International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)
ISSN: 2319-7064
SJIF (2022): 7.942

Relationship between Music Preferences, Extraversion and Optimism among Youth

Surbhi Jaiswal

Student, Lucknow, U. P., India
E-mail: *surjas1997[at]gmail.com*

Abstract: ***People seem to be innately predisposed to react to music and it is used by people of all ages for all sorts of purposes. The study attempted to examine the relationship between music preference, extraversion and optimism among youth. A convenient sample of 30 participants were approached. Their age range were from 18 to 24. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated to assess the relationships among study variables. The finding of the research revealed that Extraversion correlates positively with Energetic and Rhythmic (ER) and Upbeat and Conventional (UC) music. Further, result findings showed that Optimism associates positively with ER and Reflective & Complex (RC) music preference. Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 24.***

Keywords: Music preference, Extraversion, Optimism

1. Introduction

Music has existed in some form since the beginning of history and is evident in nearly all cultures across the world (Brown, 2008). People seem to be innately predisposed to react to music and it is used by people of all ages for all sorts of purposes. Some Psychologists in recent years have begun to realize its potential in providing valuable insights into human behaviour.

Music Preference

The broad definition of musical preference (Greasley& Lamont, 2006) means, whether style or piece, that people like and choose to listen to at any given moment or over time. Music preference has two dimensions: type and strength. The type of preference refers to the question 'which musical style a person likes best'. The strength of preference refers to 'the degree to which one likes a musical piece/style'.

Extraversion

Extraversion is "the act, state, or habit of being predominantly concerned with and obtaining gratification from what is outside the self". Extraverts tend to enjoy human interactions and to be enthusiastic, talkative, assertive, and gregarious. They take pleasure in activities that involve large social gatherings, such as parties, community activities, public demonstrations, and business or political groups. They tend to be energized when around other people, and they are more prone to boredom when they are by themselves.

Optimism

Optimism was defined by Scheier and Carver (1985) as one's expectation of positive results in the future and faith in good outcomes. Optimism is a mental attitude reflecting a belief or hope that the outcome of some specific endeavor, or outcomes in general, will be positive, favorable, and desirable. Being optimistic, in the typical sense of the word, is defined as expecting the best possible outcome from any given situation. Optimism is an attitude that can positively affect a person's mental and physical health.

2. Review of Literature

Elizabeth J. Vella and Gregory Mills (2016) did a research to ascertain whether uses of music partially mediate the link between personality and music preference. Trait neuroticism, perceived stress, and depression scores all correlated positively with emotional uses of music.

Laura M. Getz; Stephen Marks Elizabeth; Michael Roy (2014) Studied the influence of stress, optimism, and music training on music uses and preferences. The study indicates that high stress ratings were a predictor of emotional use of music.

Nil Aksoy (2014) did an analysis of the relationship between university student's attitude to listening to music and their level of optimism and found that there was significant correlation between student's attitude to listening to music and their level of optimism.

Rentfrow and Gosling (2003), correlated the Big Five Inventory with the music preference dimensions to find out the relationship between the two. The results indicated that the different ways in which people use music is significantly related to their established personality traits.

Wells (1985) studied and found that music helped individuals to calm down and relax. Music has been reported to have an effect on mental states and moods. In 1995, Steele and Brown's sample reported the enhancing effect of music on mood.

Rationale

People seem to be innately predisposed to react to music and it is used by people of all ages for all sorts of purposes (Brown, 2008). Music these days has a huge influence on youth and their culture. Young Individuals use music as a therapeutic escape from the world. A reason for the need of this research is that, in previous researches (for instance, Zweigenhaft, 2008) there were too many facets of personality used, so this current study intents to use a condensed version of the big five personality inventory, i. e. extraversion. If a correlation is found between music

preference, extraversion and optimism, it may be of assistance to Psychologists and Counsellors as it will help them gain a greater insight into their clients personalities and identify emotional or developmental issues they are having and it may also be useful for them as a means of conducting therapy. (White, 1985) Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between music preference, extraversion and optimism among youth in Indian population which has not been done before.

3. Methodology

Purpose: To examine the relationship between music preference, extraversion and optimism among youth.

Design: Correlational design will be applied in the current study.

Variables:

- Predictor variables: Extraversion and optimism
- Criterion variables: Music preference **Hypothesis:**
- Extraversion will correlate positively with Energetic and Rhythmic (ER) and Upbeat and Conventional (UC) music.
- Optimism will be positively associated with ER and Reflective & Complex (RC) music preference.

Sample

A convenient sample of 30 participants were approached. There were 15 female and 15 male participants. Their age range were from 18 to 24. The **purposive sampling** method was used for collecting the data.

Tools Used:

1) Short Test of Music Preference (Rentfrow and Gosling, 2003) to assess the music preference of the respondents. The stomp scale has been tested extensively by Rentfrow and Gosling and used in many other researchers in measuring music preference and has been found to be both valid and reliable (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Langmeyer et al 2012; Zweigenhaft, 2008
2) Big Five Inventory (John and Srivastava, 1999) to ascertain extraversion of the respondents. The BFI contains 44 items divided into five subscales: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Reliability of the BFI ranges from 0.79 to 0.88. Cronbach's alpha internal consistencies were moderate to high for the current sample: extraversion =.84.
3) The Life Orientation Test - R (Michael Scheier and Carver, 1994) to measure the level of optimism in the respondents. A 10 - item measure of optimism versus pessimism. Cronbach's alpha for the entire 6 items of the scale was.78, suggesting the scale has an acceptable level of internal consistency. The test - retest correlations were.68,.60,.56 and.79, suggesting that the scale is stable across time.

