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Pop Music and Globalization: The Integration and Re-creation of Ethnic Elements

Música pop y globalización: la integración y la recreación de elementos étnicos

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has reshaped the soundscape of pop music, enabling the fusion of traditional ethnic elements, such as indigenous instruments, folk rhythms, regional languages, and vocal styles, into mainstream compositions. While such integrations reflect growing cultural interconnectivity, questions persist regarding how these creative choices influence audience perception and commercial outcomes. This research investigates the impact of ethnic integration on listener attitudes, perceived authenticity, cultural appreciation, stereotyping concerns, and market performance in global pop music. The research involved a quantitative research design, including a content analysis of 100 internationally popular pop songs (2015-2024) and survey responses from 1200 global music listeners. Songs were systematically coded for ethnic elements, and participants evaluated them across multiple dimensions, including authenticity, appreciation, novelty, stereotyping, and engagement. Commercial success was measured through global streaming metrics and chart performance. Statistical techniques included Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to assess perceptual differences, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to structure perceptual dimensions, and hierarchical regression analysis to model relationships between perception variables and commercial performance. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28. Results indicated that songs featuring ethnic elements were rated higher for authenticity, cultural value, and novelty but also raised concerns about stereotyping. The research shows that perceived authenticity and cultural appreciation greatly influence listener engagement and commercial success in global pop music. When applied appropriately, ethnic integration, enhances cultural engagement and broadens the international appeal of pop music.

Keywords: Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA); Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA); Hierarchical Regression Analysis; Pop Music; Vocal Styles; Traditional Ethnic Elements.

RESUMEN

La globalización ha remodeel paisaje sonoro de la música pop, permitiendo la fusión de elementos étnicos tradicionales, como instrumentos indígenas, ritmos folcl, idiomas regionales y estilos voc, en composiciones de corriente principal. Si bien tales integraciones reflejan una creciente interconectividad cultural, persisten preguntas sobre cómo estas opciones creativas influyen en la percepción de la audiencia y los resultados comerciales. Esta investigación investiga el impacto de la integración étnica en las actitudes del oyente, la autenticidad percibida, la apreciación cultural, las preocupaciones estereotipadas y el rendimiento de mercado en la música pop global. La investigación involucró un diseño de investigación cuantitativo, incluyendo un análisis de contenido de 100 canciones pop populares a nivel internacional (2015-2024) y respuestas de encuesta de 1200 oyentes de música global. Las canciones fueron codificadas sistemáticamente para los elementos étnicos, y los participantes las evaluaron a través de múltiples dimensiones, incluyendo la autenticidad, la apreciación, la novedad, los estereotipos y la participación. El éxito comercial se midió a través de las métricas globales de streaming y el rendimiento gráfico. Las técnicas estadísticas incluyeron el análisis multivariante de varianza (MANOVA) para evaluar las diferencias perceptivas, el análisis factorial

exploratorio (EFA) para estructurlas dimensiones perceptivas, y el análisis de regresión jerárquica para modelar las relaciones entre las variables de percepción y el rendimiento comercial. Todos los análisis se realizaron utilizando el programa IBM SPSS Statistics versión 28. Los resultados indicaron que las canciones que presentaban elementos étnicos eran más valoradas por su autenticidad, valor cultural y novedad, pero también plantearon preocupaciones acerca de los estereotipos. La investigación muestra que la autenticidad percibida y la apreciación cultural influyen en gran medida en el compromiso del oyente y el éxito comercial en la música pop global. Cuando se aplica adecuadamente, la integración étnica mejora el compromiso cultural y amplía el atractivo internacional de la música pop

Palabras clave: Análisis de Varianza Multivariable (MANOVA); Análisis Factorial Exploratorio (EFA); Análisis de Regresión Jerárquica; La Música Pop; Estilos Vocales; Elementos Étnicos Tradicionales.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has significantly transformed the cultural landscape of popular music, leading to a vibrant fusion of diverse musical traditions within mainstream genres. Contemporary pop music increasingly incorporates traditional ethnic elements, such as indigenous instruments, folk rhythms, regional languages, and distinct vocal styles.[1] This artistic blending reflects the deepening interconnectedness of cultures and the evolving tastes of a global audience that seeks novelty, authenticity, and cultural resonance in music.[2] The integration of ethnic elements into pop compositions has become a prominent feature of global music production, driven by the rise of digital platforms that facilitate access to music from across the world.[3] Artists and producers are drawing inspiration from a wide spectrum of cultural sources, enriching their sound with textures and motifs that represent specific regional or indigenous identities. This trend not only enhances the aesthetic depth of pop music but also contributes to the visibility and preservation of intangible cultural heritage.[4]

