Presence of Hindustani raga music on YouTube and the relative positionings of the musicians and music rendering styles

Dr. Pragya Pyasi[1]

Assistant Professor, Department of Music, University of Hyderabad

Prof. Sanjoy Bandopadhyay[2]

Retired Professor in Music, Sikkim University and former Ustd. Allauddin Khan Chair Professor, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.

Abstract

YouTube is a highly dominating music distribution platform. Previous studies indicate the relations between YouTube music videos, the role of the algorithm, musical creativity, user-generated content, and user engagement. The current investigation aims to understand the bi-directional relationships between the YouTube views, selected aspects of music, and the musicians. The study obtained 257 sample videos of 87 musicians of different categories. The researchers used YouTube filters to collect sample videos, and the obtained data were statistically analyzed using pivot tables and the Chi-square test. The results show that the seniority and popularity of musicians in the ICM fraternity are not decisive factors for high YouTube views. When the research output shows an equal distribution of Instrumental and Vocal Music performances, the Male-Female ratio in the high-viewed YT presence is not equal. The study also successfully established different levels of presence of Classical, Neo-Classical, and other music renderings by the Hindustani Raga musicians. This study reveals the necessity for identifying the functional components leading to high YouTube views.

Keywords: Indian Classical Music, YouTube, music distribution, popularity, views, seniority, HRM fraternity.

Research Paper

Introduction

YouTube [YT] is a powerful music platform where many music genres are showcased. A group of researchers takes it as a kind of mirror of the presence of a specific art form and its interpretations in real life. In such a robust platform, an inquiry about the presence of Hindustani Raga music in YT and the corresponding relative presence of different statuses of Hindustani Raga Musicians match the demand of the time. Lyor Cohen, Global Head of Music on YouTube, announced in November 2020 that YouTube has had a drastic increase in music users and shot to more than 2 billion people visiting YouTube per month to listen to music.[1] Even the global pandemic also influenced the increase of YT music viewers. YouTube has become such a dominant music distribution system that musical presence without YouTube is nearly unthinkable. Interestingly, music dominates most viewed YouTube videos[2] The relations between the YouTube presence and the corresponding musicians' presence. become an important area of investigation. Several significant studies discuss the inter-relations of user engagement of the user-generated content, and participatory culture on YouTube with the music learning, [3] Digital Distribution Platforms and User-Generated Content, [4] and User engagement with online media.[5] The power of YouTube play in establishing music and the musicians' status is a general discussion among budding, new, and not-so-successful musicians.

When YouTube came prominently, a part of the musician population and their admirers understood its importance. A case study of a teenager, Wade Johnston, suggests how YouTube affected music consumption, creation, and sharing. It explained how Wade started his channel, gained popularity, interacted with others, and promoted his musical career through YouTube.[6]

A study involving 100 Indian musicians on 'dependency theory' found that 90% of the musicians agreed that YT helped their growth as musicians and their popularity, and 96% of musicians in India are dependent on YT.[7] Hindustani music artists received successful entry to the western world and had elaborate exchanges. These solid interactions and widened exposure to a broader cross-section of people worldwide positively impacted the musicians. The musicians gradually understood the importance of networking for establishing their presence and overall welfare. As a result, the Hindustani musicians improved their professional network and perceived the importance of network development. When the local patronages considerably declined, all these approaches positively contributed to the musicians' interest.[8]

The present investigation will throw light on (a) Hindustani Music on YouTube and its distribution amongst the musicians of different seniority statuses, (b) gender participation (c) the presence of Hindustani vocal and instrumental music relative presence in the popular Hindustani Raga Music YT videos and (d) presence of Classical, Neo-Classical and other genres on YT.

Changes in HRM Listenership with time

Indian Classical Music is a traditional art form, and the performers feel proud to be associated with the roots and the antiquity of their music. Musicians value their associations with their roots and mention them when they introduce themselves for a performance or as students who proudly learn in a classical tradition. A learned audience or 'the Rasika-s' was essential for compelling performances. From temples to the courts, then courts to the concert halls, and lately, from live performances to the virtual world, the HRM audiences kept changing through the ages. As the patronage changed, having a small but knowledgeable audience for a good performance has changed to cater to a relatively broader audience segment. To get maximum ears, a heterogeneous, including the naïve audience, is today's requirement.

