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Relationship between the preference styles of music and fashion and the similarity of their sensibility

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Abstract

Purpose – The recent influence of the mass media communication emphasized the visionary image of the music and eventually the close relationship between the music and fashion industries was formed. Consumers who share a similar taste in music could relate to each other more actively, and as a result, they began to develop similar aesthetic views and emotions. From this matter, the aim of this research is to conduct a survey that would go over a variety of music and fashion preferences of the consumers in order to analyze the relationship between the two. The main objective was to investigate how strongly the preference styles of music and fashion match each other and find similarity of their sensibility.

Design/methodology/approach – The participants were directed to choose their preference styles of music and fashion, grade their interest in music and fashion and evaluate their sensibilities by grading their feelings about ten polar paired adjectives.

Findings – There indeed is a close relationship between music and fashion. People who are more interested in music and fashion tend to have a stronger correlation between their preferences.

Practical implications – Through the analysis of variance it was found that the sensibility associated with different music and fashion styles are not the same. Furthermore, the authors could group the sensibility words into three common factors. Here it was found that music requires more diverse expressional adjectives as representatives compared to fashion.

Originality/value – The close relationship between preference styles of the two artistic elements and the similarity or their sensibility could be visualized through the distance of each style and adjectives in a correspondence map.

Keywords Music genres, Feeling, Visualize, Correspondence map, Statistics, Adjectives, Clothing, Music, Fashion

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

During the twentieth century music genres began to diversify, as did the fashion styles representing each of these genres. Fashion styles were initially adopted as a mechanism for expressing the type of music, but soon they became a critical factor in explaining and presenting the particular music. Each of the styles representing the different genres was unintentionally presented to the public with the development of mass media, making the audiences aware of the music and fashion as a single concept. In addition, those who preferred similar music started to wear similar styles of clothes.

Over the years, music has become a part of our daily life. This is partly due to technological developments, commercialization and the economic power of the music industry (MacDonald *et al.*, 2002; Alexomanolaki, 2006). Whether it is by our own will or by someone else's will, we are bound to listen to a variety of music in our life.

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There might be some songs that appeal to one's taste and some that are simply not one's type. As people listen to their favorite songs, they do not merely listen. The songs influence them to seek ways that will effectively portray their taste in music with fashion being the most effective and widely used media for music expression. Most of the popular music tends to follow the trends of the time. When a certain type of music is trendy, we see the popularity in the corresponding fashion industry also increasing.

As Janice Miller has argued, "The relationship between fashion and music is embedded in and emphasized by sharing of language" (Miller, 2011). Consequently, if this correlation between music and fashion increase, fashion will convey the characteristics and the feelings from music and allow us to identify the similar sensibility between the two. We wish to find out how strong this correlation between music and fashion is, and how it differs among various musical genres or people's degree of interest. Moreover, we intend to identify different sensibilities among different music genres or fashion styles and also research how similar sensibilities are when they come from the people with same taste in music and fashion.

Previous studies have investigated various aspects of music and emotion in a multiple stimuli context. For example, Morrison *et al.* (2010) investigated the joint effects of music and aroma, Vines *et al.* (2010) investigated music and body movement and Logeswaran and Bhattacharya (2009) examined music and facial expressions. Furthermore, the relationship between music and film has been the subject in many papers, for additional references on this topic see Pavlović and Marković (2011) and Lipscomb and Tolchinsky (2005). Until now, no study has been made on the relationship between music and fashion and their similarity in sensibility.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this research is to investigate how strongly the preference styles of music and fashion match each other and find similarity of their sensibility. The specific objectives are here as follows:

- *Objective 1.* Finding the relationship between preferred music genre and fashion style.
- *Objective 2.* Finding the differences between how people with different degree of interest in music and fashion adhere to their preferences.
- *Objective 3.* Finding the differences in sensibility between music genres and between fashion styles.
- *Objective 4.* Finding the similarities in people's sensibility from their taste in music and fashion.

