a larger population (Howell, 2008). Here, it has been possible to examine the data for relationships that may be evident between the various motivations of parents. The primary inferential

¹ The distribution school is unknown in the cases of two questionnaires.

technique that has been utilised in the analysis of quantitative data is factor analysis (Pallant, 2007). Factor analysis reduces a set of measured variables to a smaller, more manageable number of factors by locating the correlations between items. In this way, the data have been explored further in terms of the relationships between the various motivational factors.

Qualitative data, collected from both the extended response section of the questionnaire and from within the case study phase of the project, were analysed according to the principles of grounded theory. Data were coded thematically, using open coding, involving the transcription of all interview data, before being categorised according to individual concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The use of such qualitative analysis techniques has enabled the examination of parental motivations at a more in-depth, personal level, and has resulted in the strengthening of the quantitative data collected via the questionnaires.

The specific methodologies employed in relation to the case study phase of the project will be discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. Chapter Four presents a discussion of the results of the questionnaire phase of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: QUESTIONNAIRE PHASE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The following is a discussion of the results obtained from the questionnaire phase of the study, and will be presented from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The chapter will therefore be structured in two sections: the first will present the descriptive and inferential results gathered from the responses to Likert-scale sections within the questionnaire, whilst the second will elaborate on these findings by presenting a discussion of the primary themes that emerged from the verbal response sections of the questionnaire.

Quantitative results

Descriptive Data

Table 2 is a summary of the average responses for each of the motivation statements presented in the questionnaire, arranged according to hypothesised categories.

Table 2: My child is/has been involved in music because...

Hypothesised Categories:	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Musical:				
I feel that music is an important experience for all children	2	7	5.7	1.5
I want to improve his/her musical skill	1	7	5.5	1.4
Academic:				
I feel it will improve his/her general learning	1	7	5.0	1.7
I feel it will improve his/her academic ability	1	7	4.5	1.9
I feel it will improve his/her discipline	1	7	3.9	2.0
I wanted to have a variety of activities to include on his/her resume	1	7	3.6	2.0
Recreational:				
I want him/her to experience a wide range of activities	1	7	5.8	1.5
he/she asked to be	1	7	5.4	2.0
I wanted to improve his/her social skills	1	7	3.7	2.1
his/her friends were participating	1	7	2.5	1.6

With the exception of three statements, it should be noted that the order of endorsement has been presented within the hypothesised categories: musical motivation statements were

the most strongly endorsed items, followed by academic motivation statements and recreational motivation statements respectively. The three statements that did not perform according to hypothesised category are outlined as follows: “I want him/her to experience a wide range of activities”, with a mean score of 5.8 is the most strongly endorsed of all ten items, “he/she asked to be”, with a mean score of 5.4 is ranked fourth of ten, and “I wanted to have a variety of activities to include on his/her resume”, with a mean score of 3.6, is ranked ninth of ten.

The fact that parents’ responses lie, predominantly, within the hypothesised categories suggests that the motivations for choosing music for a child will vary from parent to parent, but that these motivations may indeed be dependent on a general motivational framework. The order of endorsement suggests that musical motivations are the most popular amongst parents, followed by academic motivations, with recreational motivation proving least influential. This is consistent with Dai & Schader’s study (2001), which also found that musical motivation was most popular amongst parents. The primary exceptions in this case are the motivations that involve providing a wide range of experiences, and the choice of the individual child. These motivations will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, with reference to qualitative data.

The categorical order of endorsement may well be related to the motivational theories presented in the literature review chapter. Musical motivation seems most related to mastery goals (Ames, 1992), in which an individual is motivated by a desire to increase competence in a particular field. Such motivation is considered intrinsic, emphasising learning for the sake of the knowledge itself. Academic motivation, contrastingly, may be driven by performance goals, whereby an individual identifies with outward signs of success, rather than with the activity itself. It may well be that parents are driven by a combination of mastery and performance goals when choosing to engage their children in formal music learning.

Relationships between motivation statements

Due to the fact that the motivation statements appeared to be grouped, predominantly, according to their hypothesised categories, it seemed necessary to examine the

relationships between these statements from a statistical perspective. Table 3 illustrates the relationships between each of the ten motivation statements based on the significance of their correlation. The statements have been organised according to their hypothesised categories.

Table 3: Correlations between motivation statements²

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Musical:										
1. I feel that music is an important experience for all children	1									
2. I want to improve his/her musical skill	.60**	1								
Academic:										
3. I feel it will improve his/her general learning	.47**	.50**	1							
4. I feel it will improve his/her academic ability	.47**	.52**	.64**	1						
5. I feel it will improve his/her discipline	.36**	.48**	.54**	.66**	1					
6. I wanted to have a variety of activities to include on his/her resume	.38**	.26*	.29**	.44**	.47**	1				
Recreational:										
7. I want him/her to experience a wide range of activities	.50**	.65**	.40**	.35**	.26*	.25*	1			
8. he/she asked to be	-.20	-.18	-.28*	-.17	.07	.02	-.26*	1		
9. I wanted to improve his/her social skills	.38**	.36**	.46**	.46**	.42**	.57**	.31**	-.17	1	
10. his/her friends were participating	-.16	-.06	.04	.09	.21	.16	-.05	.29**	.11	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$)

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .01$)

Categorical Relationships

The three hypothesised categories were formulated on the assumption that the motivation statements within the same category would correlate strongly and significantly. The two categories of musical and academic motivation have been supported, in that each of the statements within the two categories were significantly correlated with each other. In the case of musical motivations, this means that the more a parent supported the importance of musical training, the more likely they were to be motivated by a desire to improve their

² Pallant (2007, p. 132) summarises the strength of a correlation (r) according to the following:

Small $r = .10$ to $.29$

Medium $r = .30$ to $.49$

Large $r = .50$ to 1.0

child's musical skill. Academic motivation statements were also similarly correlated, suggesting that motivations of improved academic ability, improved general learning, improved discipline and a desire to improve a child's credentials are also very much linked amongst parents.

In examining the correlations between recreational motivation statements, it is interesting to note that there is not the same degree of relationship between items as between musical or academic motivation statements. Here, the relationship fluctuates, with some statements showing small to medium strength correlations, whilst others display small negative correlations. The disparate nature of the correlations between such items may be due to the fact that, as a category, recreational motivation may be defined as neither mastery nor performance goal oriented (Ames, 1992). Whilst musical motivation is clearly focused toward success in the activity itself, and academic motivation concerned primarily with external benefits, each of the recreational goals have more to do with supporting the happiness and enjoyment of the individual child, rather than suggesting a value of the activity itself.

Inter-categorical relationships

It should be noted that a number of motivational statements are highly correlated across the boundaries of their hypothesised musical/academic/recreational categories. The most interesting of these are the statements concerning the improvement of both musical skill and academic ability, both of which produced significant correlations with a number of inter-categorical statements. Comparing these two statements to each other, a large, positive correlation was produced, $r = .52, p < .001$. This correlation is of particular note when considered from the perspective of having opposite conceptual connotations. It seems that, though the two statements are conceptually distinct, they are related statistically. This may be due to the fact that they both focus on a child's improvement in a certain area, be this musical or academic in nature. It may well be that a number of parents feel that it is important to encourage a child's improvement in any area, and that this motivation will apply to any activity.

Factor Analysis

In order to more critically assess the relationships between each of the variables, the process of factor analysis was undertaken. Factor analysis is a technique that examines a large number of variables in order to reduce them to a smaller set of factors, by locating the correlations between items (Pallant, 2001). My hypothesis, based on my own perception of the literature and my examination of the correlations between individual items, as discussed above, was that the process of factor analysis would reduce the ten motivational statements to the three categories as discussed above: musical, academic, and recreational. Interestingly, this was not the case. Rather, the process extracted only two factors, as Table 4 illustrates below.

