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The Relationship Between Music Taste and Personality

Music means a lot of different things for different people. It has such a deep resonance in all cultures around the world. No matter where you live or who you are, music connects all people in a way nothing else can. Musical taste to me is determined from where you grow up in the world, who you grow up with and what kind of person you are. Everyone has a certain feeling or passion for music to some capacity wherever you come from. I believe that music plays just as big a role as any when it comes to a reflection of a culture and the people involved in that culture. Hip Hop and R&B have really had an impact on the black community because of the relatability to the artist and where they come from. People can listen to multiple types of music with other music as well so the paleta is very large. The reasoning that I put with music taste was that it is a very broad and in-depth identity due to music touching different people in many different ways. I began researching for what music taste represents and the impact they have on communities that embrace them. Kendra Cherry, the author of “Music Preferences and Your Personality**:** What does your taste in music reveal about you?” uses claims of facts from one large-scale study performed by researchers of Heriot-Watt University who asked 36,000 participants all over the world to rate 104 different musical styles. With similar topics, Author Katlyn Kritz from Youngstown State University ‘s “The Jambar” wrote “Music’s Influence on Culture” using the credibility of his peers and teachers for his claims. Music is a large component needed to understand how personality and a person’s cultural background relates to music taste.

The contributions that music gives to a culture are shown through everything that a culture involves music with. Author Vikas Shah MBE, from *ThoughtEconomics,* wrote “The Role of Music in Human Culture” with a collection of interviews from many different award-winning producers, composer, actors. In these interviews, Vikas delves into questions on what music to these people and he received some beautiful answers. David Levitin, a writer and musician, states that “…Whenever humans come together for any reason, music is there,” and precedes to name events like weddings, funerals, graduations, prayer, etc. I agree with him here because when music is used at events it unites the masses. Especially in certain cultures because majority of people will begin to dance and sing and become joyful. Vikas interviewed one of my favorite composers in Hans Zimmer, who is an award-winning composer and has done music for over 100 films. His answer to Vikas question, “What would the world be without music” shows how he views music as, “a huge chunk of social communication mechanism would be gone.” I love Hans’ stance on this because music is a part of my everyday life and without it my life would feel so much blander. One of Hans’ productions is the soundtrack from my favorite movie, *Interstellar*, and the way his work sounds brings out his view of the importance of music. I think music gives culture a voice and describes it with the effort that artist put into the genre.

Kendra Cherry, from *VeryWell mind,* uses claims of research and facts to showcase the results of the extensive survey determining the personalities associated with genres of music. She begins by stating how music plays a very important role in people’s lives around the world and the who the influence can give a ripple affect going throughout generations. Kendra speaks on the research done by Professor Adrian North stating, “the reason people sometimes feel defensive about their taste in music might be related to how much it relates to attitudes and personality.” Along with music taste playing an important part, Kendra also believes that people use music as a way to set the mood, to motivate a workout, or even to gain inspiration. I agree with her because I use my selection of music to accompany most of my everyday activities. Rap/Hip Hop is my most enjoyed genre so I instantly gravitated to Dr. North’s research on the subject.

Music is not subjective, but the taste itself is subjective. Most people understand musical taste as one’s preferences in music: particular genres, styles, music bands. Music can create your own world without interfering, while being an excellent way to connect with others. Listening to your favorite genre music everyday can somehow actually affect your personality. Depending on the style of music and how much influence the artist has, not just your personality but even the clothes you wear can change. Professor Adrian North of Heriot – Watt University conducted a study of how one’s music taste impact one’s personality. This study is also the same study that was introduced by Kendra Cherry in her article. Some results from Professor North’s research were that for the participants who enjoyed Reggae have “high self-esteem, are creative, not hardworking, outgoing, and gentle.” With participants who enjoy Rock/Heavy Metal have, “low self-esteem, not hardworking, and not outgoing.” I believe that people who prefer to dance to music are usually outgoing and more assertive. It can show that they feel good comfortable with who they are even if it is while being around others. Both of these authors believe that music taste is a very unique characteristic in which can touch a variety of communities and societies.

According to the study, Dr. North found that despite the stereotype that rap lovers are, “more aggressive or violent,” but his results gave no such indication. Instead, most rap fans tend to have, “high self-esteem and are usually outgoing.” I feel that way towards rap as well because a lot of songs give off the energy to get up and take action or become confident in who you are and what you are about. Cherry’s article uses facts brought about from the large-scale study to bring light on the impact that music preferences can have on people.

In the article, Belinda starts off with the perspective of musicians, in sighting that she is a part of that group. She says, “As musicians, we are carriers of influence, whether or not we are aware of it and whether or not we intend to be.” This is a great point to start off with because the amount of artist who don’t care about the image that they put out really doe nothing but harm communities and cultures alike. She goes on to talk about the youth and the adolescents who are, “still extremely malleable to the world around them.” Huang names the song “Get Lucky” by Daft Punk and the Katy Perry halftime show. She did this to say that kids would be singing these songs verbatim, so they too are impacted by the music they listen to. She says, “The popular music of our day reflects the culture of our day…culture is changing far more frequently than ever before.” I believe her with this statement because the evolution of social media and the ability to share information and music with a touch of a button. This also explains why music taste can change so quickly today because we have access to almost all genres of music.

