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Tegan Wren Guillebeau

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The cultural impact on artist development and consumers' preferences

by

Tegan Wren Guillebeau

An Honors Capstone

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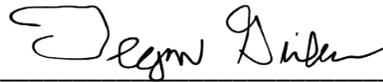
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Honors Capstone Director: Dr. Eric Fong

Associate Professor of Management

_____4-21-2020_____

Student (signature)   Date

Eric Fong   4/22/2020

_____

Director (signature)   Date

_____

Department Chair (signature)   Date

_____

Honors College Dean (signature)   Date

Honors College

Frank Franz Hall

+1 (256) 824-6450 (voice)

+1 (256) 824-7339 (fax)

honors@uah.edu

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_Tegan Guillebeau_____

Student Name (printed)

_____

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Abstract: In this manuscript, we examine the impact of two cultural variables, individualism and masculinity, on consumer preferences for musicians. Specifically, we want to understand how culture impacts preferences for solo artists vs. bands and whether culture impacts consumers' gender preferences for popular artists. Using data from various countries, such as South Korea, the United States, and Spain, we found that country level individualism impacts consumers' gender preferences when it comes to top artists.

Introduction: Research on culture suggests that many individuals' behavior and preferences are shaped by their cultural environment. For example, according to Wernars (2017), cultural variables can have an impact on consumer behavior. In their study published in Nature, McDermott, Schulz, Undurraga, and Gody (2016) found that culture impacts people's perception of music; whether find it pleasant or unpleasant. This would suggest that culture could have a significant impact on a consumers' preferences for music and the artists that produce that music. In this study, we examine two country level cultural variables, individualism and masculinity, to determine if they impact consumer preferences for musical artists. Theory and logic would predict that countries high in individualism would prefer solo artists as opposed to groups. However, masculinity prediction of gender preference may not be as straightforward; one might think masculine cultures would want to be entered by females, but it could be possible that masculine cultures prefer not to see successful women.

In order to examine our proposed relationships, we collected data from 25 countries and analyzed the top 20 most popular musicians within each country. This data was accessed through various websites, the one most commonly used being Last.fm. For countries India, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Thailand, and

the USA, additional sources were used in conjunction with Last.fm to determine the top 20 most popular musicians. These sources are noted in the references section. The countries, with their respective individualistic scores and masculinity scores, can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Country data: Individuality and masculinity scores.

Country	Individuality Score	Masculinity Score
Brazil	38	49
Canada	80	52
Egypt	25	52
France	71	43
Germany	67	66
Iceland	60	10
India	48	56
Israel	54	47
Italy	76	70
Japan	46	95
Malaysia	26	50
Mexico	30	69
New Zealand	79	58
Philippines	32	64
Poland	60	64
Portugal	27	31
Russia	39	36
South Africa	65	63
South Korea	18	39
Spain	51	42
Sweden	71	5
Taiwan	17	45
Thailand	20	34
UK	89	66
USA	91	62

Theoretical Background: According to Hofstede (year), Individualism vs. Collectivism is a spectrum in which the higher end of the dimension, called Individualism, pertains to a cultural preference for a looser social framework where an individual is only expected to maintain and care for themselves and their immediate families. The low end of the dimension, called Collectivism, pertains to a cultural preference for the exact opposite – a tight knit framework where the whole of society is focused on rather than the individual. Regarding Masculinity vs. Femininity, Hofstede (year) defines this spectrum such that the high end of the dimension "represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive." The counterpart, Femininity, "stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus oriented."

Before beginning our analysis of the data set gathered, it is important that we noted that, "the demand side of cultural industries partly shapes the conditions for production" (Deinema, year). So, we recognize that cultural variables not only impact consumers' preferences for musical artists, but that it is also possible the development of musicians within countries based on demand of that given culture. In this sense, for example, cultures with high individualism would not only prefer solo artists, but such a culture develops more solo artists.

Data and Methods: Our sample consists of the top 20 musical artists/bands from 25 countries (see Table 1) and thus providing us 500 observations. Our Hofstede measures for Individualism and Masculinity were collected from Hofstede's insights on country comparison tool, obtaining Individualism and Masculinity scores from this tool for each country.

Dependent variables: Our first dependent variable was artist gender. Artists could be measured as male, female, or mixed (bands can have both male and female members). This is a categorical measure (i.e., our categories are male, female, and mixed). Our measure is male = 1 and 0 otherwise and mixed = 1 and 0 otherwise with female as our omitted reference category.

Our second dependent variable is solo artist vs group. Again, this is a categorical measure where group = 1 and solo artist = 0.

Independent variables: Individualism and Masculinity were measure on scales of 1 to 100. For Individualism, a higher score represents greater individualism in that county and a lower score represents greater Collectivism. For Masculinity, a higher score represents greater masculinity and lower score represents greater Femininity.

