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POPULAR MUSIC AND COMMUNICATION IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how people use popular music, particularly wedding songs, to communicate. Participants were gathered at a bridal expo who either “Have a Wedding Song” or have “Witnessed a Wedding Song”. Results indicate that people do indeed communicate using music. Interpersonal partners have a wedding song because a wedding song is symbolic, tradition, expresses feelings, important, and romantic. Couples chose a particular song for their wedding because the appointed song expresses the couple’s feelings, has sentimental value, is representative of the relationship, has meaningful lyrics, and sounds good. The most important messages communicated in a song were: “I love you”, “I want to be with you”, and “I want everyone to know how I feel”. The most important emotions were: “Love”, “Warmth”, and “Happiness”. Finally, wedding partners generally communicate to their partner or to both their partner and the audience. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.
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“Music, the great communicator...”

-from the song “Can’t Stop” by the Red Hot Chili Peppers

‘Antwan The Swan’, born Anthony Kiedis, is the lead singer for one of the most influential funk, punk, rock fusion bands from Los Angeles, the Red Hot Chili Peppers. With several albums and many years of musicianship to his credit, Kiedis sings these lyrics describing music not as a great communicator, but as the great communicator. The exact meaning behind these words is not completely clear, but these lyrics touch upon an important issue in communication, which is how people use music to communicate messages. Music may have existed as communication even before human language was ever developed. Communication may have started with the tapping of rocks and sticks or the blowing of air through the mouth or into a tool before developing into an intricate combination of lyrics and instrumentation that people around the world recognize as music. Whether or not music is the great communicator is yet to be seen, but if it is true at all that music can be used to communicate messages, then the communication field should take note.

Merriam (1964) claimed that music fulfills various functions in life from providing entertainment and expressing emotion to communicating messages and representing some other symbol, idea, or behavior. Similarly, interpersonal communication fulfills numerous functions in everyday life, from achieving personal goals and needs to defining who we are and connecting with other people (Canary & Cody, 1993). This research combines both music and interpersonal communication, investigating how interpersonal partners communicate using music, specifically popular
music. Both mass communication and social psychology have long studied music as a communicative element, but music has not garnered much attention in the context of interpersonal communication.

Although prior research on music and interpersonal relationships has been limited, music should be studied in interpersonal relationships for a variety of reasons. First, several other authors have become aware of the importance of music and have called for the need to research more thoroughly this area (Hargreaves & North, 1997; Lull, 1992; Wilson, 2000). Second, the communication field is a more appropriate arena to address communication functions, such as the extent that interpersonal partners communicate with music, than are mass communication or social psychology. Third, there are several commonalities between interpersonal relationships and music that make the fusion of the two natural, such as: messages are communicated in both relationships and music, music can be a topic or a reason for communication in an interpersonal relationship, music can be a significant bond between interpersonal partners, interpersonal relationships are the dominant theme of popular music lyrics, and both interpersonal relationships and music are associated with emotion in that interpersonal relationships are full of emotion, and music often conveys emotion. Music may be used as communication or affect communication to varying degrees throughout the lifetime of an interpersonal relationship. More specifically, music may have a significant communicative function during especially meaningful moments in a relationship, such as when an individual or couple chooses a wedding song thereby dedicating the song to their interpersonal partner or the audience.
This research explored the communication function of music in interpersonal relationships by focusing on how interpersonal partners use popular music to communicate messages and emotions with wedding songs. First, definitions of interpersonal relationships and music will be put forth to clarify some key terms and fundamental concepts. Second, a background on music and communication will be reviewed, including the functions of music and prior research concerning music as communication. Third, music and communication in interpersonal relationships will be discussed. Fourth, Knapp and Vangelisti’s (2000) Model of Interaction Stages in Relationships will be described along with a review of previous content analyses that have been conducted on popular music lyrics. Fifth, interpersonal relationships, popular music, emotion, and turning points will be combined, emphasizing the most prominent point of interest in this research, the wedding song.

Definitions of Interpersonal Relationships and Music

The notion of music functioning as communication in interpersonal relationships brings forth a number of terms that may be interpreted in different ways. In order to combine these different concepts in a comprehensible manner, interpersonal relationships, music, and popular music shall be clarified. This is by no means an attempt (and subsequent failure) to redefine the aforementioned terms, but rather an establishment of basic parameters in order to bring together the fields of interpersonal communication and music in a clearer manner.

Interpersonal Relationships

Definitions of interpersonal relationships are not an easy find. Whole chapters and even entire books are written about interpersonal relationships and interpersonal
communication without ever providing a succinct, comprehensible definition of an interpersonal relationship. Instead, the reader is provided with a set of basic themes (Morton, Alexander, & Altman, 1976), basic principles (Knapp & Vangelisti, 2000), or a list of functions (Canary & Cody 1993) that generally describe rather than clearly define interpersonal relationships. Some authors have explicitly defined interpersonal relationships, but in a somewhat vague manner. For instance, Beebe, Beebe, and Ivy (2001) described interpersonal relationships as ongoing connections made with another person through interpersonal communication. This broad definition required the clarification of an additional term, interpersonal communication, which was defined as “communication that occurs simultaneously with another person in an attempt to mutually influence one another, usually for the purpose of managing relationships” (Beebe, Beebe, & Ivy, 2001, p. 177).

A more helpful definition of interpersonal relationships can be pieced together with some thoughts by Kalbfleisch (1993), who characterized interpersonal relationships as fundamentally voluntary or self-selected relationships, mentioning specifically friends, companions, and romantic partners. Kalbfleisch stated that interpersonal relationships are, and always have been the core of our societal system. Also, an interpersonal relationship is a unique form of human relationships including those who we care about and are irreplaceable. Brehm (1992), although defining the slightly different term of intimate relationships, identified communicating to similar people, “...friends, dates, lovers, and spouses” (p. 4). Interpersonal relationships, ranging from friends and family to married partners, will be the relations with which the communicative function of music
will be analyzed because they are meaningful and continuous relationships that portray a unique form of communication.

Music

The word “music” is itself a very broad term that requires clarification. A general definition of music from a non-technical perspective can be “a passionate sequencing of thoughts and feelings that expresses meaning in a manner that has no parallel in human life” (Lull, 1992, p. 1). Instrumentation and melody are often, but not always, included as characteristics of music. Similar to many definitions, music comes with some controversy about what should and should not be considered music. For instance, some writings consider music inclusive of any perceivable auditory experience such as a waterfall or an echo in a cave (Rault, 2000). Other writers argue that music is a “humanly organized sound” and that music cannot have meaning or even be transmitted in the absence of people (Blacking, 1973). In general, most research conducted about music has been concerned with the measurement of the effects of a particular type of music, more often than not, classical or instrumental music. Because the term music can still be interpreted in a very broad manner even after providing a definition, the more distinct category of popular music will be applied.

Popular Music

The specific term “popular music” is a subset of the more general term, music, but properly defining popular music has become somewhat of an elusive task. Chaffee (1985) demonstrates the difficulty in finding a useful way to characterize popular music by writing that classifying music as popular “is to say little more than that large numbers of people, generally conceived as the mainstream of society, somehow ‘consume’ it” (p.
Lull (1992) defined popular music as a specific type of music emphasizing any of the various current genres that are "popular" (e.g., rock, alternative, hip hop, and rap) but it is not exclusive of "classical, traditional, or period music" (p. 1). Although these explanations are still not very specific, these terms are more developed than the 1940's characterization of popular music as simply something different than "serious music" (Adorno, 1941). In the 1940s, the term popular music was new and regarded as "standardized", or containing a patterned framework that was much more simple and uninteresting than classical music, which was dubbed as "serious music" in order to differentiate between the two forms of music. One reason for the complications in finding a suitable definition is because popular music is in a constant state of change.

Popular music is subject to change without warning in a matter of months or sometimes days. For example, Carey (1969) and Schlachet and Waxenberg (1988), mentioned how the emergence of rock and roll provided a vehicle that expressed a new perspective on relationships that quickly changed popular music forever. Rock and roll became popular, and popular music came to be defined by rock and roll. Popular music is vulnerable to alteration with every new trend, fad, or shift in society's musical preference, rendering what was currently popular to be considered unpopular. Sometimes, music that was once well received by the masses can fall out of favor, becoming unpopular, then return decades later to be re-established as popular again. The recycling of "boy bands" (vocal quartets) in the late 1990s are an example of resurrecting what was once popular in the late 1970s and once fallen out of style in the early 1980s. This recurrent transformation would render any specific descriptions of popular music quickly inaccurate, which may be one reason why definitions tend to be rather general,
almost to the point of being unhelpful. It is sufficient enough to note that when researchers mention popular music, it almost always centers around or emphasizes well-known music that contains words or lyrics. For the purpose of this research, popular music will be any mainstream music containing both lyrics and instrumentation, or the use of instruments.

Popular music will be the music of focus for two reasons. First, popular music is by definition, popular, meaning that a significant number of people will be familiar with the music. Second, popular music is consistently a lyrical music, which would lend itself well to communication by containing a verbal element, as opposed to the communication of instrumental music that generally does not contain lyrics. In order to avoid any confusion, the general term of music will continue to be mentioned throughout this proposal when referring to prior research and background information on music. It is assumed that popular music, being subsumed under the general term of music, should also have all the characteristics and functions that music may have, but popular music is the main variable that will be examined in the latter part of this research.

Background on Music and Communication

The Omnipresence of Music

Research literature has documented music in several ubiquitous ways: “it is a human universal to be found in all cultures at all times” (Roe, 1985, p. 275); also “…there can be little doubt that music exerts an increasingly powerful influence on the lives and everyday behavior of individuals…” (Hargreaves & North, 1999, p. 82); and “there is probably no other human cultural activity which is so all-pervasive and which reaches into, shapes, and often controls so much of human behavior” (Merriam, 1964, p.
Although it may be difficult to explain just how encompassing is music, one need only imagine a life without any music at all in order to realize that it makes up a significant portion of our lives. According to Chavin (2002), music is so commonplace that we are not even consciously aware of how it affects our lives, except that without it, the world would probably seem rather dull.

Music may be viewed as a global phenomenon because it can be found almost anywhere at almost anytime. It can be heard live or recorded, in public or private, and in every populated region of the world. There are so many different types of music that almost everyone can find some form of music to enjoy. People of all levels of musical talent are able to participate with music whether through singing, tapping, humming, or just listening. In addition, due to the advances in technology, adults and even children can electronically produce music on a computer with near professional quality without actually playing an instrument or having any previous musical training.

Music is also deeply embedded in cultures around the world. Every culture is characterized by a distinct type of music that is both instrumentally and lyrically representative and expressive of each particular group of people. For instance, music in the American culture is a multi-billion dollar industry used primarily for entertainment, while for the Venda tribe in South Africa; routine social functions of ritual, work, and family activity are carried out musically with singing and dance (Lull, 1985). The examples of the global effect of music are seemingly endless because music does appear to have an inherent inescapable nature. Not only is music omnipresent, but it also functions in several different ways that fulfill many distinct purposes in the lives of individuals.
Functions of Music

The multifunctionality of music was first addressed by Merriam (1964) who labeled ten different functions of music: (a) emotional expression - the stimulation, expression, sharing, and release of emotion, mainly from the artist's point of view; (b) aesthetic enjoyment - the artistic appreciation for both the creator and the contemplator; (c) entertainment - the use of music for amusement, fun, and enjoyment; (d) communication - the messages imbedded or conveyed in the song text; (e) symbolic representation - the music is a symbol for some other thing, idea, or behavior; (f) physical response - the music stimulates people to dance, encourages armies to move during battle, and excites the behavior of a crowd; (g) enforcing conformity to social norms - the songs help dictate social control, conformity, and norms of behavior; (h) validation of social institutions and religious rituals - the religious systems enact rituals through song to preserve order and coordinate ceremonial symbols; (i) contribution to the continuity and stability of culture - the songs are a vehicle by which history, myth, legend, and values are transmitted; and (j) integration of society - the music can bring individuals the assurance of belonging to a group that is similar to themselves, stressing cultural unity, as well as cooperation and coordination of a group. These different functions are evident in the variety of areas with which music has been researched: music therapy (Amir, 1999; Bunt, 1994; Smeijsters & Hurk, 1999), music as a form of media (Aufderheide, 1986; Hansen & Hansen, 1990; McKee & Pardun, 1999), music and mood (Sousou, 1997; Stratton & Zalanowski, 1991; Terwogt & Grinsven, 1991), and music and emotion (Gfeller, Asmus, & Eckert, 1991; Lehmann, 1997; Sloboda, 1991; Waterman, 1996). Despite the attention paid to music in these areas, there remain several other interesting
topics that are yet to be thoroughly documented. The communication function of music is one such topic that lacks in volume of research.

*The Communication Function of Music*

One manner in which music is especially significant to humans is the function of music as communication (Merriam, 1964). Several writers have expressed agreement that music is a form of, and is in itself, communication: “Music is one of the oldest forms of communication” (Roe, 1985, p.275); “Music is surely the most widely enjoyed form of human communication” (Chaffee, 1985, p. 413); and “Music is communication...music also affects communication” (Lull, 1985, p. 364). Merriam (1964) admits that among the many functions of music, communication is probably the least known or understood. It seems that music does communicate something, but it is not yet clear what, how, when, to what extent, or even to whom. Although the communication function of music has not been well researched, the study of music as communication is not an entirely new endeavor, but has been documented in the fields of both mass communication and social psychology.

*Musics as Communication*

*Mass communication and music.* Mass communication has documented how music, through a single medium can communicate to an audience of sometimes millions of people. Some of the major topics that have been examined using music as communication in mass media are: (a) the communication of the musician or the media to an audience (Denski, 1992); (b) the information that commercial radio provides to its listeners (Rothenbuhler & McCourt, 1992); (c) the images that music videos portray to television viewers (Gow, 1992; Hansen & Hansen, 1990; Schwichtenberg, 1992); (d) the
use of audio media by children to fulfill developmental needs (Christenson, DeBenedittis, & Lindlof, 1985); (e) the process by which advertisers utilize music to reach potential shoppers (Hung, 2001; Scott 1990; Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000); (f) the use of music as a voice of political resistance and social change (Lull, 1985); and even (g) the communication of music and dance (Hanna, 1992). All of the mentioned areas of mass communication depict a linear, one-way transfer of a message, usually from one source to many receivers. The main communication focus centers around what messages the music and the media attempt to relay to the audience and to what extent do the music and the media messages affect the audience.

Social psychology and music. The social psychology of music focuses on how individual listeners perceive, interpret, and understand musical sounds (Hargreaves & North, 1997). This view emphasizes the receiver’s understanding of what is communicated through music to the individual. Some important research areas of the social psychology of music are: (a) the individual differences in musical preference (Dollinger, 1993; Kemp, 1997); (b) the effect of music on the formation of personal and social identity (Crozier, 1997); (c) the roles of music in different cultures (Gregory, 1997); (d) the social influence of musical performance (Davidson, 1997); and (e) the relationship between music and gender (Christenson & Peterson, 1988). Similar to mass communication, the social psychology of music also views the communication of music as a linear, one-way transfer of a message, but instead of emphasizing what is communicated through music to an audience, the focus is on the receiver’s interpretation of the musical sounds that are heard, and what the receiver thinks is communicated to them through music. In both areas of mass communication and social psychology, the
interaction between the sender and the receiver has traditionally been very limited. The parties involved in the communication are typically analyzed separately, as either the sender or the receiver of music messages, but seldom are both sender and receiver examined together.

To summarize, the communication focus of mass communication has centered on the music and the medium communicating to a receiver, while social psychology has been concerned with the receiver’s interpretation and feelings about what the music communicated to them personally. Terwogt and Grinsven (1991) introduced these two different points of view as an analytical attitude, ‘what does the composer want to express?’ and an emotional attitude, ‘how does it (music) affect me?’ Mass communication emphasizes the analytical attitude, while social psychology emphasizes the emotional attitude, in their respective views of the communication function of music. In addition to the analytical and emotional attitudes toward music, a third point of view may be introduced, namely the interpersonal communication attitude toward music.

