

Students' Participation in Institutional Music Opportunities at the University of Toronto Scarborough

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Abstract

Group music-making has been shown to improve self-esteem and reduce loneliness. Despite extensive music offerings, many non-music students at University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) are not participating in institutional music opportunities. This study aimed to survey the UTSC student population and find existing motivations and barriers to non-music students accessing music-making opportunities on campus. An in-person and online survey was first conducted ($N = 110$), following which responses were screened ($n = 31$) and interviews were conducted ($n = 4$). Results showed that although non-music students attended music-making opportunities at a rate (30.5%) higher than our minimum estimate (20%), it was still lower than our ideal estimate (50%). While there was a general interest, the interviews highlighted how participants faced significant barriers when accessing the opportunities, such as lack of promotion and time conflicts. Solutions, limitations, and future directions are discussed.

Introduction

- Previous studies at various universities have shown that making music has a greater positive effect on non-music students than music students. Non-music students find the social elements of music events to be particularly useful, as they are able to make friends and relax. They also enjoy developing musical literacy, thus giving them more confidence to make music throughout their lives. Perhaps, most importantly, the participation of non-music students in music events builds their sense of self and self-esteem. They learn to be more attuned towards the feelings, thoughts, and actions of others by making music together (Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2011; Isbell & Stanley, 2011).
- Various music-making opportunities are hosted by different groups on campus here at UTSC (see Figure 1).

