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Familiarity and liking for music: The moderating effect of creative potential and what predict the market value

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to understand better the determinants of music satisfaction, and its attributed market value. Previous studies have shown that exposure or familiarity with a piece of music influences satisfaction derived from listening to it. This effect seems to be moderated by personality variables, and particularly, openness to experience, a central aspect of creative potential. The purpose of this study is to replicate the moderating effect of openness to experience on the link between exposure and music satisfaction, and to examine the influence of exposure and satisfaction on market value. As expected, exposure predicted music satisfaction. This effect was moderated by openness to experience, even when controlling for other personality traits and components of creative potential. Individuals high on openness were less satisfied with familiar music than those low on openness. Moreover, exposure was positively associated with attributed market value; this effect was mediated by music satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Psychological studies on music satisfaction can be traced back to the emergence of psychology as a science (e.g., Meyer, 1903; Meyer & Thilly, 1901). However, research on factors influencing music satisfaction and purchasing behavior is quite scarce (Sluckin et al., 1983). This lack of research is surprising considering that music is an «activity that consumes so much time and resources and that is a key component of so many social situations that it warrants the attention of mainstream social and personality psychologists» (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003, p. 1236). Thus, it seems valuable for psychology researchers to pay attention to the factors that influence music satisfaction. Moreover, in a context of an economic crisis for the music industry (Tschmuck, 2012), understanding the factors that determine music satisfaction and purchasing behavior appears to be an important and decisive challenge.

Scholars have mainly investigated the influence of exposure to a specific music piece on satisfaction toward this piece through studies about the so called "mere exposure effect" (e.g., Schellenberg et al., 2008; Szpunar et al., 2004). The influence of exposure seems to be different according to individuals' personality and is particularly influenced by openness (Hunter & Schellenberg, 2011). Regarding the psychological and economic implications of the study of music satisfaction, this paper aims to extend previous research on exposure to music and music satisfaction by investigating the moderating influence of creative potential on music satisfaction, and attributed market value.

We will first review evidence on the influence of exposure on music satisfaction and then we will examine the extent to which creative potential, particularly cognitive and conative aspects, could influence music satisfaction and market value.

2. Mere exposure effect: Music familiarity and music satisfaction

The first determining factors of satisfaction while listening to music were established by using the mere exposure effect paradigm (Zajonc, 1968, 2001). Based on research from the early century on music satisfaction (Meyer, 1903), Zajonc (1968) demonstrated that the exposure frequency to words was positively related to a positive attitude towards these stimuli. He concluded that: "mere repeated exposure of the individual to a stimulus is a sufficient condition for the enhancement of his attitude toward it. By 'mere exposure' is meant a condition which just makes the given stimulus accessible to the individual's perception" (Zajonc, 1968, p. 1). A considerable amount of literature has been published on the mere exposure effect, showing its pervasive and reproducible effect in different cultures and with a wide variety of stimuli (Bornstein, 1989; Zajonc, 2001). In the domain of music, this effect has been studied for various types of behavior, mainly concerning music satisfaction (Hargreaves, 1984; Hunter & Schellenberg, 2011; Schellenberg et al., 2008; Verrier, 2012), or affective response to music (Brentar et al., 1994).

Yet it appears that the influence of exposure frequency to music on music satisfaction has its limits. Indeed, if music satisfaction increases

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with the first exposures to a specific music, it seems that, beyond a certain frequency, music satisfaction starts to decrease (Zajonc et al., 1972). This specific effect is called an inverted-U curve and has been highlighted several times with different types of stimuli, including musical stimuli (e.g. Hargreaves, 1984; Hunter & Schellenberg, 2011; Schellenberg et al., 2008). These results are consistent with daily observation: if only familiar music was appreciated and positively evaluated, listening and purchasing behaviors would never evolve and would remain fixed on a single and static type of music. Creativity and innovation would thus be unnecessary, as well for the rest of the consumer goods industry (Hirschman, 1980).

The inverted-U curve effect previously described appears to be moderated by two different kinds of variables. First, the method used by researchers to present music seems to affect participants' music satisfaction. Indeed, when participants are constrained by the experimental conditions to continuously listen to music, satisfaction appears to decrease rapidly as the stimulus presentation is repeated. In fact, Schellenberg et al. (2008) noticed this phenomenon starting from the third listening for the same piece of music. However, when people were exposed to the same music pieces in an incidental way, music satisfaction did not decrease after the first two plays. These results may account for differences between results found in laboratory and naturalistic studies of exposure effect (Bornstein, 1989). Indeed, in laboratory settings, the experimenters control the exposure frequency, whereas in naturalistic studies, the exposure frequencies are obtained through different methods such as exposure indexes (word frequency in a language lexicon; e.g. Zajonc, 1968) or self-reported familiarity, closer to an incidental exposure. In the present study, to investigate the exposure effect, we chose the self-report method to assess familiarity.

