# EXPLORING STUDENTS' HABITS OF LISTENING TO MUSIC WHILE COMPLETING ACADEMIC TASKS

**THESIS**


**By**

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**STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY**
**OF KIAI HAJI ACHMAD SIDDIQ JEMBER**
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING**
**ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM**



**JUNE 2026**

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**EXPLORING STUDENTS' HABITS OF LISTENING TO MUSIC WHILE COMPLETING ACADEMIC TASKS**

**THESIS**

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# MOTTO

*"Music has a healing power. It has the ability to take people out of themselves for a few hours."*[1]

*Phil Collins*

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[1] Phil Collins, quoted in The Economic Times, "Quote of the Day by Phil Collins https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/us/quote-of-the-day-by-phil-collins-music-has-a-healing-power-it-has-the-ability-to-take-people-out-of-themselves-for-a-few-hours/articleshow/128675276.cms

# DEDICATION

With sincere gratitude to Allah SWT for His abundant blessings, mercy, and guidance, this thesis is dedicated to those who have contributed meaningfully to the author's life and academic journey.

To my beloved parents, I am profoundly grateful for every prayer offered on my behalf, for your unconditional love, and for the countless sacrifices you have made throughout my life. Your unwavering support and your belief in me, even in moments of self-doubt, have been the foundation of every achievement I have attained. May Allah SWT bless you with good health, happiness, and a life filled with blessings, and may I one day become a source of pride and happiness for you both.

To my younger sister, Amira Latifah, I extend my heartfelt thanks for the joy and companionship you have brought into my life, particularly during difficult and exhausting times. Your care and laughter have brightened many of my days, and your presence has been a constant reminder that I am supported unconditionally by my family. I pray that your future will be filled with happiness, success, and boundless opportunities, and that you grow into a strong and kind person who achieves every goal you set for yourself.

This thesis may only be a collection of pages, but behind every page are prayers, sacrifices, perseverance, and the love and support of the two people dearest to me. Thank you for helping me reach this point. May Allah SWT reward every act of kindness with greater blessings and endless goodness.

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First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Allah Swt, who has given me mercy, blessings and health to complete my final thesis. Additionally. The researcher acknowledges that this thesis could not have been completed without the assistance and guidance of several parties. I would like to extend my respectful thanks to the following people:

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2. Dr. H. Abdul Mu'is, S. Ag., M.Si as the Dean of Education and Teacher Training Faculty of UIN KHAS Jember who has given the permission to do this research.
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5. Isnadi M. Pd. as the Advisor of this undergraduate thesis who has guided, advised, supported, and motivated the writer to do this thesis.
6. Dr. Mega Fariziah Nur Humairohi, M.Pd. as the Academic supervisor who has given invaluable support, patience, and commitment to the academic development.
7. All lecturers in English Education Program who has given me precious knowledge and experience during the entire of the semester.
8. All participants in this study who are willing to be involved in a series of learning activities through problem based learning and in-depth interview session.

The author acknowledges that this thesis is not yet perfect, both in terms of content and language. For the sake of improvement, the author welcomes any criticism and suggestions. It is hoped that this thesis will be useful for future researchers. May Allah reward all the kind and extraordinary efforts of those who assisted me in the completing my thesis May Allah reward all the extraordinary efforts of those who supported the researcher in completing the thesis.

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# ABSTRACT

Nadya Safiroh, 2026: *Exploring Students' Habits of Listening to Music While Completing Academic Tasks.*
**Keywords:** study habits, music listening, academic tasks, self-regulation, qualitative descriptive.

Listening to music while working on academic tasks has become a common habit among university students in the digital age. The previous studies have examined the relationship between music and academic performance, most of them relied on quantitative approaches that focused on measurable outcomes. This study aimed to identify the patterns and habits of students in listening to music during academic tasks, to examine their perceptions of how music affects their study process, and to explore the primary reasons that drive this habit.

A qualitative descriptive approach was employed in this study. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with participants who were students of the English Language Education Programme, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, at the State Islamic University of Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember. Data were analysed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which encompasses data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, and were validated through source triangulation.

The study yielded three main findings. First, all participants had incorporated music into their study routines, though the varied patterns music was most commonly used during routine, time-consuming tasks such as writing papers, reading course materials, and preparing presentations, while silence was preferred for tasks demanding higher concentration, such as memorising content or working through new concepts. The perceived impact was, in every case, highly personal and context-dependent. Third, the main reasons participants gave for listening to music while studying included relieving stress, managing boredom, improving mood, blocking out environmental noise, and sustaining productivity during long study sessions.

This study concludes that the habit of listening to music in an academic context is a form of self-regulation that develops organically through repeated learning experiences. Music does not merely serve as entertainment, it has grown into a personal strategy for maintaining psychological balance and sustaining productivity. These findings contribute to the broader scholarly discussion on student learning habits and open the door for further research across wider and more diverse settings.

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# CHAPTERI I

# INTRODUCTION

## A. Background of Study

Access to music has changed profoundly over the past two decades, shifting from a scarce, physically bound commodity into an instantly available companion for nearly every activity of daily life. Advances in digital technology and the emergence of music streaming platforms such as Spotify, YouTube Music, and Apple Music have made an almost unlimited catalogue of music ubiquitously available to listeners at any time and in any place.[2] As a result, listening to music has evolved from a purely recreational activity into a functional one, embedded in the daily routines of millions of people around the world, including university students who face significant academic and psychological demands.[3] In the academic context, many university students choose to listen to music while studying or completing academic tasks as a way to improve concentration, manage stress, and sustain motivation throughout long study sessions. This practice has grown so widespread that it is no longer considered unusual but rather a defining characteristic of how the current generation of learners approaches their academic responsibilities.

Music has long been recognised as a tool capable of shaping the psychological and cognitive conditions under which people work and learn.

[2]Greg Wadley, Amanda Krause, Jiahui Liang, Zihe Wang, and Tuck Wah Leong, "Use of Music Streaming Platforms for Emotion Regulation by International Students," in Proceedings of the 31st Australian Conference on Human-Computer-Interaction (OzCHI '19) (Perth: ACM, 2019), 1–2.
[3]Judy C. Stapley, "Music and Emotion Regulation among Emerging Adults in College," in Adolescence in the 21st Century: Constants and Challenges (2014), 225–238.

From a neurological standpoint, music activates multiple areas of the brain simultaneously, including the auditory cortex, the limbic system responsible for emotional regulation, and the prefrontal cortex associated with attention and decision-making. This multisensory activation helps explain why many students find music effective not merely as background noise, but as a genuine support mechanism for their cognitive and emotional states during study. Music can help create a more conducive learning environment by increasing concentration and reducing stress, and soothing music in particular has been found to lower anxiety levels, which can ultimately enhance academic performance.[4] This relationship between music, emotional regulation, and learning aligns with the broader field of educational psychology, which recognises that students' emotional states directly influence their capacity to absorb and process new information. When students feel anxious, fatigued, or unmotivated, their cognitive performance tends to decline. Music, by helping to regulate these emotional states, may indirectly serve as a facilitator of more effective learning. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the extent to which music aids learning is not uniform. Research has consistently shown that the benefits of music during academic work depend heavily on variables such as the type of music, the complexity of the task, and the individual characteristics of the learner.[5] These findings

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[4]Joan, A., Ahmad Rithaudin, M. N., & Md Jais, I. (2022). Effects of background music in completing academic tasks among children. Quantum Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 3(2), 42–51. https://doi.org/10.55197/qjssh.v3i2.136

[5]Kotsopoulou, A., & Hallam, S. (2020). The perceived effects of music on the learning of young people in various learning contexts. Music Education Research, 12(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800903568975

indicate that while music can create a more comfortable learning environment, its effectiveness still depends on the individual and the type of task being performed.

A growing body of research has examined how music affects one's cognitive performance, revealing findings that are both promising and cautionary. Some studies have revealed that background music can increase focus and productivity among students completing academic tasks, while other studies indicate that certain types of music can actually disrupt concentration. The concept of cognitive load theory is useful here: when the demands of both the music and the task exceed the brain's processing capacity, performance deteriorates. Conversely, when music is chosen carefully and its auditory demands are minimal, it may free up cognitive resources rather than compete for them. For example, previous research has found that the effects of using background music (BGM) vary depending on the type of task being performed and the characteristics of the individuals involved.[6] This variation in outcomes points to the importance of considering individual differences in auditory sensitivity and working memory capacity when evaluating the role of music in academic settings. Students with higher working memory capacity, for instance, may be better able to manage the dual demands of music and academic tasks, whereas those with lower capacity

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[6]Goltz, F., & Sadakata, M. (2021). Do you listen to music while studying? A portrait of how people use music to optimize their cognitive performance. Acta Psychologica, 220, 103417. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2021.103417

may find even soft background music disruptive.[7] This indicates that not all music is suitable for all students or all types of academic tasks.

Beyond the general effects of music on cognition, individual music preferences play a significant role in determining how effective a particular type of music is as a study companion. Students are not passive recipients of music's effects; rather, they actively select the music they feel suits their study needs, emotional state, and the nature of the task at hand. This sense of personal agency in music selection is itself an important factor in how music influences learning outcomes. Previous studies have found that students' music preferences can significantly influence their academic performance. For instance, electronic dance music (EDM) was found to have certain cognitive benefits and can positively influence brain activity, especially in increasing energy and alertness.[8] However, the type of music considered effective can vary between individuals, depending on their learning styles and sensitivity to sound. A student who finds lo-fi instrumental music relaxing and conducive to focused reading may find the same music monotonous and unmotivating during creative writing. Similarly, a student who is energised by pop songs during lighter tasks might find those same songs distracting when working through complex academic material. This subjectivity underscores

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[7]Perham, N., & Currie, H. (2014). Does listening to preferred music improve reading comprehension performance? Applied Cognitive Psychology, 28(2), 279–284. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.2994

[8]Hau, K. T., Tee, V., & Kuan, G. (2023). Effects of electronic dance music on academic performance among medical students: A narrative review. Education in Medicine Journal, 16(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.21315/eimj2023.16.(1)4

why habit-formation in music listening is deeply personal and cannot be reduced to a single, universally applicable recommendation.

The effects of music on academic performance can also vary depending on the complexity of the task and the type of music being listened to. One of the most consistently documented findings in this area concerns the distinction between music with lyrics and instrumental music. Previous studies have found that music with lyrics tends to be more distracting compared to instrumental music, especially for tasks that require high levels of concentration and complex information processing.[9] This occurs because the verbal content of lyrics competes directly with the linguistic processing demands of reading or writing tasks, creating what researchers refer to as "semantic interference." In contrast, instrumental or ambient music, particularly genres such as classical, lo-fi, and acoustic, tends to occupy a lower degree of attentional bandwidth, allowing students to benefit from the mood-enhancing and noise-masking properties of music without significantly impairing their reading comprehension or writing fluency. This finding has been replicated across multiple studies, suggesting that the content and tempo of music, rather than the mere presence of music, are the decisive factors in determining whether music helps or hinders academic task performance.[10] This indicates that although music can be beneficial in certain situations, selecting the appropriate type of music is important to avoid distractions.

