

Black Artists' Appeal to Mass Audience

By

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Abstract

Music is an art form that has been around for centuries as a form of expression, ritual, tradition, and more. Now, it has transformed from art into a business. Today, the music industry is a \$43 billion industry according to Maeve McDermott (2018) in the news article, "The music industry is booming" (McDermott, 2018, para.1). With this industry comes an array of different music styles and artistry. One of them being black music artists who have dominated the industry since the beginning of Motown and maybe even before then. Every year new black music emerges such as Beyonce, Childish Gambino, Kanye West, Drake, Travis Scott, Sza, and many more.

This research study was conducted to look at the history of black music and artistry of today and compare it to the Black Arts Movement of the 1960's and the Hip-Hip Revolution of the 1980's and 1990's. Along with this historical and cultural analysis was a survey, which was handed out to participants to see the result to how people responded to black music artists.

In the end, the discovery of this research became much more than about music, because it showed how we consume music as a society and what appeals to us. The survey and interviews conducted in this research have shown that different racial and ethnic groups such as whites, blacks/African-American, Hispanic/Latinos, Asian/Asian-Americans, and others are listening to black music artists with interest and at a high percentage. The results of the this study explores the appeal of black music artists to different audiences and shows the progression of black popularity to a wider audience.

Acknowledgements

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A Brief History: An Historical and Cultural Analysis of Black Music

Chapter 1: Introduction

“What if America loved black people as much as they loved black culture” (Aguirre, 2017)? This question was stated by actress Amandla Stenberg, an American actress, in a Vogue article, “Amandla Stenberg Is a Voice for the Future,” written by Abby Aguirre. It holds a lot of truth in regards to America’s treatment towards African-Americans. While African-American artists have dominated the music industry, especially in recent years with the mainstream genre being Rap/Hip-Hop, it is easy to see how many people may like black music artists. Sometimes, it seems that people don’t appreciate black people as much as they appreciate the music and culture. This question also can be looked through an historical lens of black music artists and figures in American culture. African-Americans have been influential figures in the entertainment industry since the 19th century with the blackface performances of the minstrel shows. They have turned an industry that was at first prejudiced against them into a billion dollar industry. It is no lie that American mainstream music will not be the same without the influence of black music artists such as James Brown, The Supremes, Michael Jackson, Tupac, Notorious B.I.G., Beyonce, and many more. This rich history runs deeper than just music, because it looks at race and identity itself.

For this research study, the historical lens of black music artists and their influence of mainstream music and the mass audience is reviewed. The historical timeline and progression of these articles range from the 19th century minstrel shows, the 1960’s Black Arts Movement and Motown, the 1980’s-1990’s Hip-Hop Revolution, and even up until the present. This study also

includes data from a survey of 62 conducted on black music and artists, as well as three interviews to explore if different respondents really do enjoy black music and artists.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Black music has many characteristics that make it unique. Music is an artistic expression that one uses to express his or her emotions and musical talents. There are all different genres of music from country, rock, pop, hip-hop, jazz and so on. However, black music has something that is somewhat unique and relevant to the African-American experience. It is a diverse range of music, which was developed by African-Americans. When discussing black music, the discussion is mostly centered on the music passed down from African slaves during the time of slavery until today. In the Washington University in St. Louis' blog post Frank Kovarik (2011) states, "The term black music does have meaning because black music has a specific history, a rather complex history that has required (and indeed still requires) much study and thought to articulate, and a history that is still unfolding today" (Kovarik, 2011, para.4).

The first article that explains the history of black music and artistry is Walter T. Howard's "Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop" (1999). In this article, he reviews W.T. Lhamon Jr.'s book to discuss the relationship between the blackface performances of the 19th century to the pop culture of the 21st century. Howard reviews Lhamon's idea that there is a relationship between "well-known elements of present-day popular culture[s] and of the blackface tradition" (p. 486). This article is about the blackface performances, which started with the minstrel shows. Minstrel shows were put on by white and black performers who dressed in blackface to imitate and ridicule African- Americans. Howard

notes that Lhamon's book not only talk about pop culture in relation to these minstrel shows, but also discusses the issue of race in America.

The online book "Spirituals and the birth of a black entertainment industry," by S.J. Graham (2018), further explains the history of the minstrel shows and of the jubilee troupes of post- Civil War America. Troupes such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers became a sensation well into the nineteenth-century and influenced entertainment such as the minstrelsy, variety, and plays that were performed by black and white performers. This has laid the foundation of the black entertainment industry, as well as determined the artistic, financial, and cultural practices that have extended into the twentieth century. Lastly, it has brought forth the conversation of racial identity among black people.

Graham's book provides an historical timeline of black music, particularly, the evolution and fundamental basis to which spirituals were to African-Americans and to America's history. Graham studied ethnomusicology in graduate school, which is the study of music from different cultures, especially non-Western cultures. Her study in this book provides the history from African traditions until the Fisk Jubilee Singers. She states:

Black men and women took to the popular stage in unprecedented numbers after the Civil War. By the late 1870's hundreds of black entertainers were performing in concerts, minstrel shows, musical plays, circuses, and variety shows. Whether in big cities or rural backwaters, they drew large numbers of blacks to their performances, changing the faces of nineteenth-century audiences. Collectively, they constituted the first black entertainment industry in the United States, and until about 1890, these diverse genres

were connected by one common ingredient: black sacred song, known as the spiritual. (p. 8)

The “spiritual” as it became known as sacred songs and hymns used by African-Americans to express their troubles and worries, especially when it came to the harsh realities they faced during slavery. However, before spirituals came into play, black entertainment in America started in slave society. Travel narratives of white explorers from the 1600s and 1700s told the tale of white explorers, missionaries, and adventurers who traveled to West Africa and commented on the ubiquity of Africans’ music and dance style. Africans used music and dance to accompany ceremonial and everyday activities. These accounts portrayed Africans as innately musical, but noted that they required Christianization. This is displayed more in the Middle Passage, which began in the 1500s and lasted until 19th century, when white ship crews exploited Africans by making them perform because they thought it was fascinating. They would use the slaves for their personal pleasure and profit. For example, ship captains would coerce slaves to sing and dance on deck often in chains. Even plantation owners would order slaves to dance and sing even after an exhausting day working on the field. Later on, this would be demonstrated in images of the carefree submissive, dancing slave such as Jim Crow, Zip Coon, and so on.

