

# Music Concerts: Cultural Consumption among New York University Abu Dhabi Students in Abu Dhabi and Dubai

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## Abstract

*This study examines the cultural consumption of undergraduates focusing on music concerts offered in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. I asked, first, what kind of music concerts students attend. Second, I looked for factors that may influence these preferences, including the extent of exposure to books in adolescence and childhood, languages spoken, music literacy, self-reported socio-economic status, the university's financial aid packages, and owning a Spotify account. Extensive research was conducted to identify the concerts available, which already shows how relevant organizations could invest more in developing a platform to market concerts simultaneously. The concerts were distributed in 6 genres: Pop/Rap, Classical, Rock, Electronic, Experimental, and Jazz. I found a statistically significant positive association between the monthly pocket money students had for leisure activities and the total number of concerts attended. I also found that most students attended Pop/Rap concerts. However, this may not strictly be due to their own preferences as most of the concerts listed were of this genre. This research is a first step toward learning more about undergraduates' cultural consumption across international higher education settings in the UAE. The results can help cultural organizations in the UAE to improve their programming and marketing to better target the student demographics.*

**Keywords:** cultural capital, music preferences, Bordieu, United Arab Emirates (UAE), cultural tourism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu distinguishes between economic and cultural capital. Economic capital encompasses financial resources such as income and properties, among other assets. Cultural capital refers to an individual's extent of knowledge both intellectually and in practice, among different areas of knowledge. Bourdieu considers cultural capital elements such as "books, newspapers and magazines, stationery, records, sport, toys, music, entertainment." (Grusky 2018). Starting in 1963, Bourdieu carried out an investigation using both quantitative and qualitative methods to study the division of society based on status through the concept of lifestyles. This definition was characterized by different tastes for features such as food, clothing and hairdressing, and books. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* explains that an individual's economic and cultural capital influences their cultural consumption, which is simultaneously an indicator of class and other identity-features linked to inequality and the division of society.

This research examines the cultural consumption of New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) students in

relation to music concerts offered in the Emirati cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai from May 2019 to December 2019. The project aims to identify patterns of choice about music concert preferences by the student body, contributing to the literature on undergraduate students' cultural consumption in international settings. This approach can be applied to other universities in the MENA region. The research question first examines what music concerts NYUAD students attend. Second, it evaluates the potential factors that may influence students' music concert preferences.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is considered a Middle Eastern economic center. Since the UAE began its oil exports in 1962, "the country's society and economy have been transformed. The UAE has diversified and has become a regional trading and tourism hub. UAE firms have invested heavily abroad." ("United Arab Emirates country profile" 2018). As such, with the development of musical sites such as the Dubai Opera in Dubai, the Amphitheater at the Louvre Museum, or the Arts Centre at NYUAD in Abu Dhabi, one could infer that governmental planning on tourism has considered music as an important area of the UAE's entertainment and cultural development sectors.

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According to the journalist Angel Tesorero, “the UAE’s cultural diversity drives its economic, social and intellectual development.” (2019) Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance of the UAE, stated that “the UAE’s social cohesion has made it an international model of cultural diversity, as over 200 nationalities live together in the country.” (Tesorero 2019) In 2019, there were 9,771,000 people living in the UAE (*United Arab Emirates Population Statistics* 2019). 28 percent were female and 72 percent were male. Dubai hosted 35.7 percent of the population and Abu Dhabi hosted 34.7 percent. 1.21 million people in the UAE by 2019 were between the ages of 15 and 24. The country has over 200 nationalities, and the total expat population—referring to non-Emiratis—represented 88.5 percent, meaning 8,477,000 people who live in the country do not have UAE citizenship. An 88.5 percent expat population is an indication of the level of diversity in the UAE population. Most expats come from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Iran, Egypt, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and China (*ibid.*). As this study is concerned with students’ music concert consumption, then it is relevant to add—as music concerts tend to be marketed through social media—that by 2019, in the UAE, there were 9.3 million Facebook users, and 9.25 used WhatsApp and 7.72 million YouTube (*ibid.*). The UAE is the first country in the world to appoint Ministers for Happiness and Tolerance. This institution aims to promote “love, peaceful coexistence, political stability, moderation and respect for personal freedom.” (Tesorero 2019). This research focuses not on measuring whether, in terms of music concerts, the outcomes are such, but instead, it examines whether in a sub-population of Abu Dhabi—that is, NYUAD—whether there is a diversity in music concert preferences (as an indicator of cultural capital in the literature), or if preferences are standard regardless of students’ nationality and linguistic diversity.