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[9]Cheah, Y., & Coutinho, E. (2022). Background music and cognitive task performance: A systematic review of task, music, and population impact. Music & Science, 5. https://doi.org/10.1177/20592043221134392

[10]Kiger, D. (2018). Effects of music information load on a reading comprehension task. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 69(2), 531–534. https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.1989.69.2.531

In the context of higher education, particularly at UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, the habit of listening to music while completing academic tasks is a phenomenon that is frequently observed among students. Based on the researcher's preliminary observations, a number of students in the English Language Education program were found to regularly listen to music through personal devices such as smartphones or laptops while working on assignments, whether individually or in shared study spaces. This observation is particularly noteworthy given the context: as a State Islamic University, UIN KHAS Jember carries a distinct institutional character shaped by Islamic values, where the role of music in everyday life occupies a more nuanced position than in secular institutions. Yet despite this context, music listening as a study practice appears to have taken root organically among students, suggesting that its perceived functional benefits transcend cultural and religious boundaries in the daily lives of learners.[11] When informally asked about this habit, several students stated that music helped them feel more relaxed, less bored during long study sessions, and more able to sustain focus. The types of music they choose vary according to personal taste, although many students tend to prefer English songs with upbeat rhythms or lo-fi instrumental tracks. This phenomenon suggests that music listening has become an organic part of students' academic routines, not as a formal strategy taught by educators, but as a self-initiated habit shaped by individual needs and daily experiences. Such habits, once formed through repeated

[11]Muslimah, M., & Apriani, W. (2020). The effect of listening music on concentration and academic performance. Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, 26(1), 11–19.

positive reinforcement, become embedded in students' broader learning strategies and are maintained not by institutional encouragement but by the personal sense of comfort, productivity, and emotional balance that they provide.[12]

Much of the existing research on music and academic performance, however, shares a common limitation that goes beyond a simple divide between quantitative and qualitative methods or between Western and Indonesian settings. Most prior studies treat “listening to music while studying” as a single, undifferentiated intervention: participants are assigned a type of music, given a task, and measured for concentration or output, as though music listening were a uniform variable applied uniformly across all forms of academic work. What remains largely undocumented is how students themselves differentiate their use of music according to the specific cognitive demands of each task, deliberately alternating between music and silence, switching genres, or adjusting volume as a form of self-managed, task-sensitive learning strategy, rather than as a fixed personal preference applied indiscriminately to every study session. This gap is made more compelling by the setting of the present study. At an Islamic university, where music occupies a more contested position within the institution's religious and cultural values than it does in secular settings, students' continued and apparently unselfconscious integration of music into their learning strategies raises a further question that quantitative, outcome-focused research is not

[12]Zimmerman, B. J. (2022). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. Theory into Practice, 41(2), 64–70. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2

designed to answer: how students themselves make sense of, justify, and reconcile this habit within their academic and religious environment. Exploring these two dimensions together, the task-differentiated strategic use of music and the meaning students attach to it within a distinctive institutional context, offers a more specific and substantive contribution than simply noting that qualitative research on the topic is scarce. Therefore, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of students' habits of listening to music while completing academic tasks at UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember and is entitled “Exploring Students' Habits of Listening to Music While Completing Academic Tasks.”

**B. Research Focus**

The focus of this research is formulated as follows:

1. What music-listening strategies do university students employ as part of their learning strategies when completing academic tasks?
2. How do students describe their experience of listening to music while completing academic tasks?
3. What are the main reasons students listen to music during academic tasks?

**C. Research Purposes**

The research objective is a description of something that will be the aim of the research. Research is a scientific way to obtain data with specific purposes and uses. The aim of this research is to find out:

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1. To identify the music-listening strategies students employ as part of their learning strategies while completing academic tasks.
2. To describe students' experiences of listening to music while completing academic tasks.
3. To explore the reasons students choose to listen to music during academic tasks.

## D. Benefits Of Research

The benefits of research consist of what contributions have been made after completing the research. The benefits can contain both theory and practice. Here are the benefits that can be derived after the research is completed:

### 1. Theoretical Benefits

This research is expected to add to the body of knowledge, especially regarding the inquiry learning model. By deepening the understanding of students' habits of listening to music while working on academic tasks, it is hoped that a connection between the use of music in learning and improved academic performance can be found. This can provide a new theoretical foundation in the fields of educational psychology and music in education.

### 2. Practical Benefits

#### a. For Researchers

This research is expected to be an alternative for developing learning strategies, especially in the field of education in increasing

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knowledge. The findings of this research can be used as a basis for designing more effective learning methods by utilizing music as a learning aid.

**b. For Educators**

This research provides insights for educators on how music can be used as an aid in the teaching and learning process. Educators can apply these findings in the classroom to create a more conducive learning environment and help students increase their concentration and reduce stress.

**c. For Students**

Students can understand the benefits of listening to music while working on academic tasks and how they can use music to enhance their academic performance. This research can also provide guidance on the types of music that are effective in helping them stay focused and productive.

**d. For Educational Institutions**

Educational institutions can use the findings of this research to develop policies and programs that support the use of music in an educational context. By understanding the positive impact of music on academic performance, educational institutions can create a more innovative and supportive learning environment.

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## E. Definition Of Terms

Based on the focus of the problem in this research, the definition of terms is explained as follows

### 1. Students' Habits of Listening to Music

A habit is a behavior that is performed repeatedly and automatically as a result of prior experience, to the point where it becomes a regular part of a person's routine. According to Duhigg, habits are formed through a neurological loop consisting of a cue, a routine, and a reward, meaning that once a behavior is consistently reinforced, it becomes deeply embedded in a person's daily life[13]. In an academic context, student habits refer to the recurring behaviors and patterns that students develop in relation to their learning activities, including when, where, and how they choose to study. These habits are not always consciously planned; rather, they often emerge gradually from repeated experiences that students find comfortable, efficient, or emotionally satisfying.

Listening to music refers to the activity of enjoying sounds produced by musical instruments or vocals. This activity can be done through various media, such as radio, electronic devices, or music streaming applications. Music can influence mood, concentration levels, and emotions. Some people listen to music for relaxation, entertainment, or even as a tool to help them focus while working on certain tasks.

[13] Charles Duhigg, The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business (New York: Random House, 2019), esp. Chap. 1–3.

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Students' habits of listening to music refer to the patterns and frequency with which students choose to listen to music in their daily lives, especially while engaging in academic activities. This includes the types of music they choose, the situations or conditions in which they listen to music (e.g., while studying, doing homework, or reviewing lessons), and their reasons for listening to music. These habits can vary from one student to another and are influenced by various factors such as individual preferences, music genres, and the purposes of listening to music.

**2. Academic Tasks**

Academic tasks refer to various forms of work assigned to students as part of the formal learning process. These tasks can include activities such as doing homework, creating projects, writing essays, conducting research, preparing presentations, and studying and understanding lesson materials. The purpose of academic tasks is to measure students' understanding and ability to apply the knowledge that has been taught, as well as to help them develop critical and analytical thinking skills.

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Based on the background, research questions, objectives, benefits, and key terms described above, this study is designed to explore university students' habits of listening to music while completing academic tasks in a structured way. To guide the readers in understanding the whole discussion, the following chapters are organized systematically as follows.

**F. Systematic Discussion**

The systematic discussion contains a description of the flow of discussion that will be explained in the research starting from the introductory chapter to the concluding chapter in order to facilitate understanding for researchers and readers. The systematics in question are as follows:

CHAPTER I, namely the introduction, contains the context of the research which contains a brief description of the background to conducting research, research focus, research objectives, benefits of research, definitions of terms which contain the meaning of important terms. which is the point of attention in the research title and finally the systematic discussion.

CHAPTER II is a literature review, containing previous research related to the research conducted and, a theoretical study containing a theoretical framework regarding the impact of music on students' academic performance.

CHAPTER III is research methods which include approaches and types of research, research locations, research subjects, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and data validity techniques.

CHAPTER IV contains data presentation and analysis. This chapter presents in detail the evidence obtained and the results of research findings, so that what is important to present is a description of the research object, presentation and analysis, and discussion of the findings.

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CHAPTER V is the closing which contains conclusions and suggestions

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# CHAPTER II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## A. Previous research

Several previous studies are relevant to this research and provide empirical support for exploring students' habits of listening to music while completing academic tasks. Five of the most relevant studies are summarized below:

1. *Muslimah & Apriani (2020), "The Effect of Listening Music on Concentration and Academic Performance"* This study investigated college students at Universitas Ibn Khaldun to examine how music affects their concentration and academic outcomes. The findings showed that about 75% of the students preferred soft music genres, such as pop and instrumental, while studying. These genres were perceived as effective in creating a relaxing environment and improving focus. However, some students experienced music as a distraction, which highlights the role of individual differences. This study is relevant to the present research as it demonstrates how listening to music may support or hinder students' concentration when completing academic tasks.
2. *Usman et al. (2024), "Perceived Effect of Listening to Music Towards Study Habit of Grade 11 Students in Mindanao State University-Sulu"* This research involved 100 senior high school students from different strands (STEM and GAS) at Mindanao State University Sulu. The results indicated that the majority of students perceived music as beneficial to

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their study habits, particularly in helping them reduce stress and maintain concentration. Interestingly, the study found no significant differences in perceptions based on gender or academic strand. While the participants were high school students, the findings support the present study by showing that listening to music has become a consistent part of students' study routines, which is also observable among university students.

3. *Cheah et al. (2025), "Help Me Study! Music Listening Habits While Studying"* This large-scale study by Yiting Cheah, William M. Randall, and Eduardo Coutinho analyzed music listening habits during study episodes from thousands of participants (via app data + surveys). Using qualitative thematic analysis, they explored why/how students use background music (BgM) for difficult tasks like writing/memorizing. Key perceptions: Students chose instrumental, soft, slow, low-energy music to cope with boredom, loneliness, distractions, and low mood e.g., "blocks noise," "improves concentration," "prevents mind-wandering." Positive impacts reported: Enhanced focus (most common), reduced boredom, better mood/productivity negatives rare (e.g., occasional distraction for easy tasks). Habits shifted with task difficulty: Less energetic music for harder work. Unlike other contexts, study music prioritized cognitive balance over arousal. Limitations: Self-report/app bias. Highly relevant to present research: Directly maps university students' subjective habits/reasons for music during academic tasks, complementing our descriptive exploration of patterns and experiences.

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4. *Kahar et al. (2024)" Perceptions of Music and its Effect on the Productivity of Students"* This research, conducted by Nailah Kahar and colleagues from Sulu State College, Philippines, surveyed university students to explore their perceptions of music's role in academic productivity. Using a quantitative-descriptive approach with a validated questionnaire (reliability Cronbach's α=0.89), the study involved 120 respondents from various programs. Key findings revealed that 75% of students (90/120) perceived music positively, reporting it creates a conducive learning atmosphere, reduces boredom during long study sessions, and enhances focus/motivation especially instrumental/lo-fi genres at moderate volume. Specifically, 68% agreed music helps sustain productivity for repetitive tasks like note-taking or reviewing, while 62% noted it eases stress without major distractions. However, 25% (30/120) preferred quiet environments, citing potential interference for deep reading/writing. No significant demographic differences (gender/program) were found. The study recommends educators consider music as a flexible study aid. This is strongly relevant to the present research, as it provides empirical evidence from a university context on how music shapes habits during academic tasks, aligning with our qualitative exploration of patterns, perceptions, and reasons.
5. *Goltz & Sadakata (2021), "Do You Listen to Music While Studying? A Potrait of How People Use Music to Optimize Their Cognitive Performance"* This qualitative portrait study explored how students

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strategically select background music to support different types of academic tasks. Through interviews and study diaries, participants described their deliberate music choices based on task difficulty. For complex work like essay writing or problem-solving, they preferred calm instrumental music (classical, ambient) to maintain steady focus without distraction. One student noted, *"I choose predictable music so my brain stays on the assignment."* For lighter tasks like reviewing notes, they selected familiar, personally meaningful songs for motivation. Music served as an "auditory shield" against household noise and mind-wandering, particularly in shared living spaces. Participants reported developing these habits through trial and error, learning which genres worked best for specific cognitive demands. They emphasized music's role in sustaining concentration during long sessions and transitioning between study phases. This research directly supports the present study by illustrating how university students consciously develop music-listening habits to optimize academic performance. The strategic nature of their choices validates our exploration of patterns, preferences, and perceived benefits during task completion.

