

Music-Based Stress Management for College Music Students: Research Protocol

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to outline a research protocol to determine the effectiveness of engaging with a YouTube channel in reducing the perceived stress of college music students. Due to the demanding nature of their degree, music students are at risk for depression, anxiety and burnout. The channel will offer accessible, and research based guided music experiences in order to mitigate academic stress while offering students the opportunity to reflect and understand their emotional responses to stress.

This mixed method study will be evaluated by the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing 14 item scale (WEMWBS). As this is a research protocol no data is presently recorded. Once concluded, this research offers a way to assess the potential of online music experiences to supporting the mental health and well-being of college music students.

Key Words: Student Stress, Self-care practices, Music majors, Depression, Anxiety, Learning burnout, Mental well-being, Music Based Experiences, Mindfulness.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Defining Stress

Stress looks different for everyone but is ever present within each of our daily lives. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines “stress as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a challenging circumstance” ([WHO], 2023, What is stress? section, para. 1). The WHO (2023) notes that the importance of understanding coping mechanisms and personal resilience is key to recognizing the complexities of our daily lives and the presence of stress. The American Psychological Association ([APA], 2018) defines stress as “the physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body” (para. 1). Both the WHO (2023) and APA (2018) note that stress can influence how our mind and body function. This can lead to psychological and physical disorders or diseases, which impact quality of life. Stress can impact our mental, emotional, and physical well-being, it is manifested in a variety of physiological and psychological symptoms such as negative emotions, sweating, fidgeting, dry mouth, palpitations and accelerated speech (APA, 2018). Stress affects our daily lives.

Schneiderman et al. (2005) describe stress as a threat to homeostasis. Homeostasis is defined as “a self-regulating process by which biological systems maintain stability while adjusting to changing external conditions” (Billman, 2020, p. 2). Psychological, biological, and psychosocial factors influence the response to stress and its effect on overall health. Additionally, biological vulnerabilities may further lead to a disease, especially if an individual has poor coping skills and inadequate psychosocial resources (Schneiderman et al., 2005). Understanding coping mechanisms and personal resilience is key to recognizing the complexities

of our daily lives and the presence of stress (WHO, 2023). Stress is a multifaceted phenomenon that impacts health. It is important for individuals to practice behaviors that support health to mitigate the negative impact of stress, including psychosocial interventions (Schneiderman et al., 2005).

Stress and College Students

College students face a set of unique challenges that may impact their academic performance and overall health. The American College Health Association National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) collects precise data about college students' overall health and wellness and how it affects their overall performance. The NCHA (2023) found that 85.3% of undergraduate students would categorize their health as good, very good, or excellent. However, stress impacted the academic performance of 43.4% of the surveyed individuals (NCHA, 2023). Survey findings identified anxiety, depression, and stress as having the highest negative impact on students' academic performance. Yet only 36.6% of the students surveyed reported utilizing mental health services provided to them by the institution or hometown providers (NCHA, 2023). Support services offered by academic institutions seem to be underutilized (e.g. Demyttenaere, et al., 2004).

Results from the 2023 ACHA-NCHA identified the following impediments to academic performance: career, finances, procrastination, faculty, family, intimate relationships, roommate/housemate, peers, personal appearance, health of someone close to the respondent, death of a family member friend or someone close to the respondent, bullying, cyberbullying, hazing, micro aggression, sexual harassment, discrimination, chronic diagnoses, and other mental health challenges and diagnosis (ACHA-NCHA, 2023). These impediments contribute to those suggested by Beiter et al. (2015) including “pressure to succeed, post-graduation plans,

financial concerns, quality of sleep, relationship with friends, relationship with family, overall health, body image, and self-esteem" (p. 94). Additionally, they noted that upperclassmen had higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression when compared to underclassmen and individuals who lived off campus had higher stress, anxiety, and depression than those who lived on campus (Beiter et al., 2015).

The Effects of Stress on College Students' Mental Health.

Stress places students at risk for depression, anxiety, and burnout. In part, this may be related to the pressure of academic demands which can be overwhelming at times. Increased stress decreases the quality of academic life, disrupts sleep patterns, contributes to poor eating habits, and decreases academic performance of all students (Beiter et al., 2015; Khan et al. 2013). Recognizing the nuances of emotional and psychological stress within the academic setting can better prepare students for what is to come.

Depressive mood. Stress and its impacts are reflected in a variety of ways within the college setting, one being depressive symptoms. Saleh et al. (2017) surveyed 483 Persian college students perceived stress, self-esteem, self-efficacy, optimism, wellbeing, and psychological distress. Responses indicated high levels of perceived stress and low protecting factors, such as self-esteem, optimism and self-efficacy, with 79.3% of participants reporting symptoms of depression (Saleh et al., 2017). Another study conducted by Hildebrandt et al. (2012) utilized the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale to determine the health strain and work attitudes of first year instrumental music education students in three Switzerland universities. Their results indicated a positive relationship between the strain of academic requirements and feelings of depression (Hildebrandt et al., 2012). The findings of Saleh et al. (2017) and Hildebrandt et al.

(2012) indicate that the mental well-being of college students is compromised by the presence of stress.

Anxiety is the “apprehension and somatic symptoms of tension in which an individual anticipates impending danger, catastrophe, or misfortune” ([APA], 2018, para. 1). At the beginning of the semester, students are presented with syllabi containing the semesters’ tasks for several classes. The presentation of this information may overwhelm students leading to feelings of anxiety, including tense muscles, fast breathing, and increased heart rate, "anxiety is considered a future-oriented, long-acting response broadly focused on a diffuse threat” ([APA], 2018 para. 1). Moreover, anxiety may align with students who worry about the outcome of the semester and the events of the future. This may last for a few weeks or the entire semester, due to the overwhelming amount of work and tasks expected of students. Acute stressors, such as approaching deadlines or heavy workloads, may cause anxiety.

Burnout. Many students are at risk of learning burnout, which relates to the loss of interest in one's studies due to the challenges of academic stress and affects the way students prepare assignments and respond to feedback (e.g. Gong et al., 2023). Chen et al. (2023) suggests that students with higher level of academic adaptability are able to regulate their emotions more efficiently and effectively when responding to stress. However, students who are unable to adapt to the stress of college life are more likely to develop learning burnout (Özhan, 2021; Wang & Wu, 2022) and may have lower personal accomplishment (Li et al., 2021). By understanding the stress of students and how each person responds, educators can adapt and incorporate learning methods and make self-care resources accessible to students.

