

Latin Music as a Genre in the American Market

‘What are the similarities and differences in the classification of successful music elements in Latin songs of the last decade according to critics and consumers?’

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Master Thesis

June 25th of 2020

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1. Introduction

Latin music refers to music originating from a Latin country; those which are Spanish-speaking countries and all others in Latin America (Kennon, 2018). Many Latin artists have made their way into the saturated American charts and gained critical acclaim throughout the decades. Breakthrough artists include Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, Shakira, Santana, etc. The U.S has a large Latin-American population that has slowly influenced the market and continue to strive for popularity worldwide, globalising the Latin genres (Kennon, 2018). Although many Latin artists have found success outside of the borders of their countries of origin, it was only in this decade that a song called 'Despacito' entered the top of the Billboard charts since the first Latin appearance in 1996 (Kennon, 2018). The hit also received several prominent awards gaining professional recognition from critics and enticing the American audiences.

Several documentaries were created and published on the phenomenon of Latin music and its popularity in the U.S. from the 1940s to now such as those by PBS (2009) and HBO (2015). PBS's documentary begins by showcasing diverse artists such as Shakira, Santana and Daddy Yankee, and songs of genres from Jazz to Salsa. During this montage display it is stated that 'in America, this is Latin music' then it skips to a drastically different song adding that 'this is also Latin music'. This introduction visualises the situation of the current musical categorisation system in the American industry. Furthermore, despite the variety in the broad genre, there are several musical elements which are common in Latin music. The category of Latin music is composed of numerous genres such as pop, bossa nova, reggaeton, and many others which are often placed together in the charts due to lack of more distinguished placement (Aguiar, Costa & Silla, 2018). For example, a song that is considered Latin Pop would normally be systematically included as a subgenre of the Latin category as opposed to the general Pop category. The Latin music label distinguishes the songs as foreign to the American audiences and critics. Now, as Latin songs make its way back into the Top 100 charts, they may challenge the general perception of what is considered local and global to the American music industry (Frith, 2001). However, there is still a lack of knowledge and understanding of the range and potential of music from a culture other than Anglo-American in the mainstream charts. This research will contribute to the understanding of the genre and what common elements make these songs successful thus creating a clear definition of what it represents to the American audiences.

The focus of this study will be on the American music market as it is extremely saturated but remains the main provider of popular music worldwide similarly to its overpowering film industry. The American music market is the biggest national recorded music market generating the most revenue, meaning it supplies an overwhelming amount of national music (Baskerville & Baskerville, 2018, p.524). An earlier study on the market described it as an oligopoly in which the few major productions and distribution companies would create standardised music that lacked diversity and created a homogenous selection (Peterson & Berger, 1975). This was challenged by scholar Lopes (1992) stating that throughout the year more innovation and diversity can be seen taking place in major American record companies, proving that there is change, however it is slow as seen in the case of Latin music's long struggle towards achieving the charts.

Music represents cultural values which can transpire to other geographical locations and cultures. Latin music is a transnational cultural asset as it blurs the lines between the origins and genres of a song. Although the U.S. is home to a diversified population its music charts have only recently been acknowledging Latin music. Globalisation was facilitated through the new technological advancements as distribution and accessibility of content is rapid, easy, and independent of location (Küng, 2017, p. 37). Music is transferable and easily accessible to most regions of the world. However, to a certain extent, there is an imbalance in this structure. American and British artists easily reach audiences from around the globe creating competition for local artists, and often these roles are not interchangeable. Therefore, what makes culturally different songs break through the overly saturated music industry in the U.S.? This study investigates what elements are present in Latin songs that achieved success in America according to professional music critics and consumers. The music elements refer to the technical characteristics (instruments and musical form) and aesthetics (sentiment and energy) in relation to how it adheres to or challenges the Latin genre. Music critics hold great value by giving professional recognition to artists, however, the sales of the song are in itself an important criterion which highlights the relevance of consumer's opinions.

Ultimately, this research will investigate the following research question: what are the similarities and differences in the classification of successful music elements in Latin songs of the last decade according to critics and consumers? This question will be answered by analysing the way in which professional critics and the American consumers view the songs categorised as Latin that were able to penetrate the overly saturated market through qualitative content analysis. The professional critics and audiences will give expertise whilst the consumers will give a

perspective of what elements the average American may interpret as Latin. Reviews and comments will be collected from several sources, varying from magazines to lyrics websites, to create two frameworks with the elements found to influence the success of the songs. The two frameworks will be compared in relation to categories, frequencies, language used, and interpretation of the text.

Accurate representation and capacity to educate others locally and transnationally through music and other mass media hold great social significance. Music as an art form can be representative of a cultural group. For this reason, it can also be used to identify the underlying ideologies of that certain group (Kohl, 1997). Research on the representation of the Latin social groups in America is socially relevant here as it can point out other ideals of the community other than those stereotypically shown as well as their place in the American market. The lack of definitive identification reveals a deeper social issue as discussed by other authors (Avant-Mier, 2010; Kohl, 1997). This study is also academically relevant since it strives to accurately define what Latin music entails in America and how it is currently challenging the American music industry by re-entering the charts alongside those considered to be typical American artists. Whilst previous studies discuss the concerns of the lack of proper categorisation, this thesis will define the current one through professional expertise and consumer opinions. This topic raises the importance of music critics and how they describe and interpret a song through a professional manner thus educating the American public and charts industry on music expertise.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Globalisation of Latin Music

The introduction and success of Latin music in the American market – the topic which will be discussed in this chapter – has been explored by many scholars and inspired many series and books. This attention is due to its immense impact on the industry, but also because of its unique placement amongst other genres. Latin music is currently identified as a genre by Billboard and other players in the industry (Avant-Mier, 2010, p.5; Billboard, 2012; Cobo, 2019). However, one can argue that it is a genre that encompasses a large geographical area as it is claimed to be referring to music deriving from Central and Latin America (Scaringella, Zoia, and Mlynek, 2006). In actuality it is multi-layered with other established genres such as Salsa, Reggaeton, Bossa Nova, Funk, Samba, etc. These are all placed in the same umbrella category due to their origins. Consequently, the definition of Latin music is not universal and has yet to be properly demarcated as the boundaries have been blurred throughout the years. Many artists of Latin American descent making pop music and other widely recognised genres in the English language are still often put in the category of Latin music. The Latin American population, which refers to those of Latin American descent or identification, has been continuously growing in the U.S., accounting for over 18% of the population as recorded in the recent years (Flores, 2017). This creates a large potential audience and a large number of creators (Flores, 2017). It also contributes to the significance and extensive history of Latin music in the U.S. Roberto Avant-Mier is the author of a book called *Rock the Nation: Latin/o Identities and the Latin Rock Diaspora* (2010) in which he analyses the history and identity of Latin music in the U.S., especially in relation to the genre of Rock. Avant-Mier discusses the confusion of genre-labelling in America in relation to artists with roots from Latin countries and the marginalisation and stereotyping of music styles. The Billboard charts are representative of the American industry as an important player depicting the popularity of music amongst audiences. They label their songs and consequently their charts by genre with an additional overall chart of the top 100 most popular songs amongst all genres called ‘Hot 100’. The format Billboard uses for classification is not disclosed and therefore possibly does not accurately represent the opinion of critics, peers,

and the public. The Billboard magazine has also discussed their own uncertainty over their system (Cobo, 2019). One article claimed that America used to consider songs entirely in Spanish to be under the same category, however, that is no longer the case thus blurring the lines (Cobo, 2019). Artists who reach a certain level of global recognition tend to no longer be labelled in that category and instead compete under their self-claimed genre. Avant-Mier (2010) gives the example of Santana who are placed in categories fitting to the mixed genres they are famous for. Other artists mentioned by the Billboards are also competing in more specific categories when their songs are in English or for other unknown reasons (Cobo, 2019).

Lack of clarity and consensus presents a systematic problem which hinders the local and global success of foreign music through the seclusion of the multi-genre Latin cluster (Avant-Mier, 2010). The act of labelling foreign music by their geographical location impedes direct competition with American music and ignores the complexity of music which experiments with styles and rarely adheres to the limitations of a genre. Latin music in the U.S. portrays a case of transnational music practices (da Silva & Hondros, 2019, p.7). Artists combine elements of the two nations to create their work. These also interlink with all involved actors in the network. The combination of two different elements alters the diversity of a song and the overall experience for consumers. Technology has aided in the process of globalisation and penetrating international markets, but as seen in the case of Latin music, there are still many difficulties in establishing a place for direct competition in the genre charts instead of being secluded into a different category (da Silva & Hondros, 2019, p.19; Lell, 2019, p.85). A hierarchy is present as the American music industry presents a distant reception to songs deriving from non-English speaking countries by segregating them. Despite the dissociation approach, a few non-English speaking songs have managed to enter the U.S Billboard's Top 100 charts in the past ten years. This may indicate a change in the market and a difference in how audiences and critics perceive Latin music.

2.2 Classification of Music

Latin music has proved its economic value in the American industry by achieving significant placements in the Top 100 charts of the Billboards despite the market limitations. However, these limitations do not stem solely from how songs are labelled. Classification of music is needed when navigating the music industry. In order to structure and measure a product's value and success with judgement devices (e.g. critics, audiences, charts, awards, etc.), it is of great importance to have categories such as genres for comparative purposes. The framework will serve to compare works that share musical trait similarities with those that are in

different categories. The attributes that are given to Latin music construct the conventions of the genre. Genres are classification structures meant to distinguish musical elements from one another and aid the marketing process. However, there is a limited amount of studies on these classification structures and its attributes.

Some researchers have conducted studies attempting to understand the way in which genres function in the music industry and in society. They focus on how the genres constructed revolve around individuals and the collective through a social and cultural context such as in Jennifer C. Lena and Richard A. Peterson's study (2008). However, they conducted their study assembling four categories of genres based on its corresponding communities and evolution: avant-garde, scene-based, industry-based, and traditionalist. These were created by analysing twelve attributes such as the performer, critics, fans, genre conventions, etc. Lena and Peterson (2008) touch on the attributes which form a genre, but they investigate through a vastly generalised manner based on the communities of genres.

According to Lena (2012), music is community-focused (p.3). Based on this idea she has conducted a study on music genres as social constructs. It focused on the sociological, aesthetic, and organisational aspects of genres and their development through time. The function of genres is to create expectations and conventions that attempt to unify how stakeholders and artists define a style of music through a consensus (Lena, 2012, p.6). According to Lena, the genre community includes reward systems (e.g. sales, charts, awards, etc.), which is the source for Billboard's system to calculate musical successes (p.6). Genre communities also include gatekeepers and audiences which is what this thesis will focus on.

Genre communities are complex as genres are ever-changing in order to keep their appeal to audiences. Therefore, it is difficult to properly define them and create boundaries (Lena, 2012, p.7). In order to capture the ever-changing nature of genres, Lena created the four genre forms which correspond to their social construct and organisation. Genres are socially constructed as it adapts to the society and evolves, thus it is a valuable manner of depicting how society interacts and changes a genre. Despite the new form of classification, it is complex to place Latin music in one of the four forms as it is vastly different in American society than from other Latin communities. Latin music has grown in the American society. Regardless, it is still an incredibly vague genre classification which encompasses several distant music types that have grown differently. However, Latin music is seen as a lucrative business endeavour for the three major labels in the U.S. It has had a boost in popularity and has dedicated divisions with specialists for the genre hence following a similar description of the industry-based form.

The concept of genres itself arguably implies an oversimplification of the artistry. For instance, genres which are based on geographical factors, such as Latin music, dismiss many other musical styles that exist within it such as Samba, Salsa, Reggaeton, etc. (Scaringella, Zoia, and Mlynek, 2006). They fall under the same category despite being significantly different. Moreover, genres based on locations tend to cover a significantly large geographical area with its own music market (Pachet & Cazaly, 2000). Consequently, the music industry requires song classification to ensure an organisational structure that can aid consumers in finding their preferred style of music in an efficient manner (Nanni, Costa, Lumini, Kim & Baek, 2016). The process of taxonomy would be eased by the suggestion made by Scaringella, Zoia, and Mlynek (2006) in which they argue for perceptual categories which would relate to the emotions and moods of a song instead of its musical technicalities or artists' background. This mode of taxonomy can be observed on the streaming platform Spotify which separates their catalogue in various manners. Apart from dividing songs by traditional music genres, they also have categories according to the emotions a song may emit to its listeners and to their current activities such as study, workout, dinner, etc. Receptive manners are commonly used to discover music by audiences and in this case, they are appropriately adapted by Spotify (Airoldi, Beraldo & Gandini, 2016).

