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The Rochester Institute of Technology

School of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

Music Uses and Gratifications Among Youth

by

Karen De la Rosa Herrera

A Thesis presented

in partial fulfillment of the Master of Science degree

in Communication & Media Technologies

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MUSIC USES AND GRATIFICATIONS AMONG YOUTH

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School of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

Master of Science degree in Communication & Media Technologies

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Abstract

This study identified the uses and gratifications of music genres and communication needs among young adults. An online survey of young adults in the College of Liberal Arts at Rochester Institute of Technology was conducted. Seven communication factors were found to correlate with listening to 21 different music genres. A sense of identity was significantly related to alternative, indie, jazz, and new age music. Behavior was related to dance, easy listening, hip hop/rap, new age, pop, and world music. Interaction with others was related to easy listening and pop music. Knowledge was related to alternative, dance, easy listening, hip hop/rap, pop, and rhythm and blues. Needs was related to classical, electronic, Asian pop, pop, and world music. Negative moods management was related to alternative, Asian pop, rhythm and blues, and world music while positive moods management was related to alternative, electronic, indie, Asian pop, rhythm and blues, and world music.

Keyword: music, uses and gratifications, genres, youth

Music Uses and Gratifications Among Youth

Music is among the most common, yet most intriguing artistic expressions. It has the power to emanate emotions, change states of mind, expand our consciousness, and revive memories. It has been a predominant art since prehistoric times and continues to gain importance in modern society. Most of all, studies have demonstrated music can influence masses and transcend certain social boundaries, making it a powerful means of communication that appeals to certain needs and gratifications in subcultural groups. One of the most relevant audiences to the study of the power of music is youth (Lull, 1988).

Youth is considered a distinctive social and consumption force in the music industry, since music itself is the essence of several subcultures and lifestyles promoted in young audiences. Nevertheless, most communication and social studies related to music have been conducted on teenage subjects, perhaps ignoring the relevance of youth sub-groups and in the study of music and its social meaning (Chaffee, McLeod, & Atkin, 1971).

The purpose of this study is to identify the uses and gratifications that music provides for young adults, with a special focus on their subcultural norms.

Rationale

This study is significant for its potential to provide additional insight and theoretical perspectives into the uses and gratifications obtained through modern media, the demographic norms and complexity of subculture dynamics, the ways in which certain behaviors are conditioned throughout phases of youth, and the encoding and decoding process of messages transmitted through music as a communication tool.

The uses and gratifications theory is perhaps one of the most reinvented communication theories, due to the accelerated technological innovations that have been influencing ways of

communicating for decades. These innovations are constantly pushing the introduction of new media that can be accessed through electronic devices or platforms in cyber-space. When these ways of communication are introduced on massive scale, a new range of uses and gratifications are adopted by different audiences and subcultural groups (Leung & Wei, 2000).

Youth subcultural groups are different from other groups because certain behaviors and lifestyles are frequently promoted through music genres. Music constitutes a powerful element of youth identity and symbolisms, to break conventional patterns of values and behaviors acquired from social institutions such as family, school, and work. This phenomenon reflects a force of resistance pushed by individuals in subordinate positions against perceived systems of control. Interestingly, music has been a recurrent tool and way of expression to externalize the perspectives and thoughts of these repressed sub-cultural groups on social issues (Brake, 1985).

This study will investigate how youth uses music to satisfy a variety of needs and what specific music genres gratify these needs.

Literature Review

Several theories have been proposed to explain the relationship between communication and music, as well as the wide range of dimensions and theoretical concepts that constitute this relationship. Despite the many theories referenced in the content of this proposal, the literature review will focus on six recurrent themes in which the studies in question were included: (a) Role of music in the context of communication (explaining how music is linked to communication based on theoretical perspectives), (b) sounds or lyrics (pointing out the verbal and non-verbal components of music as way of communicating), (c) music and mass media (explaining the role and dynamics of media in the music industry), (d) media uses and gratifications (detailing out what needs are being satisfied through music), (e) social forces and

music (focusing on active social patterns empowered by music), and (f) music and youth (defining the role of music in youth and its many subcultural groups).

Music in the Context of Communication

It is natural to wonder how a concept as subjective as music can be linked to the complex process of communication. Lull (1988) was able to establish or justify this relationship by identifying common elements between music and communication and defining the way such elements have influenced society throughout generations. Lull states that music has the power to communicate ideas and express emotions.

The experience of music as a whole involves several elements: (a) a content being shared (the message in question, usually, in the form of a song or music composition), (b) a group of individuals sharing the content (musicians, artists, production companies), (c) the receivers (several audiences and sub-groups receiving and consuming such content), and (d) media through which the content reaches the receivers. Since communication is also a very important aspect of culture, music plays a dynamic role shaping social perspectives around the world (Stinchcombe, 1968).

Music has the power to reshape socio-cultural behaviors due to its distinctive capacity to provide meaning and illustrate ideas. It creates a world in which masses and individuals build symbolic interactions willingly or imaginatively. The voluntary action of encoding and decoding messages in music serves to achieve a series of purposes intended for audiences. Based on these facts, music is an important influential form of communication (Lull, 1988).

Sounds or Lyrics

Music has a distinctive quality that makes it special among other ways of communication. It has the capacity to transmit messages and express meaning, verbally and nonverbally.

However, in order to understand this dual nature of music, it is necessary to understand the concepts of verbal and nonverbal communication and how they relate to music.

Verbal communication employs words or signs of a written or oral language to facilitate an exchange of information between individuals or groups. On the other hand, nonverbal communication relies mostly on gestural and body expressions to create interaction. Pointing out this differentiation, it has been established that communication as a whole is composed of two elements: (a) speech (verbal component), and (b) gesture (nonverbal component; Esposito, 2007).

