

Effect of KPOP Music on the Individuals' Anxiety Symptoms and Emotional Regulation

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ABSTRACT

Music has been said to have a certain type of healing powers and since has been the self-regulatory tool for humans since a very long time and now have been medically and psychologically recognized as a therapy for psychological disorders and issues (Fischer and Boer, 2010). This research aims at studying the influence of music on the individual's anxiety symptoms and emotional regulation of females who listen to KPOP. 266 female participants lying within the age group of 19 - 24 participated in this study from which 132 belonged to the control group and 132 belonged to the experimental group. The experimental group was told to listen to KPOP music for 2 weeks continuously. Beck's Anxiety Inventory and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire was used and the results were calculated by using the Independent Sample T Test & Mann Whitney U Test. The results revealed that listening to KPOP Music has a significant positive effect on the anxiety symptoms and emotional regulation strategy of an individual.

Keywords: Music, KPOP, Anxiety Symptoms, Emotional Regulation, Mood, Regulation

Music and Music Psychology

Music has come as a fundamental aspect of our human evolution and our culture. Music can elicit emotions that resonate inside our deepest selves and may aid in the management of negative moods and stress. At the same time, listening to music connects us to others and may aid in the creation of a sense of belonging. (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). According to Roe's (1985) retrospective research, Swedish youngsters listened to music for comparable reasons, such as creating a "pleasant environment," controlling emotions, filling silences, and passing the time. Individuals on average spend 18 to 20 hours listening to music over a span of one week. Music is a different experience for everyone and is multidimensional. (Rentfrow, 2012). The key reason humans listen to music is musical pleasure, the part of the brain which is responsible for the feeling of pleasure from food and sex is also responsible for the experience of musical pleasure. The population which is able to experience these emotional responses and chills is 92 percent. (Heshmat, 2021).

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Humans also listen to music for something that is known as aesthetic pleasure and its impact in the form of enjoyment and being inspired towards a particular thing. However, a song which is aesthetically pleasing for a person cannot be the same for another person, so, the aesthetical value depends on the person itself. Music is also our companion when we want to escape from reality when it gets too overwhelming, it diverts our mind from the reality and helps us relax and cope. Our body rhythm imitates the beats of the music. When we listen to upbeat songs, we are more alert and energized whereas when we listen to slow and soft songs, we feel relaxed, sleepy and calm. We all have experienced going to family events and just putting on music and dancing with everyone and enjoying ourselves, and afterwards, we reminisce about it through music as it evokes a nostalgic feeling of that particular memory (Heshmat, 2021) Nowadays, music has also come up as a way of expressing your identity and to tell others what type of person you are and that we are embracing that fact (Heshmat, 2021).

Music therapy is described as the clinical and evidence-based use of music treatments to achieve personalised goals within a therapeutic partnership (Press Release on Mus, 2014). Music therapy, which was established as a profession during World War II, has become an essential aspect of worldwide therapeutic and hospital settings (Greenberg and Rentfrow, 2017). Pythagoras (c.570 - c.495 BC), the Ancient Greek philosopher and mathematician, advocated numerous musical scales and modes to heal a variety of medical and psychological problems long before then (Greenberg and Rentfrow, 2017).

KPOP Music

Korean Popular Music, commonly known as KPOP Music is the music type which has emerged from South Korea. KPOP Music, has its roots from the early 1950s and the sort of KPOP Music we listen came into existence around 1990s. The reason behind KPOP being so popular is the internet and social media. The Hallyu wave is the quick expansion of Korean popular culture such as music, movies, fashion, and cuisines, among other things, not just locally but even worldwide (Kwon & Kim, 2013) - surprised the whole globe. South Korean popular music (abbreviated K-Pop) has seen a stratospheric growth in popularity in recent years. K-Pop is a musical genre that combines elements of pop, hip-hop, rap, rock, R&B, and electronic music. However, it is ultimately a genre whose greatest distinguishing feature is its South Korean provenance. Korea was the world's thirteenth biggest recorded music market in 1997, and by 2002, it had risen to the second-largest music market in Asia. (Leung, 2012).

