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A Pilot Within-Subject Investigation of Immediate Mood Responses to Culturally Rooted and Generic Music in Chennai

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ABSTRACT: Background: Music listening has been associated with emotion regulation and psychological well-being. However, limited research has examined immediate mood responses to participant-selected culturally rooted music in comparison with generic music within the Indian context. The present pilot study explored immediate mood responses and subjective listening experiences associated with these two music conditions among working women in Chennai.

Methods: A within-subject pre-test–post-test comparative design was employed among six working women aged 25–40 years. Participants underwent two receptive listening sessions involving generic instrumental music and participant-selected culturally rooted music, with a 24-hour interval between sessions. Immediate mood responses were assessed using a study-specific 14-item mood check-in comprising positive and negative mood descriptors rated on a 0–4 response scale. Qualitative responses were obtained through two open-ended feedback questions. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests, while qualitative responses were analysed to identify recurring patterns in participants' experiences.

Results: Both music conditions showed descriptive changes in mood. The mean change in positive mood was +5.67 following culturally rooted music and +2.33 following generic music. A statistically significant pre–post increase in positive mood was observed for the culturally rooted condition ($W = 0.00$, $p = .036$), whereas the corresponding change for generic music was not statistically significant ($W = 1.50$, $p = .134$). Qualitative responses included autobiographical memories, nostalgia, and personal associations during culturally rooted music sessions, while responses to generic music were primarily characterised by relaxation and calmness.

Conclusions: The findings provide preliminary observations that participant-selected culturally rooted music was associated with an increase in positive mood and with subjective listening experiences involving autobiographical memories and personal associations. Generic music was primarily associated with relaxation and calmness in participants' qualitative responses.

1. INTRODUCTION

Music occupies a unique position in human life as both a cultural artifact and a psychological resource. Across cultural traditions, music has been used for emotional expression, ritual engagement and a range of social and personal functions. Contemporary research has increasingly examined music listening as a means of supporting emotion regulation and psychological well-being, including its potential role in reducing anxiety and influencing mood (Harney et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2025). However, the characteristics of the music used in such interventions and listening-based studies vary considerably, and comparatively less attention has been given to the role of culturally meaningful music within non-Western populations.

The present study focuses on culturally rooted music, defined in this study as music selected by participants from an Indian musical context with which they personally identified or felt a cultural or musical connection. Music within the Indian context is embedded in diverse social, linguistic, regional, and personal experiences and may therefore carry associations with memory, identity, and affective meaning (Hicks, 2020). Such associations may be particularly relevant when music is personally selected by the listener, as personal relevance and familiarity can contribute to the subjective experience of music listening.

These considerations are also relevant to working women, who may navigate multiple professional, familial, and social responsibilities. Occupational stress among working women has been discussed in relation to the combined demands of professional and domestic responsibilities (Hinaz et al., 2021). Within this context, music listening represents an accessible activity that may be incorporated into everyday life and may provide an opportunity for emotional engagement and subjective relaxation.

Although music is widely studied in relation to affect regulation, there remains a need for research examining how different forms of music listening are experienced within specific cultural contexts. Existing literature has highlighted the importance of personal relevance, cultural context, and listener characteristics in understanding responses to music (Campbell et al., 2020; Chong et al., 2024). However, research specifically examining culturally rooted music among working women in India remains comparatively limited.

Against this background, the present pilot study explored immediate mood responses and subjective listening experiences associated with participant-selected culturally rooted music and generic instrumental music among working women in Chennai. A within-subject design was used to examine pre–post changes in mood following each listening condition and to document participants' self-reported memories, thoughts, feelings, and associations.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Music has been widely recognised as a medium through which individuals experience and regulate emotions. Research has examined music listening in relation to mood, stress, positive and negative affect, and psychological well-being, while increasingly recognising that emotional responses to music are influenced not only by musical characteristics but also by listener-related and contextual factors (Chong et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). An important development in this area has been greater attention to the role of music selection and personal preference in shaping emotional responses.

