Do age, autistic traits, and welfare predict the use of music as a coping strategy before and during COVID-19 lockdown?

Take home message

- Young adults and adults with poorer welfare were more likely to use music to cope both before and during the lockdown.
- One’s level of autistic traits was not associated with the likelihood to use music to cope but it was associated with their welfare: individuals with higher levels of autistic traits reported poorer welfare before the lockdown but better welfare during the lockdown.

Introduction

- The COVID-19 lockdown has affected the mental health of many\(^1\).
- Music listening is commonly used as a coping mechanism during difficult times\(^2\).
- Do individual characteristics predict the use of music as a coping strategy?
  - Adults across ages\(^3\) and autistic individuals\(^4\) use music to cope, but no quantitative comparisons in previous studies.
  - Is the relationship moderated by their welfare (defined as health, life satisfaction, and wellbeing)?

Results & Discussion

- Structural equation modelling using lavaan\(^9\) in R:
  1. Poorer welfare = more likely to use music to cope
  2. Consistent with previous studies
  3. Younger adults > older adults in using music to cope
  4. Accessibility to music streaming → more control for choice of music?
  5. Autistic traits associated with welfare negatively before lockdown and positively during lockdown
    - Removal from everyday distractions?
    - Implementation of daily routine?

Method

- 159 adults (age range: 16–61, \(M = 28.83, SD = 12.69\))
- Online questionnaire, once retrospectively based on their experience before the lockdown and again based on their experience during the lockdown:
  - Music coping subtest\(^5\) (e.g., ‘How often do you listen to music because it helps you when you feel depressed or nervous?’)
  - Life satisfaction item\(^6\)
  - Self-rated health item\(^7\)
  - Wellbeing test\(^8\)

Note:

Life = Life satisfaction; Health = Self-rated health; WB = Wellbeing; Coping = Music coping; AQ = Autistic traits
Black = significant paths; Grey = insignificant paths
Model fit: \(\chi^2 = 153.71, df = 26, p < .001\); RMSEA = 0.176 [0.149 – 0.203]; CFI = 0.825; SRMR = 0.066

References


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