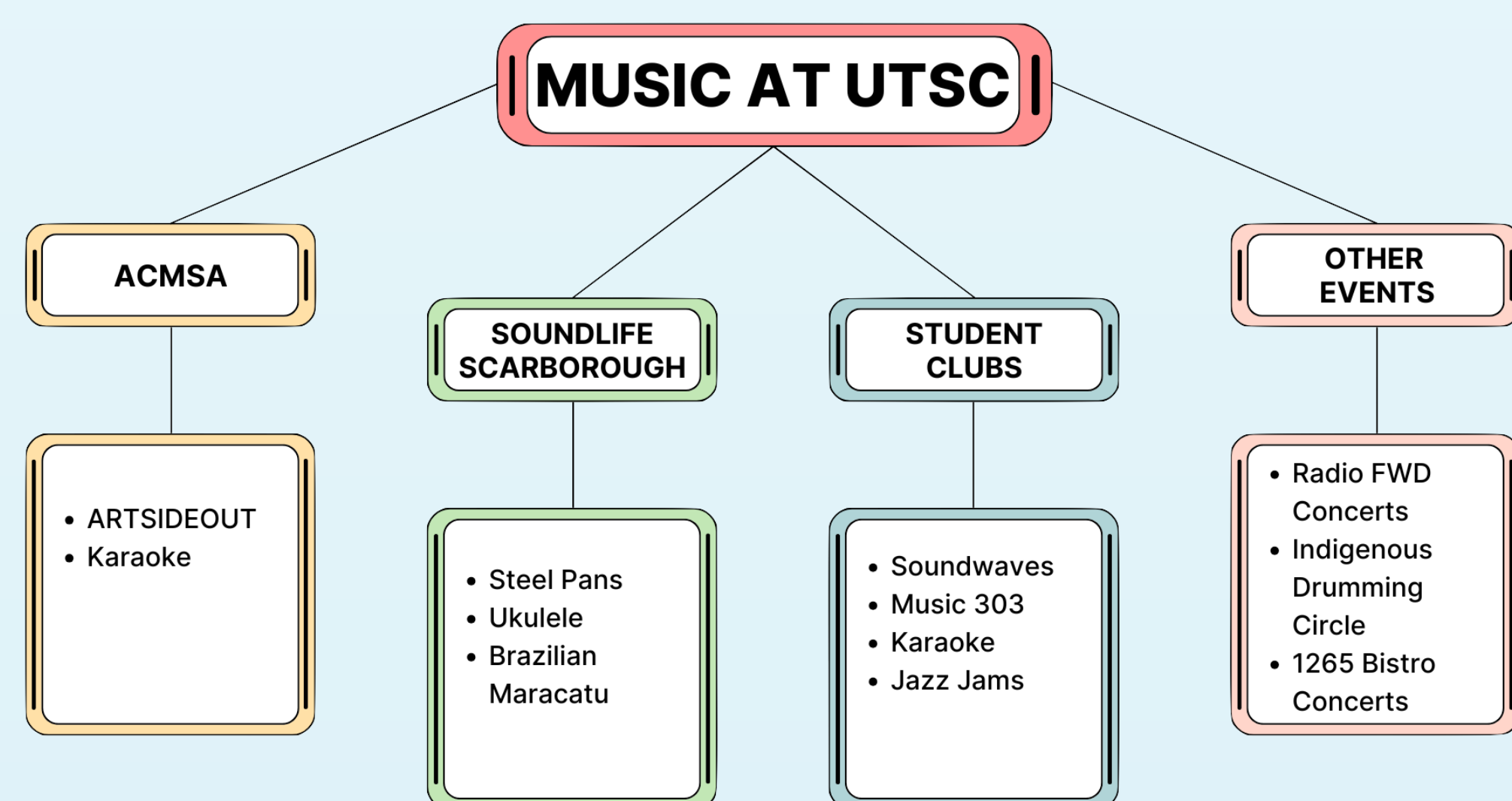


Fig. 1. Music-making opportunities held at UTSC, categorized by the organizing group.

- However, we noticed that only a select number of students attend the music opportunities held on campus, with the majority being students enrolled in one of the music programs.
- **Research Question: How many non-music students report participating in institutional music opportunities at UTSC? What are some existing motivations and barriers to accessing these opportunities?**
- We set the expected minimum frequency of non-music students attending programming at 20%, and the ideal frequency at 50%. We believed this range was realistic, considering the amount of music offerings and the state of their promotions (i.e. most being online, some as physical posters, etc.)

Methodology

Survey Data Collection:

- $N = 110$ survey respondents
 - $n = 42$ in-person (82.4% Response Rate)
 - $n = 68$ online (Google Forms)

Survey Questions

- Current program enrolment at UTSC
- Enrolment in a music program
- Previous/current enrolment in a music course
- Knowledge of music-making opportunities
- Interest & participation in music-making opportunities
- Interest and experience in music creation
- Interview consent

Inclusion & Exclusion:

