Role Of Music On Perceived Price In Retail Stores

** R. K. Srivastava*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of music on consumption experience and to explore the relationship between the variables like perceived price, quality, consumer response, consumer experience and ambience in the context of retailing.

The present study is a retail field study on atmospherics to investigate the relationship of consumer perceptions of music in retail stores with consumers' responses towards purchase of products . Data were collected in Mumbai using the store intercept method . The questionnaire was pilot tested before being administered at two hypermarkets. Research on music indicates that as a non service element, it can have a deep impact on consumer behaviour .Interesting findings revealed how music could influence the repeat visits of consumers and enhance the perceived value of quality and price. It also threw up information relating to how it can generate extra crowd to the store due to word of mouth publicity. When compared to stores where music was not played, it gave statistically different results between these two situations. Music does create a better shopping experience due to better ambience, comfort and the consumers spend more time leading to more purchases in retail stores. The research brings out the important issues for designing a musical environment in the retail stores to influence shopping experience and consumer responses.

Originality/Value : Such a study has been conducted for the first time in an emerging market . The role of the three new variables which could affect the retail store business were interesting research observations.

Keywords: Retail Store, Music, Retail Price, Word of Mouth, Sales, Purchase

INTRODUCTION

Over four decades ago, Kotler (1973) suggested that store environment could play a role in creating a retail image in the consumer's mind that comes for shopping. Indeed, many successful retailers today utilize atmospherics as an effective marketing tool, which leads to better cosumer experience, better satisfaction, more sales and repeat visits. To create the right atmosphere in their facilities, firms can appeal to various techniques. The use of colours, lighting, music, scents and visual images are particularly effective in retail stores and service establishments as they affect consumers' moods and emotions, which in turn play a key role in end-user satisfaction (Gorn et al., 1993; Machleit and Mantel, 2001; Brüggen et al., 2011; Hamida et al., 2011). Research on music indicates that as a non-service element, it can have a major impact on consumer behaviour, cognition, and motivation (Chebat et al., 2001). Same authors (2001) mentioned that a positive attitude towards a store's music is expected to have a positive influence on the creation of consumer comfort. It may be due to the consumer's feelings towards anxiety, peace of mind, and a sense of calm; the main components of consumer comfort. These activities create a right atmosphere during shopping. This is further confirmed by research on atmospherics in services (Bonnin, 2006 ; Brüggen et al.,2011; Hamida et al.,2011), which shows that the non-service environmental elements do influence the consumer . Therefore, consumer comfort can also serve as a barrier to exit (or switching barrier) as high levels of consumer comfort are expected to give consumers psychological benefits (such as reduced anxiety and higher self-esteem) that will lead to greater decision-making confidence, ultimately reducing their likeliness to switch to a competitor (Schneider and Bowen, 1999 ; Spake et al., 2003 ; Baker et al., 2002) investigated the effects of multiple environmental cues (non service element) specifically in a product retailing setting and proposed that the design, ambient and social dimensions of the store environment and consumer perceptions of merchandise, value, service quality, effort and psychic cost (i.e., store choice criteria) affect store patronage decisions and comforts. However, the aforementioned study did not analyze the impact of music on consumer behaviour in retail outlets.

Research investigating the impact of atmospherics originated in environmental psychology. M-R model (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) examines individuals' reactions to environmental cues through mediating non-verbal responses related to the three dimensions: Pleasure, Arousal and Dominance ('PAD'). Pleasure refers to the extent that a specific environmental cue is enjoyable vs. not enjoyable, and Arousal to the extent that it stimulates the individual, i.e., it

** *Professor,* Sydenham Institute of Management Studies, Research and Entrepreneurship Education (SIMSREE), B- Road, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400020. E-mail : rks_pmc@yahoo.com

results in approach vs. avoidance behaviours (e.g., the length of time a shopper spends in the store). Dominance, the third dimension in the M-R model, relates to whether a person feels 'in' control vs. 'under' control in the environment (e.g. effects of familiar vs. unfamiliar music on patrons). These factors could be measured to assess the shopping environment.The role of atmospheric music will play a different role in task-oriented shopping environments such as grocery stores than in retail formats that are patronized for more recreational purposes such as shopping centres or specialty stores (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001; Paul et al., 2010).

