

Pump Up the Jam: How Music in Brand Advertising Can Create Deeper Connections with Consumers

Major Research Paper

Pump Up the Jam: How Music in Brand Advertising Can Create Deeper Connections with
Consumers

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September 3, 2017

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ABSTRACT

As our visual landscape becomes saturated with advertisements and media technologies, the advertising industry is using sound in more ways than ever before to open new acoustic channels between brands and consumers. Through analysis of scholarly literature, advertising industry publications, and three recent advertising campaigns and online commentary around those campaigns, this MRP highlights the way advertisers attempt to use sound and music as a “universal language,” as a way of accessing emotion, and as a technique for engineering responses in audiences. The scholarly literature review identifies two broad approaches to research on music in advertising: the first focuses on harnessing the power of sound to enhance the impact of advertising messages whereas the second approach contextualizes and critiques the use of sound in advertising. Informed by concepts and themes in the scholarly literature, the MRP then turns to an analysis of the use of sound in three specific advertising campaigns: Oreo’s 2013 “Wonderfilled,” Nike’s 2016 “Unlimited Together,” and Adidas’ 2017 “Original Is Never Finished.” Finally, the MRP identifies dominant perspectives of sound and music among advertising professionals through analysis of fifteen *AdAge* issues, a popular advertising trade journal, using a coding scheme based on the work of Powers (2010), Scott (1990), and Serazio (2013). Together, these three methods provide an in-depth understanding of the dominant perspectives of sound and music which shape the use of these modalities in the advertising industry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Shiga of the Master of Professional Communication Program at Ryerson University. The door to Dr. Shiga's office was always open whenever I ran into a trouble spot or had a question about my research or writing. He consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, but steered me in the right the direction whenever he thought I needed it.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Nesselroth-Woyzbun of the Master of Professional Communication Program at Ryerson University as the second reader of this thesis, and I am grateful for her very valuable comments on this thesis.

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Introduction

Music has been an important aspect of advertising since the first network radio broadcast aired in 1923 (Kellaris, Cox, & Cox, 1993). By the late 1930s theme music was used in broadcast signatures and “singing commercials” had become standard practice (Kellaris, Cox, & Cox, 1993). When musical ads transitioned to television in the 1950s, brand jingles and pop songs took center stage. As audiences now begin to shift their attention to online platforms and other genres of advertising including “short film” type ads and the “music video style” ad, sound and music continue to play a vital role in advertising today. The influx of advertisements in the contemporary media environment has caused many consumers to become indifferent towards traditional marketing efforts (Graakjaer, 2015). In order to make a lasting impression, advertisers tap into seemingly “authentic” methods of communication to influence their audience’s thoughts and, increasingly, their emotions. A study conducted by Friestad and Thorson (1986) reveals that advertisements that use emotional messages have a positive long-term effect on memory, resulting in improved brand recall and product messaging. Authenticity has also become a key element in marketers’ quest to connect with millennials, an age group known for its cynical attitude towards the ad industry.

As our visual landscape becomes saturated with advertisements through a growing number of media technologies, the advertising industry is using sound in more ways than ever to open new acoustic channels between brands and consumers. A Nielsen Entertainment study released earlier this year found that of 600 TV commercials analyzed, the 500 with music performed better in consumer surveys across such metrics as creativity, empathy, emotive power and information power (Neff, 2015). In the advertising industry, hearing is often considered to be a unique mode of sense perception that is thought to be very powerful for brands and advertisers.

For example, in retail environments sound can influence impulse buying behaviour and incite consumers to purchase store items (Mohan, Sivakumaran & Sharma, 2013). Sound has also become a crucial feature of several products such as the 2017 Ford Mustang which, due to the new smaller engine, features speakers that project recorded engine noises into the interior of the car. Powers (2010) gives the example of Apple's 2008 Nano commercial which featured Feist's "1-2-3-4", turning the song into a global phenomenon. Each frame in the advertisement was carefully manipulated to match the beat of the song with the intention of capturing the audience's attention and leaving them in anticipation of more. Based on the notion that sound is *felt*, advertisers often assume that music can extend beyond verbal and visual language and act as a universal dialect (Scott, 1990). Sounds can also trigger a person's emotions, thus allowing consumers to connect with an advertisement on a deeper level than visuals alone. Finally, advertisers are also drawn to music because of the perception that it can be engineered in a strategic and systematic way in order to produce predictable outcomes. Based on these examples and the assumption that visuals are no longer enough to seize consumers' attention, the following sections will explore the way sound has become an effective way of governing consumer desires. Through an analysis of discourse about sound and music in industry publications as well as three music-based advertising campaigns – Oreo's 2013 "Wonderfilled," Nike's 2016 "Unlimited Together," and Adidas' 2017 "Original Is Never Finished" – this Major Research Paper aims to illustrate how advertisers attempt to use sound and music as a universal language, as a way of accessing emotion, and as a technique for engineering responses in audiences.

Literature Review

Amongst the scholars listed in this review, it is widely agreed that sound is a valuable promotional modality and should be integrated into the design of advertisements. This section explores literature on sound in advertising in communication, psychology, business and marketing.

