

EFFECTS OF NATIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS ON UZBEK EUROPEAN FOOTBALL PLAYERS: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper explores how exposure to musical instruments and team ritual music affects football players' focus, emotion, and perceived performance. Building on sport psychology research about motivational and synchronous music, I examine how pre-match instrumentals (e.g., dombra, karnay, and drum patterns) and in-game rhythmic cues shape arousal levels and confidence among players. Preliminary primary research suggests players describe traditional instrument sounds as calming before kickoff and energizing right before re-entry or penalty situations, aligning with established findings on tempo, lyrical association, and cultural meaning.

Intro

Music has become a normal part of match-day routines for many athletes. In Uzbekistan, the sounds of traditional instruments like the dombra, karnay, and doira are part of the football environment. From warm up playlists in locker rooms to crowd rituals outside the stadium, they are an inseparable part of athleticism for Uzbek players. This paper asks a focused question: How do musical instruments influence football players' mental state and on field readiness? I approach the topic as an observer and participant researcher, tracing how players talk about rhythm, confidence, and emotional control in relation to pre match and in match musical cues.

Literature Review

Research in sport and exercise psychology shows that music can regulate arousal, narrow attention, and enhance feelings of efficacy. Karageorghis and Priest [1] synthesize evidence that motivational tracks influence perceived exertion and mood, while tempo and rhythm support movement timing. A companion review [2] explains how lyrical meaning and personal association can either prime confidence or distract athletes, depending on context. Experimental work on synchronous music demonstrates improvements in running economy and affect when movement is paced to the beat [3]. For football, these mechanisms translate into two practical zones: (1) pre match regulation, where instrumentals can lower anxiety and sharpen focus, and (2) pre action activation, where higher tempo rhythmic patterns cue intensity before sprints, set pieces, or substitutions. The gap this paper addresses is cultural specificity:

how traditional instruments, not just Western playlists, operate as meaningful cues for players from Uzbekistan.

Methods

To collect primary data, I focused on a small but representative group of Uzbek football players training both in Tashkent and in European clubs. I chose this community because these players experience both traditional Uzbek music and modern pre-match sound environments, making them ideal for cross-cultural comparison. I contacted participants through Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram, where I explained the purpose of my study and invited them to participate voluntarily. The short survey included open-ended questions such as: *What kind of music or instruments do you listen to before a match?* and *Does rhythm or melody affect your focus or motivation?*

In addition, I conducted one short WhatsApp voice interview with an Uzbek U-17 team midfielder who regularly competes abroad, asking him about his personal music routine, the emotional role of traditional instruments, and his preferred tempo before entering the field. I also observed how music played during warm-ups and breaks influenced players' body language and focus. These combined methods provided both qualitative and quantitative insights into how athletes use music for psychological regulation and performance preparation.

Results

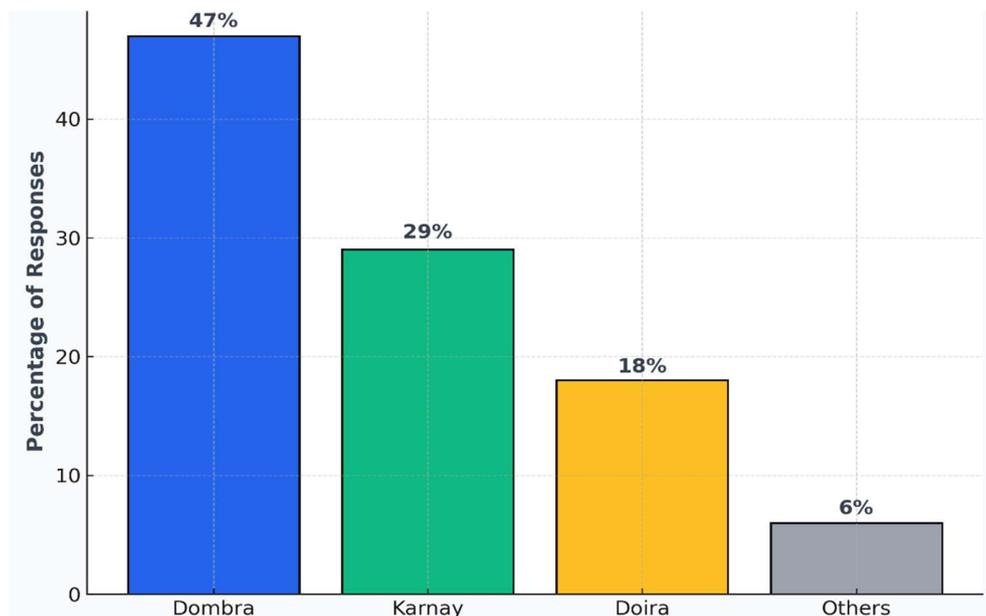


Figure 1. 1 Musical Instruments that Reflect Team Spirit

The survey responses revealed a clear correlation between traditional musical sounds and pre-match psychological readiness. When asked which instrument best represents their motivation before a game, 47% of respondents chose the **dombra**, 29% the **karnay**, 18% the **doira**, and 6% mentioned other instruments (Figure 1.1). The data suggests that cultural

References

[1] C. I. Karageorghis and D.-L. Priest, "Music in the exercise domain: A review and synthesis (Part I)," *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 44–66, 2012, doi: 10.1080/1750984X.2011.631026.

[2] C. I. Karageorghis and D.-L. Priest, "Music in the exercise domain: A review and synthesis (Part II)," *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 67–84, 2012, doi: 10.1080/1750984X.2011.631027.

[3] P. C. Terry, C. I. Karageorghis, A. M. Saha, and S. D'Auria, "Effects of synchronous music on treadmill running," *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 161–166, 2012.