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Introduction

This report contains an introduction of chosen thesis topic and a preliminary outline of the thesis. The literature review enabled us to become familiar with previous research on music's relation to consumer behaviour, and research on psychology and priming. Additionally, we recognised a linkage between priming in music and how this might influence consumer behaviour. This is the background for the chosen thesis topic, which is yet to be examined in academic journal articles. The report also outline a preliminary method and data collection, which consists of a layered experimental approach. However, we have included a limitation section, which discuss potential scenarios and areas of caution, due to the identified pitfalls in previous research.

Literature review

Previous research on music's influence on consumer behaviour

In 1973, Philip Kotler introduced the concept of atmospherics as an effective marketing tool. He discussed consumers' ability to evaluate beyond the tangible product, which is often referred to as the total product (Kotler, 1973). This entails all constructed factors within a service design, such as lighting, furnishing and sound, which intentionally is implemented in order to stimulate perceptual and emotional responses. Ultimately, the atmospherics are used to trigger certain behaviour with consumers, especially in a purchase setting. According to Yalch and Spangenberg (1990), music is the most frequently used atmospheric factor to enhance the delivery of services to customers. Published research on music in retail settings are consistent in identifying some kind of effect, especially on sales. For instance, Milliman (1982) reported a 38% increase in sales when playing slow background music compared to playing fast music. The sales increase stemmed from the pace of the customers, as they spent more time in the store with slow background music. Additionally, Milliman (1986) found evidence of how slow music made customers spend more time in a restaurant and consume more alcohol, compared to fast music. Thus, both papers found evidence of how music tempo influences time spent in different buying settings.

Similar research on music's effect in-store have emerged more frequently in recent years. For instance, the significance of tempo has been further researched, and tested with other structural elements of music, in order to detect possible interaction effects (Knöferle, Spangenberg, Herrmann, & Landwehr, 2012). The authors managed to identify an interaction effect between music tempo and mode, and that these factors jointly have an influence on consumer behaviour. Thus, exploring other components of music and potential interaction effects could detect new findings in its influence on consumer behaviour.

Previous research on priming and psychological research

In psychological research, it is shown that exposure to stimuli/prime can influence people's behaviour. There are currently questions and debates within the field of psychological science regarding the reliability and validity of the established findings in behavioural science, and a significant part of the debate has fallen on the so-called behavioural priming studies. Behavioural priming studies is explained by Klatzky and Creswell (2014), as a study where exposures to stimuli under supraliminal or brief supraliminal conditions alter subsequent behaviours. Recent research is focusing on the possibility that stimulating sensory can influence socially directed behaviours. But the priming studies are not without any debate and discussion around the reliability and vulnerabilities, of the experimental and statistical approaches that are used in priming studies (Klatzky & Creswell, 2014). Hence, it is important to consider the fact that some "failures" in the research of priming might have been type 1 errors, but are not corrected, and end up in the file drawer instead. It should be a cause for concern that some of the research done, especially within the field of priming have small sample sizes, very large effect sizes and few direct replications (Cesario, 2014).

Even though priming is often utilized as a tool for influencing consumer behaviour, repeated incidental priming effects in the everyday consumer environment can have an impact on product evaluation, purchase likelihood and choice (Berger & Fitzsimmons, 2008). Thus, recently primed environmental cues might be translated into product features, and these are more likely to be in a

consumer's consideration set. Hence, intentional priming might be diluted by incidental priming through cues in the everyday life, which is difficult or almost impossible to interfere with. In recent years, there has been an increase in employing unusual visual identifiers with little or almost no relevance to the product (Labroo, Dhar & Schwarz, 2007). Eventually, these symbols might become a part of a brand's equity, which is assumed to garner consumer attention. Thus, processing these visual identifiers are expected to enhance product preference. Therefore, incidental priming of everyday cues might benefit the brand's with unusual visual identifiers, such as Puma and the incidental priming of dogs (Berger & Fitzsimmons, 2008).

