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MUSIC-BRAND CONGRUENCY IN HIGH- AND LOW-COGNITION RADIO ADVERTISING[1]

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ABSTRACT

Many radio commercials use background music to accompany a message. This research examines how brand-congruent music (i.e., music that 'fits' the brand) will affect Attitude toward the Ad (A_{Ad}) and Attitude toward the Brand (A_{Brand}), specifically when used with different types of ad copy that are more or less demanding of cognitive resources (high-cognition vs. low-cognition advertising copy). In high-cognition ads, congruent music results in a more positive A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} compared to incongruent music or no music. However, this effect is not found with low-cognition ads, where A_{Ad} (and A_{Brand}) are similar for all three conditions of congruent music, incongruent music, and no music.

KEYWORDS:

music; radio advertising; congruency; high-cognition; low-cognition; attitude toward the ad; attitude toward the brand

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Radio advertising often uses instrumental music as a background to the verbal message. This background music may be intended to enhance the advertiser's message by drawing greater attention to the ad, or may complement the message by adding meaning or affect (Hung, 2000; Roehm, 2001; Stewart and Punj, 1998). Based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty et al., 1983), it has often been assumed that music is an affective cue processed via a peripheral route (MacInnis et al., 1991; MacInnis and Park, 1991), or that the role music plays is to influence mood (Alpert and Alpert, 1990). However, music may do considerably more than this by working in conjunction with other message elements (Scott, 1990; Hung, 2000).

In practice, instrumental background music is usually chosen by advertisers on the basis of subjective assessments of creative or artistic merit, rather than on objective measures or criteria (Croft, 1999). This means that choosing background music for radio ads has tended to be more an art than a science. The creative director looks for a "fit" between the music and the brand. This concept of "fit" implies that music may be either congruent (i.e., good "fit") or incongruent (i.e., bad "fit") with the brand (Alpert, Alpert, and Maltz, 2005). In general, it is intuitively believed that it is better to have music-brand congruence; however, little research has been done to see whether music-brand congruence truly enhances A_{Ad} and A_{Brand}, or under what conditions it would do so.

Relatively little is known about the impact of music-brand congruence on attitude toward the ad (A_{Ad}) and attitude toward the brand (A_{Brand}). If the effect of music is simply to draw attention to the ad, then the mere presence of music would be important and music-brand congruence would be unimportant. If the effect of music is to add an affective component (Alpert

and Alpert, 1990; Bruner, 1990), then having well-liked background music that creates positive affect would be of primary importance and music-brand congruence would again be unimportant. However, if the effect of music is to contribute meaning to the ad that will enhance cognitive processing, then music-brand congruence should be extremely important since the meanings added by music could contribute to an improved A_{Ad} and A_{Brand}. Some recent work supports this speculation (e.g., Hung, 2001; Shen & Chen, 2006) and reinforces suggestions that music may operate as more than a mere heuristic cue in terms of elaboration likelihood notions (Petty et al., 1983).

The verbal message contained within a radio commercial can vary widely in terms of the depth of cognitive processing demanded. Some ads contain many facts and figures requiring a significant amount of cognition, while others contain very few facts and figures and demand less cognitive effort. The resource matching framework (Anand and Sternthal, 1989; Meyers-Levy and Peraccio, 1995; Zhu and Meyers-Levy, 2005) suggests that the effectiveness of messages with high processing demands will vary depending on the resource demands made by other message elements. Brand-music incongruence is a message element that may demand cognitive effort from listeners puzzled by the incongruity, and may deplete available cognitive resources. This may leave insufficient resources available to process cognitively demanding message arguments, with consequences for advertising and brand attitudes. However, when the message itself is less cognitively demanding, the diversion of processing resources should not be as detrimental to the effectiveness of the ad, and the music might also function as more of a heuristic cue (Chaiken, 1980; Petty et al., 1983). The question we investigate is how background music and brand congruence affects A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} in radio advertising, when verbal messages make differing levels of cognitive demands.

