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The Effect and Reliability of Musical Fit on Influencing Consumer Purchases: Explored Through Several Different Demographics

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ABSTRACT

Due to an increasing interest in music and its effects on consumer behaviour, it is important to evaluate to what extent musical fit is persuasive in commercial environments. This essay explores the reliability and effect of musical fit on influencing consumer purchases through different demographics. This is achieved through critically analysing four studies on musical fit and its impact in different demographics and consumer sectors. These studies develop and replicate previous findings of musical fit and prove its impact on consumer habits. Furthermore, the studies improve the knowledge of musical fit through factors such as diverse products, commercial environments, ages, musical genres, and cultures. Despite positive findings, caveats remain which are fundamental to the success of musical fit, such as familiarity of the products and music, pre-existing preferences to both the products and music, importance of the consumer decision, commercial environment, and age of consumers. This research creates great opportunities for future research, such as the awareness of participants of the effects of musical fit, or whether too intense a musical fit could have the opposite effect. This essay merely touches the surface of a subject which provides extremely promising results for future commercial enterprises when further research is obtained.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent years have seen a rise in interest regarding psychology and its relationship with music. This relationship between music and psychology appears in numerous aspects of daily life, but one of interest is its relationship with consumer behaviour. Adrian C. North and David J. Hargreaves' chapter 'Music and Consumer Behaviour' (2009) identifies three main factors of the relationship between music and consumers. Firstly, the effect of music on psychological arousal, such as tempo influencing the speed of consumer activity. Secondly, music's ability to prime certain thoughts – several ideas can be activated both directly and indirectly through music and lyrics, or cultural understanding, such as an association between the accordion and French music. Thirdly, the emotional effects of music. Therefore, music and its genres can be influential on several aspects of the commercial world. Music appears as an influential factor in advertising, being associated with specific brands and products, and in general commercial environments such as supermarkets. It has been suggested that the pleasure and arousal based effects of music influence consumer spending, speed of customer activity, and product choice.

The effectiveness of music's influential power on consumer behaviours such as consumer spending and product choice is defined by musical fit. Yeoh and North (2011) define musical fit as a concept which 'refers to the tendency for customers to select one product over another on the basis of background music activating superordinate knowledge structures. In essence, music with characteristics that correspond with the central brand messages of a particular product should prime relevant beliefs about the product while consumers are actively considering it'. Despite the alleged effectiveness of musical fit, issues arise with regard to its reliability in commercial environments.

This essay aims to assess the effect and reliability of musical fit on influencing consumer purchases. I shall provide background on the relationships between music and consumer environments and the effect of music on consumer behaviour. This will incorporate information on the effect of musical aspects such as tempo, and concepts such as sonic branding and musical fit. I shall then consider and analyse four studies which incorporate musical fit in several different demographics to broaden the evidence and scope of musical fit. These studies explore further the persuasive effect of music in consumer environments, through musical fit.

2. MUSIC AND CONSUMERS

The three main factors of the relationship between music and consumers, stated by North and Hargreaves (2008), are significant for broader parallels. However, these theories must be regarded contextually due to the necessity of musical fit. Music choices must be 'appropriate' for the commercial environments in which they appear. For instance, if tempo can influence the speed of consumer activity, a faster tempo would be appropriate for a commercial environment such as McDonalds in which a quick customer turnaround is preferred. Conversely, commercial environments such as Fortnum and Mason perhaps prefer customers to stay longer in the hope of more purchases. This would be achieved with a slower tempo.

Music influences commercial environments through several platforms and techniques. North and Hargreaves (2008) claim that the most common techniques in everyday commercial situations are: Classical Conditioning, Sonic Branding, jingles and sponsorship, and the Elaboration Likelihood Model – this includes musical fit. Those which appear in our commercial environments more frequently are Sonic Branding and musical fit.

