

**Techno, turntables, and tokenism: A mixed-methods
exploration into the experiences of female DJs in
electronic dance music culture**

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate and amplify the lived experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music (EDM). The small amount of literature that exists on female DJs has shown that the EDM scene is inherently sexist, an ‘all-boys’ club’ that excludes women through its culture of misogyny and the masculinisation of technology (Farrugia, 2012; Gadir, 2017a; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). However, little is known about women’s experiences or about how these may be impacted by their intersecting identities. This project provides new insights into women in EDM by using an intersectional lens through which to explore their experiences, supported by the voices of a diverse sample of female DJs. The majority of EDM literature favours the male perspective, whilst research specifically on female DJs favours White, Western, cisgender, heterosexual women. As such, this thesis is the first to employ a large-scale, mixed-methods design that offers an in-depth and systematic investigation of the experiences of female DJs, as well highlighting alternative viewpoints from voices often missing from EDM literature.

This thesis adopts a sequential qualitative to quantitative mixed-methods approach, whereby data collected from semi-structured interviews ($N=23$) was used to inform the questions asked in a subsequent survey with a larger number of respondents ($N=176$). Findings significantly expand the limited literature on female DJs thus far, exposing the ‘gendered nature’ of their experiences. Although women encountered gendered barriers at all stages of their career (e.g. gatekeepers, hierarchies), many worked to actively challenge them, as well as the sexism present in the wider music industry, perceiving their role as a female DJ to be political. Further, in carving out their own spaces for inclusion, through communities, collectives, and alternative spaces, women made it possible for themselves and other

minorities to thrive within EDM, despite its male dominance. Crucially, this thesis uncovers the ways in which gender intersected with other aspects of identity to shape experience. For example, professional DJs reported experiencing depression and PTSD more frequently than amateurs, and queer women reported more negative experiences within the EDM scene overall compared to straight women. This project also provides new perspectives on, and a greater understanding of, some of the issues discussed in prior work (e.g. safety, community). For example, solidarity was identified as a benefit of community that appeared unique to women.

Findings have important implications for the development of policies and guidelines within EDM, and the wider music industry, to foster a safer and more inclusive scene. For example, the creation of safer spaces policies, procedures for reporting and dealing with sexism and harassment, or to pressure festivals, venues, and promoters to diversify their line-ups in genuine and non-tokenistic ways. Further, this project lays the foundation for the creation of resources or programmes specific to female DJs that they could engage with whilst on tour to maintain a good level of wellbeing. Additionally, it advocates for more financial and behind-the-scenes support for organisations that support female DJs in order to continue their vital work.

As the first large-scale, in-depth investigation into female DJs, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the field, providing a deeper understanding of their experiences, inclusive of a more diverse range of voices, that has not previously been achieved.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Abstract.....	4
List of tables.....	12
List of figures	14
Abbreviations.....	16
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	17
<i>1.1 Introducing the research.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>1.2 Why female DJs?.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>1.3 The present research</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>1.4 Thesis structure and content.....</i>	<i>24</i>
Chapter 2: Literature review	29
2.1 The history of EDM.....	30
2.1.1 Defining key terms.....	30
2.1.2 The history of EDM research.....	31
2.1.3 Women in EDM: The early research	33
2.1.4 Women in production	36
2.2 Gender bias and EDM.....	40
2.2.1 Gender biases in society	40
2.2.2 Gendered readings of music technology.....	44
2.2.3 Gendered readings of technology in EDM	46
2.2.3.1 Gendered Readings of Technology: Are Things Changing?	48
2.3 The sexual harassment of women in EDM	51
2.3.1 Women navigating sexual harassment in the creative industries	51
2.3.2 The importance of studying harassment in EDM	52
2.3.3 Women navigating sexual harassment in night-time spaces	53
2.3.4 The impact of sexual harassment on wellbeing.....	55
2.4 Experiences of female DJs in EDM: The key research studies.....	56
2.4.1 Beyond the dancefloor (Farrugia, 2012).....	56
2.4.2 DJ technologies, social networks and gendered trajectories in European DJ cultures (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013).....	58
2.4.3 Resistance or reiteration? Rethinking gender in DJ cultures (Gadir, 2016)	59
2.4.4 Building on the key research	60
2.4.5 Creating spaces for inclusion: DJ collectives	62

2.5 Theoretical framework	66
2.5.1 Intersectional framework	66
2.5.2 Postfeminist framework	68
2.6 Chapter summary	70
Chapter 3: General methodology	71
3.1 Research aims and questions	71
3.2 Overarching methodology: Mixed-methods	72
3.3 Theoretical underpinnings.....	77
3.3.1 Constructivism.....	77
3.3.2 Positivism.....	78
3.4 Reflexivity	79
3.5 Study 1.....	86
3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews	87
3.5.2 Reflexive thematic analysis	88
3.5.3 Ensuring quality & validity in qualitative research	95
3.6 Study 2.....	97
3.6.1 Online surveys	98
3.6.2 Likert scales	99
3.6.3 Analysis	101
3.7 Ethical considerations.....	101
3.8 Chapter summary	103
Chapter 4: Study 1	104
4.1 Methods.....	104
4.1.1 Aims.....	104
4.1.2 Participants.....	104
4.1.3 Materials	105
4.1.3.1 Questionnaire.....	105
4.1.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews.....	105
4.1.4 Procedure	106
4.1.5 Analysis	106
4.2. Results and discussion.....	109
4.2.1 Theme 1: Importance of community	111
4.2.1.1 Benefits of Community.....	112
4.2.1.2 Solidarity.....	114
4.2.1.3 Community Building.....	115

4.2.2 Theme 2: Factors facilitating participation.....	117
4.2.2.1 <i>Importance of the Queer Scene.</i>	117
4.2.2.2 <i>Role Models.</i>	119
4.2.2.3 <i>Collectives.</i>	122
4.2.3 Theme 3: Impact of DJing on wellbeing	125
4.2.3.1 <i>Positive Impacts of DJing on Wellbeing.</i>	125
4.2.3.2 <i>Negative Impacts of DJing on Wellbeing.</i>	127
4.2.4 Theme 4: Identity.....	130
4.2.4.1 <i>Age.</i>	131
4.2.4.2 <i>Race.</i>	133
4.2.4.3 <i>Sexuality.</i>	134
4.2.4.4 <i>Class.</i>	136
4.2.4.5 <i>Level of Profession.</i>	137
4.2.4.6 <i>Culture and Context.</i>	138
4.2.5 Theme 5: Gendered experiences.....	139
4.2.5.1 <i>Stereotyping.</i>	140
4.2.5.2 <i>Harassment.</i>	143
4.2.5.3 <i>Safety.</i>	145
4.2.5.4 <i>Normalisation.</i>	147
4.2.5.5 <i>Gender as a Non-issue.</i>	150
4.2.6 Theme 6: Representation	154
4.2.6.1 <i>Appearance.</i>	155
4.2.6.2 <i>Disapproval of Hyper-feminine DJs.</i>	159
4.2.6.3 <i>Tokenism.</i>	162
4.2.7 Theme 7: Finding space.....	165
4.2.7.1 <i>Barriers to Accessing the Scene.</i>	165
4.2.7.2 <i>Sense of Belonging.</i>	169
4.2.8 Theme 8: Taking up space	172
4.2.8.1 <i>DJing as Empowering.</i>	173
4.2.8.2 <i>Women as Initiators of Change.</i>	175
4.2.8.3 <i>Awareness of Political Issues.</i>	177
4.2.9 Theme 9: Structural barriers	179
4.2.9.1 <i>Hierarchies.</i>	179
4.2.9.2 <i>Gatekeeping.</i>	181
4.3 Chapter summary	184

Chapter 5: Study 2	186
5.1 Method	186
5.1.1 Aims.....	186
5.1.2 Participants.....	186
5.1.3 Design	187
5.1.4 Materials	187
5.1.5 Procedure	190
5.1.6 Ethics	191
5.2 Analysis	191
5.2.1 Hypotheses.....	194
5.2.1.1 <i>Demographics</i>	194
5.2.1.2 <i>Wellbeing</i>	195
5.2.1.3 <i>Sexual Harassment</i>	196
5.2.1.4 <i>Queer Spaces</i>	196
5.2.1.5 <i>Voice and Visibility</i>	197
5.3 Results	197
5.3.1 Being a woman in a male dominated scene.....	199
5.3.1.1 <i>Overall</i>	199
5.3.1.2 <i>Age</i>	201
5.3.1.3 <i>Gender</i>	202
5.3.1.4 <i>Sexuality</i>	204
5.3.1.5 <i>Professional Level</i>	205
5.3.1.6 <i>Career Length</i>	207
5.3.1.7 <i>Average Number of Gigs Played a Month</i>	209
5.3.2 Voice and visibility.....	210
5.3.2.1 <i>Overall</i>	210
5.3.2.2 <i>Age</i>	211
5.3.2.3 <i>Gender</i>	212
5.3.2.4 <i>Professional Level</i>	213
5.3.2.5 <i>Average Number of Gigs Played a Month</i>	214
5.3.3 DJing and wellbeing	215
5.3.3.1 <i>Overall</i>	216
5.3.3.2 <i>Age</i>	218
5.3.3.3 <i>Gender</i>	220
5.3.3.4 <i>Professional Level</i>	221

5.3.3.5 <i>Career Length</i>	224
5.3.3.6 <i>Average Number of Gigs Played a Month</i>	227
5.3.4 <i>Discrimination</i>	230
5.3.4.1 <i>Overall</i>	230
5.3.4.2 <i>Age</i>	231
5.3.4.3 <i>Gender</i>	232
5.3.4.4 <i>Sexuality</i>	233
5.3.4.5 <i>Professional Level</i>	234
5.3.4.6 <i>Career Length</i>	236
5.3.4.7 <i>Average Number of Gigs Played a Month</i>	237
5.3.5 <i>DJing and sexual harassment</i>	238
5.3.5.1 <i>Overall</i>	238
5.3.5.2 <i>Age</i>	242
5.3.5.3 <i>Gender</i>	243
5.3.5.4 <i>Professional Level</i>	246
5.3.5.5 <i>Career Length</i>	248
5.3.5.6 <i>Average Number of Gigs Played a Month</i>	248
5.3.6 <i>DJing and queer spaces</i>	250
5.3.6.1 <i>Overall</i>	250
5.3.6.2 <i>Gender</i>	254
5.3.6.3 <i>Sexuality</i>	257
5.4 <i>Discussion</i>	259
5.4.1 <i>Being a woman in a male dominated scene</i>	259
5.4.2 <i>Voice and visibility</i>	262
5.4.3 <i>DJing and wellbeing</i>	263
5.4.4 <i>Discrimination</i>	270
5.4.5 <i>Sexual harassment</i>	274
5.4.6 <i>DJing and queer spaces</i>	280
5.5 <i>Chapter summary</i>	282
Chapter 6: <i>General discussion</i>	284
6.1 <i>Summary of thesis</i>	284
6.2 <i>What are the lived experiences of female DJs in EDM and how are they impacted by participants' intersecting identities?</i>	285
6.2.2 <i>Politicisation and empowerment</i>	287
6.2.3 <i>Experiences of safety and harassment</i>	288

6.2.4 The impact of DJing on mental wellbeing.....	290
6.3 What systemic/structural barriers exist for female DJs operating within the androcentric EDM scene?.....	291
6.3.1 Socioeconomic inequality.....	291
6.3.2 Gender-based hierarchies.....	292
6.3.3 Internal systemic barriers.....	293
6.4 What factors help women navigate their experience and how does this support their practice?.....	294
6.4.1 The queer scene	294
6.4.2 Community	296
6.4.3 Role models	297
6.5 Strengths, limitations, and future research	297
6.6 Implications and recommendations.....	303
6.7 Conclusion	311
6.8 Executive summary	311
References	314
Appendices.....	376
Appendix A: Ethics approval	376
Appendix B: Demographic questionnaire	378
Appendix C: Interview schedule	380
Appendix D: Information sheet.....	382
Appendix E: Consent form.....	384
Appendix F: Survey statements.....	385

List of tables

Table 1 Survey participant demographics	198
Table 2 ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene, based on age	202
Table 3 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on sexuality	205
Table 4 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene, based on professional level	206
Table 5 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on professional level	207
Table 6 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene, based on career length.....	208
Table 7 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on career length.....	209
Table 8 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on average number of gigs played a month	210
Table 9 ANOVA statistics for participants' responses to questions concerning voice and visibility, based on age	212
Table 10 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to statements concerning voice and visibility, based on level of profession.....	214
Table 11 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to statements concerning voice and visibility, based on average number of gigs played a month	215
Table 12 ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on age	219
Table 13 ANOVA statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health problems, based on age.....	220
Table 14 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on professional level	222
Table 15 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, based on professional level	223
Table 16 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific physical health problems, based on professional level.....	224
Table 17 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on career length.....	225
Table 18 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, based on career length.....	226
Table 19 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific physical health problems, based on career length	227
Table 20 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on average number of gigs played a month.....	228

Table 21 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, based on average number of gigs played a month	229
Table 22 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific physical health problems, based on average number of gigs played a month	230
Table 23 ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning discrimination, based on age	232
Table 24 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on sexuality	234
Table 25 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on professional level.....	236
Table 26 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on career length	237
Table 27 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on average number of gigs played a month	238
Table 28 Mann-Whitney U statistics for differences in the extent to which participants' experienced specific mental health problems among those who reported 'never/rarely' (N=91) and 'at least sometimes' (N=64) to 'I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ'	242
Table 29 ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and sexual harassment, based on age.....	243
Table 30 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning safety, based on professional level	247
Table 31 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning harassment behaviours, based on career length	248
Table 32 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning harassment behaviours, based on average number of gigs played a month	249
Table 33 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning safety, based on average number of gigs played a month	250
Table 34 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the queer scene, based on sexuality	258
Table 35 Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the queer scene, based on sexuality	259
Table 36 Recommendations for industry and individuals	308

List of figures

Figure 1 Thematic map.....	111
Figure 2 Participants' ($N=175$) extent of agreement with statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene.....	201
Figure 3 How frequently participants ($N=175$) reported that they were the only woman on the line-up.....	201
Figure 4 Participants' ($N=175$) percentage of agreement with statements concerning how they felt in the EDM scene.....	202
Figure 5 Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	204
Figure 6 Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning how they felt in the EDM scene, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$)....	205
Figure 7 Participants' ($N=175$) extent of agreement with statements concerning voice and visibility.....	212
Figure 8 Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning voice and visibility, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	214
Figure 9 Participants' ($N=175$) extent of agreement with statements concerning DJing and wellbeing.....	217
Figure 10 Extent to which participants ($N=175$) experienced specific mental health issues as a result of DJing.....	218
Figure 11 Extent to which participants ($N=175$) experienced specific physical health problems as a result of DJing.....	219
Figure 12 Comparing the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	222
Figure 13 The frequency with which participants experienced various forms of discrimination ($N=176$).....	232
Figure 14 Comparing participants' mean frequency ratings to statements concerning discrimination, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	234
Figure 15 Participants' extent of agreement with statements concerning safety and experiences of harassment ($N=176$).....	240
Figure 16 Extent to which participants had experienced harassment or adopted safety measures ($N=176$).....	241
Figure 17 Percentage of participants who were aware of other female DJs who had been sexually harassed ($N=166$).....	241
Figure 18 Extent to which participants, who reported experiencing harassment, engaged in certain behaviours following the incident ($N=118$).....	242
Figure 19 Comparing the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues among those who reported 'never/rarely' ($N=91$) and 'at least sometimes' ($N=64$) to 'I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ'.....	243
Figure 20 Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning safety and sexual harassment, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	245

Figure 21 Comparing the extent to which participants experienced harassment behaviours at least sometimes, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	246
Figure 22 Comparing the extent to which participants, who had been harassed, engaged in certain behaviours following the experience, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	247
Figure 23 Percentage of participants who identified as queer/LGBT+ ($N=161$)....	252
Figure 24 The extent to which participants were involved in their local queer scene ($N=152$).....	252
Figure 25 How participants, who were involved in the queer scene at least sometimes ($N=73$), felt within it.....	253
Figure 26 Comparing how participants felt in the general EDM scene ($N=175$) and queer scene ($N=73$).....	254
Figure 27 Participants' extent of agreement with statements concerning playing in queer spaces ($N=75$).....	255
Figure 28 Percentage of cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$) who identified as queer/LBGT+.....	256
Figure 29 Percentage of cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$) who were involved in their local queer club scene at least sometimes.....	256
Figure 30 Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning how they felt in the queer scene, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$)....	257
Figure 31 Comparing participants' mean ratings to statements concerning playing in queer spaces, among cis ($N=154$) and trans women ($N=19$).....	258

Abbreviations

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour
BPM	Beats per minute
CDJ	Compact disc jokey
DJ	Disc jockey
DnB	Drum & bass
EDM	Electronic dance music
IPA	Interpretative phenomenological analysis
LGBT+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
PhD	Doctor of philosophy
PR	Public relations
PTSD	Post traumatic stress disorder
RTA	Reflexive thematic analysis
SEQ	Sexual experiences questionnaire
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TA	Thematic analysis
UKG	UK garage
USB	Universal serial bus

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introducing the research

Electronic dance music (EDM) is thriving, with an estimated global value of \$11.8 billion (IMS, 2024). However, statistics show that female DJs and producers made up only 30% of the line-up at international dance music festivals between 2022-2023 (Female: Pressure, 2024). A survey of the most popular *Billboard 100* songs across all genres between 2012-2023 found that only 3.2% of these were produced by women (Smith et al., 2024). Of the top 50 EDM tracks with the most streams, only 4.5% were produced by women and/or non-binary people and no women and/or non-binary people had engineering credits (Lazar et al., 2023). Equally, only 13% of artists signed to dance music labels in the UK identified as female (Bain, 2019). Evidently, despite EDM becoming an increasingly popular and lucrative industry, women are often not afforded the same opportunities as their male counterparts. This is particularly apparent at the international level, where the gender balance remains disproportionately skewed towards men (Female: Pressure, 2024; Rodgers, 2010).

The number of reports highlighting the gender gap in EDM, such as those by Female: Pressure (2024), Smith et al. (2024), Lazar et al. (2023), and Bain (2019), suggest that it is no longer being ignored (see also Friedlander, 2016; the Jaguar Foundation, 2022). However, the discourse within these articles is often one of absence. The reports by Female: Pressure (2024), Smith et al. (2024), Lazar et al. (2023), and Bain (2019) offer stark statistics about the number of women appearing on line-ups, labels rosters, in the studio, or backstage. For example, only 3.2% of producers are women (Smith et al., 2024). These reports concluded that there is a dearth of women within the music industry, and more should be done to increase their number. Whilst the number of women is undoubtedly an important issue, it can

often appear as though the women who *do* exist within the industry are ignored. What about their experiences? The challenges that women face do not simply end once they enter the music scene. As Rodgers (2010, p. 223), writing on women in electronic music noted, “is there perhaps more women than people expect who are using electronic technologies, but they are left out of history?” This statement also applies to EDM (see Jaguar, 2020).

Moreover, focusing on the lack of female DJs implies that simply increasing the number of women behind the decks would improve the situation. However, this strategy does not necessarily achieve gender equality (Gadir, 2017b; Puwar, 2004). Viewing ‘gender equality’ in terms of meeting certain quotas of men and women fails to look beyond the gender binary to the experiences of transgender or non-binary individuals (Gadir, 2017b). Furthermore, this view does not consider how experiences of gender may intersect with other aspects of identity (e.g. age, race) and ignores that behaviour does not always change because the numbers have. Consequently, it is important to look beyond statistics when considering the role of women in EDM. There may be more women behind the decks, but it does not necessarily follow that their experiences are reflective of gender equality having been achieved. Research, then, should not only consider the underrepresentation of female DJs, but the fact that their achievements are often downplayed or erased altogether (Farrugia, 2004a). The number of women on line-ups and at festivals is only one issue and there are many more that must be addressed if gender equality is to be achieved within the scene.

When they do manage to get behind the decks, women are frequently subject to sexist and misogynistic practices (Farrugia, 2012; Strong & Gadir, 2023). They are commonly held to lower standards, not taken seriously, and assumed to be less

technically competent than their male counterparts (Hutton, 2006). Further, women are often prevented from accessing male dominated informal networks in which they can learn to DJ (Katz, 2006), or struggle to secure gigs because of their gender (Rowley, 2009). These experiences are recalled by women in more recent articles (see Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2016; 2023; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Kenny, 2022) indicating that little has changed since the early research on female DJs was published (e.g. Farrugia, 2004a; Hutton, 2006). Today, female DJs face further challenges as the rise of social media and live-stream DJ sets (e.g. *Boiler Room*) have allowed women's gender presentation to come under even greater scrutiny in a way that men's appearance does not (see Gadir, 2017a). This lack of progress within EDM culture between the earlier accounts (e.g. Farrugia 2004a; Hutton, 2006) and more recent work (e.g. Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2023; Kenny, 2022) suggests that the scene is far from achieving gender equality. Clearly, more academic work is needed to determine why.

1.2 Why female DJs?

The DJ experience is unique. There are nuances to being a DJ which sets them apart from other musicians. For example, DJs play later and for longer, with club nights typically starting around 11pm and finishing at 4am. They tour constantly, unlike traditional musicians who gig around album cycles, and travel with little equipment so they can play more sets further apart (Zlatopolsky, 2016), with some DJs even playing multiple gigs in one night. DJs often tour alone, without a band, with many experiencing isolation and loneliness as a result (Zlatopolsky, 2016). There is a culture of substance use surrounding EDM, meaning that DJs are at greater risk of drug/alcohol abuse compared to other musicians (Kegelaers, Jessen et al., 2021; Palamar et al., 2019). Moreover, despite the internet, learning to DJ is a solitary

process, with few ways to gain the necessary skills, in comparison to more traditional instruments (Farrugia, 2012; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008). Given these differences, and the unique challenges that they present, findings from research on traditional musicians may not generalise to DJs. Consequently, it is important to study the DJ experience separately.

Within this, the female DJ experience is distinct from that of their male counterparts. Female DJs' experiences in EDM are rooted in, and shaped by, the sexism and misogyny that is deeply entrenched within the scene. As such, they must navigate many challenges. They are subject to objectification and sexualisation in a way that their male counterparts are not, frequently seen in the undue focus on female DJs' physical appearance (see Farrugia, 2012; Gadir, 2017b; O'Sullivan, 2018), exacerbated with the rise of social media and live-stream DJ sets (e.g. *Boiler Room, Keep Hush*). In more extreme, yet increasingly common cases, objectification and sexualisation are borne out in women's experiences of sexual harassment, the constant threat of which means that female DJs must navigate night-time spaces differently to men. For example, adopting safety precautions, such as taking taxis to/from the venue, going home with friends, and only attending clubs they perceive to be 'safe' (De Crespigny, 2001; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Hutton, 2006). As such, the way in which women DJs negotiate night-time spaces in response to the threat of sexual harassment is one of the most obvious ways in which their experiences differ from that of male DJs. Women working as producers or engineers also experience increased levels of harassment. In a study of music industry creators and professionals, almost all women described instances of unwanted touching in a studio setting (Kahlert et al., 2024).

Alongside objectification and sexualisation, female DJs are subject to marginalisation, discrimination, and exclusionary practices (Strong & Gadir, 2023). Here, female DJs are held to lower standards, not taken seriously, assumed to be less technically competent, and must work twice as hard as their male counterparts (Farrugia, 2012; Hutton, 2006). This culture of sexism and misogyny is partly a result of EDM's inextricable link to technology, with the use of digital music technology an essential precondition for the DJing and production of EDM (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). These technologies are largely seen as the domain of men, a result of the longstanding relationship between technology and masculinity, which is at the heart of the gender dynamics in EDM (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Strong & Gadir, 2023).

This marginalisation can also be observed for women working in related technology-based music professions, such as audio engineering and production (Hepworth-Sawyer, 2020; Marie, 2022; Marstal, 2020; Reddington, 2021; Wolfe, 2020). The experiences of women working in these professions are different from those of women working with other genres/instruments. Although female musicians face marginalisation and barriers to participation within all genres (Brereton et al., 2020; Strong & Gadir, 2023), women vocalists, pianists, or acoustic guitar players are perceived as less of a threat to the studio patriarchy as the technology they use is defined as acoustic (i.e. feminine), so they are less reliant on electronic (i.e. masculine) technology to make music (Marstal, 2020).

As well as being technically adept, the DJ must also be a selector, musical archivist, and collector (Brewster & Broughton, 2006; O'Sullivan, 2018). Here, the female DJ experience differs from that of female audio engineers and producers, as women DJs must also navigate stereotypes of record collecting (whether physical or

digital) as a masculine pursuit (Gadir, 2017b; Maalsen & McLean, 2018). EDM producers release tracks more frequently than musicians, as they do not adhere to the traditional album format, with many producers releasing on underground record labels or self-releasing (e.g. on Bandcamp). Unlike musicians, producers can be anonymous and release under several alias, without the press release or build-up that accompanies a traditional album release. Given the amount of new music, and the obscurity that can surround it, one of the few ways of being ‘in the know’ is by keeping up with the latest releases, a time-consuming activity (Farrugia, 2004a) even if done digitally. Here, the act of collecting is part of the gate-keeping practices that exclude women (Farrugia, 2004a). Women are perceived to lack interest in this ‘nerdy’, ‘obsessive’ pursuit (Gadir, 2017b; Maalsen & McLean, 2018). As such, their engagement with record collecting is considered marginal compared to men’s intense social and financial investment. Consequently, female DJs face a constant battle to prove that they are just as interested in, and passionate about, this aspect of DJing as men.

Taken together, this suggests that the female DJ experience is distinct from that of other musicians (as well as male DJs) and thus warrants its own exploration. However, the research into women in the studio suggests that there may be some similar experiences between female DJs, producers, and audio engineers, given that both work in male dominated, technological environments. Consequently, the findings and implications from this project may also be useful in helping to create a more welcoming, accepting, and gender diverse studio environment, as well as having an impact on the broader nighttime economy.

1.3 The present research

A comprehensive and rigorous study into the experiences of female DJs is both pertinent and essential in the present climate. The prior research, discussed in the following chapter, has highlighted several factors that work to marginalise women (e.g. masculinisation of technology, gatekeeping). These factors create a climate that tips the power balance in favour of men, allowing misogynist behaviour to go uncontested. Together, they are suggestive of a patriarchal culture that is deeply rooted in dance music. Therefore, meaningful research that draws on methods allowing for an in-depth and detailed exploration female DJs' experiences is needed.

This thesis attempts to readdress the current imbalance in EDM literature, both in terms of who is writing it and who they are writing about. It distances itself from the androcentric histories of EDM (e.g. Brewster & Broughton, 2006; Reynolds, 2013) in that it is not attempting to rewrite history. There are many articles in the popular press now (rightly) writing EDM's past female pioneers back into its history (see Castellano, 2022; Jaguar, 2020; McKenzie, 2022). Instead, the intention of this research is to look to the present, at the women currently pushing the scene forward, whether at a local, national, or international level.

By situating women at the centre, the present research is not simply exploring the lived experiences of female DJs because their stories have hitherto been ignored, as Pini (2001) has previously argued. There is a lack of research on female DJs' experiences, however this project goes beyond the work that has come before. Here, it attempts to shed light on how women's stories fit into EDM's androcentric narrative, exploring how and why women continue to thrive in this male dominated industry, despite their oppression. Most importantly, this project seeks to identify how this narrative can be changed by capturing the in-depth accounts of female DJs

who are, in their own way, challenging the marginalisation they experience.

Crucially, this project is supported by the voices of an heterogeneous sample of women DJs. By drawing attention to the similarities and differences in the ways in which they experience the EDM scene, it will determine why many spaces remain inaccessible to some women, as well as the ways in which they are creating their own spaces for inclusion. In doing so, this research aims to explore the diversity and complexity of the lived experiences of female DJs and provide hope for change within the industry.

1.3.1 Research questions

- What are the lived experiences of female DJs in EDM and how are they impacted by participants' intersecting identities?
- What systemic/structural barriers exist for female DJs operating within the androcentric EDM scene?
- What factors help women navigate their experience and how does this support their practice?

1.4 Thesis structure and content

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis. It draws on statistics from grey literature to provide a general overview of the research area and highlight the gender inequality within the EDM scene. It then outlines the need for the present research, arguing that, although statistics are important, they focus solely on the lack of female DJs. Following this, a brief overview of the literature on women in EDM, that will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2, is given. This section serves to emphasise the lack of progress in EDM research between the early accounts of women's experience and more recent work. It concludes by calling for more academic research into why the scene is yet to achieve gender equality. Finally, this chapter presents an overview of the present

research. It broadly positions this thesis in relation to the previous literature and outlines the ways in which it will build on this work, most notably by foregrounding the voices of a diverse group of female DJs. It ends with a statement of the research questions.

Chapter 2 will provide a detailed review of the literature, situating the current project within a wider context. It charts the *history* of EDM research, from the early work on women as consumers within rave culture, to their role as active producers of electronic music. This background research will be drawn upon to question women's absence from both popular and scholarly accounts of EDM. Secondly, it presents the literature pertaining to gender biases in society and music technology, as research in these areas provides important contextual information needed to understand women's experiences within the EDM scene. Particular attention is paid to the role of sexual harassment in the creative and night-time industries, as the way in which female DJs negotiate night-time spaces in response to the threat of harassment is one of the most obvious ways in which their experiences differ from those of male DJs. This chapter will then discuss the key studies on the lived experiences of female DJs that have provided a crucial basis for this project to build upon. Throughout, I will consider the strengths and weaknesses of the research presented, identifying the gaps within it, and stating my own position in relation to the literature. Finally, I will outline the theoretical framework used in this thesis.

Chapter 3 presents an overview of the methodology used in this thesis. It opens by outlining the research aims and questions. The overarching mixed-methods design used in this project is then discussed. I will describe the strengths and limitations of this design before detailing why it was the best approach to use within this research. The theoretical underpinnings of this project, constructivism and

positivism, will then be outlined, as well as why these approaches were most suited to answer the research questions. Following this, I present my reflexivity statement. Here, I outline why reflexivity is important, before reflecting on where my own perspectives and experiences as a female DJ may have shaped the research process and outcomes, as well as the ways in which I attempted to control this influence. This chapter then provides an overview of the methods adopted Study 1. It details why a qualitative approach was most appropriate for achieving the exploratory aims of this study before outlining the methods of data collection (semi-structured interviews) and analysis (reflexive thematic analysis; RTA). Here, I discuss the strengths and limitations of these methods, as well as the specific theoretical position and approach to RTA adopted in Study 1. Following this, I consider how I ensured quality and validity in my qualitative research, drawing on the '4 R's (rigour, relevance, resonance, reflexivity) proposed by Finlay (2021). Finally, this chapter presents an overview of the methods used in Study 2. I provide a rationale for using a large-scale online survey, the strengths and limitations of this, as well as the specific statistical analyses that were conducted.

Chapter 4 presents the methods, results, and discussion for Study 1, a semi-structured interview study analysed using RTA. The aim of this study was to explore the diversity and complexity of the lived experiences of female DJs. This chapter provides a detailed description of the methods used in Study 1, followed by the combined results and discussion for each of the nine themes: *importance of community, factors facilitating participation, impact of DJing on wellbeing, identity, gendered experiences, representation, finding space, taking up space, and structural barriers*. Findings suggest that female DJs face 'gendered' challenges, including sexism, harassment, and stereotyping. However, many women continued to thrive

within the EDM scene by creating their own communities and spaces for inclusion. Some of the themes developed in Study 1 aligned with those previously discussed in the literature (e.g. role models, appearance, structural barriers). However, six themes had not been discussed in prior work or in the context of female DJs (e.g. *importance of the queer scene, impact of DJing on wellbeing, level of profession, taking up space, normalisation, culture and context*). As such, these novel themes were deemed important to explore further in Study 2.

Chapter 5 presents the method, results, and discussion for Study 2, a large-scale online survey. The aim of this study was to explore the novel findings from Study 1 using a larger sample of female DJs and compare participants based on demographic differences (e.g. age, sexuality, professional level). Firstly, I provide an overview of the methods, followed by the hypotheses. The results are then presented. The novel findings were grouped into six main areas: *being a woman in a male dominated scene, voice and visibility, wellbeing, discrimination, sexual harassment, and queer spaces*. For each area, the overall results are first presented followed by an analysis of group differences based on age, gender, sexuality, professional level, career length, and average number of gigs played a month. Finally, the results are discussed in relation to the previous literature. Overall, the key finding from Study 2 was the importance of intersectionality. It was clear that participants' gender did not work in isolation. Instead, gender intersected with other identities (e.g. sexuality, professional level) to shape experience.

Finally, Chapter 6 brings together the findings of both studies to reflect on their outcomes more broadly. It will discuss the extent to which the research questions have been answered by the data and what the findings reveal about the lived experiences of female DJs, drawing on some of the literature considered in

Chapter 2. Broadly, female DJs' experiences were characterised by their 'gendered' nature (e.g. sexual harassment), with participants facing several systemic/structural barriers (e.g. socioeconomic inequality, gender-based hierarchies, internal systemic barriers) as a result. Further, whilst the act of DJing itself had a positive impact on participants' mental health, negative events experienced within the industry (e.g. harassment) had the opposite effect. However, many factors helped women to navigate their experience (e.g. the queer scene, community, role models), allowing them to thrive in the EDM scene, despite its male dominance. Finally, this chapter will address the strengths and limitations of this thesis, as well as suggesting areas for future research, before discussing its implications on, and recommendations for, the EDM scene and music industry practices more broadly.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The following literature review consists of four sections that contextualise the current thesis. The first section will define the key terms ‘EDM’ and ‘DJ’, provide a brief history of the genre, and critique some of the early research documenting women’s involvement in club culture. This will provide important background information about women’s position in EDM as well as highlighting that, historically, their stories have rarely been told in both academia and the media. The second section explores the gender biases present in society, in particular the relationship between technology and masculinity, and how these biases create structural limitations for women accessing the music industry. Given that EDM is so technologically based, this is arguably one of the most important biases observable within the scene and thus requires specific exploration. It concludes with a consideration of some of the ways in which this relationship may be changing. The third section outlines the literature on the marginalisation of women in the creative industries, with a particular focus on how this marginalisation can manifest as sexual harassment, and the impact that this may have on women’s wellbeing. Sexual harassment is one of the most extreme forms of misogyny and is currently a topical issue within the media, given the number of reports that have emerged within the past few years about powerful male DJs abusing female DJs, promoters, or fans (Ross 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021). However, there remains a lack of research specific to the EDM scene. For these reasons sexual harassment warrants its own investigation. Following this is an overview of the key research relating to female DJs, identifying their pitfalls, and suggesting areas for future research. Unique to female DJs’ experiences within the scene, this section will also consider the role of women-centred DJ collectives and critique the literature in relation to this. By

identifying the gaps in prior work, the purpose of this section is to situate the current project within the context of the previous literature, highlighting the research it will build on and why.

2.1 The *history* of EDM

2.1.1 *Defining key terms*

EDM is an umbrella term used to describe a broad range of electronic music styles that emerged post-disco, including house, techno, trance, jungle, and drum n bass (DnB), as well as an increasing number of sub-subgenres, such as tech-house and minimal techno (García, 2011). EDM is characterised by low-end sounds (e.g. bass) and a dominant ‘four to the floor’ beat, marked by the kick drum. Structurally, EDM comprises of loops, which are repeated to create a groove, and heavy use of sampled sounds, in particular vocals from disco, R&B, and soul (García, 2011). The main purpose of EDM is for people to dance to (Farrugia 2004a; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008).

The term ‘disc jockey’ (DJ) was coined in 1935 to describe the way in which radio presenters would “[ride] over the music with their voice” (Brewster & Broughton, 2006, p. 36). The role of the EDM DJ, however, is not to introduce tracks but to seamlessly stitch them together through the process of beatmatching. A basic DJ skill, beatmatching involves synchronising the beats per minute (BPM) of the incoming track with that of the outgoing track in order to transition smoothly between them, resulting in one continuous mix (Brewster & Broughton, 2006; Herman, 2006; Reynolds, 2013). The DJ must also be a ‘selector’, deciding which records to play and when. Often overlooked in favour of mixing ability (O’Sullivan, 2018), track selection is essential to build an atmosphere, take the audience on a ‘journey’ and, most importantly, keep them dancing (Brewster & Broughton, 2006; Herman, 2006; Reynolds, 2013).

2.1.2 The history of EDM research

EDM has not received the same academic scrutiny as other types of music (Hesmondhalgh, 1998). Although there are popular histories of the genre, such as those by Brewster and Broughton (2006) and Reynolds (2013), these accounts are not underpinned by rigorous historical musicology in the same way other genre developments are (e.g. Western art music, jazz). As such, influences, shifts, and mutations within the scene are not always recorded. A likely cause is the challenges associated with conducting research in EDM contexts, which make using conventional ethnographic methods difficult (García, 2013). García (2013) outlined some of these challenges, including the distrust of journalists/scholars in underground scenes, issues of ethics/consent surrounding photography/filming, and publishing details of an individual's 'night life' that they may not want to be made public. Women researchers experience additional challenges in club settings, such as being sexually harassed or objectified by male participants and safety concerns as a lone female (Bhardwa, 2013; Perrone, 2010). In addition, Measham and Moore (2006) attributed the gaps in EDM scholarship to the way in which research in this field is influenced by insider knowledge. Researchers, frequently restricted by ethics and politics, are often hesitant to produce a first-hand, reflexive account of the scene they are studying (Measham & Moore, 2006).

The expansion of EDM scholarship began in the early 21st century. García (2011) claimed that this rapid growth was "generational" (García, 2011, p. 5), as former 1990s rave attendees passed through the academy and began publishing their research. Partly a result of this, the majority of work tended to document early UK styles (e.g. acid house/rave; see Hutson, 2000; Martin, 1999; Reynolds, 1999) and the genres that emerged post-rave (e.g. DnB/jungle; see Chapman, 2003; Shapiro,

1999; Quinn, 2002). Despite the increase in academic interest, García (2011) grouped EDM scholarship into three main areas: historical accounts of EDM (see Fikentscher, 2000; Garrett, 2020; Langlois, 1992; Nehring, 2007), musical analysis (see Butler, 2005; Tagg, 1994), and ethnographies of specific EDM settings/scenes (see Fuernkranz, 2024; Malbon, 1998; Montano, 2009; Steingo, 2015; St John, 2012).

Here, it is important to acknowledge that there are multiple histories of EDM, some of which do not always appear in scholarly accounts of the genre. These histories chronicle the evolution of EDM from several different perspectives, foregrounding the narratives of some players whilst failing to include those of others. For example, the White-washed history of techno presents Kraftwerk as responsible for pioneering the genre (Swarè, 2021) rather than the *Belleville Three*, three Black men from Detroit (Sicko, 1999). Similarly, apart from some notable exceptions (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4), women are largely non-existent in both popular and scholarly accounts of the genre as both consumers and producers (Farrugia, 2012). These accounts, the majority of which were written by men about men (Brewster & Broughton, 2006; Fikentscher, 2000; Poschardt, 1998; Reynolds, 2013; Sicko, 1999), present a patrilineal history of EDM, (re)producing the DJ as masculine rhetoric. Throughout, the DJ is frequently referred to using male pronouns or imagery, such as ‘God’, ‘craftsman’ or ‘founding father’ (Brewster & Broughton, 2006). For example, histories of the *Paradise Garage* foreground the contribution of Larry Levan whilst erasing that of Sharon White, the first woman to play there (Jaguar, 2020). Similarly, in his book detailing the history of the *Haçienda*, Peter Hook (2009) made reference to Graeme Park and Dave Haslam but failed to mention DJ Paulette, the long-standing resident of its queer night *Flesh*. These discourses are gendered masculine,

implying that the DJ is male by default (Duignan-Pearson, 2019). Although women have participated in EDM as clubbers since its inception, Farrugia and Olszanowski (2017) claimed that this scholarly focus on male experience is partly because women did not frequently play an active role as DJs, producers, or promoters until the rise of rave in the early 1990s. However, this stance fails to acknowledge that women have been behind the decks for just as long as men, carving out a space for themselves within the early disco and house scenes of the 1970/80s (Jaguar, 2020), well before the emergence of rave. As such, it may be more accurate to suggest that the focus on male experience is due to the academy privileging the androcentric history of EDM that ignores women's pioneering contributions to the genre.

2.1.3 Women in EDM: The early research

McRobbie's (1994) sociological account of female ravers was one of the first scholarly works to document women's involvement in EDM (Farrugia & Olszanowski, 2017), followed by fellow sociologist Thornton (1995), gender studies scholar Pini (2001), and criminologist Hutton (2006). Using data collected from semi-structured interviews with female clubbers, McRobbie (1994) and Pini (2001) described the club as a place where women could transcend the boundaries of traditional gender norms and explore alternative identities. However, they recognised that women's involvement in EDM rarely went beyond the dancefloor as DJs, producers, or promoters. McRobbie (1994) attributed this to the gendered "divisions of labour" (McRobbie, 1994, p. 165), present in many other industries (e.g. STEM, politics, office work; see Daby, 2021; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Loft, 1992; Snagovsky & Kerby, 2019; Stewart-Williams & Halsey, 2021), that have since been replicated in the EDM scene.

Similarly, in her seminal ethnography of club culture, Thornton (1995) contended that, despite its diverse lineage, rave at every level, from the DJs to the bouncers, is distinctly White, heterosexual, and male (Thornton, 1995). Gatekeeping practices ensure that this White, male hegemony is maintained, with women forced to “prove themselves twice over if they want to do more than sing, check coats or tend the bar” (Thornton, 1995, p. 66). Thornton’s (1995) work is seminal as one of the first to bring women’s experiences of club culture to the fore. Although it is predominantly concerned with clubbing as a youth subculture more broadly, Thornton (1995) discussed EDM in relation to gender, particularly in her distinction between the ‘feminine’ mainstream and ‘masculine’ underground.

However, her work has since been criticised. Reflecting on Thornton’s (1995) contribution, Bennett (2002) rightly noted that, although she drew on interviews with clubbers, their voices are rarely present in Thornton’s (1995) narrative. Instead, the sociologist only briefly documented her participants’ thoughts and experiences. Further, Bennett (2002) called into question Thornton’s (1995) decision to take ecstasy whilst conducting her research. Although the professionalism of this is debatable, it presented her with a rare opportunity to provide a valuable insight into the ethics associated with becoming an ‘insider’ and building a rapport with participants (Bennett, 2002). As such, Thornton’s (1995) work can be critiqued for its absence of any real reflective discussion about how her ‘insider’ status may have impacted her relationship to participants, as well as data collection and analysis.

Building on this, Hutton’s (2006) ethnography of Manchester’s club scene documented women’s active participation in these spaces through their adoption of traditionally masculine roles, such as DJs, drug dealers, and promoters. Participants were aged between 21-39 years old and varied in ethnicity, sexuality, class, and

profession. Utilising in-depth, semi-structured interviews, Hutton (2006) explored how women navigate night-time settings, distinguishing between their experiences of drinking, drug taking, sexual activity, and safety in ‘mainstream’ and ‘underground’ environments. Hutton’s (2006) work deviates from previous accounts by including the voices of queer women. In doing so, she emphasised how sexuality can intersect with gender to influence women’s experiences within the scene, particularly in relation to their perceptions of safety. For example, the use of queer clubs by both heterosexual and gay women as safer spaces in which they are less likely to experience violence or harassment by straight men. However, in highlighting the importance of gay clubs for straight women, Hutton (2006) ignored that their infiltration of queer spaces creates safety issues for other users. As Skeggs (1999) described in her case study of Manchester’s gay village, heterosexual women’s “desire for safety can serve to undermine the safety felt by others, notably by lesbian women” (Skeggs, 1999, p. 225). Equally, Hutton (2006) failed to recognise that queer clubs do not necessarily act as safer spaces for everyone they intend to protect, with research showing that LGBTQ+ spaces can be exclusionary on the basis of race and immigration status (Cisneros & Bracho, 2020; Held, 2023).

Despite such criticism, as an early piece of scholarship on gender and EDM, Hutton’s (2006) work is significant. Crucially, it is not just about retelling women’s stories. Instead, she demonstrated how one can use women’s narratives to understand more fully society’s attitudes to risk, sexuality, and pleasure, and how these attitudes may have shifted over time. In this sense, Hutton’s (2006) work aligns with the perspective of the present research, in that it sees club culture as a microcosm of society, reflecting its biases and attitudes. The present research builds on the ideas set forth in her work. It posits that by shedding light on EDM’s attitudes towards female

DJs, as well as the way in which these beliefs manifest within the scene, one can better understand society's attitudes towards women.

2.1.4 Women in production

Women's active participation in electronic music is being explored from multiple disciplines (e.g. media studies, music technology, computing, sociology). Much of this research has tended to focus on women in production (e.g. Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Hepworth-Sawyer, 2020; Kallie, 2022; Reddington, 2021; Rodgers, 2010; Strong & Gadir, 2023; Waters, 2016), audio (e.g. Mathew et al., 2016; Sandstorm, 2000), and technology (e.g. Armitage, 2018; Bradby, 1993; Brown, 1996; Hinkle-Turner, 2003), or on gender and electronic music more broadly (e.g. Abtan, 2016; Horn, 2013; Merrich, 2021; Parsley, 2022; Richards, 2016; Stirling, 2016). Although the aforementioned authors were not directly concerned with DJs, their work shares many similarities with research on women behind the decks. Scholars from these areas have discussed women in male dominated, technological fields, leading to much overlap between their findings. For example, gendered power dynamics within the industry and its inherent sexism (e.g. Bradby, 1993; Brown, 1996; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Horn, 2013; Kallie, 2022; Rodgers, 2010; Stirling, 2016), the stereotyping of women as less technically competent (e.g. Armitage, 2018; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Horn, 2013; Mathew et al., 2016; Strong & Gadir, 2023), and the absence of female role models (e.g. Hinkle-Turner, 2003; Mathew et al., 2016).

For example, Farrugia and Swiss (2008) interviewed female producers, highlighting practices within the scene that position women at the periphery of EDM production. Participants described producing as "less intuitive" (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008, p. 90) than DJing, with fewer visual cues on how to use the equipment. Consequently, many women found it difficult to develop their production skills, as

they struggled to access male informal networks and mentors because of their gender (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008). This struggle is also recognised as a barrier for women wishing to become DJs (see Bloustien, 2016; Katz, 2006).

In terms of audio engineering, Mathew et al. (2016) identified the challenges faced by women in this field, including stereotypes that men are more adept at STEM subjects, and therefore music/audio technology, and the devaluation of women's contributions. The latter is also observed in regard to women's contributions to EDM. For example, many female DJs have reported that they must work twice as hard for their achievements to be recognised (see Craig & Kynard, 2017; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Farrugia, 2004a; Kenny, 2022).

Armitage's (2018) semi-structured interviews with women in the *Algorave* community revealed how the relationship between masculinity and technology manifests within this scene. *Algorave* refers to parties in which the music is produced through live coding. This scene is male dominated at every level. The technology used to write the code, as well as the code itself, is created by men. As such, participants spoke of their exclusion from technical discussions, and stereotypes that women cannot code. Consequently, they described experiencing 'imposter syndrome' and often downplayed their technical abilities (Armitage, 2018). The gendering of technology similarly impacts female DJs in EDM, leading to assumptions that they are less competent (Gadir, 2016; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013) or interested in technology (Gadir, 2017b).

Taken together, this research into women in the spheres of production, audio, and technology serves as a useful starting point to exploring the experiences of female DJs, particularly regarding their relationship with technology. Of these texts,

Rodgers' (2010) *Pink Noises* is the most notable. Compiled of 24 interviews with female DJs, producers, hardware builders, and installation artists, it is a comprehensive account of the many ways in which women can be actively involved with electronic music. For example, Rodgers' (2010) interview with DJ/producer, M. Singe, concluded with an in-depth discussion about her experiences in EDM through the lens of race and gender. Although M. Singe suggested that EDM is more gender equal than rock, she recalled several negative situations that she experienced throughout her career. These included intimidating encounters with established, male DJ crews (e.g. interfering with the mixer), and others' shock when they discovered that she (i.e. a woman) is a DJ. With regard to race, M. Singe described the 'aesthetic segregation' of dance music, whereby she perceived some genres to attract a White (e.g. DnB) or Black crowd (e.g. UK garage; UKG). In another interview, turntablist, Maria Chavez, revealed that she does not consider herself to be a "female musician" (Chavez cited in Rodgers, 2010, p. 101) as her music is dark, heavy, and therefore, not typically 'feminine'. However, Chavez suggested that being a woman has PR benefits, as her identity as a Hispanic, female turntablist is perceived as a novelty and, as such, has "open[ed] some doors" (Chavez cited in Rodgers, 2010, p. 102).

However, there are issues with aspects of Rodgers' (2010) work. Firstly, she employed an informal interview style, with different questions asked to each participant. Consequently, although these interviews provide a detailed account of her participants' personal histories and creative processes, there is no way of comparing the accounts to identify their similarities (or differences). Further, Rodgers (2010) did not employ a systematic method of analysis to unpack her findings and gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences in relation to

gender. Consequently, very little is known about how these women made sense of their experiences within a gendered space.

Rodgers (2010) did, however, move the discourse forward by acknowledging the role of intersectionality in women's experiences. Participants varied in ethnicity, class, and sexuality, and many of the questions attempted to elucidate the ways in which women's experiences of gender were enmeshed with other aspects of identity. This is important as much of the research prior to Rodgers (2010) failed to address intersectionality, presenting only a middle-class, White, Western experience of EDM (e.g. Farrugia, 2004a; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Hutton, 2006). This is slowly beginning to change. Within the past 10 years, several studies have begun to foreground the experiences of women of colour (see Craig & Kynard, 2017; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Kenny, 2022). For example, Kenny's (2022) interview study with three Black female DJs based in Ireland revealed that their gender produced assumptions about their (perceived) lack of ability. This was exacerbated by the women's African identity, which created expectations about what genre they played. For example, one participant described how clubbers (wrongly) assumed that she is an afro-house DJ.

The increase in inclusive work (e.g. Craig & Kynard, 2017; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Kenny, 2022) is promising, signalling a shift to more intersectional scholarship that considers the experiences of *all* female DJs. The present research builds on this by employing a heterogenous sample of female DJs in order to expand the literature's limited portrayal of women in EDM thus far, and to understand more fully how the intersection of gender and race can impact women's experiences in EDM. To summarise, this section offered an overview of the early EDM research and the way in which the field has since developed to provide contextual information

that will inform the remaining literature review. It established the complexity of EDM scholarship, acknowledging that there are multiple histories of the genre, which frequently privilege the White, male experience over others. The seminal work of Hutton (2006), McRobbie (1994), Pini (2001), and Thornton (1995) was then discussed. This work is significant as the first to document the experiences of female clubbers, signalling a shift to scholarship which considers that women's experiences of club culture may be different to those of men, as well as providing a catalyst for future research into women in EDM. Finally, this section discussed more recent work into women's active role in electronic music production (Armitage, 2018; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Rodgers, 2010). Although scholarship in this area is not directly concerned with female DJs, it shares many similarities with research on women behind the decks (see Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reisamer, 2013). Both discuss women in male dominated, technological fields, leading to much overlap between their findings. As such, research on women in these areas serves as a useful starting point to exploring the experiences of female DJs. The following section will explore possible explanations for women's marginalisation in EDM, including gender biases in society, and the long-standing relationship between masculinity and technology. It will then discuss how these biases manifest within the EDM scene in a way that works to marginalise women.

2.2 Gender bias and EDM

2.2.1 Gender biases in society

As established in the previous section, women are often written out of EDM history, but does this relate to broader societal trends about female oppression? There is much scholarly debate as to whether EDM is a microcosm of society, reproducing its norms and biases. For example, many have praised the EDM scene for its rhetoric of

acceptance and diversity. The scholars who share this view have cited specific case studies, such as the early disco (Lawrence, 2011), house (Fikentscher, 2000), techno (Sicko, 1999), and rave (Martin, 1999) scenes, which saw the divide between class, race, sexuality, and gender begin to wane on the dancefloor in favour of “inclusive egalitarianism” (Martin, 1999, p. 85). However, the belief that EDM is liberal and progressive is not universally held. Many have argued instead that the culture simply replicates the institutional racism and sexism present in society (Hutton, 2006; Thornton, 1995). For example, Hutton (2006) claimed that clubs “do not escape the structural inequalities regarding the construction of femininity, so whilst young women may be able to escape the rigours of gendered divisions these do not disappear completely” (Hutton, 2006, p. 19). Given this, it is important to contextualise EDM’s position within wider society and the impact that societal and cultural norms have on the scene.

There are many gender biases present in society that work to marginalise women. Perhaps the most salient bias is the gender pay gap, given that it occurs in most workplaces (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008), such as STEM (VanHeuvelen & Quadlin, 2021), sport (Kluska, 2022), medicine (Hoff, 2021; Whaley et al., 2021), and music (Berkers et al., 2019). For example, Berkers et al. (2019) reported that female musicians in the Dutch music sector had lower copyright revenues and earned only half of what their male counterparts did.

The gender pay gap arises from a variety of complex factors that work to disadvantage women, including occupational gender segregation, workplace discrimination, lack of pay transparency, unconscious bias, the motherhood penalty (see p. 40), and women’s limited access to training/education compared to men (Reshi & Sudha, 2023). Crucially, race can influence the gender pay gap. For

example, Bisesti and García (2022) reported that Black and Latinx women earned less than Black and Latinx men and White women with similar education levels. This pay gap is observable within the EDM scene. Male promoters often refuse to pay women DJs or pay them less than their desired fee (Farrugia, 2004a). Further, the gender pay gap may exacerbate the financial barriers for women entering the EDM scene, such as the purchasing of expensive equipment, as women have less disposable income than their male counterparts (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008).

Equally, the ‘glass ceiling’ is a term for the artificial barriers that prevent women and other minorities from occupying senior positions in the workplace (Johns, 2013). The glass ceiling is perpetuated by homophily preferences, the tendency for individuals to gravitate towards others with similar characteristics (McPherson et al., 2001). Given that managers are more likely to employ those who are culturally or socially similar to themselves and White men have, and continue to, dominate senior workplace positions, it can be concluded that homophily preferences work to maintain the glass ceiling (Purcell et al., 2010). Homophily preferences can be observed in STEM (Kwiek & Roszkaand, 2021) and music industries (McMillan, 2022). For example, McMillan (2022) reported that male R&B/hip hop artists were more likely to collaborate with other men. This propensity for same-gender collaboration resulted in powerful male networks which prevented women from gaining status within the scene (McMillan, 2022). Related to homophily preferences is androcentric networks, which provide their members with access to support, resources, and information which, in turn, can influence power and promotion practices within the workplace (Purcell et al., 2010). Given that women are prevented from accessing these ‘all-boys clubs’ (McMillan, 2022; Roth, 2004), male dominated networks can be considered another factor contributing to the

perpetuation of the glass ceiling. A third factor responsible for creating and maintaining the glass ceiling is gender stereotypes. Women are perceived to be less competent than men and must work twice as hard as their male counterparts, who often cast doubt on their ability to perform well (Berkers et al., 2019; Erickson et al., 2000; Gorman, 2006).

The glass ceiling, and the factors that work to maintain it, are also observable within the EDM scene. For example, information regarding the latest releases, gigs, and local scene knowledge is shared word-of-mouth within male informal networks (Farrugia, 2004a; 2004b). Women are refused access to these networks, and the vital knowledge within them, because of their gender (Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2016). Additionally, gender stereotypes, which position women as less interested in, or capable of, DJing are prevalent within the EDM scene (Gadir, 2017b; 2023; O'Sullivan, 2018). As such, women face pressure to perform well and prove that they are, in fact, competent DJs. Finally, the glass ceiling itself can be seen in the lack of 'superstar' DJs (Farrugia, 2004a). Evidently, there is a limit to women's growth within the scene that prevents them from reaching the top of the EDM hierarchy.

A third gender bias within society that marginalises women is cultural expectations surrounding child rearing (Dent, 2020) and the 'motherhood penalty' (Correll et al., 2007; Pepping & Maniam, 2020). The assumption that women will leave employment once they have a child to take on caregiving responsibilities devalues their economic position within the workplace (Dent, 2020). Women are paid less than men, and time off work to have a child causes a mother to lose wages and human capital, further lowering her pay (Peppiung & Maniam, 2020). If mothers do return to work, they are more likely than fathers or women without children to

hold poor quality jobs (Jones et al., 2023). Moreover, mothers are perceived as less competent and committed to employment and experience discrimination in terms of hiring practices and pay as a result. In contrast, men tend to experience a ‘fatherhood premium’, perceived as being more committed, (Correll et al., 2007) they profit from an increased chance of promotion, more hiring opportunities, or higher earnings as a result (Grau-Grau & André, 2024). Similar assumptions are observable within the EDM scene, such as the expectation that women will end their DJ career at the age of 35 to pursue the more ‘respectable’ role of mother (Duignan-Pearson, 2019).

Queer and transgender individuals experience further discrimination within society, including micro-aggressions, hate crime, higher unemployment, and lower income (Collins et al., 2015; Kidd & Witten, 2007; Nagesh, 2022). This marginalisation, which intersects with other aspects of identity (e.g. race, class) to further oppress these individuals, is observable within club culture, despite its image as a progressive and tolerant environment (the Jaguar Foundation, 2022). Although rarely discussed in the literature, many media articles have alluded to this, highlighting the homophobia and transphobia present within the EDM scene (see Barnes, 2012; Moore, 2015; TianaHRR, 2021).

2.2.2 Gendered readings of music technology

Most pertinent to the present research is the gendering of technology. EDM is inextricably linked to technology. Technological advances, such the 12-inch single, *TR-808* drum machine and, more recently, CDJs and *Ableton Live*, have shaped the way in which the genre is produced and consumed (Brewster & Broughton, 2006; Reynolds, 2013). Crucially, how this technology is discussed in relation to EDM highlights the relationship between technology and masculinity. Popular and scholarly writings on the genre have described the technology essential for DJing

and the production of EDM as almost always used by men (e.g. Brewster & Broughton, 2006; Reynolds, 2013). In discussing EDM solely in terms of technical developments, these accounts favour masculine ideals of technological accomplishment, in which success is dependent on mastering the latest technology (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2016).

The relationship between technology and masculinity is not a result of biological gender differences (Brown, 1996). Instead, beliefs about what technology 'means' partly shapes who is knowledgeable about, or has access to, it (Grint & Gill, 1995). Technology has historically been defined within a masculine framework as "devices, machinery and processes which men are interested in" (Kramarae, 1988, p. 4). Definitions such as this ignore women's relationship to technology and have, over time, created a reciprocal relationship between technology and masculinity (Armstrong, 2001; Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993; Murray, 1993), whereby technology "acts as a 'boundary marker'" in that "if it is technological, it must be masculine" (Armstrong, 2014, p. 13). Consequently, stereotypically male attributes such as logic, control, mastery, and expertise have become central to technology (Armstrong, 2001; Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993; Murray 1993), whilst a lack of confidence or ability in technology has become central to the female identity (Wajcman, 1991).

In this sense, attitudes and behaviours towards technology are determined by historical and cultural notions of gender that position engagement with, knowledge about, and interest in technology in the domain of men (Armstrong, 2008; Farrugia, 2004a). Evidently, technology cannot be discussed without reference to the social context in which it was created (Armstrong, 2008; Brown, 1996). Neither neutral nor inherently gender biased (Armstrong, 2008; Farrugia, 2012), technology is gendered through every day social processes, as part of the "social fabric" (Wajcman, 2004, p.

106) of society (Farrugia, 2004a; Wajcman, 2004), which shapes both the way in which technology is made and its subsequent uses (Farrugia, 2004a).

Sociologist Wajcman's (1991) work has expanded the technology literature, providing a feminist analysis of several technological areas (e.g. production, domestic, reproductive). Crucially, Wajcman (1991) moved away from the emphasis on technological determinism, the idea that technology develops autonomously to drive social and cultural change (Dafoe, 2015). Instead, she critiqued the social factors that can impact technology with a novel focus on gender, absent in other sociological perspectives on technology (Wajcman & Shade, 1993).

However, the studies she cited were based on data from the US, UK, and Australia, presenting a Westernised picture of women and technology. In doing so, Wajcman (1991) failed to acknowledge that women's relationship to technology is likely to be different in the global majority. For example, women in non-Western countries are less likely to have access to even basic technology, such as the internet or mobile phones, compared to men, due to lower literacy and technical knowledge. When they do gain access, their technology use is often monitored (GSMA, 2015; Sambasivan et al., 2017).

2.2.3 Gendered readings of technology in EDM

The gendered patterns of behaviour observable within the EDM scene are partly a result of this relationship between technology and masculinity, and it is around these two concepts that values in EDM are based (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). These values surrounding music technology are related to gatekeeping practices, experienced by women and other minorities, that dictate who is a 'good DJ' and,

ultimately, who becomes successful (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Puwar, 2004).