The influence and dimensions of lyrics

An article by Anderson, Carnagey and Eubank (2003) are examining the influence of violent songs on aggression related variables. They investigate possible moderator effects from two different variables: trait hostility and humorous content. Numerous studies have shown that aggressive words can prime aggressive thoughts, perception and behaviour (Anderson et al., 2003). But only a few studies have specifically examined the influence of violent songs on aggression-related variables. Anderson et al. (2003) are acknowledging that there is a difference between being an attentive listener and how people are listening to music. Hence, there is a difference between listening to the music itself or being attentive to the lyrics in the music, and that the lyrics may generally be attenuated simply because the lyrics are not processed by the listener. However, according to Bargh, Chen and Barrows' (1996) article and their third experiment, effects can occur even when the stimulus has not been consciously recognized by the participants.

Introduction to research topic

Previous research has investigated different components within music and if this influence consumer behaviour. Priming and its influence and reliability within psychological research have been highly questioned and debated during the recent years. Previous research has combined these two constructs and investigated

potential influence on consumers' mindset and how priming can affect this.

However, evaluating the lyrics in music and if this has any influence in a buying setting is yet to be researched. We will be testing the effect of priming different dimensions in music and how this can influence people's buying behaviour.

Research question:

How do different music lyrics influence consumers' buying behaviour?

The music dimensions that will be utilized are:

1. Health promoting
2. Family orientation
3. Lavish consumption

Hypotheses:

H1: Health promoting lyrics influence consumers to choose healthier options in a consideration set.

H2: Family oriented lyrics influence consumers to choose bundling options in a consideration set.

H3: Lavish consumption focus in lyrics influence consumers to choose more expensive options in a consideration set.

Objectives and contribution

The research conducted in this article will contribute to both the academic world as well as the marketing world. Various research concerning use of music to influence the buying behaviour of customers have been published. However, there have been a small amount of research within the use of lyrics in songs to prime consumers to act in a certain way when choosing from a consideration set. The results of the current research can be used as a tool within a company's in-store marketing strategy. Possessing this knowledge enables them to prime customers through music, which can influence their buying behaviour in the way the company wants.

The objective of the current research is to examine if priming through lyrics has a significant influence on customers buying behaviour, to give a clearer replicability of the effect in the future. The current research creates a good foundation for future research on the topic within multi-sensory marketing and to contribute to research on more dimensions within lyrics used in instore music.

Data collection and method

When examining previous literature, we recognised experiments and field studies as the standard methods used when testing similar hypotheses. This provided us with some assurance of fit between the planned method and hypotheses.

The data collection entails a layered approach with different experiments, conducted in three different stages. The initial stage of data collection will be carried out through Amazon MTurk. The next stage entails experiments at BI Business School's lab facilities. The experimental design that will be conducted in the lab setting controls for extraneous variables. It is important for an experiment that the internal validity is preserved, this to be able to generalize the results. (Malhotra, 2010). Participants in both of the mentioned stages will be rewarded with monetary incentives as a gratitude for their contribution. The final stage is a field study at BI Business School's coffee shop, Chaqwa, where we can conduct testing in a realistic setting. Justification for choosing the layered approach is presented in the section covering the experimental design.

Prior to the experiment, all participants (in the first and second stage) will have to sign a consent form ensuring confidentiality and anonymity (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). The participants must read through an information letter prior to the experiment, that will contain a description of the experiment and that the results are used for market research purposes. In this section, the participants will be provided with an explanation for the purpose of the background music in order to control for attentive listeners. However, the instructions will consist of a disguised reasoning, in order to avoid bias and further elaboration regarding the purpose of the music. The information letter prior to the Amazon MTurk survey will contain information that all participants

will need functional speakers, that have to be turned on in order for them to continue with the survey.

Sampling

Each stage requires different samples of participants. The MTurk sample will be extracted through a simple random sampling approach, enabling all members a chance to participate (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). However, MTurk allows us to specify some requirements to what kind of participants that are the most suitable for our experiment. Thus, only those who are native English-speaking members of MTurk will be encouraged to participate. Further, the sample will be divided into three sub-groups, one for each music dimension. The number of participants will depend on the funding available, which is yet to be confirmed. However, this stage is conducted online, which makes it the most cost-effective and least complex to carry out.