At a macro-level, what can governmental organizations promoting culture in the country do to offer choices that match the UAE’s population diversity. Is this necessary, or is it a more effective market strategy to focus on music genres that are in greater demand when purchasing tickets for concerts? Can some concerts be free to encourage undergraduate students to consume other cultural music practices in addition to the ones they prefer? These are questions that the methodology applied here could address.

The results also serve as recommendations for cultural and musical organizations such as the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism in their planning of music events. It may be the case that the emphasis on larger events such as Formula 1 in Abu Dhabi may

be taking attention from other events, and hence, other concerts, including concerts of classical music or experimental work. It could also inform marketing strategies by identifying sub-populations’ music preferences. The NYUAD Arts Center – which is known for bringing diverse music genres in its programming – had 8,116 Instagram followers by November 2021, whereas Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, where Formula 1 concerts take place, had 118,000 followers in the same month. This initial study contributes to the literature on undergraduate students’ cultural consumption—through music concerts—on international campuses.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tak Wing Chan argues in *Understanding Cultural Omnivores: Social and Political Attitudes* that cultural omnivores “have quite a distinctive profile in social attitudes.” (Chan 2019, p. 785) According to Wing, relying on data from the British Household Panel Survey and *Understanding Society*, there is a “threefold typology of cultural consumption in the domains of music and visual arts that is consistent with previous research.” (*ibid.*, p. 784) The term ‘cultural omnivores’ refers to “people whose consumption tastes include both elite and popular genres.” (Maguire 2015) Based on this definition, what Wing finds is that “omnivorousness is an expression of cosmopolitan post-materialism rather than a new form of distinction.” (Chan 2019, p. 784) Wing explains that omnivores “tend to be well-educated, of higher social status, living in urban areas, without young children at home.” (*ibid.*, p. 785). In 1992, Peterson and Simkus show that highbrow culture consumers would consume as much middlebrow or popular culture (*ibid.*). However, this does not mean that cultural omnivores like everything they consume from different cultural brows. Wing also explains that depending on age and gender, cultural consumption can be differentiated. This observation has led to the development of the methodology for this investigation.

Bourdieuian scholars such as Jenkins added that “Bourdieu is not just interested in cultural taste(s), but also in the way in which those tastes arise out of, and are mobilized in, struggles for social recognition or status” (1992, p. 129, in *ibid.*, p. 787). This study divided music concerts in Abu Dhabi and Dubai in six music genres: Classical, Experimental, Electronics, Jazz, Rock, and Pop and/or Rap. The *Understanding Society* survey that Wing analyzes divides music events in Opera/Operetta, Classical, and Rock, Pop, or Jazz Performance. (*ibid.*, p. 788)

In *Cultural Capital and Expenditures of Classical Musical Festival Visitors*, Kyoung-Joo Lee of the Department

of Tourism Management at Gachon University of the Republic of Korea offers a study on music festival visitors' cultural capital (Lee 2017, p. 71). What Lee finds is that "[the] cultural taste aspect of cultural capital may explain festival participation [,] but [the] economic resource aspect of capital is more deeply related to the amount of consumption at festivals" (ibid., p. 71). Prentice and Andersen (2003) argue in favor of music festivals because they can preserve elements such as local identity and cultural heritage (ibid., p. 72). Lee's investigation is relevant to this study because it outlines definitions and addresses a similar potential contribution of this research, advocating for marketing strategies based on data on music festival preferences among visitors. Lee, for instance, explains the concept of cultural capital. According to Lee, considering Holt's argument (1998), "cultural capital can provide comprehensive and influential insight for developing a theoretical framework to analyze the social patterns of consumption" (ibid., p. 73). Lee uses the GMMG in the Republic of Korea as a unit of analysis. Instead of focusing on a music festival, this research focuses on multiple music concerts in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. It is possible that most concerts students surveyed attended between May 2019 and December 2019 were the Formula 1 2019 Music Concerts, such as Marshmello's, Lana del Rey's, and The Killers' concerts. The GMMG is the most attended classical music festival in the Gangwon Province of the Republic of Korea (ibid., p. 76). This was also the host city for the Winter Olympic Games of 2018 (ibid., p. 73).

