Summary of Findings on Music From the 2010s

1. Does the chorus make an appearance sooner in hit songs vs flop songs?

On average, a flop will have their chorus begin at 43 seconds, and a hit will have their chorus begin at 39 seconds into the song.

In context to a song’s overall length, it appears that the majority of hits and flops will have their chorus begin 10 - 29% into the song.

Overall, there does not this is not such a big difference between hits and flops regarding when a chorus starts. However, in both cases, the chorus does start pretty early on. Perhaps this suggests that most songs, regardless of popularity, begin their choruses early on.

1. Are hit songs rated as having a higher danceability score? Also, do other elements have and impact on danceability?

To look at the difference between hits and flops regarding danceability, I went ahead and generated a box plot. The plot showed that hits have an average danceability score of .64 and flops had an average of .49. Also, on the plot, the flop danceability seemed to be more spread out whereas the hits were more condensed. It looks to me that hit songs are more danceable than flops.

In regards to seeing what if elements have an impact on danceability, I compared it to tempo, energy, and song sections. To do this, I generated scatter plots. These scatter plots showed no obvious correlations. This means that you can create a slow or fast danceable song, a low or high energy danceable song, or danceable song with few or many sections.

1. Are hits missing the human element?

To determine this question, I had to do a bit of thinking. What is the human element? What does it mean to be non-human? In the strictest sense, what is pure human music? The strictest form of human music would require a human to be physically present and only singing. This is due to the fact that microphones, instruments, amplifiers, PAs, synthesizers, drum sequencers, studies…etc. are all extensions of a human. They will all, in some way, produce a sound that is just not human.

For my analysis, I did not adhere to the strictest form of human music due to its many limitations. Instead, I looked at whether songs were done live or acoustic. Due to the fact that live music is a human performance happening in real time, it should have more of a human element to it. And, acoustic music suggests that it was done on more natural instruments instead of synthesizers.

The results for this analysis were as expected. Only .8% of hits are live tracks, and only 2.1% of hits were acoustic. So, a big majority of hits are done in the studio and are not entirely acoustic. It seems, that, hit songs are missing the human element.