Who Influence the Music Tastes of Adolescents?
A Study on Interpersonal Influence in Social Networks

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ABSTRACT

Research on music information behavior demonstrates that people rely primarily on others to discover new music. This paper reports on a qualitative study aiming at exploring more in-depth how music information circulates within the social networks of late adolescents and the role the different people involved in the process play. In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 adolescents (15-17 years old). The analysis revealed that music opinion leaders showed eagerness to share music information, tended to seek music information on an ongoing basis, and were perceived as being more knowledgeable than others in music. It was found that the ties that connected participants to opinion leaders were predominantly strong ties, which suggests that trustworthiness is an important component of credibility. These findings could potentially help identify new avenues for the improvement of music recommender systems.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.1.2 [**Models and Principles**]: User/machine systems – *human factors, human information processing*; H.5.5 [**Information Interfaces and Presentation**]: Sound and music computing – *modeling.*

Keywords

Social networks, music information behavior, opinion leaders, adolescents, music recommender systems, user studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research shows that people tend to seek variety and that consumers experience pleasure from discovering something new that fits their tastes [1]. Music is certainly no exception: most people are opened to discovering new music. But discovering music that corresponds to our tastes is not necessarily an easy task. Recent technology advances have greatly facilitated the production, exchange and dissemination of music, with the result that consumers have more choices than ever. However, making our way down the long tail to ferret out the perfect gem in the maze of music production can prove challenging. This is where music recommender systems come into play: they should be able to help us find that gem, that is the music that corresponds perfectly to our current tastes and that we might never have stumbled upon otherwise.

To achieve this, many popular music recommender systems (RS) rely on collaborative filtering (e.g., *Last.fm*). These systems compare our tastes—which can be deduced from our listening

history, previous purchases, personal music library, and/or explicit ratings—to those of other users. Based on this information, the system filters the music in its database and tries to identify the music we are most likely to appreciate. Considering the important role people play—and have always played—in shaping our music tastes and in helping us discovering new music [2], it is not surprising that many RS for music rely on collaborative rather than content-based filtering. Nevertheless, these systems are not without limitations. New users, as well as new items that are introduced in such a system, suffer from the so-called "cold-start problem" [3], which means that it typically takes some time to the system to adequately understand what the tastes of a new user are and to what type of users a new musical artist or piece will please. Collaborative filtering recommender systems are also known to have difficulty providing recommendations that are truly novel to the users [3]. These systems are also based on the assumption that people have relatively stable tastes. Indeed, although some systems allow their users to manually make adjustments to their profile (for instance by removing items from their listening history), these systems are not usually good at detecting shifts in the music tastes of their users.

Research shows that, even with these new systems on the market, young people continue to discover music primarily through friends and acquaintances [2, 4]. Hence, looking more closely at the role people play in the process could potentially help identify new avenues for the improvement of recommender systems. It is with this perspective in mind that the present study has been designed. Its main objective is to examine the process through which late adolescents' music tastes are influenced by their interpersonal relationships and how they themselves influence the music tastes of people around them. More specifically, it aims to address the following research questions: (1) In an adolescent's social network, who takes the role of opinion leader for music? (2) What are the characteristics of these opinion leaders? (3) What are the characteristics of the ties through which personal influence is exerted? (4) How are adolescents' music tastes influenced by others? This study provides a rich description of the role music opinion leaders play in shaping the music tastes of late adolescents and helping them discover new music. Although the population studied—late adolescents—is certainly not representative of the whole population, it is a very interesting one to study for various reasons. Firstly, music plays a primary role in most adolescents' lives [5], notably in the construction of their public and private identity [6]. This means that they are very likely to be interested in using music recommender systems. Secondly, late adolescence is known to be the period during which one's music tastes usually stabilize, which means that this is a crucial period to understand [7].