Black entertainment continued to grow. However, black entertainers did not get the recognition that they deserved due to the fact that they were slaves and seen as property. Since they were seen as property, they performed mainly for the entertainment of white audiences. Graham explains, “black musicians were everywhere but were especially numerous in urban

centers. Most of these musicians never attained recognition beyond their locality, however, and those who did were seldom able to sustain enduring careers” (p. 9). In 1818, bandleader Francis “Frank” Johnson was the first African-American to have his compositions published as sheet music. In 1821 the *African Grove* opened in New York. This was a training ground for black actors and musicians. It catered to a black audience with themes of revolt and triumphant struggle, which addressed the slavery life on occasion (Graham, 2018, p.9). Before the theater opened African-Americans had no public place to gather or perform where they felt safe. Therefore, this theater served as a safe ground; however, it was often met with whites who tried to disrupt it. In 1845, the unofficial start of the minstrel shows begin and William Henry Lane, “Master Juba,” made history as the first black member of an all white troupe called the “Georgia Champion Minstrels” (Graham, 2018, p.10). In the 1850’s Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield became known as the first black concert singer in the U.S. She reached popularity by touring and obtaining great critical acclaim. In 1854, Thomas J. Bowers, who was a tenor know as “The Colored Mario,” toured with Greenfield. These are just a few of the artists who made history and who were successful (Graham, 2018, p. 9).

Before the the Civil War there weren’t many African-American performers who performed in the minstrel shows. However, after the war and with performers like Lane and Thomas Dilward, “Japanese Tommy,” started to perform with various white troupes between the 1850s and 1860s (Graham, 2018, p.10). In 1867, the first anthology of spirituals with musical scores by black artists was published and it is known as “Slave Songs of the United States.” This was edited by William Francis Allen, Charles Pickard Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison. In the 1870s, hundreds of black entertainers were performing in concerts, minstrel shows, musical

plays, circuses, and variety shows. They changed the face of 19th century audiences by attracting blacks to their performances (Graham, 2018, p.10). Then in 1871, the Jubilee Singers, a troupe of black students from Fisk University began touring to raise money for their school. According to Graham (2018) they “introduced spirituals in concert halls, white and black churches, and charitable institutions. Such was their fame that they became synonymous with the songs they sang, so that spirituals became known as jubilee songs” (p. 10).

Along came more black entertainers and different genres of music. History was made when the first black entertainment industry that was constituted in the U.S. in 1890 and genres were connected by spirituals. Fast forward to 1917 and the Harlem Renaissance began and lasted until the 1930s. The Harlem Renaissance was a pivotal time for African-Americans to not only thrive for their own benefit, but to create art and music that the white audience started to appreciate and recognize. In the 1920s, at the same time as the renaissance in Harlem, NY there was still misery imbedded in the black community in the segregated south, which gave rise to the blues. In the 1940s, syncopated rhythms and improvisation of ragtime and blues created what is known as jazz music. This was music that was created by black people and was an ensemble based music that people could dance to. Around this time rock and roll evolved and many artists such as Elvis Presley often covered songs from black artists who created the genre (Timeline of Black Music, 2016).

In the 1950s, after WW2, r&b emerged from swing and the 12 bar blues. It evolved and it was known as dance music that had an emphasis on the vocals of the singers. At this time it was considered to be black popular music. In the 1960s, soul music developed and was created from

gospel and socially conscious messages of r&b. Record labels started to emerge in Detroit, Memphis, and Philadelphia. Next, came hip-hop/rap music in 1973 starting in the South Bronx, which drew on Afro-Caribbean influences. MC's, or rappers as they are known, rapped over loops, samples, and scratches with the help of dj's using turntables for music (Timeline of Black Music, 2016). By the 1990s hip-hop and rap become more well known and by 1993 New York's Hot 97 switches from playing dance music to hip-hop, which is a big accomplishment. In 2002, hip-hop dominates the mainstream with artists such as Nelly and Eminem outselling artists like Celine Dion, Pink, and the Dixie Chick (African American Music, 2012).

Another article that discusses more history of black music is "Synesthesia, 'Crossover,' and Blacks in Popular Music" by Philip Brian Harper (1989), Harper discusses the crossover strategies that have been used in the U.S. by black artists. Harper also discusses the black identity in the U.S. and how the crossover serves in the contemporary music industry. He starts off the article with the idea that the music industry uses the black culture to sell in the market. These "musical forms" and perceptions of the Afro-American culture as he says are used by the industry to, in a way, manipulate the culture to produce various market effects that are beneficial to the industry interests. However, Harper's main focus is to look at the popular music which occurred between the years of 1982 through 1986. Between this time there was a period of intense crossover activity that was connected to the crossover activity of the 1960s and 1970s. Harper (1989) states, "My aim is similarly twofold: to demonstrate a continuity in the crossover strategies historically used by blacks in the U.S. culture: and to identify a specific function that black identity-- and thus crossover serves in the contemporary music industry" (p.102).

The crossover history of black artists is not a thing that happened over night. As Harper states, the implication “of pop- cultural synesthesia in crossover success becomes particularly striking in the late 1980s, when the crossover phenomenon is widely discussed in the popular media; but its operation can be detected throughout the history of blacks in popular music at least since the late 1950s. The examination of one facet of that history can help us to understand the significance of crossover for blacks in the 1980s” (p. 105). Synesthesia can be defined by the New Oxford American Dictionary “as a sense impression relating to one sense of the body by stimulation of another sense of the body” (New Oxford American Dictionary, n.d.). An example of how this was used can be seen in Stevie Wonder’s 1972 album *Talking Book*. Wonder, who is a blind man, was able to appeal to different audiences with this album because he made it accessible for people with disabilities by making the jacket of the album in print and braille. This made the album not only an aural experience but a visual one.

Black people have often been restricted in broadening their music just as they have been restricted from reading and literacy in the 18th century during slavery. *Talking Book* is an example of not only a personal empowerment from Wonder, but a political one at that. As described by Harper,

in the context of a contemporary culture industry permeated by multimedia technology, it is increasingly difficult for musicians, in general, to achieve maximum appeal without broadening their productions beyond the strictly aural arena. This is even more the case for blacks, whose ability to market their musical products has historically been restricted,

forcing them to infuse their aurally oriented productions with visual stimuli in an attempt to widen their audience. (p. 104)

Wonder did just that with *Talking Book* and continued to strive to widen his audience to not just black people, but white people as well. Wonder's key success was the visual exposure to the white audience during his 1972 tour (Harper, 1989, p.104). He was already gaining fame, especially when his song "Superstition" hit number one in December 1972. However, when he went on tour with the Rolling Stones, an all-white British band, at the end of that year is when he gained a white following. From then on he was able to gain cross-racial success without the help of Motown, and other artists followed in a similar path.

