



Exploring The Relationship Between Music Preferences And Personality Traits In The Indian Genz Context

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Abstract: The goal of this research is to explore the link between the music preferences and personality traits of GenZ in India. With the rise of globalization, digital technologies, and cultural diversity among youth, this research will also examine how emotional regulation, social factors, background or cultural identity and level of exposure to the world also impact the choice of music. The data for this research was collected from primary sources by implementing a structured online questionnaire, to young people in India aged 18 to 27, with analysis being performed using SPSS. The analysis has indicated that personality traits, emotional regulation, social influence and globalisation strongly impact music preference. Conversely, demographic characteristics have little impact, highlighting the complex relationship with music and GenZ in India.

Index Terms - Music Preferences, Personality Traits, Emotional Regulation, Social Influence, Cultural and Linguistic Influence, Influence of Globalisation

I. INTRODUCTION

This study examines the relationship between music preferences and personality traits among the Indian GenZ populations which is influenced by factors like digitalisation, cultural and social diversity, and global media exposure. Existing research shows a link between music preferences, personality traits, emotional regulation and self expression, the study mainly focuses on how young Indians tend to regulate their emotional and social lives through music on a daily basis.

Existing literature shows more connections between the Big Five Personality Traits and Music Preferences, along with the evidence of how music helps the GenZ to regulate their mood, academic stress and also use it as a coping mechanism. However, a huge part of this literature is based on the western population and focuses less on the Indian GenZ context, which limits its cultural reliability. This gap is significant because of the importance of the Indian GenZ audience in local, regional and global music, in streaming platforms and social media.

To address this gap, the current study analyses how the Big Five Personality Traits and other factors help in understanding the music preferences among Indian GenZ with attention to social, cultural, and global influences. It is aimed at understanding how personality shapes genre choices, emotional regulation, and helps in developing the identity of an individual in a diverse Indian context.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM, RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

2.1 Research Problem

With existing literature focusing more on the western demographics, there is limited understanding of how Indian GenZ engages with music, restricting insights into how cultural and psychological factors affect their music choices. This study analyses the relationship between personality traits, emotional factors, identity construction and music preferences.

2.2 Research Gap

While there is literature examining the relationship between music preferences and personality traits, there is limited focus on factors such as culture and linguistics, globalisation, social influence, especially in the Indian GenZ context.

2.3 Research Objectives:

1. To understand the role of social and cultural factors in influencing the relation between music and personality.
2. To assess if personality traits influence music engagement, genre selection, and listening patterns among the Indian GenZ demographics.
3. To analyse if Indian GenZ uses music for emotional regulation, stress relief and self expression.
4. To examine if the impact of globalisation and international music influences Indian GenZ's personality expression through music.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Boccia, 2020, Greenberg et al., 2015, Vuoskoski & Eerola, 2011 have shown that there is a correlation between personality and preferences for music and the use of emotional regulation (Rossi et al., 2024;Georgi & Polat, 2013) through music. Though existing studies examine how one's personality has an influence on one's engagement with music and also through methods of digital consumption & listening to music (Ferwerda et al., 2017; Flannery & Woolhouse, 2021), there is limited information on the socio-cultural and global aspects of personality expressed through music and how this relates to the contextual experience of Indian Gen Z. Therefore, this research will examine how personality, music, and emotional regulation interact with each other through global exposure to music in order to create the music preferences of Indian Gen Z.

1. How Demographics Affect Music Preferences

Music Preferences are influenced not only by people's personal decisions, but also by their psychological characteristics and demographic characteristics. Research indicates there is a strong correlation between personality traits and music preference (Boccia, 2020; Tully, 2012). More recent research shows that sociodemographic factors shape preferences for the various genres and sub-genres of music (Siebrasse & Wald-Fuhrmann, 2023). In digital environments, technology influences humans and population attributes to affect the relationship between demographic factors and music preference (Ferwerda et al., 2017). However, research indicates that there is a wide variety of cultural and generational contexts where there is variation in people's music preference patterns (Minnie et al., 2021).

In the Indian Gen Z demographics, music preferences represent the relation of their demographic identity, cultural exposure, and personal traits. Therefore, it is essential that demographic characteristics be considered to understand the development of music taste within the Indian Gen Z community.

Hence the Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant association between music preferences and demographic factors of Indian Gen Z.

2. The Role of Personality Traits in Shaping Music Preferences

Personality traits are characteristics of the human mind that affect how each person behaves, feels, and what types of culture they prefer, this includes their musical tastes as well. The Big Five (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness) personality trait has had many studies showing there is a statistically significant association between personality traits and one's music preferences, this indicates that individual differences do have an effect on one's musical taste (Boccia, 2020; Tully, 2012).

