

Reference : Re-Exploring the Influence of Sad Mood on Music Preference

Ronald S. Friedman, Elana Gordis & Jens Förster

We conducted three experiments to rectify methodological limitations of prior studies on selective exposure to music and, thereby, clarify the nature of the impact of sad mood on music preference. In all studies, we experimentally manipulated mood (sad vs. neutral in Experiments 1 and 2; sad vs. neutral vs. happy in Experiment 3) and then assessed participants' preferences for expressively happy versus sad musical selections. To further help illuminate the reasons for their music preferences, we also asked participants to indicate how they believed listening to each song would affect their current emotional state as well as how appropriate they felt it would be to select a given song. Results suggested that individuals in sad moods were not reliably inclined to listen to sad songs, but rather, were strongly averse to listening to happy songs, apparently out of concern that choosing such songs would feel inappropriate. We discuss implications of these findings for theories of selective media exposure and emotion regulation.