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Music and Emotion Research

- Too much focus on **what emotion labelling scheme** is used
- **Goals/Appraisals** are central in what makes music emotionally meaningful
- Less emphasis on **musical content**, more on **purpose** and **context**

Goal-Relevance: Recent Data

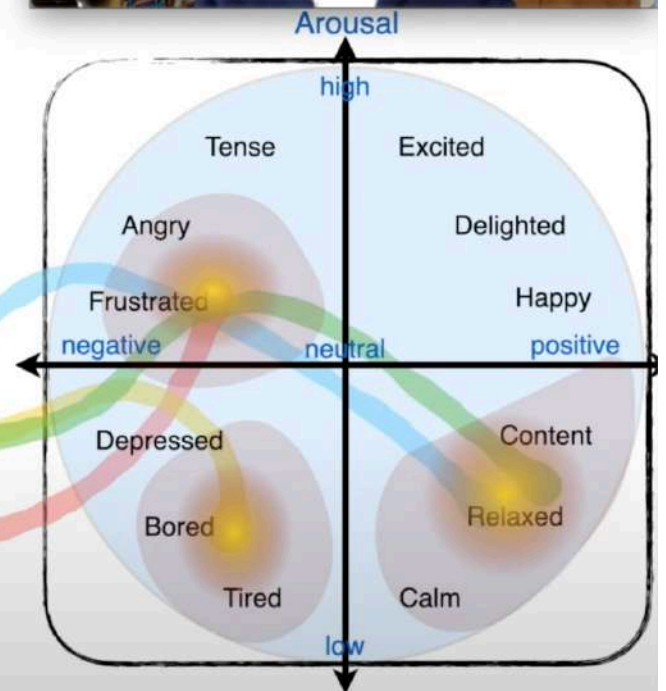
Music



Congruent

Bimodal

Incongruent



Goal relevance, not music or mechanism, **drives** emotions
(Lennie, submitted)

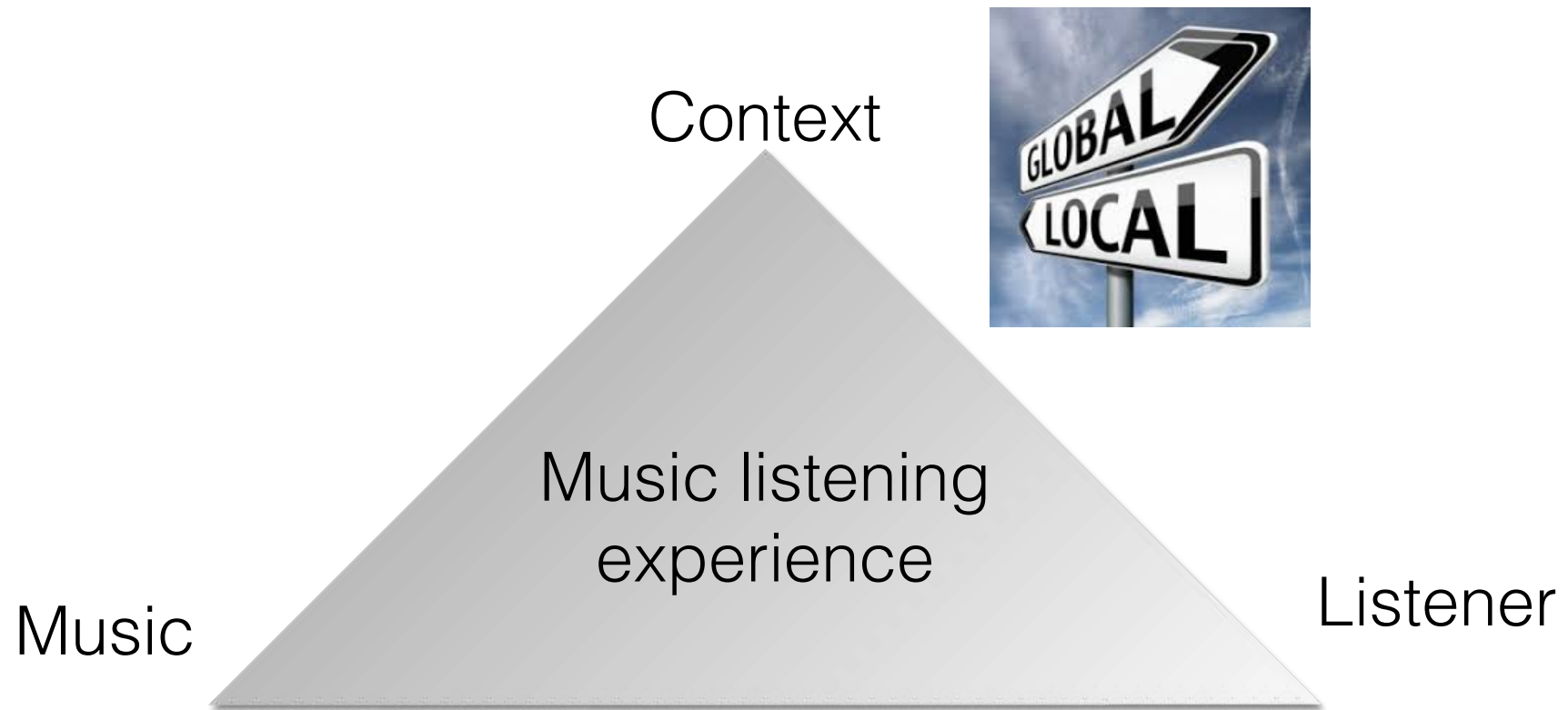
<https://youtu.be/OMauwIA8hb8?feature=shared>

