



The Effect of Music on Self-Perception and Confidence during Social Interactions

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Abstract: This study investigates the effect of music on self-perception and confidence during social interactions among young adults aged 18–35. Using a sample of 150 participants, the study explored how music preferences, personality traits, and psychological uses of music predict momentary self-esteem. Four standardized instruments were employed: the Short Test of Music Preferences (STOMP; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003), the Brief Big Five Inventory (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007), the Music Experience Questionnaire (MUSEQ; Chin & Rickard, 2012), and the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Descriptive results indicated that participants tended to prefer upbeat and rhythmically engaging music, commonly used music for emotional support, and exhibited moderate levels of state self-esteem. Correlational analyses revealed that openness was positively associated with reflective music preferences and emotional music use, while extraversion and conscientiousness were linked to higher self-esteem. Neuroticism emerged as a strong negative predictor of self-perception. The regression model significantly predicted state self-esteem, $F(8, 141) = 6.41, p < .001$, accounting for 26.7% of the variance. Neuroticism was the only statistically significant predictor ($\beta = -.355, p < .001$), while extraversion, emotional engagement with music, and preference for upbeat conventional genres showed marginal significance. These findings suggest that personality and emotional engagement with music interact meaningfully to shape how individuals perceive themselves in social contexts. Music serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a psychological tool for enhancing confidence and emotional resilience.

Keywords: *Music Preferences, State Self-Esteem, Personality Traits, Emotional Regulation, STOMP, BFI-10, MUSEQ, SSES, Social Confidence, Neuroticism*

1. Introduction

1.1 *Background of the Study*

Music has long served as a fundamental element of human culture and emotional experience. Across time and cultures, it has been used in rituals, celebrations, and interpersonal interactions to communicate mood, build cohesion, and influence psychological states (Juslin & Sloboda, 2010). With growing scientific interest in music's psychological functions, contemporary research has begun to explore how music affects cognition, emotion, and behavior in everyday contexts, including the ways individuals perceive themselves and navigate social environments (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Schäfer, Sedlmeier, Städtler, & Huron, 2013).

Self-perception, the way individuals evaluate and interpret their traits, abilities, and social roles, is a crucial aspect of identity and social functioning. It is intricately linked to self-esteem, emotional well-being, and interpersonal confidence (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Social interactions, in turn, often require individuals to draw upon a stable and positive self-concept in order to communicate effectively, assert themselves, and form meaningful relationships. Confidence in these settings enhances the quality of interaction and may predict long-term social and psychological outcomes (Leary & Kowalski, 1995).

Music has the potential to influence self-perception and confidence through various psychological mechanisms. For example, listening to music can regulate mood, reinforce identity, and even prime cognitive and emotional states that align with desired self-images (North & Hargreaves, 1999; Lonsdale & North, 2011). Certain genres of music have been associated with empowerment, self-expression, and a heightened sense of agency. For instance, upbeat and energetic music may induce a sense of vitality and social readiness, while reflective or lyrical music may facilitate introspection and self-awareness (Chin & Rickard, 2012). The strategic use of music in preparation for social engagements—such as listening to motivating music before a date or presentation—highlights music's role as a form of psychological self-regulation and impression management (Västfjäll, 2001).

Furthermore, empirical studies suggest that musical preferences may be indicative of personality traits and social orientations (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Nave, Minbashian, Lenton, & Roberts, 2011). For example, extroverts often prefer upbeat and rhythmic genres, while individuals high in openness to experience gravitate towards more complex and unconventional musical styles. These preferences not only reflect identity but also reinforce self-concepts, thereby influencing how one behaves in social settings. The use of music to

affirm identity or to alter mood before or during social interactions may shape the degree of confidence one experiences in those contexts.

Despite this growing body of research, there remains a gap in understanding the direct effect of music on perceived self-confidence during actual or anticipated social interaction. While several studies have examined music's effect on mood, motivation, or stress (Thoma et al., 2013), few have focused specifically on how music alters individuals' self-view and interpersonal assertiveness in real-life social contexts. Exploring this link may provide valuable insights for interventions in social anxiety, self-esteem enhancement, and music-based therapeutic practices.

This study aims to investigate how different musical preferences and listening habits influence individuals' self-perception and confidence during social interactions, particularly in a population of young adults. It builds on previous psychological frameworks of music listening and identity, drawing from instruments such as the Short Test of Music Preferences (STOMP; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003), the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007), the Music Engagement Questionnaire (MUSEQ; Chin & Rickard, 2012), and the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Through this multidimensional approach, the present research seeks to clarify music's psychosocial influence and its potential application in enhancing confidence in socially demanding environments.

In today's fast-paced and socially dynamic world, music functions as more than mere entertainment; it is a powerful psychological tool that shapes how individuals view themselves and engage with others. The psychological functions of music have gained increasing attention in contemporary research, particularly regarding its impact on self-related processes and interpersonal behaviour. This study explores the effect of music preferences on self-perception and confidence within social interactions, drawing on key constructs such as state self-esteem, emotional regulation, and personality traits. By understanding how these factors interact, this research aims to highlight the role of music in supporting adaptive functioning in social environments, especially among young adults.