Table 4: Components extracted through Factor Analysis (varimax rotation)

	Parent-centred	Child-centred
I feel it will improve his/her academic ability	0.81	
I feel it will improve his/her discipline	0.79	
I feel it will improve his/her general learning	0.73	
I want to improve his/her musical skill	0.70	-0.41
I wanted to improve his/her social skills	0.70	
I wanted to have a variety of activities to include on his/her resume	0.67	
I feel that music is an important experience for all children	0.65	-0.42
I want him/her to experience a wide range of activities	0.55	-0.48
His/her friends were participating		0.71
He/she asked to be		0.70

Note: Only loadings exceeding .40 are included

The two components that emerged through the process of factor analysis are not related to the three hypothesised categories. Rather, they focus on what I have called “parent-centred” and “child-centred” motivation. The “parent-centred” motivation factor includes those statements that are typically parental concerns, whilst the “child-centred” motivation factor includes those which emphasise the child’s involvement in the decision-making process. These factors support the discussion of various concepts later in this chapter, and in the following regarding the case study. The first of these is the notion of being a “good parent”, whilst the second focuses on the importance of the child’s right to choose their own activities. Some interesting qualitative data emerged on each of these themes in both the verbal questionnaire responses, and the case study interviews.

Differences between motivation statements according to parent gender

In addition to factor analysis, independent samples t-tests³ were conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in motivation between mothers and fathers. Tests found that in areas of improved discipline, general learning and social skills, as well as the statement stating that music is an important experience for all children, the mean scores of fathers were significantly higher than those of mothers. There were no significant differences found between the other motivation statements and parent gender. Whilst three of the four statements represent extra-musical rather than musical benefits, it might be concluded that fathers are more concerned with the extra-musical benefits of formal music learning than mothers. However, it seems that any differences in motivation between mothers and fathers would require further examination, especially given the small number of male respondents for this section of the questionnaire (15%).

Relationships between motivation statements and parental musical experience

In addition to examining the correlations between motivation statements, the relationships between motivation statements and parental musical experience were also analysed. Table 5 illustrates the relationships between the five parental musical experience descriptors and the various motivation statements.

³ Independent samples t-tests involve the comparison of mean scores between two distinct variables, one categorical and the other continuous (Pallant, 2007).

Table 5: Correlations between motivation statements and parental musical background descriptors

	listen to music regularly	regularly attend music concerts	play instrument	consider myself musician	have been paid to teach/ perform
Musical:					
1. I feel that music is an important experience for all children	-.013	.254 [*]	.366 ^{**}	.296 ^{**}	.205
2. I want to improve his/her musical skill	.036	.233 [*]	.306 ^{**}	.315 ^{**}	.262 [*]
Academic:					
3. I feel it will improve his/her general learning	-.019	.127	-.044	.061	.059
4. I feel it will improve his/her academic ability	-.014	.303 ^{**}	.095	.265 [*]	.219 [*]
5. I feel it will improve his/her discipline	-.035	.381 ^{**}	.181	.365 ^{**}	.310 ^{**}
6. I wanted to have a variety of activities to include on his/her resume	-.193	.020	-.001	.068	.284 [*]
Recreational:					
7. I want him/her to experience a wide range of activities	-.096	.087	.271 [*]	.177	.182
8. he/she asked to be	.291 ^{**}	.225 [*]	.107	.167	.100
9. I wanted to improve his/her social skills	-.160	.057	-.017	.120	.225 [*]
10. his/her friends were participating	-.004	.077	.130	.091	.216

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level ($p < .01$).

The data within the table indicates that, as parental musical experience increases, support for certain motivation statements also increase. The lowest musical experience descriptor, relating to listening to music regularly, only correlates significantly with the motivation statement regarding the child's choice of activity. However, as musical experience increases, so too do both musical and academic motivation statements. The highest musical experience descriptor, relating to professional musical experience, correlates most frequently with academic motivation statements. This is supported in the literature, whereby parents with professional musical experience were more likely to support motivations of academic and other extra-musical benefits than non-professional parents (Dai & Schader, 2001).

Qualitative Results

The following is a discussion of the qualitative data collected from the verbal response section of the questionnaire. These data have been organised into four primary themes, and these themes will be discussed further in the next chapter, with reference to the results obtained through case study interviews.

“People say...”: Parental opinions regarding music and academic ability

The qualitative questionnaire data provided a number of insights into the parental perceptions of a link between music and academic ability.

The questionnaire that was distributed to parents provided ample space for general comment (see APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE). Though the motivation statement relating to improving academic ability was ranked sixth of ten in regard to strength of endorsement (see Table 2), this was certainly a popular theme for parent’s general responses. It should be noted that there were no general questions referencing academic ability within the questionnaire, other than the motivation statement “I feel it will improve his/her academic ability”. The fact that such comments as the following were offered without prompting lends support to that which was discovered through statistical analysis: that though it may not be the most important motivation for all parents, improving academic ability is certainly a principle consideration for some.

The following are statements by parents in response to the general question “please explain your personal feelings on the importance of music in a child’s early experiences”:

Music can help children in the areas of reading comprehension, spelling, math, listening skills.

I have a strong feeling that music is playing a very important part in a early child’s brain development.

It is important for a child to learn music as research shows that most children get smarter while learning.

General comments such as these, which include references to improvements in areas of academic ability, seem to accept a link between music and academic ability with little questioning of the origin of the belief. Though a number of parents attribute their perception of a link between music and academic ability to “research”, one parent attributed her belief to its diffusion amongst popular culture:

I believe that it assists with their academic/hand-eye co-ordination... don't know where I heard it from... probably passed on from mothers talking or from Today Tonight [television current affair programme]!

This comment is particularly interesting in that the parent concerned is aware of the fact that they believe in a link between music and academic ability, whilst acknowledging that they are not sure of the origin of such a belief. This is specifically related to the literature discussing the diffusion of the Mozart Effect research as scientific fact, as discussed by Bangerter and Heath (2004).

Being a “good parent”: Opportunity and parental musical experience

Opportunity

The statement that “my child is/has been involved in music because I want him/her to experience a wide range of activities”, as the most frequently identified statement, may be reflected in the parental desire to provide as many opportunities as possible for their children. This was a recurring theme throughout the qualitative questionnaire data:

I feel that it is important to feed the mind to as many experiences that are available at an early age as possible to ensure they understand the scope & possibilities that there are available to them in their lives.

I think it is important to provide musical opportunities because they may find that they have an affinity for this area. I think it is part of a broad range of experiences which you try to provide for your children - and they may decide to come back to it at a later date if they don't persevere at first. Any experiences, like playing a musical instrument, add to their life experience and can only be positive.

Comments such as these were common throughout the questionnaire data, and suggest that parents are very much concerned with providing as many positive opportunities as possible for their children. It is possible that this notion is derived from a desire to be a “good parent” by allowing children to participate in as many activities as possible. Perhaps parents are motivated somewhat by a fear of their child “missing out” on vital experiences, and their own parenting being judged as inferior as a result.

Parental Musical Experience

In many cases, it seems that an important motivation toward choosing musical experiences was the parent’s own musical background. In a number of cases, parents discussed their own exposure to music as a positive experience, and highlighted a desire for their children to share such an opportunity, especially as it is one considered valuable within their own past.

My mother’s family has a tradition of amateur musicians... I wish to continue the ability to play for enjoyment as a family tradition. My husband & I are in a folk band, and play music for bush dancing-we enjoy the performing and the social interaction between band members and dancers.

I started learning piano and kept learning right through my schooling-including it as a H.S.C. subject. I have found music an enriching part of my life and think children should be given opportunities to learn music.

Here, parents are acknowledging a personal connection to music, and highlighting this personal connection as influential when it comes to choosing experiences for their own children. There seems to be a clear link between such motivation and the literature, which highlights the influence of personal value (Jacobs et al., 2005). Such literature emphasises that it is unlikely for a parent to choose any activity for their own children which they do not see to be valuable. This is particularly true of music, which involves comparatively high levels of parental involvement.

Conversely, in some cases parental value of music is demonstrated from a contrasting perspective: in these instances it is a lack of personal experience that motivates them to choose musical activities for their children.

I never grew up learning any musical instruments and think it is important for my child to take it up.

Sometime parents want their children to have a chance to experience some thing they never had a chance to do it themselves. I think it's one of my reasons.

In cases such as these it is clear that despite having had no personal experiences with music, a number of parents still view music as a particularly valuable experience. It seems that experiencing music is perceived as an important opportunity, and once again parents seem to be disinclined for their children to “miss out” on any experience that may prove valuable. Perhaps this is also related to the notion of being a “good parent”, in that parents wish to provide the absolute best for their children.

