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Worship Styles, Music and Social Identity: A Communication Study

Terri L. Johnson, Jill Rudd, Kimberly Neuendorf, Guowei Jian*

This quantitative study investigates music and worship style preferences. A survey measured participants' worship and music preferences in order to further examine the relationship between the two. Multiple and logistic regressions were significant indicating that preferred music genres can be used to predict one's worship style preference. Further investigation used Social Identity Theory to examine the conflict that often occurs within churches over music and worship styles. Therefore, the survey included the Identification with a Psychological Group scale to measure participants' identification with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. Multiple regression results showed a significant overall prediction of organizational identity, indicating that Missouri Synod Lutherans who prefer traditional or formal worship components identify more strongly with the larger organization, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). Keywords: Worship Styles; Religion, Music, Social Identity Theory; Organizational Identity; Religious Communication; Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Introduction

Throughout the Christian church, conflict abounds (Becker et al., 1993; Becker, 1998; Hoekema, 1994; Starcke and Dyck, 1996). Furthermore, there is an ongoing war that many have dubbed the "Worship Wars" (Dawn, 1995). On the surface, the conflict appears to be over the issue of music and many agree that music is an integral part of congregational worship (White, 1971; Dawn, 1995; Wootton, 2001, Marini, 2003; Meyers, 2003; Brand, 2003; Yardley, 2003). However, they differ in their assessment as to why. Some focus on the history and

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lyrics (preferring substance over form) and some focus on culture and music (preferring style over structure). Others focus on whether music should be cognitive or emotive.

Oftentimes, particularly within the church, conflict over music preferences is common (Dawn, 1995). Churches are trying to hold onto their older members, yet attract new members. This is often accomplished by utilizing modern music and other more contemporary styles of worship. Although this is an oversimplification of a complex problem, this paper examines this ongoing conflict using Social Identity Theory as a framework. Conflicts over music exist within many denominations, however, this study was conducted in a Lutheran church, therefore, the literature review begins by presenting a historical perspective of two different worship styles within the Lutheran Church as well as key terms and concepts that are used throughout this study (for further clarification on worship styles, see Stocker, 2008).

Traditional Worship Service

In the sixteenth century, October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. These theses or concerns addressed issues of purgatory, indulgences and other teachings of the church. It was an act that began the Reformation and, ultimately, changed the world (see Bainton, 1950). Perhaps unnoticed in the furor over theology was a significant change that Luther made almost as an afterthought. His primary focus in reforming the mass (which would later be referred to as a *worship service*) was to give it back to the people. In fact, Joseph Herl (2004) believed that perhaps one reason why Martin Luther devised German text chorales was so that the laity could participate in worship and gain a collective religious identity. Martin Luther emphasized using the vernacular language (which at the time was German) and was known to use traditional folk tunes as a source for composing *singable* Lutheran hymns (Noll, 2007). Luther held music in high esteem and composed many hymns that are still used in the church today. Consequently, the music written by Martin Luther, and those that are similar in form, give worshippers in the Lutheran church today a sense of identity.

If one were to define traditional, the meaning of the term is somewhat ambiguous, as traditions within particular parishes may differ considerably. However, for the purpose of this study, the term traditional will refer to a more formal type of service that follows the orders of

services and hymns that are found in the standard Lutheran hymnals. A traditional worship service follows a *liturgy*, which in this context signifies “the specific, historic ordering of public worship developed in the earliest centuries of the Church” (Dawn, 1995, p. 242).

Within the traditional liturgy there are various parts such as: the invocation, the confession, the absolution, the kyrie, a confession of faith or creed, the collect, the offertory, a sermon, and a benediction. There are three readings each Sunday that follow a particular schedule. The first reading will often come from the Old Testament, the second reading from the New Testament, and the third reading from one of the four Gospels. The pastor preaches from a pulpit and wears an *alb* (i.e., a white robe).

The service will often utilize *responsive readings* where the liturgist will read a portion followed by the congregation responding. The traditional service also contains written prayers, the Lord’s Prayer, and *traditional hymns*. Traditional hymns are usually accompanied by an organ and are sung in the traditional service. These hymns are found in the Lutheran hymnbook and are organized according to the church year and topical considerations (e.g., adoration, faith, justification, etc.) The traditional service in this study utilizes the liturgy, hymns and order of services contained within the Lutheran Hymnal, Lutheran Worship, Creative Worship and/or the Lutheran Service Book. Responsive readings are often utilized, a creed is always recited, the altar paraments follow the church year, and the pastor always wears an alb and preaches from a pulpit. The service begins with a prelude and ends with a postlude that is played on the organ and the organ always accompanies the hymns. Often a processional will take place at the beginning of a service.