An interpersonal communication attitude would ask the question, ‘what does an individual want to communicate to another with music?’ This attitude should be added because it brings forth another type of communication for which to analyze music. For instance, although the analytical and emotional attitudes differ in emphasis, the type of communication studied is identical, which is a simple message transfer of musical meaning from a sender to a receiver. However, this type of communication depicts only one of several dimensions in understanding the communication function of music in its entirety. Research should apply music to different communication contexts in order to obtain a greater understanding of the communication function of music. One viable
context would be interpersonal relationships, not only because interpersonal relationships are created and exist because of communication, but also because the interpersonal context would allow the communication of both the sender and receiver to be analyzed together.

Researchers of interpersonal communication have come to understand that normally, when people interact, messages are simultaneously sent and received by both individuals in the interaction. The context of interpersonal relationships and interpersonal communication are a useful starting point with which to extend the communication function of music beyond the thought of a message sent from a source to a receiver, and into a more interpersonal view of communication being simultaneously interactive, that people send and receive messages at the same time.

Admittedly, the combination of the two different fields of interpersonal communication and music is not an easily made connection, but because the very existence of interpersonal relationships is dependent upon communication, relationships should qualify as a fitting context to conduct research in order to unravel the role of music as communication. Music is not only ubiquitous and multifunctional, but music is also a communication phenomenon that has proved a worthwhile study in mass communication and social psychology. Equally important should be the communication function of music in the context of an interpersonal relationship, as this would help further contribute and make more complete, the research and understanding of music and communication. The lack of research regarding how interpersonal partners use music to communicate in their interpersonal relationships makes for an area that is rich with new research possibilities.
Music in Interpersonal Relationships

Neither mass communication nor social psychology has emphasized the communication function of music specifically in interpersonal relationships. Naturally, the communication of music in interpersonal relationships is not expected from, and does not belong in, the realm of either mass communication or social psychology, but fits more appropriately as research that should be incorporated into the communication field. The most prominent reason for the deficiency of research concerning the communication function of music in interpersonal relationships has been that music has been overlooked as having any real value in interpersonal communication. Roe (1985), in writing the introduction to an entire issue of Communication Research devoted to music as communication, realized music has been regarded as too trivial in terms of academic pursuit, but argued that there is reason for change due to the awareness of the importance of music and newfound interest in the topic.

The need to research music in interpersonal relationships is also evidenced by authors who have hinted at the strong effect music has had not only on individuals, but also dyads and groups (Hargreaves & North, 1999; Lull, 1992). Hargreaves and North (1999), and Lull (1992) all recognized the existence of the effect of music in interpersonal relationships, but the communication function of music in interpersonal relationships continues to lack empirical testing. To clarify, it was not the intention of Hargreaves and North (1999) or Lull (1992) to test music specifically in interpersonal relationships, but their research was significant in that it gave an overview of music and communication, introduced a number of music topics, and brought attention to the need and importance for further study of communication and music. Lull (1992) stated that it
was his hope that others would continue exploring such a unique and important variety of human communication. In addition, Wilson (2000) asked the very question that many others have posed in the future analysis sections of their writings, "How do individuals use this music...to create meaning in their own lives?" (p. 10). This research attempts to explore the possible answers to the previous question, but in interpersonal communication terms, "How do individuals use this music to create meaning in their interpersonal relationships?"

Similarities Between Music and Communication

Before discussing the current status of the research of music and communication thus far, another foundational question remains unanswered that should be addressed. The question that must first be answered is, "How can music be communication?" There are several similarities between popular music and communication that are worth noting in order to realize just how similar are music and communication.

Andersen (1999) argued that music and singing, subsumed under the nonverbal code of vocalics or paralinguistics, are universal forms of nonverbal communication\(^1\). Nonverbal behavior, including vocalics, is related in many ways to verbal behavior. Ekman and Friesen (1969) claimed that nonverbal communication is able to repeat, augment, illustrate, accent, and contradict words. They also added that nonverbal behavior could anticipate, coincide with, substitute, follow, or be unrelated to verbal behavior. If one can believe that music fits under the category of vocalics and can be considered nonverbal communication, and that nonverbal communication is related to

\(^1\) There exists an ongoing debate in the music research literature about whether music is actually a universal language or not, but that debate will not be addressed here.
verbal communication, then it becomes more believable the existence of a relationship between music and communication. In essence, popular music can be viewed as another type of communication, much like nonverbal behavior. Songs can be considered verbal communication with the addition of instrumentation. Music can be verbal communication when the lyrics are the actual message, but music also has a nonverbal element when classified as vocalics, solidifying the notion that music can be both verbal and nonverbal communication. Now that it has been established that there are similarities between music, verbal, and nonverbal communication, there are also many additional ways that music can be communication.

One manner in which music can be communication has already been implicitly suggested, that music can be communication when the text of a song may, as Ekman and Friesen (1969) described, be the substitute for the actual message. This holds true to Merriam’s (1964) definition of how music functions as communication. The song text may be a message from the writer to an audience, from the performer to an audience, from an advertiser to an audience, or from one interpersonal partner to another, just to name a few situations to answer ‘Who’ would communicate with music.

Sloboda (1985) claimed there were many structural similarities between verbal communication and music such as pitch, stress, and duration. The vocalization of words, in both speaking and singing, are physiologically the same. When used intentionally, music, being a combination of words and instrumentation, can communicate certain messages just as effectively, and in many cases, more effectively than using words alone. The words of a song are not the only way that music can communicate. The
instrumentation of a song can communicate, as well as the combination of both the song text and the instrumentation.

The instrumental portion of music can communicate cues for when to feel emotions, similar to Ekman and Friesen’s (1969) suggestion that nonverbal behavior can anticipate and coincide with communication. For instance, if a movie is supposed to be frightening, loud orchestral music is often inserted at the exact moment “the bad guy” jumps out of the darkness to grab “the good guy”. The music is used in conjunction with the action in an attempt to make the audience feel the emotion of fear during the appropriate moment of a scene. Without the music, fear may be less likely to be conveyed.

In addition, music may help communicate feelings of love, or accent communication, such as playing a song to help set the mood for a romantic dinner. Another instance when music can be communication is when couples use music as a symbol of their relationship, communicating to each other or to individuals outside of the partnership, such as picking a song to dance to at a wedding reception that represents their commitment to each other. Also, an individual can use the lyrics of a song as a repetition of the actual message communicated to another person, such as dedicating a song to a romantic partner, allowing the song text to say ‘I love you’, in addition to verbalizing the phrase.

The aforementioned list of ways that music can be communication is not exhaustive, but indicative of the many communication functions of music, whether individuals use the song text as communication, use music in addition to communication, use music as a communicative symbol, or use music to help communicate a message.
There are two additional instances in which music can be used as communication that are worth mentioning because they have been addressed in prior research: music as a topic of conversation and music as a bond between partners.

**Music as a Topic of Interpersonal Communication**

Music can be a topic of conversation at any point in a relationship. Clarke (1973) argued that a common behavior of teenagers was to communicate about music, emphasizing the two acts of information-seeking and information-sharing about music. He found that about two-thirds of the teenagers in his sample felt that popular music likes and dislikes were working criteria for forming impressions of others. Similarly, Reisman (1950) claimed popular music had a social function, meaning that songs actually created topics of conversation for adolescents, helping individuals conform to a culturally provided image. It is common for adolescents to wear or display articles, such as clothing, key chains, and stickers of a particular music group. These artifacts can communicate personal music preference, become a conversation piece for discussions about music, and provide adolescents with a way in which they can express themselves.

**Music as a Bond in Interpersonal Relationships**

Lull (1985) argued that for adolescents in particular, shared musical taste was foundational for friendship. Friends often enjoy similar tastes in music so they can have someone with which to attend concerts, dances, clubs, and other music events, as well as have someone with which to share music. Commonality in music can be a reason for establishing or maintaining interpersonal relationships and communication. Entire social networks have been created around a type of music such as Skinheads, Punks, Mods, Rastafari, and Rockers to name a few (Lull, 1985). Groupies, or people with an obsession
for a certain musical talent, or just any musical talent, are individuals whose relationships with each other exist because of their common following of music. Concerts and other social gatherings that feature music are also common places for adolescents to socialize, meet new people, and have an opportunity to develop an interpersonal relationship.

In all, there are many similarities between music, verbal, and nonverbal communication. Also, there are several different ways that music can be considered communication. For instance, music can be a topic of interpersonal communication as well as a bond in interpersonal relationships.

Another question that should be answered is, "Why would people use music to communicate?" To explore some of the possible reasons why people would communicate with music, it would be helpful to understand the general functions of communication, the motives for why people communicate with others, and the needs that communication fulfills. If music can truly function as communication, then the functions, motives, and needs of communication should also generally apply in establishing a foundational understanding of how music functions as communication, what are the motives for why people communicate with music, and the needs that communicating with music may fulfill.

*Functions, Motives, and Needs of Communication*

Similar to music, there are several functions of interpersonal communication. Canary and Cody (1993) viewed interpersonal communication as having five functions: (a) goal achievement - communication helps individuals achieve important self-presentation, relational, and instrumental goals; (b) self-definition - communication helps people define who they are to themselves and in addition to others; (c) structuring -
communication helps individuals create and re-create norms for behavior, interpersonal rule systems, and standards for evaluating the behavior of others; (d) linking - communication helps people connect to other social systems; and (e) need fulfillment - communication helps individuals meet their primary requirements for living.

The communication function of structuring is very similar to the music function of enforcing conformity to social norms in that both functions promote norms and rules for how individuals are expected to perform in the greater society. Also, the communication function of linking is comparable to the music function of the integration of society because both functions deal with how an individual connects or belongs to a group or other systems. Since music can truly operate as communication, these functions of communication should help explain how music can function as communication in interpersonal relationships. Music can function to help individuals and interpersonal partners achieve goals, help define the self, and fulfill needs. The different functions of communication may help explain what the communication function of music may accomplish, but equally meaningful, is understanding the motives behind why people communicate to discover the reasons people may have for why they would communicate with music.

Rubin, Perse, and Barbato (1988), in analyzing why people communicate, discovered six interpersonal communication motives. The interpersonal communication motives were: (a) pleasure - communicating because it is fun, stimulating and entertaining; (b) affection - communicating in order to express caring and appreciation; (c) inclusion - communicating in order to share feelings, overcome loneliness, and to be with others; (d) escape - communicating to avoid other activities and to fill time; (e)
relaxation - communicating to rest, relax, and unwind; and (f) control - communicating in order to gain compliance. They argued that these six motives explain why individuals communicate in 62.8% of communication situations. Rubin and her associates realized that there are a number of other reasons why people communicate, such as to receive information, for entertainment, to adhere to social norms, and out of habit. Although entertainment may be a greater motive for communicating with music than control or receiving information, all the motives provide a general foundation for why individuals communicate, which may also help explain possible reasons for why individuals would communicate with music. Not only do individuals have functions and motives for communication, but people communicate to fulfill interpersonal needs as well.

Schutz (1966) identified three interpersonal needs explaining why people need people. The three interpersonal needs were similar to Rubin, Perse, and Barbato's interpersonal communication motives: (a) inclusion - the need to establish and sustain a psychologically comfortable relationship with others in terms of interaction and association; (b) control - the need to establish and sustain a psychologically comfortable relationship with others in terms of control and power; and (c) affection - the need to establish and sustain a psychologically comfortable relationship with others in terms of love and affection. Schutz claimed that inclusion, control, and affection comprise a substantial set of interpersonal behaviors for predicting and explaining interpersonal phenomena. Although Schutz may not have had music in mind as an interpersonal phenomenon, the needs still provide a place with which to start discovering more about music in interpersonal relationships in that music may actually fulfill an interpersonal need, especially affection.
In summary, music of course, is not entirely identical to communication, but music can be considered communication in many different ways, such as to substitute, accent, or repeat verbal communication. In addition, when realizing both that there are functions of music and one of them is communication, it becomes more evident that music and communication are related. Beyond a relationship, music and communication have similarities that cannot be ignored, such as the physiological vocalization of speaking and singing. It seems as though speaking words and singing words are so alike verbal communication that music can be viewed as another form of communication much like nonverbal behavior.

In addition, the functions, motives, and needs that apply to communication, should also apply to music in showing how music may function interpersonally, why people would communicate with music, and the interpersonal needs that music may fulfill. For instance, if one of the functions of communication is self-definition, then music is likely to function to help the individual define the self. Also, if one of the motives of communication is affection, then people are likely to communicate with music for the reason of expressing emotions. Finally, if one of the interpersonal communication needs is inclusion, then people probably use music to fill the need to interact and associate with others. Music can be found in the communication of interpersonal relationships, but the opposite seems also true, that interpersonal relationships are found in music as a dominant subject of popular music lyrics. The next section will describe how relationships can be viewed as having different stages as well as provide a review of previous content analyses conducted on popular music lyrics.
Music About Interpersonal Relationships

Interaction Stages in Relationships

Communication scholars Knapp and Vangelisti (2000) presented a Model of Interaction Stages in Relationships focusing on interaction patterns in relational development. This model is one way of systematizing and simplifying our understanding of relationships by grouping relational development into stages that are characterized by certain patterns of communication. The model is representative of the development of romantic relationships, but can also be generally applied to most interpersonal relationships. There are ten interaction stages in the model. The first five stages represent a relationship coming together: (a) Initiating - people first meet and try to display themselves as pleasant individuals; (b) Experimenting - individuals try to discover the unknown, usually through small talk; (c) Intensifying - people become close friends and have a greater awareness of each other; (d) Integrating - two personalities fuse or combine; and (e) Bonding - people announce their commitment as a couple to the public.

The second five stages convey a relationship coming apart: (a) Differentiating - people begin to disengage or uncouple; (b) Circumscribing - partners restrict and confine their communication to certain safe topics; (c) Stagnating - relationship between partners becomes motionless or inactive; (d) Avoiding - people develop a more permanent state of separation; and (e) Terminating - individuals end the relationship.

Relational partners are able to move from stage to stage at different rates and spend different lengths of time in each stage. Couples can also skip stages, revisit stages, and maintain a certain stage. However, Knapp and Vangelisti (2000) claim that movement between stages is generally systematic and sequential from Initiating to
Bonding and Differentiating to Terminating. With this model, one can have a general understanding of how interpersonal relationships develop and retrogress. The model gives insight into the different stages a relationship can go through and the events that normally unfold in those stages. Although it is still not exactly clear as to what stage or level of a relationship that music plays a part in interpersonal communication, it is evident that relationships and the events that occur in them have a strong effect on the lyrics of popular music.

**Popular Music Lyrics**

Wilson (2000) stated, "...it is common knowledge that love is the main topic of popular music..." (p. 3). Schlachet and Waxenberg (1988) agreed, stating that the topic of love in male-female relationships was the focus of the "overwhelming majority of songs" (p. 54). A content analysis of popular music in 1941-1942 revealed that 92% of "hit" songs in that time frame were love songs (Peatman, 1944). Peatman classified them into three different types of love songs: (a) happy-in-love ballads told stories of the good effects of love; (b) frustration-in-love songs described the emotional dialectic of having previously loved or not having loved, and (c) novelty type songs were more innovative expressions of love. Horton (1957) conducted a similar content analysis of 235 different song lyrics of popular music in the year 1955 with 83.4% fitting under the category of conversational songs about love. The lyrical analysis can be viewed as mimicking the various stages or "scenes" in relationships: (a) Prologue - an individual hopes for the beginning of love; (b) Courtship (most frequent music topic) - a partner or the couple expresses love, desperation, heroics, or commitments; (c) Honeymoon - the couple experiences the exhilaration of mutual love; (d) The Downward Course of Love (second
most frequent music topic) - the couple experiences uncertainty, unkindness, infidelity, and the final parting; and finally, (e) the All Alone stage - an individual has hopes to rekindle the lost love, faces the future alone, or comes to terms with the ended relationship, which sometimes includes bitterness.

Carey (1969) conducted a similar content analysis of popular music lyrics eleven years after Horton's (1957) study. Carey (1969) discovered a shift in musical content away from love and towards greater autonomy, leaving only 65% of popular song lyrics reflecting love in specifically boy-girl relationships. The stages of love were reworked into only four components: (a) Active Search (second most frequent music topic) - actively seeking and finding a partner; (b) Happy Stage - celebrating enthusiasm over establishing a relationship; (c) Breakup - (most frequent music topic) the ending of a relationship; and (d) Isolation - the opportunity to discover one's real self. The two relational development stages of Prologue and Courtship perceived previously by Horton were collapsed into a single stage called Active Search. There were several thematic shifts of the love relationship between Horton’s (1957) study and Carey’s (1969) study: decreased romanticism and increased emphasis on a physical relationship; less dependence on the relational partner and more independence; and a lowered emphasis on fate and higher levels of internal control (Carey, 1969). Although there were changes in music lyric content, the majority of songs continued to be dominated by love in relationships.