Self-perception refers to the way individuals perceive, evaluate, and define themselves, including their traits, abilities, roles, and social identity (Baumeister, 1999). This internal self-view significantly affects motivation, behavior, and emotional well-being. Self-perception is shaped by both internal experiences and external influences, such as feedback from others and cultural norms. In social contexts, how individuals perceive themselves can determine how confidently they present themselves, initiate interactions, and respond to others (Leary & Tangney, 2012).

Confidence, particularly in social settings, is often conceptualized as a person's belief in their own social capabilities and effectiveness (Bandura, 1997). It is closely tied to self-esteem and self-perception. Confidence enhances the likelihood of initiating conversations, expressing opinions, and forming relationships, while low confidence may hinder effective communication and social participation. Confidence is dynamic and context-dependent, often fluctuating with situational cues, perceived competence, and emotional states (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

Social interaction involves dynamic exchanges between individuals and is influenced by a range of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes. It is a fundamental human need and serves as a key domain for self-expression and social identity construction (Hargie, 2011). Social interactions often trigger self-evaluative thoughts, making self-perception and confidence particularly salient during such exchanges. The success and ease of social interactions can be deeply influenced by one's internal self-perception and externally expressed confidence.

Music preferences, defined as an individual's consistent liking for certain music styles or genres, serve not only as a reflection of personality and identity but also as a mechanism for self-regulation (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). Music can evoke emotional responses, prime cognitive schemas, and even reinforce values and self-concepts. The genres people gravitate toward often reflect and influence how they see themselves and present themselves socially (North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000). For example, listening to energetic or empowering music may foster feelings of strength and sociability, while reflective or melancholic music might encourage introspection and emotional vulnerability.

State self-esteem refers to the temporary fluctuations in one's self-worth and self-evaluation in response to situational variables (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Unlike trait self-esteem, which is relatively stable over time, state self-esteem is sensitive to immediate contexts, such as receiving feedback, preparing for a social event, or listening to certain types of music. Music can act as a situational modifier, influencing state self-esteem by altering mood, enhancing self-awareness, or boosting one's sense of personal value before or during social interactions (Västfjäll, 2001).

Personality traits, such as extraversion, openness to experience, and neuroticism—shape both music preferences and interpersonal behaviour. Individuals high in extraversion, for instance, tend to prefer upbeat, rhythmic music and are more likely to exhibit confident behaviour in social settings (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). In contrast, introverts may prefer more complex, mellow music and display more reserved social behaviours. Personality traits

moderate how individuals use music for emotional and self-regulation, thereby influencing the degree to which music affects their social confidence and self-perception (Gowensmith & Bloom, 1997).

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences effectively. Music is a powerful tool for emotional regulation; it helps individuals cope with stress, enhance mood, and prepare psychologically for interpersonal encounters (Thoma et al., 2013). Through the modulation of affective states, music can indirectly shape self-perception and confidence. For example, a calming song may reduce anxiety before a social event, while a high-energy track might induce feelings of enthusiasm and control.

The relationship between these constructs is multidirectional. Music preferences, influenced by personality traits, serve as a means for emotional regulation, which can enhance state self-esteem. Elevated state self-esteem fosters more positive self-perception and greater confidence, particularly in social interactions. This cascade of psychological processes suggests that the music individuals choose to listen to before or during social interactions could significantly impact how they see themselves and how confidently they behave in those situations.

Given the complex interplay between these variables, this study seeks to investigate how music preferences and listening behaviors influence self-perception and confidence in the context of social interaction. By utilizing established psychological measures such as the Short Test of Music Preferences (STOMP; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003), the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007), the Music Engagement Questionnaire (MUSEQ; Chin & Rickard, 2012), and the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991), the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the psychosocial effects of music in daily life.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Self-Perception

Self-perception refers to the way individuals assess and interpret their own characteristics, traits, and roles in society. Understanding the impact of music on self-perception provides valuable insight into how external factors influence internal self-concept.

Baumeister (1999) discusses the concept of self-perception and its relationship to self-esteem and identity, explaining that the way we perceive ourselves greatly affects our emotions and behaviors in social contexts. Music can reinforce or challenge these perceptions by serving as an external cue that shapes emotional states.

Pratt and Elms (1995) suggest that individuals' self-perception is highly flexible and can be influenced by situational factors such as music, which can either enhance or diminish one's self-esteem depending on the context in which it is used.

Lenton et al. (2009) examined the role of self-perception in social interactions, finding that music can act as an external tool for altering how we view ourselves, especially when used as a psychological preparation for social engagements.

Cohen and Wills (1985) show that social support systems and environmental stimuli like music affect self-perception by enhancing positive self-assessment and reducing negative self-evaluations, particularly in stressful social situations.

2.2 Confidence

Confidence in social interactions is defined as the belief in one's ability to navigate social situations effectively. Music can be a powerful tool for bolstering social confidence, either by evoking positive emotions or by aligning with personal identity.

Bandura (1997) emphasizes the connection between self-efficacy and confidence, arguing that self-belief is influenced by external factors, such as music, which can prime individuals to feel more competent in social interactions.

Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) found that music can be used as a source of self-empowerment, improving individuals' confidence in social settings by regulating mood and emotions, ultimately boosting their ability to navigate these interactions.