Contemporary Worship Service

Worship music is the primary difference between traditional and contemporary worship services. Some contemporary services will blend the two worship styles by following the traditional liturgy and inserting contemporary praise songs throughout the service. On the other hand, contemporary worship services may differ considerably between particular parishes and even within the same congregation. Scripture passages are read, but not necessarily all three of the readings as stated above. The leader will often pray spontaneously, meaning that

the prayers are not written down. Some contemporary services may utilize responsive readings and other parts of the liturgy.

A contemporary service does not necessarily follow any set order (or liturgy) and is usually designed to reach different demographics than the traditional service. Although there may be many differences in the formatting between a traditional and contemporary service, the most predominant difference is the instrumentation and style of the worship music that is sung, and therefore that is the focus of this study. Songs that are sung in the contemporary service are typically accompanied by a full band (e.g., drums, guitar, bass, etc.). This will differ considerably between parishes and even within the same church as praise bands vary significantly from one another. Some bands may have a piano player or even a violinist, while others have a flautist or a saxophonist. Although the lyrics to the songs are about God and the LCMS Christian's relationship to Him, the style of music incorporates different genres such as rock, blues, pop, country and folk. Frequently, several songs are sung in succession.

The contemporary service in this study is very informal. Parishioners drink coffee and often eat during the service. The pastor does not wear an alb or preach from a pulpit, and usually only one or two of the scripture passages are read. The service does not utilize responsive readings, recite the creed, or follow a written liturgy. Two different worship teams take turns leading the service. One worship team is composed of five members: a drummer, bassist, lead guitarist, and two rhythm guitarists. The three guitarists also provide vocals. The other worship team is composed of eight members: a drummer, bassist, violinist, percussionist, two rhythm guitarists, a pianist, and a worship leader. Six of the members also provide vocals. These two teams take turns leading worship on a bi-monthly rotation.

The traditional services have been the norm for centuries. However, as our society changes, many churches are offering contemporary services in order to communicate to today's culture (see Hamilton, 1999 for further discussion). It is almost certain that music styles and language will continue to evolve and change. It is therefore pertinent that we examine this continual controversy through a communication perspective.

Music as a Form of Communication

Music is used as a form of communication throughout the world, not just for entertainment purposes. For instance, in many cultures, “music constitutes a core feature of life” (Lull, 1985, p.363) communicating practical information regarding history, legal matters, and even medical care (Wallis & Malm, 1984). One example of this can be found in the early Native American culture where religious rituals, games, tribal ceremonies and relationships were often accompanied with songs and music (Hamm, 1983). Because music has the ability to transcend social boundaries, express cultural meaning, and amplify message content blocked to other forms of communication it has also been used as a vehicle for expressing group and cultural identities (Chafee, 1985, Frith, 1981, 1987a, 1987b). For instance, during the 1960s when the United States was experiencing major upheaval and unrest, music provided the younger generations, a vehicle for expressing to the establishment their opinions about the war, feminism, civil rights and sexual freedom (Dunaway, 1987, Eyerman & Jamison, 1995, 1998; Eyerman, 2002; Peddie, 2006).

Even though many music consumers listen to music primarily for entertainment value, most artists will agree that the intent of their messages is contained primarily within the lyrics themselves (Booth, 1976; Gill, 1990; Gonzalez & Makay, 1983; Irvine & Fitzpatrick, 1972; Knupp, 1981; Molokotos-Liederman, 2004; Radwan, 2004; Smith, 1980). For example, Amy Grant, one of Contemporary Christian Music’s (CCM) top selling artists, believes that by employing a medium that appeals to a wider audience there is a greater chance for “her audience to truly hear her message” (Gill, 1990, p.15). Therefore, since music is able to convey various socio-cultural norms and beliefs (Lull, 1985) and create shared understanding, it is “appropriately placed within the tradition of the discipline of communication” (Chesebro, Fougler, Nachman, & Yannelli, 1985, p. 115). Although music is at the center of the “worship wars” conflict within many churches, perhaps examining the conflict through Social Identity Theory will help bring a deeper understanding to the problem.

Social Identity Theory

When individuals distinguish themselves from a larger, more prominent culture, a subculture develops. These subcultures develop an “us-versus-them,” or in-group versus out-

group mentality. This can best be understood through Tajfel's Theory of Social Identity (Tajfel, 1970, 1974, 1975, 1978). Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that groups view themselves positively or negatively depending on how they compare with other groups, producing a competitive dynamic that encourages group members to enhance their group status (Tajfel, 1972).

Social Identity Theory is a theory of group membership and behavior (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). It has been defined as, "the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p.31). Furthermore, according to SIT, groups view themselves positively or negatively depending on how they compare with other groups. This produces a competitive dynamic that encourages group members to enhance their group status. Tajfel and Turner (1986) found that when a group's positive identity is challenged or impeded by an out-group, conflict would often ensue.