Stress and Undergraduate Music Students

Many factors contribute to a music student's perceived level of stress, including academic and personal demands. Potential personal demands include maintaining a work life balance and prioritizing relationships with relatives and friends. Music students have additional academic demands compared to non-music majors; they are often enrolled in 16 or more credits per semester in addition to required participation in private lessons and multiple ensembles (e.g. Payne et al., 2020).

Due to these academic demands, music students seem to face unique challenges along their academic path which puts them at an increased risk for mental health disorders (Vaag et al., 2021). Music majors exhibit a 7.2% higher prevalence of depression and anxiety symptoms compared to the general student population (Vaag et al., 2021). Further, Payne (2023) indicated that of the 1,029 music students surveyed, 62% reported moderate or severe anxiety and 51% moderate or severe depression, along with elevated stress levels. Further analysis of the data found that stress had a significant relationship to depression and anxiety (Payne, 2023). These studies indicate that the stress of academic responsibilities puts music students at an increased risk for mental health disorders.

Barriers to Stress Relief

Students struggle with accessing and utilizing college-based resources that diminish stress (Dunley & Papadopoulos, 2019; Marsh & Wilcoxon, 2015). Dunley and Papadopoulos (2019) completed a scoping review of barriers to help-seeking in postsecondary students struggling with mental health issues. Their collection of articles indicated that institutional barriers such as communication issues, inadequate services, insurance coverage, sociocultural factors, awareness, symptoms of psychological distress, not feeling the need for services, and

stigma hindered them from utilizing mental health services (Dunley & Papadopoulos, 2019). Marsh and Wilcoxon (2015) sent out a survey to 105 students relating to barriers in help-seeking behavior among psychologically distressed college students and found that only ten percent of students utilized mental health services. Their results showed that college students are not engaging with mental health services because they are concerned with the cost of services and the stigma around receiving such services (Marsh and Wilcoxon, 2015). While many colleges offer mental health and counseling related services, there seems to be an underutilization of available resources (Dunley & Papadopoulos, 2019; March & Wilcoxon, 2015).

Higher levels of stress can impact how much time and effort a college student may devote to self-care. Students are under pressure to complete degree requirements, which may leave them with limited time to effectively regulate their stress responses. These time constraints could be potential barriers to planning and incorporating self-care strategies into their daily routines (Kuebel, 2019; Kunimura, 2016; Yzer & Gilasevitch 2019).

Students may not think they need to engage in self-care; however, this lack of self-perception may lead to lower academic performance (Yamada et al., 2014). In order to understand/explore the role that peer support plays in medical students' academic performance and perception of psychological distress, Yamada et al. (2014) surveyed 138 international English-educated students in the Czech Republic. Respondents reported high levels of psychological distress and poor academic self-perception. Yamada et al. (2014) suggested that lack of socialization and peer support may account for these results, and that support groups to promote social relationships "may interrupt the vicious cycle of psychological distress" (Yamada et al., 2014, p.263).

The lack of personal time and stigma around mental health treatment are also barriers to engaging in self-care (Czyz et al., 2013; Yzer & Gilasevitch, 2019). To determine the barriers faced by students, Czyz et al. (2013) sought out students who screened positive for increased risk of suicide. Recruitment drew from an online program called the “Students’ e-Bridge to Treatment or eBridge” (p. 400) from September 2010 through December 2011. Identified students were then invited to participate in the study if they indicated they had two of the following risk factors; (1) current suicidal ideation, (2) history of suicide attempt, (3) current depression, and (4) current alcohol abuse. and did not seek out mental health services. One hundred sixty-five students responded to the online survey, which contained open-ended questions related to the reasons they did not seek mental health services. Results suggest respondents did not seek out mental health services for the following reasons: (1) their problems not being a big deal, (2) lack of time, (3) preference for self-management of problems, (4) seeking out service of family and friends, (5) access to services, (6) stigma around discussing problems, (7) negative experiences, and (8) doubt service would help (Czyz et al., 2013). Yzer and Gilasevitch (2019) surveyed 53 students to determine their beliefs regarding seeking help for depression. Survey results concluded that students did not seek mental health treatment due to doubts of efficacy, support from others, stigma, and lack of time (Yzer & Gilasevitch, 2019).

An overview of the literature indicates that lack of time is the most common reason cited for not seeking out support for mental health issues. Changes in academic structures are necessary, including reviewing overall course schedules to build in time for students to participate in support groups or attend mental health counseling sessions. Advisors should work with students to develop plans of study that will accommodate their mental health needs as well as allow them to make academic progress.

There are many factors that contribute to a student's stress. As mentioned above, these stressors can have a negative impact on students' mental health and overall academic performance. Despite this need, there is limited research on stress management programs available to university students. Therefore, the purpose of this research protocol is to offer students a creative way to engage with music in order to mitigate feelings of academic stress.

Chapter Two

Literature review

Music Students and Stress

Majoring in music is time-consuming and competitive (Koops & Kuebel, 2019). Music majors are expected to spend several hours a day in the practice room working on technique, ensemble music, and lesson requirements in addition to fulfilling requirements for other courses. The competition begins during the college application process. The students are exposed to a rigorous selection process based on their skill and university requirements. Once accepted, students are expected to keep up with course work and compete for seats in selective ensembles. This time and dedication may cause students to feel stressed.

Jääskeläinen et al. (2020) aimed to determine the relationship between perceived stress and a music student's workload and livelihood. One hundred fifty-five music students from 5 institutions located in either Finland or the United Kingdom, were asked to complete a researcher created survey titled the Workload, Stress and Coping questionnaire (WSC) (Jääskeläinen et al., 2020). Twenty-nine of the original 155 participants also agreed to complete a semi-structured interview. After integrating the qualitative and quantitative data the results indicated that perceived workload is a strong predictor of stress (Jääskeläinen et al., 2020). Results from this study suggest that the academic demands respondents faced correlated to the amount of stress they were under. Further, they indicated that unrelated work, such as financial matters, living arrangements, and income increased their perception of stress. Interestingly, the additional work directly related to music study did not influence their perceived stress. This may suggest that music students enjoy music related activities which may mitigate their stress perception. The

results of this study help explain all the individual nuances music students face and suggest that music programs evaluate the individual reasons music students are feeling stressed.