“I don't want to force”: the child's right to choose

Another recurring theme throughout the questionnaire data is that of the importance of the child's decision when it comes to choosing their own activities. Many parents commented on how strongly they feel about the child being responsible for their own participation, and the notion of not wanting to force a child to be involved was a common one. The following three comments were all put forward by the same participant, and are illustrative of how passionate some parents are when it comes to the idea of the child's right to choose.

My child is involved in music because he wanted to be. It's NOT my idea to hold him back or to stop him from trying something that he would like to experience. It's solely his choice and I will encourage him as much as possible.

It's all about choice, freedom to express yourself and having confidence to try. Support from your parents is important because if your child is willing to try something then you have to support them as much as possible whether they succeed or fail.

My eldest child never tried to play an instrument but that was his choice and I support him as much as I support my son who wants to try to play.

This parent seems particularly concerned with ensuring that their child maintains ownership of their experiences; she certainly does not want to be seen to be influencing her

child's decision in any way. The view was a common one amongst the questionnaire data, and was supported by a number of other parents.

I don't believe in forcing children to have music lessons, only if they ask and show commitment, do we consider lessons.

I do not want to push my children in any direction by enrolling them into classes before they can make their own choice.

It is clear that many parents feel that the child's desire is a particularly important influence when it comes to engaging them in formal music learning. These parents seem to believe that there is little reason for studying music, if the child does not have a passion or desire to do so. The parents place much less emphasis on their own reasons for engaging their children in formal music learning, rather highlighting the importance of their child's choices. Once again, it may well be that such motivation is driven, not by expectation of beneficial academic, or even musical outcomes, but purely by a desire for the child concerned to have chosen the experience. Such motivation may be linked with the hypothesised recreational motivation category, and seems to be reflective of the results of factor analysis; that parent motivation may be grouped according to that which is parent-centred, and that which emphasises child-centred concerns.

For the love of music

One of the most popular themes for discussion throughout the questionnaire data was that of encouraging a love of music. This theme may best be described according to the following two categories: encouraging the child's love of music as a specific parental motivation, and the view of the value and importance of music generally.

Encouraging a child's love of music

There was much discussion by parents regarding the importance of a child's musical enjoyment. It appears that many parents feel that encouraging a love of music in their children is essential, and that the most important motivating factor for them in engaging them in formal music learning was to develop this love of music.

My child really loves playing the guitar. I tried to get him involved in other extra curricular activities but he just wasn't that interested, with the guitar lessons he immediately showed enthusiasm and real enjoyment. Guitar lessons and practising at home isn't something I have to encourage him to do as it's something he is passionate about.

She was born with music in her heart. She always sings and dances since she was a baby - music makes her happy and she loves playing piano to relax.

Encouraging a love of music should always come before achievement of any music exams etc.

For these parents, encouraging a love of music, or developing what they see as a pre-existing affinity for music, is an important motivation. They do not appear to be concerned with expectations of extra-musical benefits, rather valuing musical study for its innate worth. These parents focus entirely on their child's enjoyment, and as such might be said to employ a mixture of recreational and musical motivation. The motivation appears to be neither mastery- nor performance-goal oriented, in that the focus is purely on enjoyment, and not on the attainment of success, musical or otherwise (Ames, 1992).

Parental values and the importance of music

Questionnaires also included much discussion regarding love of music from a parental perspective. Many parents found music valuable for its own sake, and were keen to establish why they feel music to be such an important experience.

Music is a very important part of every person's culture. An appreciation of music from an early age helps to widen a child's experiences, and open up an area of life which will benefit them in many ways. Music is found in everyday life in so many things we do and places we go. Exposure to different forms of music allows children to experience different cultures and widen their life experiences.

Music helps change your emotional behavior and brings out a better person in you and most importantly music is another means of communication that can help bring peace in the world.

Music is a wonderful form of expression and is so multilayered that once you have begun to enjoy it you will continue for life.

These parents may certainly be said to employ musical motivation. They have a love of music themselves, and they appear to value music for its innate qualities rather than for the possible implications it may hold for other areas of a child's life. Though there were a great number of motivations discussed throughout the questionnaire, few garnered such passionate responses as those discussing the importance of music for its own sake.

CHAPTER FIVE: CASE STUDY PHASE

The second phase of the study involved a case study of three mothers, selected from amongst those parents who completed the questionnaire. The purpose of this phase of the study was to expand and reflect on the themes that emerged throughout the questionnaire data, in order to understand these issues from a more personal, individualised perspective. This chapter will be organised according to two sections: the first will outline the methodology involved in the implementation of the case study phase of the project, whilst the second will contain a discussion of the results obtained through analysis of case study data.

Methodology

The case study phase of the project relied exclusively on qualitative methods of data collection, the principles of which were discussed in Chapter Three. The following discussion will provide an outline of the case study participants, as well as focus on the specific methods used in data collection.

Case study recruitment

Participants for the case study were recruited from amongst those parents who completed the questionnaire, and had acknowledged a willingness to be contacted further. Once preliminary analysis of the questionnaire data had taken place, purposive sampling was utilised in the recruitment process. Appropriate candidates were chosen and contacted based on their questionnaire responses in a variety of areas, including opinions on academic ability and their beliefs regarding the child's right to choose their own activities. The following are summaries of the backgrounds of each of the three participants. Each is aged between 30 and 49.

Kate

Kate works as an environment manager. She has two children: her eldest, Michael, is in year three and plays percussion in the school band, and is teaching himself the guitar. She has one younger daughter, Lisa, who has not yet commenced any formal music learning, and their decision to engage her in music lessons will be dependent on her desire to do so. Kate had minimal musical experience as a child, and has taken up the piano as an adult. Her husband James plays the guitar as an adult, and Kate comments on the enjoyment that the family gain from playing and listening to music together.

Vanessa

Vanessa is a secondary art teacher. She has two children: she responded to the questionnaire in reference to her youngest, Nia, who is in year three and plays the violin. Her elder child, Elijah, plays the piano. Vanessa has had minimal musical experience. However, she states that her husband's African heritage means that music is "in the blood" for her two children.

Amelia

Amelia works as a primary teacher. She has had extensive musical experience, with expertise in a number of instruments, specialising in the piano. She has a Bachelor of Education majoring in music from a university in the United Kingdom, and she states that her husband and extended family are also musical. Amelia has four daughters, and her response to the questionnaire was in reference to her third, Rebecca, who is in year seven and plays the violin. Amelia's other three children are also engaged in formal music learning.

The semi-structured interview

Participants for the case study were interviewed according to the principles of the semi-structured interview (Burns, 2000). Semi-structured interview guides were utilised (see

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDES), and these were developed with specific reference to each of the participants. The participants were given the opportunity to discuss any related topics which they felt were relevant to their own motivations toward engaging their children in formal music learning. It was in this section of the research process that a more comprehensive, personal account of parental motivation was able to be explored.

Data collected from interviews were transcribed and coded according to the principles of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The data were examined for themes, and has been explored in the following discussion according to the same four themes as presented in the previous chapter.

Discussion of results

The following discussion of results has been compiled with reference to results obtained in the questionnaire phase of the project. The discussion will therefore be organised under the same four headings as the qualitative data in the previous chapter.

“People say...”: Parental opinions regarding music and academic ability

The discussion of parental opinions regarding music and academic ability, as presented in the last chapter, suggested that though expectation of improved academic ability was not the most popular amongst parental motivations, it is certainly a primary concern for some. Comments from the questionnaire seem to indicate that many parents believe that their views have a foundation in research, and though this may be true, to a certain extent, parents are not necessarily aware of the details of such research. It may well be that parents have been influenced by the popularisation the Mozart Effect literature (Bangerter & Heath, 2004).

The follow-up interviews provided a vehicle through which the perceived link between music and academic ability could be discussed further. All three mothers acknowledged such a link in their discussion, despite the fact that only one of the interview participants

rated the academic-focussed motivation statement highly in the Likert-scale section of the questionnaire. Table 6 summarises the responses of each of the participants.