In the 1970s, Tajfel developed a foundation of Social Identity Theory by connecting the following three social-psychological processes: *social categorization*, *social comparison* and *social identification* (Ellemers, Haslam, Platow, & Van Knippenberg, 2003). In Tajfel's initial writings about this theory (Tajfel, 1974, 1975, 1978), he developed the idea that these three processes interact with each other in situations where individuals define themselves at the group level rather than the individual level.

The first social-psychological process, *social categorization*, is when people tend to identify themselves and others, not as distinct individuals, but in terms of social categories (Ellemers, et al., 2003): a group in which one belongs, or the in-group and the group in which one does not belong, or the out-group (Ellemers, et al., 2003). This categorization can be demonstrated in this study by the two types of worship services being examined: traditional and contemporary. The second social-psychological process, *social comparison*, is when people tend to determine the value of groups and individuals by comparing them on various dimensions with other groups (Ellemers et al, 2003). This dimension of comparison in this study is the different type of worship music being examined: hymns and praise songs. Finally, the third social-psychological process, *social identification*, is when a person's identity tends to

influence their perceptions of, and responses to, a social situation (Ellemers, et al., 2003). This identification can be demonstrated in this study by the perception parishioners have of the different music styles that are being examined.

Organizational Identity

Ashforth and Mael (1989) were among the first to apply Social Identity Theory to the organization. Their research defined organizational identity as a “psychological reality [existing] beyond its membership” which “enables the individual to conceive of, and feel loyal to, an organization or corporate culture” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p.26). Furthermore, the SIT literature supports the importance of distinct values and practices in providing a unique identity (Oakes & Turner, 1986) as well as recognizing that institutions often use written forms to communicate and preserve that unique identity (Seul, 1999).

Organizational identity is prominent whenever members of an organization ask themselves, “Who are we?” (Albert & Whetten, 1985). It is the member’s collective understanding of what it is that distinguishes their organization from others, those characteristics that they believe to be central and relatively permanent (Albert & Whetten, 1985). These core features of identity are presumed to be resistant to change because they are tied to the history of the organization (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Gioia, Shultz, & Corley, 2000, 2004), resulting in what theorists call “structural inertia” (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). The theory of structural inertia posits that the older an organization is, the less likely they are to introduce changes (Chou & Russel, 2006; Delacroix & Swaminathan, 1991; Kelly & Amburgey, 1991).

Fundamental to most theoretical and empirical definitions of organizational identity is that identity consists of features and characteristics that are central, enduring and distinctive (Gioia, Shultz, & Corley, 2004). Oftentimes, intergroup conflict results when an organization adds members who are not tied to the history of the organization, and therefore have different ideas of what is central, enduring and distinctive. One way to reduce this type of intergroup conflict is to develop “superordinate goals” which can only be accomplished when groups work together (Sherif, 1958).

In the year 2000, the first issue of the journal *Academy of Management Review* was dedicated to the subject of identity within organizations. Several of the articles dealt with the

subject of multiple identities (Brickson, 2000; Gioia, Shultz, & Corley, 2000; Pratt & Foreman, 2000a; Pratt & Foreman, 2000b; Scott & Lane, 2000) and there was some consensus that multiple, and often competing identities are a common phenomenon within organizations (Pratt & Foreman, 2000b; Scott, 2007).

Although an organization needs to manage these multiple identities, literature suggests that multiple identities provide various benefits within an organization that allows the organization to adapt more readily to change (Pratt & Foreman, 2000a). Research also suggests that various small groups and dyads are frequently the source of these numerous identities (Pratt & Foreman, 2000a), which results in several differing views about what is central, distinctive and enduring about the organization (Pratt & Foreman, 2000a).

Music as Social Identity

Research has shown that an individual's music preference is able to predict their political affiliation (Fox & Williams, 1974; Timpany, 2007), aggression tendencies (Meng-Jinn, Miller, Grube, & Waiters, 2006) and personality (Pearson & Dollinger, 2004; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003). Moreover, several studies have been conducted that use music preferences to test Social Identity Theory. For example, a study conducted by Tarrant (2001), correlated participants' levels of self-esteem (Julian, Bishop, & Fiedler, 1966) with their ratings of the in-group and out-group. Tarrant found that individuals with lower self-esteem scores rated the out-group as liking unpopular music more and the in-group as liking it less. Further research conducted by North and Hargreaves (1999) examined how music preference can be used to make social judgments. Results indicated that subjects who expressed a preference for popular music were perceived more positively than if they expressed a preference for unpopular music (see also Zillmann & Bhatia, 1989).