An ability to master the latest hardware and software is among the requirements of a 'good DJ' (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). This privileging of technical knowledge disadvantages women as skill in this area is perceived as intrinsic to the male identity (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). Consequently, male DJs often place greater emphasis on technical skills, such as mixing ability (O'Sullivan, 2018). Female DJs, for whom track selection often takes precedence (O'Sullivan, 2018), can subsequently be perceived as incompetent (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). This division often manifests as intrusive or invasive behaviour towards women, in which men attempt to intercede in the mixing process by interfering with the DJ equipment or 'mansplaining' the process to them, in what O'Sullivan (2018) described as a "uniquely gendered experience" (O'Sullivan, 2018, p. 111). O'Sullivan (2018) used this term as, although her male participants reported other men approaching the decks to make comments, none described any kind of deliberate, physical tampering with the gear whilst performing (O'Sullivan, 2018).

Sociologist O'Sullivan's (2018) article utilised in-depth interviews with male and female musicians in Dublin's indie and EDM scenes. She highlighted the motivating factors for women becoming DJs, as well as the challenges they faced within the industry, such as a perceived lack of technical ability and constant focus on their appearance. O'Sullivan (2018) included the voices of male scene stakeholders in her research. This is not a widely-used approach (although it has been adopted by Gadir, 2016; 2017b; Reitsamer, 2011), but allows for comparison

between accounts, highlighting if the differences in experience can be explained by gender.

Although O’Sullivan (2018) acknowledged that technology has changed, her discussion of technology relied too heavily on the importance on vinyl and record shops when describing gatekeeping practices in EDM. One of the main difficulties with this is that her article explored the scene between 2000-2017. CDJs were introduced in 2001, marking a shift to other music formats (e.g. CD, MP3). They became the industry standard by 2004 (DJ Producer Tech, n.d.), a move which no doubt reduced the importance of the record shop for DJs. Yet, O’Sullivan (2018) claimed that “one of the greatest barriers to access for female DJs [is] access to vinyl” (O’Sullivan, 2018, p. 109). A more plausible “greatest barrier” could be the way in which technology is gendered, positioning women as less competent (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013), as this persists despite technological shifts. For example, O’Sullivan (2018) described how women DJs were often reluctant to use recently developed DJ software (e.g. *Serato*, *Traktor*) that emerged in 2010 as their male peers considered it to be “helper software” (O’Sullivan, 2018, p. 111), refusing to take women who used it seriously.

2.2.3.1 Gendered Readings of Technology: Are Things Changing?

Gendered uses surrounding technology are shifting. In her thesis chapter, *Producing Producers: Gender, Technology, E/DM*, Farrugia (2004a) explored the ways in which women discussed their music production experience. Many participants, who were already established as DJs, felt reluctant to produce music due to stereotypes that men are more creative or have a natural affinity for producing music, the absence of female role models, and lack of time and money to spend on studio equipment. From this, Farrugia (2004a) concluded that “existing assumptions about gender and

technology are being broken down on some fronts and maintained on others” (Farrugia 2004a, p. 56). She argued that female DJs are becoming increasingly at ease behind the decks, and instead it is in music production where the gender gap now lies (Farrugia, 2004a). Farrugia (2004a) claimed that many aspects of DJing are ‘feminine’. DJing is frequently associated with ‘feeling’ the music, building a relationship with the audience, and it has a more explicit connection with the body. These elements render DJing more ‘feminine’ in contrast to production, which is associated with the mind and, in turn, masculinity (Farrugia, 2004a).

While production may well be more male dominated than DJing, Farrugia’s (2004a) claim that DJing has become ‘feminised’ can be disputed. As Gadir (2017a) observed in her analysis of Nina Kraviz’ *Boiler Room* performance, when women DJs interact with the audience, dance, or engage in anything other than the ‘minimalist’ posture adopted by men, they are subject to criticism and intense scrutiny over their technical abilities. Gadir (2017a) drew on several *YouTube* comments in response to Nina Kraviz’ performance to evidence this. One user commented: “I just cringe so hard when I watch her perform, because I feel she’s as concerned with the set as she is with eye fucking the camera and doing really self-conscious sexy dance moves” (Clowes, 2015 cited in Gadir, 2017a, p. 12). Another claimed, “I look at pictures from her sets all over the world and she’s always in the middle of a set but managing to strike a pose and pout for the camera” (Fig Les, 2015 cited in Gadir 2017a, p. 12).

In this sense, existing assumptions about gender have not been “broken down” for DJing (Farrugia, 2004a, p. 56) if any displays of femininity behind the decks are condemned. Indeed, women who perform hyper-sexual femininity are often perceived as ‘gimmicks’ or ‘novelties’ lacking in talent, who receive bookings

based on their appearance alone (Farrugia, 2012; Hancock, 2020). From this perspective, stereotypical, hyper-sexualised performances of femininity contradict the ‘seriousness’ of DJing (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2012). Here, a dichotomy arises in which women can be hyper-feminine or a good DJ but never both. As a result, many female DJs choose to perform masculinity instead, adopting androgenous dress codes so that they cannot be judged on anything other than their ability as a DJ (Farrugia, 2012).

Evidently, even if women are becoming increasingly at ease behind the decks, it does not necessarily signify that the masculine associations will be removed from DJing. From this perspective, the relationship between technology and masculinity is not the only explanation for women’s marginalisation. Clearly, there are other factors, such as social/cultural norms and biases, at play.

This section has discussed several social and cultural gender biases in order to contextualise EDM’s position in wider society. It argued that EDM replicates many of the biases present within society at large. In particular, this section focused on the relationship between technology and masculinity, and how attitudes towards technology have been influenced by social, historical, and cultural notions of gender. It then discussed how this relationship has shaped the gendered patterns of behaviour observable within EDM. The following section will draw on the experiences of women in the creative industries more broadly to explore how this marginalisation can manifest as more extreme forms of misogyny, such as sexual harassment. It will attempt to elucidate why this kind of abuse is rife within creative industries, as well as why it is particularly exacerbated for women in EDM.

2.3 The sexual harassment of women in EDM

2.3.1 Women navigating sexual harassment in the creative industries

Whilst not specific to EDM, research into harassment in the creative industries serves as a useful basis for considering the experiences of female DJs. The sexism observable within society is just as ubiquitous within the creative industries, despite their liberal image (Bull et al., 2024; Gill, 2002; Henry, 2009; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015; Lee et al., 2023). Hennekam and Bennett's (2017) in-depth interview study with 32 women working within the creative industries in the Netherlands concluded that sexual harassment is endemic within this sector. Participants normalised sexual harassment, perceiving it to be part of the job and necessary for career progression. Hennekam and Bennett (2017) identified four factors, specific to the creative industries, that develop this tolerance: competition, industry culture, gendered power relations, and informal networks. Together, these factors exacerbate the inequality observable within the creative industry and, in turn, create an unsafe working environment in which higher rates, and an increased acceptance of, sexual harassment prevail (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017; McDonald, 2012).

Although Hennekam and Bennett's (2017) participants were sourced from a variety of sectors (e.g. fashion, dance, design, theatre), highlighting the prevalence of harassment in the creative sector more broadly, their experiences were homogenised, producing one universal experience of 'harassment in the creative industries' (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017). In doing so, Hennekam and Bennett (2017) failed to acknowledge that marginalisation and, in turn, harassment may differ between sectors within the creative industries. For example, in his survey of music industry workers who had experienced sexual harassment, Crabtree (2021) claimed that harassment is a result of power imbalances. These imbalances are particularly

amplified in the music industry due to its many sources of power, including the fame associated with making a ‘hit’ record, access to large audiences, high-paying contracts, and the influence of major record labels and their ability to ‘make or break’ artists (Crabtree, 2021). Consequently, these factors may increase the prevalence of sexual harassment in the music industry compared to other creative sectors.

2.3.2 The importance of studying harassment in EDM

This ubiquity of sexual harassment is particularly evident in the EDM scene. In the wake of the #MeToo movement, several high-profile male DJs have been exposed as prolific abusers (Ross, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2021), leading to multiple calls for industry-wide change (Hutchinson, 2017; Mustefa, 2020) and the creation of numerous campaigns help tackle sexual harassment in club spaces (AFEM, 2020; Hylton, 2021; Turner, 2020). Given that the Musicians’ Census reported that 32% of women experienced sexual harassment whilst working as a musician (Musicians’ Census, 2024), this raises the question; is harassment more prevalent in EDM or is it simply better reported?

Despite the media’s concern with the issue, sexual harassment in EDM has failed to receive the same level of scholarship as harassment in other creative industries, making it difficult to assess why it happens and what impact it has. It may be the case that outdated stereotypes, equating working at night with sexual availability (see Coplan, 1991), still permeate society’s perceptions of women, which may result in less focus on these individuals. Consequently, this project asks what impact does the constant threat of harassment have on female DJs?

Sexual harassment is a key factor that shapes women's experiences within EDM. Women must navigate many challenges in relation to their career as a DJ. They are subject to objectification and sexualisation in a way that their male counterparts are not, frequently seen in the undue focus on female DJs' physical appearance (see Farrugia, 2012; Gadir, 2017b; O'Sullivan, 2018; Rowley, 2009). In more extreme, yet increasingly common cases, objectification and sexualisation are borne out in women's experiences of harassment, the constant threat of which means that female DJs must navigate night-time spaces differently to men. For example, adopting safety precautions, such as taking taxis to/from the venue, going home with friends, and only attending clubs they perceive to be 'safe' (De Crespigny, 2001; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Hutton, 2006). As such, this thesis argues that the way in which women DJs negotiate night-time spaces in response to the threat of sexual harassment is one of the most obvious ways in which their experiences differ from that of male DJs. Consequently, it is important to explore sexual harassment in greater depth.

2.3.3 Women navigating sexual harassment in night-time spaces

When considering the factors that contribute to the sexualisation of night-time spaces, Palamar and Griffin (2020) suggested that an absence of guardians and increased alcohol/substance use in clubs heightens the threat of sexual harassment in these spaces. Indeed, they reported that women were twice as likely as their male counterparts to experience sexual harassment at EDM events (Palamar & Griffin, 2020). Similarly, Sanchez et al. (2019) found that attendees of electronic club nights were at greater risk of sexual harassment than those who attended clubs with a more varied sound. They suggested that environmental rather than individual factors, such as crowding, availability of cheap alcohol, and the presence of darkrooms at some

venues (Sanchez et al., 2019) increased the risk of harassment, as well as the violence and anti-authority behaviour that Lozon and Benismon (2014) associated with EDM events.

Although many studies have investigated sexual harassment in nightlife generally, Palamar and Griffin's (2020) work is vital as one of the few to have specifically explored harassment in the context of EDM. However, an issue with all studies exploring sexual harassment is that participants may under (or over) report incidents of harassment, even if a definition is given. What can be defined as unwanted sexual contact may vary between individuals. As such, Palamar and Griffin (2020) advised that future studies require more detailed descriptions. However, rather than gatekeeping what behaviours 'count' as sexual harassment, participants should be free to define this behaviour for themselves. If an individual has been harassed, whatever that means for them, it is likely to have had some impact on them and, therefore, be important to understanding them and their experiences.

Further, few studies have considered how one's sexuality may impact experiences of sexual harassment in the context of EDM. The data surrounding this is inconsistent. Research into the sexual harassment of LGBT+ individuals has broadly suggested that they are at greater risk of assault, often motivated by homophobia, than their straight peers (Jindasurat, 2013; Rabelo & Cortina, 2014; Rothman et al., 2011; Witcomb & Cooper, 2024). However, these studies are often small in scope and not generalisable. Relevant to the present research, statistics have shown that queer women are more likely to experience sexual harassment/assault, with the likelihood increasing for queer women of colour (LGBT Foundation, 2019). However, investigations into clubbing environments have tended to focus on gay

men (Braun et al., 2009; Martinez-Granata, 2017). One of the few studies to include the voices of lesbian and bisexual women in its exploration of sexual harassment in clubs was conducted by criminologist Fileborn (2016). Here, she reported that sexual harassment occurs towards LGBT+ women in many clubs, including gay ones, with discourse often centred around unwanted sexual advances by straight men (Fileborn, 2016). As a form of harassment that is sexualised by nature, this contradicts Farrugia's (2012) assertion that a women's lesbian identity may "desexualise" (Farrugia, 2012, p. 52) her in the eyes of her male peers. Evidently, more research into how the intersection between gender and sexuality plays out in experiences of sexual harassment in the EDM scene is needed.

2.3.4 The impact of sexual harassment on wellbeing

What impact does sexual harassment have on the women who experience it? Several psychological studies have investigated the effects of gender harassment (i.e. objectification, discrimination, hostility, devaluation) on the psychological wellbeing of women. These studies employed similar methods, recruiting women from a variety of professions (e.g. military, legal, university, private sector employees) to respond to the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ). They concluded that gender harassment has consequences in terms of increased depression, anxiety, PTSD, distress, and reduced job satisfaction (Alrawadieh et al., 2023; Buchanan et al., 2008; Leskinen et al., 2011; Minnotte & Pederse, 2023; Schneider & Swan, 1997). Further, harassment was more likely to occur when women were seen to deviate from traditional gender norms, such as operating in male dominated professions or possessing more masculine characteristics (Berdahl, 2007; Sojo et al., 2016).

Although this research is not specific to female DJs it serves as a useful starting point to exploring their experiences, particularly in terms of how their

marginalisation can manifest as (extreme) misogynistic behaviour. As a creative industry, night-time economy, and male dominated scene, EDM converges on all three of the aforementioned areas. As such, it is possible to surmise that harassment is more prevalent in the EDM scene. However, research on sexual harassment must be expanded. The experiences of female DJs are unique and thus warrant a more detailed exploration that is distinct from musicians in general. Understanding why harassment occurs to the extent it does and what impact it has on women may shed further light on one aspect of their marginalisation.

2.4 Experiences of female DJs in EDM: The key research studies

So far, this literature review has focused on the ways in which women have been excluded from EDM. This arguably reflects the bias in the EDM literature in which very little research has focused exclusively on the experiences of female DJs. The main contributors in this area that have attempted to readdress the balance are within media studies, social anthropology, and sociology. Whilst coming from different disciplines, these scholars have taken a similar approach, using interviews to foreground the experiences of female DJs, how they navigate the industry, the challenges they face, and their attempts to carve out a space for themselves within the scene.

2.4.1 Beyond the dancefloor (Farrugia, 2012)

Despite being published over 10 years ago, Farrugia's (2012) *Beyond the Dancefloor* is still the most comprehensive examination of female DJs' experiences to date. The media studies scholar employed a mixed-methods ethnographic approach to explore a broad range of factors that contributed to the marginalisation of women in EDM and the issues they encountered within the industry as a result (e.g. masculinity and technology, identity, DJ collectives). She utilised semi-structured interviews with

mostly White, female DJs/producers from North America, participant observation in record stores, studios, and clubs, textual analyses of EDM magazines, websites, and discussion forums, as well as a case study of the San Francisco DJ collective *Sister SF*. Consequently, this work has provided a valuable foundation on which much of the research into female DJs has since been built (see Bloustien, 2016; Gadir, 2016; Hancock, 2017).

One of Farrugia's (2012) main contributions was the creation of three categories in which the appearance of female DJs can be grouped: 'sex kitten', 't-shirt DJ', or 'dyke'. 'Sex kitten' applies to women who are considered attractive according to heteronormative ideals. Conversely, 't-shirt DJs' adopt the masculine dress code of t-shirt and jeans. Finally, 'dyke' applies exclusively to gay women who adopt visibly queer, androgenous modes of dress. The main weakness of this theory is that the latter two categories both encompass women presenting in masculine ways. As such, Farrugia (2012) has effectively forced women's identity into two dichotomous categories - hyper-sexualised or androgenous - implying that female DJs are easily grouped. Characterised by a limited set of stereotypical attributes, this reductive theory suggests that women have no autonomy over how they choose to represent themselves in EDM. Farrugia (2012) did not similarly classify male DJs, insinuating that the male identity is more nuanced and does not as easily fit into clear cut categories.

Toppin (2021) further opposed this theory that, she stated, perpetuates White, Western beauty standards, highlighting that Farrugia (2012) incorrectly claimed that "sexist, denigrating label[s] and other strategies that maintain male power are not contained to a particular race or class" (Toppin, 2021, p. 59). Drawing on Collins (1991; 2004), Toppin (2021) argued that Farrugia (2012) ignored how Black women

are “hypersexualised, fetishised and dehumanised” (Toppin, 2021, p. 62). These harmful representations are embedded in discourses of colonisation and slavery and therefore separate from those of White women. As such, their experiences cannot be discussed as analogous.

2.4.2 DJ technologies, social networks and gendered trajectories in European DJ cultures (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013)

Sociologist, Gavanas, and anthropologist, Reitsamer (2013), built on Farrugia’s (2012) research, examining the ways in which technology can both help and hinder women in EDM. Their research drew on data from interviews conducted with 75 White, middle-class, female DJs based in Europe, as well as an analysis of online DJ discussion forums. Like Farrugia (2012), Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) argued that socially constructed ideas surrounding gender and technology have become central to the marginalisation of women in EDM. But they also acknowledged that female DJs have benefited from an increase in technology, allowing them to form communities online. Here, Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) reported that women’s exclusion from male dominated networks was the “central motivation” (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013, p. 69) for female DJs forming their own local, national, and international networks.

Alongside supporting many of the frequently reported benefits of women-centric collectives (e.g. skill sharing, gig opportunities, access to role models), Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) also highlighted several limitations. For example, the reinforcement of binary gender divisions, members’ lack of commitment, and political disagreements (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). Consequently, interviewees believed that collectives were most useful at the beginning of their careers as they could network with established DJs who could support newcomers. However, once

they gained experience, many women removed themselves from these networks, as they restricted them from networking with men and accessing the “real market” (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013, p. 71).

2.4.3 Resistance or reiteration? Rethinking gender in DJ cultures (Gadir, 2016)

Finally, in her 2016 article, media studies scholar, Gadir (2016), challenged the notion that EDM is socially and politically progressive, utilising data from interviews conducted with male and female DJs based in the UK, America, Australia, Iceland, Norway, and Taiwan. She argued that the inclusive dance music communities first apparent in the early disco scene were the exception rather than the norm. Instead, she claimed that no space, however alternative, is free from gender discrimination (Gadir, 2016).

Gadir (2016) reported numerous ways in which sexist and misogynistic attitudes manifest in practices within the EDM scene, preserving its male dominance. Here, she found that men held assumptions about female DJs’ technological competence and musical preferences. Crucially, she also highlighted that gatekeeping practices still occur in many alternative venues (Gadir, 2016). This finding contradicts many accounts that suggest gender inequality only exists in mainstream spaces, whilst underground or alternative venues are more gender equal (e.g. Farrugia, 2012).

Gadir’s (2016) research went beyond the previous literature by touching on queer spaces. However, most of the discussion was structured around ‘alternative’ (i.e. underground) rather than specifically LGBT+ environments. Any analysis of queer spaces was based on her own experiences of attending gay clubs rather than those of the interviewees. Further, Gadir (2016) briefly noted that discrimination can

manifest as harassment. However, she did not explore this further, despite the lack of space given to harassment in previous research.

2.4.4 Building on the key research

In focusing directly on female DJs and their marginalisation, Farrugia (2012), Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013), and Gadir (2016) made an important contribution to the EDM literature. However, they often failed to consider how other aspects of identity, such as race, class, or sexuality might impact female DJs' experiences. The majority of literature is largely based on data from White, Western, middle-class women (e.g. Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Reitsamer, 2012). To date only one study, by African studies scholar Duignan-Pearson (2019), has considered the experiences of female DJs in a non-Western context. Her ethnographic study, which utilised in-depth interviews with female house DJs in Johannesburg, South Africa, highlighted the impact of culture and context upon the barriers they faced within the industry. For example, Duignan-Pearson (2019) described how participants' experiences were influenced by the "South African flavour of patriarchy, misogyny and race politics" (Duignan-Pearson, 2019, p. 11).

Although there was some crossover with findings from Western research (see Gadir, 2017b; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013), many challenges appeared to be unique to female DJs operating in South Africa. For example, participants described navigating racialised perceptions of women in the night-time industry, such as the 'Shebeen Queen' (Duignan-Pearson, 2019). Consequently, many women did not perceive DJing to be an acceptable career choice. Participants contrasted DJing with motherhood; with many participants believing that they should cease DJing at the age of 35 to pursue this more 'respectable' career (Duignan-Pearson, 2019).

Alongside this, Duignan-Pearson (2019) highlighted how female DJs in South Africa

must contend with the constant threat of violence and harassment whilst travelling to gigs, a consequence of the country's high crime rate.

In one of the few studies to address sexuality alongside gender, women's studies scholar, Hancock (2017), explored the experiences of female, transgender, and non-binary DJs who performed at a queer club in Vancouver. Utilising semi-structured interviews with seven DJs and two promoters, this study emphasised the importance of queer and female-centric venues as safer spaces in which to cultivate the careers of marginalised DJs. Alongside Farrugia (2012) and Gavanoas and Reitsamer (2013), Hancock (2017) noted the importance of informal DJ networks, particularly in terms of helping those who cannot access the 'all-boys club(s)' gain entry to the local scene. She found that the club, and its surrounding network, provided an opportunity for women to learn from like-gendered role models and mentors, who offered guidance and support on DJ skills, technology, and securing bookings. Hancock (2017) concluded that two factors allowed the club to nurture female DJs. Firstly, it provided them with a physical space in which to learn and practice, as well as financial assistance. Secondly, the club offered many DJs their first opportunity to play to an audience, acting as a safer and more inclusive space for face-to-face networking, something which many scholars have highlighted as a crucial aspect of male informal networks (Farrugia, 2004a; Gavanoas & Reitsamer, 2013). However, given that Hancock (2017) focused on the experiences of DJs at one specific club, this study is limited in its sample and scope.

With the exception of research by Duignan-Pearson (2019) and Hancock (2017), the stories of those who do not fit the narrow, idealised mould of a DJ, as represented in the literature, are not well documented. As such, the present research aims to foreground the voices of a heterogenous sample of women DJs, that vary in

background and identity (e.g. age, sexuality, ethnicity, level of profession), to explore the diversity and complexity of the lived experiences of female DJs.

2.4.5 Creating spaces for inclusion: DJ collectives

It is important to consider how women are challenging EDM's androcentric narrative by creating their own spaces for inclusion. Many scholars have now shifted the discourse from women's exclusion in EDM to focus on the spaces in which women thrive (e.g. Hancock, 2017; Reitsamer, 2012). A similar 'positive' approach is adopted in the present research, exploring what factors help women navigate their experience and support their practice. As Farrugia (2012), Gavanas and Reitsamer (2016), and Duignan-Pearson (2019) discussed, a growing number of female DJs have begun to establish their own spaces in response to their marginalisation. Given that these women-centric collectives are unique to the experience of female DJs, it is vital to discuss these spaces in more detail.

For female DJs, being involved in a gynocentric community, collective, club night, or workshop is crucial in order to access many aspects of EDM culture that are gatekept by informal male networks (Farrugia, 2012). There is much debate over the value of these spaces. Scholars advocating for the provision of women-centric collectives have highlighted the benefits of such spaces (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). For example, their ability to provide their members with both emotional and practical support (Bloustien, 2016; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Farrugia, 2004a; 2004b), and the freedom to participate in activities that disrupt traditional gender norms (Farrugia, 2004a) in a safer space where women feel able to experiment, make mistakes, and take risks (Armitage, 2018; Björck, 2013; Duignan-Pearson, 2019).

Scholars critical of women-centric DJ collectives have expressed concerns that the practices used by these collectives, such as running all-female club nights, may be as damaging as other types of marginalisation experienced by women (Duignan-Pearson, 2019). Here, these scholars have argued that these practices foster harmful competition between female DJs (Duignan-Pearson, 2019) and perpetuate binary gender divisions (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Reitsamer, 2012).

Equally, female-only environments do not necessarily act as safer spaces for everyone they intend to protect (Carby, 1996; Hill & Megson, 2020; Lorde, 1994). Discourses of privilege and power continue to operate in these spaces, allowing for the marginalisation of some women by other women (Carby, 1996; Hill & Megson, 2020; Lorde, 1994), such as the exclusion of transgender women from these spaces (Browne, 2009). The present research aims to explore the lived experiences of female DJs through an intersectional lens. As such, the notion that inclusive spaces are not necessarily inclusive of *all* women is particularly important. This is demonstrated by Reitsamer's (2012) exploration of the ways in which the online DJ collective, *Female: Pressure*, used the internet to network. She employed a mixed-methods ethnographic approach, encompassing a content analysis of the collective's mailing list and website, alongside in-depth interviews with five White, middle-class members based in Vienna who regularly engaged with the collective's events and activities (Reitsamer, 2012). Supporting previous findings (Farrugia, 2004a; 2012), Reitsamer (2012) concluded that the internet is essential for networking, activism, and cultural production activities among collective members. Alongside this, she reported novel evidence of "virtual gatekeeping practices" (Reitsamer, 2012, p. 403) on the website's discussion forum, which typically involved criticising other members who chose to market themselves in highly sexualised ways, as well as

ostracising queer members (Reitsamer, 2012). Secondly, Reitsamer (2012) identified the tokenistic nature of such collectives. This was not necessarily directed at *Female: Pressure* itself but it created a paradox for its members. Whilst the collective worked to improve the representation of female DJs via all-female club nights, radio shows, and releases, Reitsamer (2012) concluded that it is ghettoising strategies such as these that perpetuate gender differences in EDM, something that the collective attempted to avoid.

In documenting some of their contradictions and inconsistencies, Reitsamer (2012) provided a useful rebuttal to the literature on female collectives, which has often failed to acknowledge the limitations of such communities (see Farrugia, 2012). However, Reitsamer's (2012) research is restricted in her decision to analyse one online network. The question remains as to whether these results apply to in-person collectives given that many all-female collectives are yet to move entirely online (see Farrugia, 2012).

Although situated in the context of community-based music workshops rather than the EDM scene, Baker and Cohen's (2008) research into gendered practices within youth DJ workshops is one of the most detailed and in-depth accounts of female-only spaces. They discussed how such projects work to address the gender imbalance in various musical activities, as well as evaluating their success. Baker and Cohen's (2008) analysis went beyond that of previous work on women-centric spaces (see Farrugia, 2012; Reitsamer, 2012) by unpacking how gender dynamics operate in these spaces and how they can influence young women's (non-) participation in DJing. A major strength of this research is that it was longitudinal, allowing girls' attitudes and commitment to the workshop to be assessed over time. Consequently, Baker and Cohen (2008) were able to uncover complexities with

women-centric spaces not possible with cross sectional research. They observed that, whilst female-only workshops offered young women a safer space to build their confidence and learn to DJ, participants acknowledged that access to mixed-gender settings was necessary to advance their career (Baker & Cohen, 2008). As such, Baker and Cohen (2008) concluded that all-female spaces are useful during the introductory stages of a new hobby. However, once the necessary experience has been acquired, girls should move into mixed-gender spaces. Relating this to the EDM scene, women-centric collectives may be more useful as “temporary and short-term groups” (Baker & Cohen, 2008, p. 336) that encourage women in the early stages of their career, allowing them to develop confidence and prepare for the male dominated EDM scene.

Secondly, Baker and Cohen’s (2008) research revealed the complexities of creating women-only spaces and how societal norms and gender biases still pervade these settings. For example, Baker and Cohen (2008) demonstrated that girls’ uptake of the DJ course did not increase, despite providing a separate female-only learning environment. Evidently, the provision of such spaces alone is not enough to encourage girls to participate. As these workshops still exist within a gendered society, despite the absence of men which can mark them out as safer spaces, the stereotypes and norms that position women as less competent are difficult to defy and do not disappear (Baker & Cohen, 2008). Consequently, girls must evaluate the costs and benefits of participating in such activities. Here, Baker and Cohen (2008) suggested that, whilst not attending means forgoing active music making, the benefits of workshops do not outweigh the costs of breaking the gender binary (Baker & Cohen, 2008).

2.5 Theoretical framework

This project adopts an intersectional and postfeminist framework. Female DJs are not a homogenous group and there is no one universal experience of women in EDM. Instead, the female DJ experience is nuanced, unique, and highly individualised. As such, the theoretical framework must reflect this complexity. Here, intersectional and postfeminist frameworks were chosen as both are concerned with diversity and difference. These theories make space for a more diverse range of voices and identities within research, going beyond the White, Western, middle-class norm to recognise that multiple identities (e.g. gender, race, sexuality, class, disability) can intersect to shape experience. The intersectional and postfeminist framework will be used as a lens through which to interpret to data and demonstrate that there is no one way of being or doing ‘female DJ’. The next section provides an overview of each framework and how it relates to the present project.

2.5.1 Intersectional framework

The roots of intersectionality lie in the political movement of Black, Chicana, and Latinx women, and lesbian Women of Colour (Carastathis, 2014). Intersectionality evolved from the work of Black feminist scholars and activists, from 19th Century abolitionist and women’s rights activist, Sojourner Truth, through to late 20th Century theorists, such as Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, and members of the Black Lesbian Combahee River Collective (Kelly et al., 2021; Rice et al., 2019), as well as female activists in the Global Majority (Hancock, 2011).

The experiences of Women of Colour were largely ignored in early feminist and anti-racist discourse which failed to account for multiple marginalisations (Davis, 2016; Rice et al., 2019). As such, Black feminist scholar, Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), developed intersectionality as a theory that recognised how both

gender and race can dually influence Black women's experiences (Crenshaw, 1989; Davis, 2016). Intersectionality has since expanded into a multifaceted, theoretical framework which acknowledges how multiple identities (e.g. gender, race, sexuality, class, disability) intersect at the individual level to mirror systems of privilege and oppression within society at large (e.g. racism, sexism, classism) (Bowleg, 2012). Intersectionality is best understood as a critical theory, as it recognises that power relations play a key role in the construction of experience, thought, and knowledge. As such, intersectional theory is best aligned with social constructionist and feminist standpoint epistemologies (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016).

Buchanan and Wiklund (2021) identified several key principles of intersectional theory. Firstly, structures of oppression are "mutually constitutive" (Buchanan & Wiklund, 2021, p. 26), whereby the various forms of inequality (e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism) support and uphold one another. Secondly, these structures are interrelated and create patterns of privilege, oppression, and power that shape lived experience. Consequently, in order to understand an individual's social identity (e.g. gender) one must also understand the other social group memberships they hold (e.g. race, sexuality, class) (Buchanan & Wiklund, 2021). Indeed, in contrast to 'additive' theories, which see oppressions as distinct, separate layers of marginalisation which are added to a foundational category, intersectionality theory argues that oppressions are experienced simultaneously (Carastathis, 2014; Runyan, 2018). For example, Black women experience a different form of racism from Black men, as well as a different form of sexism from White women. In this sense, "gender is always "raced", and race is always gendered" (Runyan, 2018, p. 12). Relating this to women in EDM, Duignan-Pearson (2019) described how the "South African flavour of patriarchy, misogyny and race politics

intersect[ed]” (Duignan-Pearson, 2019, p.19) to influence female DJs’ experiences in Johannesburg.

2.5.2 Postfeminist framework

As a theoretical perspective, postfeminism can be understood as feminism within poststructuralism, a theory that challenges the idea of objective truth/knowledge (Lewis, 2014). Authors that share this understanding of postfeminism have described it as “the postmodern offspring of feminism” (Mann, 1994, p. 239), and a “pluralistic epistemology dedicated to disrupting universalising patterns of thoughts” (Gamble, 2001, p. 50), which sits at the intersection of feminism ‘post’ discourses, such as postcolonialism and postmodernism (Genz & Brabon, 2018). Lewis et al. (2017) described how considering postfeminism in this way marks three key shifts within feminism: “a shift away from a concentration on equality to a consideration of difference... a change in how ‘woman’ as the subject of feminism is conceptualised and... an ability to contemplate feminism’s location in relation to other political and philosophical movements focused on change” (Lewis et al., 2017, p. 2). By understanding postfeminism as a theoretical perspective, one acknowledges that it is not ‘against’ feminism. Instead postfeminism recognises that the extent of feminist issues is now larger and more comprehensive and, as such, it “reconsiders and makes a clear shift in [feminism’s] categories and questions” (Lewis, 2014, p. 1849).

In her book *Postfeminisms*, sociologist Ann Brooks (1997), situated feminism at the centre of postfeminist critiques. Here, she criticised the ‘singular’ concept of the feminist movement, instead recognising the various ways of doing and understanding feminism (Brooks, 1997; Genz & Brabon, 2018). From this perspective, postfeminism can be seen as the “pluralisation and diversification”

(Genz & Brabon, 2018, p. 58) of feminism that creates space for other voices and identities, or what Genz and Brabon (2018) termed a “more diverse ‘we’” (Genz & Brabon, 2018, p. 58). In this sense, postfeminism rejects the notion of a homogenous, universal female identity, as this fails to recognise the complexity of gender as it intersects with other aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and age (Genz & Brabon, 2018). Here, postfeminism can be discussed in relation to two deconstructive theories: postmodernism and multiculturalism (Siegal, 1997). Postmodernist critics undermine the notion of a universal subject, whilst multiculturalist feminists are concerned with how gender is constructed across a range of identities, beyond the White, Western, heterosexual, middle-class, female experience (Genz & Brabon, 2018).

Rather than privileging any one site of oppression, the pluralistic postfeminist perspective observed in postmodernism, postcolonialism, and queer theory supports the notion of multiple oppressed identities (Genz & Brabon, 2018). This positioning of postfeminism is favoured within the present project, as it “insists that we listen to the voices of those who dispute the terms of representation and who say, ‘this is not us’” (McRobbie, 1994, p. 7). Indeed, the current research does not see ‘female DJ’ as a monolithic concept. It is not concerned with just the *female* experience, nor does it wish to present only a White, Western, middle-class view of being a female DJ. Instead, this thesis is largely concerned with difference. By making use of a postfeminist framework to explore the complexity and diversity of women’s experiences, supported by a heterogenous range of voices often missing from the literature (see Farrugia, 2004a; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Hutton, 2006), this thesis will highlight that the experiences of female DJs are not homogenous and are, in fact, multifaceted, nuanced, and unique.

2.6 Chapter summary

This chapter contextualised this thesis in relation to the previous literature. It began with an overview of the early EDM research, charting the way in which the field has developed. Secondly, it discussed social and cultural gender biases, with a focus on the long-standing relationship between technology and masculinity, to contextualise EDM's position in wider society and explore possible explanations for women's marginalisation in EDM. Following this, the sexual harassment of women in the creative and night-time industries was discussed, as well as the negative impact it can have on their mental health and wellbeing. This chapter then outlined three influential studies on female DJs by Farrugia (2012), Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013), and Gadir (2016). It provided an overview of each study and its important contribution to the field. Following this, the limitations of this prior work were identified, drawing on two studies by Duignan-Pearson (2019) and Hancock (2017) that have begun to address these weaknesses by exploring the experiences of a more diverse range of female DJs. This chapter concluded by outlining the project's theoretical framework, which draws on intersectional and postfeminist theory.

Chapter 3: General methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological approaches taken in the current thesis. It opens by outlining the research aims and questions. The mixed-methods design, specific modes of data collection, and analysis used in the current project are then outlined, and the rationale for choosing each method given. A reflexivity statement is then provided, where I state my position in relation to the present research, as well discussing the challenges and considerations associated with conducting research as an ‘insider’.

3.1 Research aims and questions

As outlined in Chapter 2, a key limitation of the previous research is that it does not consider the impact of intersectionality in any real depth, with findings largely based on the experiences of straight, White, cisgender, Western women (e.g. Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). This thesis documents the experiences of women who do not fit the narrow, idealised mould of a DJ, as represented in the literature. The overarching aim is to explore the diversity and complexity of the lived experiences of female DJs. Within this, there are three research questions that this project will answer:

- What are the lived experiences of female DJs in EDM and how are they impacted by participants’ intersecting identities?
- What systemic/structural barriers exist for female DJs operating within the androcentric EDM scene?
- What factors help female DJs navigate their experience and how does this support their practice?

To answer these research questions this thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach, employing an in-depth analysis (reflexive thematic analysis; RTA) to collect rich, detailed data on female DJs' experiences, followed by a systematic quantitative approach using a larger sample of women in order to identify trends/patterns in the data. Due to the lack of research on female DJs, it was important that this project remained exploratory. As such, its design reflects the need to remain open to novel findings, as well as to allowing the complexity and nuance in female DJs' experiences to emerge.

3.2 Overarching methodology: Mixed-methods

This thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach, often used in psychology, where quantitative and qualitative methods are fully or partially combined in one study (Gorard et al., 2010; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). The current research adopts a partially mixed, sequential qualitative to quantitative mixed-methods approach, whereby qualitative findings are used to develop and inform subsequent quantitative methods. This method is favoured by psychologists as it allows for the selection of a method that initially focuses on the theoretical aspects of the research, before building on the first study's findings or compensating for its limitations using a different method (Morse, 2010).

Labelled as an "expansive and creative form of research" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17) by its advocates, mixed-methods research is an "inclusive, pluralistic and complimentary" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17) approach, allowing for an "eclectic" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17) attitude towards the designing and conducting of research. Here, eclecticism is crucial. By not limiting oneself to a single approach, the researcher allows the research questions, not the methods to take centre stage (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) proposed that research questions should proceed the methods in a manner that allows them to be explored in the most beneficial and complete way, something which is often achieved by using a mixed-methods approach.

One of the greatest strengths of a mixed-methods approach is that it allows for the triangulation of methods. This refers to the process of using multiple methods to study the same phenomenon (Fellows & Liu, 2008). Not only does this facilitate the identification of persistent patterns and stable relationships between variables within the data, but if the outcomes of these separate methods converge it strengthens one's confidence in the reliability and validity of the findings (Abowitz & Toole, 2010; Steckler et al., 1992). The present research employs triangulation, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to gain a more complete picture of female DJs' experiences in EDM. Triangulation is a useful approach to the research process when any two methods are employed to test the same hypotheses, but it is most beneficial when the methods used have distinct yet complementary strengths and weaknesses (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Fellows & Liu, 2008; Hesse-Biber, 2010). For example, a researcher may use a qualitative interview followed by a quantitative survey. Here, the survey compensates for the interview data's inability to generalise, whilst the interview compensates for the lack of depth and detail within the survey data. When the methods complement each other in this way it allows for greater flexibility in the research practices used (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004), provides a more detailed and complete dataset than any one method alone (Greene et al., 1989; Neuman, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), and allows for the outcome of one method to expand on or explain that of another (Beck, 2005; Goodyear et al., 2005; Migiro & Magangi, 2011; Newman et al., 2003). In this sense, the research can

profit from quantitative research's representation and generalisability, whilst concurrently benefiting from the rich, in-depth, context-specific accounts gleaned from qualitative work (Green & Caracelli, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), ultimately allowing the researcher to better understand the issue they are investigating (Hanson et al., 2005; Mertens, 2003; Punch, 1998). Equally, this approach enables the researcher to 'zoom in' on specific detail or 'zoom out' to observe the 'bigger picture' (Willems & Raush, 1969). This is relevant to the present research which places the 'real world' impacts and applications of its findings at the forefront. For example, evidence from this project can be used by industry bodies to develop policies and guidelines to create a safer EDM scene for women and other underrepresented groups.

Most pertinent to research exploring the experiences of female DJs from a variety of different countries is the impact of context. Context is important as it illustrates how experience can differ within and between groups of people and the reasons for this (Willig, 2013). Bryman (2016) contended that a mixed-methods approach allows for a contextual understanding of the phenomena under research, as qualitative data gives context to the broad, trend-focused, quantitative data.

The benefits of adopting a mixed-methods approach can be observed in research by Perkins and Williamon (2014), who investigated the wellbeing impacts of learning musical instruments in older adulthood. Initially, they used a questionnaire to measure wellbeing in a music learning and control group. Here, the outcomes did not adequately answer the research question "in what ways can learning to make music in older adulthood contribute to subjective wellbeing" (Perkins & Williamon, 2014, p. 552), with no clear differences between and within the two groups. Consequently, follow-up semi-structured interviews with music

learners were used to address this limitation. These interviews were also used to explore areas of interest that could not be explored using quantitative methods, such as participants' lived experiences of music learning and the mechanisms underlying its impact on wellbeing (Perkins & Williamon, 2014).

Despite its advantages to the research process, some methodological purists oppose the use of mixed-methods designs, arguing that the aims of quantitative and qualitative approaches are too distinct to combine (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Noblitt et al., 1988; Rosenberg, 1988). Instead, researchers should choose between the two (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Migiro & Magangi, 2011). Logistically, mixed-methods designs are more expensive, time consuming, and challenging for a sole researcher to conduct alone, particularly if both studies are being carried out simultaneously (Abowitz & Toole, 2010; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Migiro & Magangi, 2011). Should the outcomes of the quantitative and qualitative approaches conflict, then there is the additional problem of how to interpret these results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Migiro & Magangi, 2011). Divergent results should not necessarily be perceived as negative, as they may become a catalyst for further research in the area. Indeed, Mertens (2010) proposed that, "too much convergence might result in premature closure in the sense that many issues related to mixed-methods remain unaddressed, unresolved, or even unknown" (Merten, 2020, p. 3). The current project is largely exploratory, given the lack of prior research on female DJs. As such, it does not intend to provide 'closure' for certain areas of investigation. Further, I recognise that I cannot explore all aspects of female DJs' experiences in-depth within the limits of this thesis. Therefore, suggestions for future research will be provided (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5).

If the outcomes of a mixed-methods approach diverge the data can still be explored in a useful way. For example, in Moffatt et al.'s (2006) health services research, randomised control trials reported that a clinical intervention had no significant effect on participants, yet follow-up interviews found a wide-reaching, positive impact (Moffatt et al., 2006). Consequently, Moffatt et al. (2006) developed six approaches to explore the dataset further: treating quantitative and qualitative methods as fundamentally different; examining the methodological rigour of each method; investigating the comparability of the results; undertaking additional research to make further comparisons; investigating if intervention worked as predicted; and exploring if the results of each method matched (Moffatt et al., 2006). So, although the outcomes did not converge, the additional exploration resulted in a more comprehensively researched and better understood dataset.

This thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach, as it permits a more comprehensive, detailed, and inclusive investigation than any one method alone. This is important given the lack of research on female DJs. There is still much to uncover about their experiences and the method must reflect this by allowing for exploration. Here, this project will benefit from the in-depth and trend-focused data produced by a qualitative to quantitative mixed-methods approach. This allows me to simultaneously capture a broader and more detailed view of a particular issue, generating a more complete picture of female DJs' experiences than the previous literature has achieved. Using qualitative methods initially allows me to explore, in-depth, the personal experiences of female DJs, highlighting the voices of an under-researched group, and identifying key themes that warrant further investigation. Most importantly, given the heterogenous sample used in this research, mixed-methods emphasises the importance of context, with qualitative data providing

crucial contextual information. Use of quantitative methods then allows me to expand, and gather more data on, the novel findings identified in the initial study, revealing if these experiences apply to a larger sample of female DJs. This is vital given the complex and multifaceted nature of the issue being studied, which cannot be explored in enough depth using a single approach. Here, trend-focused data is vital, should this project have an impact beyond the academy, as it can be used to inform wider policy decisions and demonstrate how prevalent the issues identified are among a larger sample of female DJs.

3.3 Theoretical underpinnings

3.3.1 Constructivism

The two studies that make up this project are based on different theoretical positions. Study 1 adopts a constructivist approach. This approach acknowledges that there are multiple realities that are socially and experientially constructed and subjective to the individual (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Sexton (1997) detailed how, in constructivism, “the nature of meaning is relative; phenomena are context-based; and the process of knowledge and understanding is social, inductive, hermeneutical, and qualitative” (Sexton, 1997, p. 8). As such, proponents of constructivism agree that there is no “purely objective view of the world” (Raskin, 2002, p. 2). Instead, they acknowledge that “all constructed meanings reflect a point of view” (Raskin, 2002, p. 2).

Constructivism maintains that the researcher is not independent from the phenomenon they are researching, instead the two are linked, insofar that reality is created by the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this sense, the researcher is involved in the “construction and interpretation of the data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14) and, as such, they must acknowledge how their beliefs and biases may influence the outcome (Charmaz, 2014). This is particularly relevant to the present research given

that, as a DJ myself, I am fully immersed within the scene I intended to research, and this prior knowledge and experience likely shaped the way in which I approached this project (for more on reflexivity see Section 3.4).

By situating the first study within a constructivist framework, I recognise that there is no one universal experience of female DJs, thus allowing for the consideration of experience at the individual level. This is particularly important as this project wishes to shed light on how female DJs' experiences of comparable situations may differ depending on a variety of demographic factors (e.g. ethnicity, sexuality, class). This was briefly demonstrated in ethnographic research by Duignan-Pearson (2019). Here, her participants described how their experiences were influenced by gender and race politics in South Africa. Specifically, they discussed navigating the threat of violence and harassment whilst travelling to gigs. Although safety is a concern of many female DJs worldwide, it was particularly important to South African women, due to the country's high crime rate. Evidently, social and cultural context impacts women's access to the scene and their experiences once they are in it. Consequently, Study 1 emphasises that the experiences of female DJs are not homogenous or generalisable but complex and unique to the individual, even for women operating within the same scene.

3.3.2 Positivism

Study 2 adopts a positivist approach. Positivism acknowledges that a "single, tangible reality exists – one that can be understood, identified, and measured" (Park et al., 2020, p. 691). Here, knowledge is consistent with reality. In other words, it is the 'truth' (Park et al., 2020). Within positivism, knowledge is generated in a more objective way than in constructivism, with less influence from the researchers' and participants' experiences and biases. Instead, there is a separation between the

researcher and those being researched (Park et al., 2020). In practice, however, absolute separation is impossible to achieve as there is no “God’s Eye perspective” (Crook & Garrett, 2005, p. 208). Further, inherent biases still exist, to some extent, within positivism, as researchers choose what to study. For example, I decided which themes from Study 1 should be examined further in Study 2. As the present research is not interpreting cause and effect it is not situated at the ‘extreme’ end of positivism. As such, it adheres to more contemporary approaches which recognise that, although absolute truth is not attainable, scholars can still adopt a fallibilistic approach to research and knowledge acquisition (Crook & Garrett, 2005).

Positivism involves hypothesis testing through the exploration of correlational or casual relationships between variables. Here, experimental designs, which allow for the control and manipulation of variables are favoured (Park et al., 2020), with data used to produce generalisable claims about a certain population (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Here, it is important to note that, although this project adopts a positivist paradigm to explore trends and patterns within the data, it is cautious about generalising given that female DJs are not a homogenous group.

3.4 Reflexivity

According to Berger (2015), reflexivity is “the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researchers’ positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome” (Berger, 2015, p. 2). Reflexivity is a key aspect of acquiring knowledge through qualitative means (Berger, 2015). Equally, it is also important to quantitative researchers, as no research is completely devoid of bias. As such, Berger (2015) advised that researchers must demonstrate awareness of self-knowledge and sensitivity, recognise their own role in the formation of knowledge, and examine

how their own biases, beliefs, and experiences may influence the research process (Berger, 2015). In practice, this means acknowledging and taking responsibility for how one's positionality, including identity (e.g. gender, ethnicity, sexuality, immigration status, age, class), personal experience, political opinions, and ideological beliefs may impact the study's participants, design, data collection, and interpretation (Berger, 2015). In this sense, reflexivity is at odds with positivism's separatism between the researcher and the phenomenon they are researching.

It is particularly important to be self-reflexive when entering research as an 'insider', whereby questions of maintaining the correct level of critical distance required for study are brought into focus (Pini, 2001). Pini (2001) suggested that the researcher must not be too removed so as not to raise suspicion. Equally, the researcher must not become too involved and consequently unable to 'get out' (Pini, 2001). Adequate critical distance is also necessary in order to accurately represent participants, ensuring that they are not "victimised as mere objects of sexism" nor "valorised as heroes that have overcome struggle" (Olszanowski, 2012, p. 16).

My own perspectives and experiences inform and guide this research. As a DJ and producer myself, this thesis was borne out of my own interest to better understand the gender dynamics within the EDM scene. I was already deeply embedded within this scene for many years prior to this research. Consequently, I am aware of potential biases that may influence this work. My own experiences with sexism and misogyny within the scene served as 'background data'. This provided me with 'insider' knowledge of many of the issues that arose during the interviews, as well as the specific language used by DJs needed to understand and engage with participants. This 'background data' partly shaped the questions I asked in Study 1. For example, I have been part of a collective for women and non-binary DJs for

several years. This involvement has positively impacted my DJ career. Consequently, I know how valuable these spaces can be to women, and this was something I wished to explore in Study 1. As these spaces were helpful to me, this may colour the way I interpret how other women discuss DJ collectives. To reduce the impact of this bias, I chose not to ask about collectives directly. I did not want to shape participants' responses or for them to feel as though collectives *must* be valuable by focusing on them specifically. Instead, I inquired about the role of other people and allies within the scene. This allowed participants to discuss collectives if they wished, whilst also providing those who were not part of a collective an avenue to discuss other individuals.

Similarly, I was aware of the current issues being discussed by DJs online and within the dance music media (e.g. mental health/wellbeing, sexual harassment). Due to the 'topical' nature of these issues, I felt that they would resonate with participants, providing a fruitful discussion. As such, I choose to base several questions on wellbeing and harassment. Here, my 'insider' status benefitted the project, as an 'outside' researcher may have overlooked such topics due to their limited coverage within the literature.

However, this is not to say that my involvement within the scene enabled me to talk on behalf of all women in EDM. Although my own experiences as a female DJ allowed me to empathise with, and make sense of, the interviewees' discussions, many of them were outside of my experience. Here, I acknowledge my position as a White, cisgender, queer woman, and the biases that I hold as a result. This identity is well-represented within the existing literature in this field. This is not the case for many participants, some of whom were transgender or from non-Western backgrounds. I do not know, first-hand, about the challenges of being a woman of

colour in the EDM scene, for example, and therefore approached this aspect of the research as an ‘outsider’. Consequently, I needed to ensure that I was focusing on what participants were saying by evidencing my interpretation with direct quotes. By grounding my discussion in participants’ quotes, I ensured that it centred on what was important to the participants rather than what was important to me, and that their experiences were always at the forefront of the research. In cases where the researcher is an ‘outsider’, the participant becomes the ‘expert’. This role reversal can be empowering to the participant, which is particularly important if they are from a marginalised background (Berger & Malkinson, 2000).

During the interviews, I was open about my own identity as a female DJ/producer, in line with Tracy’s (2010) argument that in order to be self-reflexive one must also be sincere. Inevitably, there were many points where my experiences overlapped with those of the participant. Indeed, I was often asked “have you experienced this?” I struggled with how much to reveal, cautious about divulging *too* much, yet equally aware that I needed to establish a rapport with participants. I chose to remain as neutral as possible. It was important to me that interviewees told *their* stories; in sharing mine I may have unintentionally shaped what participants told me next. For example, when discussing sexual harassment, one participant asked, “have you ever experienced anything like that?” I replied “yeah, quite a few times, to be honest. I guess it just depends what sort of gigs you play, what sort of crowd you're playing to, that's a big influencing factor on it.” I intentionally gave a vague answer, sharing that I had experienced harassment but not revealing any specific details. Here, I wanted the participant to know that I could relate to her experience without shifting the focus of attention to me.

Connections created during my time as a DJ provided me with access to a large pool of potential participants. Many were my friends, several I had shared line-ups with, or were members of collectives I was involved in, others I knew through social media or mutual friends. Here, self-reflexivity was crucial to identifying where my relationship to participants may have influenced the data collected and created potential issues surrounding bias and validity. Due to my identity as a DJ/producer, many women were keen to help 'one of their own' and several expressed gratitude that I was carrying out this research. Such prior relationships may have facilitated the interview process, allowing me to quickly establish a rapport, trust and, in turn, the willingness of participants to divulge potentially sensitive information. Equally, a prior relationship may create a deeper level of understanding and honesty between the researcher and participant and, subsequently, richer, more detailed data. However, existing friendships can hinder the research process. During the interview, the relationship becomes 'professional', and this change may create confusion for both researcher and participant. The participant may become confused about what they should disclose, what I need to know, and what is implied. For example, friends may have excluded information that I already knew due to our prior relationship. Here, I asked follow-up or clarification questions if I believed they had omitted details. Equally, friends may suppress certain details to 'protect' me. For example, if a participant had a negative experience with mutual friend, they may have withheld the details for fear that I would become upset. In order to mitigate the potential effect(s) of prior relationships, participants were reminded that they were under no obligation to take part in the study. Participants did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to and could withdraw from the study at any point before the data was analysed. Further, friends may react

negatively if I do not represent them accurately within the write up or interpret something in a way that they do not agree with. Here, it was important to separate myself from the friendship and take the transcript at face value. Giving each participant a pseudonym as soon as I began transcription helped with this. Equally, participants were provided with an information sheet before consenting to take part in the research which detailed how their data would be used.

A large percentage of queer participants (56.5%) responded to the survey. I identify as queer and regularly participate in my local queer EDM scene. Given that I recruited, at least partially, from my own personal network, my position is undoubtedly reflected in the demographics of the sample. As such, when compared to the number of LGBT+ individuals in the general population, queer voices are overrepresented within the data. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, given that the queer experience has been largely ignored in previous literature, however this may lead to problems when generalising to female DJs as a whole. Further, my position in the queer scene may have impacted, albeit unintentionally, my interpretation of findings related to this theme. My own experiences at queer parties are largely positive, creating a bias towards this assessment of the scene. Not all participants will experience the queer scene in this way. Here, it is important to draw attention to my identity as a White, cisgender woman, well known within my local queer network. It is likely that this position of privilege may contribute to my positive experiences. Consequently, as Hancock (2017) acknowledged, it is vital not to portray the queer scene as a “utopia” (Hancock, 2017, p. 76) when, for many marginalised groups, it may not be.

My experiences provided me with some preconceptions about what I might find. During analysis I was cautious not to ‘force’ participants’ responses into themes

that I felt were important or that reflected my own personal experience. Themes were checked against the interview transcripts by my supervisory team to ensure that I had accurately captured participants' experiences. Further, my position within the EDM scene impacted what I found interesting in the data. For example, although I did not ask about it explicitly, many participants described starting out in the queer scene and how this benefitted their career. This was surprising as it reflected my own experiences. I chose to develop this into a theme, not because I could relate it but because many straight participants also shared this experience. This was an unexpected finding, consequently I felt that it would be fruitful to explore what exactly makes this scene so important to participants, regardless of their sexuality. Additionally, it was vital that themes reflected the breadth of participants' experiences, even if they did not align with my own. As such, I ensured that I highlighted alternative or opposing viewpoints, such as those who believed that gender was not a barrier in EDM, despite these perspectives not adhering to my preconceived ideas about what this study might find.

Many themes overlapped with those identified in the previous literature (e.g. collectives, role models, representation, structural barriers) giving me confidence in my analysis. To ensure that the themes taken forward into the survey were important to the interview participants, I chose to focus on novel themes that had not been previously discussed in detail by the previous literature (or at all). This prevented me from skewing the results by creating my own narrative about what is important to the experiences of female DJs and instead allowed me to focus on aspects of participants' narratives that needed more academic attention.

3.5 Study 1

The current project is comprised of two studies. The aim of Study 1 is to explore the lived experiences of female DJs within EDM culture. Due to its focus on experience, this study is best suited to qualitative methods, which will elicit more in-depth, detailed data about the lives of female DJs, including experiences of gigs, harassment, and the role of others, which can be powerfully illustrated through qualitative narratives (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Using this approach, findings are grounded in participants' own categories of meaning (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Advocates of qualitative research cite this as one of its greatest strengths as "participants should be able to describe their experiences as they perceive them, not through the researcher's preconceived notions about what their world is like" (Miner et al., 2007, p. 240). This serves to emphasise that there is no 'one' experience of female DJs. Given that participants' experiences are likely to be influenced by any number of factors, a qualitative method, which facilitates the exploration of complex phenomenon (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), serves as the best approach for initially identifying what some of these key factors might be.

From a feminist perspective, qualitative methods lend themselves to "understanding how particular attitudes, behaviours or experiences are distributed or associated in a population, which can then determine the best course of action in implementing social change for women" (Miner et al., 2007, p. 246). This is particularly pertinent to the present study which intends to use its findings as a catalyst for change within the EDM scene. Equally, qualitative research is responsive to the role of context and how it relates to the issue being studied (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), as exemplified within Duignan-Pearson's (2019) in-depth interviews (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.4). However, this specificity, combined with a

fewer number of participants inhibits qualitative findings from being generalised to other individuals, contexts, or settings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Indeed, Migiro and Magangi (2011) argued that qualitative techniques allow the researcher to identify some of the key issues surrounding a phenomenon before conducting further research.

Within Study 1, semi-structured interviews, conducted with a diverse sample of 23 female DJs, were used to collect exploratory data. The interviews lasted approximately one hour and were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were then analysed using RTA. The following section will describe the qualitative approaches taken in more detail, as well as the rationale for using them within the context of this thesis.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative interviews are a common method of data collection in the previous literature on female DJs (see Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Farrugia, 2004a; 2004b; 2012; Gadir, 2016; 2017b; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Hancock, 2017; Reitsamer, 2011). However, due to differences in disciplinary norms, the authors do not describe the interview process or schedule. Consequently, it is not known what type of qualitative interview was used (e.g. unstructured, semi-structured, structured) or if the same questions were asked to each participant. As such, the aim of the following sections is to be transparent about the specific methods used in the present research.

Semi-structured interviews are advantageous when the aim of the research is to understand more fully participants' individual attitudes and experiences (McGrath et al., 2019). As such, this method allows for the amplification of underrepresented voices, often ignored in research that aims to produce generalisable claims about a

large population (Reeves et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews utilise open-ended questions, which place emphasis on experience. This allows participants to speak freely and at length about their thoughts and emotions, as well as elaborate on certain points, generating rich, detailed data (Smith et al., 2009). This type of interview offers greater flexibility than structured interviews as it is guided by the participants' responses. Although the researcher may have an interview schedule with topics they wish to cover, this flexibility allows them to respond quickly and adapt the interview if an important issue emerges which requires further probing.

Semi-structured interviews are often conducted on a one-to-one basis, allowing a rapport to be established between the researcher and participant (Smith et al., 2009). Establishing an interactive relationship with the participant is vital to facilitate data collection (Alase, 2017) (see Section 3.4). Often being an 'insider' on the subject being discussed can be an advantage here, allowing a rapport to develop quickly and easily, particularly useful when exploring personal or sensitive issues (Howitt, 2019). For more specific details on the design and materials used in Study 1, see Chapter 4, Section 4.1.

3.5.2 Reflexive thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is an accessible and systematic method of qualitative analysis for organising and describing a dataset in rich detail by identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (or 'themes') within it (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA is not a methodology, instead it is a method independent of theory (although not atheoretical) which can be used across theoretical frameworks. As such, there are a variety of different 'versions' of TA (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The most frequently cited version, developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), is mainly for use within a qualitative paradigm (Clarke & Braun,

2017). Other qualitative analyses, such as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith, 1996), are tied to a specific theoretical framework. As such, there are limitations as to how IPA is applied within its theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This “theoretical freedom” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78) is a major benefit of TA, establishing it as a flexible method of analysis, which can offer a rich, in-depth, and complex insight into the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

More recently, Braun and Clarke (2019a) have expanded their constructivist approach to TA in order to distinguish it from other versions (Finlay, 2021), such as coding reliability (e.g. Boyatzis, 1998) and codebook TA (e.g. King & Brooks, 2018) (Braun & Clarke, 2019b). This more reflexive approach, termed ‘reflexive TA’ (RTA), emphasises the researcher’s active role in knowledge production and their reflexive engagement throughout all phases of the research process (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). In RTA themes are developed from codes identified within the data. Such themes do not ‘emerge’ from the data, as Braun and Clarke’s (2006) initial instruction to ‘search’ for themes led some researchers to wrongly believe. Instead, themes are generated by the researcher through active engagement with the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). From this perspective, the aim of RTA is not to provide a summary of the data but to interpret it in a “coherent and compelling” (Braun et al., 2019, p. 848) way. Here, the researcher becomes a “storyteller” (Braun et al., 2019, p. 848), using their own cultural, social, and ideological position as a lens through which to interpret the data.

This subjective approach to research can, in some cases, be political in nature. Indeed, many researchers employing RTA are often politically motivated, highlighting the voices of underrepresented groups or advocating for social change (Braun et al., 2019). For example, Dube et al. (2024) used RTA to explore refugee

women's experiences at a midwifery group practice surgery, a marginalised group who are subject to health care inequality due to their asylum status. Dube et al. (2024) described how the authors engaged in regular group reflections, discussions, and reflexivity exercises to critically explore how their “insider-outsider” (Dube et al., 2024, p. 412) status shaped the research process. The researchers’ positions as midwives with previous experience working with refugees, as well as their own cultural heritage, may have contributed to participants’ willingness to share their stories. However, none of the researchers were refugees. As such, they acknowledged that they may have misunderstood the culturally nuanced meaning in women’s accounts (Dupe et al., 2024). The political applications of RTA make it ideal for use within the current project which foregrounds the voices and experiences of an underrepresented group of women that have largely been ignored within the media and the academic literature on EDM.