More recent studies show that personality traits have an influence not only on genre classifications (e.g., rock), but also on acoustic features (e.g., “heavy”) of music, emotional processing (e.g., sad), and digital listening behaviours (e.g., Spotify) for example; these additional findings further confirm that associations between personality and music are robust in that they exist over many contexts (Ferwerda et al., 2017, Flannery & Woolhouse, 2021, Vuoskoski & Eerola, 2011).

The fact that personality traits appear to consistently influence musical tastes indicates that they will significantly impact the listening behaviour of Indian gen Z listeners as well.

Hence the Hypothesis

H2: There is a significant relationship between music preferences and personality traits of Indian GenZ.

3. Music Preferences and Emotional Regulation

Emotional Regulation is how people control and alter their emotions; music has been used to modify our moods and help us deal with our emotions (Rossi et al., 2024). Recent studies show that people commonly listen to music each day to help them manage emotions, relieve stress, and increase their overall health (Georgi & Polat, 2013).

Studies on Music and Emotional Regulatory Processes show that people's emotional reactions to music vary based on their emotional state, psychological tendencies, and personality types, and that this affects how people use music to cope with or regulate their emotions (Vuoskoski & Eerola,). Studies also show that music is helpful for people in the area of trauma therapy and mental illness, and that people differ in terms of how effectively music helps them with emotion regulation (Garrido et al., 2015; Truong et al., 2021).

In Indian Gen Z individuals, it is likely that their music preferences will serve as significant emotional regulation mechanisms for these people. Music may therefore be a factor influencing how these people regulate their emotional experience, manage their stress, and promote their psychological well-being on a regular basis.

Hence the hypothesis

H3: There is a significant relationship between music preferences and emotional regulation tendencies of Indian GenZ.

4. Music Preferences and Social Influence

Research has shown that music choice not merely depends upon factors related to individual attributes such as 'personality' but also depends upon functions such as 'cognitive styles', 'social landscapes', and 'cultural contexts'. For example, Greenberg et al., 2015 found that empathizing and systemizing predicted musical tastes beyond just personality characteristics. In a separable study, Siebrasse & Wald-Fuhrmann, 2023 found that musical preferences grouped into sub-genres based on both individual sociodemographic characteristics and personality, thereby suggesting that individual preference is a function of varying independent variables.

Cultural evidence suggests that all music choices have been socially constructed. For example, Tully, 2012 and Luck et al., 2009 both demonstrated that the manner in which individuals express their musical preferences through cultural and social avenues is influenced by personality characteristics. Despite these studies supporting the idea that music is constructed by an assortment of various culture, there are relatively few studies investigating this phenomenon in a variety of non-Western cultures where globalization and digital technology may play significant roles.

Hence the hypothesis

H4: There is a significant relationship between music preferences and social factors in Indian GenZ.

5. Music Preferences, Cultural and Linguistic Influences in Indian Gen Z

Studies indicate that the development of an individual's taste in music is primarily influenced by cultural, social, and linguistic contexts, as opposed to personality. According to Siebrasse & Wald-Fuhrmann, 2023 there was a significant difference in individuals' overall musical tastes on the sub-genre level; thus demonstrating that variables such as sociodemographics and personality traits also have a direct affect on the overall tastes. This clearly indicates that one's overall taste in music develops as a direct result of cultural conventions.

According to Tully, 2012 & Ferwerda et al., 2017, music and its relationship with one's personality are also influenced by the cultural/digital context of the Musician/Listener, further emphasizing that an individual's music preferences will be developed and expressed within a given social, linguistic and technological framework. However, there has been limited academic research on this phenomenon within

the Indian Gen Z population as there are numerous socio-demographics that exist within the country such as: Cultural Diversity, Multilingual Speakers, and a significant Global Digital Exposure to Music.

Hence the hypothesis

H5: There is a significant relationship between music preferences and cultural and linguistic influences among Indian Gen Z.

6. Music Preferences and the Influence of Globalisation in Indian Gen Z

According to research, music preferences do not only stem from individual characteristics, but have been developed through exposure to digital environments and globally diverse influences, as well as from social contexts. Music preferences demonstrate individuals' cognitive styles, sub-category structures, and social/cultural positioning (Greenberg et al., 2015; Siebrasse & Wald-Fuhrmann, 2023). Digital contexts influence how these factors have developed and change your music preferences (Ferberda et al., 2017); Schulte, M. 2018 elaborated that contextual factors are more powerful predictors of an individual's music preferences than their personal characteristics. This means Digital Platforms and Globalisation are important factors that influence music and genre choices. However, there is limited research on how these effects are present among Indian Gen Z consumers.

Hence the hypothesis

H6: There is a significant relationship between music preferences and the influence of globalization in Indian GenZ.