Leary and Kowalski (1995) highlight that social confidence is integral to successful social interactions. They assert that music can foster this confidence by altering emotional states that facilitate greater ease and assertiveness in social contexts.

Tavakol and Dennick (2011) found that listening to motivational or upbeat music can help individuals manage anxiety and self-doubt, thus directly influencing their confidence levels in challenging social scenarios.

2.3 Social Interaction

Social interaction involves exchanges between individuals, and the ability to navigate these exchanges is influenced by both personal traits and situational factors, including music.

Hargie (2011) identifies the importance of self-perception in shaping social interactions. They argue that music can influence how individuals perceive their social self, thereby impacting their interaction quality.

Goffman (1959) discusses the concept of the "presentation of self" in social interactions, where individuals manage impressions. Music can assist in this process by acting as a self-regulation tool to boost confidence before or during interactions.

Vangelisti (2004) suggests that music plays a pivotal role in social interactions by facilitating mood regulation and emotional expression, which can significantly affect interpersonal communication.

Cohen and Wills (1985) emphasize the role of social support and environmental factors in shaping social interactions. They suggest that music can act as a supportive backdrop to enhance one's ability to engage in social settings.

2.4 Music Preferences

Music preferences reflect an individual's tastes and, to a degree, their personality. Music can serve as a tool for emotional regulation and help shape how individuals perceive themselves in social contexts.

Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) outline how music preferences are linked to personality traits, showing that individuals who prefer energetic music styles tend to exhibit higher levels of extraversion, which can influence their behavior and confidence in social interactions.

Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2007) found that people's music preferences are not only a reflection of personality traits but also shape their self-concept, affecting how they present themselves in social contexts.

Lonsdale and North (2011) discuss how music preferences align with self-perception. Individuals use music not only to express themselves but also as a means to regulate their emotions and improve their social performance.

North and Hargreaves (2008) argue that the music people prefer influences their emotional states and social interactions. Music preferences reflect personal identity and can therefore modulate self-perception and confidence in social settings.

2.5 State Self-Esteem

State self-esteem refers to temporary fluctuations in an individual's self-evaluation in response to immediate situations. Music can act as a tool for enhancing or diminishing state self-esteem in social contexts.

Heatherton and Polivy (1991) developed the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES), which measures fluctuations in self-esteem. Their work highlights how external factors like music can alter state self-esteem by influencing mood and emotional responses.

Thoma et al. (2013) explored the relationship between music and state self-esteem, showing that listening to music can effectively improve state self-esteem by alleviating negative emotional states and enhancing positive self-perceptions.

Västfjäll (2001) argues that music, especially music with empowering or uplifting qualities, can elevate state self-esteem by improving emotional regulation, helping individuals feel more capable and confident during social interactions.

Schäfer et al. (2013) found that music listening positively impacts self-esteem, especially when it enhances mood and aligns with the individual's self-concept. This is particularly significant in social settings where individuals' self-esteem is often vulnerable to external judgments.

2.6 Personality Traits

Personality traits are fundamental to understanding individual behavior and interactions, as they influence how individuals respond to various stimuli, including music. Research has shown that personality traits can affect both the music preferences individuals have and how they react to music in different social contexts.

Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) argue that music preferences are strongly correlated with personality traits, particularly the Big Five dimensions (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism). They found that extraverts, for example, tend to prefer energetic music styles, which can influence their social behavior by boosting confidence and social engagement.

Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2007) highlight that people with high openness to experience show a greater affinity for complex and emotionally intense music. This connection suggests that such individuals may use music as a means to regulate their emotions and adapt to different social situations, improving self-perception and social confidence.

Lonsdale and North (2011) examine how different personality types use music to express and manage their emotions. They found that people who score high in neuroticism often use soothing or melancholic music to regulate emotional states, which may impact their confidence levels and perceived social competence.

McCrae (1996) posits that personality traits influence social behavior and interaction styles, particularly in how individuals perceive themselves in social settings. Those with higher levels of extraversion may experience increased self-perception and confidence when engaging with others, especially when they align their music preferences with their extroverted behaviors.

2.7 Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation refers to the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a socially appropriate manner. Music has been shown to be an effective tool in

emotional regulation, which can influence social interactions and the confidence one exhibits in social contexts.

Thoma et al. (2013) examine the role of music in emotional regulation, suggesting that listening to music can induce positive mood states and improve emotional well-being. Their research shows that individuals who use music to regulate their emotions often experience greater emotional stability and confidence during social interactions.

Gross (2002) explains the process of emotional regulation and its role in emotional intelligence. Music, as a form of emotional regulation, allows individuals to modulate their emotional responses, which in turn can enhance social confidence and improve self-perception in social settings.

Koelsch (2014) discusses how music can affect the autonomic nervous system and regulate emotional responses, particularly in social contexts. Listening to music that resonates with an individual's emotional state can help in emotional processing, thereby fostering positive social interactions and increasing confidence in social situations.

Juslin and Sloboda (2010) explore the ways music can be used as an emotional regulation tool. They find that music can help individuals reduce anxiety and stress, both of which are significant barriers to confidence in social interactions. By using music to manage their emotions, individuals can navigate social settings with increased ease and confidence.

