Intercultural Changes in Music Tastes of Iranian Adult Population: The Role of New Technologies, Media Convergence, and Globalization

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Abstract

Music consumption, as an important form of cultural consumption in the daily lives of Iranians, has been the subject of political focus before and after the Revolution, 1979. During past decade, high penetration of information and communication technologies, specifically convergence as well as globalization of various media, has affected the rate of use and preferred content choices. Specially, the development of satellite television channels and the use of smartphones, have shifted the way Iranians listen or watch domestic/foreign music, thus, changing the place of music in the cultural rearticulation of Iranian society and people. While most previous studies have focused on domestic factors in their analysis of current changes rather than intercultural and global issues, this study attempts to focus on the role of latter factors to identify why and how music consumption has undergone rapid and dramatic shifts in Iran. By addressing the gap, this paper represents a close look at Iranian music tastes using quantitative data collected during a survey of 3400 adult respondents aged between 18 to 60. The findings show that like

most of other countries, diverse genres of music are popular in Iran but Iranian classic music and pop music are more popular than other genres. Iranian music is more popular to Iranians than foreign music tracks & Iranian traditional music and integrated music (Iranianan classic music integrated to pop music) are very popular in Iran.

Keywords: consumption, Iran, media convergence, music, taste.

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Introduction

During the second half of 20th century and the early of 21st century, listening to the music was increasingly welcomed throughout the world. Music has played functions beyond entertainment at different junctures in diverse social contexts and some times it has been employed to excite public opinions toward heroism or epic, and some times has been used as a mean to criticize power or politics. Diverse functions of music such as entertaining or informing has made it to be termed as "music medium" and put it in line with influencing media such as television and web. Listening to the music is an integral part of today life and people wantedly or unwantedly, directly or indirectly, individually or collectively are exposed to different styles of music.

The access to music albums and tracks has been facilitated in comparision to the past times and diversity of instruments and facilities has increased in recent times. In other hand, music producers use diverse media channels to publish their products and the web has provided abundant financial, advertising and cultural opportunities for music producers and due to copyright piracy has made plentiful financial threats to their products.

In this context, the access of Iranians especially the youth and young people to any style of music, Iranian or non Iranian is easy. Iranian citizens began using satellite dishes around 1991 when those who lived in the affluent northern part of Tehran installed dishes on their rooftops. These dishes were clearly visible to people on the streets. They had been previously used by many people from border regions like northwestern (near the Turkish border) and southern (near the Persian Gulf area with its Arabic-speaking populations) cities.

The "accessibility" (the popularity) of trans-border television networks was based on, among other things, geo-linguistic proximity, as Turkish and Arabic provided common linguistic frameworks for those living near these borders. Other factors encouraged the big cities like Tehran to embrace satellite television (Alikhah, 2008: 95). As also, Semati points out, "Internet growth in Iran has been phenomenal and among the fastest in the world. Although the law prohibits the ownership and sale of satellite dishes, the government has refused to enforce these laws strictly for various reasons. Satellite dishes, and their use, remain ubiquitous." (Semati, 2008: 3). The access to persian and nonpersian satellite television channels, streaming music service and social media has much facilitated the access to the music too for these media audiences and users. As Christopher Cayari argues, "YouTube allows performers to have a global audience. It allows for creative students to exhibit their talents and have a new venue for their art. YouTube can be used as a source of information and inspiration" (Cayari, 2011: 24).

In the developed countries, the needs of audiences, style of music, the reasons why some genres of music are popular, the relation of music and social groups and differen ages are studied constantly. These studies indicate the important role of music studies in the sociology of developed countries, but such studies are rare on music consumption and developments in Iran, while the development of information and communication technology has widely provided the access between of Iranian people especially the youth to music. On the other hand, development of internet and smart phones, has accelerated the music consumption. Smart phones has become the means of reception, circulation and listening to music files and now listening to the music by smart phones, including at daily trips has become an outstanding function of smart phones.

