

EFFECT OF MUSIC TYPES ON STAFF - CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP IN SUPERMARKETS

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I. ABSTRACT

Music is a tool that enhances human emotion. Most of the supermarkets play various types of music to provide an entertaining environment for their customers while purchasing on shop floors. Staff - customer relationship is the most important factor as far as the supermarket business is concerned in promoting business. The objective of this study is to find the effects of music types on staff – customer relationship. The following three parameters viz; customer service, smoothness of staff–customer relationship and easiness of managing customers were conveyed. A survey was conducted with a structured questionnaire at Arpico Supercentre Kandy. Three types of English music such as Romantic and classical songs (RCS), Rock and Hip-pop songs (RHPS) and Traditional Songs (TS) were played. Then responses of twenty customers per type of music were evaluated. In total sixty customers and another ten staff members were interviewed. This study revealed that supermarket staff provided the best services to their customers while playing both RCS and RHPS, a similar trend was observed for the smoothness of staff-customer relationship. Furthermore, staffs found easy to manage their customers at the time of RCS was playing. Statistical analysis revealed that music types had significantly ($p < 0.05$) affected all three parameters. A significant difference ($p < 0.05$) was seen between RCS and TS in terms of customer service and smoothness of the relationship between customer and staff. On the contrary, the insignificant difference ($p > 0.05$) was observed between RCS and RHPS on the above three parameters. Therefore, this study suggests that playing music types impact human interactions and serves as a tool to make an intimate staff-customer relationship in supermarkets, thus pave ways to increase the number of loyal customers required by supermarket business.

Keywords: music, supermarket, customer relationship, staff, customer service

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2. INTRODUCTION

Sri Lankan consumers have been deeply influenced by Western lifestyles in their purchasing behaviour, which have resulted in high demand for convenient outlets. Therefore, supermarket chain was expanded from year 2000 (Wanninayake & Randiwela, 2007). At present there are over 600 supermarkets has been operated in this country which can be categorized as supermarkets, hyper markets and convenience stores. Major supermarket chains giants are Cargill's food city and Keels super. In addition, there are other supermarket chains such as Sentra, Kings Super, Arpico, Sun Up, Park & Shop, Crystal and Prince Super etc operated in urban areas.

Competition among supermarket business increases day by day. Under this circumstance, retailers feel strong urge to use various methods to enhance consumers' shopping experiences. This is achieved by the strategy used to attract customers is improving physical environmental properties of shopping outlets such as colourful lightning, playing music and painting with attractive colours inside and outside (Wijk et al., 2018) among these music is constantly changing factor inside the shopping outlet.

Music is defined as the art of structured sound, with the purpose of bringing out an aesthetic response from its listeners (Dube & Morin, 2001), Music is claimed to be capable of catching peoples' attention and driving customers into the store for purchasing (Morrison & Beverland, 2003). Therefore music is one of the main tool used to enhance the supermarket environment for changing consumer behaviour during purchasing.

Background music plays the major element of retail purchasing environment (Garlin & Owen, 2006 and Morrison et al., 2010). The effect of music types on consumer behaviour in purchasing wine, found that, classical music type lead to purchase more expensive wine (Areni & Kim, 1993). This is again proved by North & Hargreaves (2008) stated that lerics of the music has part in changing human behaviour. However, all kind of musics do not have impact on human behavior, for an instance sales rate of floral shop was increased by melody and love song; pop music does not (Guéguen & Jacob, 2010). Background music creates a tranquilizing and pleasant atmosphere in order to increase purchasing time inside the supermarket (Gueguen et al., 2007). And the amount of purchase, value of purchase and enjoyment of consumers are affected by music played inside the shopping outlet (Turley & Milliman, 2000).