Due to the overwhelming amount of music available digitally, classification is used to facilitate exploration for users and as discussed can be done in various categories. This classification system is typically done through an automated computer system. According to an article on automated music classification, the concept of genres is yet to be properly defined (Scaringella, Zoia & Mlynek, 2006). Although this research is not recent, the issue is still present as seen in the case of Billboard's uncertainty over the current classification of the Latin genre. People may label boundaries of genres differently than others and the differentiation may be more noticeable between peers, critics, and audiences. Individuals can have different understandings of what the genre is depending on their habitus which ultimately affects their opinion on cultural goods and taste. According to Keith Negus (2013), the American market has a divide between their offices dedicated to specific genres which causes miscommunication and, in some cases, linguistic barriers (p.144). The divisions supposedly mean that when recording is transferred to another division it is met with people who have little knowledge of Latin music and therefore do not adequately distribute and advertise it. Songs which an employee at these offices acquires more knowledge on, likely American, are then at a commercial advantage. All in

all, the separation of Latin music through divisions and secluded musical styles from other known genres such as Pop, contributes to a social and structural division in the American market.

Genres are not entirely reflective of the creative and often experimental songs made by artists (Scaringella, Zoia & Mlynek, 2006). The automatic classification of songs, albums, and artists is a perplexing task as there is a tendency for innovation during creation and artists often do not consciously make choices in order to adhere to a genre nor do they want to limit themselves (Lena, 2012, p.7; Nanni, Costa, Lumini, Kim & Baek, 2016). However, artists have to meet the expectations of members of the music community in order to succeed commercially. In this thesis, we will be analysing what these exact expectations are for Latin music on the basis of two essential members: critics and audiences (Lena, 2012, p.7). Automatic systems are in use to classify songs. The reason for this system is the overwhelming amount of songs now available digitally which must be assorted in specific distribution platforms in an efficient and pleasing manner to consumers. The increase in online music and in different formats also greatly influences how people search for and explore music due to the abundant amount (Airoldi, Beraldo & Gandini, 2016; Seabrook, 2015). Therefore, due to the increased amount of readily available music, they are categorised by genres which is done by separating songs based on the recognition of certain features such as tone, rhythm, and distinctive instruments (Nanni, Costa, Lumini, Kim & Baek, 2016). An investigation on the Youtube platform analysed how music recommendations are clustered together in relation to online tagging (Airoldi, Beraldo & Gandini, 2016). It claims music classification has gained some attention from scholars such as Jennifer Lena but has limited empirical research. However, online tagging can have consequences as other scholars claim a new method of classification would encompass the complex nature of music in a more coherent manner (Airoldi, Beraldo & Gandini, 2016).

This thesis will expand on how a genre is classified by focusing on the specific structure of the Latin genre through the community of critics as well as consumers. Considering the literature above, manual classification can be better suited for this medium due to its features as is suggested in an article (Scaringella, Zoia & Mlynek, 2006). Consequently, music as an art form is subjective and audiences can disagree with classification choices made by critics (Pachet & Cazaly, 2000). Therefore, an inconsistency is present in the process of assorting adequate genres to music due to the unclear definitions of each genre and the nature of music itself. This thesis will compare both evaluators, audiences and critics, to create a well-defined framework.

Ultimately, the literature presents genres as a conceptual tool used to define and facilitate distribution and marketing through classification. Consequently, musicians do not wish to be

labelled and restricted by a genre and its conventions but are often expected to do so in order to ensure an adequate number of consumers (Lena & Peterson, 2008). This boundary, built through the conventions of a genre, also limits the opportunities for a Latin artist to, for example, venture into the general categories of Pop, Rap, etc. The Latin genre in the U.S. is a unique case due to the large Latin population and the localisation of music (Avant-Mier, 2010). The music is produced and made with an American audience as its target. The category was made due to the post-national production in the U.S. which embedded both Latin and American standards in the genre (Party, 2008). The American market thus imposes their classifications and conventions in order for songs to be commercially successful within their own genres, impeding enough diversity in the charts. However, these standards are not always universal. Ultimately, the discord between markets, artists, and audiences are due to individuals in the industry which are influenced by cultural patterns (Negus, 2013, p.145). The American music market holds a significant amount of influence as it dominates the majority of the local and foreign charts, presenting itself as highly responsible for the displayed diversity in commercialised music.

2.3 The American Music Market

The U.S music market has been thoroughly studied in terms of its diversity (Alexander, 1996; Dowd, 2004; Lopes, 1992). One of the studies indicates that in the presence of decentralisation of production and high market concentration, diversity can still flourish (Dowd, 2004, p.1444). This was visible in the booming popularity of 'Rock and Roll' and 'Rhythm and Blues', and other genres. The diversity of music increases as major recording companies introduce new performers who can add other musical styles to the company's repertoire and eventually the mainstream market through radio and streaming platforms (Dowd, 2004, p.1445). Major recording companies have always been at an advantage in dominating the charts through their already established artists and ease of producing and distributing their content locally and internationally (Dowd, 2004). Most of these studies on diversity were conducted prior to the emergence and dominance of online streaming platforms (Wagner, Rose, Bacarella & Voigt, 2015). However, although the distribution of music and accessibility has been facilitated through technological advancements, major companies are still dominating the market (Richardson, 2014). This is due to the several copyright contracts involved in the distribution of their material. Many of the distributing deals can be straining to streaming platforms. This is seen in the case of Spotify, who are obligated to purchase a catalogue for a particularly high amount and promote particular artists from major labels (Richardson, 2014). Promoting established artists limits the

exposure of lesser-known artists resulting in a low stream which ultimately means a lower financial gain for the latter.

Keith Negus (2013) studied the genre of Latin music and its place in the American market, and how its approach continues to contribute to social divisions. Nevertheless, despite the American market's enforcement of social division, the Latin-American market is appealing to the U.S. This is due to the constantly growing number of Latin Americans in the country which began increasing the amount of financial gain for the music sector as a result (Negus, 2013, p.135). Furthermore, the interest and financial potential were expected to be much more during the 1990's it was clustered with other alternative genres (p.141). Additionally, many of the album sales were not included in the statistics due to piracy and other substitutes (p.142). As a result, the current percentage of the Latin genre that contributes to music sales in the U.S. music business is even larger due to the increase in population. Although this source is referring to previous decades, it provides information on how the American market underestimated the popularity and financial potential of Latin music. This can be argued to justify the importance and relevance of Latin artists in the market. Due to the continuously growing new audience, its disposable income, and interest in consuming Latin goods, the major labels created divisions solely dedicated to Latin music (p.141). While Keith Negus's work is not recent, the divisions still stand today. Universal Music Group contains Universal Music Latino which includes artists such as J Balvin and Luis Fonsi. Sony Music Entertainment founded the Sony Music Latin signing artists such as Enrique Iglesias and Jennifer Lopez. Finally, Warner Music Group created the Warner Music Latina with artists such as Maná and Jesse & Joy. At the time Keith Negus (2013) wrote his work, Latin music was still considered a niche and remained separated from popular genres (p.141). As of today, despite the divisions remaining, some of the artists on the Billboard Top 100 chart under the Latin category are not all under the Latin division of their label; an example being Camila Cabello. However, the fact that they have devoted divisions solely for Latin music confirms that the majors consider it to be financially successful, but avoid signing artists and putting them in categories of genres that suit them or are claimed by the artist themselves such as Rock, Pop, and Hip Hop, etc.

The U.S. market presents itself as a continuously dominant player in the music industry through its major labels and market power, thus influencing the rest of the industry and audiences. For this reason, it is important to investigate what attributes of Latin music allow it to enter the market amongst other mainstream American music and in turn, become successful in other regions such as Europe. The way in which music is distributed and introduced to audiences

affects overall success. The lack of diversity in a catalogue recommended playlist and on the top of charts has many consequences. The growing success of Latin music throughout this decade, breaking away from a niche group, could challenge the industry to reconsider what Latin music is and how it is currently secluded from other relevant genre charts. The boundaries of the genre are no longer clear despite reaching the mainstream, making it relevant to study how it is currently viewed by the most significant stakeholders, critics and audiences.

2.4 Success in The Music Market

As Latin music is no longer a niche and is able to gain more recognition through awards, sales, charts, critics, and audiences, it is valuable to identify the elements that currently aid songs to become commercially successful. The popularity of an artist is given in accordance to its achievements in the field of music. The cultural industries present a substantial amount of risk due to the products being experience goods and their audience behaving in unpredictable ways (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Regardless of marketing or following trends, there is little certainty of success (Hesmondhalgh, 2013, p.27). According to David Hesmondhalgh (2013) cultural workers, in this case, musicians, are given limited freedom to explore their creativity and originality to produce successful work. However, labels must rely on gatekeepers to provide enough publicity in order to generate enough interest from audiences (p.27). Consequently, it is not always possible to ensure positive publicity unless monetary benefits are established between both parties.

Publicity can be achieved through popular and artistic success, both of which require different elements to achieve. A song is given value through prizing by industry workers. Moreover, Glaucia Peres da Silva and Konstantin Hondros (2019) claim that there are different manners in which prizing of a song can occur: intrinsic value and appraisal. Intrinsic valuing of a song is given through its aesthetics and consumer's emotions attached to the song whilst appraisal refers to recognition. Similarly, according to Stephen Low, Julie Rickwood and Samantha Bennett (2018), stardom is measured by professional success and popular recognition. Professional success can be evaluated through ranking in charts and critical acclaim, whilst popular recognition can be evaluated through digital sales, concert attendance, number of streams, and the audience's response. These indicate that musical technicalities and talent do not directly equate to commercial success.

Artistically, a good song should follow the system model of creativity by remaining original, authentic, and accessible to critics and audiences according to scholar Clive Harrison

(2018) in his work on how professional songwriters can elevate their creativity. However, audiences listen to music for several reasons in the lines of entertainment instead of focusing on creativity. They also comment on the aesthetics of a song and link their personal experiences to a piece. Audiences create a connection between the artist, lyrics, and emotions emitted through the song. This is what affects how they place value to a musical piece. Audiences often listen to music which is relevant to them and attach their own feelings and experiences to it through the lyrics and tone. They tend to form a parasocial relationship with artists who portray a public persona which highly influences consumer's behaviour. The parasocial relationship created through the song possibly increases loyalty in sales. Personal identification is a large factor in the evaluation of songs by audiences (Loy, Rickwood & Bennett, 2018). The need for personal identification stems from the basis of popular aesthetics and overall popular culture discussed by Annemarie Kersten and Denise D. Bielby (2012). They analysed the idea of popular aesthetic and aesthetic disposition in relation to criticism of cultural goods. In accordance with the theories of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the distance between the cultural product and audience should be minimal to maintain relevance and a personal connection for the audiences (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Conversely, they concluded in their research that familiarity and self-identification are not always recognisable and needed in order to reach popularity amongst the public. While their research is based on film as the cultural good, the element of self-identification will still be considered in this thesis as it is mentioned in previously discussed literature.

Alternatively, appraise is present through professional reviews by critics and rankings such as charts. Professional music critics legitimise a song and artist by giving them recognition in the field. The more critical acclaim an artist has, the more social capital they build (Bourdieu, 1993; da Silva & Hondros, 2019). Similarly to the audiences' behaviour, according to a study, American cultural elites have an informal approach by focusing on the emotional and personal factors as well, which are characteristics of a popular aesthetic criterion (Van Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). In fact, the U.S. has blurred boundaries between high art and popular discourse as the critics seemingly represent an omnivorous taste, thus identifiable with the popular aesthetic criteria. There are three types of recognition; critics, peers, and the public. This thesis will focus primarily on critics and the public as peers are reflected in the overall structure of the industry (Kersten & Bielby, 2012). Moreover, cultural products with critical and popular recognition from the public have more common elements than those recognised by peers

(Kersten & Bielby, 2012). As a result, this could be seen in the analysis of this thesis if the two frameworks of critics and audiences are similar.

