

Emotional response
to music and
happiness
psychology essay



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The objective of this research is to examine the correlation between emotional response to music and happiness among the undergraduates of UTAR: Perak Campus. Besides that, the gender differences in emotional response to music and gender differences in happiness will be examined as well.

The findings show that there are more than half of the participants scored more than 4 out of the maximum score of 7. It means that they mostly have an average level of happiness. There are only few participants fall in low happiness level which scored less than 3 and about more than quarter of participants fall in high happiness level which scored 5 or above.

Emotional Response to Music and Happiness

This research found that there is a significant correlation in emotional response to music and happiness among the university's undergraduates. The level of emotional response to music among both male and female undergraduates is correlated to their respective happiness level. This is supported by Lamont (2011) where the study results show that young adults are likely to have strong positive experience from music listening, especially if it had had a prominent strong impact in their lives. This result show the correlation between emotional response to music and the pursuit for happiness as music may provide a possible connection to various aspects to find happiness or to reach a peaceful state of mind free from any side effects. (Lamont, 2011) Another research that can support the result of this finding states that music listening was claimed to be mostly relaxation, mood improvements, and as well as decreasing negative emotional well-being such as being under stress and anxiety. (Kallinen & Ravaja, 2008)

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Other than that Saaikallio, Nieminen & Brattico (2011) support the results of the research's as it was found that it is not necessarily only happy music that can evoke feelings of happiness in the listener. It was also found that sad music can induce positive feelings such as happiness as well, which may be due to the individual's need to preserve happiness despite the sad (musical) stimulus, or also because the need to not be overly emotionally affected or touched by the particular piece of music. (Saaikallio, Nieminen & Brattico, 2011) With this notion, it can further support the correlation between emotional response to music and happiness, as the type of music does not become a barrier in the obtained positive feelings of happiness through listening to music.

In a similar study Van Goethem & Sloboda (2011) found that music plays an important role in the creation of happiness as well as relaxation. Other findings include: (1) music is effective in helping strategies of regulating emotions such as distraction. (2) music is quite a successful device for affective regulation alongside with other types of mechanisms of coping. (Van Goethem & Sloboda, 2011) The research also indicates that happiness is the highest percentage affect being regulated with music which supports this research's result on emotional response to music and happiness relationship. Listening to music can regulate one's emotions and with happiness being the easiest emotion to regulate through music listening, the stronger one's emotional response to music the happier they are.

Despite the disagreement that happiness is induced from the music Konecni, Brown & Wanic (2008) found that the overall measure of the participants after listening to music was leaning more towards the positive emotion of <https://assignbuster.com/emotional-response-to-music-and-happiness-psychology-essay/>

feeling happiness which is felt through the recollection of their life-events that seems to be rather attached to the emotions felt through music. The findings also suggested the big difference between originally experienced real life events' emotions and the induction of happy-sad emotion by music proceeding to state that emotions induced in music solely triggers the listener's imagination (recollection) of that emotion once felt. (Konecni, Brown & Wanic, 2008) Hence, the emotional response to music can be applied by listening to happy music to induce positive emotions such as happiness.

Happiness and Gender

This research showed that there is a significant difference in happiness level in male and female. According to a research conducted by Yang (2008) showed that there are gender differences in happiness level where women tend to be happier than men before old age but their happiness level seems to decline when in old age; while men are tend to be happier in old age.

This is supported by Easterlin (2010) that is showing the same result displaying evidences between genders and generations, men and women are equally happy and unhappy when look on the whole; but when looked closer at different life stages, women turns out to be happier than men in early life but less happy and the end. (Easterlin, 2010) Inglehart (2002) found that women who are below 45 of age tend to be happier than man.

While the longitudinal research done by Stevenson & Wolfers (2009) shown that there is a declination of happiness level in female across the years.

