

**How Listening to Different Genres of Music as an Emotion Regulation Strategy Promotes
Healthy Emotion Expression**

Natalee A. Olsen

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Abstract

Encompassing many other uses; music is one of the most accessible modes of emotion regulation, as it offers universal coping strategies that can be utilized instantaneously by anyone who has access to headphones or a stereo. With this being said, this literature review will investigate how listening to a specific genre of music can impact emotion regulation and neuroticism as a way of promoting healthy emotion expression in an individual. I hypothesize that music-listening enhances emotion regulation strategies and lowers levels of neuroticism (i.e., the experience of negative emotions), but the extent to which negative emotions are alleviated depends on the genre of music utilized most by the individual. After providing background information on music and emotions, music genres, emotion regulation, and neuroticism; this literature review will analyze various empirical studies and theoretical papers to further explore the relationship between music and emotion regulation, different functions and genres of music and how they influence processes of emotional regulation, and finally the relationship between music-listening and neuroticism. Overall, the findings of this review suggest that music poses as a valuable source of emotional coping; especially for individuals with neurotic tendencies. Compared to other mental support strategies like therapy or other programs, music-listening is a more accessible way for people to find immediate alleviation of their negative symptoms. Essentially, listening to music is an adaptive and beneficial emotional coping strategy that has the potential to enhance one's overall wellbeing.

Introduction

Amidst the chaos of daily life, many people succumb to unhealthy coping strategies without noticing that a healthier and more accessible resource is available in their back pocket. Music is a tool that has several capabilities. For one, it is utilized to enhance social experiences and strengthen interpersonal bonds. Alternatively, it is used to tell stories and create sensual experiences. Nevertheless, it often goes unnoticed that music can be used in daily life to alleviate negative thoughts and magnify positive emotions. Music-listeners unknowingly rely on music for its ability to cultivate favorable emotional responses, thus making it an effective perpetrator in regulating one's mood. However, it is not certain how listening to a specific genre of music can impact emotion regulation and neuroticism as a way of promoting healthy emotion expression in an individual. In the attempt to observe possible associations between music genre and emotion expression, this paper aims to examine how listening to various genres of music influences emotion regulation strategies and neuroticism (i.e., the experience of negative emotions) in order to understand how various genres of music might benefit emotion expression.

First, we will review the impact of music on emotions. The relationship between music and emotion is complex, but this paper will have a particular focus on the idea that music induces strong emotional responses that alleviate stress and negative emotions. This section will also investigate how music intensifies certain feelings and triggers responses. Second, we will further investigate specific genres of music and how various music preferences lead to different emotional experiences. Third, we will examine the specifics behind emotion regulation and how various emotion regulatory habits influence an individual's overall emotion expression. This paper's introduction concludes with a brief analysis of what neuroticism is and how it holds a close relationship with negative habits of emotion expression.

Background

Music and Emotion

Emotions are known to be unpredictable and sporadic, therefore people have the tendency to become very overwhelmed when their flow of emotions feels higher and more uncontrollable than usual. This avoidance of emotion stems from a lack of control, which is why people subsequently turn to specific coping methods as a way to enhance their sense of jurisdiction over their emotions. This is where the role of music comes into play, since music is recognized as an effective method for managing and regulating one's emotions. In-terms of emotions, music has the capabilities to not only increase one's overall well-being, but to impact the intensity and expression of certain emotions (Carvahlo, 2022). Therefore, music listening is used by many to deliberately control, support, and change their current emotional state. A powerful relationship between music and emotions stems from the interactions between music and the listener. Therefore, it can be inferred that those who are more musically inclined reap the benefits of music more than others, considering they have the perceptual skills needed to fully comprehend a musical piece (Carvahlo, 2022). If someone truly resonates with the effects of music, then they can harness music as a tool to enhance the idea that their current problem or emotional struggle will eventually pass. Some musical pieces carry messages that help one to understand their own personal situations. This is where music fully becomes an effective emotional coping strategy. Music is not used to contain emotions; but to help someone imagine an ideal scenario in their head. The visualization of an ideal atmosphere effectively helps someone to understand and integrate an emotional experience into their real life (Carvahlo, 2022). This is done through a process known as "visual imagery". According to Carvahlo (2022), musically-cultivated visual imagery can lead to the development of scenarios that make an

emotional situation more prone to reappraisal. In other words, music gives a person the ability to see a situation with a fresh pair of eyes. When visual imagery works with episodic memory, people can visualize a specific event in their lives. In fact, the remembrance of particular emotional events evoked by music have nostalgic functions. For example, music could lead someone to remember past events that provoke feelings of anger, but if used correctly; the specific musical piece can lead them to a better understanding of the situation overall. Thus, music is an effective tool for emotional coping.