This paper presents an experiment using radio ad copy that differs in the depth of cognitive processing demanded (high-cognition versus low-cognition). These two types of ad copy are paired with music that is rated as being either congruent or incongruent with the brand, and the resulting impact on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} is examined. First, we examine the literature surrounding the use of music in radio advertising and outline the hypotheses for the experiment. The methodology is then presented, followed by the experimental results. We conclude with a discussion of the results and some recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

Many studies in the marketing literature have investigated music effects in advertising (e.g., Bozman et al., 1994; Gorn et al., 1991), but only a few studies have attempted to investigate the effects of music style (e.g., rock, jazz, classical, etc.) on advertising message comprehension or impact (Ramos, 1993; Sullivan, 1990; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990). Music style, particularly the congruence of that style with other aspects of the message or brand, may have synergistic effects with other elements of the ad. It seems possible that music fit, or congruence, in advertising situations may be mediated by the brand image. However, relatively little is known about the impact of music-brand image congruency on A_{Ad} or A_{Brand}. Here we review studies that examine the impact of music on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand}, in order to determine whether some of the previous results found in the literature might be confounded by congruence or incongruence of the music style with the advertised product or brand.

Impact of Music on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand}

A study by Gorn et al. (1991) compared the potential effectiveness of two different

advertising strategies (information-only versus information-plus-music) on older viewers. A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} were equally positive for the information-only and information-plus-music appeals, suggesting that the presence of music did not affect purchase persuasion. However, the study did not examine whether the music used was congruent or incongruent with the brand being advertised. It is possible that introducing greater music congruency could have enhanced the informational message, creating improvements in A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} that would not exist otherwise.

Several studies have shown that the style of music associated with a product may affect A_{Ad}, A_{Brand}, and purchase intentions. For example, Sullivan (1990) investigated the performance of radio advertising to determine whether different styles of music can moderate the persuasive effect of ads for low-involvement products. The results showed that Adult Contemporary music (compared to Easy Listening) produced the most favorable effects regarding A_{Ad}, A_{Brand}, and purchase intention. However, it is possible that the products used in Sullivan's (1990) study (non-alcoholic beverages and take-out food) may simply have been more congruent with Adult Contemporary music, which subsequently may have led to more favorable evaluations. It is also possible Adult Contemporary music was preferred by younger subjects, and this preference or liking may have positively influenced attitudes (Gorn, 1982; Groenland, 1994).

Bozman, Muelling, and Petit-O'Malley (1994) also studied the relationship of alternative music backgrounds (i.e., liked music, disliked music, and neutral music) on A_{Brand}, under conditions of high and low involvement. In the low involvement condition, A_{Brand} was more favorable when emotive cues were positive (i.e., liked music), and less favorable when emotive cues were negative (i.e., disliked music). In the high involvement condition, A_{Brand} was more favorable when emotive cues were either overtly positive or negative (i.e., liked or disliked music), rather than neutral. Subjects rated the positive and negative emotive cues equally; but

surprisingly, negative cues did not adversely affect A_{Brand}. However, music-brand congruence could provide an alternate explanation of music's mediating role on A_{Brand}. If both liked and disliked music were congruent with the brand, while the neutral music was incongruent with the brand, this could provide an alternate explanation of why the liked and disliked music conditions provided superior ratings of A_{Brand}, as compared to the neutral music condition.

Music Congruency

Studies examining the effects of music in advertising have generally treated music as an affective stimulus, overlooking the potential of music as an information medium. Music conveys meaning to consumers that may be appreciated beyond its affective qualities, and like words in an ad, it also can contribute to the selling argument for the brand being advertised (Kotler, 1973). Music has the special ability to convey thoughts, images, and feelings in an abstract fashion (Scott, 1990). Music may also perform a framing function in advertising (Hung, 2001), and musical meaning may prime specific beliefs about the brand (North and Hargreaves, 1997). Therefore, it has been suggested that music must be synergistic with other ad elements, especially with the brand being advertised. When music is used in advertising, it is experienced holistically, so that the music is interpreted along with the whole ad and message (Kellaris et al., 1993; MacInnis and Park, 1991; Scott, 1990). However, as noted by Hung (2000), in many studies music has been seen as a non-semantic cue and the relationship between music and other elements, such as meaning and context, has not been taken into account. In such studies, the consumer's ability to judge and interpret music as part of a multi-faceted message is overlooked (Scott, 1990).

Studies by Kellaris, Cox, and Cox (1993) have been key in initiating the examination of the fit of the music with the advertising message. Kellaris et al. (1993) proposed a *music-message*

congruency construct that was defined as the extent to which purely instrumental music evoked meanings (i.e., thoughts, images, feelings) that were congruent with those evoked by the ad message. Therefore, this construct expressed a relationship between non-verbal and verbal domains. Kellaris et al. (1993) suggest that music-ad message congruency can moderate the influence of music's attention-gaining value on at least some aspects of message and brand name recall. Increasing audience attention to music actually enhanced message reception when the music evoked message-congruent thoughts (versus incongruent thoughts). When congruency was low, attention-getting music served more as a distraction from ad processing. When background music was attention-getting and message-incongruent, it pulled listeners' attention away from the message, thereby reducing recall.