However, Motown founder and chairman, Berry Gordy Jr., had his own method of creating crossover artists. For Gordy, he wanted to crossover his label and wanted singers that had a commercial voice and would sell to the white audience, like Diana Ross. Gordy intended for Motown to market to a "wide and pop music" audience not necessarily a black audience. When choosing artists, Gordy chose those who he knew would sell to his desire audience, not soulful singers like Mary Wilson or Aretha Franklin. Instead, for his most popular group The Supremes, Gordy wanted Diana Ross to be the lead because he knew she had a more commercial voice. Pop music is a stem from "black" music, but at the time it was dominated by the white audience. Institutions such as Billboard would only feature "pop" music artists instead of the subsets and would apply to the mainstream market. However, Gordy wanted to insert his artists in the mainstream market. Motown had an in house "charm school," which was officially known

as the department of Artists Development. This department was established to groom artists to not only look the part, but to act the part of well-groomed and elite artists (Harper, 1989, p.107).

Nelson George, an American author and music and culture critic, states “Motown management preached that it was indeed training its artists ‘to perform in only two places: Buckingham Palace and the White House,’ for Gordy believed that ‘real longevity... lay in reaching crossover (i.e., white) audiences with stylish live shows’ ” (as cited in Harper, 1989, p.107). Gordy trained his artists to become molded to crossover to the white audience, so that they can become prestiged artists to perform in elite places where blacks artists have never performed before. In the end, it was not just about crossing over, but establishing these artists to the same social class as white people. That is why the crossover phenomenon became a racio-political phenomenon (Harper, 1989, p.107).

In Ruth Feldstein’s (2013) book, “How It Feels to Be Free: Black Women Entertainers and the Civil Rights Movement,” she discusses African- American women entertainers in the 1960’s and their success and influence on not only the African-American culture, but in American culture. Feldstein focuses on six women who made names for themselves during this time period in music, film, and television. These women are Nina Simone, Lena Horne, Miriam Makeba, Abbey Lincoln, Diahann Carroll, and Cicely Tyson. All of these women were the faces of black activism, but made strides in their own ways. This book also focuses on the Civil Rights Movement and how it related to entertainment. Feldstein shed a light on black womanhood and showed that black women entertainers were strong women in a revolutionary time.

In Marvin J. Gladney (1995) article, "The Black Arts Movement and Hip Hop," he discusses the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and compares it to the early days of hip-hop (1980s-1990s). Gladney was a senior at Chicago State University in 1995 when he published his scholarly article. In his article he discusses about hip-hop, with its rhythm and poetry, and how it has been able to address major issues such as racism, education, sexism, drug use, and spiritual uplift, which are still important issues that the African-American community continues to face today. However, others choose to look at the negative aspects of hip-hop. Many people think it's violent and therefore promotes violent behavior. They don't look at it as being a driving force in bringing people together through rhythm and poetry. Gladney quotes Addison Gayle Jr., a Black Arts literacy critic, "Black art has always been rooted in the anger felt by African-Americans, and hip-hop culture has remained true to many of the convictions and aesthetic criteria that evolved out of the Black Arts Movement of the 60's" (as cited in Gladney, 1995, p.291).

Part of this criteria, as Gayle later explains, is the call for social relevance, originality, and a drive to produce art that would change the mainstream of American artistic experience. Hip-hop has certainly done that just as the Black Arts Movement did. Gladney goes into detail about the ideological progression from the Black Art Movement to the hip-hop movement. Gladney highlights three points: the anger and rage in the cultural production of the two movements, the need for establishment of independent Black institutions and business outlets, and the development of a "Black Aesthetic."

In his first point, Gladney discusses the black rage, anger, and cultural expression. He brings back Gayle's view that Black Americans cannot escape this reality of anger and rage because it is historical. It's historical in many events that Black Americans have experienced

within the eras of the Black Art Movement and at the beginning hip-hop. These are prime examples of the frustration and anger felt by African-Americans. Gladney brings in the view of Haki Madhubuti, a poet and educator, when he said, "Anger for unfilled promises, anger toward legislators who back stepped on policies decided, passed, and not implemented, anger pouring undiluted toward a rulership that feeds on greed and exploitation and views Black people as enemies or as necessary burdens to be thrown crumbs like animals in their theme park" (as cited in Gladney, 1995, p.292). This is highlighted in the L.A. riots of the 1990's and can be compared to the riots of the late 1960's by blacks. What these two events have in common is the anger that was felt by African-Americans. Gladney also quotes Tricia Rose, an author and Chancellor's Professor of Africana Studies at Brown University, about how the beginnings of hip-hop came out of the black community in the South Bronx section of New York in the late 1970s and early 80's. Hip-hop has actively addressed the role of anger and violence since its' beginning.

The second point that Gladney makes is with the establishment of independent institutions. What he means by this is that African-Americans have used art for artistic freedom just like others. However, the primary concern for African-American artists throughout history has been maintaining that freedom while dealing with the commercial concerns of contemporary record companies. Gladney says that this has to do with the capitalist environment that Americans grow up in. This has an influence on the "cultural production" and the issue of appealing to the mainstream audience is complex. For people who were alive during the Black Arts Movement, 1960s-1970s, they dealt with the dilemma of seeking outlets of cultural production in the form of theater companies, publishing houses, and by moving to independent education.

The same goes for hip-hop artists who had to find a way in this cultural production. Hip-hop's importance can be related to the "Afrikan" oral tradition and thus as Gladney points out, "The focus of core hip-hop artists has been to pursue alternative commercial venues and the rewards that come with such a level of success, while at the same time regaining territory lost to commercially viable "pop" acts that have made their lyrical material and music palpable to middle-class, white audiences" (pg. 294). Due to the commercial success of hip-hop, artists now are seen to sell venues, get rewards, and appeal to the middle-class white audiences. These middle class white audiences (at the time) were mostly listening to these commercially viable "pop" acts, who made money. What Gladney is trying to show is that hip-hop has lost that "Afrikan" oral tradition.