Koops and Kuebel (2021) sought to collect music student's perceived levels of mental health. These included depression, anxiety, and stress levels, as well as understanding their mental health literacy. The researchers looked at music students ages 18-23 across 11 schools whose institutions were represented by the 6 regions of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). A survey was designed that included demographic information; a researcher created questionnaire, along with the short form of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21). Two hundred fifty-two students completed some or all of the survey. Thus, researchers were unable to make broad generalizations but rather gather data on the mental health of students enrolled in a music program and compare it to other published generalizations (Koops and Kuebel, 2021). Music education and music performance students reported higher levels of mental distress as compared to normal rates for 20–29-year-olds established in the DASS manual (Koops & Kuebel, 2021). Many of the students complained about how hard they have to work. This concept is not a new idea. Conway et al. (2010), sought to explore how instrumental music education students describe their experiences. Thirty-four students consisting of sophomores, juniors, and seniors from a Midwestern University responded to a two-item open-ended questionnaire, twelve of which were selected for an individual follow up interview. Lastly, six students were able to attend a focus group where the researchers facilitated a discussion based on the responses to the questionnaire. Researchers kept journals of the student's responses and held meetings to discuss and code the information. Their results highlighted the feelings and stressors faced by students. The student responses brought to light how music education majors feel different compared to others pursuing a music degree (Conway et al., 2010). Participants felt isolated from other musicians, such as performance majors, since their

focus was on “teaching and interacting with kids” (Conway et al., 2010, p. 266) and not solely on being in numerous ensembles. Additionally, time management appeared to be a common challenge among the participants, as it was the main topic of the focus group (Conway et al., 2010). Participants mentioned trying to balance academic requirements with personal and social needs. It was a challenge for students to determine when to practice and when to eat or sleep (Conway et al., 2010). Their findings are similar to those of Koops & Kuebel (2021), as they both reported that pursuing a music degree is “an inordinate amount of work” (Conway et al., 2010, p. 266). Further, respondents to Conway et al. (2010) reported that music degree requirements caused them significant amounts of stress, anxiety, and depression. Music education students felt their accomplishments and work was overlooked compared to music performance students. This study highlights the perceived competition and separation among music degree paths. Conway et al. (2010) identified common concerns held by music education students as being related to time management and the need to sacrifice individual development in order to complete degree requirements. These studies bring awareness to the demanding nature of a music degree. The workload seems to affect students' perceived stress and overall well-being.

Mental Health Concerns in Music Students

Students who decide to pursue a music degree may not fully understand the impact the rigor of the degree may have on their mental health. Their passion for music may be hindered by the academic demands, the need for extensive practice time, and the expectation to perform at a high level. Life factors such as balancing personal with academic responsibilities, financial matters, and social relationships only add to the stress placed on music students. The ongoing stressors may lead to burnout, imposter syndrome, anxiety, and depression.

Burnout. Burnout is a physiological response to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or cynicism, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment or effectiveness (Bernhard, 2016; see also Kuebel, 2019). Time constraints, social-emotional challenges, job security, and the need for personal time are all associated with burnout (Bernhard, 2016, p. 146). Burnout is the result of working diligently under extended periods of physical or mental exertion when work may be too much to the point where stress and tension disrupt a person's wellbeing (APA, 2018).

Bernhard (2007) completed a study comparing the burnout rate among music majors based on academic levels and instrument type. This same study was replicated in 2010 in order to compare previous levels of burnout to the levels perceived by a new set of students. Six hundred and three undergraduate and graduate music majors were asked to complete a "Demographic Data Form" (DDF) and the "College Student Survey" (CSS). Two hundred and twenty-nine students responded, one hundred and fifty-eight were music education majors and seventy-one were in the process of obtaining a performance, composition, sound recording, or music business degree. The results indicated that on average participants had high levels of emotional exhaustion, moderate levels of depersonalization, and moderate levels of personal accomplishment (Bernhard, 2010, p. 37), similar findings to those of the original study in 2007. Further, those not receiving an education degree had higher levels of burnout (Bernhard, 2010). These results indicate that the nuances of a specific degree may influence the level of burnout an individual feels. Graduate level students felt less burnout than undergraduate students, researchers suggested that undergraduate curricula are stricter in nature due to government and accrediting agencies (Bernhard, 2010). Results of the 2010 replication study produced similar results to the original research published in 2007 except for two areas. One being that hours of exercise each week was weakly correlated with burnout symptoms and the second being ensemble participation did not correlate with perceived burnout. The researcher pointed out that in between

studies a decision was made to award students' credit for participation in ensembles. He posited that the decrease in burnout may be related to receiving credit for ensemble participation (Bernhard, 2010). The idea of providing credit where credit is due is not a new concept, and it is possible that if a music student's credits matched the amount of time and energy put into the class, their perceived level of burnout would decrease (Bernhard, 2010). However, Moore and Wilhelm (2019), point out that it is common for the credit hours assigned within a music degree to not accurately represent the actual amount of time dedicated to the course. Bernhard's (2010) study results suggest that students are vulnerable to burnout due to the requirements of their degree. Music programs foster high-stress environments, which can be a significant factor of burnout.

Learning burnout, also called academic burnout, education burnout, or school burnout, is defined as “the mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress, often tied to academic pressures” (Weslowski, 2024, para. 1). It consists of exhaustion at school, cynicism toward the meaning of school, and sense of inadequacy at school (Salmela-Aro et al., 2009). Learning burnout affects one's perception of stress and may cause music students to lose interest in their intended plan of study, lower motivation to complete assignments, and affect their ability to concentrate, make decisions, and problem-solve (Salmela-Aro et al., 2009) This may reduce students' sense of accomplishment. The lengthy periods of stress may cause music students to experience symptoms of learning burnout. Despite the many effects learning burnout can have on music students, there is minimal research related to how learning burnout affects college music students.

Imposter Syndrome. The effect imposter feelings and demographic attributes have on music student's perceived burnout was investigated by Nápoles et al. 2023. As described by the National Institute of Health (NIH) “imposter syndrome (IS) is a behavioral health phenomenon

described as self-doubt of intellect, skills, or accomplishments among high-achieving individuals” (Huecker et al., 2023). One hundred forty-three music students from 3 large American universities were invited to participate in the study conducted by Nápoles et al., (2023). Students were asked to complete a demographic survey, the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey for Students (MBI-GSS), and the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) (Nápoles et al., 2023). Results indicated that imposter feelings significantly predicted burnout (Nápoles et al., 2023). Students who are constantly worried about proving themselves may develop burnout. Burnout can develop after long periods of stress (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018, para.1). Further, students who feel inadequate for long periods of time may deplete their emotional and psychological resources, increasing their perception of burnout. The results presented by Nápoles et al. (2023) highlight the need to address imposter symptoms to help alleviate perceived burnout and stress.

