

Assessing College Students' Genre Preferences in the year 2020

Kelly Giammarino

James Madison University

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Introduction

Music is a shared art among cultures all around the world. It has been used for dance, leisure, partying, or just some alone time to destress and relax. There are many types of music depending on culture and generation and there is no one “right” type of music. Every person has their preferences in music. There are genres of jazz, hip hop, classical, pop, and many others that have had a significant impact on people in society through entertainment and fun. People used music to destress, have alone time, to have some fun and enjoy themselves with others. Thinking about our current society, it's hard to know what genre the most popular form of music is, especially in the college-age range. Everyone has their preferences, dislikes, and likes when it comes to music. Some people love pop and hate country and some love country and hate pop. It's hard to know these days what the most favored genre is and that is what this study is all about.

Throughout this study, we will test to see what genre of music is most popular in the current group of college students in the 2019-2020 school year. Completing this study can show the average favored genre and the reasons why. I will be distributing a survey to a random selection of JMU students online on the SONA Communications website. I will provide the survey on this site allowing students to participate in the study. The survey will serve the purpose of answering the following research question.

RQ: In the 2019-2020 academic year, what is the most popular genre of music among college students and why?

There is not much scholarly research about college students' music preference, but I did manage to find a few that were similar. In a study called "Musical Listening Habits of College Students: A Foreword", they state that the purpose of their study "to examine music preferences across a wide range of cultures to get a better sense of cultural and demographic moderators of preferences across a wide variety of genres" (Graham, Stefanijia & Schöler, 2010, p. 8). They stated as findings that "in this respect, the study comparing listeners' habits from four different parts of the world is conceived as a contribution to a rather vaguely defined study of the musical universals in different 'cultural habitats'" (Graham, Stefanijia & Schöler, 2010). It is one of the only studies involving college students and music preferences specifically.

Studying music preferences of college students in America at James Madison University can contribute to the study of college genre preferences from around the world and can help compare the many differences and similarities. As stated before this study is worthwhile because it is "a contribution to a rather vaguely defined study of the musical universals in different 'cultural habitats'" (Graham, Stefanijia & Schöler, 2010). This study is worthwhile because it gives people an insight into the cultural music preferences around the world and it shows the differences in how music is accessed everywhere (Graham, Stefanijia & Schöler, 2010).

Cultural habits can mean many different things but, in this study, it seems to be the cultural society in every community. Different communities around the world access music in different ways for different reasons and it's interesting to see the similarities and differences in everyone's communities. JMU's cultural habitat can matter because it can show how much music is growing and how certain genres may be more prominent and popular in our community

compared to others. It could lead to more reasons as to why our community may prefer one genre while other communities prefer another.

Another way it can contribute to research is by providing more information to streaming services so they know their target audiences. Knowing college music preferences can be beneficial research for streaming services everywhere and can give them insight into how they should organize their music. There are articles like “Changing the Industry, Spotify” that describe the way streaming services work and how artists reach their market better than they did in the past (Carver, 2016). Carver even stated that “the results suggest that streaming has significantly affected the way individuals in the college population have consumed music” (Carver, 2016, p. 12). The industry went from physical copies to being able to play anything on any mobile device at any time because of streaming.

In the interviews done, they took away that Spotify affects an individual's way of consuming music because of a variety of reasons (Carver, 2016, p. 8). They state that “Spotify offers a lower payout than traditional album sale, Spotify allows artists a greater reach among target buyers, Spotify increases artists' ticket sales, and Spotify has lowered the rates of those who once pirated music” (Carver, 2016, p. 8). Studying how Spotify decreases traditional albums sales can be something this study can look into involving streaming services and why certain college students use them instead of getting physical copies. Combining this research can contribute to both studies and can lead to more accurate conclusions on people's preference in music and their favorite streaming services. After seeing previous research done on college genre preference I came up with the following hypothesis:

H: Streaming Services affect what genres of music college students at JMU listen to and prefer because of its easy accessibility and its features that include radio, playlists, and song sharing.

This hypothesis will provide us insight on what streaming services may affect the most popular genre chosen by college students at JMU. Streaming may also affect why certain college students listen to certain genres so analyzing the streaming services they use and what genre they prefer can help determine if streaming services do affect it.

This study will be using a quantitative research method involving online surveys for college students to fill out. The survey will be distributed on the SONA Communications website for JMU. We will be using a cross-sectional study which is analyzing people's opinions at one moment in time. The importance of using a cross-sectional study is because we are looking at current college students and depending on graduation year can affect results. If I were to do a longitudinal study, I may lose survey respondents and data may not be accurate over time so cross-sectional is the best choice for this study.

Many of the questions will involve types of streaming services, the genre of concerts they've been to, the emotions they feel, the period in which they listen to music their favorite genres, the setting in which they listen to music, and whether they agree with current music charts in America. Data this study will use to make its claims is the data received from surveys taken by JMU students aging from 1st year to the 4th year of college in the year 2019.

This data will help narrow down what preferences are most popular among the students. They will be able to rank their genres on a Likert scale determining which genres they prefer the

most. They will answer multiple-choice questions regarding what streaming services they use, how they find music on these apps and rank which apps they prefer over others. They will answer questions involving concerts they've been to and their genres and will answer further Likert scale questions determining enjoyment and other factors. Lastly, they will be presented with musical charts of America and the top ten songs of the year. They will answer an open-ended question about whether they agree with the charts presented and why.

All of these questions will show favoritism among the students and lead me to a conclusion of the most popular genre. I will later do a cross-tabulation of the results to analyze and come up with accurate conclusions about what genres college students prefer and what the overall popular choice is.