Classical Conditioning originally concerned 'advertisers' aim to influence consumers' beliefs concerning the likely consequences of consuming the product' in question (North and Hargreaves, 2008, p. 258). However, in the 1980s, focus moved to ensuring that 'customers liked the advertising for the product'. The concept was to pair 'a product (conditioned stimulus) with a liked piece of music (unconditioned stimulus) [which] should produce an association between the two, and therefore liking for the product' (a conditioned response) (DiClemente and Hantula, 2003). Gorn's (1982) research is an example of Classical Conditioning. Participants were presented with a slide with either a blue or red pen and background music (music from *Grease* or Indian Classical music). Following the study, participants could take one pen home – the majority (72%) selected the pen associated with the most popular and liked music (*Grease*).

Sonic Branding can be evaluated as a developed version on an 'old-fashioned jingle' (Buchanan, 2005, p. 20). North and Hargreaves (2008) loosely define Sonic Branding as 'the attempt to use very short periods of music and other auditory cues to convey core brand values and prime recognition whenever customers come into contact with the company'. Sonic brands are 'the auditory equivalent to a visual company logo' (p. 265). British Airways is a prime example with their use of Delibes' *Flower Duet* from the opera *Lakmé.*

The concept of 'branding' can be evaluated more generally in commercial environments. In recent years, due to growing competitive markets, brands are increasingly implementing music into their marketing strategies to influence consumer choice and distinguish themselves from other brands. If a song becomes associated with a brand, it aids their marketing and recall among consumers. Not only are specific songs effective, but musical genres also become associated with certain brands and commercial sectors. For instance, Pincus (2005) claimed that rap had been generally associated with brands such as Puma, and Smirnoff Ice was associated with dance music. North and Hargreaves (2008) argue that, from a psychological perspective, sonic branding can be evaluated as a specific case of musical fit since music used in marketing 'aims to raise salience of certain brand attributes in the minds of potential customers' (p. 267).

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) involves two routes of persuasion – central and peripheral. The central route consists of attitudes formed through 'consideration of information relevant to the object in question' (North and Hargreaves, 2008, p. 259). The peripheral route consists of attitudes formed without thinking about the object, but through '*associating* the object with positive or negative cues', which in this instance, is music (North and Hargreaves, 2008, p. 258). The central route concerns when consumers concentrate and therefore have a 'high involvement' with the advertisement. The peripheral route considers consumers in a state of 'low involvement'. The term involvement includes 'motivation, opportunity and ability to process information about the product' (North and Hargreaves, 2008, p. 258). Music is more effective in a state of 'low involvement' as 'people invoke simpler cues and heuristics when forming their attitudes' (North and Hargreaves, 2008, p. 258). This alludes to discussion of what music is more influential and what does it influence, which leads to musical fit.

3. MUSICAL FIT

Additional definitions of musical fit are provided by researchers. MacInnis and Park (1991) define it as 'consumers' subjective perceptions of the music's relevance and appropriateness to the persuasion content' (p. 163). There is somewhat limited research on musical fit, with the concept growing in recognition, but it has been suggested it predisposes consumers to behave in certain ways. Studies have concluded that different musical genres affect store image, consumer purchasing, product choice, and consumer speed in shops (North and Hargreaves, 2008). This is not only in commercial establishments, but also instances such as advertising.

When considering the term 'musical fit', a significant factor is appropriateness. To influence consumers effectively, establishments must consider their demographic and subsequently select the appropriate music to not deter customers. Several factors contribute such as age, social class and culture which stereotypically favour different genres. For instance, if classical music is supposed to elicit a sophisticated environment and therefore increase spending, its use in a shop popular with young people, such as River Island, would not be effective. Theoretical research should be conducted so that managers can use music to their best advantage. Studies have shown that no music is better than the wrong music and therefore, if managers are unsure of the success of the music, no music is better (North and Hargreaves, 2008). Likewise, establishments must consider their marketing goals and the clientele they wish to attract. For instance, if managers wish to attract a young clientele perhaps pop or R&B would be most suitable as opposed to classical music.

