EFFECTS OF MUSIC IN SUPERMARKET: EMPLOYEE'S REACTION

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EFFECTS OF MUSIC IN SUPERMARKET:
EMPLOYEE’S REACTION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration

Faculty of Economics and Business
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2012
I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a research paper for the degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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This research paper was submitted to the faculty of economics and Business, UNIMAS and is accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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I hereby declared that this research is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Signature : __________________________
Date : 30th April 2012

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF MUSIC IN SUPERMARKET: EMPLOYEE’S REACTION
(KESAN-KESAN MUZIK DI PASAR RAYA: TINDAKBALAS PARA PEKERJA)

This research focused on the supermarket employee’s reaction of moods and behavior towards the music played in their workplace. The intention of this research was to examine the relationship of background music and employee’s reaction, whether respondents like or dislike when the music being played. Questionnaires were distributed to eight supermarkets in Sibu town and total respondents obtained were 199. Collected data was analyzed by applying frequency analysis and factor analysis. The research found that respondent’s mood and behavior are closely related to the music played in their working environment.
ABSTRAK

KESAN-KESAN MUZIK DI PASAR RAYA: TINDAKBALAS PARA PEKERJA
(EFFECTS OF MUSIC IN SUPERMARKET: EMPLOYEE’S REACTION)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Employees' reaction in the workplace environment is an interesting subject. After the Hawthorne experiment carried out by Elton Mayo which was financed by Western Electric Company during 1920s, this experiment became the basis for the Human Relations Movement (Parker, Brown, Child, & Smith, 1977). The idea of the research has given some attention to the analyses of human behavior at work. Alone with the growth of the economy and retail market, the idea of Weber School of thought that "an ideal organization is without emotion, without rationality and individual factor" was challenged by Human Relation Movement (Fineman, 1993). Tendency to understand the worker's reaction from the perspective of mood and behavior is unavoidable in our society today and is getting important as to improve the environment in workplace.

Impact of service environment on employee and their reaction are important matters for a company's development such as supermarket. Music as one of the elements in the service retailing environment or retail atmospheric (e.g., Milliman, 1982, 1986; Baker, 1992; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990) that plays an important role and it helps the business to run smoothly. There are researches discussed about the advantage of giving comfortable state to their customer within the service environment they provided results in their businesses growth and
profit earned (Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990), and also debated the reaction and emotional state of consumers (Bitner, 1992; Russell & Snodgrass, 1987) instead of employees. This research will focus on how employees react towards the background music played by supermarkets in addition with their state of moods and behaviors to be discussed.

1.2 The Supermarket History

Supermarkets are to be found around the world in most of the countries and it was begin in America (Bevan, 2005). A supermarket is a departmentalized self-service store which offers a wide variety range of foods and household merchandises, large in size, and extremely wide in variety of selection compare to a traditional grocery store in consumer product (Gwynn, 1999). Supermarket originated in 1933 from America where prefix “super” has been a phenomenon in the twentieth century. During early days of retailing, customers rely heavily on grocery store assistant or clerks behind a counter to pick out their products and then measured all the products according to their customers’ needs and desires. But the grocery store began to disappear gradually at the end of the twentieth century (Friedman, 2000), unable to compete with low prices offered and other facilities provided by supermarket such as free parking space and vast variety kind of foods under one roof including non-food products.

The concept of self-service grocery was introduced by Clarence Saunders and his A&P stores, where he gain most successful trend in Canada and United States during 1920s (Mayo, 2005). But the first supermarket in the United States was opened by Michael J. Culler who was an
ex-Kroger employee during 1930s, in the New York City (Sarkar, 2005, August 4). On 4th of August, 1930, Michael Cullen dramatically changed the retail landscape by introducing the nation's first supermarket due to the inspiration from a drawing from his son who drew of a man sitting on top of the world (Sarkar, 2005, August 4). Seventy-five years later, supermarket can be found everywhere in United States. Supermarket begin to appeared as retail stores offering low prices and became the major food marketing channel in the U.S. in the 1940s and 1950s. Supermarkets spread through Europe in the 1950s and became part of a trend in developed countries and began to appear in developing countries during 1960s in the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America (Wikipedia.org., 2006). During 1990s, supermarkets began to provide goods such as clothing, stationery and electrical items and started to provide tangible products such as financial services and banking (Bevan, 2005).