At the same time, the incorporation of traditional cultural components into commercial music raises complex issues related to authenticity, representation, and cultural ownership.[5] While some integrations are rooted in genuine artistic collaboration and cultural respect, others may reflect superficial borrowing or commodification. These creative choices can influence how music is perceived in terms of its originality, cultural value, and emotional impact on listeners.[6] In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the cultural responsibilities that accompany global artistic practices. The music industry plays a critical role in shaping narratives around identity, diversity, and inclusion through the kinds of music it produces and promotes.[7] Ethnic integration in pop music has the potential to bridge cultural divides, foster appreciation for diverse traditions, and introduce global audiences to previously marginalized sounds and stories.[8] One of the challenges is a balance between marketability and cultural authenticity. Cultural diversity enriches music, but if approached without sensitivity it can lead to stereotyping or cultural appropriation. Sustaining respectful representation, particularly within culturally diverse communities, requires deep cultural understanding. Improper or superficial use of native elements can lead to negative reactions and undermine the credibility and confidence of the creation in the listeners. The purpose of the evaluation is to investigate how the employment of conventional ethnic ingredients in international pop music affects listener attitudes, in terms of authenticity, cultural appreciation, and stereotyping, and how attitudes result in audience appeal and market success. It attempts to explain the cultural and economic role of musical hybridity in a globalized pop music industry.

The research [9] examined how the immigrant groups blend traditional music with the pop culture to represent and reconstitute their identities. The case study examined music enables cultural exchange, community identification, and self-presentation, while also revealing tensions, such as conflicts in identity. It demonstrates music's dual role in heritage preservation and adapting to globalization.

Using current statistics from Apple Music Replay 2024 and Spotify Wrapped, as well as Clark Packard's thoughts, the investigation [10] attempts to investigate how globalization has influenced popular music. It examines how streaming might increase musical accessibility and diversity. The Beatles' seminal impact and the globalization of genres like Latin music through contemporary platforms were highlighted in the findings.

Focused on investigating the global impact of the Korean Wave, namely its function in cultural globalization and public diplomacy, was proposed in the research.[11] K-pop, dramas, and Korean culture were used to illustrate how South Korea's image was improved through qualitative examination of media trends and international student experiences. The cultural export promotes human development and enhanced comprehension of global connections.

The effects of globalization and digital media on listening to music in Iran after 1979 were investigated.[12] It examines how musical tastes change over time using a quantitative survey of 3400 persons between the ages of 18 and 60. Cultural adaptability in the face of global media exposure was shown by the results, which indicate that Iranian classical and pop music were most popular, with traditional and hybrid (classical-pop) genres being favored above international music.

The objective of the experiment[13] was to examine how Chinese popular music changes in response to outside cultural influences. Through qualitative techniques, such as surveys, interviews, literature reviews, and online research, it examined both local and global issues. The results show that stagnation, piracy, and lackluster live scenes were the main causes of the low worldwide market share. It highlights intercultural contact and suggests cooperative government-private solutions to increase global reach.

Vowel shifts toward English-like pronunciation were the primary focus of the research [14], which examines phonological changes among idols by analyzing 30 years' worth of K-pop singing. Linguistic and acoustic analysis revealed that idols deviate from conventional Korean by emphasizing vowels more prominently. This raises questions about Korean American identity, Western influence, and cultural hybridity in globalized pop music as it represents the targeting of a worldwide audience.

The research [15] would primarily focus on Guo Ding's "Qi Mei Di" to analyze musical ability and organization in Chinese pop. It explored how traditional Chinese features coexist with contemporary trends through a qualitative case study and interviews with industry professionals. The results indicated that digital technologies and education have an impact on changing composition methods and demonstrate the growing complexity of Chinese pop.

Zeki Müren and Fecri Ebcioğlu's 1964 Turkish adaptation of Aznavour's "La Mamma" as "Annem" was examined in the research [16] to uncover its underappreciated cultural value. To demonstrate how Müren's notoriety contributed to the legitimacy of Turkish pop, it examines musical, lyrical, and visual components used in the Aranjman translation technique. It demonstrated how early Turkish pop identity was influenced by translation and performance techniques.