Nicholas Cook (1998) expresses the concept of musical identity quite succinctly; "Deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you 'want to be'...but who you *are*...'music' is a very small word to encompass something that takes as many forms as there are cultural or sub-cultural identities" (p.5). Sardiello (1994) expounds on this idea, explaining that subcultures often define themselves in terms of distinct languages, symbols and lifestyles. Memberships in these groups help

individuals develop their personal and social identity, and music can be an important factor in their creation and maintenance (Sardiello, 1994). This is because music is able to express who we are, what our identity is and to which group we belong (Dolfsma, 1999).

An example of how music is used in this search for identity and meaning can be found during the stage of adolescence (North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000). During this stage of life, many experience an identity crisis. They want to know who they are and to what group they belong. Since adolescents spend increasingly more time exploring different musical genres (Avery, 1979), music is where many find the identity that they are searching for, therefore resolving the identity crisis (Marcia, 1966; Newman & Newman, 1988).

Music and Social Identity in the Church

One way to examine the social identity of worshippers is to examine the role music plays in communicating their social identity among other Christians. Perhaps the reason an individual prefers contemporary or traditional worship music is because their music preferences are a part of their social identity and influences the way in which they want to communicate. Or conversely, perhaps their social identity is communicated through the worship music they prefer. By building upon Social Identity Theory research and examining individual music preferences we may gain valuable insight into why worship music preference exists.

Perhaps, when a church offers two completely different worship styles with completely different styles of music, differing views emerge about what is central, distinctive and enduring. This would explain why those who have been a part of the organization for a longer period of time often attend a more *traditional* style of worship and have a stronger identification with the organization. Conversely, those who attend a more *contemporary* service are often new to the organization and, therefore, do not have a strong identification with the larger organization.

Purpose

Social Identity Theory has been used to study organizational culture (Hatch & Schultz, 2004; Clair, Beatty, & Maclean, 2005), musical identity (MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002), and religious identity (Herriot, 2007). These ideas of different identities merged in an article written by John L. Pauley (2005). His research examined the identity of the Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) community when boundaries begin to fade between the

secular and the sacred (see Gormly, 2003 for further discussion). This study seeks to build upon Pauley's research by examining competing identities within a religious denomination from a Social Identity framework. By using a social identity perspective, it is logical that one could achieve a greater understanding of the conflict that exists within the churches of today.

If music preference is part of an individual's social identity—communicating to others not only who they are but who they want to be and their means for marking their place in society—it is pertinent to examine the possible relationship between music and worship style preference. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following questions: Does worship preference predict organizational identification? Does music preference predict worship style preference?

Method

Participants

The present research was part of a larger study that surveyed parishioners from a Missouri-Synod Lutheran Church located in a metropolitan area in the mid-west. This urban congregation conducts five different services throughout the weekend with an average of 250-300 people (including children) attending. Two services were excluded from the data collection due to uncontrollable variables: one service serves African immigrants (40-60 people) and is conducted in Swahili and the other service is a new service (less than a year) that meets at a different location. Average attendance for those eligible to complete the survey was approximately 200 people. 161 surveys were completed (over an 80% response rate).

The 161 participants were 18-87 years of age ($M=45.92$, $SD=15.899$). Among those surveyed 20% were 18-30, 15% were 31-40, 25% were 41-50, 25% were 51-60, 8% were 61-70, and 7% were over 71. Of those surveyed, 39% ($N=63$) were male and 61% ($N=97$) were female; over 90% were White/Caucasian ($N=148$), 4.4% Hispanic-American ($N=7$), 1.9% Arab-American ($N=3$), .6 % Black/African-American ($N=1$), .6% Native-American ($N=1$) and .6% other ($N=1$).

Twenty-eight percent ($N=45$) of those surveyed attended some college, over 25% ($N=41$) completed a four-year degree, and over 11% ($N=19$) completed a graduate degree.

Twenty percent ($N=32$) had a highest level of education as high school graduate, and over 5% ($N=9$) did not complete their high school education. Fifty-two percent ($N=80$) of those surveyed have a yearly income of less than \$40,000 and 9.3% ($N= 15$) have a yearly household income of over \$100,000.

Procedures

Surveys were self-administered and distributed throughout the month of February at various church gatherings such as committee meetings, worship services, social functions, and choir rehearsals until sample goal was reached. The larger survey utilized various scales and consisted of a total of one hundred and three questions that measured identification, self-disclosure, values, religiosity, worship preferences, music preferences, age, race, income, family size, and sex. Participants signed an IRB-approved consent form, which was kept separate from the actual survey. The time to complete the anonymous survey ranged from fifteen to sixty minutes. This article is a portion of the larger study.

