

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methodology of the research. The study was undertaken in two phases, using a multi-methods approach for the collection and analysis of the data. This chapter starts by describing the research design and continues by giving detailed information about the research instruments that were used, the characteristics of the participants and the process of data collection. The chapter concludes with information on additional data that were collected from a consultative conference which was organised for the dissemination of the research and a brief description of the data analysis process.

DESIGN

A multi-methods approach to data collection was taken that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative elements. By using this approach for the research into older people's music activities, it was possible to construct a broad picture of the benefits and challenges, both for facilitators or leaders and for their participants, as well as exploring aspects in more detail. The design shares features of a sequential explanatory design (Creswell et al. 2003:227) in that the quantitative data partly informed the design of the interview schedule for facilitators and participants. The questionnaires included quantitative and qualitative items. In order to examine the specific benefits or indeed challenges of music activities, a selection of those taking part in non-music activities was included for purposes of comparison. The methods adopted are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Data collection methods

	Facilitators / leaders (music)	Facilitators / leaders (non-music)	Relevant others e.g. scheme managers, relatives	Participants (music)	Participants (non-music)
Questionnaires	✓	✓		✓	✓
Focus group interviews				✓	
Individual interviews (face to face or by email)	✓		✓	✓	
Video recordings	✓			✓	
Observations	✓			✓	

In addition, a consultative conference was held at the end of the project that had the dual purpose of reporting some of the findings and of seeking further insights from the delegates. Secondly, webpages and a blog were set up for the project that allowed those participating in the research to access information about it

and to contribute their own thoughts and experiences. Thirdly, observations, including filming, of music activities were carried out.

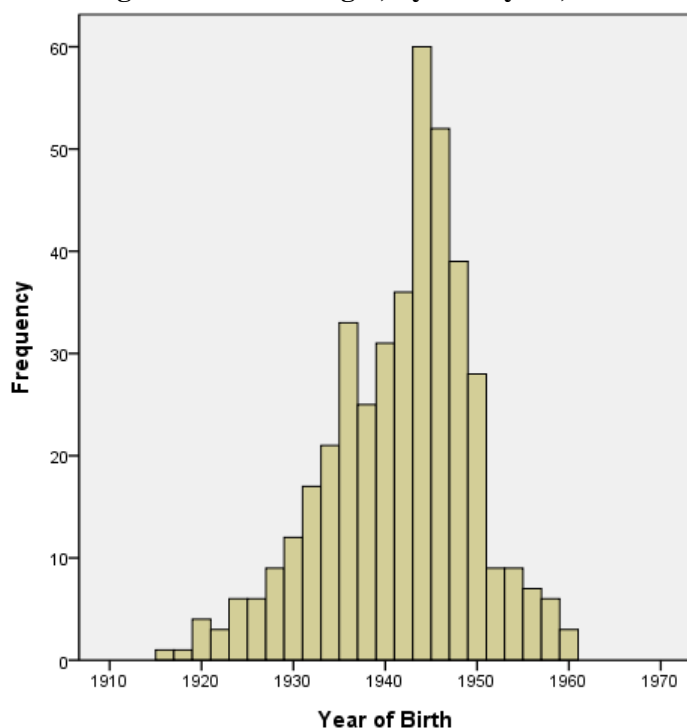
PARTICIPANTS

The research comprised three case studies of musical community involvement; the Sage, Gateshead, the Music Department of the Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) and the Connect programme of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. The participants in both the music and non-music activities were over the age of 50, with the exception of one of the choirs and the language groups in the WAES programme that were open to all adults. All participants were given one questionnaire at the beginning of their programme or classes for the year. The participants in musical activities were given a second questionnaire towards the end of their programme or classes for the year. Some activities were well-established while others (music activities) were set up as part of the study. The latter consisted of two creative music groups and a keyboard class.

The facilitators of both musical and non-musical activities received one questionnaire at the beginning of their programme. Individual interviews with facilitators from all sites were carried out. Two facilitators from the London-based research sites were interviewed twice, once at the beginning and once at the end of their programmes, because they both led new music activities specifically designed for those aged over 50.

The ages of the participants were widely spread, as shown in Figure 1 with a range of 43 years. The oldest participant was 93 and the youngest 50. Some participants did not give their age and three participants were younger than 50, therefore these are not shown in the figure below. The modal age was 65 when the data were first collected.