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**Table 2.1**
**Differences and Similarities between current research and previous research**

| No | Author and Tittle | Differences | Similarities |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Muslimah, M., & Apriani, W. ,2020 *"The Effect of Listening Music on Concentration and Academic Perfomance"* | This study focuses on the relationship between music academic concetration | The influence of music on academic activity |
| 2. | *Usman et al. (2024),* | This study targeted | This research shares |

| No | Author and Tittle | Differences | Similarities |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *"Perceived Effect of Listening to Music Towards Study Habit of Grade 11 Students in Mindanao State University-Sulu"* | high school students (Grade 11) using quantitative survey. | students' perceptions of music's benefits for study habits and stress reduction. |
| 3. | *Cheah et al. (2025), "Help Me Study! Music Listening Habits While Studying"* | This study utilized large-scale qualitative thematic analysis from global app/survey data. | Studies align in analyzing background music listening habits during challenging academic tasks. |
| 4. | *Kahar et al. (2024)" Perceptions of Music and its Effect on the Productivity of Students"* | This study applied quantitative descriptive methods with questionnaires | Both Investigate university students' perceptions of music as an academic productivity tool. |
| 5. | *Goltz & Sadakata (2021), "Do You Listen to Music While Studying? A Potrait of How People Use Music to Optimize Their Cognitive Performance"* | This study focuses on how students strategically use music for different tasks. | Research similarly explores strategic music selection habits based on academic task. |

Based on the previous studies presented above, it can be seen that many researchers have explored the role of music in learning activities, particularly in relation to students' concentration, motivation, and academic performance. Most studies indicate that music can both support and hinder learning, depending on factors such as the type of music, the nature of the task, and individual differences. However, even the studies that adopt a qualitative or portrait-style approach, such as Cheah et al. and Goltz and Sadakata, primarily describe what type of music students select for a given task, without examining this selection as a deliberate, task-differentiated learning strategy embedded within students' broader

repertoire of academic self-management. Moreover, none of the studies reviewed above were conducted within an Islamic higher-education institution, where music occupies a more contested position within the surrounding religious and cultural values, leaving unexplored how students make sense of and reconcile this habit within such an environment. Therefore, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding by exploring university students' music-listening strategies as part of their learning strategies, together with their experiences and reasons for listening to music while completing academic tasks, using a qualitative descriptive approach.

## B. Theoritical Framework

### 1. Students' Habits

#### a. Definitions and Basic Concepts of Students' Study Habits

Study habits are formed through students' daily routines when dealing with academic activities. They involve more than just reading books or memorizing material, they also include how students manage their time, choose a comfortable place to study, and strategize to make the learning process more effective and enjoyable[14]. Every student has their own way of studying. Some prefer to study in complete silence, while others feel more focused when accompanied by their favorite music. If a way of studying, such as listening to music, feels helpful and makes a student calmer or more energized, the habit will usually

[14] R. A. Lone, "Study Habits and Academic Performance of Students," International Journal of Educational Research 9, no. 3 (2021): 112–125.

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continue. Over time, it becomes part of a routine that is hard to let go some students even feel “incomplete” if they do not do it.

Study habits are formed through repeated personal experiences that the student finds effective. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to studying because each student has different characteristics, preferences, and moods while studying. In this context, listening to music while studying can be seen as students adjusting to their own needs. Students choose the method that they find most helpful, not because they are directed to do so, but because they find it comfortable and useful.

**b. How Habits are Formed in an Academic Context**

Learning habits do not just appear out of thin air. They are formed slowly through repeated actions that students find comfortable or beneficial. Students’ habits are shaped by repetition and reinforcement, making learning activities more effective over time[15]. In other words, the more often a habit is practiced, especially if it has positive effects such as increased focus or calmness, the more likely it is to become part of a student’s daily learning routine.

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In a student's daily life, many things can form habits, such as where to study, the best time to study, and the most supportive atmosphere. Some students may prefer studying in silence, while others feel more relaxed with music. When something like listening to music

[15] J. Taguda and R. Valle, “Formation of Students’ Learning Habits Through Repetition and Reinforcement,” Asia Pacific Journal of Education 43, no. 2 (2023): 201–215.

feels helpful and makes the learning process easier, students tend to repeat it. That's where habits start to form.

The surrounding environment also has a significant influence. For instance, students who live in crowded homes may use music to help them focus so they will not be easily distracted. Others use music to set their mood when they are tired or bored with their work. Conversely, their motivation and study methods can reinforce these habits. Students who want to study in a way that is comfortable for them will be more open to forming unique habits, such as using music to study.

Several psychological theories also explain how habits are formed. Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory states that behaviors repeated and rewarded (positive reinforcement) will eventually become habits. Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes that habits can also develop through observation and imitation of others in the environment, such as peers or family members. Moreover, Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior highlights that attitudes, intentions, and perceived behavioral control contribute to the repetition of behaviors that later become habits. These perspectives strengthen the view that students' academic habits, Including listening to music while studying, are not only based on personal choice but also shaped by reinforcement, observation, and social factors.

**c. Factors Affecting Study Habits**

Some of the main factors that affect students' study habits include:

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1) **Study environment**: A comfortable and distraction-free place helps students concentrate better.
2) **Study strategies**: Techniques such as active reading, note-taking, and group discussions can increase learning effectiveness.
3) **Motivation and discipline**: Intrinsically motivated students are more likely to form good study habits than those who only study because of external demands.
4) **External influences:** Family support, encouragement from peers, and access to digital learning tools can also shape students' study routines. For example, students who are accustomed to seeing their friend's study with background music may develop the same preference.

From a behaviorist perspective, study habits are understood as learned behaviors that are reinforced over time. Thorndike's Law of Effect suggests that behaviors followed by satisfying outcomes are more likely to be repeated, meaning that if a student finds studying with music enjoyable and productive, they will naturally continue doing so until it becomes a fixed habit. Similarly, Skinner's theory of operant conditioning explains that positive reinforcement, such as feeling calmer or finishing tasks more quickly while listening to music, strengthens the likelihood of that behavior being repeated in the future. In an academic context, this means that study habits are not simply formed by conscious

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decision, but are gradually shaped by the repeated experience of reward and comfort that students associate with their chosen learning behaviors.

## 2. Learning Strategies and Self-Regulated Learning

### a. The Concept of Learning Strategies

Learning strategies refer to the specific actions, behaviours, and techniques that learners consciously, or semi-consciously, employ to make learning more effective, efficient, and enjoyable, particularly when managing a task that demands sustained attention or effort.[16] According to Weinstein and Mayer, learning strategies encompass not only cognitive techniques such as note-taking or rehearsal, but also affective and motivational tactics that learners use to regulate the emotional and attentional conditions under which learning takes place.[17] Within this broader view, learning strategies are not limited to how students process academic content, but also include how they manage their internal states, such as anxiety, boredom, or fatigue, in ways that support continued engagement with a task.

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### b. Affective and Self-Regulatory Strategies

Among the various categories of learning strategies identified in the literature, affective strategies are particularly relevant to the practice of listening to music while studying. Affective strategies involve techniques learners use to control emotions, motivation, and attitudes

[16]Rebecca L. Oxford, Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know (New York: Newbury House, 1990), 14–21.
[17]Claire E. Weinstein and Richard E. Mayer, "The Teaching of Learning Strategies," in Handbook of Research on Teaching, 3rd ed., ed. M. C. Wittrock (New York: Macmillan, 2018), 315–327.

toward learning, including lowering anxiety and providing self-encouragement.[18] Music listening can be understood as one such affective strategy by selecting music that lowers anxiety, sustains motivation, or blocks distracting stimuli, students actively regulate the emotional and attentional conditions necessary for completing academic tasks. A similar affective mechanism has been observed in collaborative, non-musical strategies: structured peer-support activities such as pair work have likewise been found to lower students' learning anxiety by fostering a more comfortable and psychologically safe environment for completing academic tasks.[19] This view is consistent with Zimmerman's model of self-regulated learning, which frames effective learners as those who proactively manage their cognitive, motivational, and environmental conditions in order to optimize their own learning process, rather than passively responding to whatever conditions happen to be present.[20]

**c. Music Listening as a Task-Differentiated Learning Strategy**

Framing music listening as a learning strategy, rather than simply as a habit, foregrounds the deliberate and adaptive character of students' choices. Rather than applying the same listening practice indiscriminately to every study session, students who treat music as a strategy are expected to vary their use of music, and their choice of genre, tempo, or

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[18]Oxford, Language Learning Strategies, 140–144.
[19] Shinta Azkarina and Moch. Imam Machfudi, "Exploring Student's Anxiety in Learning Performance Through Pair Work Activity," International Journal of Islamic Education (IJIE) 4, no. 1 (2025): 61–68.
[20]Barry J. Zimmerman, "Becoming a Self-Regulated Learner: An Overview," Theory into Practice 41, no. 2 (2022): 64–70, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4102_2.

presence of lyrics, according to the specific cognitive demands of the task at hand, much as they would select any other study technique to fit the material being learned.[21] This perspective provides the theoretical foundation for exploring, in the present study, how students' music-listening practices function as part of their broader repertoire of learning strategies, rather than as an isolated or incidental habit.

**3. Listening to Music While Studying**

**a. The Concept of Listening to Music in Learning Activities**

Many students choose to listen to music while studying amid their busy academic routines. This habit has become quite common, especially in the digital age when accessing different types of music is easy. For some students, music is more than just entertainment; it is also part of their study strategy. It can help create a calmer mood, boost morale, and make the learning process more enjoyable. Listening to music while studying can affect students' ability to concentrate and retain information.[22] Some studies show that background music helps focus, while others warn that it may be distracting, showing that the effect of music on studying is not the same for everyone. This experience depends heavily on personal preferences, the type of music listened to, and the individual's study situation. These differences

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[21]Fenna Goltz and Makiko Sadakata, "Do You Listen to Music While Studying? A Portrait of How People Use Music to Optimize Their Cognitive Performance," Acta Psychologica 220 (2021): 103417, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2021.103417.

[22]P. Shriya and A. Bhuyan, "Motivation, Discipline, and the Development of Students' Study Habits," Journal of Educational Psychology 15, no. 1 (2025).

make listening to music while studying an interesting topic to explore, as it is very personal and cannot be generalized.

**b. Types of Music Usually Listened to While Studying**

Several studies suggest that students often prefer background music without lyrics while studying. Music with lyrics can interfere with verbal memory and reading comprehension, whereas instrumental music is generally less disruptive to cognitive performance.[23] Based on these findings, the genres most commonly chosen for studying include: (1) lo-fi and instrumental music, which are often preferred because they usually have no lyrics and provide a calm background that helps students stay focused; (2) classical music, which is often believed to support concentration and creativity, especially during tasks that require sustained attention; and (3) pop and acoustic music, chosen by some students because they help maintain motivation and emotional engagement, although they may be more distracting for certain study tasks.

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These preferences show that students do not choose study music randomly, but rather select music that they believe will support concentration, mood, and productivity. Instrumental and lo-fi music tend to provide a steady auditory background without introducing much linguistic interference, while classical music is often associated with a more focused mental state.

[23]Michael B. Salamon et al., "Should We Turn off the Music? Music with Lyrics Interferes with Cognitive Tasks," Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts 17, no. 4 (2023): 499–513.

**c. The Effect of Music on Concentration and Academic Productivity**

Music is often thought to help improve concentration while studying, but its effectiveness varies based on the type of music and individual preferences. According to previous research, many students feel more focused and productive when listening to appropriate music while studying, as music creates a comfortable atmosphere that makes study sessions more efficient.[24] However, music with a fast tempo or complex lyrics can interfere with concentration, particularly for tasks requiring deep thought, such as reading or writing. Instrumental music, such as classical, is often a safer option because it does not distract with lyrics. Apart from the concentration aspect, music can affect mood and motivation, making studying more enjoyable and increasing enthusiasm for completing tasks.

