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Influence of In-store Music on Product Selection

To begin with, one of the main global tendencies in modern society is consumerism, and the purchasing of different products appears as a significant part of people's everyday life and an essential factor of world economics. The buying behavior of individuals is recognized as a meaningful element of the global marketing industry and is widely researched in different fields of study. Despite the growing popularity of Internet-shopping, stores and shopping centers still attract a considerable number of consumers, and the music that plays in such places is a important part of their visitors' experience. In fact, in-store music significantly affects the customers' product selection, and while well-selected tracks may motivate individuals to purchase offered products, unsuitable ones are likely to lead them to leaving a store without buying anything; furthermore, in-store music can even be one of the decisive factors in a customer's choice of a certain product.

First of all, it is necessary to point out the fact that music has been an essential part of individuals' shopping experience for a long time, and people already have certain expectations when they go shopping in different places. For example, they know that popular music is most likely to be used in shopping centers, and that shops that offer a more individual experience such as wine stores tend to play more thoughtful and classical musical pieces.

It is necessary to highlight that the music selection in shopping centers is a great example of in-store music's notable influence and even the manipulation of customers' buying intentions and choice. As displayed in the study conducted by Hussain and Ali, the presence of the background music in shopping malls helps people feel more relaxed and engaged in the shopping process (38). To add more, Spence et al. point out that "the very presence of music had a positive effect on shopper patronage behavior—especially if it was familiar and liked" (475). The atmosphere of shopping gets more pleasant, and as a result, individuals tend to spend more time in a shopping center or a store and are more likely to choose several products.

To add more, certain characteristics of music such as its tempo, loudness, and genre also significantly influence customer buying behavior and product selection. In particular, it can be observed in the fact that music with a high tempo "may affect a shopper's level of stimulation" and lead to a more active buying behavior; in other words, it is likely to stimulate customers to purchase more products (Spence et al. 472). This type of background soundtrack is often used when shops offer special prices and aim at attracting the consumers' attention because, in such situations, the high-tempo music energizes them and makes them act faster (Spence et al. 473). On the other hand, slow-tempo music of a minor tone tends to make people spend more time shopping because they tend to relax and move slower (Spence et al. 475). In addition, the music's loudness also influences the shopping behavior, and in this case, loud music negatively affects customers' purchasing willingness because it is "associated with vigor, turmoil and conflict" (Ringstad 20). As a result, people are not willing to stay in such stores and purchase the products that are to be associated with such feelings.

Furthermore, the music's genre has a significant impact on the public purchasing behavior as well. In this case, the most important role is played by the music's congruity. To be

more precise, the customers' products selection and buying behavior depends on if the chosen musical genre suits the product that is offered to consumers. Notably, well-selected music can even have a strong emotional appeal to the shop visitors, and therefore, "ensuring a musical fit with store/brand values is a central consideration" (Spence et al. 476). North et al. point out the fact that the music that plays when a product is exposed for the first time partially defines if the audience remembers and selects it or not; in order for the product to be remembered, the genre of the in-store music should be related to it (83). As a result of this congruity, customers are likely to remember the product more and be willing to pay a higher price for it. For example, for wine stores, classical music suits the most because it is considered as more 'upmarket' and therefore, stimulates the customers to select more expensive products (Spence et al. 476). As follows, a suitable musical background has a strong positive impact on the customers' purchasing behavior and product selection.

All in all, in-store music significantly influences customers' product selection and purchasing behavior. In particular, slow-tempo and quiet music is likely to create a comfortable atmosphere for the customers and stimulate them to spend more time in a store and choose more products. Furthermore, the genre of in-store music is also a meaningful factor because in case it fits the product's appeal, it makes consumers remember it better. In addition, an 'upmarket' music genre such as the classical one tends to stimulate people to select more expensive products.

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