

Impact of Music Familiarity and Emotional Response on Consumer Brand Engagement: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Music has turned into an essential part of the contemporary brand communication and has capacity to impact consumer perceptions, emotional reactions and the levels of engagement. This is an empirical research on how consumer brand engagement is influenced by music-related factors. In particular, the research determines how music familiarity, music-brand fit, music emotional reaction, and music perceived credibility affect consumer brand engagement. A quantitative research design was used and primary data was taken among 200 consumers by using structured questionnaire on the basis of five-point Likert scale. Cronbach alpha coefficients were found to be greater than 0.70, and this was used to validate reliability and validity of the instrument. The SPSS was used to analyse the data by applying descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression methods. The results indicate that the four independent variables have a statistically significant and positive effect on consumer brand engagement. The strongest predictor has been defined as emotional response to music, then music-brand personality fit, music familiarity and perceived music credibility. The paper comes to the conclusion that the music that is carefully chosen and emotionally motivated can greatly increase the consumer interest in brands, which can be useful to marketers and brand managers.

Keywords: Music Familiarity, Emotional Response, Music-Brand Fit, Perceived Music Credibility, Consumer Brand Engagement

1. Introduction

In the modern marketing environment, companies are increasingly using the sensual elements to engage the attention of consumers and foster emotional relationships. Music, in turn, among these elements, plays a central role in influencing consumer experiences and strengthening brand identity. Music has been widely used in advertising, the atmosphere of retail stores, digital branding, and social media marketing to create an affective state, aid in brand recall, and trigger engagement.

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Consumer brand engagement refers to the behavioural, emotional and cognitive investment that a consumer shows a brand. It has been suggested by previous investigations that music may prove to be a powerful emotional arousal and thus, it can affect consumer mood, perception and brand experience. However, effectiveness of musical features in branding depends on many factors, such as familiarity, consistency with brand personality, emotional appeal and credibility.

Regardless of the general utilisation of music in branding techniques, empirical studies that challenge the joint influence of multiple dimensions related to music on consumer brand involvement are limited. The current paper attempts to fill this gap by undertaking an empirical test of four key variables of music with respect to their effects on consumer brand involvement.

2. Literature Review

Gorn (1982) investigated the impact of music in advertisement in a classical conditioning paradigm. The findings showed that even when the consumers are not conscious of using background music, this background music can influence brand choice. Music is therefore capable of associative learning between the brand and positive affect to be considered as a powerful non-verbal stimulus in marketing communication, and as a precursor to further research on emotional and behavioural levels of brand reaction.

Alpert and Alpert (1990) examined the influence of moods generated by music to consumer purchase intentions. According to their data emotional responses like pleasure and arousal mediate advertising effectiveness in a significant way; music was proved to manipulate mood which subsequently influenced brand attitudes. This paper has emphasised the emotional route in which music can have an impact on consumer behaviour and the need to select emotionally congruent music in branding situation.

MacInnis and Park (1991) attempted to determine how musical features affected consumer information processing. The authors established that music has an effect on the cognitive and affective processing especially in the low involvement consumers as a peripheral cue leading to message acceptance. Their study showed that music familiarity decreases cognitive load and heightens ad liking thus reaffirming the influence of music in forming brand judgement.

Aaker (1997) put forward the notion of brand personality and came up with five fundamental dimensions of personality. The research thesis was that consumers perceive brands as they perceive people and developed emotional attachment to them. Personality traits are conveyed through brand cues such as music, in which congruency with brand personality enhances brand meaning and differentiation. This model justifies the relevance of the music-brand personality fit in consumer involvement.

North, Hargreaves, and McKendrick (1999) compared the influence of background music in shops. They found out that congruent music has a great effect to the consumer preferences and purchase behaviour. Music influenced the quality of products and the image of the store, which did not ignore the fact of the contextual and symbolic fit. The research offered practical proof to the music-brand congruence effects.

Schmitt (1999) came up with experiential marketing theory, which stresses on branding sensory experiences. The paper has emphasised the argument that music is one of the most important sensory stimuli that improves the emotional involvement, adds to the memorable brand experiences, and helps to differentiate the emotions. This study proposed that emotional involvement would result in better brand relationships, which provides music as an appealing strategic tool of branding.

The consumer brand engagement conceptualised by Hollebeek (2011) was a multidimensional construct, which included cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions. Emotional outlay became one of the key elements of involvement, and the study focused on interactive and emotional brand experiences. It was found that music was an emotional stimulus in engagement frameworks giving engagement measurement a theoretical foundation.

Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014) have created and validated a consumer brand engagement scale. Their results proved that emotional and interactive stimuli are a significant contributor to the degree of engagement, and the sensory stimulus like music is a source of engagement. The research was associated with engagement and brand advocacy, which enhanced the empirical support of the brand engagement literature.

