Influence of Pop Music on female Consumer behaviour while shopping at apparel stores in Dublin

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At

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I, Sryas Bhargavan, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed: Sryas Bhargavan Date: 22/08/16
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Abstract

Despite studies that exist on in store environment affecting consumer behaviour, the findings are still contradictory on propositions related to pop music. This research is aimed at studying the influence of Pop music on female customer behaviour. It focuses on the relationship between pop music and their duration of consumers’ stay in the stores which can be related to their purchase intention. The experiment was conducted in Dublin city, on a popular retail store, H&M, a brand that plays pop music as they believe pop music is liked by their target customer. Data was collected through a structured questionnaires which sought to measure customer attitudes and opinions. Data from 87 respondents were received and analysed and this indicated that pop music genre has a high influence on customer’s shopping duration. Moreover, it was found that display and arrangement of merchandise also showed almost similar influence on the customer’s shopping duration. However pop music and its effects were the primary concern of this study. The study managed to find that pop music was preferred by the target customers as predicted by H&M.

The results showed that pop music was significantly affecting the time spend in store. It helped customers to stay longer at H&M, therefore resulting in higher purchase probability. However, the study could prove the hypothesis, pop music does play a significant role prolonging the customer’s stay in store, thereby increasing the possibility of customer spending. Hence, pop music can be used effectively in similar retail settings for higher customer satisfaction, shopping duration and increase in sales.
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1. Introduction

Instead of walking in, picking a product, buying it and just walking out, nowadays, customers go through a buying experience. If retailers need their customers to walk out with a positive shopping experience, they cannot survive by being a passive place that just displays products for sale. It is difficult for retailers to make their stores distinctive using traditional and existing components of the retail mix. Though in-store elements such as designs, sales persons and merchandise have always been known to have immediate effects on the buying experience, they alone cannot help in today’s competitive market.

To improve the buying experience and foster customer satisfaction, companies use several marketing tactics, such as, creating an atmosphere that will induce buying tendencies in customers. This use of consumers’ surrounding environment, known as atmospherics; formulated by Kotler (1973, p. 48-64), describes various visual, aural, olfactory and tactile dimensions of a store that can influence the purchase probabilities of consumers. Kotler (1973) defines atmospherics as “the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in buyers” (p. 50).

Various elements of atmospherics can be used to stimulate various marketing needs in different settings. For example: An ice-cream café may use the scent of flavours to attract their target market while an apparel store may use the sight of clothes on a mannequin and promotion signs to appeal to their potential customers. It can be a combination of more than one atmospheric element as well. A pub can stage live music and make beautiful waitresses serve chilled beer to retain and encourage their male customers to utilise their services for longer time. While shopping or being in a shopping environment, customers may respond to more than just the product or services being offered (Kotler, 1973, p. 48). This paper is about one such major factor of the buying environment that can affect the consumer’s behaviour in the buying space. Music or sound is this major element of atmospherics. Use of aural atmospherics, i.e. exposure to the right type of music can evoke, in consumers, a mood that can enhance purchase prospect (Sullivan & Adcock, 2002, p. 156).
Music serves as a powerful connection into our emotions. Music played in retail stores can influence the behaviour of shoppers and can increase the chances that a purchase decision will be made (Bruner, 1990, p. 94-104). Retail interior designers utilise aural atmospheric influencers to engineer positive shopper moods and emotions. In-store music can be an important component of store atmosphere and hence play an important role in the retail buying process.

1.1 Problem Statement

The use of music started as early as 1934 with the creation of Muzak, one of the more well-known services that produce music playlists for stores nationwide (Lindberg, no date). Stores use it as a marketing technique to influence the unconscious behaviour of customers, such as affecting their decisions in relation to the time spent on shopping and encouraging them to linger in a store longer or to change their pace (Graves, 2010, p. 54). Most retail stores now play music irrespective of the nature of their product or services. Music played in stores is ubiquitous and consumers have little control over it. The exposure to the right type of music can evoke in consumers a mood that can enhance purchase probability (Sullivan & Adcock, 2002, p. 156). On the contrary, the wrong music can negatively affect a customer. Mayer (2012), a blogger, who had an issue with stores playing loud music, eventually went to stores that played music to her preferred volume level. The reporter later learned that retailers are increasingly using music to differentiate target customers from customers of other demographic. She was not the target customer for the store because loud music was unpleasant to her, ultimately causing her to move to a suitable environment.

Some very attentive shoppers are aware of ambient music and argue that it can become ineffective or go unnoticed if it does not blend in well with the environment. Once a writer of a magazine publication disliked the music played at a restaurant, as he felt it did not suit the atmosphere. The music played during his dining experience “made time grind to an agonizing halt,” making him want to leave (Lindberg, 2009). However, when he had breakfast at the same restaurant, his mood was better because the background music was more suitable to the atmosphere—it made everything seem “brighter, crisper, cooler,” and
this was more to his liking (Lindberg, 2009). The fact that DMX, the music service company, produced both the playlists used during his dining experiences, was known to him, but he preferred the set of songs that was played during the breakfast meal period. These contrasting viewpoints of the same person show that background music can affect some consumers’ behaviour in retail settings both negatively and positively. Research, prior experiments and incidents as mentioned above and further in this paper, show that there is an inconsistent answer to how music can influence a consumer. Also, to decide what music can affect the target customers in a positive manner is a confusing question. It is researched that music in stores have an intended purpose of making customers behave in a specific direction and controlling the length of their stay. For such reasons, playing the right music is the most important factor and prior researches show several inconsistent or perplexing music-related findings.

1.2 Definition of the problem

Almost all retail stores play music irrespective of what they sell. Does the music chosen to play produce the right influence on their customers? This research’s reason starts from the prominence of Pop music being played very commonly in retail settings. Many apparel stores play pop music in the background and foreground. Pop music is one of the most liked genres in the world. Research published by the Ovum news service Music & Copyright (2010) reveals that the two most popular music genres in terms of retail sales in the world are pop and rock. But can pop music create a positive influence on customers? By reviewing the literature on this research theme it was found that music in general has an influence on customers, but there has been confusing answers to pop music resulting in positive and negative buying scenarios.

The influence of music on customers has been researched over decades but not pop music and its effect in particular. It is a genre of popular music that originated in its modern form from the western style of music during the 1950s and 1960s, originally derived from the genre rock and roll. Terms such as "popular music", “chart hits” and "pop music" are often used interchangeably, although the genre includes all music that is popular and commercially a success. Pop songs were first defined as “music having popular appeal"
Popular or Pop music has been a part of previous related experiments but seldom has research been done on this most preferred and listened music genre. According to Music & Copyright (2010), global retail sales of pop music stood at US$7.4 billion in 2009, while retail sales of rock music stood at US$6.5 billion. In terms of revenue share, pop accounted for the largest, i.e. 29.2% of global music-retail sales in 2010. Yet, very less research was found in relation to pop music’s influence on retail consumers. Literature analysed for this study had mostly comparative studies of pop music with no music condition and other genre backgrounds. None were focused on how pop music alone can positively influence a retail customer’s behaviour, increase a customer’s duration of stay in store, or increase his/her purchase probability.

Furthermore, many studies have been performed on the influence of music on consumers of all genders collectively. However, literature shows that research focusing particularly on female consumers are very limited. From most information analysed during this study’s limited primary research time period, it was identified that women’s aural sensory and response based research was not found. But women contribute to a large part of sales figures. They are now earning and influencing spending at greater rates. Women make or influence 85% of all purchasing decisions (Walker, 2012). Therefore, recognizing the power & influence of women has become a top priority for marketers to tap into the market’s full potential. Dr. Gloria Moss, reader in Management and Marketing, Buckinghamshire New University, claimed women are responsible for 83 per cent of all shopping purchases. Dr. Gloria, a researcher of gender habits for more than 18 years, says that shops or buying environments don’t give enough thought and ignore the fact that women hold the lion’s share in purchase power (Bignell, 2013).

It is commercially significant to marketers and there are several inconsistent or perplexing music-related findings but a clear picture of how pop music affects female consumers in Dublin is yet to emerge. Hence, this paper will focus on the effects of popular music on female consumers in spending environments in Dublin. The research location was based in Dublin due to the limited research duration and easier availability of primary research data. Dublin City Centre was chosen as it has the busiest and most centralised shopping locations,
on three major pedestrian streets on either side of the river Liffey. On the South side, King Street and College Green that holds classic high street retailers and on the North side, Henry Street, with some large shopping centres.

1.3 Research question

“Does pop music influence a female consumer’s shopping duration while shopping at apparel-retail stores in Dublin?”

In considering present day pop music, the research will specifically focus on pop genre, i.e., "popular music", “chart hits” or "top charts" (often used interchangeably). Commercially successful music prominent during the period from January to August 2016 (mid-year) will be considered as pop music in this paper’s context. A few examples of the artists whose songs have been a significant part of the pop music category this year are Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, and Coldplay, to name a few. To further explain the research question, female here refers to the ‘15 to 35 years’ age group, which the chosen store intends to target. This age group is apt as women who fall into this group have higher spending capabilities and shopping interests. Most stores play music irrespective of what they sell and some of them play it to attract their target market. A lot of stores like Pull and Bear, SuperDry, River Island, etc. play pop music playlists provided by DMX, a retail-music provider and they do so with the intention to attract their target market. With the scope of research and time constraint taken into consideration, it was decided that H&M; a popular store for apparels that play popular music, in Dublin City will be picked for research samples and observations. As per their website and their retail Manager, Ms. Shauna Patrick (College Green store), they believe pop music is preferred by their target consumers and hence pop music playlists provided by DMX are played in their stores. Their three stores located in the city (College Green, King and Henry Street) have been considered, which is advantageous due to the higher availability of primary research data with Dublin city being regarded as the shopping hub of Ireland.

Bearing the below-mentioned literature in mind, it seems fair to conclude that music affects consumer behavior, spending and time spent in store. However, this raises questions
regarding pop music and its impact. The validity of the past findings are questionable as they are old and outdated. Consumers and their behavior always evolve. Markets and music styles also keep changing.

The underlying research question of this study is, will present day pop music prolong a female consumer’s stay in store and result in positive buying behavior and shopping experience?

1.4 Hypothesis

With the research question as our basis, and the literature presented below, the following hypotheses were developed:

H 1. If Pop music is liked by the target customer, it will increase the time spent in store, respectively.

H 2. Pop music will positively influence consumer’s interest and result in an enjoyable experience and/or re-visit.

Prior research states that increased period of time spent in stores and positive shopping experience can increase the purchase probability. Kellaris and Kent (1992, p. 365-376) in their study proved that increasing the stay time for both the active and passive shoppers and slowing down the pace of travel throughout the store using music can have an influence on potential sales. Caldwell and Hibbert (2002, p. 895-917) concluded that the time spent had significant effect on the total amount of money customers spent. Keeping these significant research findings in mind, the researcher intends to assume that finding the duration of a female customer spend in a pop music playing store environment and her feedback on shopping experience will be enough to know the purchase probability. Higher shopping period and better shopping experiences will result in positive purchases. Secondly, sales or average amount spent by consumers could not be found due to consumer data
protection law and confidentiality limitations. Hence purchase bill figures of the consumer will not be assessed in this study.

1.5 H&M – Retail Store (Company Background)

One particular store in Dublin City that plays pop music had to be chosen in order to narrow the scope of study. H&M was chosen as it plays pop music and has three branches centrally located within Dublin city. H&M (Hennes & Mauritz AB), a multi-national retail-clothing company, known for its fast-fashion clothing for women, men, teenagers and children plays Pop music in all their retail stores. This research’s location revolves around three H&M retail branches on Henry Street, College Green Road and King Street.

H&M spreads over 61 countries with about 3,700 stores and 132,000 employees. It is ranked the second largest global clothing retailer, just after Inditex, the parent company of Zara. H&M’s first store opened in Sweden in 1947. The clothing company hires famous fashion designers who work on latest and trendy lines. They had launched major selling collections by Stella McCartney and Viktor & Rolf (Dutch designers) (H&M, no date). They are very particular about catering to the needs of young fashionable customers. H&M comprises everything from the latest must-haves to updated and regenerated fashion classics.

