

## ASSESSMENT OF MUSIC AND LIFE ENHANCEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Music is a crucial element of everyday life. People spend hours listening to it and a lot of money buying it. This paper reviews different articles in association with music and the psychological concern of how people experience and use music in their daily lives. Many of those reviews show that music can have considerable effects on cognition, both psychological and physiological, as well as on the brain. The paper further reviewed the concept of music, concept of life enhancement, types of music, and the roles of music in life enhancement, such as creating moods and emotions, being key to creativity, making learning more pleasant, etc. However, the paper concluded that, other than entertainment, music has a very important role in our lives. It helps in reducing a variety of disorders and chronic diseases. And thus, it is recommended, among others, that listening to music helps people regulate their emotions. Therefore, people should develop the habit of listening to music and make it part of their lifestyle.*

**KEYWORDS: Music and Life Enhancement**

### Introduction

Music is ingrained in our culture. We listen to it at home, work, the gym, shopping malls, cafes and restaurants, and even church. It plays in the background while we watch TV shows, ads, and movies. And we listen to it when reading, travelling by plane, train, bus, automobile, or walking. In fact, the average person listens to approximately 18 hours of music per week (Motion Picture Association of America, Inc., 2007). People spend more than 15% of their waking hours with music playing, assuming an average person sleeps 8 hours per night. People are spending more money and time on music as new mobile technologies make it easier to bring music with us wherever we go. Given its pervasiveness and clear

value to individuals, the role of music in enhancing life is worth giving serious consideration.

Music has a direct impact on cognition, psychological and physiological, as well as on the brain (Levitin, 2006). According to studies, people listen to music for 15 to 25% of their waking life, and the music recording industry is currently worth more than US\$15 billion, an increase of more than 1000% since 2004 (Rentfrow, 2012). Gone are the days when people had to wait for their favourite music to be played on the radio or sift through their record collection to find something suitable. People's daily music listening habits are now driven by algorithms built by streaming services that try to provide music that meets their users' needs and interests (Fricke, Greenberg, Rentfrow & Herzberg, 2019).

Science has brought the study of music more into focus, with the shift of modern-day music listening habits. The study of musical preferences has been one of the most rapidly growing fields of music psychology in the last decade and a half. This is unsurprising, given that musical preferences provide the foundation of musical behaviour. It's a fundamental individual distinction that affects how music affects a person and gives insight into why people listen to music and the psychological requirements it satisfies. Indeed, a variety of factors have been linked to musical preferences, including age, personality, cognition, values, and, most recently, testosterone levels. (Boer et al., 2011; Bonneville-Roussy, Rentfrow, Xu, & Potter, 2013; Doi, Basadonne, Venuti, & Shinohara, 2018; Greenberg, Baron-Cohen, Stillwell, Kosinski, & Rentfrow, 2015). North and Hargreaves (2008) were among the first to recognise the value of music in improving one's quality of life, and they have since provided the groundwork for most of the social psychology of music research.

### **Concept of Music**

Music always contains a variety of components, including melody, chord, tempo, rhythm, instrument, and even language or lyrics (Surya, 2018). Levinson (2000) proposes that music is "sounds temporally organised by a person for the purpose of enriching or intensifying experience through active engagement (e.g., listening, dancing, performing) with the sounds regarded primarily, or in significant measure, as sounds." Kania (2011) defined "music" as any event intentionally produced or organised to be heard and "to have some basic musical features, such as *pitch* or *rhythm*, and to be listened to for such features." Obicheta (2013) noted that music is the art, science, and technology of "creating and making pleasant and organised sounds with the human voice or other musical instruments." Adeogun (2012) states

that "music is a product of people and societies. Musical knowledge is a transmittable constellation of enduring sociomusical traits that codify, articulate, and validate the unique practise of human groups. Its organisation depends largely on the use of society-widely recognised theories of tonality and/or modality, thematic structures, rhythmic patterns, tempo, timbres, and the use of language and musical instruments in communicating ideas, thoughts, contents, and meaning to members of society". Odili (2008) viewed music as a central phenomenon that is present in every society and is experienced by every person. It also gives life and identity to human society. It also gives life and identity to the human society. It is a cultural expression which is determined, coloured and moulded by the cultural environment of a people (Okafor, 2005).