German pop lyrics from 1954 to 2022 were examined in the investigation [17] using transformer-based sentiment analysis and LDA topic modeling. With societal issues increasing after 2017, "Love & Relationships" emerged as the most prevalent subject. Significant changes in sentiment were seen, with a decline in optimism and an increase in negativity, ambiguity, and neutrality. These changes mirrored wider cultural developments in individualism, values, and mental health issues.
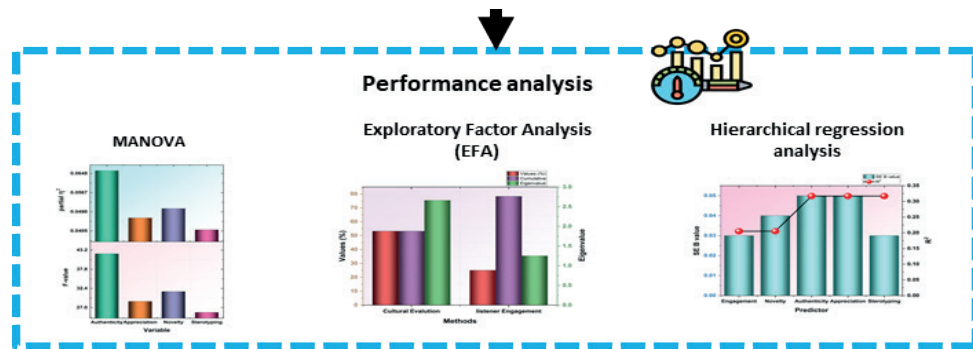
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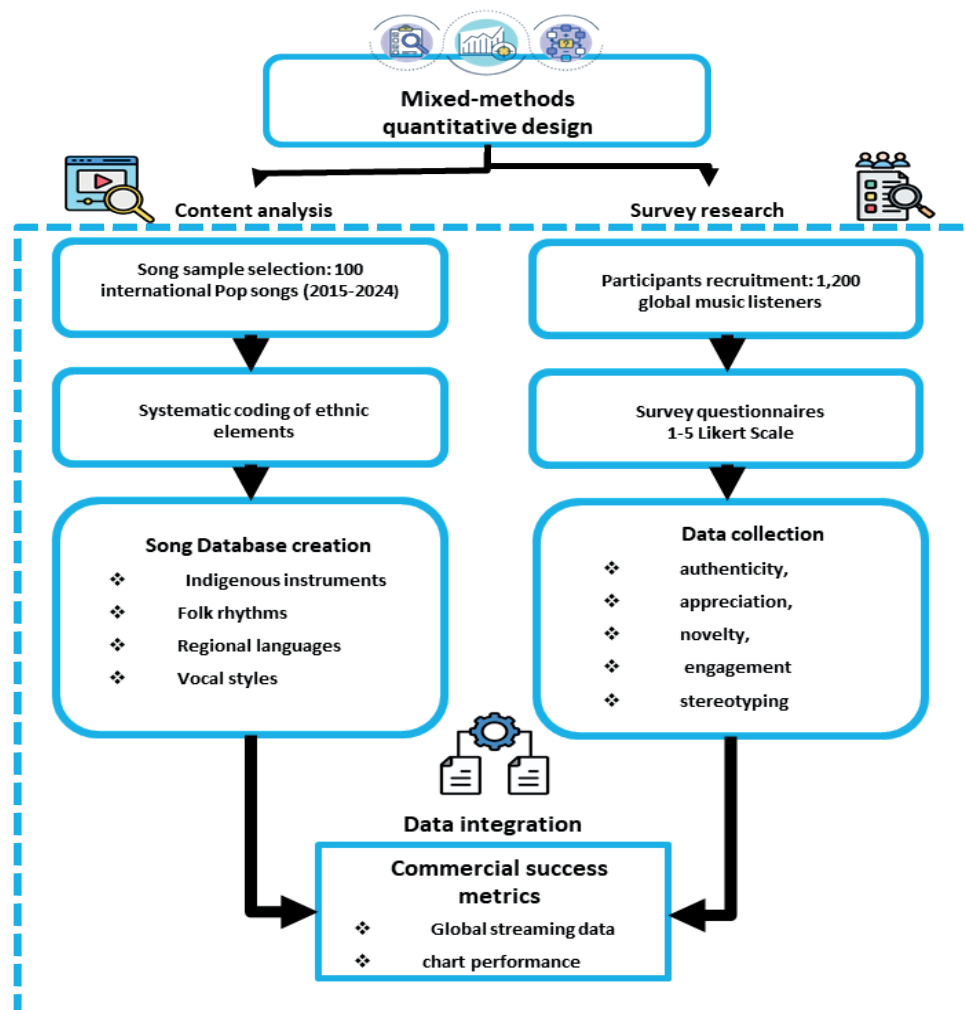
Figure 1. Fundamental concept of proposed methodology