Table 6: Participant responses to motivation statement "My child is/has been involved in music because I feel it will improve his/her academic ability".

Participant	Likert-scale response
Kate	1
Vanessa	7
Amelia	5

Kate, who rated the statement as “not at all true of me” stated the following in her interview:

- Jessica: The statement that said “my child is involved in music because I feel it will improve his academic ability”, that was one of your lowest responses.
- Kate: Yeah, that’s right.
- J: Um, can you explain why you feel,
- K: (interrupting) Well, we’ve been told that (music improves academic ability). I don’t know if there’s any real, um, scientific evidence to support it, but many people did say that children who are involved in music, um, do perform better (academically) and I think it’s more to do with the discipline than the fact that they’re playing music because it requires, you know, commitment, you’ve got to be willing to practice...⁴ People had said “kids in band perform better”...Is there any truth in that?

Though Kate clearly states that improving academic ability was not a motivation for her, she acknowledges a belief that music and academic ability are related, to an extent. Once again, this is a somewhat tentative belief, based primarily on word-of-mouth. Her attempts to receive clarification of such a theory from the interviewer also suggests that she has an interest in the area, but that she is not certain of where her beliefs on the subject have come from.

Contrastingly, Vanessa rated the statement about improving academic ability as “very true of me”. When asked to elaborate on her thoughts regarding this statement, she first discussed the background of her eldest child’s engagement in formal music learning:

⁴ Ellipses (...) signify that part of the conversation has been omitted.

Vanessa: Um, Elijah, who's my older son who plays piano ah, showed that he was, you know, fairly bright when he was little, and he was not getting enough, I suppose, intellectual stimulus... and a friend of mine who has a daughter who's now doing medicine had the same problem and she suggested he learn to play a music instrument... So that's initially how we came to be a part of... learning music. Basically to stimulate Elijah's brain and to hopefully get him to learn something that will help him sleep... because it was so useful for him, um, and it's also improved their ability to remember... So, it's actually helped their memory skills significantly.

When asked whether she believed if music does improve academic ability, Vanessa responded with the following:

V: Yes. And also not just the academic ability but also their spiritual sensibilities, their aesthetic understanding of the world, it just broadens their appreciation for life in general.

Vanessa, in contrast to Kate, acknowledges an anticipated improvement in academic ability as a primary stimulus in her decision to have her children learn a musical instrument. Perhaps the fact that Vanessa believed her son to be particularly academically gifted was an influencing factor here, in that she may have been determined to cultivate his abilities through any means possible. However, it is interesting to note Vanessa's perception of the term "academics". She is determined to emphasise her opinion that the creative arts are equally as valuable as those subjects that are traditionally considered "academic":

Vanessa: ...cause if you want to consider what academics are, you need to look at it holistically, and that's probably what I'm trying to say, that understanding aesthetic things as well as what you would find traditionally in a classroom situation where it's information and regurgitating information, I think that music and, and the visual arts and, and the creative arts actually are underutilised and actually teaching kids how to learn, and how to understand how to actually, I suppose, navigate what really is understood to be academics. I think it's too narrow what we perceive generally what academics are.

It is clear that Vanessa's motivations toward music were certainly influenced by a desire to improve academic ability. However, she does not limit this improvement to the traditionally regarded "academic" subjects such as maths and science. Her views are

similar to those of Reimer (1999), who laments that music and other such creative subjects are deemed not to be “academic” and are therefore considered less valuable.

Amelia, who had had extensive musical experience, responded moderately to the statement “My child is/has been involved in music because I feel it will improve his/her academic ability”, and this was explored further in her follow-up interview:

- Amelia: Um, I think it actually improves her memory, and her logical thinking. There is a, a view that maths and music are very, very strongly linked. I’m absolutely useless at maths and pretty good at music and the same goes for her, so I don’t necessarily agree with that. But there is, um, yeah, I think it, it’s, I think it helps them to concentrate more. And there is a link between music and all other stuff, so, yeah I’d say it helps them concentrate... and focus.
- Jessica: Was that one of your motivations though before they started, to hopefully improve (academic ability)?
- A: Um, no. Really, for me, probably for my husband it was, ’cause he’s much more academic than me. Um, for me it was enjoyment. That was the main thing. I think it does improve them academically, but I think the enjoyment thing was more important for me.

Amelia acknowledges a link between music and academic ability, suggesting that this link is a result of a perceived increase in concentration and focus. Though she states that improving academic ability was not a principle motivation for her, she assumes that it was a motivation for her “more academic” husband. Similarly to Kate, Amelia acknowledges her belief in a link between music and improved academic ability, but suggests that she is not certain of the origin of her belief, with comments such as “there is a...view”, similar to Kate’s comment that “many people did say...” (that music and academic ability is linked).

Whilst it is clear that a number of parents acknowledge a link between music and improved academic ability, many seem uncertain of the origin of such a belief. Certain parents acknowledge that this is a motivation for them when choosing to engage their children in formal music learning, whilst others maintain that other factors, such as enjoyment, in Amelia’s case, are more important to them. What has certainly been shown is that the idea that music improves academic ability has permeated the parental consciousness, and may be consequently influencing parents’ decision making. This, once again, supports discussion by Bangerter and Heath (2004) regarding the popularisation of the Mozart Effect literature.

Being a “good parent”: Opportunity and parental musical experience

One theme that emerged through questionnaire data analysis, as discussed in the previous chapter, is that of being a “good parent”. This theme was explored in two ways, as it will be here in reference to the case study phase of the project: that of opportunity, and of parental musical experience.

Opportunity

As discussed previously, one of the themes that emerged throughout the exploration of questionnaire data was that of opportunity. Many parents seemed to feel that it was their duty to provide as many positive experiences for their children as possible. This theme was explored further in the case study phase of the project. Interestingly, the results obtained were diverse. Though many of the statements in the questionnaire phase of the study supported the notion of providing as many opportunities as possible for one’s children, Vanessa suggested that this was *not* necessarily good parenting.

Vanessa: You see a lot of parents running their children every afternoon to all these different curricular, extra-curricular activities – I think that’s damaging. I think, personally, that you’re best off choosing one or two so that they can actually really excel in one or two rather than throwing them into music, drama, dance, you know, this, that and the other. Footy, netball, whatever, and they become exposed to many different things which inherently I suppose is a good thing, but they never actually achieve success at any level.

Here, Vanessa’s beliefs seem to contradict many of those that were put forward in the questionnaires. Rather than believing that it is the responsibility of a good parent to provide as many opportunities as possible for her children, Vanessa seems to support the achievement of success in a small number of activities. To her, good parenting is discovering an activity that will enable success and achievement in her children, rather than exposing them to a variety of experiences, and in doing so, lessening their ability to achieve success. She appears to be utilising mastery goals (Ames, 1992), in that she is determined for her children to achieve success in a particular field.

Contrastingly, Amelia supports the more popular opinion that being a good parent means providing as many opportunities as possible for one's children. However, her belief has a very strong link with her own extensive musical background. When asked if she believes it to be the responsibility of a good parent to provide as many opportunities as possible, she responded with the following:

Amelia: Yeah. Yeah. And particularly ones that, I think, particularly ones that I've enjoyed, I would hope that my children would.

Here, Amelia states that she believes in providing a variety of opportunities for her children, but suggests that she is more likely to encourage those activities that she has enjoyed in the past, and that she values personally.

Parental musical experience

The case study interviews provided further evidence that parents are likely to choose activities for their children that they have found valuable in the past (Jacobs et al., 2005). Many of the comments within the questionnaire suggested that parents are motivated to choose music for their children based on their own musical experience.

Amelia, having the most extensive musical experience of the three case study participants, certainly supported this idea. When asked whether she thought that her own musical background influenced her motivations toward music education for her children, she strongly agreed:

Amelia: Yes. Definitely, because it's such a huge part of my life, and my husband plays guitar as well, so I wanted to make it part of their life. We have four children and all four of them play instruments of some description.

Amelia acknowledges the influence of her own experiences in choosing to engage her children in formal music learning, and wants music to be as important for them as it was for her. She emphasises this issue by restating, later in the interview "I want her to experience what I had. And still have".