Most notably, professional music critics address the technical elements of a song and how it adheres or challenges the genre. They are able to evaluate a song by having expertise and representing a refined taste for music (Frith, 2013). Although critics may recognise a song as showing noteworthy musical abilities, it does not create any certainty that it will be a success in the market. Popularity is not measured by musical talent, but instead through sales and audiences. Music critics play a crucial role in the classification, success, and recognition of music. This can be seen most prominently in the cases of award shows where songs are critiqued not only on sales but on their musical qualities. However, musical abilities are often not highlighted due to genres still being highly significant at award shows as songs are divided into genre categories based on critics and other music experts to receive their prizes and recognition. Several award shows have been heavily criticised by artists who felt that their song did not fit into a certain genre. The most recent highly publicised example was in the 2019 Grammy Award ceremony where the artist Tyler The Creator stated his music was not in the right category (Billboard, 2020). However, this form of categorisation is also present on Spotify, Billboard, and other platforms leading to further mislabelling to audiences. The decision to evaluate both audiences and critics stems from the need to investigate both opinions as they are equally relevant to a song's success in the Billboard charts.

According to da Silva and Hondros (2019), valuation of music is associated with the concept of classifying in order to correctly compare works with each other. Songs are compared by critics in a seemingly fair manner with those in the same category in order to evaluate them within their genre. The act of listening to music is personal since the product is subjective, leading to the difficulty in comparing songs. Thereby, the legitimisation is given through the valuation according to these several tangible, professional, and measurable features named judgement devices (da Silva & Hondros, 2019). Consequently, the process of valuation can lead to a form of hierarchy within the system as only a minority of artists reach a reputable level of success in such a competitive market (Lamont, 2012).

An article by William Bielby & Denise Bielby (1994) investigates the process of introducing a new product in a highly institutionalised cultural industry and what factors affect its success in a competitive market. The article specifically talks about television series, but still addresses the essence of the formula cultural products follow. Products that adhere to a formula of classification, theme, and other important aspects are considered to ensure adequate success

with their advertisement strategies. Part of this formula is basing the product on a genre and its conventions which are already successful. According to the article, the first factor to influence success is the established reputation of the creator prior to the release of a new product (Bielby & Bielby, 1994). Reputation greatly influences success amongst audiences. Generally, well-known artists or those who are associated with a reputable label or other artists, can build a name for themselves and are able to slowly infiltrate the charts. The second factor is imitation, which refers to artists taking inspiration from already successful examples by selecting aspects which are now known to work at attracting the target group. This can also be seen in the example of using popular songs by sampling or remixing them. Nonetheless, competition keeps growing and it can be difficult to reach success even when following this formula. These three tactics have also been explored by David Hesmondhalgh (2013); however, their use does not ensure commercial success, it simply eliminates some of the risks and uncertainties (p.32). Ideally the greater the number of products to distribute, the higher the chance of achieving a 'hit' as there is no perfect formula for success due to the ever-changing audiences' tastes. At the same time, that approach is neither sustainable nor financially possible for smaller labels (p.30).

Moreover, a study focused specifically on music was conducted to examine the features which make a song popular, taking the Top 100 charts into account (Askin & Mauskapf, 2017). The research conducted gives a more specific idea of how popularity is measured and categorised. Although the study is not genre-specific they provide a success template for music. The features considered were musical elements in relation to key, tempo, energy, danceability, thematic message, etc. Some of these characteristics will be further considered during the coding of the data according to what will be mentioned in collected written reviews. Other explicit elements such as language will also be taken into account as the majority of 'hits' are in English (Seabrook, 2015). This insight will provide a deeper understanding of the significance of these elements in the chart success of certain Latin songs. Differentiation was eventually concluded to be an important aspect of popularity by Askin & Mauskapf's study (2017). Therefore, this thesis' results will also be compared in order to ascertain whether originality is considered a characteristic of success by critics. The study named its limitation to be the lack of attention to personal listening experiences, which this thesis will analyse through coding consumer reviews.

Provided with the information discussed in the previous articles, this thesis will consider the different judgement devices as charts, professional critics, and the audience's responses. Charts are one of the only ways in which value can be measured in a numerical and tangible manner (da Silva & Hondros, 2019). The ranking demonstrates a clear overview of one's

position in the market and the success of a song simply based on the audience's listening behaviour. The other judgement devices are not as easily structured given their unmeasurable nature, which is what this thesis will investigate and structure through a framework of successful elements.

To conclude, professionals focus on musical abilities whilst audiences may comment on the aesthetics of a song and their projected personal experiences. Audiences increase the number of streams thus making a song popular while professional critics are able to evaluate the technical elements which lead to a song being considered 'good' for the market. The opinions and importance of particular attributes may differ significantly or not at all, which is what will be investigated in this research. Professional critics are gatekeepers, but the success is not guaranteed until approved by the public. Music critics are not representative of the population and personal taste (Cone, 1981). There is a level of knowledge necessary to judge an art form, but critics' opinions are not the final evaluation form (Cone, 1981). The act of criticising subjective work in a professional manner means applying discretion and neutrality (Jones, 2002). This is why it is important to also further explore the boundary-less consumers' opinions alongside their critic counterparts.

3. Research Design

3.1 Qualitative Analysis

To investigate the musical elements identified and deemed important by both critics and audiences, qualitative content analysis will be conducted. Qualitative content analysis allows for a systematic way to describe and understand the meaning of the collected data by corresponding relevant sections to categories directly answering the research question (Schreier, 2014, p.172). Due to the large amount of written data being interpreted, the content analysis aids in reducing the data to focus solely on the research question but also has the flexibility to adapt and organise the data accordingly (Schreier, 2014, p.172). It is efficient in relation to this research as reviews by critics may speak on other aspects of the artists which are not relevant to how they affect the classification of genres and overall success of the songs. The qualitative content analysis will allow two frameworks to be constructed with the findings of both professional critics' reviews and consumers' reviews of the top charted Latin songs on Billboard of the last decade. The research focuses on the last decade, the 2010s, as it "experienced a change in the charts wherein Latin music had finally entered the top of the charts after a significantly long interval. The decade saw an increase in the visibility of this supposed genre in the U.S. as the Billboard Hot 100 displayed numerous entries. Therefore, it is relevant to research the specific elements in common amongst the current charting songs in order to discover how they have re-entered the American dominated space in the viewpoint of two separate types of evaluators.

Prior to the analysis, the initial phase consists of researching to gather and construct a table of the Latin songs that have reached the Billboard Top 100 song of each year of the decade (2010-2019). The charts rank the songs based on radio airplay, sales data, and streaming data to gather the total amount of plays. This data is gathered through Nielsen Music as stated by Billboard on their website. Additionally, the streaming data is collected through different sources creating possible inaccuracies in representing all music streaming platform' audiences. This will not be considered during analysis but may be considered a limitation. For every year of the decade, the Top 100 chart was scanned to find any Latin songs which had been ranked. The songs were confirmed to be under the category of Latin music for the Billboards by examining if they were present under the charts solely for Latin music as well. There were some cases in

which songs by Latin American artists have appeared in the Top 100 charts but only some of their music was not considered Latin in the Billboards. This was the case for the artist Camila Cabello in which only particular songs were under the Latin category whilst one song that did contain Spanish lyrics was not, presenting an inconsistency. Therefore, only songs which are placed under the category of Latin music on Billboard were considered for this analysis despite how artists classify the songs themselves.

The data was gathered through purposive sampling. Due to limited material available online, it was chosen on the basis of sufficient content. In relation to critics, the data is representative of the population as almost all available reviews were analysed instead of having to gather a smaller sample. However, this data is solely representative of the reviews of songs in the Billboard Hot 100 and not all commercially successfully songs. Comments by consumers were chosen according to length in order to have relevant data. The table was initially intended to gather the highest-ranking Latin albums as professional reviews are often on the whole album instead of a specific song. However, there was an insufficient number of Latin albums to have appeared in the Top 100 during the last decade. Instead, songs were gathered since they appear in a higher quantity which may indicate a preference for singles rather than albums in relation to the success of Latin artists in Billboard charts. Nevertheless, despite having to analyse singles, it also means the reviews are more about specific elements of a song instead of analysing a review generalising an entire album. Regardless, album reviews will be utilised if there are insufficient single reviews.

The singles were researched according to their genre classification on the Billboard website as each song which appeared on the chart is presented with information of other genre-based charts they also appear on. After gathering all the data, the following table was finalised visualising the growing popularity of Latin songs throughout the years and its increasing ranking. It is important to note that some songs appear twice as they remain on the charts the following year. This is likely due to a release late during the year in which its success carried onto the next.

Latin Songs in Billboard's Top 100 Chart

Year	Name of Song	Artists	Ranking
2010	None Found	None Found	None Found

2011	On The Floor	Jennifer Lopez Featuring Pitbull	11
2012	None Found	None Found	None Found
2013	None Found	None Found	None Found
2014	Bailando	Enrique Iglesias Featuring Descemer Bueno & Gente de Zona	38
2015	El Perdon (Forgiveness)	Nicky Jam & Enrique Iglesias	96
2016	None Found	None Found	None Found
2017	Despacito	Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee Featuring Justin Bieber	2
	Mi Gente	J Balvin & Willy William Featuring Beyonce	50
	Havana	Camila Cabello ft Young Thug	96
2018	Havana	Camila Cabello ft Young Thug	4
	I Like It	Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin	7

	Te Bote	Casper Magico, Nio Garcia, Darell, Nicky Jam, Ozuna & Bad Bunny	81
	X	Nicky Jam x Bad Bunny	90
	Dura	Daddy Yankee	93
	Mi Gente	J Balvin & Willy William Featuring Beyoncé	99
2019	MIA	Bad Bunny ft Drake	44
	Taki Taki	DJ Snake ft Selena Gomez, Ozuna & Cardi B	57
	Con Calma	Daddy Yankee & Katy Perry ft Snow	65
	I Like It	Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin	100

3.2 Coding System

The unit of analysis will be both consumer and critics' reviews from no specific company. The data will be retrieved from several sources wherein reviews of both audiences and of critics will be acquired in order to present generalisable and unbiased results. Differentiated resources will ensure that diverse opinions and expertise are acknowledged. Music critics and consumer reviews can be written by the same users for several songs thus variety will widen the scope of the research. The reviews will be collected from music-focused websites such as Pitchfork, Rolling Stone, Variety, Billboard, and others which have dedicated pages for reviews or critic

commentaries. The consumer reviews will be acquired through comment sections of professional reviews, song lyrics webpages, and Metacritic's user reviews section. Unfortunately, in comment sections and in some websites, it is difficult to identify the origin. Therefore, despite the majority of websites being American, a few British websites were also used due to insufficient data available, especially for critics' reviews. Comments were more widely available but also difficult to confirm the nationality of the user. Critics were initially only to be selected from well-established news and music companies, however, due to the lack of reviews available, other entertainment websites were considered if a section was dedicated to music. Audiences' comments were selected according to their length and content relevancy. Audiences also generally have shorter and similar comments, if not identical, such as "good dance song", therefore a varied amount was gathered to identify different elements whilst also taking into consideration the popularity of a certain preferred element.

The sample size was decided after investigating the charts. From 2010 to 2019, 13 different songs have appeared in Billboard's Top 100. Thus, around 5 professional reviews and 35 consumer reviews will be analysed per song. This will allow variation of opinions and expertise to collect the highlighted successful musical elements. The majority of the reviews selected will be positive to the songs in order to be able to analyse what made the songs successful in the U.S. However, if any negative comments have additional information on why the user may still be listening to the song, and therefore boosting its popularity, they will be taken into consideration. As this thesis focuses solely on the successful element, negative comments can mostly be disregarded without creating biased results since they do not contribute to answering the research question.

Two separate coding frames will be formulated to discover the musical elements which have aided the success of the aforementioned songs in the American market. With both frameworks at hand, a comparative analysis can take place to examine the commonalities and differences in musical elements found in popular Latin songs. The reviews will be coded and evaluated by how the music is described. The data analysed is used to interpret the ways in which audiences and critics describe and highlight Latin music; therefore, the frequency of codes is not emphasised significantly. The musical elements considered in this study - with the exception of those which may arise during the coding process - will be the following:

Energy

This element refers to descriptions of the intensity of the song. It will be coded through any mentions of the tempo, rhythm and/or beat of the songs as described by the reviewers.

Danceability

This element refers to descriptions of the style of the song and any expression on the desire to dance it evokes. It will be coded through any mentions of the use of terms which state or imply the song is fit for dancing such as “dance tune”, “party song”, “club song”, etc.