Traditional Approaches: The Power of Sound in Advertising

Sound as a Universal Language that Works Over the Body

In his book *BRANDsense*, Linsdtrom (2005) argues that the most successful brands will adopt characteristics of “religious sensory experience” to convert their consumers into dedicated believers. Powers suggests that sonic branding can connect consumers with sound’s “primeval, irrational nature” (Powers, 2010, p. 296). As Treasure (2007) writes: “We are not so modern that a sudden sound does not cause an immediate release of adrenaline and cortisol, our flight/fight hormones” (Treasure, 2007, p. 127). All three statements are suggestive of the assumption that sound has the potential to produce automatic reactions and bypass rational thinking. In this view, music can function as a type of stimulus which elicits a conditioned response.

In a study that utilized a classical conditioning approach to music in advertising, Gorn (1982) exposed 244 undergraduates to a slide showing a light blue or beige pen accompanied by either “liked” or “disliked” music for one minute. One half of the participants were exposed to the liked music, while the other half experience the disliked music. After participants rated the music, they were offered a choice between a light blue or beige pen, one of which was previously shown on the slide. Results indicated that 79% of participants in the “liked” music conditions chose the pen in the color displayed on screen, while only 30% of participants in the

“disliked” music conditions chose the displayed pen (Gorn, 1982). Even though the audience was provided with minimal information about the product, the results suggest that liked music with an upbeat sound might stimulate beliefs that the colour of a pen is a “fun colour” or that it matches an active lifestyle (Gorn, 1982). Gorn’s study demonstrates how the stimulus-response model has influenced academic research on music in advertising (Kellaris & Cox, 1989; Vermeulen & Beukeboom, 2015).

Powers (2010) notes that sonic branders are particularly fond of the notion that “we have no earlids,” meaning that sound cannot be avoided. Raffaseder (2009) explains:

Unlike the eye, the ear cannot be closed. Also, as it is not fixed to a visual angle it receives all audio signals from its environment. While acoustic perception always happens automatically, albeit often unconsciously, visual perception requires active looking. (Raffaseder, 2009, p. 98)

Based on Raffaseder’s assumption, one comes to understand that sound is ubiquitous, making it impossible for audiences to escape its influence. However, as discussed later in the limitations sections in the literature review, social media users now have access to “earlids” in the sense that they can mute ads and other videos on television and social platforms, forcing advertisers to become more creative in the ways they use both sound and visuals.

Finally, Powers (2010) outlines that advertisers consider the universality of music as a cost-effective tool in a globalized environment. Music is often thought to be one of the only advertising tools that can transcend verbal language for global brands operating around the world. For example, Treasure (2007) cites archaeologist Steven Mithen, who noted that humans have made music for hundreds of thousands of years, even outdating verbal language itself. According to Treasure (2007), spoken language, which is processed in our brains differently than

music, later sidelined music from its original role as our core communication vehicle.

Nevertheless, music remains a powerful communicative tool that we often use without having to consciously decode its meanings.

Scott (1990), on the other hand, challenges Powers' claim by arguing that the majority of research focusing on music in advertising has been constructed on the idea that music can act as a mood-altering drug, occurring independently from meaning or context. Meyer (1956) describes this as the "error of atomism, the attempt to explain and understand music as a succession of separable, discrete sounds and sound complexes" (Meyer, 1956, p. 5). While experimental studies such as Gorn's may yield results that seem to favour the use of music in advertising, such studies often show little to no differences between groups who experienced an ad with music versus those who did not. This leads to another error presented by Meyer: "the error of universalism" (Meyer, 1956, p. 5). This describes the erroneous belief that certain types of music will generate certain responses, regardless of the cultural or social background of the audience.

Sounds as "Pure" Emotion

The third assumption focuses on sound as "pure" emotion, which suggests that the function of music and sound more generally in advertising is to trigger emotional experiences in the audience (Powers, 2010). Powers notes that "no matter how immune consumers may believe they are to these kinds of audio cues, they're not made out of wood" (Powers, 2010, p. 297). Similarly, Lewis, Fretwell and Ryan (2012) explain that the most successful ads use emotion to appeal to consumers. Scott (1990), on the other hand, problematizes the assumption that music is primarily a process of emotional influence. The author indicates that cognitive intervention is also essential to achieve affective attachment (Scott, 1990).

If audiences are assumed to be disengaged and to make decisions irrationally, then the emotionally-stimulating aspects of music may seem to be effective tools for persuading viewers. The persuasive power of music stems from its capacity to subtly and indirectly influence consumers' emotions. Alpert and Alpert (1991) suggest that when music appears in the foreground of an ad, it has a more dominant role and will more likely target affect rather than cognition. If the music recedes into the background of an ad, it will be less attention getting, less distinctive and it will have a less dominant role, making it less likely to be affect-based (Alpert & Alpert, 1991). The authors illustrate that when music with lyrics is used to carry the ad's verbal message and meaning, the ad will likely be affective-based, appealing to feelings (Alpert & Alpert, 1991). Galan (2009) notes that music that produces an affective response in consumers increases the likeability of the brand or product and the intention to buy.

