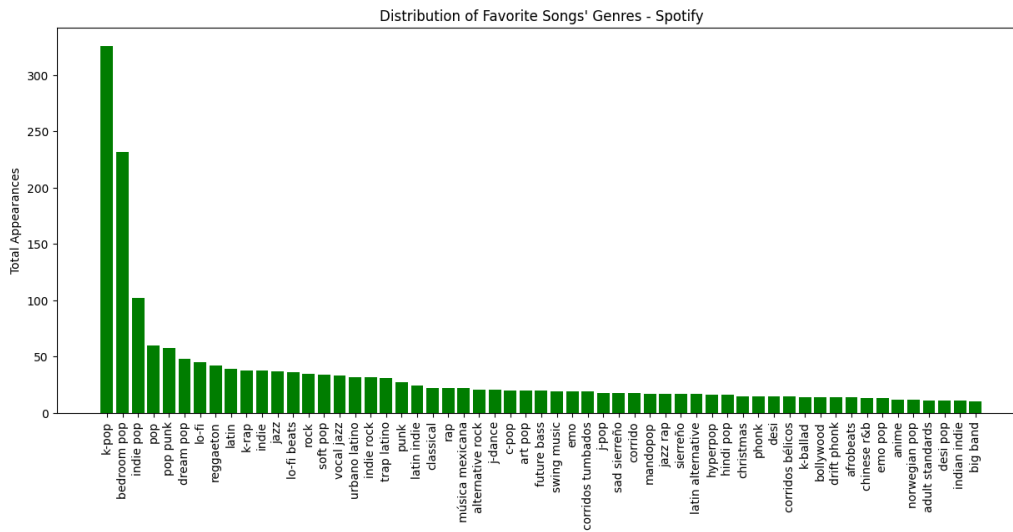


Individual Analysis: A Discovery of My True Music Tastes

Author: Charlotte Maples

How does my perception of genres differ from classifications by MusicBrainz and Spotify?



According to Spotify, my top genre by far is k-pop, followed by bedroom pop.

I was not expecting k-pop to be so high on the list, but there is a lot of indie and gen-z genres in the list such as bedroom pop, indie pop, soft pop, etc.

Moreover, latin, reggaeton, and similar genres had a surprising number of appearances.

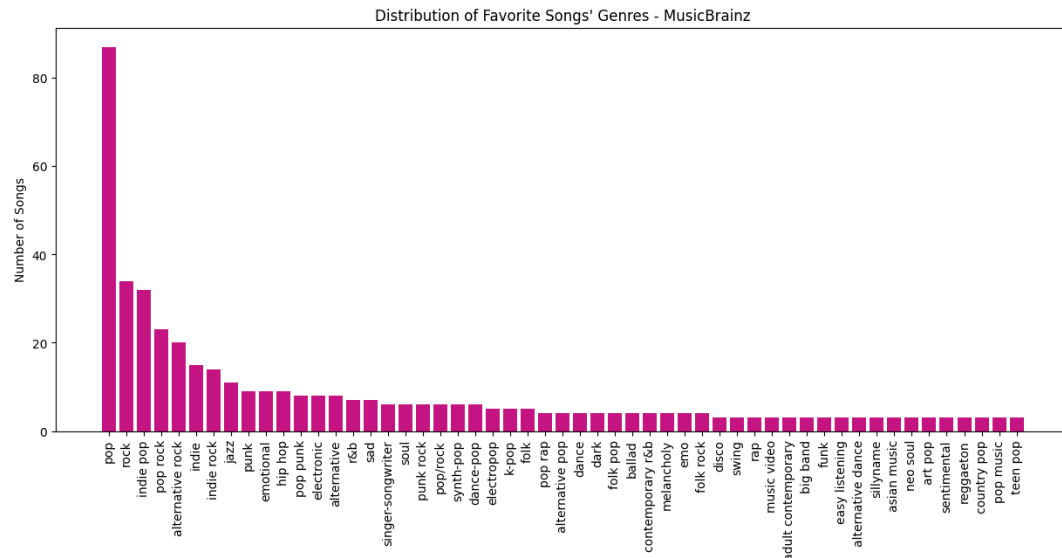
Note: 1,656 songs of 2406 are an “unknown” genre

On the other hand, MusicBrainz considers my top genres to be pop and rock.