2. RELATED RESEARCH

Research in the area of information-seeking behavior demonstrates that people often rely on other people in their social network (relatives, friends, colleagues or acquaintances) when

they need information in various daily life situations [8, 9]. For instance, Agosto et Hughes-Hassel [9], who studied the everyday life information behavior of 27 adolescents, found that their participants had a clear preference for human sources—and more specifically for friends and relatives—over all other information sources. Research on music information-seeking behavior confirms this. Three distinct studies demonstrate the importance of people as music information sources and recommendations. Lee and Downie [10], who surveyed university students on their music information needs, found that people preferred to seek the help of friends and family rather than music experts (e.g., record store staff) when they searched for music. They also found that hearing music at a friend's or acquaintance's place was the most common triggering source for seeking music information, which led them to conclude that "music information-seeking should be seen as a socially instigated act." Laplante [2], who interviewed 15 younger adults to examine how they discover new music in everyday life, found that people (typically friends and colleagues) were their preferred source of music recommendations. Similarly, Tepper *et al.* [4, 11] surveyed college students on how they discover new music, with a special attention on the role technology plays in the process. They also concluded that "social networks and face-to-face exchange remain important avenues for exploring new music." Laplante [2] and Tepper *et al.* [4, 11] both explain that music information-seeking is a social process not only because friends and relatives are easily accessible but because we appreciate their capacity to offer valuable information: they are able to take our music tastes into consideration to filter the information and provide personalized recommendations. Additionally, exchanging information and recommendations contribute to strengthening relationships, a finding that is corroborated by research in music sociology [12].

If research has highlighted the importance of people as music information source and recommendations, we still know very little about how music information and influence circulate within social networks. Diffusion studies inform us that some individuals—most notably opinion leaders—play a critical role in the adoption of new products in a social network. Opinion leadership is defined as "the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals' attitudes or overt behavior informally in a desired way with relative frequency" [13]. Opinion leaders are sometimes referred to as 'brokers' who carry information from one group to another, or from mass media to their followers [14]. Research shows that opinion leaders share some characteristics. They are usually accessible and more innovative then their followers [13]. Opinion leaders were also found to be more knowledgeable in the product class for which they exert leadership than their followers [15]. This is an important nuance: opinion leaders are not necessarily true experts; they are *perceived* by their peers as being more knowledgeable than the majority. What contributes to making opinion leaders more influential than true experts is their trustworthiness, which they gain from the enduring relationships they maintain with their followers [13]. Opinion leaders also tend to be more involved with the product category; so involved that when they are pleased or disappointed with a product, they *must* talk about it with others [16, 17]. Opinion leadership is associated with more exposure to mass media [13, 17], a greater motivation to share an experience with a product with others, and a tendency to seek information on an on-going basis [17]. Finally, research shows that opinion leaders are rarely influential in more than a few product categories and that their leadership is usually confined to a given number of individuals [18]. They should thus not be mistaken for market mavens or trendsetters who exert influence in many areas, on a much wider audience.

Opinion leadership has been studied in various domains, including in household products [14], fashion clothing [16] and movies [17]. Music opinion leadership, however, remains merely unexplored. The present study should help understand if music opinion leaders in present-day adolescents' social networks share the same characteristics as those highlighted by previous diffusion studies.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is part of a larger project on how music information is shared within the social networks of late adolescents. A statistical analysis of the ties through which adolescents discover new music can be found in [19]. In this paper, we present the results of the analysis of the qualitative data collected during the project, focusing on the role of personal influence and music opinion leaders on adolescents' music tastes. Adopting a qualitative approach allowed us to gain an in-depth understanding of why and how music opinion leaders exert their influence. Nineteen late adolescents (15-17 years old) participated in the main study, which was conducted in 2011, after a pre-test with six adolescents.

