THE PERCEPTIONS OF ADOLESCENT BOYS REGARDING MUSIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of adolescent boys’ perceptions of the relationship between music participation and social behaviour. Adolescent boys have been identified by the literature as a social group in particular need of support and programs that encourage prosocial behaviour and protect against or discourage antisocial behaviour. The data were collected from seven boys from an all boys’ state comprehensive school in Sydney. The boys ranged from Year 7 to Year 10. Data collection involved two focus group discussions and employed semi-structured questioning. Grounded theory was developed through open and axial coding of the transcribed data. It was found that adolescents perceive this relationship as a complex one, with many factors influencing both music participation and social behaviour. Results indicated that participants felt that the culture of the music ensemble, the genre of music and the degree of autonomous learning were all factors influencing this relationship. These results generate numerous avenues for further research, and add to the growing body of knowledge on music participation and social behaviour in adolescent boys.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It has been said that music may have “charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted Oak” (Congreve, 1697). For centuries music has been credited with the power to influence behaviour, and the media and social theorists have perpetuated this belief, without much empirical support. This study aims to explore adolescent opinions about the relationship between participation in music activities and social behaviour, an area that has received little attention from researchers.

As this field of study is in its infancy, it would be naïve to set out to provide an exhaustive list of factors influencing the relationship between music participation and social behaviour. This research does not intend to reach final conclusions on this relationship, but rather seeks to explore a perspective that has been largely ignored by the research community: that of the adolescents themselves. Through this lens, this research study provides a preliminary insight into adolescent opinions and attitudes, and generates a number of avenues for future research.

Music participation is particularly prominent during adolescence, with many studies emphasizing the significant amount of time adolescents spend involved with music, and the importance they attach to it (Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2002). One explanation for adolescents’ enthusiasm for musical material is its ability to address developmental needs and contribute towards the formation of a positive social identity. Developmental needs include value and belief acquisition, learning socially responsible behaviour, emotional independence and social relationships (Kirchler, Palmonari, & Pombeni, 1993; Palmonari, Pombeni, & Kirchler, 1990). Through categorising themselves as members of particular groups, adolescents construct a social identity, which guides behaviour (Tarrant et al., 2002). As adolescents participate in musical activities so frequently, researchers have suggested that many adolescents align themselves with the social identities of others in certain musical groups, and differentiating themselves from those who are not (Russell, 1997).
Through an increased awareness of the role music plays in the lives of adolescents, music educators may provide activities that may generate positive outcomes for many students, especially those that may otherwise be experiencing difficulty in constructing a positive social identity (O'Neill, 2005). The more information music educators have regarding adolescents’ involvement with music and how they perceive this in relation to their behaviour, the better equipped they are to help students achieve the important goals of socialization, developing intellectual and social competence, strengthening resilience, enhancing self-esteem and responsibility.

**The Present Study**

Data collection methods in previous studies evaluating existing programs or investigating the relationship between music participation and antisocial behaviour, have been predominantly quantitative, testing existing hypotheses to generate results that can be applied to broader populations. Few studies have yielded reliable results with many lacking adequate sample sizes or failing to establish significant quantitative relationships between music participation and social behaviour (Shields, 2001). Whilst it was initially planned that this study would employ similar methodologies, a low response rate shifted the focus of the research project away from establishing a quantitative representation of the relationship between music participation and social behaviour, towards the exploration of adolescents’ own opinions, attitudes and perceptions. This provides a valuable perspective and investigates an alternative insight, providing a preliminary exploration into adolescents’ own views of their worlds and issues.

**Research Questions**

The focus of this study shifted from identifying a quantifiable connection between two variables, to an exploration into adolescents’ own perceptions of music participation and any bearing this may have on behaviour.
The overall research question for this study is:

What are adolescent boys’ perceptions of music participation in relation to social behaviour?

As the study evolved and the participants expressed their views, it became clear that they regarded the relationship between music participation and social behaviour as a complicated one, and a number of additional research questions needed to be asked in order to address this. These questions were developed in a dynamic relationship with the data, thus addressing what emerged as the participants’ own perceptions of the salient issues surrounding adolescent music and social behaviour.

The additional research questions for this study are:

- Does the genre of music affect adolescent boys’ perceptions of music participation in relation to social behaviour?
- Do other participants in musical ensembles affect adolescent boys’ perceptions of music participation in relation to social behaviour?
- Does adult supervision or involvement affect adolescent boys’ perceptions of music participation in relation to social behaviour?

By developing the research questions in a reciprocal and dynamic relationship with the data, the methodology ensured that the direction of the study was influenced by the participants themselves. This allowed quite an open exploration of their opinions and attitudes rather than imposing predefined criteria upon their responses.

**Definition of Terms**

In order to explore adolescents’ perceptions of the influence music participation has, or may have on behaviour, it was necessary to define these terms. Participants’ discussions were focussed by the content of the questionnaire, which asked about specific behaviours and specific music activities. However, the participants digressed
from these suggested definitions, implying that they view adolescent music participation as encompassing many more activities than I had initially outlined, and the influence participation has on behaviour is more complex than initially thought. The terms used in this research study have thus been developed through referrals to previous research studies as well as the assumptions and perceptions of the participants.

**Music Activities**

For the purposes of this study, music activities are defined as any intentional participation with musical material. This may be active music making in the form of performance or composition, or listening to music. All of the participants suggested that they were involved with music, either as listeners or performers, indicating that their knowledge of music activities was first-hand.

**School-Organised Music Activities**

One focus of this study was on music activities in the school environment. This study defines involvement in school-organised music activities as being a performance or active participation (demanding a level of effort and input) in a musical activity run by the school. Participants were provided with suggestions of such activities, including participation in orchestra, choir/vocal ensembles, popular music ensembles, individual instrumental or vocal lessons and jazz bands. As many of the participants were not involved in school-organised music activities, many of their comments are based on their perceptions of what involvement in such activities entail. Perceptions of school-music activities often differed from music activities in a leisure context, with many participants assuming such activities were of particular genres (predominantly classical) and made up of particular ensembles (such as orchestra and jazz band). These assumptions may have resulted from their individual experiences with school-music activities, or experiences of their families or peers, or based on other portrayals of such activities.

**Prosocial Behaviour**

During focus group discussions, participants raised the notion of prosocial behaviour without being provided with a set definition. For the purposes of data analysis, prosocial behaviour has been defined as any voluntary behaviour that is intended to
help others or make a positive contribution to society (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989) and behaviour that aids the development of the individual. Examples that were suggested by the participants of this study include being kind to others, the mastery of an instrument and a calm approach to problems or crises.

**Antisocial Behaviour**

Since most adolescents deviate from the established societal norms at some stage, the concept of deviance and antisocial behaviour are relative terms (Dornbusch, 1989). By labelling certain behaviours as ‘antisocial’ this study does not claim that there are societal norms of behaviour to which adolescents should conform. Nor does it intend to criticize departures from what is popularly considered ‘normal’ or prosocial behaviour or to label the individuals who do deviate from supposed norms in a pejorative way. For the purposes of this study, the behaviours investigated in this study are viewed as antisocial in that they may be harmful to either the individual or others. Participants’ views of antisocial behaviour were focussed through the questionnaire which asked how many times in 2006 they engaged in a number of behaviours, including substance use/abuse, property damage, truancy, theft and violence.

Instead of restricting their discussions to set foci, the research design adapted to the data, and encouraged them to raise all issues that they felt were relevant and important, thus defining terms according to the participants’ perceptions and explanations of what they understood to be music participation and social behaviour.

**Significance of the Study**

There has been evidence that an adolescent’s participation in school-organized extracurricular activities acts as a protective context in terms of engagement in antisocial behaviour (Eccles & Barber, 1999). However, there has been little research on the relationship between specific activities and social behaviour, and less still on music activities. This thesis does not suggest that participation in music activities will deter or protect against specific behaviours, or attempt to identify all the factors affecting this relationship. Rather, it has been designed to gain a preliminary insight into adolescents’ own perceptions and attitudes towards any relationship between
music involvement and social behaviour. Instead of imposing an etic (Alasuutari, 1995) account of the adolescent musical and behavioural world, coding and interpreting the data according to predetermined categories, this study endeavours to explore adolescents’ own views, attitudes and opinions about phenomena that are imbued with meaning that is both understood and relevant to them. This emic approach provides an important insight into the complexities of the relationship between music participation and social behaviour, through analysing the data as perceived by the very group of people it involves.

The findings from this study contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the role music plays in the lives of adolescents and its relation to social behaviour. The exploratory approach of this study may guide future researchers, allowing them to formulate more precise research questions and investigate the specifics of this field.

With more information about the social behaviour of adolescents in relation to music participation, music educators will be able to design more effective programs addressing behavioural issues and promoting positive social networks within the school.

**Organization of Thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 2 will review the findings of past research studies in this area. As this field of study is relatively new, a broad range of literature has been covered, examining relevant research in adolescence, behaviour and music participation. Chapter 3 will outline the research methodology used in the current study. Chapter 4 will present and discuss the research findings on adolescents’ perceptions on involvement in music activities and the impact this has on social behaviour according to themes that emerged during data analysis. Chapter 5 will draw conclusions, outline the educational implications of the findings and make suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theorists and the media have paid considerable attention to the notion that there is a causal relationship between youth participating in leisure activities, such as music activities, and the development of prosocial behaviour (North, Tarrant, & Hargreaves, 2004) or protection from antisocial behaviour (Agnew & Petersen, 1989). However there is a marked absence of empirical literature addressing this relationship (Caldwell & Smith, 2006). It is interesting to consider whether participation in music activities is associated with different levels of prosocial or antisocial behaviours. As there is a notable lack of such research, there are limitations on what is known about this specific topic. For this reason, this literature review examines a broad spectrum of literature.

Three seminal studies for the current research were conducted by Agnew and Petersen (1989), Rutten, Stams, Biesta and Hoeksma (2007) and Shields (2001). Agnew and Petersen (1989) investigated the relationship between a number of leisure activities and antisocial behaviour, Rutten, Stams, Biesta and Hoeksma (2007) explored the connection between sporting activities and social behaviour and perhaps most pertinent to this study, Shields (2001) looked at adolescents’ perspectives of extracurricular music activities and their influence on antisocial behaviour.

In Agnew and Petersen’s research (1989), music participation was included in three different categories of leisure activities. Band participation was categorised as “organised activities”, listening to music was categorised as “passive entertainment” and music activities that are not organised were categories as “music/art”. The distinctions Agnew and Petersen make regarding different types of music participation are interesting, suggesting that different types of involvement, and different types of ensembles influence behaviour differently. The results from Agnew and Petersen’s (1989) research found that the effects of certain leisure variables on antisocial behaviour were as significant, or more significant, than those of many traditional predictors such as socio-economic status, the relationship adolescents have with their parents and friendships with antisocial peers. It was
found that involvement in organised activities, such as bands was negatively related to antisocial behaviour; that is, when adolescents were involved in organised activities, they were less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour. The findings were similar for passive entertainment. Interestingly, music/art was not found to be a significant predictor of antisocial behaviour.

Whilst these findings are interesting, they must be understood in the context in which the research was conducted. Firstly, the data were collected in 1974, before the era of mp3s and easily portable music players, perhaps representing an adolescent population with a very different relationship to music consumption and music making, not to mention the evolution of music education. The conceptual definitions of music participation illustrate how the understanding of concepts has changed. In being categorised as an ‘organised activity’, Agnew and Petersen liken music participation to the drill team, school newspaper, cheerleading, scouts, church activities and school homework. In categorising music participation as passive entertainment, they liken it to reading, television watching, movies and sporting events. Suggesting that music participation is akin to completing school homework, cheerleading or watching movies now seems absurd, and recent research has suggested that what was once considered passive entertainment is anything but (Green, 2001). Despite these limitations, this study illustrates the possible connection between activity participation and behaviour, suggesting that further research should be conducted to more firmly establish and explore this relationship.