Wendy (2009) explores various aspects of women's musical performance in Iran. Nooshin (2009) focuses on the pop band Arian and specifically the way in which the band`s musical and lyrical discourses have been shaped by, and resonate with, the ideas of President Khatami's reform period (1997–2005). She underlines that emerging as a grassroots band on the wave of post1997 liberalism, Arian has achieved phenomenal success in part because of its down-to-earth image and because its music touches on a wide range of contemporary issues with which many Iranians identify.

The sections of the paper are organised as follows: first, the paper discusses the ideas about media convergence and it`s effects on the media consumption; secondly, it elaborates the methodology employed; thirdly, it interprets the findings. Thus this paper is to respond these questions:

1. Which music genres are Iranian popular musics?
2. How Iranians get music? (by which media?)
3. Do Iranian music are more popular to Iranians or foreign musics?
4. Which ethnities music are the most favorit musics for Iranians?
5. Which countries music are the most favorit musics for Iranians?

Literature Review

Musical taste has been considered in various fields of research. Using Bourdieu and Schulz's approach, Grebosz-Haring and Weichbold (2020) surveyed social class and lifestyle to identify the demographic and class characteristics of contemporary art music audience. The results show that the use of this type of music depends to a large extent on education level as well as "music capital". However, the audience population is not homogeneous in terms of age structure and motivation. The important conclusion is that aesthetic pluralism in music can lead to social openness in issues related to social classes.

By studying a heterogeneous collection of different genres of music, Brisson and Bianchi (2020) have shown that the structure of musical taste is strongly influenced by even the slightest change in the genre of selected music. Another result of their study was that the social background and cultural capital of the respondents influenced their musical tastes.

Many studies analyze the relationship between personality traits and the genre of music which people prefer. For example, Bansal, Flannery and Woolhouse (2020) have tried to describe different subgroups of music audiences based on music genre and personality traits by analyzing the music in their phone memory.

The use of music on cyberspace has provided great data for examining musical tastes and the factors that affect them. According to Bourdieu's theory, Webster (2019) has studied the role of virtual music distribution platforms in shaping musical taste and class identity, as well as reproducing cultural superiority.

Dolfsma (2004) noted that the history of pop music consumption has not been well studied and analyzed, conducted surveys and interviews to show that music consumption not only causes challenges and contradictions between generations, but also has been widely associated with socio-cultural concepts such as success, independence and gender.

Chamorro-Premuzic, Swami and Cermakova (2012) in a study of 535 British participants found that music consumption was age-related. They also measured the effect of personality traits on music consumption by using demographic components and a questionnaire related to emotional intelligence.

Examining the relationship between personality and musical taste has led researchers to study other dimensions of musical taste. In this field, researchers have mainly chosen the subject based on genre, but in the field of the relationship between genre and taste, many studies have been done on how to use digital music, all of which have tried to explain the characteristics of music consumption on cyberspace. These studies focus on the differences in the business model of online music distribution, the way it is produced, as well as the way music is listened to, and so on.

Weijters, Goedertier and Verstreken (2014) have shown that although all age groups download music in different ways, they prefer the legal way on cyberspace to download music. Their study shows that many age group differences for receiving digital music are related to economic issues.

Recent data show that, contrary to Bourdieu's view, middle-class consumers have an omnivorous pattern of cultural consumption. In their study, López-Sintas, Garcia-Alvarez and Filimon, (2008) identified different types and degrees of economic, social and cultural capital as factors that determine the structural constraints of subjects and, consequently, their tastes in the subject of music genres. According to them, a combination of all types of capital helps to explain the omnivorous consumption of consumers in the upper classes.