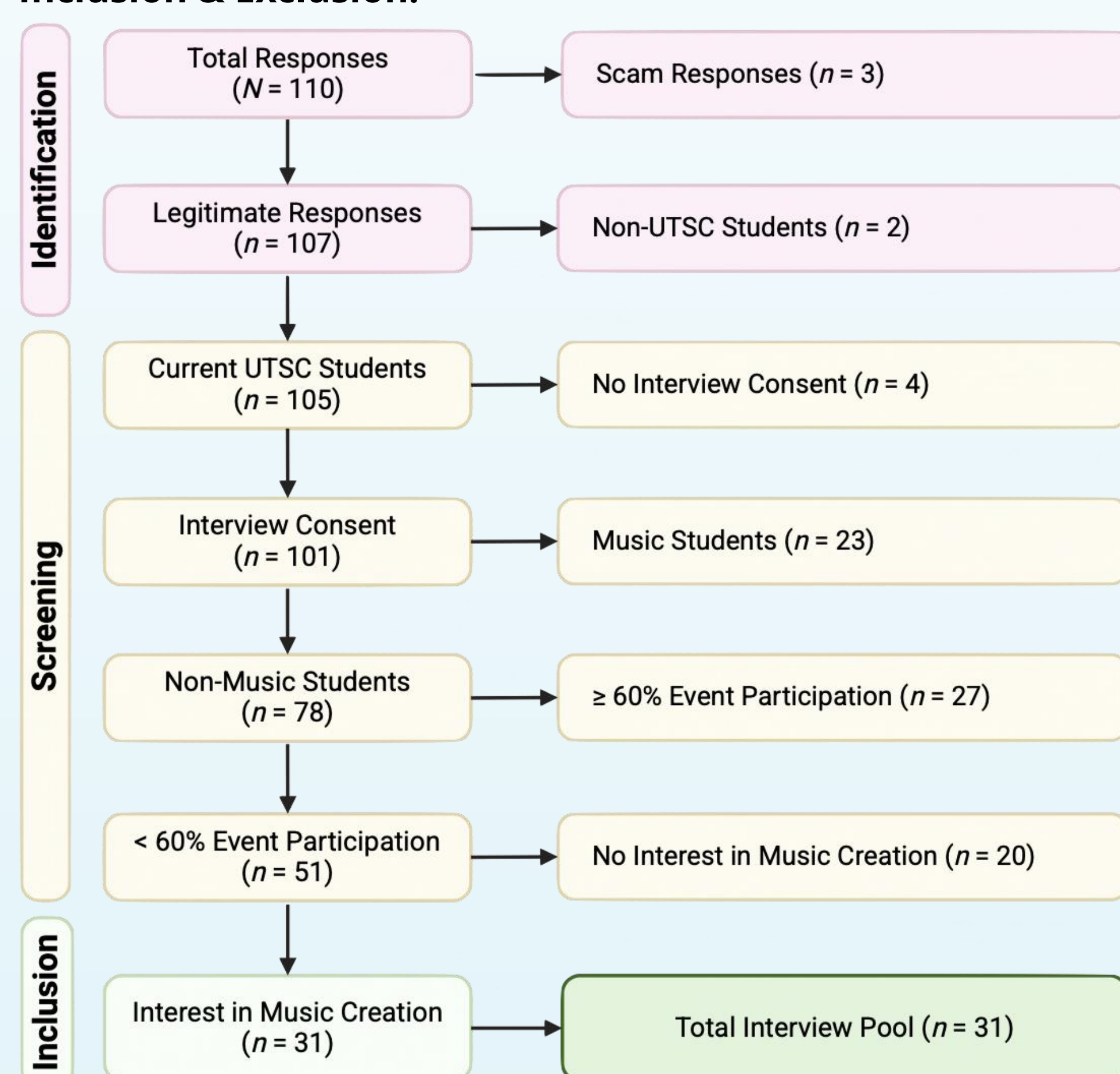


Fig. 2. Inclusion & exclusion process for survey responses.

Stratification:

Group	In-Person Respondents	Online Respondents	Total
Interview Pool	4	4	8
Non-Music Creation	1	1	2
≥ 60% Event Participation	1	1	2
Music Students	1	1	2
Total	7	7	14

Fig. 3. Stratification of interview candidates.

Interview Data Collection & Analysis:

- interview invitation ($n = 15$)
- did not consent/attend ($n = 6$); did not schedule ($n = 5$)
- 20-min interview on Zoom ($n = 4$) (26.67% Response Rate)
 - 3 from the interview pool and 1 music student
 - 5 broad questions (musical experiences, challenges, etc.)
- coded themes – internal and external – using NVivo

Results

Survey Results:

Minimum Expectations for Non-Music Students' Music Participation on Campus

- Binomial test was used to compare expectations (20%) to results (30.5%).
- The frequency found was slightly higher than expectations.

Ideal Expectations for Non-Music Students' Music Participation on Campus

- Binomial test used to compare expectations (50%) to results (30.5%).
- The frequency found was noticeably lower than expectations.