Genres of Music

Whether someone listens to music regularly or only on occasion, music has the flexibility and diversity that allows people to identify with specific genres more than others for many reasons. It is apparent that certain genres of music make it easier to exercise imagination or to express emotions - but the distinction becomes blurry when considering which genres trigger happy emotions and which genres trigger destructive emotions. According to Vella (2017), prevalent factors such as personality traits and music genre preferences induce instrumental influences that predict specific music listening habits with mood regulation. For one, personalities associated with traits of sociability, high activity, and positive emotions are associated with music genres that have high levels of arousal and positive valence. These genre subsets would be characterized by “Energetic-Rhythmic” and “Upbeat-Conventional” Furthermore, extraverted personalities are more associated with Energetic Rhythmic and Upbeat Conventional music genres, with optimism being most strongly associated with Energetic-Rhythmic genres (Vella, 2017). According to Vella’s (2017) study of music preference and personality, individuals with high ratings of openness experience commonly shared artistic characteristics as well, one of these being diverse music preferences. Essentially, individuals who

have artistic and creative tendencies tend to use music in particular ways that align with their preferred genres. This is conveyed when an individual identifies with a specific music genre more over others, because they feel it best aligns with their general moods, temperament, and life perspective. This study also demonstrated that cognitive uses of music partially mediates the relationship between openness to experience and Rhythmic-Conventional music preference. A similar relationship was also apparent for emotional uses of music, as emotional uses of music partially mediates the relationship between openness to experience and having preferences for Intense-Rebellious genres of music (Vella, 2017). This is relevant to this review, as it shows that different genres of music have different purposes. Specific genres, like Intense-Rebellious genres, may align with someone's emotional state more than other genres, therefore they will consistently utilize that genre to process, understand, and unleash their own emotions. Furthermore, since most people have emotional uses with genres that are rebellious and intense, this highlights that individuals who have emotional uses of music have a tendency of having more negative emotions; hence their gravitation towards rebellious and harsh genres.

Emotion Regulation

Emotional regulation is a human process in which we are engaged in on a day-to-day basis. We use emotions to lead important functions like decision-making, developing memories, and to interact with others. Emotions allow us to have self-awareness of not only our personal actions, but also of our innate values and goals. While emotions have many supportive characteristics, they also can lead to complications that prevent a person from the ultimate attainment of a goal (Gonzalez-Escamilla, 2022). This is why humans have learned to engage in a process known as emotional regulation. The "Process Model of Emotional Regulation" defines emotion regulation as a goal-motivated emotional response that initiates the process of one

purposefully altering their expression of emotions that stem from a specific experience. This change can be exhibited physiologically, visually, or verbally (Gonzalez-Escamilla, 2022). Carvahlo (2022) further elaborates on the process of emotional regulation by specifying upon the two strategies of emotional regulation: distraction and reappraisal. Distraction is defined as finding something that takes our mind off a problematic situation, whereas reappraisal allows someone to see the current situation with a fresh set of eyes and a new, possibly more proactive perspective (Carvahlo, 2022). Essentially, emotional regulation can be simplified as a process in which someone reinforces a feeling of control over their emotions. Though different methods of regulation are utilized by different people, the overall purpose of emotional regulation is to make it so our inner emotional systems and processes match our external goal (Gonzalez-Escamilla, 2022). Gonzalez (2022) used his research to categorize the strategy of reappraisal as inherently adaptive, whereas the strategies of avoidance and emotion suppression are inherently maladaptive.

Harmful regulation strategies of avoidance and suppression are known to have correlations with the psychological personality trait known as neuroticism. Individuals with neurotic personality types tend to experience persistent and extreme states of overall distress and dissatisfaction (Grant, 2011). According to Grant, pairing situational stressors with a lack of efficient coping methods can increase neuroticism's effects on one's well-being. Therefore, in terms of emotion regulation; it is important for neurotic personalities to have healthy, efficient methods of processing their emotions (2011). If used healthily with focuses on the correct genres for an individual; music may act as a mediator between affective neurotic symptoms, how negative emotions are processed, and how they are expressed. With this knowledge, this paper will demonstrate that music promotes the healthy regulatory processes of distraction and

reappraisal, and that it discourages the harmful processes of avoidance and emotional suppression. In this review paper, the beneficial cognitive processes of emotion regulation (Gonzalez, 2022) will be analyzed and then applied to processes of music-listening.

Neuroticism

In the world of psychology, neuroticism is one of the Big Five Personality traits, and encompasses qualities of angry hostility, anxiety, depression, impulsiveness, self-consciousness, and vulnerability (Grant, 2011). People with high levels of neuroticism tend to be very avoidant and emotionally removed. According to Grant (2011), neuroticism is closely tied to the experience of negative affect, therefore it can be inferred that people with higher levels of neuroticism experience more emotional instability. Emotional instability leads to issues in overall well-being. In fact, research demonstrates that neuroticism is linked to high exposure of stressful events and high emotional reactivity to these events; therefore neuroticism is correlated with having higher levels of distress overall (Grant, 2011).

