

SOUND RETAILING: A REVIEW
OF EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE
ON THE EFFECTS OF MUSIC
ON SHOPPING BEHAVIOR [AQ1]

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OVER 30 YEARS AFTER Kotler (1973) called it an atmospheric effect, music is still being played in retail establishments for the enjoyment and engagement of customers and employees. To many of us it is simply a form of entertainment. But to the retailer, music continues to be a key element in the retail environment. Bitner (1992) suggested that it was *the* key ambient condition of the servicescape. From a psychological perspective, it has been shown that music can affect everything from mood of the shopper to their attitude toward the store and its employees. From a marketing perspective, it can position the retail establishment and help differentiate it from its competitors by stimulating the development of what Robert Kozinets called in Chapter 1 the “brand scape.” Now with increasing competition that retailing is facing from e-tailing, music may be the *at-mus-pheric* effect that interacts with other atmospheric effects to distinguish bricks from clicks and result in *sound retailing*.

Music and marketing are popular literature topics. Music and advertising has attracted a considerable amount of academic attention especially with regard to music variables and advertising effects. Some of the most notable effects include loudness (Kellaris & Rice, 1993); mood (Alpert & Alpert, 1990; Bruner, 1990); music preference (Gorn, 1982); tempo (Brooker & Wheatley, 1994; Kellaris & Kent, 1991, 1994); time (Kellaris & Mantel, 1996); and variation (Kellaris & Cox, 1989; Kellaris, Cox, & Cox, 1993; Park & Young, 1986) just to name a few (see also Bruner, 1990, pp. 96–97).

Music and shopping behavior has also received a great deal of scholarly focus. Not surprisingly, music is in fact believed to be the most commonly studied retail environmental cue (Turley & Milliman, 2000). What is surprising is that past reviews of experimental evidence in this area have included music and retail only as part of a larger review of atmospheric effects (Lam, 2001; Turley & Milliman, 2000), or consumer behavior (North & Hargreaves, 1997). Yet, most retailers would agree that music is one of their most important considerations. However, it is expensive, contrary to what many believe (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1993, p. 632). Worldwide, retailers spend billions of dollars on music (North & Hargreaves, 1998). This includes music systems, music providers like Muzak (e.g., Eroglu, Machleit, & Chebat, 2005; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988), and royalty fees. In the case of Muzak all types of music are available for one general fee (usually between \$80 and \$120 per month). As for royalties, a license fee is paid to the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) or Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI). These companies provide residuals collected from the source and the retail establishment to song writers and composers each time a song is played. They consider the playing of CDs or radio to be public performance with licensing fees from \$200 to \$2,000 per year depending on square footage. A new alternative is satellite radio (Sirius or XM) offering a variety of music services for around \$300 with ASCAP and BMI fees included.

It is clear, therefore, based on the amount of importance and attention researchers and retailers have placed on music in the retail environment, that music has earned a solo. This review will shine the whole spotlight on music and its effect on shopping behavior.

Purpose

This chapter has three purposes. First, it is a review of the most relevant studies involving music effects on shopping behavior. Second, it is a synthesis and comparison of variables and findings. Third, based on what has been done and how it has been executed, it is roadmap of future travel down this very important research stream.

Literature Review

A summary table of 29 published empirical studies on the effects of music on shopping behavior is presented chronologically in Table 3.1. Each of these studies observed characteristics or elements of music observing some type of effect on consumer behavior in the retail environment. What follows is a summary of theoretical backgrounds, variables and findings.

Theories and Models. A brief look at the studies in this group shows that many referenced in some way environmental psychological theory. This involves a stimulus-organism response (S-O-R) model where the music is the stimulus that causes a shopper's evaluation and some type of behavioral response. The most utilized has been Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD) model of environmental psychology (e.g., Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992; Milliman, 1982, 1986; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990). This model suggests that the environment affects an individual's moods or emotions by altering their state of pleasure, arousal and dominance. Individuals, therefore, respond emotionally to the environmental stimulus of music which results in some type of approach-avoidance behavior. This approach-avoidance behavior has four aspects: a desire to stay in (approach) or not stay (avoid); a desire to explore (approach) or not explore (avoid); a desire to communicate with others (approach) or not communicate with others (avoid); and a desire to enhance satisfaction with tasks performed (approach) or not enhance satisfaction (avoid).

