

MUSIC LISTENING AND WELL-BEING: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF MUSIC

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SUMMARY. Music listening has been increasingly recognized as an important psychological activity associated with emotional regulation and mental well-being. This literature review examines the relationship between music listening and psychological well-being by synthesizing findings from previous empirical and theoretical studies. The review focuses on three key dimensions: emotional regulation, psychological well-being, and the underlying mechanisms explaining music-induced well-being. The analysis demonstrates that music listening functions as an adaptive strategy for managing emotional states, reducing stress, and supporting positive psychological experiences. In addition, musical engagement contributes to broader dimensions of well-being by facilitating self-reflection, strengthening social connectedness, and enhancing subjective quality of life. The reviewed literature also highlights several mechanisms through which music influences psychological outcomes, including emotional processing, cognitive reflection, and neurobiological responses. By integrating findings across multiple research perspectives, this article proposes a conceptual synthesis that clarifies the multidimensional role of music listening in promoting psychological well-being and mental health.

Keywords: Emotional regulation, mental health, music listening, music psychology, psychological well-being

1. Introduction

Music listening is a pervasive activity embedded in everyday human life across cultures and social contexts. Individuals engage with music in various situations, including leisure activities, emotional reflection, social interaction, and personal regulation of mood. Within contemporary research

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in music psychology, listening to music is no longer understood merely as a passive auditory activity but rather as a complex psychological process involving emotional, cognitive, and physiological responses. Empirical studies have demonstrated that musical experiences can significantly influence affective states, emotional perception, and psychological functioning, indicating that music listening may contribute to broader aspects of psychological well-being ²

One of the most widely investigated aspects of music listening concerns its relationship with emotional experience. Music possesses a distinctive capacity to evoke, shape, and regulate emotional states through various psychological mechanisms, including emotional contagion, episodic memory, and aesthetic appraisal. These mechanisms illustrate how listeners actively interpret musical structures and associate them with personal meanings and memories. As a result, music listening often functions as a form of emotional regulation, enabling individuals to manage stress, alter mood states, and enhance feelings of relaxation and pleasure. Such findings highlight the important role of musical engagement in supporting emotional processes and everyday psychological functioning ³.

In recent decades, interdisciplinary scholarship has further expanded the investigation of music listening beyond emotional response toward broader questions of mental health and psychological well-being. Research in neuroscience, psychology, and music therapy has increasingly demonstrated that musical engagement may contribute to improved psychological outcomes, including reductions in stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Additionally, music listening has been associated with enhanced positive affect, cognitive stimulation, and improved quality of life in diverse populations. These findings suggest that music listening represents a meaningful and accessible activity through which individuals may support their mental and emotional health ⁴

In psychological research, well-being is generally conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional, cognitive, and social

² Yoo et al. "Benefits of Personal Music Listening for Family Caregivers of Critically Ill Patients during the Post-COVID Era." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 14, 2023; Gustavson et al. "Mental Health and Music Engagement: Review, Framework, and Guidelines for Future Studies." *Translational Psychiatry*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2021.; Peters et al. *The Impact of Musicking on Emotion Regulation: A Systematic Review*, 2024.

³ Tan et al. "Music's Dual Role in Emotion Regulation: Network Analysis of Music Use, Emotion Regulation Self-Efficacy, Alexithymia, Anxiety, and Depression." *Depression and Anxiety*, vol. 2024, no. 1, 2024.; Miranda. "Neuroticism, Musical Emotion Regulation, and Mental Health." *Psychomusicology: Music, Mind, and Brain*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2021, pp. 59–73.

⁴ Särkämö. "Musical Leisure Activities to Support Cognitive and Emotional Functioning in Aging and Dementia." *Music and Dementia*. Oxford University Press, 2019, pp. 103–121.; Maury and Rickard. "The Benefits of Participation in a Choir and an Exercise Group on Older Adults' Wellbeing in a Naturalistic Setting." *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2022, pp. 144–171.

dimensions of human functioning. Scholars often distinguish between hedonic well-being, which relates to experiences of pleasure and positive emotional states, and eudaimonic well-being, which refers to meaning, personal growth, and psychological fulfilments. Musical experiences have been suggested to contribute to both dimensions by offering opportunities for emotional expression, aesthetic appreciation, and reflective engagement. Through these processes, music listening may serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as a psychological resource that supports resilience and subjective well-being ⁵.