Briefly on the Transition of HRM Distribution from 78 rpm record to YouTube

Many anecdotes portray the relations of an artist with the audiences. In this context the statement of Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan during his "come-back" appearance in 1967 at a Government of Maharashtra-supported Music and Dance Festival. Khan Saheb refused to start singing because the auditorium lights were off, and the audiences were not visible. He said, *"You have switched off all the audience lights and I can see no one in the dark. How can I feel like singing unless I have a darshan of my dear listeners who have come from far and near in their affection for me?"* Needless to say that the performance was outstanding once he started after the lights were turned on.[9] This notion of the musicians changed, and they accepted the change with time. It was an eventful journey from 78 RPM records to YouTube.

The presence of Hindustani Raga Music on the internet came as a boon to those who could not afford to buy expensive recordings. It became easy to download the music and listen to it later at your convenience.

Contextually, the first YouTube channel presenting Indian Classical Music (HRM), "sitardivine, " was launched on 6/07/2006, and it shared the first video of Sarod on YouTube on 9/07/2006.[i] This happened even before Google took over YT in October 2006.

Today many popular channels like Darbar Festival, SaReGaMa, and Music Today presenting HRM.

Celebritization and Mediatization

The celebrity status of musicians is established after the recognition from the power layer of the music connoisseurs.[10] The online popularity of musicians also gets decided by the niche group of people.[11] The 'to be' celebrities work hard; it is their 'aspirational labor', [12] their efforts to generate a fan base. Some of these musicians put in 'entrepreneurial labor' to develop their authentic and branded presence[13] by successfully impressing a high volume of listeners. High visibility is an essential tool in the 'celebritization' process. People use mediatization for building up social and economic capital, as Driessens wrote, "with extra-field media exposure and careers that their star began to shine".[14] Celebritization through social media and the corresponding economic benefits are often quite dicey.[15] In actuality, the musicians attracting different

volumes of YT traffic may not be proportionately placed economically and socially. This finding came out when Marwick discussed the high-hit blogs versus the status of these bloggers in real life (2013).

Method:

The study received two data sets collected at different dates and one data check. The first set of data was collected on 24 March 2020 and cross-checked on 07 March 2021, and the second set was obtained on 28 December 2021.

The first challenge was to distribute the musicians under different statuses. A study was initiated using Delphi Method to obtain objectively classified data.[16] The outcomes of the Delphi study were incorporated into the present study. The obtained data were analyzed using a pivot table.

Data Set - I

The first data set was recorded under two parameters; (a) seniority of musician and (b) view counts. At this level, the identification of different levels of seniority of musicians was based on the researcher's general understanding through more than three decades of association with HRM listening. Because the seniority of the Musicians was one of the independent variables in this study, popularity and the age of the musicians were considered as the general status criteria. A list of 87 musicians was prepared to comprise 17 very senior, 30 senior, 17 contemporary, and 22 young musicians. The samples include highly established musicians amongst the connoisseurs and the young musicians who have a high popularity volume on YouTube. At this stage, the considered total number of data was N=257 [Table & Figure 1]. The data distribution was as under:

Status	Samples	Musicians
Very Senior	52	18
Senior	90	30
Contemporary	50	17
Young	65	22

Initially, three videos of 87 musicians, having the Highest views, medium views, and low view count [257], were selected. The musicians under four categories, namely, Very senior, Senior, Contemporary, and Young, were identified according to their seniority status. The investigator first identified three videos of

these 87 musicians based on highest, middle and low view counts. All the taken view counts are the average daily view of the videos. The YouTube filter 'sort by → Relevance → View count' was applied during the data collection, and as a result, the results displayed videos from high to low view count.
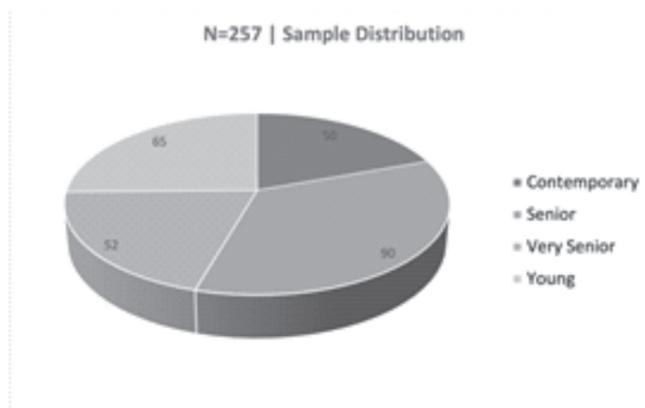

Table & Figure:1

The highest average view counts were calculated taking into account three available dates; date of uploading (a), date of data collection (b), and view count at the time of data collection (p). These two dates and view counts generated the average views. The differences in days between the date of data collection and the date of upload gave the total days of presence of the musical piece of the YouTube video. Then dividing the view counts by the total days gave the daily average view counts [X]; $X=p/((b-a))$.