Thematic Message

This element refers to what the reviewers perceive to be the core topic and themes of the song. It will be coded through descriptions of the meaning of the song and/or an explanation of the lyrics according to the reviewers.

Listener’s Experience

This element refers to the personal experiences and sentiments evoked by the song such as sadness, happiness, etc. It is based on the literature reviewed which stated that songs were evaluated on intrinsic value and need for personal identification (da Silva & Hondros, 2019; Loy, Rickwood & Bennett, 2018). The element will be coded through reviewers’ descriptions of the emotional impression the song left on them.

Instruments

This element refers to the reported appearance of particular instruments which will explore whether any are significantly popular. It will be coded through any mentions of instruments and/or the impact they have on the mood and energy conveyed.

Explicit Mentions

This element refers to descriptions of the song as being of the Latin genre which will be used to analyse whether audiences and critics actively use the term and associate songs by Latin artists. Additionally, if present, it will also allow a discussion on how this may or may not contribute to the generalised classification of music. The element will be coded through any explicit mentions of the Latin genre such as “this Latin song” or referring to the origin of the artist by stating they are Latin.

Genre Conventions

This element refers to descriptions which contain typical and/or atypical attributes associated with the music genre. It will be coded through any mentions of the song’s traits which correlate to or stray away from the conventions of its perceived genre.

Originality

This element refers to the reviewers’ opinion on the uniqueness and creativity of the song. As mentioned in previous literature, the popularity of a song is often due to its perceived

originality which is why it will be considered as a criterion during coding (Askin & Mauskapf, 2017).

Musical Form

This element refers to descriptions of the type of song based on its style. It will be coded through mentions of any recognised song types such as ballads, dance music, pop, and other music genres.

Popular Recognition

This element refers to the reviewers' perceived notion of the song's popularity. It will be coded through any mentions directly describing the song's popularity, such as repeated plays whether in public or private spaces, chart success, etc.

Professional Recognition

This element refers to the acknowledgement and accreditation of the song in professional music circles. It will be coded through any mentions of peers' opinion on the song, award nominations and wins, etc.

The elements above will be taken into consideration; however, the framework will not be limited to them as other elements may arise. It is also important to note that these elements may not appear at all or may appear at an insignificant amount. The two frameworks of audiences and critics will then be compared on the basis of elements that appeared and their frequency. The results will be used to compare to previous statements in the theoretical framework discussing possible similarities and differences between critical and public aesthetic as well as the constructed conventions of the Latin genre.

The reviews from critics and comments from audiences were collected and coded separately to construct two frameworks to mirror the findings. Firstly, the data is first coded in accordance with the pre-established coding frame. Secondly, it is evaluated through open coding to assess whether other elements considered to be success – according to each group – are found apart from the ones discussed in literature. The data is analysed both in a concept-driven and data-driven way through the evaluation of mutual exclusiveness of newfound codes with previous findings. Thirdly, the frameworks are modified to best represent the answer to the research question. Conducting double coding through open coding along with utilizing the pre-existing codes allows for an evaluation of the consistency of particular elements that could belong within the same main code.

Since this research does not include coding with peers through triangulation for comparison to ensure consistency, instead the extensive coding and evaluation of the frameworks

along with the literature reviewed make the results reliable. The data goes through constant comparison and evaluation to construct a comprehensive and focused framework. Moreover, it was collected from various sources to exclude possible bias and collect sufficient data that is generalisable and can therefore be replicated with any other sample of data chosen. Consequently, by following the methodology a similar result would be achieved due to the adequate sample size (Golafshani, 2003). Constructing a framework through qualitative analysis and extensive comparison of data allows the interpretation and understanding of data in a generalisable manner. Additionally, validity is achieved through the research instrument and method used to construct and evaluate the coding frames. As suggested in an article, constant observation, comparison, and referencing past findings all aid the accuracy of the results (Brink, 1993). The results will also be discussed in relation to disconfirming evidence previously discovered in the second chapter of theoretical framework proving balanced arguments.

As far as concerned, there are no ethical issues in conducting this research. All of the data that has been gathered are from public sources, thus not breaching any privacy agreements. Moreover, a variety of sources were chosen to adequately represent the population of both audiences and critics of Latin music in order to impede biased results.

4. Analysis

The previous chapter introduced the possible elements that could be found whilst coding the reviews and comments. While many of these codes were present many other musical elements were found whilst analysing the data. These findings both prove previous findings and also contribute additional research to the music market in America and Latin music. In order to answer the research question of what the similarities and differences in the classification of successful music elements in Latin songs are according to critics and consumers the codes represent each element of success found in the data. The data collected allowed an in-depth analysis of both critics and audiences' reviews of the songs featured in the Billboard Hot 100 chart in the 2010s decade.

This chapter will describe the individual musical elements found in the critics and audiences' reviews that, in conjunction, led Latin songs to be successful amongst critics and audiences in the American market. The musical elements will be based on the codes of previous literature and the additional codes found, all of which are shown in the individual frameworks (see Appendix A & B). The elements discussed will be mainly the ones which were greatly present in the reviews or those which showed high contrast between audiences and critics. There were particular musical elements which were sparsely present and therefore not sufficient to conclude an academically relevant argument. Following the outline of the different elements of successful music classified by critics and audiences separately, the similarities and differences between both parties will be analysed and highlighted further to directly answer the research question.

The reviews and comments collected for analysis varied in the chosen sources, dates published, and song styles, but in essence were greatly connected which is shown through quotes from the comments and reviews from both parties. The conventions of critics and audiences persist in some ways by adhering to the findings of previous literature whilst in other aspects, it is challenged by the reviews analysed. There were striking differences and similarities found whilst creating the two frameworks, but the most important aspect was concluded to be the language of the song.

4.1 Elements of Success for Critics

Music critics can have varied opinions much like the public. What constitutes as exceptional for one may be generic for others. The main elements found which will be discussed are use of language, featured artists, mentioning the term Latin, and tempo used. One striking difference was how critics viewed the addition of an Anglo-Saxon singer in a song of a Latin artist. The most prominent observation was the extensive focus and repetition on the language of the song or native to the artist. The origin of the artists was often mentioned, but many were described to be simply Spanish-speaking or from Spanish-speaking countries. Most of the critiques heavily discussed the language the songs are in and proceeded to highlight it through their work several times. It is uncertain why the emphasis was put on this one element as the use of Spanish in the songs varied. However, this signifies that the language of the song is of importance and perhaps the use of Spanish and English highly affects critics' opinions of the song. One critic presented the following statement on the song 'Con Calma' by Daddy Yankee and Katy Perry featuring Snow: "a new Spanglish remix enlisting Katy Perry seems to be a play to help the Latin hit truly crossover in the United States" (Benjamin, 2019). The critic seems to credit the success of the song to the addition of English and of an Anglo-Saxon star, Katy Perry. Similarly, another critic, Beckman claimed it is a formula to cross over to the American market. Beckman's article stated that "the music industry has a Spanish-language winning formula now: take a hot reggaeton track, add a huge international pop star, and you're cooking with gas" in relation to 'Mi Gente' by J Balvin and Willy William featuring Beyoncé (Beckman, 2017). On the other hand, a few critics touched on the fact that this formula is actually no longer needed. One reviewer expressed their opinion on whether or not to feature an English-speaking artist by applauding the popularity of the all-Spanish 'Te Bote' by Casper Magico, Nio Garcia, Darell, Nicky Jam, Ozuna and Bad Bunny. The comment said the following:

Another all Spanish hit that made it to Number 41 - has helped prove what many listeners already suspected: English-language features on songs in Spanish are cute, but increasingly irrelevant. Spanish-speaking artists no longer need to be validated by Anglo stars to find mainstream success in the U.S. (Leight, 2018).

These quotes show opposing sides that take place within the professional critics' framework. As seen in these quotes one viewed the featuring of an Anglo-Saxon artist as unnecessary whilst the other attributed the songs' success to the feature. Some found it arbitrary to feature an Anglo-Saxon artist who did not add more value to the song. According to William Bielby & Denise Bielby (1994) established reputation is an important factor in the formula for

success. Although success is uncertain in the cultural industry the element of a previous reputation can reduce the amount of risk. Therefore, the addition of an Anglo-Saxon artist which has already built an established reputation in the American market can aid in the success of the song. This can be through its popularity but also by having recognition from critics prior to the collaboration with foreign artists whom the critics may not be thoroughly introduced to and their musical abilities. Thus, there is a clear division in whether collaborations with Anglo-Saxon artists are appreciated by critics which can be dependent on their knowledge of the Latin artists. It adds to the statement that critics have varied opinions on what entails a good song and what elements constitute good.

Although critics are expected to be the expert opinion on the quality of a cultural product, it is not certain that all critics come to a consensus as is shown in the data. A study that tested the level of consensus between music critics found it to be positive, but not highly (Lundy, 2010). They measured it through the final ratings, but there were differences observed which could cause an overall imbalance in the expert opinion. They stated there are several possibilities as to why the opinions may vary apart from the expert knowledge and aesthetic. For example, the level of familiarity with artists can greatly affect how critics evaluate the work. An already well-established artist with critically acclaimed work will likely continue to receive positive reviews instead of those of which are unfamiliar. In this thesis, there is not a clear consensus observed as the opinions on the addition of Anglo-Saxon artists differ. This could jeopardise the artists' opportunities to grow within the industry and the public's view of particular artists if there are mixed reactions from gatekeepers. The possibility could potentially be the lack of familiarity with the artists as many critics choose to focus on the Anglo-Saxon featured artists during the reviews instead of the main performer. However, this cannot be clearly concluded with the data collected allowing space for future research on possible bias tendencies amongst music critics.

Additionally, their view of Anglo-Saxon artist featured went further by discussing it in relation to the language songs utilise. Some critics found that songs did not need to be translated into English for it to crossover to the American market as it once may have been the case. A critic discussed the use of English in the song 'Taki Taki' by DJ Snake featuring Selena Gomez, Ozuna and Cardi B saying "the bigger picture is that Latin music no longer has to be in English in order to cross over, and moving forward we're likely to see more than just one "Despacito"-style smash per year" (Herman, 2019). According to the critic, there is a misplaced use of English. In contrast to the statements made on how there is no need for an Anglo-Saxon artist or use of English, over half of the songs that have entered the Billboard Hot 100 have an Anglo-

Saxon artist featured. In some songs the artist performs in Spanish instead of English which received mixed reactions from critics. In the cases of which the American artists were performing in Spanish, they were highly praised, such as Beyoncé, Katy Perry and Justin Bieber. Interestingly enough, only one song which has entered the Billboard Hot 100 chart is performed with no feature artists. This evidently shows that there is a preference for collaborations within the American market. Some comments were made positively on the addition of an Anglo-Saxon artist or use of English in terms of its role in boosting the popularity or quality of the song, whilst a few expected the Latin artists to boost the popularity of the American singer featured.

Moreover, the explicit use of the word 'Latin' in the pieces written by the critics was extremely common, which was to be expected due to the common use of the word in the American market. A limited number of critics did not use the word Latin in their work to describe the song or artist. Additionally, there were a few instances of using Latin whilst referring to common genres such as pop, trap, hip-Hop and dance music in terms such as Latin pop, Latin dance music, etc. The reason for why they use the word Latin is unclear, but some critics attempted to distinguish particular songs by Latin artists by emphasising the origin of the artists when identifying a pop song as Latin pop. The fact that critics use the word 'Latin' so commonly contributes to the generalisation of the conjunction of genres which fall under the umbrella term. How critics describe a song influences the miscategorisation and uncertainty that happens in companies such as Billboard who no longer know what Latin as a genre entails due to differentiated opinions of professionals (Cobo, 2019). The continued habit of labelling a piece under the umbrella term means songs are simplified as a 'Latin' hit which can dismiss their musical complexity.

Apart from using the word Latin to define certain songs, critics also described particular pieces as summer songs. An example is a critic's comment on the song 'Havana' by Camila Cabello featuring Young Thug which is discussed as "a sunny mid-tempo track, it simmers with a hit, earthy vibe propelled by horns and Cabello's full-bodied vocals that make for a catchy and rhythmic summer song" (Norris, 2017). This quote ties in the focus on the rhythmic, catchy and summer elements of a song. The critics do not fully explain what they mean with the term "summer song", however, it was not commonly used. Instead, it was mentioned by a low number of critics and was mainly exclusive to a couple of songs. Those who did mention the term continued with the theme of summer for the entirety of the review. Thus, this particular element is not used in a significant amount looking at the exclusively Latin songs as there is a limited number to analyse. The use of the season of summer to describe a song may also be commonly

used to describe other hits that have entered the Billboard Hot 100 chart which are not under the Latin category.