Katlyn Kritz, from *The Jambar,* uses her peers and instructors to bring in opinions and insight on the impact music can have on different cultures. Music plays an important role in the lives of people from all over, which is why many people wonder what individual factors might influence musical preferences. No one’s musical taste fully aligns with anyone else’s. We can live with the understanding that we all enjoy different artist. In Katlyn’s article, we can view excerpts from her music theory instructor, Clay Colley. “Music is more ubiquitous now, but not more influential,” Colley said. “Our constant ability to access any music we want has actually diminished its power.” I don’t fully know the range of this quote but I understand where he is coming from about our constant access to any type of music. Without that access, people would have to depend on their environment to display what genre of music is available to them. Jay Jones, a senior psychology major, speaks on how music can change his mood in almost the snap of a finger. “Music can be the sun that brightens my darkest hours,” Jones said. “I can be completely outraged, and music will change that in a heartbeat.” I agree with his statement because I can calm myself from a prior situation by taking a step back and encompassing myself in my favorite songs. Jones also states that artist such as Michael Jackson and Kendrick Lamar have brought about a social change in recent years. The lyrics in songs can make you realize that you have to be strong, kind, brave, and independent.

The culture of a place can often reflect the music that comes from that place. Hujjatullah Zia, from “Outlook Afghanistan”, writes “Music Reflects Culture” explaining why music and poetry reflect the culture and folklore of a society. Zia states, “Songs and music mirror history, values, norms, and the mentality of a society.” This statement is true because at most cultural ceremonies that are celebrated with songs and music, it’s to demonstrate the tradition of that culture. Music plays such a large role in the emotions of the people who listen to it. Some people find joy and happiness listening to rhythm and beat of music. On the other hand, there is music out there that can feel you with unwanted emotions and make you feel sad or lonely. Zia also states that, “Others just enjoy traveling mentally with music in romantic and utopian cities with their beloved friends.” I believe the United States strives to be a version of a utopia and living here has shown me that listening to music can bring about inspiration and creativity. If one can share that feeling with others, it then becomes a mentality to whoever hears the same music. I grew up in my church choir so listening and singing religious and gospel music can fill you with an energy fit to serve and worship. The words from these gospels can be calming, centering and worthwhile. In a culture where people can gather in solace to enjoy each other’s company, music can be a bonding factor just as communicating is.

In our class, we wrote our previous essay on identities and how they can affect what people might like or dislike. Music can be and identity of not only a person but an identity of a region or community. Nwakego Kristine Chukwuma, from “Diggit Blog,” wrote “Identity Through the Eyes of Music” with intentions to up the topic on how can music reflect a person or cultural identity? They start off with saying that music, “seems to be a key to identity because it offers, to intensely, a sense of both self and the collective.” I agree with their stance on this because music can be shared with people so easily now that you can really identify whole groups with the same music taste. Music constructs a sense of identity through the direct experiences it offers of the body. They begin to discuss rap music and how it first gained popularity in the 1970’s in the U.S. My instructor, Dr. Caitlin Anderson previous stated that the genre that gets her the most excited and thrilled to listen to in K-POP. Kristine speaks on K-POP and says that, “Koreans emphasis on reserving the old and embracing the new. As a result, not only do they advertise themselves in the world by K-POP music but also they preserve their traditional music which is their identity.” I didn’t originally know what K-POP was, but the identity of a culture can be show through their music and at the same time evolve with the times. In the ending of her excerpt, she goes on to say that music is “truly beautiful” and is “not just simply music.” Music has meaning to everyone in the world, and it is a powerful to that can shape generations.

To summarize, music is vastly important to everyone on one level or another. It is a way we express ourselves and even though not all music is shared, the concept and the meaning behind it is reciprocated around the world. Music contributes heavily to cultures by being almost like the heart and soul of a community. Music means a lot of different things to different people. No matter your race, where you live, or your culture, it’s very likely that music can make up a large part of your being. Kendra describes how much music can change a person’s experience in the world. While Katlyn constructs perspectives of her culture to show what music can give to society. Music helps express our own identity. It may also influence the type of friends you have, the type of clothes you wear, and the type of activities you may like to enjoy. During events and ceremonies, music is expected because of the impact it has on the people it was made for. It doesn’t matter the type of music, it about how that type of music makes you feel and how it changes your identity. It can reflect a culture due to the history behind it. Not all songs have a secret meaning but majority of music genres have a story to back up the lyrics. Whatever your background may be, the music related to your culture can reveal emotions and show how you feel about certain things to you that you never would have known.

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