More recently, Wilson (2000) analyzed the top 26 country music videos from the first half of 1996 and represented her analysis with three love categories: (a) happy love, (b) hurtin’ love, and (c) difficult/reconciliatory love. All 26 videos were able to fit into
one of these three love song categories. The dominance of love in male-female relationships in popular music lyrics has been supported by research repeatedly and consistently.

Exploratory categorizations such as those from the content analyses are somewhat simplistic in nature, and problems can arise because many songs are ambiguous in meaning, can fit under several categories at the same time, and categorizations are subjective to the researcher. However, this does provide a general approach for which one can understand the lyrical content of popular music. In all, the content analyses provide a foundation that supports how interpersonal relationships and more specifically, love in female-male partnerships has been an extremely dominant topic of popular music lyrics. Also shown is how lyrical content may change, but love historically has been and continues to be, the prevailing topic of popular music. As the communication using popular music in interpersonal relationships is still yet to be uncovered, one thing is clear, relationships do play a meaningful role as the driving force behind the lyrics of popular music.

*Interaction Stages in Relationships and Popular Music Lyrics*

The content analyses of popular music topics provide a relevant point of interest that parallels interpersonal relationships. Even though music researchers have categorized and labeled love songs differently, there is a theme that is common throughout the research. Researchers consistently viewed love songs by dividing them into different categories that lyrically represent certain moments or states in a relationship, anywhere from its inception to its demise. All the love song categories are representative of defining points or significant stages in relationship lifetimes. For instance, the Prologue
theme of individuals hoping for love and the All Alone theme of an individual’s loss of love are common popular music topics that reflect realistic occurrences in relationships. Similarly, from a relationship standpoint, the Model of Interaction Stages in Relationships (Knapp & Vangelisti, 2000) divides relationships into stages representative of the several changes that occur throughout a relationship. If love songs were organized according to these stages, they would each probably fit nicely into one of the ten stages, as these different levels or points in relationships are not unlike those categorized by music scholars. For instance, the most common music lyric topics of the commitment of two people in love and the breaking up of two people that were in love are similar to Knapp and Vangelisti’s stages of Bonding and Terminating. Another parallel that may be drawn between interpersonal relationships and the communication function of music is with the role of emotion.

Interpersonal Relationships, Music, and Emotion

*Interpersonal Relationships and Emotion*

Various emotions are experienced in interpersonal relationships, and emotions are a significant portion of the interpersonal experience. Andersen and Guerrero (1998) felt that a wide range of emotions were experienced in relationships and proposed that interpersonal communication is the primary elicitor of most emotions. Interpersonal relationships stir up many emotions because these relationships are extremely important to most people, especially with those that are very close to us. Dillard and Wilson (1993) suggested that emotion is an integral part of our everyday communication experiences and that emotions influence who we are and how we relate to others. An example of emotions experienced in interpersonal relationships can be found in the Siegert and
Stamp (1994) article describing the “First Big Fight” (FBF) in a close relationship. Part of the study was made up of partners remembering when they discussed having conflict with their partner for the first time. This conflict included the discussion of certain emotions, such as feelings, doubts, and disappointments. Another example of emotions in relationships comes from Averill (1985), in researching the social construction of emotion, who argued that the emotion of love is important in relationships, and actually represents several emotions such as parental love, love between friends, and romantic love between partners.

Guerrero and Andersen (2000), in understanding that people typically experience emotion as a result of interacting with others, divided social emotions into four categories: affectionate, self-conscious, melancholic, and hostile. The affectionate emotions include love, passion, interpersonal warmth, and joy. The self-conscious emotions subsume embarrassment, shame, guilt, and pride. The melancholic emotions include sadness, depression, grief, and loneliness. Last, the hostile emotions involve anger, hate, jealousy, envy, and hurt.

Guerrero and Andersen (2000) continued their analysis of emotions by examining the role of emotions in three phases of relationships: development, maintenance, and termination. In the first phase, the development of relationships, there were three general principles in terms of emotions. First, they claimed that initial encounters are novel, exciting, unpredictable, and uncertain. People often feel passion, infatuation, warmth, anticipation, and joy, but also anxiety, uncertainty, fear, envy, and embarrassment. Second, feelings of shyness and social anxiety may hinder people from developing new
relationships. Third, people usually display more positive emotions and manage more carefully the negative ones.

In the second phase, the maintenance of relationships, there were also three principles. First, prosocial constructive behavior elicits positive affect and is related to relational satisfaction and stability. Second, satisfied couples limit their behaviors that cause negative affect. Third, positive relational and emotional outcomes are characteristics of equitable relationships more so than inequitable relationships.

The third phase, relational endings, also had three principles concerning emotions in relationships. First, people often go through numerous negative emotions after relational separations, especially if the breakup was one-sided. Second, people experience various emotional processes after the deaths of loved ones. Third, the relational expectations of people affect how much distress they feel after the end of a relationship. Guerrero and Andersen (2000) suggested that relational disengagement may be the most emotional incident that people experience.

Guerrero and Andersen (2000) concluded that "relationships and emotions are inseparably intertwined" and "it is impossible to understand one without considering the other" (p. 183). They also stated that in order to not experience emotions, one would have to cease communicating with others all together. To take that one step further, emotions are not only a necessary component experienced in relationships, but also in life such that one would have to cease living to not experience emotions. In all, it is evident that interpersonal relationships are loaded with a wide range of emotions throughout the different phases of a relationship. Similarly, music is also loaded with emotion in that people feel various emotions when listening to music.
Music Conveys Emotion

One of the most important functions of music is the ability to express ideas and emotions above and beyond what is communicated by normal discourse alone (Merriam, 1964). Most research concerning music and emotion does not specifically measure popular music, but music in general. The research does, however, utilize several different types of music to obtain the results, which supports the notion that music in general, regardless of type, does elicit affect, not necessarily one specific song or type of music. Popular music, being subsumed within the greater term of music, is likely to produce the same type of effects.

In a study of emotional response to musical structure, Sloboda (1991) found that 80% of respondents reported physical reactions evoked by certain musical passages, such as shivers or tingles in the neck and spine, laughter, lumps in the throat, and even tears. Goldstein (1980) labeled these human responses as “thrills”. Physical responses are just one manner of measuring emotional responses to music. There exist inward felt emotional thrills without outward physical manifestations as well.

Waterman (1996) claimed that musically trained and musically untrained individuals did not differ in the number of experienced emotions in musical pieces. This means that emotion expressed in music is not particular to those who have a studied knowledge of music, but in continuing with the ubiquitousness of music, the emotion that music communicates is apparently felt by individuals whether they are or not musically educated. In addition, Cunningham and Sterling (1988) found that as early as preschool, children were able to identify affective meaning in music just as well as adults. It seems
evident that neither age nor musical knowledge, are factors in experiencing emotion in music.

In a study by Gfeller, Asmus, and Eckert (1991), different types of music were combined with the recitation of a poem to test the emotions elicited when music is added to verbal communication. The different scenarios included the text spoken alone, and the text spoken with different types of music superimposed into the text. The results showed that different types of music were able to alter the affective response to the message. Also, different types of music brought different levels of liking for the message. They also claimed that repetition and familiarity with the music would most likely amount to greater liking for the music and the text. It seems that if one were armed with the information of the musical preference of a receiver, then the affective influence of the music may be even stronger when using music that is familiar and preferable to the receiver.

Interpersonal Relationships, Popular Music, and Emotions

Interpersonal relationships seem to elicit the range of emotions from positive to negative. The specific emotion that was felt, how it was felt, and the extent it was experienced is dependent upon many variables, such as whether a relationship is developing, maintaining, or terminating. Emotions are communicated throughout the development, maintenance, and termination of a relationship, but different emotions are experienced and expressed depending on the personality of the individuals, whether a relationship is stable in a stage or moving between stages, and whether a relationship is coming together or coming apart. It is likely that emotions are felt and expressed more intensely when there is relationship change rather than inactivity.
Similarly, music elicits a range of emotions that are dependent upon type of music, music preference, and familiarity with the music. When listening to music, individuals reported feeling emotion physically and psychologically, regardless of music training or age. However, the emotional experience was different for each individual. There was no musical phrase that would bring about the same exact emotion in each individual. Knowing that adding music to a communication can influence the effect of a message differently than words alone, the application of music to a normally emotionally charged context of relationships can further the expression of emotion and in turn, the communication of the individuals. Bowlby (1979) argued that the most intense emotions in relationships occur at “relational junctures” such as the development of new relationships and the ending of old relationships. Another way in which to understand the development of relationships and the experience of emotions is with the use of turning points. The turning point research will help to further define the context and the specific moment with which the interpersonal partners’ use of popular music as communication will be studied.

**Turning Points**

The advantage of focusing on relational junctures is that specific moments in relationships are identified rather than general stages, which may more accurately pinpoint the moment that music comes into effect in a relationship. Targeting the specific moments when music becomes active in a relationship may help us better understand the function of music in terms of when music functions in a relationship. One manner in which to view more specific moments rather than general stages would be with the analysis of “turning points”.

Bolton (1961) has been credited for demonstrating the usefulness of the turning point as a meaningful way in which to study the development of romantic relationships. Turning points are considered moments of personal or interpersonal transformation. Some turning points are so dramatic that one event alone can create a major relational transformation. Other times, a combination of several smaller turning points occurring in sequence are required to produce some relational change. Turning points are more personal and specific than stages because they are unique to the particular individuals involved and are representative of an actual moment or sequence of events leading up to a relational transformation. Individuals are not restricted as to how many turning points they may have, which can more clearly define a specific relationship rather than general characteristics of most relationships. Turning point research differs from the linear progression seen in other interpersonal theories or models in that relational development is not easily described by gradual increases or decreases of intimacy, but by turbulent ups and downs (Baxter & Erbert, 1999).

*Relationships Have Turning Points*

Baxter and Bullis (1986) defined a turning point as “any event or occurrence that is associated with change in a relationship” (p. 470). Their study contributed the discovery of 26 types of turning points in the romantic relationships of college students. Each respondent reported an average of having 9.5 relational turning points ranging from as few as three to as many as twenty. A typical relationship experienced a turning point about every two months and each relationship was a minimum of six months in length. The three most frequently identified turning points in order were: Quality Time, First Meeting, and Physical Separation. Bullis, Clark, and Sline (1993) examined Baxter and
Bullis' typology by conducting a similar experiment on an adult population not attending college and confirmed most of their findings, although First Meeting was by far the most frequently mentioned turning point. Bullis and her colleagues (1993) thought turning points can “be viewed as associated with choices relational partners make to maintain, change, or terminate relationships” (p. 234). Some additional turning points that may be especially pertinent to communication and music are the ‘I love you’, disengagement, and marital plans turning points.

The turning point types and the topics of popular music have much in common in that they both highlight specific transformational events in relationships. The turning point gives the researcher an event with which to analyze transformations in relationships, and the music lyrics describe the event and the feelings people may have when they go through these events. Popular music may be everywhere interpersonal relationships are, and may play a significant role within relationships at different junctures, particularly those moments that are emotionally loaded, such as turning points. There is so much similarity, that it seems as though music may go hand in hand with these events and be used to take on different roles and accomplish different tasks throughout several of the turning points in a relationship. For instance, a transformational event may be a popular song that played during a first date that helped make the evening and the song memorable. Bunt (1994) argued that people celebrate important life events with music. Birthdays, holidays, weddings, and parties usually have music intertwined with the festivities, that involve not only hearing music at those occasions, but individuals also sing, dance, and participate with the music. It is at these turning points
that the multifunctionality of music becomes very evident as music can be used for several different tasks.

*The Wedding Song*

Thus far, it has been established that music is ubiquitous, should be studied in interpersonal relationships, and can be used as communication. Also, popular music is generally about relationships, music conveys emotion, and music is involved at particular relational turning points. Popular music must have a significant effect on people, made apparent by the multi-billion dollar worldwide industry it has become. If music is a ubiquitous, all encompassing influence in the lives of people, and if music is a form of communication, interpersonal relationships and the communication between partners should be affected by music and particularly, by popular music.

In revisiting the Bonding Stage in interpersonal relationships, bonding is a public ritual that announces to others that a couple has formally contracted a commitment (Knapp & Vangelisti, 2000). Baxter and Bullis (1986) named this turning point, marital plans, under the supratype of Serious Commitment. Marriage is one type of bonding ritual that changes the nature of the relationship by solidifying, publicizing, and making more permanent a couple’s commitment to one another. Ceremonies, including weddings, may be one of the most widespread occasions throughout the world in which music is used (Gregory, 1997).

Stoner (1997) in her book about planning weddings claimed that weddings are filled with emotion, as a combination of ritual and tradition expressing intimacy, love, and commitment. Also, Stoner claimed that more than any other component of the ceremony or the reception, music sets the timing, emotional tone, and energy level. In
addition, music adds ambiance, creates atmosphere, enhances the ceremony, and instills a festive mood (Barillo, 1998). It is customary in Western cultures to play music before, throughout, and after the wedding ceremony. Barillo (1998) categorizes these parts of the ceremony as the Prelude, Processional, Ceremony, and Recessional. Prelude music is normally unobtrusive, reflective, and soothing. Processional music is normally uplifting as the bride commences walking down the aisle. The ceremony music is often a combination of vocal and instrumental solos that maintain a joyous mood, emphasize the meaning of the ceremony, and encourage guest participation. Finally, the recessional calls for lively and celebratory music. The reception, or the celebration after the ceremony, is also replete with different types of music such as background music while people enter the reception area, music to listen to while eating, and music for which people can dance and celebrate.

There is usually also a special moment in many receptions, often known as the wedding song, when the bride and groom have their first dance as a married couple (Post, 1982; Stewart, 1977). It would be somewhat awkward to dance without music, but music may play a more important role than just providing a beat for which the couple may move. Another function of music, and therefore a function of a wedding song, is symbolic representation (Merriam, 1964). Merriam references more specifically an ethnomusicological view of how music can reflect kinship, clans, or other associational groups such as religious organizations, political groupings, or other structural divisions of society. A married couple can be viewed as an example of a structural division, dancing to a pre-picked song that is in part a symbolic representation of their commitment to each other in a legal partnership.
The wedding song chosen by interpersonal partners is often lyrical, as opposed to the songs in the wedding ceremony where the music played is often classical or non-lyrical. Many wedding songs are often popular love songs, whether contemporary or traditional, but the song is likely to be a well-known tune. In choosing a song, interpersonal partners may actually attempt to communicate something to each other or the couple may possibly try to communicate something to the audience. The question is why would people do such a thing? What function does a wedding song serve communicatively in the relationship? Perhaps it is possible that interpersonal partners have a wedding song because they are in an interpersonal relationship where the couple “shares” a song, or claims a song as “their song”. Maybe the wedding song can be used to mark a point in a relationship that represents a moment of greater commitment by publicly announcing their feelings for the other partner. Also, the wedding song could just be background filler or the means by which a partner can express their love for someone publicly. It is also possible that it is just the chivalrous act of dancing in front of an audience to some special song that may drive people to have a wedding song. There is even the possibility that the wedding song is not even meaningful at all, but maybe it is the only way people could think of in order to display the groom and bride for the audience.

In deciding to have a wedding song for their wedding, interpersonal partners must then choose a song since there is no prescribed or standard wedding song. But does having a particular song for a wedding song communicate something meaningful for the couple? Does this song communicate anything that the couple could not say with standard verbal and nonverbal communication alone? As mentioned earlier, music lyrics
can do more than substitute verbal language, because lyrics can also illustrate, repeat, and accent a message. One can speculate that a wedding song can function as a replacement for verbal and nonverbal language and act as the actual message or emotion communicated from one partner to another. Maybe people listen to a song on the radio that reminds them of, or makes them reflect upon their interpersonal relationship, helping solidify their love for each other and think about each other. It is possible that partners listen to a song together and something strikes a chord as relevant or representative of something in their relationship, or maybe interpersonal partners listen to a song just to help them “get in the wedding mood”.