**4. Students' Habits of Listening to Music While Completing Academic Tasks**

**a. The Relationship between Students' Habits and Listening to Music While Doing Academic Tasks**

Many students see music as more than just entertainment; they also see it as a companion that helps create a more pleasant and lively learning atmosphere. Research indicates that students who often listen to music while studying tend to maintain a consistent study routine more easily and feel more energized when completing their

[24]W. F. Thompson, E. G. Schellenberg, and G. Husain, "Background Music and Study Performance," Psychology of Music 51, no. 3 (2023): 512–530.

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assignments[25]. This habit makes them feel more comfortable and less bored when they have to concentrate for extended periods.

In addition to providing a pleasant atmosphere, music reduces the pressure and anxiety often associated with difficult academic work. This allows students to feel calmer and stay focused on their work. Listening to music at a certain tempo can help set a productive study rhythm.

However, students need to understand when it is appropriate to use music as a study companion because not all tasks are suitable for listening to music. Overall, this habit can effectively create a more comfortable and supportive learning environment, helping students complete academic tasks more successfully.

**b. The Positive and Negative Impacts of the Habit**

Some positive impacts found in the research include:

1) Music increases motivation to study and reduces academic stress.
2) Students who listen to music while studying tend to have more consistent academic routines.
3) Certain music can increase productivity and speed up the completion of academic tasks.

However, there are also negative impacts.

1) Music with complex lyrics can interfere with information processing.

[25] Vigl, J., Ojell-Järventausta, M., Sipola, H., dan Saarikallio, S. "Melody for the Mind: Enhancing Mood, Motivation, Concentration, and Learning through Music Listening in the Classroom." Music & Science 6 (2023): 1–16.

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2) Fast-paced music genres can increase study anxiety.

3) Not all students benefit some focus better in a quiet atmosphere.

**c. The Function of the Music for Students**

Music serves as more than just background noise for students; it functions as a psychological tool that helps regulate emotions and maintain a stable mental state during academic work. Research suggests that when students engage in tasks that require sustained attention, music can act as a buffer against mental fatigue, helping them stay engaged for longer periods. This perspective positions music listening not as a distraction, but as a deliberate strategy that students adopt to manage the cognitive and emotional demands of studying[26].

In their research, Kahar et al. Show that many university students feel more comfortable and supported when doing assignments with music in the background because it helps create a conducive learning atmosphere and reduces boredom, while a smaller group of students report that they learn more effectively in quiet conditions.

These findings highlight that students' learning preferences vary widely and depend on individual characteristics as well as the types of music they choose. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to give students space to discover their own effective ways of learning

[26] Kahar, N., Abalos, C. A., Manero, H. N., Mosquera, D. S. R., Gonzales, L. B., Asoy, V., Estrellan, J., dan Marcell, A. M. "Perceptions of Music and its Effect on the Productivity of Students." ASEAN Journal of Educational Research and Technology 3, no. 1 (2024): 45–62.

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and to use music, when appropriate, as a tool to make the study process smoother and more enjoyable.

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# CHAPTER III

# RESEARCH METHOD

## A. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, supported by simple descriptive statistics derived from a supplementary questionnaire. The purpose of using this design is to describe and analyze students' music-listening strategies while completing academic tasks in a natural setting.[27] According to Sugiyono, qualitative research emphasizes understanding social phenomena from the participants' perspectives and collects data in the form of words, images, or behaviors rather than numbers. In this context, the researcher attempts to explore and describe how students at UIN KHAS Jember engage in the habit of listening to music when doing their academic assignments, and what roles this habit plays in their broader learning strategies.

Although the design of this study remains predominantly qualitative, a set of closed-ended questionnaire items was distributed through Google Form to a wider group of 40 students in order to obtain a broader, descriptive picture of general patterns, such as the frequency of music listening, preferred genres, and the types of tasks most commonly accompanied by music, before these patterns were explored in greater depth through interviews. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, namely frequencies and percentages, and were used to support and contextualize,

[27]Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian: Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D, Cet. 27 (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2022), 9–11.

rather than replace, the qualitative findings obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation.[28] This combination is often referred to as a qualitative descriptive design supported by descriptive statistics, in which numerical data serve an illustrative and complementary function within a study that remains fundamentally qualitative in its aims and interpretation.[29]

A descriptive qualitative design is considered appropriate because the focus of this research is not to test hypotheses, but rather to provide a comprehensive description of a social phenomenon, in this case, the strategies, experiences, and reasons underlying university students' use of music in relation to their academic tasks. By employing this approach, the researcher can present a detailed, systematic, and factual account of the experiences and perceptions of students, complemented by simple descriptive statistics that indicate how widely these patterns are shared across a broader group of respondents. This aligns with the study's three research questions on strategies, experiences, and reasons.

## B. Research Location

The research was conducted at Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq (UIN KHAS) Jember**,** one of the well known Islamic universities in East Java, Indonesia. This institution was selected because it provides a diverse academic environment where students come from different backgrounds. The researcher observed that many students at UIN KHAS

[28]John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018), 65–68.
[29]Sudjana, Metode Statistika, 6th ed. (Bandung: Tarsito, 2019), 3–7.

Jember have a tendency to listen to music while studying or completing assignments, making this location highly relevant to the focus of the research.

The choice of site is also supported by accessibility and feasibility. As the researcher is part of this academic environment, it was easier to gain access to students, build rapport, and ensure a natural observation process. This allowed the research to be conducted in an authentic setting without disrupting the students' usual habits.

## C. Research Subject

The subjects of this research consist of two groups of participants, corresponding to the two forms of data collection employed in this study.

The primary subjects are undergraduate students from the English Language Education Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN KHAS Jember, who took part in the in-depth interviews and observations. These participants were selected purposively, focusing on students who reported frequently listening to music while completing academic tasks such as writing essays, preparing lesson plans, or reviewing linguistics materials. Purposive sampling was used to ensure rich data relevant to the EFL context, where language processing might interact uniquely with background music. This group consisted of 5–10 students (mixed gender) from the program, a focused selection intended to capture discipline-specific habits, such as music use during writing- or reading-intensive tasks, while maintaining feasibility for in-depth qualitative exploration.

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The secondary subjects are a wider group of 40 students from the same program, who completed a closed-ended questionnaire distributed through Google Form. This group was included to provide a broader, descriptive overview of general music-listening patterns across the student population, which was then used to contextualize and support the in-depth findings obtained from the smaller interview group. Diversity within both groups, in terms of semester level and academic workload, enriches the findings without compromising the specificity of the research focus.

## D. Data Collection Technique

In line with the qualitative approach, this research uses several concrete data collection techniques that describe what the researcher will actually do in the field:

1. **Observation**

In this study, the researcher conducted non-participant observation in natural study settings at UIN KHAS Jember, such as the library, reading rooms, or other campus areas where students usually worked on assignments while listening to music. The researcher focused on students who were seen wearing earphones or playing music from their devices while doing academic tasks, such as writing essays or reading course materials. During observation, the researcher noted when they listened to music, what kinds of academic tasks they were working on, and how they organized their study environment (for example, volume level, type of music, or whether they studied alone or in

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groups). All of these aspects were recorded in an observation checklist and field notes without interrupting the students' activities.

2. **Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students from the English Language Education Program who frequently listened to music while completing academic tasks. The interviews were guided by an interview protocol that included questions about their reasons for listening to music, the types of music they preferred, the kinds of tasks they usually did while listening to music, and situations when music helped or distracted them. The interviews were carried out face-to-face or online, recorded with the participants' permission, and then transcribed verbatim. Through these interviews, participants were encouraged to tell detailed stories about their study routines so that the researcher could gain in-depth insight into their habits and experiences.

3. **Documentation**

The researcher also collected supporting documents that were voluntarily shared by participants, such as screenshots of playlists or music applications (e.g., Spotify, YouTube) and personal study notes that showed how they combined music with academic tasks. These documents were used to complement and strengthen the findings from observation and interviews, for example by illustrating the types of music most frequently chosen during study activities.

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4. **Questionnaire (Google Form)**

To complement the in-depth qualitative data, the researcher distributed a closed-ended questionnaire through Google Form to 40 students of the English Language Education Program. The questionnaire consisted of items covering students' frequency of listening to music while studying, their preferred music genres, the types of academic tasks most commonly accompanied by music, and their general perceptions of whether music helped or hindered their academic work. Responses were recorded automatically by Google Form and subsequently analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, namely frequencies and percentages, presented in the form of tables or charts. The results of this questionnaire served to provide a broader, descriptive picture of students' general patterns and to support the interpretation of the more detailed findings obtained from observation and interviews.

By combining these four techniques, the data collected in this study were expected to be richer and more trustworthy, because the findings did not rely on only one source of information.

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## E. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in this research followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), which includes three stages:

1. **Data Reduction**

In this stage, the researcher read all observation notes, interview transcripts, and documents, then selected and focused only on information

that was relevant to the research questions. For example, from the interview transcripts, the researcher highlighted statements about students' reasons for listening to music, the types of music they chose, when they usually listened to music, and how they felt it affected their academic tasks. Irrelevant parts were set aside so that the analysis became more focused.

**2. Data Display**

After reduction, the researcher organized the data into thematic categories, such as "music as a motivator", "music as a distraction", or "music as a stress reliever". These themes were be displayed in the form of matrices, simple tables, and narrative descriptions that combined quotes, observation notes, and documents. By arranging the data in this way, the researcher could more easily see patterns in students' habits and experiences.

**3. Conclussion Drawing and Verificatio**

In this final stage, the researcher drew conclusions based on the themes that had been displayed and continuously checked them against field notes, documentation, and feedback from participants. The researcher saw whether the conclusions truly answered the three main research questions about students' habits, perceptions, and reasons for listening to music while completing academic tasks, and revised the conclusions if there are inconsistencies.

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In addition to the qualitative analysis described above, data obtained from the Google Form questionnaire were analyzed separately using simple descriptive statistics. Responses to each closed-ended item were tabulated and converted into frequencies and percentages to illustrate general patterns among the 40 respondents, such as how many students reported listening to music daily or which genres were most commonly preferred. These descriptive statistics were then read alongside the themes generated from the qualitative data, allowing the researcher to see whether the patterns identified through interviews and observation were broadly reflected in the wider student population, without treating the numerical results as a basis for hypothesis testing or generalization.

**F. Data Validity**

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, the researcher employed the following strategies:

1. **Triangulation**

   Data triangulation was applied by using more than one method of data collection (observation, interviews, documentation and the questionnaire) and cross-checking the consistency of the findings across sources.

2. **Member Checking**

   After the interviews, the researcher returned the transcripts or summaries of the findings to participants to confirm their accuracy. This

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process ensured that the data truly reflected the students' experiences and perspectives.

**3. Peer Debriefing**

The researcher discussed the preliminary findings and interpretations with academic peers, such as fellow English Education students who were familiar with qualitative research, to obtain constructive feedback and reduce potential bias in interpreting the data.

**4. Prolonged Engagement**

The researcher spent an extended period in the field by repeatedly observing participants in their natural study settings. Observational activities included attending locations (e.g., cafe, the library, study rooms) at various times and on different days to capture consistent patterns in participants' habits, recording the duration and frequency of music listening while they completed academic tasks, noting behavioral changes when music was played (e.g., changes in focus, pauses, interactions with peers) and documenting contextual conditions such as volume level, type of device, and whether participants studied alone or in groups. The researcher also maintained ongoing communication with participants to verify that the observed phenomena reflected their routine behavior rather than temporary situations or responses to the researcher's presence. This prolonged engagement was intended to enhance the credibility of the findings by ensuring that observed behaviors and reported experiences represented participants' typical routines.

