



# Biblio- and music therapeutic identification among highly educated Korean emerging adults in a heterogeneous context

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Biblio- and music therapeutic identification among highly educated Korean emerging  
adults in a heterogeneous context

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A Thesis in the Field of Psychology  
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University

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## Abstract

This thesis investigated therapeutic identification within bibliotherapy and music therapy. Drawing on a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary approach, the study challenged traditional notions of homogenous therapeutic identification by introducing the concept of therapeutic heterogeneity. The exploration was embedded in the experiences of highly educated South Korean emerging adults' engagement with foreign literature and music, which allowed for a nuanced understanding of identification processes that transcend cultural and demographic boundaries.

The research was guided by three interrelated research questions that explored the mechanics, psychology, and philosophy of bibliotherapy and music therapy. The study's methodology combined qualitative thematic analysis with phenomenological case studies to ensure a holistic and authentic exploration of participants' experiences.

The analysis of mechanics revealed similarities and differences between bibliotherapy and music therapy. While both modalities share elements and techniques of symbolic systems, distinctions arose in their nuances, such as genre sub-categories. These mechanics yield distinct initial therapeutic effects, with literature emphasizing interpretation and analysis and music evoking aesthetic and cultural appreciation. The psychology theme revealed that participants' emotions imbricated or overlapped with therapeutic materials akin to projection in psychoanalysis. Emotional bonds formed with stories and compositions could be attributed to participants projecting their experiences and feelings onto the texts. The analysis also uncovered transformative coping strategies

and psychosocial developmental patterns that shed light on the stages and processes of therapeutic identification. Philosophical dimensions emerged as a central aspect, with both modalities invoking an aesthetic transcendental existential ontology.

The implications of this study are far-reaching, offering insights into therapeutic practice, autonomy, inclusivity, and interdisciplinary approaches. By recognizing therapeutic heterogeneity, therapists can expand their materials and enhance the impact of bibliotherapy and music therapy. The study promotes inclusivity and encourages a holistic approach to well-being while integrating literature and music to present a novel strategy for psychological health across divergent cultural contexts.

## Dedication

To Jungwoo and Adri ...

## Acknowledgments

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## Chapter I.

### Introduction

The intimate relationship between humans and the arts – particularly literature and music – has existed since antiquity. The healing powers of literature were renowned in ancient Egypt, where the entrance to the library at Thebes welcomed readers with the engraving, “the healing place of the soul” (McCulliss, 2012, p. 24). Similarly, the therapeutic application of music can be traced to the legendary myth of Orpheus and the Biblical tale of David and Saul (Bonde, 2019; Bryan, 2020). The significance of literature and music has endured over the millennia, and their fortitude contributes to the sustained academic interest in their healing of the psyche (Crothers, 1916; McNicol & Brewster, 2018; Shechtman, 2009).

Over the years, distinct forms of bibliotherapy and music therapy have emerged. Generally, both modalities encompass interaction with or intervention by a trained therapist. However, scholarship and practice recognize that *reading bibliotherapy* involves individuals who independently read for mental health improvements without external therapeutic guidance, and *receptive music therapy* comprises listening to music without intervention by a therapist (Grocke & Wigram, 2007; Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012; Jacobsen et al., 2019). These specific modalities of bibliotherapy and music therapy are receptive, devoid of therapist involvement, and rely substantially on self-identifying with the literature or music to yield positive mental health results. This type of reading or listening is distinct from leisurely engaging with literature or music, as it is

driven by the intention of the reader or listener to gain psychological insights from an immersive experience.<sup>1</sup>

### Therapeutic Identification

The expression of a preference for either a short story (hereinafter story) or composition signals that a person identifies with literature or music, and such identification initiates the therapeutic process. The therapeutic process in biblio- and music therapy is relatively similar and consists of the following three primary steps: identification, catharsis, and integration (Bailey, 1984; Pardeck, 1998). This study focuses primarily on the first step – identification. Identification is the psycho- and ethnographic association or resonance between individuals and stories or compositions (De Vries et al., 2017; Lenkowsky, 1987; McNicol & Brewster, 2018). When there is a lack of identification, the therapeutic value of literature and music diminishes. Figure 1 conceptualizes therapy on a linear continuum from entry to exit. Within the process, multiple iterative cycles of identification, catharsis, and integration could occur as the reader or listener identifies with different elements of the story or composition at different times. A more detailed description is provided in the literature review.

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<sup>1</sup> In alignment with Institutional Review Board approval (see Chapter II) of a non-interventionist data collection strategy and for the sake of brevity, the general terms bibliotherapy and music therapy are hyphenated as biblio- and/or music therapy, yet the abridged version specifically denotes reading bibliotherapy and/or receptive music therapy.



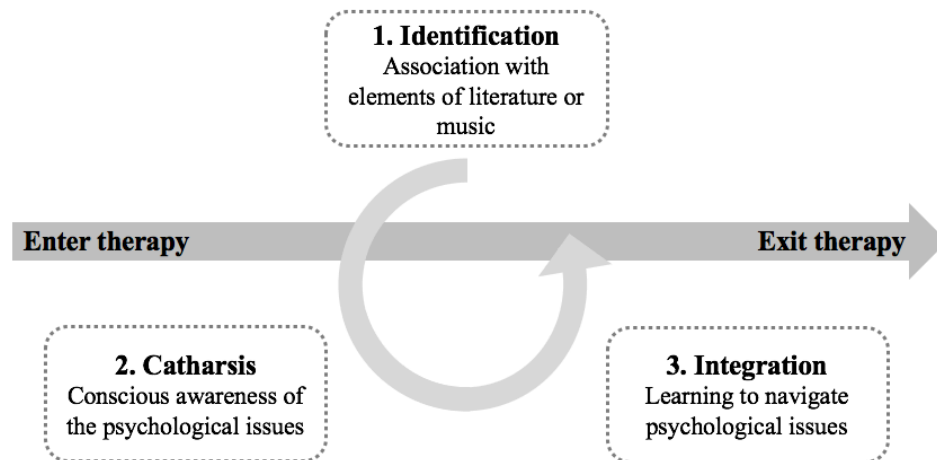


Figure 1. Therapeutic Process.

Identification occurs both contextually and textually. On the one hand, contextual identification relates to psychographic, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic similarities between individuals and literature or music (Darrow & Molloy, 1998; Grocke & Wigram, 2007). On the other hand, textual identification occurs through the alignment of the text-intrinsic or compositional features of the story or composition with an individual's reading or musical preferences. For example, bibliotherapy is effective because individuals can identify with the text-intrinsic features or literary elements of a story, such as the prose, themes, characters, plot, setting, conflict, and resolution (Freitag et al., 1999; Heath et al., 2005). Music therapy is effective when individuals identify with the musical parameters of compositions, including the dynamics, structure, harmony or chord progression, melody, rhythm and beat, texture, timbre or sound quality, and tonality or pitch. Both contextual and textual identification are crucial in optimizing the value of these therapeutic modalities (Grocke & Wigram, 2007; Jacobsen et al., 2019).

## Therapeutic Hetero- & Homogeneity

Generally, stories or compositions that communicate through recognizable languages, imagery, metaphors, expressions, cultural values, and emotional signifiers are prioritized for therapy (Freitag et al., 1999). When individuals share similar psycho- and ethnographic backgrounds with the literature and music they engage in a homogenous therapeutic setting that enhances the likelihood of identification. Conversely, research suggests that heterogeneous therapeutic settings with less psycho- and ethnographic imbrication lead to weaker identification and less effective therapeutic outcomes (see e.g., Berns, 2004; Darrow & Molloy, 1998; Freitag et al., 1999; Lutovac & Kaasila, 2020).

However, this study's exploration of the positive effects of biblio- and music therapy in heterogeneous settings challenge the notion of therapeutic homogeneity. Preliminary findings suggest that South Korean (hereinafter Korean/Korea) emerging adults can identify with and benefit from reading English literature because they are able to transfer their attitudes toward death and suicide to the characters in stories despite the textual heterogeneity (Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2021). Similarly, music therapy has been successful in multicultural (i.e., heterogeneous) settings even when there is minimal psycho- and ethnographic imbrication between the listener and the music (Belgrave & Kim, 2021). However, what contributes to identification in such heterogeneous settings remains unclear. Therefore, identification with either literature or music that differs from the psycho- and ethnographic identities of readers or listeners should be explored to illuminate and understand the positive psychological effects of reading literature and listening to music.

## Research Design

The present study surveyed a qualitative convenience sample of Korean emerging adults by exploring their identification experiences with stories and instrumental compositions from diverse cultural contexts. The use of either biblio- or music therapy in non-clinical settings enable emotional, spiritual, and quality-of-life advances without intervention by a therapist (Grocke & Wigram, 2007; Jacobsen et al., 2019). Data collection through online writing prompts prompt participants to reflect on their experiences and communicate them without the pressures of face-to-face interaction in English. This study focused on a highly educated group of Korean emerging adults, rendering it an intrinsic case study due to this population's intriguing psycho- and ethnographic nature and developmental challenges (Cohen et al., 2005; Dörnyei, 2007).

## Research Questions

The underlying presupposition guiding this study is that if Korean emerging adults can identify with literature or music from diverse contexts within a heterogeneous therapeutic setting of psycho- and ethnographic diversity, therapeutic homogeneity is not a precondition for effective therapy and improved well-being. Consequently, the following research questions propelled this investigation:

1. With what elements of foreign literature or music do Korean emerging adults identify?
2. Why do Korean emerging adults express preferences for some elements of foreign literature or music?
3. Are there associations between literary and musical identification in this study?

By addressing the research questions, this study accrued suggestive evidence, indicating that self-directed biblio- and music therapy in heterogeneous cultural contexts positively impact psychological well-being.

### Significance of Study

Research on therapeutic identification remains limited, and within this constrained research domain, there is a significant oversight in exploring heterogeneous therapeutic identification. While, from a holistic and theoretical perspective, scholarship in biblio- and music therapy encourages embracing and promoting psycho- and ethnographic heterogeneity and diversity, the practical application of these therapies during sessions often emphasizes psychographic homogeneity or uniformity (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). That is, in theory psycho- and ethnographic diversity are embraced, but in practice uniformity is preferred. This disparity between the overarching theoretical viewpoint and the localized practical approach is paradoxical. The present study aims to resolve this paradox by implementing a carefully considered research design, deliberately exposing a homogeneous population to a selection of psychographically and ethnoculturally diverse stories and compositions.

A deeper understanding of the relationship between individuals and the literature or music that they consume for therapeutic purposes is significant for the academic and therapeutic communities. The significance for the academic community is threefold: Firstly, the present study stands as a maverick, going against mainstream scholarship to point research toward relatively unexplored directions. Secondly, the robust research design demonstrates that valuable insights can be obtained to challenge ingrained

perspectives through the creative application of qualitative methods. Finally, the findings contribute meaningfully to integrating psychological and philosophical concepts, fostering the recognition of the philosophy of psychology in academia and practice. Therapists may consider stimulating such rewarding dialogues when participants are inclined to engage in philosophical conversations on ontological and existential issues.

The practice of biblio- and music therapy benefits from this study by providing tangential evidence of the efficacy of these therapies for a wide range of emotional challenges. Moreover, it highlights how literature, in particular, offers a secure environment for exploring relationship issues, as many participants reflected on their own traumatic experiences.

Most importantly, the study breaks the therapeutic mold to benefit from the therapeutic cycle that is initiated through identification. Individuals do not have to be matched with literature and music that mirror their psycho- and ethnographic dispositions because literature and music imbue a universal quality that goes beyond the scientific desire for homogenous categories (Manchaiah et al., 2017). As such, the therapeutic cycle can be self-directed, and individuals can exercise agency over their psychological well-being. In addition, therapeutic identification is not limited to biblio- and music therapy but extends to other modalities, such as psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness therapy, and cross-cultural therapy. Consequently, the findings of this research may impact the understanding of an individual's agency over personal development or self-improvement and the dynamics of therapist-directed sessions.

## Definition of Terms

Before embarking on the literature review and methods section, it is essential to clearly understand the key terms and concepts used throughout this study. The following section provides comprehensive definitions of terms and serves as a foundation for the subsequent chapters, thus enabling a congruent exploration of the research questions.

*Reading Bibliotherapy:* “Biblio” refers to books and, by extension, to literature, prose, and poetry. In this study, “biblio” refers to short stories because of the accessibility of this genre during data collection. Therapy refers to the process that facilitates the healing of an ailment. Therefore, “bibliotherapy” alleviates mental health issues by reading stories (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012; McNicol & Brewster, 2018). Bibliotherapy is also known as therapeutic and transformative reading, bibliocounseling, bibliopsychology, biblioprohylaxis, and literatherapy (Pardeck, 1998). The umbrella term “bibliotherapy” does not include narrative therapy that refers to the creative, compelling telling of one’s personal story, such as Kalanithi’s (2016) autobiographical illness narrative *When Breath Becomes Air*, although one participant did consider writing the response essay as narrative therapy.

*Receptive Music Therapy:* The World Federation of Music Therapy (2011) provides the following definition: Music therapy is a dedicated practice that appropriates music and its elements to provide interventions in different contexts, including medical, educational, and daily life settings. It is used with families, social groups, or individuals to improve their general well-being and addresses various aspects, such as physical, public, communicative, affective, cognitive, and spiritual health. This field involves

research, application, educational programs, and clinical training that all adhere to professional standards that consider cultural, social, and political factors.

*Identification:* The American Psychological Association (APA, 2009) defines identification as an unconscious process during which a person associates with the views and characteristics of others. In biblio- and music therapy, identification entails psycho- and ethnographic associations between readers or listeners and literature or music (Berns, 2004; Lutovac & Kaasila, 2020). Identification occurs when individuals recognize positive or negative aspects of themselves in the story or composition.

*Emerging Adults:* The developmental period between ages 18 through 25 in industrialized countries is called emerging adulthood. During this period, young people become more independent, explore life's possibilities, and eventually make long-term commitments. Arnett (2000, 2007, 2018) recognizes the following five features that distinguish emerging adulthood from other developmental life-span phases: identity explorations, uncertainty or ambiguity, self-focus, feeling in-between or suspended, and possibilities or optimism.

*Heterogeneous Context:* In this study, a heterogeneous quasi-therapeutic context refers to the psycho- and ethnographic differences between foreign literature and music on the one hand and ethnic Korean emerging adults on the other. These differences create a heterogeneous context that challenges the assumption of the necessity for a homogenous therapeutic context in which the story or composition and the participant share corresponding characteristics.

*Projection:* Projection is a mechanism of identification (Pardeck, 1998). In general, projection is used as a psychoanalytic defense mechanism to ascribe one's

negative motives and feelings to others and evade responsibility (VandenBos, 2009). However, projection also entails the mental process of apperception (Shrodes, 1949; 1960): the assimilation of an idea into one's knowledge (VandenBos, 2009). This assimilation is akin to what Slavson (1944) calls "infectiousness of mood" and "interstimulation" in group psychotherapy (p. 588). Slavson (1950) refers to this as "identification therapy" where the "[...] corrective effect of a situation on one patient [is] a result of his [her] identifying with another actively participating in treatment" (p. 264).

The present study aims to investigate the identification experiences of Korean emerging adults with foreign stories and instrumental compositions from diverse contexts that create a heterogeneous therapeutic context. As such, it challenges the notion of therapeutic homogeneity and satiates a significant research void. The following section meticulously reviews current literature to create a comprehensive background against which the research objective can be fulfilled.

### Review of the Literature

The literature review begins by chronicling the efficacy of biblio- and music therapy as non-pharmaceutical interventions. These interventions are deliberately carried out with the goal of mitigating psychological distress, as opposed to engaging in reading and listening purely for leisure or enjoyment. Despite their proven efficacy, these therapies are not without scrutiny, and thus justifiable critique is introduced. While the study focuses primarily on therapeutic identification rather than catharsis and integration, the three phases of therapy are detailed to lay the foundation for two research strands that illuminate the theoretical and practical understandings of identification. The two main



strands of research under investigation include preference studies and ethnocultural identification.

#### Efficacy of Biblio- & Music Therapy

Historically, bibliotherapy research faced initial skepticism, but subsequent studies have shed light on its positive effects. Lenkowsky's (1987) review and analyses report that bibliotherapy contributes to self-actualization, attitudinal change, self-concept expansion, and didactic benefits. Marrs (1995), however, conducted a meta-analysis of 70 empirical studies, and he reports that bibliotherapy benefits assertiveness, anxiety, and sexual dysfunction more significantly than depression and career challenges. In contrast with Marrs (1995), Gualano et al. (2017) report positive long-term effects in reducing depression among adults in their systematic review of randomized clinical trials. Sharma et al. (2014) demonstrate statistically significant increases in resilience and mindfulness and decreases in stress and anxiety through a 12-week bibliotherapy program. Moreover, De Vries et al. (2017) highlight the positive effects of bibliotherapy on children and youth suffering from trauma. These findings chronicle an evolving understanding of the benefits of bibliotherapy over time, with increased reading proficiency as a likely moderating factor (Stanovich, 2000).

The Covid-19 pandemic entered bibliotherapy research as a noteworthy moderating factor around 2020. In their review and analysis of 35 studies on caregivers' mental health, Wang, Bressington, et al. (2020) found that bibliotherapy has significant pooled effects on depression, self-efficacy, and anxiety. Monroy-Fraustro et al. (2021) confirmed these results in their systematic review of 13 articles that report using

bibliotherapy as a non-pharmaceutical mental health intervention during the Covid-19 pandemic. The authors report that bibliotherapy is effective regardless of the condition (e.g., depression, stress, anxiety, panic attacks, functional psychosis, sexual dysfunction, insomnia, pathological gambling, and hypochondriasis). Bibliotherapy enhances patients' existential purpose and revitalizes their moral horizon by instilling or restoring a sense of autonomy and justice (Monroy-Fraustro et al., 2021). Importantly, none of the recent Covid-studies report any adverse effects related to bibliotherapy.

These positive findings indicate that identification must have occurred to initiate the therapeutic value of literature, given that the data from the review studies report moderate to significant mental health improvements. Moreover, bibliotherapy has shown promise in addressing depression and anxiety, which are significant challenges for emerging adults (Arnett et al., 2014). Drawing on the findings from the literature review, Table 1 categorizes the spectrum of psychological conditions and personal growth opportunities for which bibliotherapy has demonstrated efficacy. The subsequent discussion chapter will revisit bibliotherapeutic efficacy, specifically in the context of identification.

Table 1. Bibliotherapy Efficacy.

Psychological Challenges	Personal Growth
Anxiety	Attitudinal change
Assertiveness	Career change
Depression	Didactic growth
Functional psychosis	Existential purpose
Hypochondriasis	Mindfulness
Insomnia	Resilience
Panic attack	Self-actualization
Pathological gambling	Self-concept expansion
Sexual dysfunction	Self-efficacy
Stress	
Trauma	

In music therapy, systematic reviews and meta-analyses have primarily focused on cancer and neurodegenerative diseases. These studies concentrate largely on psychological well-being with cursory findings on physiological effects. Li et al. (2020) report a decrease in anxiety, depression, and pain in their analysis of 19 trials with 1548 patients. They identify an optimal intervention period of between one through two months. However, they do not address the benefits of the phases of treatment or disease. Köhler et al. (2020) address this limitation in an analysis of 21 studies on music therapy in the psychosocial treatment of cancer. They describe mixed yet generally significant positive results. The stage of disease management coincides with improvements: during curative treatment, anxiety, depression, and pain management improve; during palliative care, quality of life and spiritual well-being improve while pain and stress decrease. Yang et al. (2021) confirm significant improvements in depression and functional impairment but do not observe positive effects on anxiety.

The effectiveness of music therapy for neurodegenerative diseases yields more mixed results. Studies report moderate effects on anxiety and minor effects on behavioral symptoms among dementia patients (Ueda et al., 2013). Moreno-Morales et al. (2020) found no short-term improvements in cognitive functions or depression but observed long-term improvements in depression and quality of life. Wang, Zheng et al. (2020) did not find significant effects on cognitive function or quality of life for patients with Alzheimer's disease. However, Matziorinis and Koelsch (2022) report improvements in mood, depression, autobiographical recall, verbal fluency, and cognition in patients with Alzheimer's disease.

