



**FACULTY OF MUSIC  
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA MALAYSIA**

**INTEREST TO PURSUE MUSIC STUDIES IN UiTM**

**EDU650  
ACADEMIC PROJECT**

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## **INTEREST TO PURSUE MUSIC STUDIES IN UiTM**

### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to determine the UiTM music students' perception about interest to pursue music studies in UiTM Shah Alam, factors that influence them to participate in music program and students' background in music before entering UiTM. A total of 130 participants participated in the study. They were from the Music Education (n = 52), Music Performing (n = 14) and Music Composition (n = 8) degree programs as well as the Diploma in Music students (n = 56). A survey questionnaire was designed to gather information about students' profile, their family musical background and the student's interest to learn music. Significant differences between programs and genders were found for reasons students to learn music at UiTM, influencing students to take music course at UiTM, students' reasons to taking music at UiTM and students opinion about studying music at UiTM.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Music is essential in our life. There are no civilizations that have existed without music. Hoffer (2001) described music as "an organization of sounds which is a sense of organization and a pattern of sounds is absolutely required for a person to perceive the sounds as music" (p. 36) and The Macmillan Encyclopedia says that music is "the art of organizing sounds, which usually consist of tones of definite pitch, to produce melody, harmony and rhythm" (Macmillan, 1988, p. 845). General opinion about music are that music is fun, it makes people happy, sad, it relaxes and can also make people more active. The fact that there are so many kinds of music today such as R&B music, pop music, ballad music, rock music, jazz music and classical music which can be found on TV, radio, film, Mp3 and Mp4 shows that music has become an accepted and essential part of our lives:

Let us think and imagine what would happen to the world if there were no music. Music is so much a part of our lives just like the need for clothes to cover our body, food to give energy and home for people to rest and sleep. Music has been composed and performed for many purposes such as for religious services, ceremonial and entertainment events. Human perceptions to music differ from one culture to another. While some people may see music as a waste of time, other people may desire to learn more about music so much that they are willing to attend music classes and learn to play musical instruments. Parents who like music often send their child for music lessons at a young age. This is because they may believe that younger children learn music better and faster and are able to easily develop their skills in music. For example, the Suzuki method believes that the suitable age for children to learn music is three years old. Petzold (1969) believes that "most first grade children can develop sufficient aural understandings so they are able to participate successfully in music reading activities" (p. 200).

Many factors influence people to learn more about music. Aristotle (1921) cited historical precedents for music education, saying that music is valued for "intellectual enjoyment in leisure" and that it "...is a sort of education in which parents should train their sons, not as being useful or necessary, but because it is liberal or noble" (p. 125). Today, music is considered to be able to help improve economic and social status. For example, a person who is involved in the music field as a singer, musician and educators or trainers can earn a living through music. There are some advantages to the learning of music. Some people believe that learning music helps in the development of discipline, such as in their time management, utilization of leisure time in a productive manner and the enrichment of talent within a person.

Besides that, people who learn music also can improve their self confidence. Learning music also can establish team work among students. For example, when students playing instruments as a group, students will and can learn to cooperate with each other to produce music. "Another advantage of learning music is also that it can improve memory by building short-term and long term memory in both visual and aural" (Hoffer, 2001). For example, when students memorize music and perform without looking at the score, they are also at the same time improving their capability to remember things and this can be transferred to their academic subjects. Music appreciation is an added bonus to music learning where students understand compositions and musical sounds and thus become more sensitive and tolerant of music of other cultures.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There are many factors that influence people to want to learn music. Generally, these factors may comprise of personal and external forces which play a role in the decision to learn to play an instrument. Many people can say that they learn music because they are interested and they like music. However, a liking or an interest in music sometimes does not drive a person to actually take lessons to achieve competency on an instrument. External influences such as family background, home environment, parental encouragement, peers, teachers and society are some important factors which have an effect on a person's interest to learn music. Learning to play an instrument may be found both in the public and private schools. Students who learn music in the public schools often do so because it is already in the curriculum. But those who enroll in private schools often have other more important influences in their life.

The Faculty of Music in UiTM, Shah Alam, provides music courses such as the Bachelor in Music Education, Bachelor in Music Composition, Bachelor in Music Performance and Diploma in Music. Students enter the programme of their choice based on reasons of their own. Students' career choices in music are wide and varied. UiTM student's reason for enrolling in one of the music programmes offered by the faculty suggests strong interest to learn music. So strong that it has made them decide to make music as part of their career. The fact that most students who entered the music programs offered by the faculty have very limited formal background in music shows that they have high interest to learn music. This study therefore looks at some of the issues surrounding students' decision to learn music, specifically at UiTM.

## **THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors influencing students to learn music among music students in Faculty of Music, at UiTM Shah Alam. Specifically, the study is conducted to fulfill the following objectives:-

1. To investigate the students background in music.
2. To investigate students' perception of the factors influencing them to learn music at UiTM.
3. To investigate students' reasons for choosing to do a degree in music/music education.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study attempts to answer three main questions. The following research questions will be the guidelines for this study.