IV. MEASUREMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected using a structured cross-sectional survey circulated online to the Indian Gen Z population aged between 18 and 27 years. The respondents primarily consisted of college-going students and young adults from urban and semi-urban regions across India. The study was conducted using qualitative and empirical research design. The questionnaire uses multi-item scales such as multiple-choice, checkboxes, and 5 point likert scale to measure the five key constructs: Demographic factors, Personality Traits, Emotional Regulation, Social factors, Cultural and Linguistic influences, Influence of Globalisation. To ensure sound analysis with Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics, a minimum target sample size of 392 was collected. The hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 were analysed using Linear Regression Analysis. Thus, the methodology used provides a framework which is reliable to analyze the impact of multiple factors that influence the Indian Gen Z population.

V. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

1. Descriptive Statistics

The sample size of 392 respondents (N=392) was balanced across the various demographic categories which include Gender and Region of Residence. The mean scores for the dependent variable, music preference items ranged from 3.37 to 3.57, meaning that there was a moderate to high agreement between the respondents about their music preferences. Among the independent variables-personality traits, emotional regulation, social influence, cultural and linguistic factors, and influence of globalisation, the mean scores consistently ranged between 3.4 to 3.8, where acceptable skewness and kurtosis values were seen, showing that there are approximately normal distributions.

2. Regression Analysis

The regression analysis conducted on a sample size of 392 showed that personality traits have a statistically significant relationship with music preferences, after which social influence indicates the strongest relationship among all the variables. Emotional regulation can be seen to significantly predict music preferences, while cultural and linguistic factors and globalisation show positive effects. Demographics variables show a comparatively weaker, yet statistically significant relationship, where region of residence is a significant predictor.

3. Reliability Analysis

Table 3.1: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Indicator	Cronbach's Alpha
MP	MP1	0.789
	MP2	
	MP3	
	MP4	
PT	O1	0.793
	O2	
	O3	
	E1	
	E2	
	E3	
	C1	
	C2	
	C3	
	A1	
	A2	
	A3	
	N1	
	N2	
N3		
ER	ER1	0.91
	ER2	
	ER3	
	ER4	
	ER5	
SI	SI1	0.869
	SI2	
	SI3	
	SI4	
	SI5	
CL	CL1	0.849
	CL2	
	CL3	
	CL4	
IG	IG1	0.872
	IG2	
	IG3	
	IG4	

VI. FINDINGS

H1 Supported:

Demographic factors were found to have a significant collective effect on music preferences. This supports the premise that the demographic factors ($R^2 = 0.024$, $F = 4.710$, $p = 0.010$) of the Indian GenZ do influence their taste in music preferences.

H2 Supported:

An individual's music preference is influenced greatly by their personality traits, as indicated by a high positive correlation ($r_{ij} = 0.397$, $F(1, 20) = 14.488$, $p < 0.00001$), suggesting that all five dimensions of the Big 5 Personality Traits affect what type of music Gen X and Y will listen to in India.

H3 Supported:

There is a very strong, positive and statistically significant correlation between emotional regulation and music preference ($r = 0.165$, $F(1, 20) = 15.201$, $p < 0.00001$). This indicates that emotional regulation plays a large role in determining how GenZ people in India will select their music.

H4 Supported:

There is a very strong, positive and statistically significant correlation between social influence and music preference ($r = 0.644$, $F(1, 20) = 139.581$, $p < 0.00001$). As such; social influences in addition to many others will also have an important impact on how GenZ from India will respond to their choice of music.

H5 Supported:

A statistically significant correlation between culture/language and music preference was also found ($r = 0.284$, $F(1, 20) = 38.294$, $p < 0.0001$), which suggests that culture/language will be major contributors in the selection process of music by Generation Z in India.

H6 Supported:

Globalisation was found to have a strong and statistically significant effect on music preferences ($R^2 = 0.459$, $F = 82.017$, $p < 0.001$). This confirms the influence of global exposure on music preference among the Indian GenZ.

VII. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

a) Theoretical:

The research builds on personality-music preference research, focusing on the empirical investigation of the combination of personality characteristics, emotional regulation, social variables, cultural-linguistic identity, and globalisation with regard to Gen Z in India.

b) Managerial:

The results of this research provide actionable insights for music platforms and marketers, and those who support well-being, to better engage Indian Gen Z consumers through personality-based, socially based, and culturally appropriate approaches.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This research examines the influence of various aspects of music preferences on personality in Indian GenZ. Specifically it analysed the connection between music preferences and psychological, socio-cultural and globalisation influences. The results provided strong evidence that both psychological and socio-cultural factors can influence music preferences, with social influences and personality traits being the two most important predictors. In comparison to these two groups, demographic variables did not appear to have any significant predictive ability. This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between personality and music preference by studying and expanding on previous research on this relationship to the context of Indian Gen Z using a multi-factor analysis. The findings will also be of use to music platforms which provide personalised music recommendations or use music to connect with Indian GenZ as it provides direction and guidance for engaging Indian GenZ through emotionally influenced and socio-contextual methods.

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