Music projects verbal and nonverbal elements that make it a multidimensional way of communication. It is made of lyrics (verbal component) and sounds (nonverbal component). Debates have been held and studies conducted in order to determine if lyrics or sound is music's most powerful tool for communication purposes. Despite some listeners stating the sounds or "beats" influence them more than lyrics (Frith, 1981), other studies have revealed that the power of words cannot be overlooked (Lull, 1988).

A group of adolescents and adults selected for one of these studies reported that the music they listened to contained lyrics that were useful for their social and personal lives (Horton, 1957). Analyses of lyrics have demonstrated the impact of music on society at different time periods (Carey, 1969; Chesebro, Nachman, Yanneli, & Foulger, 1985; Cole, 1971; Denisoff & Peterson, 1972; Harmon, 1972; Pichaske, 1979).

Lyrics become focal points for listeners when they provide personal meaning or social relevance, overcoming the emotional impact of the beat. When lyrics acquire such importance the beat can be perceived as a tool to reinforce lyrics by delivering them in a contagious,

rhythmic way, recurrent in listeners' minds and memories. Most likely, listeners will share the content with others, reinforcing the message encoded in the music (Lull, 1988).

Music and Mass Media

In prehistoric times, air was the medium or channel through which to transmit messages. Artists can still reach their target markets playing live for audiences. However, if artists wish to reach mass audiences, they must record and transmit their music electronically. Moreover, their compositions and products must go through an industrialization process so they can acquire the power to influence audiences and gain popularity among them. Most likely, they must also obtain recording contracts to gain media exposure for their music. The most commercialized media for music distribution in our time are radio, television, and recently, digital media, which include the Internet and social media such as YouTube. This market structure demonstrates that music and electronic media are important partners in the flow of music from artists to audiences (Knopper, 2009).

Unlike other communication pieces, the most popular musical "hits" are played and repeated several times on radio stations, reinforcing messages contained in songs for local or international groups. This cycle of repetition extends through time periods outlined by increased consumption and popularity of the songs in question, to later reappear in media as classic tunes. Radio station programmers decide what songs should be played based on external indicators of popularity and perceived potential. Common radio formats, such as "Country" and "Top 40," reflect the type of music programmers have found will attract listeners. It is believed people want to hear their favorite songs or songs with a good hook repeatedly until they "burn out." Eventually, these songs will be replaced with other collective favorite songs to continue the cycle (Frith, 1981).

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) presented a model demonstrating how the music industry system operates. A cultural item is chosen and exposed through media. It then gains popularity, which motivates further exposure until popularity decreases. Moreover, it has been suggested that the commercial radio music system has the power to affect audiences' behaviors and attitudes following this cycle (Ryan & Peterson, 1982). "Mass culture listeners" have reported radio as their main source to share or feed their interest in music (Fathi & Heath, 1974).

Most radio stations gather local and international market information to identify habits, patterns, and interactions of their targeted audiences. Their purpose is to increase demand and consumption rates by exposing collective favorite "hits." In the same way, record promoters visit radio stations bringing promotional items for audiences and data for airplay, sales, tours, offers, advertising strategies, record copies. In the last few decades, radio stations have expanded their transmissions to digital media, increasing their "hits" exposure even more (Rothenbuler, 1982).

Music Uses and Gratifications in the 20th Century

One of the ultimate purposes of communication is to shape behaviors and influence audiences with powerful messages. In music, artists are constantly crafting messages and looking for means to allow their music pieces to reach target markets. The ways in which audiences interpret, use, and add meaning to these pieces reinforces this communication purpose. Since music is recurrently shaping the social and cultural contexts of its listeners, theoretical findings regarding audience analysis are of crucial importance to understand the impact of music as a means of communication.

The uses and gratifications theory assigns a powerful role to audiences as active members in the process of decoding symbolic imagery and enhancing the power of mass media. It suggests

that media users deliberately choose media to satisfy certain needs, becoming goal-oriented users and active parts in the communication process (Blumler & Katz, 1974). There is a volitional cycle in which audience members are constantly interpreting media texts and negotiating meaning. It is important to point out managers and owners of media institutions exercise some control over mass media. Nevertheless, the role of audiences is just as important or even more crucial to measure the effects of massive communication in society (Lull, 1988).

The role of music as an agent of socialization can vary based on the fundamental social actions of audiences in every culture. However, the listener's need to create subjective personal and social uses of music is evident in all cultural contexts. The ways in which audiences participate in music are (a) physical (e.g., playing instruments, singing, dancing, and clapping), (b) emotional (sense of enjoyment, "feeling" the music, achieving spiritual delight, and reliving feelings through music, and so on), and (c) cognitive (stimulating thoughts, shaping perceptions, improving memory, processing information, and learning).

Music presents many social dimensions, providing several uses and applications for interpersonal communication. Music audiences also appeal to the principle of uses and gratifications stating that "members of the audience put messages to use, and that such usages act as intervening variables in the process of effect" (Blumler & Katz, 1974, p. 12). Important factors come to view regarding the use of music: (a) exposure (contact with music in any amount), (b) consumption (referring to what is remembered or learned from exposure), and (c) use (which measures satisfaction, applications, opportunities, and gratifications). Use is the most complex of these factors owing to its intrinsic connection to exposure and consumption.

Several uses in music have been identified throughout studies. Even though all of these uses have not been categorized definitively, some of the most important are as follows:

- Social and cultural construction: People can create rapport with other individuals using music as a means of connection beyond moments in contact with music (Riesman, 1950).
- Subcultures and group identity: Listeners from a certain audience can identify strongly with a music genre or artists, outlining lifestyles, group values, and ways of expression that appeal to that music genre.
- Emotional expression: Through music, listeners can externalize feelings and mental states that lead to satisfactory experiences (Panzarella, 1980).