Ultimately, there was not much focus on the instrumental elements of a song. Instead, the songs were mostly described as Pop, Reggaeton, Latin-infused, or a Dance song adhering to the genre conventions of Latin music. Traditionally, critics are expected to evaluate the technical elements of a song through their expert knowledge on music and taste for high art, but this was not as evident in the data collected (Frith, 2013). Focus remained on the language, features, and other superficial elements of a song. Less than half of the reviews focused on the depth of the lyrics, instruments used, etc. When mentioned, the technicalities of a song that were focused on were the beat and musical styles.

The technicalities that were addressed such as beat, rhythm, and tempo were not spoken of in-depth. The mentions of tempo mainly identified songs to be up-tempo or midtempo, with no mentions of a slow tempo. Therefore, the songs which have entered the charts ideally contain no less than 80 beats per minute. This information correlates to the preference for dance music in the charts as most songs were described as such. A study conducted on tempo preferences for dance music concluded a preference for 130 beats per minute on average, but it can vary between 80-160 beats per minute depending on the genre (Moelants, 2003). Thus, critics do prefer a higher tempo with a rhythmic feel and melody which are characteristic of dance music.

4.2 Elements of Success for Audiences

For the most part, the audiences revealed to have similar focus and opinions on the songs (see Appendix B). A great majority of the comments discuss the language of the song with a total of twenty-one comments mentioning this aspect of the song. Many addressed the lack of language comprehension, with most stating that it does not affect the appreciation for the songs. As illustrated by an Amazon user's review of the song 'El Perdon (Forgiveness)' by Nicky Jam and Enrique Iglesias in which the user stated "he has a way of making you understand and love the Spanish language, even if you can't even speak it. You find yourself understanding the message of the songs perfectly clear, without knowing a word of it" (Dickerson, 2015). The quote shows how language is a focal point since despite the majority mentioning their inability to understand the language, they ultimately conclude that the language itself can also be an element that captivates audiences. Whilst some expressed that they did not care that the song was in Spanish, others showed appreciation and a heightened interest in the language with many claiming to start "loving" Spanish. In general, the majority presented themselves as unbothered

by the use of Spanish in a song. Thus, to audiences, the language does not negatively affect the popularity of the song and its ability to enter the Billboard Hot 100 chart. As an element it either does not disturb the success or does in fact increase it purely for its application, proving how important the right use of language is to the Latin hits.

Alternatively, despite the majority expressing their enjoyment regardless of language, a few commented on their preference for English remixes or additions of Anglo-Saxon artists featuring in a song. An Amazon user reviewed the song ‘Despacito’ by Luis Fonsi, Daddy Yankee featuring Justin Bieber. The user stated that although they loved both versions they preferred the remix with the Anglo-Saxon artist Justin Bieber: “the one pro of the remix is I can hear some of the words in English as I don’t speak Spanish, yet I love it in Spanish too” (LA_Sinatra, 2018). This user’s comments amongst other opinions show that although there might be a slight preference for language comprehension through the addition of some English vocabulary, however, the addition or lack thereof does not affect the popularity of the song. It strengthens the idea that songs labelled as Latin that have entered the chart do not rely on using the English language to please the public. The use of English can be appreciated but ultimately does not alter the popularity of the songs. The preference for the use of some English vocabulary can be also linked to the need for personal identification in a song during interaction and analysis (Loy, Rickwood & Bennett, 2018). A personal connection is an important factor for audiences when evaluating a song. It is established due to the emotions emitted from a song listening experience, through which listeners can form a distinguishable association to refer back to. This is typically attained from lyrical elements and thus often best accessed by listeners with a proficiency in the verbal language(s) applied. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned, songs can still communicate with their audiences regardless of language comprehension. Therefore, for many of the commenters the language did not significantly affect their listening experience nor its emotive potential. Moreover, as it is unusual for songs in Spanish to appear on the charts, the audiences may generally not be accustomed to listening to foreign music. A book on media imperialism discussed music distribution and linguistic hegemony (Boyd-Barrett & Mirrlees, 2019, p.208). The book investigated the dominance of songs in the English language in the American market as well as others, thereby creating a cultural hegemony. Regardless of the need for personal identification, familiarity, and systematic dominance of English hits, the majority did express their admiration for the Spanish language in the songs. For example, the comment above enjoyed being able to understand a part of the song due to its English lyrics, but still highly appreciated the use of Spanish. This leads to the conclusion that using Spanish in songs

can be a favourable element in capturing the attention of American audiences. This differs from critics who had a very clear division from those who enjoyed the use of Spanish and others which credited the success of the song to the use of English. Audiences showed less interest in the English features; they simply saw it as a bonus in order to comprehend the song better, but it did not interfere with their enjoyment.

While on one hand language was a great focus, on the other hand, a less prominent aspect was referring to the Latin origins of the songs through explicit mentions. There were only a few different comments which explicitly mentioned the word Latin in relation to the song. A few also referred to the songs as a Reggaeton track or the origin of the artist. Thus, it is uncertain whether audiences directly associate the songs with being of Latin origins. The lack of comments suggests that audiences do not entirely influence the generalized categorisation of Latin music since they did not mention Latin origins nor the Latin genre in an abundant amount, unlike critics. The latter were much more explicit in making the connections between Latin origins with the songs. This suggests that they play a bigger role in maintaining the use of the umbrella term. Audiences did not commonly specify genres, whilst critics would cite several embedded genres or inspirations for a song but label the work as a Latin song. The literature reviewed indicated that categorisation was ideal to facilitate song searching for audiences (as well for comparative reasons), however, the distinction of a song being Latin is not highlighted throughout the comments (Nanni, Costa, Lumini, Kim & Baek, 2016). Thus, it is understood that audiences do not explicitly associate the songs as being Latin. Consequently, they may not use the term to search for the songs which is the precise purpose of classifying songs by genre. As the classification of songs as Latin is not evident in this case, this strengthens the argument that critics, as gatekeepers, are more influential in maintaining the umbrella genre by classifying songs as Latin in their reviews.

In addition to the origin and language, an important aspect of the songs for the audiences was beat, rhythm, and melody. Commenters did not speak of many technicalities of the songs as in-depth as critics, but audiences tend to make shorter reviews rather than deeply analyse aspects of the song. And in those occasions the recurring elements were beat, rhythm and melody with the most prominent being beat. For instance, another review of 'Despacito' mentioned that "I absolutely love, love, love this song and I must shamefully admit that I don't speak Spanish. The beat is soooo rhythmic that it makes my heart and feet dance. Language comprehension isn't necessary, although it would be helpful" (CJ23, 2017). This comment amongst others suggests that the beat and rhythm of a song can compensate for the lesser impact of other elements such as

lyrical comprehension due to language issues. Music that encompasses a great rhythmic beat can attract audiences more. This is linked to the wish to dance to music made for such activity. The beat according to the commenter creates the feeling of wanting to dance.

As previously observed in another study on elements that make a song popular, danceability was also present in the analysis of popular songs in the Billboard charts (Askin & Mauskapf, 2017). The study focused on all genres and can therefore be concluded to be a predisposition of all hits and not specific to Latin music. Danceability was mentioned by many commenters through their enjoyment of a song that instigated them to dance. A total of sixteen comments revealed that the song being reviewed ignited said desire to dance along. This indicates that this element remains a feature which can increase the possibility of a song entering the Billboard Hot 100 chart, but it is not exclusive to any particular genre as previously observed in the recent study (Askin & Mauskapf, 2017). Emitting the feeling of dancing would aid any song at reaching popularity due to it being played at parties and clubs as mentioned by a few reviewers. A song with significant danceability can entice the public to a memorable reaction such as the experience of dancing and create an impression on them. Critics touched on this element by claiming a song as a dance tune, but as gatekeepers that stray away from individualistic views, they did not speak of their personal experiences of wanting to dance. For this reason, this particular element was much more present in audiences' expressions of their interests and needs to dance. The element of danceability is therefore relevant in categorising successful songs in the American market but does not apply exclusively to the classification of successful Latin music. Consequently, it does not show a distinction between Latin and American music and in how it is differentiated within its classification.

A memorable impression can also be established through a repetitive pattern that is captivating, making it hard to forget for the public. This repetitive pattern can be attributed to the beat, melody, or rhythm. A great majority of reviewers described the songs as 'catchy' or stated they either could not stop listening to it or that it was 'stuck in their head'. An Amazon user wrote "even if you don't understand the lyrics, this song has a catchy beat" when speaking of 'Dura' by Daddy Yankee (DGM, 2019). On the other hand, commenters on Genius, a lyrics website, stated "a catchy beat, though it is nothing other than a mainstream radio song (...)"'. A second comment said "its catchy but I'm so confused with the meaning of the lyrics (...)" in regard to the song 'Havana' by Camila Cabello featuring Young Thug (Haileyvalance, 2020; Krista3301, 2017). These instances portray how despite faults such as lyrics, lack of understanding, language barriers and unoriginality, the catchy aspect attracts an audience who

can overlook the other factors. A study discussed in the literature review stated the importance of differentiation and originality, however, in the data analysed, a catchy song can overcome the lack of originality (Askin & Mauskapf, 2017). The catchiness aspect can aid in making the song replayable. Almost all songs labelled as Latin in the Billboard Hot 100 chart were described to have catchiness in the form of a repetitive pattern. This means that as a musical element it seemingly helps increase popularity with audiences in the American market. Moreover, although catchiness is considered a generic characteristic of pop music and not exclusive to Latin music, as discussed, audiences did not explicitly mention the connection between the songs and its Latin origins. Thus, they are likely evaluating the songs through the perspective of other common pop chart hits that follow a similar repetitive pattern as being appropriate benchmark for comparison.

Many of the elements discussed such as language, beat, and repetitive patterns, are easily identifiable in songs and can be categorised adequately. However, the abstract form of describing songs as ‘perfect for summer’ or ‘sounding like summer’ was common in reviews of the various songs from the selection. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact reason for such an association. A reviewer of ‘Despacito’ claimed they “thought that it smelled just like summer” when talking about their experience listening to the song for the first time (Wecker, 2017). Such a description and element were not previously discussed in the literature studied. However, these factors were prominent in the comments by audiences indicating a specific feeling evoked by the songs that could possibly influence the popularity amongst many who enjoy the idea of a “summer song”. This is not to be confused with a song being released during summer but instead it gave listeners a reminiscent feeling of the season at any random point of the year. One commenter on the website Hot New Hip Hop, which shares news and other daily content on the genre, claimed if the song ‘MIA’ by Bad Bunny and Drake would have been released during summer it would have been even more successful (Dawgg, 2018). This can mean that there is a certain element that makes it suitable for the season which most would associate it to. A recent study claims there is a correlation between music preference and season of the year which further suggested that listeners enjoy active, energetic and rhythmic songs in warmer seasons (Krause, North, Reiter-Palmon & Tinio, 2018). This strengthens the idea that songs that help listeners recall the sensation of summer by having those aforementioned elements or being released during the season can prosper more than at other times of the year. This also correlates to the suggestion made in an article which claimed an appropriate way to categorise songs is through perceptual categories according to moods, feeling, and overall receptive manners (Airoldi, Beraldo & Gandini, 2016; Scareingella, Zoia & Mlynek, 2006). Critics also used the term ‘summer song’ to

describe songs, but in relation to the release of the song whilst audiences focused on the feeling of summer and how the song evoked such a feeling.

Apart from the comments on how audiences feel and what they associate the songs with, they also commented on the artists of the songs. A few comments suggested an interest in collaborations regardless of the origin of the artist unlike the previous discussion on critics' views on features. Although the number of comments was not significant enough to prove that audiences have a preference for collaborations this argument can still be made by the fact that only one of the Latin songs that have entered the Billboard Hot 100 this decade is a solo performance. Besides, the Billboard considers sales and number of streams to calculate the popularity rather than critics' opinions.