Furthermore, recent studies have emphasized the active role of listeners in shaping their emotional experiences through music. Individuals frequently select music intentionally to influence their emotional states, such as reducing tension, coping with negative emotions, or enhancing motivation and concentration. This intentional use of music reflects the role of listening practices as strategies of emotional self-regulation in everyday life. Consequently, music listening can be understood as an accessible and widely used psychological tool that individuals employ to regulate mood and maintain emotional balance ⁶

Despite the growing body of literature addressing the psychological benefits of music listening, existing research remains dispersed across several academic domains, including music psychology, neuroscience, and music therapy. Many studies focus on specific contexts, such as clinical interventions, emotional responses to music, or patterns of everyday listening behaviour. As a result, a comprehensive synthesis of theoretical perspectives and empirical findings remains necessary in order to clarify how music listening contributes to psychological well-being. Integrating these perspectives is essential for developing a broader conceptual understanding of the mechanisms through which musical engagement supports emotional and psychological functioning.

Therefore, this article aims to review and synthesize existing literature concerning the psychological benefits of music listening, with particular attention to its relationship with well-being. By examining theoretical perspectives and empirical findings across multiple disciplines, this study seeks to provide an integrative understanding of how music listening contributes to emotional

⁵ Martínez-Castilla et al. "The Efficacy of Music for Emotional Wellbeing During the COVID-19 Lockdown in Spain: An Analysis of Personal and Context-Related Variables." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 12, 2021; Hugelius et al. "The Power of Radio to Promote Health and Resilience in Natural Disasters: A Review." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 16, no. 14, 2019, p. 2526.

⁶ Freitas et al. "Music Therapy for Adolescents with Psychiatric Disorders: An Overview." *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2022, pp. 895–910.; Agres et al. "Music, Computing, and Health: A Roadmap for the Current and Future Roles of Music Technology for Health Care and Well-Being." *Music & Science*, vol. 4, 2021.

regulation, mental health, and overall psychological well-being. Such a synthesis is expected to contribute to ongoing discussions in music psychology and musicology regarding the broader role of musical experience in human life.

2. Conceptualizing Music Listening and Psychological Well-Being

2.1. Music Listening as a Psychological Experience

Music listening represents one of the most widespread forms of musical engagement and constitutes a fundamental aspect of human interaction with music. Unlike instrumental performance or compositional activity, listening to music does not require formal training or technical expertise, which allows individuals from diverse cultural and social backgrounds to engage with musical experiences. Despite its apparent simplicity, music listening involves complex perceptual and cognitive processes that integrate auditory perception, emotional interpretation, and contextual meaning-making. Within the field of music psychology, listening to music is therefore understood as an active psychological process in which listeners interpret musical structures and expressive cues in relation to their personal experiences and cultural frameworks ⁷.

From a cognitive perspective, musical perception involves the organization of auditory information into meaningful patterns, including melody, rhythm, harmony, and timbre. These elements are processed through interactions between perceptual mechanisms and learned musical expectations. Listeners develop internalized schemas that allow them to anticipate musical events, interpret expressive qualities, and derive aesthetic meaning from musical structures. Consequently, music listening is not merely a passive reception of sound but rather an interpretative activity shaped by memory, attention, and cultural familiarity ⁸.

Furthermore, research on everyday musical behaviour suggests that individuals incorporate music listening into many aspects of daily life. Music accompanies a wide range of activities such as studying, commuting, exercising, and relaxation. In these contexts, listeners use music to structure their experiences, influence mood, and enhance engagement with their

⁷ Hargreaves. "Musical Imagination: Perception and Production, Beauty and Creativity." *Psychology of Music*, vol. 40, no. 5, 2012, pp. 539–557.; Juslin and Sloboda. "Music and Emotion." *The Psychology of Music*. Elsevier, 2013, pp. 583–645.

⁸ Brattico and Varankaitė. "Aesthetic Empowerment through Music." *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2019, pp. 285–303.; Wardani et al. "Karawitans' Musician Brain Adaptation: Standardized Low-Resolution Electromagnetic Tomography Study." *IAES International Journal of Artificial Intelligence*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2023, pp. 23–33.

surroundings. These patterns of everyday musical behaviour demonstrate that music listening functions as a psychological resource that individuals integrate into their daily routines to support emotional and cognitive functioning ⁹.

2.2. Emotional Mechanisms in Music Listening

One of the most distinctive characteristics of music listening lies in its capacity to evoke and regulate emotional responses. Emotional experiences associated with music have been widely examined in music psychology, where scholars seek to explain how abstract auditory patterns can generate powerful emotional reactions in listeners. Unlike other forms of communication, music conveys emotional meaning primarily through structural and expressive elements such as tempo, dynamics, rhythm, and melodic contour. These musical features interact with listeners perceptual and cognitive processes to produce emotional responses that may vary depending on individual experience and cultural background ¹⁰.