It is apparent that people rely on different emotional coping methods throughout their daily lives, thus everyone is on a unique path to certain health outcomes. According to the study done by Grant (2011), people with high levels of neuroticism tend to rely on coping strategies that are more harmful than not. Therefore, it can be said that neurotics experience high levels of emotional distress overall because they continuously rely on coping strategies that are ineffective. With that being said, this paper will demonstrate how music as a coping strategy has the potential to alleviate levels of emotional distress. Thus, music can be utilized as an effective emotion regulation strategy and an active combatant to neuroticism. Now that we have covered

the relationship of music and emotion, how music impacts emotions across different genres, and the characteristics of neuroticism; we can explore the emotional effects of different genres of music and how music can impact emotion expression via processes of emotion regulation and symptoms of neuroticism.

Literature Search Methods

Based on the previous assumptions, the research tasks for this literature review were to identify (i) how music has a positive impact on emotion regulation and expression, (ii) and how the positive emotional impacts of music influence levels of neuroticism. This review is based on electronic literature searches conducted in September and October of 2022. The search keywords were music, emotions, emotion regulation, emotion expression, genres, neuroticism, and a combination of these in full text or abstract. Other search criteria was as follows: (i) peer-reviewed articles or academic books published online, (ii) a timeframe from 2008 to 2022, and (iii) written in the English language. The electronic searches were conducted in the following databases: Sage Publication, PsychInfo, EBSCOhost, and Psyc Articles. Thereafter, only 15 articles were found to be valid for the review phase. The excluded articles consisted of those that did not target the analysis of music, emotional regulation, emotional expression, and neuroticism. The excluded articles also did not have empirical data on music's influences on the concepts mentioned above.

The articles selected for review were mostly (13/15) completed in the United States. One article (1/15) was completed in Switzerland and one other article (1/15) had an experiment that was conducted in 4 different countries: India, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The subjects between music and emotions differed in several articles: n=4 focused on music and emotion regulation, n=1 on emotion regulation, n=1 on emotion expression, n=1 on music and

personality types, n=1 on neuroticism, n=5 on different music genres and their emotional effects, and n=2 on music and neuroticism. The research methods deployed in the articles consisted of online surveys and questionnaires (n=8), a focus group (n=1), an in-lab experiment (n=2), and literature reviews (n=4). The method for analysis in this review was split between theories and inductive content classification.

Category 1: Music and Emotional Regulation

Before attempting to understand the complex relationship between music and emotion regulation, everyone can agree that music either carries subtle hints of emotion or very prominent emotional tones that can be translated by an individual's own emotional contexts. As a universal language, music has a diverse array of emotional qualities that people can identify with on a global level. This gives music immense potential of allowing people to regulate their emotions in many different ways. A variety of studies have suggested that the relationship between music-listening and emotion regulation is valuable in understanding how different music habits or genre preferences can impact emotion regulation and neuroticism (Miranda, 2021). The relationship between music and emotion regulation can also help to clarify what particular genres of music effectively promote healthy emotion expression in an individual. Additional research has found that different emotion regulation strategies can either alleviate negative emotions, or harmfully magnify negative emotions that ultimately lead to depression (Garrido, 2022). This has implications for how different methods of music-listening or genre preferences can impact emotion regulation strategies as well as levels of neuroticism in an individual.

Subcategory 1: Emotion Regulation and Music-Listening Habits

The effectiveness of regulating emotions through music predominantly depends on the habits, routines, and rituals that the listener engages in while listening. With this being said, it can be inferred that certain methods of music-listening cultivate positive effects of emotion regulation, while others hinder the process of emotion regulation and trigger negative coping strategies for the listener instead. Research on music-based emotion regulation, healthy and unhealthy habits of music-listening, and methods of coping found that music-based affect regulation and healthy or unhealthy music-listening habits can explain coping strategies in adults (Silverman, 2020; 2021). This is important to address because the research highlights that music can, in-fact, promote healthy emotion regulation and coping strategies if used correctly and proactively.