4.3 Similarities and Differences Between Audiences and Critics

As discussed, and seen through the examples and quotes, critics and audiences surprisingly share many opinions in common of what a song must entail to succeed in attracting the American market, hence entering the Billboard Hot 100 chart. The similarities also stem from the fact that the reviews come from the same songs thus both groups discuss the same aspects that they focused on in the songs. In this research, the focus was not on whether both sides came to a consensus on whether a song is good or not, but rather which elements were emphasised that sparked an interest and led to the commercial success of the songs. There were comments present in which both parties expressed their dislike for a song in some ways, thus demonstrating varying opinions even within the positive comments and reviews.

Firstly, both critics and audiences share an interest in rhythmic dance music, most importantly the beat of a song. Critics approached this topic by discussing the tempo of the songs with the most common being typical of dance music. Similarly, audiences also commented on the beat, describing it as catchy, and instigating the need to dance whilst listening to the songs. Both expressed the same interest in different manners with critics taking a more technical approach. This example of a musical element illustrates the core differences in the traditional characteristic styles with which both parties evaluate music. While audiences focus on personal experiences with a song and how it emits a need to dance, the critics focus on the expertise of music-making. Despite the different reasonings, it comes down to the same interest in the element of a catchy dance tune, wherein audiences may not be aware that what entices them is the chosen up-tempo. This different style of the evaluation was seen in the literature explored, however, the way in which songs are analysed ultimately does not mean the opinion also differs.

Secondly, they both made connections to the season of summer with the songs being reviewed. Critics at times referred to a song as a summer hit due to its release date, but others went as far as describe it as a “sunny” work. Moreover, audiences considered certain songs to be ideal for the summer, but also expressed that it was due to the fact that it specifically reminded them of summer. It made some commenters reminisce about the season, meaning that songs can replicate such a mood. The connection for both can be due to the release date, but also according to the feeling the songs emit to the audiences and critics. As explained, during summer people tend to prefer active songs, which are possibly up-tempo, and therefore energy-filled and appropriate for dancing and other activities. Critics seemed to refer more to the release time of a song and how it fits with the season whilst audiences described songs in relation to how they emulate memory and feeling. Thus, in this case, although there is a common element of referring to summer, the core of what both parties refer to may differ. This highly depends on whether critics' vision for a summer hit matches the feeling of summer for the majority.

Thirdly, similarities in relation to the interest or disinterest for collaborations were observed in the data collected. Critics expressed enjoyment of the collaborative work and additions of particular features. Despite the discussion on whether an Anglo-Saxon artist is the ideal collaborative partner, critics still dedicated their reviews on commenting about the features. On the other hand, audiences did not comment on the topic a significant amount, but the interest is proven by the previously stated fact that the majority of the songs are collaborations. Furthermore, there were a few comments on how certain features added a great element and exposure to the song such as Justin Bieber and Drake' appearance in 'Despacito' and 'MIA'. It is relevant how collaborations are an element that is desirable in songs in order to enter the charts, since it influences the dynamics of the song. However, it can also be closely related to the theory previously discussed which states that the established reputation of an artist can better ensure success (Bielby & Bielby, 1994; Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Consequently, a collaboration of different artists wherein some parties are known and others unknown to the public can gather a larger fanbase and increased popularity between them.

Fourthly, the most prominent similarity, as addressed in both sections of critics and audiences, was the emphasis on the language used to sing the song. Every critic mentioned the language of the song and language which the artists speak. It would be mentioned several times within the same review and translation for the Spanish lyrics would also be provided at times. Alternatively, audiences often highlighted the language, but at the same time dismissed it by saying they did not care for which language the song was actually sung in. They stated that

regardless of whether they can or cannot understand the lyrics they still enjoy it for other reasons.

Moreover, a part of the critics and a majority of the audiences did not care for English lyrics and found it unnecessary. A few critics mentioned that it was no longer needed to have English lyrics to cross over to the American market. And as previously mentioned audiences did not care for which language it was in whilst part of the comments also mentioned that they enjoyed the fact that songs were in Spanish. Despite both parties insisting they did not believe English was needed or that the language did not matter, they both repeatedly mentioned it in their reviews and comments signifying that it is an important element in some ways.

Ultimately, critics and audiences do not greatly differ in their preferences for the majority of the musical elements analysed in this research. The musical elements in common include; qualities of dance music, reminiscent of summer, and collaborations. Therefore, the elements found are what categorise songs as successful in the American music market, although they must contain both intrinsic value and appraisal making them applicable for both professional success and popular recognition.

Despite the many similarities between critics and audiences as discussed above, the most prominent element in the reviews is what differed between both parties. The differences are actually minimal, but the most important is their opinions on language. The main similarity found was a great focus on the importance of the language, however, their opinion on the use of language differed. The majority of reviews and comments chose to discuss the use of English and Spanish language in songs, but their opinions vary in relation to the presence of these languages. Although both parties focused most of their reviews on commenting on the language of the song, audiences were not displeased with the use of Spanish. A minority of commenters wished the songs had an English version, but most were content with the songs despite stating that they did not understand it. Additionally, other commenters stated how the use of Spanish made them like the song even more. The element of language is important as discussed in the introduction chapter since Billboard used to categorise Latin songs according to the language used. However, these criteria slowly started to blur, and it became unclear what exactly the Latin category entails. The data showed that audiences did not focus on defining the songs as Latin, but instead on its use of the Spanish and/or English language meaning that language is an element of great importance. Audiences were pleased with both English and Spanish lyrics, whilst also not stating the term Latin at all and thus not making the direct association of language and the umbrella genre of Latin music.

Critics and audiences did not share the same need to emphasise the Latin origin of the song and artists. The majority of reviews by critics explicitly mentioned the term Latin in relation to the song style, the artist, inspiration, etc. Alternatively, audiences rarely used the term and opted instead to refer to the songs in relation to the language they were in. This begins an interesting conversation of how songs from artists with the origin of Latin countries continue to be placed in the umbrella genre of Latin music. Audiences did not seem to instantly refer and relate songs to the term, whilst critics repeatedly mentioned it allowing the generalised term to persist in the American market.

In addition, the lack of explicit use of the term Latin also reinforces the fact that audiences and critics differed in how they addressed the origin of the artists. Critics placed significant emphasis by repeatedly mentioning where the artists were from in addition to mentions of the language they spoke. In contrast, only a small number of commenters seemed to pay attention to this detail. However, it is also important to mention that audiences tend to leave shorter comments that are straight to the point on whether they enjoyed the song or not, without giving much background of the artists whilst critics tend to approach their review structure by building a narrative with detailed backstory. Thus, this gap between both can be explained due to the traditional styles of evaluating music rather than by what they genuinely observe and prioritise.

The critics were attentive to how particular songs managed to crossover and to its Anglo-Saxons features whilst audiences stated to not care for the language chosen, largely due to danceability amongst other qualities. In comparison, even the critics who claimed they found it unnecessary to have Anglo-Saxon artist feature still dedicated a significant part of their review on the featured artist, sometimes making it the main topic. However, a great number of critics still appreciated and credited part of the songs' success to the featured artists. A critic stated, "it seems rare that a song that's largely in Spanish, and sounds like many Latin, not necessarily pop, hits, is doing so well". This quote illustrates the division between both groups as audiences are less concerned with the language and more interested in dance tunes which are catchy and not necessarily original. It highlights how critics do not always represent the publics' music taste and they themselves cannot understand what elements drove a song to be successful amongst the public. Music is an experience good and therefore subjective; it is difficult to anticipate the reaction it will have with both gatekeepers and the public. There is a lack of understanding and an unpredictability shown by the reaction to the chosen songs. A commenter claimed they liked the song but did not understand "why fans/critics aren't enjoying it", which is a false statement given that the record entered the Hot 100 due to the number of sales and streams. However, the

comment again highlights the distance between them and the critics, who do not reflect the public's taste nor can predict the exact reasons as to why a song which they do consider "good" does well in the charts.

As mentioned in the literature, critics did focus more on the technicalities of a song, but they also took interest in the lyrical depth. The thematic message of the songs was mentioned significantly more by critics than audiences. However, there was also a significant focus on the language which then led to the translation of the songs' lyrics from Spanish to English in some reviews. The augmented relevancy of the thematic message for critics could be a reason for their preference for English lyrics and Anglo-Saxon featured artists. Overall, the audiences did comment on some technicalities, but most were focused on the energy of the song through rhythm and beat which were linked to the audience's interest in music that made them dance.

The overall differences stem from the fact that critics do not represent the taste of the population and often evaluate songs on an expert level (Cone, 1981). This does not always matter for audiences who may listen to music for particular purposes such as dancing, for fun, reminisce summer, etc. Even though they enjoyed the same elements they still expressed themselves differently in terms of language and how their opinion is gathered. In some aspects, the traditional ways in which both parties are expected to evaluate music is still present, but they are able to reach similar conclusions on what makes a song popular in the American market even if these elements are popular amongst professionals and the public for different reasons.

Most importantly, although the language used by both parties strongly differ, they do ultimately touch upon the same topics. The way in which critics and audiences express their opinion on why a certain element standout fits into the traditional standards discussed in the literature review. Audiences present a more individualistic opinion and attach personal experiences and need to a song. There were not many differences as expected due to the literature reviewed stating the contrasting opinions and manners of critics and audiences. However, the few differences are still significant to how critics and audiences consider songs successful due to certain musical elements.

5. Conclusion

Latin music as represented in the U.S. was thoroughly studied by two perspectives which give value to the songs. The classification of genres greatly affects how musical pieces are portrayed and compared to each other. This is why this thesis highlighted Latin music as an example of a generalisation of several different genres that have been combined and misinterpreted. Latin music has recently found new success in the U.S. with the globally popular song 'Despacito' after a previous period of consecutive hits in the 1990s. Therefore, this thesis sought to investigate what these new hits have in common that attracted popular and professional recognition after finally crossing over to the saturated American market again. It was socially relevant to research both critics and audiences' views as they each contribute differently to the success of a song. Critical acclaim earns a respectable position in the industry but does not always translate to popularity in sales, streams and charts. The focus of this study was to investigate the following question: what are the similarities and differences in the classification of successful music elements in Latin songs in America from the last decade according to critics and consumers? This was answered through a qualitative analysis of two frameworks created from reviews and comments to allow a comparison of both perspectives.

The analysis presented in-depth information of how critics and audiences have some similar preferences in Latin music but also differentiated drastically in other aspects. Firstly, some elements that were considered prior to analysis were not relevant despite their emphasis in the reviewed literature. These included, for example, instruments, genre conventions, popular recognition, and listener's experience. The majority of these stem from the fact that the audience typically leaves a short comment rather than express extensive opinions on the songs whilst critics chose one element to focus and expand upon. Nevertheless, other important findings took place during analysis such as the opinion on the language, Anglo-Saxon featured artists, tempo, connection to the summer season, and explicit mentions of the term Latin. Audiences and critics particularly differed in their opinion on the use of language in the songs.

The data presented surprising results on how audiences were apologetic or unbothered by the use of Spanish. Although some enjoyed being able to understand a song when English was used, they still appreciated the Spanish. In some cases, the use of Spanish is what made them enjoy the song more. The need for personal identification nor language comprehension were as

important for emotional attachment to take place as expected from the literature. Moreover, critics had varied opinions on whether English was necessary, particularly in regard to the addition of an Anglo-Saxon artist.

Another key element of success that clearly demonstrated the varying opinions of critics and audiences was the tempo used since mid-tempo and up-tempo was preferred by both groups. However, this was expressed differently illustrating the traditional approaches of each. Audiences directly related the song to their experience and needs by stating the song was good for dancing, parties, and clubs. Meanwhile, critics took an expert approach by discussing the tempo used in the song, as was expected from research (Frith, 2013).

In conclusion, the research presented that although both critics and audiences do have contrasting opinions on particular elements, such as use of Spanish and English in songs, they do express similar sentiments differently on a variety of circumstances. This can be seen in the case of associating the song with summer. While this association is likely created due to the songs in question being released during release summer, mentions of it were less technical and more subjective. Critics more often directly labelled songs as “good summer songs” whilst audiences tended to comment in a more abstract tone, such as describing a song as emitting a summer-like feeling. Additionally, the descriptive language used by the critics and commenters differed despite consensus on specific elements such as the use of Spanish in some cases. Audiences expressed adoration for the Spanish language while critics focused more on stating whether or not English was entirely necessary. The data and analysis proved to be consistent with previous analysis on the traditional stances and manners of critics and audiences.