When Hung (2000) examined the congruence of music to the visuals in TV commercials, she found that viewers could draw music-evoked meanings from the ads. Based on subjects' verbatim responses, she found TV commercials with music incongruent with the visuals made viewers uncomfortable and resulted in a negative product image. This suggests that music-visual incongruence may have a negative impact on message effectiveness. Although Hung's concern was with visual elements and music, rather than brand and music, the underlying logic suggests that congruence facilitates transference of meaning, and may facilitate or enhance cognitive processing. Hung (2000) also observes that previous studies provide a framework suggesting that when music and visual elements are congruous (i.e., evoke similar meanings), the meanings can be more readily communicated.

Although researchers have discussed the importance of matching music to image in retailing contexts (Herrington and Capella, 1994; Kotler, 1973; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990) and service situations (Ramos, 1993), the fit of music with brand image is an area that has not been

explicitly explored. The proposed study is intended to explore congruence between music and brand image, examining the extent to which purely instrumental music evokes meanings (i.e., images) that are congruent with those evoked by the brand's image. This examination of congruence will, therefore, examine congruence between two non-verbal domains: music and brand image.

Music Congruency and Cognitive Processing

In the present study, background music is believed to act as a message-creating medium in an advertising situation (Kotler, 1973), not just as an affect inducing cue (Alpert and Alpert, 1990; Bruner, 1990). As such, the style of music must combine positively and synergistically with other elements contained in an ad. Specifically, music style must be congruent with the brand's image in order to help convey a uniform message regarding the product. When elements of a stimulus set complement other items in the set, the individual parts are not perceived as separable, do not compete with one another for cognitive resources, and hence create emergent meaning (Kellaris et al., 1993; Kotler, 1973; MacInnis and Park, 1991). This leads to the question of how brand-congruent music will affect A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} when used with different types of ad copy that is more or less demanding of cognitive resources. This section, therefore, examines issues related to the processing of messages.

Park and Young (1986) crossed music conditions (music versus no music) with ad copy conditions (high cognitive, low cognitive, and high affective), and examined the impact of these music-ad copy pairings on A_{Ad}, A_{Brand}, and behavioral intentions. They suggested that the music in their study acted as a persuasion cue and influenced A_{Ad}, which subsequently affected A_{Brand}. A_{Ad} was expected to contribute to A_{Brand} formation more when a commercial contained music than

when it did not. However, it is unknown whether the music in this study was congruent or incongruent with the brand, but it is likely that the music selected would have been somewhat congruent in order to "fit" with the brand. This leaves open the question of what would have been the effect on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} under conditions of music-brand incongruency. It is possible that such incongruency could create negative emotions, thereby reducing evaluations of A_{Ad} and A_{Brand}. Furthermore, messages that require high-cognition processing versus low-cognition processing may interact differently with background music in terms of advertising attitudes and effectiveness.

MacInnis and Park (1991) studied the impact of the fit of the music with the ad message on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} using an elaboration-likelihood perspective (Petty et al., 1983). In both the high- and low-involvement conditions, a fit between the music and ad message increased attention to the message and supported central-route processing. However, attention to the message strengthened positive beliefs about ad claims only in the high-involvement condition, but not in the low-involvement condition. In both conditions, good fit (i.e., congruency) also influenced peripheral-route processing by inducing more positive emotions, but this only affected A_{Ad} in the low-involvement condition. Negative emotions were generated by lack-of-fit in the low-involvement condition, but not in the high-involvement condition, and a direct path from fit to A_{Ad} was found. In summary, their results suggest that fit between music and ad message serves to increase positive emotions and is important in enhancing A_{Ad}, particularly for high involvement (central processing) conditions. However, these results need to be interpreted with caution given their operationalization of music-message fit as existing between two verbal domains, song lyrics and ad copy.

Similar results were found in a study by Lord, Lee, and Sauer (1995), where liked or disliked music was a peripheral cue that had a significant effect on A_{Ad} in both low and high

involvement conditions. The central cue, argument strength, had an effect on A_{Ad} only in the high involvement conditions but not in the low involvement ones. These results again indicate that to regard music merely as a peripheral cue or an affective signal is to take an overly simplistic view of the role played by background music in advertising (Scott, 1990; Hung, 2000).

