

Music Preference As a Factor of Attractiveness

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ABSTRACT

There have been few studies conducted to determine if similar music preferences make someone more attractive when searching for a potential romantic long-term partner. The aim of this study is to examine the influence of shared music preference on the attractiveness of a person when seeking out potential partners. Participants will comprise of single college students asked to complete an online experimental study. Five fake profiles of potential romantic partners will be created, and each profile will include a specific music preference in addition to other interest information. These music preferences will be either pop music, rap, indie, R&B, and a recent popular music genre, K-pop or Korean popular music. They will rate the fake profiles on their attractiveness based solely on traits listed for each individual. The participants will then be asked to complete a final survey. The present study hypothesizes that profiles that share the same music preference with the participants, will score higher on the attractive rating. The results expected are for the participants to rate higher attractiveness on profiles that have similar music preferences to their own.

INTRODUCTION

- Music has been found to be an easy topic to discuss to make one look more friendly and likable (Launay & Dunbar, 2015), especially if it is a conversation between potential romantic partners.
- Individuals are more likely to find those with similar interests, values, and preferences more attractive than those with different interests (Levy et al., 2019).
- Through the use of mobile dating apps, music preference has become one of the determining factors of one’s attractiveness (Kang, 2021).
- The similarity in values such as music preference has also been revealed to make a potential romantic partner more attractive (Peretti & Abplanalp Jr, 2004).
- It is more likely that people will bond with others through similarities, such as shared music preferences, and values rather than through their personalities (Boer et al., 2011).

METHOD

- A sample of 60 participants (M= 28.91 years, SD= 9.65 years) participated in an online survey.
- Participants provided demographic information that included their ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and age. Of the 60, 73.3% identified as female, 20% identified as male, 1.7% identified as transgender, and 5% identified as queer; this also included sexual orientation (straight= 55%, bisexual= 16.7%, 10%= queer, 5%= lesbian, 5%= gay, and “other”= 8.3% in which participants specified pansexual).
- Demographic information included ethnicity as well: White/Caucasian (71.1%, N= 43), Hispanic/Hispanic American (16.7%, N= 10), African/African American (6.7%, N= 4), or Asian/Asian American (5%, N= 3)
- The preferred music genre of participants are as follows: 23.7% (N= 14) preferred Indie music, 16.9% (N= 10) preferred Pop music, 13.6% (N= 8) preferred R&B, 5.1% (N= 3) preferred Rap, 1.7% (N= 1) preferred K-pop, and 39% (N= 23) specified another genre.
- Synopses of five different people were created and participants were asked to rate the attractiveness of each using a 5-point Likert scale. These synopses did not include pictures.
- Additional questions were asked to assess how music plays a part in determining attractiveness.

RESULTS

- Participants were grouped as either “match” or “no match” for each profile based on their preferred music genre and a t-test was run on ratings of attractiveness for each group and genre.
- On average, those who share Pop music preference rate profiles as more attractive (M= 3.7, SE= .26) versus those who did not share a music preference (M= 3.46, SE= .15), but this difference was not significant $t(58) = -.69, p = .25$.
- On average, those who share K-Pop music preference rate profiles as less attractive (M= 2.63, SE= .46) versus those who did not share a music preference (M= 3.19, SE= .16), but this difference was not significant $t(58) = 1.26, p = .12$.
- On average, those who share Indie music preference rate profiles as less attractive (M= 2.33, SE= .33) versus those who did not share a music preference (M= 3.3, SE= .15), but this difference was not significant $t(58) = 1.46, p = .08$.
- On average, those who share R&B music preference rate profiles as more attractive (M= 3.36, SE= .27) versus those who did not share a music preference (M= 2.8, SE= .18), but this difference was not significant $t(58) = -1.54, p = .07$.
- No results were shown for the Rap genre as there was only one participant that indicated Rap as their preferred genre.

DISCUSSION

- The profile assigned with the Pop-music genre was rated highest in attractiveness in both the “match” and “no match” groups.
- Interestingly, it was found that participants in the “match” group rated the K-Pop and Indie profiles less attractive than the participants in the “match” groups, suggesting that there may be other factors affecting the ratings besides music preference.
- Though these findings were not significant, participants stated that the music preference of the profiles did influence their attractiveness ratings.
- It should be noted that there were 23 participants that selected “other” under their preferred music preference which they specified: Country, Rock, Alternative rock, Classic Rock, Pop-Punk, Synth-Pop, Dark Pop, Metal, EDM (Electronic Dance Music), Folk, Classical, Lo-Fi, and Jazz.
- Limitations of the current study include sampling undercoverage, a limited variety of music genres, and outside influences that were not accounted for.
- In future research, the sample size should be much larger and researchers should include a more variety of music genres, artists, songs as well as other factors that may influence an individual’s attractiveness.

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Table 1: t-test Results Comparing Matches in Music Preferences on Attractiveness

	Match		No Match		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Pop Music	3.7	.82	3.46	1.03	-.69
K-Pop Music	2.63	1.3	3.2	1.17	1.25
Indie Music	2.33	.58	3.3	1.13	1.46
R&B Music	3.36	1.01	2.8	1.22	-1.54

*p < .05