Despite the contrast between both groups reflecting the traditional roles, in order for Latin music to be respected and eventually able to compete fairly with other American hits, it has to receive appraisal and contain an intrinsic value. Popular and professional recognition is required to receive value through prizing of not only industry workers but also the general public. Latin music is making a comeback this last decade by once again crossing over to the American market. However, the differentiated opinions of critics and audiences show restraint from the professional industry workers on accepting Latin artists to legitimately compete in the charts without limiting them to their origins. The general public has presented themselves as more open to music with linguistic barriers, which is not as clearly reflected on award shows and charts. The umbrella genre has been simplified to dance music to the extent in which critics generally did not attempt to delve into the thematic messages of the songs any more than surface level mentions of the translated lyrics.

The analysis led to new findings that were not mentioned in previous literature therefore increasing the academic relevance of the study by providing a deeper insight into the American music market. In order to define how Latin music can successfully infiltrate the American market and compete with local artists, it is valuable to understand how the music is currently evaluated. Although there were several studies which aided in proving the arguments made, there were still new findings that would lead to further research. Overall, the literature available was limited to the general topic of Latin music, music evaluation, and the overall system of genre divisions in American companies.

The results presented a contrast between how critics and audiences classify Latin music. Critics had a tendency to focus on origin, language, stereotypes, and Latin-influences. They repeatedly referred to songs as Latin, unlike audiences. This creates the argument that critics continue to influence misclassification by simplifying the music to Latin. Audiences were less likely to use the term which demonstrates that they do not immediately associate songs with being Latin, or at least do not announce it and alienate it as often as critics. The association between a song and the origin of the artist is being constructed within the industry rather than by local consumers who listen to “foreign” music. Audiences tended to classify songs as dance, pop, and other common genres based purely on the song rather than the origin of the artists. Although they largely expressed their like for Spanish in the songs, these mentions were still focused on the language and not the origin. The use of Spanish was also concluded to be an element of added value that influenced a certain song’s success. Consequently, this presented an opportunity for more foreign content to become hits despite previous literature showing the opposite, which is that most hits are in English (Seabrook, 2015). Critics, however, have a role as gatekeepers to present Latin songs as possible hits to consumers and others in the industry.

The findings reinforce the literature discussed on how organization of music into styles are meant for easier searching and comparison (Silva & Hondros, 2019). The music industry claims to need the structure of classification to aid consumers (Nanni, Costa, Lumini, Kim & Baek, 2016). However, majority of the audiences did not use the term Latin but rather other genres they thought described the song appropriately such as pop, hip hop, and trap. Instead, the results aligned with the mode of taxonomy suggested by Scareingella, Zoia, and Mlynek (2006) of classifying songs through perceptual categories. Consumers repeatedly referred to a song making them want to dance, workout, or reminded them of the summer season. The technicalities of a song and what defines them to be within the genre of Latin were less highlighted by consumers. Therefore, the current classification system does not appear to facilitate consumer experience.

Audiences showed appreciation for originality and creativity, an important aspect of success also found in the study by Askin & Mauskapf (2017), but which does not fit the concept of genre and its set boundaries. As previously discussed, music is subjective and therefore a consensus does not always take place as seen in the case of audiences and critics labeling songs as different genres. This proves there to be an inconsistency in the categorization and understanding between both consumers and professionals (Pachet & Cazaly, 2000).

There were a few limitations present in this study. Firstly, there were a lack of songs that were able to be studied. Unfortunately, it was based on the small amount that had entered the Billboard Hot 100 chart. Although this is not controllable since the data was taken from a specific website it would have been ideal to be able to access more data. The Billboard is a commonly used company to report charts which is why it was considered. The data was also limited in number due to a low amount of reviews available online. Despite the popularity of the songs, many did not have dedicated reviews or comments on them. Many websites post short descriptions of songs without giving an opinionated response. Additionally, the selection method is limited to songs that enter the charts, which in turn are not guaranteed to be shown preference for receiving reviews. It is possible that popular Latin songs outside of the year-end Hot 100 chart may have other elements which interest consumers and critics. The limited amount of reviews available opens a discussion for the types of songs which do gain enough interest from critics to be reviewed creating a selection effect. Therefore, a different method design could be used to investigate possible differences between popular and less popular songs.

Additionally, reviews are typically made on entire albums. Since there were not enough Latin-labelled albums that entered the charts this resulted in changes in the methodology in order to acquire a representative sample. Consequently, it does provide an insight into a preference for singles rather than albums which could be further researched. Moreover, the thesis was highly dependent on available data which proved to be a small amount. There were not many alterations that could take place to avoid this issue. On the other hand, a limitation which did have a solution was the length of comments by the public. Comments are typically one sentence long and generic, often stating identical lines such as “I love this song”. Therefore, longer comments from a variety of websites, such as lyrics pages with a comment section, were selected when available. This allowed for a better data collection that would provide sufficient information to analyse.

There is space for further research since the categorisation system studied here is still applied currently. A secondary aspect to be researched is if the aforementioned elements in the findings are exclusive to Latin music or if it is a general basis for all hits in the American market.

This thesis only highlighted one umbrella genre, but a comparative study between additional genres would benefit the understanding of the charting system in the U.S. Although elements such as language and origin are exclusive to Latin music, other elements found to be characteristic of successful Latin music in the U.S. can also be considered in other genres that have entered the charts. Therefore, it would be relevant and insightful for the American music market to further study the topic by comparing successful Latin songs with those from other genres in order to evaluate if any and/or which success elements are exclusive to one genre.

Furthermore, there are many opportunities for future research on the growth of Latin music in the industry. Apart from comparative studies, it would also be insightful to have a better understanding of genre classification in the U.S. There was a brief mention in the literature regarding incidents of mislabelling at award shows; apart from Latin artists it also affected artists in different categories, especially abstract ones such as Urban music. Abstract and vague categories have led to many disappointments and misunderstandings within the industry as well as fanbases. The genre categories raise many issues and can be argued to restrain artists. Therefore, it would be socially relevant to study how impactful the concept can be for artists and audiences. This was touched on during this thesis but requires further understanding from different perspectives to encourage a modernisation of the current award system in the U.S., and perhaps further, delving into a reform of the general use of genre in the industry.

This study proves to be valuable for both Latin artists and industry workers attempting to enter the American market, as well as music researchers. It provides industry workers and researchers with further insight on a category of music that has seldom been researched to a dedicated extent despite being an agglomeration of styles rather than a niche. Latin music is currently growing significantly in the music industry and the growing Latin American population in the U.S. itself has led to several turning points for Latin talent to legitimise its position in the market, including its own Grammy award show. The umbrella genre has been continuously proving to be financially profitable and therefore its future is valuable to explore in the market., Research about audiences and critics' reception to Latin music is an opening to understanding the complexities and potential of its many genres and songs crossing over to not only the American market but the rest of the globe.

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7. Appendix

Appendix A: Framework of Critics' Reviews

Main Codes	Sub-Codes	Quote of Example
Instruments Highlighted	Focus on Guitar	<p>“Bailando with Descemer Bueno and Gente de Zona, is an uptempo groover that melds flamenco-tinged guitars and a cut-time dance floor strut.”</p> <p>Source: Jurek, T. (2014). Re: Enrique Iglesias. Retrieved from https://www.allmusic.com/album/sext-and-love-mw0002619796</p>
Instruments Highlighted	Focus on Beat of Song	<p>“When your beat includes just four notes, you don’t need much besides a three-syllable hook: The title phrase — which translates to “I dumped you” — repeated twice to create a pleasing symmetry with the doubled piano riff.”</p> <p>Source: Light, E. (2018, September 22). Re: Te Boté: How Nio Garcia, Casper Magico and Darell’s Reggaeton Hit Took America. Retrieved from https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-latin/te-bote-nio-garcia-casper-magico-darell-722826/</p>
Musical Form	Addressing Song as Pop	<p>“Enrique Iglesias aims for every demographic by delivering sensual Spanish ballads, inviting pop, and fluffernutter dance grooves.”</p> <p>Source: Capobianco, K. (2014, March 18). Re: Enrique Iglesias, ‘Sex and Love’. Retrieved from https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/music/2014/03/17/a</p>

		lbum-review-enrique-iglesias-sex-and-love/NKqRBcgcxjTdSn7m6tKWXO/story.html
Musical Form	Addressing Song as a Dance Number	<p>“the lyrics about drinking, globe-trotting, and putting hands in the air are about as standard as they come for a dance tune.”</p> <p>Source: Idolator Staff (2011, January 15). Re: Jennifer Lopez Steps Back ‘On The Floor’. Retrieved from https://www.idolator.com/5742262/jennifer-lopez-on-the-floor?chrome=1</p>
Musical Form	Focus on Tempo	<p>“Interestingly, it's not the singles that are most convincing. "Bailando," with Descemer Bueno and Gente De Zona, is an uptempo groover that melds flamenco-tinged guitars and a cut-time dancefloor strut.”</p> <p>Source: Jurek, T. (2014). Re: Enrique Iglesias. Retrieved from https://www.allmusic.com/album/sex-and-love-mw0002619796</p>
	Adhering to Genre Conventions	<p>“The picture of Latin sounds with a heavy club beat is also nothing new (in fact, the track samples Kaoma’s two-decade-old Lambada), but given that Lopez was one of the pioneers bringing Latina flavour to the clubs, this feels appropriate.”</p> <p>Source: Idolator Staff (2011, January 15). Re: Jennifer Lopez Steps Back ‘On The Floor’. Retrieved from https://www.idolator.com/5742262/jennifer-lopez-on-the-floor?chrome=1</p>

	Challenging Genre Conventions	<p>“There is very little Latin flair in the set and its replaced by de rigueur swaths of keyboards and galloping beats to buttress the singer’s thin vocals.”</p> <p>Source: Capobianco, K. (2011, May 3). Re: Jennifer Lopez. Retrieved from http://archive.boston.com/ae/music/cd_reviews/articles/2011/05/03/review_of_jennifer_lopezs_love/</p>
	Explicit Mentions of Latin as a musical form	<p>“Bailando has a reggae/Latin sound. It’s unique and very different from his recent songs, which just weren’t all-out hit”</p> <p>Source: Trust, G. (2014, September 7). Re: Ask Billboard: How Has Enrique Iglesias’ Bailando Become Such A Big Hit. Retrieved from https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/6189519/ask-billboard-how-has-enrique-iglesias-bailando-become-such-a</p>
	Originality	<p>“The track may be too much of a throwback to older dance hits, without bringing anything new or innovative to the party.”</p> <p>Source: Idolator Staff (2011, January 15). Re: Jennifer Lopez Steps Back ‘On The Floor’. Retrieved from https://www.idolator.com/5742262/jennifer-lopez-on-the-floor?chrome=1</p>
	Differentiated Opinion from Public	<p>“It seems rare that a song that’s largely in Spanish, and sounds like many Latin, not necessarily pop, hits, is doing so well.”</p> <p>Source: Trust, G. (2014, September 7). Re: Ask Billboard: How Has Enrique Iglesias’ Bailando Become Such A Big</p>

		<p>Hit. Retrieved from</p> <p>https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/6189519/ask-billboard-how-has-enrique-iglesias-bailando-become-such-a</p>
High Energy	Danceability	<p>“Then again, clubbers need something to gracelessly bob their heads and raise their glasses to after last call, amidst multicoloured lights. And in that moment, a generic dance beat and “la la la” chorus will do just fine.”</p> <p>Source: Idolator Staff (2011, January 15). Re: Jennifer Lopez Steps Back ‘On The Floor’. Retrieved from https://www.idolator.com/5742262/jennifer-lopez-on-the-floor?chrome=1</p>
Repeatable Element	Catchy Elements	<p>“where it sounds great, standing out, but still a fit for the format with its steadily pulsating beat and catchy verses and chorus, along with Iglesias’ friendly, familiar voice.”</p> <p>Source: Trust, G. (2014, September 7). Re: Ask Billboard: How Has Enrique Iglesias’ Bailando Become Such A Big Hit. Retrieved from https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/6189519/ask-billboard-how-has-enrique-iglesias-bailando-become-such-a</p>
Explicit Mentions	Specifying Origin of Artist	<p>“In the tune, Fonsi’s romantic singing—“despacito” means “slowly,” referring here to the pace of seduction—pairs with rapping from his fellow Puerto Rican Daddy Yankee.”</p> <p>Source: Kornhaber, S. (2017, May 20). Re: Despacito and the Revenge of Reggaeton. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/05/despacito/527403/</p>