Clark (1973) concludes that music diminishes people's inhibitions in social contexts, helps listeners gain acceptance and approval from other peers, provides an appropriate background for certain interpersonal or social exchanges, generates entertainment for audiences, and transmits warm feelings in foreign environments, among other uses.

Studies explaining why people listen to music have been updated based on recent research. Innovative technological devices such as cellphones, iPods, and music players, are providing unique benefits for audiences such as portability and convenience. These benefits have made music way more accessible than it was 20 years ago. Moreover, they have led people to adopt new music uses that didn't exist at the time previous studies were conducted. A recent study suggested that the iPod serves listeners to readjust or adapt their mood while being in constant movement (i.e., listening to music and changing tunes while moving from one location to another). This action was not possible with older music formats due to their restricted mobility and limited access to a wide variety of music tunes (Bull, 2005).

A study, conducted with a sample of 13 to 14-year-olds, demonstrated that teenagers listened to music to enforce their self-identity, portray their social image to peers, and satisfy emotional needs (North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000). Correspondingly, a study concluded that

English and American teenagers listened to music to fulfill self-actualization and social and emotional needs (Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2000).

This study demonstrated that people used music to manage their mood states. They listened to music to deal with negative feelings (such as sadness, frustration, and anger) and to create positive moods (relaxation, happiness, and motivation; North, 2000).

It is important to point out that certain subgroups invest more money and time listening to music than other subgroups. This means they attribute more self-value and other benefits to music. This fact is relevant since the uses and gratifications theory suggests that media are prone to compete with other media to fulfill individuals' needs. It makes sense to assume that the needs fulfilled by music are not being completely satisfied through other media (North, 2000).

Music and Social Forces

The music industry has been known for leading aspects of popular culture in certain directions. Recording companies and radio stations are constantly commanding forms of marketing and production to ensure consumption of music on massive scales. As expected, management directives are more likely to promote ideological principles of predominant economic interests. Nevertheless, musicians and artists do not always create music in favor of these "popular" ideologies. In fact, several music genres highly appeal to young consumers that rebel against these ideologies. Following that lead, we can conclude that music as a means of communication does not solely promote prevailing philosophies or ways of thought. On the contrary, there seems to be a constant tension between forces of conventionality and forces of resistance reshaping social contexts (Lull, 1988).

Forces of conventionality are also known as patterns of control, which present conservative ways of thinking about cultural, political, economic, and social issues that lead the

activities of radio stations and record companies. In opposition to these are the less supported and financially sustainable patterns of resistance, in which artists impose unorthodox views and perspectives about life, creating subcultures of alternative orientations with profound implications (Denisoff, 1983).

Patterns of control still lead the music industry, due to the pre-established ways of promotion and consumption that prevail in record companies and radio stations. This is evident in the contracts of artists, the topics favored by major companies in music content, the commercial ways of music distribution throughout the world, and the standardization of songs and radio formats (Rothenbuhler, 1985).

Despite being the least favored of the two, patterns of resistance cannot be overlooked. These resistance forces have represented the idea of “change” in society throughout many generations. Music is perhaps one of the few ways of communicating with the capability of spreading a powerful and unified voice of protest. In fact, in the United States music has been employed as an active tool to resist racial and gender discrimination, slavery, labor abuses, and poverty and war, among other forms of oppression. Many subcultural audiences were consolidated thanks to music created by and for oppressed people. The environment of social change often involved music legitimizing and expanding civil protest (Hamm, 1983).

Music and Mood

Through science we have learned that music can shape or influence the way we perceive the world. Several experiments have demonstrated that music can affect areas of the human brain that deal with emotions and moods. Aspects of music such as meter, timber, rhythm, and pitch tend to “sync” with our emotions when we make a music selection. For this reason, experts believe music is a useful tool to enhance learning processes and improve the mental state of

people who suffer conditions such as anxiety and depression. An experiment conducted in the Netherlands demonstrated that listening to songs similar to Bill Withers' "Lovely Day" can enhance self-fulfilling thoughts in listeners (Bergland, 2013).

Music presents several components that can affect people's emotions and behaviors greatly. For instance, music in a "major key" is perceived as cheerful communication in our minds. On the other hand, a "minor key" music piece can reflect feelings of distress and lamentation, which is transmitted to our brains as sad communication. This powerful effect of music in our brain directs our psyche to actually feel what is being communicated to us (How music affects our moods, 2013).

Researchers at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Music Research at the universities of Jyväskylä and Aalto in Finland found support for the relationship between mental health and music, neural responses to music, and music listening habits (Carlson et al., 2015). This relationship was proposed by combining behavioral and neuroimaging data (Carlson et al., 2015). Recent studies also explain how the effects related to music can occur at a neural level as listening to music involves a wide range of neurobiological systems affecting our psyche in the process (Bergland, 2012).

University of Missouri scientists found that under several conditions, music can improve listeners' general mood and empower their positive feelings in just two weeks. Ferguson and Sheldon (2013) conducted two studies stating this effect was psychological (involuntary) as well as self-directed (voluntary). Participants were told to try to improve their moods by listening to upbeat or wave music. Those who focused on improving their happiness reported greater levels of happiness than those who only focused on the music (Ferguson & Sheldon, 2013). We can impose a mindset, mood, or perception by selecting specific songs or music genres that provoke

the emotional responses we are seeking. By testing several songs and music genres we can determine what kind of music can empower our emotions and attitudes. However, it is important to point out that certain songs and music genres could be perceived as uplifting or not, depending on such factors as culture, social context, and life views, among others (Bergland, 2012).