Coding in RTA is an organic and iterative process (Braun et al., 2019) that requires the researcher to reflect on and question how their biases may influence analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). Consequently, researcher subjectivity becomes an “analytic resource” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 330) shaping the knowledge produced rather than acting as a ‘threat’ to the credibility of the research (Braun & Clarke, 2021a), as it is understood in some versions of TA (see Boyatzis, 1998). Gough and Madill (2012) have discussed the benefits of researcher subjectivity, encouraging researchers to include the personal in the research process, suggesting it can “contextualise and enrich the research and its products” (Gough & Madill, 2021, p. 375). This makes RTA suitable for use within the current project. By acknowledging the potential role of personal biases in this research, I can use them, and my prior knowledge of EDM, to contextualise and enrich my findings.

Braun and Clarke no longer characterise TA as theoretically flexible, preferring only to view the generic method in this way, with different versions of TA employing specific paradigms and epistemologies (Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Here, they perceive RTA to be a purely qualitative method of analysis, limiting its use to qualitative frameworks (e.g. constructivism) (Braun & Clarke, 2019a; Byrne, 2022). However, RTA maintains flexible in terms of research design and sample (e.g. size, demographics), as well as exactly how it is employed within a certain project (i.e. essentialist/constructivist framework, inductive/deductive analysis, semantic/latent coding) (Clarke & Braun, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2019a; Byrne, 2022). In line with Braun and Clarke's (2019a) recommendation that researchers to set out their theoretical position, this section will now discuss the specific approach to RTA used in this project.

Study 1 employed a constructivist framework (see Section 3.3.1). Researchers adopting a constructivist approach to RTA pay particular attention to the 'meaningfulness' of a code when generating themes, rather than the frequency with which it occurs (Byrne, 2022), utilising the interpretative aspect of RTA (Braun et al., 2016). A code can be 'meaningful' if it is pertinent to answering the research question or if a participant ascribes particular importance to that perception/experience (Byrne, 2022). Conversely, essentialism understands language as a straightforward reflection of experience (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995) in which meaning is left unexplored. Owing to its constructivist stance, the current study recognises the importance of commonality in the coding process, but it is the 'meaningfulness' of these codes that is the most important. For example, many participants described how their parents played an important role in shaping their

music taste from a young age. Although this was a common experience it was not central to answering the research questions.

Secondly, a predominantly inductive form of analysis was used. This approach is often associated with constructivism (Finlay, 2021), whereby theme generation is driven exclusively by the data rather than a theoretical framework to best capture participant experience (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This offers a richer description of the data set than deductive analysis, which uses existing literature and theory to interpret the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). The inductive, ‘bottom-up’ approach makes RTA ideal for exploring under-researched areas (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As such, a largely inductive approach, free from any preconceived conceptual framework, was chosen for Study 1. Given the lack of research on female DJs, it was important for analysis to remain exploratory and open to novel and unexpected findings. Deductive analysis was used to a lesser degree to ensure that themes generated were appropriate to the research questions (see Byrne, 2022).

Coding in Study 1 was both semantic and latent. Semantic coding offers a descriptive, surface-level analysis of explicit meaning in participants’ accounts. Conversely, latent coding provides a deeper level of analysis, attempting to uncover ‘hidden’ or implicit meaning within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Byrne, 2022). This requires the researcher to actively engage with the data. As such, analysis is more creative and interpretative (Byrne, 2022). Both approaches were employed in the current project to allow for data to be ‘double-coded’ semantically and latently. Furthermore, paying attention to the meaning created by participants and my (the researcher’s) interpretation of it allows this project to adhere to a constructivist, inductive approach. Sexism in EDM is not always overt, barriers can be deeply entrenched and difficult to recognise (e.g. structural barriers; see Farrugia & Swiss,

2008; Gregory, 2009). Participants may not be aware of the misogyny they have experienced, therefore looking beyond what they have said is crucial.

Although RTA was eventually selected, other qualitative approaches, such as IPA, were also considered. Braun and Clarke (2021b) suggested using RTA over IPA when: the research questions are not solely interested in personal experience, the sample size is greater than 10 and/or heterogenous, analysis only involves generating themes across the dataset (rather than also focusing on individual accounts), and analysis focuses on how lived experience is situated within a broader cultural context (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). As well as 'what are the lived experiences of female DJs and how are they impacted by participants' intersecting identities?' this project also attempts to answer the research questions 'what systemic/structural barriers exist for female DJs operating within the androcentric EDM scene?' and 'what factors help female DJs navigate their experience and how does this support their practice?' These questions go beyond personal experience, which IPA is designed to explore (Smith, 2017). As such, this project better suited to RTA, which allows for greater flexibility of research questions.

Secondly, Study 1 used a sample size of 23, in line with Terry et al.'s (2017) recommendation that PhD projects employing TA as part of their research require around 20 participants for an interview study. A sample of female DJs from a variety of different backgrounds was used to capture diversity and build on previous work, which privileges White, Western women. IPA is conducted on small, homogenous samples (Smith et al., 2009), as such it is not suitable for use in the current project.

Analysis in Study 1 involved developing themes across the dataset. Unlike IPA, analysis was less interested in understanding the unique features of each

account. Instead, the goal was to identify patterns and trends in participants' experiences, which could be explored further in Study 2 using a larger sample of female DJs. Achieving breadth in the data was important as, given the lack of research on female DJs, there is still much to uncover about their experiences, particularly in terms of how it is impacted by intersecting identities (e.g. age, sexuality, ethnicity). As such, RTA was perceived as the most appropriate method of analysis for this project.

Finally, in Study 1, the analysis acknowledges how lived experience is situated within a broader cultural context. Understanding the impact of social and cultural context is vital given the international sample in Study 1. Attitudes towards gender and women's role in society is likely to vary between cultures influencing society's perceptions of female DJs and, in turn, their experiences (see Duignan-Pearson, 2019). Braun and Clarke (2021b) claimed that "IPA is quite often used as a method for doing TA on very small samples, and to produce rather 'light' descriptive analyses that show little regard for the wider social context of participants' sense-making" (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 41). Given this, and the potential impact of context, RTA was selected for use in Study 1.

There are many benefits to choosing RTA over other approaches to qualitative analysis. TA is often perceived as an 'unsophisticated', generic method of analysis, only providing a surface-level description of the data (see Howitt, 2019). Yet, there is no aspect of TA's method that suggests it is a solely descriptive process (Braun & Clarke, 2021a), as Braun and Clarke (2021a, p. 340) concluded, "interpretative depth lies in the skill of the analyst, not the method." TA is, in fact, a "rigorous and high-quality" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297) method, providing a "robust and defensible analysis" (Terry et al., 2017, p. 34) that results in a "thick

description” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 97) of the dataset. It offers ‘built-in’ quality control, such as the two-stage review process, whereby “candidate themes are reviewed against the coded data and the entire data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2017, p. 297), as well as the cyclical, reflexive coding process that requires the researcher to continually question their biases and assumptions.

3.5.3 Ensuring quality & validity in qualitative research

As well as adhering to good ethical practices, it is important to ensure quality and validity in qualitative research. In order to achieve this, I adhered to the ‘4 R’s’ proposed by Finlay (2021): rigour, relevance, resonance, and reflexivity. Rigour, the comprehensiveness of the data gathering and analysis process (Yardley, 2000), will be achieved by using RTA, a systematic method of analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Analyses lacking rigour will have too many ‘incomplete’ themes (which should be combined) with complicated thematic structures that attempt to cover the entire dataset whilst failing to say anything useful about it (Finlay, 2021). An example of rigorous research is Herron and Sani’s (2022) investigation into the meaning of ‘emptiness’. Participants ($N=240$) described their lived experiences of emptiness, which were then analysed using TA to create a definition and detailed description of emptiness. Another group of participants who had experienced emptiness then rated the accuracy of the definition (Herron & Sani, 2022). Here, the authors demonstrated rigour, using a large sample of participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the concept of emptiness, before testing the validity of this definition in a follow-up study. Rigour is vital to the current research as female DJs’ experiences are likely to be influenced by multiple factors. For example, in her study of female EDM producers, Rodgers (2010) described how racial and gender stereotypes interacted to create multiple avenues for marginalisation within the industry. For example, one

interviewee described feeling like an anomaly due to the lack of both Black and/or female musicians in EDM. Consequently, a rigorous analysis is needed to understand the complexity and nuance in participants' accounts.

Relevance concerns the importance of the research in terms of its impact on, and contribution to, the field (Finlay, 2021). According to Yardley's (2000) criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research, this is achieved by offering a novel way of understanding the research topic that uncovers something insightful and valuable about it. A good example of this is Stewart et al.'s (2024) use of TA to understand why women decide not to report sexual harassment. Their analysis revealed that choosing not to report harassment is a multifaceted decision, identifying three main barriers to reporting: lack of faith in the Criminal Justice System, self-blame, and knowing the perpetrator (Stewart et al., 2024). This study demonstrates relevance as it provided a novel and contemporary explanation as to why women decide not to report harassment. Further, the need to continually reassess survivors' reasons for not reporting is crucial to informing efforts to reduce and remove these barriers as well as training for members of the Criminal Justice System (Stewart et al., 2024). Relevance is crucial to the current project, which is the first large-scale, in-depth study to explore the experiences of female DJs in EDM. The outcomes of this research have the potential to promote change within the EDM scene by providing industry stakeholders with evidence to develop policies and guidelines to create a safer and more diverse EDM scene, such as safer spaces policies and training for venues.

Resonance refers to the emotional aspects of the research and the extent to which TA is powerful, poignant, and vivid. Resonance can be achieved through evocative use of participants' language, such as metaphor, that 'brings to life' the

phenomenon under investigation, highlighting its complexities, and evoking the ‘feel’ of participants’ experiences (Finlay, 2021). For example, in Tollow et al.’s (2023) study into the physical appearance and wellbeing of adults with cancer, participants described losing their hair as "crucifying" (Tollow et al., 2023, p. 166) and like “los[ing]’ your identity” (Tollow et al., 2023, p. 165). This powerfully captures the distress participants felt, as well as the significance they gave to changes in their appearance.

Finally, reflexivity concerns the researcher’s self-awareness of their own role in the formation of knowledge (Berger, 2015). For example, in her case study of queer club, *Lick*, Hancock (2017) acknowledged her own positive experience of the club and how this may not be the case for all participants. She reflected on this ‘internal conflict’, noting “I have to try and not paint Lick as a utopia without tensions, conflicts, and problems as those things were always present. Yet it is hard not to treat Lick as utopic, as its very concept is just that: a nightclub run by and for queer women” (Hancock, 2017, p. 76). Reflexivity was achieved in the current project by being open about my prior position in the EDM scene and the biases that I hold as a result. This involved discussing my own internal conflicts and how I attempted to resolve them (e.g. how much personal experience to divulge to interviewees without influencing them), as well as being honest about the ways in which I did influence the research process (e.g. partly recruiting from my own, personal networks resulted in a large number of queer participants in Study 2).

3.6 Study 2

Study 2 involves a large-scale online survey of female DJs. The content of this survey is informed by the data gathered in Study 1. To my knowledge, no large-scale, quantitative studies have been conducted to investigate the experiences of

female DJs, making this research novel and timely. Interviews, such as those conducted in Study 1, are important for collecting in-depth, detailed information about the experiences of a frequently overlooked group of individuals. However, it is equally important to be able to describe trends and patterns in the data, as this can then inform wider policy decisions. This is crucial given the extent of the problem. Reports, such as those by Female: Pressure (2024) and the Jaguar Foundation (2022), have described how the gender balance of DJs performing at international EDM festivals is repeatedly skewed in favour of men. By using interviews alongside a survey, any trends in the data can be identified, therefore demonstrating how prevalent the issues discussed by interviewees are among a larger sample of female DJs.

3.6.1 Online surveys

An online survey was selected as it is inexpensive and offers freedom over when and where participants choose to fill in it (Miner et al., 2007), increasing the likelihood of achieving a cross-cultural sample. To ensure diversity, participants were actively recruited from around the world by distributing the survey via international DJ databases and contacting collectives and DJs from a variety of countries, encouraging them to share the survey amongst their members and peers. However, whilst obtaining a diverse range of responses is desirable, female DJs do not have identical experiences. Consequently, some survey items may not reflect the experiences of all women. For example, the latter part of the survey asked participants about their experiences of queer scenes, yet such scenes may not be prominent in cultures or contexts where being gay is less accepted. Here, participants were told to select 'not applicable' if their experiences did not align with the question.

Additionally, online surveys reduce social response bias as participants may feel less pressure to respond in a certain way when they are not in the same room as the researcher (Miner et al., 2007). Yet, the lack of investigator presence can reduce response rates as it is easier for participants to close the survey before completion or refuse to respond all together (Miner et al., 2007). To minimise this, the survey was kept as concise as possible.

The survey data may be useful to other disciplines who do not adopt quantitative methods, and whose research is often context specific, to gain a broader understanding of the experiences of female DJs in EDM. This is important as findings from the survey can shed light on the larger patterns of sexism and misogyny within club culture that may influence the specific issues women face within their local scene. More broadly, survey data may be useful to inform policy decisions within the wider EDM industry, such as procedures for tackling sexism and harassment within club culture, or to pressure festivals, venues, and promoters to diversify their line-ups in non-tokenistic ways.

3.6.2 Likert scales

The survey involved participants reading statements and rating the extent to which they agreed to them using a traditional 7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree). 7-point Likert scales are traditionally used in psychology (Finstad, 2010). They offer a greater number of choices than a 5-point scale, with a less extreme ‘jump’ between them. This allows respondents to select an answer that more accurately reflects their opinion rather than the ‘closest match’ (Joshi et al., 2015) and removes the “dilemma of forced choosing between two equally undesirable points” (Joshi et al., 2015, p. 398). As such, a 7-point Likert scale better captures the

“objective reality” (Joshi et al., 2015, p. 398) of participants. Indeed, compared to those with more/less items, 7-point scales have been praised for their accuracy and ease of use (Diefenbach et al., 1993), providing the optimum number of items to reliably reflect participants’ opinions whilst also remaining compact (Cox, 1980; Finstad, 2010; Lewis, 1993).

Some scholars have advocated for scales with a greater number of items (see Cummins & Gullone, 2000; Hancock & Klockars, 1991; Loken, 1987; Nunnally, 1978; Preston & Colman, 2000), arguing that increasing the number of points does not affect reliability or validity (Cummins & Gullone, 2000). Other studies have suggested that adding more items does not increase the scale’s efficacy, with improvements in reliability stabilising around seven, in line with the average the number of items individuals can store in their short-term memory (Miller, 1956; Nunnally, 1978; Preston & Colman, 2000). The debate surrounding the optimum number of items suggests that the context in which the Likert scale is being used may be important. Three or five points may be sufficient in the case of time pressure or to prevent participants from becoming fatigued. If face validity is important then the scale may increase to ten points, as participants perceive this to be an ideal number of items to sufficiently convey their feelings (Preston & Coleman, 2000). In the present study, it was vital to keep the scales succinct so that professional DJs with busy touring schedules would have time to complete the survey. Equally, it was important that there were enough scale points for participants to accurately represent their opinions. Consequently, a 7-point scale was chosen as it struck the right balance between these two ideals.

3.6.3 Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to explore the data gathered in Study 2. Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, showed the sample's overall agreement with each statement, creating a general picture of female DJs' experiences in EDM.

Inferential statistics, such as one-way ANOVAs, Kruskal-Wallis, Mann-Whitney U, and independent *t*-tests, were used to compare agreement based on several different factors, such as participants' demographic information (e.g. age, sexuality, professional level) or whether they answered disagree/agree to certain statements.

Percentages, represented graphically, were also reported as they clearly and simply illustrated participants' extent of agreement with each statement, particularly important when disseminating the results outside of the academy.

To aid comparison, some continuous data, such as age, was transformed into categorical data (i.e. three age groups; under 25, 26-35, 36+). Equally, data with many sub-categories (e.g. country of residence) was organised into smaller groupings (e.g. continent) to ensure that there were sufficient participants in each sub-category to carry out comparisons.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Research was conducted in line with the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines (BPS, 2018). Ethical approval was granted by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures Research Ethics Committee (FAHC 20-061) (see Appendix A).

I am a member of some of the networks and collectives I recruited from. Consequently, I am known to some participants, creating potential ethical issues. For example, some interviewees may have felt obliged to participate due to our prior relationship. Alternatively, they may have felt uncomfortable sharing certain experiences. All participants were told that there was no requirement to take part in the research. They were provided with information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of participation so that they could make an informed decision about their involvement. Finally, participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time before the data was analysed and leave questions unanswered.

Due to the nature of the research, there was the potential for participants to disclose distressing subject matter when discussing their experiences as female DJs, such as negative or traumatic experiences at clubs, sexism, sexual harassment, and physical/verbal abuse. The potential discussion of sensitive topics was outlined on the information sheet and reiterated to participants prior to the interview. Participants were made aware that they could leave questions unanswered and could stop the interview at any time with no negative consequences. Pseudonyms were also used in the write-up of the study to maintain participants' anonymity and any information that may reveal their identity (e.g. names of clubs they have performed at) was redacted. Information regarding relevant support (e.g. helplines, support groups, hardship funds) was made available to all participants following the interview. As the interviews were conducted online it was difficult to gauge if a participant did not want to talk about a particular subject or if they became distressed. To overcome this, regular pause points were provided throughout the interview, to check in with the participant, offer them a break, and confirm that they wished to continue.

The small the size of the cohort meant that there was a risk that participants could be inadvertently identified, due to the combination of their gender, age, location, and main genre played. As such, demographics were not tabulated and some data (e.g. ethnicity, location, age) was made less specific to maintain participants' anonymity whilst also retaining important contextual information (e.g. describing a participant as 'in their 20s rather than stating their specific age).

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the research aims and questions that will be addressed within the project. It outlined the overarching theoretical and methodological approaches adopted, as well as the specific methods of data collection and analysis employed in each study and the justification for these. Key debates, such as the discourse around the strengths and limitations of quantitative versus qualitative research and the use of mixed-methods research were acknowledged. Following this, I discussed the importance of reflexivity. Here, I examined my position as an 'insider' and the ways in which my prior experiences as a female DJ may have influenced the research process, as well as how I attempted to control these biases. Methodological and ethical concerns were also discussed. The following two chapters will present the findings from each study, offering a detailed account of the method and results, before discussing them in relation to the previous literature.

Chapter 4: Study 1

This chapter describes, in detail, the first study carried out to explore the experiences of female DJs. Firstly, the aims and methods will be outlined, including details about participants, materials, procedure, and analysis. The combined results and discussion will then be presented for each of the nine themes: *importance of community, factors facilitating participation, impact of DJing on wellbeing, identity, gendered experiences, representation, finding space, taking up space, and structural barriers.*

4.1 Methods

4.1.1 Aims

The aim of Study 1 is to explore the diversity and complexity of the lived experiences of female DJs in EDM.

4.1.2 Participants

In total, 23 female DJs aged between 24-61 years old ($M=34.04$, $SD=9.63$) were interviewed over a period of four months. Participants were recruited in an opportunistic way, either through my own personal networks or by responding to an email asking for volunteers to participate in a study exploring the experiences of female DJs. Participants were recruited internationally and came from a variety of backgrounds and stages of their career in order to achieve a diverse sample.

Participants came from the UK ($N=4$), Northeast Europe ($N=4$), Southeast Europe ($N=2$), East Asia ($N=3$), the Middle East ($N=1$), South Asia ($N=2$), Southeast Asia ($N=1$), East Africa ($N=3$), North America ($N=1$), and South America ($N=2$).

Participants' careers spanned between 1-29 years, 12 identified as professional DJs, and 11 identified as semi-professional. None identified as amateurs. The genres they played include house ($N=4$), techno ($N=6$), electronica ($N=8$), jungle ($N=2$), trance ($N=1$), and global ($N=1$). One participant felt that they could not categorise their

sound, so selected 'other'. Participants predominantly used CDJs ($N=17$), followed by controllers ($N=5$), and turntables ($N=1$). One participant, Martha, was accompanied by a friend who acted as a translator, which was agreed upon prior to the interview.

4.1.3 Materials

4.1.3.1 Questionnaire.

A short questionnaire (see Appendix B), conducted using *Jisc* online survey, was used to collect demographic data about participants, including age, ethnicity, length of career, level of profession, main genre played, and DJ equipment used. This data was gathered to ensure a diverse range of participants were recruited and to provide additional context when presenting the interview data.

4.1.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews.

The interview schedule centred on participants' experiences as female DJs (see Appendix C). In accordance with the benefits outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1, an open-ended questioning style was adopted to encourage participants to talk about their experiences in detail. The first three questions were general, concerning participants' initial interest in EDM/DJing, allowing a rapport to be established between the researcher and participant. The main body of questions focused on participants' experiences as female DJs, both positive and negative. Based on previous literature, prompts encouraged participants to discuss experiences related to gigs, the role of others within the scene (Bloustien, 2016; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2018), sexism (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2017b), harassment, and safety (Farrugia, 2004a; Hutton, 2006; Rowley, 2009). Participants were then asked to consider the impact of these experiences on their wellbeing (Leskinen et al., 2011; Sojo et al., 2016). Following this, they were asked to reflect on any highlights and

setbacks in their career and their motivations for DJing more broadly. The interview closed by asking participants what advice they would give to other women interested in becoming DJs to bring the interview ‘full circle’ and conclude in an optimistic manner.

4.1.4 Procedure

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions at the time, as well as the international sample, it was not possible for interviews to be conducted face-to-face. Instead, they took place over *Zoom* from each participant’s home, and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Interviews lasted between 1-2 hours. Prior to the interview, participants were emailed an information sheet outlining the study, how their data will be used, and the withdrawal process (see Appendix D). Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions via email or video/telephone call. They then signed an electronic consent form via email (see Appendix E). Once consent was obtained, participants were asked to complete the demographic questionnaire. On the day of the interview, the content of the information sheet was verbally reiterated to participants, and they were given another opportunity to ask questions. Participants were reminded of the withdrawal process, the option to leave questions unanswered, and that pseudonyms would be used in the write up of the research. They were notified when the recording of the interview was about to begin. Following the interview, participants were debriefed and thanked for their time.

4.1.5 Analysis

Interviews were analysed using RTA. RTA was chosen as it is a “rigorous and high-quality” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297) method that provides a “robust and defensible analysis” (Terry et al., 2017, p. 34) that results in a “thick description” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 97) of the dataset. Further, RTA emphasises the

researcher's active role in knowledge production. Its cyclical coding process encourages the researcher to remain reflexive throughout the research process and continually question their biases and assumptions (Braun & Clarke, 2021a). For more detail on RTA and why it was chosen see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2.

Analysis of the data followed the six-stage procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021a): familiarisation, systematic data coding, generating initial themes, developing themes, refining and naming themes, and report writing. Stage one involved immersing myself within the data. First, I listened to the audio recordings and transcribed each interview verbatim using *ExpressScribe*. I then 'actively' read each transcript, without taking notes, to familiarise myself with the data. During subsequent 'close' readings I began to take casual notes of any interesting passages, initial patterns, or connections and contradictions with previous literature. To ensure I remained reflexive, I documented my thoughts about the data and questioned how I responded to it (e.g. do participants' positive experiences within the queer scene stand out because I share this experience or because this scene is important to them?).

Stage two involved generating codes. Codes are short descriptive or interpretative labels for aspects of the data which may be relevant to the research questions (Byrne, 2022). I coded using the 'comments' function in *Microsoft Word*, as this displayed codes in the margins and highlighted the associated passage in the transcript. I initially coded semantically, focusing on the explicit meaning in participants accounts. As I became more familiar with the data, coding became more interpretative, exploring a 'deeper' level of meaning. As a female DJ myself, my position influenced what I found interesting within the data. As such, it was important to code as a "consciously curious" (Trainor & Bundon, 2021, p. 713)

researcher, open to exploring, and making sense of, data that did not align with my own experiences (e.g. gender as a non-issue, disapproval of hyper-feminine DJs).

Candidate themes were then generated from the codes by combining codes with a shared underlying concept or meaning (Byrne, 2022). A code was ‘promoted’ to a theme or sub-theme if it “contain[ed] a central organizing idea that capture[d] a meaningful pattern across the dataset” (Braun et al., 2019, p. 855). My process of generating themes involved writing each code on a sticky note and physically clustering similar codes together on a large piece of paper. I acknowledged connections between clusters by linking the groups together with a piece of string.

Stage four involved reviewing my thematic map, exploring different ways the codes could fit together. Weaker or undeveloped themes were discarded if they did not produce a meaningful interpretation of the data (e.g. perceptions of self). Others were ‘demoted’ to sub-themes if they shared the same central organising concept as another theme (Terry et al., 2017) (e.g. the theme ‘appearance’ became a sub-theme of ‘representation’). Finally, some themes were renamed to more effectively capture the data (e.g. ‘activism’ became ‘taking up space’).

The refining, defining, and naming stage ensured that the themes produced a clear, coherent, and meaningful picture of the dataset (Byrne, 2022). A clear definition and name were given to each theme/sub-theme, and extracts of data that best captured each theme were identified. Here, I created a document which listed each sub-theme, underneath which I listed all the corresponding quotations. I then began to highlight the quotations I felt most powerfully represented each sub-theme. This stage was an important part of the reflexivity process. By evidencing my interpretation of the data with direct quotes I ensured that the themes reflected

participants' experiences and not my own. A detailed, in-depth analysis of each extract in relation to its corresponding theme, as well as the wider context of the research questions, was then conducted (Byrne, 2022).

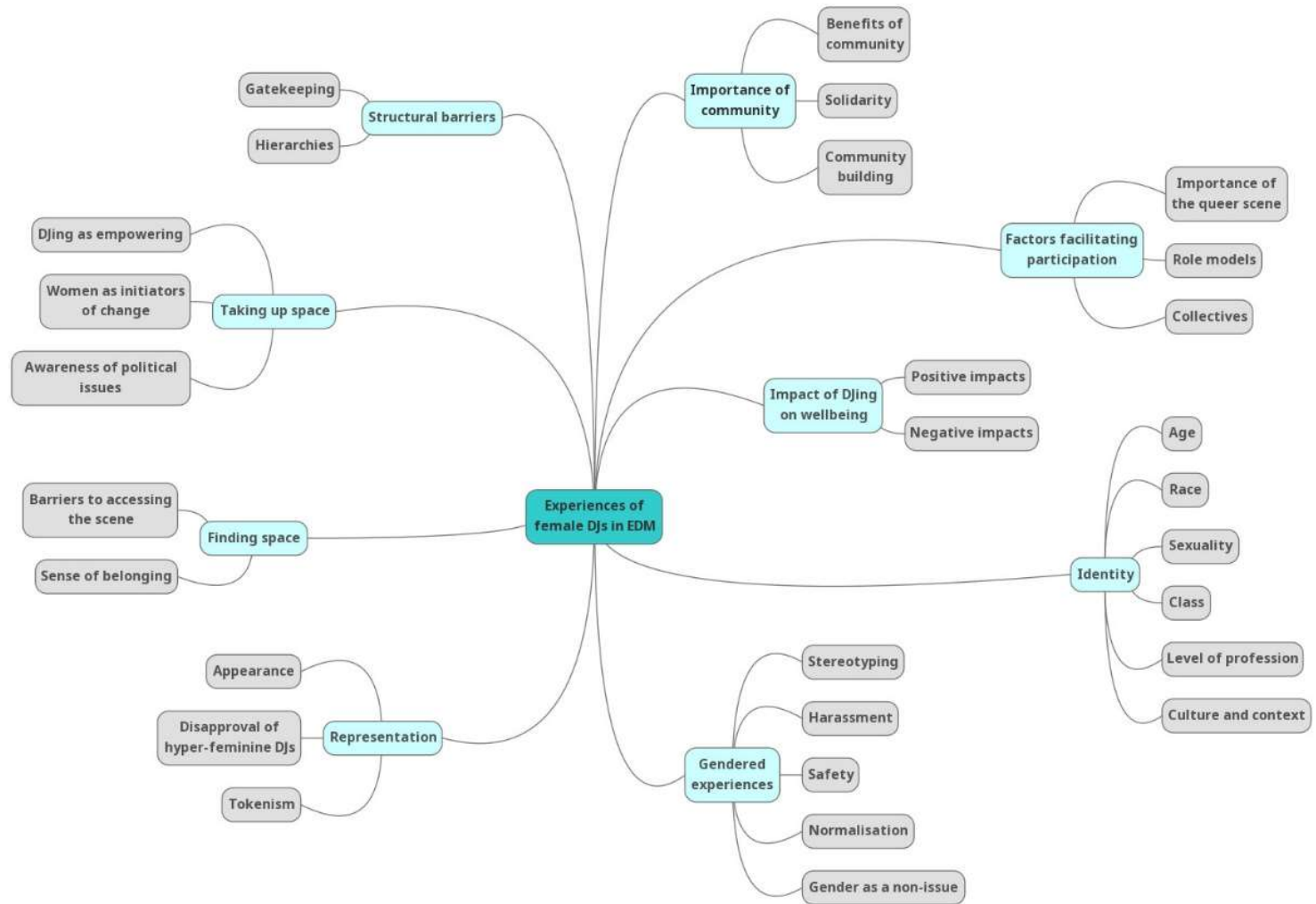
The final stage involved writing the report. Here, insights from previous literature were weaved into the discussion, providing a deeper level of analysis (Braun et al., 2019). It was important that the reporting of themes flowed in a logical way, with each theme building on the other to construct a narrative (Byrne, 2022). In line with recommendations by Terry et al. (2017), data was synthesised and contextualised in a combined results and discussion chapter rather than presenting the result and discussion separately. Where necessary, I continued to revise theme content, names, and data extracts used to ensure that the final analysis addressed the research questions.

4.2. Results and discussion

RTA generated nine themes that were important to understanding the experiences of female DJs (see Figure 1). This section presents an in-depth discussion of each theme and sub-theme, illustrated by interview extracts. Each data extract will be subjected to a detailed analysis in relation to the theme it encapsulates, as well as the previous literature. Where applicable, I will also reflect on how my position as a female DJ influenced my interpretation.

Figure 1

Thematic map



4.2.1 Theme 1: Importance of community

This theme captures the significance participants ascribed to being part of a community and the benefits that membership offered them. The concept of ‘community’ is much contested (Crow & Mah, 2012). Traditionally, scholars have used this term positively to depict social belonging, collective wellbeing, solidarity, and support (William, 1976). Yet more contemporary conceptualisations are contradictory, encompassing both the positive (support, solidarity, wellbeing, belonging) and negative (social divisions, problem populations) aspects of community (Mooney & Neal, 2008). For example, Diner and Fischer (2020) defined community as a tangible, stable reality, rather than a symbolic entity, with a set of social relations characterised by a particular form of social interaction, which could be experienced as positive or negative.

For participants in this context, community represented a close-knit network of DJs, producers, promoters, club owners, and collectives operating at the local scene level. These communities were small, grass-roots organisations centred around support, collaboration, the sharing of opportunities, and organisation of events, such as club nights and workshops. Those within the community held similar values and interests as well as a shared love of EDM. Participants often described other members as “friends” that were “like” themselves. From this perspective, participants appeared to be well integrated within their communities, defining them in positive terms.

However, as Crow and Mah (2012) posited, there is often a “darker side of communities relating to exclusion, inequality, and oppression” (Crow & Mah, 2012, p. 3). This is revealed when looking across all 23 accounts, exposing some of the inclusion/exclusion criteria within these spaces. For example, if participants were

truly included in their respective communities, why did many establish separate women-only spaces and collectives to tackle the inequality within them? Some participants also highlighted the importance of online communities, particularly for maintaining relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic and connecting with national and international networks. *Importance of community* is divided into three sub-themes: *benefits of community*, *solidarity*, and *community building*.

4.2.1.1 Benefits of Community.

For most participants, their experience of being part of a community was largely positive, having discussed several advantages that community membership offered. For example, Anna described how forming communities is advantageous for the scene, over and above the emotional support they provided her:

[I] think community is important for the scene even if you completely detach yourself from do ‘I enjoy being a part of community?’ If you just think about the quality of the nights... if people like each other, if they have similar taste, if they experiment together, they just generate better sounds... even if I thought ‘fuck community’ in terms of emotional support and I just wanted a good night... having a good community is a good recipe for people being more risky with their bookings... not just playing the same shit all the time.
(Anna)

Anna’s narration that “if people like each other... if they experiment together, they just generate better sounds” demonstrates that personal connections established within communities facilitate music making through collaboration. Such a heightened sense of sociality may allow members to feel freer in their creativity and more able to take risks. This mutual liking creates a safe, supportive environment in which they are free from certain types of judgement, such as being evaluated against a set of male-gendered criteria that prioritises technical skill (O’Sullivan, 2018). This freedom may also encompass the freedom from “self-doubt, self-censorship and inhibition” (Hill & Megson, 2020, p. 61) women often experience in male dominated

spaces (Lewis et al., 2015), allowing them the ability to experiment and make mistakes. Here, the benefits of community extend beyond the emotional into the professional, such as gig opportunities and skill sharing, reflecting the work of Armitage (2018). Writing on *Algorave*, electronic events where music is made through live coding, Armitage (2018) described the community surrounding the scene as an open, inclusive, supportive, and safe space for women.

This point is further substantiated by Anna's claim that being part of a community allows for "more risky" bookings. Women may be perceived as "risky bookings" by male promoters due to the assumption that they are not as skilled at, interested in, or knowledgeable about DJing (Bloustien, 2016; Gadir, 2016; 2017b) in comparison to men. Therefore, it is assumed by these male promoters that only men can be 'good DJs', casting doubt over women's competence. Consequently, booking a male DJ is a safer bet, given the uncertainty over women's ability. There is a sense that this aspect of community is particularly important for Anna as a female DJ, as it allows promoters to go beyond booking the "same" men and take a chance on female and gender non-conforming DJs. So, although it appears that the community she spoke of is not a women-centred space, its close-knit nature, which encourages difference and experimentation, is vital for fostering the careers of DJs from a variety of backgrounds and contributing to a vibrant and diverse music scene. This is corroborated by Hancock's (2017) research documenting a community of queer DJs in Vancouver. The intimate, familiar nature of this network allowed its members, whose queer identity did not afford them access to the heteronormative mainstream, an opportunity to collaborate with others and develop their skills as a DJ (Hancock, 2017).

4.2.1.2 Solidarity.

In communities established by women, the sense of solidarity that often formed between members emerged as another important function of these spaces, as captured in Carolina's account:

I had created a party that only women would play and there were other parties like this rising at the time and girls started to organise themselves to create more spaces for girls... and this was more like a sense of community... we [had] some identification of the issues we [had] at the time, that everyone was having the same complaints about the scene, about the guys, about the struggles. (Carolina)

The shared experience of being a female DJ in a male dominated EDM scene created a sense of unity amongst Carolina and her peers. This generated a feeling of mutual understanding and a collective identity between the women and, in turn, support and collective action. From this perspective, women gain a sense of strength by forming communities as they can tackle their common struggles together. This insight expands the small body of research into women-only communities, describing how they offer female solidarity through support (Bloustien, 2016), demonstrating to their members that they are not alone in their attempts to challenge the male dominance of the EDM scene (Farrugia, 2004b).

Carolina described how "girls started to organise themselves to create more spaces for girls", highlighting the sense of mutual support that exists for women. This supports Pillay-Naidoo and Vermeulen's (2023) work on female leaders in male dominated professions. Here, they found that the most significant benefit of female solidarity in the workplace was female support. In turn, the emotional support women received increased feelings of solidarity with their female counterpart (Pillay-Naidoo & Vermeulen, 2023).

For Carolina, this sense of solidarity created a strong sense of community (“more like a sense of community”) that did not exist in mixed-gender groups as, having not encountered sexism themselves, men are unable to relate to the “struggles” experienced by female DJs. For Carolina these struggles included not being taken seriously, an emphasis on technical skill, and a lack of women on line-ups. This interpretation has some resonance with work by Baldwin (1990), although he discussed solidarity from a political perspective. Baldwin (1990) described how a shared feeling of vulnerability engenders solidarity between individuals, establishing “a sense of community... in the face of universally shared risk” (Baldwin, 1990, p. 34). Others have suggested that solidarity entails collective action for the reshaping of work and social systems (Foley, 1999; Zacharakis-Jutz, 1993), which in Carolina’s case involved increasing the visibility of female DJs through women-only nights. Equally, Naicker (2021) described how women in South Africa used a community garden as a space to unite against and navigate common struggles caused by structural inequalities and demonstrate agency through resistance and solidarity. Although Naicker’s (2021) work is not based in EDM, it mirrors the way in which female DJs come together in women-centric spaces, communities, and collectives to challenge the scene’s male dominance.

4.2.1.3 Community Building.

Community building was a concept drawn on by many participants, who spoke of the importance of carving out their own communities within their local scene. This is evidenced by Olivia, a Serbian DJ who has been active for over a decade:

[W]hen I realised the inequality of [the] female position in [city], I organised a series of parties inviting the other female DJs to play together... I was so happy to actually connect to all these women that I know are there, but somehow we [had] never played together before... I think it was also good for them because it was happening at a club, which is one of the most famous

clubs in [city], but basically none of them performed there before... which is ridiculous in a way. (Olivia)

This extract speaks to the desire and need felt by some women to create their own distinct communities within traditionally androcentric spaces. It is apparent that building supportive networks is particularly beneficial for women due to the male dominance of the scene and the marginalisation they face (Farrugia, 2012; Rodgers, 2010; Stirling, 2016). In fact, discussions of community building and establishing gynocentric spaces repeatedly emerged throughout the interview process:

“[W]e just started doing all-girl parties and it was the only thing where you could see [an] all-girls line-up or even a girl playing after ten... we sort of paved the way for it being normal for there to be women on line-ups, not any women but really good DJ girls.” (Isabelle)

Olivia formed her community after she “realised the inequality” in the scene.

Evidently, women see the value of supporting underrepresented groups and creating safer spaces in which to nurture their careers. Here, it is important to note that no space can ever be completely safe for everyone in it (Hill & Megson, 2020).

However, the sexism, threat of violence, and self-doubt women experience in male dominated environments is less likely to occur in women-centric communities due to the exclusion of men (Browne, 2009; Enke, 2003; Lewis et al., 2015). From this perspective, Olivia understood the difficulty in accessing the scene as a woman, so chose to use her position of power to uplift others by creating a community in which women could connect and share opportunities. This emerged in several other accounts, such as that of 38-year-old Isabelle, who used her position as a longstanding semi-professional DJ support other women:

“[W]e created an organisation which was to bring up and strengthen female DJs, specifically queer and all kinds of genres... at one point we had a hundred girls on the roster.... some of them were trans, and some of them were BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and People of Colour]... so we've always been trying to make space.” (Isabelle)

These perspectives build on a small body of work that used semi-structured interviews to detail how women form their own distinct communities to counter their exclusion from male dominated spaces. According to Duignan-Pearson (2019), the creation of women-centric spaces, such as all-female nights, implies that there is a community building component among female DJs. This alludes to the preference for working collectively, as noted by Rowley (2009). Evidently, women benefit from adopting a collectivist approach to navigating the industry, as identified by Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013), gaining access to support, advice, and gig opportunities.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Factors facilitating participation

This theme addresses the individuals and organisations that have helped participants to carve out a space for themselves within the scene. *Factors facilitating participation* encompasses three sub-themes: *importance of the queer scene*, *role models*, and *collectives*.

4.2.2.1 Importance of the Queer Scene.

Three participants described how their involvement in EDM's underground queer communities played a pivotal role in their DJ career. This was a particularly interesting finding, many of these participants did not identify as queer themselves yet they felt more comfortable within these queer-coded spaces. Perhaps the women identified more with the fact this was another marginalised group rather than with

their sexuality per se. As Carolina, a DJ from Brazil who has been active for over 5 years, elucidated:

[S]ome girls really helped me, they were part of the LGBT+ scene, I grew really fast, it was easier to be a girl in this scene, [they] would embrace [me] more and [I] felt connected in different ways... straight guys, they usually are more competitive... DJ culture is really competitive inside [the] house, techno scene, like, the underground scene could be more alternative I think... this queer scene it's more receptive for women than the other scenes.(Carolina)

Carolina's belief that it is 'easier to be a girl' in the queer scene implies that the community is more welcoming to women than the straight mainstream. She felt 'connected' as a result, illustrating that this sense of acceptance may create a more inclusive environment and a greater sense of community. Other women echoed this view, further drawing out the importance of the queer scene's open nature:

[T]hey were more accepting of female DJs, just accepting of everything... we had a girl in our roster that was a little more heavy set and that didn't matter in the gay bar, who cares because they've got all these different types of people and they're proud of who they are and I think that was comforting in a sense... I do think the queer community is more welcoming... I love that it's not as judgemental. (Isabelle)

The growth that Carolina achieved through participating in the queer scene may have emerged from the feeling that she could be herself, perhaps because her peers were more embracing of difference, less judgmental, and more supportive as a result. This reading is substantiated by Hancock's (2017) case study on queer club, *Lick*.

Interviews with former patrons and DJs confirmed the importance of the queer scene for nurturing female and gender non-conforming DJs by cultivating a safe space away from the heteronormative mainstream (Hancock, 2017). Hancock's (2017) findings are corroborated by Madden's (2016) case study of DJ Mini, which recalled how she was supported by her local queer scene, who acted as mentors and collaborators, sharing their knowledge and equipment.

Alternatively, it may be “easier” for women to exist in the queer scene due to the reduced likelihood of being harassed or assaulted by their male counterparts. Parallels can be drawn here to observations made by Hutton (2006) and Farrugia (2012) that women often feel safer in queer contexts as they remove the challenges associated with mainstream straight clubs, such as the threat of violence or being overtly sexualised by men.

4.2.2.2 Role Models.

Six interviewees referred to individuals within the scene who acted as role models. Regarded as one of the most crucial factors allowing women to progress in the industry (Bloustien, 2016; Hancock, 2017; Hinkle-Turner, 2003), these individuals influenced and inspired the women, particularly at the beginning of their career. This is demonstrated by Danielle, a jungle DJ from the UK, whose career now spans almost two decades:

[I]t never crossed my mind that I could DJ 'cause I'd only ever seen men DJing... and around fifteen I came across a DJ Rap tape and fell in love... I was like 'DJ Rap is my favourite DJ', 'he's the best DJ', then someone corrected me, like 'you know DJ Rap's a woman, right?'... [I]t just blew my mind, I'd gone to so many raves and I had never seen or heard of any women... that's when I said to my boyfriend, like, 'I want you to teach me how to mix'... that was my first thing that was like 'oh, so women can do this' and so I could do this if I wanted to. (Danielle)

There is a sense that the androcentricity of the rave scene led Danielle to internalise stereotypes surrounding gender roles within EDM. Consequently, she did not consider that she could have an active role within the scene. Danielle's use of the phrase “it just blew my mind” captures the significance of realising that women do have a place behind the decks, as though it was something that she never thought possible. Although Danielle was evidently passionate about DJ culture, she only decided to learn herself after hearing another woman play, owing to the particular

importance of same gender role models. Indeed, Farrugia's (2012) ethnography of female DJs based in San Francisco revealed that many women are often discouraged from taking up active roles within EDM because the majority of key players are men. This, Farrugia suggested, implies that the presence of other women is more motivating than men, owing to the significance of same-gender mentors. This was also apparent for the three participants who lacked the influence of female role models within their scene, as evidenced by Deborah:

[I]n terms of the arts, it was really male driven, and in terms of DJing and nightclubs you'd have been hard-pressed to see a woman's name on a flyer. So, I don't know why I suddenly decided that this was the job for me because there was nobody that I could model myself on... there were men that I could've possibly modelled myself on, but then no, because they weren't doing it the same way that I was doing it. (Deborah)

Within this extract, Deborah called for same gendered models specifically, speaking directly to their necessity. This can be read in competing ways. Deborah's remark that male DJs were not "doing it the same way" signifies that women operate within the scene differently and thus require specific support. Despite not being based on female DJs, this has some resonance with Stamper's (2015) research into female electronic instrument designers. Stamper (2015) concluded that the shared experience of being a woman in music technology qualified participants to provide the specific support needed to help their peers navigate a male dominated industry. This is corroborated by Hinkle-Turner (2003). Writing on women electroacoustic composers, she documented how successful female musicians can act as allies and mentors. Here, they can offer their younger counterparts the guidance that men cannot, as these women are likely to have experienced instances of discrimination within the industry that is specific to the female musician (Hinkle-Turner, 2003).

An alternative reading is that women may gain the confidence to perform a certain task after observing someone like themselves in the position they aspire to be in. Here, comparisons can be drawn to work on female and queer electroacoustic composers by Massey (2019). Interviewees saw same-gendered role models as proof that they too could succeed in their chosen field. In this sense, these models act as a “gateway” (Massey, 2019, p. 38) to achieving one’s goals, demonstrating to women that they are not alone and removing the sense of isolation that can come with operating in a male dominated context (Massey, 2019).

However, arguing that women must identify with same-gender role models in order to access the scene perpetuates problematic gender binaries and essentialist notions that women are different from men with inherently different abilities (Werner et al., 2020), incapable of accessing the scene alone. This reinforces harmful stereotypes that only men can be ‘good’ DJs by positioning women as “exceptions that prove the rule” (Werner et al., 2020, p. 644). Moreover, it places the ‘burden of representation’ (Puwar, 2004) on female role models to act as mentors to all women entering the scene. Consequently, one must be careful not to overstate the role of mentors. Indeed, some women were able to access the scene alone, learning to DJ without the aid of role models:

“[T]here was no one, I just taught myself to DJ completely and I just had some tracks and Traktor, and I was trying to make them sound good together... some people tell me I DJ in a funny way and maybe that's the reason for it... it was just me pressing buttons and using my ears.” (Anna)

4.2.2.3 Collectives.

Finally, for six interviewees, all-female DJ collectives were perceived as vital in their access to the EDM scene. In many instances they acted as a crucial source of emotional and practical support to participants. Below Danielle recalled how they helped her to navigate the male dominated EDM scene:

[T]here's a collective and it's about nurturing women within the jungle, drum 'n' bass scene, and if it wasn't for me kind of connecting with that group of women, I really wouldn't be doing what I'm doing today, they've been instrumental in supporting me... I would never have known where to start unless I was connected with [them] because it's intimidating, these men, I just don't know how you can build relationships and get in with them. (Danielle)

Danielle's use of the word "instrumental" coupled with the idea that she "wouldn't be doing what [she is] doing" speaks to the life-changing and transformative influence being involved in a collective can have on one's career. In emphasising that this collective was a "group of women", Danielle hinted that it is not just the support of others, but the support of other women in particular that helped her. Perhaps she felt this way because she could identify with these women and, in turn, they could understand what she is going through, offering specialised support and a sense of solidarity that men cannot provide. Such support is critical as engaging in an activity which breaches the gender binary (Bayton, 2011) may be an alienating experience for some women without the aid of a collective (Katz, 2006). Indeed, Baker and Cohen's (2008) observation of girls' participation in community-based music activities revealed that women's confidence and motivation increases in the presence of other women. Danielle's use of the word 'nurturing' alludes to a duty of care and protection felt between the collective's members. This implies that the support offered within this network is partly emotional, providing the women with a sense of community. Here, parallels can be drawn to research highlighting the emotional

benefits of DJ collectives in terms of mental support and solidarity (Bloustien, 2016; Rowley, 2009).

Furthermore, Danielle's assertion that she "would never have known where to start" indicates that knowledge of the industry may be difficult to access. Perhaps then, this collective provided Danielle with practical advice about how to navigate the industry, alongside emotional support. These insights further the work of Farrugia (2012) and Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013), drawing attention to the value of all-female collectives. Their interviewees emphasised the effectiveness of such networks as spaces for knowledge dissemination and skill sharing, in terms of both technical and practical advice, such as information about self-promotion, securing gigs, and local opportunities.

The final part of Danielle's account depicts a struggle to relate to, communicate, and "get in" with the men in the industry, suggestive of the closed-off informal networks within which men operate. This chimes with the accounts of several women, including Elena, who also found themselves excluded from the 'all-boys club':

"I feel that I'm not super in the club of these young artists because I'm not a guy... if I [was] a guy I think I would have access to these things, it'd be easier because the guys are the ones most dominant in the scene... [s]o, if I [was] a guy, it would be easier to be part of this men's club." (Elena)

Evidently, these networks are off-limits and difficult for women to access, consequently all-female collectives provide an alternative route into the scene which bypasses these androcentric networks. Here, comparisons can be drawn to work by Farrugia (2004a; 2004b), Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013; 2016), and Reitsamer

(2011), who revealed that male dominated informal networks frequently work to exclude women, particularly at the beginning of their career. This makes connecting with others in the scene difficult (Farrugia, 2012; Gadir, 2017b; Reitsamer, 2011), as elucidated by Danielle. Consequently, women often struggle to establish themselves within the industry as a result (Abtan, 2016; Farrugia, 2012; Reitsamer, 2011).

All six participants discussing all-female collectives did so in positive terms. For example, when asked how important her collective is, Priya replied:

“[E]xtremely important, I don't know if I'd have been able to do it without them because there's just so much sexualisation happening from the guys... if a guy would've given me [a gig], he would've expected a reward or something. So, this [collective] was much needed.” (Priya)

Evidently, all-female collectives have a positive impact on the careers of female DJs. However, the one-sided nature of this evidence paints an overly positive picture, failing to recognise the ways in which these environments can be problematic. Writing on women-only spaces in South Africa, Duignan-Pearson (2019) stressed that they may be as damaging as other types of gender-based marginalisation. The small body of research into these collectives reported that they can foster harmful competition between female DJs (Duignan-Pearson, 2019), perpetuate binary gender divisions (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Reitsamer, 2012), and restrict members (Baker & Cohen, 2008; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013), limiting their access to the “real market” (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013, p. 71). Some scholars even reported the existence of gatekeeping practices (Reitsamer, 2012) and unequal power distribution in such spaces, which work to include some women at the expense of others (Hill & Megson, 2020). Given this evidence, it is surprising

that no participants in the current project spoke of the negative aspects of collectives. It may be the case that the type of person who responds to an advert for a study about the experiences of female DJs may feel that their career has been impacted by their gender and may have joined a collective as a result. As such, these women are more likely to attest to the value and benefits of such spaces.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Impact of DJing on wellbeing

Impact of DJing on wellbeing captures both the positive and negative consequences that DJing can have on participants' mental and physical wellbeing and the way in which they deal with these effects. This theme is divided into two sub-themes:

positive impacts of DJing on wellbeing and *negative impacts of DJing on wellbeing*.

4.2.3.1 Positive Impacts of DJing on Wellbeing.

Of the 23 interviewees, 18 commented upon the beneficial impact that DJing had on their mental health and wellbeing through emotional regulation, use as a coping strategy, or increasing positive emotion. The latter is captured in Carolina's account:

I think it's really important to me to have an artistic expression, I always say there is some stuff that I can't translate in[to] words and I can say them playing music, it's a unique way to communicate some feelings that I have... it's really good for my head, it's like therapy playing because sometimes I'm feeling bad and then I would play and feel much better... it's a way to put out some feelings from my chest. (Carolina)

Here, Carolina situated DJing as a form of creative self-expression, providing her with an avenue in which to convey difficult thoughts or emotions. DJing is "good for [her] head" and "is like therapy" signifying that it is psychologically healing in some way, improving her mental wellbeing. It appears that Carolina uses DJing as a coping mechanism to deal with negative emotions, noting that her wellbeing improves when she plays. Perhaps DJing is a cathartic experience for her, allowing for the process and release of built-up negative emotions. Conversely, it may act as a

distraction, diverting her attention away from negative thoughts. These perspectives mirror qualitative research by Saarikallio (2010), in which interviewees described using music to ‘vent’ certain emotions or forget about distressing thoughts and feelings. Carolina is not alone in her use of DJing as a coping mechanism. Six other participants also recounted DJing for this purpose, including Anna:

[W]hen I had this stalker; I don't think it impacted my wellbeing directly because I didn't think anything about [it] at the time, but what it has prevented me is doing something that I love and that makes me happy... soon after that I just had a really hard time in my life and I think if I had been DJing at the time I would have just not felt that bad... being prevented from doing what I love just had an overall long-lasting effect on how I felt. (Anna)

Although wellbeing has not been previously explored in relation to DJing, it is another form of active engagement with music. As such, the benefits of DJing discussed by Carolina and Anna are reflected within the general literature in this area, which uses quantitative, qualitative, and experimental methods to assess the impact of music on wellbeing. This large body of work has reported that self-expression and active engagement with music positively correlates with emotional wellbeing (Ascenso et al., 2017; Douglas, 2019; Groot et al., 2021; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Weinberg & Joseph, 2017), improvements in mental health (Ascenso et al., 2018; Dingle et al., 2021; Fancourt et al., 2016; Groarke et al., 2020), and can provide an avenue through which individuals can express themselves and exorcise difficult emotions (Douglas, 2019; Hays & Minichiello, 2005). Further, both accounts develop research on music’s use in emotional regulation. For example, both Saarikallio (2010) and Lonsdale and North’s (2011) interviewees described using music to deal with difficult emotions, to alleviate their negative mood, or induce a positive affective state.

4.2.3.2 Negative Impacts of DJing on Wellbeing.

The negative impacts of DJing on wellbeing were discussed by 16 participants, albeit to varying degrees. Unlike the positive impacts, the negative outcomes were not a consequence of DJing itself and were more likely to result from events experienced within the wider DJ culture, often involving promoters, fans, or fellow DJs. For example, Deborah, a professional house DJ from the UK, recalled how being sexually assaulted whilst on tour had a negative impact on her mental health:

[I]t definitely has mental health effect, [b]eing sexually assaulted and then not being able to get any comeback from it... I remember when it happened to me in [country], I've called my booking agents and said 'this has happened, get me out', and they're like 'we can't get you out, you come back you're breaking the contract.' That has a mental health effect because then you realise that nobody actually cares about you it's all about money and contracts, it's not whether you're okay. (Deborah)

It appears that Deborah's feelings of being trapped and isolated contributed to a decline in her mental health, perceiving herself to have no true allies within the scene. Perhaps she felt as though there was no one looking out for her, that she only matters whilst she is making a profit, her wellbeing unimportant in the face of potential losses of money. Deborah's realisation that "nobody actually cares" implies that others within the scene may give the impression of being supportive, but this is only surface level. When Deborah needed their support no one was there for her, suggesting that it was not genuine, and the sense of isolation and loneliness she derived from this had a negative impact on her wellbeing. This is seen again in Deborah's account when she recalled being assaulted at an afterparty:

“[S]omebody indecently assaulted me at an afterparty, and I named the person because he worked at the club and the manager belted him, and it's like right, that's all over and done with now, ten minutes later where was he?”

Managing the bar. That person didn't get fired, the next week he was managing the bar... that punch was all he got.” (Deborah)

Rather than showing genuine support by disciplining the perpetrator in an appropriate way, it appears that the manager’s behaviour was just for show, indicating that he had no real concern for Deborah’s welfare. Alongside Deborah, many other participants repeatedly drew close connections between being verbally or physically assaulted and a decline in their wellbeing:

“[T]here has been times where men have almost been trying it on with me sexually... just kind of [making] me uncomfortable, like 'oh, come round to my studio and we'll make beats together', but it's all a bit flirty and, urgh, horribleness... that has had an impact on my wellbeing in the past.”

(Danielle)

Deborah and Danielle’s experiences speak to a large body of literature confirming the negative impact of sexual harassment on women’s wellbeing (Alrawadieh et al., 2023; Leskinen et al., 2011; Minnotte & Pedersen, 2023; Rubin et al., 2019; Rugulies et al., 2020). One such study, a meta-analysis conducted by Sojo et al. (2016), concluded that gendered workplace experiences such as gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion have consequences for the psychological wellbeing of women in terms of increased depression, anxiety, PTSD, and distress. Further, several self-reported survey studies revealed that gender harassment was more likely to occur when women were seen to deviate from traditional gender norms, such as operating in male dominated professions (Dresden et al., 2018; Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2014; Leskinen et al., 2015; Park et al., 2022;

Riddle & Heaton, 2023) or possessing more masculine characteristics (Berdahl, 2007).

Although the literature discussed thus far is relevant to the present study, it is not specific to female DJs in the context of EDM. Only one study to date, conducted by Kegelaers, Jessen et al. (2021), investigated the mental health of electronic musicians. The conclusions largely replicated those found in studies on popular musician's wellbeing, reporting that they have higher levels of depression and anxiety than the general population (e.g. Kegelaers, Schuijjer et al., 2021). The results differed only in the increased levels of substance use among EDM artists, unsurprising given how ingrained drug culture is within the scene (Kegelaers, Jessen et al., 2021). Additionally, Kegelaers, Jessen et al. (2021) remarked that, although it does not necessarily prevent mental health problems, social support is crucial for sustaining at least a moderate degree of wellbeing. This chimes with Deborah's account as it appears that a lack of social support further contributed to a decline in her mental health, signifying that it plays a crucial role in the maintenance of her wellbeing.

In addition to mental health, six participants discussed the implications of a demanding touring schedule in terms of its impact on their physical wellbeing. This is evidenced by Gina, a DJ in her 50s with a long-standing career in the industry:

I just did three gigs back-to-back, travelled fifteen hours to a gig, didn't eat properly, didn't sleep... by the time I came home for a whole week I felt really depressed and I just felt really low energy and I felt physically dead... I just felt mentally really unhealthy. I couldn't get myself back into real life... I was just such a fucking zombie and I'd gone way beyond what was humanly possible... I think maybe fifty-five I might stop, I don't wanna be doing it forever... in the long run it will kill you, especially your ears. (Gina)

Expressions such as “physically dead” and “fucking zombie” illustrate the magnitude of touring's impact on Gina's physical health, to the extent that it does not make her

feel alive. The phrase “I couldn’t get myself back into real life” alludes to a separation between her touring and non-touring life. There is a sense that Gina’s DJing life is unreal in some way, perhaps because it does not follow a normal working routine, hence the use of unreal metaphors such as “zombie” to describe its impact on her.

That Gina considered quitting implies that DJing may not be sustainable as a long-term career, perhaps because its negative impacts are exacerbated with age. Work by Bonde et al. (2018) affirmed this, reporting that professional musicians often retire before the age of 65. Furthermore, Gina’s account is substantiated by literature documenting musicians’ hearing (Hake et al., 2024; Pouryaghoub et al., 2017; Schink et al., 2014; Schmidt et al., 2019) and musculoskeletal problems (Leaver et al., 2011; Paarup et al., 2011; Stanhope et al., 2022; Topoğlu et al., 2018). Although there is a small body of literature documenting DJs’ hearing loss (Bray et al., 2004; Potier et al., 2009; Santos et al., 2007), much of the research on physical health problems is based on data from classical musicians. However, there is a plethora of evidence within the media confirming the existence of such issues for DJs (DJ News, 2014; Paris, 2021; Zlatopolsky, 2016).

4.2.4 Theme 4: Identity

Contemporary scholars have begun to recognise the importance of addressing intersectionality to better understand privilege and oppression (see Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Kenny, 2022) (McConnell et al., 2016). Speaking to this progress, *identity* captures the way in which participants’ gender intersected with other aspects of self. *Identity* is divided into six sub-themes: *age*, *race*, *sexuality*, *class*, *level of profession*, and *culture and context*. These factors work to further marginalise women, shaping their experiences within, and interpretation of, the scene, as well as the ways in

which they understood their identity as a female DJ within a male dominated space. Additionally, whilst many have previously praised EDM's elimination of structural inequalities in the 1990s (Malbon, 1999; Redhead, 1990), it is evident from the data that the experiences of women in contemporary club culture are inextricable from the issues that exist within society at large.

4.2.4.1 Age.

Of the eight women 35 and over, five discussed their age to some extent. Younger participants did not consider the influence of age, suggesting that it may only impact experience as participants get older. The influence of age was two-fold, firstly it acted as a barrier to accessing the scene, as elucidated by 38-year-old techno DJ Anna:

“[The] electronic music scene, even if it's welcoming, it's normally full of kids, especially with young males, it's quite difficult to get along when you're [over 30].” (Anna)

Compared to other participants, Anna came to the scene relatively late on. Despite DJing for 12 years, most of this was spent at home playing to friends, only beginning to play in clubs two years prior to her interview. Consequently, there is a sense that Anna feels too old to engage in the scene. Her use of the word “kids” distances herself from her peers, highlighting how young she perceives them to be. She juxtaposed this with her age, affirming the supposed importance of youth. Here, it could be argued that she has internalised stereotypes about older women in EDM, which she then reproduced to explain her experiences. Her comments illustrate the tendency for women to assimilate ageist discourses which position older women as out of place in EDM (Gregory, 2007). From this perspective, Anna can be seen as

attaching certain restrictions to EDM, in which “young males” are the ideal, whilst those deviating from such gender and age constraints are marginalised.