Anders Vassenden and Metere Jonvi's are concerned with the consequences that one's cultural capital plays in one's social interactions, networks, and hence, social capital (Vassenden and Jonvik 2019, p. 37). Social capital refers to an individual's network density. Namely, the extent of their links with others from both their own group and other groups. Groups, in this case, are defined by different identity factors such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, race, and origin. The premise is that "to university graduates, taste and education often matter for self-definition and social networks" (ibid., p. 37). As such, by developing the concept of the 'discursive gap,' Vassenden and Jonvik conclude that a combination of Bourdieusian approaches to cultural capital and Goffmanian's arguments of interactionism would yield insightful results and a theoretical understanding of the research on cultural consumption in relation to cultural and social capital (ibid., p. 53). For this investigation, social networks are important because students may attend certain events due to the influence of their professors, or peers. The authors suggest that more ethnographies on this topic are needed.

Drawing upon other case studies on music con-

cert consumption, Henk Roose and Alexander Vander Stichele argue in *Living Room vs. Concert Hall: Patterns of Music Consumption in Flanders* that there is an "interplay between public and private music consumption using a large-scale survey of the Flemish population in Belgium" (Roose and Vander Stichele 2010, p. 185). Their results show that music consumption is an indicator of individuals' cultural capital within the Flemish population. As such, their findings demonstrate that, in this context, "music consumption is positively related to all indicators of cultural capital [, which include] educational attainment, enrolment in arts classes and public participation of the parents" (ibid., p. 185). Roose and Stichele also found that the effects of their results are "strongest for high-brow genres such as classical and opera and diminish for middle-brow and low-brow genres such as world/traditional music or pop/rock" (ibid., p. 185). Natasa Slak Valek and Anestis Fotiadis in *Happiness as a Value of Event Organizers in Abu Dhabi* "consider the self-determination theory (SDT) to examine the perceived impact of events on happiness based on event organizers' opinions" (Slak Valek and Fotiadis 2019, p. 34). This study offers insights into one feature that may indicate why students attend certain concerts while others are not attended. In addition, it explores why the UAE is interested in promoting culture. The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism stated in 2018 that:

"Abu Dhabi [would] become a thriving cultural hub that engages and educates residents and tourists alike by highlighting the UAE's rich national heritage and bringing the best global art, museums, and music to the region" (ibid., p. 42).

This investigation asks whether 'the best global music' brought to Abu Dhabi and/or Dubai between May and December 2019 is being consumed by NYUAD undergraduate students.

### 3. HYPOTHESES

To reflect upon Bourdieu's approach to music and artistic taste, Loka Ashwood and Michael Bell indicate in *Affect and Taste: Bourdieu, Traditional Music, and the Possibilities of Performance* that:

"Bourdieu set forth music and artistic taste as reflections of class positions developed in early life. With classical music as an explanatory tool, Bourdieu argued that cultural capital becomes deeply embodied and difficult to change" (Ashwood and Bell 2017, p. 622)

Based on the understanding that music is a feature intrinsic to an individual's cultural capital—and that its preference towards certain music concerts can indicate patterns of its cultural consumption—I pose the

following hypothesis:

**H1:** *In general terms, this study hypothesizes that most students, regardless of academic division (Arts & Humanities, Engineering, Sciences, and Social Sciences), attend concerts that fall under the category of Pop and/or Rap, whereas a smaller number of students attended concerts of Classical, Experimental, Rock, Jazz, and Electronic artists.*

**H2:** *The higher the exposure to hard and soft copies of books during childhood and adolescence the more concerts in all the genres the student attends.*

**H3:** *The greater the number of languages a student speaks fluently, the more concerts in all the genres the student attends.*