The power of music as a communication and healing tool is just beginning to be explored and understood. Therapists have qualified music as an effective tool for the reduction of anxiety, pain, and stress. It is no surprise that music therapy has been practiced for so many years and is constantly recommended as a non-intrusive measure to enhance positive changes in mood and emotional states (Davis, Gfeller, & Thaut, 2007).

Music and Youth

Music has the power to overcome temporal, national, and social boundaries. However, it can also create subcultures, generation gaps, and distinctive traditions that can set people apart. A group of great importance that has been notably relevant to studies of music as way of communication is youth. Young music consumers have stood out for creating many subcultures and setting strong affiliations with patterns of resistance. Being highly active users of electronic media, young people are more prone to media exposure than their elders. They are also more likely to impact the accelerated flow of information and music (Chaffee et al., 1971).

Popular music strongly appeals to teenagers because the lyrical content and sounds of music reflect many of their emotions and concerns. Young people use music to project their power struggles with perceived authority figures such as parents, teachers, and bosses, among others (Frith, 1981). Even though these conflicts usually begin as introspective issues, young people have the tendency to create social bonds and subcultures that increase the effects of the conflicts in question even more. In this particular stage, youth display subcultural behaviors

through language, music, dance, fashion, and other ways of expression that feed their subcultural lifestyle. As a consequence, young people perceive music as a way to oppose all ways of authority, complement their personalities, get peer acceptance, and gain perspectives about life issues not taught by schools or parents (Hebdige, 1979).

Music affects youth in two stages: (a) the formation of self-concept, when young listeners fit music into their life agendas as they transit to adult life; and (b) the exploration of content themes, in which they use music as a medium. Relationships between media, peer groups, and educational institutions are of great importance in youth life transitions and music use. Conventional educational systems obligate these individuals to spend most of their conflicted and changing teenage years in school, when they are expected to adopt conventional, non-disruptive behaviors. However, school is the one place where most friendships and peer groups are formed. These social rituals tend to be of greater importance to students than the actual process of learning in the classroom (Clark, 1973).

Schools' main function is to enforce standard social structures by teaching students that their roles and statuses are expected to fit the rules and norms of society. Schools looking to fulfill such tasks need to create standard status groupings, promote different general predispositions, and program principles and values towards cultural themes and media habits (Morley, 1980).

Research Questions

Lull (1988) presented two important inquiries regarding music uses and gratifications among audiences. His questions were "What conditions and contexts encourage utilization of music rather than other media for the common array of audiences uses and their presumed

gratifications?” and, “What are the special capabilities of music for uses that are not made of other media?” (p. 142).

Despite the complexity of these questions and the indefinite answers provided throughout research studies, Lull’s inquiries along with the theories and perspectives presented in the literature review, evidenced a relevant fact: There are certain needs being satisfied through music as a way of communicating. The focus of this study is to determine which specific needs are being met and to what degree, taking one of the most relevant and consistent music audiences throughout generations as a reference. This audience is, of course, youth. Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that the specific youth group selected for this study is adult youth, not teenage youth, which is the most recurrent targeted group in research studies related to music.

The age range for young adults is usually between 18 and 29 years old (Wilder, 2003). Although this group is frequently neglected in communication studies related to music, it can be relevant for future findings due to its important transitional stage and many rituals of passage that distinguish it (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1980). Most young adults start going to college or begin taking their first steps towards professional development one way or the other. In the process, they end up being exposed to wider ranges of media and music than they were in their teenage years. This is due to their increased contact with larger audiences and subcultures. Despite the general belief that teenage years are way more conflictive and self-defining than other stages, young adults are more likely to keep facing identity conflicts and self-reassurance processes, which can intensify even more as they transition into mature adulthood.

Due to accelerated technological innovations and their impact in modern ways of communicating, uses and gratifications theory researchers have introduced a new range of needs that are being fulfilled through modern media. Accordingly, Lonsdale and North (2010)

presented a group of factors in recent studies, relating needs and gratifications obtained through music listening. This 8-factor model is useful to identify needs sought through music and determining the extent to which such needs are being fulfilled.

Certain music genres are directly or indirectly linked to distinctive youth subcultures such as goths, ravers, punks, emos, and ghettos, among others. This phenomenon is evident for the association of music genres, behaviors, and clothing styles that constitute the symbolism of youth subcultures. Interestingly, music genres seem to be associated with levels of intellectuality, morality, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, and academic status, among other factors that have a great impact on youth subcultures (Brake, 1985). Symbols and elements of this nature bring youth subculture members together. An important issue to consider is the relationship between music genres and satisfaction of certain needs among young people, since music is the essence of many youth subcultures.

From these findings and perspectives, the following research questions are posed:

Q1: What needs are young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 years old satisfying through music and to what extent?

Q2: What needs are young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 years old satisfying through specific music genres?

The methods section will provide a detailed explanation demonstrating how these music uses will be measured and operationalized.

Method

Uses and gratifications research has presented a variety of measurement scales that can be modified depending on the study. This study will make use of two instruments: (a) a semantic differential scale ranging from 1-7 measuring the extent of needs fulfilled through music

(Research question 1), and (b) a five-point Likert type scale measuring how often respondents listen to specific genres of music (Research question 2).

The uses employed for this study will be taken from Lonsdale and North's 8-factor model:

- Factor 1 (personal identity): Music is used to enforce self-identity or to project a social image to peers.
- Factor 2 (negative mood management): Music is used to improve mood states and to lighten negative feelings.
- Factor 3 (positive mood management): Music is used to create or enforce positive mood states and entertainment.
- Factor 4 (reminiscing): Music is used to revive nostalgic feelings by reminding individuals of a person, time or place.
- Factor 5 (diversion): Music is used to pass the time or avoid boredom.
- Factor 6 (arousal): Music is used to regulate levels of arousal in individuals.
- Factor 7 (surveillance): Music is used to keep up with social trends and current events.
- Factor 8 (social interaction): Music is used to interact with others.

