INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF MUSIC WITH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IDENTITY PERCEPTION IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the connection between young people's music preferences and their sense of identity. A total of 423 participants aged 18 to 34 were involved, using the "Personal Information Form," "Identity Perception Scale," and "Music Preferences Form" as tools. The model of the research is the survey model, which is "a research model that aims to detect a past or present situation as it exists". Identity is described as how individuals perceive themselves through social roles and relationships, while music acts as a way to express feelings and thoughts. Identity formation is a complex process that starts during adolescence and continues into adulthood, with music playing a key role in this journey. The study's results showed a significant link between the types of music people listen to and their sense of identity. It was observed that young adults often express their identities through their music preferences, which are closely tied to

their self-image. For example, those who prefer pop music are generally seen as more social and fun-loving, while those who choose folk music are perceived as more melancholic. This suggests that music is not just a form of entertainment but also a strong indicator of identity. The study highlights how music helps shape and express personal identity, acting as a way for individuals to present themselves to the world. It also shows that music influences both how people see themselves and how others see them, functioning as both a social and psychological tool in forming identity. These findings emphasize the important role music plays in helping young adults deal with the challenges of self-expression and social belonging. This research is intended to provide a foundation for future studies on the relationship between music and identity.

Keywords: *Musical Preference, Positive and Negative Identity Perception, University Students*

ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNDE MÜZİĞİN OLUMLU VE OLUMSUZ KİMLİK ALGISI İLE İLİŞKİSİNİN İNCELENMESİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, gençlerin müzik tercihleri ile kimlik algıları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bu amaçla yaşları 18-34 aralığında değişen 423 gence, "Kişisel Bilgi Formu", "Kimlik Algısı Ölçeği" ve "Müzik Tercihleri Formu" kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın modeli, "geçmiş veya şimdiki bir durumu var olduğu haliyle tespit etmeyi amaçlayan bir araştırma modeli" olan anket modelidir. Kimlik, bireyin kendini algılayışı, sosyal roller ve ilişkiler aracılığıyla tanımlanırken, müzik ise bireyin duygularını ve düşüncelerini ifade etme aracıdır. Kimlik oluşumu, ergenlikte başlayıp yetişkinlik boyunca devam eden karmaşık bir süreçtir ve müzik, bu sürecin önemli bir parçası olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Araştırma sonuçları, bireylerin dinledikleri müzik türleri ile kimlik algıları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Özellikle genç yetişkinlerin müzik tercihleri yoluyla kimliklerini ifade ettikleri ve bu tercihlerin onların benlik algılarının ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Pop müzik tercih edenler genellikle daha sosyal ve eğlenceli olarak algılanırken, halk müziği tercih edenler daha melankolik olarak görülmektedir. Bu durum, müziğin sadece bir eğlence aracı değil, aynı zamanda güçlü bir kimlik belirleyicisi oldu-

ğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu çalışma, müziğin kişisel kimliğin şekillendiril-mesi ve ifade edilmesindeki rolünü ortaya koyarken, müzikal tercihlerin bireylerin dünyaya kendilerini nasıl sunduklarına dair bir mercek görevi gördüğünü öne sürmektedir. Ayrıca, müziğin bireylerin kendilerini nasıl algıladıklarını ve başkaları tarafından nasıl algılandıklarını etkilediği, müziğin kimlik oluşumunda hem sosyal hem de psikolojik bir araç olarak rol oynadığı görülmüştür. Bu bulgular, özellikle genç yetişkinlerin kendini ifade etme ve sosyal aidiyet karmaşıklıklarıyla başa çıkmalarında müziğin önemli bir rol oynadığını göstermektedir. Bu çalışmanın gelecekte müzikle ilgili çalışmalara kaynak niteliğinde olması hedeflenmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Müzik Tercihleri, Olumlu ve Olumsuz Kimlik Algısı, Üniversite Öğrencileri*