Silverman (2020) investigated music-based emotion regulation, healthy and unhealthy habits of music-listening, and methods of coping in adults with mental health conditions in an acute care unit and adults with substance-use disorders. Silverman conducted these studies to assess the major gap in existing research on this topic, particularly concerning whether music-based affect regulation and healthy versus unhealthy music-listening habits explain the coping methods used by adults with mental health conditions and substance-use disorders. To conduct this research, Silverman administered questionnaires amongst participants in the acute care units. These questionnaires included the Brief Music in Mood Regulation Scale; which assesses mood-regulating strategies through music, the Healthy-Unhealthy Music Scale; which assesses individuals' uses of music as predictors of healthy and unhealthy behavior, and the Brief COPE Inventory; which measures an individual's coping responses to difficult or stressful events (Silverman, 2020). The findings from these studies demonstrate that listening to music can be an adaptive and beneficial emotional coping strategy to enhance one's overall wellbeing (Silverman,

2020). In addition, Silverman's studies demonstrate that unhealthy music use (like listening to music with vulgar and pessimistic features) constitutes maladaptive coping strategies which can lead to further emotional dysfunction.

A strength of these studies is that the samples were inclusive for those with mental health conditions and substance-use disorders. These studies were able to contribute valuable insights that extend to an under-researched group. Therefore, the important concept of inclusion for a special population has been addressed which increases the study's level of representation. Another strength is that these studies used multiple regression analysis. The use of multiple linear regression allows researchers to account for all of the potentially important factors within the topic of music and emotion regulation. A weakness of these studies is that the results are limited by geography and the participants' demographics. Furthermore, since the participants were adults with mental health conditions, this means that they were experiencing negative symptoms to begin with. According to Silverman, negative affect states as a result of the participants' situations may have influenced the study's data (2020). In-regards to the participants with substance-use disorders, participants could have been experiencing symptoms of withdrawal or strong cravings, and these uncomfortable feelings may have influenced the way participants answered certain questions. Therefore, the participants' affective states may have influenced the study's results overall. Another weakness of the study is that it was strictly limited to patients in an acute care unit and detoxification unit, yet the specific type of substances the participants were addicted to did not matter. This may have led to inconsistencies in the study's concluding data.

These findings are similar to what other research has found on this topic, as another study on music and emotion regulation conducted by Garrido (2022) indicates that music-listening can

be an adaptive emotional coping strategy to enhance wellbeing for any kind of individual. However, these studies differ from others in that it focused on populations with mental health conditions and issues of substance use. Similar to what other literature has said on the topic of music and emotion regulation, these studies were conducted on the basis that different genres do not exude more beneficial qualities than others, but rather it is the individual's existing relationship with the specific music that constitutes helpful coping (Silverman, 2021). The following studies of (Garrido, 2022; Hennessy, 2021; Silverman 2020; 2021; Carvahlo et al., 2022) all done on the topic of music and emotion regulation demonstrate the importance of conducting individual assessments of music preferences and emotion coping strategies when working with adults with substance use disorder. Individual assessments allow for the achievement of optimal results for each person (Silverman 2020; 2021). Overall, considering that music-listening is a common practice for people with mental health issues and substance use disorders, it seems that music-based emotion regulation tactics may promote adaptive and healthy coping skills in people with substance use disorder; thus increasing their likelihood of recovery (Silverman, 2021).

The research done by Silverman (2020; 2021) demonstrates that when used correctly, music poses as an effective form of emotional coping; which is a foundational process of emotional regulation. As people have unique music preferences, relationships with music, and individualized coping strategies (Silverman, 2020), these studies claim that the capabilities of music-based emotion regulation tend to be highly distinctive and varying amongst individuals. However, Silverman demonstrates that unhealthy music use (like listening to music with vulgar and pessimistic features) constitutes maladaptive coping strategies which can lead to further emotional dysfunction (2020). This supports the aspect of my research question that implores

how listening to various genres of music (cynical genres versus hopeful genres) influences emotion regulation strategies and levels of neuroticism. These studies in-particular help us infer that unhealthy music use may lead to higher levels of neuroticism. Overall, Silverman's research supports the concept that specific habits of music-listening can impact emotion regulation and neuroticism, and that certain strategies serve as a method of promoting healthy emotion expression in any kind of individual. These studies demonstrate that music use is a versatile coping mechanism because it is predominantly adaptive. It should be noted that because music has maladaptive qualities that correlate with increased negative affective states, the harmful effects of music may correlate with higher levels of neuroticism. Overall, Silverman's research poses as a direct antecedent to the concept that each and every individual has different response-focused strategies, and these strategies determine that individual's specific processes of emotional regulation.

Subcategory 2: Individual Relationships with Music and Emotional Regulation Processes

Although it has been conveyed that music has emotional qualities that influence the emotional states of an individual, it has not been proven if an individual's personal inclinations towards music plays a mediating role in how successful it is at regulating emotions. Across the board, it is apparent that music has many different purposes. However, people with more advanced knowledge in music may be more inclined to use music-listening as a method of controlling, comprehending, or transforming emotions. As such, individuals with higher tendencies of music-listening may be more emotionally stable. Research on the topic of individual relationships with music and emotion regulation have found that the effects of music on emotion regulation were more evident in individuals who have higher levels of musical

sophistication (i.e. music-related skills, expertise, and behavior) (Carvahlo et al., 2022). This is important because if musical sophistication has a large effect on how music as a whole impacts emotion regulation methods and promotes healthy emotion expression in an individual, then this should be addressed to promote cognitive improvement in individuals who can benefit from using music as a coping method.