Whilst research on music activities and behaviour is a relatively new field, there have been a number of studies that have investigated the correlation between participation in sporting activities and adolescent behaviour. One such study was conducted by Rutten, Stams, Biesta and Hoeksma (2007). The research involved adolescent athletes and investigated the effect their participation in sporting activities had on their behaviour. The study focussed on educationally relevant aspects of youth sporting activities, such as the sociomoral atmosphere of the sporting environment, sociomoral reasoning about sport dilemmas and the quality of the relationship between the coach and the athlete. Overall it was found that 8% of the variance in antisocial behaviour and 7% of the variance in prosocial behaviour could be attributed to these aspects of the sporting activities. The focus on educationally
relevant aspects of this relationship is of particular interest for the current study as the researchers focussed largely on adolescents’ own perceptions. It was found that positive perceptions of the sociomoral atmosphere of the sporting environment and high levels of sociomoral reasoning were associated with higher levels of prosocial behaviour, and positive coach-athlete relationships reduced the likelihood of adolescents engaging in antisocial behaviours. This suggests that through extracurricular activities that promote positive environments and adult-adolescent relationships, educators may play an important role in the behavioural development of adolescents.

Research by Caldwell and Smith (2006) also highlights sporting activities as a context either preventing or encouraging antisocial behaviour by examining the effects of an intervention program. Their study also investigates this relationship through the quantitative analysis of questionnaire data. A key limitation of the study is the definitions of antisocial behaviour, which was confined to one variable: property damage, as measured by a Likert-scale response on a questionnaire. Similarly to Agnew and Petersen’s (1989) study on leisure activities, and in keeping with other research (Landers & Landers, 1978; Mahoney, 2000), the results from Caldwell and Smith’s (2006) research suggest that involvement in sporting activities may protect against or deter antisocial behaviour. This was especially the case when gender was included as a variable. Being male was a positive predictor of property damage, as were high levels of amotivation, interest, and peer influence.

This raises a number of questions about whether music activities may influence adolescents in similar ways, though few studies have been conducted to investigate this. Much of the literature on leisure activities and antisocial behaviour has emanated from a number of criminological or social theories. Hirschi’s (1969) social control theory has been used as an explanation for antisocial behaviour for over three decades, and draws one of the clearest connections between involvement in leisure activities, school commitment and antisocial behaviour (Jenkins, 1995; Petrocelli & Petrocelli, 2005). Hirschi proposed that antisocial behaviour is the result of a weakening of social bonds. Adolescents who have stronger attachment to others or groups, commitment to conventional activities, involvement in conventional activities and belief in positive social norms are suggested as less likely to engage in
antisocial behaviour. Research suggests that participation in extracurricular activities may discourage adolescents from engaging in antisocial behaviour (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney, 1997). One explanation for this, in keeping with Hirschi’s theory, is that adolescents do not want to weaken their social bonds, and fear that engaging in antisocial behaviour may jeopardize their involvement with an activity or the reputation they have built up through the activity (Jenkins, 1995). Involvement in the leisure activity may also foster conventional beliefs by exposing individuals to conventional role models and increasing their attachment to them (Schafer, 1969) or fostering conventional beliefs such as persistence, “good” manners, and cooperation (Landers & Landers, 1978). It has also been found that extracurricular activity participation is linked to increased self-concept, grades, school engagement and educational aspirations (McNeal, 1995; Youniss, Yates, & Su, 1997), which according to social control theory, should protect or deter adolescents from engaging in antisocial behaviour.

Later theories by Hirschi and Gottfredson (2000) suggest that peer influence is also important when considering antisocial behaviour. Many criminologists argue that involvement in certain activities increases the likelihood of being exposed to individuals who encourage or provide opportunities for antisocial behaviour and/or cultivate values that accept antisocial behaviours (Cohen, 1955). This is consistent with research that has found that association with antisocial peers is strongly associated with antisocial behaviour (Dekovic, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004; Dishion, Spracklen, Andrews, & Patterson, 1996).

There have been few studies on music participation and social behaviour, and researchers have largely neglected adolescents’ own opinions and attitudes on the topic. One study that did investigate adolescent perceptions was conducted by Shields (2001). In contrast to the current study, Shields’ research was a predominantly quantitative examination of music education as an intervention strategy for at-risk urban adolescents, when combined with mentoring programs. Approximately half of the participants were identified as “at risk” according to particular characteristics, including home and family, academic, school setting, social skills adjustment and behaviour and physical and mental health. Adolescents’ perceptions were measured by the statistical analysis of pre-test results, gathered
prior to the music education/mentoring intervention, and post-test results, which were gathered after 16 weeks of the intervention strategy. Structured interviews were also conducted with participants. The results from this research showed that there were no significant differences between pre-test and post-test scores for adolescents’ perceptions of their academic competence, social acceptance, physical appearance, behavioural conduct and global self-worth. However, there was a significant increase in perceptions of musical competence, which Shields suggests indicates improvement in behaviour and attitudes of at-risk students. This claim is largely speculative, and this field of study warrants further research. Whilst adolescent perspectives were explored in this study, they were regarded as indicators of the success of an intervention program rather than as an insight into adolescents’ own thoughts and opinions of whether or not such a program would, or could be successful. There is a noticeable gap in the literature, as researchers have failed to allow adolescents to comment on their own experience, voice their opinions and attitudes on the relationship between activity participation and social behaviour.

Music has been suggested as an appropriate context for programs addressing behavioural difficulties because of the importance adolescents place on music and the important role it plays in their lives. From Year 7 to Year 12, the average student will spend many hours a day listening to music (Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, & Tarrant, 2003). According to the users and gratifications approach (Larson, 1995; Rubin, 1994), music listeners have particular preferences based on personal characteristics, and people intentionally participate and select particular music. Certain genres of music will appeal to individuals because of their particular personality characteristics, issues and/or needs that are reflected in, or satisfied by the music. For adolescents, these preferences are often related to issues of identity, independence, values, and self-perception (Schwartz & Fouts, 2003) and music is used to satisfy particular social, emotional and developmental needs (Arnett, Larson, & Offer, 1995; Lull, 1987).

Adolescence is a time of rapid biological, psychological and emotional change and development (A. Hargreaves & Earl, 1990; Tarrant et al., 2002). It has been suggested that adolescents need to adjust to these changes as well as develop a positive self-concept, experience and move towards independence, develop a sense
of identity, establish relationships, and acquire personal and social values (A. Hargreaves & Earl, 1990). Tarrant, North and Hargreaves (2002) suggest that one of the main factors that contribute to the appeal of music for adolescents is its ability to help them form positive social identities. By providing a forum for identity development and expression (O'Neil, 2005) for adolescents, music activities are credited with many benefits for adolescent participants beyond the inherent value of music education and skill acquisition.

According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) individuals categorise themselves according to social groups, which guides behaviour. Through identification with peer groups that associate themselves with particular genres of music, it is suggested that adolescents also identify themselves with the extramusical delineations of the music, including behavioural norms. Through comparison with other social groups, the association an individual has with a particular genre of music can be exaggerated or diminished, according to the values placed on these extramusical delineations and in fulfilment of an individual’s social identity needs (Tarrant et al., 2002). Adolescents’ responses to the multitude of challenges and crises during this time may hold major implications for their transition into adulthood and beyond (Farrington, 1995; Sarris, Winefield, & Cooper, 2000; S. Vassallo, Smart, Sanson, & Dussuyer, 2004).

There has been much written about the demographics of adolescent listeners and their musical preferences, often warning of the dangers of negative role modelling by particular musicians (Reddick & Beresin, 2002). Many genres are accused of promoting antisocial behaviours due to the actions of the musicians and the image they project. Researchers have found that some musical genres are significantly related to antisocial behaviour (Arnett, 1991; Miranda & Claes, 2004), and researchers have linked musical subcultures to drug use and violent behaviours (Hutson, 1999; Ter Bogt, Engels, Hibbel, Verhagen, & Van Wel, 2002). It has been found that adolescent males with serious emotional problems prefer heavy metal music (Epstein, Pratto, & Skipper, 1990). Whether this suggests that adolescents use music to construct their identities or are drawn to musical genres that reflect their values, opinions and personalities, is unclear. If adolescents use music to construct their identities they may incorporate subcultural norms and expectations into their own identities, including behaviours. If musical preference mirrors their social
realities it has been suggested that adolescents may use music as a coping mechanism to understand and critically reflect on social behaviour and interactions (Arnett, 1995; Gardstrom, 1999).

It has been suggested that the influence of music is different for relaxed music activities such as listening to music, and organized involvement in a musical ensemble (Agnew & Petersen, 1989). Researchers predict more intense results from participation in the latter (Eccles & Templeton, 2002) as organized activities provide opportunities to acquire and practise social, physical and intellectual skills, develop a sense of agency as a member of a community, to belong to a socially recognized and valued group, to establish social networks and to experience and deal with challenges (Eccles & Barber, 1999; O'Neill, 2005). This may hold implications for school organised music activities, which are typically highly structured and include active music making by adolescents. School music activities also involve an age demographic that has been identified as in need of programs to address social and behavioural difficulties.

The onset of most antisocial behaviour generally occurs around 11 to 12 years old (Vassallo et al. 2004), coinciding with the start of puberty. The rates of antisocial behaviour peak around 16 to 18 years of age (Baker, 1998; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Vassallo et al., 2002), marking adolescence as the beginning of many criminal careers (Farrington, Lambert, & West, 1998). There are numerous theories to explain the cause of antisocial behaviour (Agnew & Petersen, 1989). Whilst there may be no agreement on the cause of such behaviour, the age that individuals generally begin to exhibit such behaviour highlights the necessity to address antisocial behaviour during the adolescent years. By addressing such behaviour early on, the risks posed to individuals and those they interact with will be reduced, and adolescents may be redirected on a more constructive path. Baker’s (1998) study suggests that participation in criminal activities is widespread among New South Wales secondary school students, with 61.4% of surveyed students (N = 10,441) reporting participating in any one of six categories of behaviour: assault, malicious damage, receiving or selling stolen goods, theft, break and enter or motor vehicle theft. Participation rates were higher in male students for all offences for students in Years 7-10. This highlights the relevance of research in this population.
Before determining the success of music programs promoting prosocial behaviour or addressing antisocial behaviour, or striving for generalisable results, perhaps it is worthwhile to explore adolescents’ views on the relationship between music participation and antisocial behaviour in a more unstructured, qualitative way. Studies on antisocial behaviour are predominantly quantitative (Farrington et al., 1998; Sarris et al., 2000; Shields, 2001) though it is increasingly recognized that qualitative studies are valuable in gaining in-depth insights into adolescent opinions and perspectives to enrich quantitative data. (Draper, 2005; National Crime Prevention, 1999). A broader approach to research problems may explore this social phenomenon without imposing the limitations of a predetermined framework on the findings (Schutt, 2001).

If music does have the potential to deter or reduce antisocial behaviour, it may be a valuable inclusion into the school curriculum, mentoring or therapy programs targeting antisocial adolescents, or adolescents deemed at risk of developing antisocial tendencies. There have been few studies conducted to determine the nature of the relationship between extracurricular school music activities and antisocial behaviour. The research study adds to the growing body of knowledge that is gradually exploring this largely uncharted area, investigating the opinions and attitudes of adolescents themselves, a perspective that has been given very little attention.

The current study addresses a gap in the literature, exploring adolescent opinions and attitudes towards the often-assumed relationship between participation in music activities and either prosocial or antisocial behaviour. The methodology that was used in this research is outlined in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research study evolved during the course of investigation as discussed in the introductory chapter. A hybrid methodology incorporating both quantitative survey and qualitative focus groups was initially planned as the mode of data collection. After distributing approximately four hundred questionnaires and achieving a 2% response rate, it was clear that quantitative methods were not the best tool to explore the worlds of these particular adolescents. The reason for the low response rate is unknown. Whether the participant information forms and consent forms were unintentionally abandoned or whether the design of the study itself influenced student and parents’ willingness to participate is uncertain. It is possible that the study design was itself responsible for the response rate. The questionnaire asked adolescents to report on their own antisocial behaviour. Parents and adolescents may have felt uneasy about disclosing such information, albeit anonymously, which raises questions about how such information could be gained in the future. Whilst it would have been interesting to gain some insight into whether a relationship exists between music participation and social behaviour, such hypotheses are perhaps better addressed in larger studies with more resources, respondents and time, and the setbacks experienced through this research provide a valuable insight into how to, or how not to, approach future studies that investigate similar research questions.