Analytic Techniques: Because our dependent variables are categorical, ordinarily least squares regression is inappropriate and thus we use logistic regression as our analytic technique. However, the examination of gender involves three categories (male, female, and mixed), which required a technique that could handle multiple dependent variables and thus to test our gender hypotheses, we used multinomial logistic regression.

Results: We first examined the impact of the cultural dimensions on the gender of top artists. Table 2 shows, across our musical artist, irrespective of the artist being an individual or a group, as country level individuality increases, the proportion of male artists and mixed artists in the top 20 most popular artists in a country increases relative to females artists. As for Masculinity vs. Femininity, as masculinity increases within a country, mixed gender groups are less likely than female artists to be in the top 20; however there is no difference between females and males.

Table 2. Multinomial logistic regression results for the impact of Cultural Dimensions on Gender of Top Musical Artists

Variable	Male vs. Female		Mixed vs. Female	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
Intercept	.099	.333	-1.277*	.558
Individuality	.009*	.004	.017*	.008
Masculinity	-.001	.005	-.020*	.008
χ^2	11.96*			
N	500			

Note. 1 = Male, 2 = Mixed, and 3 = Female. Female is the omitted reference category. * p < .05.

Table 3 displays our results examining only groups and bands comprised of male, female, and mixed members; excluding all individual (solo) artists. The results here suggest that as individuality increases, male and mixed bands or groups are more likely to be in the top 20 most popular artists than female groups or bands. However, in terms of masculinity, there seemed to be no significant statistical impact.

Table 3. Multinomial logistic regression results for the impact of Cultural Dimensions on Top Musical Artists in Bands only

Variable	Male vs. Female		Mixed vs. Female	
	B	Std. Error	B	Std. Error
Intercept	.604	.759	-.005	.857
Individuality	.041**	.014	.047**	0.15
Masculinity	-.010	.013	-.025	.014
χ^2	16.61*			
N	194			

Note. 1 = Male, 2 = Mixed, and 3 = Female. Female is the omitted reference category. * p < .05; ** p < .01.

Table 4 examines the impact of culture on solo artists and thus there is no mixed category to compare; this is simply a comparison between male and female solo artists. The results here show us that, for both individuality and masculinity, there is no significant impact on the top 20 most popular artists.

Table 4. Logistic regression results for the impact of Cultural Dimensions on Top Individual Musical Artists

	B	Std. Error
Intercept	-.167	.418
Individuality	.004	.005
Masculinity	-.001	.007
χ^2	.58	
N	306	

Note. 1 = Male.

Finally, Table 5 examines the impact of culture on whether top artists are largely solo artists or bands. According to these results, culture has no impact.

Table 5. Logistic regression results for the impact of Cultural Dimensions on whether Top Artists are in Bands

	B	Std. Error
Intercept	-.521	.314
Individuality	.004	.004
Masculinity	-.003	.005
χ^2	1.125	
N	500	

Note. 1 = Group.

Discussion and Conclusion: In conclusion, our hypothesis began as a desire to understand if cultural variables, such as Individualism and Masculinity, hold significant impacts on the development and consumer preferences of a country. Through using multinomial logistic regression, we were able to find that, amongst the top 20 most popular artists within a given country we examined, an increase in individualism seemed to mean an increase in the likelihood that a male artist would be in the top 20, and an increase in masculinity seemed to mean a better likelihood of mixed gender groups or bands being in the top 20. We were also able to find that male groups or bands were the most likely to be in the top 20 when just groups and bands were

analyzed, while female groups or bands were the least likely to be in the top 20. Overall, masculinity did not seem to have much of a significant impact past the increased likelihood of mixed gender groups or bands being in the top 20 when the entire population size was examined at one time.

There are a couple things that we could have done differently in order to capture different results, namely in terms of capturing data. Most of the data was taken from Last.fm, a music website, however there were still quite a few countries lacking in data on this website, leading to additional sources to be required in order to obtain all the data to run the logistic regressions. In addition, we could also have made our population size larger by either increasing the number of top musicians, increasing the number of countries in which we took data, or both.

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Completed Honors Thesis

Eric Fong <fonge@uah.edu>   Wed, Apr 22, 2020 at 1:57 PM
To: Tegan Guillebeau <twg0005@uah.edu>
Cc: FAN Tseng <tsengf@uah.edu>, William Wilkerson <wilkerw@uah.edu>, David Cook <dac0010@uah.edu>

Hi Tegan,
I approve your honors thesis. Congratulations! Attached is the signed thesis.

Best Regards,
Prof. Fong

Eric Fong, Ph.D

University of Alabama in Huntsville

Department of Management, Marketing, & IS

BAB #370

Huntsville, AL 35899

(256) 824-2897

eric.fong@uah.edu

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