

## ABSTRACT

Previous research suggested that music stimulus can alter one's anxiety level, with fast music increasing anxiety level while slow music decreasing it. On the other hand, the effect of anxiety on task performance was complex, as stated in the Yerkes-Dodson Law (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908). Based on the research, it was hypothesized that music tempo could influence task performance through the effect of anxiety. In the current study, 117 secondary three students (Female = 62, Male = 55; mean age = 14) were required to finish two arithmetic tasks (hard and easy) under three music conditions (fast, slow and quiet). The interaction effect between task difficulty and music tempo was found significant after controlling the participants' habit of music listening. Under fast music condition, participants performed better in easy task than in difficult task. The trend was reversed under slow music condition. Lastly, music pieces used in this study did not alter participants' anxiety level. The roles of music as a relaxing agent and a distracter are discussed.