Instruments

Identification with a psychological group scale (IDPG). Identification with a psychological group (IDPG) or organization is defined as the perception of shared experiences and shared characteristics of group members. It differs conceptually from the related organizational commitment construct in that IDPG focuses on perceptions rather than affect. This is a self-report survey developed by Mael and Tetrick (1992). In Mael and Tetrick's study, the ten items were found to have a coefficient alpha of .76. They used factor analysis to uncover the underlying structure of the ten items. After rotation two components emerged, a six-item component equivalent to perceived Shared Experiences (IDPG-SE, $\alpha = .81$) and a four-item component equivalent to Shared Characteristics (IDPG-SC, $\alpha = .66$). The ten-item scale is used in this study to measure the extent to which worshippers identify with the LCMS.

Worship preferences. A fourteen-item measurement was developed for this study that attempted to operationalize worship style differences. Participants were asked to what extent they liked certain components of worship on a scale of 1-9 (1=not at all, 9=very much). Examples of these include questions such as: "I like drums in worship" or "I like responsive readings in worship."

Music preferences. Although classifications of music are often controversial and can be divided into genres in many different ways (Rubin, West, & Mitchell, 2001; Selfhout, Branje, ter Bogt, & Meeus, 2009) this study divided music into the following eighteen genres: Classic Rock, Folk/Indie, Classical, Jazz, Blues, Rap/HipHop, Country, Pop, Big Band, Punk/Grunge, Alternative, Heavy Metal, Latin, R&B/Soul, Techno/Dance, Opera, World and Ska (World and Ska were not included in the analysis due to excessive missing data). Participants were asked to what extent they liked these genres on a scale of 1-9 (1= not at all, 9=very much).

Demographic profile. The questionnaire asked the following demographic information: age, ethnicity, level of education, income, sex, marital status, and family size. Participants were also asked the following four questions regarding church attendance: Which service do you attend? Which service do you prefer? How long have you been attending this church? How long have you been a Lutheran?

Results

Traditional and Contemporary worship style have long been recognized as legitimate distinctions for describing differences in worship services, particularly within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. These differences are not easy to conceptualize, due to the differences that exist among congregations. This study conceptualized traditional and contemporary worship style based on specific components each service offered in the church chosen for this study. These components were factor analyzed using principle component analysis with Varimax (orthogonal) rotation. The analysis yielded two factors explaining a total of 65.76% of the variance for the entire set of variables. Factor 1 was labeled traditional worship due to the high positive loadings of traditional worship elements practiced in the sample population. The first factor explained 37.82% of the variance (see Table 1).

The second factor derived was labeled contemporary worship due to high positive loadings of contemporary worship elements practiced in the sample population. The variance explained by this factor was 27.94% (see Table 1). Rotation converged in three iterations.

Table 1: Factor Analysis of Worship Elements

Communality	Loadings		
	Factor 1: Traditional	Factor 2: Contemporary	
I like to recite the creed in worship	.818	-.039	.670
I like the altar paraments to change colors according to the church year	.806	-.139	.668
I like responsive readings in worship	.803	-.020	.646
I like formality in worship	.775	-.407	.766
I like to sing from a hymnal or bulletin	.774	-.392	.753
I like the pastor to wear a robe during worship	.762	-.443	.777
I like the pastor to preach from the pulpit	.725	-.405	.689
I like to sing the liturgy	.716	-.132	.529
I like the organ in worship	.560	-.343	.431
I like drums in worship	-.240	.872	.818
I like a guitar in worship	-.119	.818	.684
I like to clap my hands to the music when I sing	-.093	.782	.620to
I like the words of the songs be displayed on a screen	-.273	.757	.648to
I like informality in worship	-.217	.679	.508
Cronbach's Alpha	.926	.865	
Eigenvalue	5.295	3.912	
% of total variance	37.82 %	27.94%	
Total Variance		65.76%	

The first research question asked: “Does worship preference predict organizational identification?” This question was examined by using the *Identification with a Psychological Group Scale (IDPG)* developed by Mael and Tetrick (1992). In this study the scale’s reliability with all ten items included was $\alpha = .859$. The scree plot indicated that this was a unidimensional scale, and therefore one scale was created using all ten items. To answer this research question, a multiple regression statistic was utilized using the IDPG scale as the dependent variable and the contemporary and traditional factors as the independent variables.

The multiple regression results showed a significant overall prediction of organizational identity, with 16.5% ($R^2 = .165$) of the variance explained by the two predictors. The traditional factor significantly and uniquely relates to organizational identity ($\beta = .406^{**}$) and was also significantly correlated with the dependent variable ($r = .405^{**}$), both at the .01 level. The contemporary factor was not related significantly to the IDPG. Substantively, the model is shown to be significant. Therefore, the worship elements that one prefers can be used to predict their identification with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). Those who prefer traditional elements of worship will have a stronger organizational identification with the LCMS. Therefore the answer to this question is, “Yes, worship preference does predict organizational identification.”