Kullenmark (2012) from the perspective of ubiquity (pervasiveness) has studied the dimensions of music consumption in the new era of music industry with regard to the new global network and its new technologies. He conducted this study using a theoretical framework based on cognitive and emotional components and with the method of qualitative interviews. Respondents' responses to music consumption were examined in terms of two categories of cognitive and emotional factors. Also, their music consumption has been analyzed according to two factors: their buying behavior, as well as the role of the action performed at the moment of listening to music in choosing the type of music. In general, the results of this study show that the consumption of music by individuals and groups can be changed, for example, when a new technology is introduced after a high-risk period, music consumption changes. Also, the type of music consumption of individuals and groups is determined by the work they are doing, such as driving or exercising. The results also show that purchase-oriented theories in the field of music need to be revised.

Media Convergence and It`s Outcomings

The media convergence is developing in a high speed. Bardoel and d'Haenens (2008) define the process of convergence as blurring of traditional boundaries between 'old' and 'new' media technologies.

Convergence has become an everyday reality that has gone through most stages of development: technology, market, politics, programme content and last but not least, media consumption (Bardoel & d'Henens, 2008). In fact the media technologies has changed drmarically from analogue forms to digital forms and has become more convergd in technology and organizing companies. As Straubhaar, LaRose and Davenport (2012) have noted, in a short span of years technology has moved us away from analog communication and into the digital age in which nearly all other forms of communication are either created, stored, or transmitted in digital form. The digital domain now encompasses nearly all radio, television, film, newspapers, magazines, and books with an ever-narrowing list of exceptions. Local talk radio is about the only purely analog medium that remains—local music radio stations still transmit analog signals but they play music that is stored on digital recordings. To catch up with the times the "old media" have responded with digital innovations of their own. The music industry increasingly relies on digital distribution through iTunes and other digital music services after facing ruin from free-but-illegal Internet downloads (Straubhaar et al., 2012). Digitalization of telephony and broadcasting has made it technologicallypossible to offer both terrestrial and satellite broadcast-like services to mobiletelephones, personal digital assistants and similar equipment. Development and introduction efforts are currently underway, particularly in Asia and Europe, to provide more data and audio transmission via terrestrial and satellite telephony systems and to distribute television broadcasts and video using similar methods. The convergence of the underlying technologies of telephone, computers, and media production are thus creating enormous opportunities for media firms, challenging existing media products and services, and creating a wide variety of potential strategic responses by companies. The transformation caused by these forces disintermediates and then allows reintermediation the value chains of media and communication firms (Picard, 2004).

Fragmentation of the Television Audience
State television which is called IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) has been the dominant media during almost four decades in Iran, but during recent decade the number of television audiences has been decreasing constantly and the television audiences are fragmented because of day to day increasing number of satellite and internet channels. Inherent in the move towards a choice-oriented model of television broadcasting is the erosion of the idea of a mass audience. When sports fans can choose sports channels, children can choose children's channels, music fans can choose

music channels and so on, who is left watching a mainstream channel based on a consensus of what the population wants to watch in general? Inevitably, the more channels there are to choose from, the smaller the share of the overall audience each channel will get. This simple equation problematizes the model of a public service broadcasting which rests on an idea of the audience as sharing certain common features and interests– national events such as elections or state occasions or defining sporting events such as the FA Cup Final or the Superbowl. The emergence of specialist television channels enabled by cable and satellite technologies– for example, sport, movie or lifestyle channels– creates specialist markets for particular types of programming and as a consequence assumes a different relationship between broadcaster and viewer (Pearson & Simpson, 2005).

Intercultural Consumption in the Age of Globalization

Globalization is another day to day increasing process which considerably affects diferent aspacts (public or private) of life in the late modernity. As Giddens (1999) describets it; globalization isn't only about what is "out there", remote and far away from the individual. It is an "in here" phenomenon too, influencing intimate and personal aspects of our live.

Cultural consumption including music consumption is influenced by the process of globalization. Globalization can be understood as a multi-dimensional, complex process of profound transformations in all spheres—technological, economic, political, social, cultural, intimate and personal. It has been variously conceived as time-space compression (referring to the way that instantaneous electronic communication erodes the constraints of distance and time on social organization and interaction); accelerating interconnectedness (understood as the intensification of worldwide social relations and consciousness of world society); action at a distance (whereby the actions of social agents in one locale can come to have signifi cant consequences for "distant others").