H&M has a huge inclination towards Pop music. No published research was found by the company’s marketing team or music provider (DMX), proving the positive influence of pop music on their target customers. Yet they play commercially hit tracks or pop music playlists in the foreground at all their stores. During an in-depth interview with one of their management representatives at their College Green Store, Ms. Shauna Patrick (store manager) stated that current pop or popular and commercially hit tracks like the chart-playlists are consciously played in store as the company believes that such music interests their target customers. She added that their target customers are adults between the age of 15 to 35, who prefer wearing up-to-date or trendy clothes, attending parties or events and listening to pop music. They majorly sell trendy casual wears, stunning party dresses and
smart wear collections for festive occasions (H&M, no date). Ms. Patrick mentioned that the management believes that pop music and pop culture runs parallel to their clothing style. Though they offer kids wear, their clothes are not the regular pink and light blue coloured kids wear that we find in a typical kids apparel store. They offer smaller versions of their fashionable adult’s wear which is expected to be shopped by adults for kids. The H&M Kids section offers children’s wear from super cool jeans to pretty dresses, in sizes from baby to 14 years. H&M strictly manufactures their children’s clothing fashionable and simultaneously comfortable (H&M, no date).

They believe that playing pop music could attract their target customers. Like pop music’s characteristics, current and commercially hit tracks, H&M’s clothes represent trendy and up-to-date fashion. The Swedish company’s aim is to make young fashion-conscious men and women flock to their store for up-to-date, functional clothing and accessories, covering the spectrum from relaxed basics with sporty influences to eye-catchy party outfits that will please fashionistas (H&M, no date). Their marketing and promotional activities have always been on par with their pop music based retail environment. In March 2007, H&M launched a collaboration designed by pop star Madonna. The world famous Pop singer and composer Beyoncé was the face of H&M in summer 2013. Her campaign was entitled "Mrs. Carter in H&M", and drew heavily on Knowles' personal style (H&M, no date). Brands use such celebrities or artists as brand ambassadors and marketing figures to attract customers who like, listen and relate to them. Avicii or Tim Bergling (as his real name is) had also teamed up with H&M to create a small collection of clothing based on his music art. The artist’s collaboration with the company has ended up in a collection that is sold in selected H&M stores and at Avicii’s “won’t be right back” shows. The company also worked with game developers Maxis to create a stuff pack for ‘The Sims 2’ computer game under H&M Fashion Stuff (H&M, no date). Such activity was done to attract young consumers who would be interested in the gaming culture. Since early 2000s, H&M has collaborated with international designers and style icons from Karl Lagerfeld to Beyonce on capsule collections and specifically created campaigns. Their choice of celebrities also show their purposeful inclination towards pop music as their target consumer’s preference. Thereby the aim of
this research translates to find if H&M as a retail store succeeds in its choice of playing pop music to influence its customer’s shopping behaviour in a positive manner.

1.6 DMX

The in-store pop music playlist for H&M is provided by DMX, now owned by a Texas based company called Mood Media, a "multi-sensory" branding and marketing solutions agency. The company has an on-site digital system known as "ProFusion", launched with the objective of delivering and playing back high definition and quality digital music to places like retail-stores, hotels, offices, lounges, bars etc. around the world. They have experts that develop music playlists that span over a broad range of music genres or styles and caters to a wide demographic. They help brands to connect with their target customers by not only providing music but also digital signage, hold music, on-hold messages, scent, integrated audio-visual, and interactive mobile marketing solutions that help their clients create an unforgettable experience for their customers (Mood Media, no date). Their expertise gives their clients (mainly retail stores) an edge with a potent mix of sound and strategy.

From hits-based programs with broad appeal to evocative retro sounds and unexpected niche genres, DMX’s music solutions are licensed for commercial use and designed by music and sound experts who combine an incredible knowledge of music with a deep understanding of brands and target consumer experience (Mood Media, no date). They provide custom music designs for the world’s most distinctive brands. Many brands use music from DMX, to create a differential environment. They have music designers around the globe who partner with the world’s leading brands and small scale businesses. Apart from H&M, they provide music solutions for a variety of brands like American Eagle Outfitters, Nike, Burburry, Aloft Hotels, Pottery Barn, Williams-Sonoma, etc. They partner with music designers to develop a signature sound that’s a unique reflection of their client brand and create a consistent experience in locations across the globe (Mood Media, no date). Specially designed in-store music can create a unique retail ambience and energy level. DMX claims to bring together experts in all areas of music to develop customised music solutions that make strategic links with specific target markets and retail promotions, in-store activities, events, etc. DMX works closely with retailers to create custom music
programs (soundscapes) that reach, excite and entertain shoppers. DMX claims to provide retailers with lifestyle-based foreground music that enhances the retail environment by providing the right energy and tempo at the right time in the right place.

But does DMX’s pop playlist in H&M help in convincing their target customers to prolong their stay in store? Again there is no published research stating their success in satisfying their client’s target consumer by playing the right music. Is H&M’s target customer satisfied and positively influenced to purchase more in the store? Doubts still exist and this study intends on clearing these doubts.

1.7 Research Objective

Knowing more about the atmosphere serving as the medium of attention, communication, and emotion to influence purchase behavior, will help to benefit retail brands, marketers and sales persons. The in-store marketing strategies can be altered for better consumer buying experience and results. Knowing the musical preference of the target customers will allow the retailers to generate satisfaction in them even before making a purchase.

Music played in retail outlets has an intended purpose of influencing customers and this marketing strategy is used to sway the subconscious minds of shoppers. In-depth knowledge of this topic can help businesses benefit from creating an effective and favourable atmosphere. The purpose of this research is to demonstrate the effect trendy pop music can have on female customers. The findings from this investigation in an apparel store and the analysis of several research papers, should support the arguments that:

Pop music makes the shopping experience more enjoyable and female customers should revisit if they liked it.

Popular music should increase the amount of time female customers spend in the purchasing environment.

This study intends on finding how musical ambience characteristics could ensure positive consumer behaviour among retail customers. Another benefit is to know if female purchasing behaviour is influenced by music through local primary data research. Since
selling a product or service is now an experience, this study can help to make it lasting and memorable to female consumers. It will also help to gain an insight into measuring target audience’s emotional reactions towards music and shopping. A theoretical benefit of this dissertation is to know statistical data relating to the impact of female consumer contribution, in relation to retail in Dublin city. Though this research focuses on one particular store due to data collection and time constraints, the results can be utilised to alter retail atmospherics of many other retail brands who play similar music (pop). Also, the results of this study would provide a useful framework on the influence of pop music on consumer behaviour for future researchers, academics, marketers, retailers, managers, sales personnel, etc.

Most papers analysed for this study were conducted mainly in non-European countries. Especially, there was no study that was based on Ireland’s retail industry. Music has different implications on various cultures and its people. Hence, this study is based on subjects in Ireland and the findings can help the local retail industry. The study’s findings can also be applied in the European retail context as the nations included share similar retail standards and policies.

2. Literature Review

Consumer atmospherics in the study of marketing has been a fertile area in the retailing literature, including both empirical and theoretical work. Though there is a wide amount of research done in relation to this topic, very less research has concentrated on the influence of popular music on the majority of the buying population, i.e., female consumers. Dublin City is the focus zone because very less research has been carried out in this high female oriented shopping zone of Ireland.

2.1 Literature Introduction

The background check of this research topic starts from the store atmospherics and atmospheric element’s influence on retail customers. Secondly, the effect of music and its
various structural elements on consumers in different buying spaces is reviewed. Thirdly, non-structural elements such as familiarity, preference and genre of music in retail will be reviewed followed by how Pop music is relatively researched and how it is important to the retail sector. Finally after analysing the retail sector and its atmospheric element, the most significant segment of consumers, ‘female shoppers’ (the focus samples of this study) will also be closely studied and discussed.

2.2 Atmospherics

The concept of atmospherics applies to the environment, one of the most salient features of shopping experience in retail stores. Academic researches from the past evidently clarifies the influence of retail atmosphere on consumer perceptions and behaviour. The ability to modify the atmosphere through environmental elements to create favourable in-store behaviour has been acknowledged by many retail executives and marketing organizations (Turley & Chebat, 2002, p. 125-144). The quality of a shopping space in relation to its appeal to the four senses (sight, scent, touch and sound), can impact consumers’ affective states. The features of atmospherics consist of tangible and intangible environment such as lighting, music, scent, sound and furnishings (Liu & Jang, 2009, p. 494-503). Atmospherics can impact a customer’s in-store behaviour through the mediation of emotions and attitudes (Vaccaro, et al., 2009, p. 185-196; Wirtz, Mattila & Tan, 2007, p. 6-24; Puccinelli, et al., 2009, p. 15). The atmosphere can serve as a medium of attention, communication and emotion to influence consumers’ shopping behaviour. Kotler believes that appropriate utilization of atmospherics is an important marketing tool in the product purchase space (1973, p. 48-64). This means that retail designers and managements alter the atmosphere with the aim of drawing attention of consumers to products in order to convey a directed message about them. As Turley & Milliman (2000, p. 193-211) says, the impact of store atmosphere in the success of retail outlets cannot be neglected.

Philip Kotler first presented the idea that retail environments create favourable atmospheres that influence shopping behaviour, in the ‘Journal of Retailing’ in 1973 (p. 48-64). He described the atmosphere as “the design of the of retail store that produces specific
emotional effects on the buyer that enhances his purchasing probability”. Though there were prominent issues and confusions related to the subject of his study that followed shortly, the area did not otherwise receive any necessary attention. Two other researchers in their study about store atmosphere (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982, p. 34–57) revived interest by suggesting that environmental psychology, especially Mehrabian and Russell’s PAD (Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance) framework, could be used efficiently and productively to analyse retail-store environments with respect to consumer behaviour. Many researches have subsequently found evident findings in retail shopping behaviour based on the PAD framework and found major links between emotional states and time spent in the store, propensity to make a purchase, and customer satisfaction with the store environment, and satisfaction in shopping experience (e.g., Dawson, Bloch & Ridgway, 1990, p. 408–427; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1993, p. 632–636).

In a review of approximately 60 experiments that manipulated a retail store’s complex atmosphere and its elements, Turley and Milliman observed that each of those experiments discovered some statistically significant relationship between store atmospherics and consumer shopping behaviour (2000, p. 193-211). They conceptualized atmospheric variables as stimuli leading to some cognitive affect within the individual that, in turn, leads to some behavioural response. There was less clarity on what exact the response was. Like Turley and Milliman, Mehrabian and Russell (1974) managed to only suggest that atmospheric cues may impact consumer behavioural response, which sets the reason for this research on the impact of environment related cues on finding shopper behaviour.

Atmospheric stimuli can affect humans in several ways. For example, warm colours like red, orange, etc. can stimulate consumers and end up in stressful moods. While blue, lavender and pink, which are cool, create more relaxed moods and help to decrease the level of stress on customers (Liu & Jang, 2009). Also, music played in high volumes attract people to enter a store but the same in a restaurant might be disturbing to a diner. In terms of the effects of atmospheric stimuli on consumer behaviours, colours or music can contribute towards customers’ intention of visiting a store in the future. Customers are believed to
spend more time and money on the store (Liu & Jang, 2009). In summary, favourable atmospheric variables can result in positive effects on consumer behaviour.

The attractive or favourable in-store atmosphere produces an enjoyable experience in customers or potential customers, which directly impact their decision making process and purchase intention (Srinivasan & Srivastava, 2010, p. 193-199). Most of the time these are factors that affect customers unconsciously. Milliman stated that “Atmosphere can be defined as a term that is used to explain our feelings towards the shopping experience which cannot be seen” (1986, p. 286-289). When a customer gets satisfaction due to the retail environment, he tends to spend more time in a particular store and that results in buying more because of the pleasant environmental stimuli (Bohl, 2012). Wakefield & Baker supported Bohl, by finding that probability of customers staying longer in a store increases due to atmospheric stimulus (1998, p. 515-539).