Literature Review

Sensation-Seeking and Genre Preference

There have been thousands of scholarly articles published having to do with music. Music therapy, music education and lastly music preferences. To get an accurate understanding of my topic, I researched multiple articles involving music genres and streaming services. I found over 17 articles involving these topics but 10 gave me a better knowledge of what I am studying and what has been studied already.

Although this is not directly the same topic as my study, this article focuses on sensation-seeking and music genres among college students (Weisskirch & Murphy, 2003, p.1). In the study "Sensation-Seeking and Internet Activities, Music Preference, and Personal Relationships among College Students", it relates to my current study by involving music and college students. The only difference is that my study will not involve sensation-seeking. The article states that

“the study examines if college student sensation-seeking relates to the activities engaged in on the Internet and if sensation-seeking continues to be associated with heavy metal and rock music” (Weisskirch & Murphy, 2003,p.1).

For part of their methods and measures they "created a list of 15 musical genres that participants rated on a four-point, Likert Scale” (Weisskirch & Murphy 2003, p.4). They incorporated rankings of music genres into their method which is similar to my current study. They want to learn more about sensation-seeking and other topics outside of music while my study is basic information seeking for the benefit of learning about this generation and seeing if it could impact streaming services. We just want to know what the favorite genre among college students is and why. They ended up finding relations between heavy metal and intense genres with sensation-seeking after completing their study (Weisskirch & Murphy, 2003, p.5). They also found that “having punk music as a favorite emerged as the one genre most affiliated with high sensation-seeking” (Weisskirch & Murphy, 2003, p.1). This evidence shows favorite genres tend to be correlated with sensation-seeking characteristics. It will be interesting to see what factors correlate with college student’s favorite genre after my study and if anything unexpected will arise.

Music Preferences in Other Countries

There was another study called “Musical Preference and Music Education: Musical Preferences of Turkish University Students and their Levels in Genre Identification” that was conducted in another country that relates to college student’s preferences of music. In Turkey, they conducted a study “to investigate if there is any relationship between musical preference, genre identification and frequency of listening to music genres, and whether musical training and gender played a role in these factors” (Gürgen, 2016, p.459). They measured the student’s

preferences from different excerpts they played. This is more a hands-on study with initial reaction to songs instead of surveying their likes and dislikes.

The results of this study were that “it was not Turkish music genres but Western Art Music that rated highly in both the students’ musical preferences and reported frequencies with which they listen to these genres of music” (Gürgen, 2016, p.465-466). These results are extremely important because it could lead to more studies going into how those students accessed western art music and why they prefer it over their own country’s music. They could be using the same streaming services currently used in the United States that help people access music at the tip of their fingers. This is another study that focuses on the cultural aspects of music access instead of just personal preference disregarding culture.

Another study that relates to genre preferences is the Japanese study that takes a closer look at personality and Japanese university students (Brown, 2012). The study “Music preferences and personality among Japanese university students” details methods to find out if personality and music preferences correlate (Brown, 2012). They used a 7-point response scale to determine what the student’s preferences of the genres were and then they also found results through HEXACO-100 to help view more aspects of personality (Brown, 2012, p.262). They state that the HEXACO-100 “was used in order to investigate more specific aspects of personality that might be associated with preferences for supergenres as well as specific subgenres” (Brown, 2012, p.262). Similar to the study I am conducting, they ranked the genre on their personal preferences which are what JMU students will be doing in this study (Brown, 2012, p.262). They focus on personality traits and how they relate to genre preference. This could be the main aspect that comes out of our current study, but our study is open to many causes of preference choice.

The article “Music Listening Preferences of Macau Students” studies how factors of age and gender contribute to music preference (Hui, 2009, p.485). They used music excerpts and Likert Scales to test what music preferences were most favored among the Macau students (Hui, 2009, p.485). There was a most popular preference along with western art as well which is another factor that has been seen in a lot of scholar work revolving around this topic. Around the world, a lot of student preferences are from western art along with their cultural preferences. They found that age was a significant factor in the preferences and males were more interested in this topic than females. Overall this study looks into ore aspects of why certain factors contribute to genre preference and testing them while my study is looking into answers from the students. My study is also focusing on streaming services and so far, the last abroad studies have not focused on that.

College Students and Music's Impact on their Health

Many of these studies try to test certain factors that may relate to genre preference. “College Students' Music Preference and Its Relationship to Perceived Stress levels, Extraversion Levels and to Gender” is a study that tries to investigate the relationships between college student's music preference and how stress levels, gender and extraversion levels might contribute to it (O'Regan, 2018). They used t-tests and Pearson correlation coefficient to study their results (O'Regan, 2018). They found that there was no correlation between those factors and music preference (O'Regan, 2018). They tested specific factors while our study is only testing one factor which is streaming services. We can try to see what other factors may appear through my cross-tabulation of the survey results. This study helps rule out stress relations

extraversion levels, and gender in my current study but we will still keep an eye out on the factors when analyzing our results just for precaution.

Another study detailing health effects caused by music listening is the study called “University Students’ Strong Experiences of Music: Pleasure, Engagement, and Meaning” by Alexandra Lamont. The study conducted was “drawing on positive psychology, Seligman’s (2002) framework for achieving balanced wellbeing includes the components of pleasure, engagement, and meaning” (Lamont, 2011, p.229). It all relates to the well-being and happiness of college students when listening to music and whether music actually can cause these psychological and physiological factors (Lamont, 2011, p.229). Students gave reports of their most intense music experiences and they used an idiographic approach to study the results (Lamont, 2011, p.234). They found that students had strong experiences in live listening situations (Lamont, 2011, p.235). In the end they found that “the current results show that this sample of young adults was more likely to have strong positive experiences of music listening that they recalled in detail and considered to have had a significant impact on their lives if they were in a live listening situation such as a gig or festival” (Lamont, 2011, p.241).