ROLE OF MUSIC IN RETAIL STORES

Various studies have examined the impact of background music on the temporal dimensions of in-store behaviour and on shopper expenditures. For example, Herrington (1996) studied the role of background music in a supermarket setting and found that shopping time and expenditures increased with the level of preference for the music, but music dimensions such as the tempo or volume did not have a significant impact. On the other hand, Caldwell and Hibbert (2002) found that both music tempo and music preferences were significantly related to the time spent in a restaurant, but concluded that only the time spent in a restaurant had a significant effect on the total amount (of money) customers spent. Moreover, a Ronald Milliman study conducted in the 1990s (Bogomolny, 2003) found that fast-tempo songs helped with the turnover in a restaurant, and that customers who came for diners ordered three more drinks when medium-tempo music was played. At the same time, slow-tempo music produced significantly more positive affective responses than fast-tempo music in terms of satisfaction (Oakes, 2008) . Mall shoppers lingered longer and paid more attention to merchandise when slow background music was played. However, what was the shopping experience of the consumer needs to be studied in order to assess the impact better. The following aspects need to be examined :

- ❖ Do people visit malls only for quality and price or also to have a positive experience due to music ?
- ❖ How does the background music raise the comfort level of the shopper?

These areas need to be studied further, especially with reference to shopping malls. Ambience is important, but how can music improve the ambience of a shopping place? The role of music in improving the ambience and creating a positive experience while shopping could play a role. The researcher conducted the present study to explore the aforementioned factors.

❖ **The Indian Retail Scene :** Retailing is the largest private industry in India and is the second largest employment sector after agriculture. It contributes about 10% to the GDP of India and generates 6-7% of the employment (Mullick, 2012). According to Images F&R Research (2007), India has the highest retail density in the world, having over 15 million retail outlets. This sector witnessed significant developments in the past 10 years - from small, unorganized family-owned retail formats (commonly known as 'kirana stores') to organized retailing. Liberalization of the economy, rise in per capita income and growing consumerism have encouraged large business houses and manufacturers to set up retail formats; real estate companies (like Raheja Builders, DLF) and venture capitalists (like ICICI ventures) are investing in retail infrastructure. Over a period of 10 years, the share of organized retailing in total retailing has grown from 10% to 40% in Brazil and 20% in China, while in India, the growth has only been of about six percent (Images F&R Research, 2009) . Given the rapid rate at which new retail formats have been introduced in the Indian market in recent times, many with limited success, it is imperative for Indian businesses to understand changing shopping behavior among consumers. The present study can add value to this segment in emerging markets like India as similar studies have not been conducted (as per the researcher) in this area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence of retail store environment, especially music on consumer perception and behaviour is a topic that has received little attention in the past, but recent works of Chebat et al., (2001); Garlin and Owen (2006) have given new insights into the role music in the retail outlets. According to Garlin and Owen (2006), music can cause guests to spend more time and money in an establishment; influence buyer/ seller interactions and improve customers' attitudes during a wait period. This is contrary to earlier research findings by Herrington (1996). Atmospheric (e.g. ambient) music has been shown to influence consumers in numerous ways in both retail and service environments such as: time spent, perceived waiting time, perceived event duration, product choice, desire to affiliate in buyer-seller transactions,

perceptions of sales people, evaluation of service encounters, including perceived time/effort costs, psychic costs, perceived monetary prices, perceived product and service quality, waiting and perceptions of time and sales (e.g., Smith and Curnow, 1966; Alpert and Alpert, 1989, 1990; Areni and Kim, 1994; Baker, Levy and Grewal, 1992; Milliman, 1982, 1986; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990; Bailey and Areni, 2006; Morin, Dube, and Chebat,2007). However, these studies did not examine the impact of music on perceived value of quality and price. Type store and music fit could affect the consumer behaviour. A book store may require different types of music when compared to food store in malls. However, the impact of music on shopping experience of consumers was not studied. This could be an intersting variable for study. If in-store music contributes to consumer perceptions of store image and matches with the consumer's self-concept, then "Music-Retail Consistency" could be a part of retail/self-congruity. Role of music in influencing repeat visits was not studied earlier as per our literature research. This could be an interesting variable for study. Chebat, Gelinas-Chebat and Vaillant (2001) studied the effects of music on attitudes towards the store, the salesperson, and the store visit and found that music's effects were moderated by cognitive processes. Soothing music