Among otherwise healthy populations that do not suffer from neurodegenerative diseases or cancer, music therapy is an effective treatment for depression (Tang et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2016) and stress (de Witte et al., 2022). Therefore, with an otherwise healthy Korean emerging adult population, receptive music therapy could alleviate the stress, depression, and anxiety that accompany navigating the vicissitudes of contemporary life.

The review studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of biblio- and music therapy as non-pharmaceutical interventions for mental health. It underscores the importance of identification in these therapeutic approaches while acknowledging the evolving nature of research and the impact of contextual factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The literature review outcomes have been systematically categorized in Table 2 according to the psychological, physiological, and spiritual areas of improvement due to music therapy. The discussion chapter will revisit music therapy efficacy about identification.

Table 2. Music Therapy Efficacy.

Psychological Challenges	Cognitive & Physiological Improvements	Personal Growth
Anxiety	Autobiographical Recall	Spiritual well-being
Depression	Cognition	
Mood	Functional Impairment	
Pain	Verbal fluency	
	Quality of life	

### Critique on Biblio- & Music Therapy

In addition to their efficacy, the literature review highlights particular critiques against and limitations of biblio- and music therapy research. One of the main criticisms

against bibliotherapy research is the presence of methodological limitations and the potential overvaluation of its applications. Lenkowsky (1987) points out that earlier positive findings may have been influenced by data collection bias, calling for more objective research designs. There need to be empirical investigations that establish the correlation and causation between bibliotherapy and emotional well-being to strengthen the empirical foundation (see e.g., Lenkowsky, 1987; Marrs, 1995).

Critics also caution that bibliotherapy should be used as an adjunct intervention rather than a standalone treatment, as it does not yield significant results in medical conditions (Heath et al., 2005), and its long-term effects on different populations are not well-understood (Gualano et al., 2017). Wang, Bressington, et al. (2020) specifically highlight the need for scrutiny when assessing the effect of bibliotherapy on depression due to high statistical heterogeneity resulting from different intervention strategies and variable outcomes. They call for more rigorous large-scale randomized trials.

Methodological criticisms are also directed at music therapy research. Many studies emphasize the need for larger sample sizes to enhance generalizability and address statistical heterogeneity (see e.g., de Witte et al., 2022; Moreno-Morales et al., 2020; Ueda et al., 2013). Performance and detection bias are common limitations due to the inherent nature of music therapy, as masked data is rarely used (Tang et al., 2020). Both de Witte et al. (2022) and Yang et al. (2021) highlight publication bias, suggesting that researchers may be inclined to focus on significant data to support their hypotheses.

Among the studies considered here, only one article reflected on the individual relationship between music and the participants. Köhler et al. (2020) criticize the 21 studies they reviewed for not reporting the moderating factors that co-determine the

effectiveness of music therapy. They urge future research to report participants' musical background, training, subjective value, and preference as moderating variables. These variables play a crucial role in music therapy's identification process and subsequent effectiveness. Given that biblio- and music therapy foster strong identification between literature or music and participants (see e.g., Köhler et al., 2020; Pardeck, 1998; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007), review papers may generally report on homogenous therapeutic settings that optimize the therapeutic effect.

Despite these critiques, it is essential to acknowledge that neither biblio- nor music therapy claims to be a ubiquitous panacea. These therapies are inexpensive, non-pharmaceutical, and non-invasive interventions with no known side effects (see e.g., de Witte et al., 2022; Gualano et al., 2017; Matziorinis & Koelsch, 2022; Monroy-Fraustro et al., 2021; Wang, Bressington, et al., 2020; Wang, Zheng, et al., 2020). Even with limited generalizability and moderate effects, biblio- and music therapy remain ethical alternatives because even minor enhancements through these therapies can be meaningful to patients (Köhler et al., 2020).

### Steps of the Therapeutic Process

The process in biblio- and music therapy involves ultimately three essential steps: identification, catharsis, and integration (see e.g., Bailey, 1984; De Vries et al., 2017; Lenkowsky, 1987; McNicol & Brewster, 2018; Pardeck, 1998). Identification establishes a connection between individuals and the literature or musical elements. In practice, for example, a bibliotherapist would enhance the reader's self-perception to stimulate recognition of the self in the characters or images of a story. The therapist would

highlight the similarities based on language, culture, or race to facilitate the initial connection after which an emotional connection is sought (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012). Identification amplifies an individual's self-perception and reduces a sense of otherness thus recognizing the self in others (Schrank & Engels, 1981).

In music therapy, the “in-search-of principle” (ISO principle) or “mood matching” is utilized whereby music initially matching the undesired mood with which the listener enters therapy is played and gradually transitioned to a more desired mood state by subsequent elevated compositions (see e.g., Heiderscheit & Madson, 2015; Ratcliff et al., 2014; Starcke et al., 2021). In practice, music therapists utilize catalogues such as *Symphonies for the soul: Classical music to cure any ailment* (Condy, 2021) to find recommended compositions that match the initial mood state of the listener. The ISO principle is reminiscent of psychological projection or what Slavson (1944) calls infectiousness of mood in identification therapy.

In bibliotherapy, the initial identification process typically revolves around a readily identifiable element, often emphasizing a physical characteristic rather than an emotional trait. In music therapy, a clear expression of an initial negative mood is typically met with music compositions that share similar tonal qualities, rather than those reflecting the desired emotional state. In both cases, there is a tendency toward therapeutic homogeneity. However, the present study acknowledges the value of these conventional approaches in facilitating identification while also presenting suggestive evidence that challenges this prevailing notion. It suggests that therapeutic heterogeneity may be equally effective in initiating the first step of the therapeutic process through

universal, abstract elements that are present in the literatures and music of the world, and thus this study counters the conventional preference for homogeneity.

Without identification, the subsequent steps of catharsis and integration cannot be effectively activated, which leads to diminished therapeutic outcomes. Catharsis, originating from Aristotle's concept, involves compassionate identification with a tragic hero that leads to the release and purification of emotions. Appropriately, in Greek, catharsis means "cleansing" (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012). Catharsis depends on abreaction; it brings unconscious material into consciousness by surfacing repressed or forgotten memories (McNicol & Brewster, 2018; VandenBos, 2009).

Integration is the third step, and it occurs when individuals retrospectively examine their identification and catharsis, seeking to understand the meaning behind their emotions. Such meaning-making occurs when individuals juxtapose themselves with the elements of literature or music. The process requires insight and self-awareness of individual characteristics that imbricate the identity markers of larger groups or cultures represented in or by the literature or music (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012; VandenBos, 2009). Sustained identification is vital in maintaining the therapeutic process, akin to an engaging plot line or harmonious melody that holds the attention.

Scholarship on biblio- and music therapy emphasizes deliberately matching readers and listeners with appropriate literary and musical choices to optimize therapeutic outcomes (Köhler et al., 2020; Pardeck, 1998; Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). By intentionally aligning individuals with elements that reflect their psycho- and ethnographic dispositions, a homogenous therapeutic setting is created. However, while identification supports the initiation and outcomes of biblio- and music therapy within a



homogenous context, it does not fully explain the positive effects in heterogeneous therapeutic settings, such as Korean emerging adults engaging with foreign literature and music. Such therapeutic heterogeneity occurs when individual characteristics do not match the therapeutic literature or music elements. As demonstrated in psychotherapeutic scholarship, ethnocultural therapeutic homogeneity may even hinder therapeutic outcomes (Comas-Díaz & Jacobsen, 1987). In addition, cross-cultural music therapy (Belgrave & Kim, 2021) and preliminary bibliotherapeutic research among Korean university students (Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2021) indicate that heterogeneity does not necessarily hinder positive therapeutic outcomes.

#### Preference as Expression of Identification

Identification is a complex, multifaceted process that extends beyond a mere association between individuals and the elements of literature or music (Bunt & Stige, 2014). It is more than just showing interest; it involves the expression of a preference. While research on reading and music interests often focuses on what individuals consume, preference research examines specific stimuli that generate relevant patterns and express individual attitudes (Spangler, 1983).

#### Reading Preference

Reading preference expresses a desired attitude (Spangler, 1983). This linear determination contrasts with Stanovich's (2000) reciprocal approach, suggesting that reading preference is influenced by increased reading, which, in turn, enhances reading ability. The expression of reading preference can be divided into three categories, covering social dimensions, personal attributes, and text-intrinsic factors.

Reading preferences shaped by social dimensions include a variety of factors that are socially constructed concepts and include the following: socioeconomic standing, reading ability, intelligence, motivation, imagination, age, and ethnicity (Rentfrow et al., 2011; Schutte & Malouff, 2004); sex and gender (Summers, 2013); and text and reader geographic familiarity (Becnel & Moeller, 2015). Personal traits revolve around the five-factor personality model that recognizes extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness as primary dimensions (APA, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2004). Text-intrinsic factors influencing reading preference encompass genre, character types, themes, settings, illustrations, text length, language, and difficulty (Ford et al., 2019; Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012). This study makes efforts to eliminate or control for as many of these variables as possible to ensure a reliable data set, detailed in the methods section (Chapter II) and interpreted in the discussion (Chapter IV).

Reading preference reciprocity is a bidirectional process that explicates the therapist's effect on the reader's choice. Therapists are encouraged to consult recourses that outline criteria for selecting appropriate reading material (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012).

1. Reading material should stimulate homogeneity or a group phenomenon for the reader (Cohen, 1994); the story, characters, and experiences should be plausible to the reader (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007).
2. Reading material should create a believable common experience with a clear message to be relevant.
3. Reading material should represent coping and resolve to facilitate healing.
4. Plot developments should encourage positive change.

5. The text should enable temporal projection by relating the past with the present and a hopeful future (Lutovac & Kaasila, 2020).
6. Reading material should be current, credible, and embrace cultural diversity and inclusivity (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2007). Indigenous bibliotherapeutic literature, for example, is often preferred for its unadulterated representation of cultural nuances (Freitag et al., 1999).

The criteria guide therapists to select reading materials that create alignment between the psycho- and ethnographic traits of readers and the stories. The criteria can influence the narrative transportability of readers, which refers to their level of immersion in a story through imagery, affect, and attention (Green & Brock, 2000). Higher narrative transportability correlates with consistent beliefs about the story and positive assessments of protagonists, while less-absorbed readers tend to encounter more false statements and have lower story-consistent beliefs and assessments (Dal Cin et al., 2004; Green & Brock, 2000). Narrative transportability acts as a moderator of narrative persuasion, which contributes to identification. “[I]dentification may not only lead to empathy and cognitive rehearsal of the beliefs but [...] also directly impact behavior and behavioral intentions by changing self-efficacy beliefs and making specific attitudes more accessible” (Dal Cin et al., 2004, p. 180.) Therefore, by applying transportation theory to reading preference, one can infer that low narrative transportability likely equates to low therapeutic identification and diminished therapeutic outcomes.

Based on the literature review about reading preference, Table 3 synthesizes and categorizes the three primary domains and their criteria determining preference for literature, thus ensuring therapeutic identification within homogenous settings. Note that

some criteria (i.e., age, sex/gender, intelligence) could be classified across different categories as they apply to social and personal domains; however, within this context, they derive meaning within their social context.

Table 3. Homogenous Therapeutic Reading Preference Criteria.

Social Dimensions	Intrinsic Personality Traits	Text-intrinsic Factors
Age	Agreeableness	Character Types
Ethnicity	Conscientiousness	Coping & Resolve
Homogeneity/Group Phenomenon	Extraversion	Cultural Diversity
Extrinsic Motivation	Imagination	Current & Credible
Geography	Intelligence	Difficulty
Socio-economic Standing	Intrinsic Motivation	Genre
Sex/Gender	Neuroticism	Language
	Openness	Illustrations
	Reading Ability	Indigenous Literature
		Positive Plot
		Relevance
		Settings
		Temporal Projection
		Themes
		Text Length

### Music Preference

Music preference is intricately tied to identity with individuals believing that their musical choices reflect their personalities (Marshall & Naumann, 2018). Music preference is a decision-making process when individuals make aesthetic decisions that express their chosen musical styles (i.e., a unidirectional or linear perspective) and experience reciprocal interactions between their preferences and subsequent cognitive, emotional, and physiological responses (Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2010). In this sense, music preference scholarship extends deeper into psychoanalysis than reading preference scholarship because it considers the expression of a music preference as introjection (i.e., unconscious assimilation) and projection (i.e., unconscious attribution) to identify with a composition (APA, 2009).

The moderating factors involved in expressing music preferences are generally categorized along similar blurred parameters as reading preference, which include social dimensions, personal attributes, and text-intrinsic factors. Social dimensions include age, culture, level of education, musical training, exposure to music, social learning, sex, gender, race, and intelligence. Personal factors include personality type and inherent musical qualities (Keston & Pinto, 1955; Marshall & Naumann, 2018; Meyers, 2012; Schäfer & Sedlmeier, 2010). The five personality attributes recognized in psychology usually include extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness (APA, 2009; Schutte & Malouff, 2004). The text-intrinsic factors that co-determine musical preference include genre, pitch, timbre, rhythm, melody, lyrics, and musical syntax (Patel, 2008). As with reading preference determinants, the moderating factors can often blur, as race and gender could be viewed as personal attributes influenced by more significant social dynamics (Marshall & Naumann, 2018).

In the context of this study, ethnocultural and linguistic parameters are particularly relevant due to the Korean emerging adult population's exposure to foreign music. Research indicates that Korean students rate K-Pop significantly higher than Western popular music (Auh et al., 2000). Subsequent research supports similar findings among Singaporean (Teo, 2005), Chinese and German (Gosselin, 2017), and American and Korean students (Yoo et al., 2018). These studies credit familiarity with the musical culture as a directive for preference.

However, when it comes to classical music, Korean students rate Western instrumental classical music significantly higher than traditional Korean music, which can be attributed to their informal musical experiences and exposure to Western classical

music (Auh et al., 2000). A large-scale study by Greenberg et al. (2022) involving 53 countries and over 284,000 participants supports the notion that people prefer music that reflects and reinforces their psychological needs, which suggests that psychological association plays a significant role in musical identification, often surpassing familiarity based on ethnocultural homogeneity (Greenberg et al., 2022).

Based on the literature review about music preference, Table 4 synthesizes and categorizes the three primary domains and their criteria that determine music preference. Similar to the classification of reading preference criteria, some criteria (i.e., age, sex/gender, intelligence) could be classified across different categories; however, in the research context, they also derive meaning within the social context.

Table 4. Homogenous Therapeutic Music Preference Criteria.

Social Dimensions	Intrinsic Personality Traits	Text-intrinsic Factors
Age	Agreeableness	Genre
Culture	Conscientiousness	Lyrics
Exposure to Music	Educational Level	Melody
Social Learning	Ethnocultural Familiarity	Musical Syntax
Sex/Gender	Extraversion	Pitch
Race	Intelligence	Rhythm
	Music Culture Familiarity	Timbre
	Musical Training	
	Neuroticism	
	Openness	
	Psychological Needs Association	

### Ethnocultural Identification

Ethnocultural identification plays a crucial role in biblio- and music therapy, as it involves the attribution of ethnocultural characteristics to elements of the therapeutic setting, such as the therapist, language, and literary or musical parameters (Comas-Díaz

& Jacobsen, 1987). Effective ethnocultural identification is strongly associated with the homogeneity between the reader's or listener's ethnocultural identity and that of the literature or music, as both reading and music preferences are deeply intertwined with an individual's identity (Darrow & Molly, 1998; Freitag et al., 1999; Marshall & Naumann, 2018).

In the context of bibliotherapy, ethnocultural identification manifests when readers seek out stories featuring individuals who share similar linguistic, racial, or ethnic characteristics. Studies indicate that students of color prefer multicultural literature, demonstrating their eagerness to engage with relatable texts that can impact their reading attitude and identification (Ford et al., 2019). In a case study involving African-American university students, multicultural books fostered a sense of safety, comfort, and relatability that enable freedom of expression during group therapy sessions (Rawls et al., 2020).

Ethnocultural approaches in music therapy mirror the principles observed in bibliotherapy research. A multinational inquiry found that a country's dominant religion influences young adults' perceptions and reactions to music, illustrating the strong association between personal identity and music preference (Manchaiah et al., 2017). The close association between personal identity and music preference encourages therapists to create homogenous therapeutic settings because "[...] if music therapy is to be effective, music that is familiar and specific to one's culture must be utilized in order to elicit favorable responses" (Darrow & Molloy, 1998, p. 27). This suggestion is supported by Ip-Winfield and Grocke (2011), who report that most of their participants in an Australian aged care facility preferred culture-specific songs in group music therapy.

However, emerging adults might be more receptive to exposure to music from alternative cultures associated with the neuroplasticity of the young (Pauwels et al., 2018).

In light of the support for ethnocultural therapeutic homogeneity, ethnocultural alignment with a therapist, literature, or music does not ensure therapeutic identification. Comas-Díaz and Jacobsen (1987) illustrate this with an apt case study in which an Argentinian therapist misdiagnosed a Chilean patient. The Chilean's attempted suicide was ascribed to an adjustment reaction in response to political repression. The therapist claimed to be familiar with this behavior because of their shared South American experiences with oppressive governments, which led to the misdiagnosis. A psychiatrist's follow-up assessment revealed that the patient suffered from command auditory hallucinations that required antipsychotic medication. This case illustrates that ethnocultural identification does not necessarily contribute to therapeutic identification (Comas-Díaz & Jacobsen, 1987).

In addition, this case also illustrates that patients, readers, or listeners are more than the sum of their ethnocultural environments. As Valentino (2006) cautions, "[...] therapists should be aware that reality can be cultivated and influenced by the culture in which the client is embedded" (p. 108). While Manchaiah et al. (2017) identify differences among young adults' perceptions of music in India, Iran, Portugal, the USA, and the UK, they also claim that the positive emotions or actions that music stimulates occur across the five countries "[...] indicating that this phenomenon is universal" (p. 30). However, they do not venture to explain such universality. This suggests that while ethnocultural factors play a role, underlying universal phenomena may also be at play.



Table 5 synthesizes and categorizes criteria for therapeutic identification suggested by ethnographic scholarship.

Table 5. Ethnographic Therapeutic Identification Criteria.

Ethnocultural Criteria for Bibliotherapeutic Identification	Ethnocultural Criteria for Music Therapeutic Identification
Freedom of Expression Language Comfort with Text Safety with Content Relatability Race	Familiarity Personal Identity Race Religion

### Summary

The present study focuses on therapeutic heterogeneity, specifically exploring the potential for positive therapeutic outcomes when Korean emerging adults engage with foreign literature and music. The literature review demonstrates that biblio- and music therapy have effectively addressed various mental health issues. To achieve the desired mental health outcomes, participants must identify with the stories or music used in therapy, as identification is the initial step in the therapeutic process. The expression of preference indicates that Korean emerging adults can relate to and engage with Western literature or music, supporting the notion of heterogeneous therapeutic identification. Building upon the insights from the literature review, Chapter II explicates the methods employed to answer the research questions.

## Chapter II.

### Methods

This chapter offers a complete exposition of the research design utilized to investigate the intricate process of biblio- and music therapeutic identification. The research design draws upon the three critical components outlined by Carter and Little (2007) in their framework for qualitative investigations, which include epistemology, methodology, and method (see Figure 2).

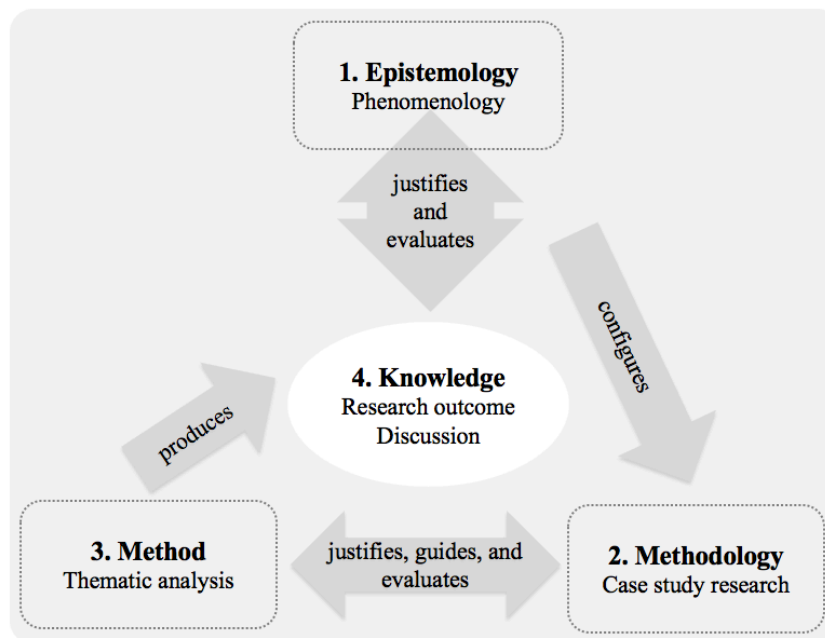


Figure 2. Progression of Qualitative Research Design.