Several theoretical models have been proposed to explain the mechanisms underlying musical emotions. Among the most influential frameworks is the BRECVEMA model, which identifies multiple psychological pathways through which music can induce emotional responses ¹¹. These mechanisms include brainstem reflexes, emotional contagion, evaluative conditioning, episodic memory, visual imagery, emotional expectancy, and aesthetic judgment. According to this model, musical emotions emerge from the interaction of perceptual processes, cognitive associations, and affective responses that occur during the listening experience ¹².

In addition to emotional induction, music listening also plays an important role in emotional regulation. Individuals frequently select music strategically in order to modify or maintain their emotional states. For example, listeners may choose calming music to reduce stress or energetic music to

⁹ Roese and Merrill. "Consequences of the COVID-19 Lockdown in Germany: Effects of Changes in Daily Life on Musical Engagement and Functions of Music." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 18, no. 19, 2021, p. 10463.; Taruffi. "Mind-Wandering during Personal Music Listening in Everyday Life: Music-Evoked Emotions Predict Thought Valence." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 18, no. 23, 2021, p. 12321.

¹⁰ Juslin. "From Everyday Emotions to Aesthetic Emotions: Towards a Unified Theory of Musical Emotions." *Physics of Life Reviews*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2013, pp. 235–266.; Susino et al. "Emotional Responses to Music: The Essential Inclusion of Emotion Adaptability and Situational Context." *Empirical Studies of the Arts*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2025, pp. 451–483.

¹¹ Völker. "Measuring Emotional Music Experience: Spreading Activation and BRECVEMA Mechanisms." *Psychology of Music*, vol. 50, no. 2, 2022, pp. 631–649.

¹² Janković and Mađarev. "The Role of Affective Dimensions in the Aesthetic Experience of Music." *Psychological Perspectives on Musical Experiences and Skills*. Open Book Publishers, 2024, pp. 27–46.

enhance motivation. Such practices demonstrate that music listening can function as an accessible strategy for managing emotional experiences in everyday life. Research has consistently shown that individuals employ music listening as a tool for coping with negative emotions, maintaining positive mood, and facilitating emotional expression ¹³.

2.3. Music Listening and Psychological Well-Being

The relationship between music listening and psychological well-being has increasingly attracted scholarly attention across disciplines such as psychology, neuroscience, and music therapy. Psychological well-being is commonly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that encompasses emotional, cognitive, and social aspects of human functioning. Within contemporary psychological theory, researchers frequently distinguish between two primary perspectives: hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being. Hedonic well-being emphasizes pleasure, happiness, and life satisfaction, whereas eudaimonic well-being focuses on personal growth, meaning, and psychological fulfillment ¹⁴.

Musical engagement has been suggested to contribute to both dimensions of well-being. In the context of hedonic well-being, listening to music may enhance positive affect and reduce negative emotional states.

Many individuals report experiencing enjoyment, relaxation, and emotional comfort when listening to music, which contributes to their overall sense of happiness and emotional balance. From a eudaimonic perspective, music can also facilitate reflection, identity formation, and meaningful aesthetic experiences that contribute to personal development and psychological insight ¹⁵.

Empirical studies further indicate that music listening may influence various indicators of psychological health. Research has demonstrated associations between music listening and reductions in stress, improvements in mood, and enhanced emotional resilience. These findings suggest that music listening may serve as a supportive factor in maintaining mental well-being, particularly in contexts where individuals experience psychological pressure or emotional challenges ¹⁶. Consequently, music listening can be viewed as a meaningful psychological activity that contributes to broader dimensions of human well-being.

¹³ Hennessy et al. "Music and Mood Regulation during the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic." PLOS ONE, vol. 16, no. 10, 2021.

¹⁴ Ryan and Deci. "On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being." Annual Review of Psychology, vol. 52, no. 1, 2001, pp. 141–166.

¹⁵ Lamont. "Emotion, Engagement and Meaning in Strong Experiences of Music Performance." Psychology of Music, vol. 40, no. 5, 2012, pp. 574–594.

¹⁶ Granot et al. "'Help! I Need Somebody': Music as a Global Resource for Obtaining Wellbeing Goals in Times of Crisis." Frontiers in Psychology, vol. 12, 2021.