3.1 Social Network Analysis

Social Network Analysis (SNA) consists of a set of methods and theoretical concepts that enable researchers to study and describe the structure of social networks, the ties that connect the members in the network and the flow of resources through these ties [20]. The resources can be tangible (e.g., good, services) or intangible (e.g., information, influence). Although SNA was first developed in sociology, it proved useful in many other disciplines, including information science, mainly for its capacity to help us understand the role of interpersonal relationships in information access and dissemination.

In the present study, we adopted an egocentric approach to SNA, which means that we examined social networks from the point of view of each participant (the "Egos"), an approach well suited for populations that are large and difficult to delineate. This contrasts with the whole network approach, which aims at examining all the ties that all members of a community maintain with each other. The whole network approach, however, can only be adopted when the social network is well delimited, for instance when we want to study the ties that connect all members of a work organization.

3.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through in-depth, face-to-face individual interviews. To collect information about the social network of each participant, we used an adapted version of the sociogram, a social network mapping tool described in [21]. These sociograms allowed participants to visually represent their social network composed of people they felt close or very close to (which are called the "alters"). They were also administered a questionnaire to collect information about each alter (e.g., age, gender, school level) as well as about the ties they maintain with them (e.g., nature of ties, frequency of contacts, duration of relationship). When positioning alters on the sociogram, participants had to determine, using concentric circles, how close they felt to them. For each clique or cluster of people in their social network, they were asked if there was someone who they felt had the most influence on others in terms of music, as well as in other domains. We also employed the critical incident technique [22], a technique that consists in relying on a concrete situation to elicit a more accurate report rather than asking hypothetical questions. Participants were hence invited to recall how they had discovered their current favorite music artist and if they had recommended or talked about this artist with others afterward. Finally, the interview guide also included questions on their music information seeking behavior.

3.3 Participants and Setting

Participants were recruited from a public school located in downtown Montreal. All 10th and 11th grade students enrolled in the French program were invited to participate in the study. We used the maximum variation sampling strategy to select the participants as described in [23]. Interviews were conducted until the saturation point had been reached, that is when the information collected during the interviews became redundant and when we felt that no new viewpoints were expressed. The final sample was composed of 19 participants, of which 14 were females. Twelve were in grade 10 and 7 in grade 11.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted between 61 and 95 minutes (mean=79) for a total of 25 hours and more than 250,000 words of transcription. The data was analyzed inductively, using the constant comparative method [23]. The software package QDA Miner by Provalis Research was used to assist the coding of the data. The data collected through the questionnaire about the alters was also compiled and descriptive statistics were computed.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Characteristics of Music Opinion Leaders

During the interviews, participants were asked to identify the person who they thought had the most influence on others in terms of music for each of the social groups to which they said they belonged. Participants could name more than one person. They could also name themselves, which is what four participants did. They were also asked to try to explain why these people had more influence in this domain than others. Answers to these questions were analyzed in order to shed light on what seems to characterize music opinion leaders for the adolescents who participated in this study. Before presenting these results, we should mention that two participants could not identify anyone as music opinion leaders in their social network, a situation they both explain by the heterogeneity of the music tastes of the members of the social groups to which they belonged.

4.1.1 Music 'Expertise'

The analysis clearly shows that the people who take the role of opinion leader for music were primarily perceived as having an 'expertise' in this domain compared to other people in the same group. This does not mean that opinion leaders were professional music experts: although some played popular music or were taking music lessons, none of them relied on professionals (e.g., teachers, professional musicians) to get music recommendations. The expertise rather came most of the time from an interest for music that was considered 'greater than average.' Hence, one participant explains that the music leader for her group "don't do anything else but listening to music" while another participant describes the leader of his group as "the type of person who always has headphones." Some also explained that the opinion leader for their group was more knowledgeable in music as a result of seeking music information on an ongoing basis (this aspect will be further explored in Section 4.1.3). For instance, one participant explains: "I think he spends a lot of time looking for things […] I think that, on a regular basis, he goes to check music sites to see what has been released." Another will say of her friend that she always "keeps up to date with the latest gossips."