Similarly, Vanessa acknowledges a family musical background as being influential for her children. When asked whether or not she believed that her children were innately musically talented, she responded with the following:

Vanessa: I come from a very musical family. My father's a drummer, um, my sister played flute, my younger sister played piano and I was kind of interested in the, in the guitar. Um, I watch them when they both go up to visit my parents... and my dad will do some kind of, you know, syncopated beat or something on the drums and show them how to do it, and very, very quickly they'll pick it up. My husband's African, you know, it's in the blood. Um, I think it's a really difficult question. How do you separate some people from others? I think everyone inherently responds to music, it's all about opportunities.

Though Vanessa states that she believes that everyone responds to music, she suggests that her children have a particular aptitude because of their family history and African heritage. Once again, she is supporting the literature that states that parents are most likely to choose activities for their children that they personally value (Jacobs et al., 2005). Her acknowledgement of her family's musical background seems an indication that her motivations towards choosing musical activities for her children are influenced by this background.

Contrastingly, Kate states that her and her husband's musical background, at least as children, is limited, and as such she discusses the influence of her own experiences from a different perspective. Many of the comments from the questionnaire suggested that some parents feel that it is important to provide opportunities for their children that they were unable to experience. Kate elaborates on this:

Kate: We never had the opportunity to learn music when we were children. It's a great gift, if you can do it, so it's something that they can do that we couldn't as well.

Kate acknowledges the fact that she and her husband were not exposed to formal music learning as children. Despite her personal lack of exposure to musical activities, she still feels that music is a valuable experience.

“I don’t want to force”: The child’s right to choose

Another theme that emerged throughout the questionnaire data was the importance of the child’s choice. Many parents were quite passionate when it came to the idea of choice, and were particularly concerned with ensuring that their child would not be forced to participate in any activity without having the desire to participate.

Data collected in the case study interviews lend support to the emergence of this theme. Kate was particularly concerned that her children would not be forced to participate in any activity against their will. When asked in the questionnaire about her motivation in regard to her second child, Kate responded with the following statement:

Kate: Our eldest child is in the band and we have not yet considered for our youngest. Whether she gets involved in music will depend largely on her desire to do so, we would support, but not force.

It is clear that Kate believes that it should be her daughter’s choice as to whether or not she participates, and not her own. Kate’s interview allowed her to elaborate on this view further:

Kate: Well, again, that just comes down to their choice. So, if she came home and said “I want to be in the band”, again we would say “Well, it’s a big commitment Lisa. Are you sure?” And, and would let her do it but um, more in a- rather than being coercive, being more passive I guess in just being there. She wants to do it, sure, we have a piano, I’m learning piano at the moment, Michael and James are playing the guitar, she gets in and we all have some fun with it. Um, but I wouldn’t, I don’t—I don’t believe parents should force children to do anything actually, I think— they will be what they will be, and you can just guide them there.

Kate is determined that her children will ultimately be responsible for choosing their own activities, and states that she does not want to coerce them into participating, preferring rather to be a passive influence.

While Kate’s opinion on the importance of a child’s choice is quite determined, both Vanessa and Amelia are less passionate on the subject. They both suggest that it is important for a child to choose their own activities, but only to a certain point. Vanessa

clarifies this, and states that she feels it is a parent's duty to ensure that the activities that the child chooses are appropriate:

Vanessa: Mmm, to an extent there needs to be some ability for them to choose, but at the same time, um, like for example Nia loves to dance. But I'm a little bit hesitant to let her actually join a dance company because they really over-sexualise kids... I mean, enjoy dance, but I have to really be careful as a parent to what I let them actually get involved in.

Vanessa believes that a child should have some degree of choice, but that it is up to the parent to ensure their safety. She states that, though her daughter loves to dance, she is hesitant to allow her to participate because she feels that she may be exposing her to negative experiences.

Amelia seems to have similar beliefs regarding the importance of a child's choice of activity.

Jessica: Do you think that it's important for a child to choose their own activities?
Amelia: Yes. And you should let them do them within reason. If for example she asked to play the harp, I would say no. It's too big and too expensive. You know, you've got to guide them... And so yeah, I think she should, they should be allowed to choose.

Amelia appears to believe that it requires parental judgement when it comes to allowing certain activities. She certainly agrees that it is important for a child to choose their own activities, yet she qualifies this by stating that there are certain things that she would not allow her to do.

Both Vanessa and Amelia's opinions are similar, despite the fact that their reasoning and examples are very different. Both parents believe that it is important for a child to have some choice when it comes to their activities. However, they also both believe that parental judgement needs to be utilised in certain circumstances.

For the love of music

Each of the three case study participants contributed to discussion regarding the theme of participating simply for the love of music, speaking both on behalf of their children, and from personal experience. As in the questionnaire phase of the project, the case study found that a love and value of music for its own merits was a priority amongst parental motivation.

Encouraging a child's love of music

Each of the three interview participants spoke about their child's love of music, and encouraging this love in different ways. Kate discussed both her son and daughter's exposure to music from an early age, and attributed this to their value of music.

Kate: And so he, he just said "yeah, I want to do it" and he really does like music. He likes the whole spectra. He likes classical, he likes jazz, and blues, he likes heavy rock, he likes Nirvana and, you know, he's just-everything, so we just thought "yeah, we'll let him do it." ...don't want to hold him back on something that he's really interested in...So, we didn't want to stop him from an opportunity.

Kate acknowledges her son's love of music, and speaks of wanting to encourage this love. She also discusses the importance of enjoyment, rather than placing emphasis on his achievement:

Kate: I think it was more that he just loved it. More than thinking that he's going to be a musician... it wasn't that we thought he was going to be the next Beethoven or a rock star, but just because he really did love it so much.

Similarly, Vanessa also emphasised encouraging a love of music in her children.

Vanessa: The one who's doing violin, she wanted to play music. Now she regrets it because she hates the discipline of practice. She loves to perform in front of people, and if you'd asked her does she like playing music she'd probably say no, but it's the actual, um, discipline that she dislikes which, you know, is inherently human anyway, isn't it. But whenever we go on holidays she loves busking. She loves being the centre of attention and

she loves, you know, being able to make lots of money because she's cute and can play quite difficult pieces...in comparison to what other people would expect of her. So she did ask and ask and ask could she play.

Despite acknowledging that her daughter has since come to dislike the discipline that studying music demands, Vanessa includes her desire to participate in music, her love of performance and, it seems, attention, as an important motivation when it came to choosing to engage her in formal music learning.

Amelia commented on the importance of enjoyment from the perspective of her role as a primary school teacher, rather than from the perspective of her own children. She emphasises that the most important motivation towards music is that it be enjoyable, and she aims to encourage that enjoyment amongst her students:

Amelia: It's, it's just such good fun. That's the main thing... And they, some of my children who aren't particularly good academically and aren't good socially generally can find something they can do. Mainly because it's fun.

Though Amelia emphasises a number of reasons as to why she feels that music is important, her primary motivation is enjoyment, and she aims to encourage an enjoyment of music at all times. She draws attention to the students who are not traditionally successful at school, either for academic or social reasons, and states that these children can often find enjoyment and success through their musical experiences.

Parental values and the importance of music

Though the three case study participants have varying backgrounds, and though their motivations toward choosing to engage their children in formal music learning differ considerably in some areas, they all discuss their own love of music, and the importance of musical experience.

Kate, with a minimal musical background, describes her love of music from the perspective of listening. She hasn't had much experience as a performer, yet this does not diminish the value that she places on music.

Kate: It's just fantastic. I love it, I listen to classical a lot, and so for me, I just get caught up in the, the highs and the lows, and the depth and, and um, it's something they can have forever. That, that's really it. You know, it's not like, something that you learn and then you forget. Or you learn and you don't listen anymore. It's a lifelong skill.

Kate's emphasis is on her own experiences listening to music. However, she acknowledges the skill involved in learning music. She sees music as important for her children because she feels that, once they have begun to enjoy it, they will be able to continue to enjoy it for the rest of their lives.

Similarly, Vanessa discusses her own feeling on the importance of music in the lives of her children, with a focus on music's value within the current education system.