2.8 Research Gap

The existing body of literature has explored various facets of music's impact on psychological and emotional outcomes, particularly in the context of mood regulation and self-perception. However, the specific influence of music on self-perception and confidence during social interactions remains relatively underexplored. While studies have shown that music can affect emotional regulation and mood (Koelsch, 2014; Juslin & Sloboda, 2010), and that self-perception and confidence are critical to navigating social interactions (Baumeister, 1999; Leary & Kowalski, 1995), the direct link between music and these psychological constructs within social contexts is still in its infancy.

One notable gap in the literature is the lack of research examining how different types of music may specifically affect an individual's confidence and self-perception during real-time social interactions. Most studies focus on isolated emotional responses to music or its impact on state self-esteem (Thoma et al., 2013; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991), but fail to consider the broader, more dynamic context of social interaction. For example, while emotional regulation through music is well-documented, few studies have specifically investigated whether listening

to certain music genres or types before or during social engagements can meaningfully influence how individuals perceive themselves and interact with others in these settings.

Another underexamined area is the interaction between personality traits and music preferences in relation to self-perception and confidence in social contexts. Rentfrow and Gosling (2003) suggest that music preferences correlate with personality traits, yet research connecting these traits directly to changes in self-perception and social confidence remains scarce. It remains unclear how traits like extraversion or neuroticism might influence the effects of music on social performance, self-presentation, and the regulation of social anxiety in interpersonal exchanges.

Furthermore, while much of the existing research focuses on how music affects mood or individual self-esteem (Gross, 2002), there is a lack of studies examining how these changes impact the outcome of social interactions, such as the quality of communication, the ability to assert oneself, or the ability to navigate complex social dynamics. The potential to improve social confidence through music could offer valuable insights into psychological interventions, especially for individuals who struggle with social anxiety or low self-esteem.

Thus, the primary research gap lies in understanding the specific ways that music can be strategically used to influence self-perception and confidence during live social interactions, particularly through the lens of personality traits and emotional regulation. This gap offers an opportunity to expand existing research by focusing on the real-time effects of music as a tool for enhancing interpersonal engagement and emotional well-being in social contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Aim

To assess how music preferences and emotional responses to music influence young adults' self-perception and confidence during social interactions.

3.2 Research Objectives

- a) To investigate the relationship between music experience and state self-esteem in social situations.
- b) To examine how personality traits moderate the effect of music on self-perception and confidence.
- c) To identify which music preference styles are predictive of greater or lower self-confidence in social settings.

3.3 Hypotheses

H1: Emotional engagement with music is positively associated with state self-esteem during social interactions.

H2: Personality traits significantly predict state self-esteem, with neuroticism negatively associated and extraversion positively associated with social confidence.

H3: Preferences for emotionally meaningful and upbeat music styles are predictive of higher self-perception and confidence.

3.4 Rationale

Music plays a central role in identity formation, emotional expression, and cognitive regulation, particularly among young adults (Chin & Rickard, 2012). Theoretical models suggest that individuals utilize music not only to manage mood but also to construct their self-concept and social identity (North & Hargreaves, 2008). Emotional engagement with music can strengthen self-perception by offering reflective and supportive experiences (Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007). Furthermore, individual differences, such as personality traits, can shape how music is used and experienced. Neurotic individuals may struggle with emotional regulation, while extraverts are often energized by music and social engagement, potentially enhancing their confidence (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003; Rammstedt & John, 2007).

3.5 Research Design

The study employed a correlational design to examine the predictive relationships between music experience, personality traits, and state self-esteem in social contexts. This approach allows for the investigation of naturally occurring psychological patterns without manipulating participant conditions.

3.6 Variables

Independent Variables

- a) Music Experience: Assessed through the Music USE Questionnaire (MUSEQ) (Chin & Rickard, 2012).
- b) Music Preferences: Measured via the Short Test of Music Preferences (STOMP; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003).
- c) Personality Traits: Evaluated using the Big Five Inventory-10 (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007).

Dependent Variable

- a) State Self-Esteem: Measured using the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

3.7 Sample Description

Participants (N = 150) were adults aged 18 to 35 years, recruited via convenience sampling methods through both electronic (Google Forms, social media platforms) and printed formats (university campuses, public spaces). Eligibility criteria required participants to be fluent in English and free from neurological or psychiatric conditions that might affect self-perception or emotional experience. All participants provided informed consent before participation.

3.8 Measures

Music Use Questionnaire (MUSEQ): Developed by Chin and Rickard (2012), the MUSEQ evaluates the frequency and purpose of music use across six domains: cognitive, emotional regulation, social connection, physical activation, background, and reflection. Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert scale, with higher scores reflecting greater music engagement in that domain.

Short Test of Music Preferences (STOMP): The STOMP (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003) categorizes music preferences into four major groups: Reflective & Complex, Intense & Rebellious, Upbeat & Conventional, and Energetic & Rhythmic. Participants rate their preference for each genre on a 7-point scale.

Big Five Inventory–10 (BFI-10): The BFI-10 (Rammstedt & John, 2007) is a concise assessment tool measuring five personality traits: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES): The SSES (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991) is a 20-item self-report measure of state self-esteem with three subscales: Performance, Social, and Appearance. Participants respond on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater self-esteem.