Today's supermarket are much different from the one Cullen create in 1930. They are facing fierce competition from deep discounters such as Wal-Mart and Costco (Sarkar, 2005, August 4) and try to survive and compete on price or service and quality.

1.3 Supermarket in Malaysia

As global supermarket chains have discovered recently, the word “supermarket” means different things to different countries around the world (Stent, 2005). In Malaysia, especially in Sibu, people always think of supermarket an air-conditioned place where they can enjoy shopping together with family. A typical supermarket in their mind will be a place that provided music, air-condition and all sorts of grocery items and clothes. A shop without
air-condition or music will be categorized as traditional grocery store for young generation. The term departmental store and supermarket are interchangeable because a supermarket can be either operated within a departmental store or just a store separate from department store selling grocery items only.

The history of supermarket in Malaysia can be dated back in 1944, a 63-year old Malaysian brand, the name Giant, built on its ability to deliver low prices everyday to consumers. It was started by Teng family as a simple grocery store in Kuala Lumpur in 1944 (GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, 2007). In 1999, it was acquired by Dairy Farm International (DFI) where its ability to continuously offer value for money products was recognized and it was transforming into a national and international brand. DFI currently operates a total of 220 stores, comprising Giant hypermarket and supermarkets, Guardian Pharmacies and Cold Storage supermarkets (GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, 2007). As one of the largest employers in the country, it has 16,000 employees (GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, 2008), and a training centre in Selangor with their human resource policy to hire as many local staff as possible. Moreover, it has been ranked 11th in Malaysia's Most Valuable Brands (MMVB), with a brand worth of RM2.065 billion (GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, 2008), where MMVB is a recognition and brand valuation exercise by the private sector and major media which supported by the Government.

Second older supermarket in Malaysia is owned by The Store Corporation Berhad and it was established in November 1968 (The Store Corporation Berhad, 2007). The Store Corporation Berhad, which is operated by Malaysian, is a leading operator of supermarkets, departmental stores and hypermarkets in the country. It is recognized as the largest supermarket and departmental chain by The Malaysia Book of Records since 2001, and also
the oldest existing supermarket cum departmental chain in Malaysia. Its company profile stated that they are the only Malaysian retailer that establish outlets in every state of the Peninsular Malaysia, with 53 supermarkets and departmental stores which operating under the name of "The Store". Through its wholly-owned subsidiary Pacific Hypermarket and Departmental Stores Sendirian Berhad, this corporation also operates hypermarkets, which are allocated in Kedah, Penang, Kota Bahru, Kelantan and the newest outlet in Johore. All together, they have 75 outlets and over 10,000 employees in Malaysia (The Store Corporation Berhad, 2007).

1.4 Characteristics of Supermarket

Besides the facilities provided by the supermarket, there are certain significant characteristics posses by supermarket. Most of the supermarkets are situated near a residential area where their customers can reach the supermarket easily and more conveniently. Basically, there are broad selections of goods and services under a single roof and the prices are relatively low compared to other specialty shop such as stationery shop, book shop, bakery, grocery stall, etc (Anonymous, 2002). Besides, supermarket that attached in shopping complex or commercial center which has more compound provide extra parking spaces for their customers. Customers can always choose their best time to shop because the shopping hours that extends until the evening.

In order to attract customers, most supermarkets have massive outlays for advertisements, such as newspaper, radio, TV advertising campaign, leaflet and brochures to elaborate their in-store products and seasonal sales (Johnson, 2009). Besides these, to enhance the effect of
bringing comfortable feeling to their customers, supermarket use to play background music and air-conditioned. Normally, after customers shop and place their goods in the trolley and moving towards the check-out counter to pay what they needs, employees are already waiting for them at the counter to give their services.

