

The Interplay Between Socio-Cultural Factors and High School Students' Music Education Participation

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the interplay that exists between socio-cultural factors and students' engagement in music education. A total of 289 participants, 128 males and 161 females, aged 15 to 19 years, were sampled through stratified random sampling, drawn from three purposively selected Zambian public high schools. To align the study, a predictive-correlational research design was used in light of the activity and socio-cognitive theoretical framework. The results indicate: strong peer influence in music, strong family support, and noteworthy perceived benefits of music. Church denomination, peer influence, family support, and social benefits of music showed a significant positive relationship with students' participation, $p < 0.001$. In terms of age and gender, there exists a statistically significant difference. The findings indicate that students' participation in music education programmes is strongly shaped by peer influence, family support, and their perceived benefits of music.

Keywords

Family support, Music Education, Music Programmes, Peer Influence

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Introduction

A human being is a social being that needs the social environment, including culture, and all factors in it, such as the neighbourhood, friends, and siblings, to reach that complete humaneness based on companionship and interaction (Henry & Stephens, 2013). All these socialising agents work together and are at play in one's life, influencing an individual either positively or negatively. Consequently, the behaviour exhibited by an individual at various points of his/her life based on different circumstances reveals the kind of social interplay one goes through (Fiske, 2018). This is also true when considering students' behaviour as they go through school. Some of the decisions, choices, and behaviour portrayed would be a result of this orientation. For instance, a student may not choose music as a subject because its value was never emphasised in the family, and the opposite is also true. According to Olusoji's (2013) study, many Nigerian parents view musicians, particularly traditional ones, as unsuccessful and of low social status. As a result, they often discourage their children from participating in music-related activities at school since they do not consider music a viable or respectable career path. This perception stems from a broader societal attitude that regards musicians as failures and individuals of limited means.

Similar to practices in many countries worldwide, music in Zambian senior secondary schools is generally treated as an elective subject, with class periods frequently shared with another subject. (Emielu, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2013). In primary schools, policy demands that music should be taught to all pupils; however, due to a lack of willing teachers and resources, it is scarcely taught (Namaiko & Kalinde, 2025; Eckeskog, 2010). This foundational problem hampers bridging the primary and secondary schools. Hence, this affects participation at the secondary school level as Fitzpatrick (2013) observed.

This study highlights the need to understand the social and cultural factors that influence high school students' participation in school music programmes, particularly in Zambian high schools. It investigated the influence of parental support, peer influence, and social benefits of music on choices made by students. By addressing these factors, it aimed to uncover the reasons behind the lack of participation and provide insights for improving music education and engagement among students.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognised benefits of music education, high school pupils in Zambia face significant social and cultural barriers that hinder their participation in music programmes such as; cultural beliefs that prioritise other subjects over music (Namaiko & Kalinde, 2025), parental expectations that focus on academic achievement, limited access to music resources and facilities, and societal perceptions that view music as a hobby rather than a viable career path. These factors result in a lack of engagement and a resultant underrepresentation of Zambian youths in music programmes, thereby threatening the development of the country's music education and cultural heritage. Hence, there is a dire need for a thorough investigation into the factors influencing involvement in music education and how challenges to participation can be minimised.

Research Objectives

1. To determine respondents' perceptions of the extent of socio-cultural factors—namely music culture, church or denominational influence, peer influence in music, family support, and the perceived social benefits of music.
2. To find out if there is any significant relationship between socio-cultural factors and students' participation in high school music programmes?
3. To ascertain whether there are any significant differences in participation in high school music programmes based on age, gender, enrolment in music classes, religious affiliation, denominational affiliation, family income, and source of income.

Research Questions

1. What are respondents' perceptions of the extent of socio-cultural factors—namely music culture, church or denominational influence, peer influence in music, family support, and the perceived social benefits of music?
2. Is there any significant relationship between socio-cultural factors and students' participation in high school music programmes?
3. Is there any significant difference in participation in high school music programmes as far as age, gender, enrolment in music class, religious affiliation, denominational affiliation, family income, and source of income are considered?