Likewise, the success of musical 'fit' is based on the products and consumer decision. A recurring concept in literature is pre-existing product preferences and familiarity. If consumers prefer a brand and re-use it, supermarket background music is unlikely to influence and alter this choice. However, non-users of the products in question tend to demonstrate a preference for the product for which the music 'fitted' the product attributes. Musical fit is suggested to be more effective with indecisive customer decisions as they render consumers more susceptible to the influences of background music (North and Hargreaves, 2008).

Musical fit is occasionally regarded as unethical since the music may persuade customers to perhaps spend longer or buy more expensive purchases, yet, North and Hargreaves (2008) argue that musical fit can be evaluated as equal to other marketing strategies, such as advertisements at shop entrances. Furthermore, it is doubtful that musical fit is so powerful and persuasive that it can alter consumer behaviour drastically.

Having provided context on the relationship between music and consumers, and the position of musical fit within this, the

following section will consider and analyse four studies which explore the effect and reliability of musical fit on influencing consumer purchases through several different demographics. These studies provide both positive and negative instances of the use of musical fit in consumer environments and advertisements which can then be applied and developed for further future research.

4. REVIEW OF PAST RESEARCH

Areni and Kim (1993). The Influence of Background Music on Shopping Behaviour: Classical Versus Top-Forty Music in a Wine Store.

Areni and Kim (1993) discuss the associations of wine tasting with sophistication and 'snob appeal', and theories that the consumption and purchasing of wine is also associated with prestige and a high socio-economic status. Therefore, classical music was deemed appropriate for this environment. The hypothesis was that classical music as background music would 'increase the amount of merchandise: (1) examined, (2) handled, (3) purchased, and (4) the amount of time patrons spent in the cellar relative to playing other genres of music in the background'.

The study was conducted in a centrally located wine cellar attached to a restaurant which was open to patrons to visit, sample and purchase which enabled factors such as browsing, consumption and purchases to be observed. The study occurred between May and July to avoid any external factors such as holidays or local events which could impact customer numbers. Each day was randomly assigned a music condition, either classical or Top 40 hits, which remained at a constant volume throughout. Data was collected by an observer who posed as a stock keeper and was unaware of the hypothesis. The average number of customers per evening was eleven, which meant that generally only one customer was present at any one time which made data recall simpler for the observer.

Information search, purchase behaviour, consumption behaviour and additional measures were observed. Information search considered the customers' inspection of shelf items. Purchase behaviour observed the 'number of items purchased, shelf location of items purchased and total dollar amount of each purchase'. Consumption behaviour considered the consumption of wine, and additional measures observed the amount of time each customer spent in the cellar.

The results showed that there was little, or no, impact of background music on the number of shelf items examined, number of items purchased, frequency customers sampled wine, time spent in cellar, and number of items handled. However, the results concluded that classical music influenced customers to select more expensive merchandise.

Critical Analysis. Despite the results disproving the majority of Areni and Kim's (1993) hypothesis, this study is still successful in evaluating the effect and reliability of musical fit. The results, and longstanding association of wine and classical music with sophistication, emphasise the efficacy of musical fit on purchases because more expensive wines were selected. Perhaps the fact that behavioural aspects such as handling were not affected by musical fit indicates that only specific aspects of music impact certain consumer behaviours, for instance, tempo, and its influence on consumer speed. In this instance, perhaps musical genres were only successful in influencing the perception of sophistication among consumers. Conversely, other musical aspects, such as tempo, could possibly interfere with the impact of classical music as a genre through their influence on consumer behaviour.

Results could also have been affected by external factors such as holidays and events. Areni and Kim (1993) intended to avoid such occurrences, but this is not always possible. These instances could have altered the number of customers in the cellar at any point in time. The average is normally one person at one time, and any higher number could cause the customers to influence each other with potential positive or detrimental consequences, such as both purchasing more expensive wine, or neither purchasing any.