Many popular love songs are created from the real experiences of a writer concerning a specific situation. Other love songs are created based on a more hypothetical interpersonal relationship. Either way, what is interesting, is how individuals take love songs, most likely written and performed by someone they do not know, and use them in interpersonal circumstances. Maybe the lyrics of the chosen song are symbolic for the couple, or the particular song had special meaning in the relationship, such as the song that was playing when they first met, or a song that they heard at some previous point in the relationship that was somehow meaningful to them. Also, the song they choose could trigger memories about some special moment in their courtship, or other significant events in a couple’s history together (Chavin, 2002). Regardless, there may be many reasons that a couple chooses a particular song, but it is evident that the wedding song is not some randomly chosen song that holds little meaning for the couple, but rather something the couple chooses thoughtfully as a symbolic representation of
their commitment to marriage as well as a vehicle with which to communicate to each other or the audience.

RQ1: Why do couples have a wedding song?
RQ2: What messages and emotions are communicated with a wedding song?
RQ3: What are the reasons for choosing a particular song as a wedding song?
RQ4: Who is the intended audience of the communication of the wedding song?
RQ5: What are the most important messages and emotions communicated with a wedding song?
CHAPTER 2
METHOD

Respondents

Respondents were garnered from an annual bridal expo in Hawaii. A total of 89 participants completed surveys. Data from two surveys were eliminated because two people reported erroneous information. Therefore, a total of 87 surveys were used in the final data set. Of the 87 participants, 63% of respondents \((n = 55)\) filled out surveys regarding the most memorable wedding song they had previously witnessed at a wedding (see Appendix C for the Witnessed a Wedding Song survey). The other 37% of respondents \((n = 32)\) filled out surveys regarding either the wedding song they had chosen for their previous wedding or the wedding song they had chosen for their upcoming wedding (see Appendix B for the Have a Wedding Song survey). A wedding song was previously described as the song at a wedding reception that the bride and groom choose for their first dance in their wedding. The average age of respondents was in the late 20’s, ranging from 20 to 59 years of age \((M = 27.85, SD = 5.90)\). The majority of respondents, approximately 83%, were women \((n = 72)\), and approximately 17% were men \((n = 15)\). No single ethnicity accounted for the majority of respondents as approximately 36% reported their ethnicity as mixed \((n = 31)\), 30% Japanese \((n = 26)\), 13% Filipino \((n = 11)\), 9% Caucasian \((n = 8)\), 5% Chinese \((n = 4)\), 2% Hawaiian \((n = 2)\), and 6% indicated “Other” \((n = 5)\).

Survey Instruments

Two different surveys were developed in order to help gain an understanding about the use of a wedding song in the communication of interpersonal partners. The Have a Wedding Song survey and the Witnessed a Wedding Song survey were both two
pages long and were attached to a clipboard with a pencil for distribution during the data collection. There were 36 total items divided into three sections in the Have a Wedding Song survey for those respondents who either had a wedding song in their wedding or had chosen a wedding song for their upcoming wedding. There were 33 total items divided into three sections in the Witnessed a Wedding Song survey for those respondents who had previously witnessed a wedding song at a wedding.

**Have a wedding song survey.** Section 1, “Your Wedding Song”, was comprised of nine items concerning the description of the chosen wedding song and whether the respondent was attempting to communicate with the wedding song. Of the nine items, five items were categorical questions (e.g., “Who chose the wedding song?”), three items were open-ended questions (e.g., “What is the name of your wedding song?”), and there was one Likert-type question using a scale of 1-10 (i.e., “On a scale of 1-10, how important is music to you?”). Section 2, “Demographic Questions”, was comprised of three items concerning the demographics of the respondent (e.g., “What is your age today?”). Section 3a, “Wedding Song Messages”, was comprised of fourteen items concerning the wedding song messages the respondent was communicating (e.g., “I love you” / “We love each other). All fourteen items were categorical questions followed by a space with which the respondent would rank the top three messages in order of importance. Section 3b, “Wedding Song Emotions”, was comprised of ten items concerning the wedding song emotions the respondent was communicating (e.g. “Love”). All ten items were categorical questions followed by a space with which the respondent would rank the top three emotions in order of importance. Section 3a, “Wedding Song Messages” and Section 3b, “Wedding Song Emotions” were lists that were developed
from a Music Messages and Emotions Compilation conducted previously, but described later in the chapter (see Appendix E for the Music Messages and Emotions Compilation).

Witnessed a wedding song survey. Section 1, “Your Wedding Song” in the Witnessed a Wedding Song survey was a modified version of Section 1 in the Have a Wedding Song survey in that three items were discarded, leaving a total of six items instead of nine. The remaining six items remained unchanged. The three items that were excluded dealt with information that would be difficult to obtain just by witnessing a wedding song (e.g., “Why did you decide to have a wedding song?”, “Who chose the wedding song?”, and “Why did you choose this song as your wedding song?”). Section 2, “Demographic Questions”, Section 3a “Wedding Song Messages”, and Section 3b “Wedding Song Emotions” of the Witnessed a Wedding Song survey were identical to the corresponding sections in the Have a Wedding Song survey.

Procedure

Setting up the data collection. The event coordinators of a bridal expo were contacted in an attempt to gain permission to gather research inside the expo. Permission was not granted, but no reason was given for the final decision. The event coordinator for the property on which the bridal expo was to be held was then contacted in an attempt to gain permission to gather research on the premises outside the expo. Permission was granted. Upon arriving at the bridal expo on the first day, there was considerable misunderstanding between the researcher and the event coordinators, as well as between the researcher and the event coordinator for the property. The confusion centered around whether one of the coordinators did grant the researcher permission to gather data, as well as where the researcher was to be stationed. The end result was that the researcher
was allowed to gather data outside the bridal expo, off to one side of the exit, approximately 100 feet away from the expo. The researcher was positioned on a bench in the middle of the concourse that expo attendees would have to pass through in order to gain access to one of the parking lots. Approximately half of the bridal expo attendees exited to the side where the researcher was set up, and approximately half exited to the other side that led to the overflow parking lots and street parking. The researcher gathered data on the first two days of the three-day event, administering 51 surveys on the first day (Friday) from approximately 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and 38 surveys on the second day (Saturday) from approximately 11:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. A research assistant provided help for a couple hours on Friday, filling clipboards with new surveys, taking completed surveys, and helping garner some respondents. The researcher worked alone for the first two hours Friday and the entire data collection Saturday.

Gathering respondents. As individuals completed their time at the expo and exited the building, as thoughts about weddings were salient in their minds, the researcher approached as many individuals as possible that were walking through the concourse regardless of whether they passed on the right or left of where the researcher stood. When more than one individual, couple, or group passed by at the same time, the researcher approached the individual, couple, or group that the researcher thought would reach the vicinity first. Every adult was eligible to fill out a survey regardless of marital status, age, or reasons for attending the expo.

The researcher approached potential respondents by first introducing himself, then explaining that the researcher was conducting research on popular music and wedding songs, and finally asking whether or not they had a wedding song (see Appendix A for
the introductory appeal). If the person or persons answered “yes” to the question of whether they had a wedding song, the researcher then asked them, “Would you be willing to complete a survey regarding your wedding song?” If they were willing to fill out a survey, the researcher asked them to sit down on one of four benches near them, explained the different sections of the survey, asked them to make sure they did not write their names on the survey, and told them the researcher would be available to answer any questions they might have as they filled out the survey. If the person or persons answered “no” to the question of whether they had a wedding song, the researcher then asked them if they had ever witnessed the wedding song of another couple. If the answer was “yes” to the question of whether they had witnessed the wedding song of another couple, the researcher then asked them, “Would you be willing to complete a survey regarding the wedding song you witnessed?” If they were willing to fill out a survey, the researcher asked them to sit down on one of four benches near them, explained the different sections of the survey, asked them to make sure they did not write their names on the survey, and told them the researcher would be available to answer any questions they might have as they filled out the survey.

As respondents were completing a survey, the researcher re-established his original position in the middle of the concourse and approached the next potential respondent or respondents that the researcher thought would reach the vicinity first. After a respondent had finished the survey, the researcher thanked them for their participation, handed them a debriefing form, and offered them a small gift the researcher had prepared that included an assortment of candies and a list of fun facts about weddings tied to it with a bow. The debriefing form explained the purpose of the study, provided the
assurance that the information they disclosed would remain anonymous, and supplied contact information for them to have in case they wanted to ask any questions regarding the study (see Appendix D for debriefing form).

The survey took respondents approximately about three to five minutes to fill out, but a number of respondents took several minutes longer, sometimes up to 15 or 20 minutes. The majority of the surveys were filled out entirely by a single respondent, while other surveys were filled out by both partners. A few surveys were filled out with the help of family members and friends.

A large majority of those who were asked to participate in the survey seemed glad to participate. The smaller portion of those who did not want to participate gave a wide variety of reasons for not participating (e.g., “I’m not feeling good right now”, “I only have half a minute”, and “I’m on my way to catch a plane”). Hundreds of people passed through the concourse without being asked to participate in the data collection, because the researcher, working alone, was unable to speak with all the attendees. The researcher did not ask people to participate if the researcher was currently communicating with a respondent or if the researcher was not able to reach the next participant in time after communicating with a respondent. Other people that the researcher did not ask to participate were those attending other functions at the property (e.g., a stamp convention), those speaking on their cellular phones, and those who were crying.

Music Messages and Emotions Compilation

The Music Messages and Emotions Compilation was created because a scale was needed in order to measure the messages and emotions communicated in popular music. Since the researcher was not aware of the existence of any such scale, a set of questions
were developed in order collect different messages and emotions that are communicated with popular music to create a working scale that would be parsimonious and usable for the study.

**Respondents for the Compilation**

Respondents were gathered from two undergraduate speech courses at a University in Hawaii. A total of 36 questionnaires were completed. The average age of respondents was in the early 20’s, ranging from 18 to 30 years of age ($M = 22.86, SD = 2.63$). The majority of respondents, approximately 69%, were women ($n = 25$), and approximately 31% were men ($n = 11$). Almost all participants were upper class level students, approximately 58% were seniors ($n = 21$) and approximately 33% ($n = 12$) were juniors. Approximately 3% were freshmen ($n = 1$), 3% were sophomores, and 3% indicated other ($n = 1$). No single ethnicity accounted for the majority of respondents, as approximately 31% reported their ethnicity as mixed ($n = 11$), 22% Caucasian ($n = 8$), 19% Japanese ($n = 7$), 8% Chinese ($n = 3$), 6% Filipino ($n = 2$), 6% Korean ($n = 2$), and 6% indicated Other ($n = 2$).

**Survey Instruments for the Compilation**

A questionnaire was distributed in order to create a survey to help gain an understanding about the communication function of music in interpersonal relationships as well as create instruments for the survey used in the study (see Appendix B for the Have a Wedding Song survey and Appendix C for the Witnessed a Wedding Song survey). The Music Messages and Emotions Compilation consisted of 46 items divided into six sections and was developed in order to help gain an understanding about music preference and possible messages communicated and possible emotions conveyed in
wedding songs. There were additional questions about music and communication in general, such as uses for music, types of music most listened, as well as the possible messages communicated and emotions conveyed in the context of song dedications. The song dedications section was included because wedding songs and songs dedications are very similar. Also, the author intended for song dedications to be a second study for future research. The questionnaire was five pages long and took approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Section 1, “Demographic Questions” was comprised of four items concerning the demographics of the respondent (e.g., “What is your age today?”). Section 2, “Music Preference” was comprised of eight items concerning the musical preferences and thoughts about the communication of music from the respondent. Of the eight items, seven were open-ended questions (e.g., “How much time a day do you spend listening to music?”) and one categorical question (e.g., “What type of music do you listen to?”). Section 3, “I Have a Wedding Song” was comprised of nine items concerning the wedding song the respondent had chosen for their wedding. Of the nine items, 5 were open-ended questions (e.g., “What was the name of the wedding song?”) and four were categorical questions (e.g., “Who chose the wedding song?”). Section 4, “I Have Witnessed a Wedding Song” was comprised of seven items concerning a wedding song the respondent had previously witnessed at a wedding. Of the seven items, four were open-ended questions (e.g., “What part of the song was meaningful to you as an audience member?”) and three were categorical questions (e.g., “Who do you think is the intended audience the couple was communicating to?”). Section 5, “I Have Dedicated a Song to Someone” was comprised of nine items concerning a song the respondent had dedicated to someone else. Of the nine items, six were open-ended questions (e.g., “Why did you
choose to make this dedication in public?" and three were categorical questions (e.g., "Were you attempting to communicate any messages with the song?"). Section 6, "I Have Heard a Song Dedication" was comprised of nine items concerning a song dedication the respondent had heard previously. Of the nine items, six were open-ended questions (e.g., "Why do you think they chose this particular song?") and three were categorical questions (e.g., "Do you think the song conveyed any specific emotions?").

Procedure for the Compilation

Undergraduate students in Speech were offered an opportunity to volunteer to fill out a questionnaire. Extra credit was awarded to each participant as determined by the instructor. The explanation of the Music Messages and Emotions Compilation took approximately three minutes (see Appendix F for the invitation speech). Participants were offered four time periods over two different days with which they were able to fill out the Music Messages and Emotions Compilation in a designated classroom on campus. A list of the names of students who completely fulfilled the requirements for extra credit was delivered to each instructor.

Upon completion of the Music Messages and Emotions Compilation, the answers concerning the messages communicated with a song were coded to produce a survey that was used in the study. Messages communicated in songs were compiled into two lists, one for all the messages communicated in a song and one for all the emotions that were conveyed in a song. Two research assistants in the Speech Department were asked to code the messages and emotions into categories based on similarity. In all, there were 225 messages and 264 emotions listed (see Appendix G for the messages list and see Appendix H for the emotions list). The categories from the two research assistants in
addition to the categories coded by the primary researcher were compiled to create a list of messages and a list of emotions that were representative of all three researchers' sets of coded categories. These were narrowed down to fourteen total messages that were communicated with songs and ten total emotions that were conveyed with songs. These two lists were the scales used in Sections 3a and 3b in the Have a Wedding Song survey and the Witnessed a Wedding Song survey in the study.
CHAPTER 3
RESULTS

The Music Messages and Emotions Compilation

The Music Messages and Emotions Compilation was created in order to develop a scale with which the researcher could measure what messages and emotions communicated with popular music, and specifically wedding songs. The questionnaire was distributed to college students who answered questions about their musical preferences, uses, and general feelings regarding the communication of music.

Although musical preferences of individuals varied, college students generally preferred certain styles of music when given the option to choose up to three types of music they listen to the most. Most notable was that 69% (n = 25) reported listening to Hip Hop; 50% (n = 18) listened to Alternative; 39% (n = 14) listened to Hawaiian; and 22% (n = 8) listened to Rap and Reggae. College students also reported listening to music an average of more than three hours a day (M = 3.24), ranging from less than one hour to more than 15 hours, while most (85%, n = 28) reported listening between 1 and 5 hours every day. In terms of communicating messages, 100% (n = 36) reported that they thought music could communicate messages, while 100% (n = 36) also reported that they thought music could convey emotions. Finally, only 8% (n= 3) reported paying attention to the lyrics only when listening to music, 8% (n = 3) reported paying attention to the instrumentation only, and 83% (n = 30) reported paying attention to both the lyrics and the instrumentation when listening to music.

The Wedding Song

All research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data provided were reported as one entire data set (n = 87). Additional data were reported for
the two sets of respondents, those who "Have a Wedding Song" \( (n = 32) \) and those who "Witnessed a Wedding Song" \( (n = 55) \).

**Preliminary Data About Music and the Wedding Song**

Preliminary data about the respondent's thoughts about music and their wedding song or the song they witnessed were included to prompt the respondents to think about their experiences concerning the communication involved with a wedding song. Respondents reported how important music was to them on a ten-point scale ranging from "Not Important" to "Extremely Important." Overall, respondents reported that music is generally very important to them \( (M = 8.86, SD = 1.38) \), and almost half of all respondents \( (47\%, n = 41) \) reported the highest number, "10" that music was extremely important to them. Descriptive statistics for the reported values and frequencies are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number reported</th>
<th>Frequency Distribution ( (N = 86) )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( f )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, nearly every respondent \( (92\%, n = 80) \) reported that either they themselves were attempting to communicate messages with own their wedding song, or that they thought someone else was attempting to communicate messages with a wedding
song they witnessed. More specifically, for those who “Have a Wedding Song”, 84% \((n = 27)\) reported that they were attempting to communicate messages with their wedding song. For those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song”, 96% \((n = 53)\) reported that they thought people were attempting to communicate messages with a wedding song.