Sung and Kim (2010) also tested the relationship among brand personality, trust and affect. The findings revealed that personality congruence enhances emotional attachment and brand trust; brand consistent cues elevated perceptions of credibility. Music was defined as a symbolic indicator that conveys brand personality, in favour of the aspect of music credibility and fit in engagement.

Keller (2021) highlighted the importance of brand elements that create a strong brand equity by being emotionally consistent. The research carried out has mentioned that music improves emotional memory and brand resonance; congruent and credible music strengthens trust and authenticity. The use of emotional branding was also associated with the long term consumer involvement which supports the strategic relevance of music in brand communication.

Dwivedi et al. (2022) examined the topic of sensory branding and consumer interaction in the online spheres. It was found that auditory cues provide a significant stimulus to emotional and behavioural reactions. The familiarity with music enhanced brand recollection and online engagement, which supports the increased significance of music in digital branding and affirms it as an agent of immersive brand experience.

Islam and Rahman (2022) compared emotional branding and consumer engagement in different industries. It was found that emotional stimuli have a direct impact on engagement and loyalty; consumer-brand relationships were reinforced by music-induced emotions. The paper has highlighted emotional response as an intervening factor and advocates the prevailing influence of emotional response in brand engagement concepts.

Hwang and Zhang (2023) examined the congruence of music in social media advertisements. The results revealed that music-brand fit contributes greatly to such engagement measures as likes, shares, and comments. Emotional resonance enhanced message credibility, where the music credibility stands out on digital platforms and the music branding research can be extended to the social media setting.

Liu, Chen, and Lee (2023) explored the conception of branding-perceived music authenticity. Findings indicated that believable and culturally acceptable music induced more trust and interaction; credibility of music moderated the effect of emotional responses. The authors had focused more on authenticity rather than popularity, which supported perceived music credibility as a major factor of engagement.

Wang and Yu (2024) investigated the emotional reactions toward music in the context of the omnichannel branding. The results have shown that emotional evoking music is more effective in improving both cognitive and emotional involvement. Familiarity with music enhanced brand consistency across platforms and the research paper identified integrated sensory branding approaches and confirmed the persistence of music in branding in the contemporary world.

Singh and Verma (2024) examined how music can be used in the establishment of consumer-brand relationships in the emerging markets. The findings showed that emotional response and familiarity with music are strongly predictive of brand engagement; agreed music increased brand trust. The paper focused on the issue of cultural sensitivity in the choice of music, which adds modern data to the research on music branding.

3. Research Gap

The former studies have largely addressed the role of music in advertisement in a disjointed way by focusing more on either emotional appeal or brand recollection. Empirical studies which simultaneously evaluate the concept of music familiarity, music-brand personality congruence, emotional reaction and the concept of perceived music credibility as predictor of consumer brand engagement are infrequent. In addition, it is common in the existing literature to use the experimental design with small sample sizes, which limit the extrapolation of the results. The current research is aimed at bridging these gaps through the application of hypothesis-based quantitative research methodology and a sample size that is substantially large.

4. Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The overall aim of the study is to evaluate how the music-related variables will influence consumer brand engagement.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the impact of familiarity of music on consumer brand involvement.
2. To test the effect of music-brand personality fit on consumer brand engagement.
3. To determine the effect of emotional music reaction on consumer brand activity.
4. To assess the impact of music credibility on brand involvement among consumers.

5. Hypotheses

H_{01} : Music familiarity has no substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

H_{11} : Music familiarity has a substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

H_{02} : Music-brand personality fit has no substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

H_{12} : Music-brand personality fit has a substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

H_{03} : Emotional response to music has no substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

H_{13} : Emotional response to music has a substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

H_{04} : Perceived music credibility has no substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

H_{14} : Perceived music credibility has a substantial effect on consumer brand engagement.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design that was used in this study is quantitative and descriptive-analytical research design to examine the impact of music-related variables on consumer brand engagement. Primary data was collected using a cross-sectional survey in which primary consumers who listen to branded music in the form of advertisements, digital media, and retail setting were used. The sampling was done through a simple random method and 200 respondents were obtained; the sample obtained was considered sufficient to perform correlation and regression analysis.

Consumer Brand Engagement was considered the dependent variable and Music Familiarity, Music-Brand Personality Fit, Emotional Response to Music and Perceived Music Credibility were specified as independent variables.

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data which were collected following a review of relevant literature. The responses were assessed on a five-point Likert scale with the Strongly Disagree (1) to the Strongly Agree (5). The expert review was used to determine content validity and internal consistency reliability was determined to have a Cronbach alpha of over 0.70 on all constructs. Ethical issues, such as voluntary participation, informed consent, and responses confidentiality, were kept to the letter.