Data Set – II

While analyzing the data, determining the seniority status of the musicians was difficult. The researchers felt it was essential to assign status to the musicians objectively. This confusion gave birth to a new study using the Delphi technique.[ii] So, the Delphi technique was applied to ascertain the objective status; this part involved highly specialized and established scholars and musicians from India and western countries.[17] Once again, the same YouTube search filter, 'Relevance →View count, ' was applied on 07 March 2021. The Delphi study showed the guidelines to objectify the status of HRM artists, and thus a few artists were shifted to another category from the categories they were initially placed.

The first category comprises 22 Young musicians having a substantial presence on YT. Although their content had a wide range - from 'covers' to 'light

musical compositions' to 'fusions, ' they have also proved themselves as accomplished Classical Musicians. They have a pretty good number of YT uploads for Classical music too. The next category has 18- very Senior Musicians. The musicians in this category are considered the milestone and are no more alive. 30 Senior musicians were kept under the Senior category. These are the well-known living legends whose presence and caliber are widely accepted. The last group of musicians consisted of 17- Contemporary artists, who are actually considered good and highly praised by the audience and have a remarkable presence on YT.[iii]

Final Data Set

The analysis was done with top viewed 100 musicians of different seniority statuses based on their average daily views at the final stage. The researchers decided to retain the outliers to maintain the character of the observed data. The character of average views of the musicians is indeed widely spread out.[iv] In this list of 100 top averaged videos, 18% were videos of very senior musicians, 40% of senior musicians, 16% from contemporary musicians, and 26% from young musicians [Table 2].

Status	Count
Very Senior	18
Senior	40
Contemporary	16
Young	26
Total	**100**

Table 2

General description of the observed data. [N=100]

Daily Ave. View	
Mean	428.60
Median	144.75
Standard Deviation	755.41
Minimum	39.20
Maximum	4347.11
Count	100.00

Table 3

Results and Discussions

The researchers faced questions regarding the seniority statuses of the musicians. There was no clearly drawn

definition for Music and Musician that satisfied the general understanding of today's Hindustani Raga Music-associated population. Also, there is no optimized vision regarding the seniority status to objectively classify the Musicians under the four selected categories. This study obtained a definition of *Hindustani rAga Music HRM*.[v] In this exercise, seventy-three experts participated, including many erudite international experts.
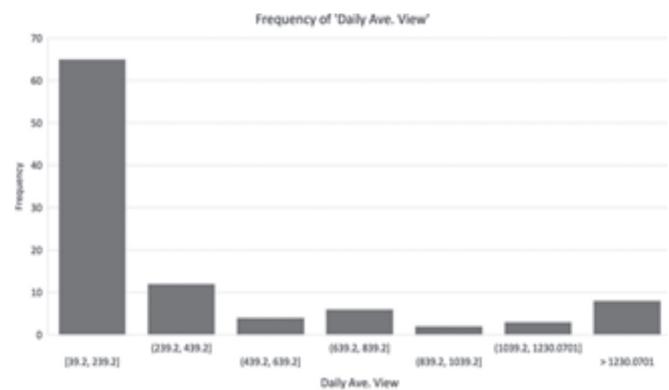

Figure 2

Figure 2 is showing the frequency of average view distributions. Also in Top-100 views the lower viewed section is highly dominating.