The environment has a huge impact on the consumers’ emotion and satisfaction. The impressive atmosphere of the retail stores enhances customer satisfaction levels and purchase experience (Silva & Giraldi, 2010, p. 60-77). Several researchers have identified the effect of atmosphere on the behaviour of consumers in the store (Russell & Mehrabian, 1978, p. 355-387), but still empirical research on the impact of certain kinds of elements of the store atmosphere on the behaviour of consumers is quite limited (Ertekin & Gurkaynak, 2011). The scope of consumer behaviour related studies is narrow in few previous researches (Areni & Kim, 1994, p. 117-125; Bitner, 1992, p. 57-71) but Ertekin & Gurkaynak (2011) argue that lots of researches were conducted, but they focused on atmospheric variables as a whole. Greg and his co-researcher’s experimented using all elements of atmospherics and the results were a comparison of other factors like pricing, quality, selections, etc. which are not even related to store atmospherics (Zeeshan & Obaid, 2014, p. 56-63). Retailers and marketers must be aware that the effects of a particular atmospheric element can be accurately predicted only while isolating it (Sullivan & Adcock, 2002, p. 158). For instance; if music and scent were used together in an experiment the combined effect would be difficult to judge. A limited number of studies set in real retail environments, have tried to find the answer to this combination of elements (eg: Zellner & Kautz, 1990, p. 391),
but very less results were successful. Therefore it can be surmised that individual use of elements can reduce the risk of negative and unexpected effects from the combinations of elements.

When Sullivan and Adcock studied atmospherics, they analyzed congruity, a concept that has been studied in relation with atmospherics. This concept deals with the idea that any atmospheric element should suit the environment it is intended for. Broekemier and few other researchers added that intentions of spending in retail have been found to be more highly correlated with perceptions of consumers about physical attractiveness (congruence) of retail environments than with merchandise quality, general price level, selection, and six other store/product beliefs (Broekemier, Marquardt & Gentry, 2008, p. 59-67). This is essential to invoke positive reactions in consumers (Sullivan & Adcock, 2002, p. 158). Researches have been carried out to prove that this concept applies to all the elements of atmospherics. An important facet of this concept though is that congruity relies on the perceptions of people that generally varies with the psychological and sociological composition of the person (Sullivan & Adcock, 2002, p. 158). This boils down to different sounds or colors being perceived in contradicting manners by different people. The lighting in a store that maybe perceived as congruent by one shopper may be considered incongruent by another. So marketers studying a wide range of shoppers as targets (eg: shoppers in a mall as a whole) will find that the degree of difference in perceptions will also be vast (Sullivan & Adcock, 2002, p. 158). Hence it gives a concrete reason to find if there are many contradictions in consumer perception about the chosen atmospheric element of this research. Sullivan and Adcock feel that, retailers focusing on a particular target group of consumers, can elect atmospheric elements regarded congruent by this target group. This would cause differences in perceptions of different consumers to be considerably small.

Most studies on atmospherics have been laboratory based experiments rather than real field studies. The studies and their results depart away from real retail settings. Practical and real retail scenarios are complicated in analysing consumers and their behaviour due to excessive reliance on individual interpretations, perceptions and uses of cues in their
different psychological, physical and social manifestations (Kumar, Garg & Rahman, 2010, p. 1-2). But the aim of exploring real value perceptions and responses from real consumers, in actual retail settings, allows more room for accuracy and legibility. Also in the context of Ireland’s retail environment there is no such research done that concentrates on an interior atmospheric element which plays a major role in influencing the consumer’s behaviour.

2.3 Music and Consumer behaviour

While music is generally thought of as a medium of entertainment, it can also be used to achieve other significant objectives. Fortunately, music is an atmospheric variable readily controlled by management. Music is actively employed in the background of stores, production facilities, offices, restaurants, etc. in order to produce specific desired attitudes and behaviours among employees and/or customers. Despite the widespread use of music in the marketplace, research documenting the effects of music is limited, and the results of existing research are inconclusive regarding music’s genre and its effects on consumer responses.

Music is an important element of retail atmospherics (Garlin & Owen, 2006, p. 755-764; Milliman, 1982, p. 86-91; Morrison, et al., 2011, p. 558–564). It can serve as a powerful link to human emotions. It is very versatile; it can relax or excite and take us to places. According to Chebat, Gelinas-Chebat & Vaillant (2001, p. 115), what really matters in retail-store music is its power to evoke memories related to music. It can control us by entertaining, inspiring and motivating us. Music has shown to stimulate emotions (Chebat, Gelinas-Chebat & Filiatrault, 1993, p. 995-1020). Music can influence buyers from the very moment they enter the store. Previous studies across various disciplines such as psychology, marketing (e.g., Demoulin, 2011, p. 10) and music (Husain, Thompson & Schellenberg, 2002, p. 151–171) have found a range of affective, cognitive and behavioural consumer responses stimulated by music. It has shown change in attitudes towards stores. The right music is thought to have the potential to increase sales opportunities, define a retail store’s image, add brand value and attract more customers. Kellaris and Kent proved that music can have an influence on potential sales by increasing stay time for both the active and passive shopper and by slowing down the pace of travel throughout the store (1992). A personalised in-store
music strategy can support a retail brand and may make a powerful connection with specific target markets by incorporating customer psychographics (such as preferences, personality and attitudes) and demographics (such as age, gender mix and income levels). Modern-day retailers have also discovered the relevance of using music to differentiate their stores from competitors. It can help in giving their stores a specific image which their target consumers can relate to.

An evaluation of prior researches indicate the most recurring result to be that music can directly impact a consumer’s shopping experience by influencing purchase needs, affective evaluations and financial returns in terms of value of sales, repeat purchases, number of items purchased, rate of money spent and quantity purchased (e.g, Herrington, 1996, p. 26-41; Garlin & Owen, 2006, p. 755-764; Oakes & North, 2008, p. 63). Also, it contributes to creating or enhancing retail experiences and brand images, managing time perception, liking or disliking the store and increasing buying intentions (Areni, 2003, p. 161-184; Morin, Dubé & Chebat, 2007, p. 115-130). Music is one of the very first atmospheric elements that attracted researchers’ interest and has been shown to impact consumer behaviour (Milliman, 1982, p. 86-91, 1986, p. 286). In retail, music has been studied by manipulating both, its structural characteristics like time (rhythm and tempo), texture (volume, timbre and orchestration) and pitch (mode, melody and harmony), as well as, its affective elements such as valence (liking), familiarity and types (Jain & Bagdare, 2011, p. 289-302) since a long time. Many experiments based on aural atmospherics or music and its influence were found during the secondary research of this study, but only a few major ones related to its characteristics and elements could be reviewed for this study.

2.3.1 Music and its Structural elements
Music can alter moods, which in turn alters human behaviour (Donovan, et al., 1994, p. 283-294.; Oakes, 2000, p. 539-556). Music, among the sensory atmospheric cues, is a powerful emotional stimulus, an effective means for triggering moods and shaping retail experience (Jain & Bagdare, 2011, p. 289-302). The effects of music on supermarket shopper’s buying behaviour was investigated by R.E. Milliman in the early 1980s. Experiments of buying environments with slow and fast tempo music and no music were used to find if there was
an impact on the daily sales, shoppers’ pace in store and the shopper’s awareness of background music presence. The pace of in-store traffic was significantly slower in slow-tempo music conditions, than in the fast-tempo music condition (Milliman, 1982, p. 89). Based on the results of daily sales; the slow tempo music condition was found to have a measurable number of high sales than that of the faster-tempo music condition. Four years later Milliman (1986, p. 286-289) studied a restaurant to find if various music tempos influence customer’s spending amounts, length of stay, length of time it took for the restaurant to serve its customers, and the number of customers who left without even ordering. For the amount spent on food, this study found no significant difference between the slow-tempo and fast-tempo conditions, but for the amount spent on drinks, the charges were higher in the slow-tempo condition. However, the findings again showed that, slower tempo music ambience made customers take a significantly longer time to finish their meals than in the faster tempo music situation (p. 288). Both the studies had the tempo as its primary factor in influencing the customers. Even though customers took more time during slower tempo music ambience, we cannot conclude that they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and that is why they took more time. Since lower tempo means lesser beats per minute, it can be argued that listeners felt lethargic and that increased the time spent in store, but it was not due to a specific genre.

Caldwell & Hibbert (1999, p. 58) carried out a research on the effect of music tempo in a cafeteria. Their findings were at par with the results of Milliman’s study (1986); music of slower tempo resulted in consumers dining for longer time. In addition they also learned that higher amounts were spent on food and drinks in the slow-tempo condition compared to the fast-tempo condition. Though satisfaction levels of customers or number of re-visits were not examined in both researches, it proved that slow tempo music conditions make consumers spend more money and time. In a research conducted later, Caldwell & Hibbert stated that music needs to fit with the image of the store; consumers perceive more congruent, fast loud music in a dance club or a bar, whereas slower, softer music is preferred in a health spa. They also used one more variable in their second research and found that both music tempo and music preference were very much related to the time spent in a restaurant setting, but concluded that only the time spent had significant effect.
on the total amount of money customers spent (2002, p. 895-917). On the other hand, Garlin & Owen (2006, p. 755-764) claimed that background music in store may affect a shopper’s level of stimulation especially when music with a higher tempo is played, but these researchers failed to specify the extent or nature of the stimulation. But, Oakes (2003, p. 685-705) concluded that slow tempo music compared to fast-tempo music produces affective responses and positive outcomes such as satisfaction, positive disconfirmation of expectations and relaxation. All the above researches managed to find the impact of tempo on consumers. Various genres of songs with higher tempo had been played to suit this finding but all the three researchers refrained from using a particular genre or type of songs.

Olahut, El-Murad & Plaias (2012, p. 317-343) conducted an in-depth review of studies relating to the relationship of levels of aural atmospherics and consumer behaviour. Like many other scholars they concluded that music can decide the pace at which shoppers move in a store, define a store image and attract or direct the attention of shoppers. Primarily, the researchers focused on volume levels and found that loud music triggered more memory traces that enhanced the retrospective approximations of time. Longer shopping time was characterized by louder music. Reyhle (2015) believes in the opposite while considering the type of product sold, as a factor of difference. When stores sell high-end products like wine, cheese or boutique clothing, shoppers listening to classical music (like Grieg and Beethoven) in lower volumes stay longer and spend more in this type of establishment. She had connected genres and class of the product to her research results. The previous study additionally established that people’s cognitive processes influence how music shapes the attitude towards stores and salespeople. When other cognitive stimulations were low, soothing music was found to enhance the cognitive processes (Olahut, El-Murad & Plaias, 2012, p. 317-343). Smith and Curnow manipulated the volume levels of background music and observed its effects on shopping duration, total amount of sales, and perceptions of the environment. Their findings were totally the opposite; significantly less time was spent in the stores when the music was loud compared to when it was soft (Smith & Curnow, 1966, p. 255-256). Despite the results encountered, the authors did not suggest any elaborate theory to account for it or managerial
implications of the phenomenon. These studies are informative regarding possible shopping influence of tempo and loudness, although no information was given concerning the actual genre of music used or how their customers evaluated it.

Hevner (1935, p. 103) reported a research associating musical elements to emotional responses by presenting subjects with identical pieces, controlling all other elements but the major and minor modes. She confirmed all of the historically affirmed characteristics of the two modes of music in her initial study. But her later research outlined relationships between musical elements such as fast tempo, loud dynamics, lively, varied rhythm, and high register with happy, merry, graceful and playful perceptions of music. Whereas, musical elements such as slower tempo, quiet dynamics, unvaried rhythm and low register were reported to be sad, dreamy, and sentimental (Hevner, 1935, p. 103-118, 1936, p. 246). Hevner noted that, mode is the most stable, influential and commonly understood element in expressing the affective mood of music even though it is not the solitary factor which determines the way music is perceived. However, mode doesn’t determine a particular genre. Meyer's (1956) theory of deviations from expectations in music supports Hevner’s findings. He explains that the minor mode is characterized by more forceful, complex departures from tones found in the major scales, and these deviations have become associated in western culture with feelings of sadness, anguish and suffering. The expectations of more regular and normative musical progressions occur in the major modes, and therefore are associated with the more normal human emotional states such as contentment, joy and calm. The drawback of these studies were that, these facial expressions of human feelings cannot be easily translated as consumer satisfaction, better spending or positive shopping experience.

