



## Music Preference and Emotional Expressivity Among Emerging Adults

Anupama.A<sup>1</sup>, Nissy Sara Raju<sup>2</sup>, Gayathri Devi J S<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>PG, Kristu Jyothi College of Management and Technology, Kottayam, Kerala, India.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Kristu Jyothi College of Management and Technology, Kottayam, Kerala, India.

**Email ID:** [anupama54652@gmail.com](mailto:anupama54652@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [nizysararaju23@gmail.com](mailto:nizysararaju23@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>, [gayathrinair1498@gmail.com](mailto:gayathrinair1498@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*Emerging adults, are in the process of evolution from adolescence to complete adulthood. Music preference refers to what kind of music you like at a specific moment, comparing one song to another. It's about your overall style of music over a long period, showing what kind of music you tend to enjoy consistently. Emotional expressivity refers to how someone shows or communicates their emotions, whether through facial expression, body language, and voice tone or even actions. The purpose of the present study aimed to explore the relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults. The sample chosen for the study conducted among 107 emerging adults ages between 18-25 (Females =53, Males =54) in Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam of Kerala through convenience sampling method. The measures used were Short Test of Music Preference (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003), Emotional Expressivity Scale (Kring et.al, 1994) and personal data schedule. Statistical procedure of Spearman's Correlation analysis was done using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The results of the study showed that there is no significant relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.*

**Keywords:** Music Preference, Emotional Expressivity, Emerging Adults

### 1. Introduction

Emerging adulthood is marked by a phase of exploration and self-discovery, during which individuals often undergo notable changes in education, relationships, and career paths, while traditional markers of adulthood, like marriage, home ownership, and full-time jobs, are frequently postponed. The phrase "emerging adults" describes people who are in the transition phase between teenage years and complete adulthood, generally aged 18 to 25. This idea was brought into the spotlight by psychologist Jeffrey Arnett in the early 2000s. Emerging adulthood is suggested as a novel life phase occurring between adolescence and young adulthood. Five characteristics define emerging adulthood: exploration of identity, instability, self-centeredness, a sense of being between adolescence and adulthood, and a feeling of many possibilities for the future.

#### 1.1. Music Preference

Music preference is described as "an individual's fondness for one music piece in comparison to another at a specific moment," While taste is considered to represent "the general arrangement of a person's preferences across extended durations. "Music preference denotes a person's specific

fondness or tendency towards particular types, genres, or styles of music. This inclination may be shaped by numerous elements, such as individual preferences, cultural heritage, emotional moments, social factors, and even character characteristics. "Music preferences reflect enduring affective reactions to different genres, including individual preferences for certain styles of music and the social and cultural meanings (Rentfrow and Gosling, 2003). Musical taste is frequently seen as a way to analyze how people connect with and convey feelings, shape their identities, and handle their mental health. For example, individuals might be drawn to specific music genres such as rock, pop, classical, jazz, or hip-hop because these styles reflect their feelings, beliefs, or social environment. Research indicates that musical tastes can indicate personality characteristics like openness to new experiences or emotional responsiveness and function as a tool for emotional control, aiding individuals in coping with stress, sadness, happiness, or anger. During emerging adulthood (ages 18-25), which is characterized by identity exploration, music frequently plays an important role in influencing self-



expression and coping strategies. For instance, a person's choice of music could act as a means to express or manage feelings, deal with difficulties, or connect with others [1-3].

### 1.2. Emotional expressivity

Emotions are intricate psychological states comprising three unique elements: a personal experience, a bodily reaction, and an expressive or behavioral response. Emotion is a multifaceted experience of awareness, physical sensation, and actions that signify the individual importance of an object, occurrence, or condition. Emotional expressivity pertains to the way individuals communicate their emotional experiences through verbal and nonverbal actions (Gross, 1998, 1999). Emotional expression must be differentiated from emotional experience since one can have emotions without showing them. Expressing emotions plays a crucial role in managing feelings and can influence health results. Emotional expression is part of the larger field of emotion regulation, which refers to how people, either intentionally or unintentionally, manage, feel, and convey emotions (Gross, 1999). Emotion regulation occurs over time in a specific context, either prior to emotional experience, during the emotional experience, or as a reaction to the emotional experience (Gross, 1998). The external manifestation of emotions through body language, vocal tones, facial expressions, and other non-verbal actions is known as emotional expressivity. It has a significant impact on how people understand feelings in social situations and express their emotional states to others. Emotional expressivity is a basic component of human interaction that affects social bonding, relationships, and general well-being. The degree of emotional expressivity varies from person to person; some choose to keep their emotions more contained or hidden, while others choose to express them publicly. Personality, cultural norms, and societal expectations are some of the elements that determine these disparities and can either promote or prevent emotional expression. Recognizing the complexity of human emotions and the ways in which people manage their emotional lives requires an understanding of emotional expressivity. It also offers important insights into social dynamics,