Earlier empirical research demonstrated the relevance of self-selected music to emotional experience. Helsing et al. (2016), in an experimental field study involving women who listened to their own preferred relaxing and energising music, reported higher intensity of positive emotions and lower perceived stress during the music-listening period compared with a baseline relaxation condition. The study also highlighted the importance of individual differences, including musical preference, familiarity, and the opportunity to choose music, when examining emotional responses to listening.

Subsequent research has further examined the effects of personal or self-selected music in comparison with researcher-selected music. Völker (2019) investigated personal and researcher-preselected music in mood induction studies and found stronger reported mood effects when participants selected the music themselves. The study also highlighted episodic memory and other listener-related processes associated with musical mood induction, highlighting the interaction between the musical stimulus and the listener's cognitive and emotional context. These findings support the importance of considering personal relevance and individual differences when examining immediate emotional responses to music.

The relationship between music selection and personal experience has also been examined in relation to autobiographical memory and emotion regulation. Gibbs and Egermann (2021) investigated music-evoked nostalgia among 570 participants who selected music associated with nostalgic experiences. Participants reported emotional responses and memories associated with

the selected music, and the study examined nostalgic music listening as an emotion-regulation strategy. The findings indicated differences in the affective and narrative content of nostalgic music listening according to the emotion-regulation strategy employed and suggested an association between nostalgic music listening and well-being. These findings are relevant to the role of personally meaningful music in eliciting memories and subjective emotional experiences.

More recent research has begun to distinguish between musical preference and familiarity as potentially separate listener-related factors. Fuentes-Sánchez et al. (2022) examined the effects of musical preference and familiarity on music-induced emotional responses among 50 participants using subjective ratings and physiological measures. Musical preference showed a strong association with emotional correlates, whereas the predicted effects of familiarity were not consistently observed. This distinction is particularly relevant when considering participant-selected music, as personal preference and familiarity may contribute to listening responses independently and should not necessarily be treated as equivalent constructs.

Recent research has extended this literature by examining music emotion regulation more broadly. A scoping review by Chong et al. (2024) identified music listening as an important context for emotion regulation while highlighting the need for greater attention to the mechanisms and contextual factors underlying emotional responses to music. Research on participant-selected music has likewise continued to demonstrate the importance of listener characteristics and subjective associations in understanding responses to music (Maidhof et al., 2023). Together, these studies indicate that the emotional experience of music cannot be understood solely in terms of the acoustic properties of the musical stimulus.

An additional consideration is the role of cultural background and culturally shaped musical experience. Recent cross-cultural research suggests that cultural background can influence the perception and emotional interpretation of music (Li et al., 2025). Wang et al. (2025) similarly examined differences between Chinese and Western listeners in expectations of musical emotions across everyday listening contexts. Sun (2025) further discussed differences in responses to music across cultural contexts. These findings suggest that musical experience is embedded within culturally learned frameworks and that listeners' responses may be shaped by prior exposure and cultural context.

The relevance of cultural context has also been discussed in research on culturally sensitive music-based practices. Khodarahmi (2025) emphasised the potential significance of culturally familiar and indigenous musical forms in relation to identity, memory, belonging, and emotional engagement. However, such literature does not establish that cultural familiarity independently produces greater mood change, and the relative contributions of cultural familiarity, personal preference, prior exposure, and other musical characteristics remain insufficiently differentiated.

Despite the growing literature on music and emotion regulation, self-selected music, personal relevance, and cultural influences on musical experience, relatively little empirical research has directly examined immediate mood responses alongside subjective listening experiences when participant-selected culturally rooted music is compared with generic instrumental music. This gap is particularly relevant in the Indian context, where music may be closely embedded within personal, social, and cultural experiences. Further, limited research has examined this comparison among working women, a population whose everyday musical experiences and emotional contexts may warrant specific attention.