In the article, "Vixen Resistin: Redefining Black Womanhood in Hip-Hop Videos," Murali Balaji (2010) discusses the black womanhood in hip-hop music videos. This article takes views from the post hip-hop era where feminists and media critics have brought forth the idea of who controls the woman's image in these videos? At times, it is not the women in the music videos who control their images and thus are subjected to a certain image that downplays the essence and image of the woman. The goal of this article is to explore what the self definition is of black women in music videos. It is also looking at the cultural industries that reproduce and exploit these women sexuality. It looks at the consumers who watch these music videos on platforms such as BET and MTV.

The purpose of Balaji's study is "to describe possible sites of self-definition by Black women in music videos while accounting for the cultural industries that reproduce and exploit Black women's sexuality" (p. 5). This study particularly looks at the images of black women in

music videos and brings forth another perspective from someone who is actually featured in these video such as Melyssa Ford who in the late 1990s and early 2000s used to be in the video modeling field. She established for herself a successful television and professional speaking career from her role in these hip-hop music videos. Women like Ford used their sexualities and bodies for their own benefits, which is to promote their careers pass the music videos.

Balaji uses an example of this when she explains body positioning. In many of the music videos that Ford was featured in she used her body to dominate her male counterpart. In the video "Shake It Fast" by Pharrell Williams, he is eclipsed by her even though he is holding a male glaze on her. Ford still asserts her dominance by dancing with her back against him in the video. This is an interesting concept to derive off of especially when Balaji brings forth the idea in this article on who controls the image in these hypermasculine music videos? Oftentimes, it is not the models like Ford, but the rappers and the industry behind these artists who promote them. Balaji notes, "black womanhood in music videos-- particularly when put against the hypermasculinity of rap music-- compartmentalize Black women and bind them to existing stereotypes of sexuality and attainability that are historically associated with young Black females" (p. 7).

Thus, it hard to change negative stereotypes especially within an industry that thrives and makes a profit off of these videos and songs. However, Ford doesn't see herself in the same stereotype as some feminist critics have pointed out. She notes that she came from a "good" family and well-to-do background. However, that didn't stop her from becoming a music video model. For her, she is the one in control and who put up limits when she was often asked to do

something that she wasn't comfortable with. Ford claimed, "that the hyper-sexual culture of American hip-hop forced her to turn down numerous video roles that she found compromised her values. 'I turned down videos all the time,' she says. 'I would turn down videos that were too misogynistic or [when] I just didn't like the artists' " (p.15).

Ford believes in order to change the stereotypes, black women need to fight against it and assert agency in how they are represented onscreen. She distance herself from the other women in the industry not because of ego, but because she wants to be viewed in a different light. Her "self-conceptualization differs greatly from her public image; moreover, she believes that her morality and dignity do translate into the video roles in which she has appeared. It is clear that emphasis on morality stems from her hesitance to fully address the contradictions between her value system and the way that she presents herself to a mass audience" (p. 17). Balaji makes a point to show that Ford is just an example, but not an epitome of the experience of black women in hip-hop music videos. However, she is also an example of someone who used agency when it came to self-definition.

Chapter III: Research Design/ Methodology

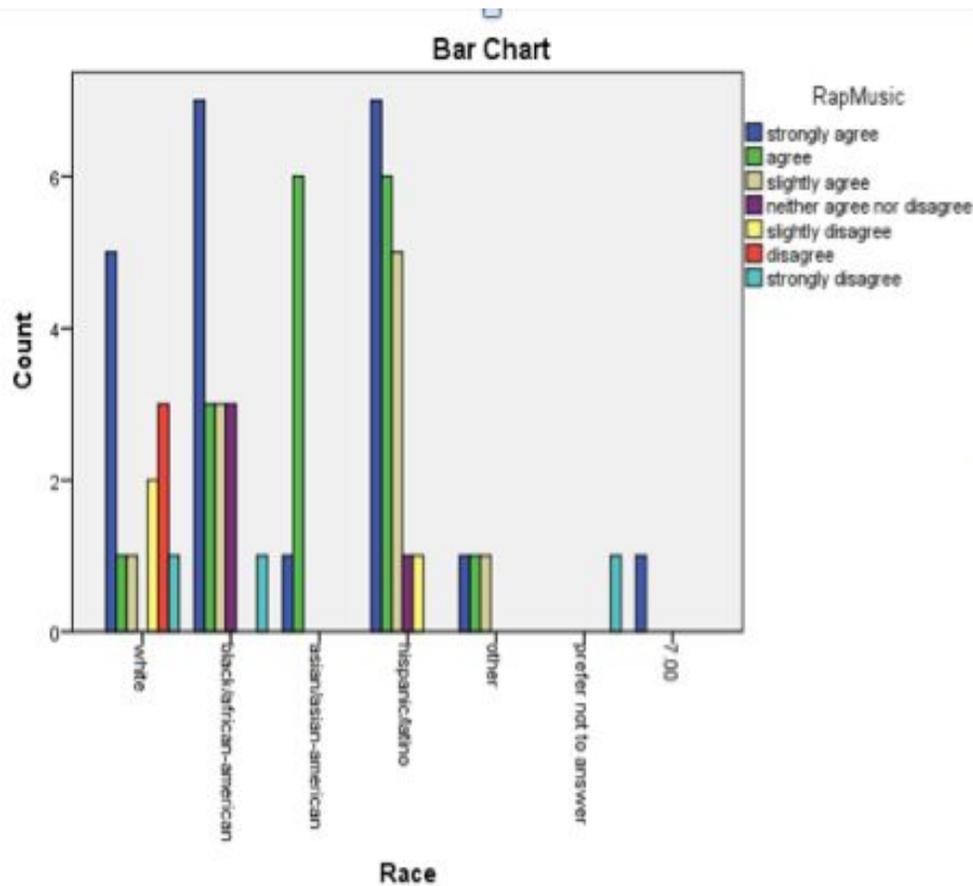
The research question(s) that this study consisted of was to see: what makes black music artists appealing to today's mass audiences? How did black entertainers (and which ones) became popular with a wider audience? How can the progression of black popularity to a wider audience be traced? To answer these questions, a 20 question survey was passed out to 50 students at Saint Peter's University, which is located in Jersey City, New Jersey during the months of October through November of 2018. All of the surveys were typed on paper, printed,

and given out in person to the participants. The snowball effect was also employed to circulate the surveys not only around Saint Peter's but also Yonkers, NY. A friend passed out the survey to three participants in Yonkers, NY and brought them back to Jersey City.. The participants in this survey were a combination of college age students (ages 19-21), young adults (22-25), and older adults (ages 30 and above). In the Spring of 2019, 12 more surveys were passed out around Saint Peter's and in Jersey City. This resulted in a total of 62 participants from the age group of 20-25 and some in the 50 and above age group who participated in this research study.