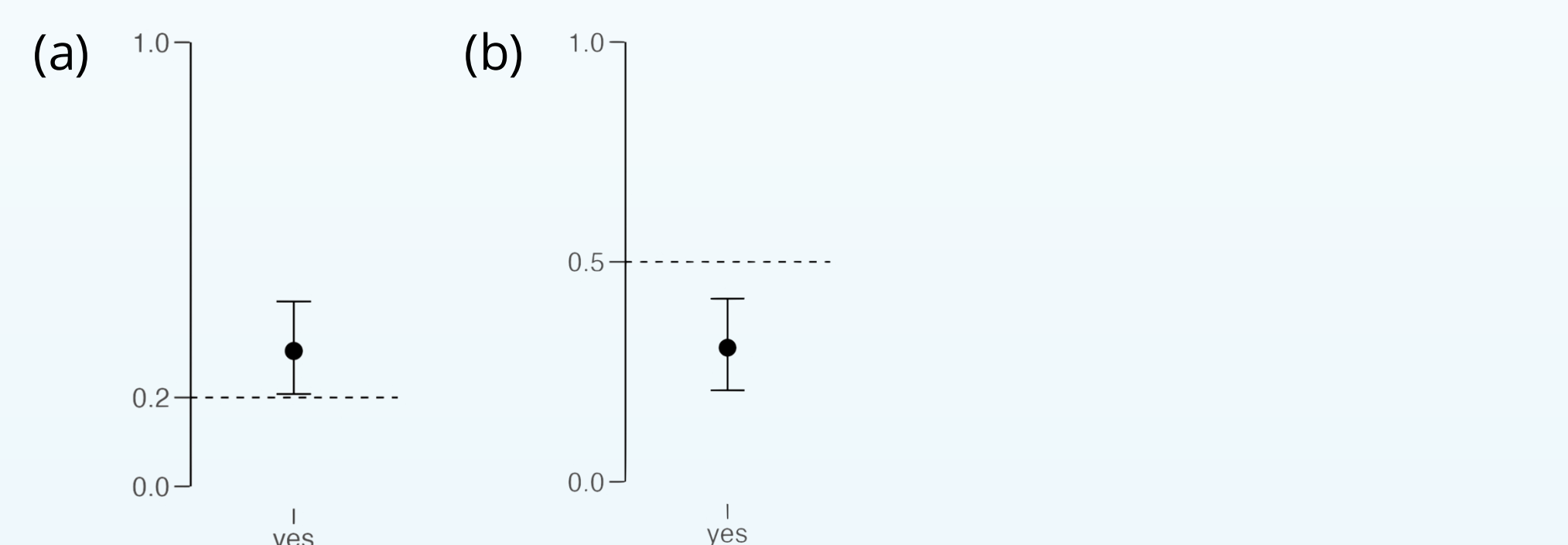


Fig. 4. Frequency of music participation when compared to expectations. (a) Estimated minimum frequency. (b) Estimated ideal frequency. Non-music students attended music events more than our estimated minimum rate, but less than our estimated ideal rate.

Interview Results:

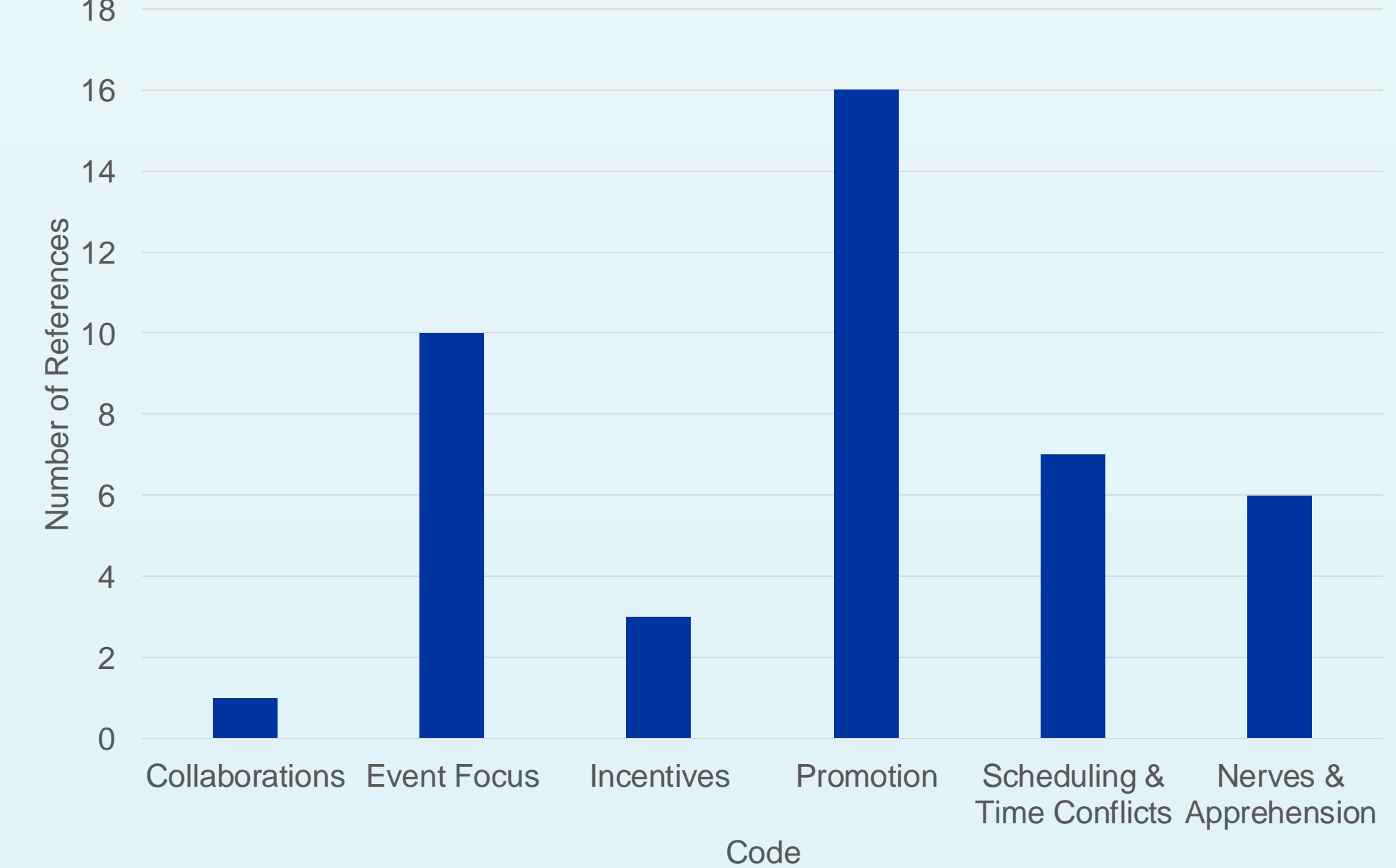


Fig. 5. Number of references vs. code. The barriers most frequently mentioned were lack of promotion, uninteresting event focuses, and time conflicts.

Select Quotes from Interviews

"I just like to listen to music, I guess, and like performances. I think it's interesting to see people like be able to do that, you know, it's to make a good sound. But you know it is a talent, you know. So it's nice to watch. It's like inspiring, you know. That's probably why I want to go."

"I'm not sure if this exists already or not, but I would like something for people who kind of suck and just have little to no skill, because I think new skills can be very intimidating to try and get into. But if there was something that's like marketed to beginners, I think that would be a great environment for people to try out new things that they like."

"Usually I go when my friends go with me."

Conclusion

Conclusion:

- Non-music students are accessing music events more frequently than we minimally expected, but they are not attending as many events as we ideally expected.
- Although all the participants interviewed expressed interest in attending music events on campus, they identified barriers to be lack of promotion and conflicts with their schedule.
- Some admitted feeling nervous and apprehension regarding starting a new activity.
- Some also mentioned that the current events are not aligned with their interests, mostly because the events are too niche.
- Potential solutions were highlighted by participants as well (see Figure 6).