The music genres referenced for Research question 2 are: (a) alternative music, (b) blues, (c) classical, (d) country/western, (e) dance, (f) easy listening, (g) electronic/techno, (h) European, (i) hip hop/rap, (j) indie, (k) inspirational (gospel), (l) Asian pop (j-pop, k-pop), (m) jazz, (n) Latin, (o) new age, (p) opera, (q) pop, (r) rhythm & blues/soul, (s) reggae, (t) rock, (u) world music/beats (see Appendix 2). These music genres have been selected because they are easily recognizable and popular among young people.

Measurement Scales

A semantic differential is a scale designed to measure connotative meanings of concepts, opinions, and attitudes. It differs from Likert scales in using polar opposites (i.e., good and bad; strong and weak) to gauge responses (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). This scale will be used to answer Research question 1 for its capability to provide a wide range of perceptions, defining the extent of music uses among participants (see Appendix 1).

Sample

The sample was composed of 95 young adults between 19 and 29 years old majoring in subjects within the College of Liberal Arts at Rochester Institute of Technology. Most college students fit the criteria of the sample. However, any individual within the age range of the selected group can take part in the study and complete the questionnaire. Although not part of the research questions, gender was asked with a fill-in question to avoid the complicated matter of gender orientation.

Questionnaire

An online questionnaire will be hosted by Clipboard (<https://clipboard.rit.edu/>), an RIT online survey site. To follow “conventional wisdom” in questionnaire design, questions on the same topic were grouped together (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 2006). However, the exact order of the factors reported in the North et al. (2000) study was not used in order to avoid order effects.

Surveys

Q1: What needs are young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 years old satisfying through music and to what extent? (see Survey in Clipboard)

Q2: What needs are young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 years old satisfying through specific music genres?

Results

As addressed in the Methods section, for Research question 1, a semantic differential scale ranging from 1-7 was used to determine (a) how music affects participants' sense of who they are (Identity), (b) how music affects participants' behavior (Behavior), (c) how music affects participants' interaction with others (Interaction), (d) how music relates to participants knowledge and information (Knowledge), (e) how music addresses participants' needs (Needs), (f) how music helps participants (Negative moods), and (g) how music affects participants' moods and feelings (Positive moods). These factors were grouped in the questionnaire posted on Clipboard (Appendix 1).

For Research question 2, a five-point Likert type scale was used to measure how often respondents listen to specific genres of music. The music genres were taken from Music Genres List (2014): (a) alternative music, (b) blues, (c) classical, (d) country/western, (e) dance, (f) easy listening, (g) electronic/techno, (h) European, (i) hip hop / rap, (j) indie, (k) inspirational (gospel), (l) Asian pop (j-pop, k-pop), (m) jazz, (n) Latin, (o) new age, (p) opera, (q) pop, (r) rhythm & blues/soul, (s) reggae, (t) rock, and (u) world music/beats (see Appendix 2).

Since this Likert type scale is considered ordinal level data and the main purpose of the research is to correlate music genres with uses and gratifications, a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was run using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Significant correlations between the seven factors and music genres are reported as follows:

Identity

Four genres of music were found to relate to identity (see Table 1). Alternative music was significantly and positively related to how music affects the sense of who you are ($r_s = .258$, $p = .012$). Indie music was significantly and positively related to how music affects the sense of

who you are ($r_s = .258, p = .011$). Jazz music was significantly and positively related to how music affects the sense of who you are ($r_s = .202, p = .050$). New age music was significantly and positively related to how music affects the sense of who you are ($r_s = .208, p = .043$). Rock music was significantly and positively related ($r_s = .280, p = .006$). World music was significantly and positively related ($r_s = .243, p = .017$).

Behavior

Six genres of music were found to relate to behavior (see Table 2). Dance music was significantly and positively related to how music affects behavior ($r_s = .289, p = .004$). Easy listening music was significantly and positively related to how music affects behavior ($r_s = .306, p = .003$). Hip hop/rap music was significantly and positively related to how music affects behavior ($r_s = .274, p = .007$). New age music was significantly and positively related to how music affects behavior ($r_s = .215, p = .037$). Pop music was significantly and positively related to how music affects behavior ($r_s = .277, p = .007$). World music was significantly and positively related to how music affects behavior ($r_s = .270, p = .006$).

Interaction

Three genres of music were found to relate to interaction (see Table 3). Easy listening music was significantly and positively related to how music affects interactions with others ($r_s = .204, p = .049$). Pop music was significantly and positively related to how music affects interactions with others ($r_s = .259, p = .011$). New age music was significantly and positively related to how music affects interactions with others ($r_s = .237, p = .021$).

Knowledge

Eight genres of music were found to relate to knowledge (see Table 4). Alternative music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and

information ($rs = .217, p = .036$). Dance music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and information ($rs = .261, p = .011$). Easy listening music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and information ($rs = .241, p = .018$). Hip hop/rap music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and information ($rs = .240, p = .019$). Pop music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and information ($rs = .233, p = .023$). Rhythm and blues music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and information ($rs = .219, p = .034$). World music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and information ($rs = .367, p = .000$). Age music was significantly and positively related to how music relates to knowledge and information ($rs = .247, p = .014$).