Quite a few emotions appear on the list including “sad”, “dark”, “melancholy”, and “sentimental”

Multiple indie and alternative genres appear.

Note: 1,455 songs of 2406 were in MusicBrainz’s dataset

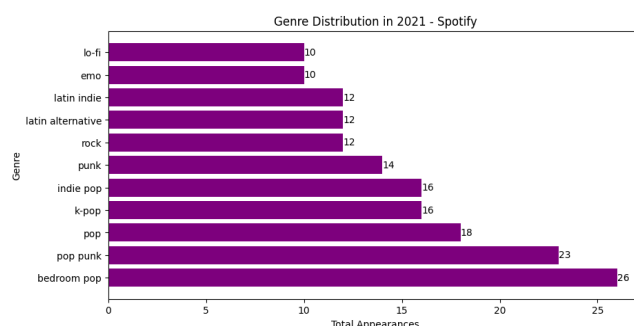
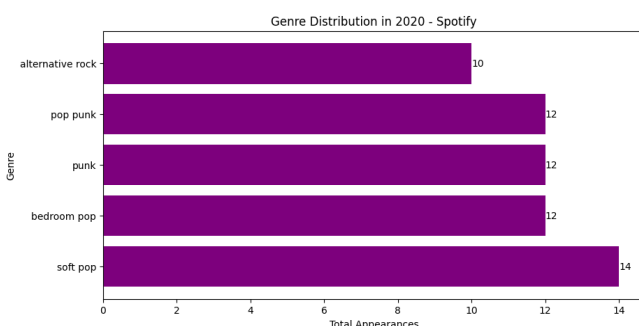


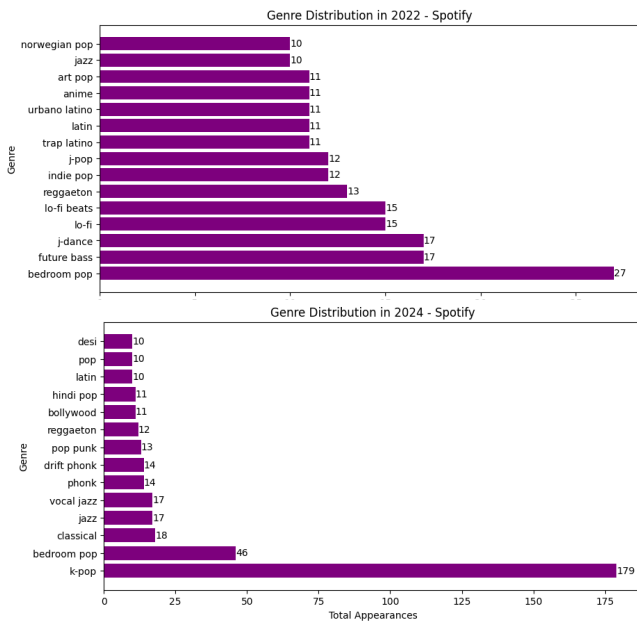
It is very apparent that the top genres are heavily affected by the completeness of the dataset, however, there is a good amount of overlap with similar genres. Both graphs show various indie or alternative genres. While Spotify focuses more on cultures and languages, MusicBrainz sticks with emotions and traditional genres.

I would add a **lot** more songs to indie genres. I generally agree with Spotify’s genre classifications. On the other hand, some of MusicBrainz genre classifications are a bit questionable (Amy Winehouse is **not** pop).