The Mehrabian-Russell (1974) model was first suggested as an explanation for the interaction of environmental effects on shopping behavior by Donovan and Rossiter (1982). They suggested that in-store variables, like music, are represented psychologically by consumers in terms of pleasure (pleasant-unpleasant) and arousal (arousing-sleepy). These two emotional states act then as mediators of shopping behaviors. This provides a mechanism for retailers to explain and predict changes to in-store variables like music. Many studies observed the interaction of music on pleasure and arousal (e.g., Baker et al., 1992; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988).

Some additional theories included Berlyne's (1971) theory of aesthetic response that was referenced in two studies (North & Hargreaves, 1996a, 1996b). This states that preference for stimuli is related to their potential to arouse in an inverted-U relationship with an intermediate degree of arousal potential being liked most. The functional theory of attitudes was also mentioned (Schlosser, 1998). This states that influences are most persuasive when they address the motives underlying an attitude targeted for change.

Independent Variables. The impact of music has been observed on a variety of shopping behaviors when mediated either individually or through the interaction of a number of variables. Those that related directly to music characteristics included tempo (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002; Chebat, Gelinias-Chebat, & Filiatrault, 1993; Eroglu et al., 2005; Oakes 2003; Herrington & Capella, 1996; Milliman, 1982, 1986; Oakes, 2003); volume (Babin, Chebat, & Michon, 2004; Herrington & Capella, 1996; Smith & Curnow, 1966), background, not as a focal point or foreground, as a focal point (Areni & Kim, 1993; Herrington & Capella, 1996; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988, 1990, 1993), and genre.

Table 3.1 Summary of Relevant Research Involving Retail and Music

Citation	Sample Setting	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Results
Smith & Curnow (1996)	1100 shoppers in a supermarket	Music volume	Time spent Money spent	High volume music resulted in less time spent but no difference in sales or customer satisfaction.
Donovan & Rossiter (1966)	30 graduate students	Music tempo	Pleasure Arousal	Up tempo music most effective when pleasure and arousal high; slow tempo or no music most effective when pleasure and arousal low.
Milliman (1982)	216 shoppers in a supermarket	Music tempo	Pace of in-store traffic flow Sales volume	Slow tempo music resulted in a slower pace of in-store traffic and a higher sales volume.
Milliman (1986)	1392 customers in restaurant	Music tempo	Service time Customer time Customer leaving Food purchased Liquor purchased	Slow tempo music resulted in longer service time; longer customer time; less customers leaving before seated; more food and liquor purchased; more sales volume.
Yalch & Spangenberg (1988)	86 shoppers in a clothing store	Background/foreground	Department shopped Time spent Money spent Pleasure Arousal Dominance	Background music resulted in younger shoppers perceiving more time shopping; foreground music resulted in older shopping; background music was less desirable and arousing.

Yalch & Spangenberg (1990)	86 shoppers in a clothing store	Background/foreground	Mood Unplanned purchases Perception of shopping time	Clothing store shoppers preferred foreground music but moods and unplanned purchases were not affected; perception of shopping time varied with music and age but not time of day.
Baker, Levy, & Grewal (1992)	147 undergraduate students watching a video of a card-and-gift store	Background/foreground Music genre (Classical/Top 40)	Willingness to buy Arousal Pleasure	Music and retail salespeople interacted to affect arousal and willingness to buy.
Areni & Kim (1993)	64 observations (16 for each dependent variable) at wine store in a restaurant	Music genre (Classical/Top 40)	Information search Purchase behavior Shopping time	Classical music influenced customers to purchase more expensive wines but did not affect the search or the time spent shopping.
Chebat, Gélinas-Chebat, & Filiatrault (1993)	427 undergraduate students in a simulated bank environment	Music tempo	Attention level Mood Time spent	Music acts as mediator and effects attention level, mood and time estimation: Music detracts from the effects of visual stimuli in bank.
Yalch & Spangenberg (1993)	105 shoppers in a department within a store	Music genre Background/foreground	Mood Perceptions of the store Time spent Money spent Music preference	Music that fit a department resulted in more purchases and money spent; music interacted with age but not gender. Younger shoppers showed a preference for foreground music and older shoppers preferred background.