Figure 1: Histogram showing distribution of ages, by birth year, in the sample of participants



RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Data collection involved the following instruments:

- Questionnaires
- Interview schedules or key questions
- Observation schedule

Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were devised for the first phase, one for facilitators and one for participants. There were two versions of each, one for those involved in music and one for non-music participants/ facilitators, the wording of which was adapted to suit the context, although the information sought was broadly the same. The facilitators' questionnaire asked for some background detail of their qualifications and experience, reasons for involvement, benefits and difficulties or challenges of leading groups at their centre, if and how they have adapted their activity for older learners, and their views on reasons for and possible barriers to participation. Two scales were included: the first assessed facilitators' views of successful leadership (Hallam, 1998; 2006) and the second was the Basic Needs Satisfaction at Work scale (Deci & Ryan, 2010). The first of these consists of 16 statements rated for agreement on a scale of 1 to 5. It aimed to assess the characteristics of a successful leader. The second scale was one of the instruments developed to measure how well the basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness are met in terms of professional satisfaction (op.cit.) using a 7-point rating scale.

The participants' questionnaire included a section on their past participation in activities, the activity or activities they were taking part in at the time, how they found out about it, what encouraged them to join, and their rating of agreement regarding the likelihood of potential or actual barriers to participation. Two scales were included for participants: the Basic Needs Satisfaction Scale (op.cit.), measuring competence, autonomy and relatedness, and the CASP-12, a recommended shortened version of the CASP-19 measure for quality of life (Wiggins et al. 2008). The CASP-12 consists of twelve statements to be rated for how often each is true on a 4-point scale measuring three aspects of quality of life: control and autonomy, self-realisation, and pleasure.

For the second phase, the questionnaires were similar with the following adjustments made in response to some observations made during phase 1 of the data collection and some feedback from participants. The music and non-music versions retained the CASP-12 to measure quality of life and added a set of statements using a 4-point Likert-type scale about reasons for participating in activities. Both groups were asked what had encouraged them to continue participating in activities, what might improve activities they were involved with, what was on offer for older people in their area and whether there had been any life changes affecting their participation. It had transpired during the first phase that some individuals in the non-music activities were engaged in music activities such as choirs at other centres therefore an item was added to gauge the importance of music in their lives. Comments were invited from all participants about what had contributed to their positive or negative experiences of participation in activities.

Interviews

Two semi-structured interview schedules were drawn up for face-to-face interviews, one for facilitators (n=12) and one for participants (n=30). The purpose was to explore in more detail particular aspects of the

questionnaire. A large-print version of the participant questionnaire was produced for use by participants with hearing difficulties. Relatives were asked to talk about the benefits and challenges for the participant in music activities who they were connected with. An adapted version of the facilitators' questionnaire was used for an interview with the manager of a charity dedicated to supporting older people in the community. A set of email questions covering local music provision and access issues was also devised for housing scheme managers and older people's charitable organisations.

Facilitators were asked to talk about their musical background, their training and experience, and the benefits and challenges of leading groups. They were also asked about a session that went well or did not go so well, and about repertoire. Participants were asked about their involvement in music throughout their life, their musical preferences, what they enjoy about participation in activities and any possible improvements, the characteristics of a good leader of music activities, and their views on performance and on the benefits of music activities for the wider community. The participants' focus group questions included how they all got involved, any access or provision issues, what they enjoyed or would like to change, their expectations of the activity and the facilitator/leader's expectations of them, and their views on performing where relevant. The views of facilitators and participants were also sought on the benefits of activities for the community, and on inter-generational activities, if they had experienced them.

Individual interviewees were selected in order to represent as fully as possible the three sites in terms of age, occupation, gender, nationality and type of activities on offer. The questions that were asked during individual interviews focused on prior and current involvement in music and non-music groups, musical preferences, experiences from music sessions and performances, perceptions of what makes a 'good leader' of musical activities, thoughts on the role of musical activities in local communities and possible connection between music participation and wellbeing. The interviewees were also encouraged to give feedback on their programmes content, structure and delivery and make suggestions on what could make their programmes more successful.

16 focus group interviews were also undertaken during the course of the project. Volunteers from 10 different groups at the Sage, 5 from the WAES and 1 from the Guildhall Connect project discussed issues related to what it felt like being a member of their group, what was the best thing about participating in joint musical activities and what they would like to change in order for the programmes to be more successful. Moreover, participants in focus groups were asked about their performance experiences and participants in non-performing groups were asked whether they would have liked the opportunity to perform.