CONTEXT MATTERS

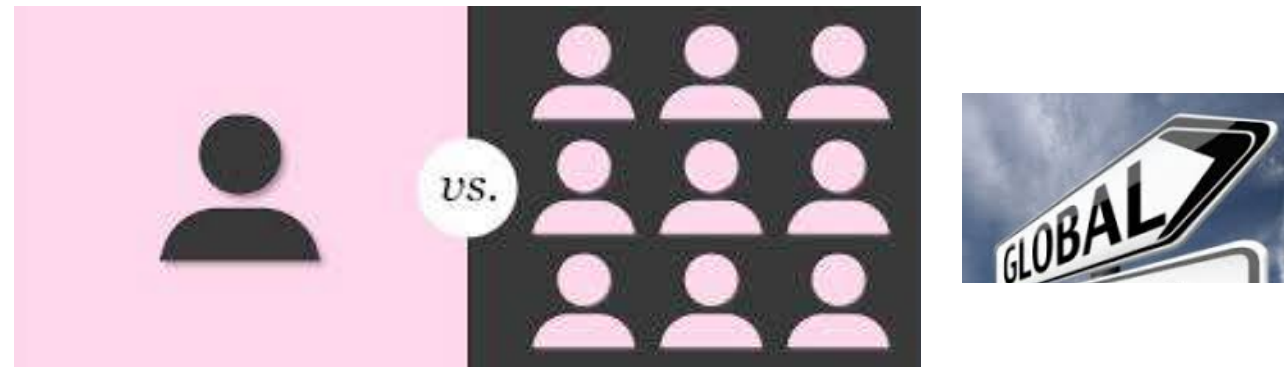
GOAL



Relevance of context



Relevance of context



Individualist*

(typically reflect western ideals)

Independent

Self-reliant

Achievement orientated

Competitive

Assertive

Pleasure seeking

Self-assured

Direct

Self-interest

Collectivist†

(typically reflect eastern ideals)

Socially interdependent

Connected

Moderate/traditional

Cooperative

Obedient

Self-sacrificing

Sensitive

Self-controlled

Equalitarian

Relevance of context

basic functions

most prevalent emotions

perceived/ communicated emotions

EVOKED EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Cross-cultural findings

- High similarity across cultures for basic functions of music (Boer & Fisher, 2009; Clayton, 2009; Saarikallio, 2011...)

Boer & Fisher (2009) (Brazil, Hong Kong, Germany, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, US)

Music in background, Memories through music, Diversion, Emotion in music, Catharsis, Music as reflection of self, Social bonding

Rana & North (2007)
(Pakistan, UK)

it aids concentration, gives enjoyment, creates the right atmosphere, passes the time, and brings back certain memories

Cross-cultural findings

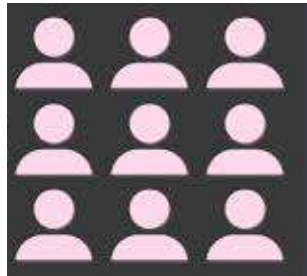
- And at the level of most prevalent emotions (e.g. Justin et al, 2016, *Psychomusicology*)

Justin et.al (2016), survey in 6 countries:

Typical for all: Pleasure-enjoyment, happiness-elation, calm-contentment, love-tenderness, nostalgia-longing

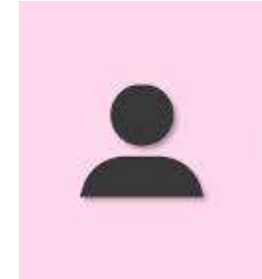
- However, some differences, e.g. individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures

Differences in individualistic vs. collectivistic cultures



Collectivistic

- Music particularly for **diversion** in social settings; **feeling good, dancing & entertainment** with friends and family (Boer, 2009) (**Philippines, Brazil**)
- Mood regulation of Kenyans through **dancing and expression of positive emotions**, using jazz and hip hop (Saarikallio, 2008)
- **nostalgia–longing, spirituality–transcendence, happiness–elation, and love–tenderness** are prevalent (Juslin et.al. 2016) (**Brazil, Kenya, Portugal**)



Individualistic

- Music particularly for **emotional and reminiscence** function (Boer, 2009) (**New Zealand, Germany**)
- Mood regulation of Finns through **background mood** for other activities & **discharging negative emotions**, using rock music (Saarikallio, 2008)
- **sadness–melancholy** and **admiration–awe** are prevalent (Juslin et.al. 2016) (**Australia, Sweden, USA**)



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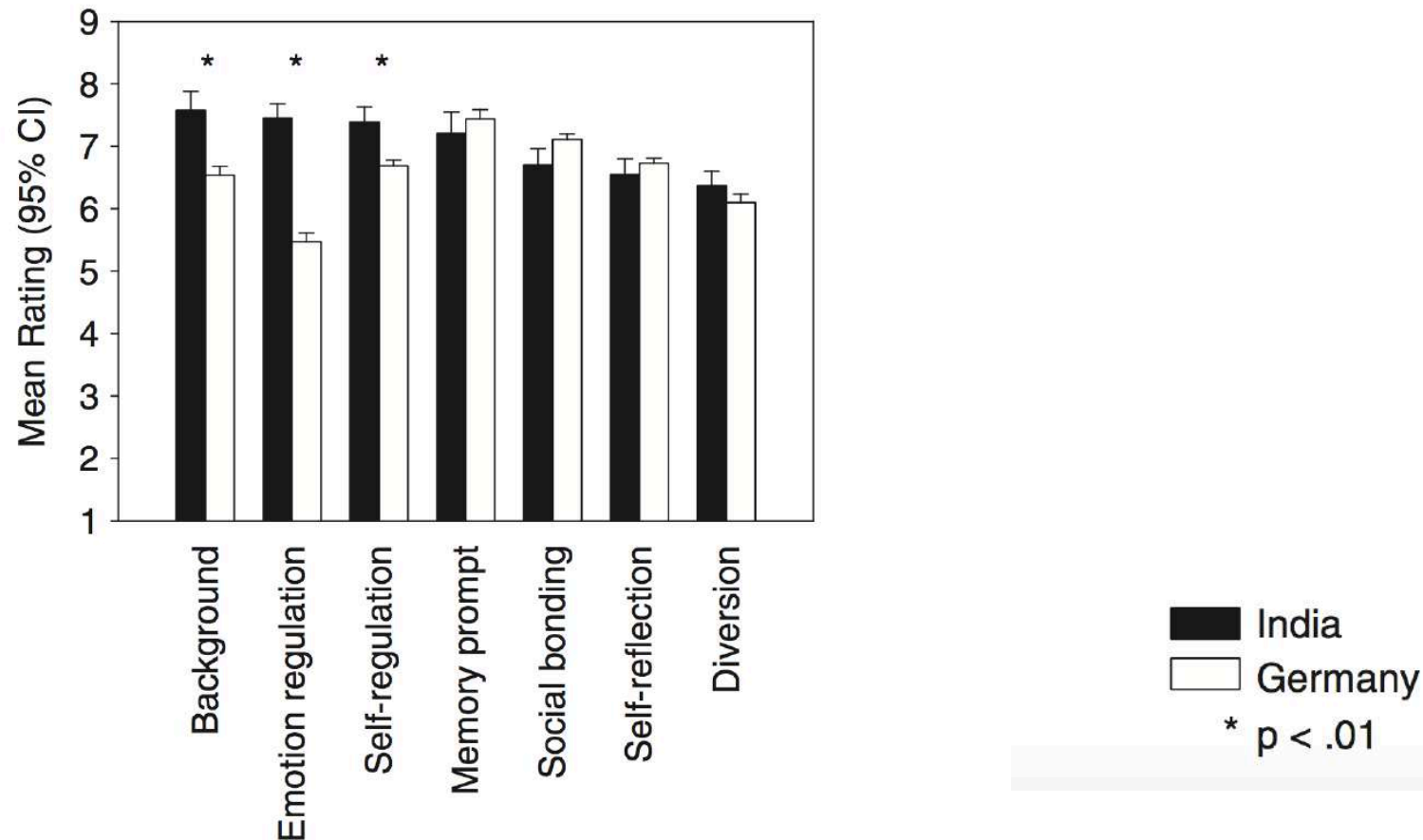
The functions of music and their relationship to music preference in India and Germany