Like Hevner, Infante and Berg (1979, p. 135-141) investigated the effects of playing two identical melodies composed for the research (in major and minor modes) on perceptions of communication. Like Hevner's, their results were also analysed by observing facial expressions of subjects. They found that music modality did not affect the perceptions of a subject with happy facial expression. Neither did it affect customer perceptions of the
favourableness of a pleasant situation. However major modality had a huge positive influence on the subject’s perceptions when facial expressions were neutral or sad, and when a situation was not pleasant. A major issue is that these results could have been misinterpreted or inaccurate as the subjects may have varying facial expressions and cannot be always strictly classified as angry, sad or happy. Generally, facial expressions do go hand in hand with one’s mental state but, they always cannot be the same. To solve that problem, Dollins (1956, p. 229) carried out his research by not only observing customer responses but also interactions with sales personnel. He based his research on studies related to the field of clinical psychology validating the presence of music influencing people’s interaction with one another. Research on verbal interaction indicate that vocal exchanges and affiliative behaviours such as smiles and eye contacts increase in the presence (compared to the absence) of background music (Dollins, 1956, p. 229; Sommer, 1957, p. 167). Eventually, he failed to specify anything more than low volumed background music, also other influential factors like mood and emotional state of consumers could have been taken into account. Sherman, Mathur and Smith (1997, p. 361–378) for instance, interviewed shoppers immediately after a purchase and solicited responses regarding their impression of the store, shopping experience, their mood, and demographic attributes. Positive relationships were discovered between the reported mood of the shoppers and favourableness towards the store, number of items purchased, and time spent in the store. Unfortunately, as a correlational study, cause and effect was indeterminate. Given the vast psychological research indicating that individuals partially judge their emotional states by their behaviour (e.g., Schachter and Singer, 1962, p. 379–399; Bem, 1972, p. 1-62), the causal role of emotional reactions to environmental factors in determining shopping remains uncertain. Also Hevner, Infante, Berg and Dollin’s researches have an influence on the consumer’s behaviour but the music used were melodies which are not specific to any particular genre. Various elements constitute a song and the elements as variables can be considerably different for different styles of music, which makes the result questionable.

2.3.2 Familiarity
Garlin and Owen’s rigourous literature review examined about 150 articles involving background music as an independent variable, of which only thirty-two were amenable to
meta-analysis treatment (2006, p. 755–764). Every research reported small to moderate effects but considering results reviewed by Garlin and Owen, one of them described by Turley and Milliman (2000, p. 193-200) presents a major problem. The authors overlooked the elements and diversity of behavioural processes involved in the studies with music as an independent variable. Grouping volume, tempo, familiarity, genre and taste as one environmental process seems to misrepresent the phenomena considered. Excluding their results, all the other authors summarized that musical preference and familiarity has positive effects on customers. It can increase shopping duration and has a greater impact on mental arousal.

Familiarity is a major element when relating to musical preference by active or passive listeners. An analysis by Yalch and Spangenberg (2000, p. 139–147) revealed that individuals reported themselves to be shopping longer when exposed to familiar music but actually shopped even longer when exposed to unfamiliar music. Shorter actual shopping times in the familiar music condition were related to increased arousal. Longer perceived shopping times in the familiar music condition appear related to unmeasured cognitive factors. This shows that music and music preferences are versatile; it can relax or excite. The study was not precise as emotional states affected product evaluations and these effects were not directly related to the music manipulations. But Yalch and Spangenberg could prove that degree of time spent in the store can be related to the familiarity of music. More time spent in a store means slowing down the pace of movement in a store. According to Kellaris and Kent, familiar music can increase time spent by slowing down the pace of travel throughout the store, which in turn can influence potential sales for both the active and passive shoppers (1992, p. 161-173). When relating the results of these two studies, familiar music can increase time and money spent. Other researchers have also concluded that if music played is familiar to a customer, it brings more positive responses in relation to purchase intention, the perceived time, the approach/remoteness and average ticket spending (Andrade & Barbosa, 2009, p. 11-20; Lai & Chiang 2012, p. 5419-5421; Guéguen, et al., 2008, p. 1795 – 1798). However, we cannot clearly relate the degree of customer satisfaction to familiar music and familiar music can be of any genre which a customer must have heard earlier. Any music heard twice can be regarded as familiar. However, familiarity, like
originality, is a subjective experience. People could not know or be familiar with a famous music track and also know non-famous ones since they could have been exposed to it before. So familiar music cannot be easily categorised. Moreover, the effects of familiarity can easily fade over time and they cannot be related to popularity. Therefore, for music to be familiar it has to be heard earlier, either due to context effects or actual prior hearing experience, or which creates a feeling of familiarity.

Few research papers have considered familiarity as a proxy of notoriety (Garlin & Owen, 2006, p. 755-764; Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000, p. 139–147). However, familiarity cannot be notoriety and vice versa. A music track is famous when it is widely recognized as such whereas notoriety can be an objective experience. This means that one could be familiar with the music if their previous exposure to the music is high. Generally multiple exposures to a particular background music have proved to encourage the increase in liking and recognition, as demonstrated by Szpunar et al. (2004, cited Petruzzellis, Chebat & Palumbo, 2014, p. 38). But Zajonc (1980, cited Pieters, Warlop & Wedel, 2002, p. 765-781) says that the mere exposure could have negative effects too. People could dislike the music they have repeatedly heard. Familiar music can attract more attention than unfamiliar ones as it rapidly recalls memories and on the other hand, notoriety affects both cognition (negatively or positively), but both familiarity and notoriety cannot be precisely classified in the popular music category though they are related.

Familiarity can be connected to preferences of what consumers like to hear while shopping. One’s preferences or interests to music is likely to be related to his or her degree of familiarity or notoriety. Many researches have illustrated the influence of aural atmospherics on store evaluation (Babin & Attaway, 2000, p. 91-99) when consumers are exposed to an environmental cue that are related to their likes and interests, such as background music. They transfer their positive feelings into store evaluation and favourable in-store behaviour (Gorn, 1982, p. 94 –101). Vaccaro, et al. (2011, p. 94-106) examined the relationship of liked atmospheric music with consumer perceptions of three emotional dimensions (happy, sad, and irritating), return patronage intentions and prior shopping
experience in retail settings. Questionnaires were distributed among 248 participants who visited random retail stores. The music genre and kind of store or product they sold, were not specific in the study. Questions were related to liked mood, music dimensions, avoid return patronage and prior retail patronage. The results of the study showed that liked music was considerably related to consumer’s prior shopping experience, and liked music is correlated with emotion’s dimension, so, when subjects heard happy and “liked” music they had highest shopping intentions.

Music preference is a valid explanation of the effects of music on behaviour and it can positively influence shoppers. Consequently selecting music that fits with the service provider’s image is one effective tool to obtain long term benefits (Oakes & North, 2008, p. 63-82; Vida, Obadia & Kunz, 2007, p. 469). It is true that music likeability (valence) exerts a positive influence on consumers’ mood (Grewal, et al., 2003, p. 259–268), but again it cannot be deducted from reviewing, Babin and Attaway, and Gorn’s research that, musical preference or likability is a factor that relates to the genre or popularity of music played. Music preferences may vary from person to person. If music played in a store isn’t of interest to the target customer it will result in negative behaviour. A study in Ljubljana, Slovenia by Vida (2008, p. 21-35) showed that when shoppers acknowledged the background music as suitable, they developed positive experiences. This led them to peruse the store merchandize favourably, spending more money and time within the store. Shoppers at two major hypermarkets and three specialty retail stores dealing sports equipment were interviewed at the checkout areas as they exited. The researcher utilized experimentation method using planned and unplanned background music and the study went on for two weeks, which resulted in 259 respondents being interviewed. The study established that stores whose background music was planned received high music-fit scores from customers compared to stores with unplanned music. Vida almost proved that a certain music can be related to a pre-conceived target customer’s preference which in-turn can end in a positive experience, but a drawback of the study was that the songs were played in the background and a considerable amount of respondents did not even notice the music being played in store. Studies related to music psychology show relevant but not
convergent findings on the attentional effects of music (Allan, 2006, p. 434-444; Jiang, et al., 2011, p. 214-222). Some authors did not agree on the optimal arousal level while some agreed on music cognitive effects. On one side, some authors (Chebat, Gelinas-Chebat & Filtrault, 2001, p. 120; McConnell & Shore, 2011, p. 1184) found that, higher the degree of arousal, more the attention; while, on the other side, few authors (e.g., Jefferies, et al., 2008, p. 290) found opposite results, i.e., slow and soothing music helps to concentrate and perform a task and highly arousing music may interrupt processing information. Such contradictory findings on propositions presented creates more room for doubts. Vida’s study being very much similar to this research theme, did not have a fair majority of subjects in favour which makes the research finding questionable. But she did conclude that noticeable foreground music has a direct relationship with consumer preferences.

2.3.3 Genre

Preferences can be connected to what one listens to most of the time. One’s liking towards music is highly dependent on the type or style of music. Bruner (1990, p. 94) suggests that the type or genre of music is likely to produce stronger effects on perceptions and preferences. All of us have a natural tendency of favoritism towards a particular music genre and that can strongly influence us. It is an important factor on deciding what music to play and what music to like. We might hear music of different styles but most of us would have a special preference towards a particular genre, irrespective of other factors like artist, volume, tempo, etc. Since preferences towards musical genres are strongly influenced by individual differences (Cupchik, Rickert & Mendelson, 1982, p. 273-284); varying the genre of a store's background music can more likely produce different outcomes on various target customer groups. The kind of music played is one of the first things shoppers notice when they enter a retail space. This music must not be chosen based on what employees want to hear, but rather on what lifestyle image a brand wants to portray in the minds of their shoppers (Deaton, 2015). Additionally, brands should chose a genre that fits its category and inspires patrons to make a purchase decision. Music is altered according to product type and nature. For example; places in a mall targeted at teens tend to play high-volume pop music, whereas a high-end jeweller might play classical music (Klosowski, 2013). MacInnis & Park (1991, pg.161-173) defined and formalized ‘fit of music’ as ‘consumers' subjective perceptions of the music's relevance or appropriateness" to the
persuasion context. The primary aim of this research paper is to find if music played is of the right choice from a customer’s perspective. Many researches were done in the past that linked consumer perceptions and genres, that resulted in similar as well as distinct outcomes.

Yalch and Spangenberg (1990, p. 31-30) examined the genre and preference related possibility by comparing the effects of easy-listening music versus Top-Forty charts music on shoppers’ estimates of the period of time they spent in store while shopping. It was found that customers above the age of 25 thought they were in the store longer when the Top-Forty music (currently known as pop or popular music) was played, whereas, customers below the age of 25 reported spending more time shopping when exposed to easy-listening music. They speculated that shoppers who encounter non-typical environmental factors (i.e., younger shoppers exposed to easy listening music) perceive intervals of time being longer than they actually are. Their experiment raises the possibility that certain musical genres can produce highly specific perceptions by consumers and influence them. The study also showed that music genre and age group have a major relation when it comes to deciding what kind of music to play. In short, the experiment could prove how time is evaluated by a consumer in his/her music filled shopping environment, but the satisfactory levels, purchase intentions or purchase results of customers are still questionable. With a wine store as the setting, an experiment was done that used classical music as one of the variables for their experiment (Areni & Kim, 1993, p. 336). The researchers manipulated the background music in the wine store between Top-hit 40 tracks (popular commercial) and classical music. Though the researchers were keen to know how pop and classical music affect the consumption behaviour and the amount of time customers spend in the store, findings showed no influence on total consumption behaviour or on the time spent in the store, but the use of classical music led customers to purchase more expensive products (Areni & Kim, 1993, p. 338). Purchasing expensive products may not necessarily mean better sales and customer satisfaction in relation to the music. Both the above researches used top hit 40 or pop music tracks, but none found a clear or direct relation between the music genre and consumer spending.
Another pair of researchers investigated various genres of music played, in a university cafeteria, by distributing questionnaires on their purchase intentions in different conditions of pop, classical and no music (North & Hargreaves, 1998, p. 2254-2273). Similar to Areni and Kim’s results, post research findings showed that subjects were willing to spend more in the classical-music environment than in the no-music environment, but this amount was not more than the overall price in the pop-music condition. The research concluded as, classical and pop music were associated with expensive items that subjects were willing to pay for. A university cafeteria atmosphere is totally different from a retail setting. The subjects were college going students, who do not have many choices unlike a customer in retail store setting. Retail customers can decide between many retail store options but a college student is confined to his/her college cafeteria. Hence, the study’s finding has less relevance. Moreover, the reason why studies show that classical music influences consumers to buy expensive products is probably because classical music is a symbol of sophistication, status, or class, which thereby encourages consumers to purchase more expensive products (Deaton, 2015).