Studying the experimental literature (MacInnis and Park, 1991; Hung, 2000) in concert with the cultural studies literature (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996; Scott, 1990) suggests a more complex relationship between music-message congruency, cognitive processing, and attitudes. Resource matching notions (Anand and Sternthal, 1989; Meyers-Levy and Peracchio, 1995) appear to provide a fruitful perspective here. This framework suggests that music-message incongruency may consume cognitive resources, thus inhibiting processing, and thus affecting the formation of attitudes regarding both the ad and the brand. This effect is more likely to be observed when the level of cognitive effort demanded by the ad is high, since cognitive resources are likely to be fully extended in such a case, and may be unable to cope with the extra burden imposed by music-message incongruity.

We draw on resource matching principles to propose that congruency between the music and the brand will interact with the ad copy cognition demands. When the ad creates a coherent whole, ad elements do not compete for processing resources (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989). Hence, in the high-cognition demand copy condition, where the message comprises many facts demanding processing, music that is congruent with brand style will facilitate message processing and enable ad claim substantiation (Edell and Staelin, 1983; Unnava and Burnkrant, 1991). Message-congruent music provides important information about the ad and the brand, which should enhance the overall liking for the ad and the brand. To the extent that music fits the ad message, it should also help consumers focus on the message, which should, in turn, enhance

message encoding and learning (MacInnis and Park, 1991). Therefore, congruent music should positively affect A_{Ad} and A_{Brand}, when compared to both the incongruent condition and the no-music condition.

H1a With high-cognition ad copy, A_{Ad} will be more positive under the music-brand congruent condition than under the music-brand incongruent condition.

H1b With high-cognition ad copy, A_{Brand} will be more positive under the music-brand congruent condition than under the music-brand incongruent condition.

H2a With high-cognition ad copy, A_{Ad} will be more positive under the music-brand congruent condition than under the no-music condition.

H2b With high-cognition ad copy, A_{Brand} will be more positive under the music-brand congruent condition than under the no-music condition.

Past studies have shown that the presence of music, compared to no music, will serve to draw attention to the ad and act as a persuasive cue (Park and Young, 1986), as well as create positive affect (Alpert and Alpert, 1990; Bruner, 1990). This should be particularly apparent in the low-cognitive demand condition, where attitude is more likely to be driven by such executional cues (Petty and Cacioppo, 1983).

H3 With low-cognition ad copy, A_{Ad} will be higher under the music conditions than under the no-music condition.

Methodology

The purpose of the main experiment was to pair a music-brand congruency condition (congruent versus incongruent, plus a no-music control condition) with an ad copy condition (high

cognition versus low cognition), and determine the impact on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand}. In order to create the music-brand congruency conditions, two brands and two musical selections were chosen. A particular music-brand pairing would result in congruency (i.e., music A and brand A, music B and brand B), while a cross of this music-brand pairing would result in incongruency (i.e., music A and brand B, music B and brand A). A series of pretests were first conducted in order to choose the music, choose the brands, and test the ad copy.

Pretest #1. We began by pretesting a group of ten instrumental musical excerpts (five Classical and five Rock, since these represent two disparate styles of music that might readily provide exemplars of music-brand congruency and incongruency). All ten excerpts had the same volume, the same fast tempo (92-110 beats per minute), and all were 30 seconds long. These ten musical excerpts were presented to a group of 34 undergraduate business students. After hearing each excerpt, students indicated their attitude toward the music using a seven-point semantic differential scale (like-dislike, offensive-tasteful, favorable-unfavorable, repulsive-appealing, pleasing-disturbing), based on attitude scales used by Wells, 1964 and Venkat and Abi-Hanna, 1995). Pretest subjects were asked to categorize each musical excerpt as Classical, Rock, or Other, and indicated their level of familiarity using a 4-point scale (1=not at all familiar, 4=very familiar). Out of this process, the selected pair of excerpts from Prince and Handel was deemed to be equally liked and equally familiar, and were correctly categorized by all 34 respondents as being Rock and Classical, respectively, and were therefore chosen to form the background music in the radio commercials for the main experiment.

