

IMPACT OF MUSIC THERAPY IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Music is a divine power and universal language that can be understood by non professionals also. Music is one of the most mystical powers that can affect the individual without getting noticed and can hypnotise to act accordingly or can have an amazing impact on mood, mind, personality and behaviour. This proposed research paper would reveal how listening of music can impact individual's personality according to the inclination of music depending on gender (male/female). The result was, an eye opener to the fact that listening of music as therapy has main relation to the one's personality and each individual's choice of music is the reflection of their personality unlike its dependency on gender aspect.

Keywords: *Anxiety, depression, music therapy, personality development, stress management.*

1. Introduction

Music has been one of our oldest forms of stress reduction. Avant et al. – 1990 -1991, reported that musical engagement was shown to be more effective than, for example, progressive muscle relaxation and focused imagery in relieving stress. Music has been used to facilitate psychological well-being among the infants to elderly. There is much empirical data collected showing that music can enhance the physiological states and emotional well-being of not only infants but to the school going kids to professionals and helps in enhancing healthy and positive personality. Some of the positive benefits reported regarding the music and its impact in personality and behaviour including the stabilisation and regularisation of heart rate, blood pressure and sleep cycles including the boosting up of confidence and self-esteem. For instance, the 24th week of an unborn infant's life, their perceptual world is embedded within the sound of their mother's heartbeat. The child is not grown in an acoustic vacuum, but rather in an environment textured by the regularly occurring beats of the mother's heart and the melodic contours of her physiological states. These temporally regularised acoustic textures provide security to the infant as their regularity affords an environment in which the infant's expectations can be repeatedly satisfied and secured. In short, the impact of music on the babies' personality and behaviour has good reason to be kicking and screaming as they enter the new world; for new world is acoustically unstable unpredictable and in a constant state of unharmonious disequilibrium from the sound of the mother's heartbeat in the womb to the sound of the world, they entered.

2. Music in relation with personality

Personality of a person seeks out the situation and environment that satisfies their psychological needs. In the same way our personality is also very much influenced by the kind of music we listen to and the type of music we avoid.

Music is an extension of our personalities. It is possible that as we age, predicting our personality according to the genres could be different in all. As we age, music tends to define us less and our taste varies more; and this could probably be due to the fact that our personality has changed and transformed. As we develop, our musical taste evolves along with us. But though we branch out in different musical genres, we all have that one inclination towards some particular, which carries more significance for us than others. That inclination could be due to the heartfelt lyrics, aggressive tempo, or the soft twang of the guitar. Anything we willingly incorporate into our lives could be considered a personality indicator, but most of us hold music a lot closer to our hearts than we do clothes, accessories etc. Music has strong ties

with emotion and can be very effective therapeutic tool. Music elicits strong emotion more consistently and frequently than other forms of art – (Frey 1985, Williams & Morris, 1996).

Dutta and Kanungo (1975), Rubin and Kozin (1984), and Gabrielson (1991) – have shown that as taste and smell is associated with strong emotions in life events in the same way music inclination also provide trigger to recall of these and their accompanying emotions.

In terms of relationships between musical dimensions and personality characteristics in context with the inclination towards music are as follows:

- *Rock dimensions found too correlate positively with ‘Openness’ and negatively with ‘Consciousness’. Negative correlation is found between rock dimension and ‘Extraversion’.*
- *Elite dimensions correlated positively with ‘Openness’ and ‘Agreeableness’ and negatively with ‘Emotional Stability’. Elite was also positively correlate with ‘Conscientiousness’.*
- *Urban and Pop Dance dimensions both positively correlated with ‘Agreeableness’ and ‘Extraversion’.*
- *The urban dimension correlated positively with ‘Conscientiousness’ and negative correlation between ‘Elite Music preference’ and ‘emotional stability’.*

Musical taste and personality types are closely related.

2.1. Music therapy & personality development

As we have seen that how closely music taste and personality is related, it could be similar way be used as a form of therapy in music to develop a positive and strong personality. Music as therapy does not have any side effects but without a doubt have infinite benefits.

Music therapy is a type of expressive psychotherapy and it requires the use of music for therapeutic purposes. The difference between music therapy entertainment and music education is that music therapy aims to meet therapeutic goals.

If you think for a moment and remember your childhood, which is the most striking image that comes in your mind? Mother holding you in her arms while ...she’s singing a lullaby. And what was the effect? If you were crying, often you would calm down and fall asleep with an innocent smile on your face imprinted.

Music therapy addresses to a variety of needs such as physical, psychological, emotional, cognitive and social aspects of people of all ages, regardless of musical training they have. The therapist addresses the patient’s problem directly, through music, or through the relationship developed between the patient and therapist.

The most significant results obtained with melo-therapy were recorded in modern psychiatry, because music has a beneficial action helps and relieves nerve accesses, quite often, the patient’s healing is complete.

Using instrumental and vocal music, the therapist tries to obtain changes. Research confirms effectiveness of treatment in several areas, such as physical and motor recovery, motivation to follow the treatment, emotional support for patient and its family.

The most common problems are related to stress, anxiety, grief, feelings, communication, aggressive behaviour, lack of motivation, mood swings, emotional intimacy. Through musical involvement, skills and strengths of the patient are transferred to other areas of life.

2.2. Music and personality development

Musical taste and personality types are closely related. During my experimentation and data collection I found out the relationship of personality and music type. Below is the description of 5 Personality traits and 4 music types, which I used for my research purpose.

A. 5 Personality Traits:

1. Extraversion

“Extraversion is marked by pronounced engagement with the external world. Extraverts enjoy being with people, are full of energy, and often experience positive emotions. They tend to be enthusiastic, action-oriented, individuals who are likely to say “Yes” or “Let’s go”; to opportunities for excitement. In groups they like to talk, assert themselves, and draw attention to themselves”.

