CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Overview of the Study

The purpose of the study was to observe the effects of background music on student disposition and achievement in the classroom. Two classes were observed, receiving the same content, instruction, and assessment. The difference between these two groups was that one group received a treatment (experimental group), background music, in the classroom, while the other classroom (control group) stayed the same. Surveys and interviews were used to observe student disposition. Only the experimental group received these surveys, therefore disposition was only observed with one group. There responses before the treatment and after were compared to see if there were any changes. A one-on-one interview was conducted to see if their responses matched their survey responses.

The assignment and test scores of both groups were compared in order to see the effects of music on student achievement. Two different kinds of comparisons were done. The treatment group was compared to itself, seeing if there was a longitudinal difference in their test scores before and during the treatment. The second type of comparison took the three tests that were taken during the treatment, and the scores of the control group was compared to the experimental group.

Summary of Findings

Student disposition changed the perspective of some students when it came to the use of music in the classroom. The surveys showed an increase in number of students favoring music in the classroom versus minimal noise or silence. Students mentioned the impact of the music on their mood in class and the focus when asked open-ended questions. More students showed a preference to music over silence in the classroom by the end of the study.
The test and assignment scores did not show a statistical significance in showing a correlation between the use of music and achievement in class. Scores were not affected by the use of music. Observing the experimental group for a longer period of time, and comparing their tests averages before the music and during the music did not show a statistical significance between their scores. The second type of comparison, in which the tests scores of the experimental group during the treatment period were also compared to the control group, and it was not statistically significant. Regardless of the presence of music, the scores of the students were not affected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

When students are asked about their preference about the presence of music or no music in the classroom, the students favored having music in comparison to silence or minimal noise. Students shared their perspective by stating that the music was a good addition because the silence made created an uncomfortable atmosphere in the classroom, or simply not focused with the task. Students, who at first thought that music would not be helpful, changed their minds at the end. The students saw the difference in their perspective towards the environment. Although only a handful of students were represented in this study, majority of the students observed the difference in the environment when music was present in the classroom. The improvement in the preference of music in the classroom shows that there is something to be said about changing the environment. Students’ notice the difference and their moods change to the difference. Music improved the social and emotional well being of the students. Students felt more comfortable and at ease.

The assignment scores and test scores do not show any significant contributions to using music in the classroom when it comes to improving achievement. When students were given an
opportunity to discuss their opinions on using music, many mentioned using music during independent work. At the same time, a couple of students mentioned that the music was distracting during tests.

These results show the need of some, not all, students of some kind of stimulant. Instead of playing one type of music for everyone to hear, students can have the choice of using their own music players during independent work (whether it is assignments or tests), as long as it is not distracting to anyone else around them If students feel that they will benefit or work better in an environment with stimulus, such as music, teachers should allow them to have this option. To ease classroom management issues that may arise, a set of boundaries or rules can be set at the beginning so that students are aware of the proper time to use and not use music in the classroom. Using their own personal music players will allow them to choose their own music styles, to help them create their mood of focus and enriching learning environment. To those students who do not choose to use their music players, they can create their silent environment that they need to focus.

**Limitation**

The study has a lot of potential and plenty of room for improvement. Several things can be done in order to improve the study, such as length of study, concurrent events in the school, and amount of students in case groups.

To truly observe the effects of music, the study should be longer in length. Instead of observing the students for just several weeks, it would be interesting to see what several months’ worth of data would show. A change, whether positive or negative, can be observed more if the snapshot was a bigger timeframe. Students would become accustomed to the music, and this might have affected their disposition towards the use of music in the classroom. The length of
study can reveal whether students truly retain the knowledge for a longer period of time, rather than just for short-term memorization. A longer period of study can also show the effects of music with more than one unit. Only looking at one unit limits the scope of the study because the presence of music may not matter because of the difficulty of the concepts in the unit.

The school has a whole during the study was impacted by multiple outside factors. These events negatively impacted the students. These are the factors, regardless of planning and thought, are not expected and can impact the results. Students were deeply impacted by three consecutive negative events at a short period of time. This affected their social and emotional well being outside of the classroom that it impacted with how they acted inside the classroom.

The same group of students can be observed with both the music and no music in the classroom. The comparison would make more sense if the same students were used and compared to them. The outside factors, difference in demographics, proficiency levels, etc, would be eliminated if the same group of students were observed in both treatments.

An inconsistency in the school schedule affected the way in which findings were attained. There were so many schedule changes and instructional time interruptions within the weeks of study, that students did not receive the consistency needed in order to appreciate the effects of music to their thinking. At some point, more than half of the students were pulled out for two days so that they may participate in the high school exit exam. Students would be absent from school because of personal or illness issues. Students would be pulled out of the classroom so that they may participate in assemblies or pep rallies. This would change the number I had in my case study on an everyday basis.

The small case study students of nine per group (a total of eighteen students) definitely limited the findings study. As mentioned earlier, absences from the classroom, whether excused
or not, would affect on how students received the music in the classroom. With the case study being so small in size, it would deeply impact whether students would show an improvement. For example, at several points, a couple of the case study students would be sporadically absent causing their test scores to be low that week. Their low scores would impact the average taken at the end. A small case study also impacted the possible patterns that could have been found during interviews and surveys. It limited the scope of the classroom point of view because it limited the interpretation to only a handful of students. The small case study group also limited with the amount of data collected. For example, the students were asked to keep a running journal for the length of the study. At the end, less than half of the students actually completed the journaling activity, and furthermore the quality of the journaling affected the patterns observed.

The type of music limited the study as well. Majority of the case study students commented on how they would change the type of music used. The music was imposed in the classroom. It was music chosen by the instructor, and no suggestions were taken from the students. The type of music in the classroom distracted students that it zoned their focus to their dislike of the music, rather than the task at hand.

The classroom set up created a difference in how the students received the music. The music would be played out of the television speakers that were found in the front of the classroom. If I had a sufficient speaker system that was arranged properly all around the classroom, each student would receive the music at the same volume regardless of where they are located in the classroom. It would definitely create a different environment, and the purpose of the background music would be served, rather than just having a handful of students hearing it at the front of the classroom. Another solution to the set-up of the music in the classroom would
be to allow the students to use their own personal players. Giving the students a choice to use or not to use music can impact individuals differently. Some students viewed the music as a distraction rather than a focus tool, while others felt likewise. If students had their own music, they can create their own mood that can help them be successful in the classroom.

These are just some of the limitations that were encountered during the study. If these can be changed for future research, better data can be gathered to answer the research questions.