South Korean artist PARK JAE SANG's video for Gangnam Style surpassed the Guinness World Record for most YouTube views, with 1.578 billion views in 2012. It has surpassed Justin Bieber's Baby to become the most viewed video in YouTube history. This is clearly a breakthrough moment in the history of KPOP music, indicating that KPOP's global popularity has risen. South Korea's popular culture is still being exported not just to other regions of Asia, but also to the rest of the globe. Korean idols, the primary exporters of KPOP music, have garnered many admirers throughout the world with their beautiful faces, amazing singing and dancing abilities, and stage performances. (Ding & Zhuang, 2021). Fans of Korean culture, particularly KPOP, have increased significantly over the world over time. "Thanks to its special combination of irresistible melodies, slick choreography and production qualities, and an unending parade of attractions, K-pop has become a genuinely worldwide phenomenon." (Romano, 2018)

Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the process by which people control the emotions they have, when they are experiencing them, and how they experience and express those emotions. Emotional regulation can be automatic or regulated, conscious or unconscious, and it can have an impact at one or more stages of the emotion-producing process (Gross, 1998). There are two types of Emotional Regulation Strategies namely, Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression. Cognitive Reappraisal involves re-evaluating the original interpretation of a situation in order to attain an adaptive, antecedent-focused perspective ((Ioannidis & Siegling, 2015; Gross & John, 2003). Whereas Expression Suppression is termed as a maladaptive, response-oriented approach to dealing with emotions after they have already developed (Gross & John, 2003).

Numerous researches have been conducted which clearly demonstrate that music undoubtedly has a positive and favourable effect on the emotional regulation of the individuals. Leipold & Loepthien (2015) investigated the Music Reception and its effect on emotional regulation in adolescence and adulthood. Attentive Analytical Listening and Emotional Listening are two types of music reception. 521 participated (18 - 86) in this study. The results show that Attentive Analytical reception is associated with accommodative coping and emotional reception is associated with rumination. Skanland (2013) examined the everyday listening to music and emotion regulation: the role of MP3 Players. The qualitative research was done on 6 men and 6 women lying in the age group of 18 to 44. The study concludes that people who use mp3 regularly and on daily basis can regulate their emotions nicely. Roy et. al. (2019) studied Music as an Emotion Regulation Strategy. 794 university going individuals were a part of this research and the genres which were popular were hip-hop, pop, rap, soul, funk etc. All the bright, energetic music was associated with positive form of emotional regulation and the results indicate that music has a high potential to be used as tool for emotional regulation. Uhlig et. al. (2013) did a systematic review of the effects of music on emotional regulation. A thorough research was done of all the publication from Jan 2001 to July 2012 pertaining to the age group of 10 to 29. The collective findings indicate that the emotional regulation can be done with the help of music. Verstegen & Silverman (2018) studied the influence of music therapy on the pain intensity and mood of patients hospitalised for a bone marrow transplantation. 13 patients were a part of this study and the results revealed that the music therapy impacted the pain and the mood in a positive manner.

Anxiety

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Anxiety is a feeling in which one expects impending danger, calamity, or misfortune and is marked by fear and bodily sensations of tension. Unpleasant psychological processes like anxiety can have their unpleasant sensations balanced by listening to music. Pythagoras would sing to his students in order to put them in a calm state of mind (West, 2017), and even today, the use of music-based therapies to lessen anxiety is quickly gaining appeal (Nilsson, 2008).

