

# Music digital streaming – the formation of listening experience

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## Background

- Over the past decade, music behavior and the way listeners experience music have changed quickly due to technological developments.
- The technological progress has allowed listeners who use digital streaming services to change the way they interact with, listen to and experience music (Nill & Geipel, 2010; North, Hargreaves and Hargreaves, 2004; Sloboda, Lamont and Greasley 2009).
- The traditional and tangible bundling of music - the album constituting LPs or CDs - has been hurt.
- The digital streaming has created new concepts and facilitated music playlists to take a dominant position in the music listening market.

# Aim

- The aim is to understand music streaming listening experience and how the drivers of recommendation and the fellowship from the social community influences the willingness to be loyal toward playlists.

# Theoretical framework

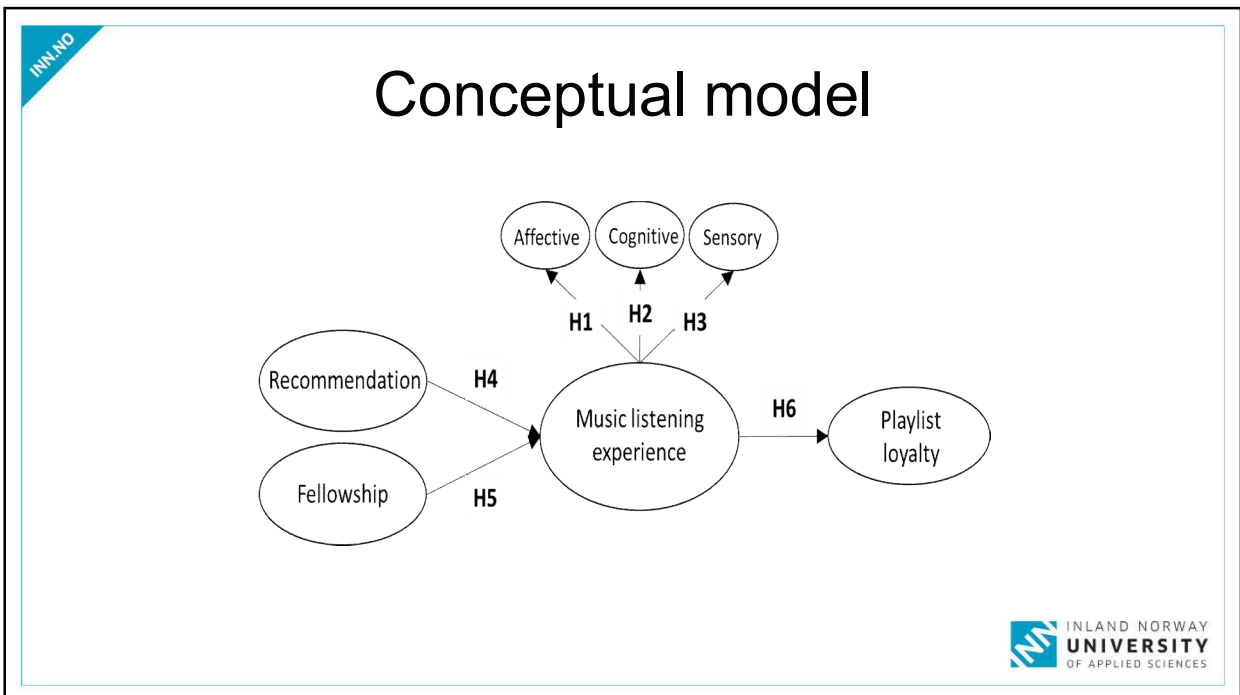
- When listening to music, individuals do not only receive the sound, they also create their own experience (Kerchner, 2000; Peterson, 2006).
- Dunn (2006) claims that every music listening experience is unique, even for a piece one has heard multiple times — even if it is a recorded performance so every note is the same each time.
- Hargiss (1966, p. 96) emphasized that the music listening experience includes “a variety of introspective reactions such as associations, memories, sensations, and other responses of a personal nature”.
- Csikszentmihalyi (2002) described music listening experience as having the potential to induce flow in participants.
- Even though, music listening experience has been dealt with numerous times, there are relatively scarce definitions of listening experience within music research. Consequently, we have retrieved definitions of experience from other disciplines of social sciences.