They stated that there was no single way to reach this happiness since people have different experiences but it’s important to take account of the music, the listener, and the situation to fully understand these experiences is underlined (Lamont, 2011, p.229). This is an important topic to take into consideration with our study because levels of enjoyment and happiness with certain genres could lead to why a genre is more popular over another. Also if these festivals cause happiness and play certain genres, that could be why they are the most popular.

Lastly, music has also been studied with its stress reduction techniques. According to the study called *Coping with Stress: The Effectiveness of Different Types of Music* they hypothesized that “listening to classical and self-selected relaxing music after exposure to a stressor should result in significant reductions in anxiety, anger, and sympathetic nervous system arousal, and increased relaxation compared to those who sit in silence or listen to heavy metal music”(Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Phar, 2007, p.163) and that “there would be a significant positive relationship with ratings of a person’s use of music for relaxation and relaxation experienced during the self-selected and classical music conditions” (Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Phar, 2007, p.164) They tested these hypotheses by having college students participate in their study after a stressful test or before a stressful test and they were exposed to different genres of music (Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Phar, 2007, p.164). Their measures included questionnaires, Relaxation Rating Scale (RRS), Music Rating Scale (MRS), State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAIX-2), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-Form Y (STAI-Y) and physiological assessment of heart rate, respiration and skin conductance (Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Phar, 2007, p.164).

They also had a cognitive speed test that was used to elicit sympathetic nervous system arousal (Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Phar, 2007, p.164). they randomly selected the genres with the participants(Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Phar, 2007, p.165) and they did analyses of variance and found that the results of other study support the hypothesis that individuals who are exposed to classical music or self-selected relaxing music after exposure to a stressor will demonstrate significant reductions in state anxiety and an increase in feelings of relaxation as compared to those who sit in silence or listen to heavy metal music (Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Phar, 2007, p.167). This study is important to take into consideration when studying genre preferences

among college students because most college students are stressed from school work and if we see patterns similar to this study, it could prove or reject, or hypotheses proposed.

Personality Characteristics and Music Preferences

Once again, there are plenty of studies involving music genre preference and personality traits. Similar to the study “Music Preferences and Personality Among Japanese University Students”, the study called “The Structure of Musical Preferences: A Five-Factor Model” studies how certain personality characteristics and factors may contribute to music genre preference (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin 2011). Music preferences and personality characteristics, they included are as follows:

“1) a Mellow factor comprising smooth and relaxing styles; 2) an Urban factor defined largely by rhythmic and percussive music, such as is found in rap, funk, and acid jazz; 3) a Sophisticated factor that includes classical, operatic, world, and jazz; 4) an Intense factor defined by loud, forceful, and energetic music; and 5) a Campestral factor comprising a variety of different styles of direct, and rootsy music such as is often found in country and singer-songwriter genres” (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin 2011).

They posted advertisements on websites recruiting college students to take their surveys and eventually get a \$25 gift card as a reward (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin 2011). They asked them how much they liked each excerpt and they used principal component analysis to discuss their results (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin 2011). In the end, they found five personality dimensions underlying music preferences and the factors that affect preferences for the music are affected by both the social and auditory characteristics of the music (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin 2011). I can consider these factors when studying the results, but we are focusing on personal preferences, not the participant's personality.

Streaming Services

Now jumping into streaming services, the biggest change in the music industry so far. It is a subject that is still not fully understood, and people are still having trouble with streaming and paying royalties, but it is slowly being worked into the industry. Streaming services are a huge part of this study because I am testing whether affects music genre preference among college students.

There have been studies related to my hypothesis, specifically the study called “Evaluating Music Discovery Tools on Spotify: The Role of User Preference Characteristics”. It studies the music discovery tools in Spotify which are “radio recommendation, regional charts, genres and moods, as well as following Facebook friends” (Tang &Yang, 2017, p.1). They had the participants sign consent forms, answer questions before the experiment then take part in the study itself by answering questions regarding dimensions of preference characteristics and they were asked to perform music exploratory tasks where they would find desirable music in 8 minutes using Spotify tools (Tang &Yang, 2017, p.4).

They used screen capturing to track their findings (Tang &Yang, 2017, p.5) and later did ANOVA Analyses to study the results (Tang &Yang, 2017, p.8). They discovered that “the results show that user experience criteria were not necessarily corresponded to search effectiveness” (Tang &Yang, 2017, p.1). They also suggest that “users’ preference characteristics did have an impact on the performance of these music discovery tools”. Some tools worked better for certain preferences which could help when analyzing what streaming services people use in my study. We may be able to make a connection with certain genres and certain streaming services.

Another study on Spotify and how it is changing the industry as a streaming service was conducted in 2016. In the study “Changing the industry, Spotify”, Seth Carver did interviews, scholarly reviews, and student surveys and found that Spotify does not directly increase artist revenues however it has increased their reach to market and has lowered the rates of internet piracy (Carver, 2016, p.2). A method specifically similar to my study that he used was “a survey of collegiate students gauging music consumption as well as purchasing behavior and attitudes” (Carver, 2016, p.3.) The part of the study that relates to our current study is the way he analyzed how Spotify reaches the audience, specifically college students. They also used a similar survey style that will be used in this study.