The SPSS software was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics were used to explain respondent perceptions and Pearson correlation was used to test the relationships between variables. Each of the hypotheses was tested and the predictive power of each independent variable on consumer brand engagement measured using the analysis of simple linear regression. The measures of model significance were assessed with the help of R, R², F-statistics, t-values, p-values, and Cohen f² measured the effect size. All of the hypotheses were considered at 5% level of significance that guaranteed strong empirical findings.

Data analysis and Interpretations

HYPOTHESIS 1 (H₀₁ & H₁₁): Music Familiarity

Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics – Music Familiarity

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Min	Max	Variance
Music Familiarity	200	3.54	0.71	0.05	1.6	5	0.504
Consumer Brand Engagement	200	3.49	0.67	0.047	1.4	5	0.449

Table 1.2: Correlation Analysis – Music Familiarity

Variables	Music Familiarity	Consumer Brand Engagement
Music Familiarity	1	.642**
Consumer Brand Engagement	.642**	1

Table 1.3: Simple Linear Regression – Music Familiarity

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Sig.
1	0.642	0.412	0.409	0.522	138.76	0

Table 1.4: Regression Coefficients – Music Familiarity

Variable	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	95% CI
Constant	1.286	0.193	–	6.664	0	[0.905, 1.667]
Music Familiarity	0.618	0.052	0.642	11.782	0	[0.516, 0.720]

Interpretation:

Music familiarity has a **significant positive effect** on consumer brand engagement ($\beta = 0.642$, $t = 11.782$, $p < .001$). The model explains **41.2% of the variance** ($R^2 = 0.412$). The effect size (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.701$) indicates a **large effect**, leading to rejection of H_{01} and acceptance of H_{11} .

HYPOTHESIS 2 (H_{02} & H_{12}): Music-Brand Personality Fit**Table 2.1: Descriptive Statistics – Music-Brand Personality Fit**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Min	Max	Variance
Music-Brand Fit	200	3.46	0.68	0.048	1.7	5	0.462
Consumer Brand Engagement	200	3.49	0.67	0.047	1.4	5	0.449

Table 2.2: Correlation Analysis – Music-Brand Personality Fit

Variables	Music-Brand Fit	Consumer Brand Engagement
Music-Brand Fit	1	.701**
Consumer Brand Engagement	.701**	1

Table 2.3: Simple Linear Regression – Music-Brand Personality Fit

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Sig.
1	0.701	0.491	0.488	0.481	191.64	0

Table 2.4: Regression Coefficients - Music-Brand Personality Fit

Variable	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	95% CI
Constant	0.918	0.181	-	5.073	0	[0.561, 1.275]
Music-Brand Fit	0.729	0.053	0.701	13.842	0	[0.624, 0.834]

Interpretation:

Music-brand personality fit has a **strong and significant influence** on consumer brand engagement ($\beta = 0.701$, $p < .001$), explaining **49.1% variance**. Cohen's f^2 (0.964) indicates a **very large effect**. Thus, H_{02} is **rejected**.

HYPOTHESIS 3 (H_{03} & H_{13}): Emotional Response to Music

Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics - Emotional Response

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Min	Max	Variance
Emotional Response	200	3.62	0.66	0.047	1.8	5	0.436
Consumer Brand Engagement	200	3.49	0.67	0.047	1.4	5	0.449

Table 3.2: Correlation Analysis - Emotional Response

Variables	Emotional Response	Consumer Brand Engagement
Emotional Response	1	.738**
Consumer Brand Engagement	.738**	1

Table 3.3: Simple Linear Regression - Emotional Response

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Sig.
1	0.738	0.544	0.542	0.452	236.92	0

Interpretation

Emotional response to music exerts the **strongest positive influence** on consumer brand engagement ($\beta = 0.738$, $p < .001$), explaining **54.4% variance**. Cohen's f^2 (1.193) confirms a **very large effect**, leading to rejection of H_{03} .

HYPOTHESIS 4 (H_{04} & H_{14}): Perceived Music Credibility**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics – Perceived Music Credibility**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Min	Max	Variance
Music Credibility	200	3.31	0.73	0.052	1.5	5	0.533
Consumer Brand Engagement	200	3.49	0.67	0.047	1.4	5	0.449

Table 4.2: Correlation Analysis – Music Credibility

Variables		Music Credibility	Consumer Brand Engagement
Music Credibility		1	.612**
Consumer Brand Engagement		.612**	1

Interpretation

Perceived music credibility has a **significant positive effect** on consumer brand engagement ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < .001$), explaining **37.5% variance** with a **large effect size** (Cohen's $f^2 = 0.600$). Hence, H_{04} is rejected.