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on two theories: activity theory and socio-cognitive theory. Activity Theory was formulated by Aleksei Leontiev, a Russian Psychologist in the seventies as a reaction to reformations informed by the socio-cultural demands of Marxism. The foundational pillar of the theory is activity involving socio-cultural interaction of the subject (people or ideas) and the object (the immediate world), deemed to be transformative, purposeful, and developing within the interactive structure. It endeavours to understand human interactions in terms of the use of tools and artefacts, especially where these tools are in a cultural context and facing constant rapid change.

Furthermore, the theory has also been used as an intervention model for shaping and increasing student participation in activities they are engaged in. Other fields of use include the psychology realm and most often the technology world, especially in relation to computers and production (Thomas, 2014).

The Socio-cognitive Theory was modelled and popularized by Albert Bandura in 1977. It is a motivation theory premised on the belief that a person's behaviour is a result of the interplay between the individual and socio-environmental factors. Its pillars are the three constructs: personal factors, behaviours, and socio-environmental influences. The theory recognises self-efficacy as a prime motivation that affects a student's task choice, persistence, and achievement. It is commonly used in areas of career choices (subjects), manipulative skills, and health (Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2014).

Significance of the Study

This study sheds light on the crucial role of socio-cultural factors in influencing student engagement in music education in Zambia. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers to develop strategies that foster a positive and inclusive music environment. This would eventually promote awareness of the benefits of music education and further address inequities in access, ultimately contributing to the development of a vibrant musical community in Zambia.

Literature Review

Social Cultural Factors

For educators to effectively encourage participation in music education, they should understand how students' cultural backgrounds shape their musical experiences and preferences (Butler, Lind & McKoy, 2007). To understand this social-cultural factor concept, the study adopted the following variables: music culture, peer influence, family support, social music benefits, age, and gender as the premise of the study (Green, 2012).

Music Culture

Music is arguably one of the most pervasive components of culture in societies around the world. There is apparently no known culture world that is lacking in music. Despite its ubiquitous nature, the way music is used and perceived differs from culture to culture. According to Garfias (2004), "Music has a status and function in each culture. There is a way that people use it, practice it, continue it and think about it which is unique to each culture, p.7"). In Africa, for instance, it is believed that one cannot be a musician unless one is born into a musical family (Aniedi, 2012). Music is also a corporative activity, meaning it is presumed to be a property of the community, this has also been observed in the Philippines, indicating communal living and care for one another as great values of family ties (Garfias, 2004). In Zambia, dances, songs, and drama are a form of worship, and hence, that justifies the value attached to music in this culture (Findlay, 2012). Culture profoundly influences individuals, shaping their thoughts, behaviour, and identity. This influence begins early in life, with children absorbing cultural norms through family and societal interactions. These early experiences, particularly through games and songs, shape their later musical preferences and their perception of music education in school. Therefore, a child's socialisation significantly impacts his/her appreciation and engagement with school music programmes (Soccio, 2013). The challenge, however, is in the conflict between music culture and music education, where the school's emphasis is on Western music (Regelsky & Gates, 2009). Three studies highlight the complex relationship between home music culture and school music. Canedo (2013) found a significant gap between students' musical preferences and analysis skills in Spanish schools versus their everyday lives, with family and friends playing major roles in shaping these preferences. Siebenaler (2006) found that in California parental involvement in music strongly predicted student participation in high school music programmes, demonstrating the importance of home-based musical values. Emberly (2009) explored the musical cultures of

children in Limpopo, South Africa, revealing the diversity of musical experiences within the province and the influence of both local and global media on their musical development.

