

# Music consumption in the dominican republic



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## Introduction

In the last three decades, technology has changed how people consume media and more specific music since these advances are making a significant shift in its distribution and consumption. According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (2017), in 2017 the total revenues in streaming increased 41.1%, and there were almost 176 million users with paid subscription accounts, while the physical revenue declined in the majority of markets representing a decreasing rate of 5.4%. During the month of March 2018, 49.5 million people only in the United States used the Apple Music service for their consumption of music, making this the most popular music streaming service (Statista, 2018). Molteni and Ordanini (2003) say that changes in the production, distribution, and consumption has altered why and how people seek music.

Most of the digital transformation started almost 30 years ago, by the 1990s people were already applying digital products and services to their companies and during the 2000s these products were used not only for businesses, but people also satisfied specific needs in their personal lives (Schallmo & Williams, 2018). Just when everyone thought that digital music was the only and the predetermined music consumption option, retro-technologies reappeared. These retro-technologies include the revival of vinyl records; contrasting with the beliefs of streaming and other musical technological developments as the primary source for music consumption. Sarpong, Dong, and Appiah (2016) argue that the resurgence of vinyl LPs illustrates that technological evolution doesn't always make older platforms obsolete.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, the music industry started in 1895 when the first phonograph arrived at the country by a local, named Rodolfo Hernandez (Hernandez, 2013) since then people have been consuming and following the trends of music in all possible ways. Now, with the return of older products, there is no longer evidence of a unique pattern of consumption of music in the Dominican Republic. People are not consuming music in the same way as it was in the past. Different ages, different satisfactions, and different medium lead to a variety of forms for music consumption. Dominicans besides using traditional media like radio stations have other sources for the consumption of music thanks to the access they have to smartphones and the internet.

Given that music is consumed for a variety of reasons is important to explore if there is a relationship between music genres platforms and gratifications. For instance, Ahtisaari and Karanam (2015) found that the reasons why young people listen to music are: social connection, reminiscence, and because it affects regulation while the factors for older people are: personal meaning, therapeutic benefits and also affect regulation. Uses and gratifications is a theory that tries to explain how people satisfy specific needs through the media. This theory is appropriate to study music because most of the studies in the past have looked at social media and other media platforms, but not many have examined why and how people listen to music, especially in the Dominican Republic. For instance

Chen (2011), found that the more hours per week or the more time a person is active on Twitter, the person will gratify more the need of connection. Another example showing the application of the Uses and Gratifications <https://assignbuster.com/music-consumption-in-the-dominican-republic/>

theory on different platforms was Istanbuluoglu, Athwal, and McCormack (2018), who studied the uses and gratifications of social media for luxury brands, and found that users get emotional and cognitive gratifications from commenting and liking content related to luxury brands, in addition, they found that need like entertainment and aesthetic appreciation are satisfied with luxury brands' social media content interaction.

The Uses and Gratifications theory can help identify the unique needs of media consumers and is capable of explaining the gratifications they seek, according to Smock (2011), this theoretical framework known as uses and gratifications (U&G) is focused on media and studies how these platforms are considered by individuals when they pursue the fulfillment of their needs.

The Dominican Republic is a developing country with a diverse group of people who listen to different types of music but in the last couple years, the urban music is the one that predominates especially among the young generation even though the content and the lyrics are explicit. The purpose of this study will be to test the uses and gratifications theory by examining music consumption or preferences of people in the Dominican Republic including their use of streaming, radio, vinyl records, and other platforms to satisfy their needs. I will survey music consumers from the Dominican Republic between 25 and 35 years old to understand how and what gratifications they get by consuming music. The independent variables to be considered for this study will be age, education and socioeconomic status, those variables were identified and selected to understand some of the music group consumers in the country since it is well known that the way Dominicans consume music is deeply deep-rooted and marked in their socio-

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cultural environment and their behavior. On the other hand, the dependent variables will be relaxation, pleasure, emotions management, these were selected to help build the layers for possible findings related to “ why” and “ what” to this people when consuming music.

### Uses and Gratifications theory

The uses and gratifications theory is grounded on a series of earlier communication studies and research from the 1940s, based on how radio listeners and comic readers consumed media. A couple of years later (1969) the theory was taken to the next level by Jay Blumler and Denis McQuail when they tried to categorized people’s attraction for political television programs. Some of the most important media satisfactions were shown by McQuail (1972) when he studied some British TV programs and radio, concluding that people interact with media while trying to escape from problems and monotony (diversion), when socializing (personal relationships), for self-reference and value reinforcement (identity), and for informational sources (surveillance).