Having an extensive repertoire was also mentioned by two participants as a reason for being an opinion leader. In two occasions, the opinion leaders that had been identified were 'experts-to-be' since they were both planning on enrolling in a music program in a nearby college. Playing an instrument also contributed to being considered influential, as long as it was popular or jazz music. Interestingly, having family members in the music industry also seemed to confer people a music expertise. For instance, to explain why her friend had the most influence on the music tastes of her group, one participant says that her friend's brothers were pursuing a career in the music industry and, as a consequence, she knew "a *lot* of artists."

Participants were also asked to say who were the opinion leaders for a few other domains (i.e., movies, television, books, video games, fashion). Their answers confirm that opinion leadership was primarily related to the perceived expertise of the person. Indeed, no participant reported having a friend who influenced the group in several domains. Instead, the most common scenario was that opinion leadership was distributed among the different group members, depending on their involvement with the domain. Some even had a more restricted domain of influence within music, for instance for a specific music genre.

4.1.2 Music Opinion Leaders as Music Ambassadors

Another characteristic that seemed to be associated with opinion leadership was the eagerness to share music information with friends and relatives. For instance, one participant describes the music opinion leader in her group as someone "who loves to talk about it [music] and loves helping others discover new things." In the same line, a participant says of a music opinion leader that "he always posts links to music videos on his Facebook page." Another participant, who reported that her music tastes were highly influenced by her father, explains that he is sometimes so eager to share a new discovery that he can even be very insisting: "He will basically talk about it until I accept to listen to it!" In short, opinion leaders are keen on providing music recommendations, whether solicited or unsolicited. They seem to enjoy sharing their enthusiasm for music and, perhaps, also pride themselves on their capacity to find the right music for the right person. For example, one participant reports that the music opinion leader in her group often goes around, asking "What do you like?" to then be able to provide tailored recommendations.

As we saw with the example of the father who insisted on his daughter listening to some music, music opinion leaders, or at least some of them, do not only share music information, they expect people to listen to it and, eventually, to convince others of their opinion about the music they share. As a matter of fact, some participants admitted that these opinion leaders had occasionally persuaded them to change their opinion about specific songs or artists. Sometimes even about a favorite artist. As a matter of fact, one participant illustrates the influence of an opinion leader by saying that "she is the one who unhooked me from the Jonas Brothers," a group she used to be completely fond of. Some participants explained how people sometimes managed to change their mind. A common strategy was to make them listen more attentively to a song, pointing out passages that were good (or not) in their opinion. Since opinion leaders are usually recognized as having authority in their domain of influence, they often succeed in their attempt to change people's mind, as illustrated by the following citation from one participant:

> "Because [Marc] is even less mainstream than I am. I mean, he has even *more* music knowledge than I do, so when I listen to a song and he tells me 'I hate this song because it's really…' I don't remember exactly what, I don't listen to it in the same way. You know, he really has more music knowledge."

Music opinion leaders could therefore be seen as music ambassadors who want to make people around them aware of the music they discover and possibly convert them to their opinion.

4.1.3 Active Music Information-Seeking Behavior

As mentioned in Section 4.1.2, people who looked for music information on an ongoing basis seemed to be perceived as more knowledgeable in this domain and, therefore, more likely to be an opinion leader. To add depth to this analysis, we looked at the answers participants gave in the section of the interview on their music information-seeking behavior. Since four participants identified themselves as being an opinion leader for music in their social group, we could compare their answers to those of others. The difference between the answers of the two groups was striking. Those who did not consider themselves music opinion leaders seemed to rely almost exclusively on serendipitous encounters or unsolicited recommendations from friends to discover new music. Active music information seeking was almost non-existent. For instance, one participant reports: "I don't look for things, that's the problem. I know there would be tons of bands I would be interested in but I *never* take the time to do it." She will then add: "I think music is not important enough in my life." Another will say the she is "lazy" and that she only uses *YouTube* or *iTunes* when she "*really* want[s] something."