Church/Denomination Influence

This dimension is considered under the content of beliefs held by a church that a student belongs to. Ozorak (1987), comparing parental influence, religious beliefs, and peer influence, found that the strongest predictor of the three was parental influence. The reason she gives is that parents cared more and desired to enforce beliefs in which they themselves were grounded. Concerning Jehovah's Witness youths, Wooley (2005), posits that "Adolescent Jehovah's Witnesses have also sought to refuse blood products based on their beliefs, regardless of the views of their parents, p.1"). If the content of the beliefs and teachings is not that compelling, why would the above youths act like this? Why would they risk their lives even? This simply shows how powerful the content of the beliefs and teachings is.

Peer Influence

When children leave the socialising environment of the home, they are likely to join school, where they will be members of peer groups. Consequently, they begin to learn the norms of these groups and assimilate them. Some of these lead to anti-social behaviour termed as negative peer pressure (Amy, 2011). Peers affect preference in what to learn, eat, wear, watch, and value (Barbour, 2008). Siebenelar (2006) carried out a study to determine strong predictors concerning students' participation in music. The results indicated eight predictors, and among the strong predictors was peer influence. However, he seems not to address the aspect of how this can be linked to safety needs (employment) as portrayed in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of safety and security needs (Maslow & Lewis, 1987). Two studies investigated the factors influencing music participation during transitions in education. Cook (2013) found that peer influence played a significant role in orchestra students' decisions to continue or discontinue music participation between elementary and middle school, confirming previous research on the impact of peers. Freer (2014) explored the musical identities of choral students through written narratives and drawings, revealing that peer influence also played a part in their decision to continue or discontinue music participation. However, both studies faced limitations in the number of participants, potentially impacting the generalisability of their findings.

Family Support

Family support, being a vast social structure, in this context should be understood as the educational level of parents, family background, social class, and locality or residence. Duncan and Magnuson (2005) studied the socio-economic aspect of family, and concluded that the nature of neighbourhood, social class, family type, methods of siring, and type of family really matter in academic involvement and excellence. Research suggests that socioeconomic factors play a role in children's music participation. For instance, Alex (2003) found that lower-class families tend to be stricter with their children, limiting their freedom, while middle-class families tend to be more permissive and emphasise freedom of choice. Shanks and Destin (2009) further observed that middle-class children, due to their upbringing, are more likely to engage in activities that develop their talents, such as music. Therefore, both lower and middle-income children may be more likely to participate in music, but for different reasons. A study by ThienAn and Khuong (2015) in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, explored factors that motivate music students and improve music education. The study involved 350 students from six music academies. The findings identified income as a key predictor of motivation, ranking among the top three factors. This finding highlights the significant barrier income presents to pursuing musical aspirations, emphasising the need for greater accessibility and support for aspiring musicians.

Social Benefits of Music

Perceived social benefits are to be sought in areas of career availability, academic excellence, and after-school social utility of skills acquired. Olusoji (2013) in his research answered the question whether the traditional stigma attached to music and music practitioners had reduced. The findings revealed that most parents still have mixed views about music as a career. Youths interviewed chose music due to frustration with not getting a high grade. In contrast, in some Chinese universities, music is a prerequisite (Leung & Xie, 2011). Other benefits include creativity. According to Kalivretenos (2015), creativity is “one of the top-five skills important for success in the workforce, par. 7”), because it enhances empathy and social awareness. Additionally, some cases of autism, stroke, and stuttering have been cured through music therapy (The Royal Conservatory, 2014). This healing potency is also supported by Skoe and Kraus (2012). Studies have also shown that playing in ensembles provides an opportunity for creating new relationships and learning to regulate temperaments (Judson, 2015; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011).

Age

Low participation as traced by research studies occurs at middle school to high school (Fitzpatrick, 2013). The observation is that, since music is compulsory in middle school, most pupils are compelled to study it. Problems arise when they move to secondary school, where music is no longer compulsory but an elective (Emielu, 2011). O’Niell’s study in 2001 aimed to establish the influence of socio-cultural factors on students’ engagement in music between elementary and secondary school. The findings show a general decline in the number of students who continued to play an instrument as compared to when they were in primary school.