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## The construct of Music listening experience

Constructs	Description	Theoretical sources
<b>Music listening experience</b>	The individuals' internalized (phenomenological) meaning of the music to sustain affective, cognitive and sensory value to enhance the current contextual situation	Grounded in phenomenology and hermeneutics.
<b>Emotional</b>	Derived from inner feelings and emotions triggered by the music listening circumstances	Brakus et al. (2009)
<b>Cognitive</b>	Derived from reasoning and deep thinking related to the music listening circumstances.	Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2007); Chin and Rickard (2012); Zarantonello et al. (2007)
<b>Sensory</b>	Derived from sight, sound, touch, taste and smell associated with the music listening circumstances.	Brakus et al. (2009); Schmitt (1999)

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## Drivers of listening experience

- Listening experience originates from a set of interactions between the music signified through playlists and the listener.
- Hence, it is in the intersection between the individual and the environment, in a specific event or situation, that music listening experience are triggered and formed.
- Listeners create unique experiences through their interactions with the music across different touchpoints, responding to playlists, along with other elements, such as the social environment.
- This makes experience emerge through an “iterative circular process of individual and collective customer sense making” making the individual’s reality socially constructed (Helkkula, Kelleher, & Pihlström, 2012, p. 59). We argue that the value realized in the experience is individually intrasubjective and socially intersubjective determined by the social contexts and interactions (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2011).

## Hypothesis

- *H1: Music listening experience is constituted by the positive effect of emotional value.*
- *H2: Music listening experience is constituted by the positive effect of cognitive value.*
- *H3: Music listening experience is constituted by the positive effect of sensory value.*

## Drivers of the music listening experience

- The importance of social relations suggests that listening activities are driven by the social roles and positions that listeners hold within a particular social group or specific encounter, in that “institutional and social structures systematically influence consumption” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874).
- The experience of music shared with others (Juslin et al., 2008; North et al., 2004) offers an important channel of communication in social settings (Greasley & Lamont, 2006; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006).
- Social aspects encourage a collective musical experience, which fulfills the requirements of meaning by allowing listeners to go beyond themselves as individuals (Sloboda, 2002).

## Hypothesis

- *H4: The greater the recommendation from others in the social environment the higher is the level of music listening experience.*
- *H5: The greater fellowship in the social community, the higher is the level of music listening experience.*

## The effects of Music Listening Experience

- Playlist loyalty is a strategic goal for artists and other actors in the music industry.
- Loyalty is defined as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior” (Oliver, 1997, p. 392).
- Creating and maintaining loyalty helps music industry actors improve long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with listeners (Pan et al., 2012).

## Hypothesis

- Listener’s loyalty represents the final ambition of artists and curators as loyal listeners spend a larger share of their time listening to the playlist and they tend to be more willing to pay for the services than other listeners. Loyal listeners exhibit attachment and commitment toward the playlist, and are thus not attracted to other competing playlists offerings (So et al., 2013).
- Without listener’s loyalty, even the best curated playlist will soon fall apart. Loyal, long-term users tend to expand their relationship, providing cumulative rewards to the music industry actors (Srinivasan et al., 2002).
- *H6: Music listening experience positively influences listeners’ loyalty to their playlists*

## Method

- Norway, as part of the Scandinavian market, is an interesting context for investigating digital music streaming. In the past years, Norway has been the leading country in digital music streaming and the country maintains its position among the international elite when it comes to use of digital music (IFPI 2016).
- The dataset is collected as part of a larger research project investigating digital streaming and music listening. The survey collected data by personal interviews from 1.794 respondents executed in streets, in shopping malls, at railway stations and other public areas. The data is collected during a two months' period in spring 2016.
- To be included in the study the respondents had to be an active user of digital music streaming services, either by own subscription or by using a family member or a friend's subscription.

## Characteristics of respondents

- A slight majority of the respondents are females (52%).
- The average age is 29 years (with 46% being 16–24 years of age, 23% being 25–29 years of age, and 31% being 30 years age or older). With respect to education, 54% have no higher education (due to the young population), 31% have a bachelor's degree, and 15% have a master's degree or above.
- In terms of number of hours listening to music on a normal weekday, 36% listen to music up to 2 hours per day, 42% listen between 3-6 hours, 22% listen more than 7 hours per day.
- In the respect of the listening popularity the respondents listen mostly to pop music (77%) and rock (66%), while metal, classic, jazz and blues are quite equal distributed (22%-26%).