Firstly, a phenomenological epistemology serves as the point of view through which the methodology is formulated. This epistemological stance acknowledges the subjective nature of qualitative knowledge, and it recognizes the importance of individual experiences and perspectives in shaping therapeutic identification. Secondly, the case study methodology concretizes the abstract concept of identification into an empirical construct; it enables in-depth examination and analysis. Lastly, the thematic analysis method provides systematic data collection and analysis procedures, which enable the identification of overarching themes and patterns within the participants' essays.

### Epistemology

Phenomenological epistemology serves as a foundational framework for knowledge generation (Carter & Little, 2007), what one can say about the data, and what it means (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It encompasses the qualitative paradigm that seeks to understand and categorize the essence of heterogeneous therapeutic identification through the descriptions provided by Korean emerging adults regarding their interactions with foreign literature and music. Within this epistemological framework, subjective experiences and interpretations are paramount as they contribute to constructing meaning in an ethnocultural context (Armstrong, 2020). Therefore, it is important to recognize my involvement in selecting the stories and compositions and interpreting the data, thus necessitating researcher reflexivity through a phenomenological reflection presented in Appendix 1.

Phenomenology has proven to be a sensitive and insightful approach to exploring experiences within therapeutic settings. For instance, Pedersen's (2007) doctoral

dissertation employed a phenomenological approach to delve into the experience of countertransference in music therapy. By adopting this perspective, Sandage (2010) conducted a phenomenological case study to examine intergenerational suicide and family dynamics, obtaining meaningful descriptions from multiple perspectives within the family and deriving thematic insights on relationship dynamics. Similarly, Economos (2018) utilized a phenomenological case study approach to explore the experiences of music therapists working with actively dying patients, shedding light on therapists' internal worlds and the clinical implications of hospice music therapy. These examples illustrate the value of phenomenology in capturing the nuanced aspects of therapeutic experiences.

Through phenomenology, the study seeks to capture the rich complexities and configurations of meaning-making in the ethnocultural context that shed light on the factors that influence therapeutic identification (Armstrong, 2020; Gavin, 2008).

## Methodology

The methodology is a necessary bridge between the theoretical underpinnings of the phenomenological epistemology and the practical application of the thematic analysis method. The methodology translated the epistemology into a tangible and comprehensible form by implementing a case study (Carter & Little, 2007).

The methodology comprises two distinct cases accounted for in the title of the present study and visually depicted in Figure 3. Firstly, the sample population of Korean emerging adults represents an intrinsic case study characterized by the unique psycho- and ethnographic nature and specific developmental challenges of this ethnoculturally

homogenous group. An intrinsic case study seeks to understand and interpret the world through the lenses of its participants (Cohen et al., 2005), delving into the inherent qualities of a particular case (Dörnyei, 2007). Secondly, the participants' interpretations of "identification" give rise to the instrumental case study. This study probes the intrinsic/inherent case of Korean emerging adults and explores the broader and more abstract phenomenon of therapeutic identification (Dörnyei, 2007). Figure 3 illustrates how the instrumental case study on identification draws upon the data derived from the intrinsic case study rooted in the unique characteristics of the sample population. As such, the population assumes the intrinsic case study, while the research topic of therapeutic identification constitutes the instrumental case study, exemplifying the intertwined nature of their respective roles in answering the research questions.

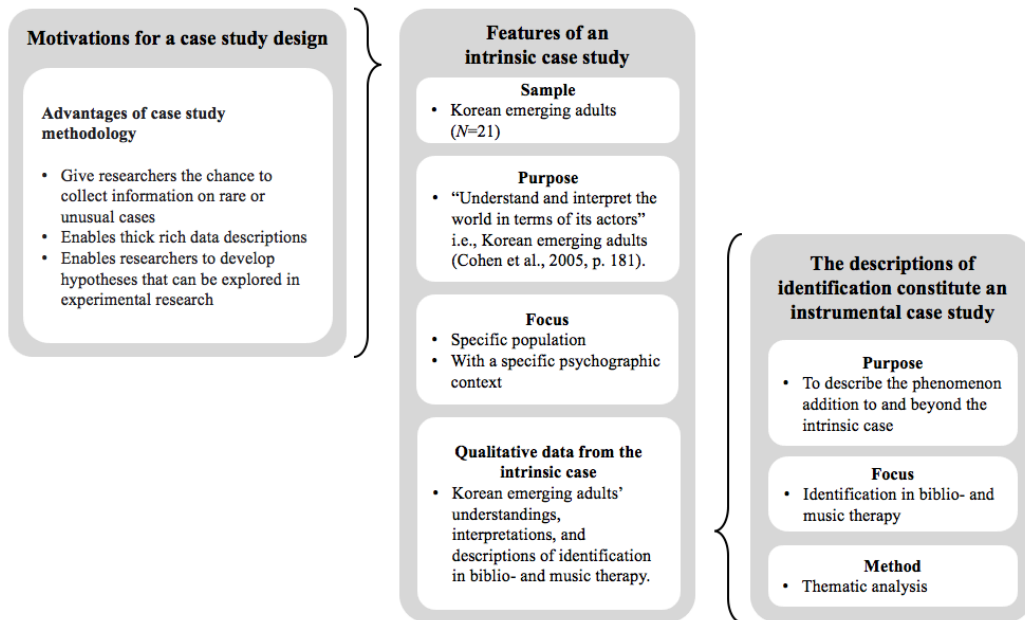


Figure 3. Case Study Methodology.

The case study methodology offers several advantages, including the acquisition of detailed qualitative descriptions that contribute to a “[...] stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures” (Geertz, 1994, p. 215). These evocative and layered descriptions contribute to the fullness of data, complex analyses, and the creation of new theories that synchronize with phenomenological epistemology (Dörnyei, 2007). While grounded theory methodologies are often associated with theory development, the present study does not strictly adhere to an iterative grounded theoretical data analysis method that utilizes open, axial, and selective coding strategies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gavin, 2008). Instead, a thematic analysis coding strategy is employed as the preferred method for data analysis, which allows for the identification and exploration of key themes within the participants’ essays and consequently enable the interpretation of the data.

## Method

The present study adopts Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis as the primary analytical tool. Thematic analysis is a well-established method that aims to identify, analyze, and report patterns and themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Particularly prevalent in psychotherapy and counseling, thematic analysis enables researchers to explore the experiences and perspectives of specific groups, such as patients, clients, and therapists (Clarke & Braun, 2018). By embracing this approach, the study aligns with an epistemology that acknowledges the researcher’s subjectivity as a valuable resource and emphasizes the reflexive process of meaning-making within the research context. The thematic analysis is a natural complement to the subjective

experiential focus of the phenomenological epistemology and the detailed qualitative descriptions inherent in the case study methodology. Operationalizing the thematic analysis required delineating the population and sample to facilitate the systematic identification and exploration of critical themes.

## Demographics

The study focused on the distinct developmental stage of emerging adulthood, characterized by the extended transition from adolescence to adulthood, physical and sexual maturation, pursuing tertiary education, and exploring occupational opportunities (Arnett, 2000; Arnett et al., 2014). This period presents unique challenges for young individuals, often marked by turbulence and ambiguity. In Korea, emerging adults face psychosocial, educational, and financial strife, termed colloquially “Hell Chosun,” to signify the repetition of a particularly turbulent period in the country’s history (Jun, 2022). The characteristics of Hell Chosun are synonymous with the challenges faced during emerging adulthood.

The study specifically targeted and recruited a sample of emerging adults aged 19 to 29.<sup>2</sup> A characteristic of emerging adults is their entry into tertiary education, especially in Korea, where 69% of the population obtained tertiary education in 2021 (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022).

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<sup>2</sup> While Arnett (2000, 2007, 2018) demarcates the age range between 18 through 29, I adjusted it to a minimum age of 19 to ensure that all Korean participants were of legal age.

English fluency is closely associated with a high level of education. For this study, participants were required to identify English fluency as a criterion to ensure quality data collection. As a result, the sample comprised individuals who had attained higher education through involvement in or graduated from tertiary institutions. In support of the English requirement, Chin's (1997) research into the reading preferences of Korean university students revealed a pattern of low self-esteem as second-language users of English. However, despite encountering vocabulary, metaphors, and complex syntactical challenges, these factors did not restrict their reading preference, as Korean students in Chin's (1997) sample perceived reading as a reconstructive psycholinguistic endeavor.

The study did not restrict participants' sex, gender, or mental and physical health, allowing for diverse perspectives and experiences. Such disregard for the contemporary emphasis on social sex differences seems to have resonated with participants as the female participant S12f explicitly stated concerning *Psychology*, "[t]he story deeply relates with my own experiences, and I strongly identify with the two main characters, the woman and the man." Conversely, S8m, a male participant, identified with a female character with bipolar disorder in *Porcelain*.

### Sample Size

A convenience sample of  $N=21$  participants responded to the research invitation. Appendix 2 accounts for their demographic details. Determining the sample size involved careful consideration of various factors, including the scope and nature of the project, contact time with participants, and the homogeneity of the target population (Boddy,



2016). As a phenomenological study, Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend a sample size range of three through 10 participants, which considers the depth of data obtained during more extended contact periods. This study's larger sample was justified because different participants were invited to respond either to literature or music. More participants ensured the richness and diversity of the data. However, considering the ethnocultural homogeneity of the population in this particular case, I found that approximately 10 responses for either literature or music contributed more to data replication and saturation rather than generating new insights and patterns. Thus, data saturation was achieved at approximately 10 participants per set (Boddy, 2016; Sandelowski, 1995).<sup>3</sup>

#### Recruitment & Data Collection Procedure

The participant recruitment process utilized an online snowball or chain-referral sampling method, which proved effective in reaching emerging Korean adults who would otherwise be challenging to identify and recruit (Biernacki & Waldrof, 1981; Cohen &

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<sup>3</sup> A practical approach to determining the appropriate sample size before data collection involved examining studies that employed comparable phenomenological case study designs. For instance, Pedersen (2007) interviewed four music therapists for her Ph.D. dissertation on countertransference; Sandage (2010) included correspondence analysis between two deceased participants and conducted semi-structured interviews with two surviving participants, resulting in a sample of four; and Economos (2018) conducted semi-structured interviews with four music therapists working with actively dying patients. Drawing on the insights from these analogous studies, a total sample size of N=21 was deemed suitable to answer the research questions.

Arieli, 2011). The snowball sampling method involved initiating the recruitment process within a reading circle that I established with my previous students who had already graduated from the institution where I teach. An open invitation was circulated among circle members, who were encouraged to forward the invitation to individuals who shared similar demographics and expressed a willingness to participate. This approach helped locate and access participants interested in the study. Initial recruitment yielded results but fell flat after the first four responses. A month into data collection, a follow-up reminder email was sent to stimulate recruitment. The follow-up message implored the reading circle to activate their informal social networks, known as “yongo” in Korean. These informal social networks are tightly woven and efficient; they are partially credited for Korea’s economic success and business homogeneity (Horak, 2018; Horak & Klein, 2016). Thus, requesting the reading circle to activate their “yongo” stimulated increased participation that satisfied data saturation.

To ensure the confidentiality of the information and adhere to ethical guidelines, the data collection was conducted via an online survey management system (Google Forms), thus minimizing the potential influence of social desirability bias by avoiding external social pressures (Bergen & Labonté, 2020).<sup>4</sup>

Participants were requested to read or listen to the selected stories or compositions by clicking on the provided URLs in the recruitment message. They were

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<sup>4</sup> The study met the requirements for exemption provided by the Harvard University Institutional Review Board (IRB23-0366), further safeguarding the privacy and anonymity of participants. The recruitment message and instructions emailed to the reading circle can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.

then asked to reflect on their reading or listening experiences by responding to three key questions related to their identification with the material and the personal significance of this identification. Participants were not restricted in the length of their reflections, allowing them to express themselves freely. As the participation involved substantial writing, participants could choose either the stories or the music for their responses, with the flexibility to engage with one or more pieces of material. Because the participation forms were stored in Google Forms that automatically saved the data, participants merely left the application to conclude their participation.

The adult consent and participation response forms were converted to Google Forms format, minimizing potential operating system compatibility issues due to the ubiquity of Google. Google Forms proved advantageous for collecting qualitative data in essays, as it allowed participants to utilize language editing tools and plug-in applications (e.g., Grammarly) to articulate their complex ideas with linguistic dexterity. These tools enabled participants to express their thoughts accurately and with grammatical precision, enhancing the richness and dependability of the raw data and likely lessening social approval bias. Measures were taken to ensure data security, with my Google account protected by two-factor authentication protocols, exclusive access to the personal password required for computer boot-up, and restricted physical access to my office and building using a personal keycard.

#### Selection of Biblio- & Music Therapeutic Material

The selection of appropriate stories and compositions was guided by the features of emerging adulthood, my own experience with teaching literature, and the individual

characteristics of each story and composition. The universal features of emerging adulthood include the following: identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, possibilities and optimism, and social withdrawal (Arnett et al., 2014). Considering the specific cultural context of Korea, the stressors associated with Hell Chosun were also taken into account. These include mandatory military service for all men, social pressure to obtain tertiary education, exorbitant house prices, and pressure to establish young families to curb the population decline (Jun, 2022; Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2021). The Hell Chosun-pressures align with the mental health implications commonly observed in emerging adulthood: anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (Arnett et al., 2014; Jun 2022). Hence, stories and compositions encompassing these stressors were sought after for inclusion.

The stories utilized as reflection prompts were predominantly sourced from my World Literature syllabus that I have been teaching at a tertiary institution in Korea since 2015. Based on my teaching experiences, it became apparent that emerging adults were curious about characters from diverse cultures and the psychosocial issues portrayed in the narratives (Prinsloo, 2018; Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2021). Thus, while selecting the stories, I considered the following criteria to increase the heterogeneity of the reading prompt material: literary tradition, genre, topics/themes, and psychographic references (see Table 5 for the story selection criteria and Appendix 5 for a synopsis of the stories. Henceforth, reference is only made to the titles of the stories).

Table 5. Story Selection Criteria.

Story title	Literary tradition	Genre	Themes	Psychographics
<i>Psychology</i> (Mansfield, 2006).	Modernist	Short story fiction	Dynamics of a courting couple, psychoanalysis	Edwardian-Victorian, upper class society, intimate relations
<i>Before Tonde, After Tonde</i> (Gappah, 2009).	Contemporary realist	Short story fiction	Migration, diasporic, & sexual identity, colonialism	Postcolonial Zimbabwe middle-class, contemporary British immigrant communities, intimate family dynamics
<i>Beyond the Bayou</i> (Chopin, 2002).	American realist	Short story fiction	Isolation & liberation fear, self-discovery, and the transformative power of confrontation	Southern Literature, segregationist relations
<i>Porcelain</i> (Rose-Innes, 2009).	Contemporary realist	Short story fiction	Bipolar disorder & mental well-being, suicide, heredity, & identity	Contemporary post-apartheid South Africa, intimate family dynamics
<i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i> (Nagamatsu, 2009).	Contemporary realist	Short story fiction	Solitude, alienation, and connection Suicide, love & human condition	Contemporary Japan, demographic decline, economic stagnation, digital relationships

While the stories explicitly deal with the identified themes, the tonal keys of the compositions were interpreted as indicators of mood that could be related to the features of emerging adulthood. For example, minor keys are customarily associated with melancholic feelings, and major keys with blissful emotions (Bonde, 2019; Condy, 2021). Therefore, the first movement of *Moonlight Sonata* could instill feelings of melancholia, yet the second and third movements could elicit excitement and assertion. Music from different cultural traditions was selected to foster heterogeneity in the data collection setting while considering musical tradition, genre, key, and psychographic sound qualities (see Table 6 for the music selection criteria and Appendix 6 for descriptions of the compositions. Henceforth, reference is only made to the titles of the

compositions). However, compositions featuring recognizable lyrics and video performances were purposefully excluded to prevent linguistic interference and visual stimuli that could influence the identification process.

Table 6. Music Selection Criteria.

Title of music	Musical tradition	Genre	Key	Psychographic sound qualities
<i>Morning Passage</i> (Philip Glass, 2014).	Minimalist classical	Program music	E-flat major	Western classical Indian classical Hypnotic
<i>Moonlight Sonata</i> (Brienne, 2011).	Romantic classical	Sonata	C-sharp minor	Western classical Melancholic contemplation Passion and elation
<i>Oblivion</i> (Chris Botti, 2018).	Jazz	Tango	C minor	Argentine Passion Spontaneity
<i>Calling Wisdom</i> (Makhfi, 2008).	New Age World fusion music	Free form	C minor	Spiritual meditative Cultural transcendence
<i>Illusions</i> (Two Steps From Hell, 2011).	Contemporary World fusion music	Epic	D minor	Intercultural Epicness Emotionally laden

It is important to note that the selected reading and listening material was unlikely to trigger psychological distress that exceeded the natural vicissitudes of everyday life. No descriptions of the stories or compositions were provided in the requirement materials to avoid framing effect. Participants explored the options and exercised preference on their own volition.

## Thematic Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the established step-by-step guide developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to systematize thematic analysis. This procedure consisted of the following six phases:

1. Phase one concerned familiarizing myself with the data by reading and re-reading the participant responses and listing initial ideas. Patterns (i.e., lexical, semantic, and pragmatic repetitions) were identified. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend reading the entire data set to familiarize oneself with the content.
2. Phase two generated the initial codes. Interesting features were systematically noted across the entire data set and collated with the relevant codes. Coding was theory-driven as the data were analyzed to answer the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Castleberry and Nolen (2018) suggest a list of questions to guide the coding procedure, including what was happening in the text, who the actors were and their roles, and when, where, why, and how the events occurred.
3. Phase three reviewed the initial codes from phase two to search for themes. The codes were collated by grouping similar codes to form meaningful overarching themes. Clarke and Braun (2018) recommend an organic approach to coding and theme development, emphasizing quality coding resulting from depth of engagement. In this phase, I looked for the “essence” or “central organizing concept” that bound a group of codes together (Clarke & Braun, 2018, p. 2).
4. Phase four reviewed the themes from phase three. Did the themes work with the codes? Did the themes account for the entire data set? The themes were used to generate an analytic map. Phases three and four were repeated to enhance the

quality of the analysis. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) suggest questions to guide theme identification, such as determining whether a theme was distinct from a code, shared valuable information about the data set, had demarcations, was supported by enough rich data, and exhibited cohesiveness.

5. Phase five defined and named the themes. The analysis continued to refine the specificities of each theme. What was the story that the analysis told?
6. Phase six moved from data reduction to the interpretation of themes and culminated in reporting the findings. Clarke and Braun (2018) describe phase six as “telling a story about the ‘so what’ of the data” (p. 3). Persuasive examples were drawn from the data related to the analysis, research questions, purpose, and literature review.

The initial data consisted of qualitative documents in the form of written reflective essays. Collecting written responses alleviated the pressure associated with speaking in a foreign language during semi-structured interviews. It allowed the English second language users to manage their time independently, reflect, edit, and choose words that conveyed their intended meaning. Written texts maintained their original form and did not require transcription, like semi-structured verbal interviews.

A unique code was assigned to each participant’s response after completing their essays that facilitated subsequent academic referencing, analysis, and report writing. Figure 4 illustrates the coding system employed, wherein each code commences with the capital letter “S” or “M” to differentiate between the story and music data sets. The numerical component of the code corresponds to the participant’s identification number within each data set, while the last letter (i.e., “f” or “m”) denotes the participant’s



sex/gender identification. This systematic coding approach ensured clarity and organization in identifying and classifying participants, thus enabling a streamlined and coherent analysis of the data sets.