The examination used a mixed-methods quantitative approach, including content analysis and formal surveys. Researchers analyzed 100 worldwide trending pop hits from 2015 to 2024, marking them for ethnic features, such as native instruments, beats, and languages. 1200 worldwide listeners were also asked for thoughts on authenticity, cultural appreciation, novelty, engagement, and possible stereotyping in the song. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed research overview.

Data collection
Information collection was organized into three integrated elements, such as song sampling, listeners' survey, and commercial data to provide an integrative assessment.

Song sampling
100 widely recognized pop songs released from 2015 to 2024 were systematically selected based on international charts and visibility. All songs were methodically coded for ethnic inclusion, considering factors, such as indigenous instruments (e.g., sitar, djembe), indigenous singing practices, folk rhythms, and non-Western language use. Coding was performed using a systematic checklist and cross-verified by multiple coders to ensure reliability.

Listener survey
A survey was conducted among 1200 foreign music listeners, selected from web panels and stratified across different age groups, ethnic groups, and listening habits. The participants were shown song clips (randomized with and without ethnic content) and were asked to judge them on five dimensions important for this study: perceived authenticity, cultural appreciation, novelty, engagement, and stereotyping concerns. The survey used a 5-point Likert scale for ease of use and internal consistency. Table 1 and figure 2 illustrate the demographic composition of the 1200 survey takers, with gender, age group, and world region being equally matched. Spotify was the most popular music platform, and most people were between the ages of 25 and 34.

| Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Listener Survey			
Variable	**Category**	**Frequency (N=1,200)**	**Percentage (%)**
Gender	Male	582	48,5
	Female	618	51,5
Age Group	18-24	312	26,0
	25-34	408	34,0
	35-44	276	23,0
	45-54	132	11,0
	55+	72	6,0
Education Level	High school or below	180	15,0
	Undergraduate degree	540	45,0
	Postgraduate degree	480	40,0
Primary Music Listening Platform	Spotify	684	57,0
	YouTube	348	29,0
	Apple Music	96	8,0
	Other	72	6,0
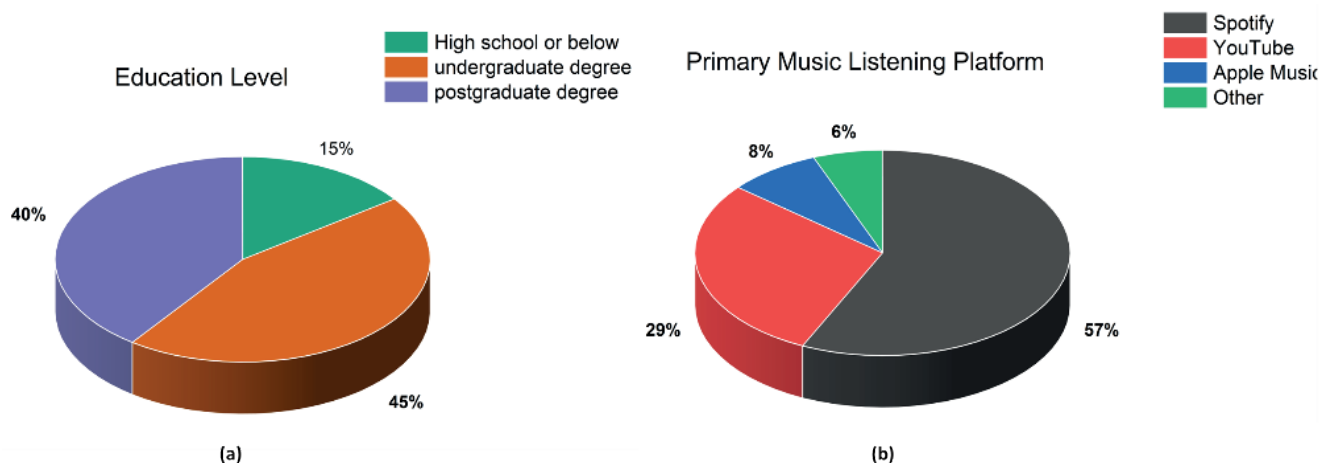
Figure 2. Survey participants were categorized by (a) education level and primary music (b) listening platform

Commercial data

Commercial success standards were gathered on each track with public Application Programming Interface and industry reports, considering variables, such as global streaming records (Spotify, YouTube) and global chart entries (e.g., Billboard Global 200). Based on these standards, audience perception as opposed to actual outcome quantitative modeling was possible.