## Measurement

- The development of measurement items is created by adopting measures that has been validated in prior studies, although the items are modified to fit the music context.
- Music listening experience is operationalized using three sub constructs: cognitive, affective and sensory experiences. We adopted three items for cognitive experience (Zarantonello et al., 2007), four items of affective experience (Chin & Rickard, 2012) and three items for sensory experience (Brakus et al., 2009; Zarantonello et al., 2007).
- The drivers of music listening experience consists of three items of recommendation are inspired by Ma and Yuen (2011) and three items of fellowship are derived from Chin and Rickard (2012).
- The effects construct of playlist loyalty are retrieved from Brakus et al. (2009) and R. E. Anderson and Srinivasan (2003).
- The study uses 20 items for six constructs.

## Analysis

- Structural equation modelling is used to investigate the construct of music listening experience (Byrne, 2001; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).
- The recommended two-step approach to model construction and testing is adopted (J. C. Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The SPSS 24 and Mplus 7.4 statistic analytical software applications were employed to evaluate the collected data.



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## Descriptive statistics

Constructs	AFF	COG	SEN	FEW	REC	PLO
Music listening experience						
- Affective (AFF)		,356**	,478**	,317**	,285**	,336**
- Cognitive (COG)			,516**	,399**	,273**	,216**
- Sensory (SEN)				,334**	,316**	,329**
Fellowship (FEW)					,316**	,197**
Recommendation (REC)						,245**
Playlist loyalty (PLO)						
Reliability: Cronbach's alpha	.79	.77	.81	.88	.84	.89
Mean	5.02	4.08	4.40	4.33	4.17	5.35
Standard Deviation	1.26	1,46	1.30	1.58	1.48	1.34

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## Measurement model

Measurement model	Range of standardized factor loadings <sup>a</sup>	No of var.	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\chi^2$ (df, p-value)
Music listening experience <sup>b</sup>	.559 - .801	3+4+3	.937	.955	.045	.034	1549.2 (45, p < .00)
Recommendation <sup>c</sup>	.651 - .864	3	1.000	1.000	.000	.000	274.6 (3, p<.00)
Fellowship <sup>d</sup>	.698 - .828	3	1.000	1.000	.000	.000	208.0 (3, p<.00)
Playlist loyalty <sup>e</sup>	.765 - .879	4	.996	.999	.010	.011	320.6 (6, p<.00)
Overall measurement model	.618 - .876	20	.962	.969	.039	.023	4940.5 (190, p<.00)

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## Structural model

Constructs		Direction	Path coeff	T-value	Result
Affective	→ Music listening experience (MLE)	+	.764	15.23	H1 (supported)
Cognitive	→ MLE	+	.693	17.89	H2 (supported)
Sensory	→ MLE	+	.764	13.26	H3 (supported)
Recommendation	→ MLE	+	.333	4.79	H4 (supported)
Fellowship	→ MLE	+	.495	7.63	H5 (supported)
Music listening experience	→ Playlist loyalty	+	.634	11.66	H6 (supported)

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## Fit indices of SEM model

Measurement model	Range of standardized factor loadings <sup>a</sup>	No of var.	TLI	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	$\chi^2$ (df, p-value)
<b>Overall SEM model</b>		20	.956	.962	.045	.023	4385.8 (190, p < .00)

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# Discussion

- What can we learn?

# Discussion

- The listening experience is an important mediator that enables artists to strengthen their relationships with fans, through playlists.
- Music listening experience depends on social factors, such as recommendation and social fellowship.
- Experience is phenomenologically determined by the individual, it depends on social fellowship and is embedded in the norms and values of music peers.
- So far, research mainly has focused on individual experience approaches, neglecting social interactions. To reveal the changes driven by digitalization and the social aspects of music listening though, experience must be viewed as a “co-experience,” that is, as a music listening co-experience.

## Co-experience

- Co-experience might be described as the process of aggregating individual experiences to a shared attention process, so the listening experience becomes part of a social interpretation process (Battarbee & Koskinen, 2005).
- Co-experience results from creating emotions, meaning, and belonging in social fellowship, through music listening. In this process, listeners together contribute to the shared experience in a reciprocal interaction, creating interpretations and meanings from the context and allowing practices to evolve in the social context.
- Co-experience is driven by social needs for communication and relationships, as well as creativity in collaboration.

- The co-experience of music can be understood as *a nonlinear, recursive process of co-creating a listening solution together through interactions with the music itself and social fellowship, to enhance emotional, cognitive, and sensory states of mind.*

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