With a small group of adolescents, the focus of the study turned to their opinions and attitudes, providing a more intense and in-depth insight into their musical and behavioural worlds than had originally been anticipated. Whilst the larger student population may have been reluctant, forgetful or unwilling respondents to questionnaires, the responses to discussion topics were open, thoughtful and enthusiastic. This may reflect the nature of the participants themselves, though may also suggest that qualitative methodologies provided a more appropriate approach to explore the adolescent world and this field of study.
This chapter will discuss the qualitative methodology that was selected to explore the participants’ perceptions of music participation and social behaviour. In addition, some background information on the participants and researcher has been included.

**Exploratory Research**

The goal of exploratory research is not to yield definitive answers, but rather to gain familiarity with a field of study, in this case, adolescent perceptions of music participation and social behaviour. Through this approach, techniques are developed for future data collection, new research questions are generated and new ideas, conjectures and hypotheses are created (Neuman, 2000).

Such intentions benefit from qualitative data collection and analysis methods, as such techniques allow for an open approach to research questions. By endeavouring to explain and understand the perceptions of a small group of adolescents, this study adds an alternative perspective to the research that has already been conducted in this field, contributes towards the development of research methods and techniques for future studies and may provide the foundation for future research that focuses on more specific aspects of music participation and social behaviour.

**The Qualitative Methodology**

In order to investigate adolescent opinions and attitudes regarding the relationship between music participation and social behaviour, a qualitative methodology was employed. Qualitative research seeks to understand, illuminate and explore context-specific phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In order to explore the perspectives of adolescent boys on music participation and its impact on social behaviour, focus groups were used as the primary method of data collection. The use of focus groups allows for data to be collected on complex behaviours and motivations whilst allowing different points of view to be discussed (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). The formulation of focus groups within this study gave additional insights into the perspectives, attitudes and opinions of the participants themselves, thus introducing alternative world-views (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).
and allowed this research to better address the complexity of the perceived relationship between music participation and social behaviour. A focus group setting allowed interactions of attitudes to be observed, as individuals disagreed or agreed and tried to make collective sense of their views (Morgan & Spanish, 1984). It has also been suggested that a focus group environment encourages participants, who would otherwise be more reserved, to discuss more sensitive topics (Kitzinger, 1995).

**Research Context**

The data were collected from seven school students in Years 7 to 10 from a state boys’ comprehensive high school in Sydney, Australia. In 2006, 84% of Year 10 students continued to Year 11. The school is located in a middle-class, suburban area. In 2006, the median weekly household income in this suburb was 42% greater than the national average. Whilst there has been considerable research refuting the often assumed link between socioeconomic status and antisocial behaviour in adolescents (Albrecht & Howe, 1992; Ozbay, 2006), socioeconomic status has been found to influence music participation, retention in music programs, attitudes towards music and musical achievement (Fitzpatrick, 2006). This may mean that the participants of this study are more familiar with music activities, material and participants than adolescents in lower socio-economic groups.

The school runs a number of extracurricular music activities: the most popular activities are rock bands, or other popular music ensembles (such as the saxophone group that performs pop songs and jazz arrangements). There are also a number of instrumental teachers that visit the school providing individual tuition in drums, keyboard, guitar, brass and woodwind. Students are encouraged to enter music competitions and rock eisteddfods and perform frequently at school or community events.

A boys’ high school was specified in order to focus particularly on the experience of adolescent boys, for whom antisocial behaviour is more prevalent than for females of a similar age (Baker, 1998). Participant information and consent forms (see appendix A, B, C) were distributed to all students in Years 7 to 10. The seven students selected
were those who returned their consent forms and were able to attend the focus group sessions. This is an example of defined sampling techniques. Defined sampling includes participants who have been identified as belonging to a particular group of interest (Kitzinger, 1995), in this case, young adolescent males attending a NSW high school that offers a number of music activities.

**Procedure**

Data were collected from two separate groups of boys, who completed a short questionnaire and participated in a focus group discussion during one school lunchtime. The focus group sessions were conducted approximately one month apart, in order to accommodate different participants’ availability.

Students were aware of the focus group session times as they were publicised in the school newsletter. A reminder message was sent to them in their individual classes that preceded lunch. Students met in the office where they completed the questionnaires, followed by sitting in a corner of the school gardens where focus groups were conducted while they ate their lunch. As the discussions took place outdoors and in a very casual setting, the atmosphere was relaxed in both groups. Discussions were audio-recorded digitally using Audacity software on the researcher’s laptop.

**The Questionnaire**

Immediately prior to the focus group discussions, a short questionnaire was distributed to participants to gather background information about their musical participation and engagement in antisocial behaviours in the past year. The questionnaire was composed of three sections.

In the first section students were asked to identify their school year and whether or not they were involved in extracurricular school music activities. These included orchestra, choral ensembles, popular and jazz ensembles and individual instrumental or vocal instruction.
The second section of the questionnaire determined the type of musical ensemble in which students were involved, and the level of participation through frequency of attendance and practice. Involvement in extracurricular music activities was measured by asking how often students attended extracurricular school music activities during the week and on the weekends, and a scale to measure how much time the student spent practising for the music activity.

Antisocial behaviour was measured in the third section of the questionnaire using a self-report scale adapted from Gold (1966) asking students to report how often they engaged in 11 antisocial behaviours in the past year, thus measuring both type of antisocial behaviour and frequency of engagement. Similar scales have been used in other criminological research studies (Agnew & Petersen, 1989; Baker, 1998; Hemphill, Toumbourou, & Catalano, 2005). However the behaviours were not ranked as in other studies, but were adopted to cover a broad range of minor antisocial behaviours relevant to adolescents. The questionnaire for this research study was modified from these mostly American examples, to exclude serious offences that may not be applicable for Australian students and to avoid any ethical problems that might arise from mandatory reporting and child protection issues with regard to serious criminal offences or substance use.

Participants completed the questionnaire individually, without discussion, encouraging participants to respond honestly and openly. Many of the participants reported engaging in minor antisocial behaviours, such as property damage or violent behaviours, which highlights the relevance of this research for this demographic group.

**Focus Groups**

Two focus group sessions with small groups took place on different days, approximately one month apart. Both discussions were conducted immediately after completing the questionnaire, were approximately 20 minutes each and were audio recorded and transcribed. Both focus groups employed a similar semi-structured focus group guide (See Appendix H), though this was used with considerable flexibility. As the research was intended to be exploratory, much of the discussion
was unstructured and led by the participants themselves, allowing them to describe and discuss their own worlds and determine much of the content of the discussion.

Both focus groups were presented with a short vignette about an adolescent’s involvement in extracurricular school music activities and engagement in antisocial behaviour (see appendix G). The inclusion of a hypothetical situation as a basis for discussion is similar to the methods used in music education research conducted by Vispoel and Austin (1993) and MacDonald and Wilson (2005), allowing participants to discuss sensitive situations without requiring them to reveal their own histories or any actual events. This not only encouraged students to discuss their opinions openly without fear of disciplinary action or embarrassment, but also ensured that no conflict of interests arose between students divulging sensitive information and any mandatory reporting of potential harm and student protection issues on the behalf of the researcher.

The vignette was presented to the first focus group at the beginning of the focus group session. The result of introducing the vignette early on to the participants of the first focus group was that much of the discussion was focused on parental discipline, and using music activities as an incentive for acceptable behaviour. This also provided participants with the hypothesis of an existing relationship between music participation and antisocial behaviour, which they could either confirm or reject through further discussion.

The vignette was presented to the second focus group at the end of the focus group session in order to gain alternative perspectives, and discuss participants’ opinions and attitudes without the assumption that adults are involved or that a relationship between music participation and antisocial behaviour exists. This resulted in broader themes being discussed in the focus group sessions, only commenting on the specific situation in the vignette to conclude the discussion.
Participants

The following section describes each focus group participant according to observations made by the researcher and their responses to the questionnaire. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the participants’ privacy.

Focus Group 1

The first discussion group involved three boys, Kieran, Scott and Dylan, all of whom were from separate peer groups, and rarely (if ever) socialised with each other. Prior to conducting this research study I had taught Kieran in classroom music during my seven-week teaching practicum at the school, and had established quite a respectful, open and positive relationship with him. The other two students had not been in my classes and I had not met them before.

The two older students seemed comfortable to discuss the issues that arose during the focus group session, and were happy to disagree and voice their individual opinions. Dylan was significantly younger than the other two boys, and often voiced his opinions by agreeing with what another boy had said earlier. This is an important point of consideration when looking at participation in music activities and antisocial behaviour, keeping in mind the influence older students may exert over the younger students. Kieran did appear to dominate much of the discussion, commenting on the other boys’ responses, often saying that they were “wrong”. Whilst Dylan may have been influenced by these comments, they did not appear to affect Scott much, who was quite firm in his comments, regardless of whether they were considered right or wrong.

Kieran

When the focus group discussion took place, Kieran was 15 years old and in Year 10. He played electric guitar in a rock band with three other students who rehearsed one lunchtime a week. He claimed to do very little practice for this activity when he was not with the other band members. During the seven weeks I taught him as a student teacher, and during focus group discussions, Kieran was always one of the
more energetic, outgoing and outspoken students, and appeared to be well liked by his peers.

In response to the questionnaire section regarding engagement in antisocial behaviour, Kieran claimed that in 2006, he often forced other students to give him things, such as money. He “sometimes” stole items or money worth up to $50, had been in a physical fight once and had damaged property once.

Scott

Scott was 14 years old and in Year 9 when the focus group discussion took place. He did not participate in any extracurricular school music activities, though claimed he had many friends that did. Scott was initially quiet and reserved during the focus group discussions, though appeared to think carefully about his responses to questions, often suggesting alternative answers and noting that statements could not be generalised for all young people as adolescents vary greatly in their values, opinions, attitudes and behaviours.

In response to the questionnaire question regarding engagement in antisocial behaviour, Scott had drunk alcohol, damaged property and been involved in physical fights once in 2006.

Dylan

At the time of the focus group session, Dylan was 12 years old and in Year 7. He received individual instrumental/vocal lessons through the school once a week. He was the only participant who claimed to do a significant amount of practice for his musical activity each week, rating the time he spends practising for musical activities 6, on a scale from 1 to 7 (1 being “none”, 7 being “a lot”).

In response to the questionnaire section regarding engaging in antisocial behaviours Dylan reported that in 2006 he had stolen items or money worth up to $50 once, damaged property once, and had sometimes hit or threatened to hit other students and been involved in physical fights.
Focus Group 2

The second focus group involved four boys, all from Years 7 and 8. All of the boys knew each other and were friendly, though claimed they were all in different peer groups. I had taught both Thomas and Anthony during my seven-week practicum in 2006, though had a more formal relationship with both boys than with Kieran. In addition to the details provided on the participant information and consent forms, I explained to them that my research was like a large and important school project. Both seemed to acknowledge that I returned to the school in a very different context, and casually enquired about my university degree and musical involvement since teaching them at school, suggesting that they no longer viewed me as a teacher.

All participants in the second focus group seemed happy to disagree with each other and voice their own opinions. Very few judgments were passed on comments, and many comments that could have been perceived negatively by others in the group were phrased hypothetically, possibly in protection of their “cool” reputations. All of the boys seemed to consider the questions and each other’s answers carefully and respond in a thoughtful way, often playing ‘devil’s advocate’ and suggesting alternative responses.