Numerous studies have been carried out that unequivocally show that music has a favourable and positive impact on people's anxiety symptoms. Thoma et. al. (2011) examined the relationship between Music Listening and physiological and psychological functioning. An online survey was done and 1230 people (20 - 30 yrs.) participated. Habitual music listening affects psychological and physiological functioning considering that the reason for listening to music (coping with stress and reducing the negative emotions) was a prominent factor. Lucidi et. al. (2018) conducted a study to see the effects of VR and Music Therapy on Breast Cancer Patients during chemo as a way to reduce their anxiety level and improve their mood.

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30 patients were chosen as a part of the VR Group and 30 were chosen as a part of the Music Therapy group along with having 34 patients in the control group. The data obtained suggest that VR and Music Therapy both are beneficial to both decrease anxiety levels and to improve mood. Yilmaz et. al. (2019) studied the way classical music affects the anxiety and the well-being of university students. 15 students participated (7F : 8M) in this study and the data revealed that after listening to classical genre of music for 60 days the anxiety level was reduced, and the wellbeing was increased. Witte et.al (2020) conducted research to examine how musical intervention impacts stress levels and outcomes. These two meta-analyses including 104 RCTs was done to assess the effectiveness of the music interventions on biological and psychological stress, incorporating 327 effect sizes and 9617 participants. Results indicated that the interventions had a positive significant effect on physiological as well as psychological stress level.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Two Hundred & Sixty-Six Indian female participants lying in the age group of 19 to 24 participated in this study and the samples were collected through Purposive Sampling. Participants with the education level of Undergraduate, Graduate, and Postgraduate were only considered for this study. One Hundred & Thirty-Three participants were K-pop Listeners and One Hundred & Thirty-Three Participants were non K-pop Listeners.

Instruments

Two measures were used in this study and are as follows:

- 1. Beck's Anxiety Inventory** – This instrument was given by Aaron T. Beck in 1998. A self-report questionnaire called the BAI measures 21 typical physical and cognitive symptoms of anxiety. It has a Likert scale with a range of 0 to 3 and raw values between 0 and 63. It was created in 1988, and a new handbook with minor adjustments to the scoring was issued in 1993. The BAI scores are divided into four categories: mild anxiety (0–7), moderate anxiety (8–15), severe anxiety (16–25). (30 to 63). The Internal Consistency Reliability according to Cronbach's α is 0.92 and the Test-Retest Reliability of 1 week is 0.75. As for the validity, The BAI was moderately correlated with the revised Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (.51), and mildly correlated with the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (.25)
- 2. Emotional Regulation Questionnaire** – This instrument was given by Oliver P. John & James J. Gross. The cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression are two regularly used techniques to change emotion, and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) is a 10-item self-report instrument developed to measure habitual usage of these two strategies. Each response is evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being the strongest agreement and 7 being the most in agreement (strongly agree). Reappraisal is frequently connected with favourable mental health indices, while suppression is frequently related with bad mental health indices. Whichever score is higher when comparing the values of Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression represents the person's main mode of perception. The measure has demonstrated good internal consistency and temporal stability, test-retest reliability, and sound convergent and discriminant validity.

Procedure

First the form of both the test including Beck's Anxiety Inventory and Emotional Regulation Questionnaire was circulated in between the participants and everyone was assured that the answers will remain confidential and also that they have to be honest with their responses.

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Each of them was explained on filling their part in the form and then the results had been calculated through SPSS. Descriptive Statistics, Independent Sample T-Test and Mann-Whitney Test was administered through the SPSS Software.

RESULTS

Table 1 - Parametric Comparison between Anxiety Levels of Kpop Listeners and Non Kpop Listeners

	Mean	Standard Deviation	T - Value
<u>Anxiety</u>			
Kpop Listeners	6.7368	2.98454	55.643*
Non Kpop Listeners	37.0606	5.51024	

Table 1 indicates the comparative statistics of the anxiety levels of Kpop and Non Kpop Listeners. The results revealed that there is significant difference between the anxiety levels of Kpop and Non Kpop Listeners ($t = -55.643$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 2 – Non-Parametric Comparison between Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression of Kpop and Non Kpop Listeners