2.4. Everyday Music Listening and Emotional Regulation

Beyond theoretical discussions of musical emotion and well-being, research on everyday music listening provides important insights into how individuals actively use music in their daily lives. Studies on everyday listening behaviour reveal that people frequently engage with music in order to regulate emotions, structure social experiences, and enhance cognitive performance during routine activities. These patterns demonstrate that music listening is deeply embedded in daily life and serves practical psychological functions¹⁷.

One of the most significant functions of everyday music listening concerns emotional self-regulation. Individuals often select specific music in response to their emotional needs, such as reducing feelings of stress, alleviating sadness, or increasing energy and motivation. Music may also facilitate emotional processing by allowing listeners to reflect on personal experiences or memories associated with particular songs. Through these processes, music listening becomes a mechanism through which individuals actively shape their emotional states and psychological experiences¹⁸.

Moreover, technological developments such as digital streaming platforms have further expanded the role of music listening in everyday life. Access to extensive music libraries enables listeners to curate personalized listening environments that correspond to specific moods, activities, or emotional goals. As a result, music listening increasingly functions as a flexible and individualized strategy for supporting psychological well-being within contemporary lifestyles. These developments highlight the continuing relevance of studying music listening as an important component of emotional regulation and mental health in modern societies¹⁹.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative literature review approach to examine existing research concerning the relationship between music listening and psychological well-being. Literature review methods aim to synthesize theoretical perspectives and empirical findings in order to construct a comprehensive understanding of a research topic. Within academic research,

¹⁷ Schäfer et al. "The Psychological Functions of Music Listening." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 4, 2013.

¹⁸ Henry et al. "Music in Mood Regulation and Coping Orientations in Response to COVID-19 Lockdown Measures Within the United Kingdom." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 12, 2021.

¹⁹ Hennessy et al. "Music and Mood Regulation during the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic." *PLOS ONE*, vol. 16, no. 10, 2021.

literature reviews are widely used to integrate knowledge from multiple studies and identify conceptual patterns across existing scholarship ²⁰.

In this study, the literature review was conducted using a thematic narrative approach. This approach allows researchers to analyse and organize scholarly findings into conceptual categories that reflect key themes within the literature. Through this method, the study aims to identify how previous research has conceptualized music listening as a psychological activity and how such experiences relate to emotional regulation and psychological well-being ²¹.

3.2. Data Sources and Search Strategy

The literature analyzed in this study was collected from major academic databases that index peer-reviewed research in music psychology and related disciplines. These sources included Google Scholar, Scopus-indexed journals, and Web of Science-indexed publications. The use of multiple databases increases the reliability of literature review studies by ensuring broad coverage of relevant academic publications ²²

The search process employed several keyword combinations relevant to the topic of this study, including music listening, music and emotion, music and well-being, psychological benefits of music, and music and mental health. These keywords were selected based on their frequent use within research in music psychology and music therapy literature. Using targeted search terms allows researchers to identify relevant studies that address the psychological functions and effects of music listening.

3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure the relevance and academic quality of the selected literature, several inclusion criteria were applied during the selection process. First, the literature had to consist of peer-reviewed journal articles or scholarly academic books. Second, the selected studies needed to examine the relationship between music listening and psychological or emotional processes. Third, publications from the fields of music psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and music therapy were prioritized because these disciplines provide the most substantial theoretical and empirical insights into the psychological impact of musical experiences ²³.

²⁰ Snyder. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 104, 2019, pp. 333–339.

²¹ Braun and Clarke. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2006, pp. 77–101.

²² Snyder. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 104, 2019, pp. 333–339.

²³ Koelsch. "Brain Correlates of Music-Evoked Emotions." *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2014, pp. 170–180.

Studies that focused primarily on musical performance, composition, or purely technical aspects of music theory were excluded, as the primary objective of this study was to investigate listening experiences rather than other forms of musical participation.

3.4. Data Analysis

The collected literature was analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach. Thematic analysis enables researchers to identify patterns and conceptual relationships within a body of literature by organizing findings into recurring themes. This method is frequently used in qualitative research and literature reviews to structure complex scholarly discussions into coherent analytical categories. Through this analytical process, the reviewed studies were organized into several thematic dimensions, including emotional mechanisms of music listening, the role of music in emotional regulation, and the contribution of musical engagement to psychological well-being. By synthesizing findings across these thematic categories, this study seeks to provide an integrative perspective on how music listening contributes to emotional and psychological functioning.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Emotional Regulation

A substantial body of literature indicates that one of the most prominent functions of music listening relates to emotional regulation. Music should not merely be understood as an aesthetic stimulus; rather, it operates as a psychological resource that enables individuals to manage affective states in everyday life. Empirical findings demonstrate that music listening is consistently associated with mood modulation, stress reduction, and the enhancement of positive emotional experiences across diverse populations and social contexts. Research examining the psychological functions of music listening suggests that individuals frequently use music as a tool to stabilize emotions, alleviate anxiety, and cope with psychological pressures arising from daily activities. This perspective highlights the importance of music as an adaptive mechanism for affective regulation in human experience ²⁴.