Gender

Gender cannot be a sole influence on participation in music because it is influenced by other complicated factors such as culture, religious traditions, familial values, and peer group inclinations. For instance, a bass guitar has long been considered a man’s instrument (Hallam, Rogers & Creech, 2008). A study by Green (2013) in the United Kingdom on gender relations to music revealed that there were more girls enrolled in music examinations and that their results were better than those for boys. Furthermore, there was negative peer pressure, especially for core and extracurricular music activities that were deemed feminine. These included gentle-sounding orchestral instruments, singing involving falsettos, or any form of classical music.

Students’ Participation in High School Music Programmes

Kratus (2007) contends that the problem of participation has nothing to do with budget cuts for music education, as others have suggested. He states that music education has disconnected itself from the current culture. Students are made to perform music that they rarely hear on the radio, at home, and so on. The teachers also base their curriculum on their goals rather than the students’ needs. Classical music also places an emphasis on group ensembles, while readily available pop music can be performed in their rooms on a guitar or simply a keyboard.

Montgomery (2012), in his study in the USA, reveals that participation in a band was highly affected by the price of musical instruments, which were too high for students to afford, as compared to joining sports. Many opted to stay away from music programmes and joined other activities/programmes that were less expensive.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative methodology embedded in a predictive-correlational research design. The design focused on identifying from the given variables the one that would positively predict the outcomes (Rippy, 2014). Socio-cultural factors are this study's predictor variables. Therefore, a prediction-correlation design was used to observe the relationships predictor variables have among themselves, and whether there were any significant relationships and differences with participation in music education.

Sample Size

Respondents of the study were enrolled students in their respective schools. One high school from each of the Kalomo, Monze, and Livingstone districts of Zambia was purposively selected and included in this study. A total of 289 respondents were used, distributed as follows: Kalomo high (99), Monze high (91), and Linda high (99).

Sampling Procedure

Schools were sampled using Purposive Sampling based on a criterion that they offer relatively good music programmes. Stratified Random Sampling was used to sample the respondents with grade levels 10, 11, and 12 used as strata. The formula $n_h = (N_h/N) n$ (Berman, 2015) was utilised to calculate the sample sizes for the pilot and final studies based on the gender proportions. The formula involves dividing the total number of girls or boys (N_h) by the total (N) and then multiplying it by the desired sample size (n). Using this formula, individual total numbers of girls and boys were computed for each grade level. A sample size of 50 was determined for the pilot study, and a sample size of 100 was determined for the final study. To ensure representation from each gender in each grade level, Simple Random Sampling was employed. This involved randomly selecting 50 participants for the pilot study and 100 participants for the final study from each gender group across the different grade levels. The sampling process was conducted within each school, considering the strata defined by gender.

Data Collection Techniques

This study was conducted using questionnaires as an instrument for collecting data. It was purely a quantitative study using self-constructed closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were chosen because they are convenient and do not waste time (Battey, 2015).

Validity and Reliability

The self-constructed questionnaire was subjected to content validation using seven experts. Reliability was achieved by subjecting the instrument to a pilot test using respondents outside the target sample (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

Data Analysis

The gathered data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The data consisted of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis involved calculating common measures of central tendency, such as the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, to describe the extent and perception of the participants. Inferential aspects aimed at establishing relationships and differences among the variables in students' participation in high school music programmes. It was determined through computing the correlation coefficient, Pearson r , t -test, and ANOVA. To assess errors and significance, a level of significance of 5% was utilised, assuming a normal distribution of the sample (Kalla, 2009). The analysis facilitated a comprehensive examination of the data, providing insights into the socio-cultural factors influencing students' participation in music programmes at the high school level.

Ethical Consideration

Permission from school authorities was sought before conducting the study. Respondents were informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis and that they could withdraw from the study at any point in the research. Their identities were also kept anonymous to maintain confidentiality.