The second question asked: “Does music preference predict worship style preference?” This question was examined by asking participants to rate how much they liked or disliked various music genres using a scale of 1-9 (1 = not at all, 9 = very much). A logistic regression was used to predict worship style preferences from music preferences using the self-categorization or forced-choice attendance measure (see Table 2). This model predicts correctly 66.7% of participants as preferring traditional worship and 88.6% of participants as preferring contemporary worship. The model therefore correctly classified 80.4% of the participants. This beyond chance classification is significant, as shown through the Press’ Q which is 41.29 ($p \leq .001$). Therefore, the answer to this question is: “Yes, music preference does predict worship style preference” (see Table 2).

Table 2: Logistic Regression Predicting Worship Style

DV: "Which service do you attend most often (0) traditional or (1) contemporary?"

Independent Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp (B)
<u>Block 1</u>					
Classic Rock	.373	.150	6.147	.013	1.452
Folk/Indie	-.084	.121	.485	.486	.919
Classical	-.151	.156	.938	.333	.859
Jazz	-.122	.187	.426	.514	.885
Blues	-.155	.197	.343	.558	.891
Rap/HipHop	.355	.141	6.298	.012	1.426
Country	.049	.116	.176	.675	1.050
Pop	.034	.160	.044	.833	1.034
BigBand	.145	.141	1.059	.303	1.156
Punk/Grunge	.054	.165	.107	.744	1.056
Alternative	.025	.157	.025	.875	1.025
Heavy Metal	.084	.143	.348	.555	1.088
Latin	.378	.163	5.405	.020	1.459
R&B/Soul	.098	.157	.388	.533	1.103
Techno/Dance	-.314	.154	4.148	.042	.731
Opera	-.187	.139	1.805	.179	.830
Constant	-2.273	1.490	2.327	.127	.103

Table 2: Logistic Regression Predicting Worship Style (continued)

<u>Statistics</u>			
-2LL	107.154		
Chi-square	41.037	<i>df</i> =16	Sig.< .001
Cox & Snell R Square	.307		
Nagelkerke R Square	.418		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	2.584	<i>df</i> =8	Sig. 958

Classification Results

	Final Predicted Group		Percentage Correct
	Traditional	Contemporary	
Traditional	28(66.7%)	4(33.3%)	66.7%
Contemporary	8(11.4%)	62(88.6%)	88.6%
			80.4%

Note: *Press' Q* = 41.29. *df* = 1. *Xcrit*² = 10.83. *p* = .001

In order to control for age, sex, education and income, two multiple regressions were conducted using the traditional and contemporary factors as the DVs. Substantively, the total model is shown to be significant in each case. Therefore the music genres one prefers can be used to predict one's worship style preference, even when controlling for age, sex, education and income (see Table 3).

Table 3: Prediction of Traditional and Contemporary Factor by Music Preference with Controls

<i>Block #</i>	<i>Variable</i>	Traditional Factor			Contemporary Factor		
		<i>r</i>	<i>Final β</i>	<i>R</i> ² Change	<i>r</i>	<i>Final β</i>	<i>R</i> ² Change
1	Age		.209	.093*	-.196*	-.077	.124**
	Male	.304**	-.074		-.287*	-.312*	
2	Education	-.018	-.059	.005	-.251*	-.082	.083*
	Income	.156	.205		-.337**	-.215	
3	Classic Rock	.027	-.201	.289*	.272*	.295*	.196 α
	Folk/Indie	.270*	.388**		.030	-.006	
	Classical	.229*	.054		-.012	.134	
	Jazz	.175*	-.066		.052	.026	
	Blues	.224*	.071		.083	.044	
	Rap/HipHop	-.032	.020		.277*	.090	
	Country	.082	.233*		.235*	.170	
	Pop	-.049	-.081		.225*	.049	
	Big Band	.135	-.136		.051	-.033	
	Punk/Grunge	-.151	-.141		.155	.205	
	Alternative	-.049	-.109		.024	-.222	
	Heavy Metal	.038	.306*		.102	-.578	
	Latin	.191	-.055		.188*	.239	
	R&B/Soul	.101	.107		.220*	.072	
Techno/Dance	.103	.146		.191*	.010		
Opera	.355**	.283*		-.053	-.089		

Total	R^2	.387	R^2	.403
	Adjusted	.239	Adjusted R^2	.259
	R^2			
	$F(20,83)$	2.616	$F(20,83)$	2.796
	P	.001	p	.001

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

Organizational Identity

The first research question was interested in whether worship preference predicted organizational identity. There were no significant relationships between organizational identity (which was measured using the IDPG scale) and the contemporary factor. However, results of this study indicated that those who prefer traditional components of worship have a stronger identification with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

These findings support previous research, as Seul (1999) recognized that institutions often use written forms to communicate and preserve their unique identity. The creed, liturgy, responsive readings, and hymnals are all written forms of communication that have been in existence in the traditional Lutheran service since the beginning of the reformation. These core features of identity are resistant to change because they are tied to the history of the organization (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Gioia, Shultz, & Corley, 2000, 2004) and are central, enduring and relatively permanent (Albert & Whetten, 1985).