Likewise, the real-life commercial setting could produce both positive and negative implications since subjects were unaware of the hypothesis and not under strict controlled conditions, genuine behaviour could be recorded. It also signifies that subjects were not over-analysing their movements. Nonetheless, several significant factors could not be recorded which could have been influential. Firstly, there was an uneven number of customers in the experiment due to the lack of controlled conditions. This perhaps affected the validity of the results compared to a controlled number of subjects per condition. Secondly, ages were presumed by the observer and the variety of ages are not noted in the results to establish whether this was an influential factor. Due to the nature of a wine cellar and wine tasting, it is likely that subjects would have been of a certain age. This indicates that personal preferences over musical genres could have impacted the results. Perhaps if a larger group of younger subjects had been recorded, Areni and Kim could have evaluated whether this altered the effect of musical fit due to the stereotype that pop is their preferred genre. Lastly, the subjects' familiarity with wine and wine tasting is unknown and yet is relatively important if musical fit is allegedly most effective in unfamiliar situations when decisions are being made. Those who rarely visited a wine cellar perhaps felt the need to conform to the perceived quality environment therein.

North and Hargreaves (1998). The effect of music on atmosphere and purchase intentions in a cafeteria.

This study observed whether music can influence perceived characteristics of a commercial environment and the purchase intentions. The study included 300 university students in the union café in the East Midlands. 75 new customers were approached at tables daily and asked to complete the café questionnaire which consisted of adjectival scales to rate: the characteristics of the music playing; the stereotypical characteristics of the music; and the characteristics of the café. Diners were also presented with a list of food items available from the café and asked to state the maximum price they would be willing to pay for each. Food items ranged from a

'sachet of ketchup' to 'lunch for two consisting of [several items]'. These complex food selections should prove most useful to evaluate whether musical fit has more influence where there is greater uncertainty over the choice being made. Subjects were approached 10 minutes after they had been exposed to the music. The study lasted four days and each day had a different musical condition – contemporary British pop, classical, easy listening, or no music. The music remained at a constant level which could be heard and spoken over to match the normal café environment. Sales were also observed through till receipts which were compared to those from the same days of the weeks prior to and following testing.

North and Hargreaves (1998) had two hypotheses. Firstly, each musical style would influence the perceived characteristics of the café which would relate to the subjects' perception of the background music. For instance, if the music appeared 'fun', the café also would. Secondly, that if music is able to influence purchase intentions, different musical styles should create a greater differentiation between the maximum amount customers are willing to pay for food items. It was predicted that easy listening would provide the lowest estimates as it is generally the least popular genre and would cause items to be perceived as less sophisticated than with classical or pop music.

The results concluded that, with regard to the perceived characteristics of the café, there was a significant relationship between the differences of the musical styles and no music on subjects' ratings. There was also a significant relationship between subjects' responses to the café and their responses to the actual music, as opposed to stereotypes. For purchase intentions, there was no significant correlation between the musical conditions and no music on the maximum people were willing to spend. Yet, results did show that classical music produced significantly higher priced figures than no music or easy listening. However, classical music did not exceed pop music. Sales were significantly higher with pop and classical music conditions compared to prior and following weeks. Conversely, the no music and easy listening conditions suggested lower sales.

Critical Analysis. North and Hargreaves (1998) supported their hypotheses and emphasised the effects of musical fit. The study suggests that musical genres can influence and alter subjects' perceptions of a commercial environment. It also suggested that this perception influences subjects' perceptions of pricing, with pop producing the highest figures. This highlights the significance of musical fit, especially compared to Areni and Kim (1993) where classical music resulted in more expensive purchases compared to pop. These findings depict the significance of the demographic and environment when selecting background music for commercial establishments. The questionnaire found a closer relationship between the café and the song choices than the general characteristics of the genre. This provides positive implications for shop managers who should perhaps focus on certain songs as opposed to entire genres. However, similar to Areni and Kim (1993), the customers' personal music preference is an influencing factor, but this is unavoidable in any situation.