3. Research method

3.1 Survey

In this research we conducted a survey. We referenced former sensibility experiments (Na, 2009; Na and Kim, 2001) in order to choose the ten polar pairs of adjective words that represent different sensibility features: soft/hard, elegant/vulgar, character/plain, conservative/open, pure/sexy, charmless/attractive, natural/artificial, gentle/lively, light/heavy and masculine/feminine. We used a multiple choice selection method for choosing the preference styles of music and fashion. A semantic differential method "Likert Scale" was used for assessing certain music and fashion preferences,

for measuring the interest in fashion and music trends and for evaluating their feelings about each sensibility word.

3.2 Participants

We used the survey questionnaire with college students during April-May 2011. 50 people of each genre answered the questionnaire and the gender ratio was 1:1.

3.3 Stimuli

We used the reference material (Figure 1). Based on the Grammy Awards, American Music Awards and Korean Popular Music Awards, we considered five genres:

Figure 1.
Stimuli of fashion images

rock, dance/electronic, ballad, hip-hop and jazz. But since significantly less people preferred jazz music, we decided to omit the jazz category. We used the fashion web site "Musinsa"(www.musinsa.com, 2011) and online stores to extract 39 male and 30 female fashion images that represent each one of the genres. We then asked 30 university students from the fashion design department to select the images that best represented the genres.

3.4 Analysis

The collected data were analyzed through the use of SPSS 11.0 with descriptive statistics, *z*-score, cross-table analysis of χ^2, ANOVA analysis of variance, factor analysis and correspondence analysis.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 The correlation between preferences in music and fashion

The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics using SPSS 11.0 to determine the correlation between matching preferences. From the results we found that the preference styles of music and fashion are related (Table I). Among the four music genres, the 50 persons with a preference for ballad showed a very good agreement between their preferences, whereas the agreement for the dance, hip-hop and rock genre varied somewhat according to the person.

4.2 The differences between how people with different degree of interest in music and fashion adhere to their preferences

To discuss how the interest in music trends influences the correlation between music and fashion, the participants were asked to grade their interest in music, music trend sensitiveness and the time spent listening to music. The persons with average involvement where omitted. We found that the people who are more interested in a music genre tend to have a stronger correlation between their tastes in music and fashion (Table II). The people with preference for ballad music, however, showed a very strong correlation although their interest in music was low (Figure 2). We believe this to be a result of ballad music having the most popular and trendy style.

The participants were also asked to grade their interest in fashion, fashion trend sensitiveness and how frequently they visit fashion sites. From these results we found that people who are more interested in fashion trends have a stronger correlation between their tastes in fashion and music (Table III). The difference was most evident for the people with a preference for rock or hip-hop fashion (Figure 3).

Fashion	Music				Total
	Ballad	Dance	Hip-hop	Rock	
Ballad	46	18	15	22	101
Dance	2	27	8	4	41
Hip-hop	1	2	26	3	32
Rock	1	3	1	21	26
Total	50	50	50	50	200

Notes: $\chi^2 = 160$; d.f. = 9; $p = < 0.0001$

Table I.
Cross-tabulation of preference styles of music and fashion

	Fashion				
	Ballad	Dance	Hip-hop	Rock	Total
Music high involvement					
Ballad	9	1	0	0	10
Dance	3	7	1	0	11
Hip-hop	5	3	10	0	18
Rock	7	2	0	7	16
Music low involvement					
Ballad	16	0	1	1	18
Dance	8	13	1	2	24
Hip-hop	7	3	6	0	16
Rock	5	0	3	4	12

Table II.
The number of people with high or low music interest and their taste in fashion

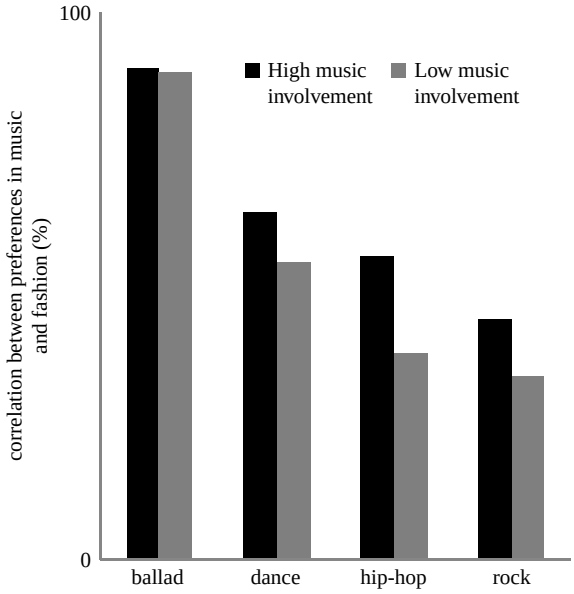

Figure 2.
Correlation between tastes in music and fashion according to people's interest in music

