



ROYAL  
STREAMING



# Have you heard it before?

A quantitative study of background  
music and its impact on consumer  
emotions and buying behavior.





The purpose of this paper is to investigate a field experiment in an ICA store, how background music influences consumers' emotional state, and how customers' average purchases (SEK/customer) vary depending on whether the music is known, unfamiliar, or if no music is played in the store.

Over a two-week period, the study has gathered questionnaires regarding the familiarity of music and the customer's emotional state in terms of joy and excitement. The study has also investigated sales, after which the receipt was analyzed to investigate the impact of music on the customer's average purchase depending on the type of music played.

#### INTRODUCTION

The influence of music on consumer behavior has long been of interest to both psychologists and marketing professionals, something that has led to a large amount of studies in the field. Among other things, it has been proven that music in-store has been able to get customers to shop slower and spend more money than they had planned when the music tempo was reduced (Milliman, 1982). The choice of music also proved to play a significant role for the type of consumption in a store, for example consumers in one wine shop was more likely to buy more expensive wines when classical music was played in the store instead of pop music (Areni and Kim, 1993).

To play music in a public place or in-store requires a valid music license, no matter if you get help from an agency or if you play the music yourself. The reason for this is that so the artists will get paid when their music is played (SAMI, 2016; STIM, 2016). The price for playing music is calculated based on the number of days the store is open and the size of the premises. At the same time, many smaller artists today are not yet licensed by a rights organization like STIM or SAMI, which means that the cost of playing their music is significantly lower (SAMI, 2016; STIM, 2016).



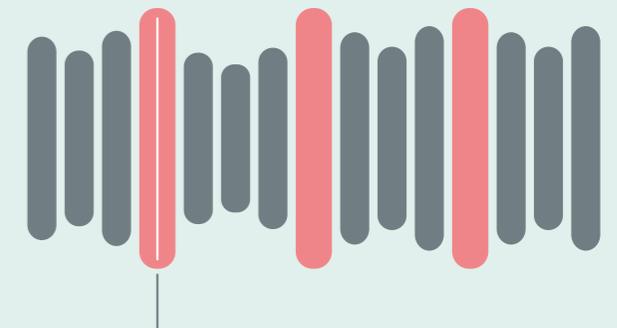
An effective way of understanding and approaching consumers is to assume their senses. The fact that they have a major impact on the customer's purchasing process has long been known, but historically, the focus has mainly been on the visual sense (Hultén et al., 2011). Our hearing is with us since birth and helps us to create an understanding of the outside world and our perception of reality. **Nevertheless, audio is an aspect that is often ignored by companies and in many cases seen as a waste of resources.** This while the same company spends large sums on graphic design and visuals (Hultén et al., 2011). Sound can help build a brand's image and identity; We all notice when the ice-cream truck comes, and McDonald's audio logo is the company's signature melody worldwide (Hultén et al., 2011).

Music also has a unique ability to influence people's feelings and moods; it can spell up, make you happy, sad, stressed and calm (Garlin & Owen, 2006).

## Most experiments show that sales have a positive connection to the degree of joy.

This is also confirmed by Andersson et al, (2012) who found that store sales are significant higher when music is played. Conclusions have been drawn that the music raises the customer satisfaction levels which later influences them to spend more money in the store. However, most studies have pointed out that sales growth is directly related to whether the music is adapted to the store and the brand (Beverland et al., 2006; Guéguen et al., 2010). Thus they underline that all types of music do not have a positive impact on all situations.

Royal Adsell





## FIELD EXPERIMENT

We have chosen to carry out our study at an ICA-store in Uppsala. Food and groceries are purchased by virtually all people, which means that our observations should be of relatively well-diversified demographic character.

The experiment measures how customers' purchasing behavior, i.e. average purchase varies depending on whether the music in-store is known or unfamiliar to the customer, or if no music is played. To increase the reliability of the survey, the volume is kept at a constant level throughout the experiment. The results of the study, in the form of average purchases, are measured through the store's cashier system (POS) and is provided after the study's conclusion.

The study was conducted over six days, and each day divided into three time blocks where familiar music was varied with unfamiliar music and no music at all. This occurred on Tuesday through Thursday for two weeks to avoid major fluctuations in sales on Mondays, Fridays and weekends (Saunders et al, 2007).

Week 1			
Time/Day	Tue 26/4	Wed 27/4	Thur 28/4
9-12	K	U	S
12-15	U	S	K
15-18	S	K	U

K: Known music  
U: Unknown music  
S: Silence

Week 2			
Time/Day	Tue 3/5	Wed 4/5	Thur 5/5
9-12	S	K	U
12-15	K	U	S
15-18	U	S	K



## We also conducted a survey to demonstrate how customers' emotional state relates to the music and thus the buying behavior.

The survey consists of eight questions and begins with two demographical questions about the respondent's age and sex. Then, a question is asked whether they bought something during their visit to the shop. If no purchase was made, the person is not considered as a customer, and thus the remaining part of the questionnaire becomes irrelevant to the survey.

In addition, the questionnaire examines the customers' feelings; the design for this survey has its foundation in eleven emotional states.

Finally, three questions pertaining to how the customer experienced the background music that was being played in the store during their purchase.

This Field Experiment's sales result was provided in the form of over 3500 receipts from the six days when the study was conducted. Receipts with an average purchase of 1 SEK or less was discarded since they mainly consists of returns and cash withdrawals that would generates misleading results.





## RESULTS

### **1. Music generates joy**

The familiarity proved to have no effect on either joy or sales, but by grouping the familiar music category with the unfamiliar music, there was a significant difference in customer satisfaction compared to when no music was played. This underlines the importance of music as a tool for influencing customers' feelings.

### **2. Music generates sales**

When music was played, the average purchase increased from 104,5 SEK to 111.1 SEK, which means a sales increase of 6.3%, indicating that music in the store has a positive impact on sales.

### **3. The familiarity does not affect**

The essay seeks to answer how background music's familiarity influences consumers as they shop in stores. The results from the study show that the familiarity does not seem to have any direct impact on the customer's level of joy or average purchase.

### **4. Music that is tailored to Brands makes a difference**

As the music in our study was designed to suit the brand and the target audience, an explanation for these results could be that it is the design of the music that is central to influencing the consumer, not how well-known it is. Some explicit conclusions about this cannot be drawn in the context of this essay but it should be emphasized that although the familiarity does not seem to be a decisive factor in choosing background music, the music should still be designed for the store. Therefore, it is not recommended to choose any music arbitrarily, for example, by the employee's preferences as this can lead to the opposite effect (Guéguen et al., 2010)

## CONCLUSION

The study's most interesting result from a practical perspective is the conclusion that music's familiarity does not seem to affect either the customers' emotional state or how much money they spend. This has potentially big implications for commerce, as stores currently spend huge sums of playing familiar music, something that often involves large license fees to STIM and SAMI. By playing unfamiliar music, stores can create financial benefits while others can get the positive aspects of music without having to incur new major cost items. This allows stores to save money by choosing the more cost-effective option.

The result also confirms the image of music as a powerful tool for businesses to easily improve their store environment. Since music, in the aspect of sensory marketing, is partly disregarded in favor of visual resources, this paper can help to emphasize the capacity of music. This should encourage more stores in the grocery trade to adopt background music designed for the brand, whether known or unfamiliar to the customers. In order to achieve good results, we recommend that you create a sound strategy for the musical soundscape.

## SALES INCREASE

# 6,3%



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BACHELOR ESSAY

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**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS STUDIES**

UPPSALA UNIVERSITY

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