Byron

At the time of the second focus group session, Byron was 12 years old and in Year 7. He did not participate in any extracurricular school music activities and was the only participant to report that he did not engage in any antisocial behaviour in 2006.

Byron seemed to be the most aware of media portrayals of the relationship between music participation and antisocial behaviour. While completing the questionnaire he drew a parallel between the research study and the Choir of Hard Knocks, a choir for people experiencing social and economic disadvantage, organised and run by Jonathon Welch and RecLink, a charitable organization that provides sporting and recreational opportunities as a form of social therapy (RecLink, 2003).
Cameron

At the time of the focus group session, Cameron was 12 years old and in Year 7. He did not participate in any extracurricular school music activities and reported being involved in a physical fight once in 2006. Similarly to Scott, Cameron often insisted that adolescents respond differently to different situations, and few statements could be generalised to describe every individual.

Thomas

At the time of the focus group discussion, Thomas was 13 years old and in Year 8. He did not participate in any extracurricular school music activities.

In response to the questionnaire section regarding engaging in antisocial behaviours Thomas reported that he had sometimes drunk alcohol and had hit, or threatened to hit other students in 2006. Thomas was the only student who appeared concerned that he may be reprimanded for his responses on the questionnaire, writing a note beside his admission of consuming alcohol, in brackets adding “(small amounts)”.

Anthony

At the time of the focus group discussion, Anthony was 13 years old and in Year 8. He learnt piano outside of school, attending lessons one afternoon a week, though was not involved in extracurricular school music activities. In response to the questionnaire section regarding engaging in antisocial behaviours, Anthony reported that he had damaged property once in 2006.

The Role of the Researcher

Approximately one year before the data collection began for this study, I completed a seven-week student teacher placement at the school. I taught music classes in Years 7 to 12, and was involved with a number of extracurricular school music activities. I listened to the students’ ensembles rehearse most lunchtimes, and would usually play with them, filling in for absent members, or improvising on piano or guitar.
Whilst I was in a position of authority, I established a friendly rapport with most students, and found that the longer I taught at the school, the more students confided in me. Discussions during casual lunchtime chats, formal meetings (such as detentions) or during musical activities often referred to antisocial behaviours, which ranged from minor behaviours talked about in humorous contexts, to more serious events, such as arranged “fights” with other schools. I felt obliged to report a number of incidents to the deputy principal, which, despite being criticised as a “dobber” by some of the more outspoken students, did not seem to affect the openness with which they disclosed such information.

Returning to the school as a researcher, I hoped students would be equally as willing to discuss such issues, perhaps more so, seeing as I was no longer in a position of authority. Prefacing the discussions with a request not to disclose any information about their own behaviours or actual events, students appeared happy to discuss the relationship between participation in music activities and social behaviour in a hypothetical, general way without fear of reprimand and for the most part required very little prompting during discussions.

**Analysis**

The data analysis assumed a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theories emerge during the process of data collection and analysis. The theory exists in a dynamic and reciprocal relationship with the data and data analysis. By deriving the theory from the interpretation of the collected data, it ensures that the theory is applicable to the phenomenon, meeting the four criteria described in Strauss and Corbin (1990): fit, understanding, generality and control. This theory emerged during the process of data analysis and was revisited and refined many times throughout the research process.

The process of data analysis followed the four stages outlined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007): preparation of data, familiarisation and documentation of initial thoughts, coding and refining themes.
The data were prepared by transcribing both focus group discussions. This was done verbatim and additional researcher observations were included where necessary, such as participants nodding, laughing and using hand gestures.

In order to gain familiarity with the data, the audiotapes were listened to a number of times before, during and after the coding process. The process of coding assumed a “specimen perspective” rather than a “factist perspective” (Alasuutari, 1995). Data were not categorised into themes according to the reality they reflect, which would assume that focus group participants were both informed and honest in their comments. The perceptions that were expressed during focus group sessions are considered as a part of the reality being investigated, rather than reifying participant opinions and attitudes as “lived experience” (Smith & Eatough, 2006).

As much of the discussion during focus group sessions was unstructured, and participants themselves raised many issues that had not been considered by the researcher, it was appropriate to use inductive coding rather than impose predetermined categories upon the data. Inductive coding employs codes that emerge from the data, as common themes are identified during data analysis, ensuring that the codes assigned to the data are drawn from the data itself, in keeping with a grounded theory approach.

Initially the data were coded openly, identifying important concepts and grouping information together in categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These concepts and categories emerged from and were in a dynamic relationship with the data itself. In addition to open coding, axial coding was employed to highlight relationships between these themes and draw connections between concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Through the process of axial coding a number of subcategories emerged, exploring the many interesting points raised during discussions. Through axial coding, questions are asked about the nature of particular relationships, in this case, the aspects of music participation that influence social behaviour. Through this process, inductive codes are verified against deductions made by the researcher regarding relationships between concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Through the constant interaction between deducing relationships and ensuring the data support these proposals, the theory that emerges is grounded in the data.
Reliability and Validity

Using the qualitative paradigm, the concerns of reliability and validity are not to generalise findings, but rather to increase the credibility of the researcher’s observations about a social phenomenon. Through exploring adolescents’ own perspectives, this study endeavours to understand music participation and social behaviour through the eyes of the participants themselves, as legitimate commentators on their own experiences and experiences of their peers. Data collection from two separate groups of adolescents illustrates methodological triangulation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). This enhances the credibility of the results, as multiple perspectives have been obtained on two occasions, expressing differing opinions on the same social phenomena.

However, it should be noted that as a small case study, the findings from this research are pertinent only to the participants involved at that particular moment in time. The results provide an in-depth insight into adolescent perceptions of music participation and social behaviour. Although not generalisable to the wider adolescent population, this insight provides a valuable preliminary exploration of this field of study.
CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

These results are what emerged as the social perceptions of the seven adolescents that participated in focus group discussions. They are not intended to describe broad social norms or stereotypes, but rather to explore and understand the thoughts and experience of a small group of adolescents. Through this open exploration, it is hoped that the results may add to the growing body of knowledge in this field and guide future research on music participation and social behaviour in adolescent boys.

There was a great deal of discussion in both focus groups, and all participants were forthcoming with their opinions. There were very few pauses in the discussion, and often students led the conversation themselves, asking each other questions and coming up with hypothetical issues that they believe young people face and situations they, or other adolescents may find themselves in.

As the vignette was presented to each focus group at different times during the focus group session, each group generated different points of discussion, and a number of different perspectives emerged. The first group were presented with the vignette early in the focus group session, and much of their early discussion centred upon parents, or teachers, threatening to forbid adolescents’ participation in extracurricular school music activities that they enjoy, as a consequence of antisocial behaviour:

Kieran: Because if his parents didn’t make that threat, then he’d… go smoke weed, get bad grades…1 and keep doing it because there wouldn’t be any consequence for his actions.

The participants of the first group discussed their perceptions of music participation and social behaviour in broader terms than had initially been anticipated. Their discussion widened the focus of the research, suggesting that the connections they see between music and social behaviour are much more complex than initially anticipated, and the study was adapted accordingly. The vignette focussed the

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1 When quoting participants, an ellipsis “…” indicates that part of the quote has been omitted. A dash “—” indicates pauses or trailing off. Quotes by different participants not separated by a space in the text indicate that comments were consecutive.
beginning of the discussion, which frequently related back to adult authority figures and using musical activities as an incentive for prosocial behaviour. This illustrates the satisfaction adolescents receive from music activities, and the importance they place on their involvement.

In an attempt to discuss adolescents’ perceptions of the relationship between music participation and social behaviour when removed from the assumption of adult involvement, the vignette was presented to the second focus group to conclude the session. The importance of music in the lives of adolescents was reiterated by the participants of the second group, as revealed through a more general discussion about adolescents and music, which again, often exceeded the boundaries of school-organised music activities and encompassed music consumption and activities as a whole. Adult involvement in adolescent issues was regarded as a more positive relationship, as role models and educators as well as authority figures. This is perhaps a result of less direction being provided to the second group, and their perceptions encompassing other adults involved with music participation rather than focussing on the ‘angry parent’.

Through the discussions of both focus group sessions, it was clear that the participants did not view the effect of music participation on social behaviour as a simple relationship. As this study is exploratory in nature, I do not wish to convey a ranking of themes according to perceived importance. However, the data from these discussions have been analysed according to four broad themes to provide clarity and focus in understanding participants’ perceptions:

(a) “The culture of the group”: Group norms and expectations
(b) “The type of music”: Genres of music as an influence on behaviour
(c) “The teacher will help you out”: Adult involvement in adolescent music making
(d) “Getting into trouble”: Music participation as an influence on adolescent behaviour

Each of the themes has been divided into a number of subcategories, illustrating the diversity of factors that affect adolescents’ musical and behavioural decisions, and
the complexity of the connection between the two. The analysis is by no means an exhaustive account of factors that relate to adolescents’ musical lives or social behaviour, but is rather a discussion of the key findings of the data, highlighting the themes raised by participants as factors influencing music participation and social behaviour.

“The Culture of the Group”: Group Norms and Expectations

The culture of music activities was raised during discussions as an important factor influencing behaviour. Participants mentioned ensemble members and sociocultural expectations when asked about which ensembles might discourage, or encourage prosocial or antisocial behaviour.

Ensemble Participants

There has been considerable research conducted on establishing social identity during adolescence, and their predispositions to adopt group norms, and engage in group protecting behaviours, in order to formulate a positive social identity (Dornbusch, 1989; D. J. Hargreaves, North, & Tarrant, 2006).

Scott and Anthony suggested that an adolescent’s behaviour would be affected by the behaviour of other participants of the music ensemble, and that individuals would conform to what was perceived as the group norm:

Scott: If the other people in your band go out drinking, you’ll probably do that.

Anthony: It depends on what sort of people are in the music group, like, if they’re [the music ensemble]… people who do lots of bad things, then they [the individual] would probably do bad things.

However, it was suggested that the behavioural norms adolescents conform to need not always involve antisocial behaviours. Some participants believed that belonging to some music ensembles (predominantly classical ensembles) might influence adolescents in a positive way, encouraging prosocial behaviours:
Scott: Orchestra people would be less prone to go out and get in trouble because the other people in the orchestra wouldn’t do that. It’s like, the culture of the group.

Participants suggested that by conforming to the norms of the ensemble, individuals would behave similarly to others, thus perpetuating the culture of the ensemble. By behaving in a way that is accepted by other ensemble members, individuals may be encouraged to engage in either prosocial or antisocial behaviours as they endeavour to assimilate into the group.

**Social Acceptance**

In endeavouring to conform to group norms within peer groups, being perceived as “normal” or “cool” was discussed as an important motivation, and concern of music ensemble participants, and even passive music consumers, when considering how they should behave.

Focus group participants outlined a number of factors that contributed towards how “cool” a musical adolescent is. The mastery of a particular instrument was raised a number of times as an important characteristic of being “cool”:

Cameron: [someone is cool in music] because… they’re able to play it well.
Byron: because they’re better than everyone else.

The genre of music and conforming to social norms or ideologies was also related to social acceptance:

Kieran: [someone is cool in music if] they play the sort of music that everyone likes, not just that the person likes. Just say, you played a crap song that no one will like, but you liked and everyone was like, ‘shit song, why did you do that?’ but if you played like a top number one song, everyone would be like ‘good job last night’ and that sort of thing.

Adolescents are attracted to music, not only because of its particular sound, but also because of the culture that is associated with it (Green, 2006). Kieran’s comment is in keeping with research (Green, 2006) and theories (Dunbar-Hall, 1991, 2005) that suggest that peer norms and musical culture are also considered when judging
musical preferences. Popularity was seen as particularly important in influencing adolescent opinions (Tarrant et al., 2002), not only as portrayed by the media, “a top number one song” (Kieran), but also as expressed by other adolescents, “I think people are cool when… other people like them” (Byron).

