Motivational qualities of music in exercise

Dietmar Tscherne
University of Graz, Austria, Centre for Systematic Musicology
dietmar.tscherne@edu.uni-graz.at

In: Jakubowski, K., Farrugia, N., Floridou, G.A., & Gagen, J. (Eds.)
Proceedings of the 7th International Conference of Students of Systematic Musicology (SysMus14)

Music can enhance athletic performance in different ways, depending on whether it is synchronous (movements are in time with rhythm; Terry et al., 2006), asynchronous (no conscious synchronization between movement and music tempo; Terry et al., 2006), or pre-task (to regulate arousal level prior to performance; Karageorghis et al., 2012). Benefits of music include more positive mood, reduced pain/fatigue, reduced subjective exertion, improved performance (e.g. in treadmill running, cycling, on grip strength, etc.), faster acquisition of motor skills, and increased likelihood of flow states (Karageorghis et al., 2001). Motivational qualities of a piece of music depend on the response to rhythm, pitch/harmony, identification with cultural groups, and non-musical associations (Karageorghis, et al., 1999; Terry et al., 2011). Tempo is the most important determinant of response to music (Karageorghis et al., 1999) and an average of 130 bpm was reported to be most suitable for workout settings (Felstead et al, 2006) and for workouts with low to moderate intensity (Karageorghis et al., 2006). This mixed-methods project focuses on the motivational qualities of music, extending Priest's findings (2003). Which music enhances motivation during a workout? Is music particularly designed for workouts more likely to motivate than other music? A total of 24 well-known sound samples with a tempo close to 130 bpm will be cut to a length of ten seconds and assigned to eight different musical styles, making them three samples for each style. Four styles will reflect workout music (taken from Spotify workout playlists), and four will be non-workout music including Jazz, Classical, Pop/Rock, and Electronic music. Regular gym-goers will be asked to listen to each sample in a random order and to answer the question, how much they would like to listen to that music during a workout, using a questionnaire after each sample. Participants are requested to rate each sample on a seven-point-scale and briefly comment on it. In a second run, subjects will be asked about their musical preferences in general and to rate the samples' musical styles on a seven-point-scale accordingly. Gathered data from both inquiries will be analyzed.

Keywords: Motivation, music, exercise, musical styles

References