The lab experiment will also consist of a sample extracted from a simple random sampling approach (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The sample will be drawn from BI students that are motivated to participate in the experiment. Further, the sample will be divided into three sub-groups, one for each music dimension to be tested.

The field experiment at Chaqwa will consist of the buying customers within the time duration of the priming. Thus, the users observed in this stage will occur spontaneously without our interference, in order to sustain the purchase situation as realistic as possible. Considering the location of Chaqwa at BI Business School, we anticipate that the majority of the users are BI students and staff, and other people with offices in and around the building. The number of users will also be determined by the time of the priming, as the demand usually increases rapidly during breaks between lectures and during lunch time.

Experimental design

Our independent variable will be the three different dimensions (health promoting, family oriented and lavish consumption), while the dependent variable will be the choices completed by the participants within the consideration set. We anticipate the occurrence of potential confound variables. For instance, previous priming within recent time before the experiment, such as being exposed to music with similar or other dimensions as in the experiment.

Amazon MTurk

The first stage of our study, will be conducted on Amazon MTurk, where we will arrange an experiment where the participants will have to use the speakers on their computers. The participants will in this stage be exposed to subtle background music, with carefully selected words and phrases to influence the choices they are facing. Thus, a set of songs in three manipulated playlists will function as the background music. The playlists are constructed from each of the three music dimensions. The participants will in this study have to choose between different products that are shown to them in the survey. We want to replicate a somewhat realistic range of options within a product category, with similar options as in a store. This type of data collection is dynamic, as changes can be implemented quickly. Additionally, this type of data collection allows us to obtain feedback and responses instantly.

Lab

The second stage of our data collection is quite similar to the first stage, but it will take place at BI Business School's lab facilities. The same survey and playlists will be utilized, depending on if the findings and results from the first stage are of any significance. Additionally, we can control all aspects of the music, such as adjusting the volume. The volume will be set in order for the participants to not be attentive listeners, but rather for them to be incidental listeners, focusing on the tasks given to them.

Chaqwa

The third stage of our data collection will be conducted at BI Business School's coffee shop, Chaqwa. This will be a field study, where the same three playlists will function as background music at different time slots. Prior to the study, we will obtain benchmark data from a neutral time slot excluding any efforts in priming. Thus, this provides us with comparison data and allows us to detect any considerable effects. The time slot of the experiments will be set at neutral weekdays, which are regular days without big events or festivities, and within the same time slots each day. We have detected a rapid rise in demand during lecture breaks, where the increase in queues and noise-level can interfere with the experiment. Therefore, we have decided to conduct the experiment early in the morning and during a break. Hence, this entails a total of eight observed time slots, two for each music dimension and two for benchmark data.

Limitations

Our main concern regarding the chosen method of data collection, is the previous priming of the participants. We are unable to control for priming, such as visual and audio, prior to the experiment, due to numerous subliminal cues one can be exposed to continuously. Hence, the priming of the dimensions through the playlists needs to be as precise and evident enough for the participants to be reached on a subconscious level.

Amazon MTurk

A limitation of using MTurk is the lack of control of the participants during the experiment. Thus, we are unable to control for volume adjustments, the functionality of their speakers, additional background noises and other incidents that might occur. Furthermore, we are unable to control for additional priming, such as visual, during the experiment.

Lab

A limitation that might occur within the lab experiment is the participants understanding of the lyrics and therefore the priming. Since the experiment will be conducted at BI Business School, and with BI students, their English vocabulary

might not be sufficient enough to comprehend and process the priming in an effective manner. By conducting the experiment in a lab-setting we will meet some limitations regarding the translation of the experiment from the lab to the real world. Therefore, this will not meet all of our objectives.

Chaqwa

A limitation regarding the field study at Chaqwa might be to control for additional noise, that exceeds the set volume of our background music. Thus, we need to pay attention to the noise level and perhaps adjust the volume accordingly, without breaching the concept of background music. Additionally, there are several factors that might influence the users in their final choice of product. For instance, visual priming, scent priming, product preferences, needs, influence from others and more are all factors that might determine a customer's choice in that particular setting.

During the time of working with the thesis, we will try to find solutions for how to control for these limitations. These are the limitations we have noticed so far, though there might be more we have not yet discovered.

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