Globalization thus suggests the expanding scale, speeding up and deepening impact of interregional flows and patterns of social interaction (Held & McGrew, 2003). Globalization affects the basic identities of individuals who now live with a partial and precarious integration of the multiple dimensions of cultural referents (Castells, 1997). Kim (2008) describes the outcomings of media globalization on Asian media, specilly state-television – which IRIB as an example was reffered before- as bellow: "The proliferation of satellite and cable television and online networks, enabled by sophisticated digital technologies and the deregulation and liberalization of broadcasting and telecommunications in the 1990s, has

created a new global media landscape, a complex terrain of multi-vocal, multimedia and multi-directional flows offering enormous challenges and opportunities." Such media flows have been accelerated by a shift from a state-centric and national view of the media to an imperative defined by commercially driven globalization, consumer interest and transnational markets. The earlier model adopted in much of Asia was of a dominant public broadcaster that was seen as integral to the development of nation states, modernizations and conceptions of national identity. Since the 1990s, the new borderless media have penetrated the emerging markets of Asia, capturing the imaginations of people who were accustomed to the traditional domestic media under government control.

Research Method

Audience measurement of music listening is a quantitative form of audience research. The data were collected through a national survey in 2016. The survey population was all Iranian people elder than 18 who populated in Iran. To define the sample, as Iran is a big country and the population are spread throughout wast areas, to achive a national sample which reprent the whole society, the Multi Stage Sampling method was applied. In this method 31 provinces of Iran were clusterd to nine clusters based on the provinces ethnic, linguistic and cultural proximities and then one or two provinces were selected among each cluster. The size of sample was calculated through Eq. (1).

$$E = z\left(\frac{\alpha}{2}\right)\left(\frac{\sigma}{\sqrt{n}}\right) (1)$$

which in σ=0.5 and E=0.018 . The calculated number of the sample size was 3400. The size of sample for each province is shown in Table1.

Table 1. The size of sample for each province

Cluster number	Selected province	Rural sample	Urban sample	Total size of sample
1	Sistan and Balouchestan	143	137	280
2	Isfahan	55	325	380
3	Lorestan	90	140	230
4	Khouzestan	105	260	365
5	Western Azerbayjan	85	140	225
6	Razavi Khorasan	150	385	535
7	Mazandaran	130	155	285
8	Kurdistan	68	132	200
9	Tehran	65	835	900
Total		891	2509	3400

Results

This research intended to understand the Iranian music Interests and taste. Thus, first of all the socio-demographic characteristics of the survey respondents are described. Then, the results of the research are presented in the next table of descriptive statistics.

Demographic and Background Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Geographic Region (Place Distribution)

Table 2. Distribution of absolute frequenc and frequency percent of the studied population based on the residence place distribution

Residence place distribution	Absolute frequency	Frequency percent
Urban	2531	75.1
Rural	841	24.9
Total	3372	100

%75.1 of survey respondents live in urban areas and %24.9 of survey respondents live in rural areas.

Gender

Table 3. Distribution of absolute frequenc and frequency percent of the studied population based on gender

Residence place distribution	Absolute frequency	Frequency percent
Urban	2531	75.1
Rural	841	24.9
Total	3372	100

%50.8 of survey respondents are men and and %49.2 of survey respondents are female.

Rate of Listenning to Different Music Genres Through Different Channels

Table 4 Shows the daily consumption of (listening to) music of survey respondents.