Thomas Schäfer^a, Arun Tipandjan^b & Peter Sedlmeier^a

^a Department of Psychology, Chemnitz University of Technology, Chemnitz, Germany

^b International Centre for Psychological Counseling and Social Research, Pondicherry, India

Available online: 21 Jun 2012



Relevance of context

basic functions

most prevalent emotions

perceived/ communicated emotions

EVOKED EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Can music communicate emotional meaning across cultures?

- Positive evidence from several studies:
 - Western listeners and Hindustani ragas (Balkwill & Thompson, 1999)
 - Japanese listeners and Western and Hindustani music (Balkwill et al., 2004)
 - Mafa (native African population) listeners and Western music (Fritz et al., 2009)



Example study

(Fritz & al., 2009)



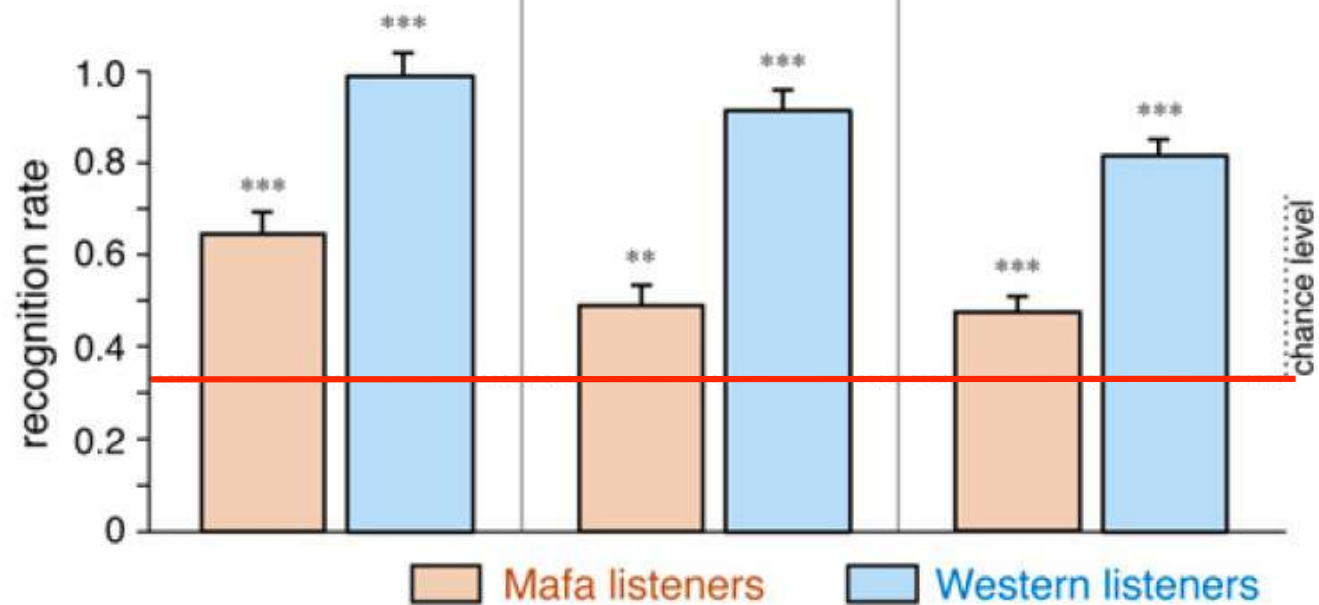
- A crosscultural study with Western and Mafa (an ethnic group in Cameroon) participants
 - The Mafa were unfamiliar with Western music
 - The notion of music being able to convey emotional expression was culturally unfamiliar to the Mafa
- Aim: to compare the ability of Western and Mafa listeners to recognise three basic emotions (happiness, sadness, and fear) expressed by Western music

Method

- Music stimuli: 42 MIDI piano excerpts
- designed to express happiness, sadness, and fear
- Measurement of perceived emotion:



emotion intended to be coded in the music



Relevance of context

basic functions

most prevalent emotions

perceived/ communicated emotions

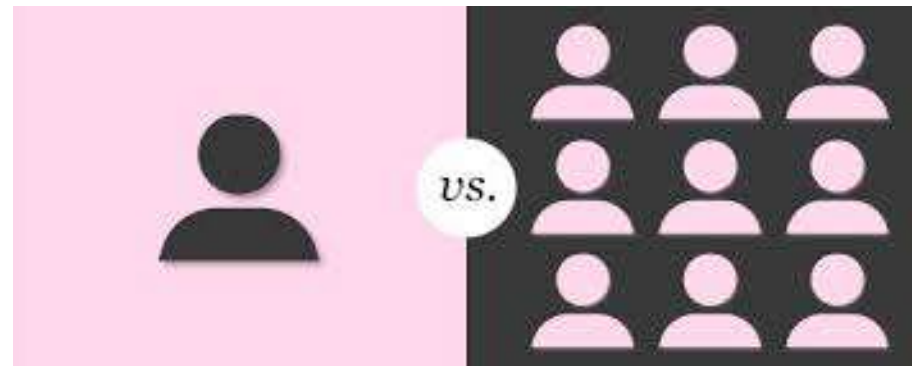
EVOKED EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Cultural factors in the constitution of emotions in meaningful music listening experiences