Individual differences are the second kind of variables that ought to moderate the inverted-U curve relating exposure and satisfaction. Zajonc et al. (1972) observed that the classic pattern of response was only observed for one-third of their participants (Zajonc et al., 1972). They suggested that personal characteristics might affect the occurrence of such patterns. Among the characteristics that may modulate the classical mere exposure effect, personality traits have been identified as important moderators (Hunter & Schellenberg, 2011). Indeed, one of the Big Five personality traits, Openness to experience, was positively associated with satisfaction only in the case of initial exposure to music, and negatively as the exposure frequency increases. Thus, Openness seems to be an important moderator variable between exposure frequency to a musical stimulus and its related level of satisfaction. Interestingly, Openness also correlates with creativity in several domains (e.g., Feist, 1998), and is a central personality trait in creativity research. Thus, the present study aims to extend Hunter and Schellenberg's (2011) previous work by using a different operationalization of music exposure and investigating the moderating influence of personality traits, but also by examining the influence of other dimensions of participants' creative potential.

3. Creative potential and satisfaction with music

Creativity is defined as the ability to realize a production—whether a simple idea or a concrete realization—which is original (new or unexpected) while remaining appropriate (useful or valuable) to the context in which it occurs (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). The first research on creativity focused mainly on the study of eminent people or geniuses known to have exceptional talents or gifts (Runco & Albert, 2010). This approach to eminent creativity, sometimes labeled "Big C" creativity (e.g., Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Runco, 2007; Runco & Pagnani, 2011), has resulted in the identification of several personal characteristics associated with creativity. Nevertheless, since several decades, scholars have adopted a broader conception of creativity assuming that all humans can display creative behavior and thinking in their daily lives. Consequently, they examined everyday creativity in ordinary individuals, and have proposed various conceptions, such as 'everyday creativity' (Richards, 1999, 2010), 'personal creativity' (Runco, 2006), little 'c' creativity (Craft, 2001), and mini 'c' creativity (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

Since the publication by Rhodes (1961) of the framework for organizing the various perspectives on creativity, called "the 4 Ps of creativity", multivariate approaches to creativity are widespread (Caroff & Lubart, 2012; Lubart, 1994, 1999; Runco, 2007; Runco & Pagnani, 2011; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999). Currently they offer the most comprehensive conception, which take account of psychological characteristics of individuals (Person), but also the characteristics of the environment or context in which a certain output must be achieved (Press), the type of mental operation conducted during the creation process (Process), as well as the type of expected production and the conditions of its reception (Production). From this approach, Runco (2007; Runco & Pagnani, 2010) argued for a clear distinction between creative performance (actual manifest creative performance) and creative potential which refers to the pertinent dimensions (person, process, press) that lead to creative performance not yet realized. According to this distinction, one can assume that the creative ability of a person in a certain domain depends mainly on his/her creative potential, in other words, a particular combination of personal characteristics (cognitive skills, personality traits, motivations, etc.). So each person has a unique profile on these factors. Within the cognitive components of creative potential, general intelligence and divergent thinking are the most examined. The latter appears to be a classical and central component of creative potential (Guilford & Hoepfner, 1971; Lubart, 2001; Runco, 2004; Runco & Pagnani, 2011), even though it is not synonymous with creativity (Runco & Acar, 2010). Divergent thinking can be defined as the cognitive ability to produce numerous responses in various directions for one task (Guilford, 1967; Runco & Pagnani, 2011). In a meta-analysis of 17 studies, Kim (2008) found a significantly higher relationship between creative achievement and divergent thinking test scores ($r = .216$) than with IQ test scores ($r = .167$).

Several studies have revealed that cognitive aspects of creative potential influenced the evaluation of a stimulus. For example, Hood (1973) was the first to postulate that creative potential may lead to individual differences when participants are asked to assess creativity. In his study, he assessed participants' level of originality based on a divergent thinking task (i.e. "unusual use" task) in. Then, participants assessed the originality of ideas produced by other individuals in a divergent thinking task. Results showed that less original participants were more sensitive to variations of ideas' originality than "original" participants. More recently, Caroff and Besançon (2008) confirmed the existence of an interaction between the level of originality of participants and their assessment of the creativity of advertisements. However, they found the opposite effect: the most original individuals in a test of divergent thinking were more sensitive to the advertisements' level of originality than less original individuals.

Very few studies assumed that cognitive aspects of creative potential are related to satisfaction regarding a specific piece of music. Nevertheless, in a study on the relationship between creative potential, aesthetic response to music, and musical preferences, Ziv and Keydar (2009) assessed participants' divergent thinking capacity with two tests. In the first test, they were asked to think of all possible uses of an object. In the second, they were asked to look at two simple graphic drawings and write down all possible interpretations of what the drawings may represent. For both tests, participants' productions were assessed on two criteria: fluency of ideas (number of uses or interpretations written) and originality of ideas (those mentioned by 5% or less of the sample). Results showed that both scores were significantly correlated with liking assessed by participants for three pieces of music from the classical repertoire. However, in this study, participant's familiarity to the music piece they had heard was not controlled (Ziv & Keydar, 2009).

Besides these cognitive aspects, individuals' creative potential is also characterized by some conative components, and particularly by personality traits. Some of these traits are systematically associated

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