As founder of sonic branding firm Brand Timbre, Brian Rupp, writes: "Where language is great for articulating your values, ideals, intentions and capabilities, music can reveal the soul of your organization in a way that both your employees and your audiences will feel and connect with" ("Brand Timbre," 2017, n.p.). Music's ability to provoke our emotions motivates its use by advertisers as a tool in a marketplace saturated by visual advertisements, an environment in which consumers have learned to avoid marketing messages to some extent. Like Powers (2010), MacInnis and Park (1991) argue that music has the power to arouse emotion and memories. Further, they suggest that the effect of music on message processing depends on the *indexicality* of music (MacInnis & Park, 1991, p. 162). Here, indexicality is defined as the extent to which music stimulates emotion-laden memories. The strong emotions associated with high-indexicality music may enhance low-involvement consumers' interest in an ad, provoking incidental knowledge of its message (MacInnis & Park, 1991). However, high-indexicality music

may interfere with high-involvement consumers' message processing.

Morris and Boone (1998) claim that music is primarily used in advertising to highlight key messages and act as the stimulating component of a commercial. The authors stress that a good fit between the music and advertisement is key to producing a positive emotional response and attitude towards an ad, as a poor fit can have little to no effect on emotional response. This relates to music *congruency*, which is defined as a concept with two dimensions: relevancy and expectancy. Here, relevancy refers to the extent to which the musical stimulus is connected to the meaning of the advertising message and contributes to its understanding (Galan, 2009).

Expectancy or the anticipated character of the musical stimulus refers to the extent to which a piece of information lies within the predetermined structures (i.e. product, brand, or advertisement) evoked by the content of the message (Galan, 2009). In Morris and Boone's study, nineteen college students were asked to rate a Sony advertisement, half without music playing in the background and the other half with music. Results showed significant improvement in the pleasure and brand attitude variables when music was added – likely due to the pairing of the Sony movie camera, a very trendy product at the time, and the Carly Simon remix of a 1940's song which was popular at the time (Morris & Boone, 1998). Additionally, the advertised photo featured a silhouette of the two main characters from the film *Sleepless in Seattle*. Not coincidentally, the song sung by Carly Simon, "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning," was also featured in the film. Thus, when the participants saw the ad and heard the music, they reported that they felt nostalgia, awe, and wonder (Morris & Boorne).

Whereas the studies above focus on the characteristics of music and ad messages, Scott (1990) explains that each musical encounter is framed by the listener's past listening experience. This includes the immediate experience of the current stimulus (i.e., music in the advertisement)

as well as the more remote past experience of similar musical stimuli and similar musical situations in other works (Scott, 1990). Each musical experience is in this way framed by all those that preceded it. This further reinforces the notion that the style of music within an advertisement must be strategically paired with the advertised concept. According to MacInnis and Park (1991), music with high indexicality provokes strong emotions that are tied with past experiences (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Dowling and Harwood (1986) suggest that indexical representations are created by “the direct association of a musical event with some extramusical object, so that emotions previously associated with the extramusical object come to be associated with the music” (Dowling and Harwood, 1986, p. 204). Here, music becomes a stimulus for past experiences and emotions become the conditioned response (MacInnis & Park, 1991). While indexicality may have different results on the message processing of low- and high-involvement audiences, it may facilitate retrieval of favourable emotions from memory, influencing the feelings and attitudes of both high- and low- involvement consumers (MacInnis & Park, 1991).

Sound as Science

Sound as science refers to the idea that sound can be engineered to produce predictable outcomes (Powers, 2010). To “engineer” music, Powers (2010) explains that advertisers often work with musicians to craft original songs that fit or are congruent with specific ad campaigns, giving the ad the crucial element of authenticity. Arthur Fleischmann, president and CEO of John St. advertising, notes emotional advertising works well because “triggering emotion triggers action” (Wright, 2017, para. 14). According to Bruner: “Music is not simply a generic sonic mass, but rather a complex chemistry of controllable elements” (Bruner, 1990, p. 94). Time, pitch and texture are the three main structural factors on which music is based. As Bruner (1990)

and Galan (2009) note, tempo (time), tonality (pitch) and texture (volume, instrumental) are the three main dimensions of musical stimulus, which explains why these three aspects of music have received the most attention in studies on strategies for enhancing fit or congruence.

Time-Related Findings

Several researchers over the years have studied tempo and arrived at the same general conclusion: fast music is considered to be happier and/or more pleasant than slow music. Bruner (1990) also indicates that slow tempo music tends to evoke tranquil, sentimental, and/or solemn feelings. Rhythmic aspects were also evaluated in his study, and led to the observation that firm rhythms were generally more sacred, serious, and/or robust, while smooth-flowing rhythms were thought to be happier and more playful or dreamy (Bruner, 1990). Additionally, Wedin (1972) noted that staccato-note-filled music gave the impression of liveliness or energy, especially when performed with great intensity. Legato music, on the other hand, was interpreted to be more peaceful, gentle, or dreamy (Wedin, 1972).

Pitch Related Findings

Pitch-related findings suggest a strong association with pitch and perceived happiness: music with high pitch is more energized and joyful than low pitched music (Bruner, 1990). Music with consonant harmonies have also been described as playful, happy, or serene, while those with dissonant harmonies seem to be thought of as more ominous or sad (Bruner, 1990).