Organizational identity is prominent whenever members of an organization ask themselves “Who are we?” (Albert & Whetten, 1985). It is the member’s collective understanding of what it is that distinguishes their organization from others, those characteristics that they believe to be central and relatively permanent (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Furthermore, according to the theory of “structural inertia” (Hannan & Freeman, 1984), the older an organization, the less likely they are to introduce changes (Chou & Russel, 2006;

Delacroix & Swaminathan, 1991; Kelly & Amburgey, 1991). The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod has been in existence for over a century and during this time period has, for the most part, utilized the liturgy and traditional hymns found within the standard Lutheran hymnals. These services often distinguish Lutherans from other denominations, giving them a sense of collective identity.

Fundamental to most theoretical and empirical definitions of organizational identity is that identity consists of features and characteristics that are central, enduring and distinctive (Gioia, Shultz, & Corley, 2004). There are several clear and distinctive differences in the two worship styles. For example, the permanence of the organ, hymnals and pulpit are in stark contrast to the temporal, ever-changing components found in the contemporary style of worship.

In a contemporary worship service, instruments are portable, the accompaniment is ever changing and words to the songs are projected on a screen for the moment, and then lost. New songs are constantly being written and old songs are frequently rearranged. Perhaps the symbolism found in the variability of the contemporary worship service and the predictability of the traditional worship service is a representation of organizational identity. The components of a contemporary worship service are temporal, always changing, and lived in the moment, whereas the components of a traditional worship service are permanent, constant, and resistant to change.

A positive relationship between *organizational identity* and the question: *How long have you been attending this church?* (.151*) suggests that those who have been attending Trinity for a longer period of time have a stronger identification with the LCMS. This is supported by organizational identity research that found when an organization adds new members who are not tied to the history of the organization they have different ideas about what is central, enduring and distinctive (Gioia, Shultz, & Corley, 2004).

It is interesting to note, however, no significant relationship exists between the length of time an individual has been a Lutheran and their identification with the LCMS. Perhaps this is explained by the broader term “Lutheran”, which encompasses all synods and the more narrow term “LCMS.” That is, those who identify themselves as Lutheran have not categorized

themselves as belonging to the group of LCMS Lutherans. Again, this can be explained by the SIT term, *social categorization* (Ellemers, et.al., 2003) which is conceptualized as the recognition individuals have of belonging to one group and not the other.

The implications at the organizational level suggest that as the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod continues to grow and change, newer members may identify to a lesser degree with the organization. Moreover, differing views about what is central, distinctive and enduring creates multiple identities, which will allow the organization to adapt more readily to change (Pratt & Foreman, 2000a). Perhaps, as an organization develops multiple identities, the differences that exist between groups are lessened, which, according to Social Identity Theory, results in less conflict (Herriot, 2007). However, if the dominant identity (traditional) does not adapt to the changing environment and other possible forms of worship, conflict will continue to erupt.

This is not implying that those who enjoy traditional worship must change their worship style, however, adaptation and acceptance of other possibilities will help reduce the conflict. Likewise, concentrating on superordinate goals will also help to reduce conflict (Sherif, 1958). This is accomplished because superordinate goals are not unique to only one group within an organization but to all of the groups within the organization, which helps members develop a unified vision and a distinct social identity. The specific church in this case study frequently gathers together members from both services and develops superordinate goals that focus on the larger mission of *Trinity Lutheran Church*. At the same time, Trinity also highlights specific ministries within the church, creating multiple identities that allow the organization to adapt to change.

Worship Style and Music Preference

The second research question investigated whether music preference predicted worship style preference. Analysis indicated that there is a positive relationship between music preference and worship style preference. The more one prefers contemporary components of worship the more they prefer the genres of *Classic Rock, Rap/HipHop, Country, Pop, Latin, R&B/Soul* and *Techno/Dance*. All of these music genres include drums, guitar, and informality,

which were all components of the contemporary worship factor; therefore this relationship is not surprising.

Conversely, the more one prefers traditional components of worship the more they prefer the genres of *Folk/Indie*, *Classical*, *Jazz*, *Blues* and *Opera*. Research indicates that Opera and Classical music appeals to older, well-educated individuals with higher income levels (Keaney & Oskala, 2007). It is interesting to note that these genres do not contain heavy drums, which are often the last instrument to be accepted into a traditional church setting and the most recognizable instrument in popular music (Hunt, 2007). In fact, it is doubtful that if one were to sample different radio stations, one would be able to find a popular song that does not contain drums. Further investigation of the data, revealed that drums had a strong negative relationship with every component of the traditional worship factor.