Table 4. Daily rate of listening to music

Items	Never	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Frequency
Listening to music Iranian radio channels (Radio Payam and Radio Ava)	43.4	24.9	13.4	11.3	5.1	1.8	3361
Listening to Iranian nonvocal traditional music	33.9	26.7	16.2	14.3	6.9	2	3355
Listening to Iranian nonvocal pop music	39.4	24.1	15.4	13	6.2	1.8	3358
Listening to foreign nonvocal pop music	51.3	20.2	11.5	10	4.9	2	3348
Listening local Music (Azari, Kurdish, Lori, Gilani, Mazandarani, Balouchi, Bandari, Khorasani,..)	21.8	21.7	17.2	19.8	14.1	5.4	3351
Listening to Iranian vocal traditional Music	19.9	21.1	18.5	21.8	13.5	5.3	3349
Listening to internal Iranian vocal pop music	18	20	16.3	22.6	17	6.2	3341
Listening to abroad Persian vocal pop music (Produced out of Iran, called Los Angeles Music in official language)	34.3	18.4	11.7	14.3	13.9	7.4	3346
Listening to Persian rap (Called informal or underground rap music)	49.5	18.6	10.7	9.8	7.6	3.8	3352
Listening to classic Western music (Beethoven, Mozzart, …)	57.3	18.7	10.8	7.4	4.3	1.5	3358
Listening to nonIranian (foreign) vocal pop music	57.2	16.6	11	8.4	4.9	1.8	3358
Listening to nonIranian (foreign) vocal rap music	62.8	15.5	9.1	7.5	3.6	1.5	3358
Listening to electronic music (Techno)	63.6	15.4	8.9	6.9	3.5	1.7	3357
Listening to nonIranian (foreign) rock and jazz music	66.1	14.2	7.8	6.8	3.4	1.7	3361

Concert Attendance

%50.8 of survey respondents spend no time for Concert Attendance, %18.8 of survey respondents spend low time for concert attendance, %12.2 of survey respondents spend moderate time for concert attendance, %5.1 of survey respondents spend much time and %1.9 of survey respondents spend very much time for concert attendance.

Ways and Media to Access and Listening to the Music

Table 5. Distribution of ways and media to access and listening to the music

Items	Never	Low	Moderate	High	Very high	Frequency
Radio	42.1	29.1	18.7	7.6	2.6	3362
Internal (state) television Channels	14.9	29.5	35.3	16	4.2	3354
Satellite television channels	36.3	17	23.1	17	6.6	3322
Reception from friends and relatives and playing on the laptop, PC, cellphone, or other audio-visual players	26.3	18.2	24.4	20.5	10.5	3351
Illegally downloading music	45.8	17	17.8	12.1	7.3	3356
Attending concert	67.1	17.5	10.9	3.5	1	3352
Buying music albums from home audio– video network and playing on the laptop, PC, cellphone, or other audio-visual players	48.5	21.2	18.5	8.8	3	3357
Playing music by friends or relatives	62.3	17.7	13.3	5.2	1.5	3358

Popular Music Genres

To respond to the question: Which music genres are Iranian popular musics? By considerin the responses, %44 of survey respondents chose traditional music, %28.2 chose pop music %20.7 of survey respondents chose integrated music (integraton of traditional and pop music) as their favorit music, %5.4 of survey respondents chose rap music and

%1.1 of survey respondents favored rock music as their popular music. Listenning to the pop, rap and rock music in Iran is considerable. As Noushin (2008) has noted, "Since its arrival in Iran in the post-war period, Western and Westernized popular music has been referred to using the generic term 'pop'." Indeed, while Iranian listeners distinguish between different styles of popular music (suggest, and indeed the whole question of terminology is phenomenally complex, partly due to the fluidity with which such terms are used in Iran and the speed with which terminology changes." techno, heavy metal, punk, hip-hop, jazz, and so on), "pop" served as a catch-all term until relatively recently. However, the post-1997 legalization led to a bifurcation such that people now tend to talk in terms of two main categories: "pop" on the one hand (legal and largely accepted by the musical mainstream) and "rock" on the other (largely unauthorized and outside the mainstream). In reality, the situation is much more blurred than these bipolar categories (Noushin, 2008).