Texture-Related Findings

An early study focusing of orchestration by Gundlach (1935) indicates that melodies

performed with brass instruments were characterized as triumphant. The same melodies were perceived as brilliant and/or tranquil when played on a piano and as glad when played on stringed instruments. Volume is another textural element that was examined in Bruner's (1990) study, suggesting that the loudest pieces are characterized as exciting and happy and the softest pieces were described as peaceful or serious.

Even though advertisers attempt to connect with "irrational" emotions, rational systems of knowledge guide the use of music and shape audience reactions (Powers, 2010). Powers notes that these systems of knowledge have two primary components. The first consists of understanding sounds through a variety of disciplines including psychology, physics, biology, and cognitive neuroscience (Powers, 2010). Sonic brander Stephen Arnold notes that "brands delivered sonically reach a place in the brain that visual branding alone doesn't approach. The tune lodges in the cerebral cortex forming a memory implant in the aural pathways to the brain" (Powers, 2010, p, 298). The author also notes that sciences devoted to sound, such as psychoacoustics, have made it possible to predict the effect music has on audiences (Powers, 2010). Powers' (2010) second component of these knowledge systems are the models developed by the firms themselves for analyzing and creating a brand's sound. Treasure (2007) outlines the SoundFlow model which identifies three categories that describe a sound's components: the "drivers" of the sound (time, pitch and dynamics), the "filters" (environment, functions and brand values), and the "outcomes" desired from particular sounds (Treasure, 2007, p. 115). This model can help marketers identify what Powers refers to as the ideal "BrandSound" which is the engineered sound that communicates the qualities and values that are best aligned with the brands, ultimately enhancing the brand experience and desirable purchase outcomes (Treasure, 2007).

While music in advertising does seem like the perfect tool to capture audience attention, it is not enough to simply include any type of music into any advertisement. MacInnis and Park (1991) note that music can be described according to its complementary relationship to other ad cues. The authors identify an important characteristic of music called *fit* (MacInnis & Park, 1991, p. 162). Fit is defined here as the audience's perception of the music's relevance to the central ad message (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Utilizing music that fits an advertisement can augment the words and pictures within an ad and reinforce the basic advertising message, facilitating the consumer's information processing. For their study, MacInnis and Park randomly assigned 178 undergraduate women to six conditions, two of which were high vs. low involvement, two were high vs. low indexicality, and 2 were high vs. low fit (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Results showed that the magnitude of which musical fit impacted positive emotions towards an ad was greater than anticipated. Results suggest that fit has a powerful role in creating desired ad and brand attitude (MacInnis & Park, 1991). The authors also found that fit has an equally strong effect on low- and high-involvement subjects' attention to the message, indicating that both audiences are more attentive to ad messages when executional cues fit the message (MacInnis & Park, 1991).

Like MacInnis and Park, Kellaris et al (1993) highlight the effects of music on audiences through the concept of music-message *congruency*. Like "fit," this concept refers to the congruency of meanings communicated nonverbally by music and verbally by ad copy (Kellaris et al., 1993). The authors hypothesize that music in ads enhances the recall of brands and messages when the meanings conveyed by music are congruent, and that music interferes with ad processing when it communicates meanings that conflict with the meanings of brands or ad messages (Kellaris et al., 1993). According to Kellaris et al., music can convey meanings in two distinct ways. First, musical pieces can communicate literal meanings by imitating existing

sounds, such as car sounds or animal noises (Kellaris et al., 1993). Second, music also has the ability to communicate figuratively by evoking visuals, thoughts, and emotions (Kellaris et al., 1993). These abilities allow music to evoke meanings that are congruent with those evoked by ad messages. Kellaris et al. found that when congruency is high, attention-gaining music can influence aspects of ad recall and recognition. When congruency is low, however, attention-gaining music interferes with ad processing (Kellaris et al., 1993).

North, MacKenzie and Law (2004) examined whether the musical fit of an advertisement enhanced the recall of the product and the brand advertised and led to purchasing the advertised product. In North et al.'s study, 162 participants ranging in age and gender were asked to rate the fit of the music within three radio advertisements on a scale of 1 (the music did not fit the ad) to 10 (the music does fit the ad). After listening to all three radio ads, the participants were asked a series of questions about whether they recalled the brands, products and advertising claims. Results showed that participants recalled the advertising claims better when advertisements featured music that fit the brands compared to music that did not. Additionally, the study indicated that musical fit promoted positive feelings towards the advertisement, which is a crucial factor in determining future purchasing behaviour (North et al, 2004). The authors demonstrate that their findings along with those of others such Gorn can be explained through the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). The ELM identifies two routes of persuasion: central and peripheral (North et al., 2004). In the central route, attitudes are formed by strong consideration of the information associated with the advertised object (North et al., 2004). In the peripheral route, on the other hand, attitudes are formed based on positive or negative cues without active thinking about the object or its characteristics. Persuasion occurs within the central route when a person is in a state of "high involvement" with the advertisement, meaning

the audience is motivated and has the ability to process information about the brand (North et al., 2004). Persuasion occurs within the peripheral route when audiences are in a state of “low involvement” with the advertisement, meaning they do not have the motivation nor the ability to process an advertisement (North et al., 2004). Consequently, music is more likely to persuade a viewer when they are unwilling or unable to evaluate consumer messaging.