Being perceived as “normal” or “cool” may not only influence musical choices, but also behaviour, as adolescents behave in a manner that is not only socially acceptable, but raises them to a more popular standing in the social hierarchy. This may socialize them into normative, antisocial behaviour (Allen, Porter, McFarland, Marsh, & McElhaney, 2005) if such behaviour is tolerated or esteemed by others in the group.

**Perceptions of Authenticity**

Music is not a purely aural experience. The technological advances of recent years bring a mass of multisensory experiences from a global music industry into the lives of adolescents, each conveying a multitude of messages, with both implicit and explicit sociocultural understandings, meanings, values and expectations.

The vernacular of popular music is in constant ebb and flow, drawing on a number of marginalised subcultures, political activism, celebrity trends and multicultural sources. This results in stereotypes of musical genres portrayed by the media and being distributed to television programs, record stores, online music downloads and radio programs targeting adolescents. Adolescents have adapted accordingly, educating themselves and becoming culturally literate and media savvy, aware that what is portrayed as the norm, need not always be accepted as such, particularly in relation to the apparent antisocial behaviour of musicians or messages condoning or encouraging such behaviour in their music.

One of the focus group participants, Scott, voiced his scepticism of such stereotypes as portrayed by the media, and the messages they send. He was quite critical of the musicians he believed were trying to construct a public image based upon what they view as consumer preferences. The other participants seemed to agree that such musicians were reflecting a social culture in an exaggerated, unrealistic and
irrelevant way, and regarded music as a commodity (O'Flynn, 2006) rather than an authentic experience:

Scott: Rappers, I think sing about it, then they go do it on purpose just to look tough and all that… Snoop Dogg the other day got caught with guns, and I mean drugs and stuff, and he doesn’t need that, I mean, he’s a millionaire.

However, as the same participant noted, this media savvy generation is not immune from influence and adulation. However, Scott’s further comments suggest that adolescents are critical of those that do imitate the exaggerated ideals of musical subcultures as portrayed by the media:

Scott: One of the people I know listens to a lot of rap and does it and stuff, and he heard that Snoop Dogg smoked weed, so he went and tried it. He’s pretty weird though.

Such criticisms of behaviour may be linked to the perception and expectations of authenticity in popular music, particularly rock music. Rock was discussed by participants as ‘real music’, music that they used to reflect and construct their own identities and realities, a “way of expressing yourself” (Kieran). It has been suggested that authenticity claims aid identity construction and are employed to characterize the norms of the subculture (Frith, 1996; McLeod, 1999) or social group, including behavioural norms.

Just as it has been suggested that the analysis of non-Western music cannot be conducted using the same tools that are used to analyse Western art music (Marsh, 1999), perhaps the conventions of Western art music analysis also do not apply to popular musical genres (Young, 1995), as such analyses render the music meaningless, removed from context and extramusical associations. Dunbar-Hall (1991) suggests that popular music may be analysed and interpreted using semiotics, which views musical works as representative of substyles which signify subcultures and lifestyles, and beliefs, as illustrated by the following diagram (Figure 1).
Comments such as Scott’s suggest that adolescents understand popular music in this way, relating to many extramusical meanings and phenomena. Though in addition to music conveying style, subculture, lifestyle and beliefs, the participants suggested that music also carries behavioural norms, associations and expectations (see Figure 2).

Thus, the authentic study and performance of some music may require an understanding of subcultures, lifestyles, beliefs and behaviours, which may be problematic for educators. By studying popular music genres, often associated with rebellion and antisocial behaviour, educators risk presenting an antiseptic version of...
adolescent music (Campbell, 1995), which suggests that the subcultures, lifestyles and beliefs associated with music should be also examined when studying popular genres.

Whilst the acceptance of popular music in the classroom has come a long way since Dunbar-Hall’s suggestion of semiotics (1991) as an analysis tool, it is nevertheless, an interesting framework on which to view adolescent learning, regardless of whether or not teaching methods are designed as such. The focus group participants repeatedly stated that music was not initially analysed in terms of pitch, duration, texture or tone colour, but rather in terms of the cultural climate, or meaning surrounding it:

    Thomas: I like people who have a good voice and everything. That way they get the message across if there’s a meaning to the song.

These comments by participants are in keeping with research that suggests that music is not understood as autonomous from its social and political associations (Green, 2006), and has interesting implications for the teaching and learning of not only popular music, but other musical genres in the classroom.

“The Type of Music”: Musical Genres and their Influence on Behaviour

Participants were quick to point out that the genre of music was very important in how it relates to adolescent behaviour, emotions and attitudes. Green (2006) identifies two types of meaning attached to music, the inherent and the delineated. Inherent meanings are within the music itself, sound, silence, and the musical syntax. Delineated meanings are the extra-musical concepts associated with music, as agreed upon by groups or individuals. The focus group participants suggested that music was not only associated with sound, but images, subcultures and values, and was recognised as fulfilling different functions in society, suggesting that delineated meanings are important in understanding, appreciating and evaluating music.
Participants discussed music as belonging to two categories – classical and popular. School music was generally assumed to be classical, in particular, orchestral music. This is interesting as the school did not have an orchestra, and most extracurricular music ensembles performed popular music styles, such as jazz, funk, or rock. The participants’ perceptions of classical music were generally shaped in the absence of available models, and influenced by the school, their families, peers and society in general. Popular music styles were seen to be the genres such as rock and pop, as well as derivatives of African-American forms, such as rap and hip hop. The music they listened to, enjoyed and discussed between peers.

Rock music has long been portrayed in popular culture as the domain of youth, encapsulating freedom, spontaneity and authenticity. Through music video programs such as MTV, Rage, Channel [V] and Video Hits, adolescents are exposed to visual interpretations of popular music genres, which, in turn, help to construct the cultural climate associated with each artist and musical genre. Popular music ensembles, particularly genres associated with violent images through the media, were suggested as the most likely to encourage, or tolerate antisocial behaviours due to the lyrical content in many songs, with artists singing “about drugs and stuff” which “gives kids the wrong idea” (Cameron):

- Kieran: Rap and hip hop stuff
- Scott: Their lyrics are the most… violent
- Kieran: About like, stealing cars and stuff
- Byron: And some music has a lot of swearing in it and then they’ll [adolescents] like, probably start… or they might start swearing afterwards.

These associations with antisocial behaviour may be due to the participants’ observations of their peers or their own experience, but may also be a reflection of their perceptions of genres that are often marketed using violent or aggressive imagery. Associations of “teenage rebellion, sexuality, drugs and so on” (Green, 2006) have long proclaimed the music’s adolescent origins and independence from education, which perhaps explains participants’ polarisation of school music and popular music genres.
Focus group participants discussed the possibility of extramusical delineations influencing individuals’ behaviour. Participants expected certain behaviours to accompany particular genres:

Thomas: The influence from the music might influence them to do bad things such as… graffiti [such genres as] heavy rock, punk sort of thing.

The more “heavy” the music, or the “heavier” the artist’s image, the more likely participants believed it was to be associated with antisocial behaviour:

Cameron: Well, because like, generally different kinds of people listen to different kinds of music, and different kinds of music can make you like, do different kinds of things like hard rock music could make you want to do drugs or drink alcohol and stuff

This concept of ‘heaviness’ is not only related to musical attributes, but also the context in which the music is understood, and cultural climate associated with performances. Clawson (1999) proposes that rock music has evolved in a predominantly masculine milieu, and the musical world of rock both reflects and constructs the masculinity of its dominant practitioners. It does this through media portrayals of rock as a male domain, with the majority of performers being male (or at least the majority as portrayed by the media), sexist lyrics and typically aggressive performance styles (Lewis, 1990). It is interesting to consider whether the stereotype of masculinity in popular music genres, with aggressive sounds and performance styles, plays a role in endorsing or encouraging aggressive behaviour in adolescent boys (Mulder, Ter Bogt, Raaijmakers, & Vollebergh, 2007). Whilst the focus group participants did not discuss masculinity in relation to music or behaviour, the music that they suggested might encourage antisocial behaviour were typically genres with aggressive performance styles, such as “heavy metal”, “hard rock music” or “rap”, genres that have been identified as masculine music.

In contrast to the adolescent domain of many popular music genres, the etiquette, formality and educational practices of classical music have been said to enshrine it with an air of responsibility, diligence, reverence and maturity (Cook, 2000). Many
of the focus group participants viewed classical music as belonging to the elderly, calm and ‘uncool’.

Cameron summarised the focus group participants’ views on the age demographic that they believe classical music caters for, by stating that contemporary music is enjoyed by the youth of contemporary society:

Cameron: Classical is for people who are born in that time when it came out… and now rock’s for people… like kids who like, were just born recently, like 10 years ago… and they’re born into the era of rock or something, so they’d probably like that, because classical’s out of date

Classical music was also seen to be associated with calmness and relaxation. Focus group participants suggested two explanations for this association. The first was that classical music calms people down and affects their moods and behaviour. The second suggestion was that individuals with a calmer personality are attracted to the musical properties of classical music:

Thomas: They say that classical music has been proven to calm down people. Because if you’re really fired up and they like, turn on their classical music, it’d probably be a good uh… relaxation sort of thing.

Byron: If they’re a real calm person, [and] like peace and quiet they would choose classical music rather not heavy rock or something like that.

Whether musical preference is a marker or a cause of particular behaviours in young people is an interesting point to consider when discussing the association between music activities and social behaviour. Focus group participants felt it was a “bit of both” (Scott), with musical preference both signifying adolescent attitudes and values as well as affecting them, both reflecting and constructing their identities.

Scott and Kieran suggested that as adolescents construct their social identities, those involved in classical music ensembles may engage in antisocial behaviour to shed the “nerdy” (Kieran) stereotype, and assert their “cool”ness:
Scott: One of the kids in my class is in an orchestra and he always makes trouble and stuff.
Kieran: Because they want to be like everyone else, they want to be cool.

The focus group participants identified discrepancies with such stereotypes associated with individuals who listen to particular genres of music. They suggested that not all adolescents are influenced by lyrical content and that for many, identification with a particular musical genre is not associated with behaviour:

Scott: I like hip hop music, but I don’t really dress like hip hop.
Kieran: It depends what way their mind goes… It depends on the individual.

Green (2006) suggests that individuals have a negative response to musical genres because they cannot identify with the social groups to which the music belongs. The focus group participants suggested that they were unable to identify with the delineations of classical music. Classical music was said to belong to worlds far removed from what was perceived as the adolescent experience: the elderly, the calm and the ‘uncool’.

**Adolescent Musical Preferences**

The genre of music is often attributed with evoking, encouraging or deterring certain behaviours (North et al., 2004). How adolescents decide which music they prefer may provide insights as to how best to approach adolescents displaying antisocial behaviours.

When asked how adolescents form their musical tastes the focus group participants referred to their environments and upbringing as well as their personalities, commenting on both extrinsic and intrinsic factors:

Anthony: They’re influenced by their parents, like what kind of parents, like music your parents listen to, because you grow up listening to a certain type of music you’re generally going to like it and get involved with it.
Cameron: It just depends if they’re like, [a] more outgoing person then they might listen to some you know, hardcore music. If they’re like calm and don’t do much, they might listen to classical stuff.

It is interesting that the participants did not refer to peer influence when asked this question, which may allude to the fact that adolescent music preferences are different in private, to the preferences they display at school. Musical choices made at school may be made to gratify social needs, whereas musical choices in private may be less subject to peer scrutiny and pressures. This suggestion is supported by the focus group participants’ responses to the suggestion that adolescents displaying aggressive or antisocial behaviours could be introduced to classical instruments and repertoire as a way to “calm” and “relax” them:

Thomas: They wouldn’t do that.
Anthony: Yeah, they probably wouldn’t want to learn how to play classical music and stuff they’d say, “go away, piss off”.