Music plays a key role in the decision making process while purchasing by enhancing the positive mood and emotional state of customer (Ding & Lin, 2012). Similarly, music can attribute to strong emotional stimulus and has the potential to be an effective and efficient means for stimulating moods. It has

been found that music influences consumption experience at cognitive, emotional, and behavioural levels, specifically with regard to attitudes and perceptions, time and money spend, and moods and feelings, in retail experience (Jain and Bagdare, 2011).

Different music genres, tempo and rhythms were used by researchers to study consumer behaviour (Soh et al., 2015). Music tempo and loudness are important characteristics which manipulate the consumer behaviour. Fast-tempo music is viewed as less annoying, gloomy, and depressing than slow-tempo music (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). Correspondingly slow tempo enhanced satisfaction, expectations, and relaxation (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). Furthermore, slow tempo music unlike fast -tempo music produces affective responses and consequently positive outcomes such as satisfaction, positive disconfirmation of expectations and relaxation are reported (Oakes & North, 2003). Consumer temped to spend more time when the slow tempo is playing rather than fast tempo (Milliman, 1986). On the other hand, the volume of background music did not affect shopping time in supermarket (Herrington & Capella, 1996). Thus, the above literatures argue that various characteristics of music effect the supermarket consumer behaviour and intension to purchase. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the effects of music types on the relationship between consumer and supermarket staff serves in an urban area.

3. METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted with structured questionnaire in Arpico Super Centre located in Kandy Peradeniya road between 2013 December to 2014 February. The effect of music types viz, romantic and classical songs (RCS), rock and hip-pop songs (RHPS) and traditional songs (TS) were evaluated on staff-customer relationship using five point Likert scale (Table 1) focusing on Customer service provided, smoothness of relationship between staffs and customers they experienced and assess the easiness of managing customer. Sixty customers and ten supermarket staff (check out staff and shop floor staff) responses were collected between 10.00 am to 9.00 pm. During this survey, each type of music was played on business hours at mild volume, then twenty customer responses were collected (Table 2). Then data were analysed with STATA (version-13) package for one-way ANOVA to find the effects of music type. Bonferroni Post-hoc test was carried out to find the difference between effects of music type on staff customer relationship.

Table 1. Five Point Likert scale and Their Corresponding Measures

Scale	Customer Service (CS)	Smoothness of Relationship	Easiness of Customer Management
1	Worst CS	Most Smooth	Very Easy
2	Bad CS	More Smooth	Easy
3	Moderate CS	Smooth	Moderate
4	Better CS	Normal	Difficult
5	Best CS	Not Smooth	Not Difficult

Table 2. Type of Music Played and Sample Size

Music Type	Sample Category	Number of Samples
Romantic and Classical Music (RCS)	Customer	20
Rock and Hip-pop Songs (RHPS)	Customer	20
Traditional Songs (TS)	Customer	20

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Customer services provided by staff

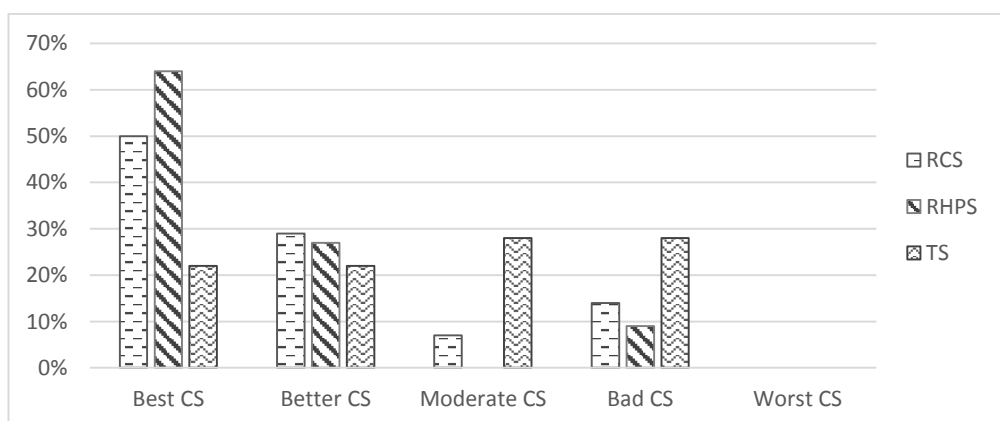


Figure 1. Customer Response on Customer Service (CS)