Pretest #2. A second pretest was conducted to choose two equally familiar brands within the same product category, but with brand personalities likely to be associated with distinctly different styles of music. A list of eleven pairs of well-known brands was generated in nine

different product categories, with each pair containing a brand that might fit better with Classical music, and a second brand that might fit better with Rock music (e.g., Perrier/Naya, Bic/Mont Blanc, Nike/Reebok, etc.). The 22 brands were presented in random order (i.e., not in pairs). Using a new sample of 39 undergraduate business students, respondents were asked to indicate their familiarity with each brand on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1=not at all familiar, 4=very familiar). Subjects also rated the suitability of Classical versus Rock music for the brand image (i.e., music-brand congruency) on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1=Classical music is much more appropriate, 2=Classical music is somewhat more appropriate, 3=Either is appropriate, 4=Rock music is somewhat more appropriate, and 5=Rock music is much more appropriate). Based on this pretest, Rolex and Swatch were the brands chosen because both of these brands were found to be equally familiar, and each was clearly identified with a particular musical style (Rolex with classical and Swatch with rock).

Pretest #3. A third pretest was conducted to develop high- and low-cognition ad copy. The high-cognition ad version gave specific reasons for buying the brand, with a selling argument based on rational grounds. The low-cognition ad version appealed to the consumer's emotions and feelings to convey brand image. An expert panel of four judges, consisting of two university marketing professors and two marketing graduate students, rated the level of information in the ads to ensure that both ads contained an equal number of information points (see Table 1 for radio scripts). The two ads had the same number of words (81), both mentioned the brand name four times, and both presented the informational points in the same order. A professional male radio announcer recorded the ads on high-quality digital tape. This process resulted in identical high-cognition ads for Swatch and Rolex (differing only in the brand name mentioned), as well as identical low-cognition ads. These four ad versions were then completed by digitally adding the

Rock or Classical music style excerpts chosen in Pretest 1, as well as a no-music control condition.

Main Experiment

The three pretests provided the basis for developing a 3 x 2 x 2 between-subjects experiment [3 (Music type: Classical vs. Rock vs. No-music) x 2 (Brand: Rolex vs. Swatch) x 2 (Ad copy cognition level: High vs. Low)], resulting in 12 experimental cells. For purposes of hypothesis testing, this was later collapsed into a 3 x 2 statistical analysis [3 (Brand-Music congruency: Congruent vs. No-music vs. Incongruent) x 2 (Ad copy cognition level: High vs. Low)].

Subjects

A total of 397 undergraduate business students were participants in the main study, each participating in one of the 12 experimental conditions. Participants were each exposed to a 30-second ad twice, and then filled out a questionnaire that took approximately 15 minutes to complete (see Table 1 for radio scripts). Sixteen of the questionnaires were found to be substantially incomplete and were discarded from the study, leaving a total of 381 questionnaires suitable for analysis (218 males and 163 females). While the use of student samples has sometimes been criticized, comparable studies in this area have previously used student samples (e.g., Kellaris et al., 1993; MacInnis and Park, 1991; Park and Young, 1986). As well, the product and brand selected (Swatch and Rolex) are ones that the business students were fully familiar with, as demonstrated by the brand familiarity ratings in the second pretest.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to test the hypotheses outlined earlier. A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} were each measured using a five-item 7-point scale (1=dislike, 7=like; 1=offensive, 7=tasteful; 1=unfavorable, 7=favorable; 1=repulsive, 7=appealing; 1=disturbing, 7=pleasing), with a Cronbach alpha for A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} of 0.87 and 0.93 respectively. Involvement with the ad was measured using a three-item 7-point scale (1=detached, 7=interested; 1=bored, 7=fascinated; 1=indifferent, 7=excited), with a Cronbach alpha of 0.84 (adapted from Zaichkowsky, 1994). Ad originality was measured using a three-item 7-point scale (1=common, 7=original; 1=traditional, 7=innovative; 1=conventional, 7=inventive), with a Cronbach alpha of 0.88. Some questionnaire items were presented in reverse order (and were therefore reverse-scored for statistical analysis), but all have been shown here in a consistent format for ease of presentation. Demographic questions were asked at the end of the questionnaire. Prior to the start of the main study, the questionnaire was refined through pre-testing with a total of 55 student subjects.

Results

A series of manipulation checks measured level of ad copy cognition, brand recognition, brand familiarity, music familiarity, music style recognition, and congruence between music style and brand image. All manipulation checks showed that the anticipated results were obtained.