Needs

Six genres of music were found to relate to needs (see Table 5). Classical music was significantly and positively related to how music addresses needs ($rs = .255, p = .013$). Electronic music was significantly and positively related to how music addresses needs ($rs = .228, p = .026$). Asian pop (J-Pop, K-pop) music was significantly and positively related to how music addresses needs ($rs = .225, p = .001$). Pop music was significantly and positively related to how music addresses needs ($rs = .278, p = .006$). World music was significantly and positively related to how music addresses needs ($rs = .210, p = .041$). Age music was significantly and positively related to how music addresses needs ($rs = .226, p = .028$).

Negative Moods

Five genres of music were found to relate to negative moods (see Table 6). Alternative music was significantly and positively related to how music helps participants ($rs = .229, p = .026$). Asian pop (J-Pop, K-pop) music was significantly and positively related to how music

helps participants ($rs = .204, p = .049$). Rhythm and blues music was significantly and positively related to how music helps participants ($rs = .215, p = .027$). Rock music was significantly and positively related to how music helps participants ($rs = .230, p = .026$). New age music was significantly and positively related to how music helps participants ($rs = .217, p = .026$).

Positive Moods

Seven genres of music were found to relate to positive moods (see Table 7). Alternative music was significantly and positively related to how music affects moods and feelings ($rs = .217, p = .036$). Electronic music was significantly and positively related to how music affects moods and feelings ($rs = .265, p = .009$). Indie music was significantly and positively related to how music affects moods and feelings ($rs = .310, p = .002$). Asian pop (J-Pop, K-pop) music was significantly and positively related to how music affects moods and feelings ($rs = .231, p = .025$). Rhythm and blues music was significantly and positively related to how music affects moods and feelings ($rs = .261, p = .011$). World music was significantly and positively related to how music affects moods and feelings ($rs = .290, p = .042$). New age music was significantly and positively related to how music affects moods and feelings ($rs = .262, p = .010$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The survey conducted in this study sought to connect music listening with communication needs. While North and Lonsdale's study pointed out differences related to music listening habits based on age and sex of participants (Lonsdale & North, 2010), the main objective of this study was to establish relationships between communication and music needs among young adults. After the survey took place, it was found that significant relationships exist between communication needs and music genres, bringing to attention a relatively new aspect in communication and music studies. This aspect can be defined as the preference for specific

music genres linked to specific communication needs, which seems to be particularly relevant in youth subcultures. Following that lead, interesting questions are brought for discussion.

Why are music genres significantly related to communication needs? What sort of common elements connect music genres to a specific communication need? How does music contribute to the conception of youth subcultures? The key to answer these questions might be related to the verbal and nonverbal nature of music (Esposito, 2007), which can also be linked to the other aspects of music and communication detailed in the literature review.

As Esposito (2007) points out, the verbal aspect of music relies mostly on a written language that is used by artists and musicians to transmit messages to their target audiences. The bigger their audiences, the more universal and commercial the language employed. The verbal side of music is mostly evident in songs' lyrics. In most cases, lyrics communicate a clear message for audiences that can be memorable and meaningful among its members. However, it is important to remember that a particular music genre or song does not need to rely on lyrics to satisfy certain communication needs. That is where the nonverbal elements of music play an important role.

The nonverbal components of music are not delimited by a written language. These elements are recognized as sounds and usually relate to intrinsic aspects of music. Elements such as meter, timber, rhythm, and pitch are among the nonverbal components of music. Due to their impact on our neural receptors, it has been suggested these components have the power to influence or enforce our moods, emotions, and ultimately, the way we perceive the world. Moreover, the impact of the nonverbal components of music is so powerful that they have been used as tools to improve moods and attitudes of people with special psychological conditions or needs (Bergland, 2012).

The combination of verbal and nonverbal elements of music presents a group of factors relating one or several music genres to a specific communication need. Alternative, indie, jazz, and new age music were all significantly and positively related to how music affects the sense of identity of young adults in the selected sample. When looking for similarities between these music genres, it makes sense to assume they might have verbal and/or nonverbal components in common. Pointing out nonverbal elements, jazz and indie music could display similar rhythms, which may provoke similar responses from young adults of the selected sample. In the same way, alternative and new age music might display songs within the same range of pitch, evocating the same emotions on listeners.

On the other hand, if the same focus is made on verbal components while conducting a communication analysis, perhaps song lyrics from these music genres might relate to stages, life experiences, conflicts, behaviors, and outcomes commonly lived throughout youth. If that is the case, young adults may strongly empower their sense of identity by listening to song lyrics of music genres they personally and collectively can relate to. Such messages may also affect these young adults based on their cultural and social context. This perspective may justify why young adults, among other groups, will always have a greater preference for music genres that can help them fulfill communication needs. As found in the results, each communication need was positively related to more than one music genre. Interestingly, alternative and easy listening music were significantly and positively related to the majority of communication needs presented in the survey. For that reason, these two music genres could have a significant impact in further findings.

Verbal and nonverbal components of music may be similar between music genres linked to communication needs; however, it is important to point out that mere similarities will not

provide a solid foundation for the creation and maintenance of youth subcultures throughout time. In other words, songs or music genres that can improve or enhance emotions and moods in young adults temporarily may not produce motivation strong enough to create youth subcultures, but they can provide an important basis for them. Since moods and emotions change constantly, factors such as culture, life stages, trends, social conditions, and even political contexts, play a very important role in the conception of youth subcultures (Frith, 1981).

The punk subculture began in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia in the mid-1970s (Savage, 2007). Even though it is not yet clear which of these countries was the first to officially recognize the movement, punk subculture still exists. Facts lead us to question how this subculture has survived almost five decades of significant political and historical change, even when it is considered a universal movement. Punk subculture, which is based on punk rock music, promotes a group of trends, ideologies, and forms of expression throughout music, dance, visual art, film, and literature. This movement is highly defined by the promotion of freedom and anti-establishment views. Such anti-establishment views include nonconformity, anti-authoritarianism, self-sufficiency, direct action, and not selling out.