While the ELM states that music should have a distracting effect on high-involvement consumers, MacInnis and Park (1991) argue that music can have a positive influence on these consumers if it properly fits within an ad. In short, North et al. (2004) explain that music that fits within an advertisement is effective for high-involvement consumers because it conveys relevant beliefs about the brand. When marketers consider how their choice of music reflects their brand, their product and their audience, they can strategically engineer songs within their ads to make lasting impressions with consumers.

Critical Approaches to Music in Advertising

Music as a Tool for Capturing Attention

While scholars such as Powers (2010), Scott (1990) and others focus on characteristics that are supposedly inherent in music and sound, it is important to consider contextual factors, such as technological changes, that may be feeding into this renewed interest in the persuasive power of sound. In this section, I draw from media studies and other fields to highlight some of these contextual factors that tend to be neglected in experimental studies on music in advertising.

Macgregor Wise (2013) argues that in the clickable world, we often feel as though our attention is being pulled from one thing to the next, making it especially difficult to concentrate on any given subject (Macgregor Wise, 2013). We often fail to perceive the technological

elements that feed into this process because dominant technologies have the tendency to disappear, either literally into the surrounding environment, or phenomenologically by falling into habit. Of particular relevance to critical approaches to music in advertising is the relationship between technology and attention, which is “the result of neural processes of alerting or orienting or resolving conflict between computations in different neural areas” (p. 101).

For Terranova (2012), the Internet has become an economic medium based on automated forms of measurement in which attention is not only a commodity, but also a source of capital. Advertisers now seek new and unique ways to capture audience attention in a profitable manner. Although audiences can and often do control sound through their devices, advertisers seem to be drawn to music because of the idea that we have no “earlids,” which makes music an effective method of recapturing lost attention. The author also cites Carr (2010) who goes one step further than Macgregor Wise (2013) by suggesting that exposure to the Internet rewires neural pathways. Informed by neuroscientific research, Carr (2010) theorizes that exposure to new media remodels various types of memory, resulting in the ability to carry out routine tasks faster but less effectively. This idea of rewiring a person’s memories can also be linked to music as pure emotion, as advertisers often use music in ads to connect their audience with past experiences. It can also relate to sound as science – the idea of enhancing ad recall and information processing by optimizing fit or congruency between music and ad message.

MacInnis and Moorman (1991) highlight three factors which they claim are likely to automatically enhance attention to ads: *novelty*, *complexity*, and *figurality*. The authors note that a stimulus is novel if consumers have never been exposed to it in the past. Such strategies are used to enhance attention, including different commercial formats (8- vs. 30-second commercials) and unusual cinematography (MacInnis & Moorman, 1991). Figural and

prominent stimuli refer to content that stands out in the larger ad context (i.e. loud music and action in ads). This type of stimuli can also enhance brand processing and influence attitudes and beliefs towards an advertisement. For example, loud music in ads is regularly used to capture and retain audience attention (MacInnis & Moorman, 1991). According to MacInnis and Moorman, complexity refers to “the number of distinguishable elements in a stimulus, the dissimilarities between elements, and the degree to which combinations of stimulus elements are responded to as separate (vs. as a unit)” (MacInnis & Moorman, 1991, p. 36). When properly executed, music within ads can adhere to all three of these attention enhancing factors.

Kellaris et al. (1993) suggest that ad memorability is particularly difficult in today’s media environment. Given the increase of ad clutter and low attention levels for broadcast media in general, marketers face the challenge of capturing consumer attention. The authors reveal that music’s ability to engage audiences can stem from objective aspects of the ads, such as speed and volume, or subjective aspects, such as “surprisingness” and “interestingness” (Kellaris et al., 1993, p. 115). In the author’s view, slow, soft music should have a low attention-gaining value, while fast, loud music should provoke higher levels of interest (Kellaris et al., 1993). Arguably, these experimental studies are symptoms of the general trend towards commodifying attention outlined by Terranova (2012) and Macgregor Wise (2013).

Guerrilla Marketing and Governance

Macgregor Wise illustrates that we now take part in subattentional processes, meaning that the things we have paid attention to so many times have become habit (Macgregor Wise, 2013). Hutter and Hoffman (2011) acknowledge this “epidemic” and suggest that it has two significant implications for advertising. The first is that the average US consumer is exposed to over 3,000

advertising messages a day, which has a negative effect on consumer freedom and ultimately increases ad avoidance (Hutter & Hoffaman, 2011). Second, traditional forms of advertising lose their power to attract consumers' attention as audiences become more familiar with these tactics (Hutter & Hoffman, 2011). The solution, the authors suggest, is guerrilla marketing. Guerrilla marketing refers to an evolving set of innovative, unconventional, and low-cost marketing techniques that yield maximum results (Serazio, 2013). In order to reach consumers, the authors argue that advertisers must produce campaigns that align with the characteristics of guerrilla marketing.

