

# Psychological predictors of engagement in music piracy

Steven C Brown<sup>1</sup> & Amanda E Krause<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, The University of Strathclyde, Scotland

<sup>2</sup>Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, The University of Melbourne, Australia

## Introduction

Designed to appease the desire to listen to music freely and conveniently, music streaming services such as *Spotify* are exceptionally popular nowadays. Yet, music piracy remains prevalent. Assuming a psychological perspective, the present study considers why people might choose to engage in *music piracy* (the practice of illegally sourcing music) when so many popular and varied legal services now exist.

### Aim

The present study considered the relationship between music piracy and broader musical engagement practices.

RQ1: Beyond demographics, can psychological concepts (i.e., personality and identity) as well as music engagement (i.e., listening engagement and format use) explain piracy attitudes?

RQ2: Are the uses and gratifications associated with one's preferred format related to piracy attitudes?

## Method

### Sample:

- N = 396 USA, UK, & Australian residents
  - 38.60% USA, 26.50% UK, 34.80% Australia
- 71.00% female, 28.00% male, 1.00% 'custom'
- Aged 16 – 71 years
  - $M = 34.53$ ,  $Mdn = 20$ ,  $SD = 8.98$

### Online questionnaire – Materials:

- Age, gender, country of residence, University degree
- Music engagement questions: Average daily listening (hours) & Importance of music in life (1-7 rating)
- Brown & MacDonald's (2014) Attitudes Towards Music Piracy (AMP-12) scale
- Langford's (2003) short five-item personality measure
- Brown & Krause's (2016) 49-item Format uses and gratifications measure
- Krause & North's (2016) music-technology identity measure
- Indication of the format used most often to listen to music (6 formats)
  - Physical (i.e., CD, vinyl, cassette)
  - Digital files (i.e., mp3)
  - Free digital streaming
  - Paid digital streaming
  - Radio
  - Live music

## Results

RQ1: The Generalized Linear Mixed Method analysis that considered whether psychological constructs and music engagement variables accounted for music piracy attitudes was statistically significant,  $F(15, 366) = 4.391$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .050$ .

GLMM analysis (N = 382)	
Gender	Higher AMP-12 Score More likely to be male
Age	
University degree	
Average daily music listening (hours)	
Music importance rating (1-7)	
Openness	
Conscientiousness	Negatively associated
Extraversion	
Agreeableness	
Neuroticism	
Most often used format	Significant pairwise comparisons



Listening Format Pairwise Contrasts
Digital files > Physical
Paid-for streaming > Physical
Free streaming > Physical, digital files, radio

RQ2: The generalized linear mixed method analysis that considered how the eight format uses and gratification dimensions related to piracy attitudes was statistically significant,  $F(8, 283) = 5.715$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .079$ .

The eight uses & gratifications dimensions are: usability and intention to use; discovery; functional utility; flexibility; connection; social norms; value for money; and playback diversity. In particular, the value for money dimension was *positively* associated with more favorable piracy attitudes, while the connection uses and gratification dimension (characterized by emotionally connecting with music) was *negatively* associated with favorable piracy attitudes.

## Conclusion

The associations between positive piracy attitudes and being male and expressing low levels of conscientiousness replicate findings reported elsewhere (Brown & MacDonald, 2014). The preference for accessing music digitally was also associated with engagement in music piracy, suggesting that even the seemingly-infinite catalogues of on-demand music from legal streaming services are not enough to deter music piracy. Furthermore, with regard to uses and gratifications, results suggest that music piracy is driven by a perception that buying music is poor value for money, rather than a reluctance to pay altogether. From a policy perspective, future research could seek to establish what it is that drives perceptions of value for money in relation to music consumption practices.

## References

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