Music students are placed in a unique position. Many of them may feel the effects of imposter syndrome due to the competitive, comparative, and isolating nature of their degree. Imposter syndrome can lead to a lower sense of accomplishment leading students to feel burnt out. Since burnout can be caused by chronic stress, and music students are likely to develop burnout, it is important to examine the factors that increase a music student's stress. In turn this will help foster a healthier learning environment and offer students the opportunity to reflect on their tendencies in order to improve their overall wellbeing.

Depression and Anxiety. Kegelaers et al. (2021) use a cross-sectional survey to compare the stress, mental health, and resilience of 28 professional musicians and 36 music students in the Netherlands. Music students were in their third year of a bachelor's program, or the first year of their master's program at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. Professional musicians were members of “international orchestras in the Netherlands, as well as academy members of another

internationally renowned professional orchestra” (Kegelaers et al., 2021, p. 1275). All participants were asked to 1) complete both the 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC-10); 2) record their hours of practice per week, 3) answer four statements regarding their physical health and health promoting behaviors, and 4) respond to general demographic questions. Results indicated that sixty-one percent of music students enrolled in a classical music degree had symptoms of depression/anxiety, while only 39.3% of professional musicians indicated such symptoms (Kegelaers et al., 2021). This suggests that the cause of depression and anxiety within the university setting is due to the requirements and expectations placed on students by their degree, and not due to the act of music making alone. Kegelaers et al. (2021) also found that individuals with higher psychological resilience, the ability to bounce back from stress, had fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety. This suggests that equipping students with resilience building skills, their perceived mental health may improve.

Wristen (2013) set out to compare the anxiety and depression rates and treatment rates of university music students to others university students. Two hundred eighty-seven students enrolled in a music degree program, at a large university in the United States, were asked to respond to a survey during their 4th weekly convocation hour. A researcher developed survey asked students about several mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, obsessive–compulsive disorder, and phobia, based on criteria from the DSM-IV (Wristen, 2013). The students were also asked to reflect on the symptoms they had over the past 12 months as well as their treatment for each condition (Wristen, 2013). The researcher states that's study focus shifted to anxiety, depression and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) after finding that the prevalence of treated and untreated bipolar disorder, obsessive–compulsive disorder, and phobia were negligible. Results indicated that 11.98 % of respondents experienced

symptoms of depression, with 9% of those indicating they never sought treatment. Symptoms related to anxiety were experienced by 16.49% of respondents with 11.23% of those indicating they did not seek treatment. Wristen (2013) also found that the prevalence of GAD among participants was 8.4%. These rates of depression and anxiety are similar to those reported in other studies. Further, “23.2% reported musical practice and performance negatively affected their mental health; 20.6% reported that the impact was neutral; and 56.2% reported positive impact of mental health on their music making” (Wristen, 2013, p. 25). These results suggest that mental health conditions are prevalent among those who responded with, and some of the respondents are not seeking out the treatment needed. These conditions affected the students' academic work, suggesting continued research on the subject.

Chronic periods of stress may lead to symptoms of burnout, imposter syndrome, anxiety and depression. Stressful situations can lead students to doubt themselves causing maladaptive coping mechanisms and a decreased mental well-being. Students may lose interest in completing assignments overtime and develop learning burnout. This is not due to the music aspect of a music degree, but research has made it clear it is due to the amount of work required for a music degree. With a lower sense of accomplishment students may develop anxiety and depression simply because they do not feel that they are doing enough. Therefore, addressing the causes of stress may help university students find supportive ways to mitigate stress while fostering a healthier balanced environment.

Self-Care

There are many definitions of self-care presented within the academic, healthcare and wellness communities. Self-care can be defined as “the multidimensional, multifaceted process of purposeful engagement in strategies that promote healthy functioning and enhance well-

being" (Godfrey, 2011, p. 11; see also Dorociak et al., 2017). Self-care is the recognition of self and one's needs. It involves actively engaging in activities that promote personal wellbeing in all its facets.

McConkey & Kuebel (2022) sought to identify the coping strategies used by music students throughout the academic year and understand the "role emotional competency skills manifest within the stress management strategies used" (p.324). They conducted interviews among 8 junior and senior music education majors across 2 universities. Their research is framed around Saarni's model of emotional competence. Saarni (1999) defined Emotional competence as "the demonstration of self-efficacy in emotion-eliciting social transactions" (p. 68). Within Saarni's model there are 8 skills of emotional competence: (1) awareness of one's own emotions; (2) the ability to discern and understand others' emotions; (3) the ability to use the vocabulary of emotion and expression; (4) the capacity for empathetic involvement; (5) the ability to differentiate internal subjective emotional experience from external emotional expression or dissemblance; (6) the capacity for adaptive coping with aversive emotions and distressing circumstances; (7) awareness of emotional communication within relationships, or within the nature of a relationship; and (8) the capacity for emotional self-efficacy. This model helped the researchers determine stress and coping skills as they relate to the student's emotions.

Researchers selected a diverse group of 8 people in their junior or senior year of a music education or music performance degree from western and southern mid-sized public universities (McConkey & Kuebel, 2022). The study took place over 13 weeks and invited students to partake in two focus groups on weeks 4 and 13, interviews took place on weeks 8 and 12, and participants journaled weeks 4-13 to identify stressful situations and coping strategies (McConkey & Kuebel, 2022). Results from the interviews and review of journals suggested that the students felt overwhelmed with the amount of work and limited time they had to complete it,

Further, students mentioned that course work for 0-1 credit classes did not match the actual amount of work asked of them (McConkey & Kuebel, 2022). Students were always busy, leading them to be overworked and overstressed. In relation to Saarni's model, the researchers found that music students' need to improve their emotional competence skills (McConkey & Kuebel, 2022). Simply, students tend to focus on the stressors themselves rather than the emotional impact they have on one's mental health.

The self-care activities of music therapy students are beginning to be explored, to date there are only 3 studies that investigate this topic. Moore and Wilhelm (2019) surveyed music therapy students and found that social forms of self-care such as talking with friends and family or attending social events outside of classwork are used more frequently than those that promote a school-life balance or physical health. The authors suggest this is due to lack of time to complete other practices and the social nature of being on a college campus. Moore and Wilhelm conducted another survey in 2023 asking music therapy students from various degree levels to investigate their perspectives on self-care definitions and common self-care practices. Three hundred and forty four participants indicated the participated in the following self-care activities “(1) media engagement; (2) music engagement; (3) resting/ taking a break; (4) spiritual/religious/contemplative; (5) physical activity; (6) creative/recreational activity; (7) pampering/hygiene; (8) organizing/planning; (9) food/beverage/nourishment; and (10) Therapy/counseling/processing” (Moore & Wilhelm, 2023, p. 358).