DELPHI also proposed to ascertain the statuses of Hindustani Raga Musicians objectively based on the Musician's 'age and fame.' 59% of the experts agreed to assign musicians' status based on age and fame; hence categories of Musicians were reshuffled in all categories. The proposal included special age cushions for exceptionally famous musicians. During the second phase of data collection, some videos were eliminated because of the YouTube policy, and some were not found appropriate. In the first phase of data collection, samples were identified by general search with the YouTube filter 'By relevance, ' and some of the videos were not pure classical music videos. The researcher decided to restrict the study to the classical music content; thus, the samples were excluded from the total samples for the analysis. However, the selections include Neo-classical genres of few leading musicians. [N=246]

The collected data covers a wide range of AVPD, which is 0.31 to 4347.[vi]

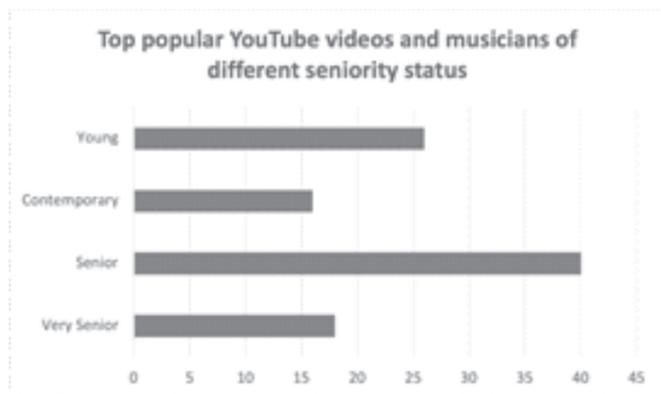Distribution of Top Popular YouTube Videos among musicians of different seniority statuses

Figure 3

The observed data gives the following table :

Status	Observed	Expected
Very Senior	18	25
Senior	40	25
Contemporary	16	25
Young	26	25
Total	100	100

Table: 4

$\alpha = 0.05$ | p-value $= 0.003$

Table 4 shows the distribution of HRM samples in all categories. The observed data are giving the distributions as follows; (as) the senior musicians are receiving maximum attention [40%], (b) then the young group of musicians [26%], (c) Very Senior musicians [18%], and (d) Contemporary musicians are receiving [16%] attentions respectively.

H0 = The top viewed Hindustani Music videos are equally distributed among the musicians of four different statuses. As the p-value is 0.003 and less than the significance level $\alpha=0.05$, the null hypothesis has been rejected. Therefore, the observed distribution is statistically validated.

Distribution of Instrumental and Vocal Music

The observed data shows 49 instrumental music videos and 51 vocal music videos among the top viewed 100 videos [Table 5].

Row Labels	Count
Instrumental	49
Vocal	51
Grand Total	**100**

Table 5

H_0 = The population of Instrumental and Vocal Music performances is equally distributed.

N=100, instrumental music 49, and vocal music 51 failed to reject the null hypothesis statistically.

Gender distribution

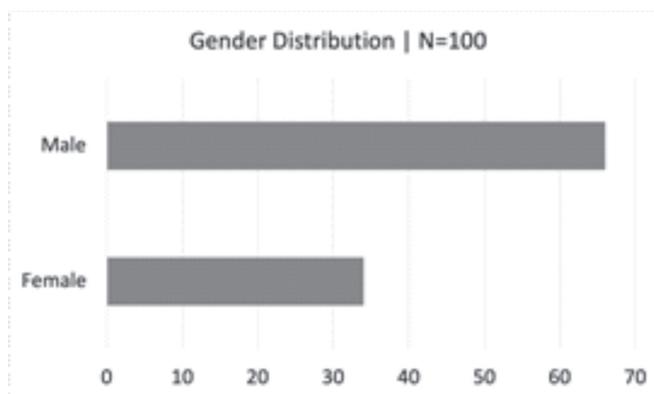Among the top viewed 100 videos, there were 66 male musicians and 34 female musicians [Figure 4].

Figure 4

H_0= The male and female musicians are equally distributed among the top viewed YT videos.

Gender	Female	Male	GRAND TOTAL
Observed	34	66	100
Expected	50	50	100
SUM	84	116	200

Table 6

α	0.05
P-value	0.0014

Of the observed top viewed music items, 34% were videos by female musicians, and 66% were male musicians, where N=100. The null hypothesis H0, which mentioned equal distribution of both male and female musicians, had been statistically rejected through the Chi-square test, where the p-value was 0.0014, which was lower than the 5% with a significance level $\alpha=.05$.

Therefore, this observed ratio of 34% female and 66% male in (Table 6) were statistically validated.

Classical, Neo-Classical, and other music style distributions [N=100]

Among the top viewed 100 videos of Hindustani Raga Musicians, 64 videos were classical music renderings,

19 were neo-classical renderings, and 17 were renderings of other styles of music [Table 7].