	Music				
	Ballad	Dance	Hip-hop	Rock	Total
Fashion high involvement					
Ballad	7	0	0	0	7
Dance	5	8	1	1	15
Hip-hop	3	1	11	1	16
Rock	4	1	0	11	16
Fashion low involvement					
Ballad	18	0	0	1	19
Dance	7	10	1	1	19
Hip-hop	8	2	6	0	16
Rock	7	1	3	4	15

Table III.
Number of people with high or low fashion involvement and their taste in music

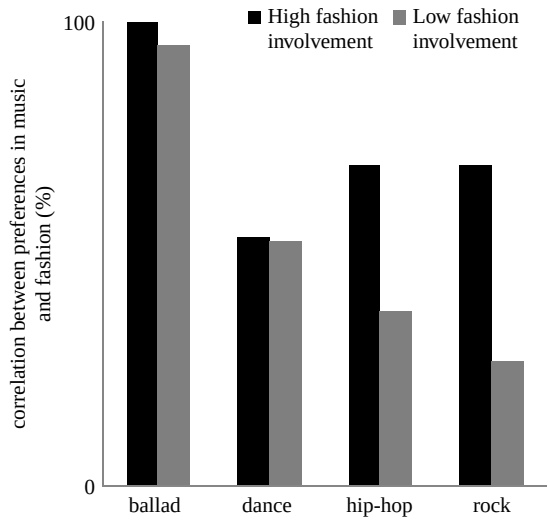

Figure 3.
Correlation between tastes in music and fashion according to people's interest in fashion

4.3 The differences in sensibility between music genres and between fashion styles

Referring to the study by Shevy (2008) in which differences between concepts associated with country and hip-hop music were found, we investigated the differences in sensibility between the music genres and between the fashion styles. This was done through analysis of variances (ANOVA) and transforming the data to *z*-score in order to obtain the relative profile for each music genre (Figure 4) and each fashion style (Figure 5).

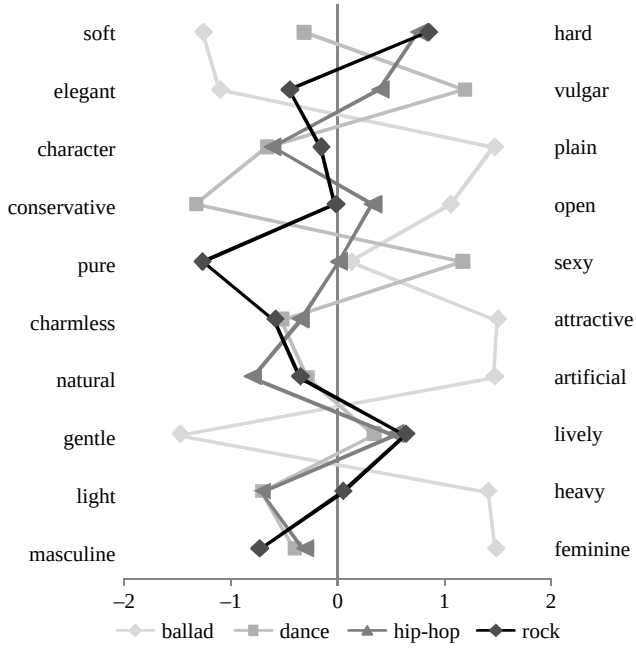

Figure 4.
Relative profile of sensibility according to music genre (*z*-score value)