High-Cognition Ad Copy: Congruent vs. Incongruent. A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to examine the impact of ad copy cognition level (high cognition / low cognition) and music-brand congruence (congruent / incongruent) on A_{Ad}. While there was a main effect for ad cognition ($F=5.550$, $df=1,244$, $p=.02$), there was no significant main effect for congruence ($F=1.219$,

df=1,244, p>.10), and no significant interaction effect (F=2.241, df=1,244, p>.10). However, an examination of the means for the high cognition condition shows that A_{Ad} is significantly higher in the congruent condition than in the incongruent condition ($\bar{x}_{congruent} = 4.93$, $\bar{x}_{incongruent} = 4.54$, t = 1.84, p<.05 one-tailed; see Figure 1 and Table 2), which supports H1a. (Because *a priori* hypotheses were presented and these hypotheses make predictions that are directional in nature, one-tailed tests are used to test the hypotheses.)

A second 2 x 2 ANOVA examined the impact of ad copy cognition level (high cognition / low cognition) and music-brand congruence (congruent / incongruent) on A_{Brand}. There was a marginally significant effect for ad congruency (F=3.290, df=1,244, p=.071), but no significant main effect for cognition (F=0.670, df=1,244, p>.10), and no significant interaction effect (F=0.994, df=1,244, p>.10). In line with the ANOVA results, an examination of the means in the high cognition condition shows that A_{Brand} is significantly higher with congruent music than with incongruent music ($\bar{x}_{congruent} = 5.49$, $\bar{x}_{incongruent} = 5.08$, t = 2.15, p<.05 one-tailed; see Figure 2 and Table 3), which supports H1b.

High-Cognition Ad Copy: Congruent vs. No-Music. A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to examine the impact of ad copy cognition level (high cognition / low cognition) and music-brand congruence versus the no-music control condition (congruent / no-music) on A_{Ad}. There was a main effect for ad cognition (F=8.339, df=1,255, p=.004), and a marginally significant main effect for congruence (F=3.649, df=1,255, p=.057), but no significant interaction effect (F=2.025, df=1,255, p>.10). An examination of the means shows that A_{Ad} is significantly higher in the congruent condition than in the no-music control condition ($\bar{x}_{congruent} = 4.93$, $\bar{x}_{no\text{-}music} = 4.48$, t = 2.42, p<.05 one-tailed; see Figure 1 and Table 2), which supports H2a.

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was also conducted to examine ad copy cognition level (high cognition /

low cognition) and music-brand congruence (congruent / no-music) on A_{Brand}. This showed that there was a marginally significant main effect for congruence (F=2.844, df = 1,255, p = .093), but no significant main effect for cognition (F=1.360, df = 1,255, p >.10), and a marginally significant interaction effect (F=0.378, df = 1,255, p > .10). An examination of the means shows that A_{Brand} is significantly higher in the congruent condition than in the no-music control condition ($\bar{x}_{congruent}$ = 5.49, $\bar{x}_{no\text{-}music}$ = 5.15, t = 1.72, p<.05 one-tailed; see Figure 2 and Table 3), which supports H2b.

Low-Cognition Ad Copy. Within the low-cognition ad copy condition, there was no significant difference in A_{Ad} under the music condition versus the no-music condition ($\bar{x}_{music}$ = 4.38, $\bar{x}_{no\text{-}music}$ = 4.28; t=.49, p>.10), hence H3 was not supported.

Discussion

This study investigated the effects of high- and low-cognition ad copy when combined with either no background music or background music that was (in)congruent with the brand. These results suggest that when the high-cognition ad was shown, both A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} were significantly more positive in the congruent music condition than in either the incongruent music condition or no-music condition. Under the low-cognition ad copy conditions, the impact of congruent and incongruent music is relatively equal (i.e., both less positive than under the high-cognition congruent condition). This study contributes to the literature on the use of music in advertising by considering the overlooked issue of congruency between brand image and music, distinct from previous studies that have focused on the mere use of music, or on aspects of music such as liking. We focus here on the effects of music in radio advertising, an area that has received little attention.

Our findings suggest that in addition to facilitating or hindering processing through its

effects on cognitive resources, music can provide a framing function in advertising, where it enhances the consumer's focus on the message (Hung, 2001; MacInnis and Park, 1991). In the high-cognition ad copy condition, brand-appropriate music may provide convergent information about the brand that helps interpret the factual information in the ad. Music may serve to promote thoughtful processing, and in doing so, affect attitudes. In this study, classical music paired with the Rolex brand may have enhanced its claims of quality and durability, while rock music paired with the Swatch brand may have enhanced its claims relating to style and fashion. However, in low-cognition ad copy conditions where the ad copy was general and lacked specific facts, neither the presence or absence of music, nor the congruence or incongruence of music, helped to substantiate ad claims or provide information to increase liking for the ad or brand. Accordingly, we found that in the low-cognition condition, there was no significant difference in A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} across the conditions, regardless of whether music was congruent or incongruent or absent completely.