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## G. Research Procedure

The procedures in this study were divided into several stages:

1. **Preparation Stage**

   The researcher identified the research problem, formulated research questions, reviewed relevant literature, and prepared research instruments such as the observation checklist, interview guidelines, and the Google Form questionnaire.

2. **Data Collection Stage**

   The researcher carried out observations, conducted interviews, distributed the questionnaire to 40 students, and collected documentation from selected students at UIN KHAS Jember according to the criteria that had been set.

3. **Data Analysis Stage**

   Qualitative data were reduced, organized, and categorized into themes using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana framework, while questionnaire data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The researcher then interpreted the data by linking them to theories and previous studies.

4. **Validation Stage**

   The researcher applied triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing to ensure data trustworthiness.

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**5. Reporting Stage**

Finally, the results were compiled into a thesis report, systematically presenting the findings and their implications for understanding students' habits of listening to music while completing academic tasks.

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# CHAPTER IV

# RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## A. Research Site and Participants

Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq (UIN KHAS) Jember is a state Islamic university located in Jember Regency, East Java. The university integrates Islamic scholarship, science, and local wisdom, and holds an excellent accreditation status across its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It operates through five main faculties: the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FTIK), the Faculty of Syariah, the Faculty of Dakwah, the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business (FEBI), and the Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Humanities (FUAH). The university's vision is to become a leading Islamic university in Southeast Asia by 2045, grounded in scholarship rooted in local wisdom and oriented toward serving humanity and civilisation.

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design supported by descriptive statistics. The primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with seven students, while a questionnaire distributed to a wider group of 40 students of the English Language Education Programme, was used to complement the interview findings and to provide a clearer statistical picture of how widely the patterns identified in the interviews were shared across the student population. This combination allows the interpretive depth of the interviews to be read alongside the numerical trends of the questionnaire, strengthening the overall credibility of the findings.

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Interview participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) currently enrolled students at UIN KHAS Jember, (2) having a habit of listening to music while completing academic tasks, and (3) willing to be interviewed and share their experiences openly. The seven interview participants were all students of the English Language Education Programme, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN KHAS Jember.

***Table 4.1 Interview Participant Profile***

| No. | Code | Gender | Semester | Music Listening Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | R1 | Female | 8 | Almost every time she does assignments |
| 2 | R2 | Female | 8 | Every day |
| 3 | R3 | Female | 10 | Situational, depending on mood and task difficulty |
| 4 | R4 | Female | 8 | 4–6 times per week |
| 5 | R5 | Female | 8 | Often, almost every study session |
| 6 | R6 | Male | 8 | Fairly often, especially with a heavy workload |
| 7 | R7 | Female | 8 | Quite often, especially for assignments and repetitive tasks |

Of the seven interview participants, six were in their eighth semester and one in her tenth semester; six were female and one was male. Their listening habits ranged from a daily habit (R2) and near-daily use tied to assignments (R1, R5), to a more situational pattern that depended on mood (R3). This range of habits, though drawn from a small purposive sample, foreshadows the broader distribution of listening frequency captured later in the questionnaire.

***Table 4.2 Questionnaire Respondent Profile (N = 40)***

| No. | Category | Group | f | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gender | Female | 33 | 82.1% |
| | | Male | 7 | 17.9% |
| 2 | Semester | 2nd semester | 10 | 25.6% |
| | | 4th semester | 10 | 23.1% |
| | | 6th semester | 11 | 28.2% |
| | | 8th semester | 9 | 23.1% |

The questionnaire respondents were drawn from a broader range of semesters within the same study programme, giving the descriptive statistical data a wider demographic base than the interview sample while still representing the same population of English Language Education students.

**B. Research Findings**

This section presents the findings of the study, which is qualitative-descriptive in nature and supported by descriptive statistics from a questionnaire used to deepen and enrich the interview findings. The discussion below first presents the descriptive statistical picture obtained from the questionnaire distributed to 40 students, which indicates how widely particular listening habits, preferences, and perceived effects were shared across the wider student population. It then presents the thematic findings drawn from the in-depth interviews with the seven purposively selected participants, which explain, in the students' own words, why and how those patterns occur. Together, these findings address the three research questions of this study: (1) students' habits of listening to music during academic tasks, (2) students' perceptions of the impact of music on their academic work, and (3) the main reasons students listen to music while studying.

**1. Descriptive Statistical Data from the Questionnaire**

Table 4.3 summarises the descriptive statistics obtained from the nine multiple-choice items of the questionnaire (N = 40). Two additional open-ended items included in the questionnaire were excluded from this summary, as they

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were intended only to enrich, rather than substitute, the interview data reported in the next section.

***Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Responses (N = 40)***

| No. | Aspect | Response Category | f | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Frequency of listening to music while doing academic tasks | Always / almost every time | 29 | 71.8% |
| | | Often | 10 | 25.6% |
| | | Rarely | 1 | 2.6% |
| 2 | Type of academic task usually accompanied by music | Writing essays/papers | 27 | 69.2% |
| | | Reviewing notes | 7 | 15.4% |
| | | Doing calculation/analytical tasks | 4 | 10.3% |
| | | Reading materials/literature | 2 | 5.1% |
| 3 | Device most often used | Laptop | 24 | 59.0% |
| | | Handphone | 16 | 41.0% |
| 4 | Most preferred music genre | Pop/acoustic | 30 | 74.4% |
| | | Classical music | 8 | 20.5% |
| | | Instrumental | 2 | 5.1% |
| 5 | Perceived effect on concentration (general) | Greatly helps improve concentration | 29 | 71.8% |
| | | Helps somewhat | 11 | 28.2% |
| 6 | Impact of music on high-concentration tasks (e.g., memorising, reading difficult material) | Very helpful | 21 | 51.3% |
| | | Somewhat helpful | 10 | 25.6% |
| | | Avoid music for this type of task | 9 | 23.1% |
| 7 | Effect most often felt after listening while studying | Reduces stress or anxiety | 26 | 66.7% |
| | | Helps focus / reduces mind-wandering | 8 | 17.9% |
| | | Reduces boredom | 6 | 15.4% |
| 8 | Main reason for listening to music | Helps focus and concentrate | 21 | 51.3% |
| | | Reduces boredom | 10 | 25.6% |
| | | Reduces stress | 9 | 23.1% |
| 9 | Main consideration when choosing a genre | Difficulty level of the task | 21 | 51.3% |
| | | Mood at the time | 19 | 48.7% |

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Two figures are of particular importance in answering the research questions of this study. First, regarding students' listening habits, 97.4% of respondents reported listening to music “always/almost every time” or “often” while completing academic tasks, and only a single respondent (2.6%) reported listening rarely; none reported never listening at all. This confirms that listening to music while studying is not an isolated preference of the seven interview participants, but a near-universal habit within the wider student population surveyed. Second, regarding the perceived impact of music, all 40 respondents (100%) reported some degree of positive effect on concentration, with 71.8% describing the effect as “greatly helping” and the remainder as “helping somewhat”; and when asked which single effect they felt most often, two-thirds (66.7%) pointed to a reduction in stress or anxiety, ahead of improved focus (17.9%) and reduced boredom (15.4%).

Several other patterns are noteworthy. Writing essays or papers was, by a wide margin, the task most frequently paired with music (69.2%), which is consistent with the interview finding that music was mainly used for language production and other routine, sustained tasks. Preferences leaned toward calmer, moderate-tempo music, with pop/acoustic (74.4%) and classical music (20.5%) together accounting for nearly all responses, while pure instrumental tracks were the least common choice (5.1%) a slightly different emphasis from the interview sample, in which instrumental and lo-fi genres were more prominent. For tasks that demand high concentration, the picture is more nuanced than a simple preference for silence: while 23.1% said they avoided music altogether for such

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tasks, the remaining 76.9% still found music at least somewhat helpful even under these demanding conditions, suggesting that avoidance of music during high-load cognitive work, although real, is not the dominant pattern across the wider student population. Finally, respondents were almost evenly split between choosing a genre based on the difficulty of the task (51.3%) and based on their mood at the time (48.7%), indicating that both cognitive and emotional considerations shape students' music choices to a comparable degree.

**2. Findings from the In-Depth Interviews**

The interview data were analysed thematically and organised into six themes that explain, in more depth, the numerical patterns described above: (a) habitual and ritualistic listening, (b) task-contingent use of music, (c) genre selection and the reasoning behind it, (d) perceived impact on concentration and motivation, (e) the underlying reasons for the habit, and (f) contextual, lived experiences of when music helped or hindered.

**a. Habitual and Ritualistic Listening**

All seven participants had incorporated music into their study routine, although the intensity and regularity of the habit differed markedly from one student to another. R2 listened every day, particularly while writing her thesis, treating music almost as a fixed companion to her most demanding academic project. R1 and R5 listened almost every time they worked on assignments, describing it as an automatic accompaniment to study rather than something they consciously decided on each time. R4 listened four to six times a week, R6 and R7 listened fairly to quite often,

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especially when their academic workload was heavy, while R3 stood apart from the others, listening only when she was “in the mood” and explicitly denying that it had become a fixed part of her routine. What stands out across these varying frequencies is not simply how often participants listened, but how deliberately they did so: more than half of them, including R1 and R4, described consciously preparing a playlist before beginning a study session, rather than choosing music passively or at random. R1 explained this preparatory step in her own words:

*“Before starting my assignments, I often prepare my playlist first because it helps me get into study mode.” (R1)*[30]

This deliberate preparation suggests that, for many participants, music functioned not merely as background sound but as a psychological transition ritual a self-initiated cue that helped them shift from an unfocused, everyday state of mind into a more concentrated, task-oriented one. In this sense, the act of choosing and queuing music before starting to work already represented a first step of engagement with the task, functioning much like a warm-up routine that primed participants mentally before the academic work itself began.

**b. Task-Contingent Use of Music**

Rather than listening to music uniformly across every activity, participants consistently distinguished between tasks that welcomed music and tasks that did not. Music accompanied writing assignments, preparing presentations, reading materials, and other repetitive tasks, and was

[30] Interviewed Towards student of eight semester, 20 may 2026

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described as especially useful when participants felt tired or had to sustain effort over a long stretch of time. R6 noted that he typically listened to music when writing articles, doing daily assignments, or reading course material over extended periods, treating it as a companion for tasks that were lengthy but not necessarily cognitively complex. The picture changed sharply, however, once the task demanded intensive, focused thinking. Nearly all participants reported switching to silence when memorising material, reading dense or theoretically difficult articles, learning unfamiliar concepts such as new theories or calculations, or engaging in group discussions that required active listening and real-time verbal exchange. R1 described this shift clearly:

*"Usually when I need full concentration, like memorizing something, reading difficult articles, or doing calculations." (R1)*[31]

R6 further explained that music could disturb his focus specifically "when the volume is too loud or when the song is too energetic" (R6), while R3 said that particularly demanding tasks required a level of quiet far beyond her usual threshold for background sound. This pattern points to something more deliberate than simple habit participants appeared to be weighing, task by task, whether the cognitive resources needed to process song lyrics or follow a beat would compete with the resources needed for the academic task itself. When the task was largely mechanical or repetitive typing, reading familiar material, or working through routine assignments music could run alongside it without much cost. When the

[31] Interviewed Towards student of eight semester, 20 may 2026

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task instead required participants to hold new information in mind, follow complex arguments, or communicate with others in real time, that same music became an added burden on attention rather than a support, which is why silence was so consistently preferred at exactly those moments. This selective switching between sound and silence therefore reflects a considerable degree of metacognitive awareness: participants were not simply reacting to music, but actively monitoring their own concentration and adjusting their listening behaviour according to the changing demands of each task.