Chapter IV: Results

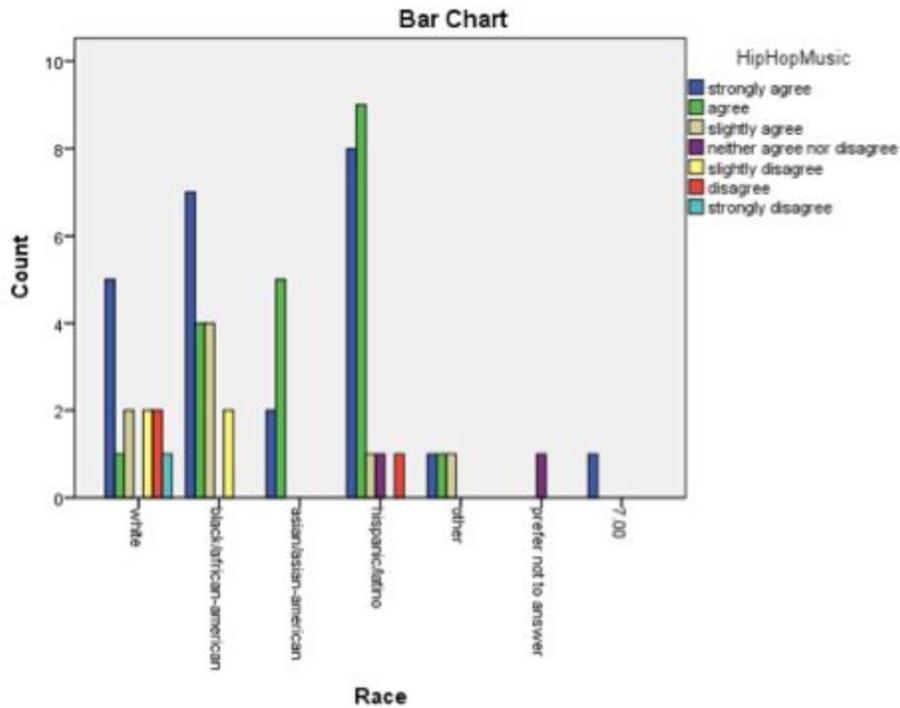
The independent variables, of the survey were gender, race, age, and grade. Other dependent variables included social media, favorite artists, mainstream, rap music, hip-hop, r&b music, enjoy, music style, personality, lifestyle, physical, emotional, feelings, spotify, apple music, soundcloud, cds, youtube, pandora, jango radio, tidal, vinyl records, stream, Kanye West, Beyonce, Donald Glover, concerts, concerts attended, and future concerts. There were a few significant relationships.

The first relationship explored was between race and rap music. In the survey, participants either had to agree or disagree to liking rap music. For the participants, those who strongly agreed to liking rap music came to a total of 22. In the black/African-American group, 7 out of 22 agreed. In the Asian/Asian-American group, 1 agreed. In the Hispanic/Latino group, only one slight disagreed, which means that this group really likes rap music and in the white group, 5 participants strongly agreed out of the 22 participants.



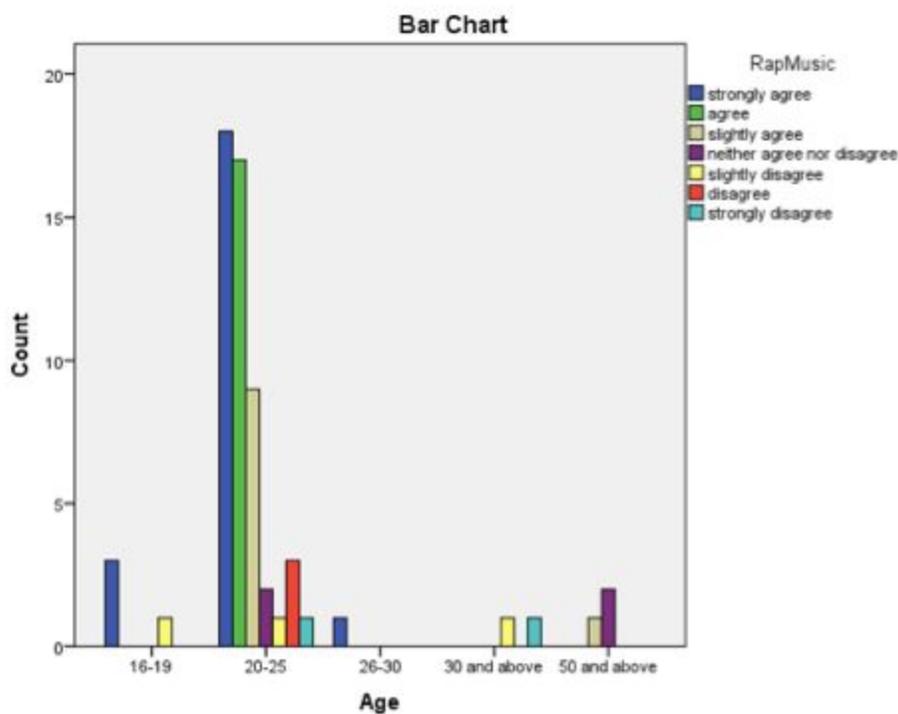
The second match that was analyzed was race and hip-hop music. Once again, chi square was used to compute the relationship between these variables. The asymptotic significance that was found came to a .014, which means there is a moderate low relationship present. The r value came to a .572. The statement that participants had to answer was based on the Likert Scale; therefore, it was tested on strongly agree to strongly disagree. The second was, “I like hip-hop music.” Participants in every group answered that they strongly agreed. In the white group, 5 out of 24 agreed to liking hip-hop music. In the black/African-American group, 7 out of 24 agreed. In the Asian-American group, only 2 agreed and in the Hispanic/Latino group 8 out of 24 agreed,