Since research shows that Opera and Classical music appeal to a certain demographic (Keaney & Oskala, 2007), this study investigated age, sex, income and education in order to further examine worship and music preference. Results indicated that those who prefer traditional worship are older, better educated, and have higher income levels than those who prefer contemporary worship. These findings indicate that demographics are an important factor in worship style as expected, but that music preference still largely influences an individual's worship style choice.

Generations have often used music as a vehicle for expressing their identity primarily because music has the ability to transcend social boundaries, express cultural meaning, and amplify message content that oftentimes block communication (Chafee, 1985). Perhaps this occurs because music is able to offer a sense of group cohesiveness (Cavicchi, 1998; Eyerman, 2002), which allows an individual to feel they are a part of a group (Tajfel, 1972). This has several implications for the church.

First, knowing what genres of music one prefers enables those in leadership to design effective worship services that will cross social boundaries and offer a sense of community as well as amplify the content of the message. For this reason, when churches are considering worship music they must consider the current memberships' music preference as well as the

music preferences of those they are trying to reach. Furthermore, one must take into consideration that younger, less educated, individuals in lower income brackets appear to prefer a contemporary worship style. Therefore it is important, not only from an outreach perspective, but from a financial perspective, that rather than dismantle particular styles of worship it would make sense to add additional forms of worship that incorporate a variety of musical genres.

Social comparison, the second social psychological process in Social Identity Theory, provides theoretical support for these findings. When people determine the value of groups and individuals by comparing them on various dimensions (Ellemers, et al., 2003), it produces a competitive dynamic that encourages group members to enhance their group status. Tajfel and Turner (1986) found that when a group's positive identity is challenged or impeded by an out-group, conflict would often ensue. Further research has shown that if one perceives the group to be threatened, then one's social identity and self-esteem is threatened, causing fear, which leads to conflict (Herriot, 2007). Thus, as parishioners understand that their preferred music is not only accepted, but also valued, they feel more secure which increases their self-esteem and reinforces their social identity. As a result, the conflict that often results (Ellemers, et al., 2003) from this musical comparison may lessen.

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. First, it focuses on a single church and the relatively small total size of the sample may have limited some statistical analysis. However, it provides a template on which to build and model future studies. Although this study examined organizational identity within the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, other levels of organizational identity could have yielded different results. The study could have examined the organizational identity of the individual church (Trinity Lutheran), the larger denomination "Lutheran" (not LCMS), and the religion (Christian).

A further limitation is an inevitable outcome of exploratory research. Because previous research conceptualizing contemporary and traditional worship was limited, the study represents a promising, but cautious exploration of these concepts that could perhaps benefit from further development. A content analysis could investigate different worship services

across a wide variety of churches in order to solidify the meaning of Traditional and Contemporary Styles of worship. Further development of worship components could prove to be valuable, extending the understanding of the role of worship music as a form of communication and a representation of organizational identification. For example, *I like guitar in worship* could be separated into different types of guitar (i.e., electric, classical, rhythm). This could be repeated for various worship components.

Additionally, this study could be replicated with different churches and populations. The results could be analyzed and compared to this research. It would be enlightening to note the differences between urban and suburban Lutheran churches as well as inter-denominational differences. In addition, surveying churches that offered one worship style as opposed to churches that offered several worship styles would offer a unique perspective.

Different methodologies could be employed in order to measure or explore the issue of Social Identity within the context of a worshipping community. It is possible that, because the survey was conducted in the church, individuals' answers reflected their social identity as a Lutheran. Experiments could be conducted to further investigate this possibility.

Conclusion

This study explored worship style, music and social identity from a communication perspective. In order to do this, a number of variables were examined. Results indicated that Lutherans who prefer traditional worship components identify more strongly with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS). Moreover, music preference strongly predicts worship style preference.

Lull (1985) understood that music was not only a form of communication but that music was communication, able to express various socio-cultural norms and beliefs. This research was interested in music as communication. Music genres provide a common ground to share culture, enabling us to communicate who we are and what we believe. The findings of this study indicate that music preferences provide insight into how one identifies with the church and the implications for church leadership. There are clear distinctions between those

who prefer contemporary or traditional styles of worship and their music preferences. Therefore, music must be given adequate attention in the church.

Of particular interest to church leaders, from a Social Identity perspective is to reduce and alleviate the conflict over music by creating superordinate goals (Sherif, 1958). Rather than concentrating on music style, it would be advantageous to concentrate on the common goal of the organization and use different music genres to accomplish that goal. Furthermore, as churches develop a greater understanding of the variables that contribute to identity and worship style preference, they can more effectively communicate to their parishioners, their community, their city and their world.

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