Saarikallio, Suvi; Alluri, Vinoo; Maksimainen, Johanna; Toiviainen, Petri (2020). Emotions of music listening in Finland and in India : Comparison of an individualistic and a collectivistic culture. *Psychology of Music*, OnlineFirst. DOI: 10.1177/0305735620917730 Article information

Aim of study

- Clarify the role of cultural background (Finnish vs. Indian) in explaining the **emotional experiences evoked** by particularly meaningful everyday experiences of music



a piece of music that is significant to you in your daily life and that evokes emotions in you.



The content or
genre of music is
not limited.

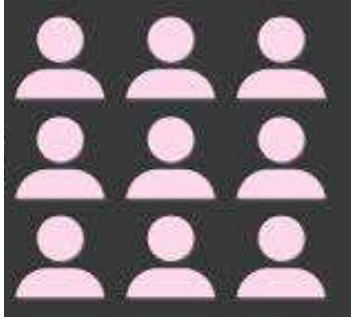
How strongly does music evoke the following emotions



Method

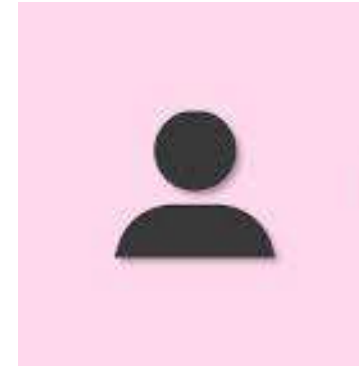
- Online survey (recruitment through university mailing lists & social media)
- Participants: 66 Asians, mostly Indians ($M = 32.5$ years, $SD = 8.9$, 47 females) and 157 Finns ($M = 29.4$ years, $SD = 10$, 109 females).
- Task: select a single piece of music that is meaningful and evokes emotions in your daily life.
- Measures: assessing the strength of discrete emotions typically evoked by that piece of music (41 emotion terms selected based on prior music and emotion research), rated on a 7-point Likert scale.
- Participants also provided free descriptions about the personal meanings of the chosen song
- Mixed-method analysis: PCA for emotion ratings & qualitative content analysis conducted on the descriptions

Collectivistic

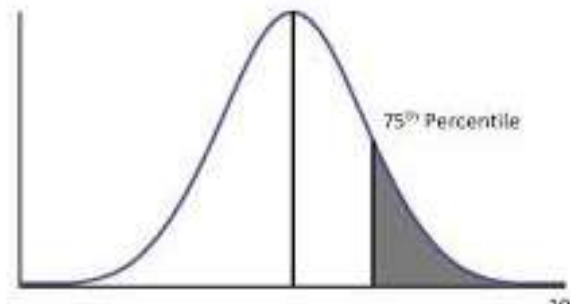


Enjoyment
Peacefulness
Joy
Happy
Comfort
Fondness
Relaxation
Moved
Pleasure
Interest

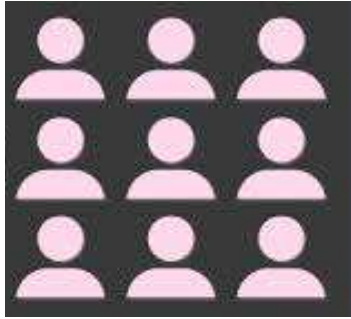
Individualistic



Enjoyment
Freedom
Joy
Pleasure
Moved
Happy
Nostalgia
Empowerment
Excitement
Comfort