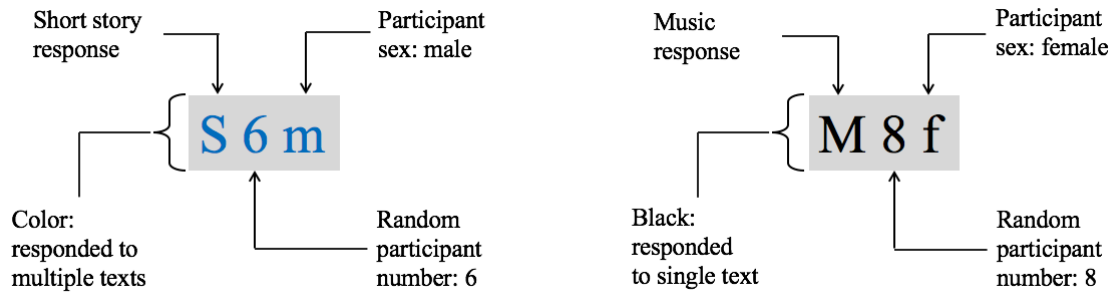


Figure 4. Decoding the Codes.

The qualitative data was quantified to generate descriptions regarding the sample and thematic analysis. However, it is essential to note that such quantitative data did not support inferences or generalizations about the population or therapeutic identification in general (Jones & Goldring, 2021). Braun and Clarke (2006) caution against over-reliance on the quantification of themes, arguing that a theme contributes essential meaning to the research questions regardless of its frequency of occurrence.

#### Validity & Reliability

To ensure the validity of this qualitative study, several procedures were implemented. Consistent with the phenomenological epistemology, the data presented thick, rich descriptions that allowed me to access the experiences of the participants

vicariously. The multiplicity of participant perspectives contributed to a comprehensive and realistic data representation. Another aspect of validity involved addressing research bias by critically reflecting on how my background and culture might have influenced interpretations, thus increasing the project's credibility. Additionally, including disparate perspectives drawn from the literature and theory on themes derived from the data provided contradictory evidence, further enhancing the study's validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The reliability of the present study depended on the rigor and thoroughness of the analytic procedure. Codes were defined meticulously and kept consistent throughout the coding process to minimize potential errors. Constant comparisons between the data and the written codes were conducted, as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018). This approach ensured that the coding remained consistent and reliable throughout the analysis.

### Summary

Chapter II outlined the research design to investigate therapeutic identification among Korean emerging adults who engage with foreign literature and music. The chapter provided a detailed account of the phenomenological epistemology, case study methodology, and thematic analysis method. The successful application of the research design led to a wealth of qualitative data that is reported as the results in Chapter III.

## Chapter III.

### Results

The results chapter presents the outcomes that have emerged through the systematic application of the thematic analysis. The analysis proceeded logically from identifying smaller linguistic units (i.e., codes represented by lexical, semantic, and pragmatic concepts) to identifying larger patterns resulting from repeated codes. These initial analytic phases ultimately led to the emergence and description of themes, which encompass the codes and patterns to reveal overarching latent abstract concepts that emanated from the response essays. Because of the richness of the data, the breadth of this chapter could be cumbersome; therefore, a schematic outline of the presentation of the data is justified. The main purpose of Figure 5 is to illustrate the sequential or vertical presentation of the results as they pertain to the findings about stories and then music. The sequential presentation assists in answering research questions one and two in the discussion chapter. Figure 5 also prefigures the discussion of research question three in Chapter IV, as the horizontal or inter-thematic associations between stories and music fall beyond the purview of the results section.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For ease of reference, the research questions are restated here: 1. With what elements of foreign literature or music do Korean emerging adults identify? 2. Why do Korean emerging adults express preferences for some elements of foreign literature or music? 3. Are there associations between literary and musical identification in this study?

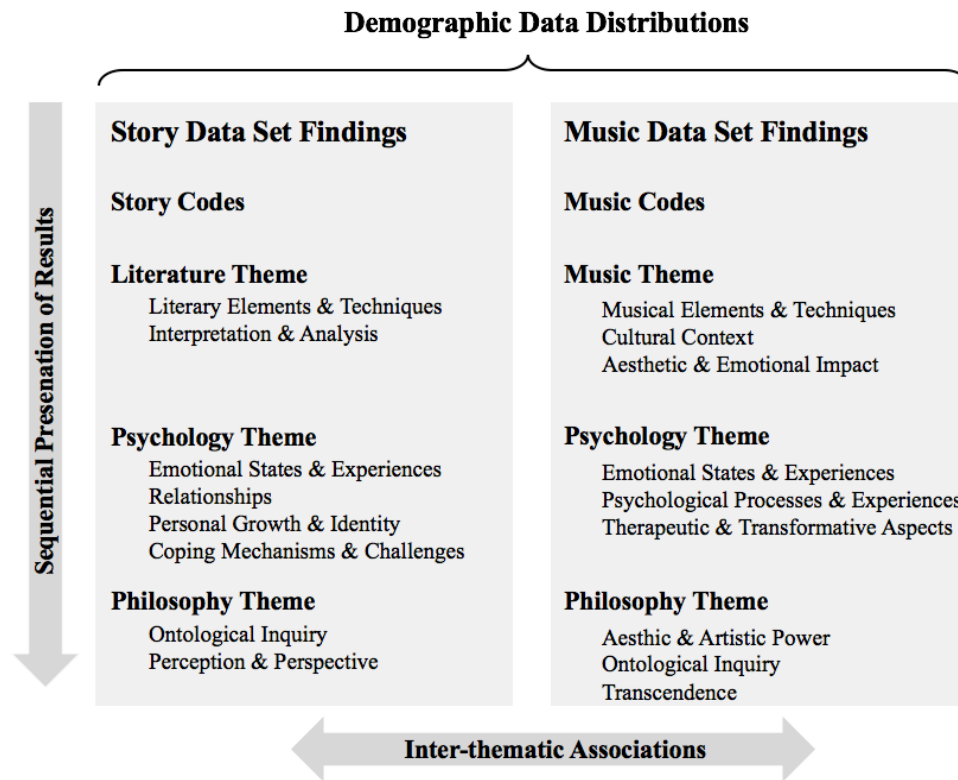


Figure 5. Outline of Results.

### Demographic Data Distributions

Prior to initiating the thematic analysis, participants were recruited, and they expressed preferences regarding specific stories or compositions. Thus, it is prudent to begin reporting the findings by presenting the demographic distribution of the participants and the expression of their preferences.

The snowball recruitment strategy yielded a convenience sample of 21 participants based on meeting the participation criteria (see Appendix 3 for the criteria listed in the recruitment invitation). Analysis of the complete data set revealed that the story prompt generated responses from a total of 12 participants, consisting of eight

females and four males. Conversely, the music prompt elicited responses from a separate group of nine participants, including five females and four males (see Figure 6). This distribution of participants renders a relatively balanced representation across the two sup-sets of data, with 57% ( $n=12$ ) of the participants responding to stories and 43% ( $n=9$ ) to music. Across the total sample, sex is unbalanced as nearly twice as many females (13 participants or 62%) compared with males (8 participants or 38%) participated. The sex imbalance does not hinder the interpretation and utility of the data. Consistent with the research objective, the emphasis lies in understanding the psychology of Korean emerging adults as a homogenous demographic unit that faces similar life challenges.

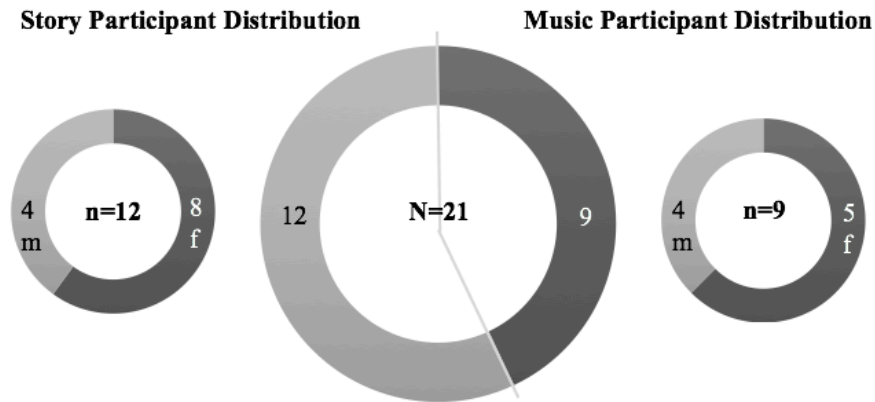


Figure 6. Sample Population Distribution.

#### Story Data Set Findings

A total of twelve participants engaged in responding to stories, with a majority of them being female ( $n=8$ ), while the remaining participants were male ( $n=4$ ). The stories

that participants responded to included *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café*, *Before Tonde*, *After Tonde*, *Porcelain*, and *Psychology*. Notably, none of the participants responded to *Beyond the Bayou*. The distribution of participant responses to each story is presented in Figure 7, highlighting the relative proportions. The story *Psychology* received only one response, while *Before Tonde*, *After Tonde* garnered four responses or 25%. *Porcelain* attracted 31% or five of the responses. *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* received the most attention with six participants or 38% of the total sample engaging with this story.

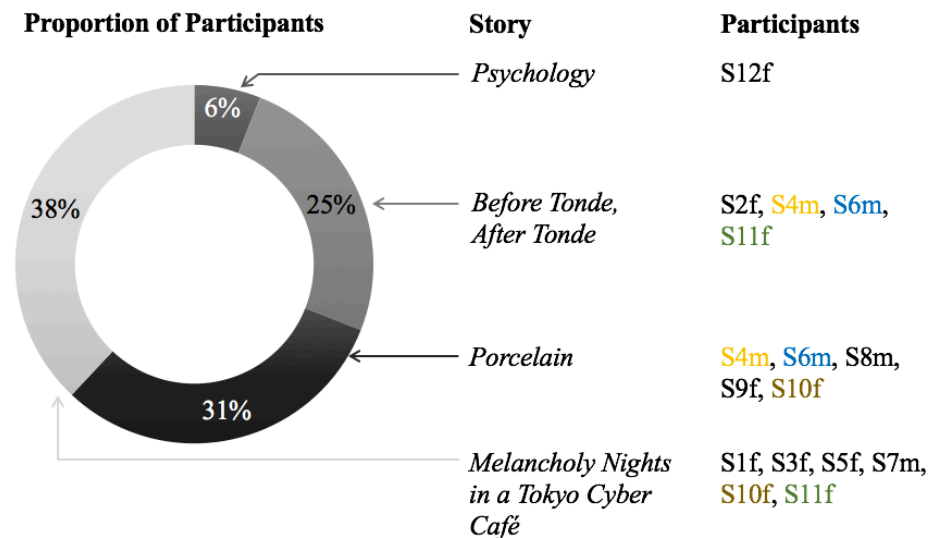


Figure 7. Demographic and Story Distributions.

Out of the 12 participants, four responded to two stories. The stories referenced twice include *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café*, *Porcelain*, and *Before Tonde*, *After Tonde*. These three stories contain overt scenes of violence, while *Psychology* does not include any references to violence. The two stories with the highest response rates, *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* and *Porcelain*, deal explicitly with suicide

during emerging adulthood. Conversely, the two stories with the lowest response rates, *Before Tonde*, *After Tonde* and *Psychology*, do not explore suicide ideation.<sup>6</sup>

### Story Codes

As mentioned in Chapter II, codes were identified based on meaningful linguistic markers. In Figure 8, each bulleted word or phrase represents a code or linguistic marker comprised of lexical, semantic, and pragmatic units. Some of these codes were directly identified in the response essays (e.g., all the codes of the literary elements and techniques pattern originate in participant responses), and others were renamed or rephrased to be more easily identifiable across responses (e.g., S8m relayed how he diverted the manic episodes of his bipolar disorder toward work productivity. The code “sublimation” subsumes such behavior as also expressed by S1f through her ruminations that lead to enhanced compassion toward others). Clusters of codes were then thematically grouped to create larger patterns within each theme, thus cycling through phases three and four of the thematic analysis. For instance, in the philosophy theme, two patterns were created (existential inquiry and perception and perspective). The pattern of perception and perspective consists of four codes: beauty, memory, detachment, and objectivity (see Figure 8).

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<sup>6</sup> The word counts for essays about stories ranged from 585 through 1016 words. S1f wrote the longest essay with 1016 words, while S5f was the shortest with 585 words, and both responded to *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café*. The remaining participants fell within this spectrum, and the mean word length was 805 (see Appendix 2).

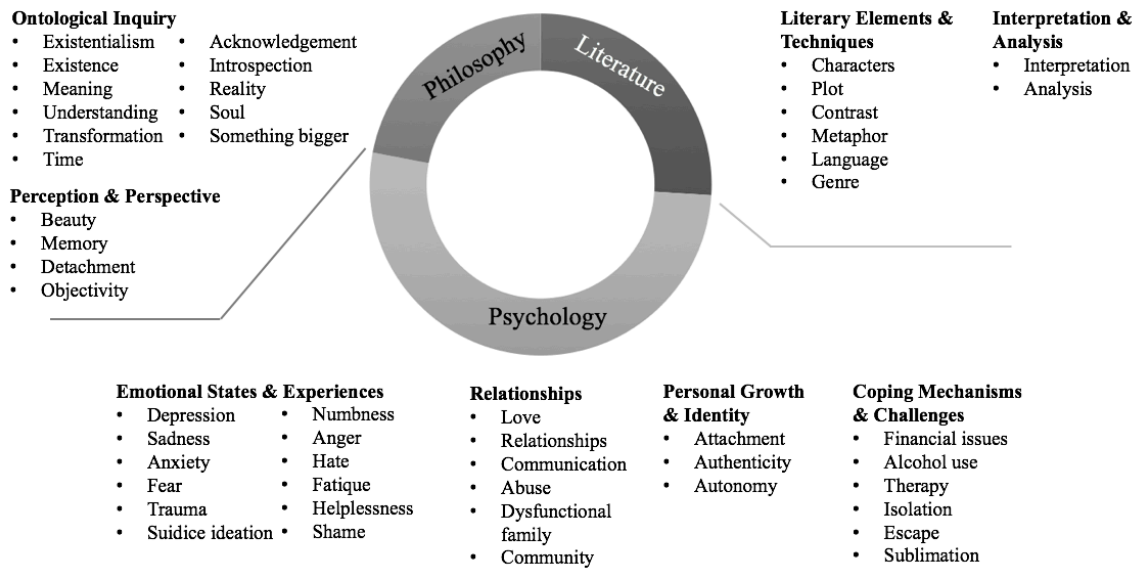


Figure 8. Thematic Analysis Framework for Stories.

A total of 50 distinct codes were generated and assigned to the story data set, encompassing eight distinct patterns and three overarching themes. Within the story data set, the literature theme comprises eight codes, while the philosophy theme accounts for 11 codes, and the psychology theme includes 27 codes. The distribution of these codes is normalized and visualized to provide insight into the prominence of each theme. Figure 9 visually depicts that the psychologically coded content displays the highest prevalence, representing 54% of the story response data. The themes related to philosophy constitute 30% while literature accounts for 16%.



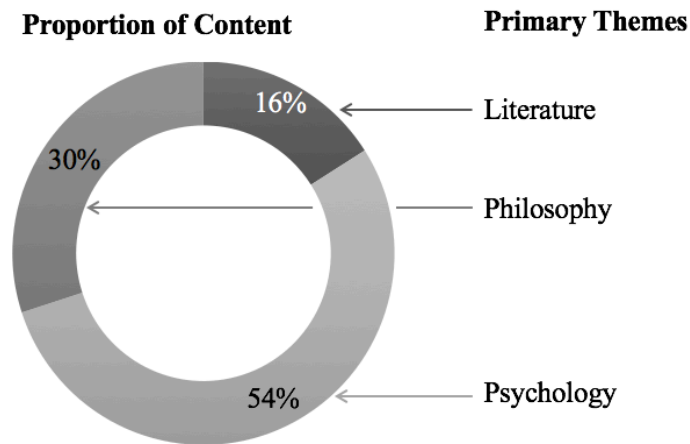


Figure 9. Proportion of Content per Theme of Story Data.

The patterns within the data set serve as practical aggregations that encompass codes from multiple participants, offering functional expressions of representative details. Accordingly, it becomes imperative to establish clear descriptions for these patterns, as they play a crucial role in defining the overarching themes. Since the codes were derived from participant responses, it is imperative to return to the source material to provide rich and thick descriptions. As a result, the patterns and themes provide the more significant coagulated abstract concepts to answer the research questions in the discussion chapter.

#### Literature Theme

The literature theme comprises the fundamental components and artistic strategies employed in literature to shape narratives and convey meaning. It involves exploring characters, plot, contrast, metaphor, prose, and genre to understand the essence of stories. Through interpretation and analysis, participants engaged with the stories subjectively

and objectively and drew personal connections and gained a deeper understanding of the stories' construction and artistic choices.

### Literary Elements & Techniques

Literary elements and techniques constitute the first pattern of the literature theme that focuses on text-intrinsic elements. Characters are the critical individuals or entities driving the story, while the plot represents the sequence of events. They are so essential to the narratives that all the participants commented on the characters of their chosen stories. S1f explicitly stated, "The first element that I could identify with was that of Akira and Yoshiko" in *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café*. Similarly, S8m identified with a character in *Porcelain* because they share a bipolar disorder diagnosis. Regarding *Psychology*, S12f remarked, "The story deeply relates to my own experiences, and I strongly identify with the two main characters, the woman and the man."

Contrast juxtaposes dissimilar elements to highlight differences, metaphor invents eloquent connections, and language employs style and rhetoric to convey meaning. For example, S4m saw existential contrast: "Life isn't always filled with moments of beauty and joy; it also carries its fair share of pain," while S5f saw the contrast in the difference in her response to depression from that of a character. The use of metaphor was so impressive to S9f that she wrote, "I like the way Marion's extreme emotions are carefully conveyed through similes and metaphors [...]. Every single sentence was elaborate and beautiful – I enjoyed reading it over and over to savor the taste of it."

The fictional story genre triggered deeply ontological reflections on the play between reality and fiction. About *Porcelain*, S9f stated, "Usually in real life, emotions

are conveyed not by emotion itself but by the intake of our visual and auditory senses.” Understanding and analyzing these elements enhance the interpretation and appreciation of the stories. The subtle nuances of metaphors and contrast that elicit intellectual or emotional responses to the text-intrinsic elements distinguish the literature theme in an abstract sense and through concrete identification with the human soul of the stories.

### Interpretation & Analysis

The second pattern consists of interpretation and analysis. To interpret the stories, participants comprehended and attributed meaning to the texts, drawing upon the aforementioned literary elements. This hermeneutical process requires delving deeper into the text to uncover subliminal messages, allusions, and emotional responses. Interpretation enables participants to identify or disidentify with the stories by drawing personal connections with the literary elements. S11f provided a prime example of personal emotional inquiry in her reflection on *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* when she asked: “Why am I agitated by the emotions of fictional characters with completely different backgrounds from mine?” Interpretation, therefore, seems to exemplify critical subjective identification.

On the other hand, analysis involves an objective, systematic examination of the literary elements embedded in the stories. It covers plot structure, character development, stylistic choices, and narrative devices. Through analysis, participants aim to uncover patterns, evaluate the effectiveness of literary techniques, and gain a deeper understanding of the stories’ construction and artistic choices. For example, S9f focused exclusively on similes and metaphors in her analysis, concluding, “I really loved the

story, both as an object of appreciation and an expansion of my sight.” In contrast with the interpretation, the analysis elicits a more objective form of identification that considers the stories’ artistic merits and thematic significance.

### Psychology Theme

The psychology theme explores the convoluted aspects of human emotions, relationships, personal growth, and coping strategies depicted in the stories. It recounts various psychological issues, such as depression, sadness, anxiety, fear, and trauma by inviting participants to feel these emotions and relate them to their internal experiences. Additionally, the theme focuses on the dynamics of human connections, examining themes of love, communication, abuse, dysfunctional families, and community. It also reveals developmental processes, such as attachment, authenticity, and autonomy that enable participants to reflect on their self-understanding and emerging adulthood challenges. Lastly, the psychology theme illuminates how characters manage difficult circumstances, including financial issues, alcohol use, and isolation; it enables participants to connect these coping mechanisms to their own life challenges. The psychology theme fosters a deeper understanding and identification with the characters and narratives, making it a compelling and insightful exploration of human experiences.