Their explanations for adolescents not wanting to learn about different genres of music, particularly classical, ranged from feeling comfortable, to social acceptance and social trends:

Anthony: That’s how they’ve like grown up kind of, and they don’t want to have anything to do with that kind of music and they just want to listen to the music that they like.

Anthony: They probably base their reputation on stuff like music they listen to and stuff like that and if they started…well, they might be worried that if they suddenly started changing the type of music they listen to people might not like them anymore.

Interestingly, Byron, the only participant who admitted that he liked listening to classical music, was the first participant who was willing to entertain the idea of changing an adolescent’s behaviour through music, though he did acknowledge that to do so was “almost impossible”:

Byron: You’d have to make [classical music] cool to them… that’s very hard. It’s easier with rock music because there’s huge amounts of fans who like them.
After Byron’s suggestion, the other participants decided that the first step in encouraging adolescents to listen to classical music was to “make them listen to it so they get an idea of what it is” (Cameron). This suggests that the focus group participants did view classical music as a musical tradition worthy of attention, but were perhaps confused and unsure of what it entails, and do not receive much encouragement from the delineations associated with it. After this initial exposure (which was discussed much like one would discuss taking a foul tasting medicine), Thomas suggested some other ways in which classical music could be made more palatable:

Thomas: You could show them, um, what classical music has gone into, such as cartoons. Lots of classical music is put into cartoons.

Thomas: Show the person what things go into the classical music… I can’t remember what it’s called, but there’s a classical piece of music which has cannons in it… and people might like the sound of the cannons.

Despite his initial enthusiasm, Byron voiced his doubts on teaching adolescents, particularly those engaging in antisocial behaviours, classical music, and suggested that perhaps music education should move with the times:

Byron: I think [teachers] should just change the style to like, a newer style because, young people don’t really like old fashioned music, like, classical music is quite old and … so if they make a difference to it… like, mix it with jazz or something they might like it more.

As seen by the comments made by focus group participants, adolescents’ musical choices are influenced by their own musical tastes and personalities, other people they interact with (Mark, 1998) and other portrayals of musical traditions.

**Role Models**

The musical influences in adolescents’ life, may determine what genre of music they listen to, which may in turn influence behaviour. Focus group participants identified a number of sources for adolescents’ musical role models, which also suggests the sources from which adolescents get their musical information:
Kieran: TV… Radio
Dylan: CDs
Scott: Their friends would also influence their choice of role models… like, if your friend likes a song then you’re probably going to go and listen to that song.

Researcher: So you think that people in the same group have the same interests.
Scott: Yeah, usually
Kieran: About 90% of the time

In addition to peer influences, focus group participants also noted that musicians themselves, as role models shape adolescents’ musical worlds, identities and in turn, their behaviour. Such musicians were identified as not only professionals, but also other students or teachers:

Thomas: Sort of like bands that are like- out of school… such as Greenday or something. They could inspire you.

Byron: [Role models are] people who are like, good at playing their instrument- and the teachers.

Mastery of an instrument was a pervading theme in the discussions about adolescent role models, whether as teachers who guide adolescent musical development, or performers or composers whose techniques or style could be imitated.

Kieran felt that adolescent musicians are particularly influenced by the musicians that they look up to, not only by the imitation of musical techniques or style but also the imitation of image and identity:

Kieran: If you get a CD and you like every single song then you’re like- ‘I’m going to get their next CD’ and stuff, then they become your favourite band, and you see them in a concert and it leads up to when you want to look and sound exactly the same as them.

The focus group participants were asked whether such imitation could include behaviour. In their responses, they referred to popular music, particularly genres that are associated with stereotypically defiant and rebellious youth subcultures:
Dylan: There’s a lot of songs like heavy metal things, they say or commit suicide and all that stuff, and people that are into that like, jump off cliffs and stuff like that, and cut their wrists and stuff like that because that’s what’s in the songs.

Kieran: Like a role model, you normally act how that person acts, and a band, like if an Emo band is your role model, then if they say, like ‘cut my wrists and black my eyes’ or something like that, then they do that- because they like the music they play.

The distinction between musical mastery and behaviour was an interesting one made by focus group participants. It seemed to be expected that adolescent musicians would imitate a particular musician’s technique or style, and focus group participants viewed this modelling almost as an apprenticeship, and an important part of music education (particularly for popular music genres). However, imitating role models’ behaviours was suggested to be a sign of immaturity, with the focus group participants specifically referring to “young kids” (Kieran) when discussing such phenomena. When asked about adolescents their own age, the participants talked less about “copying” role models’ behaviour, and more about the “subliminal” (Scott, Daniel) influence of musicians, their values, attitudes, behaviour and musical output, as well as the subcultures they align themselves with.

Whether adolescents select role models that reflect their own personalities and/or behaviour, or to assist with constructing their identities, and thus looking for a behavioural model, is an interesting consideration for educators. Assuming the former, musical role models may be indicators of adolescents’ emotions, personality, values, attitudes and behaviours, which may assist educators. Through a more comprehensive knowledge of each student, educators may better address individual needs and differences, thus, making teaching and learning more effective. Assuming that adolescents select role models to imitate and assist in constructing their own identities, educators can introduce adolescents to a variety of positive role models, and can discuss certain behavioural qualities in others that may be viewed as antisocial or potentially harmful.

**Music and Emotion**

The relationship between music and emotion has long been documented by composers, critics, philosophers and poets (Spychiger, 1995), and has been given
considerable attention by the media and researchers (Schubert & McPherson, 2006), and may be a factor influencing adolescent behaviour. Focus group participants identified different musical genres as having different effects on their emotions. Classical music was seen to have a calming effect, whereas popular music genres were seen to energise and invigorate:

Byron:  [Mozart is] calm
Cameron:  Peaceful
Anthony:  [Classical music] can relieve stress and stuff… you can just lie back and listen to the music.

Anthony:  [if you did not want to be calm you could listen to] rock music… it sort of makes you feel energetic and things like that.
Thomas:  Speedy music.

It is interesting to consider whether this perception of emotion is a cause of the properties of the music itself, or the culturally understood customs and associations of the music and the subculture it is aligned with, and where adolescents get their information on these delineations from.

Focus group participants suggested that not only does music have the power to stir emotions in adolescent listeners, but also to change them:

Thomas:  If it’s like a… comedy sort of music, people… are happier when they listen to it. Because it’s something funny, it picks up their day.

Research has suggested that adolescents who experience intense negative emotional reactions to the music they listen to regularly are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviours (Roberts, Dimsdale, East, & Friedman, 1998). Focus group participants suggested that whatever emotion music invokes, this may influence adolescents’ behaviour. One participant thought music’s effect on emotions and consequently behaviour was particularly so during live performances of popular music:

Dylan:  If someone plays at a concert or something they might get sort of pumped because there’s fast music or something so they might try to pick a fight with someone, so it sort of does [affect behaviour].
Focus group participants suggested that the atmosphere surrounding active music making is very different from passive consumption through the media, CDs, iPods or television, and may amplify music’s influence on emotion and behaviour.

**Active versus Passive Musical Involvement**

The focus group participants explained why they believed that the difference between actively participating in music production and passively listening was a possible amplifier of emotion and influence on behaviour:

Anthony:  Because you… know what’s happening in the music. You understand more. Sometimes when you’re listening to music you like, don’t hear all the words and if you’re singing it you know all the words, so you’re more involved with it.

Thomas:  [Playing music] take[s] more energy and [it is] more… what’s the word? Influential?

Whilst most focus group participants saw active musical involvement as potentially more influential on an adolescent’s emotions, not all drew this distinction between active music making and listening:

Cameron:  [active music participation may not be more influential on behaviour than passive listening] because some people enjoy listening to [music] instead of playing it.

Focus group participants suggested that the level of participation in music activities is ultimately dependent on enjoyment, and the search for some level of gratification. Behne (1997) suggests that adolescents use music in different ways in different situations, for instance, to cope with their problems. As different adolescents have different musical preferences, the level of involvement necessary to satisfy their different needs would vary between individuals.

**“The Teacher Will Help You Out”: Adult Involvement in Adolescent Music**

Typically, rock bands originate during adolescence, between peers (Clawson, 1999). In contrast, the orchestra is coordinated by an authority figure (the conductor) who
presides over the ensemble. The level of autonomous learning by adolescents may be related to adolescent behaviour, and most focus group participants drew connections between adult involvement and adolescent behaviour, at least in the time spent during musical activities:

Cameron: [The teacher should always stay in the room with the music ensemble] because if they’re not there some of them will muck up, and they won’t do it [practise].

Anthony: Like they just muck around playing like, random music … if the teacher’s there then they’ll try and practise properly.

Byron: Yeah, the teacher will help you out if you don’t get it right.

In contrast to the mention of parents in their responses about musical influences, it is interesting that participants assumed that the adult involved in adolescent music would be the teacher, rather than a parent or other adult. This may be as a result of the focus on school music activities, or a reflection of the participants’ perceptions of the adults that are most involved with adolescent music.

The comments of adult influence are in line with research conducted by Agnew and Petersen (1989). Their results suggest that adolescents are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviours when they participate in organised leisure activities with some adult involvement, and more likely to engage in antisocial behaviours when they participate in leisure activities that are unsupervised and peer-oriented.

However, focus group participants suggested that not all adult authority figures would keep adolescents on task, or dissuade them from engaging in antisocial behaviour. The teachers’ personality, expectations and approach were all identified as factors affecting student behaviour:

Byron: It depends on what kind of teacher they are, like, if they’re, if they’ve had a bad history or whatever, then it would be different to if they were always good and you know- because they’ll [students will] try to act like the teacher a bit, you know-

Thomas: The teacher would be influencing them as well as the music. Because if the teacher had a bad influence… the people who were
Participants were less forthcoming with specifics about the ways teachers could be a “bad influence”, though they did suggest that teachers exerted a significant amount of influence on their students, and could not only introduce them to different music, but different subcultures, different values and attitudes.

There appeared to be an understanding amongst focus group participants that the role of the teacher was as both educator and enforcer. Teacher involvement and supervision equated to productivity, especially regarding mastery of an instrument. Popular music ensembles such as rock bands were suggested to be less serious, and more of a leisure activity than an educational one. Recent research has shown that informal learning environments, such as peer led rock bands, may provide a model for developing musical expertise in the school environment (Green, 2006). Supporters of this model suggest that authentic learning environments when learning popular music, namely an apprenticeship model, result in less alienation from the music, as the music belongs to the learners themselves and is learnt to fulfil a practical, real-life purpose (Westerlund, 2006). It appears that the focus group participants only recognised formal educational environments as learning, though it was clear that in both formal and informal environments, with or without adult supervision, learning was taking place.

“Getting in Trouble”: Music Participation as an Influence on Social Behaviour

To conclude each focus group discussion, participants were asked to consider everything that had been talked about and to justify their opinions as to whether they believed that involvement in music activities would affect the social behaviour of adolescents. Some of the focus group participants agreed that music would, or could, promote prosocial behaviour or dissuade or prevent adolescents from engaging in antisocial behaviours, though each for very different reasons.
Byron suggested that music activities would provide adolescents with positive goals, and aspirations, which may promote prosocial behaviour:

Byron: It would give the person something to look forward to, work towards.

Anthony suggested that music would protect against antisocial behaviour by providing adolescents with an escape from reality, as a form of stress-relief and relaxation:

Anthony: Because it sort of takes their mind off all the bad stuff that’s going on around them… lets them relax and play music.

This suggests that participating in music activities will only dissuade adolescents from engaging in antisocial behaviours if the adolescent enjoys participating in them, as a means to relieve them from the activities or events they do not enjoy. Anthony’s comment supports Agnew and Petersen’s (1989) research findings, that the extent to which participants like activities is a key variable in the relationship between activity participation and antisocial behaviour.

Cameron disagreed with Anthony, suggesting that music may not be used for relaxation, and each adolescent’s coping mechanisms for dealing with problems and tensions that arise are different:

Cameron: I’m not sure why it has to be music to take off their minds about doing something else.