Moore and Wilhelm (2019) found the more perceived stress a music therapy student was under, the less self-care strategies they sought out. Music therapy students reported that they do not have enough information or education related to self-care and its outcomes (Moore & Wilhelm, 2019). Additionally, students would rather engage in preferred self-care rather than prescribed strategies by professors (Moore & Wilhelm, 2019). It appears that the additional

requests to partake in a prescribed self-care task only adds to the academic stress. Further, Moore and Wilhelm (2023) found that music therapy students often associate self-care with the “taking”, “making” and “giving” of time to an additional task (p. 360). This conceptualization of self-care offers an explanation of how students understand and practice self-care.

Boeser & Silverman (2024) sought to explore how music therapy students across four regions of the AMTA implement self-care strategies. To do this they set up semi-structured interviews with 9 different students who were in their 4th year of undergraduate music therapy work. (Boeser & Silverman, 2024). Students were asked to discuss the causes of their stress and the self-care strategies they used. One of the main stressors students faced was the amount of work they had, however they used self-care proactively, and preventively in dealing with such stress (Boeser & Silverman, 2024). Self-care activities included connection with friends and family, physical activity, sleeping, meal preparation, as well as journaling and making time for self-reflection. Participants described self-care as a “recharge”, a time to listen to yourself and a period of reflection (Boeser & Silverman, 2024). The data analysis yielded 6 themes: (1) Recognizing the need to shift to intentional self-care; (2) Developing an awareness of how and when to use self-care strategies; (3) Identifying specific strategies to support the self-care journey; (4) Circumstances impacting self-care; (5) Adjusting music as a self-care strategy; and (6) Advice for music therapy students and professors (Boeser & Silverman, 2024). These findings suggest the need for individualized self-care plans that provide students with the necessary time to engage in meaningful experiences. Furthermore, the recent interest in the self-care strategies of music therapy students will help build the foundation for future research.

Kuebel (2019) describes the relationship between self-care and stress reduction. She mentions that creating a self-care plan can help manage negative experiences during a music students' academic program (Kuebel, 2019). Self-care can help decrease stress and build

resilience. When stress is effectively managed students perform better (Khan et al., 2013). Additionally, learning personal tendencies and coping strategies can help students transition into professional life with ease (Kuebel, 2019). However, there seems to be limited education on self-care within the academic setting. There is a paucity of research related to the self-care practices of music students. This gap in research highlights the need for more interest and research in order to comprehensively understand the challenges and self-care practices of music students.

Self-care is the conscious act of taking care of an individual's well-being (Martínez et al., 2021). It appears that students are aware of the immediate stressors in front of them, unfortunately they do not have the time or resources to invest into fully immersing themselves in productive and personal self-care activities. Students are engaging in physical acts of self-care rather than emotional forms. While momentary de-stressing activities may be helpful, internal and reflective forms may provide students with effective coping strategies that can be generalized into other areas of life. Exploring various self-care strategies in order to address the diversity among music students is needed.

Creative Approaches to Stress Management

The research cited above supports the notion that music students experience stress which can lead to burnout, depression, and anxiety. Creative arts therapies utilize various forms of creative experiences such as art, dance, music, and drama in order to meet the needs of people they serve. These therapies offer a holding space for individuals to create and communicate in non-verbal ways in order to support mental, emotional, and physical healing. Creative art therapists intentionally utilize arts-based methods and creative processes that enhance one's ability and overall wellness (National Coalition of Creative Arts Therapies Associations [NCCATA], n.d.). Trained professionals utilize therapeutic relationships and artistic mediums,

such as art, dance, music and drama, in order to promote change. However, there is a paucity of research related to nonpharmacological stress management interventions for college students.

Hu et al. (2020) sought to understand the effect light painting, a creative art intervention, had on the cognitive and social-emotional wellbeing of college students. Light painting, also called light drawing, or light art performance photography, is a form of creative photography that takes place in a dark room and involves the one “painter” and one photographer. A long exposure photograph is taken when either a light source moves in frame by the painter, or the camera moves as the light is exposed. At a Chinese University, Hu et al. (2020) set up a control and experimental group that each comprised 30 college students. Prior to the start of the experience all participants were asked to complete The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) as well as a spatial orientation task that took place using psychology software tools (Hu et al., 2020). The two groups meet for five one-hour sessions every other night for 2 weeks. While the experiential group met in the recreation center, the control group was in a classroom completing individual study. After completion of the posttest, researchers distributed a survey using Likert type scales, asking participants to reflect on their experiences (Hu et al., 2020). The results indicated that members who partook in light painting had improved special orientation as well as imagination, creativity, emotional and mental health and social skills than those who competed independent learning tasks (Hu et al., 2020). Furthermore, the follow up survey indicated that light painting improved participants' mood, reduced their perception of stress and made them feel relaxed (Hu et al., 2020).

Art therapy is a mental health profession that utilizes art based and creative experience to improve the wellbeing of an individual (American Art Therapy Association [AATA], 2017). Van Lith et al. (2022), sought to compare Mindfulness-based Art Therapy (MBAT) and a neutral clay task (NCT) in improving the psychological and physiological impacts of stress and anxiety

among college students. Mindfulness-based Art Therapy (MBAT) involves incorporating yoga and other mindfulness techniques into art therapy (Van Lith et al., 2022). Twelve students were asked to participate in a series of semi-structured interviews as well as complete a survey consisting of the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item (GAD-7) and the Perceived Stress Scale PSS-10 before and after the sessions (Van Lith et al., 2022). All members were then randomly assigned to one of the two groups and given a ball of clay with materials to keep it wet in between modules. The seven participants in the MBAT group were asked to complete two “self-care challenges” a week for the course of 4 weeks (Van Lith et al., 2022). Fifteen-minute modules were made accessible via the campus provided learning management system, Canvas (Van Lith et al., 2022). The art therapy modules consisted of 5 minutes of yoga, or another mindfulness-based technique followed by 10 minutes of clay manipulation based on a corresponding prompt (Van Lith et al., 2022). The five individuals in the NCT group were given the same prompt, however, asked to simply manipulate the clay for 15 minutes. Post second interview all participants were asked to create a reflective art piece. Interviews indicated that students were stressed, felt isolated, had rigid schedules and mentioned that many of their peers also felt symptoms of burnout (Van Lith et al., 2022) Furthermore, self-care strategies were used in a negative way, such as sacrificing sleep to have a sense of “stillness” (Van Lith et al., 2022). After the creative clay experiences both groups noted decreased stress levels and brought awareness to self-care strategies and mindfulness techniques (Van Lith et al., 2022). Members in the MBAT group were able to specify the individual ways the experience helped them relax. They explained how the mind and body connection helped them become aware of stress, as well as a noted difference in their thinking style as it related to stress (Van Lith et al., 2022). Utilizing Art therapy rather than therapeutic art techniques seemed to help participants understand the importance of being mindful and allowing them to alleviate stress in a productive manner. This

program offered them the knowledge and awareness to make changes in their self-care habits moving forward.