Table 1: Previous Research Studies Conducted On Impact of Music On Consumer Behaviour In Retail Outlets

Year	Author	Research on
1986	Milliman, Ronald E. (1986). "The Influence of Background Music on the Behavior of Restaurant Patrons. " Journal of Consumer Research, Vol.13 , Issue 2 , pp. 286-289.	Time spent in the retail store by the consumers
1990	Alpert, J. I., & Alpert, M. I. (1990). "Music Influences On Mood And Purchase Intentions." Psychology & Marketing, Vol.2, pp.109-133.	Shopping Attitude, Moods And unplanned sales
1990	Yalch R. and Spangenberg E. (1990). "Effects of Store Music Music on Shopping Behavior." Journal of Service Marketing, Vol. 4, Issue 1, pp. 31-39.	Time spent
2000	Machleit, K. A., Eroglu, S. A., & Mantel, S. P. (2000). "Retail Crowding and Shopping Satisfaction: What Modifies This Relationship?" Journal of Consumer Psychology, Vol.9, Issue 1, pp.29-42. Yacht, R. F. and Spangenberg, E. R. (2000). "The Effects Of Music On Retail Setting On Real And Perceived Shopping Times." Journal Of Business Research , Vol. 49, Issues 2, pp. 139-147.	-Music and role of crowd -Shopping time
2001	Chebat, J.C., Chebat, C.G., Vaillant, D., (2001). "Environmental Background Music And In-store Selling." Journal of Business Research, Vol.54, Issue 2, pp.115-123.	Impact of music on sales
2004	Levy, M. and Weitz, B. A. (2004). "Retailing Management." 5th ed., The Mc Graw-Hill Companies, Incent York, pp. 34-57.	Music-fit with the merchandise assortment and quality
2005	Morschett, D., Swoboda, B. and Foscht,T. (2005). "Perception of Store Attributes and Overall Attitude Towards Grocery Retailers: The Role of Shopping Motives." The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, Vol.15, Issue 4, pp. 423-447.	Retail format and the music fit on shoppers' evaluations
2006	Beverland, M.,Chig Lim E.A., Morrison, M. and Teriovski, M. (2006). "In-store Music And Consumer-brand Relationships: Relational Transformation Following Experiences Of (Mis)fit." Journal of Business Research, Vol.59, Issue 9, pp. 982-989.	Music Misfit and Consumer Behaviour
2007	Irena Vida, Claude Obadia & Michelle Kunz (2007). "The Effects of Background Music on Consumer Responses in a High-end Supermarket." The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research, Vol.17, Issue 5, pp. 469-482.	Music on consumer response
2008	Vida, Irena (2008). "The Impact Of Atmospherics On Consumer Behaviour: The Case Of The Music Fit In Retail Stores." Economic and Business Review For Central and South - Eastern Europe, Vol.10, Issue 1, pp. 21-35.	Music In Retail settings and consumer responses
2011	Jain Rajnish, Bagdare Shilpa (2011). "Music and Consumption Experience : A Review." International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management, Vol.39, Issue 4, pp. 289 - 302.	Attitude, time spent, feeling