Alternatively, her feelings may arise from the perception that others within the scene are too young, not that she is too old. This alternative reading is consistent with work by Gregory (2009). Her study of former female ravers in Toronto revealed that they often held negative attitudes towards teenage girls, perceiving them to be too young to belong to the rave scene. Nevertheless, Anna’s age causes her to feel like an outsider, contributing to a sense of isolation, exacerbated by the communication challenges she experiences. These insights extend the literature, which has described how age interacts with gender to shape experience. Whilst male DJs are increasingly respected as they age (Gadir, 2017b; 2023), there is an age limit placed on women’s participation, with older female DJs not seen as the norm within the scene (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2017b; 2023; Gregory, 2009).

Secondly, for some participants, their age acted as a mitigating factor for negative experiences. 61-year-old DJ, Esther, was one of the few women who had not experienced harassment within the scene, something she attributed to her older age:

“Yeah, I think I’m just lucky 'cause I started [DJing] a bit old, so much older.”

(Esther)

Perhaps Esther felt as though her age protects her. This sense of protection may come from experience, Esther may be more aware of the situations that can occur in clubs, developing strategies over time to keep herself safe. Alternatively, her older age may make her less visible. Ageing, according to Cobrin and Levine (2012), involves a shift “to the margins of invisibility in the labour market [and] the visual

market” (Cobrin & Levine, 2012, p. 2). Indeed, Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) revealed how youth often acts as prerequisite for who is considered ‘attractive’ within contemporary club cultures. Given the emphasis on the visual appearance of female DJs (Gadir, 2017a; Gavanas & Retisamer, 2013), it follows that Esther may be less visible within the scene and, consequently, less likely to become a target of harassment.

4.2.4.2 Race.

For several participants of colour, their experiences were dually influenced by their racial identity, in addition to their gender, as illustrated by Sofia, a professional DJ from Brazil:

[I]n Europe I've received really racist comments but that's just how the world is. I don't wanna centre that on myself and my story, [t]he most negative part I think [is] the colonial consequences of the history of life and having to play the women in their line-up role or the Latin techno DJ role that sometimes you know you're playing that quota, but how do you use it [to] your favour, and in favour of others that I come with? (Sofia)

Within this extract, there is a sense that club culture mirrors society at large, in that the racism Sofia experienced in her wider community can also be observed within the EDM scene. The phrase “but that’s just how the world is” indicates that Sofia may have normalised these experiences. Perhaps she felt as though she should accept these comments as part of life, as though she is powerless to do anything about them.

Further, race and gender appear to intersect in a manner that tokenises Sofia. Here, she discussed playing the “women in their line up or the Latin techno DJ role”. Evidently, Sofia is aware that she is often booked because of her identity as a woman of colour over her talent as a DJ (“you know you’re playing that quota”), alluding to Kanter’s (1977) concept of tokenism. Tokenism refers to practices which appear to benefit minorities but are, in fact, only superficial efforts (Elliot-Sheridan, 2020). It

is a consequence of the enhanced sense of visibility experienced by minorities, in which their race and gender becomes salient (Kanter, 1977). For minority DJs, tokenism often manifests as insincere bookings by promoters looking to ‘tick boxes’ or achieve diversity quotas as opposed to genuine attempts at inclusion.

Although there are many research (see Böse, 2005; Measham & Hadfield, 2009; Talbot & Böse, 2007) and media articles (Attack, 2020, Brown, 2020) exploring racism and exclusion in night club spaces more generally, ethnicity is rarely considered within the dance music literature (Bhardwa, 2013), particularly in relation to gender. Indeed, much of the research on female DJs has prioritised the experiences of White, Western women. When the experiences of DJs of colour are considered, research has found that these women encounter greater challenges in comparison to their White peers (Smith et al., 2019). For example, interviews with female songwriters and producers revealed that 29% of women of colour believed that they had been employed as a result of their minority status, consistent with the concept of tokenism (Smith et al., 2019). More broadly, a survey by Black Lives in Music (2021) found that 86% of Black musicians reported barriers to progression within the music industry, and this number rose to 89% for Women of Colour. Equally, 80% of Black women were dissatisfied with the way the music industry supports Black musicians and 43% of Black women stated that they altered some aspect of their appearance or behaviour as a result of negative experiences within the industry, compared to just 27% of Black men (Black Lives in Music, 2021).

4.2.4.3 Sexuality.

Several participants identified as LGBT+, consequently their experiences were impacted both by their identities as women and as queer people. Although one

participant alluded to instances of homophobia, Gina perceived her identity as a queer woman to be an advantage:

“[A] lot of women get booked because the promoter wants to fuck them or they'll say, 'I'll pay you in the hotel room' or 'why don't we go for dinner?'... nobody asks me to come to the hotel room to go and pick up a payment, I'm just the wrong gender, this big butch lesbian, so I've really bypassed all of that and I feel incredibly blessed.” (Gina)

Gina believes that her sexuality allows her to avoid the advances of men in the scene, as they know that she will not be interested or, equally, they are not interested in her. Gina attributed her experiences to being the “wrong gender” and a “big butch lesbian”, as though her masculine characteristics and sexuality protect her in some way. Alternatively, she may believe that only women who appear both feminine and heterosexual experience predatory behaviour. Both readings imply that gender and sexuality intersect in a way that means some individuals are objectified more than others. Moreover, Gina felt “blessed” to have avoided such encounters. This sense of fortune alludes to how endemic predatory behaviour is within the scene, suggesting that most female DJs experience this kind of behaviour at some point during their career.

Furthermore, for women in male dominated spaces, operating outside of what is deemed ‘acceptable’ and ‘feminine’ carries negative consequences (Puwar, 2004), yet in Gina’s case doing so appears to be an advantage. This perspective builds on Farrugia’s (2012) observation that presenting as visibly queer allows women to be accepted within male dominated spaces (Farrugia, 2012), perhaps due to the perception that they are more masculine. From this perspective, a woman’s lesbian

identity may “desexualise her” (Farrugia, 2012, p. 57) in the eyes of her male peers, reducing the likelihood of her encountering predatory behaviour.

4.2.4.4 Class.

Three participants discussed how class played a role in their experiences within the EDM scene. Although it did not appear to intersect with gender directly, it was evident that social inequality created another obstacle for women to overcome when accessing the scene. This is captured by Priya, a DJ in her 20s from India, who is in the early stages of her career:

[T]he community is interesting, it's supportive but it also takes a certain amount of privilege to be able to make your way into it 'cause electronic music is not a grassroots thing in [India]. Hip hop is still a very grassroots genre, you have people from all socioeconomic backgrounds doing it, but electronic music is very elite compared to hip hop. So, I see that caste class barrier to things. (Priya)

Priya perceived the EDM scene to be exclusive and inaccessible to those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. DJing involves investing in expensive equipment, as well as the constant purchasing of new music (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008). Although this acts as a barrier for all, regardless of gender, it creates particular difficulties for women who wish to access the scene. Financial constraints and social background frequently restrict female musicians, impacting their ability to enter certain creative industries (Bayton, 1998; Wiseman-Trowse, 2008; Wolfe, 2020). For example, in her ethnography of female DJs and producers, Farrugia (2012) revealed how saving enough money to purchase new music can be a struggle, exacerbated by the gender pay gap. Priya's use of the word “elite” indicates that the EDM scene is only open to the most affluent, exacerbating the hurdles for working-class women.

This is observable on the dancefloor, as well as behind the decks. The female ravers involved in Gregory's (2007) study of the Toronto rave scene identified class

as a defining factor in deciding who had access to club spaces due to the high cost of participation. Consequently, research often depicts ravers as coming from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (see Hier, 2002; Wilson, 2006). Similar class divisions were captured by Wolfe (2020), albeit in relation to female musicians generally. Whilst acknowledging that they still experience gender issues, she observed that the music industry is more accessible to middle-class women. In comparison to their working-class counterparts, Wolfe (2020) noted that those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to have grown up in a household where the arts were valued as a career path or private music lessons were available.

4.2.4.5 Level of Profession.

This project provided novel insights into the impact of professional level. It appeared that participants experienced the scene differently depending on whether they identified as amateur, semi-professional, or professional. In this extract, the relationship between Deborah's gender and her level of profession influenced the extent to which she felt safe on tour:

I don't enjoy travelling on my own that much, I enjoy it less the older I get 'cause there's some people that you can work for that think they've paid for more than your DJing, and negotiating that situation without any kind of back up is difficult because I've never been at that level where I've had a team behind me... I think it's different the higher up the food chain you go, when you've got a support network that travels with you. (Deborah)

Although a dislike of travelling without a team is not necessarily gendered, it is exacerbated for women who are arguably at greater risk when travelling alone. This chimes with Duignan-Pearson's (2019) observation that female DJs often adopt certain safety measures when travelling to and from gigs as they are susceptible to violence or harassment on account of their gender (Duignan-Pearson, 2019). Indeed, Deborah hinted at the ulterior motives of some individuals within the scene. Yet,

although she considers herself to be a professional DJ, Deborah does not have a team of managers or agents as ‘superstar’ DJs might. Instead, she tours alone, arguably leaving her vulnerable. Deborah believes that this is not an issue for some DJs who, successful enough to employ a team, can benefit from a sense of safety in numbers. She juxtaposed this ideal with her own lack of support which means that she must deal with situations alone. Consequently, by virtue of her gender and having not reached the level that allows her to have a team, Deborah feels unsafe when touring. To date, no research has explored the intersection between a musician’s gender and level of profession, and its impact on their experience within the industry, making the present insight entirely novel.

4.2.4.6 Culture and Context.

Another original observation within this research was how the context in which participants operated, namely location, time, political climate, social/cultural norms, and variations between local scenes, shaped their experiences as female DJs.

Discussions of context were identified in 17 accounts, best exemplified by Gina’s discussion of the gender divide within the Indian scene:

[T]here's a lot more girl DJs, there's a lot more women who come to the events in the bigger cities, there's a much more equal male/female [split], if you go to the smaller cities there's a lot more men because the mindset of the parents is still like 'no, my daughter can't go clubbing', so you'll see, like, 10% girls, 90% men, whereas in the bigger cities it might be a ratio of 60/40, 60% men, 40% women, so that's definitely changed, in the beginning it was all men, very few women because they just had to lie or they had to deceive their parents. (Gina)

According to Gina, a more conservative attitude prevails within smaller cities. Here, traditional values and stereotypical gender norms dominate, restricting women to the home. In contrast, Gina perceived larger cities to be more progressive and open-minded about the roles of women, allowing them the freedom to engage in activities

that breach the gender binary. Whilst there is little academic insight to draw upon, as the majority of research is conducted from a Western perspective, Gina's account has some resonance with media coverage of the Indian EDM scene. For example, Ravens (2019) described how the country's conservative stance on alcohol and sex is reflected in strict curfews, with late-night activity perceived as immoral and illicit.

As much of the literature is based on data from Western women (see Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Reitsamer, 2012), it is difficult to observe the role of context. Only one study to date, conducted by Duignan-Pearson (2019), examined the experiences of female DJs from a non-Western perspective. Here, it is possible to observe how culture and context influence the challenges women face within the industry. Although there did appear to be some similarity with findings from Western research, many of the obstacles identified were unique to female DJs operating within the specific context of South Africa. For example, participants discussed navigating racialised perceptions of women in the night-time industry and contending with the constant threat of violence and harassment that is a consequence of the country's high crime rate (Duignan-Pearson, 2019).

4.2.5 Theme 5: Gendered experiences

This theme refers to the way in which women experience their gender as salient within the EDM scene and the challenges that this presents. Gendered experiences are borne out of the oppression that women face in the EDM scene. In this sense, they are manifestations of sexism and misogyny, which can be overt (e.g. sexual harassment) or covert (e.g. internalised stereotypes about female DJs). *Gendered experiences* encompasses five sub-themes: *stereotyping*, *harassment*, *safety*, *normalisation*, and *gender as a non-issue*.

4.2.5.1 Stereotyping.

As women operating in a male dominated environment, participants were often subject to derogatory stereotypes about their gender. This is demonstrated by Johanna, a semi-professional DJ from Estonia who had been playing for over a decade:

“I was a little bit weirdly ashamed to talk to my boyfriend's parents about the fact that I was DJing because it can have a dirty feeling, like 'oh, what's she doing there?' Like night-time in the club.” (Johanna)

In this extract, Johanna alludes to the taboo that surrounds women working at night, drawing parallels to ethnographic work by Duignan-Pearson (2019). Speaking from the context of the South African house music scene, she remarked how the perception of female DJs has been shaped by stereotypes around women operating at night. Of particular importance is the outdated notion of the ‘Shebeen Queen’, an image which has come to associate night-time working with sex work and, in turn, criminality and sexual promiscuousness (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Coplan, 1991). Consequently, many of the women interviewed by Duignan-Pearson (2019) did not perceive DJing to be a respectable career, a belief which characterises Johanna’s account. The shame she felt in discussing her career suggests that she does not believe it to be acceptable work for a woman. Johanna’s use of the word “dirty”, connotating illegality, indicates that she has internalised these stereotypes. Consequently, she worries about being judged for her career choice.

Johanna’s reluctance to discuss her career can be read in several ways. On the one hand, it may stem from a fear that women who deviate from what is considered ‘respectable’ face criticism (Gunby et al., 2020), speaking to the significance placed

on acceptable standards femininity (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2008; Wykes & Gunter, 2005). On the other, it may suggest a tension between her social norm-subverting identity as a DJ and her desire to be a ‘respectable’ woman, adhering to societal expectations about her gender. It is almost as if she possesses a dual identity. Indeed, throughout the interview Johanna refers to different or hidden selves:

“I think that it has, like, given me like [a] really cool alter-ego.”

(Johanna)

“I [felt] that I was like in the closet as a DJ.” (Johanna)

Martha, a 36-year-old professional DJ from Northeastern Europe, also appeared to have internalised ageist and sexist stereotypes about women’s position within society:

I played with [name of club] and [name of event], it was amazing. After that I thought 'maybe it's a time to get married, to [have] kids', I can quit my DJ career after that, I have everything I wanted but I had some thoughts about that because I'm 36 and I have a boyfriend, I have full-time job and sometimes it's another job to go to play because I really like to prepare, if it's in the city it's nice because you can call the cab, go to play, and then go home to rest, and if you go to the seaside, it's about five hours to go, you have to take [the] day off... it's not really easy for women to DJ, like, physically.
(Martha)

Evidently, Martha feels pressure to live up to the stereotype of women as caregivers. As a result, she has self-imposed an age/time limit on her DJ career. As she reaches certain career milestones, the pressure to choose between her career or family/motherhood increases. Martha reasoned that “it's not really easy for women to DJ, like, physically”. Here, she may be implying that women cannot handle the demands of the job, unable to balance their career with other responsibilities. She does not question men’s ability to do this, arguably reproducing sexist stereotypes about gender roles within society. Men can continue their career after becoming

fathers, women, it seems, cannot. This resonates with Pini's (1998) assertion that women's involvement in the EDM scene requires "rigorous management of time, energy, money and pain" (Pini, 1998, p. 172), especially if one is also a mother.

Parallels can also be drawn between Martha's narration and Gregory's (2007) analysis of female rave participants. Gregory (2007) described how interviewees placed an age limit on their involvement in EDM culture, perceiving it to be incongruent with their inevitable roles as wives and mothers. Consequently, these women felt pressure to cease EDM participation in order to fulfil their expected role within society.

Other stereotypes interviewees had been subjected to include the assumption that female DJs are less competent than their male counterparts, as elucidated by Martha:

Translator: "[S]ome double standards that Martha really dislikes, for example, sometimes as a woman you have to prove to the audience that you're good because they have this prejudice that 'okay, she's a woman, she might not be as good as a man', so you kind of have to prove to the audience that I'm good and that's a bit exhausting." (Martha)

This stereotype is rooted in the belief that technology is a male domain (Farrugia, 2012; Mathew et al., 2016; Rodgers, 2010; Strong & Gadir, 2023). This belief informs gatekeeping practices, experienced by women, that dictate who is a 'good DJ' (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; Gavanis & Reitsamer, 2013; Puwar, 2004). Given the relationship between masculinity and technology, these practices often privilege technical knowledge, such as mixing ability (O'Sullivan, 2018). Consequently,

female DJs, for whom track selection often takes precedence (O’Sullivan, 2018), are perceived as incompetent (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013).

4.2.5.2 Harassment.

Of the 23 participants, eight had personally experienced some form of harassment within the scene, carried out by male promoters or fans, varying in extremity from verbal abuse to sexual assault. Another five women acknowledged the potential for harassment to occur, although they had not encountered it themselves. In the extract below, Kathy, a 27-year-old DJ from China, described an instance of sexual assault involving a male clubber:

[I]t depends on the club, one time somebody groped me and then later I saw [him] on the dancefloor and he was like 'oh shit, she was the DJ, I didn't know'... it was such a dilemma for me 'cause I wanted to play, I wanted to enjoy that moment, and here I am being such a party pooper because somebody made me feel really bad, and I'm like 'I need to uplift myself but I feel like shit.' (Kathy)

Kathy’s experience of harassment “depends on the club”, speaking to the significance of context. This resonates with qualitative ethnographic research by Hutton (2006). Documenting the experiences of female clubbers, Hutton (2006) made a distinction between mainstream and underground clubbing spaces. She asserted that mainstream clubs are often seen as attracting patrons who hold derogatory attitudes about women. In contrast, underground clubs are perceived as more welcoming, with partygoers holding fewer oppressive opinions. Consequently, women often felt safer and at less risk of harassment within these spaces (Hutton, 2006). Yet, the literature is not united in the importance of context. Contradicting Kathy’s statement that “it depends on the club”, Gadir (2016) observed that even in supposedly ‘underground’ environments women are not immune to gender-based

harassment. Indeed, Hill et al. (2020) found that sexual harassment still occurs in grassroots music venues.

For Kathy, the encounter led to conflicting emotions and confusion (“it was such a dilemma for me”). What should have been a positive experience DJing became negative, consequently there is a sense of tension between these two opposing emotional states. Further, she described herself as a “party pooper”, as though she is angry at herself for feeling upset. Perhaps she believes that if she feels bad it will affect the atmosphere of the club. Indeed, the DJ has a responsibility to set the tone of the night, therefore she must appear professional and cannot show that the encounter has affected her (“I need to uplift myself but I feel like shit”).

Kathy is not alone in her experience. Although there is little research documenting female DJs’ experiences of assault, sexual harassment is common within all creative industries (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017), such as fashion (Crowley, 2023), and film (Lee et al., 2023). Relating to the music industry specifically, the Musicians’ Census (2024) revealed that sexual harassment disproportionately impacts women. Here, 32% of female musicians reported being sexually harassed, compared to 5% of men (Musicians’ Census, 2024). One explanation for the ubiquity of harassment within these spaces relates to the gendered power structures within them. Sexual harassment is more likely to occur in industries with unequal power distributions (Crabtree, 2021; Illies et al., 2003; Katila & Meriläinen, 2002; Wilson & Thompson, 2001). Power imbalances are amplified in the music industry due to its many sources of power, such as the fame associated with making a ‘hit’ record, access to large audiences, high-paying contracts, the influence of major record labels and their ability to ‘make or break’ artists, and being male in an androcentric industry (Crabtree, 2021). Given the masculine dominance

within EDM (Bloustien, 2016; Farrugia, 2012; Gavanoas & Reitsamer, 2013), it follows that women may be at greater risk of harassment. Even Kathy's position as the DJ failed to protect her, contrary to claims that being an authority figure can safeguard against harassment (McLaughlin et al., 2012). Instead, Kathy's experience is in line with research on the South Korean film industry by Lee et al. (2023), who found that women working in film were at greater risk of harassment. One explanation for this was that male film workers felt threatened by female workers' higher statuses and progressive attitudes towards gender equality in the wake of the #MeToo movement. Here, Lee et al. (2023) proposed that male workers may harass women in order to maintain their cultural hegemony and prevent its erosion in the #MeToo era.

The women who had not personally experienced harassment were thankful for having done so:

“I've been lucky to never have to deal with any sort of sexual assault scenario when I was playing, which I'm grateful for.” (Isabelle)

This sense of good fortune, also observed by Sheard (2011) and Biskupski-Mujanovic (2022), speaks to the perception of harassment as a normalised and inevitable, something that all women will ultimately experience (see Christmas & Seymour, 2014; Kavanaugh, 2013; Sidelil et al., 2020).

4.2.5.3 Safety.

All interviewees discussed the extent to which they felt safe whilst in a club environment, performing, or travelling to and from gigs. Regardless of whether they had ever felt unsafe, this suggests that participants acknowledged that women may

be at greater risk of danger when operating in night-time spaces, as evidenced by Deborah:

“I've had particular experiences, places where I've known I've not been safe, and where things have happened where it's gone so far that I've needed to either get out of the country or, you know, call the police.” (Deborah)

Deborah's experiences speak to female DJs' hyper-awareness of safety issues when performing. There is a sense of there being a sliding scale encompassing the level of harassment, extent to which she feels unsafe, and action needed to deal with the situation. This is in line with previous literature reporting that female DJs frequently consider issues of safety in night club settings (Farrugia, 2004a; Hutton, 2006), with the extent to which they felt safe dependent on the physical and social environment they were performing in (Hutton, 2006). Indeed, as a professional DJ, Deborah is more likely to play in mainstream clubs. Hutton (2006) suggested more predatory and oppressive behaviour prevails in these environments, in comparison to the more welcoming behaviour observed in underground clubs. This may be why Deborah has felt unsafe but Anna, a semi-professional DJ, has not:

“No [I have never felt unsafe], but I'm never alone, I always had lots of friends with me... I think it could've been different if I were in different places where I can't have my crew with me at all times.” (Anna)

Although Anna acknowledged the potential to feel unsafe under different circumstances, her choice to attend gigs with friends supports the idea that women often find 'safety in numbers', forming groups for protection (Hutton, 2006; Kovac & Trussel, 2015; Rowley, 2009). Although Rowley (2009) recognised this is

achievable on the dancefloor, it is more difficult behind the decks where the DJ performs alone (Rowley, 2009). Sofia's experience, however, contradicts this:

“[It has] protected me, being a DJ, because most people [are] like 'oh you're the DJ', they respect you... I would say it has made me feel more safe than unsafe, being the DJ at the party.” (Sofia)

Despite the isolation of the DJ booth, Sofia feels safe when performing. She credited this to being socially separate from the crowd, her powerful position as the DJ leaving her untouchable. On the other hand, this sense of safety may also arise from being physically separate, with the booth acting as a barrier separating her from the crowd.

4.2.5.4 Normalisation.

An original finding within this project was the concept of normalisation. This was a common theme across seven accounts, concerning the way in which participants attempted to rationalise and/or trivialise their negative experiences. Normalisation can be seen as what happens when gendered experiences (e.g. harassment) become accepted as 'part of the job'. This is best exemplified by Martha:

[Men] feel like they have a privilege to come to you if you are the girl... and sometimes you don't want to go to the security and say 'get this guy out of the DJ booth'... you just try to be friendly and sometimes they don't understand, or they don't take it seriously, and it's not really good for me, I don't like it, and I don't know why I don't want to go to the security, sometimes I feel shy or [think that] they [will] find me needy or I don't want a conflict, I don't want to make troubles to that guy, maybe he is really drunk or high from drugs and maybe he is having a good time, but in another way, I just put my comfort above his comfort, and it's not good. (Martha)

Martha admitted that she does not always seek assistance when she experiences harassment. This can be read in multiple ways. She may feel that the situation is not serious enough and by involving security she is overreacting and 'causing a scene'

“I don't want a conflict”). Alternatively, Martha may fear that she will not be believed (“sometimes they don't understand, or they don't take it seriously”) or that speaking out will damage her career. Consequently, there is a sense that it is often easier to accept harassment than attempt to prevent it. Martha's account extends a large body of research into workplace harassment, detailing the reasons why women are often unwilling to report the perpetrator. These include the refusal to be perceived as a victim and/or vulnerable, self-blame, knowing the perpetrator, and the fear of harming one's career (Brunner & Dever, 2014; Fielden et al., 2010; Littler-Bishop et al., 1982; Stewart et al., 2024).

Martha justified this man's behaviour by suggesting that his actions were a result of intoxication, thereby not blaming him directly. From this perspective, she is almost excusing his behaviour, implying that harassment is a result of external sources rather than an individual's conscious decision to harass someone. This resonates with data from Mellgren et al.'s (2018) survey into sexual harassment in public spaces, in which women frequently claimed that the perpetrator was intoxicated, thereby justifying their behaviour. Further, Martha admitted that “I just put my comfort above his comfort”, confirming the existence of a hierarchy within EDM (see Section 4.2.9.1). There is a sense that she feels subordinate to men and must respect their emotions as a result. Conversely, Martha may feel that it is her job to entertain people, forced to put the audience's enjoyment before her own so as not to be perceived as ‘spoiling’ others' fun.

Similarly, Anna normalised her negative encounters with men throughout the interview process, albeit in a different way. For example, in this extract, she trivialised an experience with a stalker by diminishing its significance:

[L]ooking back, I think if [the EDM scene] was a welcoming, mainly female environment, I would have been DJing [from] 2015 in clubs, but I just went [in]to this environment that felt welcoming apart from this one guy... so looking back I think [being stalked] was a bad event, but at the time I just said 'OK' and didn't spend time thinking about [it] at all. [It] didn't make me feel bad or good... [it's] just something that happens in life. (Anna)

Anna argued that the incident was “just something that happens in life.” There is a sense of passivity to this statement, as though she has accepted harassment to be unavoidable or inevitable, simply a part of the job. This apathy emphasises that sexual harassment is so common, particularly in night-time spaces (Peterson et al., 2023; Quigg et al., 2024), that women simply perceive it as natural. Indeed, nightclubs and bars are often dubbed as ‘sexualised social spaces’ within the literature, whereby the frequency in which harassment occurs allows it to become normalised (Grazian, 2007; Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2009; Kavanaugh, 2013).

Yet, there is a sense that this stalker did have a negative impact on Anna, despite her claiming indifference (“[It] didn't make me feel bad or good”), admitting that “I would have been DJing [from] 2015 in clubs, but I just went [in]to this environment that felt welcoming apart from this one guy.” Perhaps downplaying the experience made it easier to cope with, and only after processing this incident was Anna able to recognise the impact that it had on her.

To date there is no research on the way in which women normalise their experiences of harassment within the context of EDM. However, this phenomenon has been reported in a variety of other settings. Nielsen et al.'s (2017) interview study with care workers concluded that sexual harassment is perceived as normal within health care settings. Here, participants frequently used humour to make light of or downplay the perpetrators' behaviour. Equally, using data from a survey into sexual harassment in public spaces, Mellgren et al. (2018) found that women often

did not report instances of harassment as they felt that the situation was not ‘serious’ enough or that the perpetrator did not mean any harm. However, the most common explanation was the normalisation of harassment, a result of its pervasiveness in night-time spaces (Mellgren et al., 2018). Similarly, Sidelil et al.’s (2022) interviews with university staff and students concluded that, due to its normalisation, harassment was not perceived to be a problem. Instead, it was often seen as unavoidable, with many participants failing to recognise certain behaviours as harassment. This resonates with many of the narratives found in the present research, indicating that these findings can be applied to the context of EDM.

4.2.5.5 Gender as a Non-issue.

Several women did not consider their gender to influence their experiences as a DJ.

This is illustrated by Esther, one of the few women who reported having encountered no instances of sexism within the scene:

[T]here’s still a lot of opportunities for women in the music industry... I don't think women should be at all put off by the fact that all they see is a barrage of testosterone... I don't think being a woman has affected me, I'm not conscious of it. I don't know whether people in that position should consider that it is because they're a woman or maybe it's they're just not good enough, or they're not going about it in the right way... I don't think this issue with women is just about the music industry, I think it's more people skills, and about understanding exactly what it is you want, it might be interesting to put on some communication skills [workshops] for women in an industry which is mainly male dominated. (Esther)

According to Esther, any inequalities within the scene are not a result of gender but the extent to which individuals possess certain characteristics needed to progress within the industry. Sentiments such as “there’s still a lot of opportunities for women” and “I don't think being a woman has affected me, I'm not conscious of it” reflect the postfeminist discourse that all genders now operate on an equal playing field (Farrugia, 2004a). Yet, in stating “I don't think this issue with women is just

about the music industry”, Esther is acknowledging that, although she may not feel it, there is some kind of gender gap in the scene. That she does not consider “this issue” to be exclusive to the music industry speaks to the way in which club culture reflects issues that occur in wider society. Instead, Esther attributed women’s lack of opportunity to “people skills”, situating the problem, and its solution, within women themselves. Here, she is implying that any gender gap within the scene is not a result of its inherent sexism, but differences in biology or the way in which women are socialised to behave. Esther suggested that “it might be interesting to put on some communication skills [workshops] for women”. By advocating for an intervention specifically aimed at female DJs she is implying that the issue is with women themselves. This speaks to the “girls as problem rhetoric” identified by Baker and Cohen (2008, p. 336).

Alternatively, in proposing that only women should better their communication skills, and not men, Esther is acknowledging that, at least to some extent, gender impacts access to opportunities within the music industry. Perhaps this is because the self-promotion required to secure opportunities is linked to assertiveness, behaviour at odds with the social norm that women should be modest (Scharff, 2015). If women internalise such stereotypes, it may be more difficult for them to network with stakeholders in order to access opportunities, restricting their career growth.

Esther’s refusal to acknowledge the role of gender can be read in competing ways. As gender does not influence her own experiences, she may fear being victimised or stereotyped if she engages with issues of gender. This reading extends Farrugia’s (2004a) argument that women do not want to be perceived as victims of the patriarchy, choosing to believe the postfeminist rhetoric in which opportunities

are open to anyone, regardless of gender. Alternatively, Esther may emphasise the importance of communication skills as she has secured many opportunities by networking with stakeholders:

“[I]f I hadn't gone to [name of venue], and if I hadn't stopped [name of DJ/promoter] and said 'just wanna say what a lovely set and I really enjoyed it' and asked some questions then my so-called DJing might have just stopped there and then because I'd just be going round in circles wondering what to do. So, absolutely, really important to go and talk to people.” (Esther)

Here, Esther wrongly assumed that because she had succeeded in a male dominated industry so too can *all* women. Her comments reflect those of the male DJs/promoters interviewed by Gadir (2017b; 2023), who claimed that success is a result of hard work, such as networking, not one's gender. Yet, Esther's experience is uncommon and fails to acknowledge the gendered nature of these networks. Indeed, many participants struggled to access the male dominated spaces she entered with apparent ease (see Section 4.2.7.1). In asserting “I don't know whether people in that position should consider that it is because they're a woman or maybe it's they're just not good enough” Esther disregards the obstacles created by structural sexism. Instead, she implied that the problem is with female DJs themselves, suggesting that women failing in the industry fall back on gender as an excuse for their lack of progress. Here, parallels can be drawn to Farrugia's (2004a) observation that women often refuse to accept the existence of sexism within the industry once they have reached a certain level of success. As a successful semi-professional DJ with several years of experience in the industry, perhaps Esther perceives herself to be at the level where sexism is no longer an obstacle she must overcome.

Similarly, Gina did not see her gender as a problem, particularly in relation to experiences of sexual harassment:

I'm just this different gender for people and I look so different... I think most people just don't wanna fuck with me. I know that so many women experience lots of harassment or being sexualised constantly and I can actually say that has not been my experience at all. Discrimination [I've] also not [experienced]... there are definitely female DJs who get booked because the promoter wants to fuck them or they'll say 'I'll pay you in the hotel room' or 'why don't we go for dinner?' On the other hand, nobody asks me to come to the hotel room to go and pick up a payment... I'm just the wrong gender so I've really bypassed all of that... I remember doing a gig in [city] and the night before there'd been an incident with a female DJ, when some guys came up and they touched her inappropriately. I don't have that experience; people haven't done that [to me]. (Gina)

As a queer, androgenous woman, Gina described herself as a “different gender”. She used her gender presentation to explain why she does not experience harassment.

Here, there is a sense that Gina almost benefits from adopting more masculine characteristics. By failing to conform to traditional notions of femininity, she may be perceived by others as ‘male’. Consequently, Gina is more likely to experience the scene as a man would, reducing the likelihood of her encountering gendered behaviour, such as harassment. From this perspective, Gina’s gender is not an issue to her because she did not adhere to it to begin with.

Much of the literature has depicted club culture as inherently hostile to women (see Boustien, 2016; Gadir, 2016; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Katz, 2006). Only a small body of research portrays women as free from any kind of gender discrimination. Writing on Danish female DJs, Sulcas (2012) posited that participants did not feel constrained by their gender. Like Esther and Gina, they were unable to recall any gender-based barriers. Any obstacles they did encounter they attributed to who they associated with, resonating Esther’s sentiments about the importance of networking and communication skills.

4.2.6 Theme 6: Representation

This theme addresses the way in which female DJs are portrayed within the scene, as well as the ways in which they choose to represent themselves and others. Some scholars have argued that the way in which women are represented in popular culture has become increasingly sexualised (Bridge, 2021; Darwin & Miller, 2021; Glantz, 2013), a result of patriarchal norms and stereotypes about who women are and what they can be (Velov & Kolev, 2021). Within the music industry, these representations are disseminated by male dominated music corporations. Women musicians are expected to be attractive and are marketed in a sexualised way, regardless of their musical ability (Bridge, 2021). Indeed, Hancock (2017) emphasised the importance of representation in the digital age, whereby female DJs are often portrayed in a hyper-sexualised manner. Feminists have speculated about the social and political consequences of this, particularly for women who capitalise on their bodies (see Douglas, 2010; McRobbie, 2009, Oppliger, 2008). The female body is labelled as a “performance site” (McCarthy, 2006, p. 71) by feminist scholar McCarthy (2006), through which male dominance is “subverted” (McCarthy, 2006, p. 71). The impacts of this are dependent on ownership. In other words, can women be the subject of their own desires or are they always represented as the object of someone else’s (i.e. male desire) (Glantz, 2013)? Equally, can women exploit their bodies as part of their own feminist agenda to disrupt norms surrounding gender identity and expression, or do systemic beliefs about gender work to thwart this (Glantz, 2013)? There are two sides to this debate. Radical libertarian feminists (e.g. Duggan & Hunter, 2006; Rubin, 1989) defend the sexualised representations of women, believing it to be a form of empowerment, sexual freedom, and self-expression (Glantz, 2013; Tong & Botts, 2024). This stance aligns with third wave feminism’s focus on empowerment

and body positivity, which manifests as reclaiming agency over one's body, sexuality, and self-image (Ianello, 2010; Mohajan, 2022). Conversely, radical culturalist feminists (e.g. Dworkin, 1981; MacKinnon, 1989) oppose the sexualisation of women, arguing that these representations validate male domination and the patriarchy's control and objectification of women (Bretthauer et al., 2007; Tong & Bots, 2024). Evidently, it is not only the quantity of representation that matters but the type and quality of representation too (Hancock, 2019).

Working within the context of female DJs in EDM, Farrugia (2012) proposed that the ways in which female DJs choose to represent themselves fall into three categories: 'sex kitten', 't-shirt DJ', or 'dyke' (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1). Within the current study, most participants could be described as 't-shirt DJs'. They strongly believed that female DJs should be judged based on their skills, not their sexuality, and dressed in accordance with this stance (see Section 4.2.6.1 below). Participants' membership to this category was cemented by the fact that they found 'sex kittens' problematic, criticising those who present themselves in this way (see Section 4.2.6.2). Perhaps owing to this general distain for 'sex kittens', only one participant spoke of dressing in a way that emphasised their femininity. *Representation* encompasses three sub-themes: *appearance*, *disapproval of hyper-feminine DJs*, and *tokenism*.

4.2.6.1 Appearance.

Appearance was a recurrent theme, identified in 11 accounts. Participants discussed the significance of their own image and that of other female DJs, aware that their appearance often took precedence over their capacity as a DJ. This is best exemplified by Victoria, 28-year-old DJ from Latvia:

“I think there is some kind of stereotype that if you want to become a popular female DJ, you should look sexy, you should be all fashion[able] and I hate it because I think it's not what this is about... we should just concentrate on what you are actually playing, not how you look.” (Victoria)

Here, Victoria specifically referred to female DJs, implying male bodies are not policed to the same extent. Her comments foreground the struggle women face to be judged on their ability alone, something the literature has frequently called attention to (see Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Puwar, 2004; Rowley, 2006). The phrase “you should look sexy” alludes to the pressure women feel to dress in a hyper-feminised way, particularly if they wish to succeed in the industry, speaking to the hyper-sexualisation of club culture (Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). Here, Victoria’s account emphasises the fetishisation of female DJs according to heteronormative ideas, in that their gendered sexuality is what makes them entertaining, as noted by Hancock (2020).

Evidently, appearance has a significant influence over the careers of female DJs (Rowley, 2009). Consequently, some interviewees made a conscious decision to foreground their physical appearance. This is exemplified by Esther, who took pride in her appearance, describing the process of getting ready as the most enjoyable aspect of being a female DJ. In contrast, others, such as Gina, felt that doing so would undermine their musical ability, instead choosing not to conform to gender stereotypical modes of dress:

“[The thing I enjoy most about being a female DJ is] the fact that I can dress in anything, I can dress how I want to for the event, and I can do my hair.”
(Esther)

In the extract below, Gina alluded to the choice female DJs must make over how they wish to portray themselves, namely in terms of physical attractiveness or musical skill (Farrugia, 2012; Rowley, 2009):

I think it was easier for me [to succeed] because I don't look so gender normative, so people had to like me for my talent rather than my tits... I'm sure I would've got a lot more bookings and gone a lot further a lot quicker with great tits... I don't think it would've served me in the long run because then you just don't get taken seriously... 'cause you're just too beautiful to be talented. (Gina)

Gina's account is almost contradictory. She believes that those who market themselves in terms of appearance have an advantage yet admits that navigating the industry was "easier" for her as she does not adhere to heterosexist standards of femininity. Evidently, women can employ different gender presentations (i.e. androgenous/hyper-feminine) in order to further their career. This builds on ethnographic work by Farrugia (2012), who observed that visibly queer women are more likely to be welcomed within the scene as men do not perceive them to have unfairly benefitted from their appearance in the way more traditionally 'feminine' DJs might.

Further, Gina's suggestion that some women "don't get taken seriously" implies that those who market themselves sexually become novelties or gimmicks with no longevity in the industry. This speaks to the belief that female DJs are only considered credible if their sexuality plays no part in their career advancement (Hancock, 2020). Here, parallels can be drawn between Gina's account and much of the literature on female DJs. In her mixed-methods ethnography, Hancock (2020) differentiated between 'tokens' and 'gimmicks'. She defined a 'token' as a woman who is perceived to be a good DJ, despite her gender. In contrast, a woman is described as a 'gimmick' when she is perceived to be attractive yet incapable of

DJing. However, Hancock (2020) went on to suggest that attractive women are likely to be judged as ‘gimmicks’ regardless of their technical ability, assumed to secure gigs based on appearance alone. Indeed, Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) and Farrugia (2012) asserted that those selling themselves in terms of physical attractiveness or desirability may receive more bookings as the opportunity for promoters to market these women in a sexualised way means they are more profitable (Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). In contrast, people “had to like” Gina “for [her] talent rather than [her] tits”. As she does not “look so gender normative” she is not considered conventionally attractive in the eyes of straight male promoters, so cannot be marketed for her sexuality. This indicates that the appearance of female DJs is policed both in terms of attractiveness according to stereotypical notions of femininity and heteronormative ideals. Indeed, Hancock (2020) remarked that the control women exert over their representation in terms of appearance also extends to gender expression.

Finally, Gina believes that some women are “too beautiful to be talented”, implying that there is an incompatibility between these two attributes - one can be attractive or a good DJ, but never both. Instead, they are in opposition, whereby desirability undermines one’s capacity as a DJ, an incongruity also detected within the literature (Gadir, 2017a; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013). For example, Farrugia (2012) observed that, in an industry where simply appearing “too feminine” (Farrugia, 2012, p. 51) can impact one’s reputation, this dichotomy between appearance and ability places additional pressure on women already struggling with their self-presentation. This may explain why some women, such as Gina, abstain from representing the female body altogether (“I don’t look so gender normative”). As Jones (1998) posited “feminist artists, then, simply must avoid any signification

of the female body (since it is always already an object)” (Jones, 1998, p. 24).

Evidently, when negotiating how to present themselves it appears that female DJs may only have the illusion of choice. Although ‘sex kittens’ may succeed in the short term, success in the long run, that is being seen as a ‘good DJ’, being taken seriously, and respected by one’s peers, is only achieved by adopting the ‘t-shirt DJ’ persona. This perhaps explains why so many participants disapproved of hyper-feminine DJs.

4.2.6.2 Disapproval of Hyper-feminine DJs.

Like Victoria and Gina, many participants agreed that talent as a DJ should be the only measure of success. Consequently, there was a dislike of women who used their sexuality to promote themselves. This is best exemplified by Gina, for whom this disapproval was a prominent theme running throughout much of her account:

I hear other DJs talking [about] these really beautiful women who did a shoot for some underwear brand, and I know these girl DJs, I remember doing a gig with them in [country], they didn't even have any fucking music, and they were like 'Gina, can you give me the music?' And no DJ wanted to help them, we were all girls, nobody liked them because they looked really beautiful and they're not really good at what they do, and most of the other girls were serious fucking DJs, so of course people don't wanna help them. I was like 'okay', I gave them, like, six CDs, they played my music at the fucking gig, which is okay, alright, they managed, fair play, looking pretty and I just I don't want any fucking part of it, it disgusts me because you're part of the problem. (Gina)

Gina’s assertion that “no DJ wanted to help” refutes the importance of community and solidarity (see Section 4.2.1). Instead, as Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013) observed, hyper-sexualised self-presentations reduce respect and acceptance amongst one’s peers. Gina’s refusal to help can be read in multiple ways. Firstly, she may be annoyed, evident in the amount of strong language present in this extract. For female DJs, track selection often takes precedence over mixing ability (O’Sullivan, 2018). Gina may have spent hours curating her set, only for other DJs to play her selections.

Now these DJs have both the looks and the tracks, without putting in the same amount of time and effort, which Gina cannot compete with.

Alternatively, Gina is arguably gatekeeping the scene. Evidence of such gatekeeping practices between women emerged in Reitsamer's (2012) ethnography of the online collective *Female: Pressure*. Here, DJs adopting sexualised self-presentations were criticised by others within the collective. Evidently, the support network that exists between women (see Abtan, 2016; Armitage, 2018; Hancock, 2017) only extends to those who adhere to certain standards. In this sense, not helping these women is one way in which "serious" DJs can show their disapproval.

Generalisations, such as "nobody liked them", imply that there is a widespread dislike of hyper-feminine DJs. This creates a divide amongst women in the scene, namely between those who market themselves according to desirability and those who market themselves according to musical skill. This resonates with Reitsamer's (2012) observation that subgroups can form within networks of female DJs. Yet, Gina helped these women, contradicting herself. Perhaps she felt a sense of obligation or duty towards them, as an established female figure within the scene, throughout the interview referring to herself as a "pioneer" and "one of the older ones". Ultimately, these women were also attempting to navigate a sexist environment, so Gina did not want to make this more difficult for them, despite not sharing their values. Here, comparisons can be made to Armitage's (2018) exploration of *Algorave*, in which she observed that the women within this scene often felt a sense of responsibility to support their younger and less experienced counterparts.

Finally, Gina claimed that those who associated with these women were “part of the problem.” Here, she may be referring to the wider issue of sexism in EDM. Gina feels that those who accept sexualised self-presentations are perpetuating this problem. This reflects research by Rowley (2009), that such self-marketing strategies are often perceived as misogynistic, contributing to the objectification of women. The confusions within Gina’s account speak to the complex nature of this issue. Writing on visual art, Pro'Sobopha (2005) acknowledged that “the politics on the re/presentation of the female body have been, and are still, polemical and a complicated subject to tackle... because the body is a contested site, a location where divergent and contesting discourses converge” (Pro'Sobopha, 2005, p. 118). Indeed, Gina was not the only participant to experience cognitive dissonance in her attitudes towards female representation, this feeling was also present in Elena’s account:

I did a party and it's kind of like this secret mission with my work [to promote] this lifestyle that doesn't involve Instagram models or you have to be a model and then you become a DJ and you become super famous... we wanted to promote a female body, we encouraged everybody to wear whatever they wanted, we were covering cameras so it's like a safe space for people to dance, or if they wanna wear a bikini or whatever they can... it was really nice, this whole concept, but not doing it [so] everybody comes dressed as a model wearing a thong and a super sexy body, no, fuck that, not that, just everybody who they are, they can be what they want and just be very free and very safe without judgement... we tried with this party to not have this body shaming culture. (Elena)

Elena’s account is paradoxical. There is a clear sense of internal conflict between her desire to further a feminist cause (“we tried with this party to not have this body shaming culture”) and her reproduction of the very attitudes she was attempting to tackle (“everybody comes dressed as a model wearing a thong and a super sexy body, no, fuck that”). Her contempt for hyper-feminine DJs is clear in that she was actively trying to discourage others from adopting this method of self-presentation (“it's kind of like this secret mission with my work [to promote] this lifestyle that

doesn't involve Instagram models”), suggesting that Elena may have internalised misogynistic beliefs about women.

Most contradictory was the way in which Elena dictated women’s appearance whilst simultaneously prompting them to “wear whatever they want.” This can be read in multiple ways. She may believe that women have autonomy over their self-presentation if it is done in a non-sexualised way. Alternatively, she may hold the opinion that only certain types of bodies, that are not considered conventionally attractive, can be provocative. Further, she may believe that women can only embrace their sexuality if it is not done so performatively (i.e. visibly performing femininity on social media versus performing femininity in the relative invisibility of a club space in which cameras are covered). Elena’s desire to control certain types of bodies may stem from insecurities over her own appearance. She may be less confident in the presence of stereotypically attractive women as she feels as though she cannot compete with them.

Equally, Lily, a professional DJ from China in her twenties, also voiced her disapproval of hyper-feminine DJs:

“[T]he general population, they don't really understand electronic music yet so that gives some horrible DJs opportunities... I'm talking about those girls, they have huge boobs, and they don't even DJ they just pretend to be DJing and they [play] horrible music, and for some reason a lot of people like that and they get famous and that just really fucking pissed me off.” (Lily)

4.2.6.3 Tokenism.

Of the 23 participants, six described instances which alluded to the concept of tokenism. Tokenism refers to practices which appear to benefit minorities to give the

impression of equality but are, in fact, only superficial efforts (Elliot-Sheridan, 2020). Although participants did not explicitly describe their encounters as tokenistic, it was clear that their gender was salient, influencing their experiences within the scene. This is captured within Kathy's account:

I know sometimes that these booking agents are trying to book me because I'm a female DJ. In the [Chinese] scene, a lot of the female DJs have started to advocate for equality in the line-up[s] and a lot of the clubs started to book more female DJs, but because they are female not because they are a good DJ. So, I know that sometimes they approach me saying 'oh, can I book you because we need to meet this, like, gender quota?' It's like 'okay, sure'... it's not discrimination but my gender is highlighted and that is more of a reason to get booked than my music or my skills as a DJ. (Kathy)

For Kathy, a downside to promoting equality is that it is difficult for her to gauge which gig offers are legitimate, and which are simply promoters 'jumping on the bandwagon'. This develops Hancock's (2020) observation that improving the visibility of women has consequences in terms of increasingly tokenistic representations of female DJs. Doubting the basis on which she is booked, Kathy does not see the opportunities she is given as genuine attempts to achieve equality. Instead, she perceives herself as a marketing tool, booked for the benefit of promoters attempting to improve their image. From this perspective, it appears that Kathy often struggles to secure gigs which are not associated with her being a novelty. This substantiates claims made by female DJs interviewed by Gadir (2017b). They often felt that they were booked because they were women, alluding to the way in which female DJs are frequently defined by their gender (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2016). Extending from this, Kimmel (2017) posited that tokens are "hyper-visible as members of their category but they are completely invisible as individuals" (Kimmel, 2017, p. 198). From this perspective, Kathy is only booked because she fits into the category of 'female DJ'. There is a sense that promoters do not approach her, or any other woman, specifically. Rather, they simply

wish to book *any* female DJ.

Instead of viewing it as negative, some participants embraced their token status, benefitting from being the only woman in a male space, as captured in Gina's account:

[F]or me living in India, I've [not got an Indian passport] so I can travel just like this [clicks fingers], so on most of the line-ups internationally I was the only DJ from India, so it was also quite fascinating for people, they're like 'okay, there's this Indian... person', and Gina who they don't know [is] male or female, 'cause even by looking at me a lot of people mistake my gender... it's interesting for people because it's like a DJ from India, so that also gave me a bit of an advantage that I was the only Indian artist and a woman... I was one of the few female DJs. (Gina)

Gina's race and gender renders her doubly visible. Minorities experience an enhanced sense of visibility, in which their race and gender become salient (Kanter, 1977), resulting in tokenistic bookings. Gina described herself as "fascinating" and "interesting" to people. Here, there is a sense that minorities are perceived as novelties within the scene as they are unusual and unfamiliar, piquing people's curiosity. Evidently, exploiting tokenistic representations leads to heightened visibility, attention and, in turn, increased gig and media opportunities. This builds on findings by Bloustien (2016) that, for many young female DJs, their gender played a pivotal part in their early success. This confirms what Gavanoas and Reitsamer (2013) termed the "ambivalent advantages" (Gavanoas & Reitsamer, 2013, p. 62) of tokenism. For example, the way in which tokenism conflictingly increases the representation of women in EDM, albeit somewhat problematically, as alluded to by Kathy.

4.2.7 Theme 7: *Finding space*

This theme addresses the difficulties participants faced in trying to carve out a space for themselves within the male dominated EDM scene. *Finding space* is divided in two sub-themes: *barriers to accessing the scene* and *sense of belonging*.

4.2.7.1 Barriers to Accessing the Scene.

For 10 participants, initially accessing the EDM scene proved challenging. Most participants identified external factors as major obstacles, exemplified in the extract below. These included a shortage of venues, lack of accessible knowledge about EDM/DJing, and financial constraints:

“I can't think of any overt examples for you, but just the way the scene is... lots of men are in positions of power, they run the record labels, the promoters are also men, and they give bookings to their mates who are men... it's just a lot of groups of men, friendship groups that sort out their mates, so it's always felt very closed for me.” (Danielle)

The examples in Danielle’s account are not “overt” indicating that many of the barriers to accessing the scene are deeply entrenched within it and thus difficult to identify. Danielle justified this, stating that it is “just the way the scene is.”

Evidently, these barriers have become accepted as a natural part of EDM, implying that they are structural and difficult to change. Danielle described the scene as being composed of “lots of men” that are “in positions of power.” For her, this hierarchy, in which men are situated at the top, acts as a barrier as it allows them to control who has access to opportunities. This reading is grounded in the concept of homophily preferences. This theory states that individuals gravitate towards working with others with whom they share similar characteristics (Ertug et al., 2022; McPherson et al.,

2001). These hierarchies alluded to by Danielle build on work by McRobbie (1988) and Farrugia and Swiss (2008). They remarked that women rarely hold powerful positions within EDM, with many executive and managerial roles, such as club owners and label bosses, dominated by an ‘all-boys club’ (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; McRobbie, 1988). This is supported by more recent data from an AFEM (2021) survey into the attitudes of EDM industry professionals towards issues of diversity and inclusion. It was reported that, despite having a higher level of education than men, women were three times less likely to progress to executive level positions. Instead, women and non-binary individuals were more likely to be “stuck” (AFEM, 2021, p. 3) in junior roles, unable to secure a promotion (AFEM, 2021). More broadly, a report investigating the representation of women employed by UK music industry trade bodies found that, whilst 52% of women were board members, only 45% were CEOs and even less were chairs (27%) (Women In CTRL, 2024). Crucially, women from the global majority were severely underrepresented, with only 16% in board member positions (Women In CTRL, 2024).

Danielle further outlined how the scene is dominated by “friendship groups that sort out their mates”, resonating with the informal, male dominated networks that are well documented within the literature (see Bloustien, 2016; Farrugia, 2004a; Gadir, 2017b; Gavanis & Reitsamer, 2016). Membership to these networks is crucial if one wishes to become actively involved in the scene. Accessing opportunities in EDM often depends on who you know. The informal conversations that take place within these networks are vital for sustaining the EDM scene, with information regarding the latest releases, gigs, and local scene knowledge passed word-of-mouth between individuals within these networks (Farrugia, 2004a; 2004b). Being ‘in the know’ is essential in EDM, where power is displayed through the accumulation of

‘insider knowledge’ (Poschardt, 1998; Thornton, 1995). A DJ’s success is often dependent on being at the centre of a well-connected informal network (Farrugia, 2004b; 2012; Wang & Horvát, 2019). Indeed, technical ability or skill as a selector can often be overlooked by promoters and booking agents in favour of friendship, loyalty, or prior agreements (Gadir, 2017b).

This notion of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in EDM is paradoxical given its supposed “inclusive egalitarianism” (Martin, 1999, p. 9), founded on the basis of PLUR (peace, love, unity, respect). This alludes to the concept of ‘othering’. Within the EDM scene, women DJs are perceived as ‘other’, incapable of fitting in. According to Larsen (2017), the process of ‘othering’ “denies the other the characteristics that define the same” (Larsen, 2017, p. 404). In Danielle’s case, this includes access to informal networks and opportunities. Indeed, multiple interviews with female DJs have reported that women find it difficult to access these networks, or are excluded all together, on account of their gender (Abtan, 2016; Farrugia, 2012; Gadir 2017b; O’Sullivan, 2018). *All* the women interviewed by Reitsamer (2011) described how they were overlooked by informal networks, pointing to their discriminatory nature. This is also made apparent by Danielle’s use of the word “closed”, alluding to their exclusivity and impenetrable borders that shut out women. Consequently, in being shunned from these networks women are placed at a disadvantage within the scene.

An alternative reading that is less popular within the literature is that these informal, male dominated networks are not necessarily discriminatory on the basis of gender. Hutton (2006) observed that acceptance within EDM is often dependent on one’s involvement with the powerful cliques that run the scene. These cliques are close knit, and may be unwilling to welcome *any* newcomers, regardless of gender.

Indeed, Danielle’s use of the words “friendship” and “mates” emphasises the intimate bond that exists between members. Katz (2006) also alluded to this, suggesting that informal networks may not be deliberately exclusive, but they maintain the marginalisation of women who may be uncomfortable being alone in a large group of men. As Danielle admitted, these networks have “felt” closed to her, as opposed to actually *being* closed. Consequently, these networks may not, by definition, be inaccessible. Yet, Danielle may simply get the impression that they are because there are no other women visible within them. However, it is likely that gender is the driving force in determining who is allowed to access these networks, given the abundance of literature pointing to this reading (see Farrugia, 2012; Gadir 2017b; O’Sullivan, 2018; Reitsamer, 2011).

The existence of informal networks, and the barriers which they posed to accessing the scene, was also illustrated by Elena:

[W]ith men promoters I feel that I'm [not] in the club of these artists because I'm not a guy, and if I [was] a guy I think I would have access to these things because the guys they are most dominant in the scene... if I [was] a guy it would be easier to be part of this men's club, getting gigs... but [they] don't have so much connection with female artists, they don't communicate with them, they don't do it consciously but [if] you are sensitive [to] the issue you can kind of notice. (Elena)

In contrast, for some participants, such as Anna, the barriers to accessing the EDM scene were internal:

[T]here are lots of women now. The last few years have changed it a lot... a very big part of it is [that] it just occurs to them that they can do that... when I was in [country in Central Europe], it just didn't occur to me I could play in a club... [i]t's not like I thought I wouldn't be good enough or they wouldn't want me there, it just didn't occur to me this is an option I can pursue... it was the main obstacle, now this obstacle doesn't exist in people's minds. (Anna)

Anna revealed that it “just didn’t occur” to her that she could play in a club, as though it was something she never thought possible. Anna used the phrase “play in a

club” rather than “DJ”, implying that she was DJing at the time, but did not realise that it could be more than a hobby. There are several possible explanations as to why Anna did not consider DJing as a career choice. Firstly, it speaks to the perceived impossibility of being a female DJ. DJing is perceived as a masculine occupation (Bloustien, 2016; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Katz, 2006), making it appear out of reach to Anna, even if she did not consider herself to be less skilled than men (“it’s not like I thought I wouldn’t be good enough”). Further, it may not have occurred to Anna that she could DJ as she did not see anyone else like her behind the decks. This emphasises the importance same-gender role models, as discussed in Section 4.2.2.2. Alternatively, Anna may not have thought DJing possible due to the lack of publicly available knowledge about EDM. Despite the internet, there are few ways to learn about DJing and one’s local scene (Farrugia, 2012), as elucidated by Elena:

“[M]y mission was to understand how can you become a DJ, so I was Googling, but [it was] not really publicly available information... if you want to become a DJ how do you do that? It's a bit unknown.” (Elena)

As previously discussed, men learn from each other, distributing technical skills and local scene knowledge within informal male dominated networks, information that they are often unwilling to share with women (Farrugia, 2012). Consequently, many women often rely on their male partners or friends to access the scene (Farrugia, 2012; Kenny, 2022; O’Sullivan, 2018; Rowley, 2009). If women do not have these contacts, DJing may appear inaccessible to them.

4.2.7.2 Sense of Belonging.

A sense of belonging to one’s scene was discussed across 14 accounts, albeit to varying degrees. Seven participants struggled to fit in, illustrated by Yasmin, a 28-

year-old DJ from the Philippines, who had been DJing for three years at the time of the interview:

[S]ometimes I feel alienated 'cause there were gigs, especially when I was starting out, [where] I was the only girl in the line-up, or I was just the only girl in the room... it got better, especially when there were more queer and female DJs, but at first, I really felt alone and alienated... I feel like there was no one who can relate to me, or there's no one that I was really comfortable talking to 'cause most of them were really friendly, but it's still different seeing somebody like you in the room and just talking to them without feeling insecure. (Yasmin)

In this extract, Yasmin's sense of belonging is linked to her gender and the extent to which she felt like a minority ("I feel alienated 'cause I was the only girl in the line-up"). Although she had been accepted within the scene, describing others as "friendly", there is a sense that Yasmin does not feel fully integrated due to her identity. Evidently, belonging goes beyond being welcomed. For Yasmin, it is about feeling understood ("there was no one who can relate to me") and represented ("it's still different seeing somebody like you in the room") within that space. She claimed that "it got better" yet spoke about her isolation in the present tense ("I feel alienated"), implying that the situation has not improved entirely. Consequently, there is a sense that Yasmin will always feel as though she is on the periphery, never fully belonging within the scene whilst it is male dominated. This reading challenges the literature. The female DJs interviewed by Hutton (2006) asserted that a sense of belonging within EDM arises from being involved in one of the many cliques that exist within EDM. Indeed, many women created their own women-centric collectives as a means of establishing a sense of belonging within the scene (see Section 4.2.2.3). Although Yasmin is part of a group, she feels as though she does not belong. Evidently, gender is an important factor influencing the extent of belonging. This sense of not fully belonging was also shared by Olivia:

[I]t helped me to become more feminist or aware of that kind of patriarchy system, existing [in the scene], because all the club owners were males, all the programme managers, basically the whole staff, so I sometimes feel excluded somehow... if there's some kind of night where there are male DJs playing then I'm like 'I don't belong here'... it's like somehow you feel like all the jokes are different and you're standing there and someone [says] 'oh, you have a nice skirt', you're different in a way, so that kind of feeling [of] not belonging was something that I didn't like. (Olivia)

Like Yasmin, Olivia's sense of not belonging stemmed from being the only woman in a male dominated space. This feeling of being 'out of place' is arguably exacerbated by the behaviour of men in the scene that works to emphasise the fact that she is not 'one of them'. The exclusionary nature of such in-jokes was captured in Cohen's (1997) study of Liverpool's music scene. She described the conversations that took place between men as "insider-ish" (Cohen, 1997, p. 22), consisting of misogynistic jokes, nicknames, and technical jargon which rendered women out of place. The existence of such exclusionary language extends Maffesoli's (1996) concept of neo-tribes. Within these small communities, individuals must adopt certain codes and customs to gain membership. The reproduction of certain masculine behaviours, such as sexist jokes, creates a masculine culture that "can make women feel, without being told so in so many words, 'you are out of place here'" (Cockburn, 1992, p. 65). Evidently, many women perceive EDM to be an 'all-boys club' to which they can never truly belong.

Yet not all participants shared this sense of not belonging. Seven interviewees felt that they had found their place within the scene, as alluded to by Gina:

I feel so blessed, and I feel so loved, and I feel so seen, and I feel so felt... people tell me all the time how inspiring I am as a person... so it goes beyond the music... it's been very overwhelming... it's been healing, I think, for myself, for someone who's always been a misfit to actually be really loved for being a misfit and not fitting in, and to now have people say how inspiring that is. (Gina)

In contrast to Yasmin and Oliva, not belonging held positive connotations for Gina. Paradoxically, she felt accepted within the scene despite, or perhaps because of, not fitting in. This speaks to what Martin (1999) dubbed the “inclusive egalitarianism” (Martin, 1999, p. 85) of rave, which is often celebratory of difference. There is a sense that Gina does not need to belong to a particular community, instead content with carving out her own space within the scene. This resonates with interview data by Hutton (2006), in which female DJs emphasised the need to be authentic, staying true to themselves and their unique playing style, rather than moulding themselves to fit in with the ‘all-boys club’.