Hip hop is also a youth subculture that has transcended historic and political changes. This movement emerged in the Bronx, New York during the late 1970s. Its roots are mostly attributed to African American predecessors, although it has been also linked to Hispanic and Jamaican American communities. Hip hop proclaims that youth should be independent and intolerant of established adult society, often described as hypocritical. Despite frequently addressing eroticism and violence issues, hip hop mostly promotes anti-conformism ideas, just like punk subculture does (Taylor & Taylor, 2005).

When comparing the hip hop and the punk movement, we can conclude that youth subcultures are formed by individuals of similar life principles, socioeconomic class, gender, morality, philosophies, ethnicity, and morality views. Youth subcultures can be defined as movements following modes of expression, lifestyles, and meaning systems introduced by groups in subordinate or dependent positions, rising up against dominant systems. Such attempts are often viewed as a way to solve structural contradictions that conform to a wider societal context (Brake, 1985).

These youth subcultures are defined by music genres that communicate their ideals and are often named after those music genres themselves (i.e., the punk youth subculture was named after punk music). This example shows that music can communicate ideas and transmit messages with the capability of transcending time and space, as long as they are adopted by groups with a strong sense of identity and ideals. Following such perspective, we can affirm that each music genre has the potential of playing a distinctive role in several communication contexts, especially among young adults. We can conclude that music can impact several dimensions of communication through its verbal and nonverbal components. In sum, music does communicate, young adults do satisfy communication needs through music, and each music genre can have a significant impact in communication contexts and on youth subcultures.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations were notable when choosing a scale to measure factors in this study. The uses and gratifications approach was selected because it provides a solid foundation to explain how music uses are connected to communication needs. However, since there are no communication scales specifically created to address constant needs for the uses and gratifications approach (often considered a weakness of the approach itself), the scale

alternatives applicable to the study were very limited. Since studies linking music to communication are also relatively new, a significant lack of communication scales relating music to communication was also evidenced. To resolve this issue, Lonsdale and North's communication factors were applied using a semantic differential in order to establish relationships between music genres and communication needs.

Recommendations for Further Study

More research needs to be conducted in order to keep exploring and understanding the relationship between music and communication, as well as the range of uses and gratifications that link music genres to communication needs. It is important to point out that scales are needed to consistently address needs for the uses and gratifications approach, in order to counter its weakness as a potential communication theory. Also, scales addressing relationships between music and communication specifically might be really useful for this sort of studies.

Since the study was limited to only subjects within the College of Liberal Arts at Rochester Institute of technology, a wider sample including subjects from the entire RIT student population or young adults from universities across the country (or several countries) might be necessary to get generalizable findings linking music genres to communication needs among young adults. Factors such as location relevance, cultural contexts, and study reach should be specified in order to conduct potential cross cultural, sectional and comparative studies. Preferences for certain music genres related communication needs may vary from one country to another, a local region to another, one university to another, a social group to another, and so on. If studies of this nature are conducted in the future, additional relationships and differences might be identified.

Another important issue to address is the relevance of each individual music genre for all communication needs, taking into account listeners' social contexts, backgrounds, and youth subcultures they might feel identified with. Common behaviors and ideals of members from one youth subculture might also be foreseen when conducting this sort of studies.

Potential cross sectional studies relating music components to communication factors might also provide relevant findings linking music to communication. Music psychology aims to explain and understand all the processes that influence musical behavior and experience, such as how individuals respond to music, the ways music is perceived, and how music is incorporated into everyday life (Deutsch, 2013). Modern music psychology and sociology are considered empirical for being based on interpretations of data collected doing systematic observation and interaction with human subjects. The combination of relevant knowledge gained from music, social, and communication sciences might be the key to determine how music components such as meter, harmony, melody, tonality, rhythm, and form can affect communication processes long term, and determine with more accuracy what sort of role these elements play in the conception of youth subcultures.

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Appendix 1

How music affects your sense of who you are

To create an image for myself
To construct a sense of identity for myself
To express my identity
To explore possible identities
To discover who I really am
To reminisce about the past
To bring back certain memories
To remind me of happy times

How music affects your moods and feelings

To reflect how I feel
To express my feelings and emotions
To alleviate feelings of loneliness
To cheer me up
To make me feel better
To enjoy the music

How music helps you

To help get through difficult times
To relieve tension/stress
To take my mind off things
To escape the reality of everyday life
To relieve anxiety
To relax
To brighten up my day
To create an atmosphere
To set the "right" mood

How music affects your behavior

To help me exercise
To give me energy
To sing along to
To wake me up in the mornings
To dance to
To learn how to behave in the future

How music affects your interactions with others

To remind me of someone
To socialize with friends

To spend time with friends
To spend time with family
To portray a particular image to others

How music addresses your needs

To "fill" uncomfortable silences
To help me concentrate on work
To help me get to sleep at night
To pass the time
To distract me
To relieve boredom
To be entertained

How music relates to knowledge and information

To obtain information for daily life
To keep up with current events
To stay in-touch with current fashions and trends
To have something to talk about with others
To learn how other people think
To learn how to do things

Appendix 2

Alternative

Blues

Classical

Country / Western

Dance

Easy Listening

Electronic / Techno

European

Hip Hop / Rap

Indie

Inspirational / Gospel

Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)

Jazz

Latin

New Age

Opera

Pop

Rhythm & Blues / Soul

Reggae

Rock

World Music / Beats

Tables

Table 1

Correlations Between Music Genre and Sense of Identity

Genre	<i>rs</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	.258	94	.012*
Blues	.153	94	.141
Classical	.130	94	.212
Country / Western	.019	95	.851
Dance	.132	95	.202
Easy Listening	.148	94	.154
Electronic	.177	95	.085
European	.031	95	.767
Hip Hop / Rap	.179	95	.083
Indie	.258	95	.011*
Inspirational	.125	95	.229
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)	.205	95	.205
Jazz	.202	95	.050*
Latin	.049	94	.641
New Age	.208	95	.043*
Opera	.154	94	.135
Pop	.133	95	.200
R&B	.058	94	.580
Reggae	.158	95	.125
Rock	.280	94	.006*
World	.243	95	.017*

Note. * = $p \leq .05$ using a two-tailed test.