Ethnities Popular Musics

Which ethnities music are the most favorit musics for Iranians? %23 of survey respondents chose Azari music, %19 of survey respondents chose Kurdish music, %14.5 of survey respondents chose Lori music, %4.1 of survey respondents selected Balouchi music, %5 of survey respondents selected Gilan (Gilaki) music, %9.2 of survey respondents chose Mazandaran (Mazani) music, %10.2 of survey respondents selected Arabic music, %1 of survey respondents selected Torkmeni music, %7.5 of survey respondents selected Bandari (South of Iran) music, %5.7 of survey respondents favored Khorasani music.

Popular non Iranian Musics

Which countries music are the most favorit musics for Iranians? As many Iranians can speak and understand Turkish, they understand Turkish lyrics. Thus, %36.5 of survey respondents liked Turkish music. %12.8 of survey respondents liked Indian music, %6.4 of survey respondents favored Afghanistan and Tajikistan music, %14.5 of survey respondents selected Arabian music, %10.5 of survey respondents chose European music, %34 of survey respondents liked Latin American music &, %8.5 of survey respondents favored American music. As Turkey is a neighboring country to Iran and because Azari is second common language in Iran, which is very much (almost the same) language to Turkish, it is not surprising that Turkish music is the most foreign favorit music for Iranians, because Iranian can understand the vocal Turkish

music. It is very considerable that Turkish televidion deries which have been broadcasted in satellite television channels like Gem TV and 3A Family TV during last decade, have been very popular in Iran. It is notable that although Kpop or Korean pop is very popular among some Iranian Teenagers, but this research has not focused on the teenagers music favorits. This is considerable because Korean series which have been broadcasted in Iran National Televeision (IRIB) have been very popular in Iran. As mentioned before, Television (in it`s all formats such as digital or satellite televisions) has been the dominant media in Iran and has effected many aspects of cultural life and cultural consumption including music consumption.

Popular Foreign Singers

Michael Jackson, İbrahim Tatlıses, Jennifer Lopez, Nancy Ajram & Shakira are the most popular foreign singers listed in the survey respondents answers.

Discussion

Future research needs to have breadth and depth on Iranian music consumption. As the results showed Iranian music is more popular to Iranians than foreign music. Iranian traditional music and integrated music (traditional music integrated to pop music) are very popular in Iran. This fact shows that despite the waves of globalization, specially cultural and media globalization and increasing access to global genres of music, many Iranian music listenners prefer the Iranian music than any other genres of music. But, some other interesting facts need to be considered.

Since "the late 1990s thaw in Iran's international relations, the emergence of a cosmopolitan youth culture, and, of course, day to day increase of watching the satellite television channel and Internet, have all served to link Iranian youth into a transnational cultural network" (Noushin, 2008). Thus, through consuming the different genres of music, Iranian music lovers are representing new understandings of national identity by consuming diverse traditional and modern music, Iranian and non Iranian (national and global) music. Thus, they are embracing modernity, plurality, and cosmopolitanism through music consumption.

Fragmentation of the State television (IRIB) audiences is a very considerable fact to be considered in media consumption including music consumption in Iran. As this medi (IRIB) which has been the dominant media in Iran for almost 4 decades, but during recent decade the number of television audiences has been decreasing, the new

media are accessed, consumed and paid attention. In this new era, international satellite television channel, particularly those broadcting their programmes in Persian are very focused on broadcasting the pop and some other western genres of music. So, the taste of part of Iranian society, particulary the youth is shaped or is inclined toward these genres of music while the state television almost has ignored some of these genres. The very easy access to internet, specially by Smart phones has diverted much of the attention of television audiences to new media. Now, they are being attracted to new entertainmetns like downloading the music, legally or illegaly and listening to music. Less time is allocated to watching television and more time is spent to web-based entertainments such as listening to musics which are more diverse, easy to access, easy to consume, multicultural, plural, interesting and amusing.

Ethical considerations
The author has completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc.

Conflicts of interests
The author declares that there is no conflict of interests.

Data availability
The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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