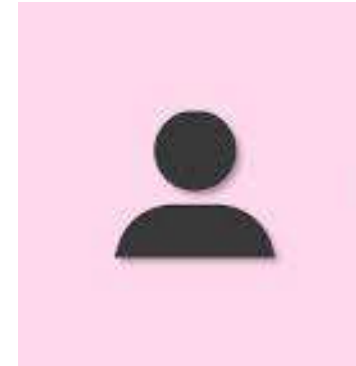


Collectivistic

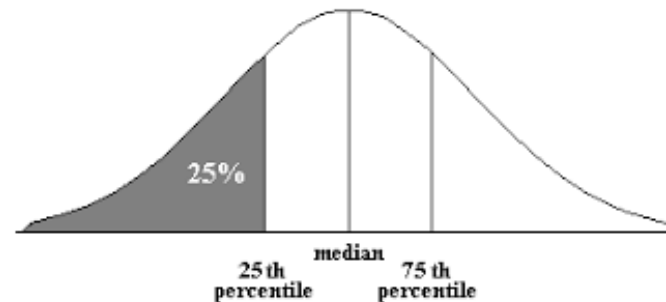


Fear
Pride
Anger
Shame
Boredom
Stress
Anxiety
Tiredness
Depression
Sadness

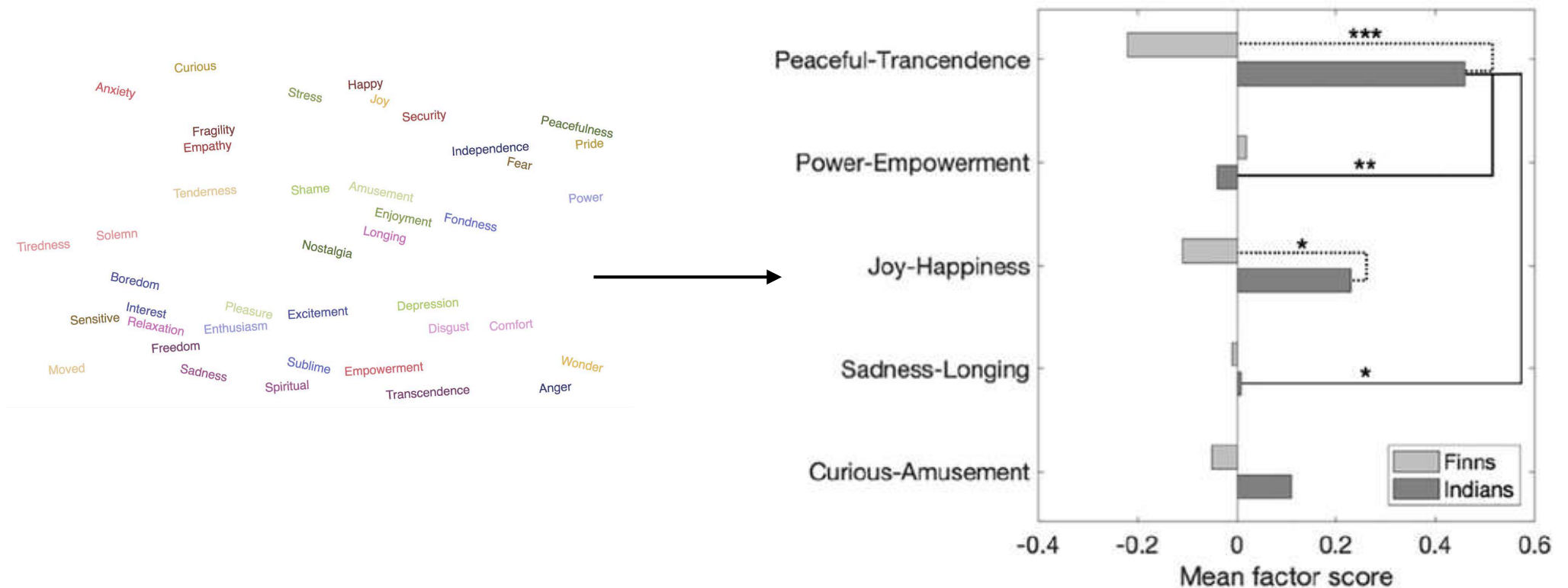
Individualistic



Fear
Pride
Anger
Shame
Boredom
Stress
Anxiety
Tiredness
Depression
Spiritual



Qualitative & Quantitative (Mixed method)



Qualitative & Quantitative (Mixed method)

Why was the music personally relevant?



It has a very mysterious and spiritual feeling to it, and makes me feel very sensitive and light.

I use its calming effect to soothe my negative feelings, like stress, fear, anxiety

Memories especially from my childhood, to overcome outer conflicts.

It makes me feel good about myself, and helps me focus on my strengths



Qualitative Descriptions

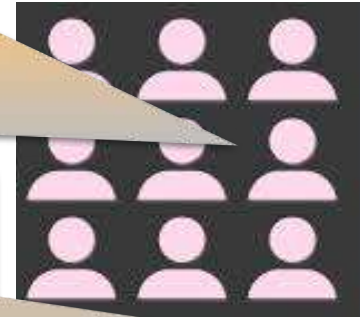
Why was the music personally relevant?

It makes me feel calm and relaxed

I prefer to work when there is some background music. So when I'm not in a mood of working I listen to this particular type of music and it kind of motivates me to work.

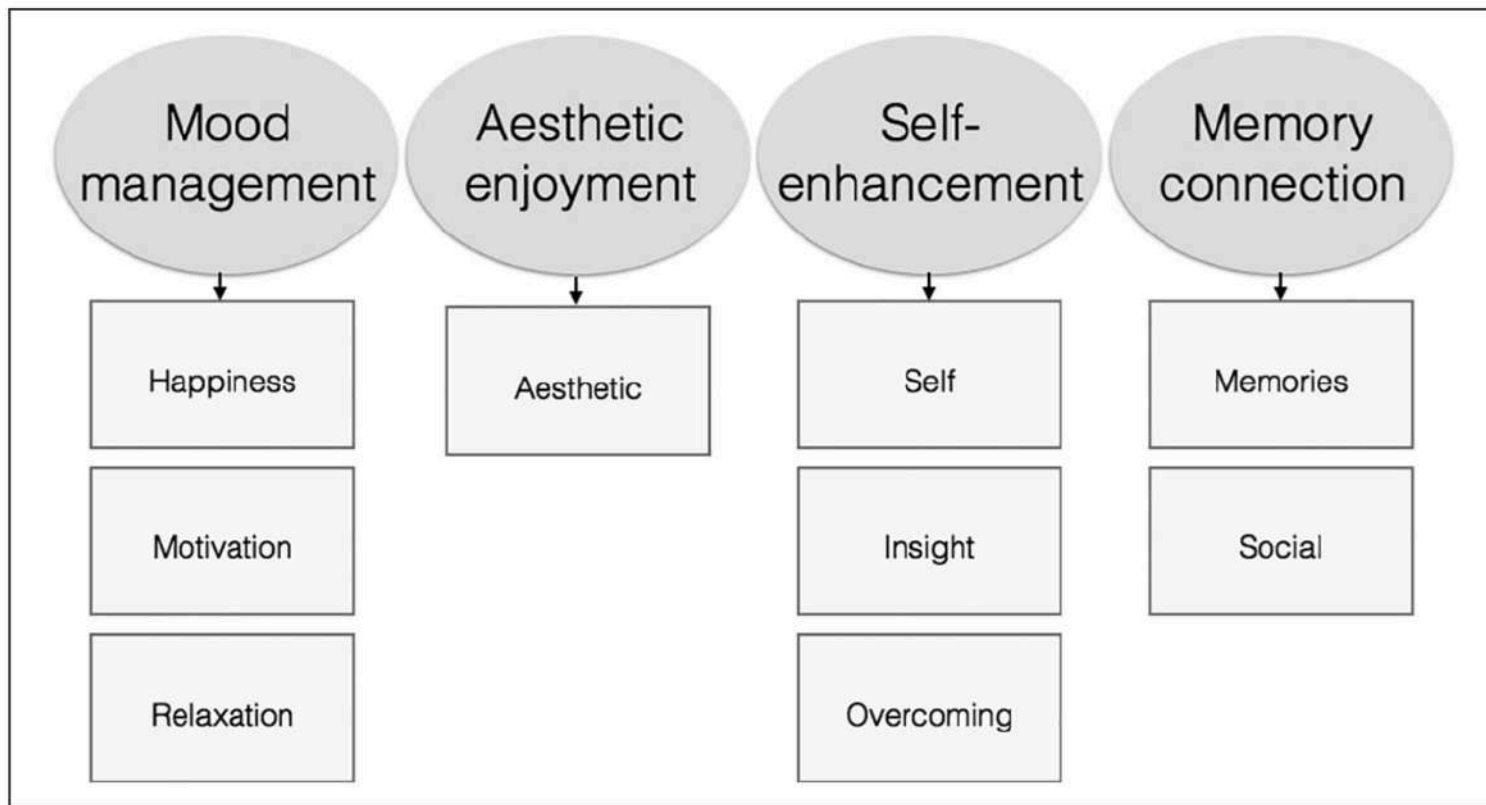
I don't have much of a personal relationship, other than that the song is extremely pretty and the melody and harmonies are awesome