He stated at the end of his research that “it can be said that streaming services have greatly impacted the way that individuals consume music” (Carver, 2016, p.18). It was also concluded that from a consumer’s perspective these services have changed the way that they access music on a daily basis” (Carver, 2016, p.18) and from the “artist’s perspective this technology has largely shifted the way they make their incomes, but also helped to widen their reach to consumers “(Carver, 2016, p.18). People are straying away from physical copies and moving towards streaming which is vital to know since our study focuses on the effect streaming has on genre preference.

Going deeper into other streaming services, the study called “The Impact that Music Streaming Services such as Spotify, Tidal and Apple Music have had on Consumers, Artists and the Music industry itself” by Aoife Coffey details and tests the impact that music streaming services have had on consumers, artists and the music industry” (Coffey, 2016). It analyzes Spotify, Apple Music, and Tidal which are all popular streaming services that have had a huge

impact on the music industry (Coffey, 2016). They conducted careful analyses of the streaming services and offered recommendations to assist the future alignment of music streaming services with the wishes of the music industry consumers, artists and record labels (Coffey, 2016). They also analyzed the influence of piracy on the music industry and the growth of technology as well (Coffey, 2016). In their methodology, they stated that “recommendations for the future of music streaming services were based on an analysis on how the music industry and streaming have changed through the years using the sources researched” (Coffey, 2016, p.6). They analyzed the applications as well as literature they found online so there was no formal experiment or study done but analyzing helped them come up with conclusions and recommendations for the music industry (Coffey, 2016, p.26).

Their findings and conclusion were that music streaming has forever changed the industry due to ease of access to music which modern streaming sites provide to the consumers (Coffey, 2016, p.29). Coffey stated that “there is a difficult relationship between music streaming services and artists” (Coffey, 2016, p.30), and it “seems that consumers have benefited the most from streaming services due to their easy access to large catalogs of music for relatively cheap prices in comparison to the traditional way of buying one CD at a time” (Coffey, 2016, p.31). Unlike our study that will be taking surveys of students’ use of streaming services, they mainly analyzed the streaming services themselves and the scholarly articles online. They also focused on the artists’ point of view (Coffey, 2016, p.30), which is not included in our current study. They provided our study with information on how much the streaming services have impacted the industry which leads us to look more into our hypothesis and that it may be an important part of college students’ access to their favorite genres.

The last article included in this literature review is the study on “College Students' Uses and Gratifications of New Media for Music Listening” by Benjamin Chad Whittle. In his study it examines “how these new services are being used by college students, and also the gratifications they receive from these services compared to traditional radio” (Whittle, 2014, p.i). For their methodology and participants, they chose a convenience sample from undergraduate students from a university in the south (Whittle, 2014, p.24). The students had to complete a questionnaire and all participation was voluntary (Whittle, 2014, p.24), and the questionnaire “asked about their music listening on different media platforms, the duration of their listening, and their dislikes/likes about the various platforms” (Whittle, 2014, p.25).

Their results showed that “students receive more gratifications from some online services, including YouTube and Pandora” compared to the radio (Whittle, 2014, p.35). Knowing this information makes it clearer that these services have a bigger effect on genre preference than other music sources. They also found not only are students using online services as their main source of music, but they are also using the Internet rather than traditional media for music discovery (Whittle, 2014, p.37). This information can help us discover whether they use other sources of music searching besides streaming services. Overall this article had many hypotheses and research questions involving the uses of streaming services and we can benefit from all information provided because it gives us more insight on these streaming services in many ways.

All of these scholarly articles contribute to this study by providing us with background information to base our studies off and gives us an insight into what is already studied and

proven correct involving college student's preferences of genre and streaming services. It will be interesting to see if our results match some of the results in the previous studies mentioned.

Methods

Participants

All participants in this study will be anonymous college students in the communication school that are completing research on the SCOM SONA Communications Website. They will all access the study online and will voluntarily take the study if they choose. The study will remain open until we reach at least 50 participants.

Instruments and Procedure

To conduct this study, I will be distributing a survey online on the JMU SCOM SONA Research website and I will be asking undergraduate students to complete the survey on Music Genre Preferences and Streaming Services. Doing this will involve volunteer sampling since I cannot randomly select or use another sampling method when putting my survey on the web. I will provide a consent agreement and verify that all information is kept private and all answers are anonymous. I will also include that they are benefitting research on music preferences of the 2019 year of college students and that their answers will be analyzed to provide a clearer picture of preferences of this time. The survey will consist of 10-20 questions ranging from topics of music genre and streaming services. After the survey is taken by at least 50 students, I will put an end date for the completion of the survey and start analyzing the results. I will use a statistical analysis approach involving descriptive statistics to find the most popular genre among college students and whether streaming services affect the choice.

Benefits of Our Method

Many other studies have used surveys and questionnaires to find preferences for streaming services and genres of college students. In the article “The Structure of Musical Preferences: A Five-Factor Model”, they used a survey to get results on how certain personality characteristics and factors may contribute to music genre preference (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin 2011). Overall, they got accurate results from their surveys, but they did state that “the contexts in which participants completed the survey were most certainly different, and it is possible that the testing conditions could have affected participants’ ratings” (Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin 2011, p.52). Knowing this has made me ensure that. All surveys conducted through this experiment will be online and in the same setting for all participants. I will not allow on paper surveys only online, so we can get the most accurate results.