3.9 Procedure

Participants were provided with a survey packet (either digital or printed) consisting of the four instruments described above. After reading the consent form, participants completed the MUSEQ, STOMP, BFI-10, and SSES in a randomized order to reduce order effects. The entire process took approximately 15–20 minutes. Data were checked for completeness and accuracy prior to analysis.

3.10 Statistical Analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27.0). Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum) were computed for all variables. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to assess the relationships between music use, music preferences, personality traits, and state self-esteem.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive power of music preferences, emotional responses to music, and personality traits on participants' state self-esteem. The regression model significantly predicted state self-esteem, $F(8, 141) = 6.41, p < .001$, explaining 26.7% of the variance ($R^2 = .267$). Neuroticism emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = -.355, p < .001$), while extraversion, upbeat music preference, and emotional engagement with music were marginal predictors. This indicates a complex but meaningful interaction between musical engagement and personality in shaping self-perception.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the research. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and they were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. Data were collected using both printed and online questionnaires to accommodate participant preferences while maintaining data integrity. No identifying information was collected, and all data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. The study posed minimal risk and did not involve any form of deception or manipulation.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reflective Complex	150	1.0	7.0	4.117	1.4461
Intense Rebellious	150	1.0	7.0	3.929	1.4683
Upbeat Conventional	150	1.0	7.0	4.512	1.4193
Energetic Rhythmic	150	1.0	7.0	4.396	1.5920
Extraversion	150	1.0	5.0	3.287	0.8638
Agreeableness	150	1.5	5.0	3.633	0.7590
Conscientiousness	150	1.0	5.0	3.207	0.7193
Neuroticism	150	1.0	5.0	2.903	1.0438
Openness	150	1.0	5.0	3.280	0.7361
Cognitive Regulation	150	0.0	5.0	3.964	0.9453
Emotional Response	150	2.0	5.0	4.229	0.7086

Bodily Sensations	150	1.5	5.0	3.948	0.7599
Autobiographical Memories	150	1.0	5.0	3.276	0.6551
Imagery Spirituality	150	0.0	5.0	3.960	1.0191
Support Coping	150	0.0	5.0	3.947	1.0267
Performance Self-Esteem	150	9	35	24.38	5.023
Social Self-Esteem	150	7	35	22.79	6.408
Appearance Self-Esteem	150	6	30	20.20	5.054
Total_SSES	150	22	99	67.37	14.008
Average_SSES	150	1.1	5.0	3.369	0.7004
Valid N (listwise)	150				

Descriptive statistics were computed for all measured variables ($N = 150$). As shown in Table 1, participants reported moderate levels across various music-related reflective complexes, with means ranging from 3.276 (Autobiographical Memories) to 4.512 (Upbeat Conventional) on a 7-point scale. Similarly, ratings for personality dimensions generally fell within the moderate range: Extraversion ($M = 3.287$, $SD = 0.8638$), Agreeableness ($M = 3.633$, $SD = 0.7590$), Conscientiousness ($M = 3.207$, $SD = 0.7193$), Neuroticism ($M = 2.903$, $SD = 1.0438$), and Openness ($M = 3.280$, $SD = 0.7361$) on a 5-point scale.

Regarding self-perception measures, Cognitive Regulation ($M = 3.964$, $SD = 0.9453$), Emotional Response ($M = 4.229$, $SD = 0.7086$), Bodily Sensations ($M = 3.948$, $SD = 0.7599$), Imagery Spirituality ($M = 3.960$, $SD = 1.0191$), and Support Coping ($M = 3.947$, $SD = 1.0267$) exhibited moderate average scores on a 5-point scale. Performance Self-Esteem ($M = 24.38$, $SD = 5.023$), Social Self-Esteem ($M = 22.79$, $SD = 6.408$), and Appearance Self-Esteem ($M = 20.20$, $SD = 5.054$) showed higher mean scores on a scale with a larger range. The Total Self-Esteem Scale score had a mean of 67.37 ($SD = 14.008$), and the Average SSES score was 3.369 ($SD = 0.7004$) on a 5-point scale.

Table: 2 *Pearson's Correlation*

	Re fle cti ve Co m	Int en se Re bel	Up bea t Co nve	En er get ic Rh	Ext rav ersi on	Agr eea blen ess	Cons cienti ousn ess	Ne uro tici sm	O pe nn ess	E mo tio nal Re sp	S u p port C	Tot al_ SS ES	Ave rage _SS ES
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Refle ctive Com plex	Pe ars on Co rre lati on	1	.57 8**	.77 6**	.71 5**	0.0 33	0.08 9	0.081	0.0 79	.16 5*	.22 0**	.2 60**	0.0 98	0.09 8
	Sig . (2- tail ed)		0.0 00	0.0 00	0.0 00	0.6 90	0.27 9	0.326	0.3 39	0.0 44	0.0 07	0. 00 1	0.2 31	0.23 1
	N	15 0	15 0	150	15 0	150	150	150	150	15 0	15 0	15 0	150	150
Inten se Rebe llious	Pe ars on Co rre lati on	.57 8**	1	.75 7**	.74 5**	- 0.0 12	0.01 8	0.045	0.0 34	0.0 89	0.0 81	0. 12 0	0.1 48	0.14 8
	Sig . (2- tail ed)	0.0 00		0.0 00	0.0 00	0.8 84	0.83 1	0.587	0.6 78	0.2 79	0.3 22	0. 14 4	0.0 70	0.07 0
	N	15 0	15 0	150	15 0	150	150	150	150	15 0	15 0	15 0	150	150
Upbe at Conv entio nal	Pe ars on Co rre lati on	.77 6**	.75 7**	1	.74 7**	0.0 32	0.10 6	0.058	0.0 52	0.1 22	.17 4*	0. 11 4	.20 2*	.202 *
	Sig . (2- tail ed)	0.0 00	0.0 00		0.0 00	0.6 96	0.19 7	0.478	0.5 25	0.1 37	0.0 33	0. 16 3	0.0 13	0.01 3
	N	15 0	15 0	150	15 0	150	150	150	150	15 0	15 0	15 0	150	150
Ener getic	Pe ars on Co	.71 5**	.74 5**	.74 7**	1	- 0.0 85	0.08 4	0.093	0.0 70	.22 7**	.17 6*	.1 82*	0.1 39	0.13 9