It make me feel like i am in a different world, a different reality, i feel a part of the picture or music, a sense of belonging to a story



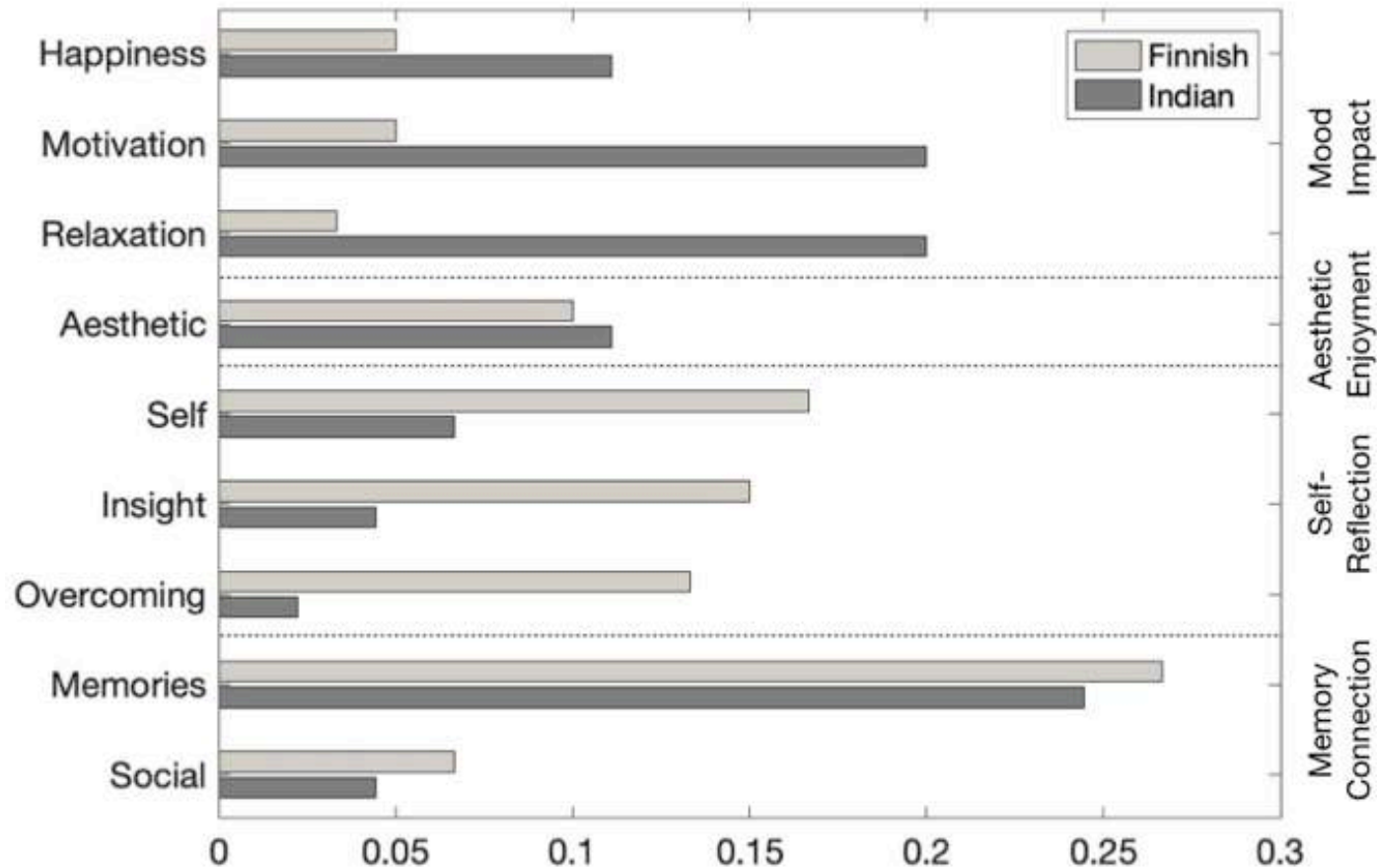
Thematic Analysis

Figure 3. Emergent conceptualization of the functions of the music.



Qualitative descriptions

Why was the music personally relevant?