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Table 3.1 (Continued)

Citation	Sample Setting	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Results
Gulas & Schewe (1994)	76 supermarket shoppers	Music genre (Classic Rock/Big Band)	Time spent Store attributes Emotions Items purchased Money spent	Classic Rock music resulted in more purchases by baby boomers than Big Band music for older shoppers.
Dube, Chebat, & Morin (1995)	270 undergraduates in a simulated bank environment	Music pleasure/arousal	Desire to affiliate	Music-induced pleasure and arousal affected consumer's desire to affiliate with bank personnel.
Herington & Capella (1996)	140 supermarket shoppers	Music tempo Music volume Music preference	Musical preference Mood state Time pressure	Tempo and volume did not effect shopping time or expenditure. Preference did influence shopping time and expenditure.
North & Hargreaves (1996a)	236 students in a cafeteria	Music genre/complexity (New Age/Organ)	Music preference/appeal	As dislike became more extreme, music became more salient as a feature of the environment that subjects might like to change. Responses to music associated with response to the dining area.
North & Hargreaves (1996b)	285 subjects in a dining area seeking advise on welfare	Music genre (New Age/Organ)	Evaluation of environment	Responses to music associated with response to the dining area.
Hui, Dube, & Chebat (1997)	116 students in a simulated bank environment	Music valence	Perceived wait duration Emotional evaluation of the service environment	Music positively affects consumer's approach behavior towards the service

organization; valenced music stimulates a more positive emotional response (and perceived wait duration) to wait and a stronger approach behavior towards the service organization.	Emotional response to the wait	
Musical genres affected perception of environment; classical music associated with paying more; classical and pop might have increased sales.	Evaluation of environment Purchase intention	North & Hargreaves (1998) 300 students in a Cafeteria
French music led to French wines outselling German wines; German music led to German music outselling French wines.	Selection	North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick (1999) 82 shoppers bought wine/44 completed postpurchase questionnaire in a supermarket
Background music did not moderate the effects of the salesperson on the intent to buy but did influence the affects of acceptance of the salesperson's arguments and the desire to affiliate.	Salesperson perception intent to buy Argument acceptance Desire to affiliate	Chebat, Valiant, & Gelinas-Chebat (2000) 593 business students watching a travel service exchange on video
Positive correlation between perception of the music and the bank and the bar.	Bank/bar perception	North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick (2000) 331 people in a bank; 328 people in bar

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Table 3.1 (Continued)

Citation	Sample Setting	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Results
Chebat, Gelinass-Chebat, & Valiant (2001)	593 business students watching a travel service exchange on video	Background/foreground Music fit	Store perception Salesperson perception	Background music that is cognitively processed and fits effects attitude toward the store, the salesperson, and the visit to the store.
Dube & Morin (2001)	110 mall shoppers	Background/foreground Pleasure/arousal	Attitude toward environment Attitude toward personnel Store evaluation	Background music exerted influence on store evaluation due to variations in the intensity of pleasure by a mediating effect of attitude towards the servicescape and sales personnel
Mattila & Wirtz (2001)	270 department store shoppers	Music/scent arousal	Store evaluation	When music and scent arousal levels are congruent then shoppers rate the environment more positively.
Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, & Voss (2002)	297/169 business students watching a video of a simulated card-and-gift store environment	Music genre	Customer service	Music perceptions of slow classical and Top 40 music were independent of customer service
Caldwell & Hibbert (2002)	62 restaurant customers	Music tempo/ Music preference	Actual time spent Effect on perceived time Money spent	Music preference affected actual time not tempo; neither affected perceived time; time spent was the best predictor of money

North, Shicock, & Hargreaves (2003)	393 total restaurant customer/ 141 investigated	Music Genre (Classical/ Top 40)	Affected enjoyment Intentions to return Intentions to recommend Time spent	spent; music preference affected enjoyment and intentions to return and recommend not tempo. Music style (Classical) affected customer spending
Oakes (2003)	335 undergraduate students during course resignation	Music tempo	Perception of wait time Affective responses	Music tempo resulted in effected temporal perception (perceived-actual wait duration); slow-tempo digitally-produced original music enhanced affective response (satisfaction, expectations, and relaxation).
Babin, Chebat, & Michin (2004)	800 mall shoppers	Music genre Music volume	Perceptual appropriateness	Changes in music type & volume caused diminishing perceptual appropriateness resulting in lower positive affect, product quality, shopping value, and fewer approach behaviors.
Eronglu, Machleit, & Chebat (2005)	347 mall shoppers	Music tempo	Shopping experience	Shopping experience most favorable under conditions of slow music/high density and fast music/low density. Significant main effects of music tempo for approach/avoidance tendency.