### **Concept of Life Enhancement**

When the word "enhance" was borrowed into English in the 13th century, it literally meant "to raise something higher." The word "enhance," which was spelled "enhauncen" in Middle English, comes from the Anglo-French "enhaucer" or "enhauncer" ("to raise"), which can be traced back to the Latin "altus" ("high") by way of an assumed Vulgar Latin verb "inaltiare," which would have been formed by combining the prefix "in" with the Latin "altus" (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Although enhance was originally used only to physically raise things, it quickly acquired an additional and less literal sense of "to exalt, especially in rank or spirit," and extended figurative senses for increasing the value of life and the attractiveness of something or someone. It is the sense of making something greater, increasing in value, improving, raising, and augmenting. According to Savulescu, Sandberg and Kahane (2011), one way of understanding the concept of life enhancement is to associate it with well-being promotion. To be enhanced is merely to change your body or mind in ways that tends to improve your well-being.

### **Types of Music**

Music can be divided into genres in varying ways, but specifically, the paper will look into popular music, art music, and folk music.

**Popular Music:** Popular music is commercially oriented music that is primarily designed to be accepted and appreciated by a large audience, usually in literate, technologically advanced societies where urban culture is dominant (Britannica Encyclopaedia, 2021). Both art music (Tagg, 2012) and traditional or "folk" music (Arnold, 2013) are in contrast with popular music. Unlike folk music, popular music is composed by well-known individuals, typically professionals, and does

not evolve through oral transmission. Scholars have classified music as "popular" based on a variety of factors, including whether listeners become familiar with a song or piece primarily through hearing it (as opposed to classical music, where many musicians learn pieces from sheet music), its appeal to a diverse audience, and it is treated as a marketplace commodity in a capitalist context (Tagg, 2012).

However, Anahid Kassabian separated popular music into four categories:

- "popular as populist," or having overtones of liberation and expression;
- "popular as folk," or stating that the music is written by the people, for themselves;
- "popular as counterculture," or empowering citizens to act against the oppression they face and
- "popular as mass," or the music becomes the tool for oppression (Eisentraut, 2012)

**Art Music:** Art music is characterised by the exploration of new rhythms, styles, and sounds. The term "art music" is used for convenience of reference for music designed for intent listening or presentation as "concert" music, in which expression of feeling is combined with a high level of craftsmanship and a sense of beauty (Owusu-Ansah & Acquah, 2012). According to Siron (2017), art music is primarily the classical traditions (including contemporary as well as historical classical music forms) that focus on formal styles, invite technical and detailed deconstruction and criticism, and demand focused attention from the listener. Art music has also been referred to as classical music, cultivated music, serious music, and canonic music, which is music of high aesthetic value (Eisentraut, 2013). It typically implies advanced structural and theoretical considerations (Siron, 2017) or a written musical tradition (Arnold, 2013). In this context, the terms "serious" or "cultivated" are frequently used to present a contrast with ordinary, everyday music (i.e., popular and folk music, also called "vernacular music") (Eisentraut, 2013). Many cultures have art music traditions, and in the Western world, the term is typically referred to as Western classical music.

**Folk Music:** The term "folk music" and its translations into other languages refer to a variety of musical styles; the term's meaning varies depending on the region of the world, social class, and historical period (Nettl, 2020). It is a music genre that encompasses both traditional folk music and the contemporary folk revival of the twentieth century. Some folk music can be classified as global music. Traditionally, folk music has been defined in several ways, including music passed down orally, music composed by unknown composers, music performed on

traditional instruments, music about cultural or national identity, music that evolves over generations (folk process), music associated with a people's folklore, and music performed by custom over a long period of time (Ruehl, 2011). In determining whether a song or piece of music is folk music, most performers, participants, and enthusiasts would probably agree on certain criteria derived from patterns of transmission, social function, origins, and performance. In comparison with art music, which brings aesthetic enjoyment, and popular music, which (often along with social dancing) functions as entertainment, folk music is more often associated with other activities, such as calendric or life-cycle rituals, work, games, enculturation, and folk religion (Nettl, 2020). Folk music is also more likely to be participatory than presentational.

### **Roles of Music in Life Enhancement**

Music has been regarded as mankind's greatest creation throughout history. The actual definition of music is creativity in its purest and most unadulterated form. Music is an important part of our life since it allows us to express our emotions and thoughts. Music is a strong therapeutic that can help you relax and, in times of joy, brighten you up. It also helps to improve the mind and increase self-confidence. Music serves a greater purpose in our lives than simply providing amusement.

**Music can Creates Mood and Emotions:** The majority of people listen to their favourite music when they are depressed. This is due to the fact that music serves as a stress reliever. While listening to music, we feel relaxed and tranquil. However, not all musical genres can cheer us up. It depends on the music we are listening to. In just a few seconds, music can change our mood. Most people adore dancing beats and occasionally dance to them when they listen to them. However, if the music rack quickly changes and plays sad, emotional songs, our mood shifts dramatically. We are quickly moved by the songs' underlying emotions. According to TargetStudy (2018), mood swings are influenced by music. This is why, when people are sad, they listen to songs that keep us going. However, it is necessary that when we are sad, we listen to music that is full of energy rather than sad or emotional songs. At times when people are troubled with an unpleasant memory, music is a terrific way to help them forget about it for the time being. For some people who are depressed, music is also a good solution. Music has the ability to help someone feel cheerful, less stressed, tension-free, relaxed, and motivated. As a result, music is a great way to relieve stress.