Research questionnaires

Determining the ethnic element in pop music's impact on listener perceptions and involvement was the objective of this research. Questionnaires were chosen from important perceptual constructs, such as authenticity, appreciation, novelty, stereotyping, and engagement. A 1–5 Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was employed to record finely grained levels of agreement to facilitate quantitative comparison across listener responses.

- Authenticity (Q1): Does the song feel authentic in its blending of cultural or ethnic elements with modern pop?
- Appreciation (Q2): Does the use of traditional or ethnic features in the song demonstrate respect and appreciation for the culture it represents?
- Novelty (Q3): Do the ethnic components in the song make it sound unique and different from typical pop music?
- Stereotyping (Q4): Does the use of ethnic or cultural elements in the song appear superficial or reinforce stereotypes?
- Engagement (Q5): Does the inclusion of cultural elements make the song more engaging or emotionally appealing?

Data analysis

Statistical analysis utilized techniques through IBM SPSS 28. MANOVA determined whether there were differences in perception between ethnic and non-ethnic songs. EFA determined the dimensions of perceptions by listeners. Hierarchical regression was used to determine the extent to which authenticity, appreciation, and stereotyping issues impacted commercial success. These techniques provided legitimate information about listener emotions and music performance by world audiences.

RESULTS

The statistical results from the survey is shown in this examination, with an emphasis on how listeners perceived pop songs with ethnic features and how their views were connected to the songs' financial success. Several statistical tests were employed to determine differences in audience attitudes and underlying perceptual factors. The analysis also investigated the ways in which these perceptual variables predict engagement and success in the music industry.
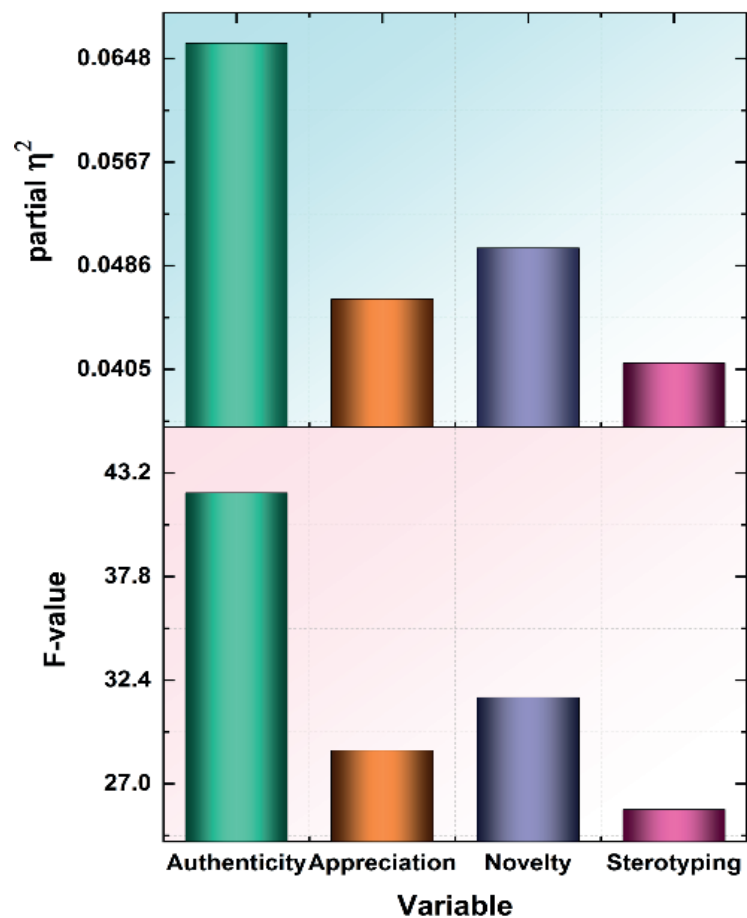
MANOVA

Determining if several dependent variables significantly differ between groups. In the present study, the experiment was carried out to confirm if listener perceptions differed for pop music with or without ethnic elements and thus establish the greater effect of cultural integration on the response from the audience.