Although genre has received a considerable amount of attention, only a few genres have been observed including Classical or Top 40 (Areni & Kim, 1993; Babin et al., 2004; Baker et al., 1992, 2002; North, Shilcock, & Hargreaves, 2003; North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 2000); Classic Rock or Big Band (Gulas & Schewe, 1994), New Age or Organ (North & Hargreaves, 1996a, 1996b); Classic, Top 40, and Easy Listening (North & Hargreaves, 1998); and French or German (North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1999).

[AQ3] Those that related more to music perception, either generally or specifically by a demographic included: fit (e.g., a consumers' perception of the music's relevance to a product or store)—music in a bar and bank (North et al., 2000), and in a store (Chebat, Gelinias-Chebat, & Vaillant, 2001); pleasure or arousal (Chebat, Vaillant, & Gelinias-Chebat, 2000, 2001; Dube & Morin, 2001; Dube, Chebat, & Morin, 1995); preference (Herrington & Capella, 1996, Yalch & Spangenberg, 1993); and age of the shopper (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990; Gulas & Schewe, 1994).

Dependent Variables. When mediated with the above variables, the effects of music on a variety of behaviors have been observed during the shopping experience. The initial and intermediary variables included: mood (Chebat et al., 1993; Herrington & Capella, 1996; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990, 1993); pleasure/arousal (Baker et al., 1992; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988); salesperson perception/affiliation (Baker et al., 2002; Chebat et al., 2000; Dube et al., 1995); store perception (Dube & Morin, 2001; Gulas & Schewe, 1994; North & Hargreaves, 1996b, 1998); time waiting (Hui, Dube, & Chebat, 1997; Oakes, 2003); time spent (Areni & Kim, 1993; Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002; Chebat et al., 1993; Gulas & Schewe, 1994; North et al., 2003; Smith & Curnow, 1966; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988, 1990, 1993). The outcome variables included: willingness to buy (Baker et al., 1992); and money spent (Milliman, 1982, 1986; North et al., 2003; Smith & Curnow, 1966; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988). A schematic along a DV continuum can be seen in Figure 3.1 and provides the structure for a review of what we know from the research that has been conducted.

Results

Much has been learned since Kotler (1973, p. 64) termed the phrase “atmospherics” to describe, among other things, music. He suggested the need for further research into the use of atmospherics as a communication tool, as a competitive edge, and as a customer behavior solution. Now, over thirty years later, here is what has been found.

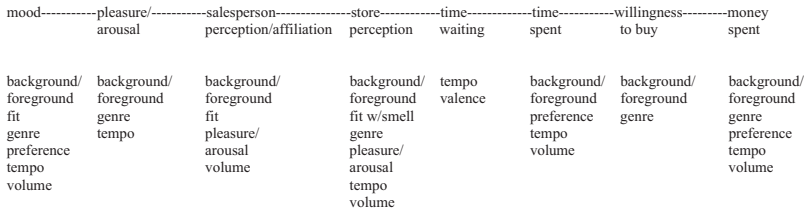


Figure 3.1.
DV/IV Continuum

Mood. The research on mood suggests that some music variables can have an effect on shopping behavior. It has been observed that background and foreground music does not affect mood (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990), but when the genre of music fits the shopper it can enhance mood (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1993). Herrington and Capella (1996) observed that preference for either background or foreground music can affect mood thereby influencing behavior, but Yalch and Spangenberg (1993) argued that moods did not explain the music effects (but store perceptions did). The results on tempo are also varied, with Chebat et al. (1993) suggesting that tempo acts as a mediator and can affect mood but Herrington and Capella (1996) were not able to confirm this finding for either tempo or volume.

Pleasure and Arousal. Whether music can enhance pleasure and arousal has received some attention with varying results. Yalch and Spangenberg (1988) observed that background music was less desirable and resulted in shoppers reporting that they were less aroused. This was observed to be dependent on age and time of day. Baker et al. (1992) observed that ambient cues (Classical-background/Top 40-foreground music) interacted with social cues (salesperson interaction) to influence pleasure. Donovan and Rossiter (1982, 1994) suggested that fast and slow tempo can interact with high and low pleasure and arousal to increase shopping-related intentions.

Salesperson Perception and Affiliation. It was observed that background music influenced the acceptance of the salesperson’s arguments and the desire to affiliate with travel (Chebat et al., 2000), and bank personnel (Dube et al., 1995). This was extended to the consumer’s attitude toward the sales personnel (Dube & Morin, 2001). This suggests that low or moderately arousing music may help salespeople significantly in selling to and affiliating with the consumer.