	Associating Song with a Season	<p>“Bailando carves through the clutter of summer to make you sit back and enjoy the tropical moments.”</p> <p>Source: Trust, G. (2014, September 7). Re: Ask Billboard: How Has Enrique Iglesias’ Bailando Become Such A Big Hit. Retrieved from https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/chart-beat/6189519/ask-billboard-how-has-enrique-iglesias-bailando-become-such-a</p>
Focus on Language of Song	Dismissing need for language comprehension	<p>“He also drops the idea that a superstar can’t mix Spanish and English lyrics on an American album.”</p> <p>Source: Gamboa, G. (2014, March 17). Re: Enrique Iglesias Sex and Love Review: Slick, Spanglish dance pop. Retrieved from https://www.newsday.com/entertainment/music/enrique-iglesias-sex-and-love-review-slick-spanglish-dance-pop-1.7394863</p>
Focus on Language of Song	Expressing need for language comprehension	<p>“As I sifted through the tracklist, I was thrilled with the amount of English records that made it on the album.”</p> <p>Source: Centeno, T. (2017, January 25). Re: Review Nicky Jam Is Bound For Crossover Success With Fenix. Retrieved from https://www.vibe.com/2017/01/nicky-jam-fenix-review</p>
	Interest in Collaborations	<p>“There are also timeless exercises in generically pleasing Europe including “(What Is) LOVE?, as well as bonafide smokers such as “On the Floor” (with Pitbull, who exists to make songs like this better).”</p>

		<p>Source: Steward, A. (2011, May 3). Re: Album review: Jennifer Lopez, Love. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/click-track/post/album-review-jennifer-lopez-love/2011/05/03/AF7xFDhF_blog.html</p>
	Attributed Success to Anglo-Saxon Features	<p>“The music industry has a Spanish-language winning formula now: Take a hot reggaeton track, add a huge international pop star, and you're cooking with gas.”</p> <p>Source: Beckman, B. (2017, September 29). Re:Beyoncé's Mi Gente remix is huge for reggaeton, especially after Despacito. Retrieved from https://mashable.com/2017/09/29/beyonce-remix-mi-gente-reggaeton-despacito/</p>
	Did Not Attribute Success to Anglo-Saxon Features	<p>“One of the frustrating things about the media coverage of the remix is that there's a lot of emphasis on Bieber. This is Fonsi's ninth studio album—Bieber definitely did not discover him, but a lot of the English-language media I've seen presents it that way”</p> <p>Source: Kornhaber, S. (2017, May 20). Re: Despacito and the Revenge of Reggaeton. Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/05/despacito/527403/</p>

Appendix B: Framework of Audiences' Reviews

Main Codes	Sub-Codes	Example of Quotes
Instruments Highlighted	Focus on Guitar	<p>“Starting with the strong intro which is not a guitar instead is a cuatro (a Puerto rican mandolin with four strings)”</p> <p>Source: Sigfredo (2017, August 30). Re: Despacito (Remix)</p>

		[feat. Justin Bieber]. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R3PPTSWK1LE6A4/ref=cm_cr_getr_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=B07121NTJY
Instruments Highlighted	Focus on Beat of Song	<p>“The beat is soooo rhythmic that it makes my hear and feet dance.”</p> <p>Source: CJ23 (2017, October 1). Re: Despacito (Remix) [feat. Justin Bieber]. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R152Z0OQ3BPLBQ/ref=cm_cr_getr_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=B07121NTJY</p>
Musical Form	Addressing Song as Pop	<p>“It’s a great pop music album. It has some of everything, it has some dance-pop tracks, Latin influences, hip-hop and r&b influences which are so common on J.Lo’s work.”</p> <p>Source: super-adn23 (2012, April 19). Re: Love?. Retrieved from https://www.metacritic.com/music/love-2011/jennifer-lopez</p>
Musical Form	Addressing Song as a Dance Number	<p>“Average pop dance song, Lambada-inspired track.”</p> <p>Source: miss_unafraid (2011, March 05). Re: On the Floor. Retrieved from https://rateyourmusic.com/release/single/jennifer_lopez/on_the_floor/</p>
Musical Form	Focus on Tempo	<p>“Natural talent, rhythmic beat and pulsating tempo blend into a sound only DJ snake can generate.”</p> <p>Source: Amazon Customer (2018, October 6). Re: Taki Taki. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/gp/product-reviews/B07HJW9WFK/ref=cm_cr_getr_d_paging_btm_next_3/?pageNumber=3</p>

Musical Form	Focus on Melody	<p>“I don't understand but loving it. The rhythm and Melody is perfect”</p> <p>Source: Mr.A (2020). Re: Casper, Nio García, Darell, Nicky Jam, Bad Bunny, Ozuna - Te Bote Remix (Video Oficial). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jI-z9QN6g8</p>
Musical Form	Focus on Rhythm	<p>“Very catchy lyrics and energy-filled dance rhythm.”</p> <p>Source: NORMA LINDA GONZALES (2015, September 15). Re: Bailando (Spanish Version) [feat. Descemer Bueno & Gente De Zona]. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R3PE65OC1LZZY1/ref=cm_cr_getr_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=B00ISG3RLM</p>
	Adhering to Genre Conventions	<p>“The instrumental is a pretty standard Latin pop one that is adequate in the context of this song.”</p> <p>Source: TrueMusicReviews (2016, July 09). Re: Bailando [English Version]. Retrieved from https://rateyourmusic.com/release/single/enrique-iglesias/bailando-english-version/</p>
	Explicit Mentions of Latin as a musical form	<p>“The selection of songs was a definite play on her strengths and popularity of Lopez in the dance and Latin genres.”</p> <p>Source: super-adn23 (2012, April 19). Re: Love?. Retrieved from https://www.metacritic.com/music/love-2011/jennifer-lopez</p>

	Originality	<p>“A catchy beat, though it is nothing other than a mainstream radio song, like every other song of hers. She needs to start putting some creativity and soul into her music.”</p> <p>Source: haileyvalance (2020). Re: Camila Cabello Havana. Retrieved from https://www.albumoftheyear.org/album/86367-camila-cabello-havana/user-reviews/</p>
	Differentiated Opinion from Critics	<p>“I thoroughly enjoyed the album! I’m not understanding why fans/critics aren’t enjoying it.”</p> <p>Source: gagaforever (2012, April 19). Re: Love?. Retrieved from https://www.metacritic.com/music/love-2011/jennifer-lopez</p>
High Energy	Danceability	<p>“Everytime I hear this I can’t help but want to get up and dance, it gets you moving!”</p> <p>Source: LA_Sinatra (2018, January 17). Re: Despacito (Remix) [feat. Justin Bieber]. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R3QIA6FECNORO1/ref=cm_cr_getr_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=B07121NTJY</p>
Repeatable Element	Catchy Elements	<p>“it’s catchy and good background music that’s danceable.”</p> <p>Source: davidbowiegirl (2012, June 28). Re: On the Floor. Retrieved from https://rateyourmusic.com/release/single/jennifer_lopez/on_the_floor/</p>

Explicit Mentions	Specifying Origin of Artist	<p>“Amazing duet from two awesome Spanish artists.”</p> <p>Source: Sonya Dickerson (September 8, 2015)</p> <p>https://www.amazon.com/product-reviews/B018SYB0G2</p>
	Sample in Song	<p>“I’m just disappointed that she stole the exact tune of the song from Lambada by Kaona which was adapted from Llorando Se Fue by Los Kjarkas.”</p> <p>Source: AFD (2012, January 17). Re: On the Floor.</p> <p>Retrieved from</p> <p>https://rateyourmusic.com/release/single/jennifer_lopez/on_the_floor/</p>
Focus on Language of Song	Dismissing need for language comprehension	<p>“Language comprehension isn’t necessary, although it would be helpful.”</p> <p>Source: CJ23 (2017, October 1). Re: Despacito (Remix) [feat. Justin Bieber]. Retrieved from</p> <p>https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R152Z0OQ3BPLBQ/ref=cm_cr_getr_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=B07121NTJY</p>
Focus on Language of Song	Expressing need for language comprehension	<p>“I love the Spanish version too, but so happy that they made an English version for those of us who don’t speak the Spanish language. I wish more Spanish artists would make more English versions of their Spanish songs, so that those of us who love Spanish artists can hear our favorite Spanish songs in English too!”</p> <p>Source: Sonya Dickerson (September 8, 2015)</p> <p>https://www.amazon.com/product-reviews/B018SYB0G2</p>

	Interest in Collaborations	<p>“Justin Bieber hopping onto a remix of an already great song...and probably giving it the attention it needs to shoot to the top of the chart.”</p> <p>Source: wraithy2773 (2017) https://genius.com/Luis-fonsi-and-daddy-yankee-despacito-remix-lyrics</p>
	Disinterest in Collaborations	<p>“The only really drag on the song is Justin Bieber, whose inclusion is almost entirely arbitrary.”</p> <p>Source: dagwood525 (2018, December 11). Re: Despacito (Remix) [feat. Justin Bieber]. Retrieved from https://rateyourmusic.com/release/single/luis-fonsi-daddy-yankee/despacito-remix/reviews/1/</p>
	Associating Song with a Season	<p>“I heard the song for the very first time a few months back whilst travelling in Germany, without the Biebs long before it was released in the US, and I thought that it smelled just like summer.”</p> <p>Source: Wecker, F. (2017, August 29). Re: Despacito (Remix) [feat. Justin Bieber]. Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/gp/customer-reviews/R3LS9CDU1Y2OME/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_rvw_ttl?ie=UTF8&ASIN=B07121NTJY</p>
	Popular Recognition	<p>“Having a Latin American presence on the pop charts whatsoever in 2017 was culturally significant.”</p> <p>Source: dagwood525 (2018, December 11). Re: Despacito (Remix) [feat. Justin Bieber]. Retrieved from https://rateyourmusic.com/release/single/luis-fonsi-daddy-yankee/despacito-remix/reviews/1/</p>

Appendix C: Overview of Data*

*Direct links found in online appendix

Websites for Critics	Websites for Audiences
Billboard (https://www.billboard.com)	Metacritic (https://www.metacritic.com)
Washington Post (https://www.washingtonpost.com)	Rateyourmusic (https://rateyourmusic.com)
Idolator (https://www.idolator.com)	Amazon (https://www.amazon.com)
BBC (https://www.bbc.co.uk)	Genius (https://genius.com)
Archive Boston (http://archive.boston.com)	Album of The Year (https://www.albumoftheyear.org)
Rolling Stone (https://www.rollingstone.com)	Hotnewhiphop (https://www.hotnewhiphop.com)
All Music (https://www.allmusic.com)	Youtube (https://youtube.com)
News Day (https://www.newsday.com)	
Boston Globe (https://www.bostonglobe.com)	
Vibe (https://www.vibe.com)	
All Noise (http://all-noise.co.uk)	
The Atlantic (https://www.theatlantic.com)	
Plugged In (https://www.pluggedin.com)	
New Yorker (https://www.newyorker.com)	
Vox (https://www.vox.com)	
Pitchfork (https://pitchfork.com)	

Vulture (https://www.vulture.com)	
The Musical Hype (https://themusicalhype.com)	
Ratings Game Music (https://ratingsgamemusic.com)	

Mashable (https://mashable.com)	
Theedgesusu (https://www.theedgesusu.co.uk)	
Hey Nineteen (https://hey-nineteen.com)	
The Guardian (https://www.theguardian.com)	
A Bit of Pop Music (https://abitofpopmusic.com)	
Slate (https://slate.com)	
Axs (https://www.axs.com)	
Npr (https://www.npr.org)	
Sounds and Colours (https://soundsandcolours.com)	
Forbes (https://www.forbes.com)	
Vice (https://www.vice.com)	
Citysoundcheck (https://citysoundcheck.com)	
Gulfnews (https://gulfnews.com/)	
Hotnewhiphop (https://www.hotnewhiphop.com)	

Wmscradio (https://wmscradio.com)	
Variety (https://variety.com)	
Acidstag (https://acidstag.com/)	
XXL Mag (https://www.xxlmag.com)	
Play Google (https://play.google.com)	
Reddit (https://www.reddit.com)	

The Outline (https://theoutline.com)	
Hollywood Life (https://hollywoodlife.com)	