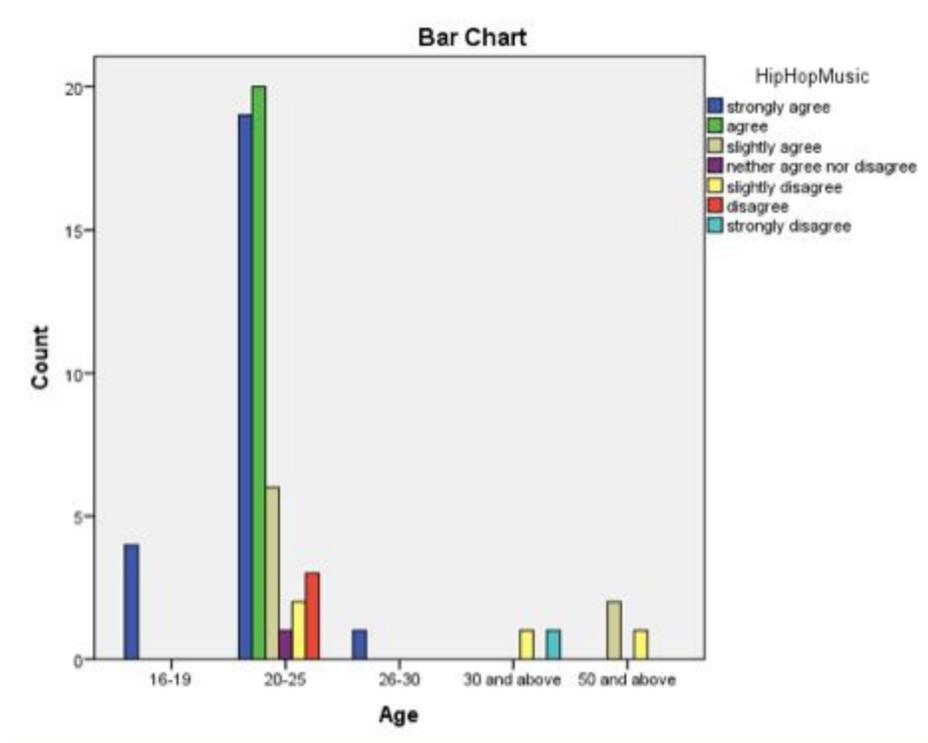
which is the largest out of the six groups presented. Once again, this shows that many people agreed to liking hip-hop music, especially Hispanics/Latinos. Out of the 52 participants who agreed they were the highest with 18 participants, which is presented in the chart below.



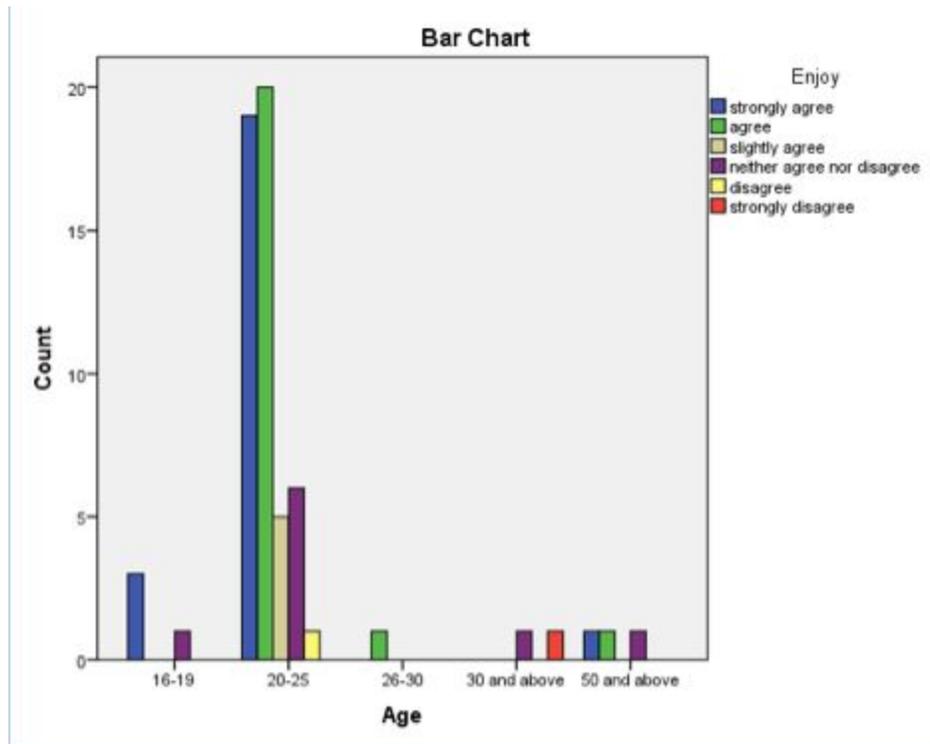
A significant relationship was found between age and rap music. Correlations was used to compute is there was a relationship between these two variables. The largest participants in this group consisted of people ages 20 to 25 years old. Again, the statement that participants had to answer was “I like rap music,” and this was based on the Likert Scale. The Pearson’s R approximate significance came to a .011, which shows that there is a good relationship. Out of the 22 participants who strongly agreed to liking rap music, 18 were in the age group of 20 to 25 year olds. In the 50 and above age group, 2 out of 4 neither agreed nor disagreed. In the 16 to 19 age group, 3 out of 23 strongly agreed.

As for age and hip-hop, the same procedures were followed through as for age and rap music. However, this correlation showed a stronger moderate significant relationship ($p \leq .001$ $r = .428$). The 20 to 25 age group continued to be the more dominant with 19 out of 23 strongly agreeing to liking hip-hop music and only 1 neither agreeing nor disagreeing in the 50 and above age group. Therefore, this relationship shows that a good amount of young adults do like rap and hip-hop music, but that older people were more mixed.



