Reflective Critique

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Abstract

This work shows an overview of theories and research on music's role in advertisement and other persuasive media. They mainly focus on music and the cognitive effect in adverts, while the concepts still work in other influential media like public service announcements, games, and commercial advertising. People also use music in love, political messages, and entertainment. The component begins with a brief discussion about the use of music in advertising. Next, an Elaboration Likelihood Model of media persuasion is introduced, which explains the effect of music in persuading people through various psychological effects while listening to music incorporated with visual elements, how a piece affects memory, mood, attitude, conditioning, message processing, meaning construction, and commercial branding use. The work explores how persuasion is not the only use of media. When music familiarity and the audience's background culture also affect how music influences people in media.

Next, a research-based practice shows the use of the research in practical work, demonstrating how the experimental work was created, edited, modified, and delivered, including creating different moods, attitudes, message processing skills that can be recreated and used in further work.

Finally, a written self-reflection critique demonstrating perceptive, incisive, and objective, critical self-evaluation shows how the research and analysis helped form the audio-visual.

Reflective Critique

Audio Visual Composition

Analysis of the psychology of music

In East Asian mythology, Sun Wukong – the monkey king, had more to worry about just the weather, thieves, and other forest hazards. If he ventured too close to a particular creature, he would hear the enchanting noise of the animal. Those who listened to the noise could not resist, following it to their deaths as the cave creature took their lives. Although few would argue nowadays that noises are strong enough to render listeners as helpless as Wukong's adventures, studies show that music does have the power to sway people navigating the caves of today's media-saturated society (Allan, 2008; Bruner, 1990).

Advertising is inescapable in everyday life. An average American aged 17 or above is exposed to close to 100 commercials every day (Holt, Ippolito, Desrochers, & Kelley, 2007). That number will increase if we include TV, radio, and online advertisements. Studies have examined the attributes of the music itself. Let us look at Hung and Rice's content analysis. The analysis showed that 80 per cent of commercial music was instrumental. A variety of musical styles were used, including atmospheric (5.7%), hard-rock/metal (5.7%), fanfare/march (5.7%), rap/dance (6.1%), jazz (12.7%), easy listening (13.1%), classical (20.1%), contemporary (29.1%). The commercials were mostly in major mode (72%), soft (62%). Most had a distinct melody (52%), but only 10% used a jingle (Hung & Rice, 1992, April). Numbers show that soft instrumental music in major mode is used broader through the media, which is reasonable. People tend to focus more on positive and soft music than hard music.

Researchers used the Elaboration Likelihood Model or ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) to explain attitude change through mass media (Allan, 2008). The ELM is a "dual-route" model that describes how a message may change one's attitude. Figure 1 illustrates the essential elements.

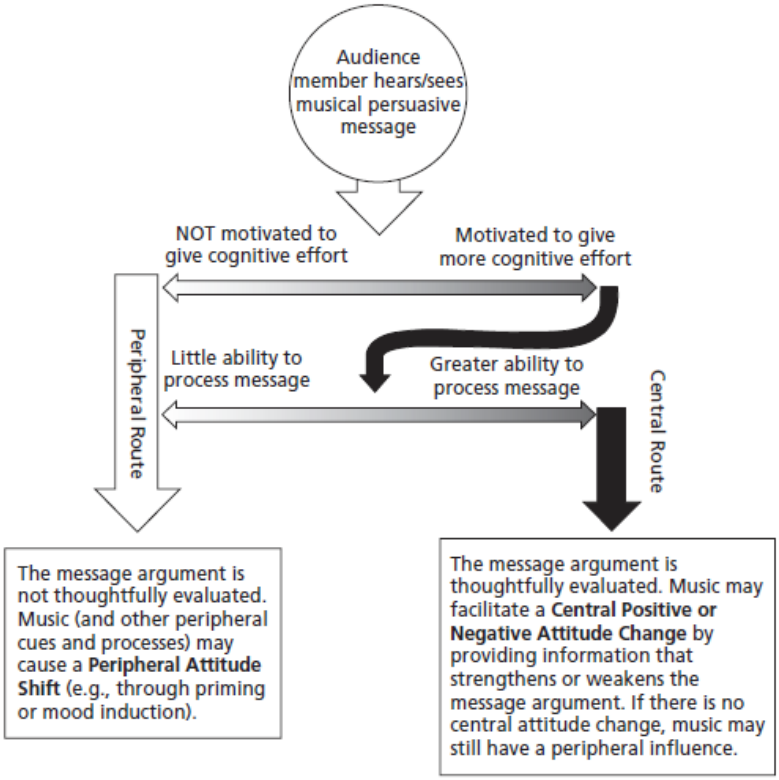

Figure 1 Elaboration Likelihood Model for music persuasion. Music may increase or decrease the audience's motivation and ability to process the message of the audio-visual composition. Peripheral Route and Central Route demonstrate the cognitive effect of the list

People will have a more significant cognitive effort ("Elaboration") and critically evaluate the message when the central idea (a logical, persuasive appeal) of a message is if they have the motivation. This is called central route processing, in which the audience is highly involved with the information and critically evaluates the argument. The audience will likely develop a less favourable attitude when the statement is weak. The audience will give less cognitive effort to the peripheral route processing. In this instance, the individual will not provide the argument much thought.

Researchers could bend the ability and motivation to elaborate in several ways. Relevance and involvement of a message can raise the participation of a message to the audience (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). A heightened sense of personal responsibility can increase the motivation for cognition (Tormala, Briñol, & Petty, 2007).