Carvahlo, Cera, and Silva (2022) investigated the relationship between an individual's relation with music (i.e., their level of musical sophistication) and executive functioning skills. To be specific, the researchers induced feelings of anger in the participants and then studied the various ways participants used music to regulate their emotional states. The researchers then measured the participants' regulation efficacy as a means of investigating whether music listening is a useful tactic for implementing efficient emotion regulation strategies (Carvahlo et al., 2022). Carvahlo and the other researchers hypothesized that music listeners would utilize a form of reappraisal that is different from the one used by those who don't listen to music for emotional reasons (2022). Specifically, music listeners would rely more on the quality of empathy to regulate or cope with their emotions. Results from this study indicate music's efficiency at regulating one's emotions is greater in individuals with higher levels of musical sophistication. Essentially, one's level of musical sophistication will determine the level of influence that music has in the process of emotional regulation (Carvahlo et al., 2022).

A strength of this particular study is that unlike other studies, it incorporated the consideration of an individual's relationship with music into account when evaluating music's capacities to regulate emotions. There is limited research in the field of music and emotions that includes such measures of musical sophistication (i.e. music training or music knowledge) in the relationship between music-listening and emotion regulation. A weakness of Carvahlo et al.'s

study involves the measures of anger that were involved. Since participants' measures were self-reported, they may not be completely truthful or reflective of how the participants were actually feeling. This paper is similar to other studies on this topic, as the two studies (Gupta, 2018) and (Brisson et al., 2020) generally also conclude that the effects of music on emotion regulation strategies largely depend on the listeners' individual characteristics and/or specific preferences. This is important to note, as later in this review paper the concept of music and what specific genre preferences mean about an individual will be discussed. This study differs from others because its findings highlight the importance of considering an individual's level of musical sophistication in the relationship between music-listening and emotional regulation (Carvahlo et al., 2022).

Overall, this research suggests that listening to music acts as an effective emotional regulatory function. However, according to this paper; music's capacity to regulate one's emotions depends on their individual characteristics, such as their level of musical sophistication and high working memory. Furthermore, music seems to cultivate increased feelings of empathy, which aids in the emotional regulatory process (Carvalho et al., 2022). Thus, music-listening promotes healthy emotion expression in that if used correctly, it can regulate difficult emotions through increased manifestations of empathy. Although this paper demonstrates that music helps to regulate emotions depending on the individual's qualities, the only significant results this paper provides are ones that depend on higher levels of music sophistication. The research performed in this literature review builds upon the idea that music can help anyone regulate their emotions, no matter if they are musicians or if they are knowledgeable about the concept of music in-general.

Category 2: Functions of Music, Genres, and Emotional Regulation

It is heavily questioned how something as sentient as music can have such a pronounced effect on someone's emotional state or processes. Subsequently, this brings into question the idea if different genres of music have stronger emotional effects than others, and what constitutes genres as beneficial or harmful for emotional processes. A variety of studies on specific types of music and how it impacts emotion regulation and expression in individuals have found that prominent factors such as personality and genre preference cultivate significant influences in musical mood induction (Vella et al., 2017). Musical mood induction is the process of using music to alter someone's current affective state. This is valuable in the observance of possible associations between music-listening and emotion regulation, as it paves way for people to understand what types of music are most beneficial to their personality type and personal circumstances. In fact, additional research has found that women are more likely to have emotional uses of music, whereas men tend to have more cognitive uses of music (Vella, et al., 2017). This can have implications on music's capacity to control or manage anyone's emotions, as it lowers music's versatility in being emotionally impactful for *any* type of person. Therefore it is important to understand the specific criteria that makes music effective in regulating an individual's emotions.

For foundational purposes in understanding the relationship between music and emotion regulation, it is important to consider the core functions and mechanisms of music, and how its various features and layers of music can stimulate raw feelings in humans. Trivedi (2017) investigated the most prominent philosophical approaches to this question of how music operates in cultivating real emotions: including formalism, metaphorical meaning, expression theories, arousalism, resemblance theories, and persona theories. The main research question investigated

in this study is how and why music has differing levels of expressiveness, and how something inanimate and insentient like music produces a prevalent mental state in an individual. Though there isn't a concrete hypothesis in this study, Trivedi (2017) argues for the "imaginationist" approach, which essentially states that music can convey a variety of emotions depending on what is imagined by the listener and what the situational contexts are. Trivedi concludes that when people imaginatively project life and mental states onto a song, it gives music strong emotional qualities (2017). This is important to address because this research highlights that while music does not have outward emotional purposes, the experiences that it provides to a listener depends on their current mental state. With this being considered, it can be inferred that if a neurotic person is experiencing emotional dissonance; their negative emotions can be projected onto a musical piece in either a constructive way, or a harmful way. Essentially, mentally animating the music is what gives music emotional experiences - whether the experiences are sad or happy. The emotional connotation that a song has is dependent on how the individual imagines their experience with the specific song (Trivedi, 2017).