Vanessa: I think it's incredibly important. You just have to look at the success of the Wiggles [children's entertainers] to see how important music is to kids. Um, and that's what I find quite disconcerting, that in the preschool years music is an integral part of kids' learning. You go to any preschool and they're dancing, they're singing, it's a vital part of how they teach them to learn. And they get to, you know, big school and then music is really shifted right into the perimeters of their learning and I wonder why.

Jessica: So very important.

V: I think it's extremely important, I think the creative arts are extremely important. Extremely important, and unfortunately, the way that the world is currently set up, *they* don't. The powers that be are pushing maths and science, which are only one part of the brain hemisphere, it's not balanced individual.

Vanessa emphasises the value of music in its ability to shape an individual. She feels that music plays an integral part in developing cultural and creative sensitivities in children, and laments that music is not given enough emphasis within the education system. As a visual arts teacher, it seems natural that Vanessa would feel passionate about furthering the creative arts within schools.

Given her extensive musical background, Amelia's discussion of her value of music is from a personal perspective. Her interview was littered with small references to her own love of music, and comments about her own past experiences. Comments such as "it's such a huge part of my life", and "I want her to experience what I had. And still have" point to a deep love of music. Amelia has experienced music for most of her life, and as such, her value of music is obvious.

As in the questionnaire phase of the study, the case study enabled the exploration of a number of parental motivations. Once again, it seems that music is valued for its own worth to a very high degree. Though each of the participants discussed various motivational factors, their value of music for its own innate worth is clear.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Music educators have often been required to justify music within the curriculum, and indeed throughout society generally. Often, students and their parents want the tangible advantages of a particular course of study to be explained to them by their teachers. Too often these benefits are clarified not in terms of the value of music itself, its complexity and beauty, and its power to positively alter the experiences of the individual, but rather in terms of the effects that its study may have on other areas of the individual's life:

Most of the arguments for the value of teaching and learning music have been directed toward the practical, utilitarian benefits to be derived, with an occasional nod toward the idea that art does something for the finer part of man's nature (Reimer, 1970, p. xi).

The purpose of this study was to examine the motivations of parents when choosing to engage their children in formal music learning. Whilst the literature suggests that parents are unlikely to engage their children in activities that they do not see to be personally valuable (Jacobs et al., 2005), there has been little research that examines *why* parents value music. This study aimed to clarify the motivations of parents, to explore them and to examine the relationships between them, whilst considering the cultural beliefs that govern such motivations. The study aimed to further an understanding of the extent to which parents employ motivation based on expectations of extra-musical benefits: those that are not explicitly musical in nature.

The study was completed in two distinct phases. The first involved the distribution of a questionnaire amongst the parents of children in grades three, five and seven.

Questionnaires were distributed at four comprehensive, co-educational schools: two government primary schools, one government high school and one independent K–12 school. The questionnaire was organised in four sections: the first was designed to collect demographic information, as well as information of the musical background of both parent and child. The second section was aimed toward establishing the motivations of parents whose children are currently, or have at some point been involved in formal music learning. The third section of the questionnaire was aimed toward parents whose children

had never experienced formal music learning, and the fourth was a section for general response.

The questionnaire return rate was small (103/770), equalling only 13% of the distribution size. Of these 103 returned questionnaires, only 25 were in response to section three, whilst 81 responses were in reference to section two involving children who do study music, or have done so in the past⁵. Due to the particularly small number of responses to section three, statistical analysis of this data was inappropriate. However, the qualitative responses of these parents were still of interest, and were considered amongst the responses to section two.

Data from the questionnaire phase were collected and analysed according to their nature. Numerical data were analysed statistically at the descriptive and inferential level (Burns, 2000; Howell, 2008), whilst verbal data were analysed according to the principles of grounded theory (Creswell, 2003). As such, four dominant themes emerged:

1. “People say...”: Parental opinions regarding music and academic ability
2. Being a “good parent”: Opportunity and parental musical experience
3. “I don’t want to force”: the child’s right to choose
4. For the love of music.

Each of these themes was explored further in the case study phase of the project. This phase involved three participants, chosen according to the principles of purposive sampling, from amongst those who completed the questionnaire. Each of the case study participants were female, aged between 30 and 49. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the three case study participants, and their responses were also analysed according to the principles of grounded theory. Case study data were used to contribute to the four themes that emerged in the questionnaire phase of the study, and through these responses the themes were able to be explored from a more personal, individualised perspective.

⁵ Please note that the number do not equal 103 cases exactly because in three cases parents completed both section two and section three

Summary of Results

“People say...” Parental opinions regarding music and academic ability

Data collected from both the questionnaire and cases study phases of the project indicated that, though expectation of academic improvement was not the most strongly endorsed motivation by parents, for many it was an important one. It seems that many parents believe that participation in musical experiences will have a positive effect on other areas of their education. However, many parents seem to be unsure of where their beliefs on the subject are derived. Reference to general statements such as “people say” suggests that, as the literature states, the notion of music making children smarter has spread throughout popular culture as somewhat of a scientific fact (Bangerter & Heath, 2004).

Being a “good parent”: Opportunity and parental musical experience

This theme was explored according to two sub-themes: that of providing opportunity, and the relationship between parental choices for their children and their own personal musical experiences.

Many parents seemed to feel that it was important to provide as many positive opportunities for their children as possible. In many ways, this theme was unrelated to music specifically, in that the concept may be applied to any extra-curricular activity. However, in many cases, music appeared to be an experience that was deemed particularly valuable by parents.

It may well be that some parents value music to a greater extent when they have experienced it themselves. Some parents spoke of their desire to pass on a particular musical experience to their children, and by doing so, continue a kind of family tradition. Conversely, many parents who have never experienced music also feel quite strongly about the importance of providing this opportunity for their children. Interestingly, most parents do not indicate a particular desire for their children to become professional musicians, but rather they want them to experience any activity that may prove valuable.

“I don’t want to force”: the child’s right to choose

For many parents, the notion of the child’s right to choose their own activities seems an important one. Many parents feel passionately about their child’s preferences, and seem particularly concerned that they not be seen to be forcing their child to participate in any activity. Once again, it is possible that this is a concept related to any extra-curricular activity, and could be applied as such. Regardless, it appears that many parents feel strongly about their role in their child’s activity choice as passive facilitator, rather than coercive participant.

For the love of music

The data from this study suggest that the strongest motivation of parents toward musical experiences for their children is related directly to their love of music, and to their desire to encourage a love of music in their children. Few responses within both questionnaire and case study phases of the project were so passionate as those espousing the value of music for children, and within society generally. It seems that, though there are many and varied motivations toward engaging children in formal music learning, a pure love of music is paramount for most.

Educational Implications

These results have a number of implications for educational practice. Though the study is small in nature, it provides insight into the relatively under-researched area of parental motivation toward formal music learning. In this way, the study contributes to the field of knowledge regarding extra-curricular music participation, and its perceived benefits.

Whilst it is certainly interesting to examine the reasons why parents choose musical experiences for their children, it is also valuable, from an educational perspective, to understand the motivation employed in such a decision. Why is it that so many parents feel a necessity to encourage their children to go beyond their compulsory musical study at school and explore music in a more personal, focused format? This study attempts to clarify such questions, and, in doing so, contributes to the field. It may well be that,

through further understanding of the reasons why parents value musical experiences for their children, we as educators may better understand their expectations. In so doing, we may also hope to better cater for the needs of each individual student.

The literature is clear in regard to the positive influence of parental support for children participating in formal music learning. If it is true that students whose parents value music perform better in terms of musical achievement, attitude and self-esteem (Borthwick & Davidson, 2002; Zdzinski, 1996), then it is important to develop an understanding of why these parents value music, and to explore the cultural beliefs that affect their decisions to engage their children in formal music learning. Through familiarity with these areas, both parents and educators may hope to contribute to a positive learning environment for those children studying music, and in so doing improve their chances of success.

Limitations of the Study

The small sample size may certainly be determined to be a limitation of this study. Though 770 questionnaires were distributed, only 103 were returned, and only 81 questionnaires were appropriate for statistical analysis. Given this small sample size, it is obvious that any statistical observations can and should not be generalised as applicable to the population. Rather, the numerical analysis provides insight into a particular societal group, within a particularly geographical area, at one time.