The present pilot study therefore explores immediate mood responses and subjective listening experiences associated with participant-selected culturally rooted music and generic instrumental music among working women in Chennai. By examining both quantitative mood responses and participants' reported memories, thoughts, and feelings, the study seeks to provide preliminary evidence concerning how these two listening conditions may be experienced differently.

3. AIM

The study aimed to explore immediate mood responses and subjective listening experiences associated with participant-selected culturally rooted music and generic instrumental music among working women in Chennai.

4. OBJECTIVES

The study had the following objectives:

- a. To examine immediate mood responses to participant-selected culturally rooted music and generic instrumental music among working women in Chennai.

b. To analyse the subjective experiences and associations reported by participants following exposure to participant-selected culturally rooted music and generic instrumental music.

5. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

a. *Culturally rooted music*: Music selected by participants from an Indian musical context with which they personally identified or felt a cultural or musical connection.

b. *Generic music*: A common instrumental music track selected for the study that was not intended to represent a specific Indian cultural or linguistic tradition and was sourced from YouTube.

c. *Immediate mood response*: The change in positive and negative mood scores reported immediately before and after each music-listening session.

d. *Working women*: Women aged 25–40 years who were engaged in paid employment at the time of participation.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Research Design

The study employed a within-subject pre-test–post-test comparative design. Each participant took part in two receptive music-listening sessions: one involving generic instrumental music and the other involving participant-selected culturally rooted music. Immediate mood responses were assessed immediately before and after each listening session using the study-specific 14-item mood check-in. The two sessions were conducted with a 24-hour interval between them.

6.2 Participants

Six working women aged 25–40 years were recruited from Chennai, India, for this pilot study. Participants were eligible if they were women within the specified age range and were engaged in paid employment at the time of participation. Recruitment was undertaken through convenience sampling. Participation was voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained before data collection. All six participants completed both music-listening conditions and the associated pre- and post-listening assessments. The age distribution of the participants is presented in Figure 1.

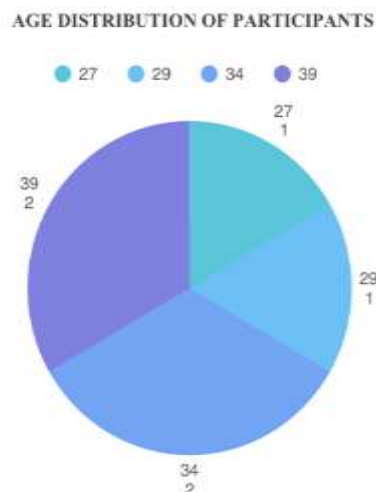


Figure 1. Age distribution of participants

6.3 Selection of Music Stimuli

Two music conditions were used in the study: generic instrumental music and participant-selected culturally rooted music.

For the generic music condition, a commercially available instrumental relaxation track was selected and used as the common listening stimulus for all participants. The track was obtained from YouTube (Yellow Brick Cinema – Relaxing Music, 2019).

following a search using the keyword “relaxation music.”. The track was selected because it was instrumental and was not intended to represent a specific Indian cultural or linguistic tradition.

For the culturally rooted music condition, participants were asked to select a piece of music from an Indian musical genre with which they personally identified or felt a cultural or musical connection. The options provided included Carnatic, devotional, film/popular, Hindustani, folk, and fusion music. Of the six participants, three selected Carnatic music, two selected devotional music, and one selected film/popular music. No participant selected Hindustani, folk, or fusion music.

The participant-selected nature of this condition was intended to capture music that was personally meaningful or culturally connected to the individual listener. Consequently, the culturally rooted condition involved variation in musical genre and stimulus characteristics across participants. Participants listened to each selected musical piece in its entirety; therefore, listening duration corresponded to the duration of the respective musical piece.

6.4 Procedure

Participants were informed about the study procedures, and written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Each participant completed two receptive music-listening sessions, comprising a generic instrumental music condition and a participant-selected culturally rooted music condition, with a 24-hour interval between the sessions.

Immediately before and after each listening session, participants completed the 14-item study-specific mood check-in. The check-in consisted of positive and negative mood descriptors rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely).