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of this study is that it examines only two brands within a single product category, and uses only two types of music and two sets of ad copy. Future research should focus on extending this study by using other products and brands, by using different types of music and ad copy, by using lesser-known or unknown brands, and by examining television ads. We were concerned in this study only with radio ads, so the results regarding music-brand congruence need to be extended to television advertising. Although some work has been done in this regard (Hung, 2000), much remains to be done as practice seems to be well ahead of theory in this area. In this study, we included only music excerpts that were pre-tested to ensure they were relatively well-

liked; while this choice seems rational with reference to prevailing practices in radio advertising, it would perhaps be useful to replicate the experiment using music excerpts that were less well-liked. We also examined the effects of music-brand congruence using brands that were relatively well known; perhaps results would differ with lesser-known brands. The fact that we obtained the expected results with A_{Brand} using established brands and two short exposures to ads suggests that stronger effects may be obtained when music is paired with brands that are lesser known and elicit weaker initial attitudes.

Another area that could be further investigated is the notion of congruity. While we manipulate congruity here using two levels, it is possible that there exists a curvilinear relationship between congruity and liking such that moderate levels of congruity are preferred to higher levels (Hung, 2000). It would also be interesting to see different operationalizations of incongruity being employed.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that the presence of brand-congruent music in an ad can have a positive impact on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} when the ad copy is high-cognition. Managers would therefore be well advised to pre-test background music selections to ensure they are congruent, or have a good fit, with brand perceptions, particularly for ads that present facts and details. Lack of fit between brand and music can have a detrimental impact on A_{Ad} and A_{Brand} when the ad copy is high-cognition. Therefore, music congruent with the brand represents a better choice with high-cognition ad copy, while incongruent music can more safely be used with low-cognition ad copy.

Table 1 – Radio Scripts

High-Cognition Ad Copy

ROLEX (SWATCH). [pause] ROLEX (SWATCH) adheres to the highest standards of quality. Every watch is designed with the most precise Swiss movement – it's guaranteed to always be accurate. Tested for durability, ROLEX (SWATCH) will certainly last you a lifetime. And you never have to worry because every watch comes with an extended warranty. With a wide selection to choose from, there are styles bound to suit your taste. And fashions so versatile, they can be worn on any occasion. ROLEX (SWATCH) – it doesn't get any better than this!

Low-Cognition Ad Copy

ROLEX (SWATCH). [pause] Ahhh – the Swiss Alps last Spring – fresh air – sunshine – on top of the world – Snowboarding down crisp, clean slopes – and suddenly my ROLEX (SWATCH) fell from the chair lift – but no problem – I found it – at exactly 2:01 p.m. and 20 seconds counting. And ROLEX (SWATCH) followed me right into the hot tub afterwards – Kept the beat through a night of dancing – ticked away the minutes until an unforgettable sunrise. All day, all night – always in style. ROLEX (SWATCH) – it doesn't get any better than this!

Table 2 – Table of Means for Attitude toward the Ad (A_{Ad})

	Congruent Music Style	**Incongruent Music Style**	**No-music**
High-Cognition Ad Copy	4.93 (0.96) n=53	4.54 (1.28) n=57	4.48 (1.17) n=79
Low-Cognition Ad Copy	4.35 (1.07) n=67	4.41 (1.33) n=68	4.28 (1.01) n=57

NB: Above table shows cell mean and (standard deviation). 1=negative, 7=positive

Table 3 – Table of Means for Attitude toward the Brand (A_{Brand})

	Congruent Music Style	**Incongruent Music Style**	**No-music**
High-Cognition Ad Copy	5.49 (0.94) n=53	5.08 (1.06) n=57	5.15 (1.33) n=79
Low-Cognition Ad Copy	5.23 (1.17) n=67	5.11 (1.30) n=68	5.07 (1.15) n=57