Arnei and Kim's (1993) study was conducted through a naturalistic observational procedure and therefore subjects were not aware they were being analysed. Conversely, North and Hargreaves (1998) combine the commercial environment with aspects such as a café questionnaire which allows for direct information from the subjects. The broad nature of the questionnaire also left subjects unaware of the hypotheses which allowed for more genuine answers as opposed to controlled conditions in which thoughts become overanalysed. Yet, this uncontrolled commercial environment could be argued to dilute the effects of musical fit compared to controlled conditions.

Likewise, the handling of the subjects and their environment also provides positive implications. Subjects were approached ten minutes after entering the café which allowed for the music to settle before completing the questionnaire. The constant volume of the music allowed for subject conversation and would not have caused distraction. Furthermore, 75 new subjects daily creates a greater sample size, which renders the results more reliable. Sale comparisons with previous and following weeks also increased the reliability and validity of the results. Similar to Areni and Kim (1993), external factors such as exams and holidays, which could have impacted the number of customers in the café, were avoided. This is important for sales numbers as random fluctuations of customers could have impacted these figures. However, North and Hargreaves (1998) justify that sales figures were parallel to the questionnaire responses of prices and not a result of random customer fluctuations.

Issues of unfamiliarity and pre-existing preferences for products also reappear. In this instance, participants are unfamiliar with the correct pricing of food combinations, as opposed to being unfamiliar with the actual products themselves. The use of generic café items signified a lack of unfamiliarity with the products. Similarly, pre-existing product preferences did not arise since subjects were asked to price items, not purchase them.

Yeoh and North (2009). The Effects of Musical Fit on Choice Between Competing Pairs of Cultural Products.

90 Ethnically-Chinese Malaysians from the University of Putra, Malaysia were divided into three groups of 30 (half male and half female). The experiment was executed in a quiet study room on the University campus. The three groups were presented with a PowerPoint presentation where each slide had two similar products side by side, one Indian and one Malay. There were 24 pairs of products, but only 5 were of interest. Product choices were between very similar items such as Indian *tikka masala* and Malay *rending* curry. The three groups also had different background music to accompany the slideshow - no music, Indian music, or Malay music. After each slide, participants had to state their product preference by writing 'A' or 'B'.

A one-way ANOVA evaluated whether the culturally different music, or no music, impacted the number of times Malay products were chosen over Indian. The results found a significant effect of the background music. With Malay classical music, Malay products were chosen, and likewise, with Indian classical music, the Indian products were selected. However, similar to the previous studies, Yeoh and North (2009) highlight that musical fit is only successful when there is no pre-existing preference for one product and that participants are more susceptible to the influence of contextual cues to aid them in their decision-making when both options are unfamiliar.

Critical Analysis. In addition to supporting their hypothesis, Yeoh and North (2009) expand the concept, application, and effects of musical fit in non-Western cultures with other musical genres. These findings do not solely aid the general research field of musical fit, but also aid commercial entities by providing new information on the expanding range of customers known to be influenced by musical fit. It also indicates that diverse genres can be applied successfully to musical fit. Most importantly, these findings disprove the theory that musical fit is a Western concept, only applicable in the West, mentioned by Yeoh and North (2011) in the following study.

In contrast to the two previous studies, Yeoh and North (2009) was conducted in controlled conditions. This controlled setting could produce different results from a replica study conducted in a real commercial environment. Yeoh and North (2009) ensured the music ran uninterrupted during the slideshow to replicate the musical setting in commercial environments, yet it did not render the two conditions equal. Furthermore, the slideshow included many irrelevant slides to ensure the subject was unaware of the hypothesis but, as in North and Hargreaves (1998), this could perhaps dilute the key slides and therefore, the effects of musical fit.