psychological well-being, and emotional control. For instance, whereas poor emotional expressivity may be linked to challenges with social connection and emotional communication, high emotional expressivity has been linked to greater interpersonal relationships and emotional support. The framework for future research on emotional expressivity, its causes, and its effects on social interaction and personal functioning is established by this introduction [4-7].

### 2. Review of Literature

Miranda D and M. Claes, (2008) studied Personality Traits, Music Preferences and Depression in Adolescence and their sample was 311. The scales used for investigation were Music preference on a five-point scale, Beck depression inventory and Big five inventory. Results indicated that Soul music listening (e.g., hip hop, R&B) was a predictor of lower depression levels in adolescent girls. And also this study shows that personality dimensions from the Big Five revealed various predictive relations with music preferences. Marc JMH Delsing and Tom FM TerBogt (2008) studied on Adolescent's music preferences and personality characteristics. They examined the structure of Dutch adolescents' music preferences, the stability of music preferences and the relations between Big-Five personality characteristics and (changes in) music preferences. They collected data from 2334 adolescents aged 12-19. Music preference questionnaire has been used here. The results show that music preferences were found to be consistently related to personality characteristics, generally confirming prior research in the United States. Personality characteristics were also found to predict changes in music preferences. NaseerMehak, Majeed Sana and Qamar Tania (2021) conducted a study on Emotional expressivity, social support and life satisfaction among depressed and non-depressed adults. Their sample size were 200 depressed and non-depressed adults. They used Emotional expressivity scale, Multidimensional scale of perceived social support, World health organization-quality of life scale and symptom checklist-revised. Correlational analysis showed highly significant positive association between emotional expressivity, social support and life



satisfaction. Findings also showed significant predicting role of emotional expressivity and social support on life satisfaction of depressed and non-depressed adults. S CK and M. Singh (2024) investigated on the topic Study of Music Preference and Personality in Young Adults. Based on their listening preferences and gender, a total of 100 participants were chosen. Music preference scale and big five inventory were used to measure. The findings supported theories about the association between personality traits and music kinds by showing strong correlations between personality factors and specific music preferences. Tariq Rashid and Sana Mustafa (2016) studied on the topic to explore the relationship and difference of life satisfaction and emotional expressivity among adolescence in joint and nuclear family. The sample of this study consisted of 100. Emotional expressivity scale and The Diner's Life satisfaction scale measures were used. Results showed that there was positive relationship between emotional expressivity and life satisfaction.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Objective

To explore whether there is any relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.

#### 3.2. Hypothesis

- H01: There will be no significant relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.
- H02: There will be no significant relationship between the reflective and complex of music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.
- H03: There will be no significant relationship between the intense and rebellious of music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.
- H04: There will be no significant relationship between upbeat and conventional of music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.
- H05: There will be no significant relationship between energetic and rhythmic of music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.

### 3.3. Sample

The sample of the present study consist of 107 emerging adults age between 18-25 years old, selected from Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam districts of through convenience sampling method with data collected on ranging from undergraduate to postgraduate degrees.

#### 3.3.1. Inclusion Criteria

- Participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 25 and live in Kerala's Kollam, Pathanamthitta, or Kottayam districts in order to be eligible for the study.
- They must report routinely listening to music of any genre and be able to read and comprehend the language in which the questionnaire is given, such as English or Malayalam.

#### 3.3.2. Exclusion Criteria

- Those with hearing impairments or other disorders that limit their capacity to interact with music.
- People with diagnosed psychological illnesses, that may hinder emotional expressivity unless specifically targeted by the study.

### 3.4. Measures/ Tools

#### 3.4.1. Short Test of Music Preference (STOMP)

The STOMP is a 14-item questionnaire which assesses the participant's music preferences. Each of these 14 items stated a music genre. The genres are varied ranging from electronic and pop music to heavy metal and folk music. The scale is scored using a 7-point Likert scale format (1= Strongly Dislike, 7= Strongly Like), this determines how the participants feel towards the genre that is listed to them. The higher the number on the scale is, the more the participants enjoy the genre presented. The STOMP (Rentfrow and Gosling,2003) can be further broken in to different sub-scales depending on the questions answered. These subscales are as follows: Reflective and Complex (e.g. folk), Intense and Rebellious (e.g. Rock), Upbeat and Conventional (e.g. Pop) or Energetic and Rhythmic (e.g. Rap/hip-hop). Test-retest reliability correlation coefficient is 0.75.