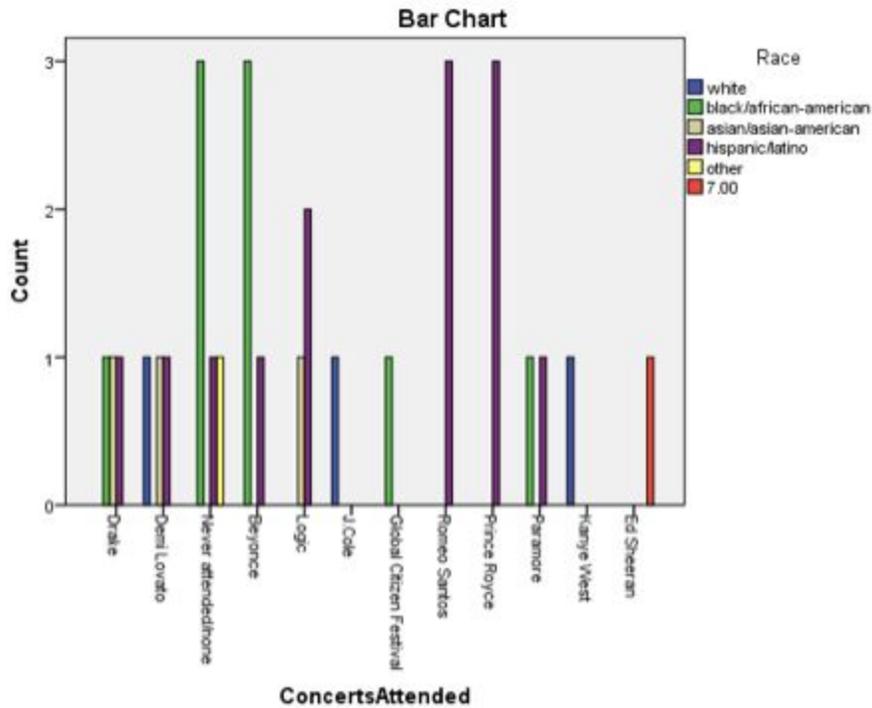


The fourth question that the participants had to answer was if they enjoyed listening to African-American music artists. A significant relationship was found here too, and the largest group of participants were in the age group of 20 to 25. ($p \leq .04$ $r = .26$). In the 20 to 25 group, 19 out of 23 strongly agreed to enjoying black music artists. This shows that black music artists are popular among young adults than older adults, which only 1 out of 9 neither agreed nor disagreed to liking black music artists.



The last relationship that was analyzed in this study was between race and concerts attended. This was an open ended question that participants had to answer to see what concerts they attended and to list as many that applied to them. Due to the amount of responses from the participants, the artists who were tallied and showed up the most were Drake, Demi Lovato, Beyonce, Logic, J.Cole, Global Citizen Festival, Romeo Santos, Prince Royce, Paramore, Kanye West, and Ed Sheeran. There were also a number of people who have not attended a concert before, which was also taken into consideration when this data was analyzed. The artists who were most popular consisted of black and non-black artists. There was also a large percentage of people who never attended a concert before, which can be viewed in the bar chart below.

However, the group that attended these artists' concerts were the black/African-American group and the Hispanic/Latino group. ($p \leq .017$ $r = .79$).



Chapter V. Discussion

This research study has shown that different audiences do appeal and enjoy listening to black music artists. The most notable part of this study is the percentage of some of the results. For instance, under the variables race and rap music, the Hispanic/Latino group was the top percentage, even surpassing the black/African-American group. However, this was also due to part in the number of participants in the study. There was a larger number of Hispanic/Latino participants than African-American participants. However, it was still interesting to see how

many participants, who were not black, were interested and liked black music artists. It was also interesting to see why some people liked their favorite artists. It had more to do with their music style, personality, and even physical characteristics more than anything else.

After the results were gathered and analyzed, three interviews were conducted. Two participants are currently seniors at Saint Peter's University and the third participant is a retired musician and police officer. The first participant, age 20, is an African-American woman who grew up in the Poconos, Pennsylvania. She would describe the area she lived in as being quiet, small, and full of nature. Growing up, she listened to a lot of Motown and jazz, which was due to the fact that she lived with her mom for all of her life. She listened to artists including Michael Jackson, The Supremes, Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, and more. However, the area she grew up in was not diverse because there was not a high population. She grew up in the Poconos and she was surrounded by mostly white people, which has also influenced the artists that she listened to such as Panic at the Disco, Fall Out Boy, Paramore, and more. She didn't get into rap/hip-hop music until a few years ago.

Now, she enjoys listening to black music artists more such as Beyonce, Kanye West, and Childish Gambino (Donald Glover). Even with controversial artists such as Kanye West, she loves his music because she feels like he has been an example that other artists have followed and looked to who have come into the industry later than him such as Kid Cudi, Travis Scott, Big Sean, and many more. Despite his political views, which she does not agree with nor with his favoritism with President Trump, she still would listen to his music. She views Childish Gambino as being an artist that represents the culture and stand for much more than music due to the strong statements in his music such as "This is America," where he created a vivid music

video depicting the police brutality and cruelty on African-American life. She admires Beyonce and thinks of her as a strong black female figure that women of color, and women in general, can look up to for not only for her music, but for her empowerment and feminism as well.

When asked what she saw in the future for black music artists, she said she believes that they will be just as popular, but in a new way. Instead of genres dominating the charts, she sees a new wave of music dominating the chart. Sub-categories from popular genres such as trap music deriving from rap and hip-hop and neo-soul deriving from r&b. Even a mixture of r&b artists that can also rap such as Bryson Tiller and 6lack. She says, "There is always going to be a new genre for the time period. The early 2000's was rock or like punk rock, you had the Green Day's and all that stuff. Then it went to all the radio hit stuff then it went back to hip-hop. I feel like there's always going to be a new genre of music that's going to emerge again. In ten, twenty years it's not going even be about the genre anymore, just the sub-categories."

The second interviewee was a 21 year-old woman. She is of mixed heritage, her mom is white and her father is Ecuadorian. However, she identifies more with her Hispanic side due to the household she grew up in. She grew up in Jersey City, New Jersey which is a very diverse, urban, low-income, and populated city. She lived in "The Heights" for most of her life, which is a section of Jersey City that she describes as very Hispanic, yet diverse. Growing up, the music that she listened to were genres such as r&b and hip-hop. By the time she got to junior high and high school she still listened to these genres, but she also listened to rock, punk, and alternative. She vividly remembers her mom "liking Nelly and LL Cool J and Boyz II Men, so I would listen to that a lot in the car and Sean Paul." She thinks that black artists do have a positive affect on

society because we are able to gain a different perspective on music and it would be boring, as she puts it, if we just had one genre of music.

She likes most of the artists based on their music style not because they are considered “mainstream.” So for artists such as Beyonce and Kanye West, who are mainstream and “trendy” artists, she doesn’t enjoy their music as much as she enjoys Childish Gambino. For her, she likes Gambino’s sound rather than if he’s trendy or not. Also, she respects him as an artist because of his personality and the fact that he is one of the few rappers who does not degrade women in his art. While she listens to Kanye West, she feels a bias towards him and somewhat of a guilt for listening to his music. For her, the personality of the artist is not separated from the artistry. So, when Kanye West makes claims such as saying “slavery was a choice” and other radical statements, she wants nothing to do with him as a person and as an artist.

