Music and Feeling of Wellbeing: An analytic study of the role of gender on response to music
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Abstract

Music is a significant part of the human experience. It is beneficial for daily life and applicable as a therapy when required to enhance wellbeing. The aim of the present research therefore, is to critically analyze the role that gender plays in how men and women respond to music and how these responses affect their feelings of wellbeing.

Overall hypotheses were supported, with gender playing a minimal or no role on how people respond to music and how this affect their feelings of wellbeing.

Introduction

Music can be felt all around us in nature, in our ears and heart (Howell, n.d.). It is a universal phenomenon that cuts across boundaries, culture, religion, race and age (Vivyan, 2010). Many researches attest to the wonderful benefits of music, which include regulating moods and emotions; increasing energy level during physical workout; reducing tension and anxiety during hospitalisation and surgical operations; and also improving concentration and productivity levels while performing a task Ramsay, 2011; Skanland, 2013; Huang and Shih, 2011).

However music is not without negative consequences. Background music can be used to influence the actions taken by people (Hallam, 2012). Through the use of background music many businesses and companies have been able to get customers’ attention and influence their shopping habits. This may lead to overspending, which may lead to financial problems and therefore affecting their wellbeing. Also listening to song with violent music is proven to create violent emotions and expressions in a person, which may eventually lead to a violent personality (Anderson, Garnagey and Eubanks, 2003).

Nonetheless, music is most effective depending on an individual’s preference and experience.

Method

Quantitative approach was adopted for the present research with samples accessed through convenient sampling. Participants (100 male and 100 female), who ranged between the ages 18 and 58, with an average age of 31.8years filled a two-page questionnaire which was developed by the researcher to suit the specific requirements of the present research.

The questionnaire had 13 questions (including 3 demographic ones), which sought to investigate people’s music preference and their response to these and other music genres.

Results

H 1: Music will affect people’s feeling of wellbeing and these effects depend on certain predisposed conditions such as the music preference, ethnicity and age; but not gender. Supported.

H2: Men and women will express emotions as a result of listening to music; however women will exhibit a higher level of emotional expression than men. Supported.

H3: Men and women will exhibit an increasing level of feelings of wellbeing with increasing duration of listening to preferred genre of music. Ho rejected.

Discussion

In line with previous researches (Rentfrow and Gosling, 2012) ethnicity and age range, factors which influence a person’s personality play key roles in what music genres people like and consequently how those music genres can ultimately impact on their feelings of wellbeing. Gender on the other hand does not play such a meaningful role.

It was apparent as well that women do express a higher degree of emotions and response to music more than men do. This Viegas (2013) suggests is due to the fact that women are able to identify emotions better than men, i.e. men experience same emotions as women, but are unable to identify these emotions and thus, unable to express them.

For age in particular, there appears a wide discrepancy between music preference for the young (18-35) and mature (36-58) generations. The young prefer up-beat genres like, hip-hop and R&B, while the mature prefer gentler genres like soul and pop. A reason for this suggested on Wikipedia is that hip-hop and recent versions of R&B started in the 1970’s, while soul and gospel have been longer around than that. Soul and gospel are also linked with civil right struggles in America and spirituality; 2 phenomena that the young may not be concerned about.

In conclusion, music is beneficial; however further research is needed to fully understand and apply the effects of music for the human wellbeing.

References