Similarly, results obtained through qualitative means should also be treated as exemplary of the same sample, and generalisations regarding the population should not be made. Within the sample size, other limitations might be discussed. Female participants were selected within the case study phase of the project to reflect the nature of the questionnaire data: 83% of all questionnaire participants were female. As such, it is difficult to determine the similarities and differences between the motivations of fathers compared to mothers, and it is difficult to determine if the results are homogenous amongst all parents.

Recommendations for future research

There are many avenues for future research that may develop from this small, exploratory study. Certainly, there are a number of possibilities in regard to increased sample size and response rate. A similar study with a larger sample size might better determine the motivations of parents toward formal music learning, and in doing so enhance, or indeed clarify the results of this study.

It may be particularly interesting to examine the results of a study that focused on a variation in sample: would the results be replicated in a different geographical location, for example? Conversely, are these results indicative of their geographical location only, and would other motivations be prioritised by participants from a contrasting location?

It may also be worthwhile to determine the differences and similarities between motivations of fathers and mothers. Whilst this study examined a sample with a high percentage of mothers, it may be valuable to examine a sample containing sufficient fathers to allow for statistical comparison. Would a case study of three fathers, for example, produce similar results, or would their reasoning be focused toward other motivations entirely?

There is certainly potential for further exploration of parental motivation toward formal music learning. Whilst this study has contributed somewhat to the expansion of knowledge on the subject, there is much to be gained from future research.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT



The University of Sydney

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

Research Project Title: Why Choose Music? A study in parental motivation toward child music learning.

1. What is the study about?

This study is about the motivations of parents when choosing music as an activity for their children. The study will be conducted from the perspective of the extra-musical benefits of music education, with particular interest in the extent to which parents employ motivation based on extra-musical benefits of music education.

2. Who is conducting the study?

The study is being conducted by Jessica Paterson and will form the basis for the honours requirement of the Bachelor of Music (Music Education) degree at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, under the supervision of Mr James Renwick.

3. What does the study involve?

The study involves the distribution of surveys, as well as some audio-recorded interviews with a small number of willing participants.

4. How much time will the study take?

The survey will take approximately ten to twenty minutes to complete, and interviews will last no longer than 30 minutes. If you consent to an interview, this will take place only once.

5. Can I withdraw from the study?

Being involved in the study is completely voluntary— you are under no obligation to consent. Please note that completion of the survey implies consent. There will be a separate consent form for you to complete if you choose to be involved in the interview section of the study.

6. Will anyone else know the results?

All aspects of the study, including results and recordings, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers, Miss Jessica Paterson and Mr James Renwick, will have access to information on participants. All data, including audio recordings, will be kept in the possession of the researcher. Data will be stored in a locked cabinet for a period of seven years, before being destroyed in a secure manner. A report of the study will be submitted

as part of an honours thesis. Transcriptions will be made of all recordings, and quotations may be used, however individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

7. Will the study benefit me?

The study is contributing to the development of music education generally, and your participation will benefit the field of music education. There is no monetary compensation for participating in the study.

8. Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you may tell other people about the study.

9. What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Jessica Paterson will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Jessica Paterson on 0400336601 or Mr James Renwick on 9351 1235.

10. What if I have a complaint or concern?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Senior Ethics Officer, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 9351 4811 (Telephone); (02) 9351 6706 (Facsimile) or gabriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



The University of Sydney
**SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC**



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM INTERVIEW

I, , give consent to my participation in the research project

Name (please print)

Why choose music? A study in parental motivation toward child music learning.

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.
3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) now or in the future.
4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.
5. I understand that interviews will be audio taped.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Jessica Paterson on 0400336601 or Mr James Renwick on 9351 1235.

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Senior Ethics Officer, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 9351 4811 (Telephone); (02) 9351 6706 (Facsimile) or gabriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS



The University of Sydney
**SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC**



To whom it may concern,

I am writing to ask for your consent for your school to be involved in a research study that I am undertaking to form the basis of an honours thesis as part of a Bachelor of Music (Music Education) (Honours) degree at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney.

The study is titled Why choose music? A study in parental motivation toward child music learning. The purpose of the study is to ascertain the motivations of parents when enrolling their children in extra-curricular music activities, and the extent to which these motivations are based on parental expectations of extra-musical benefits, such as the idea that studying music will increase intelligence.

The study will require the voluntary participation of parents to complete a survey, and possibly be available for a short follow-up interview.

The surveys will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete, and arrangements for distribution and collection of these surveys within the school will be determined through consultation, in order to provide minimal disruption to school procedure.

Interviews with parents will be approximately 30 minutes in duration, and will take place at a mutually convenient time, outside school hours. There will be fewer than 5 interviews conducted with parents from your school.

The only commitment from your school is in the distribution of surveys to students, and in aiding the researchers in collected any completed surveys.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 0400336601, or at jpat5531@mail.usyd.edu.au.

Thanking you,

Jessica Paterson

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE



The University of Sydney
**SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC**



QUESTIONNAIRE

WHY CHOOSE MUSIC?

*** PLEASE NOTE that you may still complete this questionnaire even if you do not have any children studying music.**

By completing this questionnaire you are helping in the completion of the honours requirement of a Bachelor of Music (Music Education) degree, as well as contributing to further development in the field of music education. Your participation is very much appreciated!

1. There are four sections to this survey. Please fill in only those sections that are applicable to you and your child.
2. If you have more than one child, please answer in reference to the child who received the survey.
3. Please note that a 'music programme' is defined as any music lessons or ensembles that are not part of regular schooling, such as bands, orchestras, individual instrumental tuition, choirs, and group music learning.
4. Returning this form is an acknowledgement of your consent to participate in the study.

Thank you very much for your time!

Section One: Demographic information

1. What is your sex (Please circle)? male female
2. What is your age (Please circle)? 18-29 30-49 50+
3. What is the sex of your child (Please circle)? male female
4. Child's school grade:_____
5. Please state your occupation:_____
6. Please state your highest academic qualification:_____
- _____
7. If your child is involved in a music programme, please state the instrument they play, or the music activity that they are involved in:_____
- _____

8. Please rate your own musical involvement:

a) I listen to music regularly on the radio or in the home or car.

Not at all true of me						Very true of me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

b) I regularly attend music concerts.

Not at all true of me						Very true of me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

c) I play one or more musical instruments.

Not at all true of me						Very true of me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

d) I consider myself a musician.

Not at all true of me						Very true of me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

e) I am, or have once been, paid to teach or perform music.

Not at all true of me						Very true of me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*If your child is **currently enrolled** in a music programme, or **has been enrolled** in a music programme in the past, please proceed to **Section Two**.*

*If your child **has never** been enrolled in a music programme, please skip Section Two and proceed directly to **Section Three**.*

Section Two: Child IS or HAS BEEN enrolled in a music programme

*Please complete this section if your child is **currently enrolled** in a music programme, or **has been enrolled** in a music programme in the past.*

1. Please rate the extent to which the following statements are true of you:

a) My child is/has been involved in music because I want him/her to experience a wide range of activities.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

b) My child is/has been involved in music because I want to improve his/her musical skill.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

c) My child is/has been involved in music because I feel it will improve his/her academic ability.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

d) My child is/has been involved in music because his/her friends were participating.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

e) My child is/has been involved in music because I feel it will improve his/her discipline.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

f) My child is/has been involved in music because he/she asked to be.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

g) My child is/has been involved in music because I feel it will improve his/her general learning.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

h) My child is/has been involved in music because I wanted to have a variety of activities to include on his/her resume.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

i) My child is/has been involved in music because I wanted to improve his/her social skills.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

j) My child is/has been involved in music because I feel that music is an important experience for all children.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

Section Three: Child HAS NEVER been enrolled in a music programme

*Please complete this section if your child **has never** been involved in a music programme.*

If you have already completed Section Two, do not complete this section and proceed directly to Section Four.

