THE IMPACT OF IGEN INCLUSIVITY AND INDIVIDUALITY ON THE AMERICAN MUSIC ECONOMY

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Recent trends in the music industry reveal increased genre diversity among the iGeneration populace which suggests that the individualism and inclusivity of today’s youth may be driving the American music economy.
INDIVIDUALITY IN TODAY’S YOUTH

• “iGen’ers want products that will be useful to them, make them feel unique, and provide them with the convenience or comfort they want.” ~ Twenge

• Music has always been “social and cultural force of identification and presentation” for young people

• Modern technology heightens the iGeneration’s sense of individuality, as almost everything is customizable
INCLUSIVITY IN THE IGENERATION

• “From LGBT identities to gender to race, iGen’ers expect equality and are often surprised, even shocked, to still encounter prejudice.” ~ Twenge

• Increasing acceptance and celebration of diversity and differences

• Popularity of social movements

• Rejection of traditional gender roles
WHAT IS THE AMERICAN MUSIC ECONOMY?

• Any source of revenue attributed to music in the U.S.
  • Albums and singles streamed or purchased online
  • Physical products related to artistry (merch, vinyl, etc.)
  • Revenue from live performances
  • Royalties from sync and mechanical licensing
  • Sale of musical instruments and published music
  • Sale of recording and listening devices
  • Jobs related to providing these products or services

• Worth $43 billion as of 2017
The question of cause and effect:

Music, and all media to an extent, is both a reflection of our own beliefs, norms, and trends as well as a catalyst for change.

It can be hard to distinguish cause from effect so we observe trends and correlations often without assigning causation.
LISTENING TECHNOLOGY AND INDIVIDUALITY

• Mobile devices encourage personalization
  • Music as an extension of self
• Streaming services allow customization
  • Control over listening environment
• Technology becomes status symbol
  • Tidal, Beats by Dre, etc.
RECORDING TECHNOLOGY AND INDIVIDUALITY

• “The independent producer’s artistic and aesthetic preferences, inspired by personal choice, individuality and intrinsic values, intersect with the music production already happening in bedroom studios with laptop computers and via Internet collaboration” ~ Daniel A. Walzer

• Ease of access to recording technology has allowed new voices to be heard

• Instrumentational choices define style and message
• Marketing has generally become more individualized
  • Social media marketing
  • Companies tracking buying behavior online

• iGen’ers are less concerned with privacy online

• Music Marketing focuses on making buyer feel unique or elite
  • Branding to fit individual preferences and subculture

• Artists find success by setting themselves apart
  • Name, image, message, etc.
LGBTQ+ ARTISTS AND THEMES

• Becoming more prominent and popular
• Troye Sivan
  • Blue Neighborhood trilogy
• Hayley Kiyoko
  • Girls Like Girls
• Music is often about representation, especially for young people
MENTAL ILLNESS IN TODAY’S MUSIC

• “iGen is on the verge of the most severe mental health crisis for young people in decades.” ~ Twenge

• “Breathin” by Ariana Grande and “In my Blood” by Shawn Mendes

• Demi Lovato
  • Struggles with bipolar disorder

• Kendrick Lamar
  • Struggles with depression

• Mental illness has often been linked to artistry
  • Musicians opening up about their struggles
FEMINISM SELLS, BUT DOES IT STICK?

- Feminism and female empowerment common in popular music
- St Vincent’s female guitar design
- Programs for young female producers and sound engineers
- Is it a façade?
DIVERSITY IN STREAMING

• Spotify listeners are listening to more artists per week than ever before
  • “It’s clear more listeners are hearing more music on Spotify, and they’re streaming a wider variety of music.” ~ Erlandsson and Perez

• Accessibility in streaming allows for increased variety

• New tech also enables independent artists and producers to release their works onto streaming cites and collect royalties
  • Royalties impact larger music economy
MUSIC LOYALTY AND THE NICHE MUSIC ECONOMY

• Music loyalty can be extremely lucrative for niche genres

• The industry may be driven by consumer loyalty to niche music genres

• Chris Anderson theorizes that “if the twentieth-century entertainment industry was about hits, the twenty-first will be equally about niches.”
CONCLUSIONS

• Today’s youth are more interested in music that appeals to their sense of individuality and inclusivity, indicating that the future of the music economy may be in niche music genres.

• New music technology allows the iGeneration to personalize and customize their listening experience which means that marketing to them must be done similarly.

• The iGeneration’s tendency toward acceptance and inclusivity opens up new options for artists and marketers in the music industry.
SOURCES


