

## **The introduction of the term "bassface" into psychological research**

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### **Abstract**

In the electronic music scene, the term "bassface" refers to a specific facial expression that is often displayed when listening to intense bass. Despite its seemingly negative externality, this expression always represents positive emotions. This article examines the historical origins of the term and the relevance of the phenomenon to psychological research, particularly with regard to the discrepancy between perceived emotion and outward expression.

### **Introduction**

The term "bassface" (or "bass face" / "bass-face") is a widely used term in the electronic music scene. Although its origins can no longer be clearly traced, there is evidence of its existence since at least the 1990s, such as by the artist "Bassface Sascha" (Bassface Sascha, n.d.). The term typically refers to the facial expression made when listening to intense or loud bass. This expression, often characterized by downturned corners of the mouth, is often perceived as distorted and negative (Woodward, 2021).

### **Relevance to psychological research**

The "bass face" phenomenon is intriguing from a psychological perspective because the facial expression shown can be attributed to the basic emotions of disgust or anger (Ekman, 1999). Going by Zhao and Xu (2019), the expression most closely resembles that of an "angrily disgusted" emotion. Nevertheless, this face, when evoked in the listener by bass-heavy music, always represents joy, happiness or similar positive feelings (Woodward, 2021). Studying this

discrepancy between internal experience and external expression could provide deeper insights into the neurology of emotion and the effects of auditory stimuli.

### **Outlook and future research approaches**

To date, there is little scientific knowledge about the "bassface" phenomenon. Future research should therefore focus on the specific musical features that elicit this face, as well as possible demographic differences in response. Research could also investigate the role of musical taste and the exact feelings experienced when listening to this music and displaying the "bassface." Here, the methods of Zentner et al. (2008) could be helpful.

### **References**

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