Source: Secondary Data

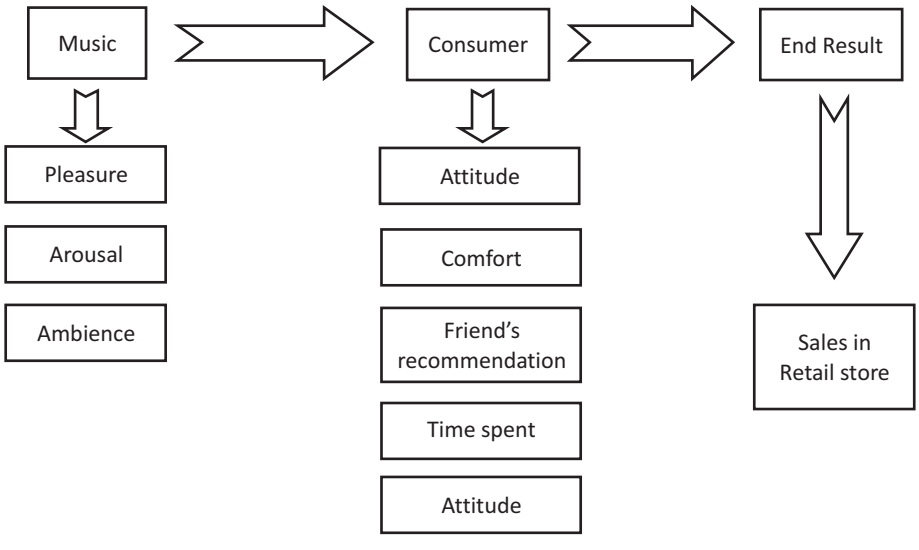
was found to have increased cognitive processes when another cognitive stimulation was low, and the researchers suggested that "music fit with the store" might explain the study's findings.

❖ **Role of Music In Retail Stores :** Music should be appropriate and good music based on the occasion could influence the consumer's behaviour in retail store. Effects of in-store background music valence (liking) and music fit with the overall store image on consumer evaluative and behavioural responses in the context of a high-end supermarket chain was studied by Vida, Obadia and Kunz (2007). Among the numerous aspects of the retail environment examined, two factors - music and crowding due to high density - have been shown to be particularly critical in influencing customer responses in both positive and negative ways (Machleit et al., 2000; Oakes, 2008). Music as an atmospheric variable has been found to influence various in-store shopping attitudes and behaviors, including moods and unplanned purchases (Alpert & Alpert, 1990; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990 ; Oakes, 2008), time spent in the environment (Milliman, 1982) . The background music in retail establishments is found to affect various shopping behaviors and evaluations such as the pace of in-store traffic flow and dollar sales volume (Eroglu et al., 2005). What are the ideal combinations of music type and congruity levels that can be manipulated by the retailer in order to enjoy the high sales volumes from highly dense stores without creating negative consumer attitudes and behaviors due to retail crowding? This needs to be studied.

Background music in retail establishments is found to affect various shopping behaviors and evaluations such as the pace of in-store traffic flow and dollar sales volume (Milliman, 1982), drinking time (McElrea & Standing, 1992), perceived and actual time spent while shopping (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). Music may influence consumption experience at cognitive, emotional, and behavioural levels, specifically with regard to attitudes and perceptions, time and money spent, and moods and feelings in retail experience. The influence of music is moderated by customer and store profiles, purchase timings, and other ambience factors (Jain and Bagdare, 2011). Research to date has examined cognitive and emotional outcomes, but perhaps due to data collection difficulties, it has not focused on behavioral outcomes. The research carried out by different researchers on how music influences retail behaviour is presented in the Table 1.

Most of the studies on the role of music in retail stores focused on attitude, time spent feeling good due to music fit and crowd density and how it affects sales. However, shopping experience due to music, association of music with comfort of shopping, linkage to ambience with music, repeat visits due to music or even recommending to friends to visit the store were not studied as per the literature search. It is possible that music could influence consumer behaviour due to