According to Zaidi (2010), women have bigger orbital frontal cortices

compared to men because there is highly significant difference in the ratio of <https://assignbuster.com/emotional-response-to-music-and-happiness-psychology-essay/>

orbital grey to amygdala volume. The ratio between the orbitofrontal cortex (part that in charge in regulating emotions), and the size of the amygdala, are mixed up in order to produce emotional reactions. The ratio appears larger in women than men. On average, women might be more proficient of handling their emotional responses. (Zaidi, 2010) Biological differences and gender roles are the most probably to lead distinction between male and female and presenting the differences of happiness among genders.

In another research conducted by Crossley & Langdrige (2005) showed gender differences among the perceived happiness: Men scored better in “sexual activity”, being “liked”, “sports” and owning a “good social life”; whereas women scored better in having a “close family”, “loved by loved one”, “assisting others”, “good social life” and being “liked” than men in assisting them to achieve happiness. (Crossley & Langdrige, 2005) Hence the difference of happiness level between genders.

Emotional Response to Music and Gender

This research showed that there are is a significant difference in emotional response to music level between male and female. According Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai (2007) women were more emotionally reactive than men as they exhibited larger changes in overall reactivity, where they report the more extreme emotions while reliving rage and feelings of affection for recollection of past events. The study suggests that at some level, gender differences on emotional response may persist even across ethnic groups. (Chentsova-Dutton & Tsai, 2007) Hence the gender differences in emotional response to music.

According to Nater, Abbruzzese, Krebs & Ehlert (2006) research on participants reactions to different musical stimuli (relaxing classical music, and unpleasant metallica), women have the tendency to exhibit hypersensitivity to repulsive musical stimuli hence displaying the gender differences in emotional response to music. In a similar research, Istók, Brattico, Jacobsen, Krohn, Müller & Tervaniemi (2009) found gender differences for some emotional when describing music terms such as “touching”, “feelings evoked”, “ugly”, and “drab”, additionally male participants have higher tendency to express with negative adjective compared to female participants.

Multiple researches suggests otherwise, Rickard (2004) found that gender difference may not contribute to difference of emotional response to music in terms of physical arousal as the music with emotional power treatment induced significantly greater increase in skin conductance and number chills equally in both gender. Lundqvist, Carlsson, Hilmersson & Justin (2009) show similar results with no gender differences in emotional response to music in terms of both physical and mental response, as both male and female have equal response level to music stimuli.

Limitations and suggestion

This research had faced difficulties in finding journals of gender differences on level of happiness, gender differences in emotional response to music no matter of Malaysia context or others because there are limited sources and research on this topic. The researcher had faced difficulties especially in locating journals or articles to compare on happiness level and emotional response to music. Therefore, this research is to make contribution to the <https://assignbuster.com/emotional-response-to-music-and-happiness-psychology-essay/>

studies gender differences on happiness level, and emotional response to music and happiness.

In this research, it only involved a hundred participants (fifty male students of UTAR: Perak Campus, and fifty female students of UTAR: Perak Campus) which is not enough to generalize on the population. Further research need to increase the sample size and different backgrounds of participants so that the result obtained could be generalized to the whole population.

Furthermore, the participants of this study are mostly Chinese. Due to the same ethnics and belief systems they have, may contribute to this result which is no gender differences in happiness level. Thus, further study has to be done by involving more ethnicities and culture values in order to find out a more thorough study.

Moreover this research only focuses on the effects of gender differences on emotional response to music, and level of happiness which is not enough to study on the outcome of the research. Other demographic aspects should be included in future study on this research, such as age, ethnicity, race, field of study and so forth. A suggestion for more accurate reliability of this research is to conduct a cross-cultural study to determine the effects of cultural differences on the outcome of the research.

Conclusion

This study is proposed to find out the correlation between emotional response to music and level of happiness, the gender differences in emotional response to music, and gender differences in happiness. The results show that there is significant correlation in emotional response to

music and happiness which means the level of emotional response to music and level of happiness interrelates with each other. There is also a significant gender difference in emotional response to music, where this study found that female have higher level of emotional response to music compared to male. Lastly, gender differences in happiness have a significant outcome as well, where female was found to have a higher level of happiness than compared to male.

This research has made contribution to emotional response to music and happiness researches in Malaysia context. In order to improve the outcome of this study, more research as a bigger sample range should be conducted to increase the validity and generalization.