Following each listening session, participants also responded to two open-ended questions concerning their subjective listening experiences:

1. “Is there any specific memory, image, or thought that came to mind while listening?”
2. “In a few words, how did the music make you feel?”

The quantitative responses were used to examine pre–post changes in positive and negative mood, while the open-ended responses were examined for recurring patterns in participants’ reported experiences and associations.

All participants completed the generic music condition first, followed by the participant-selected culturally rooted music condition, with a 24-hour interval between sessions. The order of presentation was not randomised or counterbalanced. No formal procedure was used to assess or eliminate potential order or carryover effects. Consequently, the possibility that prior exposure, expectations, or temporal changes in mood influenced responses in the second session cannot be excluded

6.5 Measures

A brief, study-specific 14-item mood check-in was used to assess participants’ immediate mood states before and after each music-listening session. The check-in comprised seven positive mood descriptors (Happy, Caring, Loving, Calm, Active, Focused, and Content) and seven negative mood descriptors (Sad, Tired, Nervous, Angry, Irritated, Gloomy, and Drowsy).

Participants rated each descriptor on a five-point response scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). Positive and negative mood scores were calculated separately by summing the ratings of the corresponding seven items, yielding possible scores ranging from 0 to 28 for each category. Higher positive mood scores indicated greater endorsement of positive mood descriptors, while higher negative mood scores indicated greater endorsement of negative mood descriptors. Pre–post change scores were calculated by subtracting pre-listening scores from post-listening scores. A positive change in the positive mood score indicated an increase in reported positive mood, whereas a negative change in the negative mood score indicated a reduction in reported negative mood.

The check-in was used as an exploratory measure of immediate subjective mood responses and was not intended as a diagnostic instrument.

6.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and non-parametric inferential analysis. For each music condition, pre- and post-listening scores for positive and negative mood were summarised using means and corresponding change scores.

Given the small sample size and the paired nature of the observations, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests were used to examine pre–post differences within each music condition. Rank-biserial correlation was reported as an effect-size measure. All quantitative analyses were conducted using Jamovi (version 2.7).

Qualitative responses to the two open-ended questions were examined to identify recurring patterns in participants’ reported memories, thoughts, feelings, and associations following each listening condition. The qualitative findings were used to describe similarities and differences in participants’ subjective listening experiences.

7. RESULTS

7.1 Quantitative Findings

Changes in positive and negative mood were examined following exposure to generic and culturally rooted music. Difference scores (Δ) were calculated by subtracting pre-test scores from post-test scores for each participant.

As shown in Table 1, individual changes in positive and negative mood varied across participants and music conditions. In the generic music condition, changes in positive mood ranged from -1 to $+6$, while changes in negative mood ranged from -9 to 0 . In the culturally rooted music condition, changes in positive mood ranged from $+1$ to $+10$, while changes in negative mood ranged from -7 to 0 .

Table 1: Individual Change Scores (Δ) Across Conditions

Participant	Δ Positive (Generic)	Δ Negative (Generic)	Δ Positive (Cultural)	Δ Negative (Cultural)
P1	-1	-1	7	0
P2	0	0	10	0
P3	4	-3	4	-1
P4	4	-9	4	-7
P5	1	-2	1	-3
P6	6	-4	8	-6

Descriptive statistics for pre-test and post-test mood scores are presented in Table 2. For the generic music condition, the mean positive mood score increased from 12.67 at pre-test to 15.00 at post-test, corresponding to a mean change of $+2.33$. The mean negative mood score decreased from 6.00 to 2.83, corresponding to a mean change of -3.17 .