A strength of Trivedi's research is that it identifies multiple pathways in which music is given emotional connotations and qualities. Analyzing several different perspectives within one body of literature is useful in understanding the complexity of music and emotions - especially when investigating very contrasting views like Trivedi did. A weakness of this research is that it does not provide a concrete conclusion from the analysis of the studies at-hand, but instead settles on a theory of emotion (the imaginationist theory). Solely depending on theories and taking a philosophical approach casts a rather subjective feel on this topic. Trivedi's research is different from other papers on the topic of music and emotion because it revolves around a philosophical approach. While most other sources on the topic of music and emotion are

empirical, this one stretches the psychological concepts of music emotion with philosophical concepts such as the “imaginationist” theory, the “persona’ theory, and even dives into some metaphorical meanings behind music (Trivedi, 2017).

All things considered, Trivedi’s research supports the foundational idea that music has emotional capabilities. Since listeners can perceive music as consisting of extremely emotional content, Trivedi (2017) thereby promotes the idea that music has emotional purposes, which aligns with this literature review because it builds upon the idea that people are able to utilize music as a way of regulating their emotions. Trivedi supports the idea that music promotes healthy emotion expression, by stating that a fluid understanding of how music translates to emotion expression enhances an individual’s understanding of their own affective emotional states. Musical expression also promotes increased levels of empathy, which is an important quality to have not only when attempting to understand your emotions, but also to express them in a healthy manner (Trivedi, 2017).

Shifting to a different aspect on the topic of music features and the emotion regulatory effects of different genres, researchers Brisson and Bianchi (2020) investigated the relationship between personality and individual tastes in music. More specifically, the researchers aimed to investigate how much the structure of reported musical tastes in online surveys about genres is affected by adjustments made in the set of music subgenres that are under study (Brisson et al., 2020). Brisson and Bianchi hypothesized that music genre diversity explains why there is no clear solidified reproducibility in structures of music taste, or obvious patterns that are repeated throughout the population (2020). To conduct this study, the researchers administered online surveys to students at a Swiss university. With these questionnaires, Brisson and Bianchi measured participants’ degrees of appreciation for 40 different music genres and subgenres,

established music-genre groups such as “alternative”, “rock”, “EDM”, and so on (2020). The research on the aspects of different music genres and how people react to them found that specific structures of music taste are influenced by how listeners conceptualize various genres in the grand scheme of their own personal contexts, as well as how they define themselves through music in-general (Brisson et al., 2020). Brisson’s study also found that music preferences depend on the social background of participants, as well as their personal cultural experiences (2020).

A strength of Brisson’s study is that the sample consists of people of the Swiss ethnicity from both a university and a high school. Thus, the study achieves a global perspective by focusing on a Swiss population while also incorporating two different age groups. A weakness of this study is that both samples revolved around French-speaking participants only, which means that some of this study’s context or definitions may have been mistranslated or misconstrued upon translation to English. On another note, this study is similar to others on this topic because previous research on music taste also revolves around genre-based analysis (Brisson et al., 2022). Furthermore, similar to the current study at-hand; previous studies have also implemented heterogeneous sets of music genres to analyze participants’ perceptions of genre. The diverse groups of music genres that society generates may likely be the reason as to why there aren’t any reproducible music tastes or genre structures that are prevalent in the world of musical research.

Though the subject of this paper mostly revolves around separate distinctions of music genres and the characteristics of the groups that each genre falls into, it further insinuates the concept that music promotes emotional regulation. Even so, this research found that the music genres of blues, jazz, and classical music facilitate the mental process known as introspection (Brisson et al., 2022). When someone engages in introspection, they deeply and thoughtfully examine their own mental and emotional states. Therefore, this research proves that softer, more

mellow music genres promote healthier processes of emotional reflection, which lead to healthier methods of emotion regulation overall. In terms of the relationship between an individual's psychological characteristics and their taste in music, this study does not necessarily provide significant conclusions because the findings indicate that interpreting the distinctions of music genres according to their intrinsic properties is misleading and not completely accurate (Brisson et al., 2022)

Category 3: Music and Neuroticism

The research presented in this review paper thus far insinuates that music preferences largely depend on an individual's personality type. Although people are separated by geography, different languages, and different cultures; a specific type of music (like vulgar or rebellious music), seems to have similar emotional and physical effects on people across the world. The concept that personality traits are linked to musical preferences and habits (Gupta, 2018), is valuable to consider with the idea that specific genres of music can impact emotion regulation and neuroticism. Additional research has found that there is a positive correlation between neuroticism and emotional use of music (Miranda, 2020), which has implications for individuals with neurotic personalities who use music as a means of coping. Symptoms of neuroticism may cause music-listeners to succumb to unhealthy music behaviors, such as listening to vulgar and pessimistic genres, or using music as a method of distraction. These habits result in worsened affective states; therefore, it is important to understand how music and neuroticism can work together to cultivate positive emotional regulation methods rather than harmful ones.