According to Serazio (2013), the most effective guerrilla marketing enables a subtle form of “governance” over audiences, meaning that marketing strategies are capable of conducting other people’s conduct. The author applies Foucault’s theory of power to the advertising industry, revealing how innovative ad campaigns govern consumers in subtler and more effective ways than ever before. He illustrates that *authenticity* within an ad campaign is a key element of this form of governance. As revealed by Powers (2010), advertisers often turn to music to provide authenticity to an ad campaign by harnessing popular artists and original songs. While musical elements in advertisements may seem authentic in the sense that they appear spontaneous, they are carefully crafted to spark consumer reaction. In environments saturated by advertisements, the industry is attempting to create campaigns that do not feel as though they are conducted by marketers, hence the importance of *authenticity* (Serazio, 2013). As consumers begin to recognize that they live in an inauthentic society created through advertising, their desire for authenticity becomes even greater. Serazio argues that an authentic brand is one that appears to be “disinterested” in selling, explaining that advertising should be about “the generation of ambience around a product rather than a frank exaltation of its attributes” (Serazio,

2013, p. 36). Serazio (2013) provides several examples that display this practice, such as branded content and native advertising, which are methods that enable advertising content to match the flow of non-commercial media content. For instance, he mentions the brand produced video game *America's Army*, a game created for and by the U.S. Armed Forces in order to recruit soldiers. Even though this practice along with native advertising seems to be spontaneous, the author emphasizes that it is carefully planned and engineered.

One way marketers are tapping into authenticity is through music-product partnerships. In this instance, original music is produced for a specific brand, product or commercial, and designed for a particular audience. Online outlets such as YouTube and SoundCloud have enabled musicians to share their content with the masses without belonging to a record label, resulting in an abundance of musical content. As the musical marketplace becomes more competitive, artists have begun to seek out advertising as a new avenue to enter the music industry. Even those who may once have forbidden the use of their music in television advertisements have begun to embrace such partnerships. According to Graakjaer (2014), music draws attention to a product and overall message, enhances the learning and remembering of a product or message, and helps construct a positive impression for a product of message. The term “music-product partnership” refers to self-contained music that is available on the market and appears in a commercial promoting a non-musical product (Graakjaer, 2015). In this setting, the values and characteristics of both the music and the non-musical product are concurrently produced and promoted, which is what characterizes the “partnership” or the process of “cross-promotion” (Graakjaer, 2015, p.44). The advertising industry was not the first to participate in this pairing; original songs produced for a particular film have also experienced widespread success on the music charts, for example, “(I’ve Had) The time of My Life” for *Dirty Dancing*

(1987), “Let It Go” for *Frozen* (2013), and “Can’t Stop the Feeling” for *Trolls* (2017). By pairing artists with ads and creating songs that are unique to their company, marketers are tapping into an authentic voice that enables them to sell their brand image without overt advertising messaging. From this, one can see how authenticity within musical advertising is not only about emotional engineering, but a key aspect in generating brand identity, credibility and persona. Through these sophisticated marketing strategies, advertisers can govern audiences by satisfying their desire for authentic content.

Limitations

While these authors reveal some interesting findings relating to sound and music within the advertising industry, there are limitations of each approach. One of these limitations includes the rather broad notion of sound and music the authors deal with. Lury (2007) explains that music used within broadcasting, whether that is advertising, television, or radio, has a specific “soundscape” built within it. The soundscape consists of three key aspects: musical sounds, sound effects, and vocal sounds (Lury, 2007). Musical sounds are the musical components of a program, including original songs or popular music, as well as the song’s pitch, texture, timing and so forth. Sound effects refer to the concrete sounds which give volume, depth and material substance to the elements on screen (Lury, 2007). These sounds also include the background sounds which may not be visible on screen but which deepen our perception of the environment (Lury, 2007). Finally, vocal sounds concentrate primarily on the speech within a program and the qualities of these voices (Lury, 2007). Most often, this refers to the dialogues and narration within a broadcast or recording. Lury’s description of the types or layers of sound can be applied to audio-video advertisements to make finer distinctions between the sonic elements of an

advertisement than the overly broad categories used in most of the literature.

Another limitation in the literature is exemplified by Powers' "no earlids" concept, which is flawed in today's media environment as consumers have more options to mute ads on television and social media platforms. In recent years, advertisers have had to radically rethink the ways in which they produce video ads due to these soundless ad experiences. This does not indicate that sound should be disregarded altogether, but rather that marketers must find creative ways to prompt consumers to turn their sound on.

Research Questions

Based on assumption that visuals are no longer enough to seize consumers' attention, the following analysis is guided by the following questions:

1. According to industry discourse about sound, what are the motivations and social factors underlying the industry's use of sound, and to what extent do these explanations match those from academic sources?

This question aims to understand how trade journals represent the relationship between sound and music in advertising and broader cultural and technological shifts in contemporary society.

This section will critically analyze industry discourse about sound and music through the lens of scholarly concepts such as the attention economy and guerrilla marketing.

2. To what extent are advertisers' assumptions about the power of sound and music, as discussed in the scholarly literature reviewed above, articulated in the ads themselves?

As stated previously, scholars have identified a number of assumptions that shape the use of sound in advertising including sound as a universal language, sound as emotion, and sound as science. Here, I aim to explore the ways in which those assumptions manifest themselves in

advertising content.