Findings and Discussion

This section is about the findings of the study and the interpretation of the quantitative data collected through a self-constructed questionnaire. Research objectives were used as a guide to presentation and discussion.

Objective 1: To determine respondents' perceptions of the extent of socio-cultural factors—namely music culture, church or denominational influence, peer influence in music, family support, and the perceived social benefits of music.

This was the first objective, which looked at factors of the society that greatly impact the choice processes and biases of high school students. All the dimensions here were assigned responses on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

Music Culture

This section presents a component of socio-cultural factors. A total of 10 items were used, as can be seen in the summary of findings in Table 1. All items were stated in the positive, hence needing no reverse coding. The respondents' perception of music culture was open ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.53$).

Table 1

Music Culture (N=289)

No.	Items	Mean	SD	Scaled Response	Interpretation
4.	Dancing is not only for women and girls in our culture	3.26	0.82	Agree	Open
9.	There are a lot of musical shows and dances involving various cultures in my society	3.12	0.82	Agree	Open
2.	Dancing is not only for the specially trained in my culture	3.11	0.78	Agree	Open
10.	My culture allows singing traditional songs with friends at school	3.09	0.79	Agree	Open
8.	Learning music from other cultures is allowed	3.06	0.78	Agree	Open
6.	Learning traditional songs at school is allowed by my traditional practices and customs	3.01	0.79	Agree	Open
7.	Traditional practices and customs in my culture allow learning dances at school	2.96	0.76	Agree	Open
3.	My culture allows learning dances from other cultures	2.87	0.88	Agree	Open
1.	I can perform a dance from my culture with anyone	2.69	1.05	Agree	Open
5.	My culture allows mixing music, traditional practices, and customs of other cultures	2.56	1.01	Agree	Open
Music Culture Overall		2.97	0.53	Agree	Open

Note: 3.5-4.0=Very Open, 2.5-3.49=Open, 1.5-2.49=Restrictive and 1.0-1.49=Very Restrictive

From Table 1, the highest mean shows that the respondents *agreed* that dances in their culture are not only for women and girls, but for all genders ($M = 3.26$). Implying that, dances are open for learning by anyone in this culture. It should have been followed by a large number of respondents participating in folk dance. However, this is not the case as seen in the findings above. The results here are contrasted with what Nadine (2013) in which there is a perceived

notion in society that dances are for women and girls. This, she says, can be seen in the way boys and girls are sired.

Church/Denomination's Influence

This dimension refers to the beliefs that a student has, which are a result of the denomination's doctrinal teaching experienced through the agent of the church and his/her parents. To measure it adequately, 12 items were assigned. Results indicate that respondents' perception of the church's influence is restrictive ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 0.48$). This implies that the church's teachings regulate the behavior of the respondents in church, in public, at home, and at school. Furthermore, the respondents disagree that the church allows them to participate in traditional dance at home ($M = 2.25$) and at school ($M = 2.39$). The implication here is that church teachings restrict participation in folk dance both at home and school. This has a direct influence, especially on folk dances at school. This finding is corroborated by the study of Mumpuka (2009) in Zambia, who found that the most shunned music programme in high school was traditional dance.

Peer Influence

This dimension refers to the force that attaches a student to friends. It controls the way a student behaves, makes decisions, and makes choices in school music programmes. To measure it, 9 items were used. The respondents' perception of peer influence is *strong* ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.58$). See Table 2 below for a summary of findings.

