

## The Effect of Socio-Cultural Identity on Musical Distaste

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### ABSTRACT

#### Background

Many researchers strive to know what music people enjoy. While that aspect of music is clearly important, this one-sided view excludes characteristic musical taste that is just as pertinent: musical distaste. Ackermann (2016) examined musical dislike in a series of 21 interviews. The results of these interviews suggested that musical distaste is an important aspect in the affirmation of personal identity. The following research will expand on Ackermann's work by looking directly at socio-cultural identity and musical distaste.

#### Aims

The researchers attempted to determine if socio-cultural identities are partially defined by music that the individual dislikes.

#### Method

The participants, who were recruited from two universities and the surrounding area in southwestern Virginia, USA, completed surveys detailing their socio-cultural identity and background, and his/her musical taste. Then five excerpts from the American genres of country (Gammond, n.d.) (Neal, 2012), rap (Wilton, n.d.) (Toop, Cheney, & Kajikawa, 2012), pop (Middleton & Manuel, 2015), classic rock (Moore, 2002) (Vallee, 2013), and heavy metal (Walser, n.d.) (Wilton, n.d.) were played and participants completed six surveys to determine any positive or negative responses to the music as well as levels of dislike for each excerpt.

#### Results

It appears there is a correlation between personal identity and musical distaste in some individuals; the trend appears to be strongest in participants between ages 18 and 27. This age group, when they responded negatively to a song, seemed to be more likely to write that the reason was because of negative familial ties, negative socio-political views on the song's associated culture, or an inability to relate to or align with the culture of the music. Other age groups when responding to disliked music, wrote more about the music itself as opposed to the associated cultures.

#### Conclusions

There appears to be a correlation between musical distaste and personal identity especially in the generation that was born in the 90s. However, research that implements different recordings, different music, better quality delivery systems, and more in-depth forms of data collection such as both a survey and interview are essential to further establish the

boundaries and depth of the relationship between musical distaste and personal identity.

#### Keywords

musical distaste, music therapy, socio-cultural identity

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