**H4:** *If a student plays a musical instrument, the more concerts the student attends.*

**H5:** *The higher the student self-reported its socio-economic background, the more concerts the student attends.*

**H6:** *The more self-reported monthly pocket money a student has available, the more concerts the student attends.*

**H7:** *If a student receives financial aid at NYUAD, the more concerts the student attends.*

**H8:** *If a student has access to a Spotify account, the more concerts the student attends.*

**H9:** *The more often a student who has a Spotify account uses it, the more concerts the student attends.*

#### 4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The unit of analysis is students of all academic undergraduate levels (first, second, third, fourth, and super-senior) at NYUAD. Data was collected through a survey with Qualtrics. The students had to be enrolled and studying at NYUAD. In addition, participants had to be 18 years old or older. A total of 90 participants were sampled. The dependent variable was whether a student attended a music concert in Abu Dhabi and Dubai between May 2019 and December 5, 2019 (yes or no). In total, 58 concerts were found in multiple event websites and brochures. These concerts were then placed in 6 genre categories: Classical; Pop and/or Rap; Experimental; Electronic; Rock; and Jazz. Although the survey considered more potential variables, the independent variables selected, based on the literature review, are as follows:

**The extent of exposure to hard and/or soft copies of books during childhood and adolescence:** *to a very great extent; to a great extent; to a moderate extent; to some extent; to a small extent; and not at all.*

**Languages Spoken Fluently:** *One; Two; Three; Four; and More than Four.*

**Music Literacy, operationalized by asking if she/he plays any musical instrument:** *yes; no; and no, but I would like to.*

**Self-reported Socio-economic Background:** *This variable was operationalized by asking participants the following question. Here is a list of the different ways of describing the socio-economic classes that exist in X country. Imagine that you live in this X country, based on your personal experience in the country where you were born. Please indicate where you think you fall into. The response alternatives were upper; upper middle; lower middle; and lower.*

**Self-reported Financial Resources:** *This variable was operationalized by asking participants the following questions. (1) After you account for food, health, academic materials, cost of living, and transportation, how much pocket money do you have left per month for leisure activities, such as outings (i.e., going to the movies), attending a concert, treating yourself with an object you want to buy in a mall? (AED = UAE Dirhams). The response alternatives were less than 100 AED; 101 AED to 300 AED; 301 AED to 500 AED; 501 AED to 1000 AED; 1001 AED to 2000 AED; and more than 2000 AED. (2) **Financial Aid:** Participants were asked whether they receive financial aid (yes; no; and decline to answer).*

**Having a Spotify account (personal or group):** *yes; no; and no, but I would like to.*

**How often does the participant use their Spotify account, if yes was responded to variable number eight?** *Namely, every day; every two days; every three days; once a week; once a month; once a year; and never.*

#### 5. RESULTS

##### 5.1. Descriptive Results

Table 1 indicates the total number of concerts, and the total number of participants who attended or did not attend any concerts in each genre. There were 58 concerts in total: 13 Classical music artists; 23 Pop and/or Rap; 4 Experimental, 6 Electronic, 8 Rock, and 4 Jazz.

Regarding the dependent variable, there was a question in the survey that asked participants the following: *What music concerts, if any, have you attended in any part of the world, from May 2019 to December 2019? Please list them out.* There were 34 participants that listed other concerts. For future research, it may enhance the scope to include entry ones as well. However, the problem with these values was that some participants re-stated the concerts they had already been asked if they attended, and others stated concerts that did not happen between May 2019 and December 5, 2019. Among the sample, in terms of gender, 31 participants (34.4 percent) were identified as male, 56 as female (62.2 percent) and 1 identified as other (1.1 percent). Given that students are allowed to pursue double majors at NYUAD, 23 students double-majoring in the sample. One par-

**Table 1:** Total number of concerts, and the total number of participants who attended or not any concerts in each genre.

Preferences Music Concerts	Total Number of Concerts	Percentage (%)	Attended	Percentage (%)	Did not attend	Percentage (%)
Classical Music	13	22.4	39	22.2	51	14
Pop and/or Rap	23	39.7	70	39.8	20	5.5
Experimental	4	6.9	38	21.6	52	14.3
Electronic	6	10.3	5	2.8	85	23.4
Rock	8	13.8	6	3.4	84	23.1
Jazz	4	6.9	18	10.2	72	19.8

participant double-majored in the academic divisions of Arts & Humanities and Science, and seven participants double-majored in the academic divisions of Arts and Humanities and Social Science. In terms of nationality, participants self-reported their region of origin, either because they were born there and/or because they have lived there most of their lives. Most students who responded were from the Americas, Asia, and the Middle East. There were no respondents from Oceania or the Caribbean.