Figure 1: Theoretical Construct On Music In Retail Outlets & Consumer Behaviour



Source : Author's Research

the activation of the right brain rather than the left brain. It means rational behaviour gets subdued by emotional behaviour. The heart overrules the brain! Therefore, based on these factors, the theoretical construct was developed in order to explain possible consumer behaviour.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Various elements and forms of atmospherics such as lighting, colours, music, scents, and visual communications are employed by retailers to induce emotions in shoppers and to influence their shopping behaviour (Machleit and Mantel, 2001; Levy and Weitz, 2004). The most commonly used theoretical paradigm in the existing body of empirical research addressing the impact of atmospherics (including music) stems from environmental psychology (Garlin and Owen, 2006) which focuses on relationships between environmental stimuli, emotional reaction and individuals' behavioural responses (Vida, 2007). Therefore, keeping the variables like - Consumer attitude (Alpert and Alpert,1990), Comfort (Spake, 2003 ; Machleit and Matel, 2001 ; Oakes, 2008), Time spent (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990 ; Oakes, 2008), Impact of music on repeat visit association, Shopping experience, Association of better quality and value -in mind, a theoretical construct was developed, which is presented in the Figure 1. Music could improve pleasure, ambience and create arousal among consumers, which can lead to better comfort while shopping. It may give a positive experience due to the atmospheric environment and thus creating a positive attitude. Positive experience could lead to more sales in retail stores, which is possible due to better comfort created by the right music. The RM model (Mehrabian and Russel,1974) was adopted for the theoretical construct. They were taken as independent variables to measure the consumers' experience.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to investigate the impact of music on improving shopping experience in retail stores with special reference to shopping malls. How did background music enhance the store ambience and increased the duration of time spent in the store were the factors that were also taken up for the study. In addition, the aspects-quality and price linkage to background music and how music can lead to repeat visits and recommendations (to others) to visit the store - were also examined.

Research on impact of atmospherics was studied by many authors (Meridian & Russd, 1974; Herrington, 1996; Bruner and Gordon, 1990; Aldwoland and Hibbert, 2002; Machlert and Mantda, 2000; Garlin and Owe, 2006 ; Oakes, 2008). Shopping experience, impact of music on better perception of quality and price and how word of mouth could influence the visit of others were the other objectives of this study. Therefore, keeping the above objectives in mind, the following hypotheses were framed.

HYPOTHESES

Six hypotheses were considered keeping the above objectives in mind. The first hypothesis was that background music in the store does improves the shopping experience of consumers (h1). Research of Boning (2006) showed that non service environment elements do influence consumers as they may lead to better consumer comfort, which can be expressed in feelings through pleasure, assured and willing to spend more time (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974).

The second hypothesis was to find out whether there is any linkage to improvement in ambience due to background music (h2). Mattil and Wirtz (2001) did report improvement in task related shopping environment, but not on ambience.

The third hypothesis was to see whether there is a correlation between the role of music in improving the perceived value of quality and price (h3). How can music influence and enhance the perception of consumers towards quality and price?

Other hypotheses were related to time spent in the store by the consumers (h4). This aspect was earlier studied by Herrington (1996), Caldwell and Hibbort (2002), Bogomnlny (2003), Garland and Ower (2006), Jain and Bagdare (2011).

The fifth hypothesis (h5) aimed to explore if there is a relation between the customers' recommendations to their friends and store visit. Chebat et al. (2001) studied consumer attitude due to music, but the role of word of mouth promotion to promote the retail outlet was not explored. At the same time, this study also presumed that background music does help in improving the repeat visits (h6). Similar studies (as per the literature review) had not examined this

aspect, though in-store traffic flow due to music was studied by Eroglue et al. (2005).

METHODOLOGY

The present study is a retail field study on atmospherics, and aimed to investigate the relationship of consumers' perceptions of music-retail consistency with the consumers' responses on product involvement. The questionnaire method was used to record the responses, which was pilot tested earlier involving fifty respondents. Data were collected in Mumbai using the store intercept method as the shoppers left the checkout counter at two hypermarkets. Mumbai was selected as the location for conducting the study as it is the financial capital and has people with diverse cultures residing in the city. Another survey using the questionnaire as a research tool was conducted when music was not played at the same two hypermarkets . However, the sample size and respondents were different for the second survey. This could be one of the limitations of the study as it was not possible to interview the same set of respondents when the music was turned off in the two hypermarkets.

The research instrument consisted of questions related to time spent in the store, the purchases made by the respondents, shopping experience, ambience of the store, quality perception, etc. A five point scale was used to measure the construct. A similar study was conducted at the same stores when no music was played, and the respondents were interviewed on the same parameters.