Table 2

Peer Influence in Music (N=289)

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Scaled Response	Interpretation
1.	I value the opinion of my friends about learning music	2.83	0.87	Agree	Strong
7.	My friends tell me that I am good and have a talent for music	2.81	0.97	Agree	Strong
2.	I spend most of my time listening to music with my friends	2.75	0.91	Agree	Strong
6.	My friends share music books or videos with me	2.71	0.89	Agree	Strong
4.	I play musical instruments with my friends	2.64	0.90	Agree	Strong
5.	I mention music as a career with my friends	2.63	0.93	Agree	Strong
3.	My friends suggest and select the music we listen to	2.60	0.93	Agree	Strong
8.	I go to concerts and music festivals/shows with my friends.	2.50	0.95	Agree	Strong
9.	My friends come to support me when I am having a show or performance	2.50	0.99	Agree	Strong
Peer influence Overall		2.66	0.58	Agree	Strong

Note: 3.5-4.0=Very strong, 2.5-3.49=Strong, 1.5-2.49=Weak and 1.0-1.49=Very weak

Studies by Siebenelar (2006), Klonowski (2009), and Cook (2013) report that peer influence has a greater impact on students' participation in music programmes. The majority of students, 66%, surveyed were either in ensembles or music class because friends were found there. This report confirms findings of this study where respondents agree that they value the opinion of their friends about learning music ($M = 2.83$), are told that they are good at music ($M = 2.81$) and listen to music with friends ($M = 2.75$).

Family Support

This refers to the orientation a student has gone through at home, which involves family background, the influence that parents, siblings, and other members of the family have had on the student. Furthermore, it includes motivation through encouragement by virtue of word of mouth or through monetary support for buying a musical instrument or paying for music tuition for in-school or outside school music studies.

To measure this variable adequately, eight questions were used. The perception of respondents regarding family support is shown to be strong ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 0.64$). This implies that the family plays its role of encouraging the respondents to participate in music programmes. The result is similar to Wai-Chung (2011), whose respondents' perception of parental support in music in Hong Kong was found to be strong as well.

Table 3

Family Support (N=289)

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Scaled Response	Interpretation
4.	My family members enjoy listening to music	3.21	0.81	Agree	Strong
2.	Some members of my family sing	3.07	0.88	Agree	Strong
3.	Some members of my family play musical instruments	2.84	0.95	Agree	Strong
6.	I sing with my family	2.76	0.96	Agree	Strong
1.	I go to music concerts with my family members	2.36	1.03	Disagree	Weak
5.	My family owns a musical instrument	2.30	0.97	Disagree	Weak
7.	I play musical instruments with my family	2.26	0.94	Disagree	Weak
8.	My family members help me with my homework in music	2.20	0.98	disagree	Weak
Family support Overall		2.62	0.64	Agree	Strong

Note: 3.5-4.0=Very strong, 2.5-3.49=Strong, 1.5-2.49=Weak and 1.0-1.49=Very weak

Furthermore, Jeff (2009) and Klonowski (2009) in their studies support this finding, in their observation that family involvement and encouragement through deeds, word of mouth, and homework support, encourage students to take music and continue with it.

Social Benefits of Music

This refers to how society looks at music and its advantages in the social setup, especially where employment opportunities are concerned, as means for becoming famous and rich. To adequately measure it, seven items were assigned. The respondents perceive that the social benefits of music are strong ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.61$).

Table 4

Social Benefits of Music (N=289)

No.	Item	Mean	SD	Scaled Response	Interpretation
7	Music is a way of communication	3.21	0.85	Agree	Strong
6	Music is the best entertainment	3.20	0.87	Agree	Strong
5	Music helps pass cultural values from generation to generation	3.11	0.76	Agree	Strong
4	Learning to play an instrument encourages hard work	3.03	0.82	Agree	Strong
3	Music enhances my ability to learn many languages	3.01	0.81	Agree	Strong
1	I will be famous if I take music studies	2.89	0.91	Agree	Strong
2	Music is a career where I can get rich fast	2.46	0.97	Disagree	Weak
Social benefits of music overall		2.99	0.61	Agree	Strong

Note: 3.5-4.0=Very strong, 2.5-3.49=Strong, 1.5-2.49=Weak and 1.0-1.49=Very weak

Results of Table 4 show that the respondents agree that music is a way of communication ($M = 3.21$), is the best entertainment ($M = 3.20$), and is a means to pass cultural values from one generation to another ($M = 3.11$). This constitutes the highest mean score recorded under this dimension. Through social commentary in music, knowledge of what is moral in society is noted and passed on to the next generations. The findings are consistent with the opinion poll by Judson (2015), where 83% of respondents acknowledged the importance of music as an effective way of communication. Further findings show that respondents agree that taking music will make them famous ($M = 2.89$) but recognise that there is no link between fame and becoming rich in music as a career ($M = 2.46$). A study by Olusoji in 2013 revealed that parents' perception about music as a career pathway was negative, a result consistent with this study.