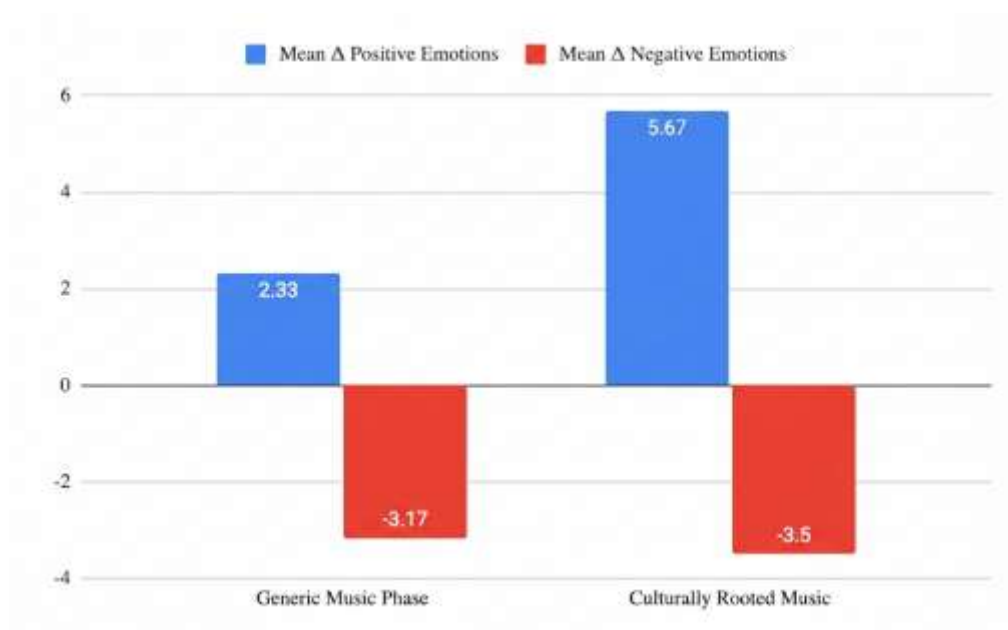
For the culturally rooted music condition, the mean positive mood score increased from 11.33 at pre-test to 17.00 at post-test, corresponding to a mean change of $+5.67$. The mean negative mood score decreased from 4.50 to 1.00, corresponding to a mean change of -3.50 .

Table 2: Mean Emotional Scores and Mean Change (Δ) Across Conditions

Condition	Pre-Test Positive (M)	Post-Test Positive (M)	Δ Positive	Pre-Test Negative (M)	Post-Test Negative (M)	Δ Negative
Generic Music	12.67	15.00	+2.33	6.00	2.83	-3.17
Culturally Rooted Music	11.33	17.00	+5.67	4.50	1.00	-3.50

Figure 2 illustrates the mean changes in positive and negative mood across the two music conditions. Descriptively, the culturally rooted music condition showed a larger mean increase in positive mood (+5.67) than the generic music condition (+2.33). Reductions in mean negative mood were observed following both music conditions, with changes of -3.17 for generic music and -3.50 for culturally rooted music.

Figure 2. Mean change (Δ) in positive and negative mood across music conditions



To examine pre-post differences within each music condition, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests were conducted. The results are presented in Table 3. For the generic music condition, the change in positive mood was not statistically significant ($W = 1.50$, $p = .134$). The change in negative mood was also not statistically significant ($W = 15.00$, $p = .059$).

For the culturally rooted music condition, a statistically significant pre-post increase was observed in positive mood ($W = 0.00$, $p = .036$). The reduction in negative mood was not statistically significant ($W = 10.00$, $p = .100$).

Table 3: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results

Condition	Mood Type	W	p-value	Rank-Biserial Correlation
Generic Music	Positive Mood	1.50	.134	-0.800

Generic Music	Negative Mood	15.00	.059	1.000
Culturally Rooted Music	Positive Mood	0.00	.036	-1.000
Culturally Rooted Music	Negative Mood	10.00	.100	1.000

The rank-biserial correlation estimates indicated large effect-size magnitudes for the observed pre–post differences. These estimates should be interpreted cautiously given the small sample size and the presence of tied values.