#### 3.4.2. Emotional Expressivity Scale (EES)

The 17-item Emotional Expressivity Scale (Kring,Smith and Neale,1994) was designed as self-



report measure of the extent to which people outwardly display their emotions. The response format for the EES is a 6-point Likert scale (1= never true and 6=always true) allowing ratings of the extent to which each item applies to each participant. The EES was found to be highly reliable, with an average alpha of .91 across seven administrations. The test-retest correlation was .90.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

The study's objective was to find out the relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity.

**Table 1 Relationship Between Music Preference and Emotional Expressivity**

r value	Emotional Expressivity	p value
Reflexive and Complexity	0.061	0.532
Intense and Rebellious	0.128	0.188
Upbeat and Conventional	0.079	0.417
Energetic and Rhythmic	0.154	0.114

Table 1 shows that the relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity. It shows no significant relationship between emotional expressivity and any one of the subscales of music preference as p value is greater than 0.05. Thus, the five hypotheses are accepted. The study's objective was to find out the relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults. Based on the table 1, the analysis reveals that there is no statistically significant relationships between emotional expressivity and preferences for the listed music styles. Given that the p-value was greater than 0.05, the result indicates insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This means that, based on the data collected, we cannot conclude that emotional expressivity significantly influences music preferences. The lack of statistical significance suggests that, at least within the scope of this study, emotional expressivity may

not play a major role in shaping individual music preferences. Further research with a larger sample size or different methodology may be needed to explore this relationship more thoroughly. The lack of significant results could be due to a small sample size or low effect sizes, meaning that emotional expressivity may not strongly influence musical preferences in this dataset. These findings align with previous studies suggesting that music preferences are influenced by a combination of emotional, cultural, and personality factors rather than a single variable like emotional expressivity. Further research could explore these correlations with a larger and more diverse sample to increase statistical power. Investigating other psychological variables could help understand the complex relationship between emotional expressivity and music preferences [8-10].

#### 4.1. Scope for Research Study

- Further research could explore these correlations with a larger and more diverse sample to increase statistical power.
- Investigating other psychological variables could help understand the complex relationship between emotional expressivity and music preferences.
- Conducting present study with a longitudinal research design will help in a better understanding in the future.

#### Conclusion

The current study measures the relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity. From the result, there is no relationship between music preference and emotional expressivity among emerging adults.

#### Acknowledgement

The authors appreciate all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be able to be mentioned.

#### References

- [1]. Arnett, J. J. (2014). Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- [2]. Baker, F., & Bor, W. (2008). Can music preference indicate mental health status in young people? Australasian psychiatry,





- 16(4), 284-288.
- [3]. Ck, S., & Singh, M. (2024). Study of Music Preference and Personality In Young Adults. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4), 8585-8596.
- [4]. Delsing, M. J., Ter Bogt, T. F., Engels, R. C., & Meeus, W. H. (2008). Adolescents' music preferences and personality characteristics. *European Journal of Personality: Published for the European Association of Personality Psychology*, 22(2), 109-130.
- [5]. Greasley, A., & Lamont, A. (2016). Musical preferences. In S. Hallam, I. Cross, & M. Thaut (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of music psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 263–281). Oxford University Press.
- [6]. Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (1995). Facets of emotional expressivity: Three self-report factors and their correlates. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 19(4), 555–568.
- [7]. Hunter, P. G., Schellenberg, E. G., & Stalinski, S. M. (2011). Liking and identifying emotionally expressive music: Age and gender differences. *Journal of experimental child psychology*, 110(1), 80-93.
- [8]. Kring, A. M., Smith, D. A., & Neale, J. M. (1994). Individual differences in dispositional expressiveness: Development and validation of the Emotional Expressivity Scale. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 66(5), 934–949.
- [9]. Miranda, D., & Claes, M. (2008). Personality traits, music preferences and depression in adolescence. *International journal of adolescence and youth*, 14(3), 277-298.
- [10]. Rentfrow, P. J., & Gosling, S. D. (2003). The do re mis of everyday life: The structure and personality correlates of music preferences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(6), 1236–1256.