1. Please rate the extent to which the following statements are true of you:

a) My child has never been involved in music because he/she refused to participate.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

b) My child has never been involved in music because I don't think music is a valuable activity at this time in my child's life.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

c) My child has never been involved in music because I do not think that he/she would enjoy it.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

d) My child has never been involved in music because I do not think that he/she has any musical talent.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

e) My child has never been involved in music because he/she has never shown any interest in musical activity.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

f) My child has never been involved in music because I was not aware of any programmes in our area.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

g) My child has never been involved in music because he/she already participates in too many other activities.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

h) My child has never been involved in music because it is too expensive.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

i) My child has never been involved in music because we have never been given the opportunity.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

j) My child has never been involved in music because we just never got around to it.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

k) My child has never been involved in music because he/she is too young.

Not at all true of me
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Very true of me

2. Please state any other reasons why your child has never been involved in music: _____

3. Please share any other thoughts or statements regarding the above statements: _____

Please proceed to Section Four.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDES

INTERVIEW GUIDE (KATE):

1. Can you please describe your general thoughts regarding the survey?
2. When asked in the questionnaire about why your child is involved in music, you responded very highly to the statement “My child is involved in music because he asked to be”. Can you explain why you feel strongly about this?
3. You also mentioned your younger child, stating that you would support her desire to be involved in music, but not force her to participate. Could you elaborate on this?
4. Other than his desire to participate, what were your other reasons for involving your son in music?
5. Can you explain the circumstances through which your son became involved in music?
6. You responded to the statement “my child is involved in music because I feel it will improve his academic ability” by saying that this was not at all true of you. Can you explain why you feel this way?
7. You commented that your son “has always loved music”. Were your motivations toward music related to a belief that your son was innately musically talented?
8. You mentioned concern regarding the commitment involved in joining a musical ensemble. Could you elaborate on this?
9. Could you please explain your personal feelings regarding the importance of music for children?
10. How do you think that musical participation has influenced your son?

INTERVIEW GUIDE (VANESSA)

1. Can you please describe your general thoughts regarding the survey?
2. When asked about your motivations toward choosing music as an activity for your daughter, you responded very highly to six of the statements, and I'd like to talk about some of these individually. One of these statements was "My child is involved in music because I feel it will improve her academic ability". Can you tell me your thoughts about this statement?
3. Another of the statements was "I feel it will improve her general learning". For you, how is this distinct from feeling that music will improve academic ability?
4. Another of the statements was "My child is involved in music because I feel it will improve her discipline". Can you describe your thoughts regarding this statement?
5. You also responded very highly to the statement "I want to improve her musical skill". Was your decision to enroll your daughter based on a feeling that she was innately musically talented?
6. Another of your strong responses was "My child is involved in music because she asked to be". Can you explain why you feel so strongly about this?
7. One of your lowest responses was to the statement "My child is involved in music because I want her to experience a wide range of activities". Could you elaborate on why this was not a motivation for you?
8. Did you have any other reasons for choosing music for your daughter that you would like to share?
9. Could you explain your personal feelings on the importance of music for children?
10. How do you think that music participation has influenced your daughter?

INTERVIEW GUIDE (AMELIA):

1. Can you please describe your general thoughts regarding the survey?
2. You responded highly to four of the five statements regarding your own musical involvement. Can you elaborate on your own musical experience?
3. Do you think that your musical background influenced your motivations toward music education for your child/children? How do you think you were influenced in this way?
4. You responded very strongly to five of the motivational statements that were listening on the questionnaire, so I'd like to talk about a few of these individually. One of these statements was "My child is involved in music because I want her to experience a wide range of activities". Could you elaborate on this?
5. Do you think that it is the duty of a "responsible parent" to provide a wide range of experiences for their children?
6. Another of the statements that you supported strongly was "My child is involved in music because I feel it will improve her discipline". Can you elaborate on why you feel this way?
7. Another of the statements that you supported strongly was "My child is involved... because she asked to be". Can you elaborate on why you feel strongly about this? Do you feel that it is important for a child to choose their own activities?

APPENDIX F: LETTERS OF APPROVAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY HREC



The University of Sydney

NSW 2006 Australia

Human Research Ethics Committee

www.usyd.edu.au/ethics/human

Senior Ethics Officer:

Gail Briody

Telephone: (02) 9351 4811

Facsimile: (02) 9351 6706

Email: gbriody@usyd.edu.au

Rooms L4, L4 & L6, 04 Main Quadrangle A14

Human Secretariat

Telephone: (02) 9036 9308

(02) 9036 9308

Facsimile: (02) 9036 9310

12 December 2007

Mr J Renwick
Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Greenway Building – C41
The University of Sydney

Dear Mr Renwick

I am pleased to inform you that the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at its meeting on 11 December 2007 approved your protocol entitled **"Why choose music? A study in parental motivation toward child music learning."**

Details of the approval are as follows:

Ref No.:	12-2007/10593
Approval Period:	31 December 2007 to 31 December 2008
Authorised Personnel:	Mr J Renwick Miss J Paterson

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007* under Section 5.1.29

The approval of this project is **conditional** upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. We draw to your attention the requirement that a report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed.

Special Condition/s of Approval

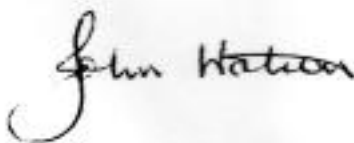
- Amendment to the Participant Consent Form:
 - Page 1 of 1, Last Paragraph, Line 2: Please remove Ms Jessica Paterson's private telephone number and replace with a mobile number.
- Amendment to the Participant Information Statement:
 - Page 2 of 2, under the heading "What if I require further information?": Please remove Ms Jessica Paterson's private telephone number and replace with a mobile number.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities to ensure that:

- (1) All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

- (2) All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- (3) The HREC must be notified as soon as possible of any changes to the protocol. All changes must be approved by the HREC before continuation of the research project. These include:-
 - If any of the investigators change or leave the University.
 - Any changes to the Participant Information Statement and/or Consent Form.
- (4) All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The Participant Information Statement and Consent Form are to be on University of Sydney letterhead and include the full title of the research project and telephone contacts for the researchers, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee and the following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement. *Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Senior Ethics Officer, University of Sydney, on (02) 9351 4811 (Telephone); (02) 9351 6706 (Facsimile) or gbriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).*
- (5) Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.
- (6) It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.
- (7) The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.
- (8) A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor J D Watson
Chairman
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Miss Jessica Paterson, 13 Carmel Close, Baulkham Hills NSW 2153

Encl. Participant Information Statement Page 2, Participant Consent Form Page 1



The University of Sydney

NSW 2006 Australia

Human Research Ethics Committee

www.usyd.edu.au/ethics/human

Senior Ethics Officer:

Gail Briody

Telephone: (02) 9351 4811

Facsimile: (02) 9351 8706

Email: gbriody@usyd.edu.au

Room 313, Level 3, Old Teachers College – A22

Human Secretariat

Telephone: (02) 9036 9309

(02) 9036 9308

Facsimile: (02) 9036 9310

4 April 2008

Mr J Renwick
Sydney Conservatorium of Music
Greenway Building – C41
The University of Sydney

Dear Mr Renwick

Title: *Why choose music? A study in parental motivation toward child music learning.*

Ref: 10593

Thank you for providing the revised Participant Information Statement and Participant Consent Form, fulfilling the condition of approval for the above-mentioned protocol.

This has been filed with your original application.

Yours sincerely

Professor D I Cook
Chairman
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc Ms Jessica Paterson, 13 Carmel Close, Baulkham Hills NSW 2153

Encl.
Participant Information Statement
Participant Consent Form

APPENDIX G: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

PLANNING AND INNOVATION



Miss Jessica Paterson
13 Carmel Close
BAULKHAM HILLS NSW 2153

Dear Miss Paterson SERAP Number **2007250**

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *Why choose music? A study in parental motivation toward child music learning*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved. You may now contact the Principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation.

This approval will remain valid until 31/12/2008.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

Name	Approval expires
Jessica Paterson	6 December 2008

You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to schools.

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- School Principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the Principal for the specific method of gathering information for the school must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school's convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the Research Approvals Officer before publication proceeds.

When your study is completed please forward your report marked to General Manager, Planning and Innovation, Department of Education and Training, GPO Box 33, Sydney, NSW 2001.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Donovan
General Manager, Planning and Innovation

26 March 08