Considering a free environment as a setting, a genre-driven study, focusing on pop and classical music’s influence in an expensive first class restaurant was conducted. This study also concluded that customers in the classical music ambience spent larger amounts than in pop music (North, Shilcock & Hargreaves, 2003, p. 713). The hypothesis was reasoned with classical-music condition having the greatest spending out of the classical, pop, and no music situations. Both the studies managed to prove the relation between expensive product spending and classical music, but failed to find the influence of pop music alone on the average spending and time spent.

Many prior researches were done using two or three settings as environments, which gave a comparative result. A study was conducted in a flower shop by Gueguen & Jacob (2010, p. 837-856). Customers were exposed to a store environment with pop songs, romantic songs and no music. The outcome was that customers spent more time in the romantic musical
environment, but found no correlation between pop music, romantic music and no-music environment when the chosen factor was the average amount spent on flowers by customers. Broekemier, Marquardt and Gentry (2008, p. 59–67) researched to find which among the two dimensions of music, happy/sad within the popular music/non popular, had major influences on purchase intentions. We know by now that, music is a powerful emotional stimulus, an effective means for triggering moods and shaping retail experience (Jain & Bagdare, 2011, p. 289-302). Prior researches (mentioned earlier in this paper) support the fact that emotions are highly linked with music. Similarly, the research indicated that when respondents were exposed to happy/sad dimensions, there was a direct effect on purchase intent. However the purchase intent was higher when happy music/popular music was played. The research managed to point out the positive purchase probability in pop music conditions with a focus on emotional factors linked to the tracks played. But pop music wasn’t analysed singularly.

Other studies have related music genres with the perception of time that the customer stays in the store, the mood of the consumer during the shopping period, the decision to revisit the store and attitude (Marcelino, et al., 2011, p. 45-79). But the studies used forró, gospel, soul and axé as music genres. The study demonstrated that there are major differences in perception of time remained in the store over the musical style (soul with lower score and axé with more score). The findings helped to understand gender as factor of differential responses in relation to music. It showed that men are less sensitive to variations in musical rhythm while considering the consumer’s mood. Axé genre caused less positive feelings among consumers of both sexes and got the lowest average in the case of the probability of return.

Andrade & Barbosa distributed questionnaires to customers, vendors and cashiers/stockers in order to study the influence of music on the behaviour of sellers and consumers in a women’s textile store (2009, p. 11). They created three scenarios; the first & the third playing music alternating with the usual music played in-store, while the second scenario playing a disc with international soundtracks or commercial hits. The outcomes showed a
positive relationship between the purchase intention and re-visit intention. When songs played were considered as familiar (international), the perception of time remained in the store was below the other two situations. While considering the relationship between genre, satisfaction and money spent in the store, consumers responded that the genre of music did not have influences in the amount of money that they had planned to spend. However the study found that lounge and jazz musical styles have strong influence on consumers and makes them spend more. Hence this study also left a huge gap in the findings related to popular music’s influence.

Andersson, et al. (2012, p. 553-560) tried to explore whether music played in retail environments affect consumer behaviour using gender (male and female) as moderators. Two situations were used in the experiment: one with music and one without music. Female and male customers had different reactions to both the situations, but an interesting and distinct point found in this research was that the music had negatively impacted the satisfaction levels. Though the study found that consumers tended to increase the average ticket spending in a music filled environment, the music was of multiple genres and not pop.

A laboratory experiment was conducted with college going subjects in a simulated retail store (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000, p. 142). The paper revolved around the hypotheses that individuals who listen to pop music (Top hits) while in a retail setting will be more stimulated and spend less time shopping than the ones who listen to unfamiliar music (instrumental style of older music or easy-listening music). The hypothesis was supported with a significant result but the loophole was that time couldn’t be related to higher spending and customer satisfaction. Covering up that loophole, Popular and no music treatments were used in an experiment conducted in an electronics store by Andersson, et al. (2012, p. 553-560). Shoppers were asked to answer a questionnaire that measured the time they spent in the store and their spending total. They found that consumers spent significantly more time in the store and spent more on purchases during the pop-music condition compared to the no-music condition. This result is based on a relative (no music versus pop music) setting and brings questionable data which calls for an in-depth study in this topic.
Though most above stated researches bring valuable data, there are doubts and gaps yet to be filled. Almost all researches reviewed for this study, doesn’t involve the influence of popular music on consumer’s in-store experience, satisfaction or average spending, collectively. Despite studies that exist on in-store environment affecting positive consumer behaviour, there are still contradictory findings on propositions presented. Also there has been no research found on how female retail consumers perceive, experience, or respond to popular music in a shopping environment.

2.4 Female Consumers

The target subjects of this study are female consumers. Female consumer behaviour has been interpreted in various ways, which makes it even more interesting to research and study.

According to Rajput, Kesharwani & Khanna (2012, p. 121-129), marketers find it very difficult to formulate a different strategy for males and females. There is also no economic viability to formulate strategies separately. This gender gap is not considered good and is extremely unwelcomed by the marketers as efforts have to be raised by them. Some marketers believe that a common measure is good enough to handle the issue where as some feel it is workable to formulate separate strategies (Alreck & Settle, 2001). Prabhu (2015) who belongs to the latter group of marketers, believe that marketing plans designed according to the nature of men and women separately will prove to be successful. It is better to focus either on male or female customers rather than on both, which will prove to be unsuccessful. Research indicates that gender has a significant impact on shopping preferences. Compared to men, women prefer shopping leisurely, spending more time browsing, showing a greater preference for physically evaluating products, using more mental energy researching available options and enjoying shopping even when they do not buy anything (Beaudry, 1999, p. A5–A18; Falk & Campbell, 1997; Gehrt, et al., 2007, p. 167–177; Hansen & Jensen, 2009, p. 1154-1170; Seock & Chen-Yu, 2006, p. 204–212; Workman & Cho, 2012, p. 267–283).

A French study says that while women have much stronger buying involvement than men, particularly in terms of emotional involvement, men are high on efficiency and quality (Dittmar, Long & Meek, 2004, p. 423-444). "Women tend to enjoy the shopping experience
as an end unto itself," said Marc Barach, Jumio's Chief Marketing and Strategy officer (cited Gustafson, 2015). Recently, researchers conducted a survey on 2,000 people and found that females are generally very happy shopping for around two hours before they start getting stressed, bored or annoyed. Women tend to only get fed up when they can't find what they are looking for, when shops get really crowded or when their male shopping partner starts getting annoyed or bored. (Markham, 2014).Women are generally very particular about the brand. They carefully analyse and select their products according to its brand image (Prabhu, 2015). Also, they are interested in offers and discounts during purchases. They have a keen interest in the design of the product. On the other hand, men are more concerned about the features of a product and they compare the same line of products for specific features, price, after-service, etc. (Prabhu, 2015). Offers and brand names are of less botheration to them and they compromise for a higher price if they are satisfied with the quality. In short, men's shopping is more product focused. Research also shows that men get bored after just 26 minutes of shopping (Markham, 2014). This is exacerbated if they're feeling hungry or if they're shopping in the presence of a female partner who can't make her mind up. So, when it comes to shopping, men and women behave differently.

It is no secret that women are one of the top consumer groups that corporations try to reach out to during the favourite season for retailing (Freud, 2012). They are a huge chunk of the retail consumer community. In addition to buying for themselves, women buy on behalf of their husbands, partners, kids, colleagues, adult children, friends, relatives, elderly parents, in-laws, their businesses and even their kids’ friends, to name just a few. If somebody, somewhere needs a gift, chances are there’s a woman thinking about it; tracking it down; wrapping it; making sure it’s accompanied by a personal message and reaching the person on the appointed day (Brennan, 2013).

So to marketers, women can be defined as multiple markets in one. Which is a very significant and compelling reason to study the influence of gender in the sales and marketing process. Every time a women is satisfied with good service, she has a multiplier effect on the business or brand as a whole because she represents a broad range of other potential customers and end users. She is also likely to tell people about the great service she was offered (Brennan, 2013).
Though few researches do exist regarding female consumer behaviour and decision making process in retail settings, all which were reviewed for this research literature did not include sensory impact on female purchase behaviour. For example, Granot, Greene & Brashear (2010, p. 801-808), together studied female consumers in particular for their decision-making in brand-driven retail. They researched on how emotional quotient and gender differences affect female consumer’s purchasing behaviour, but not music’s impact. Music’s impact on female and male subjects were analysed by Andersson, et al. (2012, p. 553-560). They tried to find if music of various speeds played in retail environments influence consumer behaviour using gender as a moderator. The findings exhibited that male consumers behaved more positive when present in the environment with music and fast-paced music while female consumers behaved more positive when present in the environment without any music or playing slow songs. The above mentioned research has an affinity towards this paper, but again brings a comparative finding in with respect to general music speeds ignoring genre.

Like how women are not given equal importance in many sectors, they are not subjected to research experiments equally as men. There was no research material found relating to music and female consumer buying behaviour in Dublin. Dr. Gloria, a researcher of gender habits for more than 18 years, says that shops or buying environments don’t give enough thought and ignore the fact that women hold the lion’s share in purchase power. Hence this research will give a focused thought on how women are impacted by aural sensory factors while shopping.

2.4.1 Age
Like gender, age is also a major factor on how music impacts a customer. The Association for Consumer Research claims that shoppers between the ages 25 to 49, tend to stay longer and buy more commodities when attention-grabbing and loud foreground music is played, while people above the age of 50 tend to purchase more when stores are filled with soft and mellow background music.

Reyhle (2015) says that retail stores that cater to teenaged customers can generally get away with playing pop and rock music at louder volume levels. Loud music can not only
influence teens, but customers of all ages to make their purchases as quickly as possible and leave the store. This is why fast food restaurants like McDonalds and Burger King tend to be so loud; they want their customers to order, eat and make way for other customers. While playing currently prominent tracks in the foreground in loud volumes will not prevent teens from entering stores and buying what they need, it may cut down on the time spent on browsing and aid in making quick or spontaneous purchases.

In support to the above researchers, Lewis (no date) claims that ‘the way a woman shops when she is 18 years old is the same way she is going to shop when she is 43 years old. It is a lifelong mind-set and can change after 50 years of age.

2.5 Popular Music

The two most popular music genres in terms of retail sales are pop and rock. According to Music & Copyright (2010), global retail sales of pop music stood at US$7.4 billion in 2009, while retail sales of rock music stood at US$6.5 billion. In terms of revenue share, pop accounted for 29.2% of global music-retail sales in 2010. This shows that pop music is the most preferred genre and an in-depth analysis in this may help in attaining a better marketing and sales result (refer Figure 1.).

![Global recorded music retail sales by genre, 2009](image)

Figure 1. Global recorded sales (Music & Copyright, 2010)
Also retail customers are mostly fragmentary listeners - those who don’t listen to music with a lot of attention. They prefer short melodies or tunes, a familiar sound and the like. The fragmentary listener is probably more inclined to use music as a background for other activities. Fragmentary listening demands a lot less adaptation of the musical impressions than comprehensive listening (Lilliestam, 2013, p. 109-110). Thus pop music can be considered more apt for retail settings as consumers are not keen listeners while shopping in most cases.

At the same time, there is a fake built in popularity bias of music services. If any commercial music service playlist is taken into consideration, it is obvious that they all feature a number of playlists filled with popular music (Lamere, 2014). Playlists like The Billboard Top 100, The Viral 50, The Top Tracks, Popular New Releases etc. populate the home page or starting screen for most music services. This popularity bias inflates the apparent interest in popular music. So, for instance, it may look like a 45-year-old is more interested in popular music than they really are because they are curious about what’s on all of those featured playlists (Lamere, 2014). In this manner, popular music may be forced upon on listeners.

Age can also be a major factor that decides music preferences. Whether the demands of parenthood and careers mean devoting less time to pop culture, or just because they’ve succumbed to good old-fashioned taste freeze, music fans beyond a certain age seem to reach a point where their tastes have “matured” (Kalia, 2015). Even though popular music is proved to be more preferred there are still loopholes in relating it to female music preferences and age related data.