INTRODUCTION

The term identity[1] comes from the Latin root 'idem', which means same-ness and continuity. In the psychology dictionary of the APA (2015), it is stated that identity is expressed as the feeling of self-perception of an individual defined by several relationships and social roles, as well as identity stems from beliefs about self (Ergün, 2020). At the same time, it is important for the individual to define himself within social norms, interact and integrate with groups, as well as in the psychological sense of the individual; self-esteem, self-development, social life, academic success, etc. it is a phenomenon that affects concepts. The process of identity formation is a condition that begins with adolescence and continues throughout adult-hood. Creating a healthy identity allows an individual to perform adult roles more easily and move into adulthood healthier (Erikson 1968, Luy-ckx et al. 2008) Although the phenomenon of identity forms the agenda of the individual with adolescence, the phenomenon of identity does not end with this period. Looking at the current studies (Arnett 2000, 2003, 2015, McAdams 2001), it has been shown that identity development contin-ues throughout life and becomes even more important, especially during young adulthood (Ergün, 2020). The concepts of positive and negative identity perception are two basic frameworks used to describe how indi-viduals perceive themselves. Positive identity perception reflects a positive perspective on an individual's self-worth, while expressing an individual's

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[1] Identity in Turkish is formed from the query root "who" and in the same way it denotes a mandatory membership (belonging), being the same, being the only one, which person to be (Dalbay & Avcı, 2018).

self-esteem, social cohesion and positive feelings towards himself. This perception supports the individual to adopt social roles and relationships in a healthy way. Negative identity perception, on the other hand, includes an individual's negative feelings about himself, low self-esteem, and often alienation from society. Negative perceptions can negatively affect an individual's psychological and social functioning. Research shows that these two perceptions are also associated with individuals' music preferences; for example, it has been stated that individuals who listen to pop music are generally perceived as more social and fun, while individuals who listen to folk music have a more melancholic identity perception. This situation reveals that the individual's music preferences serve both as a tool and a reflection in shaping the perception of identity.

Today, the process of acquiring an identity has become increasingly complex, and an assessment needs to be made to resolve this complexity. The rapid change of social and cultural dynamics is one of the main reasons why the process of identity acquisition is becoming increasingly complex. Individuals who move away from traditional norms encounter new value systems and make efforts to make these values a part of their identity. Globalization and increasing cultural interaction make it easier for individuals to be influenced by different cultures, and this situation adds both diversity and complexity to the identity formation process. In addition, the spread of social media and digital platforms creates pressure on individuals to present their identities in idealized forms and to strike a balance between their real-life identities and their virtual identities. One of the factors of this necessary evaluation is music, since it is often described as a means of expressing emotions and thoughts. Music has a profound influence on the formation of an individual's identity beyond other human interactions (Duman, 2024).Music is also a tool that can convey an individual's feelings and thoughts to a wide audience and create a social network between individuals who are in the same mood as him (Sağır & Öztürk, 2015). Music: apart from being just an art phenomenon with its rhythm, melody and words, it is an important consumed social tool that affects the acquisition of a person's identity and the shaping of his perception. The ways in which music is consumed also include the self-identification of the individual as an identity. Thanks to the social network, music listeners build a common network for themselves and shape their lives around this class by creating a class around this network. For example, punk, rock and arabesque, rather

than being a musical genre, are turning into forms of representation of a culture in their own right. Individuals define their own worlds within this music culture and make sense of their lives within this culture (Sağır & Öztürk, 2015).

Music penetrates deeply into a person's emotional and mental environment. Music, which is described as the food of the soul in many definitions, holds a mirror to a person's mood. People listen to music according to their modes, reflect the balance or confusion in their inner world to the outside according to the music they listen to. Making or listening to music can reveal or transmit various emotions and experiences. When it comes to the psychological effects of music, music that is melodic can be useful in reducing stress levels, allowing people to calm down and focus more easily. The tempo, genre and melody of a song can change depending on a person's mood, and the music they listen to can also affect a person's mood. Music can affect people's moods and increase the intensity of their emotions. Many people use listening to music to connect their musical tastes with others, express their inner world and create an identity. People have the opportunity to find their own unique sounds thanks to music, especially during childhood. However, how this musical journey will affect a person's positive or negative sense of identity may vary depending on a person's experiences, cultural background and personal preferences.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the relationship of listening to music on positive and negative identity perception among university students. Quantitative studies typically use three types of research questions (RQs). In an experiment or group comparison, the researcher may compare groups on an independent variable to observe how it affects a dependent variable. In a survey project, the researcher can link one or more predictor factors to one or more outcome variables. RQs can be descriptive questions where the intent is to describe a single variable. Alternatively, RQs can state relationship questions among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023,p.175-6). The following questions were answered within the framework of this general purpose:

1. What genres of music do university students prefer?
2. What are the levels of positive and negative identity perception among university students?

3. Is there significant differentiation positive and negative identity perception acording to socio-demographical variables?
4. Is there a significant relationship between students' sense of identity perception and music genre preference?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

When the Google Scholar, Scopus, ULAKBIM databases were scanned there was no study in which the two variables were considered together has been conducted on the relationship of listening to music on positive or negative identity perception in students. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship of the types of music students want to listen to on positive and negative identity perceptions and to elucidate potential directions for future research in this field.

METHODS
Model of the research

The model of the research is the survey model, which is "*a research model that aims to detect a past or present situation as it exists*" (Karasar, 2018:109). In the study, the "*relational screening model,*" which is one of the screening models under the title of general screening and aims to determine the existence and/or degree of change between two or more variables, was used. This model is made in the form of data pairs that will allow a relational analysis (Karasar, 2018:114).

Data collection tools

The data of the research were collected by using three forms as "*Personal Information Form*" , "Music Preferences Form", and "*Identity Perception Scale*".

Personal Information Form (PIF): PIF prepared by the researchers consists of some close-ended questions about age, sex, educational status.

Music Preferences Form: "The Music Preferences Form" was specially designed by the researchers in accordance with the main objectives of the research. The main purpose of the form is to determine the effects of participants' music preferences on identity perception. In this direction, it was aimed to reveal how individuals express their identity through their preferred music genres and the relationship of these preferences with positive or negative identity perception. A music preference form, designed

by researchers, presented participants with two options: Neset Ertaş song "Ah Yalan Dünya" and Serdar Ortaç's song "Ne Bu Neşe". The main reason why only pop and folk music genres were focused in this study is that these genres are seen as two opposite poles representing the perception of cultural and social identity in Turkish society. While folk music reflects the traditional values and melancholic nature of Turkish culture, pop music represents a modern, social and fun identity (Erdal, 2009). The choice of the two types is based on the symbolic roles of these types in social perception. Serdar Ortaç's success in pop music and the awards he has won have been the main reason for his selection as a representative of this genre (Kral Müzik, 2017.) In addition, in the research, the choice of music genre was examined by making a choice between two artists. This approach is based on the perception of artists as powerful symbols representing their genre.

Identity Perception Scale: The scale was developed by Serafini and Adams (2002). It is designed to measure the positive and negative identity perceptions of individuals. Demir adopted this form of the scale into Turkish. The scale consists of 19 items. The form is a 5-point Likert type; it is scored between 1-5 (*1-strongly disagree... 5-completely agree*). There are no reverse coded items in the scale. The scale also has two subscales. While questions numbered 4-7-10-11-13-14-16-18-19 examine the dimension of "positive identity perception"; questions numbered 1-2-3-5-6-8-9-12-15-17 examine the dimension of "negative identity perception". The total scores on the scale are taken based on the sub-dimension, and the total score is not obtained from the scale as a whole. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be α =.88. Since this value is above .70, it shows that the scale is reliable.

Ethics of the study
Research started after obtaining ethical approval from the İstanbul 29 Mayıs University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee on the date of 04.12.2023, under reference number 2023/12.Participants were informed about the research before the scales were administered. Participation in the research was voluntary. The informed consent form and scales were presented to the participants online, and the data were collected via Google Forms created on the Internet.

