Patterns and Changes in Music Consumption over the Years in the U.S

(COMP3125 Individual Project)

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*Abstract*—This paper describes the research that I conducted to study current and past trends in music genre consumption. Datasets from Statista and streaming data from ChartMaster indicate that around 2018, hip-hop/rap was a dominating genre. However, in recent years, there does not seem to be a single genre taking over charts.

Keywords—ChartMaster, Spotify, Stream

# Introduction

In this project, I attempted to study current trends in music popularity over recent years, and how they compare to trends of the past. I wanted to see what genres and types of artists have been the most popular over recent years, and what shifts there have been over them. I also wanted to see if I could find causes for the popularity or unpopularity of certain genres. In addition, I wanted to see if I could find either data or information on how popular music of the past compares to that of now.

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# Datasets

## Dataset 1: “Share of total music album consumption in the United States in 2018, by genre”

This is a dataset from Statista, which is a widely used and trusted source for datasets. The dataset describes what percentage of consumption, out of the total consumption of music, albums of certain genres received in 2018. Although I found this dataset on Statista, it was unavailable to download without a premium subscription. Therefore, I used the data I found in this set to create my own dataset in Excel. I did so by looking at the values displayed in the bar graph provided by Statista, and plugging them into an Excel Spreadsheet. This dataset provides information for fifteen genres of music. The left column lists the genres, and the right one provides the share of consumption in percent. I chose it because it is the most recent year for which I could find data on most popular music genres.

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## Dataset 2: Most Streamed Albums of 2018

This dataset provides a more in depth look at popular music albums of 2018. While the previous dataset describes popular genres for albums, this dataset describes which specific albums were the most popular. I generated this dataset by creating an Excel spreadsheet which I filled with information provided by the website ChartMaster, which gives data on Spotify streams for music of various time ranges and periods. The left column lists the artist name and their album, and the right column gives the number of Spotify streams, in millions.

## Dataset 3: Most popular songs in the United States in 2023, by number of audio streams

This dataset states the ten most streamed songs in the United States in 2023, and provides the number of streams in millions. As this was another Statists dataset that was not available to be downloaded for free, I used the same method to create an Excel Spreadsheet as I did in the first dataset. The left column lists the artist and song, and the right album gives the number of streams of that song in millions.

## Dataset 4: Most Streamed Albums of 2023

This is a dataset that is similar to Dataset 2, but shows the same information for 2023. The method for creating this dataset is also the same as Dataset 2.

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# Methodology

## Method Used for Research

For research, I decided to find as many useful datasets regarding current music trends as possible. This included how much a certain genre is listened to, most popular songs, and most played albums. I was hoping to find datasets for older time periods as well, but wasn’t able to. Therefore, I read a few articles to find more information on popular music genres over time.

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## Method Used for Graphing

All of the graphs I made were bar graphs, which I coded in a Jupyter Python 3 notebook. To do so, I imported the “pandas” and “matplotlib.pyplot” libraries. To create the bar graphs, I used the “ax\_barh” method to make a horizontal bar graph. Then, I used the “plt.title”, “plt.xlabel”, and “plt.ylabel” methods to provide the title and labels.

## Method C

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# Results

## Trends over the past years

I found that rap music was extremely popular in 2018, The data I found for 2018 showed this for both most popular genres and most popular albums. However, album and song popularity in 2023 showed popularity shift to genres like country and pop. I also noticed that there was more of an evenly spread popularity for genres, rather than the overwhelming dominance of hip/hop that was seen in 2023.

## Data Showing the Dominance of Hip-Hop/Rap in 2018

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As shown in the first bar graph, hip-hop/rap had the largest share of consumption in 2018. Though other genres like pop and rock also had a good share of album consumption , a very high dominance by hip-hop/rap was shown in the most streamed albums of 2018. In particular, all of the most streamed albums besides “Speak Your Mind”, “A Star is Born” and “Shawn Mendes” were hip-hop/rap albums.

## Data For Last Year (2023)

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## In 2023, there was not as heavy of a dominance by one genre as in 2018. The most streamed songs and albums were much more evenly distributed mix of genres like country, pop, r&b, and hip-hop/rap.

# Discussion

I was disappointed that I was not able to find valuable datasets describing music trends of earlier decades. All of the information I gathered regarding these time periods was from articles. In the future, I will do more research and see if I can find datasets for this information. In addition, I wish I could have conducted more research on why certain genres were popular during certain time periods.

# Conclusion

The research I conducted showed me that the popularity of genres changed repeatedly over time. For example, according to Medium, jazz was one of the most popular genres of the 1940s, but has now become one of the least popular genres. In addition, disco was an extremely popular genre in the 1970s, but was not even a listed genre in any of the datasets of recent years I used. When it comes to recent years, hip-hop/rap, especially of the trap subgenre, was extremely popular in 2018. However, has started to lose its intense dominance. Currently, there does not seem to be one single genre that is dominating album and song streaming.

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