

Enhancing the Service Environment: The Effect of Music and Mood in Service-Based Businesses

Elyria A. Kemp, ekemp@uno.edu

Dong-Jun (DJ) Min, dmin2@uno.edu

Kim H. Williams, khwilli3@uno.edu

Aberdeen Leila Borders, aborder4@kennesaw.edu

Deborah H. Lester, dlester@kennesaw.edu

Abstract

Music has often been used in marketing to evoke emotions and enhance the consumer experience. Especially for service-based businesses, where customer evaluations of the service encounter can be key in establishing and maintaining competitive advantage (Hartline et al. 2000), music can positively influence the customers' experience in various ways (e.g., decrease perceived waiting time, influence dining speed, increase purchase intentions). This research examines the impact of background music in service settings, specifically regarding its influence on consumers' perception of service quality, consumption behavior, and attitude toward the service provider.

Prior research shows that music helps people regulate arousal and mood (Schafer 2013), and even the simple act of listening to music can evoke positive emotions and influence well-being (Krumhansl 2002). As a result, music is often used for emotional regulation purposes (Thayer et al. 1994), and it has been shown that individuals can actively alter their experience of happiness by listening to music (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005).

The effects of music can have special implications for the service environment. According to mood congruency theory, emotions at encoding are congruent with the nature of the emotion in which memory is recalled. Distinctively, when individuals are in a good mood, they may see the world in a more favorable light, and consequently exhibit more positive judgement (Bower 1981). Thus, if positive emotions can be induced through music, customers' perceptions of the service environment may be positively influenced.

In this research, we aim to demonstrate the influence of background music in the service environment through a field experiment that involves a mood regulation technique. Individuals

will then be exposed to a service experience where music is being performed (vs. not performed). Differences in consumers' evaluations of service quality and attitude toward the service provider will be assessed, and implications for business owners will be discussed.

References:

Bower, Gordon H. (1981). *Mood and memory*. *American Psychologist; American Psychologist*, 36(2), 129.

Hartline, Michael D. , James G. Maxham III, Daryl O. McKee (2000), "Corridors of Influence in the Dissemination of Customer-Oriented Strategy to Customer Contact Service Employees," *Journal of Marketing*, 64 (April), 35-50.

Krumhansl, Carol. (2002). "Music: A Link between Cognition and Emotion," *Current Directions Psychological Science*, 11 (2), 45-50.

Lyubomirsky, Sonja, Kennon M. Sheldon, and David Schkade (2005), "Pursuing Happiness: The Architecture of Sustainable Change," *Review of General Psychology*, 9(2), 111-131.

Schäfer, Thomas, Sedlmeier, Peter, Städtler, Christine and Huron, David (2013), "The Psychological Functions of Music Listening," *Frontier in Psychology*, 14 (August), 1-33.

Thayer, Robert E., Robert J. Newman Tracey M. McClain, (1994), "Self-regulation of mood: Strategies for changing a bad mood, raising energy, and reducing tension," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67 (5), 910-925.

Author Information:

Elyria Kemp is an Associate Professor of Marketing and the Bank One Endowed Professor in Minority & Emerging Business in the Department of Management and Marketing at the University of New Orleans.

Dong-Jun (DJ) Min is an Assistant Professor and the Freeport McMoRan Endowed Professor in Consumer Behavior and Decision-making in the Department of Management and Marketing at the University of New Orleans.

Kim H. Williams is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration in the College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans.

Aberdeen Leila Borders is a Professor and Assistant Chair of the Marketing and Professional Sales Department and Assistant Director in the Center for Professional Selling at Kennesaw State University.

Deborah H Lester is a Professor of Marketing and Professional Sales in the Coles College of Business at Kennesaw State University.

Keywords: services, influence on consumers, mood, consumption behavior, background music

Relevance to Marketing Educators, Researchers, and Practitioners:

In this research, we aim to demonstrate the influence of background music in the service environment.

Track: Ethical Business and Marketing Considerations

ID#: 1342