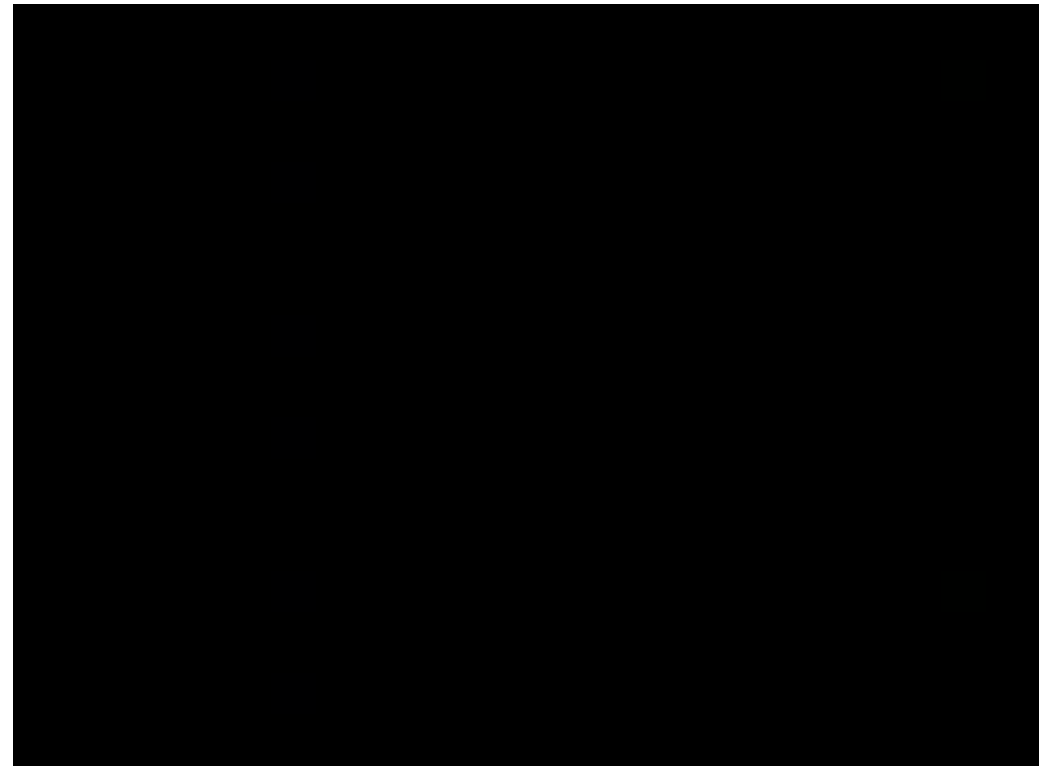


Conclusions

- both cultures value music for the positive emotions it evokes
- Finns emphasise empowerment that is achieved through self-reflection
- Indians emphasise happy calmness that is achieved through mood regulation

Exploring the emotion-induction mechanisms of music

- Immediate context



How does extra-musical information affect music-induced emotions?

- **Aim:** to investigate whether the emotions induced by a particular piece of music are influenced by prior information about the original context of that piece

JK Vuoskoski, T Eerola (2015). Extramusical information contributes to emotions induced by music, *Psychology of Music*



Method: Extra-musical information

Group 1: “In the next section you will hear a piece of music taken from *Yellowstone*, a BBC documentary depicting the change of seasons and nature’s awe-inspiring beauty in Yellowstone National Park. The music is taken from a section that illustrates how the rugged, impressive landscape of Yellowstone changes when autumn turns into winter. Please concentrate on listening to the music [...]”



Method: Extra-musical information

Group 2: “In the next section you will hear a piece of music taken from *Band of Brothers*, a miniseries set in the Second World War. The music is taken from a scene where, in the final stages of the war, the Easy Company of the US Army’s Airborne Division finds an abandoned concentration camp near Landsberg, Germany. The men of the Easy Company are deeply shocked by what they see; starving prisoners who have been left for dead. At first they don’t understand the true purpose of the concentration camp, but they try their best to help the prisoners. Please concentrate on listening to the music [...]”



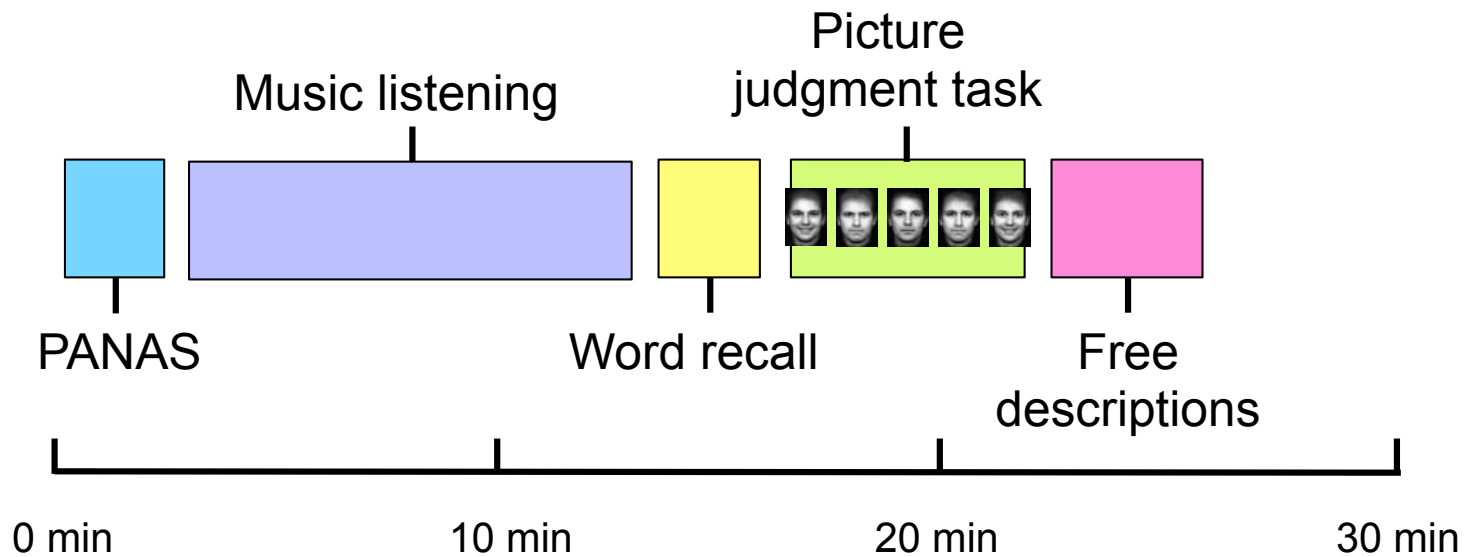
How does extra-musical information affect music-induced emotions?