Statistical Analysis:

Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 24. Basic descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to determine the properties of the sample. Spearman's rho correlation coefficient was calculated to assess the relationships among study variables.

4. Result

Table 1: shows the relation between Extraversion and Energetic & Rhythmic (ER) and Upbeat & Conventional (UC) music genre.

Correlations				
			Extraversion	ER & UC
Spearman's rho	Extraversion	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	**.463***
		Sig. (1 - tailed)	.	.031
		N	17	17
	ER & UC	Correlation Coefficient	.**463***	1.000
		Sig. (1 - tailed)	.031	.
		N	17	17
***. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1 - tailed).**				

Table no.1 shows that there is a moderate significant positive relationship between the two variables (rho=.463, n=17, p<0.05) with a higher preference for Energetic & Rhythmic and Upbeat & Conventional music associated with higher levels of extraversion.

Table 2: shows the relation between Optimism and Reflective & Complex (RC) and Energetic & Rhythmic (ER)

Correlations				
			RC & ER	Optimism
Spearman's rho	RC & ER	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.670*
		Sig. (1 - tailed)	.	.012
		N	11	11
	Optimism	Correlation Coefficient	.670*	1.000
		Sig. (1 - tailed)	.012	.
		N	11	11
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1 - tailed).				

Table no.2 shows that there is a strongly positive, significant correlation found between the two variables (rho=.670, n=11, p<0.05), with higher preference for Energetic & Rhythmic and Reflective & Complex music associated with higher levels of Optimism.

5. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between music preference, extraversion and optimism among youth. For this purpose an attempt was made to explore music preference, extraversion and optimism among youth and to see the relationship between them.

In the current study, the purposive sampling method was used for collecting the data. A convenient sample of 30 participants was approached, their age ranging from 18 to 24. The data were calculated and tabulated. Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 24. Spearman's rho

correlation coefficient was calculated to assess the relationships among study variables.

Table 1 shows the relation between Extraversion and Energetic & Rhythmic (ER) and Upbeat & Conventional (UC) music genre. Preliminary tests of normality on the relationship between the Energetic & Rhythmic and Upbeat & Conventional music dimension and the personality facet of Extraversion (as measured by the BFI), revealed that the data was not normally distributed. Thus a Spearman's Rho was carried out to see if there was a correlation between the two variables. A significant correlation was found between the variables (rho=.463, n=17, $p<0.05$) with a higher musical preference of Energetic & Rhythmic and Upbeat & Conventional music moderately associated with higher levels of extraversion. Correlation was found to be significant at the 0.05 level (1 - tailed). The first hypothesis, that extraversion will correlate positively with Energetic and Rhythmic (ER) and Upbeat and Conventional (UC) music is accepted and confirmed by the results.

Table 2shows the relation between Optimism and Reflective & Complex (RC) and Energetic & Rhythmic (ER). Preliminary analysis were performed on the relationship between the Energetic & Rhythmic and Reflective & Complex music dimension (as measured by the STOMP) and the Optimism (as measured by the LOT - R), revealed that the data was not normally distributed. Therefore a Spearman's Rho was utilized instead of a Pearson's Correlation. Significant associations were observed between the two variables (rho=.670, n =11, $p<0.05$), with higher preference for Energetic & Rhythmic and Reflective & Complex music associated with higher levels of Optimism. Correlation was found to be significant at the 0.05 level (1 - tailed). Thus, the second hypothesis, that optimism will be positively associated with ER and Reflective & Complex (RC) music preference is also accepted and confirmed by the results.

The finding of this study supported previous research that extraversion will correlate positively with Energetic and Rhythmic (ER) and Upbeat and Conventional (UC) music (Desling& Engels, 2008, Nicola Sigg (2009); George et al 2007; Rentfrow and gosling 2003; Zweigenhaft, 2008). It shows that Extroverts people prefer Energetic & Rhythmic music because they are active, social, assertive and outgoing. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) argued that people's music preferences are selected by how the music reinforces their personal dispositions. This correlation then could be explained by extraverts enjoying energetic and complex music as extraverts have lower resting levels of arousal and higher levels of sensation than introverts and so listening to unconventional and complex music might satisfy their needs better than other types of music as it is emotionally arousing music that is fast pace and grabs their attention (Chamorro – Premuzic & Furnham, 2007, Dollinger, 1993).

Previous research found an association between optimism and a preference for reflective & complex and energetic & rhythmic music type and these findings were replicated in this study. Individuals with higher optimism ratings tended to use music emotionally. It may be that individuals higher in optimism are more proficient at using music to maintain their positive mood, which in turn may help them to deal with stressful situations more effectively. It is also possible that some third, unmeasured variable, such as extraversion, may help to explain the link between optimism and emotional use of music. A link with extraversion also helps to explain the preference of individuals with high optimism for upbeat/conventional genres (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003).

These findings suggest that there is a definite relationship between music preference, extraversion and optimism, but the picture is far from complete and in order to truly uncover this relationship further intensive research is required.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between music preference, extraversion and optimism among youth. The finding of the research concludes that Extraversion correlates positively with Energetic and Rhythmic (ER) and Upbeat and Conventional (UC) music, (rho=.463, $p<0.05$). It also concludes that Optimism positively associates with ER and Reflective & Complex (RC) music preference (rho=.670, $p<0.05$). The researcher has gone through many articles, journals, and research papers that consisted of the variables used in the research.

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