**c. Genre Selection and the Reasoning Behind It**

Beyond deciding when to listen, participants were equally deliberate about what they listened to. Genre preferences varied across the group pop/K-pop for R1 and R5, breakbeat and pop for R2, instrumental pop for R3, instrumental classical, ambient, and modern instrumental music without vocals for R4, acoustic pop for R6, and instrumental, lo-fi, classical, and soft pop for R7 yet beneath this surface variety lay a strikingly consistent underlying logic. Almost every participant explicitly avoided music that was too loud, too energetic, or, notably, music they were personally attached to, because such songs were more likely to seize their attention rather than simply accompany their work. R4, who took perhaps the most deliberate and analytical approach to selecting music, offered the clearest explanation of this reasoning:

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*"I choose instrumental music because there are no lyrics to distract me, the tempo and dynamics tend to be calm which helps me maintain a steady work rhythm, and the sound of the instruments creates a focused backdrop without drawing my attention to any words." (R4)*[32]

R4's reasoning captures three distinct functions that recur across the other participants' accounts removing lyrics to avoid competing with the brain's language-processing demands, maintaining a calm and steady tempo to sustain a consistent working rhythm rather than triggering excitement or restlessness, and creating a stable sonic backdrop that fills silence without pulling attention toward itself. This indicates that genre choice was not simply a matter of personal taste, but a self-regulated strategy through which participants engineered their listening environment to match the cognitive demands of the work at hand, deliberately keeping potentially distracting elements lyrics, unpredictable tempo changes, emotionally loaded songs at a manageable distance.

**d. Perceived Impact on Concentration and Motivation**

Every participant described experiencing positive effects from listening to music while studying, though the way they articulated those effects differed slightly from one person to another. For some, the main benefit was that studying simply felt less monotonous and more bearable over long stretches of time for others, it was a sense of calm and motivation that carried them through otherwise stressful tasks. R7 summarised this dual benefit clearly:

[32] Interviewed Towards student of eight semester, 21 may 2026

*"Listening to music improves my concentration because it reduces boredom and creates a more comfortable study atmosphere. It makes me feel more relaxed and motivated while studying." (R7)*[33]

This quote captures a pattern echoed across the interviews: music appeared to work less as a direct booster of cognitive performance and more as a regulator of the emotional and motivational state that makes sustained concentration possible in the first place by making the study environment feel calmer and less tedious, participants found it easier to remain seated at their tasks for longer. At the same time, participants were candid about the conditions under which this benefit reversed into a cost. R1 admitted that choosing the wrong song, especially one she was personally fond of, could pull her attention away from her work entirely, while R6 described a similar experience in which overly upbeat songs led him to sing along instead of studying, effectively replacing the academic task with the music itself as the object of his attention. R3 offered the most nuanced account of all, explaining that her response to music depended entirely on the difficulty of the task and her mood on a given day, to the point that particularly demanding work sometimes required her to turn the music off completely rather than adjust the genre. Read together, these accounts show that music's impact on concentration and motivation is not a fixed, one-directional effect but a balance that can tip either way depending on the song chosen, the participant's current state, and the

[33] Interviewed Towards student of eight semester, 22 may 2026

nature of the task a balance each participant appeared to manage through ongoing, largely self-taught trial and error.

**e. Underlying Reasons for the Habit**

When asked directly why they listened to music while studying, participants offered reasons that, on the surface, seemed to differ reducing stress and creating a more comfortable atmosphere (R1, R6), managing boredom during long or repetitive tasks, sustaining productivity and mood especially during demanding periods such as thesis writing (R2, R5), and blocking out environmental noise (R4) but that converged on a common underlying function using music to regulate an internal state that would otherwise make studying harder to sustain. R3's account was particularly revealing, because rather than pointing to a single practical reason, she described the need for music in almost purely restorative terms:

*"Actually, I don't have a main reason because my reason is just only that I need to relax with my body and also my brain. Even when I do every task that I think is not really easy, I will listen to music." (R3)*[34]

R3's framing is instructive precisely because she denied having a specific, task-related reason at all for her, music was less a tool aimed at a particular outcome and more a baseline need for mental rest that she reached for whenever a task felt effortful. This suggests that, across the group, music was rarely approached as mere entertainment. Instead, participants consistently treated it as a personal coping and self-regulation strategy a resource they could draw on flexibly to manage whichever

[34] Interviewed Towards student of eight semester, 20 may 2026

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demand felt most pressing at a given moment, whether that was boredom, fatigue, noise, low mood, or simply the accumulated mental load of academic work.

**f. Contextual, Lived Experiences**

The participants' own recollections of specific study sessions provide the most concrete evidence of how strongly context shapes whether music helps or hinders. R1 recalled that music was genuinely helpful for assignments that took several hours to complete, yet became distracting once she shifted into exam preparation, where the demand for focused recall outweighed any comfort music could offer. R3 described a formative experience during an especially overwhelming third semester, when she began relying on music more heavily and, through that experience, came to recognise just how much it helped her manage her mental state under pressure a realisation that shaped her listening habits in the semesters that followed. R4 offered one of the more analytically detailed accounts, while an instrumental playlist reliably sustained her writing over long thesis sessions, the same strategy failed the first time she encountered complex statistical theory using lyrical music, because her attention kept splitting between following the words of the song and grasping unfamiliar concepts only after switching to purely instrumental music did her concentration return. R6 described a comparably vivid contrast between two specific occasions:

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*"One time I had to finish an article assignment with a short deadline, and listening to pop acoustic music helped me stay calm and focused. However, when I listened to very upbeat songs, I became distracted and started singing along instead of studying." (R6)*[35]

What makes R6's account particularly useful is that it involves the same participant, doing a similar kind of task, on two different occasions, with only the type of music changing yet the outcome shifted from productive focus to outright derailment. Read alongside R1's, R3's, and R4's experiences, this points to a single underlying principle that runs through all six themes discussed above: music supports academic work when its genre, lyrical content, tempo, and volume are well matched to the cognitive demands of the task at that moment, and becomes disruptive as soon as that match breaks down. Crucially, none of the participants treated this as a fixed rule to be applied once and forgotten; rather, each of them appeared to keep adjusting their listening choices session by session, based on direct, lived experience of what had worked and what had not.

## C. Summary of Findings

Table 4.4 synthesises the descriptive statistical data and the interview findings in relation to the three research questions of this study.

***Table 4.4 Summary of Key Findings by Research Question***

| NO | Research Question | Key Findings (Questionnaire and Interviews) |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | What music-listening strategies do university students employ as part of their | Listening to music functions as a deliberate learning strategy for nearly all students: 97.4% of questionnaire respondents reported listening "always/almost every time" or "often" while |

[35] Interviewed Towards student of eight semester, 22 may 2026

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | learning strategies when completing academic tasks? | studying, and all seven interview participants described incorporating music into their study routine rather than listening incidentally. This strategic use is most visible in how students match music to task type writing tasks were the most common context for listening (69.2% of questionnaire respondents), and more than half of the interviewees reported preparing a playlist beforehand as a deliberate transition ritual to shift into a study mindset. Both sources of data converge on the same strategic exception: students consciously set music aside for memorisation, complex problem-solving, and learning new concepts, indicating that the decision to listen (or not) is task-dependent rather than habitual by default. |
| **2** | How do students describe their experience of listening to music while completing academic tasks? | Students overwhelmingly described their experience of listening to music in positive terms all questionnaire respondents (100%) reported a positive effect on concentration, and two-thirds (66.7%) identified stress or anxiety reduction as the effect they felt most often a description echoed throughout the interviews, where participants recounted feeling calmer, less bored, and more motivated while working. However, students' accounts of this experience were not uniformly positive; 23.1% of questionnaire respondents described avoiding music entirely for high-concentration tasks, and interview participants similarly narrated instances where loud, upbeat, or personally meaningful songs became distracting, sometimes reversing the benefit they had come to expect from music. |
| **3** | What are the main reasons students listen to music during academic tasks? | Improving focus and concentration was the single most common reason reported in the questionnaire (51.3%), followed by reducing boredom (25.6%) and reducing stress (23.1%). The interviews add texture to these figures, showing that students use music as a broader coping strategy to create a more comfortable study atmosphere, sustain motivation during long or repetitive tasks, block environmental |

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| | | |
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| | | noise, and regulate mood before and during study. |

**D. Discussion**

This chapter has presented findings on university students' habits of listening to music while completing academic tasks, drawing primarily on in-depth interviews with seven students and enriched by a questionnaire completed by 40 students from the same study programme. The questionnaire results and the interview findings are discussed together below, organised around students' listening habits, their perceptions of music's impact, and their main reasons for listening, before being related to previous studies presented in Chapter II.

**1. Students' Habits of Listening to Music**

The questionnaire data show that listening to music while studying is not a marginal or occasional behaviour but a habit shared by nearly all respondents (97.4% listening always/often), and the interviews help explain why this habit takes hold so widely. Several participants described consciously preparing a playlist before starting an academic task, a practice that functioned less as entertainment and more as a psychological cue signalling the beginning of a focused study session. The type of task also shaped listening behaviour in a consistent way in both sources of data: writing and other language-production tasks were most frequently paired with music (69.2% of questionnaire respondents), while tasks requiring intensive concentration memorising, reading complex material, or learning unfamiliar concepts were more often completed in silence. This indicates that participants were not using music indiscriminately, but adjusting it deliberately according to the cognitive demands of each task.

This pattern is consistent with the study conducted by Goltz and Sadakata, who found that students strategically select background music according to the type of academic task at hand, favouring calm instrumental music for demanding work and more familiar or energetic music for lighter activities.[36]

Similarly, Cheah, Randall, and Coutinho found that students actively adjust their music choices to task difficulty as a strategy for maintaining concentration and minimising mind-wandering.[37] The present findings extend this picture with a clearer sense of scale, rather than describing an occasional coping tactic used by a handful of students, the questionnaire data suggest that this kind of deliberate, task-sensitive use of music is close to a shared norm within this student population.

**2. Students' Perceptions of the Impact of Music**

The questionnaire and the interviews agree that music is generally perceived as beneficial every questionnaire respondent reported at least some improvement in concentration, and interview participants consistently described feeling more relaxed, less bored, and better able to sustain long study sessions. What the questionnaire adds is a clearer sense of which benefit matters most subjectively two-thirds of respondents (66.7%) identified stress or anxiety reduction as the effect they noticed most often, ahead of improved focus (17.9%) and reduced boredom (15.4%). This is a notable nuance, because when asked directly for their main reason for listening (rather than the effect they felt most),

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[36] Goltz and Sadakata, "Do You Listen to Music While Studying? A Portrait of How People Use Music to Optimize Their Cognitive Performance," Acta Psychologica 220 (2021): 103417.
[37] Yiting Cheah, William M. Randall, and Eduardo Coutinho, "Help Me Study! Music Listening Habits While Studying," Psychology of Music (2025),

respondents ranked improved focus and concentration highest (51.3%), with stress reduction close behind (23.1%). Read together, this suggests that students may initially turn to music expecting a productivity benefit, but the emotional relief it provides a calmer, less anxious state is what actually registers most strongly once they are in the middle of studying, a distinction the interviews independently support participants such as R1, R3, R6, and R7 all described music as something that made studying feel “less boring,” “more comfortable,” or “relaxed,” language that centres on emotional regulation as much as on cognitive performance.