Likewise, nearly every respondent \((93\%, n = 81)\) reported that either they themselves were attempting to convey emotions with their own wedding song, or that they thought someone else was attempting to convey emotions with a wedding song they witnessed. More specifically, for those who “Have a Wedding Song”, 94% \((n = 30)\) reported that they were attempting to convey emotions with their wedding song. For those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song”, 93% \((n = 51)\) reported that they thought people were attempting to convey emotions with a wedding song.

Approximately half the respondents \((51\%, n = 44)\) reported that they thought the part of the song that was used to communicate in a wedding song was the lyrics, 2.3% \((n = 2)\) reported that they thought the instrumentation was used to communicate, and 46% \((n = 40)\) reported that they thought both the lyrics and the instrumentation were used to communicate. For those who “Have a Wedding Song”, 44% \((n = 14)\) reported that they thought the part of the song that was used to communicate in a wedding song was the lyrics, 3% \((n = 1)\) reported that they thought the instrumentation was used to communicate, and 50% \((n = 16)\) reported that they thought both the lyrics and the instrumentation were used to communicate. For those who have “Witnessed a Wedding Song”, 55% \((n = 30)\) reported that they thought the part of the song that was used to communicate in a wedding song was the lyrics, 2% \((n = 1)\) reported that they thought that
the instrumentation was used to communicate, and 44% \((n = 24)\) reported that they thought that both the lyrics and the instrumentation were used to communicate.

The majority of respondents \((66\%, n = 21)\) who “Have a Wedding Song” reported that both partners chose the wedding song, while 31\% \((n = 10)\) reported that the wedding song was chosen solely by one of the partners. No one reported that anyone outside of the partnership chose the wedding song for the wedding couple.

*The Wedding Song*

*Research question 1.* Research question 1 attempted to explore the reasons why couples have wedding songs. Of the 32 respondents that “Have a Wedding Song”, 28 provided responses (see Appendix I for the complete list of responses). The researcher and a research assistant coded the 28 answers into categories based on similarity. All the responses from the surveys were transcribed into a list that both researchers categorized independently. The categories from both researchers were combined, resulting in five reasons for why couples have a wedding song: (a) The wedding song is symbolic, (b) The wedding song is tradition, (c) The wedding song expresses feelings, (d) The wedding song is important, and (e) The wedding song is romantic.

The wedding song is symbolic was the most frequently reported reason as to why interpersonal partners have a wedding song. There were eleven respondents that reported an array of answers. Some examples of this category were: “Represents our relationship”, “Remembrance”, and “Joyful way to transition from formal to celebration”.

The wedding song is tradition was the second most frequently reported reason as to why interpersonal partners have a wedding song. There were seven respondents that reported a variety of answers. Some examples of this category were: “Tradition”,
"Thought that’s what we were supposed to do - part of tradition”, and “Doesn’t everyone have one???”

The wedding song expresses the couple’s feelings was the third category of reasons for why interpersonal partners have a wedding song. One researcher labeled this category as “expresses how we feel” and the other researcher labeled this category “song represents feelings”, so the title was a combination of both categories. There were five respondents that provided answers. Some examples of this category were: “Because during the first dance, you can express with words from the song how you feel”, “To put words to our feelings”, and “Because it describes the way you feel about that person when you can’t find the words.”

The wedding song is important is the fourth category as to why interpersonal partners have a wedding song. There were three respondents providing a few answers. The responses in this category were: “We love music”, Music is extremely important”, and “Important”.

The wedding song is romantic was the last category explaining why interpersonal partners have a wedding song. There were two respondents that provided answers that comprised this category. The responses in this category were: “Because we think of each other when we hear that song, so it’s romantic for us”, and “Romance”.

Research question 2: messages and emotions. Research question 2 attempted to explore what messages and emotions interpersonal partners attempt to communicate with their wedding song. Research question 2 was divided into (a) messages communicated with a wedding song and (b) emotions communicated with a wedding song.
Research question 2a was about the messages communicated in wedding songs. All of the 14 messages in the scale seemed viable messages communicated with a wedding song because none of the messages went unreported. Descriptive statistics for the messages communicated and their frequencies are reported in Table 2.
### TABLE 2.
**Messages Communicated with a Wedding Song**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Overall $(N = 80)$</th>
<th>Have$^a$ $(n = 27)$</th>
<th>Witness$^b$ $(n = 53)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$f$</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>$f$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We love each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with you</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We want to be with each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want everyone to know how I feel</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We want everyone to know how we feel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This relationship will last forever</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am committed to you</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are committed to each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our relationship is strong</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are one</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am lucky to have you</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are lucky to have each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am thinking about you</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are thinking about each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need you</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We need each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our friendship is important</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have faith in you</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have faith in each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am attracted to you</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are attracted to each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I respect you</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We respect each other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Have a wedding song

$^b$ Witnessed a wedding song
Several messages were reported by a high percentage of respondents as a message communicated with a wedding song. Nearly every respondent who reported messages were communicated with a wedding song reported the messages “I love you/We love each other” and “I want to be with you/We want to be with each other” as messages communicated with a wedding song. Also reported by a high percentage of respondents were the messages “I want everyone to know how I feel/We want everyone to know how we feel” and “This relationship will last forever”. These messages were reported by a high percentage of both those who “Have a Wedding Song” and those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song”.

A high percentage of respondents, both those who “Have a Wedding Song” and those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song” reported the messages “I am committed to you/We are committed to each other”, “Our relationship is strong”, and “We are one” as messages communicated with a wedding song.

A large majority of respondents reported the messages “I am lucky to have you/We are lucky to have each other”, “I am thinking about you/We are thinking about each other”, “I need you/We need each other”, “Our friendship is important”, and “I have faith in you/We have faith in each other” as messages communicated with a wedding song. The largest discrepancy reported between those who “Have a Wedding Song” and those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song” was for the message “Our friendship is important”. A higher percentage of those who “Have a Wedding Song” (92%, n = 24) reported communicating this message than those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song” (62%, n = 32).
The last two messages, “I am attracted to you/We are attracted to each other” and “I respect you/We respect each other” were the least reported messages as communicated in a wedding song, but they were still reported by a strong majority of respondents. These two messages also had the second and third largest discrepancies reported between those who “Have a Wedding Song” and those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song” respectively. In both cases, a higher percentage of those who “Have a Wedding Song” reported communicating this message than those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song”.

Although there seemed very few messages that were not accounted for, 7% (n = 6) reported that there were additional messages communicated with a wedding song such as, “You are my soul mate”, “We can work through things”, and “You are the only one I need”.

Research question 2b was about the emotions communicated with a wedding song. All of the 10 emotions in the scale seemed viable emotions communicated with a wedding song because none of the emotions went unreported. Descriptive statistics for the emotions communicated and their frequencies are reported in Table 3.
Several emotions were reported by a high percentage of respondents as an emotion communicated with a wedding song. Nearly every respondent who reported that emotions are communicated with a wedding song reported the emotions “Love”, “Warmth”, “Happiness”, and “Joy” as emotions communicated with a wedding song. A high percentage of respondents also reported the emotions “Passion” and “Excitement” as emotions communicated with a wedding song.

The remaining four emotions, all having a generally negative connotation to them in the context of a wedding were not highly reported as emotions communicated in a wedding song. Hence, only a small percentage of respondents reported the emotions “Lust”, “Sadness”, “Fear”, and “Hurt” as emotions communicated with a wedding song.

Research question 3. Research Question 3 attempted to explore the reasons why interpersonal partners chose the particular song they did for their wedding song. Of the 32 respondents that “Have a Wedding Song”, 28 provided responses (see Appendix J for

### TABLE 3.
Emotions Communicated with a Wedding Song

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Overall (N = 80)</th>
<th>Have&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; (n = 30)</th>
<th>Witness&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; (n = 50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lust</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Have a wedding song

<sup>b</sup> Witnessed a wedding song
the complete list of responses). The researcher and a research assistant coded the 28 answers into categories based on similarity. All the responses from the surveys were transcribed into a list that both researchers categorized independently. The categories from both researchers were combined, resulting in five reasons explaining why interpersonal partners chose the particular song they did for their wedding song: (a) The song expresses the couple’s feelings, (b) The song has sentimental value, (c) The song is representative of the relationship, (d) The lyrics of the song are meaningful, and (e) The song sounds good.

There were three categories that had six answers within each category, making them all equal in terms of most frequently reported reasons for choosing the particular song picked for a wedding song. One of the most frequently reported reasons was that the song expresses the couple’s feelings. There were six respondents that provided answers comprising this category. Some examples of this category were: “We felt it expressed our feelings”, “Because it communicates our feelings”, and “To express our feelings of one another.”

Another one of the most frequently reported reasons for why interpersonal partners chose the particular song they did for their wedding song was that the song has sentimental value. There were six respondents that provided answers that fit this category. Some examples of this category were: “Our first song when we started going out”, “Favorite love song”, and “It has sentimental value to us.”

The third category that had six answers that comprised the category was that the song is representative of the relationship. There were six respondents that provided answers that fit this category. Some examples of this category were: “Simple, tells the
whole story of us”, “Represents both our ideas of our union”, and “Represents our relationship.”

The fourth category explaining why interpersonal partners chose the particular song they did for their wedding song was that the lyrics of the song are meaningful. There were five respondents that provided answers that comprised this category. Some examples of this category were: “The importance/meaning of the words”, “Lyrics mean a lot”, and “The words have the right meaning.”

The final category explaining why respondents chose the song they did for their wedding song was because the song sounds good. There were five respondents that provided answers to make up this category. Some examples of this category were: “It sounded good”, “Words sounded good”, and “Sounds romantic”.

Research question 4. Research question 4 attempted to explore the answer to who was the intended audience for the messages communicated with the wedding song. In terms of who was the intended audience for the messages and emotions communicated with wedding songs, 57% (n = 50) answered that the wedding partners were communicating only to each other with the wedding song, 11% (n = 10) reported that the wedding partners were communicating only to the audience, and 31% (n = 27) answered that both the wedding partner and the wedding guests were the receivers of the messages communicated with the wedding song. For those who “Have a Wedding Song”, 41% (n = 13) reported that they were communicating only to their wedding partner, 13% (n = 4) reported that they were communicating only to the wedding guests, and 47% (n = 15) reported that the intended audience for the messages and emotions communicated was the wedding partner and the wedding guests. For those who have “Witnessed a Wedding
Song”, 67% \((n = 37)\) reported that they thought the wedding partners were communicating only to each other with the wedding song, 11% \((n = 6)\) reported that they thought the wedding partners were communicating only to the audience, and 22% \((n = 12)\) reported that they thought the wedding partners were communicating to both the wedding partner and the wedding guests.

**Research question 5: messages and emotions ranked.** Research question 5 attempted to explore what respondents thought were the most important messages and emotions communicated with a wedding song. Research question 5 was divided into (a) most important messages communicated with a wedding song and (b) most important emotions communicated with a wedding song. The ranking instrument used in the survey was apparently confusing, because out of the 87 respondents, only 49 completed the ranking section correctly while 31 completed the ranking section incorrectly. Of those respondents who incorrectly filled out the ranking portion, almost all of them made the mistake of ranking more than one message as a “1”, “2”, or “3”, instead of only ranking the top three for each scale. In order to preserve some of the data that was provided by those who ranked the messages, albeit incorrectly, a system was implemented in an attempt to save the data while compensating for their mistakes. The system used was as follows: when respondents ranked more than one message with a “1”, all the numbers of the messages ranked “1” were placed in a hat and pulled out to be re-ranked, with the first number pulled representing the “1” rank and the second number pulled representing the “2” rank, and so on (e.g. If all fourteen messages were reported with a “1” ranking, then all fourteen numbers would be put in the hat, and the first three numbers drawn would be assigned the numbers “1”, “2”, and “3”, in that order). The following rank data will be
reported two different ways. First, the data of all the respondents who ranked the messages and emotions correctly will be reported and broken down into those who “Have a Wedding Song” and those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song”. This data will be labeled “Correctly Reported”. Second, the data of all the respondents who ranked the messages and emotions correctly and incorrectly will be reported and broken down into those who “Have a Wedding Song” and those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song”. This data will be labeled “Correctly and Incorrectly Reported”.

Research question 5a was about the most important messages communicated in a wedding song. Descriptive statistics for the most important messages communicated and their frequencies are reported in Table 4.
### TABLE 4.
Frequency Distribution of Most Important Messages Communicated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Messages</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correctly Reported</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Rank Overall (n = 49)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you / We love each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with you / We want to be with each other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This relationship will last forever</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Wedding Song (n = 17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you / We love each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I respect you / We respect each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with you / We want to be with each other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed a Wedding Song (n = 32)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you / We love each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with you / We want to be with each other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This relationship will last forever</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correctly and Incorrectly Reported</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Rank Overall (n = 78)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you / We love each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with you / We want to be with each other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This relationship will last forever</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Wedding Song (n = 26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you / We love each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with you / We want to be with each other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have faith in you / We have faith in each other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed a Wedding Song (n = 52)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love you / We love each other</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This relationship will last forever</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to be with you / We want to be with each other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from all respondents who ranked messages correctly were as follows: the message “I love you/We love each other” was ranked as the most important message by far, the message “I want to be with you/We want to be with each other” was ranked as the
second most important message, and the message "This relationship will last forever" was ranked as the third most important message. For those who Have a Wedding Song: the message "I love you/We love each other" was ranked as the most important message, the message "I respect you/We respect each other" was ranked as the second most important message, and the message "I want to be with you/We want to be with each other" was ranked as the third most important message. For those who Witnessed a Wedding Song: the message "I love you/We love each other" was ranked as the most important message, the message "I want to be with you/We want to be with each other" was ranked as the second most important message, and the message "This relationship will last forever" was ranked as the third most important message (see Table 4).

The data from all respondents who ranked messages correctly and those who ranked incorrectly, preserved by the ranking system were as follows: the message "I love you/We love each other" was ranked as the most important message by far, the message "I want to be with you/We want to be with each other" was ranked as the second most important message, and the message "This relationship will last forever" was ranked as the third most important message. For those who Have a Wedding Song: the message "I love you/We love each other" was ranked as the most important message, the message "I want to be with you/We want to be with each other" was ranked as the second most important message, and the message "I have faith in you/We have faith in each other" was ranked as the third most important message. For those who Witnessed a Wedding Song: the message "I love you/We love each other" was ranked as the most important message, the message "This relationship will last forever" was ranked as the second most
important message, and the message "I want to be with you/We want to be with each other" was ranked as the third most important message (see Table 4).

Research question 5b was about the most important emotions communicated in a wedding song. Descriptive statistics for the most important emotions communicated and their frequencies are reported in Table 5.
**TABLE 5.**
Frequency Distribution of Most Important Emotions Communicated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Rank 1st</th>
<th>Rank 2nd</th>
<th>Rank 3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correctly Reported</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion Rank Overall (n = 48)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Wedding Song (n = 18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnessed a Wedding Song (n = 30)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Correctly and Incorrectly Reported |          |          |          |
| Emotion Rank Overall (n = 77)     |          |          |          |
| Love                              | 55       | 8        | 9        |
| Happiness                         | 8        | 29       | 19       |
| Joy                               | 3        | 18       | 12       |
| Have a Wedding Song (n = 28)      |          |          |          |
| Love                              | 20       | 3        | 3        |
| Happiness                         | 3        | 10       | 8        |
| Joy                               | 2        | 7        | 6        |
| Witnessed a Wedding Song (n = 49) |          |          |          |
| Love                              | 35       | 5        | 6        |
| Happiness                         | 5        | 19       | 11       |
| Warmth                            | 4        | 4        | 14       |

The data from all respondents who ranked emotions correctly were as follows: the emotion “Love” was ranked as the most important emotion by far, “Happiness” was ranked as the second most important emotion, and “Joy” was ranked as the third most
important emotion. For those who Have a Wedding Song: the emotion “Love” was ranked as the most important emotion, “Happiness” was ranked as the second most important emotion, and “Joy” was ranked as the third most important emotion. For those who Witnessed a Wedding Song: the emotion “Love” was ranked as the most important emotion, “Happiness” was ranked as the second most important emotion, and “Joy” was ranked as the third most important emotion (see Table 5).