In 1973, Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch and other colleagues joined the investigation to research how and why people viewed mass media. People’s gratifications from media content, exposure (to media), and social context were again studied to understand the satisfaction of different individual and social needs through media. These studies led to the creation of the uses and gratifications theory which states that individuals create or chose existing media among many other resources to satisfy their needs (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, 1973). The theory is a very common tool among

scholars and other investigators since it sets the bases for a psychological study of the motivators that make individual look for specific medium to fulfill specific needs (Ko, Cho, and Roberts, 2005). Liang, Lai, and Ku (2006; 2007;) explain that the uses and gratifications theory has been found extremely valuable when developing explanations of how people adopt and use new communication technologies.

The Uses and Gratifications theory can be applied to different studies related to media. For instance, some researchers have used this theory to study video games and the gratifications obtained by people from these games. For instance Chen, Kaunchin, Jengchung, and Ross (2010) about online games dependency, in this study they found out that the gratifications people get from multimedia realism for social interactions (MRSI) or video games are a diversion, a positive aesthetic experience, and a sense of virtual community. The use of several websites have also been studied from the uses and gratifications perspective, it is the case of Hicks, Comp, Miki, Bevan, and Horovitz (2012), they found that individuals use the website 'Yelp. com' for information seeking, convenience, pass time, and entertainment. The theory has also been used to examine how social media consumers receive gratifications, Anita Whiting (2013) found that by using social media consumers receive ten uses and gratifications which are: Knowledge about others, opinion expression, information sharing, entertainment source, social interaction, relaxation, pass time, information seeking.

Regardless of these gratifications mentioned above, others research have found that consumers use social media as an identity developer, and as a

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tool for expression and communication, for instance, Krause, North, and Heritage (2014) found that there are three uses and gratifications related to listening to music through social media indicating that individuals seek to build stronger technological identity, entertainment, and communication.

Some types of print media like magazines, books, and newspapers have been analyzed and premeditated guided by the uses and gratifications theory as part of the purpose of the theory that seeks to explain the factors that impulse consumers to use media. According to Kim, Lee, and Contractor (2015) state that emotional needs motivate people to read magazines and they added that personal experiences influence the engagement with the magazine advertising. Other research has discovered that music definitely gives its costumers a variety of pleasures such as information, diversion, emotional release, expression, relaxation, etc. (Sarovic, 2016). Karen De La Rosa and Rudy Pugliese (2017) who studied a variety of music genres found that there are a wide-ranging of needs gratified by different music genres whether it be to stay awake or go to sleep, pass time, distraction, etc.

Notwithstanding of the age and/or the gender of the users, there is a positive correlation between media exposure, and social influence with the gratifications related to the photo and information sharing on the Facebook social media platform (Malik, Dhir, and Nieminen; 2016).

These findings are very good examples of some of the gratifications related to music, social media, and video games. They show a wide range of research that can be covered with this theory; however, more research is needed to determine and identify if there is a difference on how the people in the Dominican Republic listen to music, and to understand the factors, <https://assignbuster.com/music-consumption-in-the-dominican-republic/>

uses, and gratifications that motivates them to consume music in certain ways. The focus on independent variables like age and gender will contribute to existing and future investigations. This study will contribute to the theory a new perspective of gratifications obtained from music consumption by people of the Dominican Republic, the lack of research related to this particular angle will definitely add interesting findings and applications of the Uses and Gratifications theory. This investigation should work as a tool for further researches about music consumption and topics focused more on the Dominican Republic and its music.

#### Literature review

Music provides a lot of different gratifications to consumers, for instance, Sarovic (2016) found that by consuming music people can get a diverse number of satisfaction such as relaxation, entertainment, reinforcement, lifestyle, expression, among others. Sarovic findings clearly validate McQuails conclusions in his 1972 study "The Televised Audience: A Revised Perspective" mentioned above. According to Dela Rosa (2017), people seek different music genres for specific gratifications in new ways since technology has disrupted the music industry and the consumption behavior of listeners. People on average enjoy 17.8 hours of music per week being the car the most popular listening location; 86% of music is listened through on-demand streaming, in which 57% of young consumers (16-24 years old) are the most engaged with paid audio streaming services (Music Consumer Insight Report, 2018).



The influence of technology in the music have disrupted this industry so much that CD's or any other traditional way for music consumption is no longer dominating the music business (Coronin, 2014). Advances in distribution technology played an important role in the disruption of the music industry, according to Hudson (2011) when new technology is able to weaken existing distribution and listening models, the new listening mediums become even more disruptive, one example is the evasion of the phonographs distribution when the radio appeared since this technology massively reached more people. Others authors like Ordanini and Molteni (2003) found that there is a contradictory relationship between the online music consumption and the behavior related to the conventional music consumption (recorded music).