Additionally, Baker et al. (2002) observed that when the music fits, it can positively affect perceptions of customer service and when it doesn’t fit, or there are changes in the volume of music, the result is diminished perceptual

environmental appropriateness resulting in fewer approach behaviors (Babin et al., 2004).

Store Perception. Not surprisingly, the effect of music on the perception of the store has received a considerable amount of attention. The results tell us that background music that is highly pleasurable can positively affect store evaluation (Dube & Morin, 2001). It appears that the fit of the music to the retail environment is an important consideration. It was observed that when the music fit, it affected the perceptions (positively) of a bar and bank (North et al., 2000), and a store (Chebat et al., 2001). Fit has also been shown to interact with scent to enhance store evaluation (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001). Finally, genre has been observed to interact with fit/age of the shopper to (positively) affect perception of the store (North & Hargreaves, 1998; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1993).

Tempo also appears to be an important music variable. It was observed that fast tempo negatively influenced attention level (Chebat et al., 1993), but had no effect on enjoyment (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). It was also observed that slow tempo enhanced satisfaction, expectations, and relaxation (Babin et al., 2004), and that slow tempo interacted with high retail density and fast tempo interaction with low retail density to enhance the overall shopping experience (Eroglu et al., 2005). Finally, changes in volume (and genre) of music were shown to diminish perceptual environmental appropriateness resulting in lower perceptions of personal shopping value (Babin et al., 2004).

Time Waiting. As for the real and perceived time that a consumer waits for service, Milliman (1986) observed that slow tempo resulted in longer customer actual time. It was also shown that slow tempo can increase perceived wait time by the consumer (Oakes, 2003). Another variable to consider is music valence (e.g., liked versus disliked) which was suggested as a possible stimulus of lower perceived wait duration (Hui et al., 1997).

Time Spent. As for time spent shopping, background (older consumers) and foreground music (younger consumers) affected perceived time shopping depending on age but not gender (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988, 1990). It was also observed that background music did not affect the amount of time spent shopping in a wine store (Areni & Kim, 1993).

It was shown and confirmed that tempo had no effect on shopping time, either real or perceived (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002; Herrington & Capella, 1996), but music preference did (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). Milliman (1982, 1986) did observe that slow tempo resulted in a slower pace of in-store traffic, service time, and customer time. Similar results were observed by Kellaris and Altsech (1992) for fast and liked music when used to increase the turnover of tables in a busy restaurant.

The results on volume are contradictory with Smith and Curnow (1966) finding that variation (high) resulted in less time spent, but Herrington and Capella (1996) observing that volume did not affect time spent in a supermarket.

Willingness to Buy. Although purchase intention has always been difficult to research and predict, a few researchers have attempted to investigate it with regard to music variables. Chebat et al. (2000) concluded that background music did not appear to moderate the relation between salesperson's perception and the intent to buy. Baker et al. (1992) observed that genre variation interacted with salesperson interaction to enhance willingness to buy. North and Hargreaves (1998) also suggested that genre (Classical and Top 40) was associated with subjects being prepared to pay the most for food in a cafeteria.

Money Spent. Of course a positive outcome is ultimately the purchase. It appears that background and foreground does not affect unplanned purchases (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990).

Some music variables, however, have been shown to have some type of an influence here. It was observed that genre (Classical music) influenced customers to purchase more expensive wines than Top 40 did (Areni & Kim, 1993), and has been shown to be associated with paying and spending more in a cafeteria (North & Hargreaves, 1998; North et al., 2000; North et al., 2003). Classic Rock background music resulted in more purchases by Baby Boomers in a supermarket but fewer purchases for older shoppers, suggesting some type of interaction between genre and age (Gulas & Schewe, 1994). French music was shown to increase French wine sales and German music to increase German wine sales suggesting some type of relationship between music fit and product (North et al., 1999). Music preference, however, was shown to influence total spending and the amount spent on food and drink in a restaurant (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). Slow tempo was observed to have resulted in higher sales volume in a cafeteria (Milliman, 1982, 1986), but no affect on sales volume in a restaurant (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002), or a supermarket (Herrington & Capella, 1996). Similarly, music volume was not observed to affect money spent at a supermarket (Smith & Curnow, 1966).