At the same time, both the questionnaire and the interviews show that music's benefit is not unconditional. In the questionnaire, 23.1% of respondents said they avoided music entirely for high-concentration tasks such as memorising or reading difficult material, while the remaining majority (76.9%) still found some benefit even under these conditions a more moderate pattern than the interviews might suggest on their own, where participants such as R3 and R6 described a firmer need for silence once a task became sufficiently demanding. This divergence is instructive it indicates that while the tendency to set music aside for cognitively demanding work is real and shared by both the interview participants and the wider questionnaire sample, the threshold at which students do so, and how completely, varies from one individual to another. Interview participants further specified the conditions under which music turns counter productive when the volume is too high, the tempo too energetic, or the song personally meaningful enough to invite singing along, as R1 and R6 both experienced. These findings are consistent with Muslimah and Apriani, who found

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that soft or instrumental music in particular could improve concentration and academic performance,[38] and with Usman et al., who reported that students perceived music as helpful for reducing stress and sustaining concentration.[39] The present study adds to this literature by showing, through the questionnaire, how widely shared these perceptions are, while the interviews clarify the specific conditions task type, volume, tempo, and personal attachment to a song under which the same music can shift from being supportive to disruptive.

**3. Main Reasons for Listening to Music**

The questionnaire identifies improving focus and concentration (51.3%), reducing boredom (25.6%), and reducing stress (23.1%) as the three main reasons students listen to music while studying, and the interviews flesh out how these reasons operate in practice. Participants described music as a way of making long or repetitive tasks feel more manageable, of blocking out distracting noise in busy environments, and of regulating their mood both before and during a study session. Rather than treating music as mere entertainment, participants framed it, both in the interviews and in line with the questionnaire results, as a personal strategy closer to a coping mechanism than a leisure activity for managing the emotional and cognitive load of academic work.

This result aligns with Cheah, Randall, and Coutinho, who reported that students often use music to cope with boredom, loneliness, distraction, and

[38] Muslimah and Apriani, "The Effect of Listening Music on Concentration and Academic Performance," Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan 26, no. 1 (2020): 11–19.
[39] Usman et al., "Perceived Effect of Listening to Music Towards Study Habit of Grade 11 Students in Mindanao State University-Sulu," ASEAN Journal of Social Science and Humanities 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–12.

negative moods during study,[40] and with Usman et al., who found that students primarily listened to music to reduce stress and support their study habits.[41] The present findings suggest that, within this student population, this self-regulation strategy is not confined to a small subset of highly music-dependent students but is practised, in some form, by nearly all of them.

**4. Discussion of Findings**

Taken together, the questionnaire results and the interview findings of this study reinforce and refine one another. The questionnaire establishes that listening to music while completing academic tasks is a habit shared by the great majority of students in this population, that its perceived impact on concentration is overwhelmingly positive, and that its most keenly felt benefit is a reduction in stress and anxiety rather than a purely cognitive gain. The interviews explain the mechanisms behind these figures: music functions as a ritual cue for entering study mode, as a selectively applied cognitive aid restricted to lower-demand tasks, and as a self-regulation strategy for managing boredom, stress, and environmental distraction.

The findings also demonstrate that the effectiveness of music is highly contextual, depending on the interaction between the type of task, the characteristics of the music (genre, tempo, volume, and lyrical content), and the individual student's mood and cognitive state at a given moment. This contextual sensitivity was visible both in the questionnaire and in the interviews: the near-

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[40] Yiting Cheah, William M. Randall, and Eduardo Coutinho, "Help Me Study! Music Listening Habits While Studying," Psychology of Music (2025),

[41] Usman et al., "Perceived Effect of Listening to Music Towards Study Habit of Grade 11 Students in Mindanao State University-Sulu," ASEAN Journal of Social Science and Humanities 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–12.

even split in the questionnaire between choosing genres based on task difficulty (51.3%) and based on mood (48.7%) mirrors the interview finding that participants continuously adjusted their listening behaviour according to both the demands of the task and their emotional state. This supports the broader argument, consistent with Goltz and Sadakata as well as Cheah, Randall, and Coutinho, that listening to music while studying is best understood not as a fixed habit or a simple distraction, but as a flexible, self-regulated learning behaviour shaped by repeated personal experience and ongoing adjustment to academic demands.

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# CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSSION AND SUGGESTION

## A. Conclussion

This study set out to explore the habits of university students in listening to music while completing academic tasks at Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq (UIN KHAS) Jember, with a particular focus on students enrolled in the English Language Education Program. Drawing on in-depth interviews with the participants and qualitative descriptive data analysis, the study arrived at several key conclusions that directly address its three research questions.

First, with regard to the patterns and habits of students in listening to music during academic tasks, the study found that all participants had incorporated music listening into their study routines, though the frequency and circumstances varied considerably from one individual to another. Most participants tended to listen to music when working on tasks that were routine and time-consuming in nature, such as writing papers, preparing presentations, reading course materials, and completing repetitive assignments. In contrast, they opted for silence when confronted with tasks requiring sustained concentration, such as memorising content, grasping complex new concepts, or working through analytical problems. These habits did not emerge abruptly; rather, they developed gradually through repeated learning experiences, reinforced by the positive effects that participants directly perceived. Notably, several participants had developed a pre-study transition ritual of preparing a

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playlist before beginning work, which served as a psychological cue signalling the start of a focused study session.

Second, concerning how participants perceived the impact of music on their academic work, the study found that music was broadly regarded as beneficial. Among the effects most frequently reported were improved concentration, reduced boredom, sustained motivation, and a greater sense of comfort and ease throughout the study process. Music also functioned as an auditory shield, helping participants block out distracting sounds from their surroundings. That said, participants were also candid about situations in which music became counterproductive particularly when they chose songs with prominent lyrics, tracks they were emotionally attached to, or music with an overly energetic tempo. The perceived impact of music was, in every case, highly individual and context-dependent, shaped by the nature of the task, the characteristics of the music itself, and each student's psychological state at any given moment.

Third, regarding the primary reasons students chose to listen to music during academic tasks, the study identified several motivations that recurred consistently across participants alleviating the stress and pressure of academic demands, making the study process feel more enjoyable and less monotonous, sustaining productivity during extended study sessions, managing boredom when working on repetitive tasks, filtering out environmental distractions, and regulating their emotional state before and during study. Taken together, these motivations point to music functioning primarily as a means of emotional

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regulation a deliberate strategy through which students maintained their psychological equilibrium amid the pressures of academic life.

On the whole, this study affirms that the habit of listening to music in academic contexts is a phenomenon that is deeply contextual, personal, and cannot be understood in purely linear terms. The findings are broadly consistent with the theoretical frameworks employed, namely habit formation theory, cognitive load theory, and self-regulated learning theory, while also revealing the limits of these frameworks in fully accounting for the complexity of individual student experience. In this sense, the study does not merely confirm existing theoretical assumptions, but extends conceptual understanding through empirical findings that are specific to the context of UIN KHAS Jember.

## B. Suggestion

In light of the findings and conclusions presented above, the researcher offers the following suggestions to relevant parties.

### 1. For Students

Students are encouraged to approach the habit of listening to music during academic work with greater intentionality and reflection. Choosing the right genre, setting an appropriate volume, and knowing when music genuinely helps versus when it gets in the way are all dimensions of self-regulation that are worth cultivating. As a general principle, instrumental music without lyrics tends to be more conducive to tasks that demand language processing and deep concentration, while softer, low-key music is better suited to routine or

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repetitive work. Beyond genre and volume, it is equally important for students to recognise the appropriate contexts for this habit: music listening belongs in independent study outside the classroom, not during lectures or academic discussions. Using earphones during class not only reflects a lack of academic discipline, but also undermines active participation and the quality of understanding that every student is responsible for.

**2. For Future Researchers**

This study is not without its limitations, and these deserve to be acknowledged transparently. The scope of the research confined to participants from a single study programme at a single institution means that its findings cannot be generalised broadly. Future researchers are therefore encouraged to extend the scope of inquiry by involving participants from a wider range of study programmes, institutions, or cultural backgrounds, so as to produce a more representative and comprehensive picture. A mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative exploration with quantitative measurement may also be worth considering, as it would strengthen both the validity and the generalisability of findings. Furthermore, future studies that specifically examine the role of gender differences, cultural background, or personality traits in shaping students' music-listening habits within academic contexts would make a meaningful contribution to deepening and enriching the scholarly discourse in this field.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1. Research Matrix

**RESEARCH MATRIX**

| TITLE | VARIABLE | SUB VARIABLE | INDICATORS | RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH FOCUS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students' Habits of Listening to Music While Completing Academic Tasks | Habits of Listening to Music | Types of Music | Genre of music, tempo, presence of lyrics | 1)Research Approach<br>-Qualitative Approach<br><br>2) Type of Research<br>- Descriptive Research<br><br>3) Technique of Data Collection<br>- Interviews and Observations<br>4) Data Analysis<br>- Thematic Analysis<br><br>5)Validity of Data<br>- Triangulation and Member Checking | 1) What are the habits of university students when listening to music while completing academic tasks?<br>2) How do students perceive the impact of listening to music on their academic tasks?<br>3) What are the main reasons students listen to music during academic tasks? |
| | | Duration of Listening to Music | Time spent listening to music while studying | | |
| | | Environment of Listening | Study environment (e.g., library, home, cafe) | | |
| | Perceptions of Impact | Academic performance | Self-reported impact on grades, focus, productivity | | |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mental and emotional state | Self-reported impact on stress levels, mood | | |
| | Reasons for listening to music | Personal preferences | Preferred types of music, reasons for choosing certain types | | |
| | | Situational factors | Situations which music is preferred (e.g., specific tasks, times) | | |
| | | Cognitive and emotional benefits | Reported benefits such as increased focus, relaxation | | |

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**Appendix 2. Interview Transcript**

Subjek: mahasiswa

Tanggal Wawancara: 20 Mei-22Mei 2026

Participant Identity Table:

| No | Code | Name | Gender | Semeseter | Study Program |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **R1** | AS | Female | 8 | English Language Education |
| **2** | **R2** | NDA | Female | 8 | English Language Education |
| **3** | **R3** | NAS | Female | 10 | English Language Education |
| **4** | **R4** | LB | Female | 8 | English Language Education |
| **5** | **R5** | NI | Female | 8 | English Language Education |
| **6** | **R6** | BHR | Male | 8 | English Language Education |
| **7** | **R7** | IAF | Female | 8 | English Language Education |

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**Interview Questions**

1. Do you usually listen to music while completing academic tasks?
2. How often do you listen to music when doing academic tasks?
3. In what situations or while doing what kinds of tasks do you usually listen to music?
4. What types of music do you usually listen to while doing academic tasks?
5. Why do you prefer those types of music?
6. How does listening to music affect your concentration when completing academic tasks?
7. Does listening to music make you feel more relaxed, motivated, or distracted while studying?
8. In what situations does music help you the most while doing academic tasks?
9. In what situations does music disturb your focus?
10. What is the main reason you listen to music while completing academic tasks?
11. Has listening to music become part of your study routine? Please explain.
12. How do you feel if you study or work on assignments without listening to music?
13. Do you have any experience that shows music is very helpful or not helpful when completing academic tasks?

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**Respondent 1**

1. Yes, I usually listen to music while doing academic tasks, but not all the time. It depends on the type of task and my mood.
2. Quite often. I think I listen to music almost every time I do assignments, especially if it takes a long time.
3. Usually when I'm writing assignments, doing PowerPoint, reading materials, or working on tasks that feel repetitive.
4. Pop songs or K-pop are the types of music that I often listen to while studying.
5. Because those types of music make me feel calmer and help me stay focused. I don't really like music that is too loud while studying.
6. For me, music helps me concentrate better because it makes studying feel less boring and keeps me focused longer.
7. Most of the time it makes me feel more relaxed and motivated. But if I choose the wrong songs, especially songs I really like, I can get distracted.
8. Music helps me the most when I'm tired, sleepy, or when I have to work on assignments for a long time.
9. Usually when I need full concentration, like memorizing something, reading difficult articles, or doing calculations.
10. The main reason is because music makes studying feel more comfortable and less stressful.
11. Yes, I think so. Before starting my assignments, I often prepare my playlist first because it helps me get into study mode.
12. I can still do it, but sometimes it feels too quiet and I lose motivation more easily.
13. When I worked on assignments that took several hours, music helped me stay productive. But when I studied for exams, sometimes music distracted me, so I preferred silence.