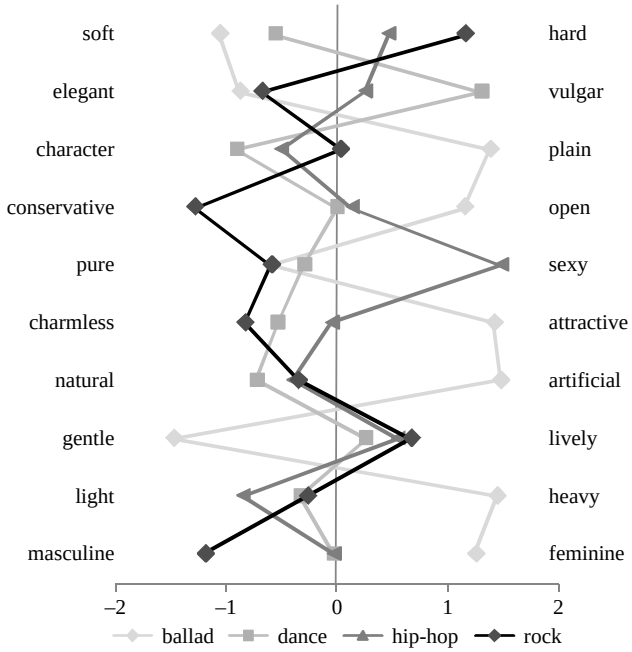

Figure 5.
Relative profile of sensibility according to fashion style (*z*-score value)

We found that the sensibilities associated with different music and fashion styles are not the same. The other way around, the results imply that people can share emotions through a music genre or fashion style.

The survey data of ten sensibility words were analyzed through factor analysis and from the music genres we obtained three common sensibility factors. The first factor (f_1) is named "warm/cold" and contains heavy, lively, plain and open. The second factor (f_2) is named "flat/rough" and contains vulgar, artificial, hard and attractive. The third factor (f_3) is named "weak/strong" and contains feminine and sexy. The cumulative explanatory value of these three factors covers 62.7 percent of all sensibility variance (Table IV).

Common sensibility factor	Sensibility feature	Factor load			Eigen value	Cumulative explanatory value (%)
f_1 *"warm/cold"*	Heavy	−0.82	−0.016	0.292	2.6	26.2
	Lively	0.813	0.112	0.219		
	Plain	−0.673	0.007	−0.257		
	Open	0.621	0.168	0.454		
f_2 *"flat/rough"*	Vulgar	0.363	0.684	0.174	1.9	45.0
	Artificial	−0.03	0.658	0.14		
	Hard	0.208	0.651	0.403		
	Attractive	0.226	−0.636	0.508		
f_3 *"weak/strong"*	Feminine	−0.036	−0.266	−0.794	1.8	62.7
	Sexy	0.469	0.181	0.516		

Table IV.
Sensibility words of music genres and the result of factor analysis

Also, the survey data of ten sensibility words were analyzed through factor analysis for the fashion styles and we obtained three common sensibility factors. The first factor (f_1) is named "dynamic/static" and contains open, lively, plain, vulgar, sexy and hard. The second factor (f_2) is named "plastic/stone" and contains heavy, feminine and artificial. The third factor (f_3) is named "like/dislike" and contains attractive. The cumulative explanatory value of these three factors covers 66.6 percent of all sensibility variance (Table V), which is higher than that of music genres. This means that sensibility needs somewhat more diverse expressional adjectives as representatives of music compared to fashion.

4.4 The similarities in sensibility between music and fashion

To visualize the similarities in sensibilities between music and fashion we considered each mean value of ten adjectives and the mean value of each music and fashion style and positioned the data in a correspondence diagram through correspondence analysis. The similarity is visualized through the distance of each feature. The *x*-axis was named "mono" – "multi" and the *y*-axis was named "metallic" – "elastic" (Figure 6). Our results show that hip-hop is located on the mono side of the *x*-axis. Whereas rock, ballad and dance are located on the multi side. In the y direction rock is positioned on the metallic side, dance on the elastic side and ballad is to be found in the middle.

The sensibility adjectives and the preference styles of music and fashion are grouped in four enveloping circles: "rough" including rock and the sensibility of hard, "warm" including ballad and the sensibilities of sexy, artificial and open, "flat" including dance and the sensibility of lively and "cool" including hip-hop and the sensibility of plain. The groups are seen to present the connection between emotional features and preference styles well, with the exception that "heavy" not is included in the "rough" group.