Table 2: Sample Size

	Respondents
With music as background	234
Without music	150
Source: Author's Research	

Table 3: Background Music and Shopping Experience

With Background Music				
	strongly dislike	Neutral	Strongly like	Total
shopping Exp.	27(11%)	81(35%)	126(54%)	234
Pearson Chi-square				
Likelihood ratio	value	df	Assumption	
Linear-by-linear	36.867	4	0.000	
	23.511	4	0.000	
Association	12.656	1	0.000	
Source: Author's Research				

Table 4: Effect of Background Music On Price Quality and Perception

With Background Music					
Price & Quality		**Strongly Like**	**Neutral**	**Strongly Like**	**Total**
	Very Satisfied	63(74%)	21	0	84
	Neutral	57(44%)	48	24	129
	Very Dissatisfied	6	9	3	18
	Total	**126**	**78**	**27**	**231**
Pearson Chi square	**value**	**df**	**Assumption**		
Likelihood ratio	9.905	4	0.042		
Linear-by-linear					
Association	8.315	1	0.004		
Source: Author's Research					

❖ **Sample Design :** It was convenient sampling and the shoppers who visited the hypercity mall were interviewed at the existing point after taking the consent of the store manager. Two groups of respondents were - one group was when music was played, and the second group was when the music was not played. The sample size is presented in the Table 2.

Sixteen respondents were rejected due to incomplete data. MBA students in groups of three participated in the collection of data. Two malls were covered, and at the same time, the mobile number of the respondents was taken for verification. This helped in better management during data collection.

❖ **Data Analysis :** The data were analyzed by using SPSS and Chi square test ; Pearson correlation test was conducted for inference of the data.

❖ **Ethical Consideration:** Each respondent's permission was sought before taking an interview. The store manager's permission was taken and on his advice, questions related to income data and age profile were deleted due to ethical considerations.

❖ **Limitations of The Study :** This study was conducted in two hypercity malls of Mumbai. However, it cannot represent the consumer behaviour of B- class towns - as they may exhibit different consumer behaviour. The researcher did not study the income profile and age profile of the respondents as the researcher was not allowed to ask these question due to ethical reasons.

RESULTS

Music creates a positive mood in the retail store and improves satisfaction among the consumers (Machleit and Mantel, 2001). Analysis of data based on shopping experience and background music in store reveals that people enjoy their shopping experience because of background music. The Pearson chi - square test value was 36.867 with p-value 0.000. Music does influence the shopping experience. It could be due to better ambience and mood created by music (Table 3).

Background music could lead to increased pleasure, sensual arousal and ambience as it was reported by Mehrabian and Russel (1974). It is quite possible that these factors lead to a better shopping experience (h1). In contrast, when the music was not played in the malls, the shopping experience of 150 consumers (who were surveyed) was not enjoyable ($t = 1.4$). Thus, the researcher concluded that there is a relationship between shopping experience and the background music played in the store. A comparative study under different conditions gave the above findings. Music does influence the mind, which in turn enhances the ability to complete tasks. Music playing in offices is a common practice to improve the efficiency of employees. Therefore, it is possible that consumers do feel better while shopping due to music. Music does enhance the shopping experience. The study also investigated the impact of music on improving perception of quality and good price. Music may influence the thinking process. Spangenberg et al. (2006) studied the alteration of consumer behavior due to music, but improving the perception on quality and price due to music was not studied. The present study indicated that music does enhance perception of quality and price .The Pearson's chi-square test value was 9.905 with p value at 0.042 for these variables. It implies that people go to the store not only for good price and high quality, but also because of background music. Music adds value to the consumers' perception of quality & price (Table 4).