### Emotional States & Experiences

The first pattern relates to emotional states and experiences as a range of psychological feelings and phenomena, such as depression, sadness, anxiety, fear, trauma, suicide ideation, numbness, anger, hate, fatigue, helplessness, and shame. Since depression strongly correlates with suicidal ideation in emerging adulthood (Prinsloo &

Prinsloo, 2021), and the two stories with the highest response rate address suicide, three examples are provided here of participants' responses to *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café*. S1f contemplated, "As I occasionally suffered from depression and suicidal thoughts, I could see that the relationships I experienced before in my melancholic days highly resembled those introduced in the story." Referring to her struggle with depression, S3f stated, "[...] I am talking about which symptoms I identified myself with [...]". In the thesis statement to her essay, S5f wrote, "[...] I identified with the psychological elements, especially depression in this story." While participants reflected on other emotions as well, the poignancy of Hell Chosun-based emerging adult depression stood out. Identification with a range of emotional states and experiences reflects the complex relationship that the participants forged with the stories.

### Relationships

The relationship pattern focuses on the dynamics and complexities of human connections, and except for S9f and S10f, all the participants commented profoundly on relationships. It entailed the following six critical relationship codes: love, physical and digital relationships, communication, abuse, dysfunctional family, and community. Love signifies strong feelings of affection for another person. For example, S1f weaved a complex causal narrative between love, depression, isolation, and an online relationship: "Isolation was one of the main causes of my depression [...], and because of that, I felt like I was not getting enough love and attention from other people." She found love in an online relationship, which left her fatigued and exhausted because she became obsessed with acceptance. In unique ways, S3f and S5f expressed how they became absorbed in digital relationships, or as S6m stated, "I seem to have fallen into the Internet world." The

nature of relationships was further explored, encompassing how participants interact and engage with others. For instance, S8m's struggle with bipolar disorder and identification with a character taught him the following moving lesson:

Like Marion, I've come to learn that I can never be completely honest and open about my disorder with other people, including my family. This is not merely because I do not want to worry them, but rather because I learned that they can never completely understand my problems, and therefore, can never be expected to make any helpful gestures.

The relationships code necessarily also stimulated identification with the dysfunctional family that emphasized unhealthy, abusive patterns of communication or physical altercations within familial relationships (APA, 2009). At least three participants identified personally with the abusive family dynamics (S2f, S6m, S10f) as presented through power imbalances, financial friction, and immigrant identity in *Before Tonde*, *After Tonde*. S2f commented, "Even though Tonde's family seems like it is only a fiction, I'm convinced that there are thousands of families in our society that resemble their dysfunctional family dynamics. My family was also really similar to them, especially in 2020, when Covid struck South Korea hard."

Communication is also highlighted as a fundamental component of relationships, representing individuals exchanging thoughts, ideas, and emotions. S2f identified poor communication as one feature of the dysfunctional family, and S5f mentioned communicating through messaging, while S12f reflected on a friend's direct communication style that shifted her behavior.

Finally, the community code explores specific groups' social networks and relationships. For example, S1f, S3f, S5f, and S6m considered the digital communities in which they participated somewhat objectively, while S4m pondered the collectivist effects of school community conformity on his formative years.

Participants' profound reflections provide insights into how their identification may shape their relationship experiences. For instance, the link between love, depression, and isolation demonstrates how individual attachment styles (addressed as part of the following pattern) and emotional regulation impact mental well-being. The occupation with online relationships highlights the influence of personality characteristics on engagement in digital contexts. Moreover, identifying dysfunctional family dynamics reflects the role of self-perception in shaping communication patterns and coping mechanisms.

### Personal Growth & Identity

The personal growth and identity patterns reveal developmental processes and self-understanding through attachment, authenticity, and autonomy. Attachment covers the emotional bonds formed between individuals, particularly in close relationships (APA, 2009). S1f described her attachment to digital communities because of their shared experiences with depression, bipolar disorder, and low self-esteem. This type of attachment could be described as misery that loves company. Authenticity refers to being unpretentious and expressing one's "true" identity. S4m relayed that the traumatic transitions between schools brought authentic meaning to his life (APA, 2009). Autonomy denotes the capacity for self-governance and independent decision-making; it emphasizes the development of a strong sense of self and personal agency that harkens

authenticity (APA, 2009). S6m considered the unreasonable expectations that society placed on fathers as stereotypical breadwinners in *Before Tonde, After Tonde* and home ownership that served as a qualification for entry into adulthood in *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* robbed the fictitious characters and individuals in reality from their autonomy and happiness. Attachment, authenticity, and autonomy are hallmarks of emerging adulthood struggles, and participants' reflections on these personal growth issues attest to their identifiability.

### Coping Mechanisms & Challenges

The coping mechanisms and challenges patterns illuminate various techniques that participants employed to manage difficult circumstances related to the previous three patterns of the psychology theme. It included financial issues, tightly connected to the tribulations of Hell Chuson and the struggles related to economic instability. Three participants, S1f, S2f, and S6m, reported financial strife as a significant contributor to depression and dysfunctional family dynamics. S2f identified directly with the financial challenges in *Before Tonde, After Tonde*: "The way our family relationship got worse is like Tonde's. There were financial issues in the background." In particular, S6m argued that job losses and financial ruin resulting from the booming artificial intelligence economy would contribute to a decline in existential value.

Alcohol use exhibited itself through the challenges it caused and its function as a coping mechanism. Participants connected the declining economy directly to alcohol as an escape mechanism. Escape or avoidance is the need to withdraw from overwhelming situations or emotions (APA, 2009). In a poignant remark, S2f highlighted that her father, akin to the antagonist in *Before Tonde, After Tonde*, turned to alcohol amidst the



pandemic-induced financial downturn: “My father started to drink a lot and play a game with all gun shooting stuff, which reminds me of Dhedhi [...]. I feel like those are fathers’ ways of forgetting their worthlessness.” Escape and avoidance necessarily associate with isolation, which signifies being socially or emotionally disconnected, leading to feelings of loneliness or exclusion. Due to her depression and self-imposed isolation, S3f identified with Akira, the protagonist in *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café*, but she realized it was a mechanism to escape from reality and social relationships. Her realization is important because it is part of the second and third stages of therapy (i.e., catharsis and integration) and could lead to sublimation.

Two of the six coping mechanisms (i.e., therapy and sublimation) demonstrate that participants sought and embraced healthy approaches to overcoming emerging adulthood challenges. In a keen reflection on multiple characters from different stories, S10f articulated the following:

[...] Reading these stories felt like therapy sessions because I came to know that I’m not the only one suffering from these kinds of problems. Beautifully written sentences whispered that it is all right to be immature; it’s completely normal to feel so wrong about myself sometimes just like Akira and Celia did.

S2f extended the identification with the stories beyond bibliotherapy and into narrative therapy, stating, “[...] writing this essay became a part of therapy to overcome my traumatic experience.” S7m transmuted his failures into empathy for his juniors, whom he now mentors, remarking, “[t]hese failures became stories that create bonds of understanding.” Consequently, S2f resorted to sublimating her struggles through narrative therapy, while S7m found solace in support group therapy.

## Philosophy Theme

The philosophy theme comprises two interrelated patterns: ontological inquiry and perception and perspective. Ontological inquiry is a vast pattern that denotes abstract ideas related to human existence, examining the search for meaning, understanding, and personal transformation. Participants identify profoundly with characters who grapple with existential values as they reflect on the vicissitudes of their own lives. Time and introspection are recognized as crucial mechanisms for healing and personal growth. The perception and perspective pattern focuses on how participants' experiences are shaped by their perceptions. Beauty and memory play significant roles in interpreting and engaging with the stories. Participants value the importance of objectivity and detachment, adopting a neutral perspective to gain a deeper understanding of philosophical concepts within the stories. The philosophy theme showcases that participants ponder profound questions about existence and perceive the world through various perspectives, enhancing their understanding of the emerging adult condition and the complexities of life.

### Ontological Inquiry

Ontological inquiry ponders abstract ideas related to participants' understanding of reality. It contained codes such as existentialism, which examines the nature of existence and the search for meaning, understanding, and personal transformation. All the participants mentioned the generation of meaning and understanding as it relates to making sense of the vicissitudes of their lives. Of all the participants, S6m focused almost exclusively on existentialism, as the opening sentence of his essay grabs attention by stating: "People crave for existential values." He identified profoundly with Akira in

*Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* and *Dhedhi in Before Tonde, After Tonde* because, as he stated, “[...] existential values were a personal problem for me.” S9f commented, “*Porcelain* was particularly meaningful to me because it gave me a totally new sight on how to view mood disorders and various emotions related to it.” Her insight led S9f to realize that emotions are not conveyed by emotions but rather by decoding visual and auditory stimuli.

Participants also recognized the importance of time and its mechanisms of contemplation and introspection that facilitate healing and transformation. S7m reflected: “A few weeks ago, I found [*Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café*] that made me look back on [my]” failure to gain entrance into a top-tier university. S4m wrote: “[...] time exerts its transformation power of old, painful memories as catalysts for personal growth.” Through time and introspection, S1m was led to ponder how online suicide communities led to the fatal corroding of her soul.

Participants contemplate existential values, seeking meaning and understanding amidst emerging adult challenges. Time and introspection play pivotal roles in facilitating healing and personal transformation. This pattern uncovers how existential themes and self-reflection deepen participants’ understanding of reality and their inner selves.

### Perception & Perspective

The perception and perspective pattern focuses on the role of perception in shaping participants’ experiences (i.e., ontologies). Codes such as beauty highlight the aesthetic aspect of perception, while memory is acknowledged as a crucial factor in how participants interpret and engage with the stories. For example, S9f mused, “I really loved the story [*Porcelain*], both as an object of appreciation and an expansion of my sight.”

Entwining beauty and memory in a sublimatory relationship, S4m wrote: “They say that memories possess a peculiar allure, their intrinsic beauty derived solely from just their being as memories. [...] Even the most painful recollections can become the most treasured ones when revisited.”

Objectivity explored the importance of adopting a detached perspective and striving for neutrality when engaging with philosophical concepts within the stories. Codes such as detachment highlight the need to distance oneself from personal biases and preconceptions in order to gain a more objective understanding. S3f articulated her thoughts beautifully in the following quote:

In the process of identifying myself with Akira, I was able to view my depression history in a more detached way. This means that I became not soaked in my depression, instead I became able to face my struggles during depression and recognize the value of my power for survival.

The interplay between beauty and memory emerges as a transformative relationship, while the importance of detachment and neutrality adds depth to the understanding of the shared narratives.

### Music Data Set Findings

Nine participants responded to the music prompt, with a relatively equal distribution between female ( $n=5$ ) and male ( $n=4$ ) participants. Unlike the exclusion of one story, participants responded to all the pieces of music, as indicated in Figure 10

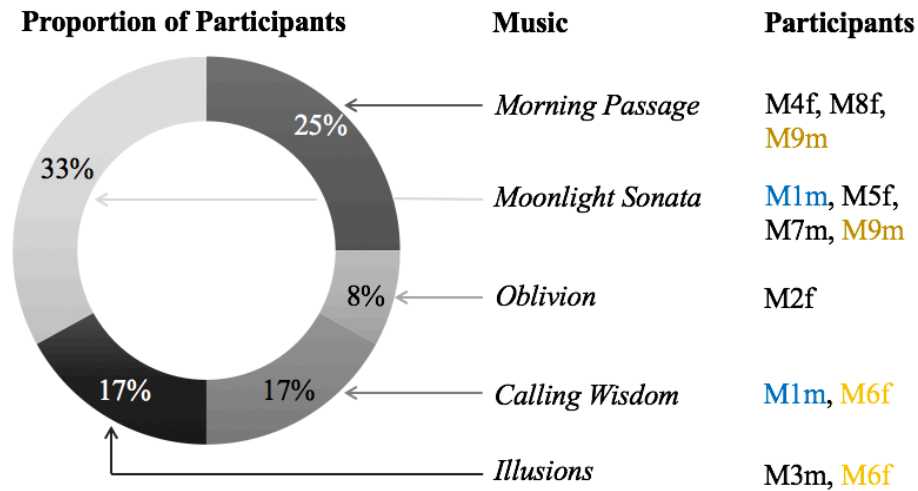


Figure 10. Demographic and Music Distributions.

*Oblivion* garnered the lowest response rate with only one participant (8%). In contrast, *Illusions* and *Calling Wisdom* received a slightly higher response rate of 17% or two participants each. Conspicuously, participant M6f responded to both *Illusions* and *Calling Wisdom*. *Morning Passage* received a quarter of the responses, with three participants (25%), while *Moonlight Sonata* had the highest response rate, with four participants (33%) selecting this composition. Participant M9m responded to *Morning Passage* and *Moonlight Sonata*, indicating a preference overlap. Three participants responded to two compositions each (see Appendix 2 for participation data).

In terms of genre and style, *Oblivion* stands out as a singular composition within the jazz genre. In contrast, *Illusions* and *Calling Wisdom* share an expected sound quality characterized by epic instrumental music. *Illusions* was composed as cinematic trailer music while *Calling Wisdom* combines new age and world music elements. Similarly, the

two pieces with the highest response rates, *Morning Passage* and *Moonlight Sonata*, fall under the classical genre. *Morning Passage* represents a contemporary classical style, while *Moonlight Sonata* reflects the romantic classical period.<sup>7</sup>

Music preference could also be expressed according to the sex of participants. Male participants preferred *Moonlight Sonata* and demonstrated selective engagement with other pieces. In contrast, female participants displayed diverse musical choices across the range of options. However, because of the small sample, more profound interpretations are unjustified.

#### Music Codes

Similar to the story codes, music codes were identified based on meaningful linguistic markers. In Figure 11, each bulleted word or phrase represents a code or linguistic marker comprised of lexical, semantic, and pragmatic units. Clusters of codes were then thematically grouped to create larger patterns within each theme. For instance, 14 codes were identified in the psychology theme to create the unifying pattern of emotional states and experiences.

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 5 for descriptions of the compositions. The word counts for essays about compositions ranged from 373 to 658 words. Participant M2f wrote the shortest essay with 373 words, while participant M4f wrote nearly twice as much with 658 words. The remaining essay length fell within the spectrum, ranging from 463 to 636 words. The mean response was 574 words long, and music essays were 231 words on average shorter than the responses to stories (see Appendix 2).

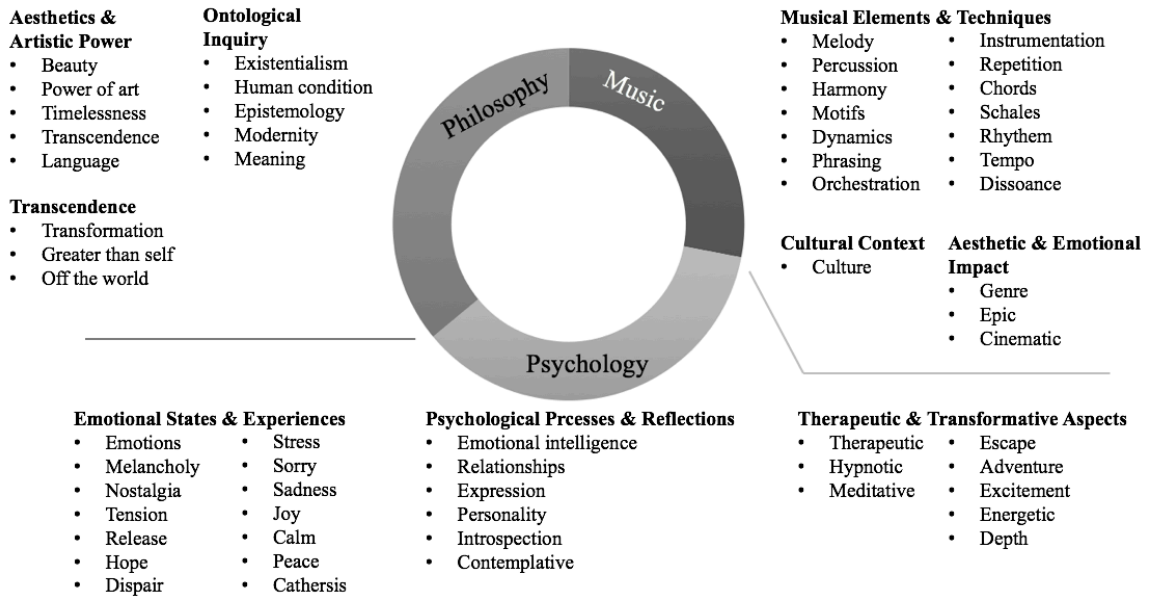


Figure 11. Thematic Analysis Framework for Compositions.

A comprehensive examination of the music data set led to the generation of 59 codes, further organized into nine specific patterns, each contributing to three overarching themes. Among these themes, the music theme encompassed 18 codes distributed across three patterns. On the other hand, the philosophy theme consisted of 13 codes, which were categorized into three patterns. The psychology theme emerged as the most extensive, with a total of 28 codes being distributed among three distinct patterns (see Figure 11).

The normalization and subsequent analysis of code distribution offered insights into the prominence of each theme within the music data set. Figure 12 illustrates that the psychology theme claimed the highest prevalence, constituting 47% of the music essay content. The theme associated with philosophy accounted for 22% of the data, while music-related aspects contributed to 31% of the music essay content.

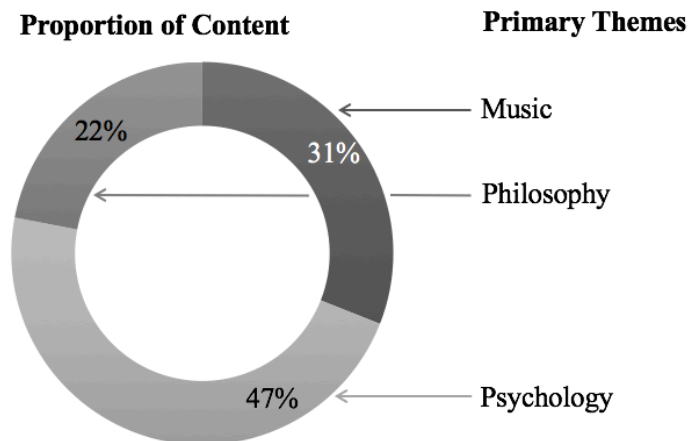


Figure 12. Proportion of Content per Theme of Music Data.

### Music Theme

The music theme encompasses three interrelated patterns: musical elements and techniques, cultural context, and aesthetics and emotional impact. Musical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics form music's foundational components, shaping the compositions' emotive qualities. The cultural context pattern explores how culture influences participants' perceptions of music, with diverse cultural influences enriching the musical experience. The aesthetic and emotional impact pattern delves into the emotional significance of music and its ability to evoke deep emotions and philosophical reflections about the human experience. Overall, the music theme highlights music's profound and universal nature as it connects individuals to the core of their listening experiences.



## Musical Elements & Techniques

Musical elements and techniques constitute a comprehensive pattern, encompassing 14 distinct codes that elucidate the intricacies of musical compositions. Among these codes, melody, harmony, and rhythm are the fundamental domains of music, with melody garnering significant attention from the participants. Approximately six out of nine (67%) participants referred to the compositions' melodies, specifically emphasizing *Moonlight Sonata* for its gentle and haunting qualities, as mentioned by M9m, and its "simplicity, yet emotive power," noted by M5f. *Oblivion* elicited an emotive response, as M2f described the evocative and emotional nature of its tango melody.

Dynamics and phrasing received substantial attention from eight out of nine (89%) participants. These elements play a pivotal role in shaping the expressiveness and interpretation of compositions. Dynamics, encompassing variation in volume and intensity, and phrasing, involving the grouping and shaping of musical phrases, contribute significantly to the emotional experience of music (Randel, 2003). The captivating use of dynamics in *Oblivion* was emphasized: "The piece begins with a soft, melancholic melody that gradually builds in intensity" (M2f). Similarly, *Moonlight Sonata* was praised for its phrasing, as M1m observed the effective creation of tension and release through musical phrasing, and M7m described it as "powerful and heartbreaking."

Orchestration and instrumentation, two integral aspects of music, also garnered attention. Orchestration pertains to selecting and arranging musical instruments to create specific colorful and textural qualities, while instrumentation refers to choosing and

implementing instruments in a composition (Randel, 2003). M4f, drawing on personal musical expertise, described *Morning Passage*'s instrumentation as akin to traditional Korean chamber music. Additionally, M3m appreciated *Illusions* for its "[...] grand orchestral arrangements, elevated choirs, and hammering percussion that reminds me of the music used in epic games."