The “Changing the industry, Spotify” study also used surveys to conduct their research as well. “The survey consisted of questions pertaining to how the individuals consumed music before and after the introduction of streaming services” (Carver, 2016, p. 12) which is very similar to. The surveys we will be conducting for this study. They found accurate results by using surveys and it gave them the data they needed to analyze and come up with conclusions.

Another study that used the quantitative method of surveys is the study “College Students' Uses and Gratifications of New Media for Music Listening”. They state that “College undergraduates from a midsize southeastern university were asked to participate by completing a survey about their likes/dislikes of traditional radio, as well as online music sources, where they discover new music, and why they choose to listen to music” (Whittle, 2014, p.i). This is very similar to our study and it worked well to get results in their study, so it will work similarly since

we have similar topics. The only limitation they had was that “since the surveys were anonymous, there is no way to verify their answers for accuracy” (Whittle, 2014, p.41). Not knowing if the participants are telling the truth is a limitation this study will face as well (Whittle, 2014, p.41).

Surveys and quantitative research methods have been used for thousands of studies and have worked countless amount of times. After reviewing these few studies that used surveys and quantitative methods, I am confident that a survey is the best possible option for finding an average and most popular genre preference among college students and whether streaming services affect it.

Using a quantitative research method approach involving a survey procedure is the best method to use for this experiment because it is the easiest way to get college students involved. College students are busy with studying, their health and social life. They rarely have time to participate in qualitative focus groups or interviews. Providing a survey on JMU's SCOM SONA site can provide easy access for students and they can complete it for course credit in the communications department or just for fun in their free time. Using volunteer sampling gives the study more a chance to get participants that care about answering truthfully and accurately. It also gives them a chance to participate in a study they are interested in since SONA offers many different types of studies.

When it comes to analyzing the data, surveys are the best because I can use statistical analyses and descriptive statistics to find my results. According to “Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry” by Donald Treadwell, descriptive statistics are used to describe and summarize data from a research sample (Treadwell, 2014, p.93). When students are ranking their

genres or telling us what streaming's services they use we can use descriptive statistics to summarize this complex data, show how all of the data vary, show if different groups of people differ in some way and show if there are relationships among variables we are interested which are genre preference and streaming services (Treadwell, 2014, p.93). We, of course, are going to use measures of central tendency to organize our data and then cross-tabulate our results into tables to further analyze (Treadwell, 2014, p.99-101). We will use measures of dispersion to find the maximum number of people under the preferred genre and preferred streaming service to see if they correlate and what is most popular among the students (Treadwell, 2014, 102).

A quantitative analyses approach is better than a qualitative approach in this study because it is hard to find an average or overall popular opinion without involving numbers. We are not interpreting people's answers to find their favorite genre or their favorite streaming service. We are finding the genre and streaming service that is most popular among the group. Whatever answers have the highest numerical value out of all of them is the most preferred or favored and can lead to the answers to our research question and hypothesis. Survey questions and multiple-choice questions are easy to make numerical since there are few answers to choose from and we don't have to interpret their answers since we display them for the participants. For my method in this study I will be using the following survey (see Appendix)

Theory

It's hard to find theories that can help analyze music genre preferences among college students but there are a couple that can somehow relate to this research question and hypothesis. A theory that can help understand our hypothesis, research question, and method is Social Marketing Theory.

Social Marketing Theory is a collection of theories that focus on how socially valuable information can be promoted (“Social Marketing”.., 2018) and this can help us analyze this study in many ways. This theory can be used to create audience awareness, target the right audience, reinforce the message, cultivate images or impressions, stimulate interest, and induce desired results (“Social Marketing”.., 2018). This can specifically help us analyze our hypothesis and the tools involved with streaming services. As stated before in the article “Evaluating Music Discovery Tools on Spotify: The Role of User Preference Characteristics” the music discovery tools in Spotify are radio recommendations, regional charts, genres and moods, as well as following Facebook friends (Tang & Yang, 2017, p.1). Using Social Marketing Theory and analyzing the streaming service questions involved in our study, we can see if the use of those tools helps create audience awareness, targeting the right audience, reinforce the message, cultivate images or impressions, stimulate interest, and induce desired result (Social Marketing.., 2018).

According to the article called “Social Marketing Theory” by Shraddha Bajracharya, “the theory emerged in the 1970s when marketing techniques were realized to sell ideas, attitudes and behaviors rather than products and includes the concept of “Edutainment” (Education and Entertainment)” (Bajracharya, 2018). When certain genres are marketed as “rising” or “popular” more people will consume those genres. This is selling the idea that a certain song or genre is in at the moment or popular and we can analyze this when looking at the tools streaming services have (Bajracharya, 2018).

There are two types of social marketing which are operational and strategic (Bajracharya, 2018). In this case, streaming services could be using operational since they are marketing to

change behavior (Bajracharya, 2018). They are marketing to change the behavior of listeners when they see tools promoting certain songs or genres (Bajracharya, 2018).

Using Social Marketing theory to help analyze our hypothesis can help provide us with reasons why this hypothesis might be true. Streaming services provide the tools for a reason and that is to provide easier access to music. This easier access to music can lead to why certain genres are more popular among college students. This theory helps analyze our hypothesis which could help answer our overall research question. This theory can lead to the answer of streaming services being the reason why one genre may be more popular among college students.

Annotated Bibliography

Bajracharya, S. (2018, February 15). Social Marketing Theory. Retrieved December 1, 2019, from <https://www.businessstopia.net/mass-communication/social-marketing-theory>

This article provided me with information on Social Marketing Theory. Shraddha Bajracharya writes about how Social Marketing Theory is a theory of mass communication that promotes socially valuable information and socially accepted behaviors and how it tries to integrate marketing ideas, principles, tools, techniques and socially beneficial concepts to promote communication and benefit society. I used this theory to help guide my hypothesis and provide possible outlets or answers for reasons streaming services may produce popular genre preferences among college students.