2. Agreeableness

“Agreeableness reflects individual differences in concern with cooperation and social harmony. Agreeable individuals”, value getting along with others. They are therefore considerate, friendly, generous, helpful and willing to compromise their interests with others. Agreeable people also have an optimistic view of human nature. They believe people are basically honest, descent and trustworthy.”

3. *Conscientiousness*

“Conscientiousness concerns the way in which we control, regulate, and direct our impulses. Impulses are not inherently bad; occasionally time constraints require a snap decision and acting on our first impulse can be an effective response. Also, in times of play rather than work, acting spontaneously and impulsively can be fun. Impulsive individuals can be seen by others as colourful, fun-to-be-with and zany”.

4. *Neuroticism*

“Freud originally used the term neurosis to describe a condition marked by mental distress, emotional suffering, and an inability to cope effectively with the normal demands of life. He suggested that everyone shows some signs of neurosis, but we differ in our degree of suffering and out specific symptoms of distress. Today neuroticism refers to the tendency to experience negative feelings”.

5. *Openness to New Experience*

“Openness to New Experience describes a dimension of cognitive style that distinguishes imaginative, creative people from down to earth, conventional people. Open people are intellectually curious, appreciative of art and sensitive to beauty. They tend to be, compared to closed people, more aware of their feelings. They tend to think and act in individualistic and non conforming ways.”

2.3. Four Music Types

1. Relative & Complex Music Type

- Blues, Classical, Folk, Jazz
- Open minded, Politically Liberal, Creative and Intellectual, Patient.

2. Energetic and Rhythmic Music Type

- Hip - Hop, Dance
- Confident, Liberal Minded, Gregarious, Feel s attractive and Athletic.

3. Upbeat and Conventional Music Type

- Religious, Country, Pop
- Politically conservative, Helpful, Hardworking, Trustworthy.

4. Intense and Rebellious Music Type

- Heavy Metal, Rock, Alternative
- Energetic, Adventurous, Impatient, Inquisitive.

In a way if you know person’s music preference you can tell what kind of person they are and this music taste-based personality analysis would even be more lucid than the face to face impressions and interaction.

- Similarities between fans of classical music and heavy metal are that they both are creative and at ease but not outgoing and are impatient.
- People who like upbeat and conventional music like country tend to be more conventional, honest and conservative compared with fans of other genres. People who like country and pop have found to be simplistic according to “Rentfrow”. They just avoid making things unnecessarily
- If one is studying or working efficiently while listening to music may depend how outgoing you are. Background music can help extroverts focus but tends to torment introverts.
- Motivational music can give weightlifter edge. Runners however don’t move faster with the help of motivational songs.
- People who like energetic music like dance and soul are more likely to impulsively blurt out their thoughts, compared with the people who prefer other genres.
- People for strong inclination for classical, folk and jazz, i.e. Reflective and complex music type are more likely to have personality traits associated with Openness and verbal ability. This means they have more creative bent and are quite open and imaginative.
- People who are interested in Upbeat and conventional music type tends towards the personality trait of Extroversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and low level of Openness, verbal and analytic ability. This means they are more conventional than they're classical, jazz and folk music and have strong sociability and dependability.
- Stereotypes are usually to be taken with a grain of salt both physical and social stereotypes, actually have the connection to the actual personality traits of the individual.
- People who are more creative are drawn to jazz and classical music, although each person is different in what they’re interested in.

3. Experiment

An experiment that I conducted including both males and females between the teenagers up to seniors, to know the quality of time they give to music and in what conditions. The subjects were all from school, college, professionals, adults and retired seniors.

4. Procedure

The subjects were given out the TIPI questionnaire with the questions related to find out their personality and other was STOMP questionnaire for the choice of music they are more inclined towards and the last questionnaire was related to the amount of time they give to music and at what time they prefer listening music and for what reasons. There were a total 800 participants Amongst them 400 were males and 400 were females from the age group of 10- 80 + years After answering the questionnaire the data was analysed manually based on the comments and answers they have given.

5. Result and conclusion

Result indicated that these children between the age group of 10 to 14 years have shown the personality trait of Openness to new experience and Agreeableness.

For them listening to music was an important leisure activity, particularly for the children aged 10-14 years. Home music listening was correlated with enjoyment, emotional, mood, social relationships, while school music was linked with motivation for learning and being active and particular lesson content. 13- 19 years old adolescents and youth that are observed to have personality of Openness to new experience had more inclination towards intense and rebellious music. They show the characteristics of being curious, active physically, a risk takers, and intelligent.

20-40 years of adults and middle adulthood people with the personality trait of extraversion had inclination towards Upbeat and Conventional music type. These people tend to be outgoing, helpful to others, cheerful, had positive feelings about themselves, and were more conservative in their views.

40 – 80+ years of later adulthood and older people are found to have personality trait of Agreeableness and prefer Reflex and Complex music type. They possess the imaginative, inventive, tolerant, and had liberal political views.

Music is a medium to bring people together and has been proved a way to promote a sense of community in cultures.

Participants who appeared to answer the questionnaire have also said that classical and self-selected music significantly reduce anxiety and increased relaxation after exposure to a stressor when compared to heavy metal music and silence.

Particularly it is found in all the age groups that self-selected and self-interest music acts as a therapy and helps in coping with anxiety and stress as well and enhances relaxation response in people of all ages as well as in college students and teenagers. Music therapy is a kind of a self-therapy and just have to understand the correct way to enhance overall well-being.

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