2.6 Literature Conclusion

The literature reviewed above provides evidence that music can influence factors such as the speed of consumer activity and their estimation of time. One area that has been given comparatively little attention in the literature is the extent to which pop music might actually influence the amount of time spend. Initial evidence has been provided by
Wakefield & Baker (1998, p. 515-539) that the probability of customers staying longer in store increases due to atmospheric stimulus. When a consumer feels satisfied from the retail environment of the store, he spends more time in a particular store and buys more because of pleasant environmental stimuli (Bohl, 2012). People are likely to spend more time and money in a restaurant or retail environment if the music being played is considered appropriate (Radocy & Boyle, 1997), but Pop music being liked or appropriate and its impact in retail settings is still questionable.

Consumer preferences and interests keep evolving from time to time. Older research conclusions do not hold true today. Marketers need to adapt to the present needs of consumers and to understand the current consumer behaviour, more research has to be done on consumers now. Although the above mentioned studies emphasize the importance of music in the atmospherics of retailing, they adopt a wide variety of methods and are based on different theoretical frameworks, rendering it difficult for generalization of results. New models and fresh data enhances the interest in this study. There still is a lot to research in the field of retail music atmosphere and consumer behaviour, and major discoveries to unveil. An unavailability of a proved result in the context of Irish retail and female oriented consumer behaviour, motivates the researcher to learn more with new marketing and research methods.
3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology Introduction

Since the research onion, developed by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007), provides an effective progression through which a research methodology can be designed, each layer of the onion will be described to understand the detailed research methodology process and tools. The following section will illustrate the stages of developing the research strategy (refer Figure 2.).

3.2 Research Design

Figure 2. Saundér’s Research Onion (Saunder, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007)
3.2.1 Research Philosophy
Since the research involves large samples of quantitative data and statistical hypothesis testing, it relates to Positivism philosophy. The research initially assumes to be true based on hypothesis (Null Hypothesis); ‘If popular music can positively influence potential buyer’s behaviour, there can be an increase in amount of time spend in store’. The researcher will be using highly structured and measurable data for testing the hypothesis, and not his personal opinion to conclude the cause (pop music played) and effect (increase in time spend and positive shopping experience) experiment. The research intending to predict result (pop music will increase time spend and result in positive customer experience), can be classified as a one tailed Hypothesis.

3.2.2 Research Approach
The Deductive approach is chosen as the research runs on formulation of a hypothesis followed by the statistical testing of expected results, i.e., will the music positively or negatively influence the time spend in store. It particularly goes hand in hand with the positivist approach, which permits the formulation of hypotheses and the statistical testing of expected results to an accepted level of probability.

3.2.3 Research Strategy
The researcher will adopt Survey strategy to attain information as data will be collected through structured questionnaires from a sizeable number of retail footfall and staff. Only quantitative data is involved in this study. Since the study involves examination of causative variables or data like customer preferences, genre, time spent, etc. survey strategy will be most apt strategy.

3.2.4 Sampling

Non Probability
The sample or participants for the survey include potential female customers, existing female buyers who re-visit, females who did not make any purchases but spent time in the store with an intention to buy later or not buy and window-shoppers. The researcher
approached the subjects with questionnaires after their purchase during the store working hours. Hence self-selection method was used.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments

A single method involving statistical data analysis was used to gather quantitative data for the primary research, i.e. questionnaires to customers. Questionnaires was chosen as it was appropriate and less possibilities for bias caused by the presence of the researcher. Also it was cost effective and easier to analyse data using SPSS.

Though two semi structured interviews with retail managers were used to know more facts about the store’s current atmospheric nature and music environment, their opinion about the influence of pop music on their customers where not questioned.

The focus of this research was to discover the relationship between retail music as an atmospheric element and time spend by customer in store. Therefore, a field survey was conducted and the tool used for the field study was a structured questionnaire measuring customer responses. This quantitative research technique was used to analyze the relationship among the atmospheric element; pop music and the variable; time or shopping duration. The samples were selected on the basis of the gender; female respondents who walked out of H&M were approached with the questionnaire (Appendix 1) to fill on their own.

The objective of the survey was to find the customers' duration of time spent in store when pop music was played. Thus, female respondents were approached randomly irrespective of their shopping intention or average ticket spending. To minimize bias, the respondents were randomly chosen as they exited the store’s doors.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

As the research was based on Quantitative primary data, inferences were made by statistically analysing them. A comparison of variables like time spend in store, preferred
music genre, etc. was done. Data entry and tabulation was done with the help of bar graphs, charts and tables for accurate interpretation. Due to large amounts of primary data collected, the researcher used SPSS (computer software) for ease of data compilation and analysis.

3.5 Time Horizon

Since the research was undertaken to address a research question related to the present time period the research is classified under the Cross sectional time horizon. This cross sectional study where data was gathered thrice over a 6 day period in the month of July 2016, was conducted with willing respondents post their shopping process without any previous instructions. The research focuses on current pop music influence and not over a long period. The investigation is focused on the study of a particular phenomenon during a specific time (May to July 2016). Pop music pertaining to the period of February to July 2016 were prominently played in H&M.

3.6 Research Ethics

- Since the research involves time consuming interviews and questionnaire responses, all research subjects may or may not be interested in taking part in them. Since it doesn’t directly benefit them, it will be the researcher’s responsibility to explain the research reason to participants and ensure they are well informed, asked for consent or willingness to answer questions.
- The interviews and questions includes questions about their shopping decisions, time and money spent in store, music preferences, etc. Since such questions may be of personal value to the subject. It will be made sure that they are well informed about the research prior to questioning. The data collected will not be used for any other purpose other than research and analysis. The confidentiality of data collected will be ensued and not used for any malpractices.
- Very deep and personal questions wouldn’t be asked at any cost. Attaining any sort of sensitive information will be refrained from.
In order to avoid any kind of communication barriers during interviews, the researcher will be distributing worded documents before face to face interviews for more accuracy of data.

I, the researcher, will be solely & truly accountable and responsible to the college, supervisor, participants and myself during the conduct of the research. There will be no false data or manipulations involved in the experiment.

3.7 Limitations of Methodology

Few limitations that might make this study a challenge, are as follows:

- Retail stores have information relating to customer feedback, footfall and sales figures, music playlist patterns, etc. which would be of major help to the research, but due to data protection and confidentiality reasons they did not wish to share such information.

- Retail stores have a code of conduct that involves the choice of style or type of songs that can be played in store. Hence, as a part of research, the researcher would be restricted from trying various music selections within the genre of Pop music.

- Stores do not allow experiments to be carried out in store due to several reasons such as customer interruption, store activities interruption, company’s data protection policies, etc. Also the study is not of interest to retail personnel as there is no evident or immediate benefit for the store.

- The study is confined to Dublin city, the scope of research had to be narrowed down making H&M on College Green Road, King Street and Henry Street, as the focus of research location.

- The researcher being a foreign national, makes data collection a challenging task, as it would be much easier for the nationals to attain information more easily.
• Though time is not a major constraint, the time required for data collection (such as interviews and questionnaires) was highly dependent on the retail store employee’s convenience and availability, which did cause a delay.

• Larger samples tend to produce better results and reduces the risk of errors or bias. In this study, the survey sample size was 400 but only 84 shoppers responded, making reliability of data a constraint.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

A pilot study was conducted at another retail store (cannot be published due to data protection and confidentiality reasons) with random respondents who have actually shopped at H&M store earlier. The analysis of the pilot study, tested with 4 respondents, showed which adjustments are necessary to fine-tune the questionnaire. Although it was a minor analysis the preliminary responses helped to alter one question, which was made easier as the respondents found the questions baffling. Another question related to respondent’s suggestions on ‘making the music more favourable’ was deleted as it seemed difficult to answer and irrelevant.

The tool used for the field study was a structured questionnaire (appendix.1) that began with questions on demographic characteristics such as name, age, their frequency of visit. Then the questions measured customer responses on a 7-point Likert scale; each of them to measure store lighting & brightness, scents, product display & arrangement, temperature and music; all related to the influence of time they spend in store. The questionnaire correspondingly consisted of six closed ended questions that were generated on the basis of literature and a pilot.

Only female consumers were chosen. About 450 female customers who walked out of H&M stores were approached in three days, out of which only 22 of them responded
immediately, filling physical questionnaires. Whereas most of them shared email ids and electronic versions of questionnaires were sent to them. Only 65 responded from the 140 mails sent. So about 84 responses were recorded in total. Since the stores have three branches in Dublin city, all three stores were covered in three days.

By importing all results on to the computing software SPSS, it was possible to connect and analyse data accurately. The insights from the data collected and summarized; show that majority of the shoppers belonged to the age group of 15-25 (57%, figure.3). The second highest category of female respondents were of the age group 26-35. The age group accounted for 28 females i.e. 33% of the total number of respondents. This shows that majority of the respondents belong to the ages between 15 and 35. This implies that 90% of the customers who responded belong to H&M’s target range.

The two graphs shown below indicate the frequency of shopping (Figure 3. Shopping frequencies) and quality of experience of the customers (Figure 4. Shopping experience) at H&M, respectively. It can be deduced from the graph that the frequency of shopping at H&M for most responders were at a moderate level. This combined with the pie chart shows that the frequency is independent of the experience as 93% of respondents enjoyed
their shopping experience. With the help of statistics, it could be established that 81 respondents out of 87 enjoyed their shopping experience at H&M.

![Shopping Frequency](image1.png)

**Figure 3. Shopping frequencies**

![Enjoying Shopping Experience?](image2.png)

**Figure 4. Shopping experience**
On being asked to rate the various factors affecting time duration spent apart from the products themselves, on a scale from 1 to 7, the respondents answered as shown in Figure 5 (atmospheric variables and their ratings). From these results we can see that in-store music has been rated relatively as one of the most important factors. Comparatively the number of people that rated any of the factors with a ‘7- highest influence’ was lesser than ‘6-high influence’ but even then, in-store music was rated 7 the maximum number of times. However ‘display and arrangement’ was graded with similar importance on the scales of high influence (6) and highest influence (7). Approximately 34% rated display-arrangement and music as a high influence on the time they spend in store.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighting &amp; Brightness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scents &amp; Fragrances</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display &amp; Arrangement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp &amp; Environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-store Music</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5. Atmospheric Variables and rating responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>No influence</th>
<th>Least influence</th>
<th>Less influence</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Moderate influence</th>
<th>High influence</th>
<th>Highest influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total value = score x number of responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Number of responses multiplied by the score assigned to each rating scale</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighting &amp; Brightness</td>
<td>0 4 36 68 135 120 63</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scents &amp; Fragrances</td>
<td>4 18 30 100 105 102 7</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display &amp; Arrangement</td>
<td>0 0 27 48 140 174 63</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp &amp; Environment</td>
<td>1 8 24 56 135 132 77</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-store Music</td>
<td>1 0 18 80 100 174 77</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6. Quantitative analysis**
To easily analyse the collected data related to atmospherics, values were assigned to different Likert scale ratings. As illustrated in figure 6, the ratings were assigned values from one to seven; one being the least value for ‘no influence’ and seven being the highest value for ‘highest influence’. Later they were multiplied to the number of responses to quantify the value of responses (formula illustrated in figure 6) for easier analysis. The final values when summed up showed that Display-arrangement had the highest score (452), followed by instore pop music (450) and lighting (426). Music and display values are not of huge variance in values.

About 22% rated display-arrangement as having moderate influence on the time spend in store. Whereas only 23% of the respondents ranked music as a moderate influence on time spend. Thus the result makes it evident that pop music does have a considerable amount of influence on the consumer’s duration of time spend in store but not as much as the influence ‘display and arrangement’ has.

When considering scale 6 (Figure 5 Atmospheric Variables and their Ratings), the maximum rating was given to both music and display-arrangement; 29 respondents agreed that both equally have high influence on their time spend in store. Though, we can conclude pop music does support the hypothesis that it can prolong the time of stay in store, an equal influential factor among retail atmospherics was arrangement and display.
However, as picturized in the graph above (Figure 7. Preferred genre of music), about 57% of the respondents selected Pop Music as their preferred genre. This is further evidence to the belief of H&M considering their target customer’s liking or preference towards pop music genre. It can be concluded that pop music is enjoyed by most customers who visited the store, as 50 respondents out of 87 enjoy pop music.