The data from all respondents who ranked emotions correctly and those who ranked incorrectly and preserved by the ranking system were as follows: the emotion “Love” was ranked as the most important emotion, “Happiness” was ranked as the second most important emotion, and “Joy” was ranked as the third most important emotion. For those who Have a Wedding Song: the emotion “Love” was ranked as the most important emotion, “Happiness” was ranked as the second most important emotion, and “Joy” was ranked as the third most important emotion. For those who Witnessed a Wedding Song: the emotion “Love” was ranked as the most important emotion, “Happiness” was ranked as the second most important emotion, and “Warmth” was ranked as the third most important emotion (see Table 5).
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

Popular music is both omnipresent and multifunctional. Mass communication and social psychology have historically treated music as communication to some extent, but the communication field has largely ignored the communicative ability of music. In realizing that music is omnipresent in our lives and that music can be viewed as communicative, one way that the communication of music can be measured would be with interpersonal partners and popular music. This research investigated how interpersonal partners communicate using popular music, and more specifically, within the context of wedding songs. Several research questions were proposed to examine why interpersonal partners had a wedding song in their wedding, why partners chose the particular song they picked, what messages and emotions partners communicated or were attempting to communicate with their wedding song, and to whom the partners were communicating.

This study provided some new and foundational groundwork for the study of music and communication by researching how interpersonal partners use wedding songs to communicate messages and emotions while developing working measurements to discover what specific messages and emotions are communicated with popular music. Instead of bothering the average college student to circle numbers for a menial reward of a few points of extra credit, data were gathered at a bridal expo from actual wedding couples regarding a real wedding song they have or have had, as well as real witnesses to wedding songs who have actually seen a wedding song. The data gathered has strong external validity in terms of accurately gathering wedding song information because these respondents were at a wedding convention rather than a college campus. There do
exist instances where a college population is an appropriate choice from which to sample, but Williams and Monge (2001) claimed in their book about statistics that the continual use of college students as respondents is a "long-time shortcoming" of many studies. They argue that although undergraduates are a conveniently accessible group to sample, they are not always the most interesting or the most representative groups in society. The respondents in this study were actual brides and grooms to be with real wedding songs. These data more accurately portray how partners communicate with wedding songs because so few college students are married, plan to get married anytime soon, and have attended fewer weddings, thus the college population data would have to be based on far off anticipated or imagined wedding songs. Respondents were not offered any incentive for their time and filled out the surveys willingly rather than as a means to an end, another glaring problem with surveying college students. The respondents volunteered to fill out the surveys with the knowledge that they would be helping further research on popular music and communication, but each participant was presented a small gift after finishing the survey.

Although the measurements developed for this research have never been used before, there were promising results as to the validity of the measurements. Respondents were provided additional space to write any messages or emotions that they may have been attempting to communicate or perceived were communicated that were not already on the measurement. For the most part, these spaces were left blank which may indicate that the measurements were able to accurately cover the array of messages and emotions that may be communicated in a wedding song. All fourteen messages in the messages measurement and all ten emotions in the emotions measurement were chosen as messages
and emotions communicated in wedding songs so that none of the measurement variables needed to be thrown out for lack of reporting.

**People Use Music to Communicate**

A central, although implicit, issue in this research regarded the possibility and extent to which people communicate interpersonally using popular music. Music as communication has had some proponents in the past (e.g., Hargreaves & North, 1997; Lull, 1992), but there has not been, as far as this author is aware, any published research conducted concerning what ways people use music to communicate and what actual messages do people communicate using music. Nearly every participant in both the study and the Music Messages and Emotions Compilation responded positively that music, including wedding songs, can be and is used to communicate. The almost total agreement should help solidify the notion that popular music, and wedding songs in particular, are valid aspects of human communication. Interpersonal partners reported that they attempted to communicate using wedding songs, audience members reported that wedding songs were used to communicate to them, and music listeners in general reported that music is used to communicate messages and emotions.

Stating that popular music and wedding songs can be and are used to communicate messages and emotions may come as no surprise because words are foundational to human communication, and songs have words, hence songs theoretically should communicate something. People may be quick to assume that the words of the song are the extent of what can be communicated, which may be true in terms of what the artist or writer of the song intended to communicate. However, when the average person takes a song someone else wrote and tries to communicate with the song, interpersonal
partners add their own intent and experiences to the messages such that the meanings may be different than what was originally intended by the writer of the lyrics. For example, many popular wedding songs do not actually contain the words “I love you”, “I want to be with you”, or “I want everyone to know how I feel”, but these messages were reported with high frequency as messages communicated in wedding songs. This shows that the messages communicated were not just what said with the lyrics, but the communicator adds a relational element that may speak volumes between the interpersonal partners. The extent to which popular music and wedding songs communicate, and the variety of messages songs can transmit seem to amount to more than just the words of a song with instrumentation as background filler. This supports the notion that simple content analyses of song lyrics do not completely account for the communication potential that is available in popular music.

The words are not the only elements of a song that communicate. Most wedding songs have two major elements: lyrics and instrumentation. The combination of the two elements, lyrics and instrumentation can be viewed as a third element because the combination of lyrics and instrumentation were just as frequently reported to be communicative as lyrics alone. The lyrics can be thought of as verbal communication, and the instrumentation can be thought of as nonverbal communication. Together, the verbal and nonverbal elements of a song work together to communicate messages similar to the verbal and nonverbal elements of everyday speech. In realizing this, a song should be considered as a whole communication, not to be divided into different parts as has been studied in the past. Music scholars have traditionally reported on the communication of non-lyrical music, studying more often than not, classical music and the emotion that
is felt when listening to chosen excerpts of Beethoven or Bach for example. Communication scholars have traditionally reported music as a small part of a larger communication medium, often concentrating on aspects such as the adolescent view of how different types of music affect their lives. Scholars that content analyze songs develop research that is helpful, but entirely dependent and restricted to what is said with the lyrics. Generally, it seems evident that it is not just the words of the song alone that are the message, but there is much more involved such that researchers should measure the communication of each song in its entirety, inclusive of lyrics, instrumentation, and any other element that people perceive as communicative in a song.

How People Use Music

Music was rated as very important in people's lives. College student participants in the Music Messages and Emotions Compilation reported listening to music more than three hours every day on average and choose to listen to music daily for a variety of different reasons to fulfill a variety of needs. Some ways that college students reported using music were to help them get out of bed in the morning as the first thing they experience when starting a new day. Also reported was using music to have something to accompany them while driving in the car on the way to school or to work, either for singing purposes, distraction from the traffic, or just for listening enjoyment. Another use of music was for entertainment or to get users in a certain mood, sometimes to calm them down and sometimes to get them excited for a night out on the town. Students also use music to dance, as background filler to replace the silence, and to help them unwind and relax at the end of the day. Finally, several others even report listening to music when falling asleep. Individuals do vary in how often they use music, how they use music, and
how important is music evidenced by some that reported music was not extremely important to them and they only listen to music as little as one hour a day. In all, music is for the most part a chosen omnipresence in people’s lives, sometimes surrounding people for half their waking hours.

Reasons for Having and Choosing a Wedding Song

Respondents chose to have wedding songs for a variety of reasons, whether having a wedding song was symbolic, because of tradition, to express feelings or because having a wedding song was important or romantic. In addition, respondents chose a particular song as their wedding song for many reasons such as the particular song expresses the couple’s feelings, has sentimental value, is representative of the relationship, has meaningful words, or because the song sounds good. These answers do seem to indicate that the wedding song does play a meaningful role in the wedding. For example, the wedding song really is the first moment that the wedding audience gets to see the bride and groom as a couple after the wedding ceremony. The wedding song is the moment where all eyes are fixed on the couple and all ears are fixed on the song. The partners were able to use the song to communicate to each other and to the audience during this first dance when everything seems to stand still for a few moments so that the groom and bride can express their love for one another. The song acts as a commentator to the dance, telling a monologue to each other and to the audience how the partners feel about each other. The song is a symbol of their love and a way for everyone to remember and frame the moment in their memories and in time.

Although most couples had significant meanings for choosing the particular song they did, some couples did not have much meaning behind why they chose a particular
song for their wedding song. Some individuals reported choosing the wedding song merely because they liked the words or because the song sounded romantic. This shows that although the particular song chosen did not necessarily have a lot of meaning in itself for the couple, the song was still chosen carefully because couples were concerned about picking a song that at least sounded romantic rather than just asking the DJ to pick an all-time favorite. The wedding song chosen still seemed important because couples, although they did not have a specific song in mind, attempted to portray something whether they attempted to instill a certain mood or emotion, or just to have something pretty to listen to while everyone stares at the couple.

*Communicating Positive Messages and Emotions*

The messages and emotions that were reported as communicated, or perceived as communicated in wedding songs were not surprising. The wedding songs focused mostly on communicating positive messages that go along with the context with which the song was being used. There is a complementary and repetitive relationship between the occasion and what messages people are using the song to communicate. Most weddings follow a generally standard format for weddings and receptions wherein a couple makes a public commitment repeating pre-prescribed vows in a ceremony. The voluntary compliance with the rigidity of the ceremony and the reception seldom set aside time for the couples to say anything to each other or to the audience. Couples are rarely given the time or opportunity to say that they love each other, are committed to one another, and respect and trust one another, or that they are feeling love, happiness, and joy. The ceremony, the rings, the nonverbal affection, and the music must all make up for the lack of non-ritual verbal communication in a wedding. The wedding song helps communicate
that the wedding partners love each other, respect each other, and want everyone to know how they feel. The wedding also helps the couple communicate love, joy, and happiness. The partners and the audience are able to understand the messages and emotions communicated not only from observing them and deducing that feeling from the fact that they are at a wedding, but also from the music that they hear.

A wedding is a combination of a legal ceremony and a public celebration, where negative messages and emotions are generally perceived as inappropriate. No one reported communicating any negative messages and relatively few people did report communicating negative emotions, but those who did report negative emotions also reported the positive emotions. This suggests that some interpersonal partners felt the whole gamut of emotions positive and negative, and not to be interpreted as interpersonal partners communicated only negative emotions at their wedding. In all, wedding couples attempt to communicate positive messages and emotions, minimizing negative emotions.

Implications

This research does further the understanding of the communication of music in several ways. First of all, popular music is much more interpersonally communicative than previously documented in prior research. Although content analyses of popular music have and continue to reveal that most popular music is about love, this research shows that songs in an interpersonal context communicate more than one simple message of love. In fact, one song can be perceived to communicate several messages and emotions at the same time. The communication is more varied and complex as shown by the many different messages and emotions respondents reported communicating with just one wedding song. Love songs in general do not communicate all these different
messages all by themselves, because each song on its own is somewhat limited in communication to the lyrics, instrumentation, and imagination of the listener. However, when individuals get a hold of a song, they use the song to communicate messages other than those in the lyrics. For some, a song communicates the feelings of one partner for another, while for others, a song represents an entire relationship or a whole concept of love and commitment. All popular music containing lyrics and instrumentation, possess the inherent potential to be created to communicate just about any verbal and nonverbal message. If a message or emotion can be put into words, then it can be communicated with a song on the surface and public level, but when interpersonal partners use a song to communicate, they often add a deeper and intimate relational meaning to the overall communication beyond the words in the song.

Second, the messages and emotions wedding couples are attempting to send are for the most part similar to the messages and emotions that the audience perceives. There was much similarity between what those who “Have a Wedding Song” and those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song” reported as messages and emotions communicated in a wedding song. Even though respondents were reporting on different songs from different weddings, there was general agreement as to what was being communicated in wedding songs. The positive messages and emotions wedding partners were sending accurately reflected the positive messages and emotions the audience was receiving. This may reveal that interpersonal partners can communicate using music with some degree of accuracy. Also, the accurate sending and receiving of messages may indicate that messages are easily communicated when using popular music and that popular music is an effective medium with which individuals can reach a variety of different people to
understand the same messages. On the other hand, this may show that even though there are thousands of popular love songs in existence, all love songs seem to communicate the same thing, especially in a wedding song context.

Third, positive messages and emotions dominate the communication with a wedding song indicating how well popular love songs are able to communicate love messages. The wedding song chosen is complementary to the occasion for which the song is used. When the occasion calls for love, the popular love song, inclusive of its lyrics and instrumentation is effective in communicating the respective message. Although songs varied in lyrical content and instrumentation and even though some messages are song specific, people perceived the same messages overall. In general, the wedding song indicates that popular music may be used to communicate on a grander scale with a wide array of messages whether positive, negative, happy, sad, political and so forth. The extent of different messages music can be used to communicate are only as limited as the human vocabulary and imagination. In contexts other than weddings, music can be used to communicate more than simply positive messages. For example, funerals have a distinct type of music that communicate peace, reverence, and reflection, while sporting events use a different type of music that communicate excitement, testosterone, and action. Commercials are a very good example of how music can be used to help complement the mood and context for whatever is communicated, whether a commercial is supposed to be funny, happy, scary, somber, painful, or adorable, there is music helping communicate that message or feeling. In the case of the wedding song, the chosen song seems to set the mood, pace, emotion, and theme for the moment as both a public and private display of their commitment to one another. Music not only sets the
tone and environment, but during the couple’s first dance, the chosen song really is the only communicator at that moment besides the limited nonverbal messages the couple communicates while dancing.

Fourth, popular music is a shared event and a shared communication. Popular music does not only communicate to those who choose the song or are the intended receivers of the communication, but popular music is perceived as personally communicative to others who hear the music. People seemingly take the music they hear and try to make sense out of the song by applying it to themselves or trying to understand what is being communicated with the song without verifying if the intended communication was even for them or not. When a person listens to a song on the radio, it is heard from the individual’s point of view. For instance, when a musician sings about a broken relationship, listeners are not likely to think about the artist or the writer is going through, but individuals probably think about their own circumstance and broken relationship. Moreover, listeners are free to think about the communication of a song in any manner they choose, a privilege that is not necessarily afforded in other communication contexts.

Fifth, although previously mentioned, it should be made clear that both the lyrics and instrumentation are communicative elements of a song. When people listen to a song, they not only report that the lyrics and the instrumentation can both communicate, but they also pay attention to both elements. Popular music should be considered as a whole when being measured as communication including the words, instrumentation, and even the artist, melody, genre, dance, rhythm, and style. In one instance, a married couple explained that not only did they use a particularly meaningful song for them in their
wedding, but they also handed out maracas and taught the entire audience a short dance routine. Their wedding song consisted of the entire audience, singing, dancing, and shaking maracas to a popular song in an attempt to communicate that everyone was part of their family and they were sharing something special with the audience through music. Although not very traditional, it was a wonderful way to communicate such a message using several of the communicative elements of a song. The communicative power of music is exemplified in this instance because it seems, if anything, the chosen song and dance communicated the message better than simply verbalizing the intended message alone. If people are listening to both lyrics and instrumentation, it is important when using a song to communicate, to take into account how the two elements work together as a whole. The lyrics and the instrumentation complement one another and should not be separated for ease in research because even though they often both communicate the same type of message, the combination can communicate even greater meaning than the sum of either element alone.

Another interesting finding is that individuals who use music to communicate add more messages and emotions than what the song was originally intended to portray lyrically. Using popular music to communicate consists of taking the words of a writer and musician that the individual probably does not know personally, putting the song into their own individual context, and adding a relational element to the meaning. For example, any song may just be a song about how much the writer of the lyrics loves someone, but when a couple or group communicates to each other with the song, the relational history and relational meaning are all added to the song such that the users of the song are not just re-communicating what is already lyrically displayed, but they are
communicating their own unique message. The communicator helps the song say much more than what they song says by itself. If each message has both a content and relational element, the communicators add the relational element that can take an already special song and make it even more special. For instance, a song that is beautiful by itself can become personally meaningful and communicative if it is the first song that two people danced to as a couple. The relationship and intent of the communicator, added to a song, come together for a unique, meaningful communication that sounds lovely as well.

Finally, in terms of popular music research, the content analyses conducted about popular music have long shown that love in relationships is a major theme of music. This research has extended existing research by adding the actual messages and emotions that interpersonal partners communicate in the interpersonal context. In essence, people communicate more than just love, they convey many specific, personal, and positive messages and emotions with a wedding song.