Scott suggested that a music activity with a positive peer environment might dissuade adolescents from engaging in antisocial behaviour:

Scott: I think it would stop them from getting into trouble but only if, it depends who they hang out with, who’s in the music group.

Scott’s comment reflects similar findings of previous research studies. It has been found that participation of an individual’s peer network in extracurricular school activities augments the positive adjustment of antisocial, or high-risk youth (Mahoney, 2000). However, it has also been cited that socialization with antisocial
peers is a risk factor for adolescents engaging in antisocial behaviour (Kaufmann, Wyman, Forbes-Jones, & Barry, 2007). Scott’s suggestion that participation in music activities influences social behaviour through the behaviour of the others in that environment echoes such findings.

Other focus group participants were more doubtful about the existence of a direct relationship between music participation and engagement in antisocial behaviour. Thomas and Kieran agreed with Scott’s comment, that the culture and behaviour of the music ensemble will affect individual adolescents’ behaviour:

Thomas: I don’t think that being in music will stop people from getting into trouble and stuff, I mean, they’re just going to do what the rest of the people in their band do. So, if the other people in your band go out drinking, you’ll probably do that.

Kieran: If you get into trouble it’s because of people around you as well, like picking you out to start a fight and stuff like that. I think it’s the same thing if you’re in a band.

In contrast to Scott, Thomas and Dylan focussed on a more negative influence of other music activity participants. They suggested that music participation perhaps has little, or no influence on social behaviour, but rather provides a forum for social interaction, which does.

Dylan felt that participating in music activities would not dissuade adolescents from engaging in antisocial behaviour, unless used as a “threat” by their parents:

Dylan: No… they don’t think of music at the time because it doesn’t usually do much, like affect it, unless your parents have threatened you or something. Like if, someone like, maybe a teacher might say, if you keep on being bad I won’t put you in the band and that will just, I mean, aside from that, I don’t think it will affect it much.

The suggestion that parents threaten to cancel or prevent adolescents from attending activities that they enjoy, particularly participating in music ensembles, was discussed in one of the focus groups in response to the vignette. Participants thought such threats made by parents wouldn’t “particularly happen” (Kieran) and may put more pressure on the adolescents:
Scott: The kid’s going to have a lot of pressure on him… and he could like, get depressed or something then go smoke weed anyway

Participants thought that threats made by parents to cancel music activity attendance were often “empty”, and were potentially harmful, in that such threats may result in adolescents seeking to gratify their needs through antisocial behaviour rather than through music participation.

These results suggest that the focus group participants identified a number of factors that influence music participation and social behaviour. Whilst not a comprehensive list, these findings hold implications for music educators and generate a number of avenues for future research. These are discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This research study was an exploration of adolescent boys’ perceptions of music participation and the influence this has on their behaviour. This research study builds on previous research by narrowing the scope of investigation, focusing on one particular type of extracurricular or leisure activity – music. This study also expands on previous research by focussing on adolescents’ own perceptions and beliefs, a facet that until now has been largely neglected. This chapter will summarise the research process and findings of the current study. The educational implications of the results will be discussed, bearing in mind the intentions and limitations of this study. As the findings from this study contribute to a growing body of knowledge in a relatively unknown field, many new questions have been generated, and recommendations have been made for future research on music participation and social behaviour of adolescents.

Two focus group discussions were conducted with seven adolescent boys in Years 7 to 10. The first group consisted of three boys, Dylan from Year 7, Scott from Year 9 and the Kieran from Year 10. The second focus group consisted of four boys, Byron and Cameron from Year 7 and Thomas and Anthony from Year 8. Prior to the focus group discussions, boys completed questionnaires detailing their musical participation and the frequency with which they engaged in a number of antisocial behaviours in 2006. The behaviours listed in the questionnaire were developed from criminological research studies (Gold, 1966), were considered relevant to Australian adolescents (Baker, 1998) and concentrated on minor antisocial behaviours, to avoid any conflict of interest that may have arisen with reports of more serious criminal offences. A semi-structured focus group guide was employed and the use of a vignette provided the participants with stimuli to discuss the relationship between music participation and behaviour. Focus group discussions were analysed using a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) deducing relationships between concepts in constant interaction with the data.
It was found that the participants’ views on the relationship between music participation and behaviour encompassed a broad spectrum of factors. These included ensemble culture, musical genre and adult involvement, illustrating the complexity with which focus group participants perceived both music participation and social behaviour in adolescents.

Participants thought that behaviour was influenced by the culture of music activities. Focus group participants suggested that individuals would conform to what was perceived as the group norm in order to construct a positive social identity. It was noted that group norms would vary between ensembles, and behaving in a manner that was accepted by other members of musical ensembles may encourage either prosocial or antisocial behaviours. This is in keeping with other research findings that peer influence is a significant factor affecting behaviour (Carter, Bennetts, & Carter, 2003).

Conforming to the behavioural norms of a music ensemble or activity was described as a path to social acceptance. Focus group participants suggested that musical performance might also contribute towards social acceptance. Through the technical mastery of an instrument or the performance of popular music, adolescents could advance their standing in the social hierarchy. What other adolescents and the media deem to be popular music, has a significant influence on adolescent music preferences and performance. Through associating themselves with particular genres and social groups, adolescents may adopt behaviours that are portrayed as normative.

Some focus group participants viewed media portrayals of musicians with scepticism. Inauthentic images of popular musicians and role models were seen as unrealistic and irrelevant. Adolescents who adopted the exaggerated ideals as portrayed by the media were criticised, as such imitations illuminate the inauthentic nature of a music that prides itself on being “real”. This is in line with previous research that has suggested that authenticity claims are a way of defining identity, by categorising the norms of subcultures and rejecting others (McLeod, 1999). It has been suggested that through perceptions of subcultural norms, music conveys style, subculture, lifestyle, and beliefs (Dunbar-Hall, 1991). This study suggests behaviour is also conveyed through music. This implies that music is not understood as
autonomous from its social and political associations (Green, 2006) and may influence adolescents’ behaviour.

Popular music was seen to encapsulate certain ideals, such as freedom, spontaneity and authenticity. Focus group participants felt that popular genres with violent lyrical content and delineations of antisocial behaviour were the most likely to negatively influence adolescents. Classical genres were seen to be associated with prosocial behaviour, the elderly, calm and more “nerdy” people. However, it was noted that identification with a particular musical genre is not necessarily associated with particular behaviours. Focus group participants believed that music not only has the power to stir emotions in adolescents, but also to change them.

In addition to their own personalities and preferences, focus group participants believed that adolescents’ musical tastes are influenced by their parents, peers and role models. Role models were sourced from the radio, television and other musical media. Role models such as bands or musicians, other students, teachers or celebrities were seen to have an influence on behaviour and identity development. Focus group participants also felt that the influence of music would be amplified through active music making, rather than listening.

Adult involvement in different ensembles was seen to have an effect on adolescent behaviour. Peer-oriented activities such as garage bands were seen to be more related to antisocial behaviour, whereas more structured activities, particularly classical ensembles coordinated by an adult authority figure were associated with prosocial behaviour. However, it was noted that the adult’s personality, expectations and approach were all factors that had an impact on an adult’s influence on adolescent behaviour.

The focus group participants were divided in their opinions about whether participation in music activities had an influence on social behaviour. Some felt that music activities provided individuals with a coping mechanism for stressful situations and goals to work towards, encouraging prosocial behaviour. Other participants were unconvinced about music as a deterrent or remedy for antisocial behaviours. They suggested that there were other activities that could fulfil this
function, or the behavioural influence of music participation was dependent on the others in the ensemble, which could be positive or negative.

**Educational Implications**

Many youth programs and extracurricular school activities promote positive social norms (Eccles & Templeton, 2002), and the views expressed during focus group discussions confirm that it is important that educators are aware of the behavioural norms that are established by not only the adolescents who participate in music activities, but popular culture, the media, and themselves. If educators are aware of the delineated meanings adolescents attach to different music and musical ensembles, they may better equip themselves to achieve not only educational and musical goals, but also important goals such as encouraging socialization, cooperation, responsibility and identity development, in a positive way.

This raises questions about repertoire in school music activities, and whether by selecting repertoire, educators convey extramusical cultural expectations and associations to the adolescent performers, or whether the very practice of studying adolescent music, removes it from the adolescents’ domain, rendering it instantly ‘uncool’, inauthentic and changes the meanings conveyed through the music.

Adolescents’ music is imbued with values, meaning and perceptions of subcultures, which are often disregarded in formal teaching practices. How the educator incorporates musical cultures belonging to adolescents in lessons without alienating the students, or themselves, is an interesting point of consideration, and warrants further investigation than can be given in this research study.

How music is made relevant for adolescents will vary between classes, students, age groups and cultures, though these results imply an awareness of adolescent opinions, preferences, preconceptions and attitudes would better equip the classroom teacher to design musical experiences that enlighten, expand and enrich students’ musical worlds in a positive, enjoyable way.
The National Review of School Music Education (Pascoe et al. 2005) promotes the belief that quality music education in Australian schools may address antisocial behaviour, with improvements in dropout rates, violence, self-concept, levels of harassment and ethnic tensions between students. This research study has added to the growing body of knowledge asking why and how, through an exploration of adolescents’ own perceptions.

**Limitations of the Research**

It should be noted that the findings of this research study relate specifically to the participants involved in the study at one particular moment in time, and cannot be generalised to the wider adolescent male population. The themes and issues raised by the focus group participants were not intended to establish a relationship between participation in music activities and behaviour but rather provide an insight into adolescents’ musical and social worlds.

Another limitation of this research is that it cannot account for the family background or socio-economic status of the participants. Whilst data on participants’ musical and behavioural backgrounds were collected by the questionnaire, these data are based on self-reports, which rely on the honesty of participants and may not reflect reality.

As this field of study is in its infancy, this study did not have the advantage of building upon previous research, or following tried and tested methodologies. As a result this study is not able to provide a detailed, exhaustive list of factors influencing the relationship between music participation and social behaviour. Nor is this study able to provide conclusions on this relationship. However, this research provides a valuable preliminary insight into adolescents’ own perceptions and has generated many more questions and areas of research for future study.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

The first suggestion for future research in this area is not so concerned with what to research, but how. As illustrated by the evolution of this study’s methodology and
focus, as well as small sample sizes in other research studies, it is clear that survey techniques requiring large numbers of respondents, may not be the most appropriate approach for this population. Whilst the focus group methodology was very effective in generating group discussions and encouraging all participants to contribute and voice their opinions, it would be interesting to conduct focus group discussions with friendship groups, or individual interviews, to explore environments where participants may be more or less influenced by their peers.

This exploratory research has generated a number of avenues that warrant further investigation. Further research into the various factors of music participation and social behaviour that have been raised through this research would focus on more specific aspects of these complex phenomena. Research into how peer influence in music ensembles, the importance of social acceptance in music ensembles or music preferences, perceptions of authenticity, musical genre, the perception of masculinity in music, musical influences, role models, active versus passive participation in music activities and adult involvement in adolescent music relates to social behaviour would provide a more detailed, specific insight.

In addition to investigating these areas in more detail, it would be interesting to replicate this study with adolescents from different socio-economic backgrounds, schools or with female adolescents. Also contrasting the perceptions of adolescents involved in music activities with those who are not would provide an interesting insight into adolescent perceptions of music participation and social behaviour.

Including participants other than adolescents would provide alternative perspectives on the relationship between music participation and social behaviour. These participants could be teachers, parents, siblings or other individuals involved with adolescent music and social behaviour.