Objective 2: To find out if there is any significant relationship between socio-cultural factors and students' participation in high school music programmes?

This section of the data interpretation discusses the relationship between socio-cultural factors and students' participation in high school music programmes

Data from Table 5 show that church influence, peer influence, family support, and social benefits of music are significantly and positively related to students' participation in high school music programmes.

Table 5

Relationship of Socio-Cultural Factors to Participation in Music Programmes

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	P	Interpretation
1. Music culture	.110	.062	Not significant
2. Church influence	.212**	.000	Significant
3. Peer influence	.314**	.000	Significant
4. Family support	.222**	.000	Significant
5. Social benefits of music	.165**	.005	Significant

**P < 0.001, two-tailed

This study found a strong positive correlation between church influence, peer influence, family support, and the social benefits of music when participating in high school music programmes. In all three instances except one, the hypothesis stating 'there is no significant relationship with socio-cultural factors and participation in high school music' was rejected. However, despite these positive influences, participation levels remained low. This suggests that other factors, such as restrictive church influence, may be impacting participation rates.

Objective 3: To ascertain whether there are any significant differences in participation in high school music programmes based on age, gender, enrolment in music classes, religious affiliation, denominational affiliation, family income, and source of income.

The section below, presents the moderator variables. Kruskal-Wallis H test was used for age, religious denomination, monthly income, and source of income. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for the gender comparison.

Age

Table 6 presents the Kruskal-Wallis H test results, which indicate that respondents aged 19 and above participated slightly more in high school music programmes, while those aged 16 had the least participation. Results, therefore, show that there exists a statistically significant difference in students' participation in high school music programmes when age is considered ($F(4,284) = 3.952, p = .004$).

Table 6*Students' Participation in Music Programmes when Age is Considered*

Age	N	Mean	SD	ANOVA	
				F(4,284)	p
15 and below	37	2.03	0.77	3.952	.004
16	42	1.61	0.57		
17	69	1.76	0.64		
18	75	2.00	0.77		
19 and above	66	2.10	0.82		

The implication of this is that, as the age of students increases, there is a likelihood that participation in music programmes will also increase. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states, “there is no significant difference in participation in high school music programmes when age is considered,” was rejected.

Gender

This section shows the difference in participation when gender is considered. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to measure the difference in participation in music programmes. Mann-Whitney U, also called the Wilcoxon test, is used when measuring unrelated variables. In the case of this study, the unrelated variables are males and females. The results are as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7*Participation in Music Programmes when Gender is Considered*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Female	128	1.81	0.63	-2.132	.034
Male	161	2.00	0.81		
Total	289				

As indicated by the data in Table 7 above, males had a higher mean ranking than females. There was a statistically significant difference in participation in terms of gender ($p = 0.034$). Implying that, males were slightly more involved in music programmes than females. The hypothesis stating ‘there is no significant difference in participation when moderator variables are considered’ was rejected.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant influence of socio-cultural factors on high school students’ participation in music programmes. While music culture was perceived openly, church influence remained restrictive. Peer influence, family support, and the social

benefits of music were found to strongly encourage participation. Age and gender also played significant roles, with older students and males participating more in music programmes. Despite positive correlations, overall participation levels were low, suggesting other factors, such as restrictive church influence, might hinder engagement. This comprehensive analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of socio-cultural impacts on students' musical involvement.

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