Alternatively, the sense of “not fitting in” Gina described may not refer to her position within the EDM scene, but instead to feeling out of place within society at large. EDM’s roots lie in the predominantly queer, Black genres of disco and Chicago house (Brewster & Broughton, 2006; Jaguar, 2020). Martin (1999) claimed that this diverse lineage allows marginalised individuals, such as women, the LGBT+ community, and POC to feel accepted within the scene. Perhaps Gina’s minority status as a queer woman of colour renders her out of place within wider society, but not in EDM due to its supposedly inclusive nature.

4.2.8 Theme 8: Taking up space

An original finding within this research was the concept of taking up space and its political implications, for both female DJs personally and the scene as a whole. This theme captures the ways in which many participants actively challenged the marginalisation of women in EDM. Many interviewees identified as feminists, perceiving their status as a woman in a male dominated occupation as inherently political. As Street (2003) stated “music has long been a site of resistance” (Street, 2003, p. 120). Consequently, many participants sought to use their position of power

to address the scene's structural sexism and uplift other women. *Taking up space* encompasses three sub-themes: *DJing as empowering*, *women as initiators of change*, and *awareness of political issues*.

4.2.8.1 DJing as Empowering.

Despite the oppression they faced, many women perceived their minority status as an opportunity to carve out their own space within the androcentric EDM scene, as illustrated by Elena:

“[A]s a feminist, for me to be in a booth alone as a woman is like I'm claiming my space, not only for me but also for other women, but also for me because I have self-confidence issues, even though I'm shy, even though I'm scared, I'm going to play music for you. It's like gaining your superpowers, it's quite healing.” (Elena)

Elena's use of the phrase “it's like gaining your superpowers” alludes to the liberating and transformative powers of DJing. The act of DJing not only empowers Elena, contributing to her self-development and growth, but through DJing Elena empower others (“I'm claiming my space, not only for me but also for other women”). There is a sense that when Elena takes to the stage she does so on behalf of all women, developing Puwar's (2004) concept of the ‘burden of representation.’ This is often interpreted as negative, in that the mistakes of one woman can come to reflect the ability of all women, yet Elena sees the ability to represent one's gender as positive. Through being visible she is helping other women to rise up, acting as a role model to others who may not have the means to carve out their own space. Here, she demonstrates that DJing is possible and gives others the strength and confidence to follow suit. Bayton (1993) acknowledged that women's choice to pursue music is

often motivated by political interests, such as the fight for equality. Indeed, many scholars have recognised music's power for positive transformation, creating more progressive and inclusive communities and selves through political activism (Shank, 2014; Street, 2012; Waters, 2016). For example, Daulay et al. (2024) revealed how women in punk used fashion, music, and political activism to challenge sexism and traditional gender norms as well as advocate for broader societal change and gender equality.

The concept of space-claiming is discussed at length by Björck (2011). To claim space, she argued, involves “being seen and being heard in the strongest sense of the phrase” (Björck, 2011, p. 57). Consequently, space-claiming is associated with agency and empowerment, in which women must exhibit strength and confidence (Björck, 2011). Elena alluded to this in her desire to claim her space, despite her shyness and self-confidence issues, which she described as being like “gaining your superpowers.” For Elena, she is claiming space by being “in a booth alone as a woman”. However, reducing the act of space-claiming to merely being visible onstage simplifies the process (Björck, 2011). Although one may be visible, the process of space-claiming is never complete. Rather, space must be constantly reclaimed, involving a constant battle between both empowerment and disempowerment. As a minority, visibility is empowering, as alluded to by Elena (“it's like gaining your superpowers, it's quite healing”). Yet, through being visible she is positioning herself as an object of the male gaze, allowing herself to become objectified and, ultimately, disempowered. In this way, one can see how empowerment through space-claiming is not necessarily guaranteed (Björck, 2011).

The feeling of empowerment through DJing was further documented by Connie, a DJ in her twenties from South Korea:

“DJing is a male dominant industry but I take it as [an] advantage that I could express [myself] more powerfully as a minority... it's sad that females are minorities, but it also gives me power that I can expend more... use your disadvantage as an advantage.” (Connie)

Here, Connie’s sense of empowerment arises from the feeling that, as a successful DJ, she has greater power in society, despite being a woman. Although she may have less authority than her male counterparts in the EDM scene, as a professional DJ she is visible in society. Consequently, she may have a larger platform from which to further feminist causes than other women who do not share her position. From this perspective, DJing is an act of resistance against her minority status, disrupting societal norms about traditional roles for women.

4.2.8.2 Women as Initiators of Change.

Several women believed the onus was on them, and other women in the scene, to challenge EDM’s inherent sexism, as elucidated by Elena:

[F]or starters you have to have a woman or somebody from the [LGBT+] community who will be sensitised towards the issue [and] see all the men on the line-ups of a festival... this is something that I notice also in Serbia, there is a super big male dominance of selectors or people who organise line-ups, therefore there's not gonna be too many female performers or women performers, and not to mention [the LGBT+] community... stereotypically men are not sensitive [to] these issues. (Elena)

For Elena, it is not the responsibility of the whole scene to bring about social change, women alone must act as a catalyst for gender equality. She believed that minorities have a greater awareness of issues surrounding diversity and inclusion and are therefore best suited to address them. Elena embraced her role as an activist (“I want with my act to change [the male dominance]”), describing it as a “community service mission”. Yet, others, such as Isabelle, were more reluctant:

[T]here's been this period in the last few years where I feel like all female DJs are being called to be activists and we're being demanded to take on roles politically that maybe don't suit us, that maybe we don't feel comfortable taking on... there seems to be some overdone expectations around women being in those activism roles, and I find that to be really challenging 'cause I've been called into those roles so many times and even though I do identify as being a leader, I don't necessarily believe that it means I have to solve everyone's problems. (Isabelle)

Isabelle rejected the political implications of her role, confirming Vaugeois' (2007) assertion that musicians often see politics as unrelated to, and independent from, music. There is a sense that the term 'female DJ' has become synonymous with that of 'activist', creating the assumption that women will inevitably want to challenge their under-representation. This places a disruptive burden of responsibility on women who already face the pressure of marginalisation. Indeed, Isabelle claimed that many women do not feel "comfortable" assuming such roles. This reflects Vaugeois' (2007) assertion that musicians often become involved in political affairs which they are inadequately equipped to deal with. Isabelle's refusal to step into an activist role is almost contradictory given the work she has done to platform women within her local scene:

"[W]e created an organisation which was to sort of bring up and strengthen female DJs, specifically queer [DJs]... we've always been trying to make space, people know me as that, people respect me as a pioneer." (Isabelle)

Rather than refusing to help other women, Isabelle may be rejecting the political connotations of this role. There is a common misconception that feminist activists are angry misandrists (Farrugia, 2012), consequently she may distance herself from this label so as not to alienate male promoters and club owners. This expands Farrugia's (2012) case study of the *Sister SF* collective, in which she reported that members actively rejected the 'feminist' label, despite establishing the collective

after experiencing gender-based oppression, for fear of being perceived as anti-male. Alternatively, Isabelle may identify as a feminist but refuse to assume the role of ‘activist’. Although not based on female DJs, this has some resonance with Cortese’s (2015) work on LGBT+ organisations. Here, some members refused to adopt the ‘activist’ label as, for them, it held negative connotations of shouting protestors, antagonism, and radical behaviour. Conversely, Isabelle may not perceive what she is doing in her organisation to be activism, so does not feel comfortable defining herself in such terms. Here, parallels can be drawn to Blackstone’s (2007) exploration of college anti-rape activism, in which students refuted any political connotations as they did not believe their work to be serious enough to be considered ‘activism’.

Finally, Isabelle’s rejection of the political implications of her role may be indicative of advocacy fatigue. Advocacy fatigue can be defined as the emotional, mental, and physical burden that arises from continually fighting (and being exposed to) systemic inequalities (Basas, 2015; Zevon, 2024). This is best exemplified by Eddo-Lodge (2020) who discussed the emotional exhaustion she experienced from educating White people about racism, as they consistently denied its existence and could not (or would not) understand that not everyone experiences the world the way they do. Given that Isabelle has “always been trying to make space” for female DJs within the scene and has “been called into [activism] roles so many times” she may be experiencing burnout and no longer has the energy to engage in activism work.

4.2.8.3 Awareness of Political Issues.

The marginalisation experienced by participants allowed them to develop a greater awareness and understanding of broader political issues, as evidenced by Olivia:

[I]t really helps me to be aware of [the] position of women. I also work as a graphic designer but somehow [in] design and art there are more females, at least in Serbia, so I didn't find [that] the patriarchy is really strong because I was surrounded mainly with women, but in DJing it's different because they were all men, and with that kind of awakening through texts like 'there are just 1% of women in festivals', it just helped me to realise 'okay, this world is not equal' and then I start comparing to Serbia and our clubbing scene and then I was like 'okay, I don't agree with this', I'm [a] feminist'... it helped me [to be] aware [of] that inequality and to do some kind of activism as well, because I wasn't doing that before, but this made me have my stand and say something. (Olivia)

Witnessing gender inequality within EDM allowed Olivia to recognise that “this world is not equal.” Here the EDM scene can be seen as reflective of society at large, in that the structural sexism she experienced within the scene is reflective of the gender-based oppression that occurs outside of it. Olivia described this realisation as an “awakening”, indicating that she was less aware of such issues as a graphic designer, perhaps due to the increased female presence in that industry. As a result, Olivia may have experienced less gender-based oppression than in more masculine spaces. Consequently, Olivia did not identify as a feminist until she experienced sexism herself. Here, it may be the case that individuals who are not affected by an issue do not feel the need to challenge it until they experience it first-hand. This may be why Elena believed that women must be the initiators of change within the scene as men are “not sensitive with these issues” (see Section 4.2.8.2). To Olivia, the political implications of her marginalised position were difficult to ignore (I don't agree with this', I'm [a] feminist'... it helped me [to be] aware [of] that inequality and to do some kind of activism as well”). There is a sense of inevitability to her becoming a feminist activist, in contrast to Isabelle, who saw assuming a political stance as a choice (see Section 4.2.8.2).

Olivia’s experience of becoming politicised through her position as a female DJ was also shared by Kathy:

“I think it helps me to be okay with who I am as a person and be proud of what I like and my style and build confidence as a DJ and as a person, and [it] helps me to be more verbal about my stance, not just musical but sometimes political.” (Kathy)

Although there is a small body of literature documenting the role of politics and activism within the music industry generally (see Daulay et al., 2024; Street, 2003; Vaugeois, 2007), it has yet to be explored within the context of EDM, making these insights entirely novel.

4.2.9 Theme 9: Structural barriers

This theme addresses the barriers engrained within the EDM scene that help to maintain its inequalities and systematically disadvantage women. *Structural barriers* is divided into two sub-themes: *hierarchies* and *gatekeeping*.

4.2.9.1 Hierarchies.

Several participants, such as Isabelle, spoke of hierarchies, based on gender, that exist within EDM:

I think [there is greater gender inequality in the breakbeat scene] because at the top of that community is a bunch of dudes that I would call old dads, and when you look at house music or techno, at the very top of that triangle you have Black, trans, like, there's all these different types of leaders and archetypes... once it funnels up there you go 'okay', and we're taking our cues from a lot of those people, but in the breakbeat community, when I think of, like, classic breakbeats I think of [male breakbeat DJ] and a tonne of the guys from the UK and they're all like fifty year old White dads. (Isabelle)

There is a sense of multiple hierarchies existing within EDM. Here, Isabelle described house and techno as having “different types of leaders and archetypes”, suggestive of the diversity of these scenes. Indeed, when it first emerged in Chicago in the 1980s, house was a predominantly gay, Black genre (Rowley, 2009). Isabelle claimed that DJs often emulate those at the top of the hierarchy, alluding to the way

in which hierarchies are perpetuated and maintained. Consequently, if women only see “old dads” at the top, it may deter them from pursuing a career in EDM as they have few same-gender role models from which to take their cues (see Section 4.2.2.2).

Isabelle’s narration challenges Martin’s (1999) description of how such hierarchies are structured. Here, Martin (1999) claimed that hierarchies within EDM are not established in terms of gender or ethnicity, but on the level of one’s involvement within the scene. Yet, Isabelle stressed that breakbeat is dominated by “White dads”. This implies that, in this scene at least, gender and race determine an individual’s position within the hierarchy of rave.

Isabelle’s comments chime with Bocart et al.’s (2018) observation that a ‘glass ceiling’ exists within the art industry, another male dominated creative field, that prevents women’s advancement to the higher end of the market. This ‘glass ceiling’ can also be observed in the music industry. Indeed, Gregory (2009) noted that, relative to women, men are more likely to move through the EDM ranks, illustrated by Isabelle’s remark that there is a “tonne of guys” at the top. The existence of gender-based hierarchies is confirmed by a large body of research from across musical genres (Bull & Scharff, 2021; Hansen, 2022; Milestone & Meyer, 2020) and male dominated professions (Berdahl et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2018; Stojmenovska et al., 2021). This suggests that, although some hierarchies in the industry may fluctuate, gender hierarchies tend to remain stable (Schmutz, 2009).

The presence of hierarchies in EDM was also observed by Olivia:

“[Female DJs are] there but they're not that popular compared to the male DJs and they're more playing the bars, [they're] not [playing] that much in

clubs... we had like one successful female DJ, she's like the only one that actually is on that level, that she's having respect from the other people and the other DJs.” (Olivia)

4.2.9.2 Gatekeeping.

Within most hierarchical industries, there will be individuals who act as gatekeepers. Of the 23 participants, four experienced instances of gatekeeping within the scene, in which their access to resources or opportunities was restricted or controlled by men, as illustrated by Isabelle:

[I]t was really hard back then to get people to help you, I feel like there was a very protectionist attitude especially with the older men that had been the stalwarts in the community. They had been gripping the best gigs and the best residencies and playing the best slot times at raves, and it was really hard to ask for help and get people to spend time with you, it wasn't very easy, when I decided to start producing music it was a similar story arch... asking for help was challenging because there seemed to be a lot of gatekeeping going on, people didn't want you to not succeed but they definitely didn't wanna help propel you in any way. (Isabelle)

Isabelle’s use of the past tense “back then” implies that gatekeeping may no longer be an issue for her now she has become one of the “stalwarts” of the scene herself (stating later in the interview that she is respected as a “pioneer”). From this perspective, gatekeeping only exists at the beginning of one’s career and is broken down once the DJ establishes herself within the scene.

The word “gripping” captures the intensity and strength with which men hold on to opportunities. Along with Isabelle’s use of “protectionist”, this alludes to men’s attempts to preserve the male dominance of the EDM scene, to which women are perceived as a threat. This reading is substantiated by Farrugia and Swiss (2008), who documented how the existing order in EDM is maintained through a plethora of gatekeeping practices. Isabelle’s notion that men “didn't want you to not succeed but they definitely didn't wanna help propel you” implies that the gatekeeping she

experienced was more subtle than the outright removal of opportunities. Perhaps Isabelle was offered gigs by her male counterparts, but these were not the “best”. Indeed, Isabelle recalls playing in “side rooms [where] no guy would want to take those gigs” at the beginning of her career. From this perspective, the sharing of less lucrative opportunities allows men to appear supportive, thus avoiding the label of ‘sexist’, whilst concurrently rendering it difficult for women to progress.

Layla, a DJ in her 20s from Africa, experienced similar instances of gatekeeping. At the time of her interview, she had been operating in the scene for a year, affirming that gatekeeping is most prominent at the beginning of one’s career:

“[I]t’s gatekeeping because they are the ones who have the gigs, the funds, the gear, so that’s why they act the way they do, because they know that the rest of the scene has to rely on them, and it’s just bad, there isn’t enough resources because the ones who have the resources hoard it and they are very selective with who they allow, it’s not open to everyone.” (Layla)

Layla did not use gendered language when referring to gatekeepers or those whose access they control, implying that, whilst gatekeepers are typically men, they can also be women. This builds on evidence, drawn from Reitsamer’s (2012) analysis of the *Female: Pressure* collective, of women engaging in gatekeeping practices, based on others’ physical presentation. Specifically, Reitsamer (2012) observed that those who did not conform to heteronormative ideals, such as queer or hyper-feminine women, were denied support from other members. However, it is more likely that gatekeepers will be male, given that they often occupy high status positions, such as record label bosses or club owners, which are stereotypically male dominated (Werner et al., 2020). Additionally, Layla’s use of non-gendered language indicates

that gatekeeping may be based on other factors in addition to gender, such as race and sexuality. This reading affirms accounts that gatekeeping practices are encountered by both women and racial minorities (see Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Puwar, 2004).

Further, the literature has frequently discussed gatekeeping in relation to technology, in that the values surrounding certain DJ technologies and practices are used by male gatekeepers to dictate an individual's insider/outsider status (Attias, 2011; Gavanas, 2008; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2018). This is clearly seen in the value DJs attach to older technologies, such as vinyl, which are perceived as superior. For DJs, choosing to adopt past technologies has meaning beyond functionality. Instead, it is political in the sense that technological choice is related to perceptions of (not) belonging in the scene (Foroughi et al., 2024). Foroughi et al. (2024) suggested that there is a certain level of technical mastery one must reach in order to be recognised as 'competent' by fellow DJs. From this perspective, the valuing of past technologies suggests that there is a hierarchy within EDM. In particular, the skills associated with vinyl DJing (e.g. beatmatching without visual cues) allows gatekeepers to separate DJs into those who are more authentic (because they can use past technologies) and those who are less authentic (Foroughi et al., 2024). Given that women often take advantage of recent technological developments (e.g. digital DJ software) that are perceived to 'democratise' DJing (Bloustien, 2016; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013) it follows that male gatekeepers may use discourses surrounding the value and authenticity certain technologies to distance women from the scene and label them as 'incompetent'. Yet, as the vignettes from Isabelle and Layla illustrate, many aspects of EDM can be gatekept in addition to technology,

whereby men control and limit women's access to opportunities, support, knowledge, and equipment.

4.3 Chapter summary

Study 1 identified nine themes that are important to understanding the experiences of female DJs. Some themes aligned with those previously reported in the literature, such as the importance of community (Armitage, 2018; Hancock, 2017), role models (Hinkle-Turner, 2003), collectives (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013), appearance (Farrugia, 2012), and structural barriers (Reitsamer, 2012). Six themes had not been discussed in prior work or in the context of female DJs and, as such, were deemed important to explore further in Study 2. These novel themes are outlined below:

Importance of the queer scene describes how participants' involvement in underground queer clubbing spaces played a pivotal role in their DJ career. This finding was particularly interesting as many participants did not identify as LGBT+ themselves yet felt more supported and accepted in queer-centric spaces.

Impact of DJing on wellbeing captures the wellbeing benefits and consequences of DJing on female DJs' mental and physical health. The positive impacts were derived from the act of DJing itself. Here, participants described using DJing as a coping mechanism, or to regulate their emotions and increase positive affect. By contrast, the negative impacts stemmed from events experienced within the wider DJ scene, such as negative encounters with promoters, clubbers, or other DJs.

Level of profession encapsulates how one's identity as an amateur, semi-professional, or professional DJ can impact their experiences within the scene.

Professional DJs tended to report more negative experiences, suggesting sexism and marginalisation become more severe the higher up the hierarchy one moves.

Taking up space refers to the political nature of participants' roles as female DJs. Many participants identified as feminists and saw their position within the scene as empowering, despite their marginalisation. As such, interviewees often used their platform challenge the sexism they experienced, as well as to support and uplift other women.

Normalisation encapsulates how participants downplayed or made light of negative experiences within the EDM scene. Here, many women excused or justified male harassment behaviour in order to reduce its detrimental impact on their mental health.

Finally, *culture and context* concerns the way in which social and cultural norms, as well as the country in which participants were located, shaped their experiences. Here, cultural norms impacted others' attitudes towards female DJs, as well as determining what careers were 'acceptable' for women.

These novel themes were taken forward into Study 2, a large-scale online survey, to explore these findings further and determine if they applied to a larger, diverse range of female DJs. Chapter 5 will outline the methods and analyses used in Study 2, before presenting the results of the survey, followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the previous literature.

Chapter 5: Study 2

This chapter presents the second study, a large-scale online survey. First, it describes the aims and methods used in Study 2, including details about the participants, materials, procedure, analysis, and hypotheses. It will then outline the results for each of the six main areas, identified as major themes within Study 1, that were deemed important to explore further: *being a woman in a male dominated scene, voice and visibility, wellbeing, discrimination, sexual harassment, and queer spaces*. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of the results in relation to the previous literature.

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Aims

The aim of Study 2 was to provide further evidence for the novel findings that emerged in Study 1 using a larger sample of female DJs. These novel findings were grouped into six main areas: *being a woman in a male dominated scene, voice and visibility, wellbeing, discrimination, sexual harassment, and queer spaces*. A secondary aim was to compare between participants based on demographic factors (e.g. sexuality, ethnicity, professional level) as the interview data suggested that there may be group differences (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4).

5.1.2 Participants

268 participants were recruited in an opportunistic way through my own personal networks, or by using the snowball method. Here, I contacted international DJs and collectives by email or social media to ask if they would take part in the survey and to forward it other female DJs who might be interested. Many organisations, most notably the global female DJ network, *Female: Pressure*, sent out the survey on their mailing list, allowing me to reach more international participants. 92 incomplete

responses by participants who had not filled out at least 50% of the survey were removed, leaving 176 complete responses. Participants ranged in age from 16-70 ($M=32$, $SD=9.52$). 154 (87.5%) participants identified as cisgender, 19 (10.8%) identified as transgender, and 3 preferred not to disclose.

5.1.3 Design

This study used a correlational design. The research sought to explore group differences, based on demographics, within the data to provide new insights. Here, the research can be described as quasi-experimental, as it attempted to establish relationships between certain variables without the use of randomisation. The independent variables were demographic factors (e.g. gender, sexuality, age) and career characteristics (e.g. professional level, career length, average number of gigs played a month). The dependent variables were extent of agreement with each statement or frequency with which participants had encountered a certain situation.

5.1.4 Materials

In total, there were six main areas that emerged as major themes within Study 1 that were deemed important to explore further: *being a woman in a male dominated scene, voice and visibility, wellbeing, discrimination, sexual harassment, and queer spaces*. The 27 survey items were grouped into six sections based on these themes (see Appendix F). Questioning began at a broad level, exploring female DJs' general experiences within the EDM scene (e.g. feelings about their position in the scene), and became more specific (e.g. experiences of harassment, participation in the queer scene) as the survey progressed.

Questions about being a woman in a male dominated scene encompassed participants' general experiences within EDM and access to opportunities (example statement: "the EDM scene is male dominated"). Voice and visibility concerned the

political nature of being a female DJ and the responsibilities associated with this (e.g. “I often use my platform to promote other female DJs”). Wellbeing related to the positive and negative impacts that DJing had on mental and physical health (e.g. “I know DJing can have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway”). Discrimination concerned the women’s experiences of different forms of prejudice related to identity (e.g. “I have experienced transphobia within the scene”). Sexual harassment encompassed participants’ experiences of physical and/or verbal abuse and how they dealt with it, as well as their perceptions of safety (e.g. “sexual harassment is an inevitable part of being a female DJ”). Finally, queer spaces related to participants’ experiences of playing at non-normative events or venues and how they felt within these spaces (e.g. “I prefer playing in more normative spaces compared to queer spaces”).

Participants responded to most statements using a traditional 7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree). For seven items, participants were required to use an alternative frequency-based Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, all the time). Given the survey’s global distribution, it was important for questions to be worded in a clear and unambiguous way (example statements: “I have experienced sexism within the EDM scene”; “the EDM scene is male dominated”). Equally, technical and industry-specific terms were avoided to be inclusive of amateur DJs.

The survey was not piloted. Instead, its content was discussed with my supervisory team prior to distribution to check the wording and structure of each statement. Here, the questions went through several iterations. Initially, the survey intended to explore all nine themes identified in Study 1, making it overly long.

Consequently, a decision was made to focus exclusively on the novel findings from Study 1 or those that had not been discussed in-depth within the literature. An introduction was added at the beginning of each section to help signpost participants. In the first draft, many statements contained ambiguous concepts that were difficult to define, such as the dichotomy between the ‘mainstream’ and ‘underground’ (e.g. “as a woman, I feel more supported in the queer scene than in the straight mainstream”). Participants may characterise these two scenes differently. To remove any uncertainty, yet still facilitate a comparison between queer and more normative spaces, two separate question matrixes were developed. Participants were first asked about how they felt in the EDM scene more generally, before being asked about how they felt in queer spaces. Responses for each matrix were then compared during analysis.

Initially, the wording of most statements was positive, particularly for those about wellbeing (e.g. “DJing has a positive impact on my mental health/wellbeing”). As a result, some statements were ‘reversed’ to provide variety and encourage participants to think carefully about their experiences, as well as avoid automatic responses, such as responding to all questions with ‘strongly agree’) (e.g. “DJing is more of a chore than it used to be”).

Further, some statements consisted of multiple questions, creating difficulty if the participant did not agree with all aspects of it (e.g. “DJing negatively impacts my physical health [e.g. hearing problems, back problems, insomnia]”). Consequently, these statements were separated into individual items. For this particular question, a matrix was created which allowed participants to consider each psychological health impact separately.

Several statements were too complex (e.g. “I often engage in activism activities which challenge the marginalisation of women in EDM”) and may be difficult for participants from non-academic backgrounds, or for those whom English is not their first language, to answer. Consequently, specialist language was replaced with more common phrases and questions reworded where necessary (e.g. “when I experience sexism within the scene, I am able to challenge it”).

Additionally, some statements did not fit the ‘agree/disagree’ format of the Likert scale (e.g. “I have experienced some form of harassment within the scene”). Here, a decision was made to use several different Likert scales. For example, this statement was found to be better suited to a frequency-based scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, all the time).

Within the second draft, there were several issues regarding the structure of the survey. Initially, it began with statements regarding gendered experiences (e.g. “men in the scene always have an ulterior motive”). However, it was decided that this theme was too specific for the beginning of the survey. Instead, participants should first be presented with more general statements, to allow them to adjust to the format of the questioning. Consequently, the sections were rearranged, allowing for a reflection on general experiences first, then becoming more specific as the survey progressed.

5.1.5 Procedure

The survey was distributed using *Qualtrics*. Participants were required to read information about the study before giving their informed consent to take part in the research. They were then asked basic demographic and background information about their DJ career. In the main body of the survey, participants were asked to read statements and rate the extent to which they agreed with them. The survey concluded

with a free text box, allowing participants to reflect on the content, if they wished. 23 participants responded, however this data was not analysed due to the low response rate and time constraints of this thesis. Finally, they were given the option to leave their contact details if they were happy to take part in any future research. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

5.1.6 Ethics

This study received ethical approval by the Arts, Humanities and Cultures Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 11th May 2021, ethics reference FAHC 20-061 (see Appendix A). Due to the nature of this study, some statements concerned potentially distressing experiences, such as the negative impact of DJing on wellbeing, discrimination, verbal/physical abuse, and sexual harassment. Participants were made aware within the survey introduction that they were under no obligation to answer any questions. They were able to skip statements or sections and answer ‘not applicable’ or ‘prefer not to say’. All responses were kept anonymous. If participants left their contact details, these were held securely on the institutional *OneDrive* and they were not named in any part of the research.

5.2 Analysis

A number of different analyses were used to explore the data. Firstly, descriptive statistics, represented graphically, illustrated the percentage of agreement with each statement. Following this, independent one-way ANOVAs were used to explore group differences in mean statement response based on participants’ demographic information (e.g. age, sexuality, professional level). In the case of unequal sample sizes, a Kruskal-Wallis test or comparison of means was used. Additional comparisons were made between groups of participants based on whether they

answered disagree/agree to certain statements. For this, independent *t*-tests, Mann-Whitney U tests, or comparison of means was used.

For the purpose of comparison, participants' age was grouped into three, roughly equal sized categories: 25 and under ($N=60$), 26-35 ($N=63$), and 36+ ($N=53$). Age was an important factor to explore further as this study (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4.1) highlighted how age interacts with gender to shape experience. For example, by acting as a barrier to entering the scene (see also Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2017b; Gregory, 2009).

With regard to gender, it was not possible to compare cisgender ($N=154$) and transgender ($N=19$) participants meaningfully using inferential statistics due to unequal group sizes. Consequently, descriptives were compared instead. The experiences of transgender women in the EDM scene are different to that of their cisgender counterparts (the Jaguar Foundation, 2022) as they experience additional forms of oppression. Consequently, it is important to consider their experiences separately.

Participants' sexuality was grouped into three categories: bisexual/pansexual ($N=79$), gay woman/queer ($N=34$), and heterosexual/straight ($N=53$). Here, the large proportion of queer participants may partially be a result of recruiting from my own personal networks. Insights from Study 1 and the previous literature (Farrugia, 2012) suggested that being queer may be advantageous in EDM, as this identity allows women to feel more accepted in male dominated spaces, due to the perception that they are more 'masculine' (Farrugia, 2012) (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4.3). Yet, opposing research has suggested that operating outside of what is deemed 'feminine' can carry negative consequences, such as the removal of male support (Puwar,

2004). Given these tensions, I deemed sexuality an interesting factor to explore further.

Further, it was vital to explore the impact of ethnicity as Black women face more barriers than their White counterparts in the music industry (Bain, 2019; Smith et al., 2019). Equally, the majority of literature is largely based on data from White, Western women (e.g. Farrugia, 2012; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Reitsamer, 2012), and fails to consider race in any real depth. As such, ethnicity was divided into eight categories: American Indian or Native Alaskan ($N=1$), Asian ($N=9$), Black or African American ($N=3$), Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish Origin ($N=8$), Middle Eastern or North African ($N=3$), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander ($N=2$), White ($N=137$), and other race, ethnicity, or origin ($N=12$). When asked to state their ethnicity, the latter group all identified as mixed heritage.

Similarly, participants' location was grouped according to continent: Africa ($N=6$), Asia ($N=7$), Europe ($N=37$), North America ($N=110$), Oceania ($N=13$), and South America ($N=3$). Data from Study 1 and previous research has pointed to the influence of culture and geographical location on the experiences of female DJs. For example, the negative connotations given to women operating within the night-time industry (Duignan-Pearson, 2019) or social norms about 'respectable' behaviour for women (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4.6). As such, an aim was to compare the data based on location and ethnicity. However, due to the small number of participants in each group (sometimes 1 or two), it was not possible to examine the differences statistically. Consequently, this data is not included in the results.

Participants' professional level was divided into 3 categories: amateur ($N=32$), semi-professional ($N=101$), or professional ($N=43$). The influence of

professional level was a novel theme generated in Study 1. As such, examining this variable further with a larger sample of female DJs is necessary to investigate the prevalence of its impact.

Career length and average number of gigs played a month were included as variables in the analysis due to the exploratory hypothesis that being more active or spending more time participating in the EDM scene will result in a greater likelihood of encountering negative situations (e.g. discrimination, sexual harassment). The length of participants' career was grouped into three categories: <1–5 years ($N=108$), 6–15 years ($N=38$), and 16+ years ($N=30$), as was the average number of gigs they played a month (<1 gig a month [$N=50$], 1–3 [$N=74$], and 4+ [$N=51$]). It is important to note that professional level, career length, and average number of gigs played may be closely linked given that many outcomes (e.g. frequency of mental/physical health problems, discrimination, sexual harassment) may simply be a virtue of participants having spent more/less time in the EDM scene.

5.2.1 Hypotheses

5.2.1.1 Demographics.

There are a number of predictions surrounding participants' demographics. The data gathered in Study 1, coupled with previous literature suggests that gender does not work in isolation (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4). Older age acts as a barrier for women entering the scene (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2017b; Gregory, 2007; 2009). Consequently, it is predicted that older female DJs will experience more discrimination than their younger counterparts. Specifically, they may feel less accepted, supported, and represented within the scene.

Female DJs' experiences are further influenced by their sexuality, as elucidated in both the current and previous research (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4.3). For example, a woman's queer identity is believed to have a positive impact, as they are more likely to be accepted in male dominated spaces due to the perception that queer women are more 'masculine' (Farrugia, 2012). Consequently, it is predicted that queer women will experience more instances of homophobia but less instances of sexism.

Finally, a novel finding in Study 1 was that participants appeared to experience the scene differently depending on whether they identified as amateur, semi-professional, or professional DJ (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.4.5). For example, one insight from Study 1 suggested that semi-professional DJs who travel alone without a team felt at greater risk of gender-based violence. Therefore, it is predicted that level of profession will negatively impact feelings of safety.

5.2.1.2 Wellbeing.

Previous research has reported that professional musicians are more likely to experience depression (Gross & Musgrave, 2016), anxiety (Barbar et al., 2014), and distress (Vaag et al., 2016) than the general population. Physical wellbeing is impacted too, with musicians commonly experiencing hearing (Schink et al., 2014) and musculoskeletal problems (Topoğlu et al., 2018). Conversely, active engagement with music has been shown to positively correlate with emotional wellbeing (Ascenso et al., 2017), improvements in mental health (Groarke et al., 2020) and can provide an avenue through which individuals can express themselves and exorcise difficult emotions (Douglas, 2019). Similar benefits were reported in Study 1, where participants described using DJing for emotional regulation and to cope with stress (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3.1). Consequently, it is predicted that DJing will have an

impact on participants' wellbeing, and this will be exacerbated for those who play a greater number of gigs.

5.2.1.3 Sexual Harassment.

As illustrated by the data gathered in Study 1 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5.2) and the previous literature, sexual harassment has a negative impact on women's wellbeing (Rugulies et al., 2020) in terms of increased depression, anxiety, PTSD, distress, and reduced job satisfaction (Leskinen et al., 2011). Although prior work is based on women in non-musical professions, given that many of the interviewees in Study 1 discussed experiences of sexual harassment in line with the literature, it is likely that these findings may generalise to female DJs. Consequently, it is predicted that participants who have experienced sexual harassment are likely to report that it had a negative impact on their mental health/wellbeing.

Experiences of harassment are often dependent on the type of club, with mainstream clubs seen as less welcoming to women (Hutton, 2006) (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.5.2). Consequently, it is predicted that professional DJs, who play in mainstream clubs, are more likely to experience harassment and feel less safe compared to amateur or semi-professional DJs who play in more progressive, underground spaces.

5.2.1.4 Queer Spaces.

Underground queer communities in the EDM scene played a pivotal role in many women's DJ careers, acting as a safer space in which women can learn to DJ in a non-judgemental environment (Hancock, 2017) (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.1). Consequently, it is predicted that participants who are involved in the queer scene

will feel more accepted/support/represented/confident/safe in this scene compared to the wider EDM scene.

5.2.1.5 Voice and Visibility.

Finally, an original finding from Study 1 was that some women perceived their position as a female DJ to be inherently political (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.8). Consequently, they believed that the onus was on them, and other women DJs, to challenge the misogyny they experienced, as well as to educate, inspire, and support younger women within the scene. Therefore, it is predicted that professional DJs or women with the longest careers will be more likely to use their platform to promote other female DJs, as well as feel more able to challenge sexism within the scene.

5.3 Results

This section will begin by characterising the participants (see Table 1). Following this, the main results section is structured according to the six major themes explored in the survey: *being a woman in a male dominated scene*, *voice and visibility*, *wellbeing*, *discrimination*, *sexual harassment*, and *queer spaces*. For each theme, results for the whole sample will be presented, followed by an analysis of group differences, namely age, gender, sexuality, professional level, career length, and average number of gigs played. Due to the large amount of data produced by the survey, only the most significant and insightful group differences will be reported.

Table 1*Survey participant demographics*

		Freq	%
Sexuality	Bisexual	58	33.1
	Gay woman/lesbian	12	6.9
	Pansexual	21	12
	Queer	22	12.6
	Straight/heterosexual	53	30.3
	Prefer to self-describe	3	1.7
	Prefer not to say	6	3.4
	Ethnicity	American Indian/Native Alaskan	1
Asian		9	5.1
Black/African American		3	1.7
Hispanic/Latinx/Spanish origin		8	4.6
Middle Eastern/North African		3	1.7
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander		2	1.1
White		137	78.3
Mixed race/ethnicity		12	6.9
Location		Africa	6
	Asia	7	4
	Europe	37	21
	North America	110	62.5
	Oceania	13	7.4
	South America	3	1.7
	Career Length	Less than a year	6
1-5 years		102	58
6-10 years		26	14.8
11-15 years		12	6.8
16-20 years		15	8.5
21+ years		16	8.5
Professional level		Amateur	32
	Semi-professional	101	54.7
	professional	43	24.4
No. of gigs a month	Less than 1 gig a month	50	28.6
	1-3 gigs	74	42.3
	4-6 gigs	41	23.4
	7-9 gigs	4	2.3
	10+ gigs	6	3.4
	Equipment used at least sometimes	CDJs	141
Controller		93.2	59.8
Turntables		77	44.2
Other		10	21.3

		Freq	%
Main genre played	Afrobeats	3	1.7
	Afrohouse (Amapiano/Gqom/Kwaito)	1	0.6
	Breakbeat	12	6.9
	Dancehall/Bashment	2	1.1
	Disco	14	8
	Downtempo	5	2.9
	D&B	13	7.5
	Dubstep	5	2.9
	EDM	4	2.3
	Electronica	10	5.7
	Hardcore	5	2.9
	Hip Hop	4	2.3
	House	29	16.7
	Jungle	7	4
	Industrial	3	1.7
	IDM	3	1.7
	Techno	20	11.5
	Trance	3	1.7
	UKG	8	4.6
	Other	23	13.2

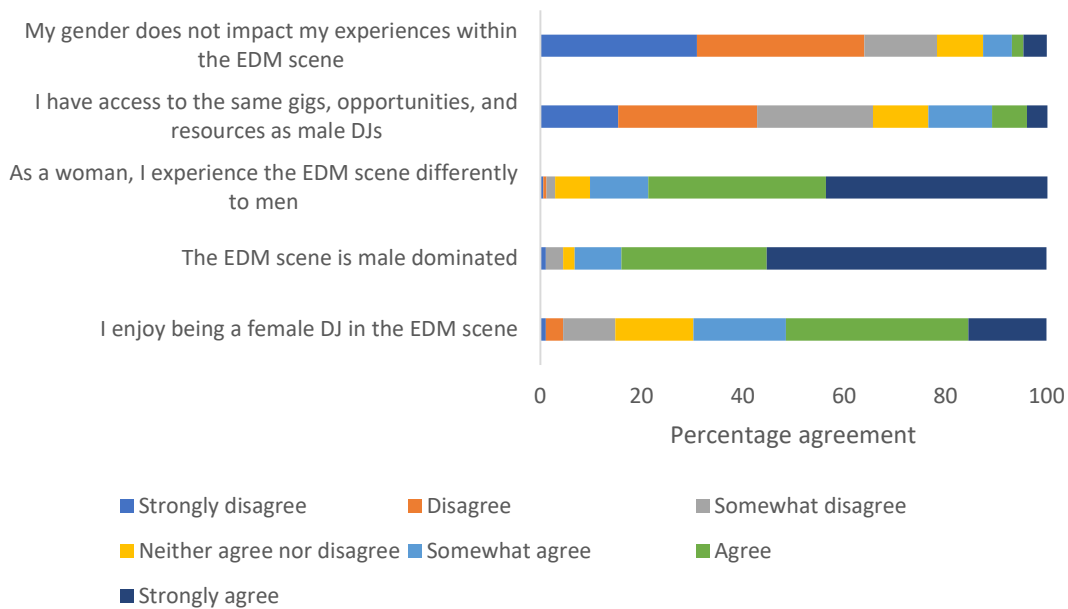
5.3.1 Being a woman in a male dominated scene

5.3.1.1 Overall.

Participants were presented with a series of statements about their general experiences of being a female DJ and how they felt as a woman operating within the EDM scene. 78.3% of participants agreed that their gender impacted their experiences within the scene in some way. The majority (69.7%) enjoyed being a female DJ. However, 93.1% agreed that the EDM scene is male dominated. 90.3% agreed that, as women, they experience the EDM scene differently to men, with 65.7% of the sample stating that they did not have access to the same opportunities and resources as their male counterparts (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

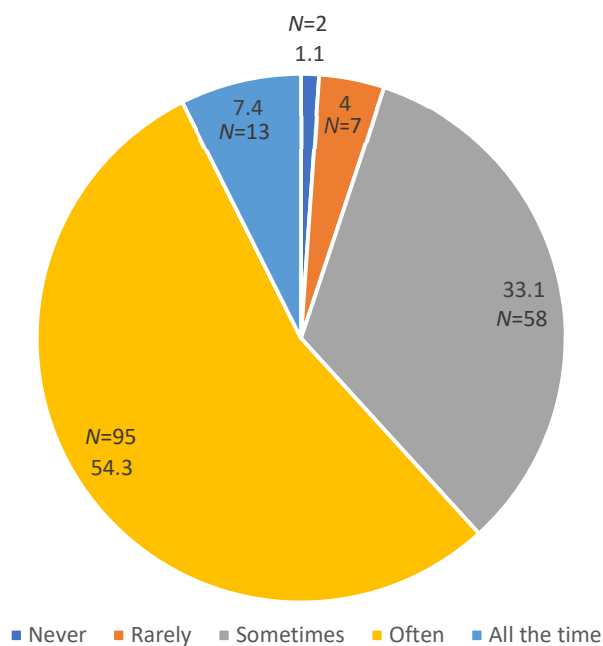
Participants' (N=175) extent of agreement with statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene



In terms of diversity on stage, over half (61.7%) of female DJs reported that they were often the only woman on the line up (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

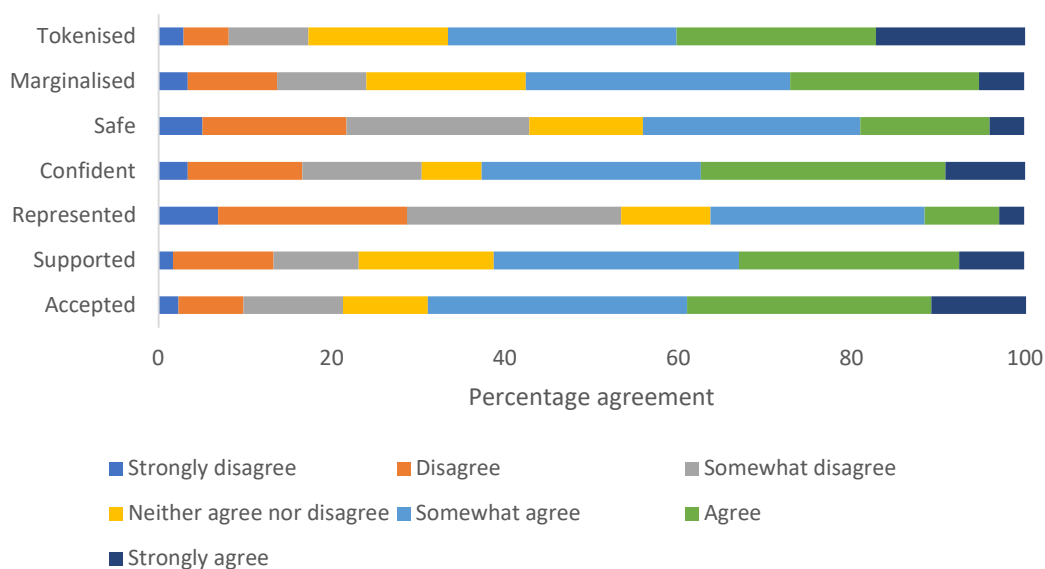
How frequently participants (N=175) reported that they were the only woman on the line-up



When asked about how they felt within the EDM scene, most participants agreed that they felt accepted (69%), supported (61.2%), and confident (62.7%). However, only 44% felt safe and even less (36.2%) felt represented. Negatively, over half of participants felt marginalised (57.5%) and 66.6% felt tokenised (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Participants' (N=175) percentage of agreement with statements concerning how they felt in the EDM scene



5.3.1.2 Age.

Regarding how participants felt within the EDM scene, a one-way independent ANOVA reported a significant difference in support ($\omega=.24$) and representation ($\omega=1.56$) based on age group (see Table 2). Planned contrasts revealed that participants under 25 felt more supported than those over 26, $t(128)=2.472$, $p=.015$, $r=.21$, and those aged between 26-35 felt more supported than those aged over 36, $t(90)=2.483$, $p=.015$, $r=.25$.

Equally, participants aged between 26-35 felt more represented than those over 36, $t(171)=2.129$, $p=.035$, $r=.16$. However, there were no significant differences between those under 25 and over 26, $t(171)=1.479$, $p=.141$, $r=.11$.

Table 2

ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene, based on age

	Levene's test of significance	<i>F</i>	df	<i>p</i>
Accepted (<i>N</i> =174)	$p=.019^{\wedge}$.830	2, 109	.439
Supported (<i>N</i> =173)	$p=.010^{\wedge}$	4.939	2, 106	.009*
Represented (<i>N</i> =174)		3.177	2, 171	.044*
Confident (<i>N</i> =174)	$p=.037^{\wedge}$.324	2, 113	.724
Safe (<i>N</i> =175)		.003	2, 172	.997
Marginalised (<i>N</i> =174)		.633	2, 171	.532
Tokenised (<i>N</i> =174)		.170	2, 171	.844

[^] Welch's *F* was used instead * $p<.05$

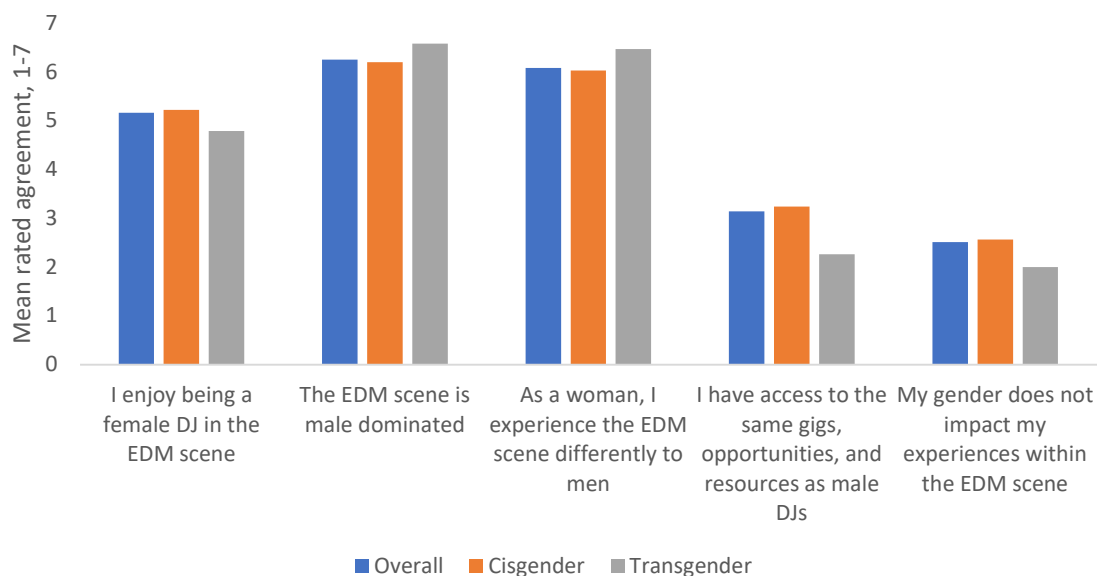
5.3.1.3 Gender.

Only a small number of trans women took part in the survey. As such, mean responses were compared instead. Transgender women reported slightly worse experiences overall in comparison to their cisgender counterparts (see Figure 5). In particular, they disagreed with the statements 'I enjoy being a female DJ in the EDM

scene’ and ‘I have access to the same gigs, opportunities, and resources as male DJs’, more than cis women.

Figure 5

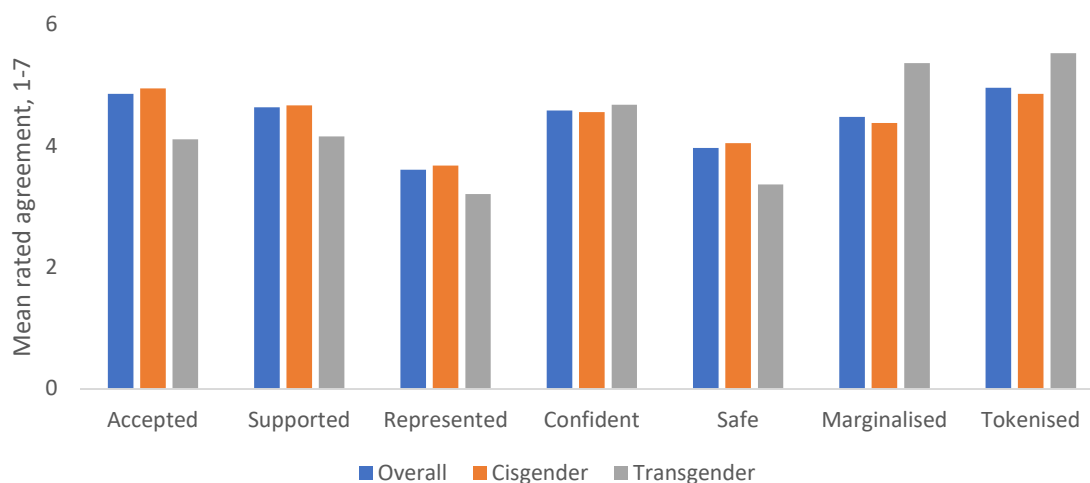
Comparing participants’ mean rated agreement to statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



When examining how transgender women felt in the EDM scene, compared to their cisgender participants, their mean responses were similar, albeit slightly lower, for four out of seven variables (see Figure 6). As indicated by strong agreement, the biggest differences arose in responses to the final three items, in which trans women reported feeling less safe, more marginalised, and more tokenised compared to their cisgender peers.

Figure 6

Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning how they felt in the EDM scene, among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



5.3.1.4 Sexuality.

An independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test only reported a significant difference in feelings of acceptance and support, based on sexuality (see Table 3). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that gay/queer women felt more accepted than bi/pansexual women ($p=.007$, $r=.286$), but less accepted than heterosexual/straight women ($p=.034$, $r=-.271$).

No significant differences between bi/pansexual women and heterosexual/straight women ($p=1.00$, $r=.033$), gay/queer and bi/pansexual women ($p=.051$, $r=.225$), gay/queer women and heterosexual/straight women ($p=.080$, $r=-.238$), or bi/pansexual and heterosexual/straight women ($p=1.00$, $r=-.8.704$) were identified for the degree to which they felt supported. Evidently, whilst the Kruskal-Wallis test showed overall significant differences, the adjustments for multiple comparisons in the post-hoc tests explains the lack of significance for the pairs.

Table 3

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on sexuality

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Accepted (<i>N</i> =164)	9.74	2	.008*
Supported (<i>N</i> =163)	6.46	2	.040*
Represented (<i>N</i> =164)	1.26	2	.532
Confident (<i>N</i> =164)	1.30	2	.521
Safe (<i>N</i> =165)	.62	2	.733
Marginalised (<i>N</i> =164)	2.13	2	.344
Tokenised (<i>N</i> =164)	1.89	2	.388

* $p < .05$

5.3.1.5 Professional Level.

An independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported that only responses to ‘my gender does not impact my experiences within the EDM scene’ significantly differed across professional level (see Table 4). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted *p*-values revealed that amateurs agreed with this statement more than professionals ($p=.013$, $r=.328$). However, there were no significant differences between professional and semi-professional ($p=.434$, $r=.122$) or semi-professional and amateur DJs ($p=.147$, $r=.171$).

Table 4

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene, based on professional level

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I enjoy being a female DJ in the EDM scene (<i>N</i> =175)	2.381	2	.304
The EDM scene is male dominated (<i>N</i> =174)	4.552	2	.103
As a woman, I experience the EDM scene differently to men (<i>N</i> =174)	3.771	2	.152
I have access to the same gigs, opportunities, and resources as male DJs (<i>N</i> =175)	1.253	2	.534
My gender does not impact my experiences within the EDM scene (<i>N</i> =175)	8.089	2	.018*
I am often the only woman on the line up (<i>N</i> =175)	4.517	2	.105

* $p < .05$

In terms of how participants felt within the EDM scene, a Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there were significant differences in feelings of confidence and tokenism between the levels of profession (see Table 5). However, pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that there were no significant differences in confidence between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.045$), amateurs and professionals ($p=.261$, $r=.171$), and semi-professionals and professionals ($p=.057$, $r=-.196$). Evidently, whilst the Kruskal-Wallis test showed overall significant differences, the adjustments for multiple comparisons in the post-hoc tests explains the lack of significance for the pairs.

Secondly, professional DJs reported feeling more tokenised than amateurs ($p=.021$, $r=-.016$). However, there were no significant differences between amateurs

and semi-professionals ($p=.197$, $r=-.160$) and semi-professionals and professionals ($p=.463$, $r=-.119$).

Table 5

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on professional level

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Accepted (<i>N</i> =174)	4.011	2	.135
Supported (<i>N</i> =173)	3.499	2	.174
Represented (<i>N</i> =174)	2.250	2	.325
Confident (<i>N</i> =174)	6.897	2	.032*
Safe (<i>N</i> =175)	.192	2	.909
Marginalised (<i>N</i> =174)	.763	2	.683
Tokenised (<i>N</i> =174)	7.295	2	.026*

* $p<.05$

5.3.1.6 Career Length.

An independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test found a significant difference according to career length in responses to the statement ‘I enjoy being a female DJ in the EDM scene (see Table 6). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values reported that women who had been DJing for <1-5 years agreed with this statement more than those who had been DJing for 6-15 years ($p=.007$, $r=.253$). There were no significant differences between the 6-15 and 16+ ($p=.525$, $r=-.165$) or 16+ and <1-5 years categories ($p=.698$, $r=.102$).

Data also showed significant differences in response to ‘I have access to the same gigs, opportunities, and resources as men’ (see Table 6). However, pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that there were no significant differences between women who had been DJing for 16+ and 6-15 years ($p=1.000$, $r=.056$), 16+ and <1-5 years ($p=.083$, $r=.187$), or 6-15 and <1-5 years ($p=.212$, $r=.150$).

Table 6

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants’ responses to statements concerning being a woman in a male dominated scene, based on career length

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I enjoy being a female DJ in the EDM scene ($N= 175$)	9.588	2	.008*
The EDM scene is male dominated ($N=174$)	.520	2	.771
As a woman, I experience the EDM scene differently to men ($N=174$)	2.511	2	.285
I have access to the same gigs, opportunities, and resources as male DJs ($N=175$)	6.579	2	.037*
My gender does not impact my experiences within the EDM scene ($N=175$)	2.537	2	.281

* $p<.05$

When examining how participants felt within the EDM scene, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test only found significant differences in terms of feelings of support and representation, based on career length (see Table 7). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values demonstrated that women who had been DJing for <1-5 years felt more supported than those who had been DJing for 6-15 ($p=.012$, $r=.239$) and 16+ years ($p=.002$, $r=.288$). There were no significant

differences between women who had been DJing for 16+ and 6-15 years ($p=1.000$, $r=.078$).

Further, women who had been DJing for 16+ years felt less represented than those who have been DJing for <1-5 ($p=.001$, $r=.297$) and 6-15 years ($p=.050$, $r=.291$). There was no significant difference between women who had been DJing for <1-5 and 6-15 years ($p=1.000$, $r=.057$).

Table 7

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on career length

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Accepted (<i>N</i> =174)	4.541	2	.103
Supported (<i>N</i> =173)	16.113	2	.000**
Represented (<i>N</i> =174)	12.175	2	.002*
Confident (<i>N</i> =174)	1.090	2	.580
Safe (<i>N</i> =175)	.852	2	.653
Marginalised (<i>N</i> =174)	2.869	2	.238

* $p<.05$

5.3.1.7 Average Number of Gigs Played a Month.

Finally, when examining average number of gigs played a month, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test only reported a significant difference in feelings of tokenism (see Table 8). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p values revealed that participants who played <1 gig a month felt less tokenised than those who played 1-3

($p=.023$, $r=-.25$) and 4+ gigs ($p=.025$, $r=-.26$). There was no significant difference between participants who played 1-3 and 4+ gigs ($p=1.000$, $r=-.019$).

Table 8

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the EDM scene, based on average number of gigs played a month

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Accepted (<i>N</i> =173)	.389	2	.823
Supported (<i>N</i> =172)	1.015	2	.602
Represented (<i>N</i> =173)	1.563	2	.458
Confident (<i>N</i> =173)	3.674	2	.159
Safe (<i>N</i> =174)	1.000	2	.607
Marginalised (<i>N</i> =173)	1.301	2	.522
Tokenised (<i>N</i> =173)	9.078	2	.011*

* $p<.05$

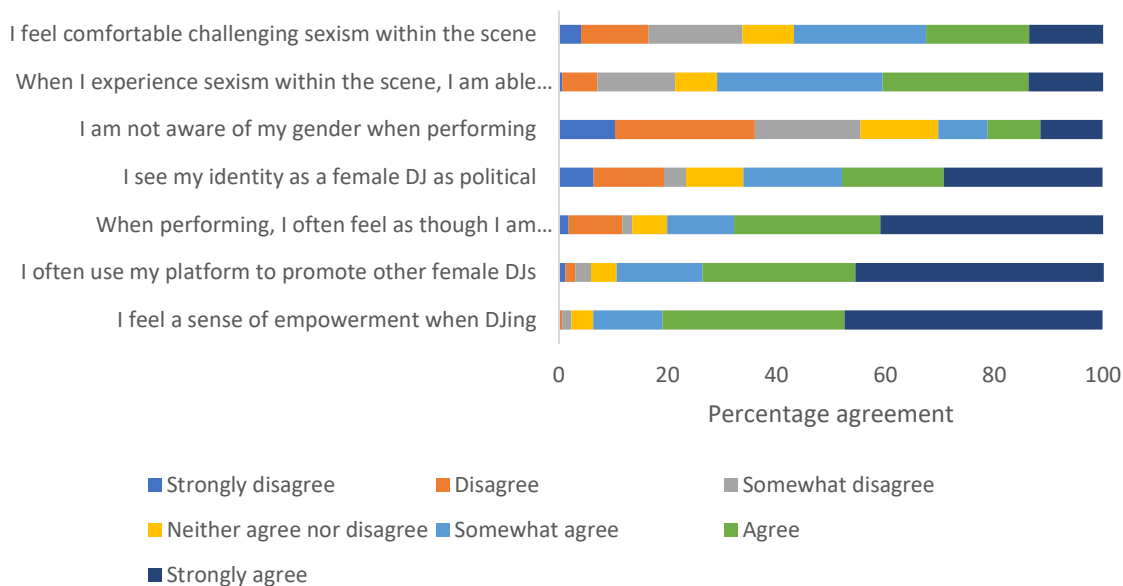
5.3.2 Voice and visibility

5.3.2.1 Overall.

Participants were presented with statements about the extent to which they used their position as a female DJ to educate, inspire, and support other women within the scene (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Participants' (N=175) extent of agreement with statements concerning voice and visibility



Two-thirds (66%) of participants agreed that their identity as a female DJ was political and 93.6% agreed that they felt a sense of empowerment when DJing. Over half (55.4%) agreed that they were aware of their gender when performing. Most (80.1%) felt as though they were representing female DJs as a whole, with 89.5% using their platform to promote other women in the scene. 70.9% of the sample agreed that they were able to challenge sexism, but only 56.8% felt comfortable doing so.

5.3.2.2 Age.

A one-way independent ANOVA reported that only responses to 'when performing, I often feel as though I am representing not just myself but female DJs as a whole' differed across age categories ($\omega=.16$) (see Table 9). Planned contrasts revealed that participants aged over 36 agreed with this statement more than those aged between

26-35, $t(105)=-2.668$, $p=.009$, $r=.26$. However, there were no significant differences between the under 25 and over 26 age categories, $t(106)=-.208$, $p=.835$, $r=.02$.