In one study, Miranda (2020) analyzed the personality trait of neuroticism and its association with various musical habits, such as the amount of time spent listening to music,

different emotional reactions to music, various music tastes in-terms of genre, and the capabilities of music-based emotion regulation. The research question at-hand was whether or not the negative trait of neuroticism directly impacts musical behaviors, and in what ways that impact manifests itself through an individual's emotional state. Miranda hypothesized that neuroticism involves complicated emotional needs that have an influence on how people engage with and react to music (Miranda, 2020). To further analyze how music and neuroticism relate, Miranda (2020) provides descriptions of the respective features of neuroticism and musical emotions. Miranda then discusses how neuroticism is associated with specific musical habits, how neuroticism is associated with individuals who play instruments, perform musically, and harness the comprehensive quality of creativity overall (2020). Miranda's research found that while music-listening provides neurotic personalities with emotional experiences that can either instigate or alleviate symptoms of neuroticism; the various ways in which these personalities react to, utilize, and create music are too complex to make concrete statements on the relationship between music and neuroticism (2020). This is important to address because neuroticism is a personality trait of emotional instability that increases one's need to find strategies that work for their unique and individual needs. Music listening can be the most accessible means of emotional coping to manage one's frequently negative emotional reactions, depending on their situational circumstances and temperament.

A strength of Miranda's research is that it identifies multiple pathways in which music and neuroticism are related. Analyzing several different perspectives and studies within one piece of literature is useful in understanding the complex relationship of music and neuroticism. A weakness of this source is it did not provide readers with a concrete conclusion from the

analysis of the studies at-hand. Instead, the conclusion of this review emphasized the need for more research on how different music habits may be both beneficial and detrimental for different people with higher levels of neuroticism (Miranda, 2020). This research is similar to the paper done by (Grant, 2011), in that the concepts analyzed within it are coherent with the unanimous idea that neuroticism causes emotional instability. The instability that neuroticism brings about increases an individual's need to find coping strategies - such as music, to help regulate their emotions. Miranda's research supports this literature review because it demonstrates that people with higher levels of neuroticism may resort to different habits of music-listening as a means of emotion regulation (2020). This further insinuates that music is, in fact, a medium of emotional ease. This paper also supports the research question at-hand because it expands on the fact that music is a valuable source of emotional coping, especially for those with neurotic tendencies. Compared to other mental support strategies like therapy or other programs, music-listening is more accessible and easy to harness as a way of providing somewhat immediate alleviation of negative symptoms.

In another study conducted by the same researcher as the one above, Miranda (2021) investigated how various helpful and harmful forms of musical emotion regulation can influence symptoms of neuroticism manifesting as anxiety and/or depression. The research question of this study revolves around an effort to pinpoint the emotional characteristics that form a relationship between neuroticism, music-based emotion regulation, and overall mental health (Miranda, 2021). Miranda hypothesized that people with higher levels of neuroticism are more likely to engage in music listening as a self-help strategy of emotion regulation. However, music-based emotion regulation may do more harm than good, since neurotic personalities have the tendency to distort their emotions and overall perception of the world to an unhealthy extent (2021).

Results of this study demonstrated that there are four characteristics of music-based emotion regulation. These characteristics are rumination, discharging negative emotions, avoidant coping, and liking sad music. All of these have a heavy influence on levels of neuroticism, as well as anxiety and depression (Miranda, 2021). This is important to address because it concretely highlights the harmful music habits that neurotic personalities tend to succumb to. If people with neuroticism are made aware of these tendencies, they may have higher success in combating them with healthier methods of music-listening to regulate their emotions.

A strength of this study is the entire sample was of Canadian ethnicity and lived in Canada. Therefore, this study incorporates diverse and inclusive perspectives on a global scale. A weakness of this study is it did not include enough male or non-binary participants, so the gender differences that were found are insignificant (Miranda, 2021). This research is similar to other papers on this topic because it incorporates the most prominent connections between neuroticism and musical emotion regulation. These connections include deductive regulation, inductive regulation, music-listening to relieve stress, and the concept of negative trait-congruence; which means that liking sad music signifies higher levels of neuroticism (Miranda, 2021). Many other studies on the topic of music-based emotion regulation and neuroticism mention these four forms of emotion regulation when defining music's relationship with negative emotionality and coping strategies.