Brown, R. A. (2012). Music preferences and personality among Japanese university students. *International Journal of Psychology*, 47(4), 259-268.

Brown did a study on Japanese college students and how their personality traits might relate to or influence their music and genre preferences. They studied dimensions and facets of personality along with musical genres when conducting their study. They hypothesized that musical preferences are related to aspects of personality, and specifically that preferences for general musical “dimensions”. Their participants were college students and they had them indicate how much they liked certain genres on response scales and they complete the HEXACO-100 to investigate personality characteristics. They found that “aesthetic appreciation” was associated with a preference for reflective music (jazz, classical, opera,

gospel, enka), while sociability was associated with the preference for pop music. This is important to think about when conducting my study because if streaming services are proven to not affect genre preference we can see if we recognize any personality characteristics in our study

Carver, Seth A., "Changing the Industry, Spotify" (2016). Chancellor's Honors Program Projects. https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1973

In this article, the overall research question was whether streaming services have an impact on the overall industry, including the impact on those who make the music, and those who consume it. The purpose of this was to analyze the current music consumption industry and determine if Spotify increases artist revenues and if Spotify has lowered the rate of piracy. Their methods included one-on-one interviews with professionals in the music industry, reviews of scholarly works done within recent years on streaming services, and a survey of collegiate students gauging music consumption as well as purchasing behavior and attitudes. They found that streaming services have greatly impacted the way people consume music, that it shifted the way artists make their income, and widened the artist reach to consumers. Because it gives consumers more access to music, it could be giving them more access to different genres and that could lead to some being popular among college students.

Coffey, A., & Coffey, A. (2016). The impact that music streaming services such as Spotify, Tidal and Apple Music have had on consumers, artists and the music industry itself. Geraadpleegd van <https://scss.tcd.ie/publications/theses/diss/2016/TCD-SCSS> DISSERTATION-2016-027. pdf.

Coffey's study "The Impact that Music Streaming Services such as Spotify, Tidal and Apple Music have had on Consumers, Artists and the Music industry itself" analyzes the impact that music streaming services have had on consumers, artists, and the music industry. For their methods, they analyzed scholarly research and the streaming services themselves. They used three case studies to fully interpret the impact the introduction of music streaming services have had on the industry. They also analyzed the influence of piracy on the music industry. Their findings and conclusion were that music streaming has forever changed the industry due to ease of access to music which modern streaming sites provide to the consumers. It was shown that there is a difficult relationship between music streaming services and artists and it seems that consumers have benefited the most from streaming services due to their easy access to large catalogs of music for relatively cheap prices in comparison to the traditional way of buying one CD at a time. This is relevant to our proposed project because it talks about how streaming services are changing music and our hypothesis is how streaming services change or affect genre preference.

Graham, R., Schüler, N., & Stefaniya, L. Musical Listening Habits of College Students: A Foreword.

Although there was no clear stated research question or hypothesis, the purpose of the current study was to examine music preferences across a wide range of cultures to get a better sense of cultural and demographic moderators of preferences across a wide variety of genres. They stated as findings that in this respect, the study comparing listeners' habits from four different parts of the world is conceived as a contribution to a rather vaguely defined study of the musical universals in different 'cultural habitats'. For their methods, they used a questionnaire to

get data on college student's musical preferences. It is relevant to this study because studying music preferences of college students in America at James Madison University can contribute to the study of college genre preferences from around the world and can help compare the many differences and similarities.

Gürgen, E. T. (2016). Musical preference and music education: Musical preferences of Turkish university students and their levels in genre identification. *International Journal of Music Education*, 34(4), 459-471.

The purpose of this study was to see if there was any relationship between musical preference, genre identification, and frequency of listening to music genres, and whether musical training and gender played a role in these factors. They measured the student's preferences from different excerpts they played and there was a total of 13 music excerpts belonging to 13 genres from popular, classical, and Turkish music. The results concluded that it was not Turkish music genres, but Western Art music that rated highly in both the students' musical preferences and reported frequencies with which they listen to these genres of music. This is relevant to my proposed project because it is studying the music preference of college students like I am but in a different country. It is good to see their results and how they may relate to mine.

Hui, W. V. (2009). Music listening preferences of Macau students. *Music Education Research*, 11(4), 485-500.

This article studies and explores the factors of age and gender regarding music preference. They studied participants from younger ages to college students and their methods involved Likert scales and musical excerpts. The results indicated that the most popular genre

was Cantopop, followed by Western Pop/Rock, Western Classical, non-Western and the most disliked was traditional Chinese music. Age was an important factor for all genres in Macau students' listening preference and genre differences. Lastly, they found that male students expressed more interest in music listening than female counterparts. This is relevant to our current study because it emphasizes genre preference which is the main idea of our study, and they also study college students as well.

in Advertising, P. relations. (2018, April 23). Social Marketing Theory. Retrieved

December 1, 2019, from <https://www.communicationtheory.org/social-marketing-theory/>.

This article details what Social Marketing Theory is, and the variables involved in it. Social Marketing Theory is a collection of theories that focus on how socially valuable information can be promoted and it is used by organizations to help promote their product and consumer behaviors. The features of this theory include creating audience awareness, reinforcing the message, cultivating images or impressions, to stimulate interest, and to induce a desired result. This article was relevant to our study because we can use this theory to help analyze how streaming services may use aspects in this theory to make one artist or genre more popular on their service.