Even though technological advances seem to be displacing the traditional consumption of music, some investigators believe that this idea of old platforms threaten by technology should not be adopted. Magaudda (2011) who analyzed and studied the process of digitalization, and the change of the material (physical) music consumption for the digital consumption, found that even when the music has been altered by technology and transformed from 'tangible records' to 'intangible data' there is still a very important role of material objects in the way people consume music. Furthermore, she stated that the advances in technology have not led to the 'dematerialization' or disappearance of material objects.

Supported by these ideas about 're-materialization' stated by Maggauda, the resurgence of vinyl as an example of retro-technology regaining power does not sound crazy. Sarpong, Dong, and Appiah (2016) mentioned that <https://assignbuster.com/music-consumption-in-the-dominican-republic/>

the revival of vinyl challenges the digital streaming era and strongly contradicts those predictions related to the total disappearance of vinyl LPs.

None of the existing research about music consumption is able to explain or identify a unique way in which music is being consumed nowadays in the Dominican Republic, this is in part thanks to the lack of attention generated by this country to the investigators and another reason for this is that new technologies also influence and change how people do certain things including how people consume music. The ambiguity showed on this literature review, have led to a further investigation to understand how people in the Dominican Republic consume music and what gratifications they obtain from doing it.

When talking about music in the Dominican Republic the 'merengue' heads the musical panorama, this music genre is an essential part of the national heritage and culture. According to L'Hoeste (2014), merengue is the national music of the Dominican Republic, it replaced other predominant genres like salsa in music stations and nightly venues, merengue was born in 1844 which is the same year of the country's foundation, and it is considered also as one of the vehicles that Dominicans have to express social issues. However, during the last two decades, merengue is not the dominant music genre in the country anymore. Younger generations have completely lost the interest in this genre, adopting urban dance music genres. Spending a little bit of time in the Dominican Republic and you will definitely hear the hasty sound known as 'dembow' which is a blend of reggaeton, American rap, and others, this bass-heavy urban genre has become the principal rhythm of Dominican youth in recent years (Shepherd, 2013).

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This transition in the music of the Dominican Republic has created different opinions and separations in the society. Only a few traditional prefer merengue over popular music nowadays, these traditional listeners consume this music genre in the old ways while the younger generation follows the technological changes which give more possibilities to consume music. Delmonte (2017) found that younger generations have *disengaged* with the traditional formats for music reproduction, radio receivers, and CD players have very low percentage among the 16-24 years old group age while it peaked among respondents of 65+ years old, in addition, a third of the youngest age group (16-24 yrs.) listening time use smartphone as their preferred listening device whereas just 4% of the older group age (65+) prefer this technology.

The music consumption pattern in the Dominican Republic has not been defined yet and is still a complex singularity that hasn't been studied, Based on that premise, this investigation WILL find answers for the following questions:

RQ-1: How is music consumed by people in the Dominican Republic?

Many studies related to music consumption in certain societies are focused on developed countries such as the United States, Italy, India, Mexico, etc. other countries have been studied too, but for the case of the Dominican Republic there is not a singular study that aims to explain the way in which Dominicans are consuming music nowadays. In order to identify what is the music consumed by people in the Dominican Republic we ask the second research question:

RQ-2: What is the most popular music genre in the Dominican Republic?

As stated at the beginning of the investigation, technological advances and social developments have led to changes in the way people in the Dominican Republic are consuming music and their preference for certain channels, these also include variations on the society preference pertinent to music genres. Merengue is the national music genre of the country it achieved vast popularity in the countryside, working and an increased acceptance across the hemisphere (L'Hoeste, 2014). But according to Shepherd (2013) in recent years, popular music has become the signature for the emerging generation. Finally, there is not a clear view of what is the preferred music genre for Dominicans.

RQ-3: What are the gratifications sought by Dominicans when listening to music?

With this question, the investigation will obtain valuable information related to the factors that motivate people from the D. R. to seek and consume music because it is known that music is capable of providing gratifications, for instance, Edwards (1998) found that the gratifications sought and obtained from music are related to personal identity, mood change, danceability, inspiration, and diversion. By addressing this question, a fourth research question has surged:

RQ-4: How is music used in the Dominican's daily lives?

According to O'Hara and Brown (2006), music consumption has a high dependency on the demographic and psychological characteristics of the

consumers, the mood, and the actual social circumstances and activities in which the individual is involved. As an example, the authors mentioned general music uses such as interaction, relaxation, exercising, dance, emotions mediator, among others. It is very important to determine what specific uses are given to music by the Dominican consumers since this society has not been examined from the music consumption perspective based on the uses and gratifications theory.

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