Table 9

ANOVA statistics for participants' responses to questions concerning voice and visibility, based on age

	Levene's test of significance	<i>F</i>	df	<i>p</i>
I feel a sense of empowerment when DJing ($N=173$)		.527	2, 170	.591
I often use my platform to promote other female DJs ($N=171$)		2.249	2, 168	.109
When performing, I often feel as though I am representing not just myself but female DJs as a whole ($N=171$)	$p=.002$ ^	3.765	2, 111	.026*
I see my identity as a female DJ as political ($N=171$)		.445	2, 168	.641
I am not aware of my gender when performing ($N=175$)		.046	2, 172	.956
When I experience sexism within the scene, I am able to challenge it ($N=168$)		.763	2, 165	.468
I feel comfortable challenging sexism within the scene ($N=169$)		.370	2, 166	.691

^ Welch's *F* was used instead * $p<.05$

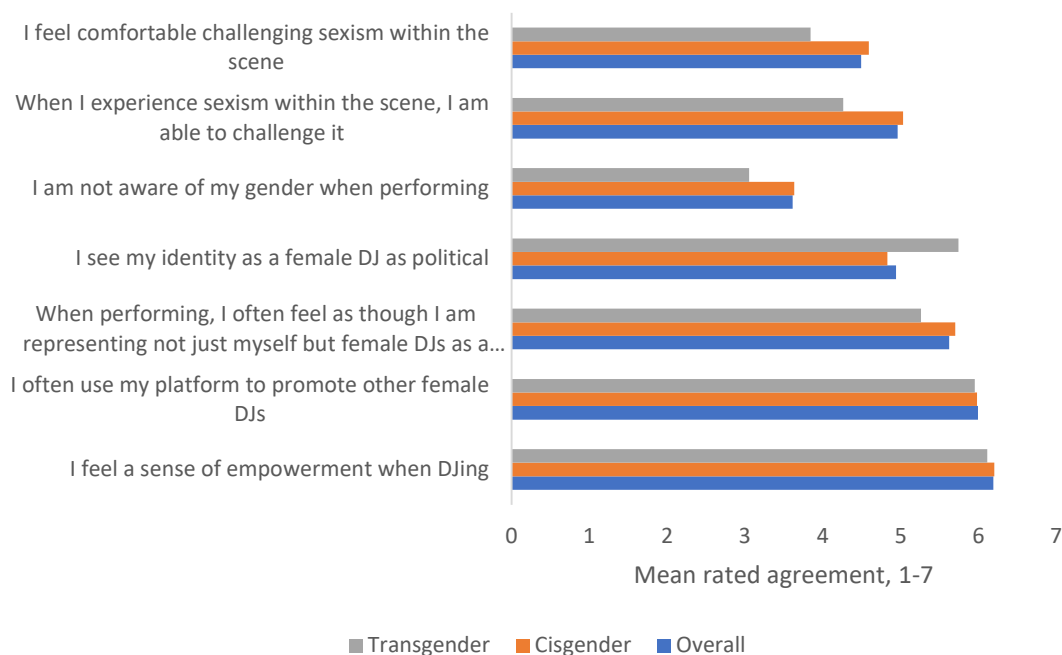
5.3.2.3 Gender.

Trans women's mean responses were lower than their cisgender counterparts for all statements except 'I see my identity as a female DJ as political' (see Figure 8). It was not possible to compare cisgender ($N=154$) and transgender ($N=19$) participants

using inferential statistics due to unequal group sizes and the small number of trans participants.

Figure 8

Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning voice and visibility, among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



5.3.2.4 Professional Level.

An independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that responses to the statement 'I see my identity as a female DJ as political' differed across levels of profession (see Table 10). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values showed that professional DJs agreed with this statement more than amateurs ($p=.031$, $r=-.296$). However, there were no significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=.068$, $r=-.198$) and semi-professional and professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.062$).

Additionally, ratings for 'when I experience sexism within the scene, I am able to challenge it' also significantly differed by professional level (see Table 10). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that professional DJs agreed

with this statement more than semi-professionals ($p=.038$, $r=-.207$). There were no significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.048$) and amateurs and professionals ($p=.053$, $r=-.274$).

Table 10

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to statements concerning voice and visibility, based on level of profession

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I feel a sense of empowerment when DJing (N=173)	.069	2	.966
I often use my platform to promote other female DJs (N=171)	.823	2	.663
When performing, I often feel as though I am representing not just myself but female DJs as a whole (N=171)	.629	2	.730
I see my identity as a female DJ as political (N=171)	7.143	2	.028*
I am not aware of my gender when performing (N=175)	4.252	2	.119
When I experience sexism within the scene, I am able to challenge it (N=168)	7.741	2	.021*
I feel comfortable challenging sexism within the scene (N=169)	2.313	2	.315

* $p<.05$

5.3.2.5 Average Number of Gigs Played a Month.

An independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test only reported a significant difference in response to 'I see my identity as a female DJ as political' based on average number of gigs played a month (see Table 11). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p values revealed that participants who played <1 gig a month disagreed with this statement more than those who played 1-3 ($p=.018$, $r=-.26$) and 4+ ($p=.020$, $r=-.27$). There

were no significant differences between participants who played 1-3 and 4+ gigs a month ($p=1.000$, $r=-.019$).

Table 11

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to statements concerning voice and visibility, based on average number of gigs played a month

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I feel a sense of empowerment when DJing ($N=170$)	1.506	2	.471
I often use my platform to promote other female DJs ($N=170$)	2.078	2	.354
When performing, I often feel as though I am representing not just myself but female DJs as a whole ($N=170$)	2.354	2	.308
I see my identity as a female DJ as political ($N=170$)	9.589	2	.008*
I am not aware of my gender when performing ($N=174$)	1.840	2	.399
When I experience sexism within the scene, I am able to challenge it ($N=167$)	3.275	2	.194
I feel comfortable challenging sexism within the scene ($N=168$)	4.560	2	.102

* $p<0.05$

5.3.3 DJing and wellbeing

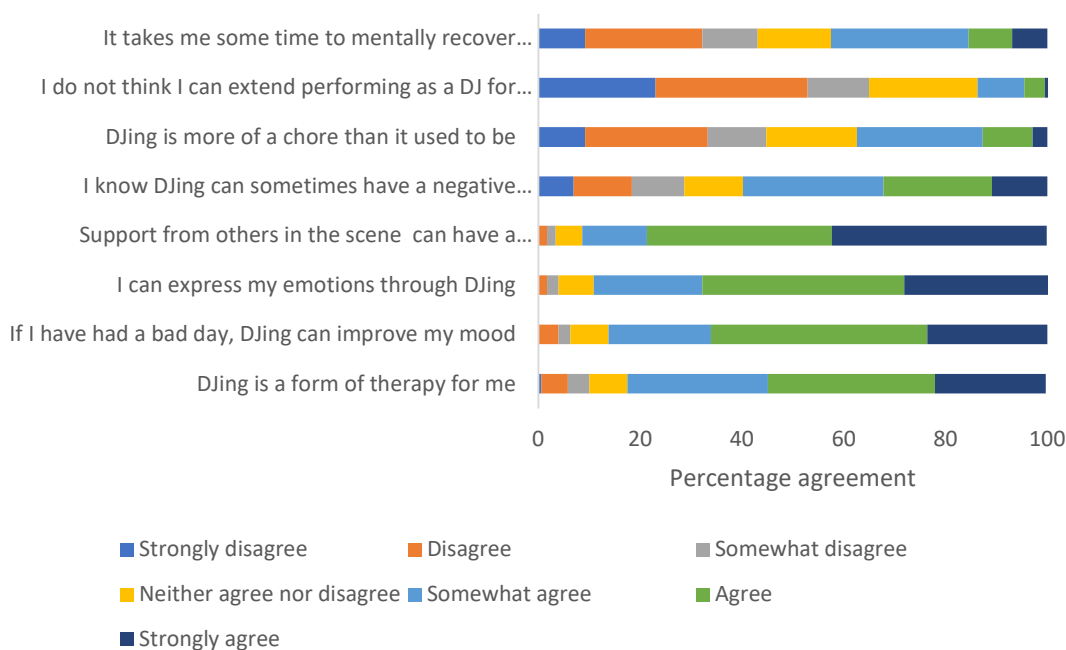
Questions concerning the extent to which participants experienced mental and physical health problems used a frequency-based Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, all time). In some cases, the scale points were combined into two broader categories to aid comparison: 'never/rarely' and 'at least sometimes' (the latter including sometimes, often, and all the time).

5.3.3.1 Overall.

Participants were asked about the positive and negative impacts that DJing had on their mental and physical health (see Figure 9). 82.2% of participants agreed that DJing is a form of therapy, improving their mood (82.6%), and allowing them to express their emotions (89.2%). The majority (91.3%) stated that support from others within the scene had a positive impact on their mental health. Despite this positive picture, over half the sample (59.8%) agreed that DJing sometimes had a negative impact on their health, and 42.5% agreed that it took them some time to mentally recover following a gig. 37.4% agreed that DJing was more of a chore than it used to be. Yet, 65% disagreed with the statement ‘I do not think I can extend my DJ career for much longer’.

Figure 9

Participants’ (N=175) extent of agreement with statements concerning DJing and wellbeing

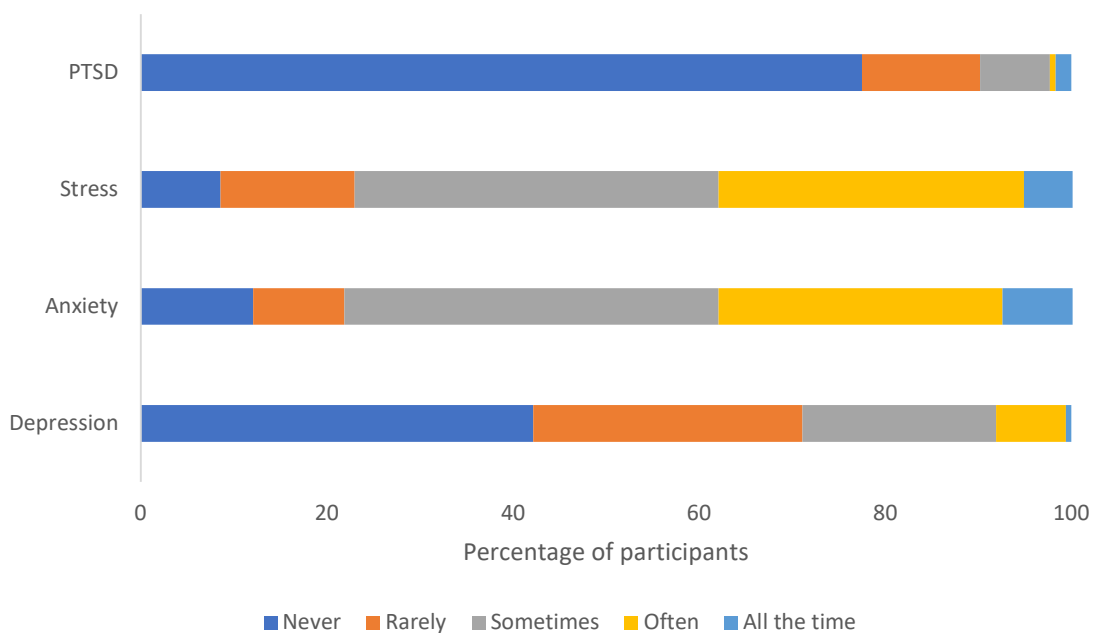


With regard to mental health issues that participants had experienced due to DJing, 77.5% had never experienced PTSD and 71.2% never/rarely experienced

depression. However, the majority experienced stress (77.1%) and anxiety (78.2%) at least sometimes (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

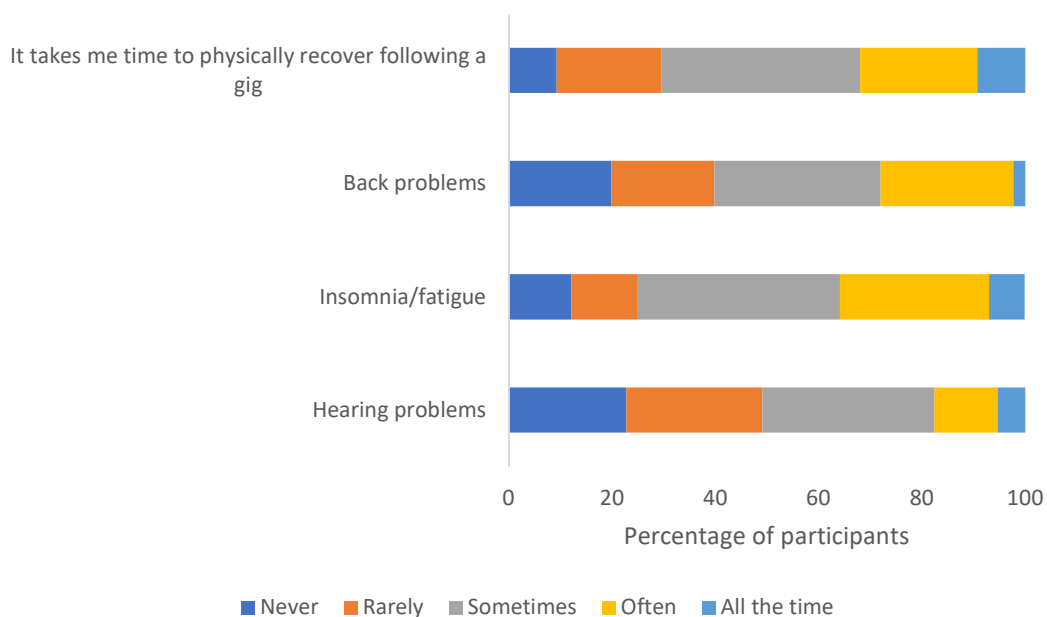
Extent to which participants (N=175) experienced specific mental health issues as a result of DJing



In terms of physical health problems, 60.2% of participants reported experiencing back problems, 50.9% hearing problems, and 75.1% insomnia/fatigue at least sometimes due to DJing. Additionally, 70.4% of the sample reported that it took them some time to physically recover following a gig (see Figure 11).

Figure 11

Extent to which participants (N=175) experienced specific physical health problems as a result of DJing



5.3.3.2 Age.

A one-way independent ANOVA reported that responses to the statement ‘I don’t think I can extend my DJ career for much longer’ significantly differed across the three age groups ($\omega=.17$) (see Table 12). Planned contrasts revealed that participants aged over 26 agreed with this statement more than those aged 25 and under, $t(171)=-2.339$, $p=.020$, $r=.18$. There were no significant differences between the 26-35 and 36+ categories, $t(171)=-1.387$, $p=.167$, $r=.11$.

Table 12

ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on age

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
DJing is a form of therapy for me (N=174)	.062	2, 171	.940
If I have a bad day, DJing can improve my mood (N=174)	.208	2, 171	.813
I can express my emotions through DJing (N=174)	2.049	2, 171	.132
Support from others in the scene can have a positive impact on my mental health/wellbeing (N=173)	1.017	2, 170	.364
I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway (N=174)	.979	2, 171	.378
DJing is more of a chore than it used to be (N=174)	.217	2, 171	.805
I don't think I can extend my DJ career for much longer (N=174)	3.539	2, 171	.031*
It takes me some time to mentally recover following a gig (N=174)	2.089	2, 171	.127

* $p < .05$

When exploring specific mental and physical health problems, only responses to 'it takes me time to physically recover following a gig' significantly differed across the three categories ($\omega = .20$) (see Table 13). Planned contrasts revealed that participants over 26 needed time to physically recover more than those aged 25 and under, $t(169) = -2.971$, $p = .003$, $r = .24$. There were no significant differences between the 26-35 and the 36+ age groups, $t(169) = -.901$, $p = .369$, $r = .007$.

Table 13

ANOVA statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific physical health problems, based on age

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Hearing problems (<i>N</i> =171)	2.167	2, 168	.242
Insomnia/fatigue (<i>N</i> =173)	.048	2, 169	.953
Back problems (<i>N</i> =171)	.484	2, 169	.617
It takes me some time to physically recover following a gig (<i>N</i> =172)	4.682	2, 169	.010*

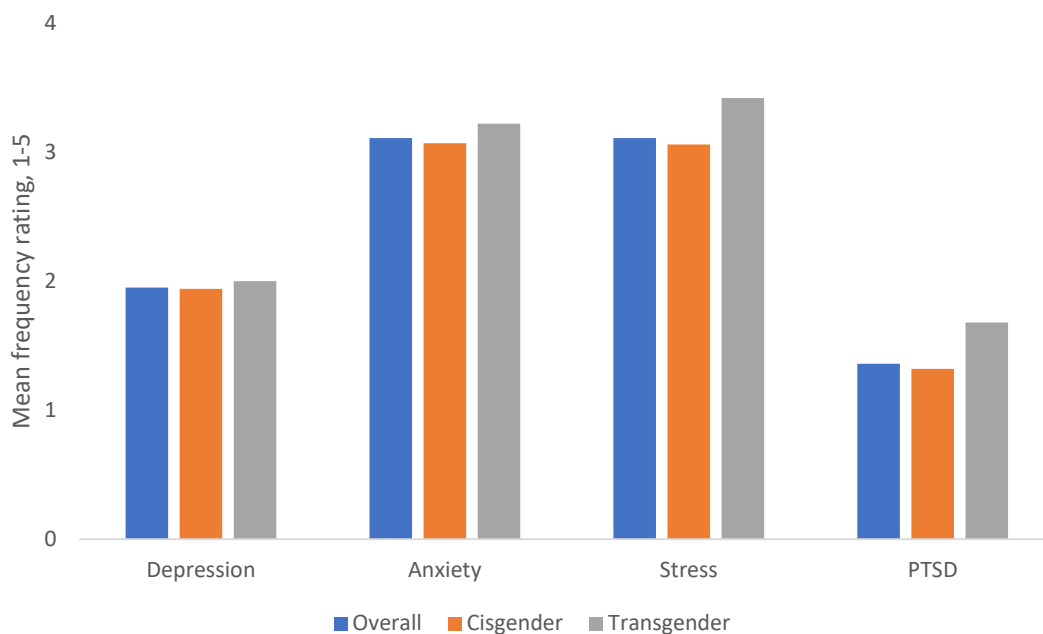
**p*<.05

5.3.3.3 Gender.

Due to the unequal number of cis and transgender participants, meaningful comparison was not possible. However, a comparison of each group's mean rating demonstrated that trans women experienced depression, anxiety, stress, and PTSD because of DJing more frequently than their cisgender peers (see Figure 12).

Figure 12

Comparing the frequency with which participants experienced specific mental health issues among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



5.3.3.4 Professional Level.

An independent Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant difference in response to the statement ‘I can express my emotions through DJing’ based on level of profession (see Table 14). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that professional DJs agreed with this statement more than amateurs ($p=.020$, $r=-.314$). However, there were no significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=.270$, $r=-.147$) or semi-professionals and professionals ($p=.324$, $r=-.134$).

There were further significant differences in response to the statement ‘it takes me some time to mentally recover following a gig’ (see Table 14). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values highlighted that professional DJs agreed with this statement more than semi-professionals ($p=.030$, $r=-.215$). There were no

significant differences between semi-professionals and amateurs ($p=1.000$, $r=.045$) or amateurs and professionals ($p = .362$, $r = -.179$).

Table 14

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on professional level

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
DJing is a form of therapy for me (N=174)	1.457	2	.483
If I have a bad day, DJing can improve my mood (N=174)	.078	2	.962
I can express my emotions through DJing (N=174)	7.400	2	.025*
Support from others in the scene can have a positive impact on my mental health/wellbeing' (N=173)	.877	2	.645
I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway (N=174)	4.845	2	.089
DJing is more of a chore than it used to be (N = 174)	1.087	2	.581
I don't think I can extend my DJ career for much longer (N=174)	1.096	2	.578
It takes me some time to mentally recover following a gig (N=174)	6.662	2	.036*

* $p < .05$

In addition, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported a significant difference in the extent to which participants experienced depression and PTSD based on professional level (see Table 15). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that professional DJs experienced depression more frequently than semi-professionals ($p=.015$, $r=-.234$). However, there were no

significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.015$) or amateurs and professionals ($p=.059$, $r=-.269$).

Equally, professional DJs experienced PTSD more frequently than semi-professionals ($p=.037$, $r=-.208$). Yet, there were no significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.024$) or amateurs and professionals ($p=.087$, $r=-.252$).

Table 15

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, based on professional level

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Depression (<i>N</i> =173)	8.786	2	.012*
Anxiety (<i>N</i> =174)	3.070	2	.215
Stress (<i>N</i> =174)	1.348	2	.510
PTSD (<i>N</i> =173)	7.193	2	.027*

* $p < .05$

Further, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported a significant difference in the extent to which participants experienced insomnia/fatigue by level of profession (see Table 16). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that professional DJs experienced insomnia/fatigue more frequently than semi-professional ($p=.002$, $r=-.286$) and amateur DJs ($p=.030$, $r=-.298$). There were no significant differences between semi-professionals and amateurs ($p=1.000$, $r=.009$).

Equally, there were differences in responses to the statement ‘it takes me some time to physically recover following a gig’, $H(2)=15.293$, $p=.000$ (see Table

16). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values illustrated that professionals tended to agree with this statement more than amateurs ($p=.003$, $r=-.384$) and semi-professionals ($p=.000$, $r=-.295$). However, there were no significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=.512$, $r=-.057$).

Table 16

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific physical health problems, based on professional level

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Hearing problems ($N=171$)	.016	2	.992
Insomnia/fatigue ($N=173$)	12.480	2	.002*
Back problems ($N=171$)	1.846	2	.397
It takes me some time to physically recover following a gig ($N=172$)	15.293	2	.000**

* $p<.05$ ** $p<.001$

5.3.3.5 Career Length.

An independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported that responses to the statement ‘I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway’ differed based on career length (see Table 17). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that women who had been DJing for 6-15 years agreed with this statement more than women who had been DJing for 16 + years ($p=.007$, $r=.368$). There were no significant differences between <1-5 and 6-15 years ($p=.179$, $r=-.160$) or 16+ and <1-5 years ($p=.050$, $r=.156$).

Table 17

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on career length

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
DJing is a form of therapy for me (N=174)	.162	2	.922
If I have a bad day, DJing can improve my mood (N=174)	.379	2	.827
I can express my emotions through DJing (N=174)	5.314	2	.070
Support from others in the scene can have a positive impact on my mental health/wellbeing' (N=173)	3.488	2	.175
I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway (N=174)	9.226	2	.010*
DJing is more of a chore than it used to be (N=174)	2.701	2	.259
It takes me some time to mentally recover following a gig (N=174)	3.028	2	.220

* $p < .05$

When exploring specific mental health issues, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test only showed a significant difference in experiences of depression based on career length (see Table 18). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that women who had been DJing for <1-5 years reported experiencing depression less frequently than those who had been DJing for 6-15 ($p=.013$, $r=-.237$) or 16+ years ($p=.001$, $r=-.298$). There were no significant differences between the 6-15 and 16+ categories ($p=1.000$, $r=-.092$).

Table 18

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, based on career length

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Depression (<i>N</i> =173)	16.684	2	.000**
Anxiety (<i>N</i> =174)	1.394	2	.498
Stress (<i>N</i> =174)	.035	2	.983
PTSD (<i>N</i> =173)	3.853	2	.146

***p*<.001

In terms of physical health problems, a significant difference based on career length was only present in responses to the statement ‘it takes me some time to physically recover following a gig’, $H(2)=15.140$, $p=.001$ (see Table 19). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted *p*-values revealed that women who had been DJing for <1-5 years agreed with this statement less than women who had been DJing for 6-15 ($p=.024$, $r=-.219$) or 16+ years ($p=.002$, $r=-.288$). There were no significant differences between the 6-15 and 16+ categories ($p=1.000$, $r=-.096$).

Table 19

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific physical health problems, based on career length

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Hearing problems (<i>N</i> =171)	3.283	2	.319
Insomnia/fatigue (<i>N</i> =173)	4.919	2	.085
Back problems (<i>N</i> =171)	.689	2	.709
It takes me some time to physically recover following a gig (<i>N</i> =172)	15.140	2	.001*

**p*<.05

5.3.3.6 Average Number of Gigs Played a Month.

A Kruskal-Wallis test reported that only responses to ‘I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway’ significantly differed based on average number of gig played a month (see Table 20). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted *p* values revealed that women who played 4+ gigs agreed with this statement more than women who played <1 (*p*=.029, *r*=-.29) and 1-3 gigs a month (*p*=.046, *r*=-.23). There were no significant differences between the <1 and 1-3 categories (*p*=1.000, *r*=-.04).

Table 20

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and wellbeing, based on average number of gigs played a month

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
DJing is a form of therapy for me (<i>N</i> =173)	2.914	2	.233
If I have a bad day, DJing can improve my mood (<i>N</i> =173)	1.652	2	.438
I can express my emotions through DJing (<i>N</i> =173)	5.139	2	.077
Support from others in the scene can have a positive impact on my mental health/wellbeing (<i>N</i> =172)	.202	2	.904
I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway (<i>N</i> =173)	8.187	2	.017*
DJing is more of a chore than it used to be (<i>N</i> =173)	1.529	2	.466
I don't think I can extend my DJ career for much longer (<i>N</i> =173)	1.164	2	.559
It takes me some time to mentally recover following a gig (<i>N</i> =173)	.267	2	.875

**p*<.05

With regard to specific mental health issues, an independent-samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported a significant difference in the extent to which participants experienced depression and PTSD according to average number of gigs played (see Table 21). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted *p* values revealed that women who played 4+ gigs a month experienced depression as a result of DJing more frequently than those who played 1-3 gigs (*p*=.005, *r*=-.29). There were no significant differences between the <1 and 1-3 (*p*=1.000, *r*=.08) or <1 and 4+ categories (*p*=1.000, *r*=-.21).

Similarly, participants who played the greatest number of gigs also experienced PTSD more frequently than those who played 1-3 gigs ($p=.004$, $r=-.30$) or <1 gig a month ($p=.036$, $r=-.25$). There was no significant difference between the <1 and 1-3 category ($p=1.000$, $r=-.05$).

Table 21

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, based on average number of gigs played a month

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Depression (<i>N</i> =172)	10.081	2	.006*
Anxiety (<i>N</i> =173)	4.488	2	.108
Stress (<i>N</i> =173)	3.894	2	.143
PTSD (<i>N</i> =172)	11.300	2	.004*

* $p<.05$

When exploring physical health problems, an independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported a significant difference in the frequency with which participants experienced insomnia/fatigue based on average number of gigs played a month (see Table 22). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p values showed that women who played 4+ gigs a month experienced insomnia/fatigue more frequently than those who played <1 gig ($p=.029$, $r=-.26$). There were no significant differences between women who played <1 and 1-3 ($p=1.000$, $r=-.07$) or 1-3 and 4+ gigs a month ($p=.117$, $r=-.19$).

Additionally, responses to ‘it takes me some time to physically recover following a gig significantly differed across the three categories (see Table 22).

Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p values illustrated that participants who played 4+ gigs a month agreed with this statement more than those who played 1-3 ($p=.039$, $r=-.23$). There were no significant differences between those who played <1 and 1-3 gigs ($p=1.000$, $r=.07$) or <1 and 4+ gigs ($p=.373$, $r=-.15$).

Table 22

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific physical health problems, based on average number of gigs played a month

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Hearing problems ($N=170$)	2.455	2	.293
Insomnia/fatigue ($N=172$)	7.295	2	.026*
Back problems ($N=170$)	7.195	2	.070
It takes me some time to physically recover following a gig ($N=171$)	6.203	2	.045*

* $p<.05$

5.3.4 Discrimination

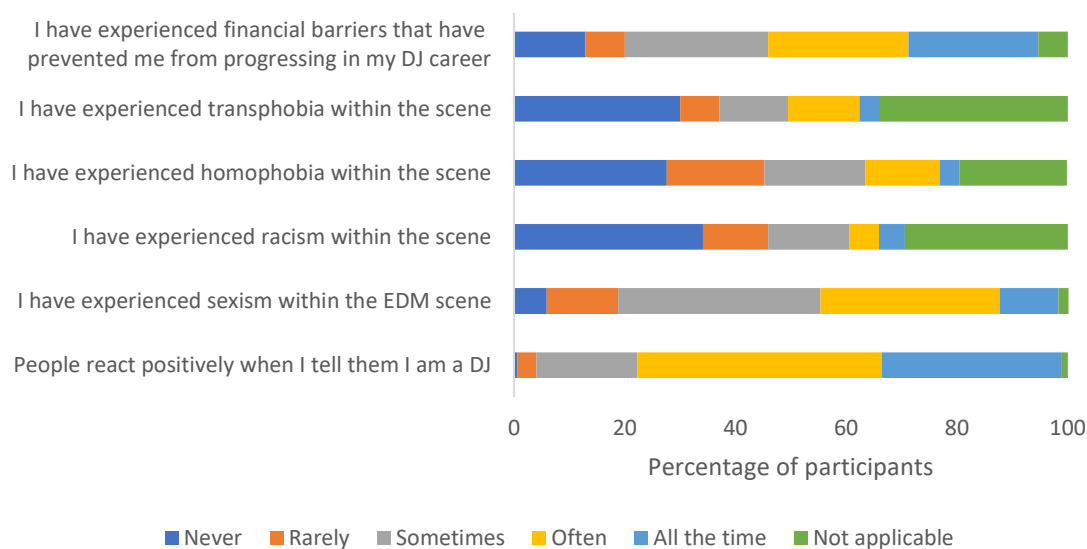
Statements concerning discrimination used a frequency-based Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, all time). In some cases, the scale points were combined into two broader categories to aid comparison: ‘never/rarely’ and ‘at least sometimes’ (the latter including sometimes, often and all the time).

5.3.4.1 Overall.

Participants were presented with a series of statements concerning the extent to which they faced discrimination within the EDM scene (see Figure 13).

Figure 13

The frequency with which participants experienced various forms of discrimination (N=176)



The majority of the sample (76.5%) responded ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ to the statement ‘people react positively when I tell them I am a DJ’. Yet, most participants described experiencing sexism (79.5%) and financial barriers (74.7%) ‘at least sometimes’ within the scene. Around a quarter of participants encountered racism (24.7%), homophobia (35.2%), or transphobia (28.8%) with the same frequency.

5.3.4.2 Age.

A one-way independent ANOVA only reported a significant difference in the extent to which participants experienced transphobia based on age group ($\omega=.18$) (see Table 23). Planned contrasts revealed that women over 26 experienced transphobia more frequently than those 25 and under, $t(147)=-3.042$, $p=.003$, $r=.009$. There were no significant differences between the 26-35 and 36+ age groups, $t(106)=.361$, $p=.719$, $r=.003$.

Table 23

ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning discrimination, based on age

	Levene's test of significance	F	df	p
People react positively when I tell them I am a DJ (N=170)		1.923	2, 167	.149
I have experienced sexism within the EDM scene (N=170)		.031	2, 167	.969
I have experienced racism within the scene (N=170)	$p=.015^{\wedge}$	2.300	2, 109	.105
I have experienced homophobia within the scene (N=170)	$p=.006^{\wedge}$	2.412	2, 108	.094
I have experienced transphobia within the scene (N=170)	$p=.000^{\wedge}$	4.805	2, 107	.010*
I have experienced financial barriers that have prevented me from progressing in my DJ career (N=170)		.206	2, 167	.814

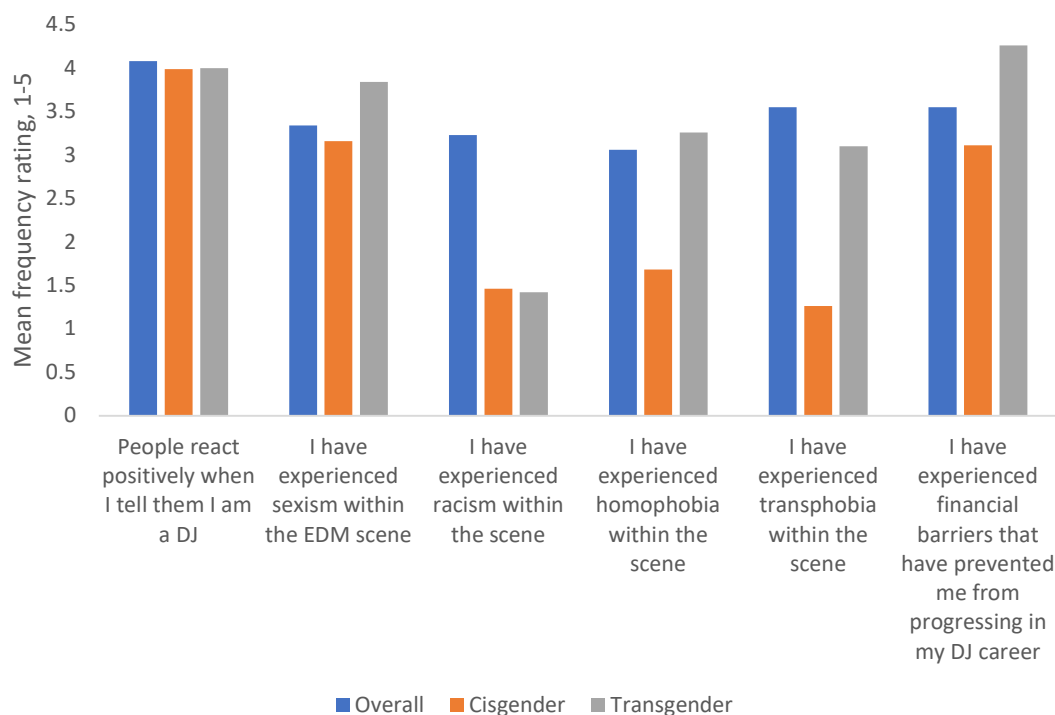
[^] Welch's *F* was used instead, * $p < .05$

5.3.4.3 Gender.

As shown in Figure 14, transgender participants reported experiencing a higher frequency of discrimination compared to their cisgender peers. The greatest differences were observable in response to homophobia, transphobia, and financial barriers.

Figure 14

Comparing participants' mean frequency ratings to statements concerning discrimination among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



5.3.4.4 Sexuality.

An independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported that experiences of homophobia, transphobia, and financial barriers significantly differed by sexuality (see Table 24). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values highlighted that gay/queer women experienced more homophobia than heterosexual/straight women ($p=.002$, $r=.369$). However, there were no significant differences between heterosexual/straight and bi/pansexual women ($p=.127$, $r=.177$) or bi/pansexual and gay/queer women ($p=.156$, $r=-.183$).

Equally, gay/queer women experienced more transphobia than bi/pansexual women ($p=.016$, $r=-.261$). However, there were no significant differences between heterosexual/straight and bi/pansexual women ($p=1.000$, $r=-.035$) or heterosexual/straight and gay/queer women ($p=.073$, $r=.241$).

Finally, gay/queer women also encountered financial barriers more frequently than heterosexual/straight women ($p=.028$, $r=.279$). However, there were no significant differences between heterosexual/straight and bi/pansexual women ($p=.168$, $r=.166$) or bi/pansexual and gay/queer women ($p=.771$, $r=-.107$).

Table 24

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on sexuality

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
People react positively when I tell them I am a DJ ($N=160$)	1.031	2	.597
I have experienced sexism within the EDM scene ($N=160$)	4.189	2	.123
I have experienced racism within the scene ($N=160$)	1.436	2	.488
I have experienced homophobia within the scene ($N=160$)	12.024	2	.002*
I have experienced transphobia within the scene ($N=160$)	8.057	2	.018*
I have experienced financial barriers that have prevented me from progressing in my DJ career ($N=160$)	7.283	2	.026*

* $p<.05$

5.3.4.5 Professional Level.

An independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported significant differences in the extent to which participants experienced sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, and financial barriers, based on professional level (see Table 25). With regard to sexism, pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that amateur DJs

experienced sexism less frequently than semi-professional ($p=.029$, $r=-.224$) or professional DJs ($p=.001$, $r=-.411$). There were no significant differences between semi-professional and professional DJs ($p=.265$, $r=-.142$).

Secondly, professionals experienced racism more frequently than amateurs ($p=.012$, $r=-.331$) or semi-professionals ($p=.002$, $r=-.280$). There were no significant differences between amateur and semi-professional DJs ($p=1.000$, $r=-.031$).

Professional DJs also experienced homophobia more frequently than amateurs ($p=.002$, $r=-.386$). However, there were no significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=.169$, $r=-.166$) or semi-professionals and professionals ($p=.084$, $r=-.183$).

Further, professional DJs experienced transphobia more frequently than semi-professional DJs ($p=.030$, $r=-.214$). There were no significant differences between amateur and semi-professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.033$) or amateurs and professionals ($p=.065$, $r=-.297$).

Finally, semi-professional DJs experienced financial barriers more frequently than amateurs ($p=.033$, $r=-.220$). There were no significant differences between amateur and professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.107$) or professionals and semi-professionals ($p=.268$, $r=.142$).

Table 25

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on professional level

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
People react positively when I tell them I am a DJ (<i>N</i> =170)	4.233	2	.120
I have experienced sexism within the EDM scene (<i>N</i> =170)	12.720	2	.002*
I have experienced racism within the scene (<i>N</i> =170)	12.862	2	.002*
I have experienced homophobia within the scene (<i>N</i> =170)	11.424	2	.003*
I have experienced transphobia within the scene (<i>N</i> =170)	7.798	2	.020*
I have experienced financial barriers that have prevented me from progressing in my DJ career (<i>N</i> =170)	7.599	2	.022*

* $p < .05$

5.3.4.6 Career Length.

An independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test only reported a significant difference in the extent to which participants experienced sexism, according to career length (see Table 26). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted *p*-values revealed that participants who had been DJing for over 16 years experienced sexism more frequently than those who had been DJing for <1-5 years ($p=.009$, $r=-.025$). There were no significant differences between the <1-5 year and 6-15 ($p=.312$, $r=-.13$) or 6-15 and over 16 categories ($p=.629$, $r=-.015$).

Table 26

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on career length

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I have experienced sexism within the EDM scene (<i>N</i> =170)	9.674	2	.008*
I have experienced racism within the scene (<i>N</i> =170)	5.217	2	.074
I have experienced homophobia within the scene (<i>N</i> =170)	3.037	2	.219
I have experienced transphobia within the scene (<i>N</i> =170)	2.796	2	.247
I have experienced financial barriers that have prevented me from progressing in my DJ career (<i>N</i> =170)	.255	2	.880

* $p < .05$

5.3.4.7 Average Number of Gigs Played a Month.

A Kruskal-Wallis test reported that experiences of racism and transphobia significantly differed based on average number of gigs played a month (see Table 27). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p values revealed that women who played <1 gig a month experienced racism less frequently than those who played 4+ gigs ($p=.029$, $r=-.26$). There were no significant differences between those who played <1 and 1-3 ($p=.363$, $r=-.15$) or 1-3 and 4+ gigs ($p=.638$, $r=-.12$).

Similarly, women who played <1 gig a month experienced transphobia less frequently than those who played 4+ ($p=.018$, $r=-.27$). There were no significant differences between those who played <1 and 1-3 ($p=.843$, $r=-.10$) or 1-3 and 4+ gigs ($p=.163$, $r=-.18$).

Table 27

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced discrimination, based on average number of gigs played a month

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I have experienced sexism within the EDM scene (<i>N</i> =169)	1.379	2	.497
I have experienced racism within the scene (<i>N</i> =169)	6.688	2	.035*
I have experienced homophobia within the scene (<i>N</i> =169)	5.955	2	.051
I have experienced transphobia within the scene (<i>N</i> =169)	7.865	2	.020*
I have experienced financial barriers that have prevented me from progressing in my DJ career (<i>N</i> =169)	1.343	2	.511

* $p < .05$

5.3.5 DJing and sexual harassment

Participants were presented with statements concerning their experiences of sexual harassment in the EDM scene. Some questions (e.g. “I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ”) were measured using a frequency-based Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, all the time). In some cases, the scale points were combined into two broader categories to aid comparison: ‘never/rarely’ and ‘at least sometimes’ (the latter including sometimes, often, and all the time).

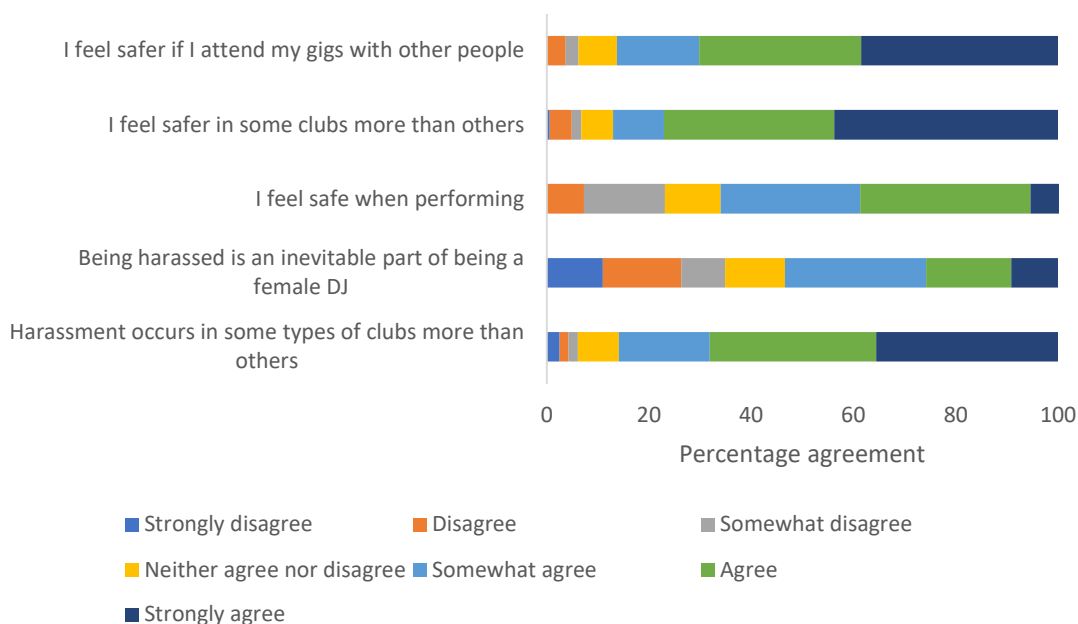
5.3.5.1 Overall.

Two thirds (66.1%) of participants agreed that they feel safe when performing. Most agreed that they felt safer in some clubs more than others (87%) or if they attended their gigs with other people (86.3%). Over half of the sample (53.4%) agreed that

harassment was an inevitable part of being a female DJ, and 85.9% agreed that it occurred in some clubs more than others (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

Participants' extent of agreement with statements concerning safety and experiences of harassment (N=176)



Although 71.6% of participants said that they adopted certain measures to ensure their safety when playing gigs at least sometimes, 40.7% had been sexually harassed/assaulted sometimes or more whilst working as a DJ (see Figure 16). Further, the majority of women (69.9%) were aware of other female DJs who had experienced sexual harassment (see Figure 17).

Figure 16

Extent to which participants had experienced harassment or adopted safety measures (N=176)

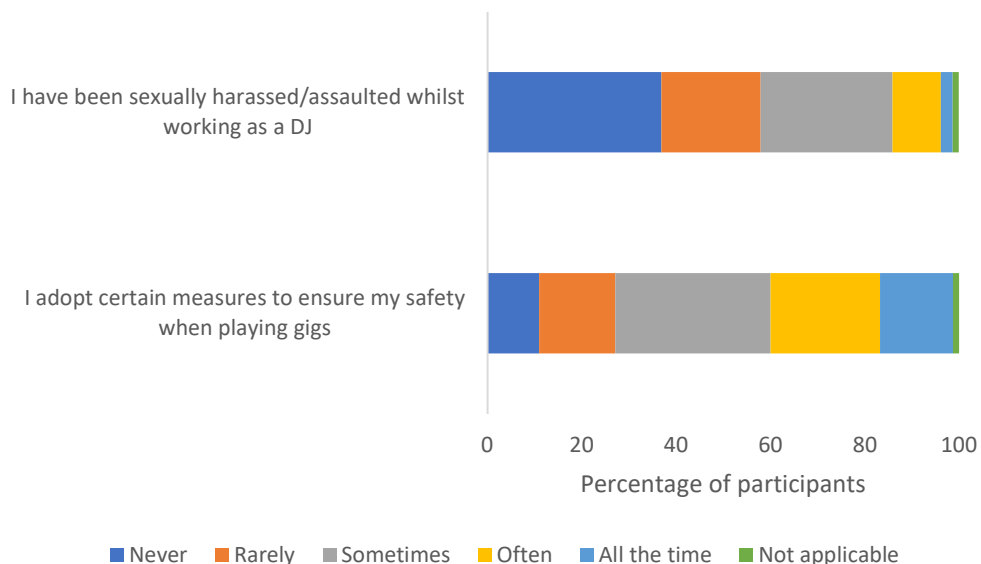
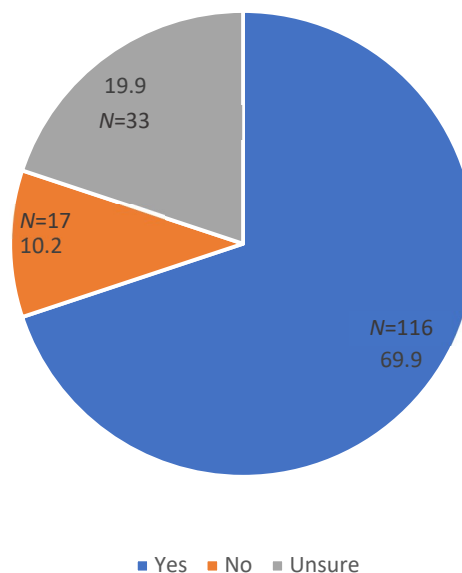


Figure 17

Percentage of participants who were aware of other female DJs who had been sexually harassed (N=166)

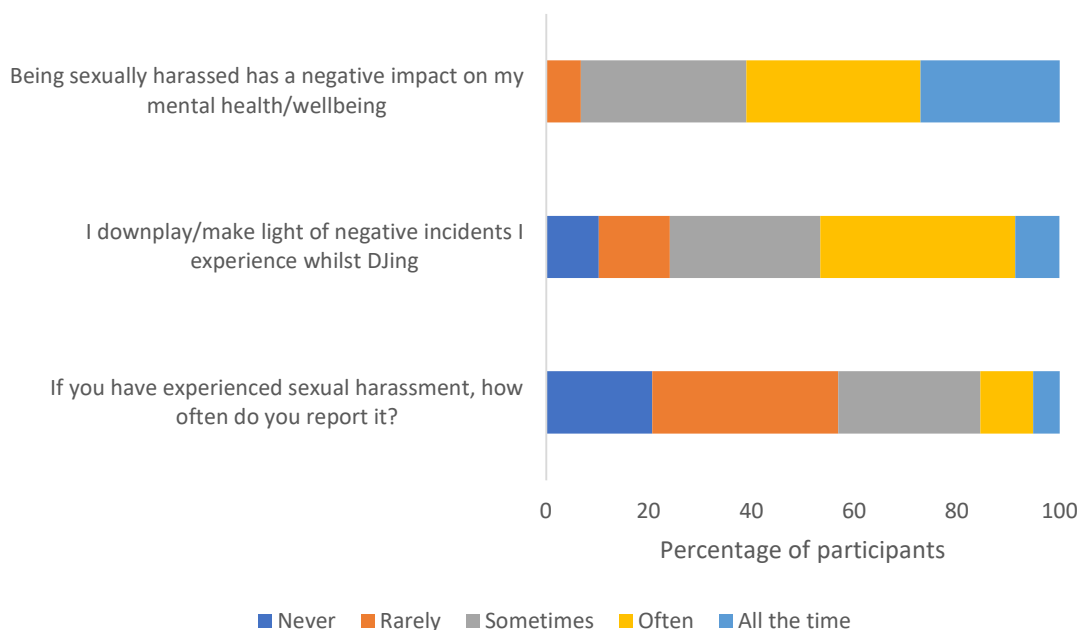


Of those who had experienced sexual harassment at least sometimes (40.7%), the majority (93.2%) stated that it had a negative impact on their mental health

‘sometimes’, ‘often’, or ‘all the time’. Yet, over half (56.9%) never or rarely reported it, with 75.8% downplaying or making light of negative incidents they experienced whilst DJing at least sometimes (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

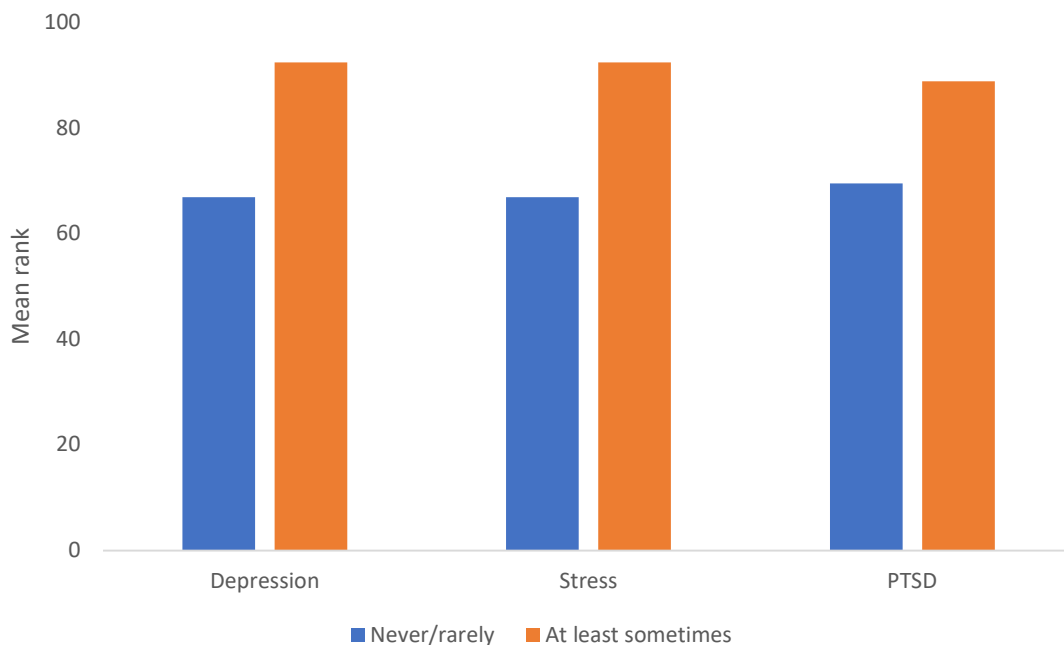
Extent to which participants, who reported experiencing harassment, engaged in certain behaviours following the incident (N=118)



When examining participants’ mean ranks in response to specific mental health issues (see Figure 19), those who had been sexually harassed/assaulted at least sometimes experienced depression, stress, and PTSD significantly more frequently than those who had never/rarely been harassed (see Table 28).

Figure 19

Comparing the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health issues, among those who reported 'never/rarely' (N=91) and 'at least sometimes' (N=64) to 'I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ'

**Table 28**

Mann-Whitney *U* statistics for differences in the extent to which participants experienced specific mental health problems among those who reported 'never/rarely' (N=91) and 'at least sometimes' (N=64) to 'I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ'

	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Depression	3834.5	3.700	.000**	.30
Stress	3664	2.870	.004*	.23
PTSD	3601.5	3.540	.000**	.29

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

5.3.5.2 Age.

A one-way independent ANOVA only reported a significant difference in response to 'I downplay/make light of negative incidents I experience whilst DJing' ($\omega = .27$) based on age (see Table 29). Planned contrasts revealed that women aged 26-35

agreed with this statement more than those aged 36+, $t(55)=2.517$, $p=.015$, $r=.03$.

There were no significant differences between those aged <25 and 26+, $t(55)=.320$, $p=.750$, $r=.003$.

Table 29

ANOVA statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning DJing and sexual harassment, based on age

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
If you have experienced sexual harassment, how often do you report it? ($N=58$)	.488	2, 55	.617
I downplay/make light of negative incidents I experience whilst DJing ($N=58$)	3.282	2, 55	.045*
Being sexually harassed has a negative impact on my mental health/wellbeing ($N=59$)	1.032	2, 56	.363

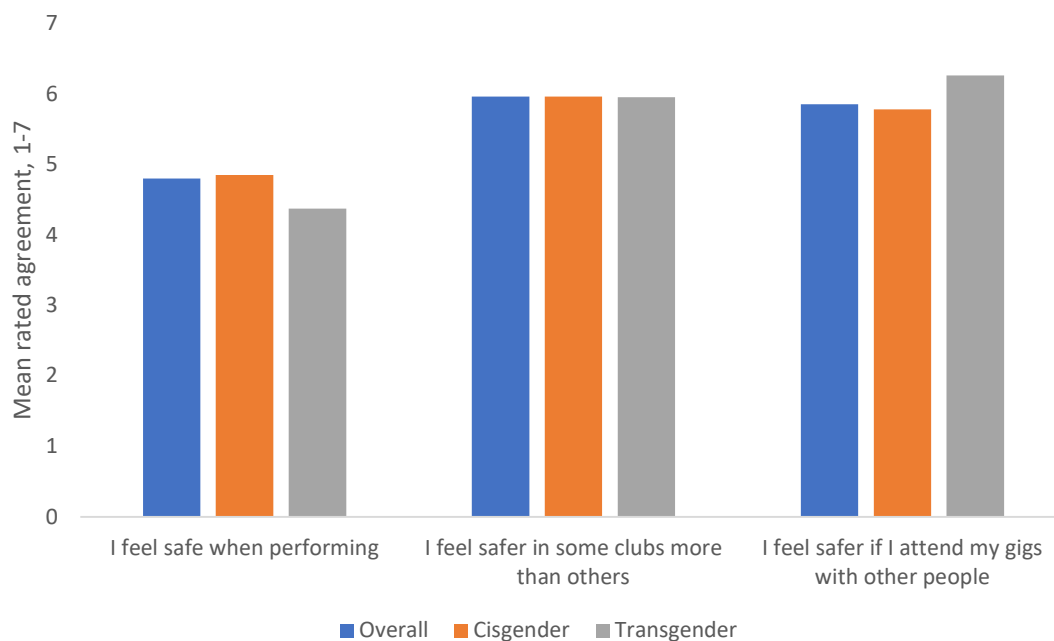
* $p < .05$

5.3.5.3 Gender.

With regard to safety, Figure 20 illustrates that transgender women felt less safe than their cisgender peers, however feelings of safety improved if they attended their gigs with other people.

Figure 20

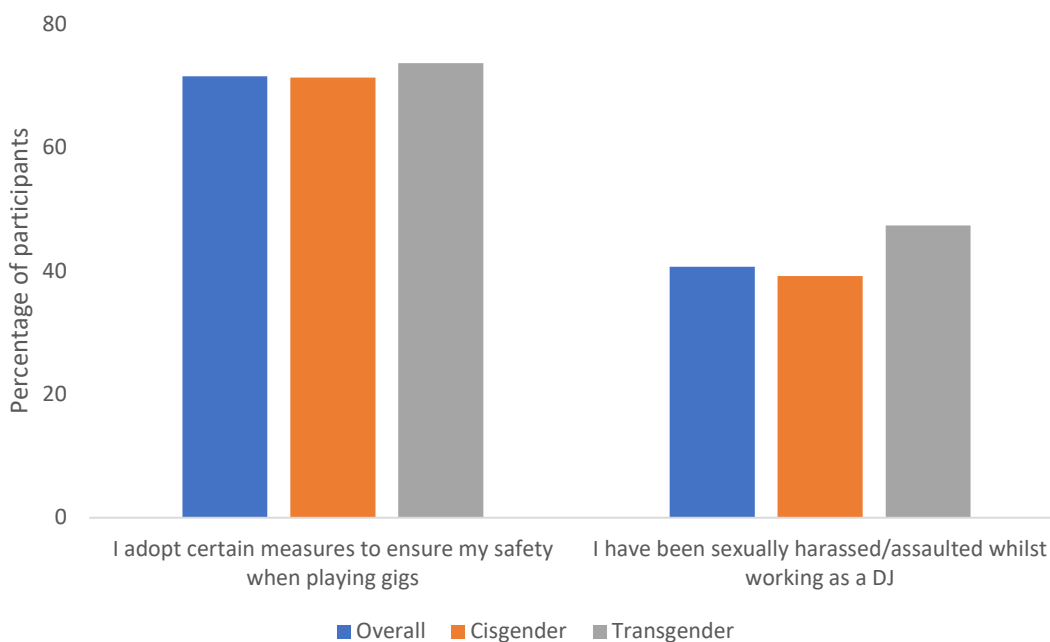
Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning safety and sexual harassment, among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



Transgender women reported adopting safety measures and experiencing sexual harassment or assault whilst working as a DJ more frequently than cisgender women (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

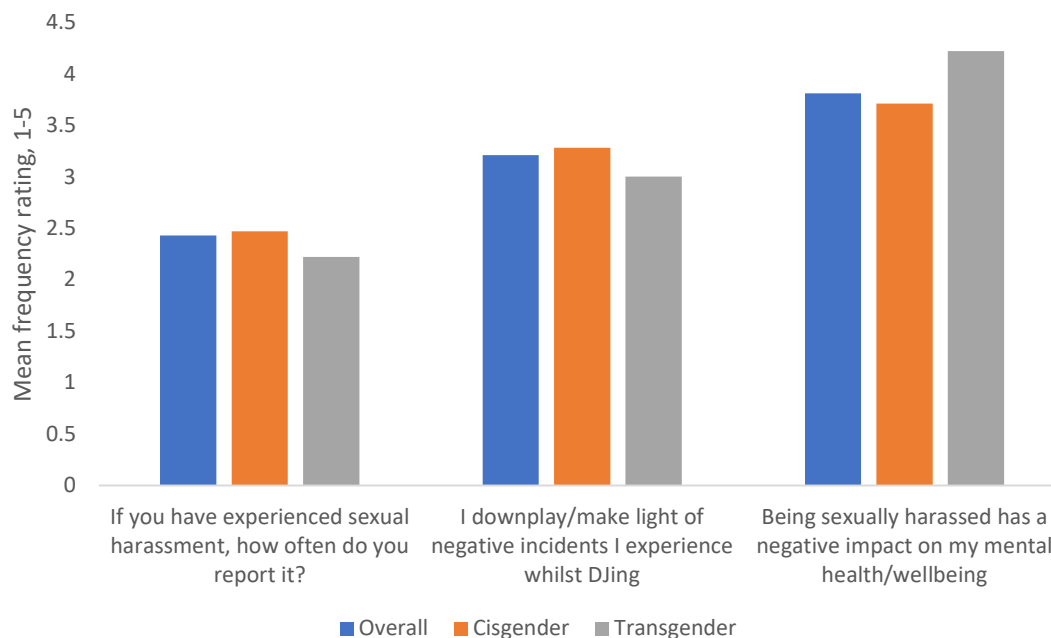
Comparing the extent to which participants experienced harassment behaviours at least sometimes, among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



Finally, trans women were less likely to report sexual harassment (e.g. to venue staff/security) or to downplay/make light of their negative experiences. However, the experience of being harassed had a negative impact on trans women's mental health/wellbeing more frequently. In contrast, the opposite pattern was observable for cisgender women (see Figure 22).

Figure 22

Comparing the extent to which participants, who had been harassed, engaged in certain behaviours following the experience, among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



5.3.5.4 Professional Level.

An independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test reported that responses to the statement ‘harassment occurs in some types of clubs more than others’ differed across professional level (see Table 30). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that professionals ($p=.037$, $r=-.289$) and semi-professionals ($p=.001$, $r=-.302$) both agreed with this statement more than amateurs. There were no significant differences between professionals and semi-professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=.061$).

Secondly, responses to the statement ‘being harassed is an inevitable part of being a female DJ’ significantly differed based on level of profession (see Table 30). Professional DJs agreed with this statement more than amateurs ($p=.038$, $r=-.288$). There were no significant differences between amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=.260$, $r=-.149$) and semi-professionals and professionals ($p=.579$, $r=-.109$).

There were further differences in responses to ‘I feel safer in some clubs more than others’ (see Table 30). However, there were no significant differences between amateurs and professionals ($p=1.000$, $r=-.096$), amateurs and semi-professionals ($p=.053$, $r=-.206$), or professionals and semi-professionals ($p=.285$, $r=.139$). Evidently, whilst the Kruskal-Wallis test showed overall significant differences, the adjustments for multiple comparisons in the post-hoc tests explains the lack of significance for the pairs.

Table 30

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants’ responses to questions concerning safety, based on professional level

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Harassment occurs in some types of clubs more than others ($N=163$)	12.206	2	.002*
Being harassed is an inevitable part of being a female DJ ($N=163$)	6.203	2	.045*
I feel safe when performing ($N=165$)	6.820	2	.033*
I feel safer in some clubs more than others ($N=162$)	4.012	2	.135
I feel safer if I attend my gigs with other people ($N=161$)	1.379	2	.502

* $p < .05$

5.3.5.5 Career Length.

An independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test showed a significant difference in participants' adoption of safety measures based on career length (see Table 31). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values illustrated that women who had been DJing for <1-5 years adopted safety measures less frequently than those who had been DJing for 6-15 years ($p=.002$, $r=-.028$). However, there were no significant differences between the <1-5 and 16+ ($p=.217$, $r=-.015$) and 6-15 and 16+ ($p=.629$, $r=.14$) categories.

Equally, women who had been DJing for <1-5 years experienced harassment less frequently than those who had been DJing for 6-15 ($p=.031$, $r=-.21$) and over 16 years ($p=.629$, $r=-.23$). There were no significant differences between the 6-15 and 16+ categories ($p=.629$, $r=-.03$) (see Table 31).