Observations

A range of musical activities was observed. For this purpose an observation sheet was drawn up that aimed to capture the physical arrangement and content of the session, including an assessment of, for example, participant enjoyment, involvement and interactions. Digital video recordings were made at various points in the session for later analysis.

PHASES OF THE RESEARCH

The data collection process was undertaken in two phases. The different elements of the research are described within each phase.

Phase 1

Design and distribution of the first questionnaires

The first phase included the design of the first questionnaire for participants and facilitators as well as informal guides on what the project was about and what was expected of the participants who would like to join the research. During September 2009 the research team worked collaboratively to design the first questionnaire for the participants in music and non-music activities and a separate questionnaire for the facilitators in music and non-music activities. Both the questionnaires and guides were distributed during the second week of the project (in October 2009) to all locations. The first questionnaire was collected during winter term (October – December 2009). The questionnaires were either posted to the researchers (questionnaires for the Sage, Gateshead) or collected in person during or after the music sessions. The last questionnaires were received in December 2009 and they were entered into an SPSS database for quantitative analysis.

Phase 2

Analysis of Phase 1 questionnaires – interviews, video recordings, observations

The second phase included initial analysis of the quantitative data from the first questionnaire, designing the second questionnaire, which was distributed in May and June 2010, and undertaking interviews with participants in music activities, both individual and focus group interviews, and their facilitators. Also three interviews with relatives of the participants, two scheme managers and the project manager for one of the sites were undertaken in London and referred to the two London-based research sites. Ten individuals were identified from each case study through their willingness or not to be interviewed, which was indicated by giving their contact details on the questionnaires. Although 301 participants agreed to be interviewed, the research design stipulated that ten people from each site. 9 participants were interviewed from the Sage, Gateshead; 8 from the Guildhall Connect Programme (out of the eleven participants only eight agreed to be interviewed) and 11 from WAES. The interviews took place either in the premises of the three sites before or after the music sessions or in the participants' homes. The number of participants in the focus groups ranged from 3 to 8, with the exception of two groups where all participants (maximum number was 12) wanted to take part. All the interviews were audio recorded. The transcription of all the interviews was completed by September 2010.

The second phase included observations, using the schedule designed for the project, making video recordings of music sessions at all three case study sites as well as attending the summer concerts at the Sage, Gateshead and the Guildhall Connect programme. Two primary schools were involved in an intergenerational project that was part of the Guildhall Connect programme in London. Feedback forms and drawings on their experiences of making music and performing with older people were collected from the children. In addition, group interviews with the children and individual interviews with the class teachers were undertaken.

SUMMARY OF THE DATA COLLECTION

This section presents a summary of the data that were collected from each research site. The Sage, Gateshead was the biggest of the three programmes. During the first phase of the research 650 questionnaires were posted to Gateshead and 290 questionnaires from the participants were returned. In addition 12 questionnaires were sent to the facilitators of the programme and 8 were returned. 9 participants were interviewed individually and 10 focus group interviews were undertaken by two researchers. The programme offered 22 different types of classes; some happened in different locations from the Sage, Gateshead that operated as satellite centre, for example Silver Singers in Stanley, in North Shields, in South Shields. Some classes offered different sessions depending on the level of the participants, for example Silver Beginner Recorder, Silver Intermediate Recorder and Silver Recorder Consort. 11 different classes have been observed and video recorded. One DVD from the two summer Galas (Instrumental and Singing Gala) that took place at the Sage, Gateshead in July 2010 was produced from a professional filming crew with financial support from the Music for Life Project. The DVD was presented at the conference that was organised for the dissemination of the research findings.

Table 2: Data from the Sage, Gateshead

	Questionnaires Phase 1	Questionnaires Phase 2	Individual Interviews	Focus groups
Participants	290	108	9	10
Facilitator	8	-	6	-
Observations without video	Video recordings	Activities filmed	Hours of filming time	DVD from performance
4	13 (22/2, 23/2, 25/5, 26/5, 27/5)	1. Silver recorders (1) 2. Silver Breves (1) 3. Men allowed (1) 4. Silver Divas (2) 5. Guitar Squad (1) 6. Ukulele (1) 7. Silver singers (1) 8. Calabash (2) 9. Silver Belles (1) 10. Silver Rockers (1) 11. Steel Pans (1)	7410 seconds	3