In contrast, the four participants who self-identified as music opinion leaders seemed to have a strategy to keep up to date in the field and discover new music. Some read music blogs, whereas others watched specialty channels devoted to music. More general information sources, such as *Wikipedia* and *YouTube* were used, but three of the four participants also mentioned using music specialized services on the Web. Indeed, one participant reported visiting regularly *Slack-Time*, a music video service, and two other participants mentioned being occasional users of *Last.fm*, a music recommendation service. The fourth participant reported not using Internet as much. She rather relied heavily on the extensive music collection of her father to find inspiration and discover music that was new to her.

4.1.4 Extrovert Personality

One last characteristic that appeared in some participants' answers concerned the personality of music opinion leaders. A few participants indeed reported seeing in the extrovert or dynamic personality of their friends a reason for their opinion leadership. One participant explains, about a music opinion leader, that "she takes up a lot of place in our group." For another participant, it is the "strong personality" of opinion leaders that explains their influence on the group, whereas another refers to the "energetic" and "intense" personality of the opinion leader. Another opinion leader was qualified as a "real chatterbox" who "talks all the time."

4.2 Flow of Music Influence

In social network analysis, each tie is considered a potential channel through which resources, such as information or influence, can be exchanged. In this study, we tried to understand what were the ties through which personal influence was exerted in the field of music.

4.2.1 Characteristics of Ties

Since participants pointed who in their social network had the most influence on others in the area of music, we were able to look at the characteristics of the ties that connected the participants to these persons. As mentioned in the methodology section of this paper, participants had to answer different questions about the persons (or alters) they added to their sociogram as well as about their relationship with them. We could notice that the ties were mostly homophilous, which means that the persons they connect share similar characteristics. For instance, most opinion leaders attended the same school and were almost the same age as the participant. We should nevertheless mention that, in some cases, older people were considered influential for music. Hence, two participants reported being highly influenced by their father, two by an older sibling and one by a friend who was 5 years older. It is worth noting that none of the influential people mentioned were more than 1 year younger than the participant. We can also add that influence was primarily exerted through strong ties. The alters the participants identified as having the most influence on their own music tastes counted among the stronger ties of their social network: they had been positioned on average at 1.7 on a seven-level scale ranging from 'very close' (1) to 'mere acquaintance' (7).

For each alter they included in their sociogram, participants were asked to determine, on a five-point scale ranging from 'never' to 'very often,' how often they discover new music because of them. We also asked the reverse question, that is, how often they thought they help *them* discover new music. This allowed us to look at the direction of influence. The analysis of the ties that connected the participants to the people who exerted influence on their music tastes showed that the direction of influence was almost always asymmetrical. While the mean of the answers to the question "how often do you discover music because of him/her' was 3.9, which roughly corresponds to 'often,' the mean of the answers to the reverse question was 2.7, which sits between 'rarely' and 'once in a while.' This means that people who exerted influence in the music domain were more likely to influence the music tastes of the participants than the opposite.

4.2.2 The Role of Bridges

The analysis of the critical incidents reported by the participants also allows us to better understand the flow of information within one's social network. Participants were asked to recollect how they had discovered their favorite music artist and if they had introduce that artist to anyone else. Sociograms could be used to trace the flow of influence if there was one. Results clearly demonstrate the importance of people in discovering new music for the participants. In the vast majority of the incidents that were reported, people played a role in it. In some incidents, people played the main role. For instance, one participant had been encouraged by her father to watch a music video on *YouTube*, which is how she came to know and like her current favorite artist. Another participant recalled being in a summer camp and hearing a song a counselor had selected to help them fall asleep. She had later asked the counselor the name of the musical group and started listening to their music.