Table 31

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning harassment behaviours, based on career length

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I adopt certain measures to ensure my safety when playing gigs ($N=155$)	12.223	2	.002*
I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ ($N=157$)	11.144	2	.004*

* $p<.05$

5.3.5.6 Average Number of Gigs Played a Month.

A Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant difference in the extent to which participants experienced sexual harassment/assault, based on average number of gigs

(see Table 32). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p values revealed that participants who played 4+ gigs a month experienced sexual harassment/assault more frequently than those who played <1 ($p=.018$, $r=-.27$) or 1-3 gigs ($p=.003$, $r=-.30$). There were no significant differences between those who played <1 and 1-3 gigs ($p=1.000$, $r=.02$).

Table 32

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning harassment behaviours, based on average number of gigs played a month

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I adopt certain measures to ensure my safety when playing gigs ($N=155$)	.538	2	.764
I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ ($N=157$)	12.029	2	.002*

* $p < .05$

Further, significant differences were also reported in response to 'being sexually harassed has a negative impact on my mental health/wellbeing' (see Table 33). However, pairwise comparisons with adjusted p values highlighted no significant differences between women who played <1 and 4+ ($p=1.000$, $r=.02$), <1 and 1-3 ($p=.076$, $r=-.21$), and 1-3 and 4+ gigs a month ($p=.070$, $r=.21$). Evidently, whilst the Kruskal-Wallis test reported overall significant differences, the adjustments for multiple comparisons in the post-hoc tests explains the lack of significance for the pairs.

Table 33

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in participants' responses to questions concerning safety, based on average number of gigs played

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
If you experience sexual harassment, how often do you report it? (<i>N</i> =58)	4.253	2	.119
I downplay make light of negative incidents I experience whilst DJing (<i>N</i> =58)	4.246	2	.120
Being sexually harassed has a negative impact on my mental health/wellbeing (<i>N</i> =59)	6.735	2	.034*

* $p < .05$

5.3.6 DJing and queer spaces

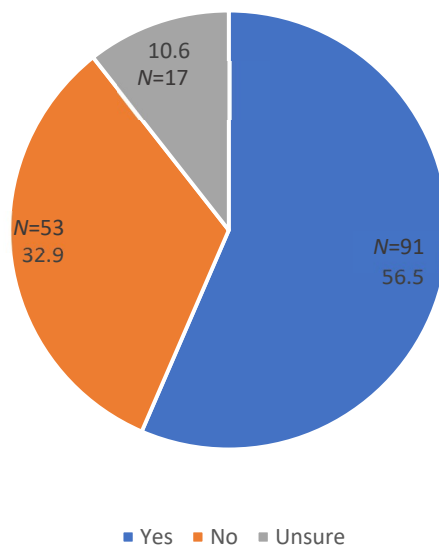
Participants were asked about the extent to which they were involved in their local queer scene. This was measured using a frequency-based Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, all time). In some cases, the scale points were combined into two broader categories to aid comparison: 'never/rarely' and 'at least sometimes' (the latter including 'sometimes', 'often' and 'all the time').

5.3.6.1 Overall.

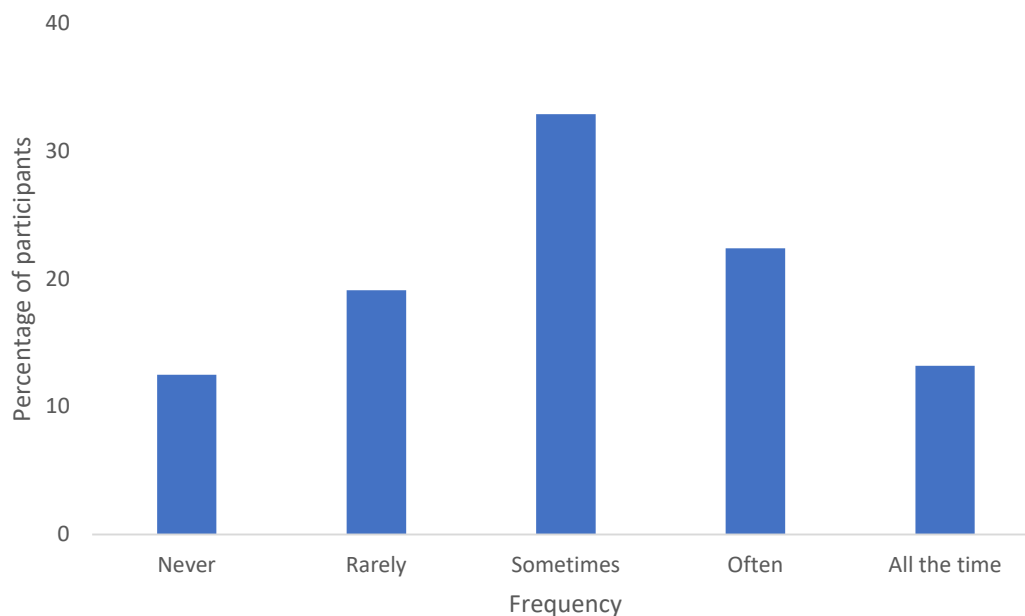
Participants were questioned about their experiences of playing at clubs or events considered to be queer or non-normative. Over half the sample (56.5%) identified as queer/LGBT+ (see Figure 23) and 68.5% participated in their local queer club scene at least sometimes (see Figure 24).

Figure 23

Percentage of participants who identified as queer/LGBT+ (N=161)

**Figure 24**

The extent to which participants were involved in their local queer scene (N=152)

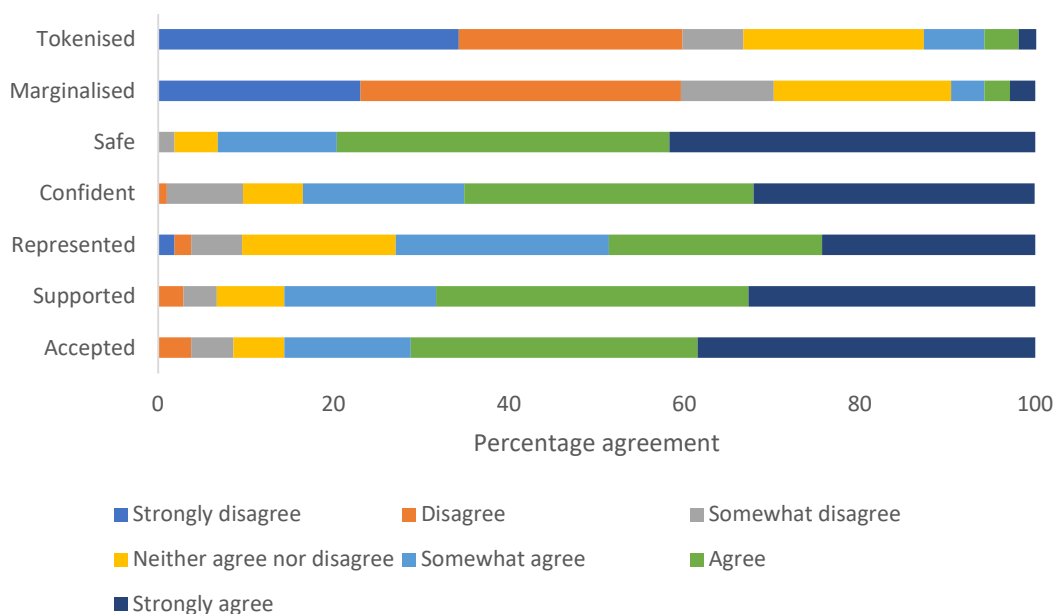


Women who participated in the queer scene at least sometimes were asked about their feelings towards it. Here, the picture was a positive one (see Figure 25). The majority of this group agreed that they felt accepted (85.6%), supported

(85.6%), represented (72.9%), confident (83.4%), and safe (93.2%). Only a small percentage felt marginalised (9.6%) or tokenised (12.8%) within the queer scene.

Figure 25

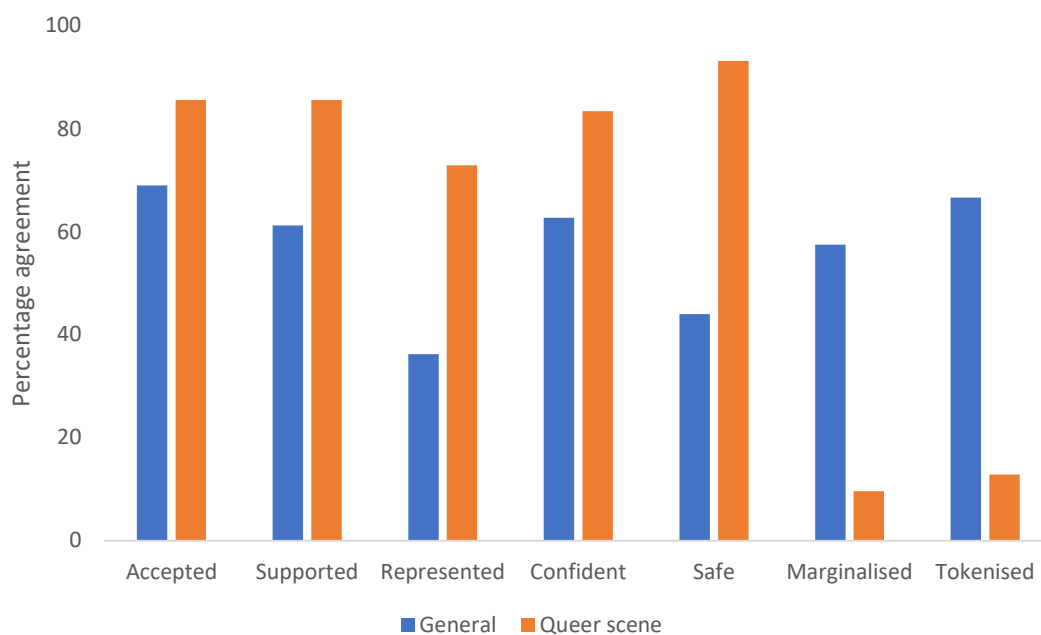
How participants, who were involved in the queer scene at least sometimes (N=73), felt within it



This data was compared with how participants felt within the EDM scene in general. Here, Figure 26 clearly illustrates that participants felt more accepted, supported, represented, confident, and safe within the queer scene. The greatest differences were observed in feelings of marginalisation and tokenism, which participants reported experiencing less in queer spaces.

Figure 26

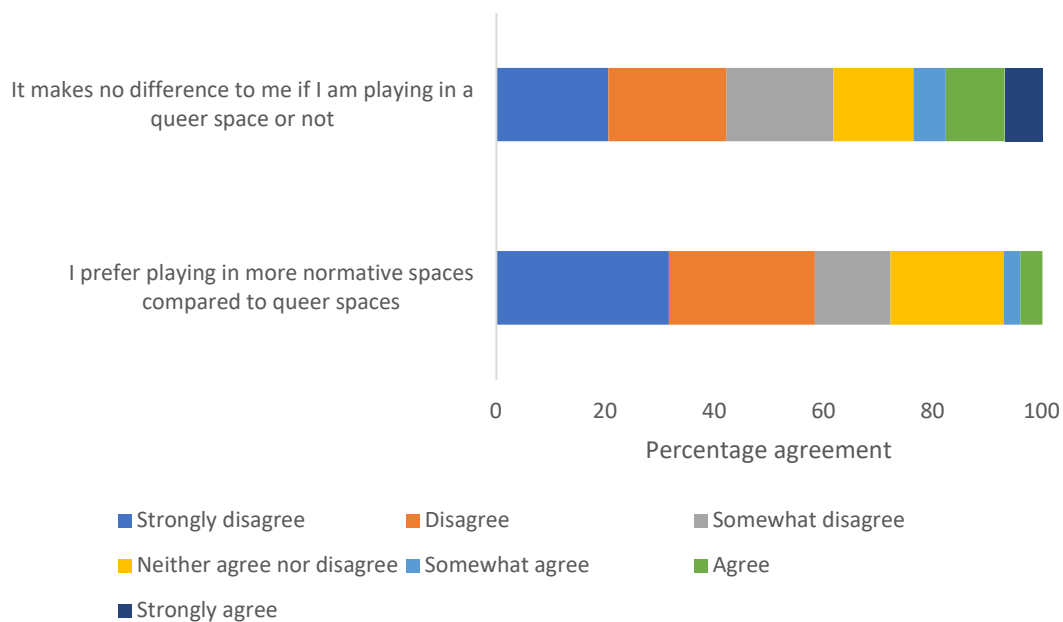
Comparing how participants felt in the general EDM scene (N=175) and queer scene (N=73)



Of those who participated in the queer scene at least sometimes, most (61.8%) felt that it made a difference whether they were playing in a queer space or not, with the majority of this group (72.3%) preferring these venues, compared to more normative environments (see Figure 27).

Figure 27

Participants' extent of agreement with statements concerning playing in queer spaces (N=75)

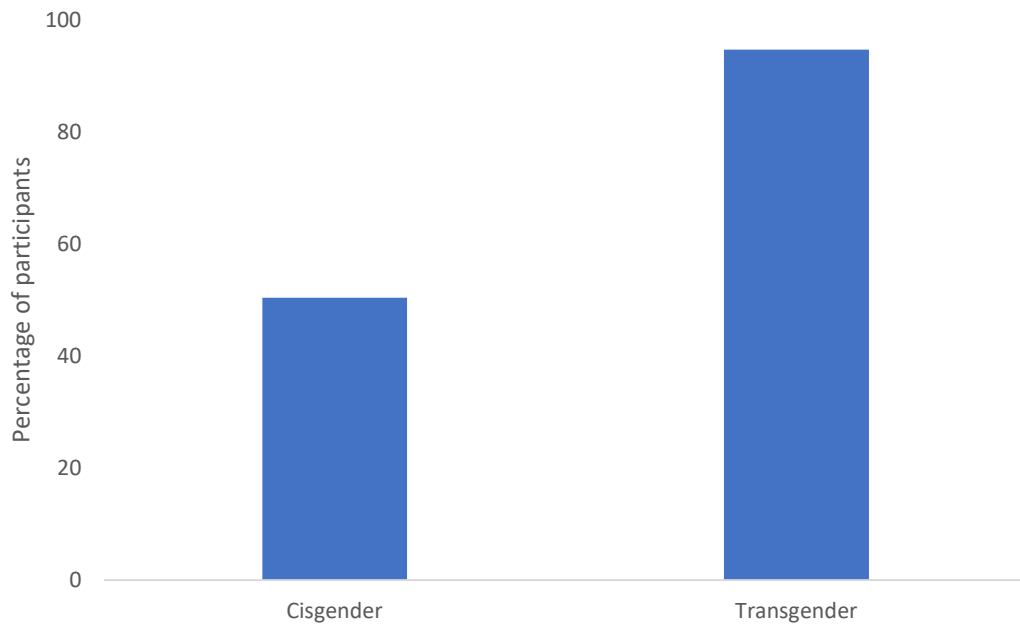


5.3.6.2 Gender.

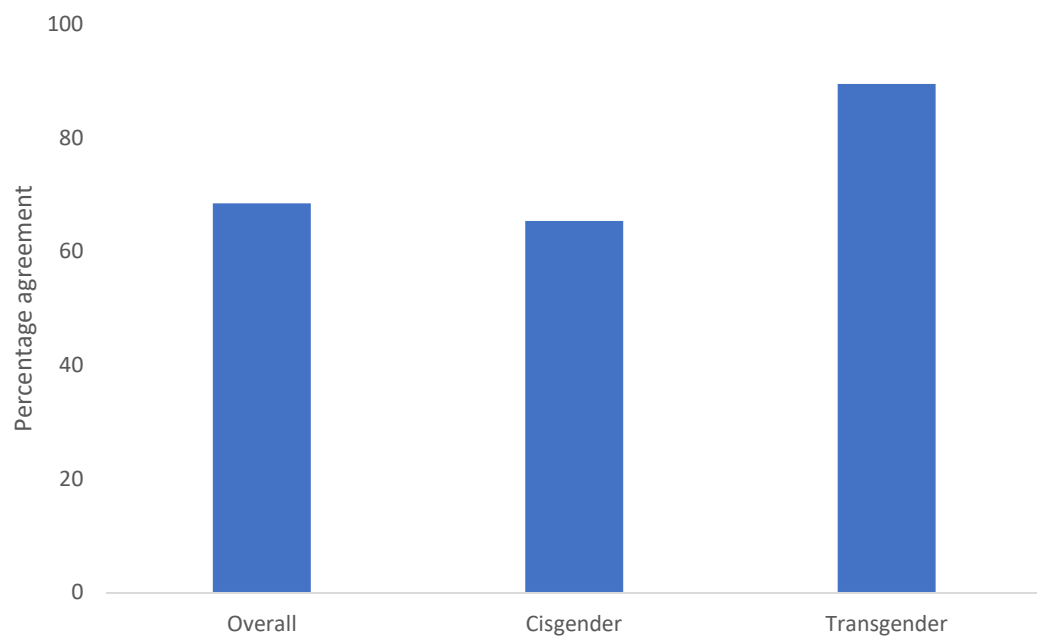
As Figure 28 highlights, the majority of transgender women identified as queer/LGBT+. Additionally, they participated in their local queer scene more frequently than cis women (see Figure 29).

Figure 28

Percentage of cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19) who identified as queer/LBGT+

**Figure 29**

Percentage of cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19) who were involved in their local queer club scene at least sometimes

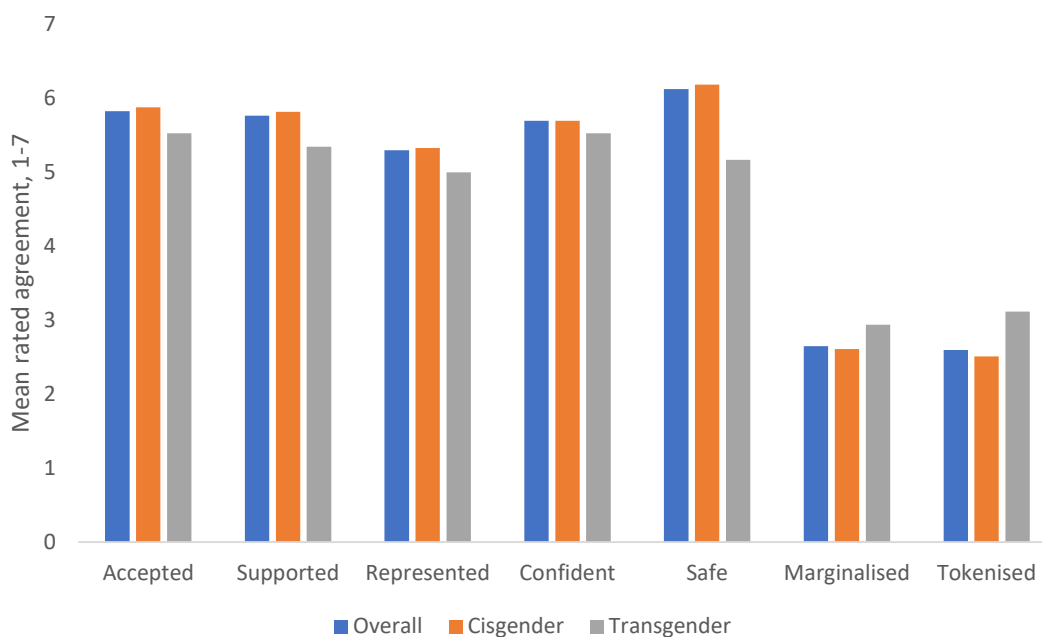


Despite this, trans DJs, who participated in their local queer scene at least sometimes, reported slightly more negative experiences in this scene overall

compared to cisgender DJs (see Figure 30). However, when compared to how they felt in the EDM scene in general (see Section 5.3.1.3), both trans and cis women reported more positive experiences than in non-normative spaces.

Figure 30

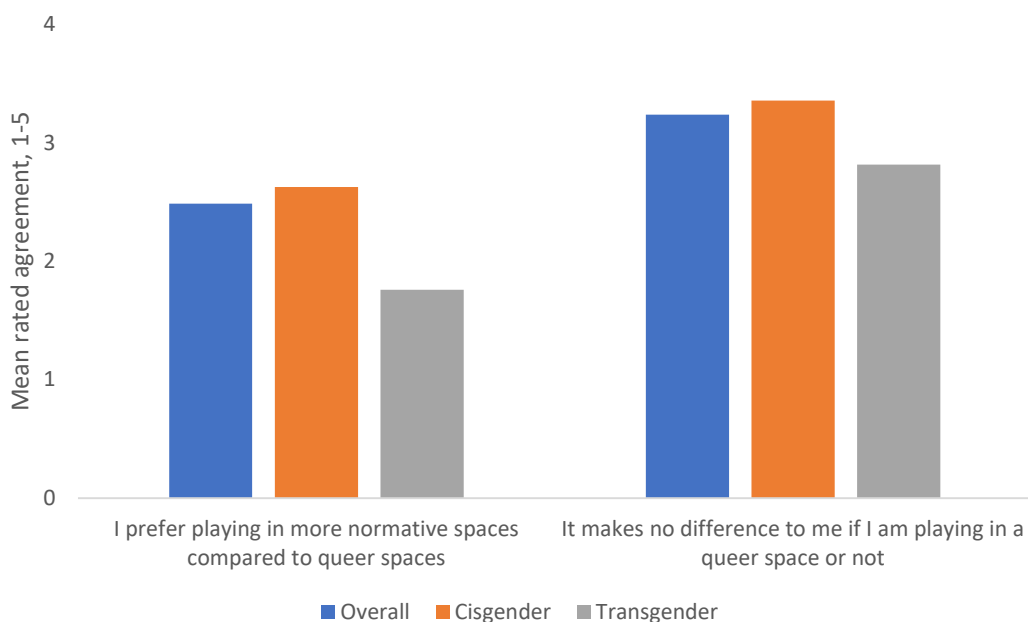
Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning how they felt in the queer scene, among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



Despite having more negative experiences in the queer scene, compared to cisgender women, transgender women preferred queer spaces to more normative ones and felt that it made a difference if they played in a queer space or not (see Figure 31).

Figure 31

Comparing participants' mean rated agreement to statements concerning playing in queer spaces, among cis (N=154) and trans women (N=19)



5.3.6.3 Sexuality.

A Kruskal-Wallis test highlighted significant differences in feelings of marginalisation and tokenism, based on sexuality (see Table 34). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p -values revealed that gay/queer women felt more tokenised than heterosexual/straight women ($p=.047$, $r=.259$). There were no significant differences between heterosexual/straight and bi/pansexual women ($p=.085$, $r=.191$) or bi/pansexual and gay/queer women ($p=1.000$, $r=-.051$).

Equally, there were no significant differences in feelings of marginalisation between heterosexual/straight and bi/pansexual women ($p=.092$, $r=.188$), heterosexual/straight and gay/queer women ($p=.063$, $r=.248$) or bi/pansexual and gay/queer women ($p=1.000$, $r=-.043$). Evidently, whilst the Kruskal-Wallis test reported overall significant differences, the adjustments for multiple comparisons in the post-hoc tests explains the lack of significance for the pairs.

Table 34

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the queer scene, based on sexuality

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Accepted (<i>N</i> =101)	.155	2	.926
Supported (<i>N</i> =101)	.672	2	.715
Represented (<i>N</i> =100)	1.066	2	.587
Confident (<i>N</i> =100)	.479	2	.787
Safe (<i>N</i> =100)	.808	2	.668
Marginalised (<i>N</i> =101)	6.482	2	.039*
Tokenised (<i>N</i> =99)	6.884	2	.032*

* $p < .05$

Additionally, responses to the statement ‘it makes no difference to me if I am playing in a queer space or not’ significantly differed based on sexuality (see Table 35). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted *p*-values demonstrated that straight women preferred playing in normative spaces more than queer women ($p = .039$, $r = -.266$). There were no significant differences between queer and bisexual women ($p = .451$, $r = .135$) or bisexual and straight women ($p = .542$, $r = -.117$).

Table 35

Kruskal-Wallis statistics for differences in how participants felt in the queer scene, based on sexuality

	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
I prefer playing in more normative spaces compared to queer spaces (N=98)	3.094	2	.213
I makes no difference to me if I am playing in a queer space or not (N=99)	6.173	2	.046*

* $p < .05$

5.4 Discussion

This section discusses the survey results, summarising the key findings from each of the six major themes (*being a woman in a male dominated scene, voice and visibility, wellbeing, discrimination, sexual harassment, queer spaces*), as well as considering how this data relates to the previous literature. The aim of Study 2 was to provide further evidence for the novel findings identified in Study 1 and facilitate comparisons between participants based on demographic factors, such as age, sexuality, and professional level.

5.4.1 Being a woman in a male dominated scene

Overall, the results for *Being a woman in a male dominated scene* present a contradictory picture. Most participants enjoyed being a female DJ and reported feeling accepted, supported, and confident within the scene. Yet, they also acknowledged that EDM is male dominated and that, as women, they did not have access to the same opportunities and resources as their male counterparts. In addition, less than half of participants felt safe and only a third felt represented. The

majority experienced marginalisation and tokenism, reporting that they were often the only woman on the line up.

A negative correlation between age and feelings of support was identified, whereby younger women felt more supported than their older counterparts. Here, it is important to draw upon the concept of homophily preferences, the propensity for individuals to associate with persons like themselves, which in turn influences access to mentors/mentorship opportunities (Kwiek & Roszkaand, 2021; McMillan, 2022; Roth, 2004). In this sense, older women may struggle to enter informal networks from which they can access support. Given that nightclubs are often centred around young people (Rymajdo, 2021), it may be the case that younger DJs are more likely to receive support in these spaces. A similar pattern was also observable in the current data in relation to representation. Previous studies have pointed to an age limit placed on women's participation in EDM, both as DJs and dancers (Duignan-Person, 2019; Gadir, 2017b; Gregory, 2007). As such, it is plausible that older women may leave the scene once they reach 35, creating a dearth of older female role models, and a lack of representation for those that remain.

In terms of sexuality, the present study reported that queer women felt more accepted than bisexual women but less accepted than straight women, contradicting Farrugia's (2012) belief that presenting as visibly queer allows women to be accepted within male dominated spaces. Instead, this finding aligns with Gadir's (2017a) assertion that heteronormative ideals have replaced the queerness and gender/sexual fluidity present in many of the early dance music scenes. In this sense, the EDM scene reflects the heteronormativity present in wider society. For example, homophobia is rife within society, indicating that LGBT+ individuals are still not accepted by mainstream society (Chao-Fong, 2021; Nagesh, 2022). To further this

point, the current research reported that bisexual women felt less accepted within the male dominated EDM scene than queer women. This is perhaps unsurprising given that biphobia/bi-erasure are prevalent in both straight and queer communities (Mulick & Wright, 2002; Stewart, 2021). It could therefore be argued that such prejudices may extend into both mainstream and alternative EDM spaces. Importantly, this finding contradicts the harmful assumption that bisexual individuals hold certain 'privileges' because their relationships are often perceived as 'straight passing' (White, 2017).

Career factors (e.g. professional level, career length, average number of gigs played) were perceived to influence participants' experiences in the present study. Here, it is important to note that these variables may be closely linked as they relate to extent of experience within the scene. Amateur DJs agreed more than professionals that their gender did not impact their experiences within the EDM scene. Here, it may be the case that the effects of gender are only seen higher up the EDM hierarchy. Built on gendered power relations, this hierarchy ensures that women's involvement is characterised as the 'passive' clubber, in contrast to the 'active' male DJ (Farrugia, 2004a; 2012; Hutton, 2006; McRobbie, 1994; Thornton, 1995).

Finally, professional DJs reported feeling more tokenised than amateurs in this study. The most apparent explanation may be that professionals simply have more experience in the scene and, as such, are likely to have encountered more situations in which they considered their involvement to be tokenistic (e.g. being booked simply because they are a woman). Alternately, this finding may be explained by the gender composition of the spaces in which professionals operate. Professional DJs are more likely to operate in the mainstream, given their popularity

and status. However, mainstream success is more difficult for individuals who are not cis, White, or male (the Jaguar Foundation, 2022). Indeed, large, mainstream dance music events feature less women DJs on their line up than smaller festivals (the Jaguar Foundation, 2022). Due to the lack of female representation in mainstream spaces, women's gender becomes salient, and they experience heightened visibility as members of the category 'female DJ' whilst remaining invisible as individuals (Kimmel, 2017). This results in 'token' experiences, whereby women are being booked based on gender rather than their ability as a DJ, for example.

5.4.2 Voice and visibility

There was a strong feminist/activist element to participants' role as female DJs. Although there were few significant demographic differences in response to these statements, it emerged that DJs with more experience (i.e. age, professional level, number of gigs played) reported that they engaged more with the political connotations of their role. Older women felt as though they were representing not just themselves, but female DJs as a whole more strongly than their younger counterparts. Here, older women may see themselves as having a mentoring role and feel a responsibility to set an example to younger DJs (see Rymajdo, 2021), particularly as many identified a lack of role models when they began their career (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.2.2).

Interestingly, amateurs and women who played the fewest number of gigs agreed less than professionals and those who played more gigs that their identity as a female DJ was political. It may be the case that the former groups do not see themselves as having a large platform from which to exert political influence or that any activism they do will not be important due to their status. This is reflected in

Blackstone's (2007) assessment of college anti-rape activism. Here, students refuted any political connotations of their role as they did not believe their work serious enough to be regarded as 'activism'. Alternatively, Bayton (1993) acknowledged that a woman's decision to pursue music is often motivated by political interests, such as the fight for equality. In this sense, professional DJs may have chosen to pursue their craft full-time as they see their identity as a woman in a male dominated industry as political and wish to bring about change within the scene. The opinion of amateur DJs, on the other hand, parallels Vaugeois's (2007) claim that musicians often see politics as unrelated to, and independent, from their music. The current study also found that professional DJs agreed more than semi-professionals that they were able to challenge sexism, mirroring Vaugeois' (2007) discussion of materiality, ideology, and power in the lives of musicians. In this, Vaugeois (2007) stated that musicians often become involved in political affairs which they are inadequately equipped to deal with. Here, professional DJs have more experience and a greater standing in the scene and, as such, they may feel more confident, and thus equipped, to challenge sexism within it.

5.4.3 DJing and wellbeing

Broadly, DJing was perceived to have a positive impact on wellbeing. Participants reported that DJing acted as a form of therapy, improving mood, and allowing for the expression of emotion, along with the additional benefits support from others in the scene can provide. To date, there is no research on the positive impact of DJing on wellbeing. However, when considering active musical participation more broadly, there is a large body of evidence to support these benefits (see Chin & Rickard, 2014; Creech et al., 2013; Dingle et al., 2021; Douglas, 2019; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Gabrielsson, 2011; Groarke et al., 2020; Groarke & Hogan, 2016; Groot et al.,

2021; Saarikallio, 2011; Southcott & Joseph, 2015; van Goethem & Sloboda, 2011). However, caution must be taken when making comparisons between DJs and musicians in general. There are nuances to being a DJ (e.g. they often play later and for longer, the culture of substance use within EDM, constant touring), which are likely to yield differences between DJs' and other musicians' wellbeing.

Crucially, participants agreed with the positive wellbeing statements to a greater extent than the negative statements, such as 'it takes me some time to mentally recover following a DJ gig' and 'DJing is more of a chore than it used to be'. Additionally, most women also disagreed with the statement 'I do not think I can extend my DJ career for much longer'. As such, it can be concluded that, in general, DJing is perceived to have a largely positive impact on female DJs' wellbeing.

It is noteworthy that most participants reported experiencing stress and anxiety as a result of DJing, but not PTSD or depression. Here, the results are only partly consistent with existing research. They contradict reports that professional musicians are more likely to suffer from depression than the general population (Ackermann et al., 2014; Gross & Musgrave, 2016; Kegelaers, Schuijjer et al., 2021) and that active musical engagement can reduce stress (Bittman et al., 2005; De Witte, 2022; Wachi et al., 2007). However, the present findings confirm that musicians experience higher levels of anxiety compared to the general population (Barbar et al., 2014; Kegelaers, Schuijjer et al., 2021). Although, this latter point may be simply explained by the fact that women are more likely than men to suffer from anxiety (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; Lewinsohn et al., 1998; Mahon, 2023), and experience higher levels of anxiety in comparison to males (Gao et al., 2020).

Professional DJs in the current study also reported experiencing depression and PTSD more frequently than semi-professionals. An explanation for these mental health differences may be that, due to their status, professionals feel greater pressure to perform well. As such, they may experience a greater ‘crash’ in emotions if a gig does not go as well as they hoped, as they may feel that they will not be re-booked, for example. This may be similar for semi-professionals but is exacerbated for professionals given that they rely on DJing for their income. This supports research by Ackerman et al. (2014) and Kenny et al. (2014) that 22% of professional orchestra musicians experienced depression and PTSD. Although neither study elaborated on this data, some musicians’ reports of their worst performance have been found to mirror the narratives of PTSD sufferers (Kenny, 2011). In the context of the present study, PTSD may not be related to the performance itself but to incidents experienced within the wider clubbing environment. These may include sexual harassment, which has been shown to predict PTSD (Gómez, 2021; Martinmäki et al., 2023; McDermut et al., 2000; Stockdale et al., 2009; Wolfe et al., 1998).

It is important to acknowledge that, in the present study, participants self-identified as professional, semi-professional, or amateur. Loveday et al.’s (2023) study of musician’s mental health reported that anxiety, depression, and general wellbeing were predicted by whether or not music was one’s main profession, not professional level. This is crucial as an individual may be a professional DJ but not perceive DJing to be their main career (for example, they may also be a producer) and vice versa. As participants were not given a description of each professional level, it is unknown what factors they based their professional status on (e.g. if music is their main career, amount of money earned). Consequently, caution must be taken when interpreting these results.

Equally, the impact of substance use and how this may influence participants' mental health must be considered, given how ingrained drug culture is within the EDM scene (Mulder et al., 2009; Palamar et al., 2019). Acutely, alcohol is perceived to reduce stress and anxiety (Kosendiak et al., 2021; Sidor & Rzymiski, 2020), whilst recreational drugs such as amphetamines and cocaine can produce a subjective feeling of increased wellbeing (Amigó, 2023; West, 2004). However, when taken chronically, these substances increase anxiety (Aharonovich et al., 2021; Di Sclafani et al., 2007) and depression (West 2004). This study did not measure alcohol/drug use. As such, it is unknown if substance use may have confounded participants' wellbeing ratings.

It must be noted that much of the previous literature on musicians' wellbeing used a mixed-gender sample (see Bonde et al., 2018; Holst et al., 2012; Kegelaers, Schuijjer et al., 2021; Loveday et al., 2022) whilst the current study surveyed women only. This may explain the difference in the results. However, the impact of musicians' gender on wellbeing is much contested. Some studies have reported that being a professional musician has a greater negative wellbeing impact on men (Hamilton et al., 1995), whilst others have found more negative wellbeing consequences for women (Holst et al., 2012; Kegelaers, Schuijjer et al., 2021; Johansson & Theorell, 2003; Spiro et al., 2021; Vaag et al., 2016). As such, it may be plausible that the outcome depends on the sample used.

Although physical health problems were reported less often than stress and anxiety in this study, over half of participants still reported experiencing back problems, hearing problems, insomnia/fatigue, and needed to allow time to physically recover following a gig. Hearing loss in DJs is well documented (see Bray et al., 2004; Pocock, 2024; Potier et al., 2009; Santos et al., 2007), however back

problems are only discussed in the context of orchestral musicians (Leaver et al., 2011; Paarup, et al., 2011; Rodríguez-Gude et al., 2023; Sousa et al., 2016; Topoğlu et al., 2018;). Yet, the current findings support a wealth of industry articles about back pain in DJs and how to prevent it (Paris, 2021; DJ Top Tips, nd; Pirate, 2021). Insomnia/fatigue were most common amongst participants in the current study. This is unsurprising as, although sleep disturbance is experienced by many popular musicians (e.g. Vaag et al., 2016; Vermeersch et al., 2023), it may be particularly exacerbated for DJs, as they frequently perform late at night (Kegelaers, Jessen et al., 2021). Equally, insomnia and fatigue are more prevalent in women than men (Bensing et al., 1999; Zeng et al., 2020), which may explain why both were common in this sample.

Unsurprisingly, older participants reported that they needed more time to physically recover following a gig and did not think that they could extend their DJ career for much longer, in comparison to younger participants. There is a large body of research documenting how older musicians take longer to physically recover after performing (Fishbein et al., 1988; Manchester, 2009). Equally, they suffer from greater pain/musculoskeletal injuries (Berque et al., 2016; Fishbein et al., 1988; Schuh-Renner et al., 2023) and hearing loss (Heckman et al., 2021; Henoach & Chesky, 1999). Age has also been observed as a risk factor for injury in many other professions, such as sport (Collings et al., 2021; Stevenson et al., 2000) and dance (Póvoa et al., 2023; Solomon et al., 2005), validating the present findings. However, it is important to note that musicians will differ in age-related health problems, as they may be contingent on the individual's disposition or particular situation (Gembris et al., 2018).

Further, professional DJs reported experiencing insomnia/fatigue and took time to physically recover more frequently than both amateurs and semi-professionals in this study. It is possible to surmise that professionals take longer to mentally/physically recover as they have a more demanding touring schedule, playing multiple gigs a week. Without adequate recovery time, the negative impacts of performing may build up, making it difficult to recover quickly. Additionally, the differences observed in insomnia/fatigue symptoms may be explained by the precarious and uncertain nature of a full-time music career, particularly financial insecurity. This creates pressure that manifests as exhaustion, preventing participants from being able to “switch off” (Gross & Musgrave, 2017, p. 14).

These physical problems may be conflated with age, in that professional DJs are more likely to be older and, by virtue, more likely to experience physical health problems. Broadly, the differences that emerged between professional levels are encapsulated by Gross and Musgrave’s (2016) claim that “music-making is therapeutic but making a career out of music is destructive” (Gross & Musgrave, 2016, p. 12). Amateur music making is associated with a myriad of health benefits (Brodsky, 2006; Gembris, 2012; Pennill & Timmers, 2021; Theorell, 2014). However, the current and previous literature has indicated that many professionals do not appear to profit from the health benefits of musicking (Ascenso et al., 2017; Musgrave, 2023). Higher levels of depression, anxiety, and reduced mental wellbeing have been found in individuals for whom music making is a full-time job (Loveday et al., 2023), as engaging with music at this level involves number of challenges and risk factors (Bonde et al., 2018; Gross & Musgraves, 2016; 2020; Vaag et al., 2016). Some potential hazards of being a full-time musician include job instability, work under/overload, financial insecurity, isolation, anti-social working

hours, exhaustion, and exposure to alcohol and recreational drugs (Cooper & Wills, 1989; Gross & Musgrave, 2016; 2017; 2020). Evidently, being a professional musician cannot protect one from health issues in the long term, as some research suggests (e.g. Davies & Mangion, 2002). Indeed, most participants in the current study identified as non-professional (i.e. amateur or semi-professional). This may explain why there was such high levels of agreement with the positive wellbeing statements.

Women who had been DJing for 6-15 years agreed with the statement 'I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway' more than those who had been DJing for 16+ years. It is possible to surmise that those with the longest careers are more aware of the wellbeing consequences of DJing and may have implemented mitigating tactics (e.g. playing fewer gigs, playing at an earlier time) to sustain their career/health. Further, the present study reported that women who had the longest careers or who played the most gigs took longer to physically recover and experienced depression more frequently than those who had shorter careers or who played fewer gigs. It may be the case that spending more time behind the decks has negative consequences for one's mental and physical health. Interestingly, those who played the most gigs experienced insomnia/fatigue less frequently than those who played the fewest number of gigs. This is surprising, as it may be predicted that if a DJ is playing more gigs late at night, they may experience these symptoms more frequently. However, these women may have developed better coping strategies due to having more experience in the scene.

Finally, the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on professional participants' mental and physical wellbeing cannot be ignored. Although most lockdown restrictions were lifted at the time of this survey, participants' careers were

still likely to be affected by this disruption in some way. Job insecurity and financial instability, commonly identified as risk factors to musicians' wellbeing (Cooper & Wills, 1989; Gross & Musgrave, 2016; 2017; 2020), were exacerbated during the pandemic, particularly for professional DJs who, having played for much of their lives, were not trained in other careers. Consequently, many resorted to low paid delivery jobs, taking out loans, or relying on family support (McGuinness, 2020). This change in financial situation is likely to have had an impact DJs' mental wellbeing. Equally, some DJs have documented how the health impacts of long Covid, including insomnia/fatigue, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, and reduced concentration, have hindered their performance ability (Balram, 2022).

5.4.4 Discrimination

Participants reported experiencing sexism most frequently followed by financial barriers. Less than a third encountered racism, homophobia, and transphobia to the same degree. The notion that women experience a myriad of prejudices aligns with Gregory's (2009) position that gender interacts with a variety of factors, including ethnicity and social class, that work to further discriminate against women in the scene.

Sexism emerged as the most common form of discrimination for participants in this study. This is not surprising given that almost all aspects of DJing and club culture are gendered male. The most apparent explanation for this gendering is EDM's inextricable link to technology, which itself has a longstanding relationship to masculinity (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3). As a result, the DJ is seen as male by default, with women who DJ referred to as 'female' or 'girl' DJs (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2016; 2017b; Gavanis & Reitsamer, 2013). This implies that it is 'natural' for men, whose gender is not made salient, to DJ. In addition, the EDM

scene centres around male dominated informal networks, who gatekeep access to knowledge, support, and gig opportunities. Further, conversations within these networks often include gossip, insider jokes, and nicknames of a sexist nature (Cohen, 1997). Clearly, sexism is still rife in the EDM, an observation at odds with the postfeminist notion that gender is no longer an issue in dance music (McRobbie, 1994; Pini, 2001; Sulcas, 2012).

Particularly noteworthy was that financial barriers were identified as the second most common form of discrimination for women in this study. There are several explanations for this. Active engagement with music, regardless of genre, requires financial support (Werner et al., 2020). DJing involves large financial investments, such as the purchasing of expensive equipment and new music (Farrugia & Swiss, 2008). This cost of participating in club culture is also observed from the perspective of clubbers, who perceive class to be a defining factor in accessing rave culture, due to the cost of attending events (Gregory, 2007).

However, financial barriers can affect anyone regardless of gender identity. A more gendered explanation is that female musicians are often prevented from entering the music industry due to social background and financial constraints which are exacerbated by the gender pay gap (Bayton, 1998; Farrugia, 2012; Wiseman-Trowse, 2008). Importantly, financial barriers may not be limited to the ability to afford equipment. As Wolfe (2020) posited, the music industry is more accessible to middle-class women and those from higher socio-economic backgrounds as they are more likely to have grown up in a household where the arts were valued as a career path or private music lessons were available. As such, women from working-class backgrounds may not choose to pursue a DJ career as they do not see it as financially viable or cannot afford to take time off work to gig. However, caution must be taken

when discussing financial barriers in relation to social class as it was not formally measured in this thesis.

Crucially, the current research found that gay/queer women reported encountering financial barriers more frequently than heterosexual/straight women. There are several possible explanations for this. Firstly, members of the queer community face financial discrimination and wealth inequality. In the US, poverty rates among LGBT+ individuals are double that of the general population (United States Census Bureau, 2021). Queer people are also reported to earn less than their straight counterparts (Folch, 2022), and a meta-analysis by Flage (2020) revealed that LGBT+ applicants faced similar discrimination to ethnic minorities during the hiring process (see Zschirnt & Ruedin, 2016), with 40% lower odds of being hired than straight applicants. Further, the discrimination of queer candidates was greater when recruiting for lower-paid jobs compared to higher paid jobs (Flage, 2020). In addition, queer people are the backbone of the service industry (e.g. hospitality, entertainment, sex work) (Bjerk, 2022). These industries are often low paid and lack the benefits of other forms of employment (e.g. holiday/sick pay) (Bjerk, 2022). If queer people earn less, then it follows that they will have less capital to fund a career in music and will be paid less than their straight counterparts for the same work.

It was surprising that so few women in the present study reported experiencing racism. Research has suggested that there are more barriers for Black and ethnic minorities in the industry compared to their White counterparts (Bain, 2019; Smith et al., 2019). Here, musicians of colour lack access to mentorship, informal networks, role models, and opportunities to increase their visibility (Yap & Konrad, 2009) and are often underrepresented on festival line ups (Barnes, 2020). Barnes (2020) cited the disconnect between dance music's Black roots and its current

White-washed state as a reason why there are few POC on the dancefloor and behind the decks. However, this is not to say that there are no Black DJs. It may be more accurate to suggest that DJs of colour are frequently overlooked and fail to have their voices heard (Barnes, 2020). It is important to note that the present study may not accurately depict the prevalence of racism within the EDM scene. Although it aimed to achieve a diverse sample, the number of non-White participants was still small. Consequently, the frequency of racism reported may be an underestimation of the actual statistic.

The lack of homophobia reported by participants in this study was also surprising as it contradicts its earlier finding that LBGT+ women felt least accepted in the EDM scene. Equally, it disputes reports that the UK has seen an increase in homophobic hate crimes (Chao-Fong, 2021; Nagesh, 2022). Is it the case that this form of discrimination is less present in the EDM scene than in society at large? Indeed, presenting as visibly queer may allow women to be accepted within male dominated spaces, such as EDM (Farrugia, 2012). However, as Gadir (2017b) posited, many scenes replicate forms of marginalisation that occur off the dance floor. Here, a more likely suggestion is that homophobia in EDM is covert and difficult to recognise.

Equally, the lack of transphobia reported by participants in the present research was startling, given the rampant transphobia present within society (Bradley, 2020) and, more specifically, the EDM scene (see TianaHRR, 2021). An analysis of 34 festival line ups from 2019 revealed that only 0.5% of DJs were transgender (Barnes, 2020). This lack of visibility may account for the present results. Equally, only 19 trans women took part in the current survey and this underrepresentation may be reflected in the level of transphobia reported. When

transphobia was reported in the current study, gay/queer participants were found to experience it more frequently than bi/pansexual participants.

Interestingly, older women also reported experiencing more transphobia than younger women. Ageism has been shown to interact with other forms of discrimination, such as homophobia and transphobia (ILGA World, 2021; WHO, 2021; Wirth, 2021). Here, individuals who already face oppression are further marginalised as they age (Centre for Ageing Better, 2019). Added to this double discrimination that elder trans individuals face is the notion that older people are often more vulnerable to discrimination as they are less able to prevent or challenge it (Westwood, 2019). Alternatively, reduced power and agency as a result of ageing may undermine such opportunities to challenge discrimination that individuals had when younger (Westwood, 2016).

Finally, professional DJs reported experiencing more sexism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia. Equally women who played the fewest gigs a month encountered racism and transphobia the least. However, this may simply be a virtue of them having spent more time in the scene.

5.4.5 Sexual harassment

The present study concludes that sexual harassment is endemic in the EDM scene, a significant finding. Although a minority of DJs reported experiencing sexual harassment themselves ‘at least sometimes’, the majority were aware of other women who had been harassed or assaulted whilst working as a DJ. This large percentage of women reporting harassment (whether personally experienced or not) resonates with the notion that sexual harassment is more likely to occur when women are seen to deviate from traditional gender norms, such as operating in more

male dominated professions or possessing more masculine characteristics (Berdahl, 2007; Dresden et al., 2018; Kabat-Farr & Cortina, 2014; Sojo et al., 2016).

Is the increased harassment reported by participants because they experience greater instances of harassment or are these women simply more aware of, and able to identify, it? Here comparisons can be drawn to Magley et al.'s (1999) much discredited (see Ilies et al., 2003; Munson et al., 2001) 'whiner hypothesis', which proposed that harassment is often overestimated due to victims 'whining' about trivial events. Although not endorsing this theory, Berdahl (2007) suggested that more 'masculine' women may encounter harassment less but recall it more because they are more sensitive or susceptible to such sexualising behaviour. However, given the number of media reports of harassment in the EDM scene (see Ross 2020a; 2020b; 2020c) this reading is unlikely.

A more plausible explanation is society's growing awareness and discussion of sexual harassment in the aftermath of the #MeToo movement (Acquaviva et al., 2021; Starkey et al., 2019), which highlights how endemic sexual harassment is in the creative industries (Bain, 2019). As a result, women feel more empowered to speak out about their experiences due to a reduction in the stigma surrounding sexual harassment (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Maier, 2023). But is harassment experienced by those working in the EDM scene specifically? Research has suggested that it is present in all creative industries. Such environments are characterised by competition, lack of regulation, prevalence of lone working, irregular employment, and reproduction of masculinist workplace cultures (Bennett & Bridgstock, 2015; Chamberlain et al., 2008; Hennekam & Bennett, 2017; Leslie & Catungal, 2012). Evidently, the nature of this industry and the way in which it operates creates an

unsafe working environment in which higher rates, and an increased acceptance of, sexual harassment prevail (McDonald, 2012).

Most participants in the current study agreed that harassment was an inevitable part of being a female DJ, and that it occurred in some clubs more than others. This resonates with research that has described how sexual harassment has become so prevalent in sexualised social environments, such as bars and nightclubs where DJs often operate, that it has become an accepted part of women's experiences in these spaces (Grazian, 2007; Kavanaugh, 2013; Kavanaugh & Anderson, 2009; Mellgren et al., 2018). Palamar and Griffin (2020) suggested that the threat of sexual harassment is particularly heightened in clubs, environments characterised by an absence of guardians and increased alcohol/substance use. Indeed, they reported that women were twice as likely as their male counterparts to experience sexual harassment at EDM events (Palamar & Griffin, 2020).

Of those who had experienced sexual harassment in the current study, the majority stated that it had a negative impact on their mental health at least sometimes. However, they never or rarely reported it, downplaying/making light of negative incidents they experienced whilst DJing at least sometimes. This is in line with an ISM survey conducted by Williams and Bain (2022) into discrimination in the music industry, in which 58% of their participants had experienced sexual harassment but only 23% officially reported the incident. There are several explanations as to why so few women report harassment to venue staff/security or the police. Firstly, not all sexually suggestive interactions are perceived as problematic (Blackstone et al., 2014) and thus worthy of reporting. Alternatively, women may wish to protect the 'cool' image of the creative industry (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017) or their chances at career progression, which may be damaged by

such charges (Hennekam & Bennett, 2017; Littler-Bishop et al. 1982). Further, women may not report harassment due to the refusal to be perceived as a victim and/or vulnerable, lack of support, little/no understanding of their rights, lack of trust in the Criminal Justice System, self-blame, and a concern that the perpetrator may retaliate, or that they will not be punished (Brunner & Dever, 2014; Fielden et al., 2010; Stewart et al., 2023). Alternatively, Mellgren et al. (2018) reported that women did not report harassment to the authorities as they did not perceive the assault to be serious enough. Equally, they felt that it would not be beneficial to report the incident as harassment was seen as inevitable in clubbing environments and they would not be able to 'move on' from it. From this perspective, harassment has become so normalised that women see the onus as being on them to deal with it rather than the authorities (Mellgren et al., 2018).

Further, most women in the present study who had been sexually harassed/assaulted at least sometimes agreed that it took them longer to mentally recover following a gig and experienced depression, anxiety, and PTSD more frequently than those who had never/rarely been harassed. This is in line with a large body of research reporting that harassment has consequences in terms of increased depression, anxiety, PTSD, distress, and reduced job satisfaction (Alrawadieh et al., 2023; Buchanan et al., 2008; Leskinen et al., 2011; Minnotte & Pedersen, 2023; Schneider & Swan, 1997). Although this data is based on women in other androcentric professions, given the male dominance within EDM, it is likely that the results may generalise to female DJs.

Older women reported experiencing the most harassment, however differences between the age groups were not significant, challenging research that younger women are at greater risk of experiencing sexual harassment (Palamar &

Griffin, 2020; Sampsel et al., 2016). For example, Riger (1991) posited that the likelihood of a woman experiencing sexual harassment decreases after the age of 50, perhaps because they are seen as having more power in the workplace than their younger counterparts, or because their age and maturity deem them to no longer be targets (Ford & Donis, 1996). Instead, the current finding aligns with O'Grady and Madill's (2019) research on older female clubbers, in which they asserted that older women were not exempt from harassment in the EDM scene. This may partly be due to the belief that, because of their age, older women should be 'thankful' for any sexual advances. However, older female DJs may experience more harassment simply by virtue of having spent more time in the scene. Equally, this may account for why women with the shortest careers or those who played the fewest gigs experienced sexual harassment less frequently than those with the longest careers or those who played the most gigs.

Finally, women aged 26-35 agreed with the statement 'I downplay/make light of negative incidents I experience whilst DJing' more than those aged 36+. Young people may be more likely to downplay harassment because they do not have the experience to acknowledge sexually suggestive behaviour as harassment. Equally, they may fail to recognise the presence of gendered power dynamics when interacting with their peers (Blackstone et al., 2014). Conversely, older women are more likely to perceive sexually suggestive behaviours as serious and label them as harassment as they have a greater understanding of what behaviours fall into this category (Reese & Lindenberg, 2005).

Unsurprisingly, safety was a key concern for the women surveyed. Over two-thirds reported adopting certain measures at least sometimes to ensure their safety when performing. This parallels research by De Crespigny (2001), Duignan-Pearson

(2019), and Hutton (2006), who highlighted how female clubbers were aware of issues concerning personal safety. As such, they tried to protect themselves from compromising situations, such as taking taxis to/from the venue, going home with friends, and only attending clubs they perceived to be 'safe' (De Crespigny, 2001; Duignan-Pearson, 2019, Hutton, 2006). Specifically concerning DJs, the Jaguar Foundation (2022) identified several safety measures implemented by women and non-binary DJs, including the layout, accessibility, and security presence of the venue. They also reported implementing safety/inclusion 'riders', which stated that the event must have a diverse line up (e.g. by race or gender) and prohibited others from entering the DJ booth during their performance (the Jaguar Foundation, 2022).

Importantly, the current study reported that participants' feelings of safety increased in certain clubs or if they attended their gigs with others. This indicates that safety is contingent on certain factors, drawing parallels to research by Hutton (2006). Here, she found that many female clubbers perceived mainstream clubs to be 'meat markets'. This was due to the predatory and oppressive behaviour of the males in attendance, as well as the level of alcohol consumed in these spaces. As such, her participants choose to avoid these venues. In contrast, they perceived underground clubs to be safer and hold fewer sexist attitudes towards women (Hutton, 2006). However, this is not to say that harassment does not occur in underground spaces. Women may simply *believe* that they are less likely to be harassed in these environments, where more progressive attitudes towards women prevail (Gadir, 2016) and safer spaces policies are upheld (Kakaire, 2019). Hutton (2006) reported that men are often removed for sexist/harassment behaviour in underground venues due to the social rules present in these spaces. These rules are often outlined in the club's safer spaces policy (for example, see Wharf Chambers, n.d.). However, rather

than removing the harassment, Hutton (2006) proposed that these rules work to send it further underground where it becomes more subtle and less easy to recognise, but just as harmful. This is illustrated by the female clubbers in Hutton's (2006) study who claimed that they had not experienced harassment in the underground yet followed this by describing an instance of harassment that took place in this scene. This contradicts the present finding that participants felt safer in some clubs more than others. In this sense, it may be more accurate to say that harassment occurs in all venues but as it is less overt in underground spaces it may be more difficult to recognise.

What the present study did not ascertain was what factors make a certain club safe/unsafe to women. For the women in Hutton's (2006) study, one key factor was the attitudes of those in attendance. Further, Hill and Megson (2020) identified feeling included/welcomed, (un)comfortable, and/or that mental/physical/emotional boundaries had been crossed as some emotional states associated with feeling (un)safe (Hill & Megson, 2020). In contrast, others have understood safety in terms of the threat of physical violence, particularly sexual harassment (Fileborn, 2016).

5.4.6 DJing and queer spaces

Over half the sample identified as queer/LGBT+ and just over two thirds were involved in their local queer club scene 'at least sometimes'. The number of queer women in the present study is particularly high given that, in the UK, the majority of people aged 16+ identify as heterosexual/straight (93.6%), in comparison to 3.8% who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (ONS, 2025). Although there are no worldwide statistics, general population trends for the UK indicate that 16-24-year-olds were most likely to identify as LGBT+ (10.5%) in 2023, followed by 25-34 (6.3%), 35-49 (2.9%), and 50-64 (2.4%) year olds (ONS, 2025).

It is important to note that many women who identified as heterosexual/straight participated in queer spaces. Queer clubs are often more welcoming to women (Rymajdo, 2021). Many scholars have attributed this heightened feeling of safety in non-normative spaces to the lack of violence, harassment, or being overtly sexualised by men (Farrugia, 2012; Hill & Megson, 2020; Hutton, 2006; Skeggs, 1999). When those involved in the queer scene at least sometimes were asked how they felt within it, the majority agreed that they felt more accepted, supported, represented, confident, and safe, and less marginalised or tokenised in comparison to the EDM scene in general. As such, the results conclude that participants had more positive overall experiences in queer spaces, a particularly important finding.

Most participants felt safe in the queer scene, aligning with literature that has described queer clubs as 'safe spaces' (Avis-Ward, 2022; Hancock, 2017). However, the present study did not ascertain what specific features of the queer scene made participants feel safe. Previous research has identified feelings of community and shared experience, absence of violence, aggression, or discrimination, ability to use a certain bathroom without having one's identity challenged, not feeling 'othered', and respecting difference as factors that contribute to feelings of safety in queer environments (Avis-Ward, 2022; Campkin & Marshall, 2018). In this context, 'safety' could refer not only to 'freedom from' but also 'freedom to'. From this perspective, the queer scene provides individuals with security, community, and belonging, allowing them to freely express themselves without fear of judgment (Avis-Ward, 2022; Campkin & Marshall, 2018). Further, queer spaces are supportive environments for LGBT+ individuals. Although acceptance of LGBT+ people is increasing (Eatough, 2022), they still risk being cast out from traditional support

networks (e.g. friends, family, community) (Guasp, 2010). For these individuals, queer clubs act as an alternative support network (Avis-Ward, 2022).

Despite this positive picture, trans individuals reported slightly more negative experiences in the queer scene overall than their cisgendered counterparts. This parallels Campkin and Marshall's (2018) assertion that queer clubs are not inclusive of all members of the LGBT+ community. Many of their survey participants claimed that some supposedly queer spaces were exclusionary, favouring "cis gay men... White, hyper-masculine, muscular male bodies... [and] middle-class audiences" (Campkin & Marshall, 2018, p. 86).

Finally, of those who participated in the queer scene at least sometimes, most felt that it made a difference whether they were playing in a queer space or not, with the majority preferring these venues to more normative environments. Evidently, there is value to performing in queer spaces. Building upon earlier reports about the supportive nature of this scene, many scholars have identified the benefits of queer spaces for nurturing female, trans, and gender non-conforming DJs (Hancock, 2017), providing mentors and collaborators who can share their knowledge and equipment (Madden, 2016).

5.5 Chapter summary

Chapter 5 presented the methods, results, and discussion of Study 2, which explored six major, novel topic areas in greater depth using a larger sample of participants. It highlighted original findings related to being a woman in a male dominated scene, the political nature of women's role as female DJs, the impact of DJing on wellbeing, discrimination, sexual harassment, and the importance of queer spaces. The following chapter will bring together Study 1 and 2, summarising the key findings,

relating them to the overarching research questions and interpreting this project's contribution to the literature.

Chapter 6: General discussion

This thesis is the first large-scale, in-depth investigation into the experiences of female DJs in EDM. It used an intersectional lens through which to explore the experiences of women in EDM, supported by the voices of a diverse sample of female DJs. As such, it offers many original insights into their experiences within the EDM scene, the barriers they face, and how they continue to thrive, despite EDM's male dominance. This final chapter summarises the key findings, relating them to the overarching research questions and interpreting its contribution to the literature. It also critically evaluates the methods used, as well as suggesting potential directions for future research and discussing the project's implications on, and recommendations for, the EDM scene and music industry practices more broadly.

6.1 Summary of thesis

This thesis has sought to investigate and amplify the lived experiences of female DJs through a mixed-methods design, utilising semi-structured interviews and a large-scale survey. It follows several reports that have emerged in recent years highlighting the dearth of female DJs on club and festival line-ups (Female: Pressure, 2024; the Jaguar Foundation, 2022). However, these articles often focus solely on women's absence from EDM rather than the ways in which they can break down barriers and succeed in industry, despite its male dominance. Consequently, this thesis addresses this imbalance in the literature by situating participants, and their experiences, at the centre. It offers an in-depth insight into the lived experiences of a diverse range of female DJs who are, in their own way, challenging the male dominance in EDM, whether on a grassroots or global scale. It has uncovered how each of their stories fit into EDM's androcentric history, as well as how participants are working to change this narrative, carving out their own spaces for inclusion. Ultimately, this research

aimed to explore the diversity and complexity of the lived experiences of female DJs. The following three sections summarise the key findings in relation to the research questions.

6.2 What are the lived experiences of female DJs in EDM and how are they impacted by participants' intersecting identities?