The Connect Programme of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama ran musical activities for older learners for the first time in its history. The programme was small in terms of participation; 20 people joined the programme during the first term and 18 questionnaires were returned. 10 participants stayed until the end of the programme and 8 of them returned the second questionnaire. Individual interviews were undertaken with 8 participants as this was the number that agreed to be interviewed individually. One focus group interview took place in one of the two housing schemes and five participants were present during the interview. Two of the three facilitators who led music sessions returned the questionnaire and agreed to be interviewed. The principal facilitator was interviewed twice, both at the beginning and at the end of the programme. Also, an administrator who organised the practical side of the project, such as the recruitment of participants, the transportation for participants to the venues of the musical activities and the final concert at the Pit theatre of the Barbican Centre, London was interviewed. Although the sessions had been attended on a weekly basis by one of the researchers, 6 sessions were video recorded and 2 sessions were observed and notes were kept on what took place. For the rest of the sessions the researcher was asked to actively participate in the music-making activities, which made it impossible for her to keep notes or film the sessions.

One aspect of the project included an intergenerational collaboration between the older learners and pupils from two primary schools in the areas where the venues that hosted the musical activities were located. 34 pupils participated in the intergenerational musical activities. The researcher visited the two schools one week after the final concert. She distributed a simple feedback form for the pupils that included two questions (*What was the best thing about singing and playing music with older people?* And *What was the best thing about participating in the concert at the Barbican Centre?*) and left some space for them to draw a picture of what it was like singing and playing music with older people. 28 forms were collected (100% responses) on the same day. In addition, interviews were undertaken with three school teachers and the two scheme managers of the venues that hosted the musical activities. Lastly, a DVD of the concert at the Barbican Centre was produced by the Gateway Housing Scheme Association which also supported the musical activities for older people in East London from the beginning of the project.

Table 3: Data from the Connect Programme

	Questionnaires Phase 1	Questionnaires Phase 2	Individual Interviews	Focus groups
Participants	16	8	8	1
Facilitator	2	-	3	-
Scheme managers	-	-	2	-
Project manager	-	-	1	-
Children	28	-	-	2
School teachers	-		3	-
Observations without video	Video recordings	Activities filmed	Hours of filming time	DVD from performance
2	6 sessions	1. Weekly music sessions 2. Intergenerational activity	10708 seconds: older people's workshops;	1

			5794 seconds: intergenerational activities	
Children's Drawings: 28				

During 2009 – 2010, four different musical activities were offered by the Westminster Adult Education Service in London, when the study took place. 36 participants over the age of 50 completed questionnaires in total. Three facilitators returned the questionnaires and four were interviewed individually. One of the facilitators who ran a new programme was interviewed twice.

All four musical activities were filmed once by the researcher and a written observation from each session was also provided. Participants from the WAES music groups came together for the purpose of performing at the consultative conference organised for the dissemination of the research findings and held at the Institute of Education. Their performance was recorded by the researchers and a short DVD was produced.

Table 3: Data from the Westminster Adult Education Service, London (Musical Activities)

	Questionnaires Phase 1	Questionnaires Phase 2	Individual Interviews	Focus groups
Participants	29	31	11	4
Facilitator	3	-	5	-
Observations without video	Video recordings	Activities filmed	Hours of filming time	DVD from performance
4	4	1. Choir 2. Exploring music 3. Find your voice 4. Creative Keyboard	8033 seconds	1

The participants in non-musical activities were the control group for the research study. The non-musical activities that contributed to the study and numbers participating are shown below.

Table 4: Data from the Westminster Adult Education Service and Open Age, London (Non-musical activities – Control Group)

	Questionnaires (Phase 1)	Questionnaires (Phase 2)
Participants	89	36
Facilitators	8	N/A

CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

Preliminary findings were presented to 100 key stakeholders (representatives from agencies supporting older people and from arts organisations working with older people or interested in implementing this work), on 22nd October 2010. The assembled stakeholders participated in two consultative activities, contributing their responses to the research findings, issues arising and suggestions for ways forward. These responses were collated and analysed thematically.

DATA ANALYSIS

The qualitative data that derived from the questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and email communications were coded using NVivo. Four separate files were created, one for individual participants' interviews and qualitative comments, one for focus group interviews, one for those leading activities and supporting participation and one for the participants in the intergenerational activity of the Guildhall Connect Programme. A number of themes emerged that gave greater insight into aspects of leading and taking part in activities for the over 50s, including benefits and challenges for all concerned.

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