

Do Song Titles Matter? The Effects of Linguistic Fluency and Emotionality on Evaluations of Music

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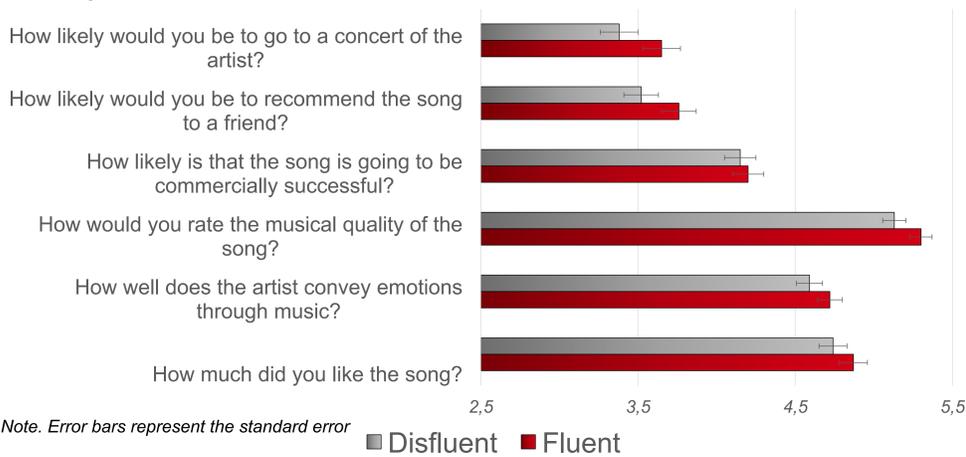
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BACKGROUND

- Presenting pieces of art with titles has a significant effect on the understanding, visual exploration, and liking of artworks [1,2,3]
- To the best of our knowledge, there are no studies in the published literature that examined song title effects on aesthetic and value judgements of music
- To investigate song title effects, the present study made use of two well-known heuristic principles:
 - Processing Fluency** [4]: human tendency to evaluate easy-to-process information more positively than similar but less-fluent information
 - Affect Heuristic** [5]: reliance on good and bad feelings associated with a stimulus

Results Experiment 1

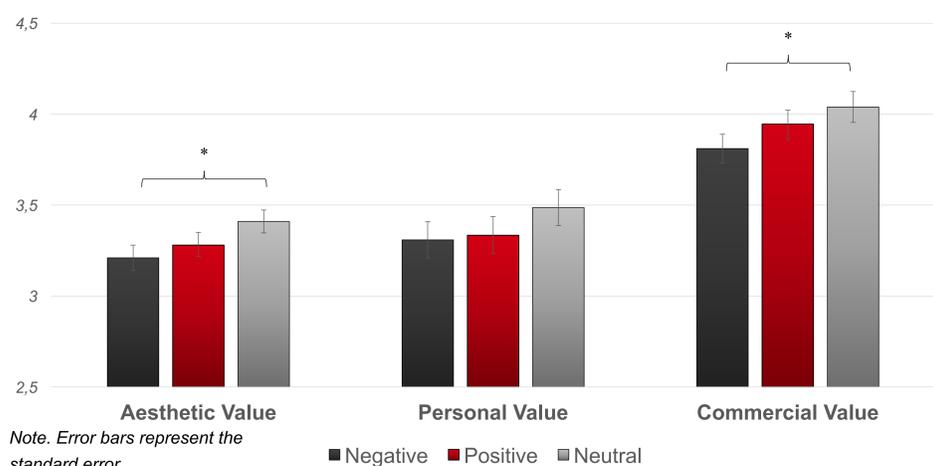
Figure 1. Music presented with fluent names was evaluated more positively than music presented with disfluent names ($p = .037$ in a general LME model with fluency)



Note. Error bars represent the standard error

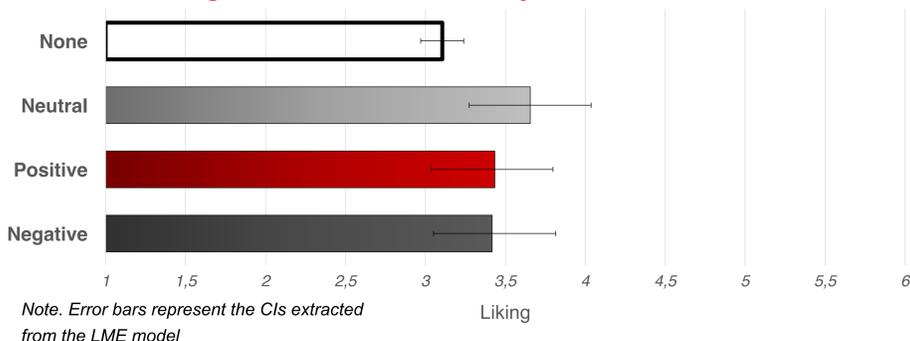
Results Experiment 2

Figure 2. While negative titles resulted in the lowest ratings, neutral titles resulted in the highest ratings ($p = .02$ in the two significant models)