In most incidents, however, people played what we could call a 'supporting role.' Indeed, in many cases, participants already knew the artist and their music but the true discovery—the moment when they had realized they liked the music—had been triggered by a friend or a relative. One participant had heard the music of a singer for the first time on the radio, in company of her father. She said she hated it and explained that her father had made fun of it and declared it was bad music. A friend of her mother later gave her a CD of this artist, an artist she realized her mother also liked. She then said, explaining why she had changed her mind: "Well, listening to it again, with other people who liked it… You know, you listen and you say 'it's not so bad'." Another participant reported that her father had put a Radiohead album in the house. Although she had known this group since she was little because of her father, she had never considered this group as one of her favorites. However, listening to it again, knowing that many people around her, including some of her close friends, liked it, she had a revelation and this group became instantly a favorite.

We can add that, unless they were the last person to like an artist in their group of friends, participants all minimally tried to

convince other people around them of the quality of the music artist they liked so much, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. One participant said she had made "all her friends listening to it." Another said she had "converted" two of her close friends, her mother and "many other people." Different strategies had been used, from including songs of the favorite artist in a friend's playlist to sending a link to a music video online.

To illustrate the flow of influence, we can look more closely at the incident reported by one participant and follow the flow of influence in his sociogram (see Figure 1). We notice that this participant's social network is composed of three distinct groups: one group of close friends at school, one group of close friends he met during primary school, and his family. The participant identified Gaspard (indicated as A in Fig. 1) as the music opinion leader for the first group and Elias (indicated as B in Fig. 1) as the music opinion leader for the second. The arrows in Figure 1 show the flow of influence. We can see that Elias (B) introduced the participant (at the center of the sociogram) to a new music artist. The participant then introduced this new artist to Gaspard (A). Gaspard, as a music opinion leader, introduced the other members of the group to this new artist. The participant, in that case, acted as a bridge between the two groups. Although not all incidents followed this exact pattern, many showed a similar pattern in which one person (whether the participant himself or someone else in his social network) carried the information from one densely knit group of people to another. For instance, the participants who reported being influenced by their father played a similar role, bringing music heard at home in their circle of friends.
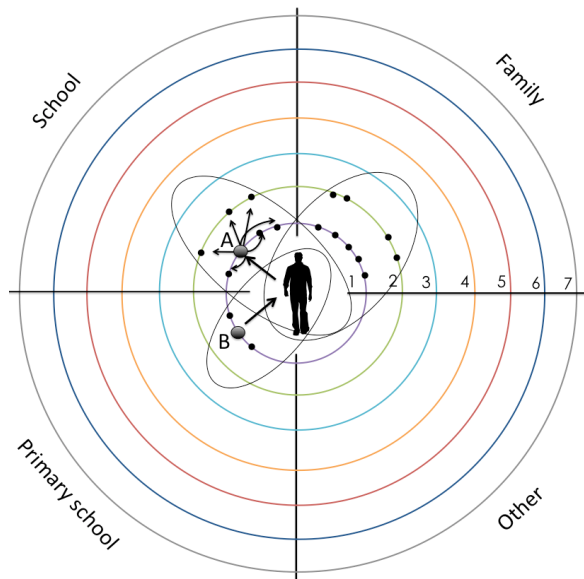

Figure 1. Flow of influence illustrated in the sociogram of a participant

4.3 Dynamics of Music Tastes

To examine further the importance of social relationships on one's music tastes, we asked participants if their music tastes had changed significantly in the last two years. Unsurprisingly, considering that adolescence is a period that entails great changes, most participants reported that their music tastes had evolved a lot lately. What is especially striking when we examine their answers are the reasons they give to explain these changes: they were almost always related to people around them. Changes in friendships or changes in one's friends' tastes were the most common reasons mentioned. As a matter of fact, some