As for the future of black music artists, she believes that they will be just as popular as they are today. She believes that society today isn’t as openly racist anymore as we were before; therefore, there isn’t much of a polarization between races as it was before. Especially, when President Trump is out of office, she believes that we will be less divided than we are now as a nation. Since black artists are largely represented now, the participant feels that “it’s really important to see that representation to see and represent the youth.” She’s even waiting to see this representation in politics and maybe one day more Muslim rappers and other ethnicities and different people can make their way on the scene.

The third interviewee was a 65 year old man. He is African-American and grew up in Jersey City, New Jersey in a family oriented area that he describes as lower-middle class. His early youth was spent in the 60’s and 70’s and around that time he listened to Motown and jazz.

His favorite artists consist of black artists such as Stevie Wonder, John Coltrane, and Earth, Wind, and Fire. Being a former musician himself, he thinks of black music being consisted of genres such as r&b, jazz and so on. And that most contemporary that we listen to today has its roots in black music. He thinks that, for the most part, black music artists do have a positive impact on society, but there are some who might have a negative impact. He said one thing was for certain: that black music is America pop culture because everything else, rock, country, and all other music has its roots in black music.

However, he also said there is no denying the negative connotations that comes with black music, particularly, in rap and hip-hop and its treatment towards females. The participant believes that rap and hip-hop do treat females in a negative way, but they are expressing their environments through their music. He believes that if one grows up in a negative environment where he refers to females in such a negative way then he is in cultured to be that way. That is part of some rappers and hip-hop artists' cultures and is translated into their music. But comparing the music of today and of the past, one may find similarities or some differences. For the participant he says that there is a big difference. He states,

“The music of Motown didn't have a lot of the negative connotations as the music today as far as disrespecting females and whatsoever, because that's not the way that culture in the 50's responded to... that's not the way we were raised in the 50's and 60's. But now you break it up into the 90's and you look at the deterioration of the black culture right as far as most of these kids who grow up without fathers right, single parent homes, right. That you see the degradation of the black family. And that's part of the reason how come

our society has really I guess the black society has, the young black society in the 2000's to 2019 has really lost its way as far as respect for the black woman.”

Chapter VI: Conclusion

At the end of the study, the hypothesis proposed at the beginning was supported that black music artists do appeal to a wider audience based on their mainstream success and the progression of black music in America. It was found that it had more to do with age than with race. The participants who belonged to an older age group did not like today's rap and hip-hop music as much as the younger participants. Based on the 62 participants who contributed to the survey, regardless of race, young people listen to today's rap and hip-hop music artists. However, some participants did enjoy Motown and jazz music.

Future Research

For future research, this study should be expanded to older ages, not just 20-25 year olds. What this means is that there should be a larger group of participants who are older than 20-25 in order to have more comparisons between the older and younger ages. The sample should also be expanded to include more participants so each racial/ethnic group can be more evenly represented. Another way that this study can be expanded is by going to different areas such as different cities or states and handing out surveys. Originally, the surveys were just passed out in Jersey City, New Jersey and some in Yonkers, New York. However, it would be interesting to see if different cities and towns would get different or similar results. Also, different universities should be considered as well since the majority of the respondents were from Saint Peter's University.

Another consideration to expand this study is researching on the cultural appropriation of black music. In a news article, Emily Blatchford defines cultural appropriation as “the act of taking our using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture” (Blatchford, 2017, para. 6). Thus, it is noted that many things from the black culture have been appropriated from others such as hair styles, clothing, and music. However, it would be interesting to add this factor in to see if it still exist in today’s music and if other non-black artists profit from it. Lastly, another factor is to look at the effect of social media and pop culture. This project can expand by researching how social media spreads culture and seeing the kind of impact it has.

Hopefully, with expanded research, there would be even more results that either are similar or different from the previous results. Maybe there will be an increase in the correlations and the percentages. Overall, this study offered just a glimpse of why audiences like their favorite artists, how they listen to their favorite artist, and the impact that black music artists have on society. It also has shown that as a society, for the most part, we are more connected than divided when it comes to music. Another insight developed through the interviews is that an artist’s politics does play a huge role in whether people will listen to him/her or not. Also, it shows how far black music has come and how people are still enjoying black artists and may even enjoy them twenty years from now. Overall, the study shows that variables such race, age, and gender do play a certain role on why people listen to certain artists, but not as much as it did in the past.

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Appendix

Survey Questions

1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other
 - Prefer not to answer
2. What is your ethnicity/race
 - White
 - Black/African-American
 - Asian/ Asian-American
 - Hispanic/Latino
 - Other
 - Prefer not to answer
3. What is your age?
 - 16-19
 - 20-25
 - 26-30
 - 30 and above
 - 50 and above
4. What is your grade level?
 - High school student

- College student
- College graduate
- Doesn't apply to me

5. Do you follow your favorite music artist on social media?

- Yes
- No

6. Who is your favorite artists? List 3 below.

7. I listen to "mainstream" music?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. I like rap music

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree

Strongly disagree

9. I like hip-hop music

Strongly agree

Agree

Slightly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

10. I like R&B music

Strongly agree

Agree

Slightly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

11. The artists that I enjoy listening to are African- American

Strongly agree

Agree

Slightly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Slightly disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. What appeals to you when you listen to your favorite artists (Check all that apply)

- Music style
 - Personality
 - Lifestyle
 - Physical characteristics
 - Emotional characteristics
 - Other (please specify)
-

13. What media do you use to listen to your music (Check all that apply)

- Spotify
 - Apple Music
 - Soundcloud
 - Cd's
 - Youtube
 - Other (please specify)
-

14. What artists do you stream on music streaming services? List 3 below.

15. How do you feel about Kanye West?

- Strongly like

- Like
- Slightly like
- Neither like nor dislike
- Slightly dislike
- Dislike
- Strongly dislike

16. How do you feel about Beyonce?

- Strongly like
- Like
- Slightly like
- Neither like nor dislike
- Slightly dislike
- Dislike
- Strongly dislike

17. How do you feel about Donald Glover (known as Childish Gambino)?

- Strongly like
- Like
- Slightly like
- Neither like nor dislike
- Slightly dislike
- Dislike
- Strongly dislike

18. How often do you attend concerts?

- Very Often

- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

19. What concerts have you attended? List as many apply below.

20. If you could see someone in concert, who would it be? List as many apply below.