Figure 7. Preferred genre of music

Figure. 8. Reasons for not liking the music played in H&M
Of the 87 respondents, 72 noticed the music being played in the foreground and 60 among them responded that the music ‘did’ add to their shopping experience. This conveys that a majority (68%) of the female shoppers who were questioned enjoyed pop music and it added on to their positive shopping experience. On the contrary 15 respondents did not like the music filled environment (Figure.8 Reasons for not liking the music played in H&M). Comparatively, it could be considered as a small number compared to the respondents who liked pop music played in store. The reasons respondents chose were various. 4 respondents thought the pop music played was too loud and they belonged to the age category of 46 and above, who do not belong to H&M’s target age group. 6 respondents did not like the genre played; it was found that most of these respondents preferred other genres such as Rock, Jazz and EDM (Figure. 9. Genre and Reasons for not liking the music played in H&M). Nevertheless, two among the six respondents, had contradicting choices, hence Priya and Pooja’s (refer Figure. 9 Genre and Reasons for not liking the music played in H&M) responses had to be ignored from the data collected. Thereby it can be distinguished that 4:1 is the ratio between respondents who enjoyed the shopping experience with pop music to ones who didn’t.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>What genre of music do you enjoy the most?</th>
<th>Did you notice the music played in the foreground while shopping?</th>
<th>If you answered ‘yes’ to the previous question, did the music add on to your shopping experience?</th>
<th>If you answered ‘no’ to the above question, why did you not like the music?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Himani</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Did not like the genre being played</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priya pradeep</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Did not like the genre being played</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciara Finnerty</td>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Did not like the genre being played</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manju Thomas</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Did not like the genre being played</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pooja</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Did not like the genre being played</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn</td>
<td>EDM</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Did not like the genre being played</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure. 9. Genre and Reasons for not liking the music played in H&M
25 respondents answered ‘why they did not like the music’ but only 15 responses were accurate as the rest had contradicting responses. The rest 10 initially said that they like the music and still responded to the question; “why did you not like the music?”. While considering the remaining 15 flawless responses who did not like the music played, five of them said that the genre was of not their interest, 2 of them had other reasoning such as ‘causing distractions while shopping’. Contrarily, two customers mentioned that they did not like the artist played. It is evident from question no.8 (appendix.1) that Crystal and Poornima enjoy listening to pop music but did not like the artist played during their shopping period in store. So it can be inferred that they prefer other pop artists but responded negatively as they didn’t like a particular artist or song on the DMX playlist.

Furthermore, only 17 out of 87 indicated that they would not re-visit the store if H&M continues to play the same music (Figure 10. Revisit and Positive influence). This implies that almost 79% enjoyed their shopping experience and will re-visit which means they end up spending more time at H&M. Additionally, 64% of the sample data collected agreed that pop music had a positive influence on their potential to buy. The above two charts indicate that the majority of the respondents felt they would re-visit the store and that the music had a positive influence on their potential to purchase. The above mentioned factors combined together are likely to point towards the result that pop music has a positive influence on female consumers.
5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore whether pop music would significantly influence the time spend by a customer in a retail store. It was hypothesised (H1) that if pop music is liked by the target customer, it will increase the time spent in store.

This research presents unanticipated results. The study intended to find if pop music was noticed and stood out considering other elements. Other elements of retail atmospherics were questioned; it was with the intention of finding the importance of pop music and its influence on shopping duration. The study does not intend on comparing other retail atmospheric elements to music as an influential factor, but studying how pop music can impact the customer’s stay in store. Hence the questionnaire is structured to know if music stands out as an influence when compared to other atmospheric elements or stimuli. It was found that there was a significant influence of music on consumer’s time duration spend in store and a similar significance on the influence of display and arrangement on the time spend in store. The largest number of respondents; 29 female shoppers said that music and display-arrangement has a high influence on their shopping duration. However on the higher scale music had the highest score; 11 respondents agreed that music has the highest influence on their time spend in store. The quantitative data analysis and calculations illustrate that display has the highest influence, followed by music and lighting. Though the dependent variables such as lighting, display-arrangement, scent and temperature are factors that influence the time spend in store, instore music had one of the highest ratings among them. Display and arrangement as atmospherics almost shared a significant role that influences time spend, but pop music stood almost at similar value ratings. Cumulatively considering the higher influence scales, it can be understood that display has an upper hand but almost similar number respondents feel that music influenced their shopping duration. The study revealed no huge variation in effects comparing display-arrangement and music as influential factors. However the results considering pop music’s influence on time spend does fill the gap found in this study’s literature review.
It was proved by Grewal, D., Baker, J., Levy, M. and Voss, G.B. that music likeability (valence) exerts a positive influence on consumers’ mood (2003, pg. 259–268), but again it wasn’t deducted from reviewing, Babin and Attaway, and Gorn’s research that, musical preference or likability is a factor that relates to a genre or popularity of music played. Nevertheless, this study has found the likeability of pop music among the retail store’s target consumer, and hence can be surmised that the genre of a consumer’s preference can increase likeability and satisfaction. Bohl, in his research indicated that when consumers feel satisfied from the retail environment of a store, he/she spends more time in a particular store and buys more because of pleasant environmental stimuli (2012). Caldwell and Hibbert (2002, pg.895-917) had concluded that the more the time spent, higher are the chances of total money spent by customers. Based on previous research conclusions and this data, it can be surmised that the shopper’s positive experience enables to prolong their duration of stay in store and it can end in a positive purchase result.

Unlike North, Shilcock, & Hargreaves (2005, p. 713), Gueguen & Jacob (2010, pg.837 – 856), Broekemier, Marquardt & Gentry (2008, pg.59–67) and Marcelino et al (2011, pg.45-78); who all studied pop music in comparison with other genres, like classical music, romantic music, gospel, etc. this study focused solely on the influence of pop music on the consumer. Many studies compared pop music to no music scenarios or settings and found similar results, but none of the researches made an effort to study pop music on its own. Pop music being such a popularly and widely accepted genre had very less research done on it. As believed by the Retail store management, the study proved that Pop music was their target customer’s interest among music genres. Evidently, about 93% respondents enjoyed their overall shopping experience, 57% of the respondents enjoy pop music genre and 68% agreed that pop music added to their shopping experience. These numbers support the (H2), pop music will positively influence consumer’s interest and result in an enjoyable experience and/or re-visit. As reported in the literature review, prior studies by Vida (2008, pg. 21-35.) showed that when shoppers acknowledged the background music as suitable, they developed positive experiences. The findings show that majority (93%) of the respondents enjoyed their shopping experience, which reassures that a customer who feels
satisfied from the retail environment of the store, spends more time in a particular store and buys more because of pleasant environmental stimuli (Bohl, 2012). The overall results of this study do support both the hypotheses that pop music should increase a consumer’s duration of stay in store and provide the customer with a positive enjoyable shopping experience and/or revisits.

Unlike a laboratory experiment that was conducted with college going subjects in a simulated retail store (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000, p. 142), this study was conducted around an actual retail store with real customers as subjects who exited from a real retail store. The accuracy and context of data collected will be more useful as the research was conducted in a real environment.

**Limitations**
Due to dearth of time and limited resources, it was not possible to conduct a large scale survey involving more retail stores and respondents from various parts of the country. Therefore, results might vary in case the survey is conducted in other regions.

The most common limitation or issue researchers come across in collecting data is avoidance behaviour. Getting subjects to answer questionnaires was a major challenge. Only 1 out of 4 respondents approached for this research responded with answers. More awareness has to be created on research questionnaires responses and their importance.

Getting honest and accurate answers was also a challenge as a few shoppers tend to randomly tick choices to quickly complete the survey and leave.

Most prior researches the author reviewed for this study were mostly conducted in American retail settings. The European retail environment, pricing, standards, etc. differ in nature. Hence it could have been effective if more European experiments, papers or journals existed or were made available (published).

**Implications for future research**
In the current study, only one retail store was examined. Further researches should be conducted to explore the influence of Pop Music on retail consumers.

Some research studies have drawn conclusions about the effects of pop music in comparison to other music genres while ignoring the sole importance of pop music and its popularity among retail stores.

Future research should aim to conduct similar experiments in other European contexts using other genders and consumer groups. Most past studies were based on American settings and data can be culturally and socially inclined (one-sided).

The quantity of participants should also be greater than this study helping in deeper analysis. Future research should also attempt to conduct experiments inside retail stores (with prior permission from concerned authorities) with observations and interviews. The researches can help to elevate the success of retail atmosphere and increase consumer satisfaction and sales.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Review of related research has shown that playing music preferred by customers can increase their shopping duration in stores. Therefore, H&M can continue to play pop music that is liked by their target markets in order to achieve the highest positive influence of music on time spend, in turn increasing patronage behavior.

Perhaps retailers and marketers should consider display and arrangement of their products with similar importance as a compared to music. As demonstrated by results, careful consideration of the interaction of pop music may yield positive effects on customers’ shopping durations. Playing pop music has considerably helped in increasing subjects’ intentions to stay longer in the store. It has been suggested that people are likely to spend more time and money in retail environments if the music being played is considered
appropriate (Radocy and Boyle, 1997). When a consumer feels satisfied from the retail environment of the store, he spends more time in a store and buys more because of pleasant environmental stimuli (Bohl, 2012, no pg). Hence it can be surmised from previous researches and the findings of this study that shopping intentions would be expected to be the highest in such scenarios. Therefore it can be concluded that Pop music increases the time spend in retail stores, in-turn resulting in higher purchase probabilities. It can be concluded that Pop music is widely accepted and can be played in certain retail stores to appeal female shoppers of younger age groups.

It can be inferred via the literature review and the survey findings that, the importance of pop music in retail settings have become more precise and it can be used as an effective retail marketing tool to prolong consumer indulgence in retail stores, which can help to increase purchase rates.
Bibliography


• Kalia, A. (2015) ‘Music was better back then: When do we stop keeping up with popular music?’, *Skynet and Ebert*. Available at: https://skynetandebert.com/2015/04/22/music-was-better-back-then-when-do-we-stop-keeping-up-with-popular-music/ (Accessed: 03 April 2016).


Appendix

1. Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am Sryas Bhargavan, an Msc in Marketing student from Dublin Business School. I am currently doing my dissertation project entitled “Influence of Popular Music on female Consumer behavior while shopping at apparel stores in Dublin”

The primary aim of this study is to know how pop music influences consumer behavior. Your co-operation in filling this questionnaire is greatly appreciated. I, the researcher, assure that all information you provide would remain strictly confidential and only be used for research and analysis purposes.

Thank you

Instructions
Kindly read all questions carefully and answer them with utmost precision.

Name: __________________________

Age:
- 15-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46 and above

1. How often do you shop at H&M?

- Twice a month
- Once a month
- Once in three months
- Once in 6 months
- Not at all (this being your first time)
2. Did you enjoy the shopping experience at H&M?
   - Yes
   - No

3. What was the influence of ‘store lighting and brightness’ on the **time** you spent shopping? Rate on a scale from 1 to 7, 1 being the least and 7 being the most significant influence.

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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Moderate influence</td>
<td>High Influence</td>
<td>Highest Influence</td>
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</table>

4. What was the importance of ‘in-store scents or fragrances’ on the **time** you spent shopping? Rate on a scale from 1 to 7, 1 being the least and 7 being the most significant influence.

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</table>

5. What was the influence of ‘product display and arrangement’ on the **time** you spent shopping? Rate on a scale from 1 to 7, 1 being the least and 7 being the most significant influence.

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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Moderate influence</td>
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<td>Highest Influence</td>
</tr>
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</table>
6. What was the influence of ‘store temperature and environment’ as a factor that affected the time you spent shopping? Rate on a scale from 1 to 7, 1 being the least and 7 being the most significant influence.

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<td>Highest Influence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. What was the influence of ‘in-store music’ on the time you spent shopping? Rate on a scale from 1 to 7, 1 being the least and 7 being the most significant influence.

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</tbody>
</table>

8. What genre of music do you enjoy the most?

- Rock
- Pop (Popular/charts)
- Jazz
- House
- EDM

9. Did you notice the music played in the foreground while shopping?

- Yes
- No

10. If you answered ‘yes’ to the previous question, did the music add on to your shopping experience?

- Yes
- No
11. If you answered ‘no’ to the above question, why did you not like the music (not add to the experience)?