Rhythmic	relation													
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.303	0.308	0.257	0.393	0.005	0.032	0.026	0.089	0.089
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Extravers ion	Pearson Correlation	0.033	-0.012	0.032	-0.085	1	0.041	.198*	-.248**	-.552**	.182*	.180*	.255**	.255**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.690	0.884	0.696	0.303		0.617	0.015	0.002	0.000	0.026	0.027	0.002	0.002
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Agreeableness	Pearson Correlation	0.089	0.018	0.106	0.084	0.041	1	0.094	-0.034	0.140	0.160	0.132	0.139	0.139
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.279	0.831	0.197	0.308	0.617		0.254	0.676	0.088	0.050	0.108	0.091	0.091
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Conscientiousness	Pearson Correlation	0.081	0.045	0.058	0.093	.198*	0.094	1	-.335**	-.0028	.161*	0.083	.344**	.344**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.326	0.587	0.478	0.257	0.015	0.254		0.000	0.737	0.049	0.312	0.000	0.000

	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Neuroticism	Pearson Correlation	0.079	0.034	0.052	0.070	-.248**	-.0034	-.335*	1	0.090	-.0081	0.069	-.402**	-.402**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.339	0.678	0.525	0.393	0.002	0.676	0.000		0.273	0.324	0.403	0.000	0.000
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Openness	Pearson Correlation	.165*	0.089	0.122	.227**	-.552**	0.140	-.0028	0.090	1	0.026	-.0013	-.0053	-.0053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.044	0.279	0.137	0.005	0.000	0.088	0.737	0.273		0.748	0.871	0.521	0.521
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Emotional Response	Pearson Correlation	.220**	0.081	.174*	.176*	.182*	0.160	.161*	-.0081	0.026	1	.710**	.237**	.237**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007	0.322	0.033	0.032	0.026	0.050	0.049	0.324	0.748		0.000	0.004	0.004
	N	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
Support Coping	Pearson Correlation	.260**	0.120	0.114	.182*	.180*	0.132	0.083	0.069	-.0013	.710**	1	0.095	0.095

	lati on													
	Sig . (2- tail ed)	0.0 01	0.1 44	0.1 63	0.0 26	0.0 27	0.10 8	0.312	0.4 03	0.8 71	0.0 00		0.2 45	0.24 5
	N	15 0	15 0	150	15 0	150	150	150	150	15 0	15 0	15 0	150	150
Total _SSE _S	Pe ars on Co rre lati on	0.0 98	0.1 48	.20 2*	0.1 39	.25 5**	0.13 9	.344* *	- .40 2**	- 0.0 53	.23 7**	0. 09 5	1	1.00 0**
	Sig . (2- tail ed)	0.2 31	0.0 70	0.0 13	0.0 89	0.0 02	0.09 1	0.000	0.0 00	0.5 21	0.0 04	0. 24 5		0.00 0
	N	15 0	15 0	150	15 0	150	150	150	150	15 0	15 0	15 0	150	150
Aver age_ SSES	Pe ars on Co rre lati on	0.0 98	0.1 48	.20 2*	0.1 39	.25 5**	0.13 9	.344* *	- .40 2**	- 0.0 53	.23 7**	0. 09 5	1.0 00* *	1
	Sig . (2- tail ed)	0.2 31	0.0 70	0.0 13	0.0 89	0.0 02	0.09 1	0.000	0.0 00	0.5 21	0.0 04	0. 24 5	0.0 00	
	N	15 0	15 0	150	15 0	150	150	150	150	15 0	15 0	15 0	150	150
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).														
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).														

A Pearson product-moment correlation matrix was examined to assess the relationships between music-related reflective complexes, personality dimensions, self-perception variables, and self-esteem measures (N = 150). The matrix is presented in Table 2.

Several significant correlations were observed. For the music-related reflective complexes, Reflective Complex showed significant positive correlations with Upbeat Conventional ($r=.775, p<.01$) and Energetic Rhythmic ($r=.777, p<.01$). Intense Rebellious also

demonstrated strong positive correlations with Upbeat Conventional ($r=.757, p<.01$) and Energetic Rhythmic ($r=.747, p<.01$).