Regarding international exposure operationalized by living in different countries for 4 months or more than where one was born, 88 participants responded to the question. A total of 72.2 percent of participants had lived for 4 months or more in a different country than where they were born. 24.6 had not. Exposure to books in adolescence and childhood (Table 2) shows that 62.2 participants were either exposed to a very great extent or to a great extent to hard and/or soft copies of books during childhood and adolescence. In this case, only 87 participants responded to the question, which represents 96.7 percent of participants.

**Table 2:** Frequency and Percentage of extent of exposure to hard and/or soft copies of books during childhood and adolescence.

The Extent of Exposure to Books	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To a very great extent	35	38.9
To a great extent	21	23.3
To a moderate extent	16	17.8
To some extent	10	11.1
To a small extent	5	5.6
Not at all	0	0

Regarding the languages spoken fluently, only 88 participants responded to the question, which represents 97.78 percent of participants. 92.2 percent of the participants are either bilingual or multilingual.

**Table 3:** Frequency and Percentage of the Number of Languages Participants spoke fluently.

Languages Spoken Fluently	Frequency	Percentage (%)
One	5	5.56
Two	55	61.1
Three	23	25.6
Four	3	3.3
More than four	2	2.2

Regarding whether the student played a musical instrument, operationalized by asking the participant if she/he played any musical instrument, Table 4 shows the distribution. 43.3 percent of students play a musical instrument. Although this data was not used for the regression, 28.9 participants reported that they did not play an instrument but that they would like to. 86 participants responded to the question.

**Table 4:** Frequency and percentage of the students that play an instrument or not.

Do you play a musical instrument?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	43.4
No	21	23.3

On self-reported socio-economic background, as explained before this variable was operationalized by asking participants the following question. *Here is a list on which are listed different ways of describing socio-economic classes that exist in X country. Imagine that you live in this X country, based on your personal experience in the country where you were born. Please indicate where you think you fall into. The response alternatives were upper; upper middle; lower middle; and lower.* Table 5 shows that most students reported to be either upper, upper middle, and lower middle in relative to their backgrounds. The main finding is that there was not a single respondent who self-reported a lower socio-economic background relative to their context. Graph 2 illustrates the distribution more clearly. 7 people did not respond to this

question. There was another question about whether students were from a rural or urban area, and out of the 83 participants who responded to the question, 73, meaning 81.1 percent, reported being from an urban area.

**Table 5:** Frequency and percentage of self-reported socio-economic background.

Self-reported socio-economic background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Upper	13	14.4
Upper Middle	51	56.7
Lower Middle	19	21.1
Lower	0	0

On self-reported monthly pocket money, as explained in the previous methodology section, this variable was operationalized by asking participants the following question. (1) After you account for food, health, academic materials, cost of living, and transportation, how much pocket money do you have left per month for leisure activities, such as outings (i.e., going to the movies), attending a concert, treating yourself with an object you want to buy in a mall? (AED = UAE Dirhams). The response alternatives were less than 100 AED; 101 AED to 300 AED; 301 AED to 500 AED; 501 AED to 1000 AED; 1001 AED to 2000 AED; and more than 2000 AED. Table 6 presents the distributions. This shows that most students have between 101 and 500 AED as pocket money. The assumption is that these are assets a student would invest in when purchasing a music concert ticket. However, this may not be the case.

**Table 6:** Frequency and percentage of self-reported pocket money.

Self-reported pocket money	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 100 AED	2	2.2
101 AED to 300 AED	16	17.8
301 AED to 500 AED	22	24.4
501 AED to 1000 AED	7	7.8
1001 AED to 2000 AED	7	7.8
More than 2000 AED	1	1.1

In relation to financial assets, about whether the student gets financial aid, participants were also asked whether they receive financial aid at NYUAD (*yes; no; and decline to answer*). 85.6 percent of respondents receive financial aid. 83 participants answered this question, and 3 declined to answer. 61.1 percent of the students who responded had a Spotify account. Spotify

is an online platform and app for audio streaming. At the end of the survey, participants were asked to list three factors that they thought most influenced the class in which a person belongs. The question was: '*individuals often have different ideas about factors that influence the class a person belongs in. What do you think are the factors that influence social class? Please list the 3 you think are the most influential ones.*' The factors mentioned the most times were: (1) Income, (2) Wealth, (3) Family (including status, ancestry, history, name, etc.), (4) Social networks (friends, colleagues, etc.); (5) Education (both level and quality), and (6) Area where one lives.