SUMMARY TABLE: ALL HYPOTHESES

Null Hypothesis	Variable	r	R ²	β	p-value	Effect Size	Decision
H_{01}	Music Familiarity	0.642	0.412	0.642	<.001	Large	Rejected
H_{02}	Music-Brand Fit	0.701	0.491	0.701	<.001	Very Large	Rejected
H_{03}	Emotional Response	0.738	0.544	0.738	<.001	Very Large	Rejected

H ₀₄	Music Credibility	0.612	0.375	0.612	<.001	Large	Rejected
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FINDINGS

The empirical evidence of the current research confirms beyond any doubts that music-related dimensions have a decisive impact on the consumer brand engagement. The results indicate that the three chosen independent variables, namely, the familiarity to music, the fit of music-brand-personality, the emotional reaction to music and the perceived music credibility have a statistically significant positive influence on consumer brand engagement.

It was also found that familiarity with music was a strong influence on consumer interest in the brand. Participants who had been exposed to the familiar music had a higher degree of comfort, recognition and positive association with the brand and thus, they have engaged more. It reduced the cognitive load, and increased the brand recall, thereby further increasing the emotional and behavioural reactions towards the brand, due to the presence of familiar musical elements.

The personality fit between music and brand was a predictive factor that was found to be strong in predicting consumer engagement to the brand. The findings show that the more the music used in brand communication is properly aligned with the personality and values of the brand, the more the consumers view the brand as more coherent and authentic. This congruency increases the feeling of attachment to the brand and encourages a greater level of interaction with the brand. The strongest variable which had an impact on consumer engagement with the brand was found to be emotional response to music. Stimuli in music that gave positive emotions to consumers, including excitement, pleasure or nostalgia, significantly increased the emotional connectivity, attention and interest of consumers to the brand. This observation highlights the critical importance of emotional stimulation in the development of long term consumer-brand relationships.

There was also positive significant influence in terms of perceived music credibility on consumer brand engagement. Consumers, who perceived the music as original, suitable, and reliable, had more confidence with the brand. Authentic music content helped to build brand belief and strengthen the desire of consumers to both think and act.

Comprehensively, the results indicate that consumer brand engagement cannot be determined by a single musical aspect, but a complex of emotional, cognitive, and symbolical musical aspects. Emotional resonance was found to be the most influential factor with the assistance of congruence, familiarity, and credibility.

SUGGESTIONS

Depending on the empirical evidence, the current research outlines a number of practical and managerial implications that are relevant to brand managers, advertisers as well as marketing strategists.

The statistics show that it is necessary to focus on the emotional appeal of the music used in advertising and branding efforts. Music that stimulates positive affective states and is consistent with the emotional anticipations of the target audience significantly increases consumer response. Therefore, a careful process of selection that would incline to musical stimuli that can

potentially drive excitement, warmth, or nostalgia is a must to strengthen the affective connexion between the consumers and the brand.

It is then recommended that the marketers should create a strong fit between music accompaniment and brand personality. The selected music must be reflected of brand name, values as well as positioning of the brand in the market in order to preach a coherent and believable brand image. Poor matching or lack of alignment of musical cues is the possibility of watering down brand meaning and weakening the engagement.

The use of recognisable music should be well-timed. Although recognisable tracks can strengthen the brand and make consumers feel more comfortable, influence on brand recognition and consumer comfort can cause wear-out effects when used too frequently. Based on this, the brands must reimagine the already known musical components strategically, in a way that does not eliminate the recognisability, but maintains the novelty.

Also, the authenticity and credibility of the music that is used in branding should be given a second thought. Music is to be regarded as something suitable and authentic as opposed to being exploitative and artificial. The use of culturally relevant, ethically obtained, and contextually relevant music can help build consumer trust and engage within the long-term.

Future studies might involve longitudinal studies to determine how engagement changes over time and experimental studies to determine the causation processes. Future cross-cultural, cross-industry, and cross-digital media comparative studies can potentially contribute to the theoretical knowledge of the role of music in consumer behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The current research is an empirical test that is strong enough to support the fact that music is a crucial factor in increasing consumer brand engagement. Through conducting the analysis of several dimensions in relation to music, the study shows that music familiarity, music-brand personality fit, emotional reaction towards music, and perceived music credibility have collective and independent effects on enhancing consumer engagement.

Of these factors, emotional response to music was found as the most significant predictor thus the emphasis on emotional stimulation in branding strategies. Nevertheless, familiarity, brand personality congruence and credibility are the most useful in support of emotional influence.

The research proves that the success of brand engagement cannot be achieved by music only but with a well-planned combination of music that matches the emotional appeal with the brand and consumer expectations. Brands that consider music in their communication plans have a higher chance to create more emotional attachment, trust and long-term interaction.

Generally, the study gives valuable contributions to the current body of knowledge on sensory marketing and consumer behaviour as it provides useful recommendations to practitioners that aim to utilise music as a strategy in branding. The results emphasise the critical role of the deliberate and emotionally charged nature of music choices in generating effective and lasting consumer brand relationships.

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