As with North and Hargreaves (1998), the sample consists of university students and therefore produces a restricted sample. In alternate studies, this sample age could impact results through genre preferences when compared to other age groups. However, this study implements two classical music conditions which avoid the potential issues of pre-existing musical genre preferences. Preferences could still occur between Indian and Malay classical music, but this does not concern age stereotypes. Similarly, participants were Chinese-Malaysians, which avoids bias responses. This increases possible instances of unfamiliarity and reduces potential pre-existing preferences of both products and musical genre.

Yeoh and North (2011). The effect of musical fit on consumers' preferences between competing alternate petrols.

This study explored the efficacy of musical fit on consumer choices through advertisements of petrol brands Caltex and Esso. The music Yeoh and North (2011) deemed appropriate for the Caltex advertisement was *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star,* since the logo is a star. Esso was paired with *Eye of the Tiger* due to the tiger logo. 90 students (fluent in English) from University of Putra, Malaysia, were split into three groups of 30: regular Caltex users; regular Esso users; and users of neither. These subgroups were halved and presented with two different stimuli – either Set A (music which fit Esso and not Caltex) or Set B (music which fit Caltex and not Esso). Yeoh and North (2011) predicted that regular users would choose their preferred brand, but those with no preference would choose the advertisement where the music had better 'fit'. Participants were presented with a PowerPoint presentation of 10 still images, each for one second, with accompanying music. Following the PowerPoint, participants completed a 5 question questionnaire on: 1) What brand they preferred; 2) Whether they drove; 3) If they did drive, how often; 4) Whether the music influenced their choice of brand; 5) To rate the extent to which the music influenced their choice from 0-10.

Results were not significant for regular users of the brands, but non-users provided significant results. In support of Yeoh and North's (2011) hypothesis, the results demonstrated a clear preference for the petrol brand with which the music 'fitted'. Participants generally did not rate music as exerting a strong influence over their petrol choice, which is appropriate for the regular user groups, but the non-user groups were also reluctant to admit the effect of music.

Critical Analysis. Yeoh and North's (2011) study is innovative by focusing on the effects of musical fit through advertisements and lyrics as opposed to musical genres. Yeoh and North (2011) argue that lyrics with musical fit portray more powerful and direct messages to consumers. However, since the study is conducted in controlled conditions, it is unreliable to generalise the results onto real life situations. Likewise, in laboratories, such as in this study, subjects are aware that they must concentrate and interpret the advertisements displayed, whereas general TV and radio listeners would perhaps not be as attentive.

Similar to Yeoh and North (2009), this study expands the field of musical fit in non-Western countries. However, Tavassoli and Han (2002) highlight a possible limitation of musical 'fit' and sonic branding in advertising in Eastern countries. Tavassoli and Han (2002) remark how techniques such as sonic branding and jingles are perhaps less effective in cultures with logographic scripts since the written characters represent meaning rather than units of sound. This is in contrast to English which uses phonological methods in which the alphabetic script shows units of sound. However, in Yeoh and North (2011) this is perhaps not an issue since the advertisements and songs are associated with pictorial logos as opposed to textual jingles or slogans. Likewise, all participants were fluent in English.

Petrol is an interesting product choice since the sample is university students. Only a certain number of participants would hold a driving licence, or be driving at university. Petrol is also a product for which customers often have a preference due to habit, price and location of the garage, which then limits the effects of musical fit. Yeoh and North (2011) acknowledge this limitation and use it to provide a

contrast to the other conditions and strengthen their hypothesis. Musical fit is most apparent in the group with no preference for either petrol brands, most likely due to the increase in unfamiliarity and uncertainty.

5. SUMMARY

In summary, these four studies replicate previous findings to develop and improve knowledge on musical fit through factors such as different products, commercial environments (unless in a laboratory), ages, musical genres and songs, and different cultures. Despite some differences, all four demonstrate the effect and reliability of musical fit on consumer purchases. Regardless of stereotypes of musical genres, such as classical music appearing sophisticated and therefore leading to higher consumer spending, if the correct music is not implemented in the appropriate environment, where it 'fits', it has no effect.