The present study reveals that best customer services were provided during the time of playing RCS (50%), while, 7% of customers gained moderate customer services by staff members (Fig 1). Similar trend was seen for RHPS types played with in the stores, 64% of them were given best service. In contrast to RCS and RHPS, 22% of customers scored best while, 28% scored (bad services) for TS music played within the store. Interestingly no customers had experienced worst services during this survey. This study proves that these three type of music had positively impacted customer services provided by staff. And the highest number of customer satisfaction on service could be obtained during RHPS.

4.2. Smoothness of Customer Relationship

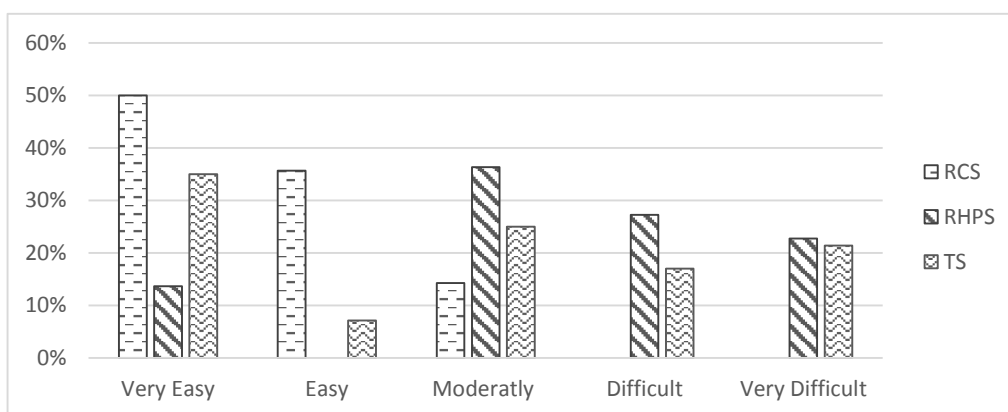


Figure 2. Customer Response on Smoothness of customer Relationship

It was found that smoothness of customer relationship were built through playing music in the shop floor. Highest percentage (77%) of response for RHPS (Fig 2) while no customer observed below the third category (smooth). The response for RCS showed that only 36% of respondents scored highest (smoothest) while 43% of customer scored second category (smoother) remainder 21% responded below second category. In terms of TS, 36% of respondents found forth category (neutral relationship) while the reminder responses were below the other types (RCS and RHPS) this proves smoothness of customer relationship had improved by both RCS and RHPS while least for TS type.