## 5.2. Regressions

Multiple regressions were run to prove the hypotheses presented in the Hypotheses section. There was a student who attended 29 concerts as shown in Table 21, which could potentially be an outlier. Dropping this value did not result in significant changes in the correlations or whether they were statistically significant. Hence, it was kept. There are different ways to explain this outlier. It could be that the participants did not take the survey as seriously, and selected concerts randomly. It could also be that the participants attended more concerts than their peers. Given the anonymity of the survey, it was not possible to find out.

Regarding the independent variables addressed in the bivariate analysis of this study to examine whether there is a correlation between the total number of concerts a student attended and the eight variables under study, the findings varied considering multiple variables. Owing to space limitations, the correlation models and tables for these variables were not included in this manuscript.

The relationship between the total number of concerts a student attended and the exposure to books during childhood and adolescence was not statically significant. However, the correlation coefficient indicates a positive association between the variables. A 1-unit increase in the extent of exposure to books during childhood and adolescence was associated with an increase in the total number of concerts attended by 0.823 units. With no perceived exposure to books during childhood and adolescence the constant of the total number of concerts attended was 11.98.

The relation between the total number of concerts a student attended, and the number of languages spoken was not statically significant. Nonetheless, this association was positive. With no perceived number of languages spoken the constant of the total number of concerts attended was 2.141. Furthermore, the relationship between the total number of concerts a student

attended and whether the student played a musical instrument was not statistically significant either. However, the correlation coefficient indicated that if the student played an instrument there was an increase in the total number of concerts attended by a 0.637 unit (Table 24).

The relationship between the total number of concerts a student attended, and the self-reported socioeconomic background was not statistically significant (Table 25). Nevertheless, the association between these two variables, as the results show, was positive. Table 7 indicates that the correlation between the total number of concerts attended by a student, and the self-reported pocket money was statically significant. A 1-unit increase in the self-reported range of pocket money available was associated with an increase in the total number of concerts attended by 2.889 units. This was statistically significant with a p-value of 0.05. Thus, the association can be accepted with 95 percent of confidence.

**Table 7:** Bivariate Regression of Total Number of Concerts and Self-reported Pocket Money.

VARIABLES	Model 5
Total Number of Concerts a Student Attended	
Self-reported Pocket Money	2.889** (1.365)
Constant	0.379 (0.586)
Observations	55
R-squared	0.087
seEform in parentheses	
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1	

The association between the total number of concerts a student attended and financial aid was not statistically significant. However, it seems that the association between getting financial aid and the number of concerts was positive. Regarding the relation between the total number of concerts a student attended and whether the student had a Spotify account, this association was not statistically significant. However, the bivariate association indicated a positive relationship. Lastly, the association between the total number of concerts a student attended and how often the student uses their Spotify account is also not statistically significant. In summary, the results indicate that this association may be positive, but not significant.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This investigation aims to examine the music concerts that students attend. This study hypothesized that *in general terms, most students, regardless of academic division (Arts & Humanities, Engineering, Sciences, and Social Sciences), attended concerts that fall under the category of Pop and/or Rap, whereas a smaller number of students attended concerts of Classical, Experimental, Rock, Jazz, and Electronic artists.* First, *H1* can be accepted. 39.8 percent of the participants attended Pop and/or Rap concerts. However, this may not only be due to a preference per se, in contrast with other genres, but also because of the music concerts market in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Namely, 23 out of the 58 concerts found between May 2019 and December 5, 2019, were of Pop and/or Rap artists. This high attendance was also influenced by the artists invited to the Formula 1 concerts for the 2019 Grand Prix. All artists were Pop and/or Rap artists. Perhaps, the second most attended concert was *Lana Del Rey's* with 19 students reporting to have attended. Moreover, the findings add nuances to *H1*. This is because even though cumulatively, most students attended concerts of Pop and/or Rap, if the concerts were separated, then two concerts offered by the NYUAD Arts Center ('Sufism vs. Modernism - Fathy Salama with Sheikh Mahmoud,' with 16; 'Rooftop Rhythms: Season 8', with 18; and the 'Ethiopian Dreams - Circus Abyssinia', with 21). Ethiopian Dreams- Circus Abyssinia was the most attended concert. These events were not Pop and/or Rap, but fell under the genre categories of Classical Music and Rooftop Rhythms and Ethiopian Dreams under the genre of Experimental. A possible explanation for these findings is that the NYUAD Arts Center, regardless of the genre, receives more attendance from students in comparison with other non-NYUAD events in Abu Dhabi and Dubai because NYUAD Arts Center's tickets are free for NYUAD students.