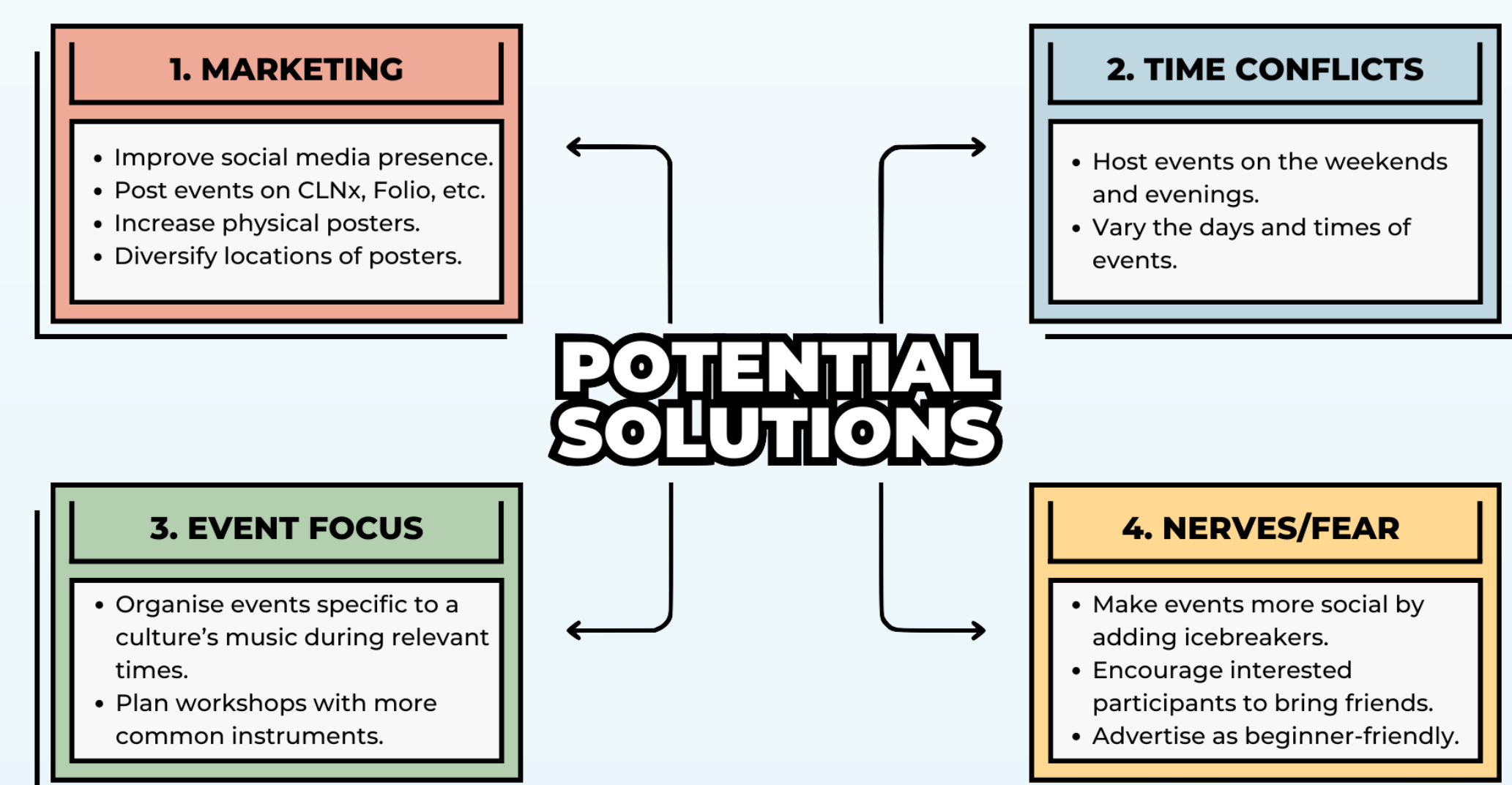


Fig. 6. Participants' solutions to improve music events.

Study Limitations:

- There was a low interview attendance rate, so only a few interviews were conducted.
- There was also likely a high percentage of scam responses on the online survey.
- More demographic and contextual data could have been obtained to identify confounding factors.

Future Directions:

- Ask participants to log in with their UToronto email before filling out the online survey.
- Allocate more time toward interviewing participants to account for cancellations and ask participants about personal motivations for music participation in interviews.
- Implement the participations' suggestions into current musical programming to improve attendance of non-music students.
- Expand the study to all three UoT campuses.

Acknowledgements & References

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