4.3. Easiness of customer Management

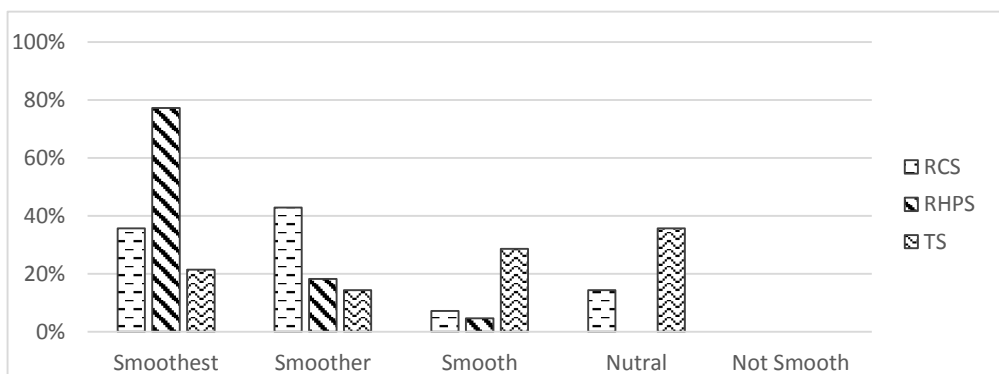


Figure 3. Easiness of customer management by staff

The responses provided by staff members showed that customer management had influenced by types of music played within shopping outlet. It was found half of the staff casted highest score (50%) for RCS (very easy to manage customers), while about 35% for TS and remainder 15% for RHPS type music. Similar trend were found for the response for 2nd and 3rd categories. However, RHPS and TS had impaired the easiness of customer management (scores below 3rd and 4th categories) depicting that 50% staff complains for RHPS and 38% for TS. This shows the most preferred music type by staff were RCS as it had change the moods of customers.

4.4. Staff – Customer Relationship and effect of music type

One-way ANOVA analysis reveals that for particular language song, (in this study English song alone) staff-customer relationship such as customer services, smoothness of relationship and easiness of customer management were significantly ($p < 0.05$) affected by types of music played in shop floor (Table 3).

Table 3. One-Way ANOVA Results

Staff-customer Relationship	F-Value	P-Value
Customer Service	4.87	$p < 0.05$
Smooth Relationship	12.00	$p < 0.05$
Easiness of Management	9.28	$p < 0.05$

Further Bonferroni Post-hoc test analysis (Table 4) reveals that different between effect of TS and RHPS on customer service and smoothness of customer relationship was significant ($p < 0.05$). The differences among rest of the music types were insignificant. In terms of customer management, the significant effect were found between RCS and RHPS similarly RCS and TS. The present study further explains quality customer services and smooth relationship could be experienced by the respondents when RHPS was played rather than TS type. While, customer management could become easy whenever RCS was playing inside the shop floor.

Table 4. Bonferroni Post-hoc Test Result

Customer Service		
	RCS	RHPS
RHPS	MD = 0.312 p-value = 1.000	
TS	MD = - 0.786 p-value = 0.151	MD = - 1.097 $p < 0.05$
Smooth Relationship		
	RCS	RHPS
RHPS	MD = 0.727 p-value = 0.070	

TS	MD = - 0.785 p-value = 0.080	MD = -1.52 p < 0.05
Easiness of Management		
	RCS	RHPS
RHPS	MD = -1.812 p < 0.05	
TS	MD = - 1.357 p < 0.05	MD = 0.454 p-value = 0.871

MD = Mean Difference

Background music creates a tranquilizing and pleasant atmosphere for increasing purchasing time inside the supermarkets (Gueguen et al., 2007). By using this strategy staff-customer relationship would improve and contributes to increase the sales revenue. Previous studies have suggested, ambient music impacts the customer behaviours, they become relax and enjoy the shopping. For an instance when customer standing in the queue in front of the billing counter, they behave in a calm way until the bill is paid (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000).

Typically, supermarket staffs have to work long working hours per day and get exhausted after few hours of continuous work resulting in less efficient and lower performance in their given tasks. To cope up this scenario, supermarket management has introduced ambient music as an alternative tool to mitigate the so called effects.

The present study confirms the speculations and found types of music had positive impact on all three parameters measured in Likert scale. This confirms the previous finding that cheerful music had led to positive moods, attitudes and behaviours of human (Kellaris, 2008)