1. What are the profile/ background of students taking music at the Faculty of Music?

2. What are the student's reasons for pursuing music studies?
3. What are the factors which influence students' interest to take music at UiTM?

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study attempts to explore the degree of interest in learning music courses among music students at the Faculty of Music, UiTM. Through this study various reasons and factors that influence students to choose to learn music are explored. The influence of family as the contributing factor for choosing music as a career is also investigated. This study may help in the understanding of why students apply to take music courses and why they have chosen UiTM as the university to study. Reasons and factors which influence students may assist the Faculty of Music to improve the existing music programs and how they are marketed to society.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The sample for this study consist of students in the Faculty of Music at UiTM, Shah Alam who are enrolled in the Bachelor of Music Education program, Bachelor in Music Composition program, and Bachelor in Music Performance program. The music students' population in the faculty is somewhat dominated by the diploma students with only about a quarter of the population comprising of degree students. Therefore, this study is limited in the number of sample available among degree students.

Another limitation is the music students in Faculty of Music have different backgrounds in music. The music students in Faculty of Music, at UiTM come from diverse backgrounds and musical experience. Therefore findings from this study may be difficult to generalize to all music students in other institutions of higher learning.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Music Education in Malaysia**

Generally, music education is divided into two major divisions which are formal education and informal education. Formal music education requires students to learn music from a specified curriculum. According to Johami Abdullah (1993, p. 2) "pendidikan muzik secara informal adalah melalui kaedah meniru ataupun mengajuk perlakuan muzikal orang lain menerusi apa yang dilihat dan didengar" In addition, he states that "Pengajaran muzik tradisional Malaysia pula dilakukan menerusi tradisi lisan ataupun melalui sistem "berguru"" (p. 4).

Music Education in Malaysia was made a compulsory subject in primary schools starting from 1983. In the past, the existence of music education in schools puts less pressure on teaching the Malaysian traditional music. However, an improved version of the music education syllabus shows that the teaching of traditional music such as " Cak Lempong, Gamelan, Angklong, Kompang and a few more percussions instruments are given highlights both in primary and secondary school.

During the early days of music education in school, there are some parents, teachers as well as the school own administrations who tend to resist the implementation. These groups think that music education is not parallel to the teaching of Islam. According to a research done by Diana Harris (2006) in United Kingdom, *ulama's in society decline the teaching and learning of music education because they think that music education might lead to illegal activities. Thus, some parents hinder their child from going to school that teaches music. Besides that, there are small portions of the society that refuse the*

teaching and learning of music education because they think that music will make their children rebellious.

Music education for the primary level, stress on the aesthetic experience and music appreciation. Students in primary level will learn music subjects from primary one until primary six (KBSR, 1998, p. 1). On the other hand, the KBSM music syllabus, subjects consists of learning music education form form one to form five. It intends to produce students who are well equipped with knowledge on music, as shown by this quote from the curriculum:

*Kurikulum Pendidikan Muzik menengah rendah dan atas bermatlamat melahirkan pelajar yang mempunyai pengetahuan, kemahiran dan pengalaman muzikal yang membolehkan mereka menikmati dan menghargai muzik, menyatakan ekspresi diri dan meneroka potensi diri dalam penciptaan dan persembahan muzik ke arah melahirkan insan yang seimbang, kreatif, berdisiplin dan harmonis*  
(KBSM, 2004, p. V).

Exposures from school are some of the reasons that may have influenced undergraduate students to choose music education. Some students who enter UiTM could already play an instrument well while most others do not have any background. Nevertheless it is important to discover what are some factors which influence students' interest in music learning.

## **Factors Which Influence Interest to Learn Music**

### **Influence of the Family**

Both parents are a great influence to their children. Parents are the one that mold their children's attitudes and behavior. In music education, parents can determine whether to send their children to formal music classes. Parents who have great concern about music will create opportunities for their children to learn it. According to Bergee (2001) the home and family can influence their children's decision to become involved in music. Asmus (2005) stated that students know the importance of the home in music learning. He "contended that the home environment and its associated factors are the primary determinants of student learning. Involving parents in the total music teaching process is important for student success" (p. 3-4).

Normally, parents who have background or interest in music will encourage their children to follow in their footsteps. Parents who are familiar with schools in music will most likely send their children to good music institutions. Sichivitsa (2004) found that "the influences of parental musicianship and support in music, previous musical experience, self-concept of musical ability, academic integration, social integration, and value of music influence students' intentions to continue studying music" (p.27).

Besides that, there are some parents who send their children to music classes to make sure they are filling their time with profitable activities. This way it helps them prevent their children from being involved in bad social activities. Darrow (1993) stated that "family involvement with music did not seem to affect respondents' involvement with music, but did seem to affect respondents' responses regarding the importance of music in their lives. Respondents' family involvement with music was somewhat more active as they were growing up than in their family now. This is understandable since it is usually the parents that initiate musical activity in a family" (p. 615- 632).

Some parents are willing to spend thousands to send their children to music classes. This motivates the child to study music seriously and might be another reason why they chose to learn music in UiTM. Howe and Sloboda (1991) found "high levels of investment on the