Repetition, another noteworthy musical element, involves the restatement of musical ideas that contribute to the melodic structure of a composition (Randel, 2003). *Morning Passage* received responses commending its hypnotic and repetitive nature, evoking a sense of stability and continuity. M9m drew an inter-art comparison between the musical and geometric pattern repetition in Kandinsky's *Composition VIII*: "Both the painting and the music use repetition to create a sense of unity and coherence" (M9m). Furthermore, M8f philosophically connected the repetitive phrases of *Morning Passage* to its transcendence of time:

[...] it manages to convey a sense of eternity through its cyclical structure and recurring themes. This sense of timelessness is something that I find intensely moving, especially in today's fast-paced world. As a young woman living in a world that is constantly changing, I find comfort in the idea that there are certain things that remain constant, like the beauty of music.

Repetition is necessarily connected to rhythm and tempo as they occur in time, the oxygen that gives music its breath.

Rhythm and tempo are quintessential time measurements of music that denote the passage of musical time and the pace of the performance (Randel, 2003). For example, M6f described the urge to dance inspired by *Illusions*' fast-paced tempo. M1m

commented that the upbeat second movement of the *Moonlight Sonata* created hope in contrast to the despair of the first movement. However, M7m considered the fast tempo as fleeting and ephemeral, while the music itself is rooted in something more enduring: “The music is a reflection of the human experience, which is always changing and evolving, but at its core, remains constant and unchanging.” This profound statement recognizes the paradox in the necessity of time for evolution and the urge to find stability.

The final musical element includes chords and scales, the fundamental building blocks of harmony and tonality. Chords are combinations of three or more pitches played simultaneously, while scales are sequences of pitches in a specific key (Randel, 2003). Participants appreciated the emotive quality of minor chords in *Oblivion*, creating tension and unease (M2f), and recognized the similarity between the pentatonic scale in *Morning Passage* and traditional Korean music (M4f).

### Cultural Context

The cultural context pattern focuses on the role of culture in shaping and influencing the perception of music. All the compositions purposefully display diverse cultural influences to create a heterogeneous context that could contrast with the participants’ Korean culture. This code delivered 45% or four out of nine cultural-related responses. For instance, M1m noted that *Calling Wisdom*’s meditative nature could be attributed to using Eastern instruments and sounds, evoking associations with Indian/Hindu philosophy and its emphasis on meditation and inner peace. M4f, recognizing *Morning Passage*’s introspective and reflective aspects, connected it to the contemplative lifestyle often associated with traditional Korean music. Interestingly, *Moonlight Sonata* stood out as the only composition transcending cultural boundaries, as

M5f and M7m emphasized a deep personal connection to Beethoven's music, notwithstanding its origins in a different time and place. M7m affirmed, "Despite the fact that Beethoven was a European composer from a very different time and place than I am, I feel a deep connection to his music."

### Aesthetic & Emotional Impact

The aesthetic and emotional impact pattern is defined by genre, epic, and cinematic codes. Only M1m commented directly on genre because he compared the *Moonlight Sonata* with *Calling Wisdom*, saying that despite their differences, "they share a common idea in their ability to stir deep emotions and philosophical questions about the human experience." M3m preferred Thomas Bergersen's *Illusions*, drawn to its epic and cinematic genre quality, which captivated his imagination. The aesthetic and emotional impact of the music theme focuses on the mechanics of music, while the aesthetics of the philosophy theme is more abstract.

In the music pattern, the thematic analysis results revealed the diverse and profound ways in which participants engaged with the compositions, exploring musical elements, cultural influences, and emotional significance. The music theme offered a rich and textured landscape of responses, providing insights into the participants' perceptions and foreshadowing their psychological connections with the selected compositions.

### Psychology Theme

The psychology theme comprises three distinct patterns:

1. The emotional states and experiences pattern focuses on the wide range of emotions expressed or elicited through music, with tension being a prominent code identified by all participants.
2. The psychological processes and reflections pattern explores how music evokes internal psychological processes, leading to self-reflection and contemplation.
3. The therapeutic and transformative pattern explores the therapeutic effects of music, including its meditative and hypnotic qualities and its ability to provide escapism, excitement, and emotional release.

#### Emotional States & Experiences

The pattern of emotional states and experiences encompasses codes that reflect a wide range of emotions expressed or elicited through music. All the participants commented on emotions, elaborating on particular emotional states. Among the codes, tension received particular emphasis, addressed by all the participants. This suggests that individuals quickly identify and connect with tension in the music. For example, M2f stated that *Oblivion* conveyed a sense of “[...] emotional tension and urgency.” M3m articulated, “The shifts from quiet, reflective sections to bombastic, triumphant sections are particularly effective at creating emotional tension and release.” M5f identified the tension in *Moonlight Sonata* with the “listener’s journey.” These emotional states are significant within the therapeutic context as they allow individuals to explore and process their emotions in collaboration with music.

#### Psychological Processes & Reflections

The psychological processes and reflections pattern displays the ability of music to evoke internal psychological processes that might manifest externally. This pattern was

as prolific as the emotional states and experiences since all the participants commented on reflective psychological events. Codes related to relationships, expression, personality, introspection, and contemplation illustrate music's profound impact on the participants' psychological experiences and self-reflection. The reflective capacity of music not only lies within the composition itself, but it elicits introspection within the listener. For example, M8f aptly remarked, "The quiet, introspective nature of *Morning Passage* seemed to mirror the inner turmoil and contemplation of Virginia Woolf [...]," the protagonist in the movie *The Hours*, for which Glass composed the original soundtrack.

Similarly, *Moonlight Sonata* stimulated introspection within several participants, with M7m expressing, "I can't help but become completely absorbed in the music, allowing it to take me on a journey of self-examination." M9m and M5f conveyed how *Moonlight Sonata* facilitated contemplation and reflection. M5f metaphorically connected the piece's dynamics to her evolving relationships, emphasizing the intricate interplay between the music, her emotions, and her emotional intelligence.

The piece represents a specific type of emotional intelligence, one that is able to navigate the complexities and nuances of our emotions with beauty and compassion. This type of emotional intelligence is valuable; I believe it is what allows us to form deep and meaningful connections with others.

M6f eloquently articulated a multifaceted process integrating internalized music with physical self-expression, enabling a paradoxical sense of freedom and attachment. Drawing from Korean expressions, M6f described the contrasting emotions experienced while dancing to *Illusions* and *Calling Wisdom*, where each piece evoked a distinct

emotional response, reminiscent of the concepts “heung” and “jeong,” reflecting elation and connection, respectively.

Music’s profound impact on psychological experiences and self-reflection highlights the ability of music to evoke internal psychological processes, fostering meaningful connections and a multifaceted process of self-expression and attachment that prefigures music’s therapeutic and transformative power.

### Therapeutic & Transformative Aspects

The therapeutic and transformative aspects pattern probes therapeutic codes, such as hypnosis and meditation. These codes may either cause or are the result of transformative codes, such as escape, adventure, excitement, energy, and depth. Their unique relationships group these codes together. Seven participants mentioned that the music was either meditative or hypnotic. M1m, for instance, connected *Calling Wisdom* to Indian/Hindu philosophy, emphasizing its meditative qualities.

Similarly, M6f acknowledged the meditative nature of *Calling Wisdom* and *Illusions*, highlighting their potential for calming activities like yoga. M6f explicitly connected the listening experience to therapy: “[...] in a way that is very liberating and therapeutic.” Similarly, M9m mentioned that the repetition in *Morning Passage* was “calming and meditative.” These codes emphasize the entrancing and immersive nature of specific musical compositions.

The therapeutic effects of music are also evident, as it provides an avenue for emotional release, escapism, and adventure. For example, about the epic nature of *Illusions*, M3m articulated, “The music has the power to transport me to a different world, to a place where I can escape from the stresses of everyday life.” Additionally,

music elicited excitement, energy, and depth, providing transformative experiences for participants as they established profound connections with the music. M5f insightfully expressed, “When I listen to *Moonlight Sonata*, I connect with my own emotions and experiences in a way that is both powerful and transformative. It allows me to understand myself better and navigate my relationships with clarity.”

The three patterns of the psychology theme reveal how music can evoke a broad spectrum of emotions, trigger reflective psychological processes, and offer therapeutic and transformative experiences, underscoring its profound impact on emotional and psychological well-being. Music holds profound significance in the participants’ lives, impacting their emotional and psychological well-being by facilitating introspection and personal growth.

### Philosophy Theme

The philosophy theme revolves around three interconnected patterns: aesthetic and artistic power, ontological inquiry, and transcendence. The aesthetic and artistic power pattern delves into the captivating qualities of music. The ontological inquiry pattern explores the philosophical concepts and broader existential questions connected to music, with participants pondering the search for meaning in a chaotic world and the influence of modernity on the understanding of the human condition. Lastly, the transcendence pattern highlights music’s transformative and awe-inspiring nature, with participants expressing their experiences of being transported to a different world and connecting with something greater than themselves, transcending time and space. The



philosophy theme reveals how music extends beyond its auditory perception and offers participants a profound spiritual exploration.

### Aesthetic & Artistic Power

The pattern of aesthetics and artistic power explores the captivating qualities of music and its ability to evoke profound experiences beyond the self. It encompasses codes such as “beauty,” which refers to the inherent qualities that make music aesthetically appealing, and “power of art,” acknowledging the profound impact that music can have on participants. The majority of participants, except for M3m and M6f, used the terms “beauty” or “beautiful” to describe various aspects of music, including melody (M1m, M5f), dissonant intervals (M2f), emotions (M7m), repetitive motifs (M4f), and music in general (M8f, M9m). In this recognition of the aesthetic, participants’ perception extended beyond the mechanics of music; for example, M5f describes *Moonlight Sonata* as a reminder “[...] of the power and beauty of music that connect us to our deepest emotions.” M8f considers the consistent, enduring nature of music as beautiful.

Music that elicits profound and transformative experiences holds a mesmerizing influence, an observation acknowledged by six participants who recognized this intrinsic power. M5f and M9m emphasized the inherent potency of *Moonlight Sonata*, attributing its ability to evoke profound emotions in the listener. M3m, reflecting on *Illusions*, contemplated its transcendental power, stating, “Ultimately, it is a reminder that music has the power to transcend language and cultural barriers and to touch the human spirit.” Furthermore, M2f envisioned the power of music extending beyond humanity, connecting art to something greater than humans, maintaining, “In many ways, my love

for *Oblivion* reflects my larger philosophical beliefs about the power of art to connect us to something greater than ourselves.” With such power, music inevitably exerts sway over our perception of reality.

### Ontological Inquiry

The ontological inquiry pattern delves into philosophical concepts and their relevance to understanding the human condition within the context of music. Seven participants explored existential meaning, with M1m and M2f acknowledging that it is the emotional connection with music that renders it meaningful. This search for meaning is intricately linked to broader ontological questions, with M1m pondering, “How can we find meaning and fulfillment in a world that can often seem chaotic and meaningless?”

This pattern also acknowledges the influence of modernity on our understanding of the human condition and how music offers insights into these philosophical inquiries. M8m aptly placed *Morning Passage* by Glass within the modernist minimalist movement, further reasoning that her identification with the piece stems from Glass’s ability to “[...] create a sense of timelessness. This sense of timelessness is something that I find particularly poignant, especially in today’s ‘bali bali’ (Korean for hurry hurry) culture.”

### Transcendence

The pattern of transcendence extends beyond individual experiences, encompassing codes such as transformation and greater than self. These codes signify the transformative power of music in both secular and metaphysical contexts. This pattern highlights participants’ capacity to identify with music that transcends personal boundaries and connects them with something larger than themselves. Additionally, the

code “off this world” captures music’s extraordinary and transcendent qualities, evoking a sense of wonder, awe, and transpersonal experiences.

Several participants expressed their transcendent experiences with music. M1m conveyed, “There is a sense of peace and calm that permeates the music, as if I am being transported to a different world where all is still and quiet.” Similarly, M2f noted, “Through its use of melody, harmony, and dynamics, the piece provides a way for me to connect with my own emotions and experiences in a way that is transcendent and deeply human.” M3m acknowledged, “The music has the power to transport me to a different world [...]” For M5f, music served as a gateway to connect with something greater than herself, transcending language and culture. M7m shared a profound experience while listening to *Moonlight Sonata*, feeling connected to something greater than himself, transcending time and space. Similarly, M9m expressed, “When I listen to *Moonlight Sonata*, I am in a place of introspection and contemplation. I am able to reflect on my own emotions and experiences, and to connect with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose.”

The philosophy theme captures the profound philosophical dimensions of participants’ engagement with music, exploring its aesthetic allure, its ability to evoke existential contemplation, and its capacity to transcend individual experiences, offering a glimpse into a realm beyond the ordinary.

## Summary

Chapter III presented the results of the data collection process. The primary dataset has been bifurcated into two categories: responses rooted in the stories and others

centered on musical stimuli. Both subsets have been further compartmentalized into three organic divisions, each encompassing themes exploring psychology and philosophy while segregating themes related to literature and music. The subsequent discussion in Chapter IV explores the points of convergence and divergence between the datasets mentioned above, with the ultimate aim of addressing the research questions.

## Chapter IV.

### Discussion

As a first of its kind, this study explored therapeutic identification by highly educated Korean emerging adults in the context of biblio- and music therapy. Conventional practice and scholarship encourage psycho- and ethnographic homogeneity or mirroring between biblio- and music therapeutic materials and individuals to initiate the first step of therapy - identification. However, preliminary research indicates that therapeutic heterogeneity seems equally feasible (Prinsloo & Prinsloo, 2021) because Korean students understand English literature beyond mere language acquisition (Prinsloo, 2018). Traditional therapeutic homogeneity successfully inculcates identification; however, that does not explain the mechanisms behind heterogeneous therapeutic identification.

A three-pronged qualitative research design was conceived to achieve the research objective, consisting of a phenomenological epistemology, a case study methodology, and a thematic analysis. The research design captured the essence of qualitative knowledge by accentuating the importance of individual experiences and perspectives in understanding therapeutic identification. The case study methodology embodied intrinsic and instrumental cases, exploring the unique characteristics of the Korean emerging adult sample and the broader phenomenon of therapeutic identification, respectively. This approach aligned seamlessly with the thematic analytical tool, which uncovered and deciphered patterns within the qualitative data. The sample population consisted of highly

educated Korean emerging adults who were proficient in English, and they engaged with therapeutic materials containing themes emblematic of the vicissitudes of contemporary life.

The research design responded to three research questions, and the three questions guided the structure of the discussion. Hence, it would be prudent to restate them here:

1. With what elements of foreign literature or music do Korean emerging adults identify?
2. Why do Korean emerging adults prefer some elements of foreign literature or music?
3. Are there associations between literary and musical identification in this study?

The data collected in response to the questions suggest that self-directed biblio- and music therapy in heterogeneous cultural contexts positively impact psychological well-being.

Before answering the questions, the term “elements” should be clarified. As used in this study, it is a collective noun that denotes the fundamental smaller constituting parts (i.e., codes and patterns) of a larger concept (i.e., themes). These elements encompassed participants’ connections with the stories or compositions, as expressed through the response essays. The thematic analysis deconstructed the essay content as codes, patterns, and themes. Figures 7 and 10 in Chapter III account fully for the identification of elements in the present study. These figures are tabulated in this chapter to assist with answering the research questions.

### Elements of Therapeutic Identification Based on Efficacy

In order to answer question one methodically, it is imperative to juxtapose or collate the homogeneous elements of prevailing scholarship (from the Literature Review, Chapter I) with the heterogeneous elements discovered through the present study (from the Results, Chapter III). The collation hinges on comparing the outcomes of past efficacy studies and the insights on identification extracted from the present study. It is essential to highlight that the efficacy of homogeneous bibliotherapy depends on the successful occurrence of identification. Efficacy research indicates with a high degree of certainty that identification occurred successfully. Hence, the circumstances under which bibliotherapy demonstrated efficacy serve as elements of identification and can be compared with the results of the present study.

### Elements of Bibliotherapeutic Identification

The elements of bibliotherapy are collated in Table 7. There is a significant overlap on seven of the 10 categories of elements, suggesting that the present study confirms many of the elements of identification from existing scholarship.

Table 7. Elements of Bibliotherapeutic Identification.

Elements	Current Scholarship Homogenous Perspective	Present Study Heterogeneous Perspective
Depression	Yes	Yes
Anxiety	Yes	Yes
Stress	Yes	Yes
Trauma	Yes	Yes
Self-actualization	Yes (self-concept expansion)	Yes (personal growth, identity)
Relationships	Yes (attitudinal change, assertiveness)	Yes (love, communication, abuse)
Literary Elements	No	Yes (characters, plot, metaphor)
Emotional States	Yes (assertiveness, sexual dysfunction)	Yes (fear, suicide ideation, hate)
Coping Mechanisms	No	Yes (financial issues, alcohol use)
Existential Inquiry	No	Yes (existentialism, meaning, introspection)

### Common Elements

Both perspectives acknowledge depression, anxiety, stress, and trauma. Self-actualization and relationships also overlap but are expressed through different codes. Both perspectives share emotional states; however, the absence of sexual content from the stories could explain its absence from the present results. The overlap of these elements suggests that the reader and the story do not have to share ethnocultural traits to form a valuable connection. Therefore, heterogeneous therapeutic identification can occur related to these fundamental psychological issues.

### Distinctive Elements

The present study includes literary elements and techniques as a method of therapeutic identification. Current scholarship recognizes these elements but not as markers of therapeutic identification. They are included as criteria for homogenous reading preference expression; for example, literature should preferably be read in the native language (Hynes & Hynes-Berry, 2012). Recognized as elements of identification, the present study directly challenges this notion because it acknowledges the reader's



agency or autonomy. When agency is satisfied, self-motivation and mental health improve. Therefore, instead of relying on the therapist to play matchmaker, the reader can exercise agency over the story selection, which could lead to more intense emotional resonance and cognitive engagement because self-determination leads to intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The present study uniquely diverges on coping mechanisms and existential inquiry, which signals that bibliotherapy can provide a more comprehensive approach to mental health. Whether successfully or unsuccessfully applied by characters, coping mechanisms in the stories serve a didactic role related to existential inquiry. Seeking higher meaning and conducting introspection are means of identification. Coping mechanisms and existential inquiry indicate that heterogeneous bibliotherapeutic identification promotes resilience and existential well-being that extends beyond reducing the reader's experience to symptom reduction. S8m's astute reading of *Porcelain* confirms this notion: "By portraying Celia, not in medical or professional terms (notice how the term 'bi-polar' never appears in the story), the author makes her seem like an everyday person that might be living with us." Therefore, stories can effectively impart coping mechanisms through identification.

#### Elements of Music Therapeutic Identification

Table 8 collates the elements of music therapeutic identification. Six of the 11 categories of elements overlap, and five provide unique, divergent perspectives.

Table 8. Elements of Music Therapeutic Identification.

Element	Current Scholarship Homogenous Perspective	Present Study Heterogeneous Perspective
Anxiety	Yes	Yes
Depression	Yes	Yes
Pain	Yes	Yes
Stress	Yes	Yes
Quality of Life	Yes	Yes
Emotional States	Yes (Mood, autobiographical recall)	Yes (Emotions, tension, hope)
Musical Elements	No	Yes (Melody, harmony, dynamics)
Cultural Context	No	Yes (Culture)
Aesthetic Impact	No	Yes (Epic, cinematic)
Psychological Processes	No	Yes (Emotional intelligence, relationships)
Philosophy Themes	No	Yes (Ontological inquiry, transcendence)

### Common Elements

The two perspectives overlap on some of the most common psychological challenges, including anxiety, depression, pain, stress, quality of life, and emotional states. This agreement indicates that music therapy is effective in both homogenous and heterogeneous therapeutic contexts. It also shows that these elements of overlap (e.g., psychological challenges) can be identified with beyond the narrow parameters of homogenous music therapeutic identification. That is, music that does not match the psycho- and ethnographic disposition of the listener can still serve a therapeutic purpose, as M7m affirmed, “Despite the fact that Beethoven was a European composer from a very different time and place than I am, I feel a deep connection to his music.”

### Distinctive Elements

The present study makes valuable contributions by discovering musical elements, aesthetic impact, psychological processes, and philosophical themes as distinctive

identification elements. Adding these elements to the heterogeneous therapeutic setting offers alternative perspectives on therapy, self-discovery, and personal growth.