Emotion Regulation	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U Value
<u>Cognitive Reappraisal</u>			
Kpop Listeners	199.95	26593.00	7.000**
Non Kpop Listeners	67.05	8918.00	
<u>Expressive Suppression</u>			
Kpop Listeners	68.30	9084.50	173.500**
Non Kpop Listeners	198.70	26426.50	

Table 2 indicates the comparative statistics of the two aspects of Emotional Regulation namely Expressive Suppression and Cognitive Reappraisal. It was revealed that for the Cognitive Reappraisal aspect, there is a significant difference between the Cognitive Reappraisal of Kpop and Non Kpop Listeners ($U = 7.000$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, for the Emotional Suppression aspect, it was revealed that there is a significant difference in the emotional suppression level of Kpop and Non Kpop Listeners ($U = 173.500$; $p < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION

The aim of current research was to see investigate the relation between Listening to KPOP Music with Individual's Anxiety Symptoms and their Emotional Regulation Strategy. Music is nowadays a prominent part of our lives, we listen to music when we are happy, nostalgic, sad, livid, sentimental and so and so forth. Music has been our buddy in our everyday life and it is a way of expressing our emotions when it is difficult for us to express themselves as well as a way of providing a positive mood (Schäfer, 2016).

The findings revealed that there is a significant difference in the anxiety levels of Kpop and Non Kpop Listeners. This means that the anxiety level is low in kpop listeners and relatively high in non-kpop listeners. Hence the hypothesis "There will be significant difference in the anxiety level of kpop and non kpop listeners" is accepted. Research conducted by Ede et. al. in 2019 examined the effect of music therapy on social anxiety patients along with CBT. 155 school going students were a part of this study, and 12-week program for social anxiety was

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given. The data indicated that the social anxiety decreased significantly in the experimental group.

The results further reveal that there is a significant difference in the Cognitive Appraisal Levels of the Kpop and the Non Kpop Listeners. This means that the cognitive appraisal is high in kpop listeners and comparatively low in non kpop listeners. Hence the hypothesis "There will be significant difference in the cognitive reappraisal of kpop and non kpop listeners" is accepted. Lastly, the results reveal that there is a significant difference in the Emotional Suppression Levels of the Kpop and Non Kpop Listeners. This means that the emotional suppression is low in Kpop Listeners and relatively high in the non kpop listeners. Hence, the hypothesis "There will be significant difference in the anxiety level of kpop and non kpop listeners" is accepted. This explains the positive correlation which is there between music and anxiety and emotional stability. Chin & Rickard (2013) examined how the emotional regulation strategy conciliates the positive and negative relationships between wellbeing and music. The mediating effects of reappraisal and suppression were examined in the context of the relationship between music engagement and subjective wellbeing. 637 participants participated in this study. The result indicates that if the person listens to music for emotional and cognitive regulation, then it will result in enhanced wellbeing, however, if a person listens to suppress their emotions, then, it will reduce the wellbeing.

Music can successfully be applied in the psychological and the psychiatric area to treat the disorders and to make the lives of the people better. This research can pave the way for the usage of KPOP Music in the same. Various researches have been conducted to investigate the influence of music in the medical settings and the lab settings, both of which showed a positive short-term effect of music on the person's physiology and psyche. When researched further on the long-term benefits of music, it was found that it reduces the depression symptoms, cortisol level and fatigue of humans (Roy et al., 2007; Kumar et. al., 1997). The attenuated psychophysical activation has come up as the logic behind the positive effect of music on our stress levels and its therapeutic use (Nilsson, 2008). According to research conducted by Dykin et. al. (2017), there was reliable and efficient evidence that music had a positive effect on the individual's wellbeing.

Limitations

A larger and more diverse data sample may help in providing stronger evidence. An individual's self consists of a multitude of aspects and the current research explored just a few important variables out of these aspects.

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Conflict of Interest

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