NB: Above table shows cell mean and (standard deviation). 1=negative, 7=positive

Figure 1

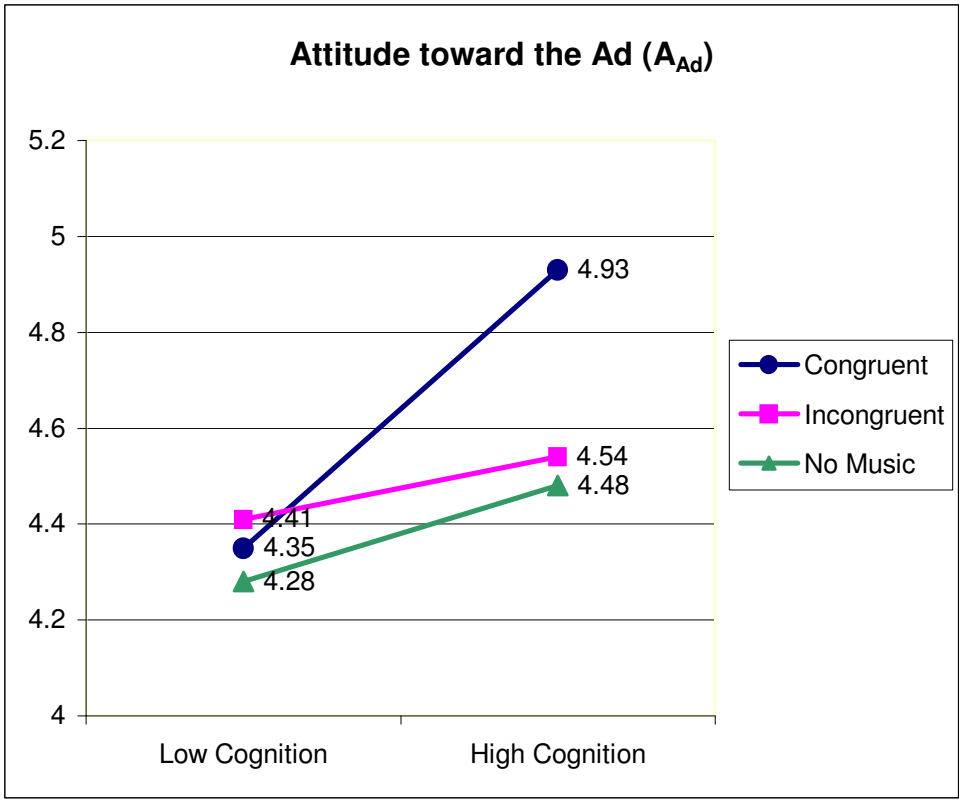
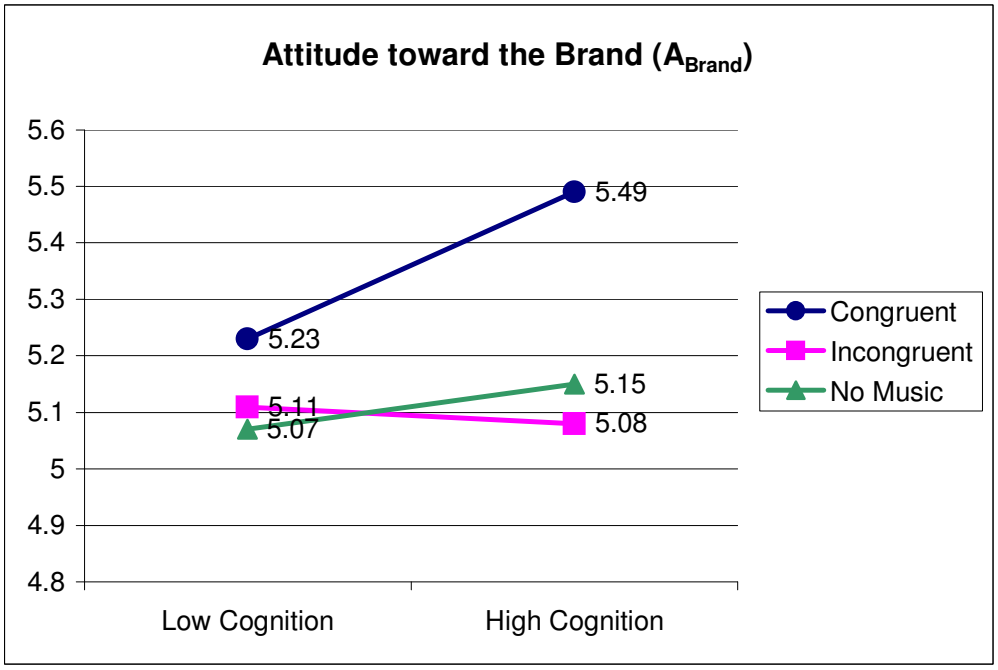


Figure 2



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