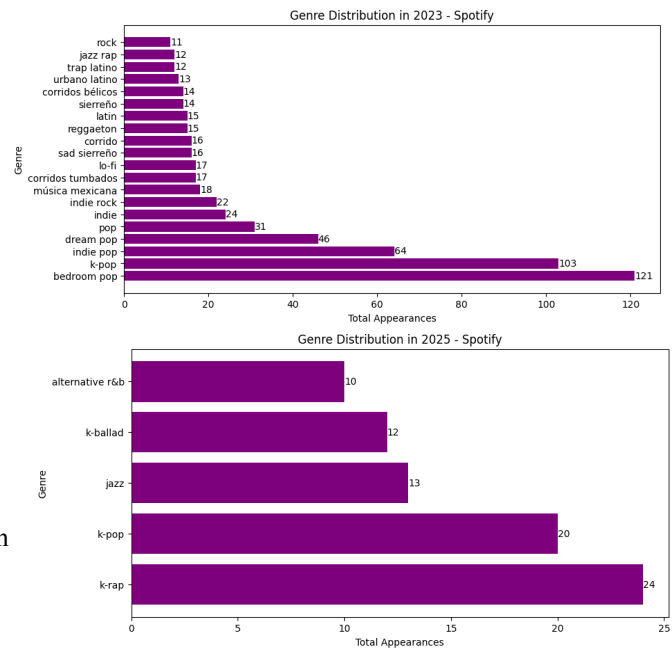
How has my music taste changed over the past five years, and how does this compare to overall music trends?

Using Spotify’s data on genres, my music taste started with mostly rock and punk, with some Gen-z pop.





Around 2022 is when my music taste began really expanding to a lot more genres and cultures, particularly Latinx and Japanese music. This later expanded to Indian and Korean music.



The Gen-z pop consistently stayed at the top for multiple years, then came 2024. The year when k-pop took over. That trend seems to be continuing, with 2025's top genres including k-rap and k-ballad.

I did not follow the overall music trends for each year. Hip-hop and Pop have continued to be top genres year over year, neither of which have made it into my personal top genres. However, I have somewhat stayed with smaller trends, particularly ones that became popular through TikTok and other social media.

2020 saw a big rise in indie music, especially from Gen-Z artists, due to COVID-19 and TikTok. I began listening to more Gen-Z artists that year in the "bedroom pop" and "soft pop" genres. Notably, Sitting on Saturn, girl in red, and david hugo.

Latin music began its rise to mainstream in 2021, which I began to catch onto in September 2021 with Mon Laferte and Selena. 2022 was a big year for Latin music and k-pop due to Bad Bunny's and BTS' individual rises. BTS did not catch my attention, but Bad Bunny sure did. Bad Bunny and similar artists were added to my liked songs in late 2022. Additionally, phonk began its rise in 2022, which I would later catch onto in 2024.

2023 was a very big year for Afrobeats after Rema's "Calm Down". I continued on my Latin and Gen-Z music adventure.

2024 got to witness an Afro House takeover. Additionally, Afrobeats and Amapiano continued to resonate globally. Country also saw major mainstream attention due to Beyoncé's album, "Cowboy Carter". While this was going on, I was having my Indian music and k-pop moments.

So far, 2025 has been continuing 2024 trends with Afrobeats and Amapiano. We have not had anything like Brat Summer quite yet.

Do I listen to more indie artists than major label artists, as I assume?

Considering the lack of documentation from Spotify and MusicBrainz, it is fair to say I listen to a fair amount of indie artists. However, does that outnumber the amount of major label artists?

Of 73 artists not in MusicBrainz's database, 24 had under 20,000 monthly listeners, which I would classify as small artists. And 17 of those had under 3,000 monthly listeners, also known as unknown artists or local bands.

Moreover, of the artists in MusicBrainz's database, a majority of them were not a part of a major label.

The artists may not necessarily be traditionally indie artists, however, most of my favorite artists are not widely known.

Conclusion

In regards to artist labels and popularity, my hypothesis was correct. However, my perception of genre classifications greatly differed from that of MusicBrainz. Spotify could be a bit questionable, but for the most part I agreed with. Moreover, I was correct in assuming my music taste has shifted towards more major label artists, due to the k-pop, over time. On the other hand, I was incorrect in assuming that I stayed away from the trends. My music taste is not mainstream by any means, but I did follow some trends, even if it was a bit late.