Table 2. MANOVA Results in Impact of Ethnic Integration with or Without on Listener Perceptions in Global Pop Music

Dependent Variable	MS	SS	df	F	p-value	Partial η²
Authenticity						
Between Groups	243,62	487,23	2	42,18***	< 0,001	0,066
Within Groups	5,78	6924,77	1197			
Total	-	7412,00	1199			
Appreciation						
Between Groups	156,23	312,45	2	28,74***	< 0,001	0,046
Within Groups	5,44	6506,55	1197			
Total	-	6819,00	1199			
Novelty						
Between Groups	149,34	298,67	2	31,52***	< 0,001	0,050
Within Groups	4,74	5668,33	1197			
Total	-	5967,00	1199			
Stereotyping						
Between Groups	78,45	156,89	2	18,23***	< 0,001	0,030
Within Groups	4,30	5152,11	1197			
Total	-	5309,00	1199			
Engagement						
Between Groups	117,39	234,78	2	25,67***	< 0,001	0,041
Within Groups	4,57	5473,22	1197			
Total	-	5708,00	1199			

Note: Sum of Squares (SS), degree of freedom (df), and mean square (MS), "***" means highly significant

Figure 3. F-values and effect sizes across variables are measured

This MANOVA test investigated the impact of varying levels of ethnic integration in pop music (low, medium, high) on listener perceptions across five dimensions: authenticity, appreciation, novelty, stereotyping, and engagement. The multivariate test indicated an overall significant effect, which confirmed that the level of ethnic integration has a significant influence on the overall perceptual variables, as shown in table 2 and figure 3. MANOVA demonstrated that more ethnically integrated tracks were much more authentic and appreciated, and the novel was graded and increased listener engagement. More ethnic integration was linked with more stereotyping issues. The strongest individual effect showing the highest impact was on authenticity (partial $\eta^2 = 0,066$), then novelty (partial $\eta^2 = 0,050$), and appreciation (partial $\eta^2 = 0,046$). These results support the research's conclusion that integrating different cultures makes listeners more positive about the music and feel engaged; however, they also raise concerns about cultural stereotyping. This suggests a complex relationship between cultural fusion and listener reaction in global pop music.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
The statistical method for the extraction of underlying latent factors responsible for covariations among observed variables. It supposes that observed variables (W) can be explained as linear combinations of common factors (E) and unique factors (V).

$$W = \Lambda F + V \quad (1)$$

Where equation (1), Λ is the factor loading matrix, F is the common factors, and V is the unique/error factors. Using factor extraction techniques, such as estimation of maximum likelihood or principal axis factoring, the objective is to determine the minimum number of factors that may explain the greatest amount of variation in the data.

Table 3. Factor Loadings and Communalities from EFA of Listener Perception Items			
Survey Items	**Factor 1 Cultural Evaluation**	**Factor 2 Listener Engagement**	**Communality**
Authenticity	0,821	0,234	0,729
Appreciation	0,798	0,189	0,672
Novelty	0,756	0,267	0,642
Stereotyping	0,689	0,156	0,499
Engagement	0,278	0,834	0,773

Note: sample: N = 1200 global music listeners, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0,834 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $x^2 = 2847,65$, df = 10, p<0,001
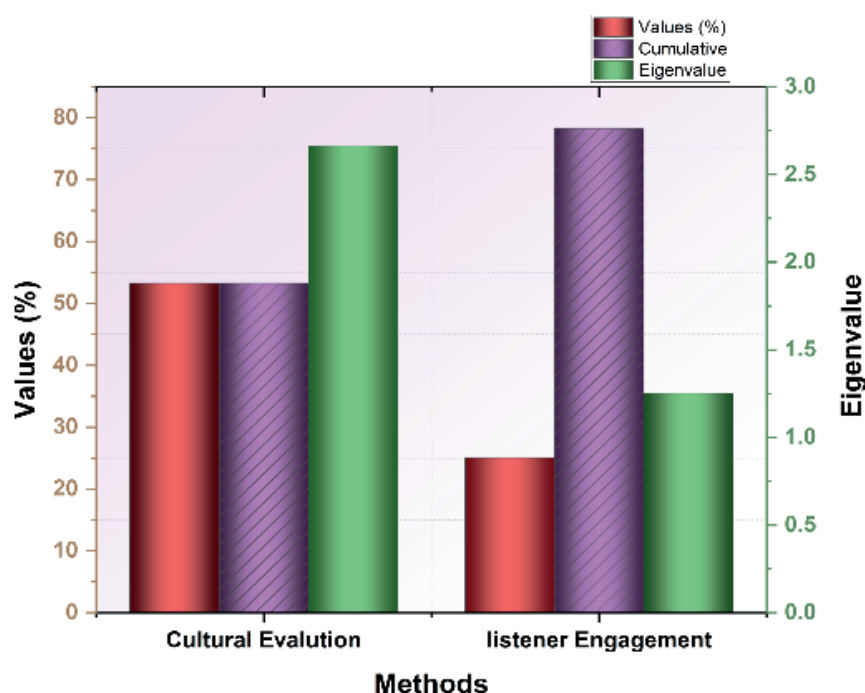