Analysis

In the analysis of the research results, the data collected from the forms and scales were digitized and entered the SPSS-22 program for Windows. To analyze the data, it was first determined whether the relevant dataset showed a normal distribution. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) accept that the distribution is normal when the skewness and kurtosis values are between ±1.50. Since the skewness and kurtosis values of the Identity Perception Scale subscale (positive-negative identity perception) scores in the study are within this range, it can be said that the data set has a normal distribution (S*ee* Table 2). As such, parametric methods were found suitable for analysis. p<.05 and p<.001 significance levels were preferred in interpretation.

Sampling

This research was conducted in the fall semester of the 2023–2024 academic year. While determining the sampling method, the simple random sampling technique, which is a type of sampling in which all elements in the study population have an equal chance of being selected, was used. For the sample size, 426 people were determined as the sample by calculating a 90% confidence interval and a 4% margin of error in the unknown universe. Three data was excluded, so 423 people were included in the study. Detailed information about demographic variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographical Variables

Variables		n	%
Sex	Male	292	69,0
	Female	131	31,0
Education	Undergraduate	311	73,5
	Graduate	94	22,2
	Master-Doctoral	18	4,3
Age groups	18-24 years	326	77,1
	25-35 years	97	22,9
Music Genre Preferences	Pop music (Serdar Ortaç)	192	45,4
	Folk Music (Neşet Ertaş)	231	54,6
Identity Perception	Positive identity	320	75,7
	Negative identity	103	24,3
	Total	*423*	*100*

RESULTS

In this section, descriptive analysis results on the *"Identity Perception*

Scale", comparative analysis results according to demographic variables, and correlation analysis results on the relationship between positive-negative identity perception and music genre preferences will be presented, respectively.

Descriptive analysis

The average scores of the participants from the Identity Perception Scale subscales are presented in Table 2. The average scores of the participants from the Identity Perception Scale subscales are presented in Table 2. Accordingly, 320 participants have a positive perception scored 34.37±6.36 points; 103 participants have a negative perception scored 24.87±7,85 points.

Table 2.

"Identity Perception Scale" descriptive analysis

	n	Min	Max	X̄	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Identity Perception Scale	423						
Positive identity	320	9,00	45,00	34,37	6,36	-,685	,879
Negative identity	103	10,00	50,00	24,87	7,85	,255	-,321

Chi-square Correlation

To determine whether students' music genre preferences relate to identity perception, Chi-square (χ^2) analysis was conducted. Results indicate that there is highly significant relationship between music genre preferences and identity perception, $\chi^2=12,846$; $p<.001$. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Music genre preferences and identity perception χ^2 analysis

Identity Perception	Music genre preferences		Total	χ^2
	Pop (Serdar Ortaç)	Folk (Neşet Ertaş)		
Positive identity	161	159	320	12,846*
Negative identity	31	72	103	

p<.001 significant relationship

Comparative analysis

Independent Sample T-test analysis was conducted to determine whether students' music genre preferences and identity perception differ according to sex. In the t-test analysis results, music genre preferences show highly significant difference according to sex, $t(289,330)=-6,650$, $p<.001$. While female prefer pop music more, male prefer folk music. On the other hand, identity perception do not show significant difference according to sex, $t(421)=-,269$, $p>.05$. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Music genre preference and identity perception comparison analysis according to sex

	Sex	n	X̄	Sd	t	p
Music genre preference	Female	292	1,449	,4982	*t(289,330)*	.000*
	Male	131	1,763	,42	-6,650	
Identity Perception	Female	292	1,2397	,42	*t(421)*	,788
	Male	131	1,2519	,43	-,269	

*p<.001 highly significant differentiation

Independent Sample T-test analysis was conducted to determine whether students' music genre preferences and identity perception differ according to age. In the T-test analysis results, the perception of identity differs highly significantly according to age groups, t(211,361)=-3,717, p<.001. The younger age group has a more negative sense of identity than older age group. On the other hand, music genre preferences show no significant differences according to age, t (159,337) =-1,176, p>.05. Results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5.