It is clear the creative art experiences can help manage college students' perception of stress. There is a growing use of experiential music-based programs that offer an effective method of reducing stress in college students. Music therapy experiences can provide students with a basic understanding of how music can be used in self-care. Through this understanding students will be equipped to handle the stressors and transition in professional life. Research on music-based programs and music therapy for self-care for music students is limited. This suggests that further inquiry into music-based programs for the self-care of college students is needed.

Engagement in Music as a Self-Care Strategy

Engagement in music can offer students the opportunity to reflect on and manage their academic stress. Listening to music, engaging in music-making activities, and participating in musical expression can have a positive effect on an individual's overall well-being. Creating music with peers has the potential to promote wellness among music students.

De Witte et al. (2020) completed a systematic review and meta-analysis in order to summarize the effect of music interventions on stress. Their results indicated that engaging in music-related interventions whether provided by a music therapist, other health care professional or used for personal enjoyment decreased physiological and psychological stress. Huang et al. (2018) completed a meta-analysis seeking to determine the effectiveness of interventions such as, cognitive and behavioral techniques, mindfulness-based experiences, attention/perception modifications, and other self-help activities such as supplements, exercise, music, peer support and personalized feedback, in alleviating the symptoms caused by mental health challenges faced

by college students. Their results suggest that peer support and music therapy experiences were more effective than cognitive behavior therapy in managing symptoms of Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) (Huang et al., 2018).

Cheng and Wong (2023) sought to examine the efficacy of a Group-based Focus Music Imagery Program (GFMI), utilizing a two-arm randomized control trial. They hypothesized that GFMI would foster a positive mindset towards stress, instill self-compassion, and promote a sense of coherence and examined if GFMI alleviated perceived stress and anxiety among undergraduate students. The sixty-four participants were asked to complete the Chinese versions of Stress Mindset Measure (C-SMM), the Sense of Coherence Scale (C-SOC-13), the Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (C-SCS-SF), the Perceived Stress Scale (C-PSS-10), and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (C-GAD-7) on week one, six, and ten of the 10 week study. Weekly sessions lasted 120 minutes for six weeks and were led by a music therapist (Chen & Wong, 2023). These music therapy sessions allowed participants to “explore and understand the images that emerged during music listening session” (Chen & Wong, 2023, p. 4). The control group was led by two registered nurses, participants were asked to partake in breathing and stretching activities, guided imagery with music, and meditative drawing with background music. Participants in both the music therapy group and control group showed a decrease in perceived stress ($p=0.003$) and anxiety ($p=0.005$) over the 10 week period (Chen & Wong, 2023). However, only the participants in the therapy groups had reported a significant increase in their sense of coherence ($p=0.007$) and self-compassion ($p<0.001$). This may suggest that participation in music groups will equip students with generalizable qualities that can be used for self-care. Results of this study highlight the effectiveness of music-based experiences in decreasing the perceived stress and anxiety of undergraduate students.

Therapeutic music experiences can be used to address the symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression. Fiore (2018) developed a 5-minute online music listening experience for music therapy students. Prior to the experience, participants completed a pre-test that consisted of the stress overload scale (SOS) and state trait anxiety inventory (STAI). The participants then engaged in a 5-minute music listening experience and completed a post experience questionnaire. Results indicate that participants reported experiencing prolonged periods of stress, and the intervention decreased participant's stress and anxiety levels. MacDonald and Wilson (2014) proposed a model on how improvisation could help improve one's mental health, thus improving their self-esteem, self-confidence, self-awareness and emotional wellbeing. Songwriting may be used to promote self-expression and coping strategies while challenging the writer to dig deeper and explore ways of being. Gee et al. (2019) conducted a randomized control trial to see if songwriting can improve a student's wellbeing. Participants across two programs who self-identified as stressed, anxious or depressed at a university in the United Kingdom were asked to complete the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), a mental health survey, and consent form. The treatment group worked together to create two songs over five weekly sessions (Gee et al., 2019). The results indicated that songwriting had decreased perceived depression and increased social connection. Engaging in active music-making, such as singing, helped students articulate how they feel and outwardly express emotions (de Witte, 2020).

Music is a powerful medium that can help individuals in a variety of stressful situations. Listening to calming music can help reduce cortisol levels leading to lowered blood pressure, heart rate, and respiration (de Witte et al., 2020). This sense of relaxation can help promote mindfulness. Music can also distract individuals from stressful thoughts or situations (Steinfeld & Brewer, 2015). Lastly, music can help individuals regulate their emotions. Listening to music can evoke specific emotions and allow individuals to process feelings in an effective way.

Randall et al. (2014) sought to determine how music listening can affect the general population's emotional health and overall wellbeing. Three hundred twenty-seven participants, including those of musical and non-musical backgrounds with an average age of 21 years old, were asked to download an app called MuPsych (Randall et al., 2014). Over 2-week period individuals were asked to track their listening and respond to the prompted questions (Randall et al., 2014). Results concluded that personal music listening helped individuals regulate their emotions and reach desired mood states. Individuals can use music to help manage and reflect on their stress.

Music Therapy and Stress Management

The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) defines music therapy as “the clinical & evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program” ([AMTA], 2005, What is Music Therapy section, para. 1). Bruscia (2014) offers the following definition of music therapy: “Music therapy is a reflexive process wherein the therapist helps the client to optimize the client's health, using various facets of music experience and the relationships formed through them as the impetus for change” (p.36).