7.2 Qualitative Findings

Responses to the two open-ended questions were examined to identify recurring patterns in participants' reported memories, thoughts, feelings, and associations following the two music-listening conditions. Two broad patterns were observed: (a) memories and personal associations and (b) reported emotional experiences.

a. Memories and Personal Associations

Participants reported personal or nostalgic associations during the culturally rooted music sessions. These responses were often specific and linked to past experiences, relationships, and places. For instance:

- *"This song was played in one of the cultural fests in my college... It brought back many of the good memories I shared with my friends."* (P1)
- *"It reminded me of my mother singing in the temple near my childhood home."* (P3)
- *"My memories with grandparents in my hometown, this song echoing in temple speakers in the early morning."* (P5)

In contrast, responses to generic music were more commonly characterised by abstract or nature-based imagery, such as waterfalls, forests, or calm landscapes.

b. Reported Emotional Experiences

Responses to culturally rooted music included descriptions of nostalgia, happiness, calmness, and a sense of belonging. Participants also described personal connections associated with the music. For example:

- *"It made me nostalgic and enjoy the song more."* (P5)
- *"I felt deeply connected to my roots."* (P2)

Responses to generic music were predominantly characterised by general states of relaxation and calmness, with participants describing experiences such as:

- *"The music made me calm and relaxed."* (P3)
- *"Felt calm, dozed off after listening for some time."* (P4)

8. DISCUSSION

This pilot study examined immediate mood responses and subjective listening experiences associated with participant-selected culturally rooted music and generic instrumental music among working women in Chennai. At the descriptive level, changes in positive and negative mood were observed following both listening conditions. However, the inferential analysis indicated that the pre–post increase in positive mood reached statistical significance only following the culturally rooted music condition. The corresponding change following generic music was not statistically significant.

The findings should be interpreted in the context of the small sample size and exploratory nature of the study. Although a statistically significant pre–post increase in positive mood was observed following culturally rooted music, the result does not by itself establish that culturally rooted music was more effective than generic music. The two conditions were not compared

using a direct between-condition inferential test, and the culturally rooted condition involved participant-selected music that varied across individuals. Accordingly, the observed differences should be regarded as preliminary evidence of differing patterns of immediate mood response rather than evidence of comparative effectiveness.

Descriptively, the culturally rooted condition showed a larger mean increase in positive mood (+5.67) than the generic music condition (+2.33). Reductions in negative mood were also observed following both conditions, with mean changes of -3.50 for culturally rooted music and -3.17 for generic music. However, neither reduction in negative mood reached statistical significance. In this small sample, the descriptive changes were larger for positive mood than for negative mood.

The qualitative findings provide additional context for the quantitative observations. Participants' responses following culturally rooted music included autobiographical memories, nostalgic experiences, and personal associations linked to people, places, and previous experiences. For example, participants referred to college cultural events, memories of their mothers singing, and childhood experiences involving grandparents and temple music. In contrast, responses following generic music were more commonly described in terms of general relaxation, calmness, and abstract or nature-related imagery. These findings suggest that the two listening conditions were associated with different types of subjective listening experiences within this small sample.

The occurrence of autobiographical memories following culturally rooted music is consistent with research suggesting that music can serve as a cue for autobiographical memory retrieval (Nawaz & Omigie, 2025). Music can be linked to particular people, places, events, and periods of an individual's life, and such associations may become particularly salient when the listener has an established personal relationship with the music. The participant responses in the present study illustrate this phenomenon through references to family members, childhood settings, social experiences, and culturally situated events. However, the present study did not directly measure autobiographical memory processes; therefore, these responses are best understood as participants' reported memories and associations rather than evidence of a specific memory-retrieval mechanism.

The qualitative differences may also be considered in relation to personal relevance and music selection. Previous research has suggested that personally meaningful or self-selected music may be associated with emotional and regulatory experiences (Groarke et al., 2019). In the present study, the culturally rooted music condition was explicitly based on participant selection, whereas the generic condition involved a common instrumental stimulus. Consequently, the personal relevance of the selected music may have contributed to the nature of participants' responses. At the same time, personal relevance cannot be separated from cultural rootedness in the present design. Participants selected music from different genres and musical contexts, and the study did not independently measure familiarity, frequency of prior listening, degree of preference, or strength of cultural identification. Therefore, these factors may have jointly contributed to the observed responses.