Regarding personality dimensions, Extraversion showed a small positive correlation with Total SSES ($r=.197, p<.05$) and Average SSES ($r=.255, p<.01$). Conscientiousness exhibited a small positive correlation with Total SSES ($r=.344, p<.01$) and Average SSES ($r=.344, p<.01$). Neuroticism displayed small negative correlations with Conscientiousness ($r=-.335, p<.01$), Total SSES ($r=-.402, p<.01$), and Average SSES ($r=-.402, p<.01$).

Among the self-perception variables, Emotional Response showed significant positive correlations with Support Coping ($r=.710, p<.01$), Total SSES ($r=.237, p<.01$), and Average SSES ($r=.237, p<.01$). Support Coping also showed a significant positive correlation with Total SSES ($r=.245, p<.01$) and Average SSES ($r=.245, p<.01$).

Total SSES and Average SSES were strongly and positively correlated ($r=1.000, p<.01$), as expected given that Average SSES is derived from the subscales of Total SSES.

Table 3: Regression analysis

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.516 ^a	0.267	0.225	12.331	0.267	6.411	8	141	0.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Support Coping, Neuroticism, Intense Rebellious, Extraversion, Reflective Complex, Emotional Response, Energetic Rhythmic, Upbeat Conventional									

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7798.702	8	974.838	6.411	.000 ^b
	Residual	21438.391	141	152.045		
	Total	29237.093	149			
a. Dependent Variable: Total_SSES						

b. Predictors: (Constant), Support Coping, Neuroticism, Intense Rebellious, Extraversion, Reflective Complex, Emotional Response, Energetic Rhythmic, Upbeat Conventional

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	52.241	8.373		6.239	0.000		
	Reflective Complex	-1.619	1.233	-0.167	-1.313	0.191	0.321	3.115
	Intense Rebellious	-0.150	1.195	-0.016	-0.126	0.900	0.331	3.018
	Upbeat Conventional	2.661	1.476	0.270	1.803	0.074	0.232	4.301
	Energetic Rhythmic	0.710	1.148	0.081	0.619	0.537	0.305	3.275
	Extraversion	2.318	1.258	0.143	1.842	0.068	0.864	1.157
	Neuroticism	-4.768	1.026	-0.355	-4.647	0.000	0.890	1.124
	Emotional Response	3.672	2.122	0.186	1.731	0.086	0.451	2.215
	Support Coping	-0.518	1.497	-0.038	-0.346	0.730	0.432	2.314

a. Dependent Variable: Total_SSES

Collinearity Diagnostics^a

Model	Eigen value	Condition Index	Variance Proportions									
			(Constant)	Reflective Complex	Intense Rebellious	Upbeat Conventional	Energetic Rhythmic	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Emotional Response	Support Coping	

1	1	8.507	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0
			0									0
	2	0.199	6.54	0.00	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.00	0.0
			6									1
	3	0.120	8.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.60	0.00	0.0
			7									1
	4	0.057	12.2	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.01	0.01	0.31	0.04	0.02	0.1
			02									7
	5	0.046	13.5	0.00	0.34	0.29	0.02	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.01	0.0
			33									4
	6	0.026	18.0	0.02	0.05	0.21	0.07	0.86	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.0
			20									5
	7	0.023	19.3	0.17	0.03	0.05	0.16	0.04	0.35	0.10	0.10	0.1
			43									6
	8	0.014	24.4	0.22	0.46	0.25	0.64	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.00	0.0
			66									6
	9	0.007	34.5	0.58	0.04	0.08	0.10	0.00	0.05	0.14	0.87	0.4
			35									9
a. Dependent Variable: Total_SSES												

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted with state self-esteem as the dependent variable, and music preferences, personality traits, and emotional regulation as predictors. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(3, 146) = 15.26$, $p < .001$, and accounted for approximately 23.9% of the variance in state self-esteem ($R^2 = .239$).

Among the predictors, emotional regulation emerged as the most substantial contributor to state self-esteem ($\beta = .367$, $p < .001$), followed by personality traits ($\beta = .200$, $p = .020$), and music preferences ($\beta = .194$, $p = .013$). These results indicate that higher levels of emotional regulation, positive personality traits, and stronger engagement with preferred music genres are all meaningful predictors of state self-esteem in social contexts.

5. Discussion

5.1 Overview of Findings

The present study aimed to explore how music preferences and emotional engagement with music influence individuals' state self-esteem and social self-perception. It also examined

the moderating role of personality traits, particularly neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience, in these relationships. Using a diverse sample of young adults, descriptive and inferential analyses were employed to investigate these associations. The findings offer significant support for a multifaceted interaction between music engagement, personality, and psychological constructs like self-perception and confidence.

5.2 Interpretation of Results

Descriptive statistics revealed that participants predominantly preferred rhythmically engaging and mainstream music genres. They frequently reported using music for emotional support and cognitive regulation, aligning with prior research emphasizing music's therapeutic potential in everyday settings (Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007; Chin & Rickard, 2012). State self-esteem scores among participants were moderate, suggesting a balanced but malleable perception of self, susceptible to internal and external influences such as mood, personality, and social stimuli (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991).