Current scholarship recognizes musical elements and cultural diversity as criteria for therapists to select music for therapy (Greenberg et al., 2022). However, it does not consider these elements explicitly as tools for identification. The present study provides an alternative perspective by considering the mechanics of music and cultural diversity as empowering tools that give listeners identification agency instead of conferring it onto a therapist.

Aesthetic experiences significantly impact how people perceive the world, feel about it, and behave in general (de Witte et al., 2022; Kohler et al., 2020). Aesthetic impact emphasizes the ability of music to arouse solid emotional reactions and establish a therapeutic setting favorable to catharsis, emotional expression, and sensory engagement. This is consistent with the most recent developments in music therapy that emphasize the value of aesthetic encounters in micro-interventions by fostering emotional control, reducing stress, and improving overall psychological functioning (de Witte et al., 2022).

Psychological processes as an element of heterogeneous identification show that music therapy engages deeper cognitive systems in addition to surface-level emotional perceptions. This highlights how music can promote reflection, understanding, and cognitive restructuring, consistent with scholarship emphasizing the interaction between cognition and emotion in determining human behavior (Schaefer, 2017). Metacognitive awareness of these psychological processes involved in identifying with the music could improve conscious emotional regulation (Gebhardt et al., 2018).

The appearance of philosophical ideas as identification elements connect music therapy directly with approaches such as Logotherapy and existential psychotherapy. Philosophical identification elements confirm music's ability to arouse strong emotional states and psychological processes that trigger more significant ontological and epistemological issues. Therefore, the present study contributes evidence that "meaning can be actualized through music" (Pfeifer, 2021).

#### Reasons for Therapeutic Identification Based on Preference

Preference studies provide scientifically-based criteria to enhance therapeutic identification; thus, an expression of a preference also provides the reason for the selection. For example, participants who chose *Before Tonde*, *After Tonde* all identified with the tumultuous family relationships in the story. *Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* elicited identification based on its themes related to depression and suicide (see Figure 6, Chapter III). Therefore, as codes from the thematic analysis, relationships and depression also express motivation or reason. Conversely, in preference studies, reading and music preference criteria could be understood as reasons for identification and can thus be collated with the identification data from the present study.

#### Reasons for Bibliotherapeutic Identification

The elements in Table 9 account for why individuals identify with literature, and they are collated with the findings of current scholarship and the present study.

Table 9. Reasons for Bibliotherapeutic Identification.

Element	Current Scholarship Homogenous Perspective	Present Study Heterogeneous Preference
Demographics	Yes (Age, ethnicity, sex/gender)	No
Intrinsic Personality Traits	Yes (Agreeableness, intelligence)	No
Text-intrinsic Factors	Yes (Character types, genre, language)	Yes (Literary elements, interpretation)
Emotional Dimensions	Yes (Depression, fear, shame)	Yes (Emotional states, personal growth)
Relationships	Yes (Communication, community)	Yes (Relationships)
Personal Growth	No	Yes (Personal growth)
Philosophical Theme	No	Yes (Existential inquiry, perception)
Interpretation and Analysis	No	Yes (Interpretation, analysis)
Coping Mechanisms	Yes (Coping, Resolve)	Yes (Coping mechanisms)

### Demographics & Intrinsic Personality Traits

The data collection procedure of the present study did not explicitly pursue the demographics and intrinsic personality traits offered by current scholarship. Current research reaffirms its insistence that individuals resonate with stories that reflect their demographic characteristics. However, participants did not significantly offer demographics and personality traits in their reflections. Therefore, the present study suggests that these elements are optional reasons for identification. Naturally, demographics and personality traits could have played a subconscious role in identification ; however, such a determination is beyond the scope of this study.

### Text-intrinsic Factors, Emotions, Relationships, & Coping

The next group of elements overlaps with current scholarship and the present study. Regarding text-intrinsic factors, the connection between readers and characters, plot, language, and genre may be important reasons for identification. Emotional states are essential to both perspectives for bibliotherapeutic identification. Therefore, literature

that explores deep emotions may elicit more substantial reasons for identification. Similarly, relationships constitute a firm reason for identification. As a more collectivist society with strong informal “yongo” associations, relationships are an essential fiber of Korean society. Both perspectives share coping strategies as a reason for identification, which suggests that readers understand how stories can assist their lives.

#### Personal Growth, Philosophy, Interpretation & Analysis

The present study makes a significant contribution by offering four elements for bibliotherapeutic identification that have largely yet to be noticed by current scholarship. These include personal growth, philosophy, interpretation and analysis, and coping mechanisms. Personal growth as a reason for identification mirrors the self-focus, possibilities, and optimism associated with emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2007, 2018), suggesting a desire to overcome the tribulations of this turbulent developmental phase. Similarly, the philosophical reasons for identifying with literature signal a search for existential meaning beyond the superficial. The notion that interpretation and analysis are also reasons for identification indicates that emerging adults are willing to connect with stories encouraging introspection and critical thinking, which could lead to more profound meaning.

#### Reasons for Music Therapeutic Identification

The elements in Table 10 account for the reasons why individuals identify with music, and these reasons are collated with the findings of current scholarship and the present study. While current scholarship considers demographics and intrinsic personality traits necessary for music therapeutic identification, the present study needed to deliver more data to support such codes. This could indicate that participants did not consider

demographics and personality traits as essential and instead focused on emotional and philosophical identification elements.

Table 10. Reasons for Music Therapeutic Identification.

Element	Current Scholarship Homogenous Perspective	Present Study Heterogeneous Perspective
Demographics	Yes (Age, culture, sex/gender)	No
Intrinsic Personality Traits	Yes (Agreeableness, intelligence)	No
Text-intrinsic Factors	Yes (Genre, melody, rhythm)	Yes (Musical elements, cultural context)
Emotional Dimensions	Yes (Psychological needs)	Yes (Emotional states, psychological processes)
Cultural Context	Yes (Culture)	Yes (Culture)
Aesthetic and Philosophical Theme	Yes	Yes (Aesthetics, philosophy)
Psychological Processes	No	Yes (Psychological processes, relationships)
Personal Growth	No	Yes (Personal growth)
Ontological Inquiry	No	Yes (Ontological inquiry)

### Text, Emotions, & Culture

Both current scholarship and the present study indicate text-intrinsic factors, emotional dimensions, and cultural context as reasons for identification. However, current scholarship considers it from a homogenous perspective, while the present study discovered that participants chose to identify based on these elements even within a heterogeneous therapeutic setting. Therefore, foreign music does not hamper identification because the emotions that music elicits from the listener are not specific to any race, gender, or ethnic group. While the homogenous perspective suggests that similar cultures attract each other, the heterogeneous perspective suggests that it is not a universal given. The aesthetic value or beauty that individuals attach to music might be a universal reason that fosters identification.

## Psychological Processes, Personal Growth, & Ontology

Similar to the reasons for bibliotherapeutic identification, the present study significantly contributes to recognizing the deeper psychological and philosophical reasons for music therapeutic identification. Psychological processes, personal growth, and ontological inquiry are reasons for identification that require higher-order thinking beyond just “liking” a soloist. These reasons require deep reflection to forge bonds with compositions. As such, the heterogeneous perspective suggests that music therapeutic identification initially occurs at an intense subconscious level, and that with reflection, the identification can be brought into consciousness.

### Associations Between Biblio- & Music Therapeutic Identification

The third research question is dedicated to understanding the data in the present study by investigating the associations between biblio- and music therapeutic identification. The associations are visually conceptualized in Figure 13, which serves a threefold purpose: firstly, it combines the insights from Figures 8 and 11 in Chapter I, which detail the codes, patterns, and themes derived from the data collection procedure. Secondly, it incorporates the syntheses related to the first two research questions related to the present study. Lastly, Figure 13 synthesizes the information derived from the previous two points and simplifies it for clarity. This discussion about the associations follows the three main themes that have emerged from the data, namely, literature and music, psychology, and philosophy.



Themes	Patterns	Bibliotherapy		Music Therapy
Literature & Music	Mechanics	Interpretation & Analysis	Elements & Techniques	Culture, Aesthetics
Psychology	Emotions		Emotional States & Experiences	Catharsis
	Psycho-Social Development	Nuclear Relationships	Relationships, Personality & Identity, Personal Growth	Social Relationships
	Transformative Strategies	Sublimation	Transformative Coping Strategies	Hypnotic
Philosophy	Ontology	Meaning-Making	Aesthetic Transcendental Existential Ontology	Failure of Language

Figure 13. Synthesis of Biblio- & Music Therapeutic Identification.

### Mechanics of Literature & Music

The mechanics of bibliotherapy and music therapy share similarities while also displaying differences (see Figure 13). Taking a broad perspective, these mechanics are similar in that they relate to the elements and techniques employed in creating works through symbolic systems guided by specific rules. However, a closer examination reveals distinct nuances. For instance, although both can be categorized by genre, the subcategories—such as novels or poems for literature and concertos or nocturnes for music—differ significantly.

These variations in mechanics yield distinct initial therapeutic effects. In the case of literature, its mechanics prompt interpretation and analysis, while music evokes aesthetic and cultural appreciation. While literature also invokes aesthetic beauty, this tends to occur within the context of philosophical exploration, which can only occur

following substantial engagement with the story. On the other hand, music stimulates aesthetics within both its mechanics and philosophical exploration.

Since literature and music enter consciousness through human senses that perceive and decode the mechanics of a story or composition, recognizing beauty in literature may require interpretation and analysis before identification occurs. In contrast, music can trigger instant identification, as its perceivable aesthetic appeal is present within its fundamental structure. Individuals with Type-A personalities, characterized by impatience and haste, might more readily identify with music therapy, while those with Type-B personalities find bibliotherapy more suitable. This postulate is indirectly supported by Dunn et al. (2011), who found robust correlations between neuroticism and classical music and openness and jazz music preference. Therefore, different personality types may respond differently to biblio- or music therapy.

The mechanics of bibliotherapy and music therapy may relate to narrative transportability, a concept that moderates narrative persuasion and contributes to the identification process (Dal Cin et al., 2004). This contribution to identification implies that the mechanics of literature and music serve as steps toward actual identification. However, they still need to align with the story or composition completely. As foundational building blocks for identification, the elements within the mechanics of literature and music play a vital role in fostering identification.

## Psychology of Biblio- & Music Therapy

### Emotions

Both biblio- and music therapy imbricate substantially on emotional states and experiences (see Figure 13). The instructions in the questionnaire explicitly avoided any

direct or indirect use or reference to emotions (see Appendices 3 and 4). Thus, the prevalence of emotional states and experiences is attributed to the participants identifying with story elements and composition elements. The notion that both biblio- and music therapy imbricate significantly on a broad spectrum of emotional states suggests that emotions are a robust dynamism for identification.

Emotional bonds forged between the participants and the stories or compositions can be explained through the psychoanalytic process called projection. Projection occurs unconsciously when people recognize their peculiarities or virtues in others. Projection is also a defense mechanism by which people usually attribute unpleasant or undesired stressors, feelings, or impulses to other people or situations while exhibiting or experiencing such unpleasant behavior themselves (APA, 2009). Since the participants identified acute negative emotional states (i.e., hate, depression, anxiety, fear, trauma, suicide ideation, anger, numbness, helplessness, shame, and despair), projection, as a defense mechanism, could have facilitated the identification.

The difference between the emotions the stories and compositions elicit is equally significant. The primary difference is that the compositions elicit catharsis as an emotional state related to the psychology theme, while responses to stories omit catharsis entirely. Catharsis is the second step in the therapeutic process (see Figure 1, Chapter I). This disparity suggests that music either accelerates the stages of the therapeutic process or the stages may occur concurrently. As discussed above, projection as a defense mechanism is indeed involved in the identification process. In that case, the therapeutic stages are likely overlapping since one of the subsequent patterns of the psychology theme involves transformative coping strategies.

## Psycho-Social Development

To create the psycho-social development pattern, the original patterns on relationships, personal growth and development, and psychological processes and reflections were integrated because they share several codes related to the features of emerging adulthood, including identity explorations, instability, and self-focus (see Figure 12).

Surprisingly, story responses reflected more on nuclear relationships, and musical responses more on social relationships. Acknowledging that the story content emphasizes familial and intimate relationships over broader social connections is essential. Consequently, this distinction could be attributed to a predisposition within the data collection material.

The significant imbrication of psycho-social developmental issues encompasses pivotal dimensions of being an emerging adult, and identification with such elements across therapeutic modalities is expected. The psychological process underlying identification here seems to be what Slavson (1944) calls “infectiousness of mood” and “interstimulation” in group psychotherapy (p. 588). Considering that this pattern deals primarily with relationships, the group effect could be projected into (i.e., read into) the story or composition. Slavson (1950) refers to this as “identification therapy,” where the “[...] corrective effect of a situation on one patient [or character is] a result of his [her] identifying with another [...]” (p. 264).

## Transformative Coping Strategies

Transformative coping strategies are the last pattern of the psychology theme where biblio- and music therapy imbricate considerably (see Figure 12). They overlap on issues such as adventure, escape, isolation, meditation, and therapy that involve a degree of agency. Because agency is involved, these are conscious strategies. While defense mechanisms unconsciously protect the individual from psychic conflict, coping strategies consciously modify one's reaction to stressors (APA, 2009). This means that the stories and compositions triggered a conscious approach to dealing with the acute negative emotional states with which participants initially identified through projection as a defense mechanism.

The point of divergence between biblio- and music therapy, regarding transformative strategies, includes sublimation and the hypnotic state. Stories elicited the defense mechanism sublimation from some participants, which entails the conversion of unacceptable drives into socially acceptable expressions. As this process indicates, sublimation extends beyond mere identification, indicating that the participants naturally continued with the therapeutic process toward catharsis and integration. On the other hand, music elicited a hypnotic state. Hypnosis is only successful when trust has been established between the hypnotherapist, the composition, and the listener because the listener surrenders to the music (APA, 2009). As with sublimation, hypnosis suggests that listeners have reached a point in the therapeutic process beyond identification. In both cases, identification must have been successful. Because it was successful, participants ventured even deeper into philosophical considerations of their existence.

## Philosophy of Biblio- & Music Therapy

The philosophy theme is associated with an aesthetic transcendental existential ontology. This perception of what is real (i.e., ontology) consists of an appreciation of an aesthetic, poignant beauty of both literature and music. Their ability to stimulate the recognition of something transcendental among participants suggests that this reality, or this stage in therapy, is beyond sensory appearance (APA, 2009). Bibliotherapy distinguishes it as an intense existentialist meaning-making process, while music therapy reaches a point where language fails to express the transcendent. In psychology, as a transpersonal moment. Friedman and Hartelius (2015) define transpersonal psychology as “a transformative psychology of the whole person in intimate relationship with a diverse [...] world; it pays special attention to self-expansive states as well as to spiritual, mystical, and other exceptional human experiences that gain meaning in such a context” (p. 14).

The philosophical aspect of biblio- and music therapy introduces a liminal zone in therapy that is neither necessarily conscious nor unconscious, neither cathartic nor integrative. It is a transpersonal experience, best described by participants who responded to compositions by saying it is something more significant than the Self.

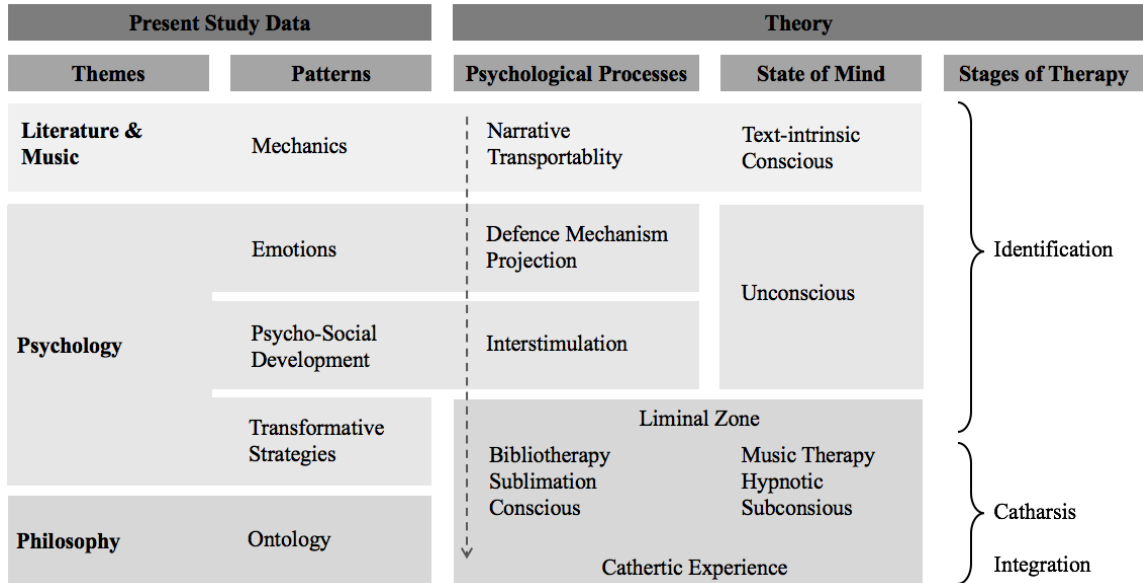


Figure 14. Integration of Biblio- & Music Therapeutic Processes.

Figure 14 achieves several goals: firstly, it visually integrates the associations between biblio- and music therapeutic identification derived from the study. Secondly, it considers these associations in terms of theories that include psychological processes, states of mind, and stages of therapy. Its purpose is first to summarize the main chain of thought and then to interpret it in terms of theory. The themes and patterns are copied from the present study but slightly altered to synthesize information.

The mechanics of literature and music constitute the text-intrinsic features of stories and compositions that narratively transports us into the realm of the text. In the therapeutic context, we consciously engage with texts because of the expression of a preference, and this combination of contributing factors initiates biblio- and music therapeutic identification. Because of narrative transportability, emotional connections are forged with texts.

The emotional connections between us and the text-intrinsic features become so intense that an unconscious defense mechanism is activated to project our desires, experiences, and feelings onto/into the text. The infectiousness of their mood unconsciously triggers the associations we feel for families or social groups to interstimulate us into more profound identification.

When identification has reached a climax of integration, a liminal zone is entered where the transformative strategies for biblio- and music therapy seem to separate on their way to the transpersonal. Bibliotherapy consciously sublimates these transformative experiences as coping strategies. Music therapy lingers for longer in a subconscious state of mind reminiscent of hypnotic induction that requires a suspension of the conscious mind to access the subconscious (Wolf et al., 2022). Regardless of the difference, both biblio- and music therapy have the potential to deliver us through the transpersonal to a cathartic experience.

### Implications & Contributions

The present study has important implications and valuable contributions to academia, practice, individuals, and society.

### Understanding & Improving Therapeutic Practice

The present study challenges conventional therapeutic identification that promotes beyond psycho- and ethnographic homogeneity. It introduces therapeutic heterogeneity, indicating that individuals can effectively identify with and benefit from therapeutic materials that do not necessarily mirror their ethnocultural or demographic backgrounds.



Therefore, therapists can expand the diversity of their collections of literature and music and possibly enhance the impact of biblio- and music therapy.

The expansion of the understanding of identification conversely expands therapeutic goals. A holistic approach to well-being is encouraged because existential inquiry, personal growth, and transformation are sought after. The holistic approach is expanded as a transpersonal connection is forged by acknowledging meditative, hypnotic, and transcendental states.

#### Promoting Autonomy & Inclusivity

By sharing the responsibility of finding elements of identification between the therapist and client, the client's agency is recognized, which enhances engagement with and ownership of therapy. Because cultural and demographic mirroring is not essential for identification, cross-cultural inclusivity is implicitly stimulated. This openness to heterogeneity contributes to revealing the ubiquity of emotions, psycho-social developmental issues, and philosophical dimensions, which encourages a deeper understanding of identification mechanisms.

#### Interdisciplinary Universal Multimodality

As a first of its kind, the present study bridges biblio- and music therapy and uncovers their shared mechanisms and processes of therapeutic identification. The imbrications between biblio- and music therapy emphasize the uniqueness of the human experience among emerging adults regardless of ethnocultural demographics. These associations demonstrate their capacity to conjure emotions, kindle introspection, nurture personal growth, and inspire philosophical contemplation. Manchaiah et al. (2017)

suggest that literature and music possess a universal quality that extends beyond their psycho- and ethnographic elements. A multimodal approach combining story and sound proposes a new strategy for psychological well-being, as people may resonate with literature and music. Such an interdisciplinary interpretation shows how malleable both modalities are for cross-modal therapeutic interventions and could enhance both theoretical foundations.