Music genre preference and identity perception comparison analysis according to age

		n	X̄	Sd	t	p
Music genre preference	18-24	326	1,53	,49	*t(159,337)*	,241
	25-34	97	1,59	,49	-1,176	
Identity perception	18-24	326	1,27	,44	*t(211,361)*	,000*
	25-34	97	1,12	,33	3,717	

*p<.001 highly significant differentiation

The difference of identity perception according to education status was examined by ANOVA one-way variance analysis. According to the results of ANOVA analysis, identity perception shows significant differentiation according to education status, F (2,420) = 5,112, p=.006. Results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6.

Musical Genre preferences and identity perception comparison analysis according to education level

		n	X̄	Sd	F (2,420)	p
Identity Perception	Undergraduate	311	1,28	,45116	5,112	,006
	Graduated	94	1,12	,33550		
	Postgraduate	18	1,16	,38348		
	Total	*423*	*1,24*	*,42970*		
Music Genres	Undergraduate	311	1,53	,4999	,915	,401
	Graduated	94	1,60	,4912		
	Postgraduate	18	1,50	,5145		
	Total	*423*	*1,54*	*,4985*		

$p < .001$ significant relationship

Individuals with an undergraduate level of education have a more positive sense of identity compared to graduates and those currently pursuing a graduate degree ($P = .009$, $p < .05$). No significant differences were observed in the other subgroups ($p = .530$, $p > .05$). Results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7.

Post-hoc Scheffe analysis results for identity perception

(I)Eğitim Durumu	(J)Eğitim durumu	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Undergraduate	Graduated	,15530	,009
	Postgraduate	,11629	,530

$p < .001$ significant relationship

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study aimed to reveal the music preferences of university students, as well as their positive and negative identity perceptions, and to determine the relationship between preferred music genres and positive and negative identity perceptions. The following results were obtained:

Among students, folk music is the most preferred genre. This situation can be attributed to the high level of respect for folk music within Turkish society and its transmission to younger generations by elders. The generally traditional structure of Turkish society is also considered one of the main reasons for this preference. Folk music, deeply embedded in Turkish culture, plays a significant role in shaping individuals' cultural identities.

In this context, the inclination of students towards folk music can be interpreted as a sign of their attachment to cultural heritage. On the other hand, pop music is less preferred among students. The lower preference for pop music could be influenced by the specific artists featured in the survey. The general listening habits for pop music in Turkey, along with its lack of profound lyrics and emotional depth, may not resonate with the emotional nature of the respondents, leading to its lower preference. Additionally, the tarnished image of Serdar Ortaç, one of the featured pop artists, due to various tabloid incidents, might have negatively impacted the survey results. In contrast, Neşet Ertaş, who represents Turkish folk music in the survey, is a highly revered figure in Turkish society. He is considered one of the most important and respected folk artists, which likely contributed to the higher preference for folk music among students. When compared to other studies conducted with university students, Pop music genre is more commonly preferred. (Balcı, Soysal 2021) This suggests that the choice of university students in this study may be related to their socio-demographic characteristics rather than the age factor. The literature on music preferences emphasizes that relatively older individuals tend to listen to Folk music.

The study, conducted with young adults aged 18-34, revealed a significant relationship between music preferences and identity perception. This finding clearly demonstrates how music tastes shape individuals' perceptions of their own identities. Young adults express themselves through the music they listen to, and these music preferences become an integral part of their identities. Music serves as a means of conveying who they are to their surroundings and simultaneously influences how they perceive themselves. Thus, music is not merely a form of entertainment but also a powerful determinant of identity. For instance, a person who listens to pop music may be perceived as fun and sociable, whereas someone who listens to folk music might be considered melancholic.

SUGGESTIONS
1. Repeating the study with individuals from different age groups and comparing the research results,
2. Conducting new research in which different music genres are offered as a choice and comparing the research results,
3. Conducting new research to identify different identity perception and

comparing the research results,

4. Repeating similar studies taking into account different geographical regions in our country is suggested.

LIMITATIONS

1. The research is based on students' own evaluations (self-report). There is a possibility that some students may have avoided expressing their real situation or exaggerated it during the application.

2. The research is limited to only 423 people.

3. The small number of female participants in the study is among the limitations of the study.

4. This research is limited to two music genres.

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