3. How successful are music-based advertising campaigns according to audience responses?

Does public opinion match the academic and advertising industry literature?

This section focuses on the way the themes found within the scholarly and advertising trade literature might also be reflected in the way audiences interpret the three campaigns I have selected for this study. This question aims to explore public opinion concerning the use of sound in advertising and why this strategy is successful or not.

Methodology

This study consists of qualitative case study research, which provides an in-depth examination of the use of sound in three specific advertising campaigns, as well as a critical analysis of industry discourse about the use of sound in advertising. The campaigns that will be evaluated are Oreo's "Wonderfilled" campaign (2013), Nike's "Unlimited Together" campaign (2016), and Adidas' "Original Is Never Finished" campaign (2017). This paper builds upon the scholarly work discussed in the previous section to create a coding scheme that guides my thematic analysis of the three campaigns. Using a deductive approach to answer the first research question, I analyze 15 issues of *AdAge*, a popular advertising trade journal to investigate the extent to which industry discourse aligns with academic discourses about sound and music in advertising. To address the second research question regarding the assumptions about the role of music in the ads, I code the three ads using the themes identified by Powers (2010) and others in advertising industry discourse concerning music in ads. To answer the third research question, I collected and analyzed YouTube user comments about the three campaigns selected for this study. The collection and analysis of these various types of data enables this study to consider similarities and differences between public, industry and academic discourses about sound and music in advertising.

Method of Selection

The three campaigns were selected based on the prominent role of music in the advertisements, as well as their popularity with both audiences and industry professionals. Rather than randomly selecting viral video ads with music as a central component, three of the most popular ads in the past few years were chosen because they are likely to provide the most user

data. There are some limitations to this method of selection. For example, weak or unpopular ads will not be examined, which may make it difficult to determine what advertisers should avoid when applying music to their campaigns in future research. Each ad is one of the top online ads for the brand, with over 3 million views, 20,000 likes and thousands of comments on YouTube. Within only 48 hours of the launch, Oreo's "Wonderfilled" commercial was shared 260% above Oreo's average and accounted for a 13.2% boost in sales between May and August 2013 ("Oreo Is One Smart Cookie," 2014). Nike's "Unlimited Together" advertisement was awarded a Gold Lion in Entertainment for Music at this year's Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity and Adidas' "Original Is Never Finished" took the Grand Prix in the same category. Additionally, only advertisements that featured lyrics were chosen to be analyzed in this study as they render the brand's core values legible for analysis in a more direct way than ads that feature instrumental music.

To ensure the sample of *AdAge* stories was a manageable size, I selected the most recent issues between the years of 2015-2017 and those relevant to the use of music within advertisements. *AdAge* was chosen based on its reputation amongst advertising professionals and its wide circulation within and beyond the industry.

To gather public commentary about the ad campaigns, I used systemic sampling by collecting every third YouTube comment manually within the first month the ads were launched. For the sake of anonymity, all user names were removed.

Method of Analysis

Qualitative analysis will be used throughout the study to identify specific messages embedded within the three campaigns, including content analysis and sentiment analysis.

Concepts and themes identified in the literature review have been incorporated into a coding scheme used to evaluate the three campaigns as well as industry and public discourse about music in advertising. Through content analysis, the study analyzes the way advertising content may be shaped by perspectives and assumptions about music identified by scholars such as Powers' (2010): sound as a universal language, sound as "pure" emotion and sound as science. These assumptions have been integrated into a coding scheme to analyze the three campaigns. By identifying the extent to which the capacities and functions attributed to music in advertising literature are evident in the ads themselves, this method of coding will answer both the first and second research questions by revealing which themes are most prevalent in the ads.

Furthermore, this study will apply sentiment analysis to explore which characteristics of these ads are most significant for audiences. Baseline sentiment analysis classifies the polarity of a piece of writing by revealing whether it is positive, negative or neutral – indicating how individuals feel about a certain topic. Contextual polarity, on the other hand, analyzes a text as a whole and examines more specific emotional states including "happy" or "sad" (Hoffmann, Wiebe & Wilson, 2005). This study will follow a mix of both baseline and contextual sentiment analysis to identify the characteristics of the ads that provoke users' reactions to the three campaigns. This method will also assist in identifying which elements of these ads audiences are most drawn to, such as the song itself, the visuals, or the brand.

Together, these methodological approaches will provide an in-depth understanding of how Oreo's "Wonderfilled", Nike's "Unlimited Together" and Adidas' "Original Is Never Finished" campaigns utilize sound to capture audience attention. A successful ad will presumably produce results where the dominant emotion or concept will be reflected in the user comments. Additionally, mentions of musical fit and authenticity are expected to be crucial aspects when

determining ad success. Finally, both brand and song mentions in YouTube comments are anticipated to show that the music assisted in processing brand messages and influenced attitudes towards an advertisement.

Findings

Key Themes in Advertising Industry Discourse

Sound as a Universal Language that Works Over the Body

In his articles, Ries (2015, 2016) notes that we live in a world of words – our laws, company documents, marketing plans, memos, and emails are all written in words – yet in his view we do not think in words, we think in sounds (Ries, 2015 & Ries, 2016). He notes that from a young age we learn to communicate with sounds and then associate these sounds with words. Like Powers (2013), Ries suggests that humans must learn a range of socio-cognitive skills in order to use language, while musicality is there from the beginning. In this way, industry discourse as exemplified by Ries’ work in *AdAge* suggests that our early attachment to sound enables music to act as “a universal language that works over the body.”