One of the most significant difference compare with traditional grocery shop is that the background music used by the supermarket to enhance the positive attitudes towards the store (Chebat, 1999). Background music is exactly the music on the background which is noticeable yet won’t disturb but accompany the on-going activities. Background music has been shown in researches has emotion and cognition stimulation (Chebat, 1999; Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990). On top of these, background music is capable of affecting both customers and employees. Even though they surrounded by music, the level of listening is very much different (Pen, 1992).

1.5 Problem Statement

The elements in the workplace environment such as music, is very much affect human emotions and behavior. When people engaged in varied activities to fulfill their social or economic roles, the importance of the human factor cannot be denied as human relation school proposed against the scientific management. When we compare Human Relations and Scientific Management, Human Relations assumed that people are not rational and determine by emotion and sentiment (Parker, Brown, Child, & Smith, 1977). While Scientific Management assumed that people are totally rational to meet the job for money. Both theories assumed can be use for certain people at different level in the organization.
But other theories, such as the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Madden, 1986), also predict the actual behavior of the individual as a function of their intention to perform a particular action. Thus, stimuli that can be processed by our sensory system which are either recognizable or not recognizable to us, which can cause changes in our psychological state, are important matter to be considered in an employee’s reaction.

The turnover of the employees in the supermarket is equally high especially during holiday seasons and festive seasons (Bevan, 2005) compared to other service retailing environments such as grocery stalls which usually are family-business run by family members. The human resource department of a supermarket would spend massive amount of time and effort in training new staffs. Obviously, it will be a waste of resources, time and money in training new staffs over and over again as most of the staffs won’t stay permanently after the peak season. The purpose of this research is to find out the employee’s reaction towards the background music throughout their working hours in supermarket. We need to take good care of a company ‘asset’ because human-oriented company is very much depending on employee and their performances.

1.6 Brief Literature Review

Different arousing dimension from environmental stimuli can sense by the individual and cause differential responses through different ambient cues (Mattila, 2001). In order to understand the different responses caused by environmental stimuli, we need to study environment-behavior relationships, particularly store atmosphere, which has been conceptualized as a single attribute and studied as one factor that influencing responses.
Mehrabian-Russell model of human-environmental interaction in environmental psychology discipline would appear to have equally strong applications to store environments, especially in retail context (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). In this model, emotional states will be posited as significant mediators between environmental stimuli and people's behavior.

1.7 Study Objective

This research intention is to examine the relationship of background music and employee's reaction from the aspects of moods and behaviors when respondents like or dislike when the music being played. The research will also discuss, integrate, and build upon the work of Bruner and Mehrabian-Russell (1974), researches that provided theoretical and empirical evidence in which background music may influence human behaviors and responses. Throughout the research, the productivity and effective human relations of the organization will be improved in near future and the use of the employee opinion survey will enhance the human resource management. This would eventually contribute to the profitability in long run.

1.8 Study Rationale

Music as one of the important elements in supermarket, and it has powerful affect and influences on the human emotion and responses. In workplace where music was played throughout whole day, employees have been greatly influenced by music besides customers. Focus on this issue will gradually assist in resolving workforce shortage problem.
1.9 Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of this study, the following well-known model introduced by Mehrabian and Russell, 1974 served as the underpinnings for this research: model of human-environment interaction.

Figure 1: Model of human-environmental Interaction

| Environmental Stimuli: Sounds (Background Music) | Emotional Response: Pleasure / Arousal | Approach / Avoidance: Moods Behavior |

Source: Mehrabian and Russell (1974)

Various environmental stimuli (color, light, sound, smell, texture, temperature etc.) can cause primary emotional responses which as intervening variables determine reactions to the environment (Brengman, 2002). The theory assumed and proposed that individuals respond emotionally to environmental stimuli and leads to the “approach-avoidance” behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The Mehrabian-Russell model uses a Stimulus-Organism-Responses (S-O-R) paradigm, which offer a description of environments, intervening variables, and behaviors relevant to the retail settings. In their S-O-R paradigm, it has three requisite which are a stimulus taxonomy, a set of intervening or mediating, and taxonomy of responses.

In Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm, emotional states (Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance, also refer to as PAD) are used as intervening variables. But with the
modification of the Mehrabian-Russell theory proposed by Russell and Pratt (1980), this theory deletes the dominance dimension. Russell has argued that dominance is not purely applicable in situations where affective responses needed, because dominance requires cognitive interpretation by the person.

1.10 Research Question

What are the employee’s reactions (moods and behaviors) towards the music in the supermarket when they like or dislike the music being played?
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Background music

Music can be defined into many different characterizations. Three categories of music which have characteristics that clearly distinguish from one another but interrelated are art music, traditional music and popular music (Pen, 1992). There all exist at the same time and they constantly interact with one another. Art music is music of the Euro-American culture, transmitted though written notation and generally performed in a concert style setting. It is usually divided into six large time periods: Medieval, Renaissance, baroque, classic, romantic and modern (20th century music). Traditional music on the other hand, can be consider other worlds of music which conceived outside the Euro-American tradition to popular and it performed throughout the world. It is no more or less important than the traditions of Asiatic, Oceanic and African culture (Pen, 1992). Traditional music is the folk music of a culture, passed on orally, from person to person and performed in an informal atmosphere. In many cases, these civilizations are more sophisticated in timbre, textural approaches, duration, pitch and dynamics than the western ones. Popular music and traditional music are similar in that they appeal to a broad spectrum of people. It is rapidly spread through mass media and is intentionally created to be popular, marketed to the majority of the public (Pen, 1992).

Music is part of our lives, which cannot be separated. Background music is the noticeable
yet non-disturbance beats or rhythms that played in the background (Sherman & Seldon, 1997), which some familiar pieces that we choose to accompany us and it won’t unduly distract us from the primary task at hand.

Music performs an important role. Under different occasions, everyone listens to music: people in shopping center enjoy their family time; people crowds riding up and down in elevators at airport; people stuck in the traffic jam turn on their car radios; teens on streets with their MP3 player; audiences in concert halls listened to the symphony; couples enjoyed and bathed in the romantic music at their candlelit dinner. Music is everywhere in our daily lives and have much impact in daily operating activities.

We listen to music in a variety ways that satisfy our needs and emotions at particular times. The pleasure of enjoying the music in the concert hall and the music we enjoyed in a fine restaurant or supermarket while shopping are different. Music produces pleasant excitement and feeling in either situation, but with the different levels of listening. There are three levels at which we listen to music: those as background mood enhancement, thought association, and analytical perception (Pen, 1992). When we listen to music passively, allow the music to wash over us, our mood is enhanced by music. While at though associate level, we use music to rouse our mind and memory. At analytical level, we will concentrate on the music itself. In this study, researcher will concentrate on music as background mood enhancement.
2.2 Mood

Although many experiments suggested that moods can be easily changed, popular admonitions may be more valuable in practical mood management such as smile at ten people or think about good feeling all the time (Thayer, 1989). Mood also can be produced by hypnosis (Bower, 1981). We want to create a happy mood for each employee by using music instead of hypnosis because we have known for sometimes that thought exerts powerful controls on behavior and reaction (Thayer, 1989). As an informal survey conducted by Thayer (1989), it indicated that more that 10 percent of the respondents found music to be the best way to lessen their bad moods and ease the tense situation. Teasdale and Clark also successfully employed music in connection with their studies to elation and depression (Clark, 1983; Teasdale, Taylor & Fogarty, 1980).

2.3 Emotional States

Music arouses strong emotional responses in people (Pen, 1992). Not only do listeners have emotional reactions to music, but pieces of music also represent emotions in ways which can be recognized by listeners. Music is sound ordered in time, travel through air as sound waves until they reach a listener. Then the sound will become stimulus to brain and interpreted as music.

Aristotle (1961) once stated that:

Why is sound the only sensation that excites the feelings? Even melody without words has feeling. But this is not the case for color or smell or taste...But we feel the