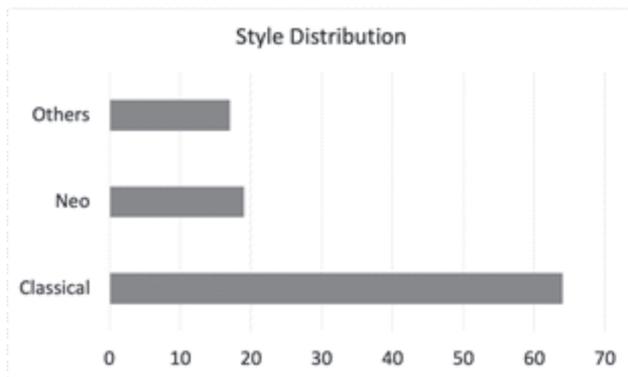| Style	Distribution
Classical	64
Neo	19
Others	17
Total	100

Table 7

Figure 5

H_0 = Classical and Neo-Classical Music videos are equally distributed among the top popular videos.

For statistical validation, the Chi-square test was used.

	Classical	Neo	Others
Observed	64	19	17
Expected	33.333	33.333	33.333
	$\alpha = 0.05$		
	P-value =	6.99067E-10	

Table 8

The Chi-square test [Table 7] gave a p-value of 6.99067E-10, which is far below the significance value $\alpha = 0.05$, and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected, and the observed distribution was statistically validated.

Inference

The study established relationships between the different seniority statuses and the popularity of the HRM Musicians on YouTube. It also showed the positionings of different styles of music rendered by the HRM practitioners. The gender participation and presence of instrumental and vocal music in popular YT videos also came to open. The findings will help to develop a better understanding of the current status of different factors in the relatively high-viewed music;

this information will help to open up the scope for better planning and use of YouTube for the generation of a larger market.

This study opens up scopes for further research for (a) identifying the underlying factors of the visualized scenario of HRM on YouTube and (b) developing a clearer understanding of the employable roles of the virtual platforms in creating a more comprehensive and effective presence of HRM.

Acknowledgment

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Appendix :

Very Senior	Senior	Contemporary	Young
Abdul Halim Zafar Khan	Ajay Chakraborty	Aman Ali Bangash	Abhishek Lahiri
Abdul Karim Khan	Ajay Pohankar	Debashish Bhattacharya	Ankita Joshi
Ali Akbar Khan	Ali Ahmed Hussain	Gundecha Brothers	Anupam Bhagwat
Amir Khan	Amjad Ali Khan	Kaivalya Kumar Gurav	Avanindra Sheolikar
Bade Ghulam Ali Khan	Ashwini Bhide	Kala Ramnath	Ayan Sengupta
Begum Akhtar	Bhajan Sopori	Kalapani Komkali	Debosmita Bhattacharya
Bismillah Khan	Bhimsen Joshi	Kamla Shanker	Devki Pandit
Buddhadeb Dasgupta	Budhaditya Mukherjee	Kaushiki Chakraborty	Indrani Mukharjee
Debu Chaudhary	Girija Devi	Kushal Das	Kalyanjit Das
Halim Zaffer Khan	Hari Prasad Chaurasiya	Manjari Asnare Kelkar	Manjusha Patil
Kesar Bai Kerkar	Jagdish Prasad	Niladri Kumar	Meeta Pandit
Kumar Gandharva	Jasraj	PravinGodkhindi	Nandini Shanker
Nikhil Banerjee	Jitendra Abhisheki	Purbayan Chatterjee	Omkar Dadarkar
Ravi Shankar	Kishori Amonkar	Sangeeta Shanker	Panchajanya De
Sharan Rani Mathur	Malini Rajurkar	Sanjeev Abhyankar	Pratik Choudhary
Uma Shankar Mishra	N. Rajam	Tushar Dutt	Pratik Srivastav
Vilayet Khan	Nayan Ghosh	Uday Bhawalkar	Pravin Sheolikar
Zarin Dauwala / Sharma	Parveen Sultana		Rajpupa Choudhary
	Prabha Atre		Ramakant Gaikwad
	Rajan Sajan Mishra		Ruchira Panda
	Rajendra Prasanna		Rupak Kulkarni
	Rashid Khan		Shahana Banerjee

	Shahid Parvez		
	Shiv Kumar Sharma		
	Shobha Gurtu		
	Shujaat Khan		
	Ulhas Kashalkar		
	Veena Sahasrabuddhe		
	Venkatesh Kumar		
	Vishwa Mohan Bhatt		