Figure 4. Variance Explained and Eigenvalues of Extracted Factors from EFA

EFA of the five variables (Q1-Q5) that assess listener perception of ethnic integration in popular music yielded a two-factor solution accounting for 78,30 % cumulative variance. Factor 1 is Cultural Judgment includes cognitive ratings such as authenticity, appreciation, novelty, and stereotyping, all of which show how listeners assess the quality and appropriateness of ethnic integration. Factor 2 is Listener Engagement measures the emotional response dimension through the engagement, indicating how ethnic elements influence listener involvement and musical appeal, as shown in the table 3 and figure 4. The analysis showed strong statistical quality with KMO = 0,834 and a significant Bartlett's test (p <0,001), suggesting that listener perceptions of ethnic integration in pop music are centered on these two distinct but related dimensions: evaluative judgment and emotional response.

Hierarchical regression analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis is a statistical method used to examine how multiple sets of independent variables contribute incrementally to predicting a dependent variable. Predictors are entered in blocks or steps, allowing assessment of the added variance explained by delta R-squared (ΔR^2) at each stage. The model can be expressed as the following equation (2):
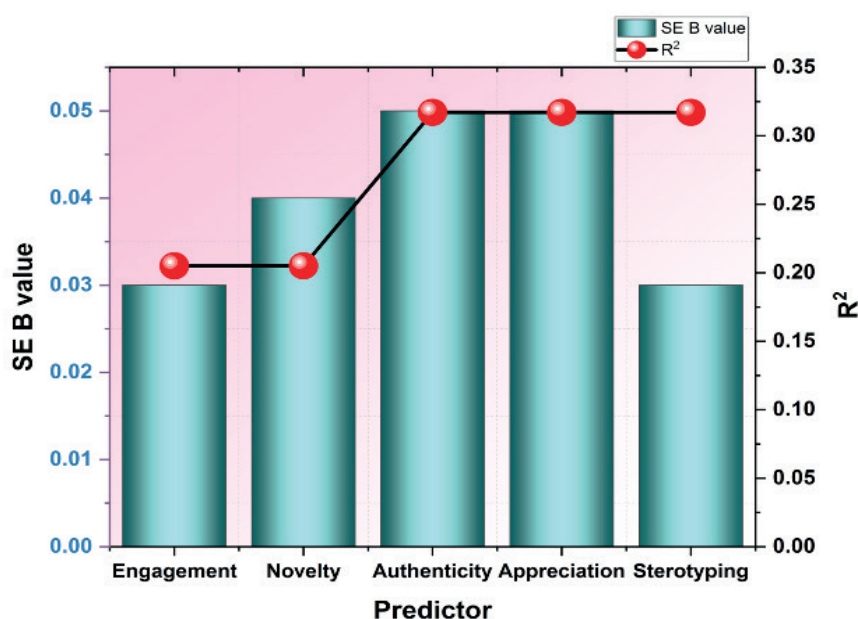
$$Z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 W_1 + \beta_2 W_2 + \ldots + \beta_p W_p + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

With each step, more predictors are added to further improve the model fit. The two-step model is separated to offer a graphically representable notion of the incremental explanatory power (ΔR^2) contributed by additional predictors to the base model.

Model	Predictor Variables	B	SE B	ß	t	P	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1	Engagement	0,42	0,03	0,45	14,00	< 0,001	0,205	-
	Novelty	0,21	0,04	0,22	5,25	< 0,001		
Step 2	Authenticity	0,28	0,05	0,24	5,60	< 0,001	0,317	0,112
	Appreciation	0,19	0,05	0,17	3,80	< 0,001		
	Stereotyping	-0,12	0,03	-0,14	-4,00	< 0,001		

Table 4. Hierarchical regression analysis predicting commercial performance based on listener perceptions of ethnic integration in global pop music

Note: Unstandardized coefficient (B), standard error of B (SE B), standardized beta coefficient (ß).