- **Hypothesis:** explicit contextual information will have an effect on the emotions induced by the piece, possibly by promoting visual imagery related to its original context
- Sad contextual information will intensify the sadness induced by a sad-sounding piece of music, while neutral contextual information will attenuate it

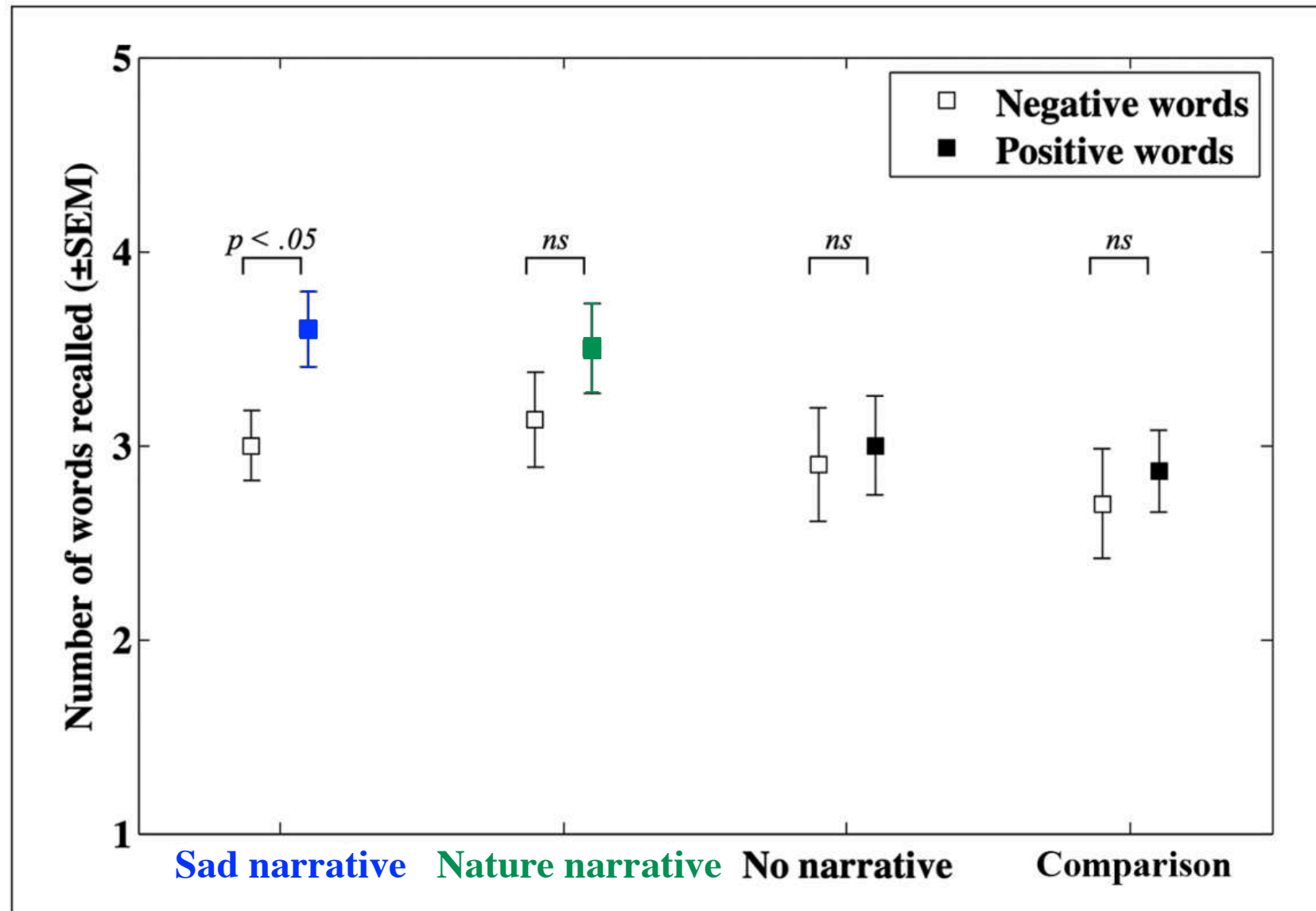
Method: Extra-musical information

- 90 participants randomly assigned to 3 groups, and given 2 different narrative descriptions (or no description) regarding the original context of a musical piece

Procedure

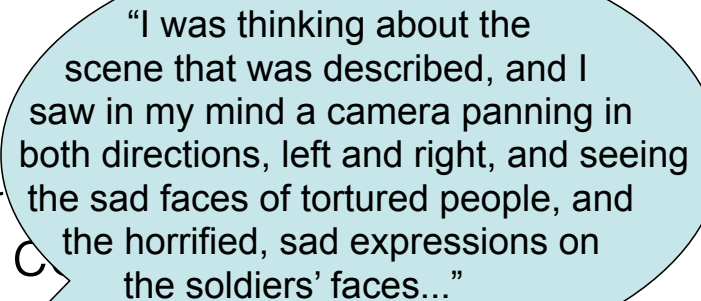


Results: word recall task



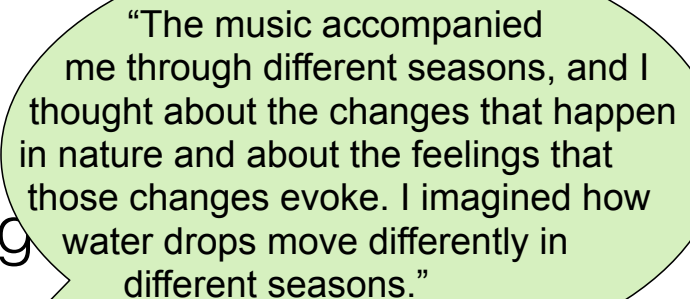
Results: free descriptions

- **Sad narrative group:** 80 % of participants thinking about imagery related to conflict and WW2



“I was thinking about the scene that was described, and I saw in my mind a camera panning in both directions, left and right, and seeing the sad faces of tortured people, and the horrified, sad expressions on the soldiers’ faces...”

- **Nature narrative group:** 80 % of participants thinking about nature-related imagery



“The music accompanied me through different seasons, and I thought about the changes that happen in nature and about the feelings that those changes evoke. I imagined how water drops move differently in different seasons.”

Conclusions



- Emotionally congruent contextual information about a musical piece has the potential to intensify the emotions induced by that piece – possibly via the visual imagery mechanism
- Narrative descriptions about the original context of a musical piece can promote music-related visual (or narrative) imagery related to those descriptions
 - Does music-induced imagery emerges from a narrative mode of listening?
- contextual information crucial part of the music listening experience

Applications