As a music educator and criminology graduate, my interest in this field was generated by the connections others had drawn between my two fields: crime research and music education research. The course that this research study has followed, particularly methodologically, holds important implications for future research, and has led to quite a different destination than was initially planned. At the
beginning of this research study, I intended to conduct a quantitative analysis of the relationship between music participation and antisocial behaviour. My approach was fairly reductionist, and I hoped to find out whether different types of music participation encouraged or discouraged different types of antisocial behaviour. The use of qualitative focus groups was intended to support my quantitative analysis of the situation. The journey this research study has led me on has broadened my views and amplified my interest in this field. Through the focus shifting away from a quantitative representation of the relationship between music participation and antisocial behaviour to a qualitative, exploration of adolescents’ own opinions, my understanding of this area of research has become more multifaceted. My understandings of this field now encapsulate not only a wider range of social behaviours, antisocial and prosocial, but also perspectives I had not previously considered. The perspectives of the seven boys I spoke with are much more diverse and complex than I had anticipated. The findings from this study are a valuable accompaniment to the large-scale, quantitative research projects being conducted in Australia and internationally, and add to the growing number of qualitative insights into music participation and social behaviour. This study has opened many more avenues for me or for others to follow, and contributes towards addressing an important void in the literature: the inclusion of adolescents’ own views, opinions and attitudes as legitimate commentators on their own experiences.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
Appendix A: Participant Information Statement

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The University of Sydney

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT
Research Project

Title: Are Extracurricular School Music Activities Appropriate Contexts for Intervention Programs Targeting Antisocial Behaviour in Adolescents?

(1) What is the study about?

This study is trying to figure out whether the programs that are designed to help young people that get into trouble at school, with friends or with the law, should be run in music activities.

(2) Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being done by Alexis Robertson for the degree of Bachelor of Music (Music Education) Honours at the University of Sydney under the supervision of Mr James Renwick.

(3) What does the study involve?

If you choose to be involved in this study, you will be asked to complete a written questionnaire. Questions will be about whether or not you are in a school music activity that runs outside of class time (such as bands, choirs, orchestras etc.) and whether or not you have smoked, used alcohol or drugs, stolen or damaged things or been in fights. There is no way that you can be identified from the questionnaire – it is totally anonymous.

If you want to, you can volunteer to join a small group of other students (2 – 5 other students) to read a short story and give your opinions about young people in music activities and young people that get into trouble. You can volunteer by giving your name to the researcher after you have finished the questionnaire, or your class teacher at any other time. You will not be asked to talk your behaviour, other people’s behaviour or what you or other people have done.

(4) How much time will the study take?

The questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to finish. If you would like to join the discussion group, that will take another 20 minutes.
(5) Can I withdraw from the study?

If at any time you decide you don’t want to be in the study any more, you are allowed to stop participating without it being held against you. The researchers and the University of Sydney are happy for you to stop being a part of the study whenever you like.

(6) Will anyone else know the results?

Only the researchers will have access to any information about you, unless the law requires them to tell someone else. All parts of the study will be kept secret.

(7) Will the study benefit me?

The study may benefit young people just like you in the future, as it will add to the growing body of knowledge on how best to deal with the many problems young people face while growing up. Many young people do harmful things to themselves and others, and this study will give information to people that design programs to help them and give them ideas on how to run these programs in the best ways.

(8) Can I tell other people about the study?

You can tell other people about the study at any time.

(9) What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Alexis Robertson 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 the researcher Alexis Robertson on 0411655922 or her supervisor, James Renwick on 9351 1235

(10) What if I have a complaint or concerns?

Any person with concerns or complains 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 gbriody@mail.usyd.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep.
Appendix B: Participant Consent Form – Questionnaire

The University of Sydney
SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I……………………………..…, am willing to participate in the research project
Name (please print)

TITLE: Are Extracurricular School Music Activities Appropriate Contexts for Intervention Programs Targeting Antisocial Behaviour in Adolescents?

In saying that I am willing to be in the study, I know that:

1. The way the project will be run and the time it will take has been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered so that I understand.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss what I read and my involvement in the project with the researchers.
3. I understand that if I decide I don’t want to continue filling out the questionnaire I can withdraw from the study without affecting my relationship with the researchers now or in the future.
4. I understand that once I hand in the questionnaire I can not withdraw it from being used in the study.
5. I understand that no one will know about my involvement and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

Signed:
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
Name:
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
Date:
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM: Focus Group Discussion

I…………………………., am willing to participate in a group discussion
Name (please print)
I am in year ………………..

In saying that I am willing to be in a discussion, I know:

1. The way the discussion will be run and the time it will take has been explained to me, and any questions I have about the questionnaire have been answered so that I understand.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss what I read and my involvement in the project with the researchers.
3. I understand that I can decide not to be a part of the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researchers now or in the future.
4. I understand that no one will know about my involvement and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.
5. I understand that I am not supposed to discuss my personal experiences, and will be stopped if I do. If I do discuss something serious that has happened, the researcher may be required by law to tell someone else.

Signed:

Name:

Date:
Appendix D: Parent Information Statement

Page 1 of 2

The University of Sydney

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT
Research Project

Title: Are Extracurricular School Music Activities Appropriate Contexts for Intervention Programs Targeting Antisocial Behaviour in Adolescents?

(1) What is the study about?

This study is designed to determine whether or not school organized music activities that are run outside of school time are appropriate environments to implement programs that aim to help adolescents who display antisocial behaviours – such as bullying, substance abuse and stealing.

(2) Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Alexis Robertson and will form the basis for the degree of Bachelor of Music (Music Education) Honours at the University of Sydney under the supervision of Mr James Renwick.

(3) What does the study involve?

This study is in two parts. You may consent to your child being in one or both part of the study. The first part of the study involves your child completing a short, anonymous questionnaire. Questions will be about their involvement in extracurricular school music activities such as orchestras, choirs, and bands, and awareness of antisocial behaviour, such as bullying, minor substance abuse and stealing. Your child will also be given the option of taking part in the second part of the study, a focus group discussion which will involve a small group (3 – 6) of students. The focus group will provide students with a hypothetical story and ask their opinions and reactions to it. The focus group discussion will be audio taped. The interest is in minor antisocial behaviour, and no student is to discuss specific offences or particular events. If a student begins to talk about such topics they will be stopped immediately by the researcher.

(4) How much time will the study take?

The questionnaire will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If your child is willing, permitted, and chosen to participate in a focus group discussion, the focus group discussion will take approximately 20 minutes.
Can my child withdraw from the study?

Your decision whether or not to permit your child to participate in either the questionnaire or the focus group discussion will not prejudice you or your child’s future relations with the University of Sydney or the school. Once the questionnaire has been completed and returned to the researcher by your child, you will not be able to withdraw your consent. The questionnaire is anonymous and it will be impossible to identify your child’s and exclude it from the study. You may withdraw your consent for the questionnaire any time prior to your child handing in the completed questionnaire. If you decide to permit your child to participate in the focus group, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your child’s participation at any time without prejudice. No information gained from your child, even anonymously, will be used in the final report.

Will anyone else know the results?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. Students will be asked not to discuss any specific events in focus group discussions. However, if they do discuss specific things such as severe bullying, abuse or serious drug offences, we may be required by law to discuss this with their teacher.

Will the study benefit me?

There are no rewards or incentives to be in this study and by consenting for your child to participate you will be helping the researcher to understand the many problems young people face and how music may address these.

Can I tell other people about the study?

You may tell other people about the study at any time.

What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Alexis Robertson 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 the researcher Alexis Robertson on 0411655922 or her supervisor, James Renwick on 9351 1235.

What if I have a complaint or concerns?

Any person with concerns or complains 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 gbriody@mail.usyd.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep
Appendix E: Parent Consent Form

The University of Sydney

SYDNEY CONSERVATORIUM
OF MUSIC

PARENTAL (OR GUARDIAN) CONSENT FORM

I, ............................................ agree to permit ..........................................., who is aged ......................years, to participate in the research project –

TITLE: Are Extra Curricular School Music Activities Appropriate Contexts for Intervention Programs Targeting Antisocial Behaviour in Adolescents?

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. I have read the Information Statement and the time involved for my child’s participation in the project. The researchers have given me the opportunity to discuss the information and ask any questions I have about the project and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I understand that I can consent to my child participating in either one or both parts of the research project.

3. I understand that once my child has handed in the anonymous questionnaire I am unable to withdraw consent.

4. I understand that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time without prejudice to me or my child’s relationship with the researchers now or in the future.

5. I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published provided that neither my child nor I can be identified.

6. I understand that if I have any questions relating to my child’s participation in this research I may contact the researchers who will be happy to answer them.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I consent to my child filling out the questionnaire:</th>
<th>I consent to my child volunteering for the focus group discussion:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>........................................................................</td>
<td>........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Parent/Guardian</td>
<td>Signature of Parent/Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>........................................................................</td>
<td>........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please PRINT name</td>
<td>Please PRINT name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>........................................................................</td>
<td>........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Appendix F: Questionnaire

#### SECTION A

**What year are you in at school?**

- [ ] Year 7
- [ ] Year 8
- [ ] Year 9
- [ ] Year 10

**Tick each of the school music groups you are in:**

- [ ] Orchestra
- [ ] Choir/vocal group
- [ ] Rock or popular music band
- [ ] Individual instrumental/vocal lessons done through school
- [ ] Jazz band
- [ ] Other (please specify)
  - ……………………………
- [ ] None

*If you ticked none, go straight to Section C*

#### SECTION B

Which mornings, break times or afternoons do you go to the music activity? (tick all days you go):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>before school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recess or lunchtimes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>afternoons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much time do you normally spend at school music activities on the weekends? (not including practising?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| None| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A lot

How much time do you spend practising for school music activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| None| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A lot
**SECTION C**

Think back to last year. Please tick the boxes for how many times you did these activities. Remember, no one will be able to identify you from this questionnaire… be honest!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In 2006 How many times did you:</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smoke cigarettes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink alcohol? (beer, wine, spirits)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke marijuana? (hashish, pot, weed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use other illegal drugs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sell small amounts of marijuana or other drugs to other people?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tag, graffiti, break, or in any other way damage or destroy things belonging to someone else or the school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steal less than $50 or other things worth less than $50?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss classes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit or threaten to hit other students?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get into fights?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force someone else to give you something, like money?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: Focus Group Vignette

Terry is in year 9 and plays saxophone in a jazz band and the orchestra at school. He practises very hard at the saxophone because he wants to play really complicated pieces that will impress people and sound cool!

One afternoon Terry’s friend Brian suggests that they skip maths and go down to the beach and smoke pot for a while, then meet up with their girlfriends to drink some beer he found in his older brother’s room. Terry is not very good at maths and his parents have said that he won’t be allowed to play in the jazz band or orchestra anymore if he doesn’t pass.
Appendix H: Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. How many of you are in a school music activity?
   a. What kinds of activities?
   b. How often do you go?
   c. How much practice do you do for the activity?
   d. What is it that you like about the activity?

2. Sometimes young people at school behave badly or get into trouble. I have a short story to show you and would like you to think about possible solutions to the problem Terry faces. What options does Terry have? Why might he pick those options?
   a. Do you think his decision is influenced more by his parents, his friends, or his love of the saxophone?
   b. Do you think Terry would have made the same decision if Brian hadn’t suggested it, or if it had been a person at school he didn’t know very well?
   c. Do you think not being allowed to play in the jazz band or orchestra is a good threat for his parents to use to make Terry go to maths?
   d. Do you think Terry would have invited anyone else? Who would they be – other people in the jazz band or orchestra?

3. Do you think that being in music groups stops kids from getting into trouble? Why/why not?
Appendix I: Approval Letter from the University of Sydney  
Human Research Ethics Committee

The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 Australia

10 September 2007

Mr J Ronwick  
Sydney Conservatorium of Music – C41  
The University of Sydney

Dear Mr Ronwick

Title: Are extracurricular school music activities appropriate contexts for intervention programs targeting antisocial behaviour in adolescents?

Ref: 03-2007/9862

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 August 2007, confirming/fulfilling the conditions of approval for the above-mentioned protocol as stated in your approval letter dated 4 April 2007.

This has been filed with your original application.

Yours sincerely

Associate Professor J D Watson  
Chairman  
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Ms Alexis Robertson, 28 Lennox Street, Mosman NSW 2088