Thus, music improves the perception of quality and price (h3). It means people are willing to pay more money for price and quality if the right music is played. This is an interesting finding of this research. Caldwe and Hebert (2002) did mention about music improving a store's ambience, and good music enhancing the store's image was reported by Garlin and Owen (2006). Furthermore, the present study also interviewed the respondents when music was not played in the hypermarkets. It was observed that only 30% of the respondents opined that quality & price were the main factors for visiting a store as compared to 70% of the respondents, who said that music was also an important component, with 't' value = 1.71. Hence, it can be inferred from the findings that music does improve ambience of the store. The greater the perceived music fit with the store image and type, the more positive will be the shopper's evaluation due to ambience. Store ambience is an important factor for improving the shopping experience and comfort; Kotler (1973) did give importance to ambience in store. Chebat et al. (2001) reported that music created a positive influence. The present study confirms that people visit malls to enjoy the ambience, which is enhanced

Table 5: Impact of Background Music On Recommendation To Friends And Repeat Visits					
With Background Music					
		Strongly Like	**Neutral**	**Strongly Like**	**Total**
Recommendation	NO	0	0	9	9
to friends	PERHAPS	48	42	15	105
	DEFINITELY	78(65%)	39(32%)	3	120
	Total	**126**	**81**	**27**	**234**
Pearson Chisquare					
Likelihood ratio	27.760	P=0.000			
Linear-by-linear Association	12.452	P=0.000			
		Strongly Like	**Neutral**	**Strongly like**	**Total**
	NO	0	3	15	18
Repeat visit	PERHAPS	39	39	9	87
	DEFINITELY	87(67%)	39(30%)	3	129
	Total	**126**	**81**	**27**	**234**
Pearson Chi-square					
Likelihood ratio					
Linear-by-linear	36.818	p=0.000(two sides)			
Association	19.890	p=0.000(two sides)			
Source: Author's Research					

because of the background music (Pearson Chi square test = 72.057 with p value 0.000). Furthermore, music does improve the consumer comfort level (h2). Therefore, 'retail therapy' also acts as a stress buster. Hearing soothing music did lead to spending more time in retail outlets (Yalch and Spangehberg, 1990; Jain and Bangre, 2011).The present study also confirms the finding that people spend more time (h4) in the store because of the background music (Pearson Chi square test value 21.019 with p value 0.000). Respondents who visited retail stores when music was not played answered that less than 50% will like the store ambience without music (t = 1.41). A greater comfort level experienced by the customers can lead to better loyalty and repeat visits. This brings better ROI (Return on Investment) to retail outlets as frequent and repeat visits will lead to better sales. The present study indicates that due to a better shopping experience, the consumers are likely to frequent a store for shopping (h5). Therefore, music is one of the important factors to influence this behaviour (see Table 5).

Thus, a positive experience due to atmospheric music not only makes the customers spend more time in the store, but also helps in more number of purchases from the store, buyer-seller transactions, and diminishes the psychic cost (which could be a hindrance to purchase behaviour). A positive shopping experience leads to positive WOM (Word of Mouth publicity for the store), where a happy customer influences his friends and acquaintances to visit the retail outlet. This is an interesting observation of the study, wherein a positive experience due to music and other factors leads to word of mouth recommendation to visit the retail stores (Pearson chi- square test value 27.760 with p value (two sided- 0.000)). At the same time, less than 30 % of the consumers (who visited the store when music was not played) opined that they would recommend the store to their friends/family members/acquaintances (t=0.6).This is an interesting comparison between the two situations. The only difference is the sample size, which was not same due to logistic issues. This could be a drawback of the inference, even though statistically, it gives a marginal difference.

CONCLUSION

The present research on music indicates that as a non service element, music can have a significant impact on the consumers. Interesting findings were that music influences the repeat visit of consumers to a retail store and enhances the perceived value of quality and price. It also concludes that music in retail stores does generate extra traffic to the

store due to word of mouth. When compared to the time when music was not played in the same store, it gave statistically different results.

Music does create a better shopping experience due to better ambience and comfort level, and consumers tend to spend more time in the retail store, thereby leading to more purchases. This is in conformity to an earlier study of Bonnin (2006), which showed that non service environmental elements like music do influence the consumer in spending more time in the retail store.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Music has a role to improve the sales of a store. Music along with other atmospheric designs aids in improving the number of consumers in the retail store and enhances customer satisfaction. The consumers will pay more due to the better perception of the value of a product and its quality. Therefore, it is recommended that the retail store managers play the right music depending upon the store image to improve sales and profit, more customer inflow and better customer satisfaction.

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