Labbé, E., Schmidt, N., Babin, J., & Pharr, M. (2007). Coping with Stress: The Effectiveness of Different Types of Music. *Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback*, 32(3-4), 163–168. doi: 10.1007/s10484-007-9043-9

In the study “Coping with Stress: The Effectiveness of Different Types of Music”, they hypothesized that listening to classical and self-selected relaxing music after exposure to a stressor should result in significant reductions in anxiety, anger, and sympathetic nervous system arousal, and increased relaxation compared to those who sit in silence or listen to heavy metal music. They also hypothesized that an individual’s perception of whether they believed the music was relaxing may be an important factor in inducing relaxation. They administered and played relaxing music before a stressful test for some participants or after a stressful test. They did many mixed-design analyses of variance to determine the effects of music and silence conditions and time on emotional state and physiological arousal. This study found that listening to self-select or classical music, after exposure to a stressor, significantly reduces negative emotional states and physiological arousal compared to listening to heavy metal music or sitting in silence. This study is relevant to mine because if music can impact health and decrease stress, that may be why one genre is preferred over another among college students

Lamont, A. (2011). University students’ strong experiences of music: Pleasure, engagement, and meaning. *Musicae Scientiae*, 15(2), 229–249.

This study was based on Seligman’s (2002) framework for achieving balanced well-being which includes the components of pleasure, engagement, and meaning and it is using this

framework to study the impact of university students' strong experience of music pleasure, engagement and meaning. Their methods involved students giving reports on their strongest and most impactful musical experience and they analyzed them using an idiographic approach. They found that most strong experiences were at live events and concerts. This study is relevant to mine because it shows that live events could be another factor along with streaming services that impact genre preference. It also involves university students which is an important part of my study.

O'Regan, C. (2018). College student's music preference and its relationship to perceived stress levels, extraversion levels, and gender.

According to O'Regan, the aim of the study was to investigate any possible relationships between college students' music preference and their perceived stress levels, gender, and extraversion levels. Their participants were college students and they completed online surveys and questionnaires. Through these questioners involved topics of music preference, stress, and personality. They used the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and T-Test to find relations and correlations between all of the factors and variables. There were no significant findings, but women tend to be more stressed than men. This is relevant to my study because it studies music preference and college students and knowing that stress and personality don't influence musical preference can lead to me believing there is a chance that my hypothesis is correct.

Rentfrow, P. J., & Gosling, S. D. (2007). The content and validity of music-genre stereotypes among college students. *Psychology of Music*, 35(2), 306–326.

This study analyzed the stereotypes of people that listen to certain music genres and the participants were college students. They were testing to see if the stereotypes were accurate. They analyzed personalities, values, and alcohol and drug preferences. Their method was to have students randomly assigned to classrooms and to rate the prototypical music fan of one of the 14 music categories. They predicted and found that individuals clearly defined stereotypes about fans of certain genres and that many stereotypes are truthful. They found that the results indicated that many of the music stereotypes contain truthful information. They can present accuracy in musical based personality judgments. This study is relevant to mine because it involves music preferences and college students and it could be interesting to see if certain college students at JMU like music related to their personality stereotype or based on streaming service accessibility.

Rentfrow, P. J., Goldberg, L. R., & Levitin, D. J. (2011). The structure of musical preferences: a five-factor model. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 100(6), 1139.

This study introduces a model of musical preferences based on listeners' affective reactions to excerpts of music from a wide variety of musical genres. They invited people online to their study and stated that it involved personality, attitudes, and preferences. They did 3

industrial studies and found a latent five-factor structure underlying music preference that is genre-free and reflects primarily emotional and affective responses to music. The factors are 1) a mellow factor comprising smooth and relaxing styles; 2) an urban factor defined largely by rhythmic and percussive music, such as is found in rap, funk, and acid jazz; 3) a sophisticated factor that includes classical, operatic, world, and jazz; 4) an intense factor defined by loud, forceful, and energetic music; and 5) a campestrial factor comprising a variety of different styles of direct, and rootsy music such as is often found in country and singer-songwriter genres. After finding these 5 factors they also found that music factors are affected by both the social and auditory characteristics of the music. The concluded statements of this study were that the present research provides a foundation framework for studying music preferences. This study is relevant to mine because if streaming services are not as important as we believe them to be, we can use this framework to study responses from JMU's college students and see if their personalities and genre preference correlate.

Tang, M. C., & Yang, M. Y. (2017). Evaluating Music Discovery Tools on Spotify: The Role of User Preference Characteristics. *Journal of Library & Information Studies*, 15(1).

“Evaluating Music Discovery Tools on Spotify: The Role of User Preference Characteristics” studies the music discovery tools in Spotify which are radio recommendations, regional charts, genres and moods, as well as following Facebook friends. Their methods involved having participants sign consent forms and they had to answer questions before the experiment. Then they had to take part in the study itself by answering questions regarding dimensions of preference characteristics and they were asked to perform music exploratory tasks where they would find desirable music in 8 minutes using Spotify tools. They used screen

capturing to track their findings and later did ANOVA Analyses to study the results. They discovered that the results show that user experience criteria were not necessarily corresponded to search effectiveness. They also suggest that users' preference characteristics did have an impact on the performance of these music discovery tools. Some tools worked better for certain preferences which could help when analyzing what streaming services people use in my study. This is relevant to my study because may be able to make a connection with certain genres and certain streaming services.