participants explained that they had made new friends and, through them, had become aware of new music genres or artists they now liked. Two participants reported that the changes in their music tastes coincided with the time when they had changed school and had to make new friends, as illustrated by this quotation: "it is because of the changes in my friends, the school change… I made a new friend who was really into that [metal music], so I took on her music tastes." Another one explained that she had made a new friend about two years ago who had introduced her to several new music groups which, as a result, had led her to appreciate music that was not as popular as what she used to listen to. Other participants explained that their friends' musical tastes had also changed. For instance, one participant reported he and his friends had influenced each other in such a way that they had all moved away from mainstream music. Several participants attributed the change in their music tastes to the discovery of a new artist, a discovery that was often made as a result of a recommendation from a friend. One participant described that a friend had given her a CD she liked for Christmas. Her enthusiasm for the album was such that it had led her to explore further this music genre. Another participant reported that her father had invited her to a show of an artist from the 1970s, which had triggered in her a new passion for the music of this period. To conclude, we can see from the participants' responses that their social relationships clearly contributed to shaping their music tastes.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on how interpersonal relationships influence the music tastes of adolescents and how personal influence circulates within their social network. Our study confirmed and extended previous findings from diffusion studies on opinion leadership. The individuals our participants identified as playing the role of opinion leader regarding music have many of the characteristics previously identified by other researchers who focused on different domains of influence. The music opinion leaders described by our participants are perceived by the other members of their group as being more knowledgeable in the field than others. They also seem to exhibit enduring involvement with music, which translates into an eagerness to share music information and provide unsolicited recommendations to their friends and relatives. They also appear to be more likely to engage in ongoing music information-seeking in order to keep abreast of the latest music releases. Moreover, our analysis reveals that the ties that connect participants to opinion leaders are predominantly strong ties. This, combined with the fact that music opinion leaders are considered more knowledgeable about music than their peers, corroborates Rogers' affirmation that "An ideal change agent would have a balance of competence and safety credibility" [13], the competence being acquired from their great involvement with music, and the safety credibility by the trustworthiness they gain from the close relationship they maintain with the people they influence. It also emerges that the music tastes of our participants are constantly changing, molded by their social environment. Indeed, they mostly attribute shifts in their music tastes to changes in their circle of friends or to changes in their friends' tastes.

Drawing on this study as well as on previous diffusion studies on opinion leadership, we can offer some potential avenues for the improvement of music recommender systems based on collaborative filtering.

5.1.1 Implications for Music Recommender System Design

As mentioned in the introduction, music recommender systems (RS) often assume that the tastes of their users' are relatively

stable. Our research suggests that important changes in one's social environment could lead to a redefinition of their music tastes. Hence, as suggested by Koren [24], RS should be able to model the temporal dynamics of music tastes to provide recommendations that correspond to the current tastes of their users. RS that integrate social networking tools could try to detect important changes in the social network of their users. A new romantic relationship, the addition of a number of new and interconnected friends, or significant changes in the pattern of interactions with other members could indicate that the social environment of a user is changing and that their music tastes could also be changing. RS could also be sensitive to changes in the music tastes of people with whom a user interacts often.

The fact that music opinion leaders seem to predominantly exert their influence through strong ties indicates that the trustworthiness of the source is extremely important. This suggests that, as discussed in [25], RS should be as transparent as they can be when recommending music to their users. If we add to that the role music tastes play in building one's identity [26], especially during adolescence [6, 12], providing users with links to the social network profile of users who like the music being recommended could perhaps help them determine the relevance of the recommendation for them.

Our study and other studies on opinion leadership also highlighted the bridging role music opinion leaders could play between mass media (e.g., radio, television) or specialized information sources (e.g., music blogs, music RS) on one side, and people who are less involved with music on the other side. Therefore, it would make sense for music RS to primarily target opinion leaders and give them the tools they need to share music with their social circle.

5.1.2 Limitations and Future Work

Because of the small size of the sample, this study alone does not allow us to generalize to the whole adolescent population, let alone to the general population. However, the fact that our findings parallel those of other studies on opinion leadership adds validity to our research. Nevertheless, quantitative studies and studies with different populations should be conducted to verify how common the behaviors and opinions of our participants are in the general population.

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