The distinction between the two conditions is therefore important when interpreting the findings. The culturally rooted condition did not represent a single standardised musical stimulus; rather, it represented music that individual participants selected because of a perceived personal or cultural connection. The findings may consequently reflect the combined influence of cultural association, personal relevance, familiarity, preference, and the musical characteristics of the selected pieces. The generic condition, in contrast, provided a more common stimulus across participants. This difference in stimulus structure should be considered when interpreting the observed quantitative and qualitative patterns.

The findings also provide preliminary observations concerning music listening experiences among the working women who participated in this study. The participants' responses indicate that music listening may involve experiences extending beyond immediate changes in mood, including memories, associations, and personally meaningful experiences. In an everyday context, such experiences may be relevant to how individuals engage with music as part of their routine. However, the present pilot study assessed only immediate responses following brief listening sessions and did not examine longer-term psychological outcomes, stress reduction, or sustained changes in well-being.

These findings provide a basis for further examination of how personal and cultural associations with music may relate to immediate mood responses and subjective listening experiences.

9. LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. The small sample size ($N = 6$) limits statistical power and the generalisability of the findings. The within-subject design and brief listening sessions do not permit conclusions about longer-term changes in mood or

emotional well-being. Mood was assessed using a brief study-specific self-report check-in, which may be subject to response bias and may not capture the full complexity of emotional change.

The culturally rooted condition involved participant-selected music that varied in genre, musical characteristics, and potentially in duration, as participants listened to their selected pieces in their entirety. This introduced heterogeneity in the musical stimuli. Factors such as music familiarity, frequency of prior listening, and personal preference were not independently assessed. Listening conditions were also not fully controlled, and contextual factors such as the listening environment, device used, and time of day may have influenced participants' responses. Other potentially relevant contextual factors, including menstrual-cycle status, were not assessed or controlled and may have contributed to variation in immediate mood responses.

The order of the two listening conditions was not randomised or counterbalanced; therefore, potential order or carryover effects cannot be ruled out. Although a 24-hour interval was maintained between sessions, it cannot be assumed to have completely eliminated such effects. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the preliminary findings and when designing larger studies with more controlled and standardised procedures.

10. CONCLUSION

This pilot study explored immediate mood responses and subjective listening experiences associated with participant-selected culturally rooted music and generic instrumental music among six working women in Chennai. Both listening conditions were accompanied by descriptive changes in positive and negative mood. A statistically significant pre–post increase in positive mood was observed following culturally rooted music, whereas the corresponding change following generic music was not statistically significant. Reductions in negative mood were observed in both conditions but did not reach statistical significance.

The qualitative responses further showed differences in participants' reported listening experiences. Responses following culturally rooted music included autobiographical memories, nostalgia, and personal associations with people, places, and past experiences, whereas responses following generic music were more commonly characterised by relaxation, calmness, and general imagery.

These findings provide preliminary observations regarding the relationship between participant-selected culturally rooted music, immediate mood responses, and subjective listening experiences. Given the small sample size and the participant-selected nature of the culturally rooted music condition, the findings should be interpreted cautiously. Larger and more controlled studies are needed to further examine the contribution of cultural and personal relevance to responses to music.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Deepa Iyer S: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing—original draft preparation, Writing—reviewing and editing.

Dr. Rajshri Ramakrishna: Supervision, Project administration, Writing – review & editing.

Dr. Gurpreet Kaur: Project administration, Writing – review & editing, Funding acquisition.

Dr. Yashpal Azad: Supervision, Project administration, Writing – review & editing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

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ETHICS STATEMENT

The study involved minimal-risk, non-clinical procedures, and written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to participation. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study. Formal ethics committee approval was not obtained because the institutional ethics committee responsible for social sciences research was not operational at the time of data collection; consequently, no ethics approval was issued.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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