Treadwell, D. F. (2014). *Introducing communication research: paths of inquiry* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

This is a classroom textbook used in our research class and the information inside prided me with details and instructions on how to conduct my methods and what certain methods and vocabulary mean. It is relevant to this project because it gave me background information on research and research papers.

Weisskirch, R. S., & Murphy, L. C. (2003). *Sensation-Seeking and Internet Activities, Music Preference, and Personal Relationships among College Students*.

According to Weisskirch and Murphy, this study examines if college student sensation-seeking relates to the activities engaged in on the Internet and if SS continues to be associated with heavy metal and rock music. They also hypothesized that high sensation seekers are expected to have a larger pool of casual and close friends to meet higher needs for arousal, stimulation, and diverse people providing novelty in the lives of sensation seekers. Their method included a sample of 138 students and the procedure was the author approaching students in

dining hall facilities and the participants were given an oral and a written explanation about the research project and a questionnaire to complete.

They used Arnett's (1992) Inventory of Sensations eking (AIS) to measure Sensation-Seeking and they measured internet use, musical preference items, and close relationship items as well. They found that higher sensation-seeking was associated with getting sex-oriented material and the internet can provide intense sensation-seeking activities. They also found that there might be some sensation-seeking for stimulation via non-physical means on the internet. The relationship between friends and sensation-seeking yields a relationship that indicates how sensation-seekers use friendships to reinforce needs for stimulation. This can contribute to this study because it will be interesting to see what factors correlate with college student's favorite genre after my study and if anything, unexpected will arise. We can see if any sensation-seeking factors arise throughout our current study.

Whittle, B. C. (2009). College Students' Uses and Gratifications of New Media for Music

Listening (Doctoral dissertation, Department of Communication Arts of the College of Arts December 2014 Benjamin Chad Whittle BFA, Valdosta State University).

The study involves examining how streaming services are being used by college students, and also the gratifications they receive from these services compared to traditional radio. They took a convenience sample from undergraduate students they were asked to participate by completing a questionnaire. They were asked about music listening preferences on different media platforms, how long they listened for and what they liked and didn't like about certain

streaming services. They found that the participants received more gratifications from new media sources than from traditional radio, but students continue to listen to AM/FM radio, indicating that these new sources have not yet replaced radio completely. This is relevant to our current study because knowing college students' opinions on the streaming services can give me more insight into whether my hypothesis may or may not be correct.

Appendix

Survey

1. What year are you at JMU?

- a. First
- b. Second
- c. Third
- d. Fourth
- e. Other _____

2. What is your gender?

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Other _____

3. Rank the following music genres from least satisfying to most satisfying

Genre	Not Satisfying	Slightly Satisfying	Neutral	Very Satisfying	Extremely Satisfying
Rock					
Pop					
Country					
Alternative/Indie					
Hip-hop/Rap					
Classical					
R&B					
Jazz					

Musical Theatre					
Folk Music					
Blues					
EDM					
Heavy Metal					
Reggae					
Punk Rock					
Religious					

4. Rank the following genres from favorite (1) to least favorite (16)

- a. Rock_____
- b. Pop_____
- c. Country_____
- d. Alternative/Indie_____
- e. Hip-Hop/Rap_____
- f. Classical_____
- g. Jazz_____
- h. R&B_____
- i. Musical Theatre_____
- j. Folk Music_____
- k. Blues_____
- l. EDM_____
- m. Heavy Metal_____

- n. Reggae_____
 - o. Punk Rock_____
 - p. Religious_____
5. How do you listen to your music?
- a. Streaming services
 - b. Buy it online from iTunes
 - c. CDs
 - d. Record Player
 - e. Internet
6. Do you ever use streaming services?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Out of the ones listed which is your favorite streaming service
- a. Spotify
 - b. Apple Music
 - c. Pandora
 - d. Tidal
 - e. Amazon Music
 - f. Google Play Music
 - g. SiriusXM
 - h. Other _____ (please list if your favorite is not listed)
 - i. I don't use streaming services
8. Rank the following streaming services from most favored (1) to least favored (7/8)

- a. Spotify____
 - b. Apple Music____
 - c. Pandora____
 - d. Tidal____
 - e. Amazon Music____
 - f. Google Play Music____
 - g. Sirius-XM____
 - h. Other _____
 - i. I don't use streaming services
9. Do you use any tools or programs on streaming services and if so what are they?
- a.
10. Do you listen to any radio on streaming services and if so what are they called?
- a. _____
11. Who is your favorite artist and what genre of music do they play?
- a. _____
12. How many hours a day do you listen to music on a streaming service?
- a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. Other _____
13. Do you listen to certain streaming services to find a certain genre, type of music, or artist? If so, what is the service name?

a. Yes _____

b. No

14. Have you been to any concerts?

a. Yes

b. No

15. How many concerts have you been to?

a. 1

b. 2

c. 3

d. 4

e. Other _____

16. If you have been to concerts, what music genres did they fall under? Select all that apply

a. Rock _____

b. Pop _____

c. Country _____

d. Alternative/Indie _____

e. Hip-Hop/Rap _____

f. Classical _____

g. Jazz _____

h. R&B _____

i. Musical Theatre _____

j. Folk Music _____

k. Blues____

l. EDM____

m. Heavy Metal____

n. Reggae____

o. Punk Rock____

p. Religious____

17. Do you want to go to a concert in the future and if so what artist and what genre does the artist fall under?

a. _____

18. Do you ever find new music on streaming services?

a. _____

19. Do you believe streaming services have provided you access to different kinds of music?

a. Yes

b. no

20. Do your friends like similar music?

21. What is your favorite genre and why?

a. _____