

A Comparative Analysis of Tempo and Valence in Spotify Pop and Country Songs

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Introduction

Canada, particularly Toronto, is recognized as one of the most multicultural regions globally, bringing with it a wide variety of musical influences and preferences (World Population Review 2024). Among the numerous genres that thrive in this diverse nation, country and pop music are two of the most popular (Camuz 2024). To explore these differences further, this paper analyzes key musical features from two renowned artists: Luke Combs, a leading figure in country music, and Tate McRae, a rising star in pop. Using the `spotifyr` library (Thompson et al. 2022), we make use of the Spotify API to gather and compare data on their tracks, providing insight into the unique characteristics of each genre.

Results

Figure 1 and Figure 2 compares the valence of a track with its tempo for songs by Tate McRae and Luke Combs, respectively. In the case of Tate McRae's pop songs, we observe that there is little to no correlation between valence and tempo. This suggests that pop listeners may prioritize tempo over emotional content when deciding their preference for a track, supporting findings that tempo plays a larger role in pop music appeal than emotion (Eerola 2011).

Conversely, for Luke Combs' country songs, there appears to be a stronger relationship between valence and tempo. Country music often emphasizes storytelling, and listeners may focus more on the emotional tone (valence) of the song rather than its tempo. As a result, the valence seems to play a more significant role in determining a song's appeal, even across a wide tempo range (from 75 to 170 bpm). For instance, several of Luke Combs' slower songs exhibit valence levels similar to his faster tracks, indicating that emotion, rather than speed, is the key factor in country music appeal.

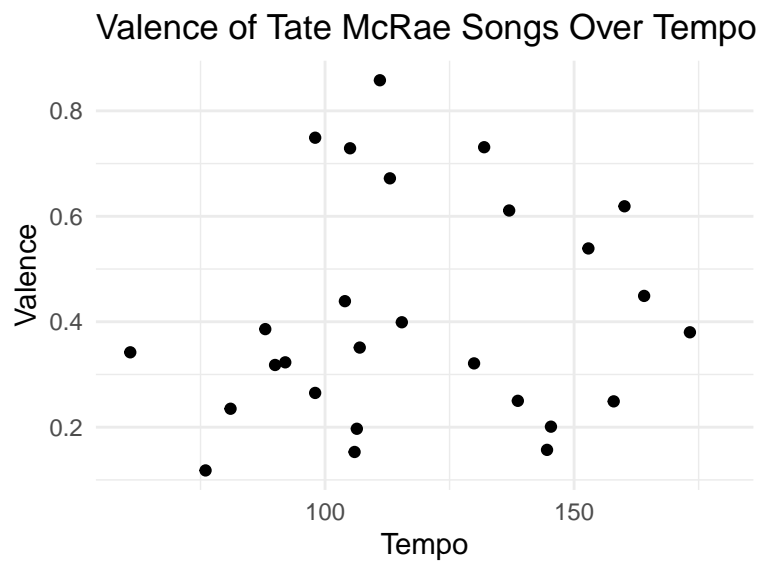


Figure 1

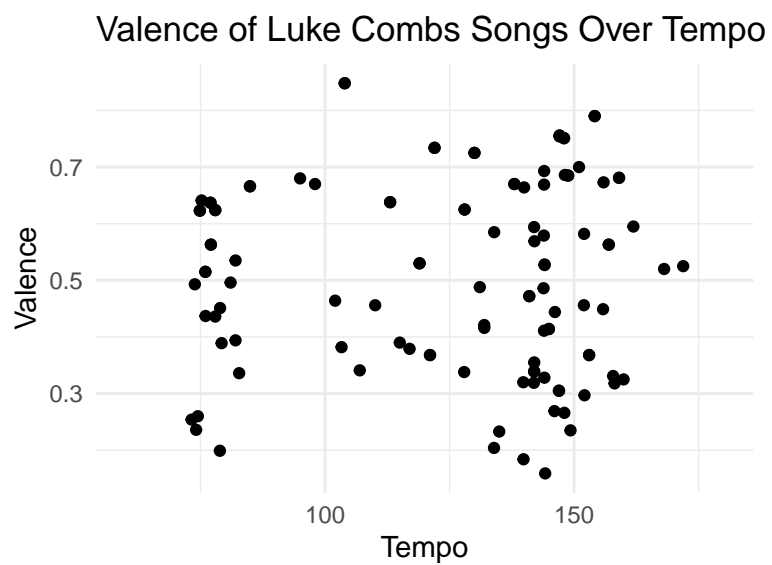


Figure 2

References

- Camuz. 2024. “What Is the Most Popular Music in Canada?” <https://www.camuz.ca/what-is-the-most-popular-music-in-canada/>.
- Eerola, Tuomas. 2011. “Are the Emotions Expressed in Music Genre-Specific? An Audio-Based Evaluation of Datasets Spanning Classical, Film, Pop and Mixed Genres.” *Journal of New Music Research* 40 (4): 349–66.
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