- It was too loud
- Did not like the genre being played
- Distracted me while making shopping decisions
- I did not like the artist being played
- Other reason: ______________

12. Will you re-visit the store if they continue to play the same or similar music?

- Yes
- No

13. Did the in-store music help in creating a positive influence on your potential to buy?

- Yes
- No

Quantitative data analysis Spreadsheet: Questionnaire answers
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<td>coline</td>
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<td>Eilis</td>
<td>46 and above</td>
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<td>4 4 3 1 1</td>
<td>Jazz</td>
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<td>5 4 7 6 5</td>
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<td>Yes 5 6 5 5 3</td>
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<td>Sometimes it helps me shop longer as I spend more time in store listening to the songs as I browse</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Janet</td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
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<td>Yes/No</td>
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<td>Jebi John</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6 5 5 7 6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I did like the music. I just start skipping <em>read dancing</em> a step in stead of walking thereby increasing the time I spend on picking out clothes.</td>
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<td>Jom</td>
<td>18 - 25</td>
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<td>House</td>
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<td>Twice a month</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 6 7 7 5</td>
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<td>Lara</td>
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<td>3 4 5 5 6</td>
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<td>Once in 3 months</td>
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<td>Pop (Popula / Charts)</td>
<td>Yes  Yes</td>
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<td>Mitsue</td>
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<td>3 3 5 4 4</td>
<td>Jazz</td>
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<td>Navaneetha</td>
<td>18 - 25</td>
<td>Not at all / Just once</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 5 6 5 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes i didn't pay attention to it</td>
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<td>4 3 3 4 4</td>
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<td>Neetha Kumar</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
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<td>6 5 6 3 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>2 3 6 3 4</td>
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<td>4 4 4 6 6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Did not like the artist being played</td>
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<td>It was too loud</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>18 - 25</td>
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<td>House</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>EDM</td>
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<td>Rubina Kausar</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Agusta Likes Music</td>
<td>Pop (Popular Charts)</td>
<td>My Friend Likes Rock</td>
<td>Agusta Likes Rock</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Sarah</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pop (Popular Charts)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saurabh</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>Not at all / Just once</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pop (Popular Charts)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Samhiti</td>
<td>Chromatic</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Listening Experience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>saurav choudhury</td>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>Just once</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5 5 4 6 6</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shakeb Hussain</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4 5 6 6 6</td>
<td>Jazz</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td>No Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shamine Mary Kuriakose</td>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>Not at all / Just once</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 6 5 6 6</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>No Distracted me while making shopping decisions</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharath</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Not at all / Just once</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 4 5 6 5</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>Once in 3 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 3 5 5 5</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shaunacee</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>Once in 3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7 4 4 5 6</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>Yes Yes</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Yes/No Notice</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Was Busy Shopping?</td>
<td>Did Not Notice It?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shin</td>
<td>18 - 25</td>
<td>Once in 3 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4 4 4 4 4</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shruti</td>
<td>Srinivasan</td>
<td>Not at all / Just once</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6 4 5 5 6</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Suzanne</td>
<td>18 - 25</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 2 6 2 4</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>swedha</td>
<td>18 - 25</td>
<td>Once in 6 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4 4 5 5 6</td>
<td>Pop (Popula r / Charts)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>was busy shopping and did not notice</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Therese</td>
<td>26 - 35</td>
<td>Once in 3 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 6 6 4 3</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Did not notice it (no music at all?)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>Genre</td>
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<tr>
<td>V N B PILLAI</td>
<td>46 and above</td>
<td>Once in 3 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varsha</td>
<td>18 - 25</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wendy Jenning</td>
<td>46 and above</td>
<td>Once in 6 months</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Influence of Pop Music on female Consumer behavior while shopping at apparel stores in Dublin

Student Number: 10314890
Student Name: Sryas Bhargavan

Reflection on learning

Course Title: Msc in Marketing
(Sept intake)

DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL
Reflection on Learning

Now that all the main sections of this dissertation have been discussed, the author moves on to reflecting the outcomes of this exercise. This whole process of conceiving the idea, developing it and putting it into words has been an overwhelming, and at the same time rewarding, journey.

Lewis and Williams (1994) said:

“In its simplest form, experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking.”


Going back to the initiation of this dissertation, the conception of the topic, I have to describe myself a bit. I am the type of person who loves to pay attention to my professors in the classroom and understand the matter being taught at a practical level. I do not seek to learn just to score marks in the next exam. It was my interest in retail-marketing, my professional work experience and my wish to further my knowledge in this area that brought me to the MSc in Marketing program. So when faced with the question of what topic do I select for my dissertation, I was inclined to combine my thirst for knowledge improvement with my passion: music. Though I aspire to be a stellar marketer, I am a musician by passion. Furthermore, my previous jobs and current part-time job are all retail and sales related (refer attached pdf. Curriculum Vitae). I used to work for Bose Corporation (the sound solutions company), who had retail stores that sold sound and music related equipment. Placing my personal interest in music and retail together, it intrigued me to research about the effects of music as pertaining to retail-marketing.
The realization that music has an effect on not only a person like me but also a majority of the common population further encouraged me to select this topic. In conversation with many people of different age groups I noticed that they had various preferences towards different kinds of music. The prominence of playing pop music in many retail stores intrigued me. Most retail stores play pop music and I wanted to know why they did so. Reading and searching online articles, journals, books and research papers interested me to know more about this topic. I was introduced to many new findings and unknown facts about atmospherics, retail environments, music genres, shopping behavior, etc. It gave me a new perspective about retail and its consumers.

Due to the time constraints I had to narrow down my topic to Dublin and female consumers. This process itself showed me the vast possibilities available and the importance of filtering and prioritizing. This I believe will also be a very useful skill that will come in handy in my future career.

Moving ahead with assimilating literature review for the dissertation, I was flooded with a very large pool of material. I realized it is not physically possible to analyze such a huge amount of data and hence I learned to review data quickly and selecting the most relevant material. The availability of data from various sources such as journals, magazines, blogs and websites make this an important skill to have mastered. Companies obtain an edge by analyzing information about their concerned market and hence look for candidates with strong analytical skills. Hence, procuring this skill not only helped me with the dissertation, but will also help me in my career.

I was also able to acquire valuable primary research skills during the course of this study. The common quantitative research methods were studied and the study was carried out by conducting a survey through questionnaires. This method was selected after weighing in the advantages and disadvantages of using each of the various methods.

One of the most challenging task to reach out to H&M and its management representatives for the brand related information. Most representatives couldn’t share relevant information due to confidentiality and data protection reasons. One of the managers simply did not
respond to emails and phone calls. Mostly, student requests are not accommodated due to no immediate benefit for retail stores, hence such requests for information are of low priority to major businesses. Fortunately, one of the store managers at the College Green Store, Ms. Patrick, agreed to provide with some relevant information regarding the store music genre and target consumers.

Also survey data collection proved to be more difficult than I expected, with very few people willing to respond to the survey. Hundreds of people were approached out of which only a handful chose to respond. The survey in particular helped to boost my self-confidence and patience as several rejections were faced. In spite of many avoidance from many shoppers, a few respondents helped to lead this research to a fruitful completion.

A very important figure in my research experience was my dissertation supervisor, Prof. Staunton, whose guidance and valuable advice was a major key to the successful completion of this study. The roles of Profs. P.J Paul and Brid Lane should also be stressed here as they laid the foundations for this study through their lectures for the 1st & 2nd installments of the Research Methods class. This wouldn’t have been possible without their valuable guidance and teachings.

This study has also improved my time-management skills. This has benefitted me at both a personal and professional level. An enormous amount of preparation and planning was required to carry out this study in order to navigate from each stage in an organized manner. The Research Methods modules of the entire Master’s program was an interlinked and developing process. A written plan was formulated on a timeline to ensure organized and efficient use of time. The plan as illustrated below includes the Learning Objectives:
Research Methods

- To learn and understand data collection methods which would be useful for my career related researches.
- To identify and choose a relevant research problem related to my career and also find productive results or information which can help me as well as marketing related organizations.
- To understand each formal aspect of research and how it helps my career.

There were development Plans according to which progress of my work was noted, evaluated and checked in a timely manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Methods</th>
<th>OCTOBER .....</th>
<th>JANUARY ....</th>
<th>MARCH ....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development Plans (in chronological order)</td>
<td>Search online and libraries about my research topic related to ambient music and purchasing behavior at retail stores.</td>
<td>Visit major apparel stores, observe shopping cultures and notice in-store ambient music.</td>
<td>Prepare my research; find relevant data and relate it with learned module topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Progress</td>
<td>Found a lot of information and research related to my topic which allowed me to construct a better statement of problem in my research.</td>
<td>After visiting stores I had confusions related to my topic, hence I consulted my faculty and his feedback helped me proceed with my proposal.</td>
<td>With all the relevant data collected and learning in class, I prepared and presented my proposal and got a lot of positive feedbacks from my classmates and professor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes of Modules</td>
<td>Improvement plans</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Found different methods of data collection and the scenarios to use them.</td>
<td>• Utilizing the feedback from my professor and peers for improvement and rectification</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learned the steps to be followed while doing research.</td>
<td>• Use all valuable learnings from the module to forecast and conduct research in the final semester.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understood the limitations and a plan to conduct research</td>
<td>• To find interesting books, articles and journals relating to my research as per the professor’s instruction so that I don’t blindly carry out my dissertation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learned to present the proposal in a creative and attractive manner. Learned to analyse the future requirements of the research process.</td>
<td>• The thesis feedback can be used constructively to narrow down the scope of my research topic as it was a little vague.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The professor gave regular feedbacks after class for the right methods to be used.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• My classmates also gave positive and negative feedback for my improvement. (Folder 1.5, Research dissertation and feedback, feedbacks.pdf)</td>
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</table>
Even though data was more easily available in general, obtaining material and literature particularly relevant to my topic proved to be difficult sometimes. I was also prone to reading in depth about certain related arguments and straying away from my topic and struggling to regain my focus. Initially, I had tendencies to stray slightly away from schedule and lag behind, especially during the literature review stage, owing to the vast amount of data to be collected and sorted. I have to mention the most commonly used statement by my Research guide, “The focus of the research question shouldn’t be forgotten”. His reinforcing words with the help of formulating a fixed aim and ensuring to adhere to it, helped to reach my goal. With this experience I learned that seemingly difficult tasks can be better managed by setting goals and a plan to achieve them.

A very useful tool that aided my literature review was the library resources. I realized I hadn’t utilized this feature provided by the school to this extent earlier. This has encouraged me to learn and read more about topics that interest me and to utilize the easy availability of data.

My educational goals include completing my degree in a fruitful manner, for which the dissertation project has helped to search and find more relevant knowledge. This task has given me the platform to provide productive information to the marketing industry. I am interested in developing innovative strategies as promotional tools for marketing. Being a dynamic graduate aspiring to enter the marketing industry to leverage my abilities to succeed in a Marketing career, the knowledge and information I acquired for this project will help me easily face the retail market.

As my career progresses, I wish to work for a marketing firm that focuses on retail. I expect to use my past experience in retail and the knowledge gained from this study. I expect to analyse more subjects (shoppers) and conduct a large scale survey to find consumer interest. This can help me provide a better and favourable atmosphere that may result in higher customer satisfaction. Better and innovative strategies can be used in retail stores. This would help me achieve success and growth to my career and the company I aspire to work in. for example: I wish to re-join Bose Corporation’s marketing department and use my learning to better their retail environment.

The learning outcomes of this study could be used to formulate ideas to increase consumer satisfaction and average ticket spending. If this study is published it can also add knowledge to the European or Irish based literature. Since very less retail atmospheric research was done in the European context in the past, this study can benefit many researchers and marketers with current data.

Towards the end of the dissertation process, it was released that few things that could have been done differently. Data collection and time management was an issue because getting responses as expected were out of my control. Targeted amount of shoppers did not respond, so extra
time had to spend to procure survey responses. Such delays could have been anticipated before conducting the study and planned accordingly on the timeline.

However, this dissertation project helped to acquire a better knowledge about my career related industry, thereby benefitting me with research skills. Problems and issues were faced as challenges to overcome and the learning outcomes were decidedly rewarding.