Figure 5. Hierarchical regression model showing the predictive effects of engagement, novelty, authenticity, appreciation, and stereotyping on commercial success

Hierarchical regression analysis showed that interest among listeners and novelty largely explained the commercial success of pop tunes with ethnic content, accounting for approximately 20,5 % of the variance.

Adding authenticity, appreciation, and stereotyping concern in step two raised explained variance to 31,7 %, suggesting these constructs of cultural perception meaningfully add to the prediction of a song's commercial success, as shown in table 4 and figure 5. In particular, authenticity and appreciation were positively associated with outcomes, while stereotyping affected outcomes negatively by a narrow but statistically significant margin. That is, apart from overall appeal, the significance of the cultural authenticity of ethnic unification is a strong determining factor in commercial success.

DISCUSSION

Globalization has significantly shaped pop music by prompting the blending of various cultural aspects into mainstream music. The research [17] examined how such ethnic unions shape listener impressions and affect the global popularity of modern pop music. Through the use of topic modeling and cross-thematic sentiment analysis, the research discovered that "Love & Relationships" is the most popular music, with "Society & Status" (post-2017) replacing "Dreams & Longings" (pre-1960s). A long-term decrease in positive mood was found using sentiment analysis, which was consistent with societal trends, such as rising levels of loneliness, mental health problems, and individualism from the middle of the 1960s.

This research considers the influence of incorporating ethnic aspects in worldwide pop music on sentiment among listeners and commercial success. With a qualitative procedure, it analyzes authenticity, Appreciation, novel, stereotyping, and engagement in 100 songs and surveys 1200 worldwide listeners. MANOVA analysis indicated ethnic integration in pop music had a significant influence on listener attitudes on five variables. The music with greater ethnic content was evaluated much higher on authenticity ($F = 42,18$, $\eta^2 = 0,066$), novelty ($F = 31,52$, $\eta^2 = 0,050$), and appreciation ($F = 28,74$, $\eta^2 = 0,046$), but also created moderate concerns regarding stereotyping ($F = 18,23$, $\eta^2 = 0,030$). EFA also established two fundamental perception factors: Cultural Evaluation (53,26 % variance) and Listener Engagement (25,04 % variance), which show listeners differentiate between affective and cognitive responses. Hierarchical regression testing also duplicated these findings to confirm that engagement and novelty initially predicted 20,5 % of commercial achievement, growing to 31,7 % after accounting for authenticity, appreciation, and stereotyping, with authenticity ($\beta = 0,24$) being the most significant positive effect. Both of these findings demonstrate the pervasive influence of culturally grounded music on audience response as well as on market performance. Ethnic integration in pop music is a variable that enhances listening perceptions and commercial appeal to a great extent, largely via authenticity and engagement. Stereotyping remains an important reception issue for the listener.

CONCLUSIONS

In integrating traditional ethnic themes into pop music, this research demonstrated that globalization has affected the evolution of pop music. From an evaluation of 100 music's global songs and questionnaires from 1,200 participants, the analysis affirmed that ethnocentric songs were always rated higher on novelty, appreciation, and authenticity. They also made cultural stereotyping. Statistical models validated that perceived authenticity and appreciation were positively associated with listener engagement and were key predictors of commercial success. It revealed that even though cultural integration enhanced the listening experience and increased global appeal, effectiveness depended on the extent to which these factors were respectfully and meaningfully incorporated. Ethnic music was ranked higher on authenticity ($F = 42,18$, $\eta^2 = 0,066$), novelty ($F = 31,52$, $\eta^2 = 0,050$), and appreciation ($F = 28,74$, $\eta^2 = 0,046$), but also created stereotyping issues ($F = 18,23$, $\eta^2 = 0,030$). Perceptions explained 31,7 % of commercial success by regression analysis with authenticity ($\beta = 0,24$) as the strongest predictor. Overall, the research offered empirical validation for cultural blending in popular music with the utmost focus on reflexive inclusion to prevent perpetuating stereotypes. This research examined listener attitude and streaming volume but did not account for industry influence, such as promotion or artist motive, which can mediate audience reception. Future research could include producer and artist qualitative interviews, and explore regional variation in cultural sensibility to observe more effectively how ethnic integration works in an assortment of global contexts. Subsequent research could help the music industry craft culturally responsive production approaches that merge creativity with respect for ethnic representation.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST
None.

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