Table 2

Correlations Between Music Genre and Behavior

Genre	<i>r_s</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	.061	94	.562
Blues	.064	94	.607
Classical	.181	94	.080
Country / Western	.071	95	.491
Dance	.289	95	.004*
Easy Listening	.306	94	.003*
Electronic	.185	95	.072
European	.175	95	.092
Hip Hop / Rap	.274	95	.007*
Indie	.119	95	.253
Inspirational	.031	95	.762
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)	.015	95	.887
Jazz	.124	95	.232
Latin	.099	94	.343
New Age	.215	95	.037*
Opera	.196	95	.057
Pop	.277	95	.007*
R&B	.094	94	.367
Reggae	.092	95	.377
Rock	.089	94	.391
World	.279	95	.006*

Note. * = $p \leq .05$ using a two-tailed test.

Table 3

Correlations Between Music Genre and Interaction With Others

Genre	<i>r_s</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	.150	94	.149
Blues	.024	94	.818
Classical	.014	94	.894
Country / Western	.103	95	.319
Dance	.188	95	.069
Easy Listening	.204	94	.049*
Electronic	.089	95	.393
European	.069	95	.507
Hip Hop / Rap	.114	95	.270
Indie	.196	95	.057
Inspirational	.014	95	.891
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)	.051	95	.637
Jazz	.019	95	.851
Latin	.036	94	.728
New Age	.050	95	.627
Opera	.013	95	.904
Pop	.259	95	.011*
R&B	.026	94	.802
Reggae	.154	95	.136
Rock	.100	94	.335
World	.164	95	.112

Note. * = $p \leq .05$ using a two-tailed test.

Table 4

Correlations Between Music Genre and Knowledge

Genre	<i>r_s</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	.217	94	.036*
Blues	.064	94	.521
Classical	.082	94	.429
Country / Western	.048	95	.645
Dance	.261	95	.011*
Easy Listening	.243	94	.018*
Electronic	.189	95	.066
European	.138	95	.186
Hip Hop / Rap	.240	95	.019*
Indie	.159	95	.124
Inspirational	.149	95	.150
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)	.197	95	.056
Jazz	.038	95	.716
Latin	.016	94	.875
New Age	.149	95	.149
Opera	.186	95	.072
Pop	.233	95	.023*
R&B	.219	94	.034*
Reggae	.111	95	.286
Rock	.138	94	.183
World	.367	95	.000*

Note. * = $p \leq .05$ using a two-tailed test.

Table 5

Correlations Between Music Genre and Needs

Genre	<i>r_s</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	.056	94	.589
Blues	.000	94	.993
Classical	.255	94	.013*
Country / Western	.052	95	.620
Dance	.046	95	.658
Easy Listening	.190	94	.067
Electronic	.228	95	.026*
European	.099	95	.344
Hip Hop / Rap	.029	95	.782
Indie	.199	95	.053
Inspirational	.040	95	.698
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)	.325	95	.001*
Jazz	.129	95	.215
Latin	.099	94	.343
New Age	.054	95	.601
Opera	.089	95	.389
Pop	.278	95	.006*
R&B	.020	94	.848
Reggae	.068	95	.510
Rock	.202	94	.051
World	.210	95	.041*

Note. * = $p \leq .05$ using a two-tailed test.

Table 6

Correlations Between Music Genre and Negative Moods Management

Genre	<i>r_s</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	.229	94	.026*
Blues	.101	94	.331
Classical	.141	94	.175
Country / Western	.020	95	.844
Dance	.175	95	.089
Easy Listening	.132	94	.206
Electronic	.199	95	.053
European	.014	95	.890
Hip Hop / Rap	.141	95	.173
Indie	.192	95	.062
Inspirational	.121	95	.241
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)	.204	95	.047*
Jazz	.080	95	.438
Latin	.038	94	.720
New Age	.135	95	.193
Opera	.109	95	.294
Pop	.164	95	.112
R&B	.215	94	.037*
Reggae	.078	95	.455
Rock	.230	94	.026*
World	.133	95	.199

Note. * = $p \leq .05$ using a two-tailed test.

Table 7

Correlations Between Music Genre and Positive Moods Management

Genre	<i>r_s</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
Alternative	.217	94	.036*
Blues	.173	94	.096
Classical	.171	94	.099
Country / Western	.045	95	.662
Dance	.188	95	.068
Easy Listening	.097	94	.353
Electronic	.265	95	.009*
European	.005	95	.960
Hip Hop / Rap	.195	95	.058
Indie	.310	95	.002*
Inspirational	.145	95	.160
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-pop)	.231	95	.025*
Jazz	.152	95	.141
Latin	.004	94	.971
New Age	.172	95	.095
Opera	.178	95	.085
Pop	.086	95	.407
R&B	.261	94	.011*
Reggae	.121	95	.143
Rock	.202	94	.051
World	.209	95	.042*

Note. * = $p \leq .05$ using a two-tailed test.