The NYUAD Arts Center seems to be integrated with the curriculum and syllabuses of different academic courses, particularly, in the division of Arts & Humanities and the NYUAD Core Curriculum. Hence, some students may be expected to attend these events. However, this was not studied in this survey. As such, for future steps, it may be important to add questions to investigate what motivates students to attend the NYUAD Arts Center's music concerts. Another reason for the popularity of the NYUAD Arts Center's events is its proximity. Most students at NYUAD live on campus. The NYUAD campus is small enough for students to have more incentive, distance and time to attend concerts. In addition, as shown in the correlation between the number of concerts attended and the pocket money

available, there is a statistically significant association between financial resources and attendance. Hence, if a student can save up on transportation, this could be a further incentive to attend.

This research utilized over 20 websites to develop a list of concerts. One reason as to why concerts beyond Pop and/or Rap and non-NYUAD Arts Center or Formula 1 concerts were generally less attended is because most students at NYUAD who completed the survey may have not stayed in the UAE during the summer break. However, most of the concerts listed took place between September and December 2019, a time when students were doing their Fall 2019 semester. Moreover, to enter bars and clubs in the UAE, where some concerts take place, individuals must be 21 years old or older. Even though age was not asked, students had to be 18 years old or older to complete the survey. There is a possibility that a significant percentage of the students were younger than 21. For that reason, they may not have been able to attend concerts such as Afro B in the club MAD on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, or Francesca Lombardo that took place in the Blue Marlin Ibiza in Abu Dhabi. To develop the survey, extensive research was conducted among different websites and brochures to find all the concerts available in Abu Dhabi and Dubai during the study period. This shows that, in terms of marketing, organizations should put a larger emphasis on developing a platform in which all their concerts can be combined and marketed. Undergraduate students, based on common knowledge, may not have the time to search for different concerts. Hence, a strategy for marketing would be to develop a new platform or to strengthen platforms such as Platinum List.net to publish all the concerts for different genres. If the goal of the Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism and the Ministry of Happiness in the UAE, for instance, is to promote diversity and cultural exchange, then this investigation shows that, in music, more marketing work needs to be done for more students to get exposed to these concerts.

Regarding other descriptive results, in terms of international exposure, which in the literature can be identified as a feature that increases cultural capital, this investigation shows that NYUAD students, at least those sampled, have lived for 4 months or more in a different country, distinguishable from where they were born. If internationalism enhances cultural capital, then the students are exposed to diverse parts of the world. This may stem from the study abroad programs of the NYUAD Office of Global Education, or from their previous experiences in high school and with their family and personal backgrounds. Another fundamental finding of this study is that none of the students

sampled placed themselves in a lower socio-economic background. Of the 83 participants who responded to the question on social class, 64 self-reported that they were either upper- or middle-class individuals relative to their background of origin. This aligns with the ongoing criticism of socioeconomic diversity at NYUAD. The criticism, in general, argues that the diversity at NYUAD is in terms of nationality, religion, and language, but it is not an economically diverse student body. Further research is needed to operationalize questions on social class, income background, and economic diversity. However, this study, in attempting to evaluate cultural capital, also found evidence for the argument questioning diversity in terms of social classes and/or economic background representative of the entire world.

Furthermore, this study found that most students have available between 101 AED 500 AED for pocket money per month for leisure activities, such as outings (i.e., going to the movies), attending a concert, treating oneself with an object one wants to buy in a mall, etc. This pocket money represents the amount of AED available after students account for food, health, academic materials, cost of living, and transportation. The range selected by the students was self-reported. However, this is the independent variable that showed a statistically significant association with the total number of concerts attended by a student. Hence, these results show that one aspect is to have a preference for one's cultural capital, and another is the ability to satisfy these preferences. It may be the case that students enjoy Classical Music, which is often seen, in the music arena internationally as a higher-brow music taste; however the tickets of the Dubai Opera are not affordable for the students' budgets. The caveat is, however, is that although tickets to the NYUAD Music Faculty Concert October 2019 (Classical Music) were free, as it was organized by the NYUAD Arts Center, the concert was only attended by 6 students. Therefore, it may be the case that the lack of engagement with classical music is owed to cultural consumption preferences as well. In general, attending private concerts outside the NYUAD Arts Center in Abu Dhabi and Dubai is expensive. Prices can range from 80 AED to 1,000 AED. If there is a statistically significant positive association between attending a concert and pocket money available for leisure activities, then organizations that want students, and undergraduate youth in general, to attend their music concerts can consider this study's found association when deciding prices.