An overarching finding within this project was that gender underpins the lived experiences of female DJs. It is important to note that participants' experiences of being a female DJ in EDM were rich, complex, and highly individualised. Indeed, female DJs are not a homogenous group and there is no one universal experience of women in EDM. Their experiences often differed depending on age, sexuality, and level of profession. However, some patterns of shared experience did emerge that were explicitly attached to participants' identity as women. These experiences were often rooted in, and shaped by, the sexism and misogyny that is deeply entrenched within the EDM scene. The following section will discuss four of these shared experiences which were crucial to understanding the lived experiences of female DJs: intersectionality, politicisation and empowerment, experiences of safety and harassment, and impact of DJing on mental wellbeing.

6.2.1 Intersectionality

The lived experience of female DJs is nuanced by the intersection of gender and identity. Factors such as age, sexuality, and level of profession intersected with gender to further marginalise participants. This shaped their experiences within, and interpretation of, the scene, as well as the way in which they understood their identity as a female DJ within a male dominated space.

This project provided new insights into the impact of age. In Study 1, participants described how EDM is predominantly made up of young males, which acted as a barrier to accessing the scene. As such, participants felt too old to engage in EDM. This aligns with claims women tend to assimilate ageist discourses which position older women as out of place in EDM (Gregory, 2007). In addition, Study 2 reported a negative correlation between age and feelings of support, whereby younger women felt more supported than their older counterparts. Here, the gender difference in experience is evident. Whilst male DJs are increasingly respected as they age, there is an age limit placed on women's participation, with older female DJs not perceived as the norm within the scene (Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Gadir, 2017b; Gregory, 2009).

Surprisingly, few women reported experiencing homophobia in Study 2, despite an increase in homophobic hate crimes within society at large (Chao-Fong, 2021; Nagesh, 2022). However, queer participants reported more negative experiences within the EDM scene overall in comparison to straight women, a novel finding. This contradicts Farrugia's (2012) observation that presenting as visibly queer allows women to be accepted within male dominated spaces. Instead, this implies that the marginalisation and discrimination of queer women is more subtle than overt homophobia, instead manifesting in a sense of not being welcome in the scene.

Equally, few participants reported experiencing racism in the survey, an unexpected finding. This contradicts research indicating that there are more barriers for POC in the industry compared to their White counterparts (Bain, 2019; Smith et al., 2019), at least within the current sample. Previous literature has reported that POC lack access to mentorship, informal networks, and role models (Yap & Konrad,

2009) and are severely underrepresented on festival line ups (Barnes, 2020). Given this evidence, it may be more accurate to suggest that the lack of racism reported in the survey may be down to the lack of non-White participants.

Finally, this project has provided novel insights into the impact of professional level on experience. Professional DJs reported more negative experiences within the EDM scene overall, including sexism, marginalisation, and tokenism. Here, it is possible to surmise that the effects of gender are greater the further one progresses up the hierarchy of EDM. Clearly, the popularity and esteem garnered from being a professional DJ does not protect women at this level from experiencing misogyny.

6.2.2 Politicisation and empowerment

Participants' experiences of being a female DJ were characterised by feelings of empowerment gained through DJing. Many participants perceived their status as a woman in a male dominated occupation as political, with some believing that to be a female DJ is to be a feminist. In Study 2, over half of participants agreed that they were aware of their gender when performing, and the majority felt as though they were representing female DJs as a whole. As such, many used their platform to actively challenge the marginalisation of women in EDM and uplift other minorities. However, it is important to note that, whether participants embraced the political nature of their role or not, being a female DJ is *inherently* political. In getting behind the decks, participants are not only taking up space as women in a male dominated environment, but they are disrupting societal norms about women, such as their perceived technical incompetence (O'Sullivan, 2018). This disruption can be seen as a form of resistance against the gender binary. From this perspective, simply existing as a female DJ in EDM is a political act. This parallels research that has described

music as a “site of resistance” (Street, 2003, p. 120), inspiring positive transformation and creating more progressive and inclusive communities and selves through political activism (Daulay et al., 2024; Shank, 2014; Street, 2012; Waters, 2016).

This thesis provides new knowledge about women’s perceptions of themselves as the initiators of change. Many interviewees believed the onus was on women, not men, to challenge EDM’s inherent sexism. However, not every woman embraces the political connotations of her role or considers herself to be an activist. Indeed, whilst most participants in Study 2 agreed that they were able to challenge sexism, only a minority felt comfortable doing so. This reflects Vaugeois’ (2007) assertion that musicians often see politics as unrelated to, and independent from, music. If musicians do become involved in political affairs, they are often inadequately equipped to deal with them (Vaugeois, 2007). Related to this was the novel finding that the inequality women experienced allowed them to develop a greater awareness and understanding of broader political issues, as well as motivating them to challenge their marginalisation. Here, there is a sense of inevitability to the politicisation of female DJs.

6.2.3 Experiences of safety and harassment

This project concludes that sexual harassment is endemic in EDM, so much so that it is now ‘all part of the job’ for female DJs. Study 2 reported that 41% of women had been sexually harassed whilst working as a DJ, and 70% were aware of other female DJs who had experienced sexual harassment.

Participants’ experiences of being a female DJ were characterised by the constant threat of sexual harassment that permeated their accounts. This threat

manifested as a hyper-awareness of safety issues, recognising that, as women, they were at greater risk of danger in night-time spaces. As such, interviewees developed strategies to mitigate the risk of harassment, such as going to gigs with friends or only attending certain clubs. These strategies appeared to be effective for participants, who reported in Study 2 that feelings of safety increased if they were accompanied by others when going to gigs or if they attended certain clubs. This aligns with research by Hutton (2006) and Rowley (2009), who also acknowledged the way in which women form groups for protection.

Another finding associated with sexual harassment was the way in which participants normalised or trivialised their negative experiences. Study 2 reported that most women downplayed or made light of negative incidents, such as harassment, that they experienced whilst DJing. Study 1 elucidated the ways in which they did this, through justifying the perpetrators' behaviours (for example, claiming he was intoxicated) or by diminishing the significance of the event.

Related to this perceived apathy towards negative experiences was the reluctance to officially report harassment incidents. Over half of survey respondents never or rarely reported sexual harassment to venue staff or security. Study 1 uncovered the reasons for this, describing how interviewees feared that they would not be taken seriously, instead being seen as overreacting, causing conflict, or spoiling others' fun. Similar fears, including the refusal to be perceived as a victim and/or vulnerable, self-doubt, and harming one's career have been previously reported, albeit in the context of workplace harassment (Brunner & Dever, 2014; Fielden et al., 2010; Littler-Bishop et al., 1982; Stewart et al., 2023).

6.2.4 The impact of DJing on mental wellbeing

A key finding from this project was the distinction between the positive and negative impacts of DJing on mental wellbeing; wellbeing benefits appear to only derive from the musical aspects of DJing, whilst negative impacts do so from external factors (e.g. negative encounters with promoters, clubbers, or other DJs). The mental wellbeing impacts reported by participants were largely positive. Most agreed that DJing functioned as a form of therapy, benefitting their mental health through emotional regulation, increase in positive affect, and its use as a coping strategy and form of creative self-expression, providing participants with an avenue in which to convey difficult thoughts or emotions. This contributes to a broader body of literature which has consistently documented the positive mental health benefits of active music engagement (Ascenso et al., 2017; Douglas, 2019; Fancourt et al., 2016; Groarke et al., 2020; Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Perkins et al., 2016; Weinberg & Joseph, 2017).

Despite the positive picture, over half of survey respondents agreed that DJing had a negative impact on their mental health, in the form of stress and anxiety. Crucially, Study 1 revealed that these negative impacts were not a consequence of DJing itself. Instead, poor mental health was more likely to result from events experienced within the wider DJ culture, such as sexism and harassment. Indeed, almost all survey participants, who had experienced sexual harassment at least sometimes, reported that it had a negative impact on their mental wellbeing. This supports research documenting the negative impacts of sexual harassment on women's wellbeing in terms of increased depression, anxiety, PTSD, and distress (Alrawadieh et al., 2023; Leskinen et al., 2011; Minnotte & Pedersen, 2023; Rubin et al., 2018; Rugulies et al., 2020; Sojo et al., 2016).

6.3 What systemic/structural barriers exist for female DJs operating within the androcentric EDM scene?

The second aim of this thesis was to explore the barriers that female DJs face operating within the androcentric EDM scene. Throughout this project it was evident that the EDM scene replicates many of the systemic and structural barriers present in society at large that work to maintain its inequalities and systemically disadvantage women. Three key barriers identified in this project are: social inequality, gender-based hierarchies, and internal systemic barriers.

6.3.1 Socioeconomic inequality

Socioeconomic inequality was identified as a crucial systemic barrier for female DJs. Although it did not appear to directly intersect with gender in this study, it was clear that socioeconomic inequality created another obstacle for women to overcome when accessing the scene. Interviewees described how EDM is more exclusive compared to other genres and perceived DJing to be inaccessible to those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Several scholars have proposed similar class divisions for women accessing the music industry as musicians (Wolfe, 2020) and clubbers (Gregory, 2007). An original finding from Study 2 was that, after sexism, financial barriers were the second most common form of discrimination. Although financial barriers present a challenge for all regardless of gender, they are exacerbated for women who wish to access the scene due to the gender pay gap (Bayton, 1998; Farrugia, 2012; Wiseman-Trowse, 2008).

Importantly, financial barriers impact some women more than others, an original finding. Study 2 revealed that queer women encountered greater financial barriers compared to their straight counterparts. This extends evidence for the financial discrimination and wealth inequality faced by the queer community in

society at large (Folch, 2022; Flage, 2020; United States Census Bureau, 2021), applying it to the specific context of EDM.

6.3.2 Gender-based hierarchies

Gender-based hierarchies, which consist of gatekeepers and male dominated networks, were identified as a significant structural barrier to female DJs.

Interviewees discussed how the EDM scene is dominated by men who hold the most powerful positions. Those further down the hierarchy emulate those at the top, demonstrating the way in which these hierarchies are perpetuated and maintained. The existence of gender-based hierarchies has been confirmed by research from across musical genres (Hansen, 2022; Milestone & Meyer, 2020) and male dominated professions (Berdahl et al., 2023; Smith et al., 2018), alluding to their stability (Schmutz, 2009).

At the top of these hierarchies there exists gatekeepers. Interviewees described how their access to resources and opportunities was restricted or controlled by men. Previous literature has documented how the existing order in EDM is maintained through gatekeeping practices that work to marginalise women (Farrugia & Swiss, 2005; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Puwar, 2004). However, Study 1 offered several new insights into the impact of gatekeepers. Firstly, interviews revealed that gatekeeping only exists at the beginning of one's career and is no longer a barrier once one is established within the scene. Secondly, the gatekeeping participants experienced was more subtle than the outright removal of opportunities. For example, by receiving bookings that are inferior to those offered to their male counterparts. This allows men to appear supportive, thus avoiding the label of 'sexist', whilst concurrently rendering it difficult for women to progress.

Finally, interviewees discussed how the EDM scene is made up of informal male dominated networks, 'all-boys clubs' in which gigs and opportunities are shared between members. They described how these networks are exclusive, inaccessible to women on account of their gender. Ostracised, participants felt that they were at a disadvantage within the scene. The existence of male dominated networks, which exclude female DJs on the basis of gender, has been well documented within the EDM literature (Abtan, 2016; Farrugia, 2012; Gadir 2017b; O'Sullivan, 2018; Reitsamer 2011). Some scholars have suggested that these powerful cliques that run the scene may be unwilling to welcome *any* newcomers, regardless of gender (Hutton, 2006). However, given that participants referred to these cliques in relation to gender (e.g. "men's club", "groups of men"), it is more likely that the reasons behind women's exclusion from these networks is based on gender, in this study at least.

6.3.3 Internal systemic barriers

This thesis provides new knowledge about internal systemic barriers, the idea that women can (unintentionally) internalise barriers that exist within the industry. As these barriers came from within the women themselves, they were often not aware of them. However, they still worked to systematically disadvantage participants. From this perspective, internal systemic barriers are just as detrimental to one's career as more overt obstacles (e.g. hierarchies, gatekeepers). Interviewees spoke of the assumed impossibility of being a DJ, perceiving that it could be nothing more than a hobby. Here, participants may have internalised the stereotype that DJing is a masculine occupation (Bloustien, 2016; Gavanas & Reitsamer, 2013; Katz, 2006), making it appear out of reach, even if they do not consider themselves to be less skilled than men.

Secondly, participants spoke of the need to adhere to certain patriarchal standards or expectations. Such standards could be imposed on them from external sources or by participants themselves. Interviewees assimilated ageist and sexist norms about women's position within society, feeling internal pressure to fulfil their expected role as 'respectable' women, wives, and mothers. Similar tensions have been identified by Duginan-Pearson (2019) whereby female DJs felt pressure halt their careers at a certain age to become mothers. Crucially, men do not place an age/time limit on their careers (Pires, 2015), highlighting its gendered nature.

6.4 What factors help women navigate their experience and how does this support their practice?

The final aim of this thesis was to identify the factors that help women to navigate their experience and support their practice in the EDM scene, despite its male dominance. Importantly, this thesis demonstrated that women do not just exist within EDM but *thrive*. Three factors were identified as being particularly helpful to participants in this study: the queer scene, community, and role models.

6.4.1 The queer scene

A significant finding within this project was the importance of the queer scene to female DJs. This was an interesting finding as many participants did not identify as queer themselves, yet they felt more comfortable within queer-coded spaces. Interviewees discussed the pivotal role the queer scene played in their career by creating a safer, more supportive space for minorities away from (what they perceived to be) the oppressive mainstream, and for fostering an alternative, non-judgemental environment that is welcoming and accepting of all. Survey data confirmed the importance of the queer scene. Just over half of respondents identified as queer/LGBT+, yet two thirds participated in their local queer club scene at least

sometimes, implying that many heterosexual participants were also involved in this scene. Crucially, compared to the EDM scene in general, participants felt more accepted, supported, represented, confident, and safe, and less marginalised and tokenised within the queer scene. The previous literature, Hancock's (2017) case study aside, has only alluded to the importance of the queer scene (Farrugia, 2012; Hutton, 2006; Madden, 2016), failing to discuss it in any depth. This thesis addresses this gap by offering many detailed, original insights into the value of LGBT+ spaces.

However, the queer scene does not support the practice of *all* female DJs, an original finding. Study 2 found that trans women reported more negative experiences within the queer scene than their cisgender counterparts. This was surprising as trans women are members of the queer community. However, this finding reflects the widespread transphobia present within society (Bradley, 2020) and the EDM scene (TianaHRR, 2021). From this perspective, the queer scene is not as inclusive as first believed, even to members who appear to 'fit' into this space. This mirrors the gatekeeping practices that occur in female DJ collectives, observed by Reitsamer (2012). Clearly, not all 'safer' spaces are safe for everyone.

It is important to acknowledge that conclusions regarding the importance of the queer scene may be a result of my identity as a queer, woman DJ. Here, my experiences, albeit unknowingly, shaped what I found interesting and how I interpreted the data, as well as the participants I recruited. However, participants in both studies, regardless of their sexuality, attested to the value of the queer scene, suggesting that it is at least partly important to their experiences. However, this is not to say that all female DJs should seek out the queer scene. Indeed, straight women's infiltration of such environments can create safety issues for other users (Skeggs, 1999). Here, it may be more accurate to suggest that other spaces which share the

queer scene's accepting, inclusive, and non-judgemental attitude may be equally as beneficial for some women (e.g. kink spaces, POC only club nights, DIY spaces).

6.4.2 Community

Community was found to be important in helping women to navigate their experience and support their practice. Interviewees described how personal connections established in communities created a safe, supportive space in which to experiment and collaborate with others, as well as gig opportunities and skill sharing. These benefits of community are arguably not gendered as they can support the practice of all DJs. However, solidarity was unusual, in that it was an advantage of community that appeared to be unique to women, a key finding. The shared experience of being a female DJ in the male dominated EDM scene generated mutual understanding, support, and a sense of collective identity among female community members, providing them with the tools necessary to overcome their collective struggles together. This mirrors work by Naicker (2021), who described how women in South Africa used a community garden as a space to unite against and navigate common struggles caused by structural inequalities and demonstrate agency through resistance and solidarity.

The fundamental role played by community in supporting women's practice was most evident in participants' reflections on community. It was clear that interviewees saw the value of supporting marginalised groups and creating safer spaces in which to nurture their careers. Participants understood the difficulty in accessing the scene as women, so used their positions of power to uplift others by creating communities in which women could connect and share opportunities. Crucially, the communities built by women were gynocentric, confirming the specific importance of women-centric collectives in supporting the practice of

female DJs (Bloustien, 2016; Duignan-Pearson, 2019; Farrugia, 2012; Gavanoas & Reitsamer, 2013).

6.4.3 Role models

Finally, role models were another factor that helped women navigate the scene and supported their practice. Crucially it was not just any role models, but *female* role models that appeared particularly important to participants, strengthening the idea that women support women. Such same-gender models influenced and inspired interviewees, particularly at the beginning of their career, acting as allies and mentors, demonstrating that women do have a place behind the decks. This emphasises that women's experiences in EDM are distinct from those of men. Here, women navigate the scene differently and thus require specific support that men are not qualified to provide.

Several scholars have attested to the importance of same-gender role models in terms of offering specific guidance that men cannot (Bloustien, 2016; Hancock, 2017; Hinkle-Turner, 2003) and demonstrating to women that they are not alone, removing the sense of isolation that can come with operating in a male dominated scene (Massey, 2019).

6.5 Strengths, limitations, and future research

This project has a number of key strengths. Firstly, a diverse range of DJs contributed to Study 1, setting it apart from research that has hitherto favoured White, Western, cis gendered voices, and making this thesis one of the most inclusive studies of female DJs to date. This heterogenous sample helped the project to uncover many original findings about participants' intersecting identities (e.g. age,

sexuality), as well as highlighting the complexity and nuance of female DJs' experiences, allowing it to make an important contribution to the literature.

A second strength of this research was its use of a mixed-methods approach, which allowed for the triangulation of methods (see Fellows & Liu, 2008), strengthening my confidence in the reliability and validity of the findings (Abowitz & Toole, 2010; Steckler et al., 1992). For example, the importance of the queer scene was a key finding in both studies. Here, I could be assured that this was because this scene is a valuable part of many female DJs' experiences and not due to the large proportion of queer participants in Study 2. In addition, the mixed-methods design allowed each study to compensate for the limitations of the other, another strength of this project. Here, Study 1 compensated for the lack of depth in Study 2, whilst Study 2 allowed me to expand, and gather more data on, the novel issues identified in Study 1. This provided a more comprehensive insight into the experiences of female DJs, offering a more detailed and complete dataset than any one method alone (Greene et al., 1989; Neuman, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This is vital given the complex and multifaceted nature of the issue being studied, which cannot be explored in enough depth using a single approach.

Thirdly, this project benefitted from adopting a qualitative approach in Study 1. Qualitative data, collected using semi-structured interviews, placed emphasis on lived experience. Open ended questions allowed participants to speak freely and at length about their thoughts and experiences, as well as elaborate on certain points, producing rich, in-depth data about individual experience (Smith et al., 2009), a strength of this research. Given the lack of existing literature on female DJs it was crucial that this thesis remained exploratory as there is still much to uncover about their experiences.

In addition, a large-scale, quantitative survey design was used to collect data in Study 2. To my knowledge, no large-scale, quantitative studies have been conducted to investigate the experiences of female DJs, a key strength of this research. The ability to describe trends and patterns allowed me to investigate if the novel themes generated in Study 1 applied to a larger sample of female DJs. This is important as the previous literature largely comprises interview and case study data from a small sample of women. As such, it has produced few generalisable claims about the experiences of female DJs. Here, identifying trends among a larger sample of participants is vital if the data is to influence wider policy decisions.

Another strength of this research was its use of RTA which allowed me to assume an active role in the production of knowledge, using my own cultural, social, and ideological position as a lens through which to interpret the data. As a DJ myself, this was a key reason why RTA was selected. Here, I used my prior knowledge and experience to enrich the data and help me decide what issues to investigate and what questions to ask. This basis provided the thesis with a more nuanced argument that it may otherwise have lacked, had the research been conducted by someone who was not as immersed within the scene, for example.

However, there were also several limitations of this research that can be addressed in future research. Firstly, whilst every attempt was made to recruit participants internationally in Study 2, White, Western participants dominated. Consequently, level of agreement based on ethnicity or location could not be compared in a meaningful way. As such, this project can be seen as a useful starting point, highlighting fruitful areas of study for more focused, intersectional research in EDM. Future research must prioritise intersectionality. It should employ more targeted sampling methods that concentrate on recruiting a more diverse range of

participants that are not often the focus of study (e.g. POC, DJs from the global majority, gender non-conforming DJs) to ensure that research is representative of the full spectrum of women's experiences. Additionally, future research questions should acknowledge the ways in which identities can intersect to shape experience.

Indeed, the identities that this project did examine (e.g. gender, sexuality, professional level) were found to be important to female DJs' experiences in some way. As such, these identities also warrant their own, in-depth research, exploring their impact individually or as they intersect with gender. Future research could adopt a similar structure to this thesis, using a mixed-methods qualitative to quantitative approach to first gain a detailed understanding of the impact of each identity, before exploring if these findings apply to a larger sample of DJs.

Secondly, my own positive experiences at queer parties arguably created a bias towards their importance in Study 1. Although LGBT+ events were brought up naturally by participants during the interviews, increasing my confidence that they were at least somewhat important, I may have unintentionally overstated the significance of the queer scene given its significance to my own career. Here, the more objective data produced in Study 2 was useful in demonstrating that participants *did* have more positive experiences in the queer scene. However, this may have been skewed by the large number of LGBT+ participants in this study. Evidently, this project provides useful preliminary findings about the role of the queer scene for women in EDM, however more research is needed to ascertain its importance.

Further, my own experiences in the scene served as 'background data' which partly influenced the questions I asked in Study 1, another example of how my

position within the EDM scene shaped the research process. This is a potential limitation as I may have overlooked fruitful areas of discussion as they were outside of my experience. Consequently, ‘insiders’ should ensure that they look beyond their experiences when conducting future research in this area, perhaps by recruiting focus groups of DJs to share their experiences and suggest areas of study. The potential for this to be a useful tool in future research was demonstrated in the ‘final reflections’ section of Study 2. Here, several women reflected on the “lack of neurodivergent representation within the EDM scene” and one participant with a physical disability described ableism as “the new frontier to fight discrimination”. Ableism has not been explored within the previous literature, from the perspective of clubbers or DJs. Evidently, more research is needed to understand the challenges those with mental and physical disabilities face within EDM, including the lack of representation of disabled DJs, and how ableism manifests in the EDM scene.

Connections created during my time as a DJ provided me with access to a large pool of potential participants, many of whom were friends or fellow DJs, others I knew through social media or mutual friends. As such, my relationship to participants may have influenced the data collected and created potential bias and validity issues, a limitation of this study. Here, friends may have excluded information that I already knew due to our prior relationship or suppressed certain details to ‘protect’ me. For example, if a participant had a negative experience with mutual friend. However, my prior relationship with some participants was also a strength of this research as it allowed me to quickly establish a rapport with participants, as well as a deeper level of understanding, honesty and, in turn, richer, more detailed data.

Further, over half of participants in Study 2 identified as queer. When compared to the number of LGBT+ individuals in the general population, queer voices were overrepresented within the data. Here, the impact of my position on the data is clear. This overrepresentation may lead to problems when generalising to female DJs as a whole, another limitation of this research. However, the large number of LGBT+ participants could be seen as a strength, given that the queer experience has been largely ignored in previous literature.

Indeed, this study attempted to represent a diverse range of experiences and identities, such as sexuality. However, it was not possible to provide a detailed insight into all. Consequently, the experiences of some groups are still yet to be explored and, as such, are ripe for future research. For example, although this project did explore differences in experience based on age, it did not question participants about ageism specifically, as it did sexism, racism, and homophobia. As such, future research could expand this field, focusing on DJs rather than clubbers. For example, it would be interesting to explore the experiences of older women who choose to continue their careers past the ‘time limit’ identified by some scholars (e.g. Duignan-Pearson, 2019).

It is equally important to consider the women who hold other active roles within EDM. Although producers are often researched separately or in tandem with DJs (e.g. Farrugia, 2004a; Farrugia & Swiss, 2008), less has been said about women ‘behind the scenes’, such as female promoters and record label owners, who may experience similar marginalisation.

6.6 Implications and recommendations

This thesis has several important implications and recommendations for the EDM industry. Firstly, given the topical nature of this subject, this thesis will be disseminated to the wider public by publishing the findings on many of the large EDM platforms (e.g. *DJMag*, *Mixmag*, *Resident Advisor*) to raise public awareness. Many of the barriers identified in this thesis are ingrained within EDM culture (e.g. hierarchies), so much so that male DJs may be unaware that they are marginalising women. Adapting this thesis into magazine/website format so a non-academic audience can engage with its findings will allow a wide range of stakeholders to be educated about sexism/misogyny in EDM and the challenges female DJs face.

Secondly, many of the issues identified in this thesis (e.g. representation, safety concerns, sexual harassment) may be used to inform policy decisions within the wider music industry. For example, the creation of safer spaces policies, procedures for reporting and dealing with sexism and harassment, or to pressure festivals, venues, and promoters to diversify their line-ups in genuine and non-tokenistic ways. Findings from this thesis suggest that some 'safer' spaces are not safe for everyone. As such, it advocates for policies that are dynamic and receptive to the specific challenges faced by female DJs of colour, as well as queer and transgender DJs. However, implementing policies that all venues, festivals, and events must adhere to may prove difficult in practice. Some venues/promoters may be unwilling to adopt safer spaces policies or book diverse line ups, or they may not have the financial resources to train their staff to deal with sexism and harassment. It is a legal requirement for employers to take a preventative approach to safeguarding their staff from workplace sexual harassment (see the Worker Protection Act 2024) (Pound, 2024). However, DJs are largely freelancers and many events integral to the

EDM scene, such as free parties, are unregulated. In these cases, it may be less feasible for such policies to be enacted. Further, venues with safer spaces agreements must be held accountable if they are not upheld - can this feasibly be achieved and who will they be accountable to? Rather than asking all venues and events to adhere to certain policies, it may be more realistic for spaces 'sign up' to them. For example, the *Keychange* initiative, which advocates for gender equality within the music industry, asks music organisations to sign its pledge. In doing so, these organisations confirm that they are committed to increasing minority representation and must outline their ambitions to do so (Keychange, n.d.). Here, they are effectively holding themselves accountable. However, the onus should not be on venues alone. As such, it is recommended that artists feature 'inclusion riders' in their contracts. If multiple DJs refuse to play on all-male line-ups, venues and promoters will have to change their practices.

Related to the issues of representation and gender equality, this project advocates for the publishing of annual diversity reports to track changes and improvements in gender diversity within the industry. This would allow stakeholders to see if strategies to improve representation (e.g. *Keychange*) are successful. Further, stakeholders could track which areas are becoming more diverse (e.g. festival line-ups) and which areas need more targeted support to improve their gender balance (e.g. if the report identified that there were few female producers on label rosters, more funding could be directed to production workshops for women). Yearly reports on gender diversity at international festivals (Female: Pressure, 2024) and in the charts (Smith et al., 2024) demonstrate that regular analyses are possible. However, expanding this to include data from club line-ups and label rosters, as well

as behind-the-scenes roles would provide a broader picture of the industry, particularly for underground scenes which are less well-documented.

This project identified that insomnia/fatigue, stress, and anxiety are the most common wellbeing problems amongst female DJs. As such, it recommends that resources or programmes specific to female DJs are developed that allow them to maintain a good level of wellbeing whilst on tour. For example, guidelines could be introduced around the number of days off or hours of sleep required when touring. Further, statutory sick pay should be introduced for all musicians, so they are able to take the necessary time off before any problems become exacerbated.

It may also be useful to adapt these resources to managers or promoters, so they know how to offer support following harassment. It was evident that some promoters/venue owners did not know how to correctly deal with harassment incidents. As such, compulsory training should be offered to anyone working in a night-time space (such as the *Good Night Out* campaign). If women knew who to report harassment to and that their claim would be taken seriously, more may be willing to speak out about their experiences. Given that the music industry is a 'gig economy' it may be difficult for sick pay and compulsory days off to be implemented as musicians do not have a long-term employer. Here, joining a musicians' union that can help artists access medical assessments, advice, and support may be more feasible.

Further, it was found that some participants felt pressure to 'choose' between DJing and motherhood. As such, it is recommended that flexible working arrangements are available for both parents so that women do not have to end their career once they become a mother. If parental leave was shared and more support

was available, women may be more likely to return to the music industry after becoming a mother.

This thesis highlighted the invaluable role that women-centric DJ collectives, communities, and queer spaces played in supporting female DJs. Consequently, it advocates for more financial support and behind-the-scenes assistance for these organisations to continue their vital work. More funding could allow collectives to host more workshops, put on club nights, and employ more experienced DJs as mentors to their younger counterparts. The large number of potential sources of funding that grassroots organisations can apply to (e.g. *Arts Council*) make this a feasible option. However, funding is highly competitive so funding bodies should offer support to collectives during the application process. Importantly, the onus should not be on women alone. Anyone who has the capacity should consider hosting workshops on DJing, production, and promotion, as well as networking events, creating more opportunities for minorities to learn and develop their skills. Crucially, these workshops should be free, or free for those on no/low income, given that financial barriers were identified as a common challenge to entering the industry.

Furthermore, many of the challenges and barriers identified by participants were a direct result of the actions of White, cis men (e.g. gatekeeping). As such, men are encouraged to become allies. They should become knowledgeable in how to recognise their privileges and biases, how to unlearn them, as well as how they can use their position of power to uplift others. Crucially, this does not exclusively apply to men. Study 1 highlighted that women also hold biases, particularly surrounding other female DJs' appearance. As such, all individuals should acknowledge how they too can perpetuate biases. Here, workshops, similar to anti-racism/allyship training,

could be offered to DJs and other industry stakeholders, for example through their union.

Finally, many participants identified as feminists and perceived their role as a female DJ to be political, using their position to advocate for gender equality in EDM. This has important implications for how one incites change within the industry. Although policies and guidelines are useful, individuals are urged to take action at the local level, protest, boycott venues and events that are not inclusive, call out and continually question the lack of diversity in the scene, as well as hold stakeholders to account. The effectiveness of grassroots activism should not be underestimated.

The implications and recommendations for the music industry and individuals discussed in this section are clearly summarised in Table 36:

Table 36

Recommendations for industry and individuals

Finding from thesis	Recommendation for industry	Recommendation for individual
Only 36% of female DJs felt represented in the EDM scene.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All music organisations sign the Keychange pledge, joining a network of over 700 organisations who are working collectively to ensure better representation in the music industry (Keychange, nd).- Promoters should actively question whether the line ups they have booked are truly representative of the diversity of their scene. Using databases (e.g. <i>Female: Pressure, the F-List, In the Key of She</i>) to discover local female DJs/producers should become an established and common practice.- Music organisations should publish publicly available annual diversity reports to track minority representation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- DJs should feature an ‘inclusion rider’ on their contract which requests that the event they are playing must have a diverse line up (e.g. by race or gender).- Clubbers should be mindful about which events they attend and boycott those with all male line-ups.
Insomnia/fatigue, stress, and anxiety are the most common wellbeing problems amongst female DJs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Government guidelines should be introduced around the number of days off or hours of sleep required when touring to prevent burnout.- Statutory sick pay should be introduced for all DJs, so they are able to take the necessary time off before any problems become exacerbated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All DJs should join a musicians’ union that can help them access medical assessments, advice, support, and wellbeing courses.

Finding from thesis	Recommendation for industry	Recommendation for individual
Only 44% of female DJs felt safe in the EDM scene.	- All venues and festivals should have a publicly available safer spaces policy that clearly sets out what behaviour will not be tolerated and how staff will respond. Alongside this, all venues should employ safer spaces staff. These are easily identifiable, trained individuals who act as a point of contact for clubbers with safety concerns, separate from security/bar staff, who ensure that the safer spaces policy is upheld.	- Everyone attending a venue is responsible for ensuring that the safer spaces policy is upheld. DJs, promoters, and clubbers should familiarise themselves with the venue's safe spaces policy before attending.
Promoters/venue owners did not know how to correctly deal with incidents of harassment.	- Compulsory training about how to respond to and prevent sexual harassment should be offered to anyone working in a night-time space (e.g. the Good Night Out campaign), such as bar staff, security, promoters, and artist liaison. This training should be repeated regularly (e.g. every six months) to ensure that all staff are knowledgeable about venue procedures.	- DJs should become a member of the Association for Electronic Music (AFEM) who have produced a code of conduct against sexual harassment and gender discrimination which all members must follow. The more members actively upholding these guidelines, the safer the EDM scene will be.
Women-centric DJ collectives, communities, and queer spaces played an invaluable role in supporting the careers of female DJs.	- More government-funded financial support and behind-the-scenes assistance should be made available to women-centric and queer spaces so these organisations can continue their vital work. - Funding is highly competitive so funding bodies should offer support to collectives during the application process (e.g. how to write funding applications).	- Anyone who has the capacity should host workshops on DJing, production, or promotion, as well as networking events, to create opportunities for minorities to learn and develop their skills. Where possible, these workshops should be free, or free for those on no/low income.

Finding from thesis	Recommendation for industry	Recommendation for individual
Many of the challenges and barriers identified by participants were a direct result of the actions of White, cis men (e.g. gatekeeping).	- Allyship training should be made available to all those working in the EDM industry, to help individuals recognise their privileges, as well as how to actively stand in solidarity with, and advocate for, minorities. This training should be offered through an employer (e.g. if an individual is employed by a venue) or through a union (e.g. for freelance DJs).	- The onus should not be on women alone to challenge the sexism in EDM. Everyone involved in the EDM scene, including DJs, promoters, or fans, is responsible for calling out unacceptable behaviour. Men, in particular, should question and hold to account other men to reduce the burden on women.

6.7 Conclusion

This thesis sought to investigate and amplify the lived experiences of female DJs in EDM. It adopted a mixed-methods, sequential qualitative to quantitative design to better understand the experiences of female DJs and the systemic/structural barriers they face, as well as what factors help them navigate the scene and support their practice. Findings exposed the ‘gendered’ nature of female DJs’ experiences.

Although women encountered gendered barriers at all stages of their career, many worked to actively challenge them, as well as the sexism present within the wider music industry. In carving out their own places for inclusion, through communities, collectives, and alternative spaces, women made it possible for themselves and other minorities to thrive within the industry, despite its male dominance. Additionally, this project revealed that women’s experiences can be dually influenced by other aspects of identity, such as age, sexuality, and professional level. Further, whilst the act of DJing itself had a positive impact on participants’ mental health/wellbeing, negative events experienced within the wider industry had a detrimental effect. These findings have the power to bring about change within EDM and create a safer, more diverse scene that is welcoming, accepting, and celebratory of all.

6.8 Executive summary

The aim of this research was to explore the diversity and complexity of the lived experiences of female DJs using a mixed-methods approach, namely interviews ($N=23$) followed by a large-scale survey ($N=176$). An overarching finding was that gender underpins the lived experiences of female DJs. Participants’ experiences of being a female DJ in EDM were rich, complex, and highly individualised. Their experiences often differed depending on other aspects of identity (e.g. age, sexuality), as well as career factors (e.g. professional level), that worked to further

marginalise women. For example, queer women reported more negative experiences in the EDM scene overall compared to straight women, and older women felt less supported than their younger counterparts. However, there were some patterns of shared experience and these were rooted in, and shaped, by the sexism and misogyny that is deeply entrenched in the EDM scene. For example, sexual harassment was found to be endemic in EDM. 41% of female DJs had experienced harassment, whilst 70% were aware of other women who had been sexual harassed whilst working as a DJ.

Female DJs encountered gendered barriers at all stages of their career (e.g. male networks, gatekeepers, and hierarchies). After sexism, financial barriers were the second most common form of discrimination. Crucially, these barriers impacted some women more than others, with queer women encountering greater financial barriers than their straight counterparts. However, many female DJs worked to actively challenge their marginalisation, as well as the sexism present in the wider music industry, perceiving their role as a female DJ to be political. Further, in carving out their own spaces for inclusion, through communities, collectives, and alternative spaces, women were able to thrive in EDM, despite its male dominance. Here, a key finding was the importance of the queer scene. Compared to the EDM scene in general participants felt more accepted, supported, represented, confident, and safe, and less marginalised and tokenised within this scene, even if they did not identify as queer themselves.

Finally, female DJs' experiences impacted their mental wellbeing. There was a distinction between the positive and negative impacts of DJing on wellbeing. Wellbeing benefits (e.g. increase in positive affect) derived from the musical aspects

of DJing, whilst negative impacts (e.g. stress, anxiety) did so from external factors (e.g. sexism, harassment).

Recommendations for music organisations/industry:

- Publish annual diversity reports to track minority representation within the workplace
- Question if the line-ups you have booked are truly representative of your scene and use databases (e.g. *Female: Pressure, the F-List*) to discover female talent
- Create and uphold a safer spaces policy that clearly sets out what behaviour will not be tolerated in your venue and how staff will respond
- Employ safer spaces staff who will act as a point of contact for clubbers, independent from security, and ensure that the safer spaces policy is upheld
- Introduce guidelines around the number of days off/hours sleep required when touring to prevent artist burnout and ensure that artists have adequate recovery time
- Provide compulsory training (e.g. Good Night Out Campaign) to anyone working in a night-time space (e.g. bar staff, promoters), which should be repeated regularly
- Additional financial and behind the scenes support should be made available for women-centric and queer spaces to continue their vital work
- Provide allyship training to music industry employees to help them recognise their privilege and learn to stand in solidarity with, and advocate for, minorities

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics approval

AHC FREC: reviewer comments

Application reference	FAHC 20-061	Date reviewed	April 2021
Project title	Exploring the lived experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music culture		

NB: Do let the administrator know of any potential conflicts of interest. Please copy in the other reviewer when you email this completed form to researchethics@leeds.ac.uk. Ideally you should review the application first before reading the other reviewer's comments, but you are welcome to discuss the application with the other reviewer or ask for the Chair's opinion if you would like to.

Recommendation (Please tick one)	
Approve (please include a brief (min 25 words) explanation below)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approve with suggestions of points to consider prior to carrying out the research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minor amendments required before approval can be given	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Major amendments required before approval can be given	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reject	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suitable for discussion at FREC meeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>
General comments (These will be returned to the applicant)	
<p>This is a worthwhile proposal to investigate a dark feature of DJ culture. The applicant has put a lot of thought and care into the research plan. Plans for data security and for dealing with the possible trauma to participants are in place</p> <p>The research is designed to encourage participants to give accounts that may be traumatic and which they may have hitherto repressed. The researcher does list various forms of support – helplines, support groups and the like – however I would like to see more evidence of how such situations will be managed and of how the researcher will attend to the welfare post-interview of participants who, in spite of having freely volunteered to take part, may have been quite distressed by the experience.</p> <p>Participants will be made aware, both when I circulate the information sheet and before they give informed consent, that the interview may involve the discussion of potentially distressing subject matter. I will also remind participants that information on how to access further support and advice will be made available to all participants following the interview.</p> <p>As the interviews will be conducted online rather than in person it may be more difficult for me to gauge if a participant did not want to talk about a particular subject or if they have become distressed. To overcome this, I will provide pause points throughout the interview, to check in with the participant, offer them a break, and confirm that they wish to continue.</p> <p>I am confident that the benefits of conducting this research outweigh the potential harm to participants. I intend to disseminate my findings back to the DJ community, for example through dance music magazines such as DJMag and Mixmag. By bringing greater attention/awareness to these issues, it may lead to positive changes within the electronic dance music (EDM) that can help the scene become a more inclusive and safer environment for women and other minorities.</p> <p>I am aware of the need to look after my own wellbeing during the research process, particularly when discussing more sensitive issues. For example, I plan to take regular breaks and discuss any</p>	

particularly distressing/difficult interviewers with my supervisors.		
Application section	Comment	Response required/ amended application required/ for consideration
C15	Mitigation of potential distress of interviewees	x

01/07/2021

Email - Shauna Stapleton [ps16ss] - Outlook

FAHC 20-0061 - AHC FREC application Outcome - Favourable

Erin Pickles <E.R.K.Pickles@leeds.ac.uk>

on behalf of

AHC Research Ethics <AHCResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk>

Tue 11/05/2021 10:13

To: Shauna Stapleton [ps16ss] <ps16ss@leeds.ac.uk>**Cc:** AHC Research Ethics <AHCResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk>

Dear Shauna,

RE: FAHC 20-061 / Exploring the lived experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music culture

Further to the submission of your review response (26/04/2021), I am pleased to inform you that the above research ethics application has been reviewed by AHC Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this email.

Please retain this email as evidence of approval in your study file.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please see http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/179/amendment_form or contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information (ahcresearchethics@leeds.ac.uk) if required.

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

If you require this confirmation in letter form, for example to show to external funders, then please do email me. I am happy to provide this if required.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study goes well.

Very best wishes,
Erin
(On behalf of the AHC FREC)

Erin Pickles

Research Administrator
AHC Faculty Research Ethics Committee | University of Leeds
Email: ahcresearchethics@leeds.ac.uk

Appendix B: Demographic questionnaire

Exploring the Experiences of Female DJs – Interview Demographic Survey

0% complete

Page 1: Introduction

Thank you for participating in my research exploring the experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music.

Please complete this short demographic survey prior to the interview. It will take approximately 5 minutes and your responses will be made anonymous.

If you have any questions, or wish to withdraw your data, please contact ps16ss@leeds.ac.uk.

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by Arts, Humanities and Cultures Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 11th May 2021, ethics reference FAHC 20-061.

Page 2: Demographics

1. Name/DJ alias

2. Age

3. Ethnicity

4. What country are you currently based in?

Page 3: Demographics

5. How many years have you been DJing for?

6. What is your level of profession as a DJ?

- Amateur
- Semi-professional
- Professional
- Retired

7. What is the main genre of music you play?

- Afrobeats
- Afro House (Amapiano/Gqom/Kwaito)
- Baile Funk
- Breakbeat
- Dancehall/Bashment
- Disco
- Downtempo
- Drum & Bass
- Dubstep
- EDM
- Electronica
- Hardcore
- Hip Hop
- House
- Jungle
- Industrial
- IDM
- Techno
- Trance
- UK Garage
- Other

a. If you selected Other, please specify: **Required**

8. What is the main equipment you use?

- CDJs
- Controller
- Turntables
- Other

a. If you selected Other, please specify: **Required**

Appendix C: Interview schedule

Thank you for taking part in this interview. I'm interested in your experiences as a female DJ and how these experiences may impact your wellbeing. I'm going to ask you some questions about the positive and negative aspects of being a DJ. We may discuss some sensitive topics, but you don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to, and you can take a break if needed. I'm not a trained counsellor but I do have a list of helplines/resources if you need them.

Opening Qs

How did you become interested in electronic dance music (EDM)?

- What genres did you listen to?
- Early experiences of going to raves/clubs?

How did you get into DJing?

- What made you want to become a DJ?
- How did you access to the scene/learn to DJ/get your first gig?

Can you tell me about the current set-up you use?

- How did you access it/decide on this particular set-up?
- How has your set up changed over time?

Main Qs

I'm interested in all the positive aspects of being a female DJ? Can you tell me about...

- What do you enjoy the most?
- Positive experience of gigs
- Role of others (the role others play in your career as a DJ)
- Who are your allies in the scene? (female collectives?)
- Safer spaces (any experiences of clubs with safer spaces policies)
- Thinking about all the positive experiences you've had... How do these positive experiences impact your wellbeing (if at all)?

Can you tell me about all the negative aspects of being a female DJ?

- What do you enjoy the least?
- Negative experiences of gigs
- Experiences of sexism/discrimination/harassment
- Safety/feeling unsafe at gigs
- Do these negative experiences impact your wellbeing (if at all)?

Closing Qs

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

- How did this make you feel?
- How has it impacted you/your career?

To what extent have you experienced setbacks in your career?

- How did this make you feel?
- How did you overcome/manage these setbacks?
- What motivates you to continue DJing?

*If participant has quit/retired from DJing – What caused you to quit?

- Why/was it a difficult decision/in what ways?

In what ways has the absence of live DJing due to COVID impacted you (and your wellbeing?)

What advice would you give to your younger self?

Is there anything else you'd like to add or anything you think is relevant that I have not mentioned?

Thanks for participating.

Prompts:

- How?
- Why?
- How did that make you feel?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- Tell me what you were thinking?

Appendix D: Information sheet

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Exploring the lived experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music (EDM) culture: Interview study information sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the project?

The aim of this research is to explore the lived experiences of female DJs in EDM culture, including initial involvement, motivations for participation, and experiences within the industry. I am particularly interested in how these experiences relate to wellbeing, as well as how gender may intersect with other aspects of identity (including race, class, and sexuality).

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you identify as a female DJ and operate within the EDM scene. Approximately 20 other DJs will also be taking part in this research.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You can still withdraw at any time up until the point at which the data will be analysed. You do not have to give a reason.

What do I have to do?

You will be invited to take part in an informal interview, conducted by the lead researcher, Shauna Stapleton. The interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be conducted online using Zoom (or another video conference software of your choosing) at a mutually convenient time. The questions will allow you to discuss in-depth, and reflect on, your experiences as a DJ. There are no further commitments following this.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You will need to give up some of your time in order to participate. You may not wish to disclose certain experiences during the interview. You do not have to answer any question(s) you do not want to, and you can stop the interview or withdraw at any time up to 6 months following the interview with no consequence.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This research will contribute to the growing body of literature on EDM culture and provide a greater insight into the experiences of female DJs, particularly around wellbeing and aspects of identity, areas which have received little academic attention. It is hoped that you will benefit from having your voice heard and feel satisfaction in contributing to an understanding of important issues within EDM.

<i>Project title</i>	<i>Document type</i>	<i>Version #</i>	<i>Date</i>
Exploring the lived experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music culture	Interview study information sheet	1	11/05/2021

Last updated 13/03/19

Page 1 of 2

School of Music



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What will happen to my personal information?

All contact information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored separately from the research data. All data will be held securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998), the Human Rights Act, and the University's Code of Practice on Data Protection.

Any sensitive topics or experiences that you may discuss during this interview will be made confidential and anonymous, although they may still be used in the write up of this research.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

Your responses will be analysed and used as material for my PhD thesis. You will not be identifiable within any reports or publications. Your personal details and those of others, such as the names of any specific DJs, clubs, or venues, you refer to will be made anonymous. Some of your responses may be used in the write up of this research as direct quotes, but they will be anonymised.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Yes, this interview will be recorded using an audio recorder. The recording will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

Who is organising/ funding the research?

This research is not funded.

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions or wish to discuss your involvement in this research, please contact:

Shauna Stapleton (ps16ss@leeds.ac.uk)

Dr Alinka Greasley (a.greasley@leeds.ac.uk) tel: 0113 343 4560

Prof Alice O'Grady (a.ogrady@leeds.ac.uk) tel: 0113 343 8715

This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by Arts, Humanities and Cultures Faculty Research Ethics Committee on 11th May 2021, ethics reference FSHC 20-061.

<i>Project title</i>	<i>Document type</i>	<i>Version #</i>	<i>Date</i>
Exploring the lived experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music culture	Interview study information sheet	1	11/05/2021

Last updated 13/03/19

Page 2 of 2

Appendix E: Consent form

School of Music



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Consent to take part in Exploring the experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music culture: Interview study

Add your initials
next to the
statement if you
agree

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 11/05/2021 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer a particular question(s), I am free to decline. I understand that I can withdraw at any point up until 6 months following my interview by emailing Shauna Stapleton (ps16ss@leeds.ac.uk) and that my data will be destroyed.	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report(s) that result from the research. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be stored and used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.	
I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participant	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	Shauna Stapleton
Signature	
Date*	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

Project title	Document type	Version #	Date
Exploring the experiences of female DJs in electronic dance music culture	Consent form	1	11/05/2021

Appendix F: Survey statements

Exploring the experiences and wellbeing of female DJs in electronic dance music (EDM)

Start of Block: Introduction

Q2 The aim of this survey is to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of female DJs in Electronic Dance Music (EDM). For the purpose of this study, 'EDM' is being used as an umbrella term to encompass all genres/sub-genres of dance music.

You will be asked some basic demographic and background information before being presented with a number of statements. You will be asked to rate the extent to which you agree with these statements on a 7-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree). The statements broadly relate to your general experiences as a female DJ, visibility within the scene, wellbeing, discrimination, sexual harassment, and experiences playing in different types of spaces. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

All responses will be kept strictly confidential and the information you provide will be accessed solely by members of the research team. There is an option to leave your name and email address if you would like to participate in any future studies. This contact information will be held securely for the duration of the project, in line with GDPR regulations.

The research project has been granted ethical approval by the University of Leeds (ethics reference FSHC 20-061). This research is being carried out by Shauna Stapleton (ps16ss@leeds.ac.uk) and is supervised by Dr Alinka Greasley (A.E.Greasley@leeds.ac.uk) and Professor Alice O'Grady (A.OGrady@leeds.ac.uk). If you have any questions, please get in touch.

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Consent

Q3 I understand the aims of this research and give my consent to take part in this study

Yes (1)

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Background Information

Q1 What is your age?

Page Break

Q2 Is your gender the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Prefer not to say (3)
-

Q3 Which category best describes your sexuality?

- Bisexual (1)
 - Gay woman/lesbian (2)
 - Pansexual (3)
 - Queer (4)
 - Straight/heterosexual (5)
 - Prefer to self describe (please state) (6)
-
- Prefer not to say (7)
-

Q4 Which category best describes your ethnicity?

- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
 - Asian (2)
 - Black or African American (3)
 - Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (4)
 - Middle Eastern or North African (5)
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (6)
 - White (7)
 - Other race, ethnicity or origin (please state) (8)
-
-

Q5 What country are you currently based in?

- Afghanistan (1)
- Albania (2)
- Algeria (3)
- Andorra (4)
- Angola (5)
- Antigua and Barbuda (6)
- Argentina (7)
- Armenia (8)
- Australia (9)
- Austria (10)
- Azerbaijan (11)
- Bahamas (12)
- Bahrain (13)
- Bangladesh (14)
- Barbados (15)
- Belarus (16)
- Belgium (17)
- Belize (18)
- Benin (19)
- Bhutan (20)
- Bolivia (21)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (22)
- Botswana (23)
- Brazil (24)
- Brunei (25)
- Bulgaria (26)
- Burkina Faso (27)
- Burundi (28)
- Cabo Verde (29)
- Cambodia (30)
- Cameroon (31)
- Canada (32)
- Central African Republic (CAR) (33)
- Chad (34)
- Chile (35)
- China (36)
- Colombia (37)
- Comoros (38)
- Congo, Democratic Republic of the (39)
- Congo, Republic of the (40)
- Costa Rica (41)
- Cote d'Ivoire (42)

- Croatia (43)
- Cuba (44)
- Cyprus (45)
- Czechia (46)
- Denmark (47)
- Djibouti (48)
- Dominica (49)
- Dominican Republic (50)
- Ecuador (51)
- Egypt (52)
- El Salvador (53)
- Equatorial Guinea (54)
- Eritrea (55)
- Estonia (56)
- Eswatini (57)
- Ethiopia (58)
- Fiji (59)
- Finland (60)
- France (61)
- Gabon (62)
- Gambia (63)
- Georgia (64)
- Germany (65)
- Ghana (66)
- Greece (67)
- Grenada (68)
- Guatemala (69)
- Guinea (70)
- Guinea-Bissau (71)
- Guyana (72)
- Haiti (73)
- Honduras (74)
- Hungary (75)
- Iceland (76)
- India (77)
- Indonesia (78)
- Iran (79)
- Iraq (80)
- Ireland (81)
- Israel (82)
- Italy (83)
- Jamaica (84)

- Japan (85)
- Jordan (86)
- Kazakhstan (87)
- Kenya (88)
- Kiribati (89)
- Kosovo (90)
- Kuwait (91)
- Kyrgyzstan (92)
- Laos (93)
- Latvia (94)
- Lebanon (95)
- Lesotho (96)
- Liberia (97)
- Libya (98)
- Liechtenstein (99)
- Lithuania (100)
- Luxembourg (101)
- Madagascar (102)
- Malawi (103)
- Malaysia (104)
- Maldives (105)
- Mali (106)
- Malta (107)
- Marshall Islands (108)
- Mauritania (109)
- Mauritius (110)
- Mexico (111)
- Micronesia (112)
- Moldova (113)
- Monaco (114)
- Mongolia (115)
- Montenegro (116)
- Morocco (117)
- Mozambique (118)
- Myanmar (119)
- Namibia (120)
- Nauru (121)
- Nepal (122)
- Netherlands (123)
- New Zealand (124)
- Nicaragua (125)
- Niger (126)

- Nigeria (127)
- North Korea (128)
- North Macedonia (129)
- Norway (130)
- Oman (131)
- Pakistan (132)
- Palau (133)
- Palestine (134)
- Panama (135)
- Papua New Guinea (136)
- Paraguay (137)
- Peru (138)
- Philippines (139)
- Poland (140)
- Portugal (141)
- Qatar (142)
- Romania (143)
- Russia (144)
- Rwanda (145)
- Saint Kitts and Nevis (146)
- Saint Lucia (147)
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (148)
- Samoa (149)
- San Marino (150)
- Sao Tome and Principe (151)
- Saudi Arabia (152)
- Senegal (153)
- Serbia (154)
- Seychelles (155)
- Sierra Leone (156)
- Singapore (157)
- Slovakia (158)
- Slovenia (159)
- Solomon Islands (160)
- Somalia (161)
- South Africa (162)
- South Korea (163)
- South Sudan (164)
- Spain (165)
- Sri Lanka (166)
- Sudan (167)
- Suriname (168)

- Sweden (169)
 - Switzerland (170)
 - Syria (171)
 - Taiwan (172)
 - Tajikistan (173)
 - Tanzania (174)
 - Thailand (175)
 - Timor-Leste (176)
 - Togo (177)
 - Tonga (178)
 - Trinidad and Tobago (179)
 - Tunisia (180)
 - Turkey (181)
 - Turkmenistan (182)
 - Tuvalu (183)
 - Uganda (184)
 - Ukraine (185)
 - United Arab Emirates (UAE) (186)
 - United Kingdom (UK) (187)
 - United States of America (USA) (188)
 - Uruguay (189)

 - Uzbekistan (190)
 - Vanuatu (191)
 - Vatican City (192)
 - Venezuela (193)
 - Vietnam (194)
 - Yemen (195)
 - Zambia (196)
 - Zimbabwe (197)
-

Q6 Which category best describes your professional level?

- Amateur (1)
- Semi-professional (2)
- Professional (3)
-

Q7 How long have you been DJing for?

- 1-5 years (1)
- 6-10 years (2)
- 11-15 years (3)
- 16-20 years (4)
- 21+ years (5)
-

Q8 On average, how many gigs do you play a month?

- 1-3 (1)
- 4-6 (2)
- 7-9 (3)
- 10+ (4)
-

Q9 How often do you use each piece of equipment?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)
CDJs (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controller (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Turntables (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please state) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 You may play many genres of music but for the purpose of this study, please select the main genre that you play

- Afrobeats (1)
- Afro House (Amapiano/Gqom/Kwaito) (2)
- Baile Funk (3)
- Breakbeat (4)
- Dancehall/Bashment (5)
- Disco (6)
- Downtempo (7)
- Drum & Bass (8)
- Dubstep (9)
- EDM (10)
- Electronica (11)
- Hardcore (12)
- Hip Hop (13)
- House (14)
- Jungle (15)
- Industrial (16)
- IDM (17)
- Techno (18)
- Trance (19)
- UK Garage (20)

Other (please state) (21) _____

Q11 What is the scene you identify with most?

End of Block: Background Information

Start of Block: Being a woman in a male dominated scene

Q15 Some women I interviewed described the EDM scene as 'male dominated'. The next three questions concern your general experiences of being a female DJ and how you feel as a woman operating within the scene.

Q12 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I enjoy being a female DJ in the EDM scene (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The scene I operate in is male dominated (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As a woman, I experience the EDM scene differently to men (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have access to the same gigs, opportunities, and resources as male DJs (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My gender does not impact my experiences within the EDM scene (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 Please rate the extent to which you have experienced the following:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)
I am often the only woman on the line up (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 In the EDM scene, I feel...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Accepted (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supported (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Represented (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confident (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marginalised (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tokenised (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Being a woman in a male dominated scene

Start of Block: Voice & Visibility

Q20 Some women told me that they often feel a sense of responsibility to educate, inspire and support other women within the scene, for example through establishing their own DJ collectives or club nights. The next question concerns the extent to which you might use your position as a female DJ to do this, if at all. If this does not reflect your experiences, select 'not applicable'.

Q15 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)	Not applicable (8)
I feel a sense of empowerment when DJing (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often use my platform to promote other female DJs (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When performing, I often feel as though I am representing not just myself but female DJs as a whole (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see my identity as a female DJ as political (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not aware of my gender when performing (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I experience sexism within my scene, I am able to challenge it (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable challenging sexism within my scene (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Voice & Visibility

Start of Block: DJing & Wellbeing

Q22 Some women told me that there are positive and negative impacts to working as a DJ, due to the night-time environment, unsociable working hours, and availability of alcohol/drugs. The next three questions concern the positive and negative effects that DJing may have on your wellbeing. If you do not wish to answer these questions, skip to the next section.

Q16 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
DJing is a form of therapy for me (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I've had a bad day, DJing can improve my mood (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can express my emotions through DJing (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support from others in the scene (e.g. other DJs, promoters, agents, managers, venue owners) can have a positive impact on my mental health/wellbeing (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know DJing can sometimes have a negative impact on my health, but I do it anyway (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
DJing is more of a chore than it used to be (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't think I can extend my DJ career for much longer (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It takes me some time to mentally recover following a gig (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 To what extent have you experienced the following mental health issues as a result of DJing?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)
Depression (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anxiety (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stress (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PTSD (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 To what extent have you experienced the following physical health problems as a result of DJing?

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)
Hearing problems (e.g. tinnitus) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insomnia/fatigue (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Back problems (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It takes me time to physically recover following a gig (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DJing & Wellbeing

Start of Block: Discrimination

Q27 Some women told me that they experience prejudice within the scene as a result of their gender, race or sexuality. The next question concerns the extent to which you have faced discrimination within the scene. If this does not reflect your experiences, select 'not applicable'. If you do not wish to answer these questions, skip to the next section.

Q19 Please rate the extent to which you have experienced the following:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)	Not applicable (6)
People react positively when I tell them I am a DJ (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced sexism within the EDM scene (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced racism within the scene (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced homophobia within the scene (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have experienced financial barriers that have prevented me from progressing in my DJ career (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Discrimination

Start of Block: DJing & Sexual Harassment

Q29 Some women told me they have had negative experiences as female DJs, I'm interested in knowing the extent to which this has happened to you, if at all. The next three questions

concern your experiences of sexual harassment within the EDM scene. If this does not reflect your experiences, select 'not applicable'. If you do not wish to answer these questions, skip to the next section.

Q20 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)	Not applicable (8)
Harassment occurs in some types of clubs more than others (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being harassed is an inevitable part of being a female DJ (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe when performing (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safer in some clubs more than others (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safer if I attend my gigs with other people (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q21 Please rate the extent to which you have experienced the following:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)	Not applicable (6)
I adopt certain measures to ensure my safety when playing gigs (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as a DJ (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q22 Are you aware of other women who have been sexually harassed/assaulted whilst working as DJ?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unsure (3)

End of Block: DJing & Sexual Harassment

Start of Block: Experiences of Sexual Harassment

Q23 Please rate the extent to which you have experienced the following:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)
If you have experienced sexual harassment, how often do you report it? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I downplay/make light of negative incidents I experience whilst DJing (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being sexually harassed has a negative impact on my mental health/wellbeing (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Experiences of Sexual Harassment

Start of Block: DJing & Queer Spaces

Q37 Some women I interviewed described playing at clubs or events considered to be queer or non-normative. The next four questions concern your experiences of playing in such spaces, should you have any. If this does not reflect your experiences, select 'not applicable'.

Q24 Do you identify as queer/LGBT+?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Unsure (3)

Q25 Please rate the extent to which you have experienced the following:

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	All the time (5)
I participate in my local queer club scene (e.g. attending/organising/playing at queer-centric events, attending or playing at queer clubs/venues, being a member of a queer DJ collective/network) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: DJing & Queer Spaces

Start of Block: Queer Spaces

Q26 In queer spaces, I feel...

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Accepted (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supported (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Represented (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Confident (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marginalised (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tokenised (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q27 Please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I prefer playing in more normative spaces compared to queer spaces (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It makes no difference to me if I am playing in a queer space or not (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Queer Spaces

Start of Block: Final Reflections

Q28 If you would like to reflect on any of the themes covered in this survey, please do so here:

End of Block: Final Reflections

Start of Block: Debrief

Q29 If you would be happy to take part in any future studies, please leave your name and email address

Q45 Thank you for taking part in this survey. The aim of this research is to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of female DJs in EDM and how these experiences may relate to their wellbeing.

If you have any questions or wish to withdraw your data, please email Shauna Stapleton (ps16ss@leeds.ac.uk).