Music therapy can address goals within cognitive, communicative, emotional, musical, physiological, psychosocial, sensorimotor, and spiritual domains (CBMT, 2015). Music therapy may help music students across multiple domains of health. Within the cognitive domain music therapy can help increase concentration and focus, improve problem-solving skills, and offer mental clarity. In terms of communication music therapy can focus on verbal and non-verbal skills, offer a place to explore social needs and create networks. Emotionally, students may have the opportunity to express themselves, while also allowing them to process and understand their feelings related to the college experience. Musically, student musicians can explore techniques,

instruments, and have the opportunity to use their skills freely in the moment to create something of personal meaning rather than for academic requirements. Physiologically, music therapy can help decrease heart rate and blood pressure, while also improving sleep patterns. Sensorimotor skills have the potential to be addressed through physical exercise, managing the physical symptoms of stress, and the release of tensions. Psychosocial needs can be addressed through self-expression, mindfulness, and the development of coping strategies. Music therapy can also help connect college students to a greater sense of power while also providing a sense of purpose.

Zhang et al. (2022) aimed to determine the efficacy of group improvisational music therapy (GIMT) on Chinese undergraduate students' depression symptoms and emotional regulation. All students were asked to complete the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Zhang et al., 2022). Thirty-six students were placed in the experimental group and 35 in the control group. Sessions took place once a week over the course of 4 weeks, and was implemented in stages, (1) evaluate the ability to emotionally regulate and depression status, formulate plans, and determine the overall goal areas of the intervention, (2) implementation of the treatment plan, and (3) generalize the ability to use healthy emotional regulation strategies and complete the assessment (Zhang et al., 2022). Members in the control group were asked to complete the DERS and BDI post GIMT. Prior to the experience there was no significant difference in depression and emotional regulation skills among the control and experimental groups. Compared to members in the control group, members who partook in GIMT reported a significant decrease in DERS scores ($p < 0.001$) with improvements in emotional perception. The results related to emotional perception show that the group who received GIMT had a mean score of 22.71 (± 4.18) while the control group's mean score was 18.6 (± 3.11). Zhang et al. (2022) conclude that GIMT could help participants

recognize and regulate their emotions. Music experiences seem to help college students understand their emotions. However, there is a lack of research about how music therapy can alleviate such symptoms among music students.

Participation in music therapy has been shown to alleviate depression among college students. Wang et al. (2011) predicted that participation in group music therapy would alleviate such symptoms. They selected 80 participants from a pool of people who scored greater than 40 on the Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS) and exceeded 2.18 on the depression factors of the Symptom Checklist-90 (SCL-90). These measures also served as a post-test. Forty were assigned to the control group and forty to the experiential. The music therapy group had 3 stages: introduction stage, implementation stage, and feedback stage. Music experiences were chosen based on their ability to foster group cohesion, teach relaxation techniques, and develop creative ways for self-expression, such as drawing. There was no significant difference in the pretest depression scores between the two groups prior to the experience ($t = -0.20, p > 0.05$). However, after experiencing music therapy, participants reported significantly lower depression scores, ($t = 6.93, p < 0.001$), and improved mental health symptoms compared to those in the control group ($t = 1.51, p > 0.05$). This indicates that participation in group music therapy may have a positive impact on the mental well-being of college students.

Music therapists offer individualized goal-oriented programs that can help students learn how to use music to effectively manage academic stress. These experiences may include music listening, and imaginal listening which may decrease perceived anxiety and tension as well as refocus attention on the perception of stress (Fiore, 2018). Music therapy can help students reflect and develop effective ways to manage stress that results from rigorous academic requirements. However, there appears to be a lack of literature on how these specific experiences impact college students who are on track to obtain a music degree.

Music Therapy and Self-care

Group experiences within the college setting have the potential to bring peers together, improve social bonding, and equip individuals with sustainable coping strategies to respond to potential stressors. Lin (2014) sought to explore the effects of music therapy support group on the academic experiences of Asian music therapy students. Eleven Asian music therapy students participated in a weekly self-regulated group for 90 minutes. Group members were given the choice of improvisation, arranging, sing-along, song writing, role-playing and small group discussions. Three participants were selected to provide a 1-hour interview reflecting on their experiences at the group's conclusion (Lin, 2014). Findings indicated that the participants felt the group experience provided a sense of belongingness, emphasized cultural-based challenges that provided them with meaningful coping mechanisms, as well as the opportunity to practice music-based techniques, and drew attention toward their overall wellbeing (Lin, 2014). This is an example of the benefits of allowing participants to choose from music-making experiences they feel will meet their needs in the moment.

Purpose

This research is focused on the use of online YouTube videos, demonstrating mindfulness practices that students can use to decrease academic stress as well as explore their mental well-being. This opportunity may support students to explore their sense of self while introducing self-care strategies in order to help them explore emotions relating to university stressors. The protocol aims to help deepen student's self-awareness in order to refocus their attention toward their health. This shift will allow students to become reflexive, a generalizable skill that can be used in any music profession.

The research highlights the need for self-care programs in college. Creative art experiences can provide these opportunities resulting in improved mental health. Students pursuing a music degree use music each day in their educational journey for various assignments and performances. However, there is a lack of research specifically on how therapeutic music making experiences can be used to their benefit. This research protocol aims to bring awareness and provide education on the importance of self-care for music students. Finding creative ways to care for the developing musician can benefit long-term health. Furthermore, learning self-care techniques and personal tendencies as an undergraduate can lead the way for effective self-care as one progresses through their education and professional life. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to offer students a way to engage in meaningful experiences, through the creative arts in order to alleviate stress.

Chapter 3

Method

Design

The theoretical framework of this research is informed by the Biopsychosocial Model of Stress (Engel, 1980). This research will take on a mixed-method approach utilizing qualitative and quantitative data to determine the effectiveness of a YouTube channel designed to help music students alleviate academic stress and offer creative self-care strategies.

Channel Content

Varona (2018) offers ways educators can use mindfulness to decrease feelings of stress, however, there is minimal research on how mindfulness practices can be used to help mitigate a music student's perceived stress. This YouTube channel will be the first to explore how social media can be used to mitigate feelings of stress while also being a positive resource for students to access. The content will be created by the main researcher and consist of 7-10 minutes long videos designed to fit within student's schedules. Rather than offer suggestions about how students can gain momentary stress relief techniques the content is designed to be reflexive, encouraging students to explore and develop a deeper understanding of their response to stress. To do this, videos will primarily include receptive and mindful music experiences since they translate well via online mediums and have been found to decrease stress, anxiety, and depression (e.g. Fiore, 2018; Van Lith et al., 2022). Projective experiences will also be included to help students visualize and explore how they feel. Discussion posts will offer students creative suggestions students can use to mitigate stress, and the opportunity to explore and reflect on how they feel. The content on the channel will be research-informed and incorporate a wide variety of self-care strategies for the diverse college population. By incorporating all this content into one

place students will have the opportunity to not only reflect as it relates to academic stress but also offer new ways to think and manage stress in a productive manner.