5. Conclusions and suggestions

In the current study we aim to investigate how strongly preference styles of music and fashion correlate with each other and how the correlation varies among music genres or is influenced by people's interest in music and fashion. We also aim to identify different sensibilities among different music genres or fashion styles and identify similar sensibilities between matching music and fashion preferences.

We demonstrate a close relationship between music and fashion. The ballad style, believed as the trendiest style, tends to have a stronger correlation compared to dance,

Common sensibility factor	Sensibility feature	Factor load			Eigen value	Cumulative explanatory value (%)
f_1 *"dynamic/static"*	Open	0.835	0.043	−0.032	3.6	36.0
	Lively	0.825	−0.237	0.009		
	Plain	−0.758	−0.119	0.21		
	Vulgar	0.753	0.16	0.348		
	Sexy	0.736	0.393	−0.052		
	Hard	0.526	0.501	0.378		
f_2 *"plastic/stone"*	Heavy	−0.469	0.696	0.05	1.8	54.5
	Feminine	−0.115	−0.669	0.079		
	Artificial	0.151	0.639	0.123		
f_3 *"like/dislike"*	Attractive	0.084	−0.032	−0.933	1.2	66.6

Table V.
Sensibility words of fashion styles and the result of factor analysis

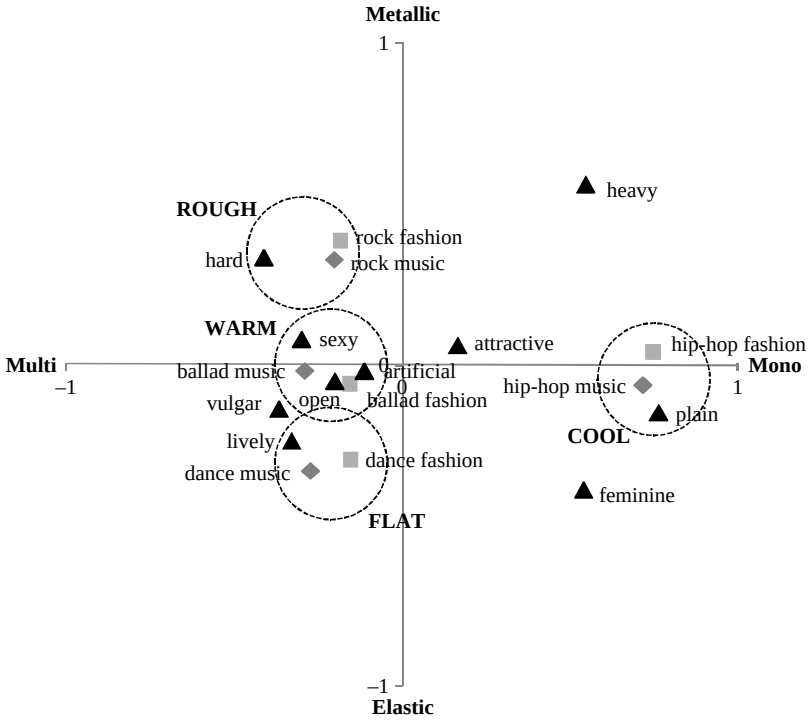

Figure 6.
Correspondence diagram of preference styles of music and fashion and their sensibility

hip-hop or rock. Furthermore, if people are more interested in music and fashion they more effectively portray their style and the correlation between their preferences becomes even stronger. We have found that people feel different emotions depending on what kind of music or fashion style they prefer and it requires more diverse expressional adjectives as representatives of music compared to fashion. Our results reveal that indeed fashion conveys sensibility from music and we could identify similar sensibilities between the two.

We can conclude that our research results have confirmed the objectives in the study. We suggest that music and fashion have a very strong correlation that can be used in terms of mixing the two artistic elements within different styles of sensibility and which offers qualities and opportunities for the music and fashion industries. Specifically, understanding the relationship between music and fashion and the similarity of their sensibility will improve the efficiency in which the two hand in hand can be used in creative activities.

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