This research done by Miranda supports this literature review because the findings demonstrate that music-based emotion regulation can alleviate some of the affective symptoms of neuroticism. Therefore, music can be viewed as a healthy and effective coping strategy (Miranda, 2021). Furthermore, the researcher provides evidence that higher levels of neuroticism are correlated with harmful methods of music-based emotion regulation. This further proves the

basis of my research by demonstrating that it isn't the action of utilizing music as a coping method that increases levels of neuroticism, it is the fact that neurotic personalities tend to rely on maladaptive ways to regulate their thoughts and feelings (Miranda, 2021). Subsequently, they get stuck in a harmful loop of repeating the same unhealthy patterns.

Conclusion

How music-listening impacts emotion regulation and neuroticism as a way of promoting healthy emotion expression in an individual is mediated by the psychological temperament of an individual, as well as their contextual environments. By looking at the different uses of music (i.e, the specific genres an individual listens to), through a purely humanistic theoretical approach; we are able to break away from its focus as a central role in understanding emotional regulation, and instead, focus on the impact of music's use in reference to the individual's specific genre preferences. I believe that a person's decision to employ their use in a specific genre of music is heavily rooted in their subjective experiences with music as they interact with their environment. It also depends on the individual's habits, routines, and rituals that they engage in while listening to music. For example, someone who relies on music with purely emotional intentions rather than social or calming grounds will most likely succumb to listening to Intense-Rebellious genres.

The Intense-Rebellious genre grouping resonates with tumultuous individuals who have harder-to-manage, inconsistent temperaments as compared to others. Therefore, according to the research presented in this literature review, it seems that individuals who utilize more cynical and Intense-Rebellious genres of music have higher levels of neuroticism, or exhibit more neurotic tendencies. On another note; an individual who listens to the music genres of blues, jazz, and

classical music exhibits higher tendencies of introspection, which leads to lower levels of neuroticism. When someone engages in introspection, they deeply and thoughtfully examine their own mental and emotional states. Therefore, this research proves that softer, more mellow music genres promote healthier processes of emotional reflection. Music-based habits of introspective reflection lead to healthier methods of emotion regulation, and subsequently, healthier emotional expression overall.

Based on the fundamental research and findings outlined above, there is clear evidence to support that the use of healthy music-listening at an individual level serves as an emotion-regulatory and accessible coping strategy that can promote healthy emotion expression. These findings shed light on how any type of person around the world can use music as an emotion regulation method. However, a more in-depth empirical approach would be needed to reveal that music may be more effective in its immediacy with dealing with unpredictable life stressors than medication or therapy. Overall, it can be concluded that music-listening is an adaptive emotional coping strategy that enhances levels of wellbeing for any kind of individual.

Discussion

The outcomes of this literature review have provided insight into the association between music genre and emotion expression. This review examined the under-researched topic of how various genres of music influence emotion regulation strategies and neuroticism (i.e., the experience of negative emotions) in order to accurately understand how various genres of music might benefit emotion expression. However, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations found in research on music genres specifically. Music genres are highly subjective, therefore most of the study's findings stated that music genre preferences and their impacts on emotion regulation strategies primarily depend on individual temperament,

personality traits, and situational contexts. From a critical therapeutic perspective, it is safe to say that the effectiveness of different music-listening habits are influenced by the individual's current state-of-mind (i.e., the individual is just sad, or the individual is clinically depressed). The findings of this literature review demonstrate the importance of helping individuals to change their music-listening habits in a way that maximizes their emotion regulation capacities to provide support for the processes of emotional expression. Considering the research presented in this literature review, it is important to increase awareness in the younger generations and encourage them to select music genres with higher consciousness and regard for music's effect on their well-being and perspectives.

Further research could clarify how various music-listening habits and genres manage levels of anxiety, considering that anxiety is one of the most prevalent issues in the current generation and their experiences with mental health. Nonetheless, the literature review at hand contributes a helpful basis of knowledge that adds to our understanding of how music carries psychological benefits for any kind of person. If music is not cultivating these benefits for someone, this literature review may provide direction for them to try practicing healthier music-listening methods or choose a different genre. On another note, this literature review presents a conceivable point that it isn't exactly the specific genres of music that increase levels of neuroticism, but it has more to do with the habits and manners in which individuals listen to the music, and the notions that they project onto it. The associations between music, emotion regulation, and neuroticism may have implications for people all around the world because neuroticism seems to have very meaningful, prevalent, and pervasive effects on music-listening habits as a whole. Future longitudinal and more in-depth studies can further clarify how different

music-listening habits can be both helpful or harmful for people with higher levels of neuroticism.

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