Access to Channel

Link: <https://youtube.com/@musicbasedforcollegestress?si=RKjdE2k2Eo9gFdVE>

Account Name: musicbasedforcollegestress

Participants

Participants will include undergraduate and graduate music students at one college/university in the United States. All students must be enrolled in a music program at the university level and willing to engage with online content via YouTube. Those involved must be 18 years of age or older and able to give consent; speak, read, and understand English, and have access to reliable internet service. Students will be recruited through their educational email. A minimum of 30 students is required. Snowball sampling will be used to increase sample size if necessary.

Procedure

Participants will complete the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing 14 item scale (WEMWBS) one week prior to engaging with the YouTube channel. The WEMWBS scale was developed to assess the overall mental wellbeing of the general public to evaluate a program, projects, and policies aimed to improve mental wellness (Warwick University, n.d., About WEMWBS section)

Students will be asked to watch one video per week and engage with the content fully, keeping a journal documenting their frequency of engagement and the self-care practices they engaged in (see sample in Appendix A), for a duration of 10 weeks. The researcher developed YouTube channel will contain videos asking students to participate in receptive experiences,

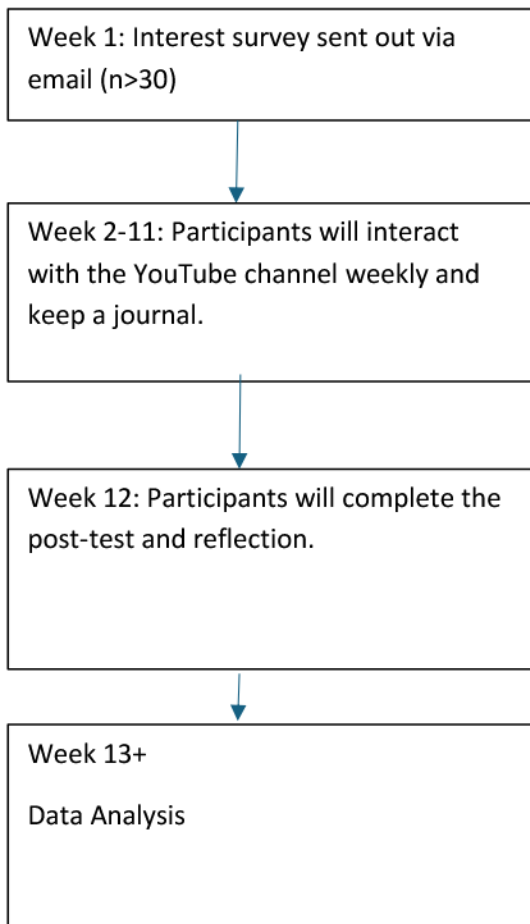
such as guided meditation and projective experiences, or offer them with ideas and examples to engage in creative self-care practices they can try independently. Further, in order to create a sense of community, students will be asked to respond to one of the written posts each week.

At the end of the 10 weeks, students will be asked to complete the WEMWBS and write a short reflection addressing what music experiences and self-care strategies they found most helpful and what they are likely to use for their mental wellbeing in the future (see Appendix B).

Data Analysis

After the completion of the pre- and post-test, the sum of the WEMWBS will be taken for each of the 14 items. The results of the WEMWBS will be analyzed and interpreted following the instructions that accompany the measurement tool. The score for each item is based on a 1-5 scale, with total scores ranging from 14-70. Once the mean and standard deviation have been calculated, T-tests will be used to determine if the results are significant.

Deductive thematic analysis will be employed to analyze the qualitative data. The journal entries will be coded, categorized and common themes uncovered among participants. This analysis will be deductive as coding will be focused on which strategies improve well-being and quantify how many times they have been utilized. Once a list of themes has been completed it will be emailed to participants for validation in order to further refine the data.



Chapter 4

Discussion

The intended mixed-methods study aims to determine the effectiveness of an online YouTube channel on the overall wellbeing of music students. After data analysis, the results of the quantitative data will indicate any significant effects on students' perceived stress levels. Qualitative data findings may provide insight into students' personal experiences, what content was used, and how they will continue in attending to their overall wellbeing.

The proposed study utilizes digital content with the intent to improve the wellbeing of music students. It is not only intended to decrease perceived academic stress, but also to raise awareness and build a supportive community for individuals who are struggling with common concerns. Moreover, the use of the YouTube platform in this way has the potential to build users self-esteem, foster self-understanding, and help them develop positive coping strategies toward stress.

This study could contribute to a broader understanding of how digital resources can facilitate positive change within a student's educational experiences. Furthermore, if the proposed research proves successful, it will be the first to offer measurable and accessible means of reducing academic stress. This research lays the foundation for further research relating to digital and creative self-care strategies and tools.

Further Developments

Based on the potential findings, the growth of the YouTube channel will be adapted and continue. Additional videos will be added as they relate to the intended audience, including interviews with professionals, student testimonials, and more research and research-based therapeutic content from other creative art fields, such as dance, art, drama, and poetry.

Expanding to other social media platforms, such as Tik-Tok, Instagram, X (formally Twitter), and Facebook may also reach more students and individuals who feel academic burnout and stress.

Ethics

Prior to the implementation of this study the research will need to gain approval from the institutional review board (IRB). Informed consent will be gained from all participants, and confidentiality will be kept when reporting results. Since this study relates to mental health and the wellbeing of students, counseling and other services will be made available to those who require additional support.

Potential Limitations

It is anticipated that the study may encounter a few limitations. First, the degree to which students engage with the channel may vary since it is self-directed. Additionally, since data is self-reported there is the potential for bias, as responses are influenced by participants' perception of change, their given stress that day, and their willingness to disclose personal information. Another limitation will be in the students maintaining consistent engagement with the content. Due to the busy lives of music student's external factors, such as increased academic stress, research related responsibilities, and other personal business/life events, may interfere with consistent YouTube engagement.

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Appendix A

Sample Journal Page

Date:

Time Spent on YouTube Channel:

What Videos I watched:

What helped:

What did not help:

Appendix B

Reflection Prompt

What resonated most with you throughout the past 10 weeks, and what strategies will you use to care for yourself moving forward?