Limitations

As with all studies, there were limitations to this research such that the interpretation of these results must be read with some common sense. First, the measurements were developed and used specifically for this study. There is no history of reliability or validity for the messages and emotions measurements. There is no way of knowing at this juncture whether the measurements were sufficiently complete and encompassing of all the messages and emotions interpersonal partners wanted to communicate with a wedding song. Respondents were provided additional room on each survey to add to the list of messages and emotions if they felt that they wanted to communicate something that was not on the list. Only a few messages were added that
were not already on the scale which could mean that either the scale was sufficient in accounting for all messages and emotions, or that respondents they were not motivated enough to add anything else to the list. The measurement was also dominated by positive messages and mostly positive emotions that would limit the use of the list to positive contexts unless a broader range of messages was added.

A second limitation may have been that all the data gathered were based on what people recall of weddings that happened in the past or weddings that they are planning to have in the future. Because it would be impractical to gather research while at people's weddings, data were not gathered nor observed at the time of the actual communication, but on recalled moments in history or projected communication in the future. People’s perspectives about what they want their wedding song to communicate and how perfect they want their wedding to be may be different than how the wedding actually turns out and what the wedding song actually communicates. Similarly, the perspectives of how people view the wedding songs of others that are likely to be their friends may affect how they recall the wedding song moment as opposed to what they actually experienced. For those who “Witnessed a Wedding Song”, many had difficulty remembering the date of the wedding, maybe because the wedding occurred more than a year ago or because they have been to several weddings and the date was not important or memorable to them. However, remembering the date is more difficult and less important than remembering the moment of the wedding song, which is more important and easier to recall.

A third limitation with this research was concerned with the ranking of the most important messages and emotions reported in the data. Because the researcher worked alone for the most part, some mistakes in filling out the survey were overlooked. Several
respondents incorrectly ranked what messages and emotions were most important in that they marked more than one message or emotion as “1”, “2”, and “3”, rather than simply ranking the top three. The incorrectly ranked data was then put through a highly unreliable process that has been utilized by other researchers, attempting to arbitrarily and randomly assign data rankings so as not to lose the data. Some care should be taken when interpreting the second half of the ranking data of the most important messages and emotions labeled “Correctly and Incorrectly Ranked”. There was only a slight difference between the “Correctly Ranked” and “Correctly and Incorrectly Ranked” findings, but the former should be more accurate than the latter despite the fact that there were less respondents.

A fourth limitation may center around a possible self-serving bias because respondents may feel the need to convey positive thoughts about their wedding to come because it is their own wedding and they want the occasion and the wedding song to be perfect, even if only in their mind. Similarly, those that witnessed a wedding are likely to have some sort of familial or relational connection to the wedding couple whose song they are reflecting upon, and again may feel the need to reflect positively about the wedding and the wedding song. In addition, weddings have a positive and celebratory connotation to them, possibly influencing people, especially those who had just left a bridal expo, to report how perfect and wonderful weddings should be rather than how normal and possibly horrible a wedding really was.

Finally, a limitation that readers may claim about this research is that the type of person that attends wedding expos may somehow have a different view of weddings than those who do not attend wedding expos. In addition, these different wedding expo
attendees may be over represented and people who get married without going to wedding expos may be under represented in the sample. The argument may also be made that there are many weddings that are designed to go against tradition and would not feel the same way as those who go to wedding expos and are somehow dubbed “traditional”. However, those who are going against tradition by not having a wedding song or not having a ceremony in a church are still probably communicating the same messages as those who go through a traditional ceremony complete with wedding song, unless they are getting married without wanting to say they love one another. In addition, if people who attend wedding expos and people who do not attend wedding expos are different enough to be considered a limitation in the interpretation of the data, then almost all research is subject to the same limitation as those who attend college and fill out surveys must be very different from those who attend college and do not fill out surveys for extra credit and even more so different than those who do not attend college at all.

Directions For Future Research

This research should serve as a starting platform that other researchers can utilize to further knowledge about how people use music to communicate. It has been established that music communicates an array of specific messages and emotions, but music as communication should be taken to the next level, researching the different areas that music is used to communicate. There are several ways in which this research may serve as a base for which to begin to understand other ways in which people communicate through music and there are many other contexts than wedding songs in which music communication can be viewed.
First, to extend the communication of a wedding song, it would be interesting to study the effect of different types of love songs. Popular music was defined as any music that is well known and having both lyrics and instrumentation. How might country songs differ in communication from rhythm and blues songs or adult contemporary songs? Another facet to look at would be to see how much does the Western cultural view of weddings affect what wedding songs communicate. Are respondents at all influenced to report communicating love because of the American view toward weddings? Other cultures have traditional wedding songs and do not choose a particular wedding song to be played. If there is a possible influence by society, it can be checked by considering other contexts in which people use music to communicate or by studying what people communicate with music in a general sense devoid of context.

An interesting interpersonal context worth studying in which popular music has been used as communication is with song dedications. People dedicate songs to other people over the radio, on television, or even in person. People use the song to communicate something to the other person using the words and instrumentation, the meaning or symbol that the song represents, and also as a prelude wherein the dedicator actually talks about or dedicates the song to the dedicatee. There are many radio programs across America that dedicate several hours every day for listeners to call in to dedicate songs to other people. For example, in the Music Messages and Emotions Compilation there were just as many college students that have dedicated a song to someone as there were married couples, and the number of students that have heard a song dedication outnumber those who have observed a wedding song. Somehow, the
choosing, dedicating, or sharing of a song must fulfill some communicative need or function in an interpersonal relationship.

Another interpersonal facet that should be looked at is when partners or friends “have a song” or people “share a song”. This song has meaning or is symbolic to the dyad or group. The song may communicate something significant for those involved. In this case, the meaning or the communication in the song is more privately held depending on how many people are in on the song. The communication for the partnership or group will be different than what the public understands, similar to an inside joke.

Although it is easy to focus on love relationships, there are other relationships to be considered such as close friendships, groups, and even family members that use music to communicate. Tight-knit families have songs that represent their unit, organizations have songs that exemplify their unity, and schools have fight songs that represent their university. Also, clans, religious groups, and other co-cultures have songs that represent, identify, and bind themselves together while setting their particular group apart from others. These interpersonal and group dynamics would be another interesting facet of music and communication.

Culture is another variable that would be interesting to research as many cultures have more uses for music than others. In some cultures, music is an integral part of life, learning, and identifying with others. Other cultures use music only for specific purposes and music is only one part of life such as using music solely for entertainment. In some cultures, usually non-western groups, almost everyone in the community is taught to play an instrument, and they also learn their culture and other life lessons through music.

Other cultures take music out of the learning process, such as the public education system
in the United States where music programs are the first to be eliminated when trying to save government money. Non-western cultures also seem to have many more communicative uses for music in terms of communication. The talking drum language in Africa and the whistled language of the Canary Islands are two such examples of languages that are completely nonverbal in code, and all the communication is conveyed solely with instruments.

In summary, people use music to communicate messages and emotions. Wedding songs are communicative for couples who have a wedding song and for those who witness a wedding song. Wedding songs are meaningful and important, communicating love and other positive messages and emotions through lyrics and instrumentation, while the interpersonal partner or couple adds the relational message to the song. Wedding songs are not randomly chosen out of a handbook of wedding songs, but carefully picked because the wedding song is symbolic and tradition, expresses the feelings of the couple, while being important and romantic. The chosen song also expresses feelings, has sentimental value, is representative of the relationship, has meaningful lyrics, and the song sounds great for the occasion. This research has provided several implications for the study of music and communication as well as help set a foundation for music research in the future.
Appendix A

Introductory Appeal to Wedding Expo Attendees

Good afternoon. My name is Anthony and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii conducting research on wedding songs. I am asking individuals such as yourself to help me graduate by taking a couple minutes to fill out a questionnaire regarding your wedding song, or if you do not have one, your experience of someone else’s wedding song will suffice. This is a questionnaire regarding the messages communicated and emotions conveyed by the wedding song you chose or the wedding song you witnessed. Please fill it out completely and honestly, taking as much time as you need. Please do not mark any identifying information so that your responses remain anonymous. I am available to answer any questions you may have regarding this survey. Thank you for helping me graduate. Have a wonderful day!
Appendix B  
(Survey was modified to fit manuscript dimensions)  

Music and Communication in Interpersonal Relationships  
Anthony Ongyod  
2560 Campus Road, George Hall 322  
Honolulu HI 96822  
956-6354, asurfguitar@hotmail.com  

Date of Wedding __________  

Section 1: Please think about your wedding song.  

1. On a scale of 1-10, how important is music to you?  
(Please circle: 1 = not important, 10 = extremely important)  
   Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Extremely important  

2. What is the name of your wedding song? ____________________________________________  

3. Why did you decide to have a wedding song? ________________________________________  

4. Who chose the wedding song? __Me __My partner __Both of us __Other: ____________  

5. Why did you choose this song as your wedding song? _______________________________  

6. Are you attempting to communicate any messages with the song? ____Yes ____No  

7. Are you attempting to convey any specific emotions with the song? ____Yes ____No  

8. Who is the intended audience you are communicating to? (Please check all that apply)  
   __My partner __The wedding guests __Other: ________________________________  

9. What part of the song do you think is used to communicate? (Please check one)  
   __Lyrics __Instrumentation __Both __Other: ________________________________  

Section 2: Demographic questions  

1. What is your age today? __________  

2. What is your gender? ___Male ___Female ___Other  

3. What is your ethnicity? ___African-American ___Caucasian ___Chinese ___Filipino  
   ___Hawaiian ___Japanese ___Korean ___Mixed  
   ___Other: ________________________________
Section 3a: Here is a list of possible MESSAGES that are communicated with a wedding song.

(1) For each number, **CIRCLE YES** if you are communicating that message; **CIRCLE NO** if you are not communicating that message with your wedding song.

(2) **RANK THE TOP 3** messages you communicated

1 = most important message, 2 = second most important, and 3 = third most important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MESSAGE</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“I love you” / “We love each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I need you” / “We need each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“I respect you” / “We respect each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>“I want to be with you” / “We want to be with each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>“I have faith in you” / “We have faith in each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>“I am thinking about you” / “We are thinking about each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>“I am committed to you” / “We are committed to each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>“I am attracted to you” / “We are attracted to each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>“I am lucky to have you” / “We are lucky to have each other”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>“I (We) want everyone to know how I (We) feel”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“This relationship will last forever”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Our relationship is strong”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>“Our friendship is important”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>“We are one”</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***OTHER messages that you communicated:

Section 3b: Here is a list of possible EMOTIONS that are communicated with a wedding song.

(1) For each number, **CIRCLE YES** if you are communicating that emotion; **CIRCLE NO** if you are not communicating that emotion with your wedding song.

(2) **RANK THE TOP 3** emotions you communicated

1 = most important message, 2 = second most important, and 3 = third most important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EMOTION</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Passion</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lust</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***OTHER emotions that you conveyed:
Appendix C
(Survey was modified to fit manuscript dimensions)

Music and Communication in Interpersonal Relationships

Anthony Ongyod
2560 Campus Road, George Hall 322
Honolulu HI 96822
956-6354, asurfguitar@hotmail.com

Date of Wedding __________

Section 1: Think about the most memorable wedding song you have witnessed.

1. On a scale of 1-10, how important is music to you? (Please circle: 1 = not important, 10 = extremely important)
   Not important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Extremely important

2. What was the name of the wedding song? ____________________________

3. Do you think they were attempting to communicate any messages with the song? __Yes __No

4. Do you think they were attempting to convey any specific emotions with the song? __Yes __No

5. Who do you think was the intended audience that they were communicating to? (Please check all that apply)
   ___The partner ___The wedding guests ___Other: ______________________

6. What part of the song do you think is used to communicate? (Please check one)
   ___Lyrics ___Instrumentation ___Both ___Other: ______________________

Section 2: Demographic questions

1. What is your age today? _________

2. What is your gender? __Male __Female __Other

3. What is your ethnicity? __African-American __Caucasian __Chinese __Filipino
   __Hawaiian __Japanese __Korean __Mixed
   __Other: ______________________
Section 3a: Here is a list of possible MESSAGES that are communicated with a wedding song.

(1) For each number, CIRCLE YES if you think that message was communicated; CIRCLE NO if you do not think that message was communicated.

(2) RANK THE TOP 3 messages you think were communicated
   1 = most important message, 2 = second most important, and 3 = third most important.

1. "I love you" / "We love each other" YES NO _____
2. "I need you" / "We need each other" YES NO _____
3. "I respect you" / "We respect each other" YES NO _____
4. "I want to be with you" / "We want to be with each other" YES NO _____
5. "I have faith in you" / "We have faith in each other" YES NO _____
6. "I am thinking about you" / "We are thinking about each other" YES NO _____
7. "I am committed to you" / "We are committed to each other" YES NO _____
8. "I am attracted to you" / "We are attracted to each other" YES NO _____
9. "I am lucky to have you" / "We are lucky to have each other" YES NO _____
10. "I (We) want everyone to know how I (We) feel" YES NO _____
11. "This relationship will last forever" YES NO _____
12. "Our relationship is strong" YES NO _____
13. "Our friendship is important" YES NO _____
14. "We are one" YES NO _____

***OTHER messages that you thought were communicated: ________________________________

Section 3b: Here is a list of possible EMOTIONS that are communicated with a wedding song.

(1) For each number, CIRCLE YES if you think that emotion was communicated; CIRCLE NO if you do not think that emotion was communicated.

(2) RANK THE TOP 3 emotions you think were communicated
   1 = most important message, 2 = second most important, and 3 = third most important.

RANK

1. Love YES NO _____
2. Joy YES NO _____
3. Happiness YES NO _____
4. Passion YES NO _____
5. Sadness YES NO _____
6. Excitement YES NO _____
7. Warmth YES NO _____
8. Hurt YES NO _____
9. Fear YES NO _____
10. Lust YES NO _____

***OTHER emotions that you thought were conveyed: ________________________________
Appendix D

Participant Debriefing Form
Music and Communication in Interpersonal Relationships
Principal Investigator: Anthony Ongyod
Department of Speech
University of Hawaii, 2560 Campus Road, George Hall 322, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Phone: 956-6354

Purpose
Thank you for your participation! The survey you just completed is a part of a larger
study focused on the communication of music in interpersonal relationships and more
specifically, determining the role of a song in communication. You are 1 of
approximately 100 individuals included in this research. A graduate student asked people
at a wedding expo to complete a survey that attempted to gain an understanding about the
communication with wedding songs. If you have questions regarding this research, please
contact Anthony Ongyod: 956-6354.

Anonymity
All information collected will be kept anonymous and confidential to the extent allowed
by law. There will be no identifying information that will connect you to the information
on the survey. The results of this research project may be published, but only the
combined data will be made public. The University of Hawaii’s Committee on Human
Studies has the authority to review the research.

Your participation in this project does not waive any of your legal rights, nor does it
release the investigator or the institution or any employee or agent thereof from liability
of negligence. If you are not able to obtain satisfactory answers to your questions or have
comments about your treatment in this project, please contact: Committee on Human
Studies, University of Hawaii, 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822; Phone: 956-5007. Thank you again!
Appendix E
(Survey was modified to fit manuscript dimensions)

Music Messages and Emotions Compilation

Music and Communication in Interpersonal Relationships

Instructions: Please answer the following questions completely and honestly. Feel free to list as many or as few answers as you want in order to completely answer the question. If you have any questions, contact Anthony, at 956-6354. Thank you very much!

Section 1: Demographic questions

1. What is your age today? __________

2. What is your gender? __ Male __ Female __ Other

3. Level in college. __ Freshman __ Sophomore __ Junior __ Senior __ Other

4. What is your ethnicity? __ Caucasian __ Chinese __ Filipino __ Hawaiian __ Japanese __ Korean __ Mixed __ Other: __________

Section 2: Music preference

1. What type of music do you listen to? Mark up to 3 most frequently listened. __ Alternative __ Blues __ Classic Rock __ Classical __ Country __ Gospel __ Hawaiian __ Heavy Metal __ Hip Hop __ Instrumental __ Jazz __ Light Rock __ New Age __ Oldies __ Punk __ Rap __ Reggae __ Rock __ Ska __ World __ Other __________

2. How much time a day do you spend listening to music? __________

3. Which element do you pay attention to more in music?

   __ Lyrics? Please explain __________

   __ Music? Please explain __________

   __ Both? Please explain __________

4. How important would you say is music in your life? __________

5. Do you think that music can communicate messages? __ Yes __ No

   Please explain your answer __________

6. Do you think music can convey emotions? __ Yes __ No

   Please explain your answer __________

7. Please list all the ways you use music throughout the day.

   __________

   __________

   __________
The Communication of a Wedding Song

Section 3: Music is significant in the lives of people all around the world. One instance in interpersonal relationships when music often occurs is during weddings and more specifically when the bride and groom have their first dance. This “wedding song” the couple chooses may communicate messages or convey emotions from one partner to the other, or from the couple to the audience.