**Music is the Key to Creativity:** Music fuels the mind and thus fuels our creativity. A creative mind has the ability to make discoveries and create

innovations. The greatest minds and thinkers like Albert Einstein, Mozart, and Frank Lloyd Wright all had something in common in that they were constantly exploring their imagination and creativity. Listening to music enhances one's ability to pay attention and tell stories about what he or she hears. Similarly, playing a musical instrument allows you to express a story without using words. Both need extensive use of the right brain, which engages not only one's creativity but also one's intellect. The strength of all the arts, including writing, painting, dancing, and theatre, is that they all have the power to produce a comparable effect.

**Music is a Universal Language:** Music is universal in the sense that it can be literally understood by anyone. Even animals like birds, dogs, and whales, for example, can interpret music to a limited extent. It exceeds all communication barriers since we can communicate with someone on the other side of the world even if we do not speak the same language. However, it is believed that having an open mind is necessary in order to connect with that sense of understanding. Many individuals dismiss other genres of music without first exploring what they have to offer. Although not all genres will appeal to or resonate with a person, if you are open to them all, you may discover a new aspect of yourself.

**Music has Spiritual Powers:** Without a doubt, no one knows where music came from, yet there are several theories implying that music predates humanity's existence. One of the most well-known uses of music for religious and holy tribal gatherings. Many cultures used music to commemorate military victories and even to bury prominent people. In medieval times, choral pieces for church prayers were some of the earliest documented events in music (Catherine, 2017). The structure and usage of precise harmonies to generate moods that would elicit a spiritual experience were given a lot of attention. Many individuals now believe that music is the path to God and a more holy, satisfying existence through the Church.

**Music makes Learning more pleasant:** Music is an extremely unique way to develop the capability of memorization. The best way of proving this sentence is that it is very easy to learn songs rather than your syllabus. The reason behind learning a song quickly is that your mind enjoys music. Whatever your mind enjoys, it preserves it. This can be related to the fact that whenever life is being enjoyed, moments are retained in our minds forever. Thus, music is said to be a good option for learning new things quickly. For example, whenever students start their schooling or pre-schooling, the teachers teach them poems first. Poems are being taught to children because they find them interesting and easy to learn and retain in their minds (TargetStudy, 2018). The music in the poems makes them

more enjoyable. This is the only reason that we all remember those poems throughout our lives. These days, schools realise the importance of music and use it for the teaching and learning process. Thus, music enhances the methods of teaching by making them interesting to students and motivating them to learn.

**Music Brings People Together:** Music is incredible in that it is ingrained in every living person. If they open themselves to music, everybody can understand it and feel something. Playing music with other musicians is a great sensation. Some people describe it as rowing down a river together. It is without doubt that there is a certain type of bonding that occurs when people make music in a group. This is applicable to those that listen to music in a group and interact with it through dance. This type of behaviour can be traced back to human history and discoveries. Many studies have shown that performing music in a group allows people to communicate and copy each other, as well as enables them to form bonds.

**Music Therapy:** Music therapy is an evidence-based treatment that helps with a variety of disorders, including cardiac conditions, depression, autism, substance abuse, and Alzheimer's disease. It can help with memory, lower blood pressure, improve coping, reduce stress, and improve self-esteem. However, the American Music Therapy Association (2018) added that the goals of treating people with music therapy, especially for those at high risk for chronic diseases, often include increased recognition and awareness of emotions and moods, improved decision-making skills, opportunities for creative self-expression, decreased anxiety, increased self-confidence, and better listening skills.

## Conclusion

Other than entertainment, music has a very important role in our lives. It creates moods and emotions and brings people together. It develops the brain and enhances our ability to be creative. It has also been proven that music therapy helps with a variety of disorders and some chronic diseases. People listen to music at home, work, the gym, shopping malls, cafes, restaurants, and even churches. In fact, the average person listens to approximately 18 hours of music per week and spends more than 15% of their waking hours listening to music. However, music is very beneficial to life and should be included in everyone's daily lifestyle.

## Recommendations

1. One of the most common benefits of listening to music is that it helps

people regulate their emotions. Therefore, people should develop the habit of listening to music and make it part of their lifestyle.

2. Music therapy should be utilised more in healthcare settings to help people recover from certain chronic health issues.
3. Music memory is one of the most helpful brain functions in therapy, so caregivers should make use of music to calm patients and build trustful connections between them.



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