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**Respondent 2**

1. Yes.
2. Maybe almost every day while studying or doing assignments.
3. Mostly when working on my thesis or other academic tasks.
4. Breakbeat, pop, and some other relaxing songs.
5. Because I enjoy the different sounds and rhythms from those songs.
6. I feel more enjoyable while listening to music when completing tasks.
7. Of course. Music makes me feel more relaxed while studying.
8. It helps the most when I am completing my thesis.
9. Music disturbs my focus during praying.
10. I feel more relaxed and comfortable when listening to music.
11. Yes, I often listen to music when completing tasks or doing other work.
12. There is something missing when I study without music.
13. While doing my thesis, listening to music made me feel balanced and I really enjoyed the process.

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**Respondent 3**

1. Sometimes I listen to music while doing academic tasks, depending on my mood and the difficulty of the task.
2. Not all the time. It depends on my mood and the type of assignment.
3. Usually during lighter tasks or when I need relaxation while studying.
4. Pop songs, especially instrumental pop music.
5. Because instrumental music makes me feel comfortable and relaxed while studying.
6. Listening to music helps me feel relaxed, but for difficult tasks it can sometimes disturb my focus.
7. Yes, it does. Music makes me feel more relaxed and comfortable.
8. Music really helps when I feel confused, stressed, or need relaxation.
9. It disturbs my focus when I work on difficult assignments that require full concentration and silence.

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10. Actually, I do not have a specific reason. I just listen to music to relax my body and mind while doing difficult tasks.
11. No, I think it has not become part of my study routine because I only listen to music when I am in a good mood.
12. That's okay for me. I feel there is no problem studying without music because I am used to both situations.
13. During my third semester, music really helped me relax and reduce stress when academic tasks became more difficult. However, for tasks that required deep concentration, I preferred silence.

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**Respondent 4**

1. Yes, I usually listen to music while completing academic tasks because it helps me feel more comfortable and focused.
2. I listen to music quite often, especially when working on assignments, reading materials, or doing repetitive tasks.
3. I usually listen to music when writing assignments, reading articles, making presentations, or doing tasks that require a long time to finish.
4. I usually listen to instrumental music, lo-fi, classical music, or soft pop songs.
5. Because those types of music are calming and not too distracting, so they help me stay focused while studying.
6. Listening to music improves my concentration because it helps reduce boredom and creates a more comfortable study atmosphere.
7. It makes me feel more relaxed and motivated. I do not feel distracted because I choose music that is calm and suitable for studying.
8. Music helps me the most when I study for a long time, feel tired, or need motivation to continue working on assignments.
9. Usually, music does not disturb my focus. However, very loud music or songs with fast beats can sometimes reduce my concentration.
10. The main reason is that music helps me stay focused, relaxed, and comfortable while studying.

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11. Yes, listening to music has become part of my study routine because it helps me maintain concentration and makes studying more enjoyable.
12. I feel that the atmosphere becomes quieter and sometimes more boring, so I usually prefer studying with music.
13. Yes, I have experienced finishing assignments more efficiently while listening to music because it helped me stay focused and reduced stress during studying.

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**Respondent 5**

1. Yes. I usually listen to music while doing academic tasks, especially for a long time.
2. I often listen to music while studying or doing assignments.
3. Usually while writing assignments, reading materials, or making presentations.
4. English songs, K-pop, and Chinese songs are the types of music that I often listen to.
5. Those songs make me feel relaxed, comfortable, and motivated while studying.
6. Music helps me focus better and makes studying less boring.
7. Yes, music makes me feel relaxed and motivated, but sometimes it is distracting if it is too loud.
8. Music helps the most when doing repetitive tasks or studying in a noisy place.
9. My focus gets disturbed if the song is too loud or has distracting lyrics.
10. The main reason I listen to music is to improve my mood and maintain focus.
11. Yes. Listening to music has become part of my study routine.
12. If I study without music, I sometimes feel bored and less motivated.
13. Music helps me when doing simple tasks, but sometimes it distracts me during difficult tasks.

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**Respondent 6**

1. Yes, I usually listen to music while completing academic tasks because it helps me feel more focused and relaxed.
2. Quite often, especially when I have many assignments or tasks from college.
3. Usually when writing articles, doing assignments, reading materials, or completing other college tasks.
4. Pop acoustic music is my favorite choice while studying.
5. Because pop acoustic music has a calm and soft melody, so it makes me feel relaxed and helps me concentrate better.
6. Listening to music helps me stay focused and makes it easier for me to finish tasks.
7. Yes, it makes me feel more relaxed and motivated while studying.
8. Music helps me the most when writing long assignments or working on tasks for a long time.
9. My focus gets disturbed when the volume is too loud or when the songs are too energetic.
10. The main reason is because music helps me feel comfortable, relaxed, and more focused while studying.
11. Yes, it has become part of my study routine. Before starting assignments, I usually prepare my playlist first because studying with music feels more enjoyable.
12. Actually, I am still okay studying without music, but sometimes the atmosphere feels less enjoyable.
13. One time I had to finish an article assignment with a short deadline, and music helped me stay calm and focused. However, upbeat songs sometimes distracted me because I started singing along.

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**Respondent 7**

1. Yes, I usually listen to music while completing academic tasks because it helps me feel more comfortable and focused.
2. Quite often, especially when working on assignments, reading materials, or repetitive tasks.
3. Usually when writing assignments, reading articles, making presentations, or doing tasks that take a long time.
4. Instrumental music, lo-fi, classical music, or soft pop songs are my usual choices while studying.
5. Because those types of music are calming and not too distracting, so they help me stay focused.
6. Listening to music improves my concentration because it reduces boredom and creates a more comfortable study atmosphere.
7. It makes me feel more relaxed and motivated while studying.
8. Music helps me the most when studying for a long time, feeling tired, or needing motivation to continue assignments.
9. Usually, music does not disturb my focus. However, loud music or songs with fast beats can sometimes reduce my concentration.
10. The main reason is that music helps me stay focused, relaxed, and comfortable while studying.
11. Yes, listening to music has become part of my study routine because it helps me maintain concentration and makes studying more enjoyable.
12. Without music, the atmosphere feels quieter and sometimes more boring.
13. I have experienced finishing assignments more efficiently while listening to music because it helped me stay focused and reduced stress during studying.

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**Appendix 3. Questionnare Transcript**

Judul kuesioner: Habits of Listening to Music During Academic Tasks

**Bagian I. Data Diri Responden**

1. Nama
2. Angkatan
   - 2022
   - 2023
   - 2024
   - 2025
3. Semester
   - 2
   - 4
   - 6
   - 8
4. Gender
   - Female
   - Male

Bagian II. Pertanyaan Inti

1. How often do you listen to music while completing academic tasks?
   - Always, almost every time I work on a task
   - Often
   - Rarely
   - Never
2. What type of academic task do you usually do while listening to music?
   - Doing calculation/analytical tasks
   - Writing essays/papers
   - Reading materials/literature
   - Reviewing notes
3. What device do you usually use to listen to music while doing academic tasks?
   - Laptop
   - Handphone
4. Which music genre do you most often choose while doing academic tasks?
   - Instrumental
   - Pop/acoustic
   - Classical music
5. In your opinion, how does music affect your concentration while doing academic tasks?
   - Greatly helps improve concentration
   - Helps somewhat
   - Does not affect concentration

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- Disrupts concentration

6. For tasks that require high concentration (e.g., memorizing or reading difficult material), what impact does music have on you?
   - Very helpful
   - Somewhat helpful
   - I avoid music for this type of task
7. What effect do you most often feel after listening to music while studying?
   - Helps me focus and reduces mind-wandering
   - Reduces boredom
   - Reduces stress or anxiety
8. What is your main reason for listening to music while doing academic tasks?
   - Helps me focus and concentrate
   - Reduces boredom
   - Reduces stress
9. What is your main consideration when choosing a particular music genre for academic tasks?
   - The difficulty level of the task at hand
   - My mood at the time
10. Why do you choose that particular type/genre of music while doing academic tasks? Explain your personal reason (e.g., related to mood, comfort, past experience, or the type of task you are doing).

    (esai)
11. Briefly describe an experience when music truly helped (or instead disrupted) you while doing an academic task. What made that experience memorable?

    (esai)

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**Appendix 4. Interview Documentation**

| NO | PICTURES | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| 1 |  | **The Researcher Interview with Students About the Habits of Listening to Music** |
| 2 |  | **The Researcher Interview with Students About the Habits of Listening to Music** |
| 3 |   | **Student Playlist from the Spotify app** |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **4** |  | **Student Playlist from the Youtube app** |
| **5** |  | **Students are working on assigments at a cafe while listening to music** |

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**Appendix 5. Research Journal**

| NO | DAY and DATE | ACTIVITY |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | **Rabu, 20 mei 2026** | Melakukan observasi di perpustakaan kampus untuk mengamati kebiasaan mahasiswa mendengarkan musik saat mengerjakan tugas akademik. |
| **2** | **Rabu, 20 mei 2026** | Melakukan wawancara dengan responden 1 di perpustakaan kampus mengenai kebiasaan mendengarkan musik saat mengerjakan tugas akademik. |
| **3** | **Rabu, 20 mei 2026** | Melakukan wawancara dengan responden 2 di luar perpustakaan kampus mengenai pengalaman mendengarkan musik saat belajar. |
| **4** | **Rabu, 20 mei 2026** | Melakukan wawancara dengan responden 3 di kos mengenai kebiasaan mendengarkan musik selama mengerjakan tugas akademik. |
| **5** | **Rabu, 20 mei 2026** | Melakukan observasi di kafe yang sering digunakan mahasiswa untuk belajar sambil mendengarkan musik. |
| **6** | **Kamis, 21 mei 2026** | Melakukan wawancara dengan responden 4 di rumah mengenai persepsi nya terhadap penggunaan musik saat mengerjakan tugas akademik. |
| **7** | **Kamis, 21 mei 2026** | Melakukan wawancara dengan responden 5 di tempat belajar mengenai pengalaman nya mendengarkan musik saat belajar. |
| **8** | **Jumat, 22 mei 2026** | Melakukan wawancara dengan responden 6 di kampus mengenai kebiasaan mendengarkan musik saat mengerjakan tugas akademik. |
| **9** | **Jumat, 22 mei 2026** | Melakukan wawancara dengan responden 7 di rumah mengenai pengalaman dan persepsi nya terhadap penggunaan musik saat mengerjakan tugas akademik. |

## AUTHENTICITY STATEMENT OF WRITING

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Hereby declares that the thesis entitled: "Exploring Students Habits of Listening to Music while Completing Academic Tasks" is truly my original work, except in part of quotation and references, theory, sources, and data. I take references from experts.

Jember, 29 of May 2026

Author




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## SURAT KETERANGAN LULUS CEK TURNITIN

Bersama ini disampaikan bahwa karya ilmiah yang disusun oleh

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Program Studi : Tadris Bahasa Inggris
Judul Karya Ilmiah : Exploring Students Habits of Listening to Music while Completing Academic Tasks

Telah lulus cek similarity dengan menggunakan aplikasi turnitin UIN KHAS Jember dengan skor akhir sebesar ( 14% )

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5. BAB V : 2%

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Jember, 26 Mei 2026
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**Organizational Experince:**

1. Secretary of Insani Jember
2. Member of IMABA UIN KHAS Jember
3. Member of PMI UIN KHAS Jember

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