Note. Error bars represent the standard error

Figure 4. Music was significantly more liked when presented with titles than in their absence, regardless of the emotionality of the title ($p < .001$)



Note. Error bars represent the CIs extracted from the LME model

GENERAL DISCUSSION

- Results from two experiments show the relevance of song titles for the evaluation of music
- Experiment 1:** the same music was evaluated more positively when presented with fluent names compared to disfluent names, which is in line with **Processing Fluency** [4]
- Experiment 2:** the emotional content of titles influenced participants' judgements and also had an impact on participants' memory for music, supporting **the Affect Heuristic** [5]

AIM

To investigate to what extent titles presented with music have an impact on aesthetic and value judgements of music

EXPERIMENT 1

Method

Participants: 48 English native speakers

Design & Materials: Mixed design

- Linguistic fluency** (Table 1)
 - 4 easy to pronounce names (fluent)
 - 4 hard to pronounce names (disfluent)

- 8 unfamiliar song excerpts (15s each)

Procedure

"The main purpose of this study is to examine how people evaluate music made by Turkish amateur musicians".



Table 1. List of fluent and non-fluent Turkish names

Fluent	Disfluent
Dermod by Artan	Siirt by Lasiea
Kado by Pera	Taahhut by Aklale
Boya by Tatra	Emniyet by Luici
Alet by Ferka	Dizayn by Sampiy

* Names obtained from a previous study [6]

EXPERIMENT 2

Method

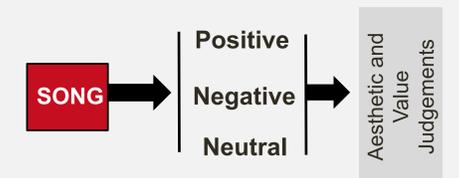
Participants: 100 native and non-native English Speakers

Design & Materials: Mixed design

- Emotionality** (Table 2)
 - 3 positive, 3 negative, and 3 neutral titles

- 9 unfamiliar song excerpts (30s each)

Procedure



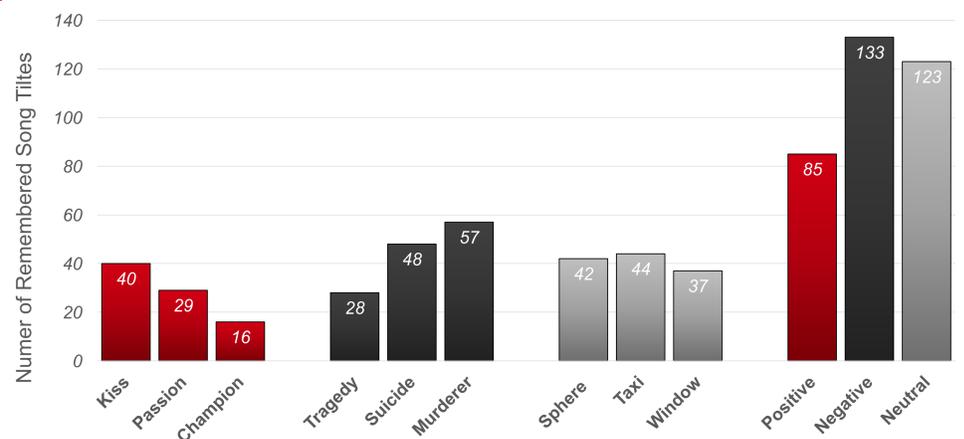
At the end → **unexpected free recall task:** "Please write down as many songs as you can remember"

Table 2. List of positive, negative, and neutral song titles

Positive	Negative	Neutral
Kiss	Suicide	Taxi
Passion	Tragedy	Window
Champion	Murderer	Sphere

* Names differed in valence and arousal, but were similar in frequency, concreteness, length, and plausibility.

Figure 3. Negative and neutral titles were remembered significantly better than positive titles ($p < .001$)



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