Neuropsychological evidence further supports this interpretation by demonstrating that music influences neural systems associated with emotional processing and stress responses. Physiological reactions to music, including changes in autonomic nervous system activity, indicate that music can reduce

²⁴ Schäfer et al. "The Psychological Functions of Music Listening." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 4, 2013.

cortisol levels and promote states of relaxation. These findings strengthen the argument that music functions as a stimulus capable of modulating emotional responses through specific neurobiological pathways. Within the context of mental health interventions, music has also been employed as a strategy to improve emotional stability and to mitigate psychological distress among individuals experiencing anxiety-related conditions or chronic stress ²⁵.

Meta-analytic research on music-based interventions further demonstrates that structured engagement with music can significantly influence stress-related outcomes. Quantitative analyses indicate that music interventions produce moderate to strong effects in reducing both psychological and physiological indicators of stress. These results confirm that music should not be viewed solely as a form of entertainment, but also as a psychological intervention with therapeutic potential in the domain of mental health ²⁶.

Complementary systematic reviews focusing on anxiety reduction also report that music listening can significantly decrease anxiety levels in both clinical and everyday contexts. This effect is largely attributed to music capacity to redirect attention away from negative stimuli while simultaneously fostering emotional stabilization and psychological comfort ²⁷.

Taken together, these findings suggest that emotional regulation represents a central psychological mechanism underlying the relationship between music listening and mental well-being. Music therefore functions as an affective regulation tool that enables individuals to manage emotional experiences in a constructive and adaptive manner.

4.2. Psychological Well-Being

Beyond emotional regulation, literature consistently demonstrates a strong association between musical engagement and psychological well-being. Numerous studies indicate that involvement with music contributes to improved quality of life, increased feelings of happiness, and enhanced overall mental well-being. These findings suggest that the role of music extends beyond immediate emotional responses and encompasses broader psychological outcomes that may influence long-term well-being.

Comprehensive reviews investigating the relationship between music, health, and well-being emphasize that musical engagement can enhance psychological well-being through multiple mechanisms, including the stimulation

²⁵ Filippis and Foysal. "Associations between Music Listening Habits and Mental Health: A Cross-Sectional Analysis." *OALib*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2025, pp. 1–29.

²⁶ de Witte et al. "Effects of Music Interventions on Stress-Related Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Two Meta-Analyses." *Health Psychology Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2020, pp. 294–324.

²⁷ Harney et al. "Is Music Listening an Effective Intervention for Reducing Anxiety? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Controlled Studies." *Musicae Scientiae*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2023, pp. 278–298.

of positive emotional experiences, stress reduction, and the strengthening of social connections. In addition, music provides a medium for self-expression that allows individuals to process emotional experiences in reflective and meaningful ways ²⁸.

Within the broader context of mental health, participation in musical activities has also been shown to support psychological well-being among both general populations and vulnerable groups. Research indicates that engagement in activities such as listening to music or singing can enhance feelings of social connectedness and reinforce personal identity. These processes highlight the important social dimension of musical engagement in shaping subjective experiences of well-being ²⁹.

Further investigations suggest that music contributes to psychological well-being through complex cognitive and emotional processes. Listening to music often facilitates reflective engagement with personal experiences, the retrieval of autobiographical memories, and the construction of meaning in relation to one's life circumstances. Such reflective processes play a critical role in the development and maintenance of enduring psychological well-being ³⁰.

Research examining the relationship between music listening habits and mental health also demonstrates that certain patterns of musical engagement are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being. Individuals who actively use music as a strategy for emotional regulation tend to report better mental health outcomes compared to those who engage with music in a more passive manner ³¹. Overall, the literature suggests that music serves as a significant contributor to psychological well-being through a combination of emotional, cognitive, and social processes.

4.3. Mechanisms of Music-Induced Well-Being

Although the beneficial relationship between music and psychological well-being has been widely documented, the mechanisms explaining this relationship remain an active area of investigation within literature. Existing studies suggest that the positive effects of music on well-being emerge from several interrelated psychological mechanisms.

