

**Pop for the Mind**

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Several studies have been conducted over the influences of music on the human body processes such as mental and physical functioning. Many of us turn to music for several reasons and we may choose a certain genre of music based on what type of mood we are in. For example, there are individuals that admit to listening to sad or depressed music when working out or when driving because it puts them in a better mood, and we also have a different set of individuals that may listen to upbeat music to remain positive throughout their day. Therefore, we understand that music has a different affect on everyone. This study is designed to measure the affects of pop music on a positive mood compared to other types of genres such as rap and country. This type of research is significant because it allows researchers to examine whether certain genres of music can affect a mood in a positive aspect.

### **Literature Review**

According to Ahmad and Rana people are interested in listening to music and believe that music influences them in both negative and positive ways. In this study participants were given a close ended questionnaire to collect data. Ahmad and Rana hypothesized all kind of music effect mood, feeling and emotions, and people who listen to classical and pop music will show more positive effects, and those who listen to heavy metal will show more negative moods. From this study they were able to find that people who listen to music are more relaxed and people enjoy more when they listen to familiar music or their favorite one.

According to the studies of Rea, MacDonald and Carnes (2010) different types of music had effects on moods. Rea et al, hypothesized that participants who listened to classical and pop music would report more positive moods and those who listened to heavy metal would report more negative moods. In this study they assigned participants to one of the three music

conditions, participants then completed the Short Test of Musical Preferences (STOMP), which was a 14-item measure and participants answered the questionnaire using a Likert scale.

Participants also completed a Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (STAI-AD.) After completion participants were then exposed to one of the three music conditions through a compact disc player with three discs. Afterwards, participants completed the STAIS-AD a second time.

Through this study Rea et al, found a positive correlation between intense and rebellious musical preferences and feelings of satisfaction. There was also a positive correlation between energetic and rhythmic musical preferences and reports of relaxation.

Khan and Ajmal found that pop and classical music effect performance and mood of individuals with pop music enhancing mood and level of happiness more than classical and no music (2017.) Khan and Ajmal hypothesized that classical and pop music would affect mood and performance. They tested this by randomly assigning participants to all conditions and this was a 2-day study. Each participant was given an Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) that measured the current mood of participants before conditions. On day 1 the OHQ was given first, then pop music was presented for 5 minutes, after 5 minutes participants were given a second OHQ and a WAIS coding scale. After completion classical music was presented for 4 minutes, then another OHQ and WAIS coding task was completed. On day 2, conditions were presented in a different order with classical music first and then pop music. In this study they found high performance with pop music compared to classical music.

In this study we will be addressing other genres that were not yet considered in the studies mentioned. In current time the genres that we will include in our study are popular genres that our population is familiar with. A similarity between the studies that were mentioned and this one has to do with the population coming from one University only. In this study we expect

to find a positive correlation between positive mood and pop music compared to rap and country music.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

One hundred and eleven undergraduate participants were recruited using the online Angelo State University Sona-systems program that is utilized by the psychology department. This system allows students to sign up for available psychology studies within the university. Participants of men within the study is presented at 26.1 percent. Participants of women within the study is presented at 71.2 percent. Participants of transgender within the study is presented at .9 percent. Participants of non-binary within the study is presented at 1.8 percent. Ages ranged from 18 to 47 years old ( $M = 21.09$ ,  $SD = 5.14$ ), with two participants declining to state their age. Participants of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity are presented at 45.9 percent, White at 36.0 percent, Black/African American at 8.1 percent, Asian at 4.5 percent, other ethnicities not specified at 4.5 percent and Native American/Native Alaskan/Indigenous at .9 percent

### **Design**

This study is designed as a quasi-experimental study due to the groups in this study being pre-existing. In this study there is no random assignment, participants already have a preference of music to listen to before participating in this study. The design of this study is a within-subjects due to all participants testing every condition in this study (i.e., the genres of music).

### **Measures**

The questionnaire in this study is designed to measure whether pop music leads to a more upbeat mood compared to country and rap music. The questionnaire includes 17 items, including the demographic questions. The survey used in the study is not an existing survey, it is a newly

created survey using a Likert type scale for scoring. Some samples from the survey include, “*On a Likert scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the least and 10 being the most, how enthusiastic are you while listening to Pop?*” “*On a Likert scale of 1 to 10, 1 being the least and 10 being the most how willing are you to perform tasks while listening to Pop?*” Demographic questions included in this study include questions of age, race and gender and asked solely to allow researchers to gain background information on the participants and to better analyze the data from this study.

### **Procedure**

This study was initiated by researchers that questioned the ability of pop music affecting individuals’ mood in a positive way. A hypothesis was created based on prior research and studies of music having an effect on behavior, mood, personality, and functioning. Variables were formulated based on the hypothesis and by popularity of music genres. In turn, a Quasi-experimental research design was decided on by evaluating how data would be obtained for the study. Next, a recruitment ad and questionnaire were formulated with the goal of obtaining specific data. Participants were recruited by an ad on Angelo State University Sona-system that included the words “genres” and “music” to catch participants attention. This study was an online study and participants responded to the survey using the Qualtrics program.

### **Results**

I hypothesized that pop music would have a more positive effect on mood compared to rap and country music. To test my hypothesis, I used a within-subjects ANOVA to determine the reported effects of the three genres of music on positive mood. Results indicated that there was a difference in positive mood reported between the three music genres of pop ( $M = 7.12$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ), country ( $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 2.55$ ), and rap, ( $M = 6.41$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ )  $F(2, 220) = 18.67$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial eta squared = .15.

Although the ANOVA results determined there was a difference between the three means, to further determine whether pop music had a greater reported influence on mood compared to the other two genres of music, I conducted a post-hoc pairwise comparison using the Bonferroni correction. Results showed that participants reported a significantly more positive mood when listening to pop music than when listening to country ( $M = 7.12$  vs.  $M = 5.18$ , respectively,  $p < .001$ ). Results also showed that participants reported greater positive mood when listening to pop music compared to listening to when listening to rap ( $M = 7.12$  vs.  $M = 6.41$ , respectively,  $p = .022$ ).

### **Discussion**

In this study we hypothesized pop music has a positive effect on mood compared to rap and country music. From this study we found that though individuals may experience genres of music differently we were still able to conclude that pop music had a better effect on mood compared to other types of genres. One thing we can take away from this study is that with the knowledge from multiple studies we can better apply music to our emotional states. Our findings from this study relate to previous studies such as Khan and Ajmal (2017) who found high performance with pop music compared to classical music in participants.

This research was accurately conducted with the ethical standards in place and tested what was intended to be measured. In this study we were able to identify the correlations between positive mood and genres of music with certain genres that are popular within our population. The research was conducted through a questionnaire, if conditions were presented face to face with a disc player and discs of each genre of music, it could have had more reliable results.

Future research could explore larger populations and a different population. This study and the studies that were mentioned in this research were based on different universities, therefore populations consisted of undergraduate students and Psychology students. Therefore, focusing on a different population can result in some new findings that can lead to future hypotheses and predictions.

Through research we can conclude that music has an influence on our mood and much more. Music is a big part of our daily lives, we hear music in elevators, waiting rooms, when we're on the phone on hold and even in our cars. This study was able to add extra recognition on how upbeat genres such as pop music can have a greater positive effect on our mood.

### References

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