### Future Research Directions

The present study's novel interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach to bibliomusic and music therapy stimulates additional research possibilities in psycholinguistics, the therapeutic process, and the liminal zone.

A psycholinguistic analysis could investigate the complex role of language in facilitating identification. In my analysis of the responses, I noticed incredibly complex semantic structures that addressed the three major themes of mechanics, psychology, and philosophy within one sentence. An analysis of specific linguistic cues and their relation to emotional responses, cognitive engagement, and the connection between individuals and therapeutic materials could provide insights into the interplay between language, cognition, and emotion in the context of therapeutic identification.

The present study reveals noteworthy mind states during the stages of therapy; hence, future research could investigate more rigorously how the stages of different therapeutic modalities progress and imbricate. In particular, the role of emotions and their associations with conscious, unconscious, and subconscious processes could be investigated for how they contribute to the therapeutic journey. The guiding hypothesis is

that conscious awareness may not always contribute to the outcome, as unconscious participation may be a sign of least resistance to change.

The exposure to the complex interactions between the mechanics, psychology, and philosophy of biblio- and music therapy reveals an intriguing research direction into the liminal zone of therapeutic identification. This liminal zone is a therapeutic dimension beyond the distinction between conscious and unconscious processes. It resists simple classification into conventional therapeutic stages and reaches into the domain of aesthetic, existential, and transpersonal experiences. What happens in the liminal zone during biblio- and music therapy?

Finally, during conversations with Dr. Muse-Orlinoff, she brought up a most intriguing question: What are the limits or parameters of therapeutic heterogeneity beyond which identification becomes challenging? While this question warrants an entire new study, I theorize that an indeterminable multitude of subjective reader and listener biopsychosocial variables demarcate the permeable parameters of identification. The sample of this study comprised highly educated Korean emerging adults and their emersion in the stories and music might be associated with their commendable educational attainment.

### Limitations

Although the present study makes significant contributions, its limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the nature of the topic poses challenges in translating data, as the richness of emotional descriptions and use of figurative language may differ from what participants intended to reveal. Chu (2008) points out the difficulty of translating

culture-specific conditions, such as the concept of “Han,” which is challenging to convey into other languages. Responses in the first language would be most reliable, yet they would have to be translated for the research report by a professional translator. The present study attempted to curb this challenge as much as possible by limiting the population to highly educated Korean emerging adults who were fully conversant in English.

Methodologically, two limitations are noteworthy. Firstly, the small sample size may raise concerns about the generalizability of the findings. However, the appropriateness of a small sample has been supported by the three example phenomenological case studies and scholarly recommendations, demonstrating the value of in-depth explorations within a specific context. Secondly, the coding procedure employed in the study may face criticism for not predefining themes. Nevertheless, this approach aligns with the qualitative and moral aim to avoid imposing Western assumptions on the Korean sample before data collection. By allowing native participants to freely express their identification process without reflecting on predetermined topics, the present study cultivates a more authentic investigation of their experiences, which are untainted by theoretical biases that could influence the coding process.

## Conclusion

The final chapter encapsulates a comprehensive and critical examination of therapeutic identification intricately woven into the fabric of biblio- and music therapy. This study challenged the conventional notion of therapeutic identification through homogeneity. It introduces a paradigm shift by suggesting therapeutic heterogeneity,

accentuated by the participants' educated comprehension of English and their profound psychological connections with foreign literature and music.

Research question one unravels a tapestry of imbricated and distinct elements that constitute the efficacy-based threads of therapeutic identification. Question two relies on preference-driven elements to determine the motives for identification. Integrating current scholarship with the present study, the first two questions emphasize the fundamental role of personal agency in steering the identification journey and illuminate the complex intricacies of the mechanics of literature and music, psychological themes, and philosophical musings. Question three delves deep into the associations between biblio- and music therapy. Rooted in the themes and patterns of the present study, it navigates the stages of therapy by illuminating underlying psychological processes and states of mind. While the English language and the sample size might have posed limitations, it is evident that the study has illuminated new pathways for therapeutic practice and future research.

## Appendix 1.

### Phenomenological Reflection

Utilizing a phenomenological epistemology, this reflection embarks on a journey into the recognition of subjectivity in the intricate process of meaning-making. Such an exploration necessitates profound self-reflection on my role as both a researcher and meaning generator. Moreover, it extends beyond the elucidation of the phenomena, participant recruitment, data collection, and the intricate process of analysis and interpretation, as outlined in the methods chapter. Phenomenology, as a guiding framework, prompts contemplation of two pivotal questions: firstly, how did I manage to suspend my preconceived notions about the participants and the phenomena? Secondly, how did my involvement with the data collection reading circle impact the data collection process?

My personal journey commenced in the diverse and culturally rich tapestry of South Africa, where I, a white boy, entered this world four decades ago. Growing up in such an ethnically, racially, culturally, and linguistically varied environment, I have been consistently immersed in a heterogeneous world. However, the landscape underwent a noticeable transformation upon my arrival in South Korea, a place where homogeneity was palpable in 2009. More than a decade later, the omnipresence of the Han people and the Han language remains unchanged. This relatively homogenous ethnocultural and linguistic prevalence introduced a bias in my anticipation of uniform responses to the research prompts. However, the data provides evidence to the contrary, and, due to my

long-term involvement with Korean students, it also suggests an evolution wherein the Korean collective slowly embraces diversity from within.

As Korea is experiencing its evolution, my time here has transformed me as well. When I now stand in front of a class, I am no longer acutely conscious of my distinctiveness; I am merely one entity within the vast sea of humanity. In a similar vein, the psychological aspects of being an emerging adult transcend the local, constituting a universal phase of human development. Thus, while I duly acknowledge and report the contextual specificities of Korean culture that contribute to the stressors of Korean emerging adulthood, my phenomenological perspective regards the study participants not through preferential lenses but as contributors of their unique experiences to the broader human condition.

The inception of data collection took shape through a reading circle that I established in my capacity as a teacher, thereby invoking the inherent power dynamics between teacher and students. The question arises: Did these dynamics influence certain participants to engage in the research project? While it is a possibility, it remains rather unlikely. The members of the reading circle were drawn into this intellectual realm by their shared love for short stories. Within the circle, their involvement fluctuates as life beyond the university introduces new obligations. Consequently, it is conceivable that if they feel comfortable abstaining from participating in reading sessions where their identities are overt, they might similarly find it easy to decline participation in an anonymous invitation to the research project. It is also noteworthy that the snowball data

collection method and the “yongo” could have led to participants who were never part of the reading circle.

In light of my phenomenological epistemological approach, this journey compelled me to be sensitive to my own preconceptions, thereby highlighting the dynamic interplay between subjectivity and meaning-making. The complexities of subjectivity persist as a fundamental undercurrent throughout this exploration, underscoring the profound impact of context and personal experiences on the shaping of knowledge.



## Appendix 2.

### Demographic & Participation Data

Tables 11 and 12 account for the raw data related to the basic demographic information of the participants, the expression of their participation preference, and the word count of their essays. Data on exact age was not deemed necessary because participation was limited to emerging adults.

Table 11. Story Response Data.

Participant code	Participant sex/gender	Responded to the following story or stories	Essay word count
S1f	Female	<i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i>	1016
S2f	Female	<i>Before Tonde, After Tonde</i>	920
S3f	Female	<i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i> <i>Porcelain</i>	663
S4m	Male	<i>Before Tonde, After Tonde</i>	747
S5f	Female	<i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i> <i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i>	585
S6m	Male	<i>Before Tonde, After Tonde</i>	985
S7m	Male	<i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i>	632
S8m	Male	<i>Porcelain</i>	986
S9f	Female	<i>Porcelain</i> <i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i>	701
S10f	Female	<i>Porcelain</i> <i>Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café</i>	672
S11f	Female	<i>Before Tonde, After Tonde</i>	908
S12f	Female	<i>Psychology</i>	840
			805 mean

Table 12. Music Response Data.

Participant code	Participant sex/gender	Responded to the following piece or pieces of music	Essay word count
M1m	M	<i>Moonlight Sonata</i> <i>Calling Wisdom</i>	631
M2f	F	<i>Oblivion</i>	373
M3m	M	<i>Illusions</i>	569
M4f	F	<i>Morning Passage</i>	658
M5f	F	<i>Moonlight Sonata</i>	653
M6f	F	<i>Calling Wisdom</i> <i>Illusions</i>	552
M7m	M	<i>Moonlight Sonata</i>	635
M8f	F	<i>Morning Passage</i>	463
M9m	M	<i>Moonlight Sonata</i> <i>Morning Passage</i>	636
			574 mean

## Appendix 3.

### Email Recruitment Invitation

Invitations were extended to the reading circle in English only because English proficiency was one of the participation criteria to avoid miss communication through translation. While the reading circle might suggest preexisting interest in literature, participants were free to abstain from participation, they could have participated through the music selection, or referred the invitation to someone in their informal “yongo” network. Within the context of the study, participant bias to please the researcher was limited as much as possible and communicated through the recruitment invitation and subsequent exchanges.

**Subject line:** Invitation to participate in biblio- or music therapy research

Dear Reading Circle Members and possible additional research participants,

My name is Christiaan Prinsloo, and I am a master’s student of psychology at the Extension School at Harvard University. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in my research project.

Here is a brief outline of the project with links to additional documents:

**Project title:** Biblio- and Music Therapeutic Identification among Highly Educated Korean Emerging Adults in a Heterogeneous Context

**Purpose:** I would like to invite you to take part in a research study because you are a highly educated Korean emerging adult (age between 19 – 29) whose perspective on stories or pieces of music from other cultures can inform our understanding of your connection or association with these texts.

**Criteria:** If you can answer yes to all these questions then you are an ideal candidate to participate.

1. Are you between the ages of 19-29? Yes/No
2. Are you a Korean national? Yes/No
3. Is Korean your first language? Yes/No
4. Do you feel comfortable expressing yourself in written English? Yes/No
5. Are you currently in or have you graduated from a university or college after high school? Yes/No
6. Do you understand that your sex, gender, or mental or physical health do not limit your participation? Yes/No

**Snowball:** I would appreciate it very much if you could forward this email to anyone you know who might be interested in participating and meet the criteria above.

**Duration:** It will take you approximately 75-90 minutes to complete your once-off participation. There is no follow-up participation.

- 15 minutes consent
- 10-30 minutes listening or reading
- 40 minutes writing

**More:** If you would like to know more and consider participating, please click on the following links that will take to you the Google Forms for this study:

- Adult consent form (link)
- Participation response form (link)

If you would like more information about the project, please contact me at this email or phone number anonymously:

[christiaanprinsloo@gmail.com](mailto:christiaanprinsloo@gmail.com)

010-5518-4233

**Participation is completely anonymous and voluntary.**

**No one will know if you participate or if you withdraw.**

Thank you very much for reading this email, considering participating, and forwarding it to someone who might be interested in participating.

Sincerely,

Christiaan Prinsloo

## Appendix 4.

### Participation Response Form

**Project title:**  
**Biblio- and Music Therapeutic Identification among Highly Educated Korean Emerging Adults in a Heterogeneous Context**

If at any time during your participation you need clarification or have any questions, please contact us anonymously if you can at [christiaanprinsloo@gmail.com](mailto:christiaanprinsloo@gmail.com) or 010-5518-4233.

#### **Step-by-step participation**

1. On the participation response form, review the list of stories and pieces of music by clicking on the URLs. You can access all these links for free.

#### **Stories**

*Porcelain* – Henrietta Rose-Innes

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D2BMeusTceJQXJ\\_P8s3zqYQYRcIsDtT/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D2BMeusTceJQXJ_P8s3zqYQYRcIsDtT/view?usp=sharing)

*Beyond the Bayou* – Kate Chopin

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46650/46650-h/46650-h.htm>

*Psychology* – Kathrine Mansfield

<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/mansfield/bliss/psychology.html>

*Before Tonde, After Tonde* – Petina Gappah

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YbifGrZIT5j1HcpshHfd9S48c82dYsUc/view?usp=sharing>

*Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* – Sequoia Nagamatsu

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=bHNtc2EuZWZWR1fHBmcmFuY2lzfGd4OjVmNTc1YjdjMWZmMGNhYjY>

**Or**

## Music

*Morning Passage* – Philip Glass

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIYHNRAgyDc&ab\\_channel=PhilipGlass-Topic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIYHNRAgyDc&ab_channel=PhilipGlass-Topic)

*Moonlight Sonata* – Beethoven

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvCEkSeJK2I&ab\\_channel=Brianne](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvCEkSeJK2I&ab_channel=Brianne)

*Calling Wisdom* – Karunesh

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33rFp85Yd5s&ab\\_channel=makhfi](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33rFp85Yd5s&ab_channel=makhfi)

*Illusions* – Thomas Bergersen

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1qzm3UUTrg&ab\\_channel=TwoStepsFromHell](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1qzm3UUTrg&ab_channel=TwoStepsFromHell)

*Oblivion* – Astor Piazzolla & Chris Botti

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jogWQRUF94c&ab\\_channel=ChrisBotti-Topic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jogWQRUF94c&ab_channel=ChrisBotti-Topic)

2. After reviewing the list of stories and music decide if you would like to participate by reading stories **OR** listening to music. You can choose more than one story **OR** more than one pieces of music.
3. After you read our story **OR** listened to your music, write a reflection by answering the following three questions:
  - With what elements of the story or piece of music do you identify, or what elements do you find appealing?
  - Why do you find these elements so appealing that you identify with them?
  - What does it mean to you that you identify with or find these stories or pieces of music appealing?
4. You can type your response at the end of this form where it states “Type your reflection here”
5. There is no word limitation. You can write as much or a little as you want, as long as you feel that you expressed yourself sufficiently.
6. When you are finished with your writing, exit Google Forms. Google will automatically save all the changes you made to the documents.
7. Exiting Google Forms concludes your participation.

**Type your reflection here:**

...

## Appendix 5.

### Synopses & Descriptions of Stories & Compositions

The synopses and descriptions of the stories and compositions were deliberately withheld from potential participants to mitigate the potential for expectancy bias. Instead, participants were tasked with autonomously selecting their preferred choices based solely on the titles of the respective selections or through a cursory review of the stories or listening to various compositions. The synopses and descriptions in Appendix 5 offer supplementary context for the benefit of readers engaging with this thesis.

#### Stories

Inspired by Freudian psychoanalysis, *Psychology* by Katherine Mansfield is a complex psychoanalytic exploration of the intricate dynamics of an anonymous courting couple whose indecisiveness creates frustration, ambivalence, and existential strain on their relationship. Mansfield's redolent prose and probing insight into human psychology converge to create a narrative that weaves together topics of friendship, courtship, attraction, love, disillusionment, avoidance, and repression. With a fragmented narrative structure emblematic of the modernist tradition, the story turns its gaze inward, probing the internal struggles of its characters rather than yielding to external events, thus illuminating the subtle dimensions of the human psyche.

*Before Tonde, After Tonde* by Petina Gappah chronicles the ordeal of a Zimbabwean family's migration to Britain after the middle child's (Tonde) death. Within

its narrative, Gappah skillfully examines mortality, bereavement, diasporic identity, domestic discord and abuse, sexuality, religious belief, racial dynamics, and the destructive repercussions of British colonialism. Gappah's storytelling is embedded in the rich contemporary realist fiction tradition. Within a sentimental atmosphere that captures both resilience and adversity of the characters, she harmonizes vibrant descriptions, cultural perceptions, and provocative social commentary.

*Beyond the Bayou* by Kate Chopin is situated in a landscape embroiled in the history of the deep south of the United States. This setting explores the realms of isolation, phobia, liberation, and self-discovery. The story centers around La Folle, the protagonist, a young Creole woman who is a prisoner of her phobia of the outside world. She is haunted by an entrenched fear engendered by a historical hunting accident. La Folle finds herself obliged to confront her phobia as a *deus ex machina* intercedes. Chopin explores the complexities of human emotions by accentuating the transformative power intrinsic to accepting one's inmost fears. *Beyond the Bayou* fits the American realist literary tradition, presenting authentic depictions of ordinary people while exploring social and psychological issues.

Henrietta Rose-Innes' enthralling story *Porcelain* chronicles conversations and memories that transpire over a weekend in a family beach cabin. During this time, the abstract antagonist, bipolar disorder, penetrates the family's psyche. Marion, the protagonist, struggles with the disorder that claimed her mother's life by suicide and now obscures her own. Rose-Innes embellishes the narrative with imagery, tender metaphors, and intricate symbolism as she investigates themes of mental health, suicide, anger, heredity, family dynamics, and identity. The story is permeated with scenes of



introspection that navigate the intricacies of acceptance. *Porcelain* is a work of contemporary literary fiction, and it expertly merges ambiguous symbols of magical realism with realism to craft a profoundly affective narrative.

*Melancholy Nights in a Tokyo Cyber Café* by Sequoia Nagamatsu captivates readers with a heart-wrenching account of “Hell Chosun” in the Japanese context. Within the bustling Tokyo cityscape, the protagonist Akira is ensnared in unemployment and homelessness while he yearns for human connection, recognition, and love. Nagamatsu explores the heartbreaking topics of solitude, alienation, suicide, identity, love, and autism. He describes an atmospheric plot with haunting scenes of mysterious white underground basements, online suicide groups, and a mass suicide on the slopes of Mt. Fuji. Nagamatsu writes in contemporary realist fiction, as he sets Akira free to entangle himself in impersonal digital webs and stoic physical streets. As Akira navigates this world, the reader is invited to contemplate the complexities of the human condition.

### Compositions

*Morning Passage* by Philip Glass (2002) is the opening piece for the movie *The Hours*. It is easily recognized as a minimalist classical composition that was inspired by the repetitive rhythmic patterns emblematic of classical Indian music. *Morning Passage* is written in E-flat major; as such, the optimistic tone quality matches the early morning activity of the waking household. While the piece is dynamic, it also imparts an introspective, hypnotic mood.

*Sonata No. 14, in C-sharp minor, op. 27, no. 2* by Ludwig van Beethoven (1801-1802) is also affectionally called the *Moonlight Sonata*. It is an renowned three-part piece

that straddles the classical and romantic traditions. As such, the classical contrapuntal balance accommodates the lingering romantic melodies. The piece opens with the famous *adagio sostenuto* slow and affectionate movement set in C-sharp minor. This is followed by the tempestuous second and third movements that are annotated *allegretto* and *presto agitato*. The *Moonlight Sonata* attests to Beethoven's genius to evoke deep emotions through music.

*Oblivion* was originally composed by the Argentine tango composer Astor Piazzolla (1982) and arranged and performed by Chris Botti. Botti's interpretation infuses the original composition with elements of contemporary jazz and ambient music. The melancholic tones in C minor create a pensive mood. While the Botti's pure trumpet playing leads the melody, it is accompanied by contrapuntal atmospheric piano arpeggios to render a rich soundscape. The contrast between trumpet and piano evokes a tension between a sense of yearning and surrendering. *Oblivion* displays both Piazzolla and Botti's mastery over tone and phrasing. The notes blanket listeners in contemplation like a fog that obscures the view of rolling waves on a winter shore.

In *Calling Wisdom* (2001), the German composer, Karunesh blends new age and world music to create a unique transcendental listening experience. While the composition makes many key changes, it is written mainly in a C minor pentatonic scale that invokes a sense of the native Far Eastern ambiance. The throat singing places it geographically on Mongolia's vast plains and snow-capped mountain peaks. The melody is played by an airy flute and accompanied by indigenous instruments, such as singing bowls, bells, and wind chimes. In the background, ethereal synthesizers create an

incandescent mood. The composition is quintessentially introspective, meditative, and spiritual.

*Illusions* by Thomas Bergersen (2011) is an epic orchestral composition that could be described as cinematic trailer music that blends various world sounds. The piece conjures a sense of reverence with its theatrical angelic choir, twisting melodies, pounding percussion, and grand symphonic arrangements. While the home key is D minor, *Illusions* vary throughout as it incorporates shifts between major and minor keys to create pressure and build emotional intensity. The mood can be described as grandiose and inspirational. *Illusions* sweeps listeners up in a roller-coaster journey of towering high voices and guttural low synthesizers that paint a musical scene of anticipation, elation, and catharsis.

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