Instructions: Please check one of the following:
___ I have a wedding song (Please answer #1-9)
___ I do not have a wedding song, but I have witnessed a wedding song (Please answer Section 4, #10-17)
___ I do not have a wedding song, nor ever witnessed a wedding song (Please skip to Section 5, #18)

Please keep your wedding song in mind when answering questions #1-9

1. What was the name of the song? ________________________________

2. Who chose the wedding song? ___ Me ___ My partner ___ Both of us ___ Other: ______________

3. Why did you choose this song as your wedding song? ________________________________

4. Who is the intended audience you are communicating to?
   ___ My partner ___ The guests ___ My partner and the guests ___ Other: ______________

5. What part of the song was meaningful to you?
   ___ Lyrics? Please explain ________________________________
   ___ Music? Please explain ________________________________
   ___ Both? Please explain ________________________________

6. Were you attempting to communicate any messages with the song? ___ Yes ___ No

7. If yes, what messages did you attempt to communicate with the wedding song?
   Please list as many as possible.
   ____________________________________
   ____________________________________
   ____________________________________

8. Were you attempting to convey any specific emotions with the song? ___ Yes ___ No

9. If yes, what emotions did you attempt to convey with the wedding song?
   Please list as many as possible.
   ____________________________________
   ____________________________________
   ____________________________________
   ____________________________________
Section 4: Please keep the most memorable wedding song you witnessed in mind when answering questions 10-17.

10. What was the name of the song? ________________________________

11. Who do you think was the intended audience that was communicating to?
   __The partner   __The guests   __The partner and the guests   __Other: __________________________

12. Who do you think is the intended audience the couple was communicating to?
   __The partner   __The guests   __The partner and the guests   __Other: __________________________

13. What part of the song was meaningful to you as an audience member?
   ___Lyrics? Please explain _________________________________________________________________
   ___Music? Please explain _________________________________________________________________
   ___Both? Please explain _________________________________________________________________

14. Do you think the song communicated any messages?  _Yes   _No

15. If yes, what messages do you think they attempted to communicate with the wedding song?
   Please list as many as possible.
   __________________________________________   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________   __________________________________________

16. Do you think the song conveyed specific emotions?  _Yes   _No

17. If yes, what emotions do you think they attempted to convey with the wedding song? Please list as many as possible.
   __________________________________________   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________   __________________________________________
The Song Dedication

Section 5: Another instance in interpersonal relationships (defined as close relationships with family, friends, or romantic partners) when music occurs is when partners dedicate songs to one another. Often times, messages are communicated and emotions are conveyed in a song dedication made over the radio, singing karaoke, at a restaurant...

Instructions: Please check one of the following:
___I have dedicated a song to someone (Please answer #18-26)
___I have not dedicated a song, but I have heard a song dedication (Please answer Section 6, #27-35)
___I have not dedicated a song, nor ever heard a song dedication (Please turn in the survey)

Please keep your song dedication in mind when answering questions #18-26.

18. What was the name of the song? _____________________________________________

19. Why did you choose this song? _____________________________________________

20. Who is the intended audience you are communicating to? Please check all that apply.
___My partner ___The radio listeners ___The disc jockey ___Other: ______________________

21. What part of the song was meaningful to you?
___Lyrics? Please explain _______________________________________________________

___Music? Please explain _______________________________________________________

___Both? Please explain _______________________________________________________

22. Why did you choose to make this dedication in public?
__________________________________________________________

23. Were you attempting to communicate any messages with the song? ___Yes ___No

24. If yes, what messages did you attempt to communicate with the song dedication? Please list as many as possible.
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________

25. Were you attempting to convey any specific emotions with the song? ___Yes ___No

26. If yes, what emotions did you attempt to convey with the song dedication? Please list as many as possible.
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
Section 6: Please keep the most memorable song dedication you heard in mind when answering questions #27-35.

27. What was the name of the song? ____________________________

28. Why do you think they chose this song? _______________________

29. Who do you think was the intended audience the dedicator was communicating to?
   Please check all that apply.
   ___Their partner ___The radio listeners ___The disc jockey ___Other: ________________________

30. What part of the song was meaningful to you?
    ___Lyrics? Please explain ____________________________
    ___Music? Please explain ____________________________
    ___Both? Please explain ____________________________

31. Why do you think the individual chose to make this dedication in public?
    ______________________________________________________________________________________

32. Do you think the song communicated any messages? _____Yes _____No

33. If yes, what messages do you think they attempted to communicate with the song dedication?
    Please list as many as possible.
    __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________

34. Do you think the song conveyed any specific emotions? _____Yes _____No

35. If yes, what emotions do you think they attempted to convey with the song dedication?
    Please list as many as possible.
    __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________________
Appendix F

Invitation Speech

Hi, my name is Anthony. I am a graduate student in the Speech Department at UH and I am currently gathering research for a study called "Music and Communication in Interpersonal Relationships." I am asking for your help in contributing to the research by filling out some questionnaires. There are no restrictions or qualifications for participation, everyone is welcome and encouraged to fill out a questionnaire and you may be able to receive extra credit in this course for responding.

In order to participate in this opportunity, you must come to George Hall 215 to complete the questionnaire. You may not take the questionnaire to fill out at home because I must be there to explain the instructions to you. There are six different times on three different days that you may come to fill out a questionnaire. They are (show slide): Tuesday, the 12th of December from 5pm-5:30pm and 5:30pm-6pm; Wednesday, the 13th from 3pm-3:30pm and 3:30pm-4pm; and Thursday the 14th from 4pm-4:30pm and 4:30pm-5pm. If you cannot come at any of these times, but would still like to participate, you may call me to make an appointment.

You do not need to sign up; you need only show up at the appointed time with a pen. Also, we will start promptly, so if you are a minute late, you will not be able to participate for that particular half hour. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. My contact information is on the slide. Thank you for your time.
Appendix G

Messages list for Music Messages and Emotions Compilation

(All responses were transcribed exactly as written on the compilation)

1. Wanting to be the only one to be spending the rest of with my partner
2. letting my partner know that I tell him how I feel
3. love
4. fidelity
5. faith
6. loyalty
7. trust
8. commitment
9. honesty
10. that they found the right one
11. they cherish the person
12. commitment
13. it seems to good to be true
14. its supposed to last forever
15. lyrics communicated that they will love each other for the rest of their lives
16. that from that moment they were going to spend the rest of their lives together & grow old together
17. commitment
18. love
19. relationship
20. trust
21. new beginnings
22. forever being a couple
23. friendship
24. the couple’s love for one another (we’re in love)
25. “i love you” from one partner to the other
26. “we’re finally married”
27. a love that won’t fade away or die
28. love honor
29. respect
30. fidelity
31. commitment
32. love
33. happiness
34. gratitude
35. appreciation
36. love
37. honesty
38. trust
39. loyal
they love each other
the couple was lucky to find each other
they would be lost w/o each other
a feeling of love
what it’s like to have a long term relationship
doesn't mean you can’t fall in love
friends can grow into lovers
it is said that after you dance this song, you will become fertile
that they love each other
commitment
love for one another
strength in their relationship
I love you
I am committed to you
love
friendship
unity
bond
sweetness
attraction
their love
their commitment
they loved each other
they were taking a stand to show their commitment
they would always be there for each other starting “now”
loving only the other person forever
I love my partner
I want everyone to know that I love my partner
I am happy and I want to make my partner happy
I have finally found my true love + no longer need to search
they were each other’s one and only valentine for the rest of their lives
words couldn’t express the love they felt for one another
they had a special connection forever
no matter what happens in their lives, they will always have a unique bond & love
each other forever
reinforced partner’s love for one another
reinforced partner’s commitment to ea. Other
how much they love each other
no one else compares
security in the relationship
love
romance
intimacy
being together
forever love
romance
commitment
85. sharing
86. memories
87. they are committed to each other
88. they love each other
89. they’re happy + looking forward to the rest of their lives
90. love
91. hope
92. sharing
93. wanting to spend life w/ other
94. how the couple felt about each other
95. the theme of a traditional marriage, peaceful, serene, loving, beautiful
96. love
97. commitment
98. love
99. caring
100. dedicated
101. trusting
102. I’m sorry
103. I love you
104. com back
105. I’ll try harder
106. give me another chance
107. I would like to know you
108. I like who you are
109. your someone I would enjoy
110. I loved him
111. I want to be with him
112. he completes me
113. that’s how much I want him everyday
114. good times
115. humor
116. we have been through a lot
117. friends are important
118. friendship
119. respect
120. dedication
121. dreamy
122. love
123. I love him
124. thinking of him
125. miss him
126. love
127. excitement
128. faithfulness
129. happiness
130. pride (I was proud of them)
longevity
faith
group cohesion
group identity
attachment
bonding
ritual
symbol of our unity
affiliation
that there is hope
regardless of the outcomes there is always a positive aspect in life
that I truly cared for him
I loved him
I wanted to be with him for a long time
“I love you”
I wanted to show this girl that I liked her, but not loved her (could have been a misinterpreted choice of music)
how people stick together for a common cause in a group
to believe in yourself because you are someone important
regret
sorrow
hope
dreams not fulfilled
love not returned
that the old gang is together, so the good times are ahead
I’m not ashamed of my feelings for you
I like you/I’m interested in you
missing the person
that they know you’re somewhere (far away)
horny
young-minded
he loved me
he wants me
he needs me
he dedicates himself to me
he wants to marry me
he loves her
how it just happens
the sorrow that the family felt for their lost
I love you
I love her
love
faith
fun
honesty
dedication
risky
lust
appreciation
thanks
hope
strength
I love you
love
dependence
sacrifice
declaration of love
thinking of person
took time to dedicate
consideration
thoughtful
love
longing
joy
lust
happiness
faith
excitement
thrill
anxiety
regardless of what happens in one’s life, they will always hold a special place in the hearts of their parents
no matter what the circumstances, love prevails
I hate you (him)
she wished him ill
hoped he was out of her life forever
the intensity of their love
that she wanted to be in his life
she needs/wants him to hold her when they’re together
she’d rather be with him instead of just thinking about it
time to take out of their day just to dedicate a song
“I love you”
“I need you”
“I want to be with you”
I love you lots
you mean the world to me
thank you for your love
I like you for who you are
I like the person I am when I am w/ you
commitment
love
that partner was being thought of
221. the dedicator loves the dedicatee
222. love, special
223. different
224. mystery
225. a little of sadness too
Appendix H

Emotions list for Music Messages and Emotions Compilation

(All responses were transcribed exactly as written on the compilation)

1. love
2. warmth
3. honesty
4. assurance
5. love
6. commitment
7. loyalty
8. love
9. gratefulness
10. happiness
11. love
12. love
13. love
14. love
15. happy
16. sad
17. the excitement for the future
18. their no longer going to be alone
19. happiness
20. elatedness
21. trust (not really an emotion)
22. love
23. happiness
24. nostalgia
25. intimacy
26. love
27. love
28. hope
29. joy
30. sadness
31. love
32. happiness
33. appreciative
34. love
35. honesty
36. happiness
37. love
38. love
39. passion
40. love
41. respect  
42. faith  
43. dedication  
44. love  
45. fertility  
46. warmth  
47. happiness  
48. sentimental  
49. love  
50. thoughtfulness  
51. love  
52. happiness  
53. vulnerability  
54. vulnerability  
55. trust  
56. love  
57. dependence  
58. happiness  
59. love  
60. uncertainty  
61. trust  
62. fear  
63. happiness  
64. joy  
65. faith  
66. longevity  
67. love  
68. joy  
69. peace  
70. happiness  
71. security  
72. commitment  
73. dedication  
74. honor  
75. love  
76. passion  
77. lust  
78. care  
79. thoughtfulness  
80. hope  
81. faith  
82. uncondition  
83. fate  
84. uniqueness  
85. specialty  
86. scarcity
87. reciprocity
88. need
89. unending/eternity
90. sweetness
91. happiness
92. warmth
93. love
94. love
95. appreciation
96. love
97. togetherness
98. feeling
99. love
100. romance
101. intimacy
102. being together
103. love
104. happiness
105. satisfaction
106. joy
107. elation
108. happiness
109. love
110. happiness
111. caring
112. sadness
113. longing
114. longing
115. happiness
116. pleasure
117. trust
118. honor
119. respect
120. love
121. sadness
122. regret
123. love
124. longing
125. love
126. love
127. joy
128. happiness
129. gratitude
130. innocence
131. eternity
132. love
133. warmth
134. dedication
135. my feelings
136. happiness
137. laughter
138. friendship love
139. love
140. happiness
141. love struck
142. sadness (miss him)
143. happiness (when I see him)
144. happiness
145. caring
146. honesty
147. joy
148. new beginning
149. love
150. appreciation
151. dedication
152. sincerity
153. happiness
154. hope
155. excitement
156. joy
157. honor to parents
158. faith
159. hope
160. inspiration
161. motivation
162. thoughtfulness
163. happiness
164. no regrets
165. love
166. caring
167. happiness
168. love
169. romance
170. intimacy
171. caring
172. love
173. humor
174. happiness
175. fun
176. love
177. positivity
178. group cohesiveness
179. love
180. togetherness
181. reliability
182. lack of self confidence
183. sadness
184. hope
185. forgiveness
186. love
187. faith/belief
188. happiness
189. delight
190. confidence
191. liking/love
192. sorrow
193. sadness
194. missing the partner
195. love
196. love
197. love
198. sadness
199. happiness
200. sadness
201. desperation
202. love
203. love
204. foolishness
205. fun
206. joking around
207. respect
208. lust
209. love
210. sadness
211. grieving (sp?)
212. loneliness
213. respect
214. remorse
215. love
216. trust
217. love
218. happiness
219. lust
220. love
221. happiness
222. emotion
223. love
224. hope
225. inspiration
226. motivation
227. eternity
228. comfort
229. companionship
230. bonding
231. strength
232. protection
233. faith
234. anger
235. sadness
236. hurt
237. rejection
238. love
239. like/love
240. happy
241. love
242. love
243. romac
244. intihome
245. endearment
246. love
247. happiness
248. elation
249. 😊 (respondent drew a smiley face)
250. love
251. lust
252. happiness
253. loneliness
254. happiness
255. sadness
256. longing
257. missing
258. love
259. lust
260. kind of sad
261. admiration
262. sadness
263. pain
264. happiness
Appendix I

Why Respondents Have a Wedding Song

1. Traditional
2. Remembrance
3. First dance
4. We love music
5. Time was right
6. Tradition
7. Thought that's what we were supposed to do - part of tradition
8. Because we think of each other when we hear that song, so it's romantic for us
9. Joyful way to transition from formal to celebration
10. It was the first song danced to
11. This song expresses how we both feel about each other
12. After I heard it on American Idol
13. Romance
14. Music is extremely important (pointed an arrow to extremely important on survey)
15. Tradition
16. Represents our relationship
17. Tradition
18. It's beautiful!
19. Because during the first dance, you can express with words from the song how you feel
20. To put words to our feelings
21. Because it's our song and it represents our relationship
22. Because it totally fits us
23. Doesn't everyone have one???
24. I want to express my love to him
25. Motto (Apparently the song “Rest of Your Life”)
26. Important
27. Tradition, first dance
28. Because it describes the way you feel about that person when you can’t find the words.
Appendix J
Why Respondents Chose a Particular Song as Their Wedding Song

1. To express our feelings of one another
2. Favorite love song
3. Our first song when we started going out
4. He liked it
5. (Wrote the same as above)
6. Expressed joy in the song and in our era
7. Simple-tells the whole story of us
8. The importance/meaning of the words
9. 1st song we met
10. (Wrote same as above & “it is our song”)
11. It sounded good
12. We felt it expressed our feelings
13. Lyrics mean a lot
14. Represents both of our ideas of our union
15. (Wrote same as above)
16. Meaning-the words described us
17. Words sound good
18. The words have the right meaning
19. Because it communicates our feelings
20. (Wrote same as above)
21. (Wrote same as above, drew an arrow to it)
22. It’s nice
23. It expresses love
24. Special meaning
25. It has sentimental value to us
26. Fitting
27. Sounds romantic
28. It describes everything we’ve been through & feel for each other
References