This investigation also found that when students are asked to report the three factors that influence the social class a person belongs to, the most mentioned fac-



tors were: education (both level and quality of) income, family (status, ancestry, history, name, etc.); wealth, and social networks (friends, colleagues, etc.). If the most mentioned (19.8 percent of the times) factor is education, it makes sense that students are pursuing degrees, as university attainment is correlated with job opportunities, and job opportunities are correlated with income and wealth. In addition, as the literature explains, education can be a way to develop cultural capital. The findings of this study provide insights on how students from different parts of the world understand the factors that influence social class. These findings may also provide insights into undergraduate students' understanding of inequality, as inaccess to these factors is associated with multiple forms of inequality.

The research question considered the diversity of NYUAD stemming from its cultural consumption operationalized with music concerts as a feature of cultural capital in the literature. Even though all the associations were explored in the bivariate regressions aligned with the hypotheses, as there were no negative associations, the hypotheses cannot be accepted because the results were not statistically significant. However, *H6*, which stated that *the more self-reported monthly pocket money a student has available, the more concerts the student attended*, can be advanced with 95 percent confidence. It should be clarified that while the other hypotheses did not align with statistically significant results, this may not mean that there is no association at all. Larger samples can be addressed in future research applying the same methodology.

Students were further classified into three different risk zones based on their geographical location and whether or not they have family or friends in the risk prone zone. If students had family and friends in the risk prone zone, they were classified to High-Risk. If students did not have family in the risk zone and belonged to Charikot, they were classified to the Medium-Risk category. The remaining students from Kathmandu with no family in the risk prone zone were classified to be in the No-Risk category.

### 6.1. Limitations

This initial investigation had various limitations. First, there was no access to all the email accounts of NYUAD students to distribute the survey. The survey was posted on multiple social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook Groups (for example, the NYUAD Room of Requirement) that had 2,898 members at the time of distribution. People were also randomly approached within the university in different locations such as the library and the dining hall to complete the survey. Since

the research directly asked students to complete the survey, there is a risk of voluntary submission. No monetary incentives were given to complete the survey, which may have hindered students' motivation to respond. In closing, accounting for a different aspect, due to the number of concerts offered in Abu Dhabi and Dubai in relation to music concerts, some genres prevailed more than others. For instance, the number of Pop and/or Rap artists was greater than Classical Music concerts.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This research contributes to the study of music concert preferences among undergraduate students, and shows that there is a significant difference between attending a Pop and/or Rap music concert than an Electronic or Jazz music. The results may help organizations in Abu Dhabi and Dubai to improve their marketing among students; if these institutions want more university undergraduate pupils in their theaters, music halls, and arenas. Indeed, the descriptive analysis of results shows that most music concerts attended by respondents were organized by the NYUAD Arts Center, regardless of genre. This may be since the NYUAD Arts Center events tickets are free for NYUAD students throughout the entire year. In addition, many of the concerts attended were Pop and/or Rap ones. It may be the case that Formula 1 concerts, which usually invite artists of these genres and occur during National Holidays, were highly attended by students. However, there was not a question in the survey about days off and holidays to establish a regression and evaluate the relation between these two variables. Research shows that music is an important aspect of one's cultural consumption and cultural capital. Hence, this is a variable that should not be dismissed when analyzing cultural capital among specific populations such as NYUAD. Furthermore, all the regressions were bivariate analyses. For future work, control variables are needed to evaluate correlations.

Overall, this is an initial investigation that, ultimately, aims at responding to the following questions, and that will continue to do so in future research with larger samples. The research inquiries of this investigation considered what music concerts do NYUAD students attend. Secondly, it examined what are the potential factors that may influence students' music concerts preferences; and discussed what these factors could potentially indicate regarding the diversity of NYUAD stemming from its cultural consumption operationalized with music concerts as a feature Bourdieu and other scholars related to the research inquiry have used when evaluating cultural capital in society.

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