Despite developing the effects of musical fit through different situations, some significant caveats remain. Ultimately, the products in question are of great significance as they alter aspects such as familiarity and pre-existing preferences which are fundamental in determining the success of musical fit. They also alter the nature and importance of a consumer decision. If it is a rash decision with minor products such as bottled still water, then musical fit is more likely to be effective compared to larger decisions such as cars. Likewise, surely certain products cannot be differentiated by musical fit, such as McDonalds' 'Quarter Pounder with Cheese' and 'Cheeseburger'.

Participant age is also of great significance since, generationally, pre-existing preferences to musical genres are likely to appear, such as older people preferring classical music and younger people preferring pop. This is similar between diverse social groups. The environment is also important as it alters what music can be deemed 'fit'. For instance, a nightclub would not play classical music to increase consumer spending as it is not appropriate for the dynamic of the environment.

It could be suggested that the effects of musical fit are mainly coincidental. Studies have not specifically proved that music knowingly affects consumers, and subjects do not admit it either. Furthermore, musical aspects such as tempo and volume could interfere with the significance of musical genres on consumer choices. Other factors such as shop lighting could also affect consumer behaviour. For instance, shops such as Abercrombie & Fitch maintain dark lighting and loud music, both of which can either deter or entice customers.

Unanswered questions and ideas for future research can be concluded from these studies and musical fit. Perhaps the most significant aspect to consider is whether participants are aware of the effects of musical fit and if so, how? In addition, why does musical fit occur? These could be explored with deeper psychological tests regarding subjects' emotions with the musical genres and their consequent perceptions of the environment. Future research could also determine whether too intense a musical fit could have the reverse effect and deter customers. Future studies could also consider more specific products, similar to the petrol study, but for more everyday items, such as bottled still water. Likewise, studies should incorporate equal numbers of an age range of participants to evaluate potential differences between demographics, for instance, the effects of pop music on an elderly sample in an antique shop. Alternatively, studies could focus on investigating musical fit in specific environments, such as charity shops which contain a wide range of low-priced items, as opposed to focusing on specific products. The application of musical fit to advertisements is also significant for future research. If musical fit raises awareness of products, it could perhaps have implications on consumer memory. For instance, if music in advertisements 'fits' accordingly with the product in question, then raising the prominence of the product should help improve consumer recall. Future research should also expand on musical fit in Eastern cultures to broaden the field of musical fit and instances in which it can be applied.

These findings also produce wider implications which can be applied to everyday life. The expanding knowledge of musical fit allows managers to create a desired atmosphere to then influence sales and other aspects of consumer behaviour such as speed of customers and prices paid. For instance, if customers seek sophistication, then the business should facilitate this experience to increase their sales. Marketing goals can be altered in accordance with the commercial environment, age group and music choice. It could also be implemented by brands to distinguish themselves from competitors, such as Nike and Adidas. Additionally, specific songs should be carefully selected by managers as North and Hargreaves (1998) suggested that songs are more influential to the perceived atmosphere of the commercial environment than genre stereotypes. Furthermore, advertising companies and brands can select relevant music through lyrics, text and logo of the brand in order to increase the consumer choice and recall.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this essay has explored the effect and reliability of musical fit on influencing consumer purchases through several different demographics. By comparing environments, products and musical genres, a more reliable evaluation of the effects of musical fit can be gained. Key trends have arisen such as familiarity and pre-existing preferences which impact the success of musical fit. Likewise, musical fit appears more effective on impulsive, more minor decisions, but, ultimately, there is no 'right' type of music in consumer environments. The successful application of musical fit is fundamentally dependent on the managers and their marketing goals. The field of musical fit is a relatively new concept which has been expanded in recent years, but it still contains areas requiring further investigation. Musical fit is currently more experiment-centred, which undoubtedly aids build general theories, but should be applied more to the general public in consumer environments to evaluate the full effects. The technology and marketing worlds are becoming increasingly

competitive and innovative. It will be interesting to see if the field of musical fit becomes more significant and used to a greater extent in the consumer world in the future.

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