One key mechanism concerns the influence of music on cognitive and emotional systems associated with stress regulation. Neuropsychological

²⁸ MacDonald. "Music, Health, and Well-Being: A Review." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2013.

²⁹ Daykin et al. "What Works for Wellbeing? A Systematic Review of Wellbeing Outcomes for Music and Singing in Adults." *Perspectives in Public Health*, vol. 138, no. 1, 2018, pp. 39–46.

³⁰ Gustavson et al. "Mental Health and Music Engagement: Review, Framework, and Guidelines for Future Studies." *Translational Psychiatry*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2021.

³¹ Vandana et al. "Music Therapy as a Viable Alternative Medicine for Improving Psychological Well-Being." *Journal of Pioneering Medical Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2025, pp. 7–20.

research indicates that music can affect brain activity related to emotion, attention, and memory processing. The activation of these neural systems allows music to modulate emotional responses and contribute to greater psychological stability³².

In addition, music functions as a medium through which individuals can process emotional experiences via cognitive reflection. Listening to music is frequently associated with introspective processes that allow individuals to gain deeper insight into their emotional states. Such reflective engagement may facilitate the development of self-awareness and enhance individuals' capacity for emotional regulation³³.

Another mechanism relates to the social functions of music. Musical engagement often operates as a social resource that fosters interpersonal connections, reinforces group identity, and promotes feelings of belonging. These social dynamics play a critical role in shaping broader experiences of psychological well-being³⁴.

Within therapeutic contexts, music has also been implemented as a tool for improving mental health outcomes through music therapy approaches. These interventions demonstrate that music can facilitate emotional expression, reduce psychological tension, and support improvements in psychological well-being³⁵.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the positive effects of music on psychological well-being cannot be attributed to a single mechanism. Instead, they emerge from the interaction of emotional, cognitive, neurobiological, and social processes that collectively shape the psychological impact of music in human life.

4.4. Conceptual Contribution of the Article

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this article offers a conceptual contribution by clarifying the relationship between music listening and psychological well-being. Previous studies have often examined the

³² Rebecchini. "Music, Mental Health, and Immunity." *Brain Behavior & Immunity – Health*, vol. 18, 2021.

³³ Rossi et al. "Personality Characteristics, Music Listening, and Psychological Well-Being: A Systematic and Scoping Review." *Research in Psychotherapy: Psychopathology, Process and Outcome*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2024.; Shan et al. "The Association between Music Listening at Home and Subjective Well-Being." *Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 9, 2024.

³⁴ Zhang et al. "Impact of Music-Based Interventions on Subjective Well-Being: A Meta-Analysis of Listening, Training, and Therapy in Clinical and Nonclinical Populations." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 16, 2025.

³⁵ Basile. "Beneficial Effects of Music in the Healing Process of Traumatic Injuries: Perceptual Control of Suffering and Possible Abatement of Disability Conditions." *La Clinica Terapeutica*, vol. 174, no. 6, 2023, pp. 531–536.

effects of music in isolation, focusing separately on emotional, cognitive, or social outcomes. In contrast, the present review integrates these diverse findings into a unified conceptual framework that highlights three central mechanisms: emotional regulation, psychological well-being enhancement, and the underlying psychological processes that explain music's impact on mental health. The principal contribution of this review lies in demonstrating that the relationship between music and well-being is inherently multidimensional. Music does not merely function as an emotional stimulus but also operates as a medium for cognitive reflection and social interaction, both of which play crucial roles in shaping individuals' experiences of psychological well-being. By synthesizing these perspectives, the article provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding the psychological role of music and opens new directions for future research examining the mechanisms through which music contributes to mental health and human flourishing.

5. Conclusion

The present review highlights the significant role of music listening as a multidimensional psychological resource that contributes to emotional regulation and overall psychological well-being. The synthesis of previous studies indicates that music functions not only as an aesthetic experience but also as a mechanism through which individuals manage emotional states, cope with psychological stress, and construct meaningful personal experiences. Furthermore, the literature suggests that the impact of music on well-being emerges through interconnected emotional, cognitive, social, and neurobiological processes. By integrating these perspectives, this review provides a clearer conceptual understanding of how music listening contributes to mental health and everyday well-being. The findings emphasize the importance of considering music listening as a relevant psychological activity in contemporary well-being research and highlight the need for future studies to further explore the mechanisms through which musical experiences influence human psychological functioning.

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