Conceptual Model on Effect of Music Type

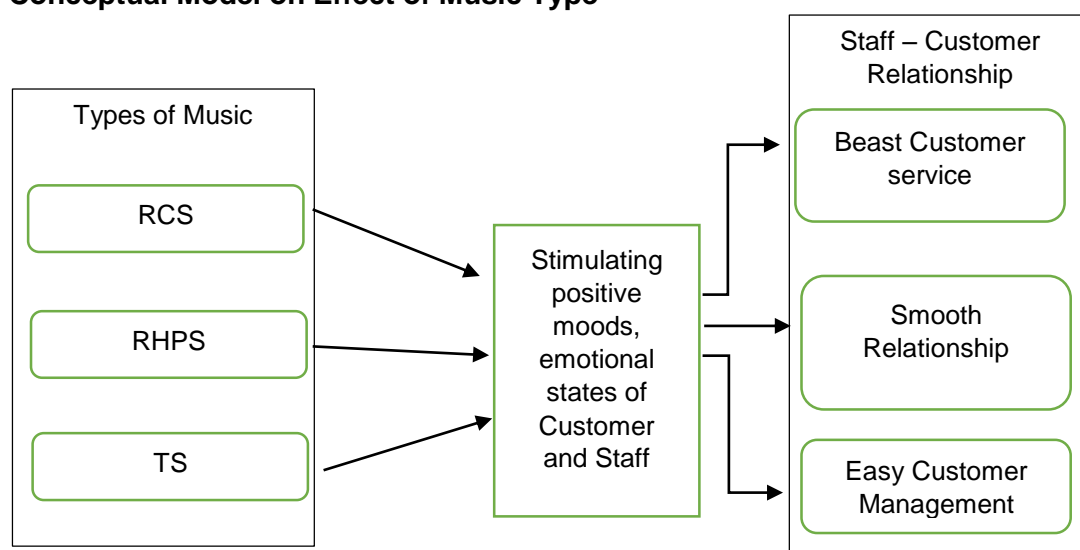


Figure 4. Conceptual Model on Effect of Music Type on Staff – Customer Relationship

Based on the above findings, a conceptual module (Fig 4) is formulated depicting that type of music stimulate positive mood and improve emotional states of customers and employees. This model further predicts ambient music help in maintaining smooth relationship between staff and customer.

To provide best customer services, maintain smoothest relationship and easiest customer management, supermarket staffs should be active and willing to show positive attitudes to their customers. In response to ambient music staffs entertain themselves and enhance their mood to positive mind.

The present findings further confirms the previous studies as the effect of music type on consumer behaviour in purchasing wine (Areni & Kim, 1993), the lyrics of the music also contribute in changing human behaviour (North & Hargreaves (2008). Similar trend was seen in the present study, 64% respondents agreed that best customer services were provided when RHPS type of song was played (Fig 1). In contrary, least preferred type music was TS (22%). Music tempo and loudness are important characteristics which manipulate the consumer behaviour. Previous studies stated that fast-tempo music was viewed as less annoying, gloomy, and depressing than slow-tempo music (Caldwell and Hibbert, 2002). Thus cautious measures has to be considered while playing ambient music within the stores.

This study found that, most of the customers felt best customer services and smoothest relationship during the time of RHPS was played. On the contrary, largest number of supermarket staffs found difficulties to handle customers. This phenomena could be occurred because of music tempo, is defined as the playing speed of the music. RHPS music has high tempo compare to RCS due to this, customers become highly agile, enthusiastic and feel pleasant while purchasing (Caldwell & Hibbert, 2002). In contrast working staffs could not enjoy the high tempo music due to stress of working environment and supervision of store manager. Furthermore, statistically significant difference was shown between RSC and RHPS on easiness of customer management, depicting that RCS seem to have slow tempo. In response staffs become calm and willing to serve the customers in a productive way by freely think of their customers. However, present study revealed that playing continuously RHPS alone would not yield profitable customer relationship, while alternatively playing RCS and RHPS would make better customer relationship in supermarkets.

5. CONCLUSION

The primary aims for playing music in supermarket is to provide delightful environment to customers, make staff positive attitudes and energised. This study revealed that music had displayed significant effect on improving staff-customer relationship and hence maintain intimate staff-customer relationship in supermarket eventually leads to increase loyal customers towards business. Although this survey, was only be able to focus on the customers and shop - floor staffs perspectives, further studies could be carried out to find out the effect of diverse language of songs

to confirm above relationship. In addition various strategies for effective handling of human resource to promote business in supermarkets could be explored.

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