Associative priming involves using two stimuli that are usually associated with one another, forming a network of associated nodes. When a trigger is activated, other closely related nodes become activated, making it more accessible for use in working memory (Dimofte & Yalch, 2011). Shevy (2008) did two experiments showing that the sound in popular music genres can be associated with distinct groups of extra-musical concepts, forming 'cognitive genre schemas'. In Shevy's first experiment, participants indicated their thought of country music or hip-hop. In these two comparisons, listeners associated hip-hop with minority ethnicity, youth and liberal ideology, and less trustworthiness and friendliness. The musical style of music did not directly alter the attitude to the brand but changed the listeners' perception of the artist.

Research-Based Practice

The musical composer does not directly influence the brand, but the music sways people to give the effort to process the information provided in the media. We have learnt that people relate different musical genres with ideological concepts (Shevy, 2008). While working with fashion brand advertisements, receiving an audience list benefited me while choosing the genre. Picking a base-house/hip-hop track for an audience aged 16-21, living in the south of China, with more liberal/capitalist ideologies, seemed reasonable. Since the brand was advertising pioneer streetwear, which is not but close to luxury streetwear brands, it was appropriate to reference brands such as 'Adidas Skateboards', 'Supreme' and 'Off-white'. These brands have had giant

budget adverts, and the music in them mainly was hip-hop, drum n bass and trap. So, I referenced them while composing music for adverts.

When working on a school advertisement and knowing that the audience would be 16-21 years old, I did not make hip-hop and bass music. Since school adverts are more about friendliness and trustworthiness, the audience would be unmotivated to process the message if the music was associated with minority ethnicity, youth and liberal ideology. So instead, I used classical orchestra with synths, which blended the feelings of friendliness, kindness, modernity and aspiration for self-improvement. When composing orchestra, I used the Kontakt orchestra library 'Spitfire – Albion ONE', ambient sound library 'Sample Logic – Morphestra 2' and some organic drums recorded by Native Instruments. Not every composer would agree that digital orchestra libraries are any better than real orchestras, but critically speaking, the audience will hear the music on tiny speakers, which does not make it much better if I live recorded an orchestra.

Evidence of the influence of research in the Specialist Project

Matching sound designed effects with visuals to increase the cognitive impact is essential for adverts. Different sound effects make it easier for the audience to follow what is going on the screen (Flueckiger, Harper, Doughty, & Eisentraut, 2009). When the logo appears on the screen in our modern media-saturated society, most likely, we will hear a white noise sweep. It makes sense because the image appears on screen without any visual reminders, so the sound compliments the change in imagery. In my personal opinion, this is a great technique to tell the audience that something has changed, but not every time. While working on an adult-wear advert, a logo appeared at the end of the advertisement. Instead of using white noise, I used a sub-base that repeated three bars before the end credits disappeared. Since mainstream adverts

have white noise, but the audience has ideologies opposite the mainstream, it seemed way more interesting to flip the typical high-end sound with a low-end sound.

Reflection

Self-evaluation

To be perceptive, incisive, and objective, I invited my friends working as film producers for a fair enough number of years to see my project. The first thing that I learned was that my musical styles all fit the visuals. Carefully and thoughtfully crafted sound effects matched scenes that demanded audio complementary. Indie film music perfectly fits the director's initial thoughts when creating the film. Also, they liked the drum-n-bass music for the fashion wear advertisement, said that it did the style of the character who looked 'young and wild'. At the same time, I found that I could improve my music by adding more sound effects to several parts of my work. For example, I could add some white noise in the advertisement for youth clothes, where the logo's visual changes. Also, I could try to work in different genres and types of music to experiment more with emotions and feelings.

Nonetheless, I asked myself if I liked what I did. If I put some standards that can hold the meaning of good and wrong, it can be easy to answer this question. It is good if the audience can cognitively finish watching the video and remember what was on screen. It is even better when the audience can think of relative topics and have cognitive effort to process the message. While my friends were watching, I tried to ask them throughout if they had followed what was on screen. They demonstrated cognitive effort.

Areas for future development

Many sensory modes are involved in multimedia experiences. For example, test subjects scroll through a long menu and respond to the researcher's guide questions related to motor

responses. Alternatively, test subjects played a video game on a console with intense visuals, tactile input, and a group of researchers close to them (Donohue, Woldorff, & Mitroff, 2010). Alternatively, a child dances and sings to an interactive children's program. These real-world contexts incorporate far richer sensory experiences than the artificial laboratory stimuli used in most sensory dominance and engage a broader range of sensory modalities. For instance, university students with extensive video game experience were better in multisensory perception and integration than non-gamers, shown by their ability to distinguish slightly offset audio and visual events in time (Donohue, Woldorff, & Mitroff, 2010).

Then we might ask, can a single broader perspective could contain all the different viewpoints presented. Could a single framework or theory represent the overall media communication described by Shevy (2008) while preserving the depth of the role of music in emotion? While the Grand Theory of music in multimedia might not be the goal, we can use arguments to fulfil current theories.

Further, a single dominant culture does not strap music. Every culture's multimedia does it uniquely individual to its culture. An insight into the mental processes underlying the role of music from the media produced in other cultures is a challenging experience that can change our assumptions about music. There also remains a mystery of consciousness. While psychoanalysis might be the final frontier, accounting for the contents of consciousness is a challenge for a complete understanding of the role of music in multimedia. Very few empirical studies have attempted to explore audience response to the same piece of music in a dietetic and non-diegetic function, which means that many further studies are needed to follow these pioneering efforts.

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Figures title:

Figure 1 ELM for music persuasion. The ELM terminology and general concepts of Petty and Cacioppo (1986) are adapted.