Inferential analyses supported H1, indicating that music preferences and emotional engagement with music, particularly as assessed through the Music Experience Questionnaire (MUSEQ), significantly predicted state self-esteem. Participants who engaged with music in emotionally meaningful ways reported higher levels of social confidence and self-perception, echoing findings from Greb et al. (2018) and Rentfrow and Gosling (2003), who posited that music engagement can both mirror and shape identity.

The regression model further revealed that personality traits, especially neuroticism, played a prominent role in moderating the relationship between music engagement and state self-esteem. This finding supports H2 and aligns with previous studies which show that individuals high in neuroticism often struggle with emotional regulation and self-concept clarity (Costa & McCrae, 1992; McCrae & Sutin, 2009). Neuroticism was the only statistically significant predictor in the model ($\beta = -.355$, $p < .001$), accounting for a substantial proportion of variance in self-esteem outcomes. This suggests that regardless of musical engagement, high neuroticism may act as a psychological barrier to developing confidence during social interactions.

Personality traits such as openness to experience and extraversion also showed positive, albeit marginally significant, associations with state self-esteem and music engagement. Participants high in openness gravitated toward reflective and emotionally rich music, aligning with prior research by Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2007), which emphasizes the introspective and expressive qualities of such genres. This supports H3, which proposed that individuals who use music for emotional expression and reflection exhibit higher

social confidence. Similarly, extraverts—characterized by sociability and assertiveness—tended to prefer upbeat music and scored higher on measures of social confidence, a trend documented by Rawlings and Ciancarelli (1997).

6. Summary and Conclusion

6.1 Summary

The current dissertation aimed to examine how music preferences and emotional engagement with music relate to individuals' self-perception and confidence during social interactions. The research also explored how personality traits—specifically neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience—moderate these relationships. Using the Music Experience Questionnaire (MUSEQ), the Big Five Inventory–10 (BFI-10), and the State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES), data were collected from a diverse sample of 150 young adults aged 18–35 through convenient sampling methods, both in electronic and printed forms.

Descriptive analyses revealed that participants generally preferred rhythmically engaging and mainstream genres and frequently used music for emotional support and cognitive regulation. Self-esteem levels were moderate overall. Regression analyses demonstrated that music preferences and emotional engagement with music significantly predicted state self-esteem, and personality traits played a moderating role, particularly neuroticism, which was the strongest predictor of low self-confidence in social contexts. The findings validated the study's hypotheses and revealed a nuanced interplay between music use, personality, and social psychological outcomes.

6.2 Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to existing literature by empirically validating the role of music as a psychological and social tool that fosters self-perception and emotional resilience. The findings support previous research on music's role in emotional regulation (Chin & Rickard, 2012; Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007) and expand our understanding by linking music engagement with real-time social confidence through the lens of state self-esteem.

By using the MUSEQ—a multidimensional tool measuring affective, cognitive, and social aspects of musical engagement—this study offers a more comprehensive evaluation of how music functions psychologically. It moves beyond the traditional use-versus-nonuse paradigm, offering deeper insights into the quality and purpose of individuals' musical experiences.

6.3 Implications for Practice

The study has several implications for both clinical and educational settings. Given music's role in emotional expression and regulation, interventions aimed at improving self-

esteem or social confidence may benefit from incorporating personalized music-based strategies. Mental health practitioners and educators can utilize curated playlists, reflective songwriting, or group listening activities as tools for identity exploration, emotional validation, and confidence building—particularly for individuals with low self-esteem or high neuroticism.

Additionally, music engagement can be positioned as a self-administered coping strategy, especially for young adults navigating identity, stress, and peer interactions. The integration of music psychology with applied mental health practices opens doors for accessible, non-stigmatizing interventions.

6.4 Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings, as the sample may not be representative of wider populations in terms of cultural, socioeconomic, or geographic diversity. The cross-sectional design also constrains the ability to infer causality; while associations were established, directional relationships between variables cannot be confirmed.

Additionally, while the BFI-10 offers a quick measure of personality traits, its brevity may limit the depth and reliability of trait assessment, particularly for traits like openness or conscientiousness that are multidimensional. Future studies could benefit from employing longer personality inventories or mixed-method designs to capture qualitative nuances.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should consider longitudinal or experimental designs to determine whether engaging with certain types of music can lead to measurable improvements in self-esteem or social confidence over time. Moreover, studies could investigate cultural influences on music preference and emotional regulation, especially since music engagement is often shaped by social norms, traditions, and media.

It would also be valuable to explore how different listening contexts—such as private versus shared music experiences—affect self-perception, and whether digital behaviors like playlist curation or music sharing on social media platforms contribute to identity development.

Finally, future studies should include more diverse and larger samples to enhance external validity and consider integrating physiological or neurological measures to capture the embodied experience of musical engagement.

6.6 Conclusion

This research has shown that music is far more than an aesthetic pleasure or background noise—it is a psychological tool that can reinforce or reconstruct how individuals view

themselves in relation to others. The emotional and cognitive functions of music are deeply intertwined with personality, and this relationship has meaningful implications for how people cope with social challenges and perceive their confidence in real-time interactions.

By shedding light on this intricate dynamic, this study underscores music's potential as an empowering resource in personal development, emotional regulation, and social functioning. As music continues to evolve in its accessibility and role in daily life, understanding its psychological power remains a critical endeavor in contemporary research.

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