Future Research

Often with discovery comes more questions. While there is obviously much we know based on the preceding review of results, there is also much we still do not. What follows are future research suggestions made but never

pursued beginning with Smith and Curnow (1966) and ending the way this review started with Kotler (1974).

Settings. Since Smith and Curnow (1966, p. 265) suggested that some “unanswered questions” included the application of their findings on the effect of music volume on time/money spent to purchasing situations other than supermarkets, only Harrington and Capella (1996) further researched these variables (disputing the findings) and again it was at a supermarket. Location for most of the field experiments, on all aspects of music and retail, has been limited primarily to supermarkets (Gulas & Schewe, 1994; Harrington & Capella, 1996; Milliman, 1982; Smith & Capella, 1966); restaurants/cafeterias/bars (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002; Milliman, 1986; North & Hargreaves, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; North et al., 2000; North, 2003); malls/department stores (Babin et al., 2004; Dube & Morin 2001; Eroglu et al., 2005; Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1988, 1990, 1993); banks (Chebat et al., 1993; Dube et al., 1995; Hui, 1997; North et al., 2000) and wine shops (Arena & Kim, 1993; North et al., 1999). It is necessary to expand this to a wider variety of field locations. Some possibilities include sporting good stores (e.g., investigating the impact of the sports radio genre) and women’s lingerie stores such as Victoria’s Secret (e.g., investigating the impact of the genre of romantic music). Another interesting field environment would be Starbucks. With the introduction of music retail into their stores, it would be interesting to investigate the music’s effect on time and money spent.

Samples. Gulas and Schewe (1994) found that age-linked music can be differentially target marketed and called for future research into a possible nostalgia effect. Much of the research has been done using demographic segmentations involving limited ages (mostly student samples) with some gender manipulations. Future research should focus on more race/ethnicity-based preferences, along with other demographic variables that have yet to be investigated.

Variables. While a wide variety of variables have been manipulated and observed, a larger scope within certain music variables provides future possibilities of interest and investigation.

Genre. North and Hargreaves (1998) agreed there was a need for future research utilizing additional listening environments and “a broader range of musical styles” (p. 2268). Genre did garner a considerable amount of study but it was primarily limited to Classical versus Top 40. More attention needs to be given to other genres of music appealing to a wider range of demographics

and subcultures. Additional research in this area could also introduce new forms of delivery other than broadcast radio and Muzak such as satellite or cable radio. Fit has also received considerable amount of attention in regard to music (North et al., 1999), and the workplace (Grayston, 1974) and advertising (MacInnis & Park, 1991), but not enough attention with respect to the retail environment. Only a few studies focused on fit (e.g., Areni & Kim, 1993; Chebat et al., 2001; North et al., 2000), and those again where primarily concerned with Classical and Top 40. Future research should further investigate what constitutes fit effectiveness in the retail environment for a wider range of genres.

Music preference. Herrington and Capella (1996) observed that music preference could affect such things as time spent shopping and suggested that not enough is currently known about the effects of music preferences of consumers. Most of the research in this area has been experiments that provided the music. Future research could be conducted where the shopper actually chooses the music using some type of iPod or jukebox, providing the ability to customize the music for an individualistic approach. The possibilities of music variables here are many including genre, tempo, and volume.

Ethical Implications. Kotler (1974) suggested the need for an investigation into the social and ethical implications of “man’s growing power to create atmospheres to motivate purchase” (p. 64). This suggestion has been largely ignored. Future research should investigate the ethical and social implications of the persuasion powers and manipulation opportunities of music in the retail environment. In addition to the obvious ones, one other alternative could be the use of music as a discriminatory atmospheric effect (e.g., an extreme genre of music like heavy metal that appeals to one race but can be unappealing to another resulting in intimidation and/or avoidance).

Conclusion

It is clear that much has been accomplished with regard to the effects of music on shopping behavior. This review of the experimental evidence summarizes the most relevant research from 1966–2006. By shining the spotlight on music, it not only shows the potential of music in the retail environment but further solidifies the argument that it may be the most important atmospheric consideration.

It is also clear that much is left to do in this area from both a theoretical and practical perspective. There is much to be learned by the future exploration

of new settings, with varied samples, using yet untested variables. More importantly, now that so much has been learned, it is probably the perfect time to reflect on the social and ethical implications of our gained knowledge. Hopefully, this review provides the foundation and incentive for future research and leads to even more sound retailing.

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