Yet, my analysis of the *AdAge* literature also found several instances where professionals recognize that the impact of music depends on “fit” with other ad content and with the audience. As Scott (1990) and North et al. (2004) note, musical “fit” can enhance a person’s connection with an ad and the advertised brand. At this year’s Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, Adidas’ “Original Is Never Finished” campaign earned the Entertainment for Music Grand Prix over Nike’s “Unlimited Together.” In her report in *AdAge*, Diaz (2017) notes that the message of Nike’s ad, which centers around the U.S. Olympic Basketball teams, was directed towards an American audience and did not resonate as well with the European jurors. Adidas’ message about creativity, on the other hand, fit perfectly with the Cannes Lions festival. Chief Creative Officer Matt Eastwood claimed, “We loved the philosophy of ‘Original Is Never Finished.’ You could put that under the Cannes logo and it would be a perfect fit. We loved the synergy of the mission of that festival and the mission of the campaign” (Diaz, 2017). This

suggests that while Nike's ad was an ideal fit for an American audience, listeners worldwide may not be as inspired by its message and are less likely to connect with the brand on the same level as Americans. This contradicts Powers' (2010) assumption that music acts as a universal language, and aligns more with Scott (1990) and Hung's (2000) theory that a consumer's connection with an ad also depends on their cultural experiences. Moreover, it suggests that influential institutions within the ad industry, such as Cannes, acknowledge the capacity of music to resonate more with some audiences than others due to cultural and other differences.

Music as "Pure" Emotion

Along with sound as a universal language that works over the body, sound as "pure" emotion is another key theme in industry discourse. Writing in *AdAge*, Ries (2015) reveals that the reason music has such emotional power is because the right brain is key to the processing of emotions as well as music; this is significant for advertisers because emotion creates the memory links within the brain. Using techniques like harmony, melody, repetition and rhythm, music is sound arranged and organized to be euphonious in the listener's mind (Ries, 2015). This resonates with Powers' (2010) claim about how it is exceedingly difficult to ignore sounds that one can hear and remain unaffected by the presence of sonic stimulus.

According to articles in *AdAge* by Brandt (2015) and Maddox (2016), music's effect on emotions can help mobile ad technology reach its full potential. Aside from location-based targeting, which is a trend that can only be done through mobile devices, all other mobile ad platforms are simply less effective versions of desktop ad units (Brandt, 2015). Brandt argues that in order to engage consumers on an emotional level, *sensory marketing* must be further explored. According to the author, sensory marketing is an advertising approach that is used to

empower brands and create emotional connections with consumers through multi-sensory experiences such as sight, sound and touch (Brandt, 2015). This solidifies positive thoughts, opinions and feelings with a particular brand.

Marketers are also utilizing sound to complement sight because positive sounds are believed to be an effective way of inspiring lasting memories that “tug at people's heartstrings,” such as a catchy tune, jingle or song associated with a brand (Brandt, 2015, para. 5). Maddox (2016) also notes that creating multi-sensory experiences is a useful marketing strategy that encourages consumers to build relationships with brands and allows them to immerse themselves in brand storytelling. Brandt and Maddox also point to studies that suggest sounds can influence people’s moods when shopping and can have a direct effect on their purchasing behavior. For example, wine stores tend to play classical music to produce a reflective mood that complements the qualities that are culturally-associated with the product, while a bar may blast rock music, which has proven to drive more beer consumption (Brandt, 2015). By embracing sensory ads, mobile marketers ensure that people are more engaged, ads are more memorable, and people-to-brand connections are stronger.

As expected based on the review of the scholarly literature, there was also an emphasis on music as emotional stimuli in the industry discourse. Much like the academic readings, the *AdAge* authors speak to the emotional effect music in advertising can have on a person’s memories, how it can build relationships between brands and consumers, and how it can strengthen a brand’s image. The concept of sensory branding, however, seems to be more prominent in the advertising discourse than in the scholarly literature. As Brandt (2015) mentions, this is a topic that is worth further investigation as it goes beyond visuals to build a deeper connection between advertisers and their audience.

Sound as Science

Sound as science is the third theme that can be found in advertising industry discourse, as well as academic literature. Paone (2015) reveals that when used properly, music creates a deep connection with audiences that other modalities of brand communications cannot quite reach. The author notes that the success of an ad depends on an agency's musical understanding, which suggests that expertise in music theory is often necessary. It is not enough to simply enjoy music; one must also be aware of the elements that make-up the backbone of a song, such as the melodies, harmonies, chords and instrumentation (Paone, 2015). Composing, performing and producing music on a level where one can write for commercials requires a certain level of proficiency that is incredibly difficult to achieve, often requiring a lifetime of study and practice (Paone, 2015). The author explains that in order to put music first in an agency's marketing efforts, composers should be experts in the field, included when the project initially begins, and consulted during creative critique with the design and writing teams (Paone, 2015). This concern with the rigour, expertise and authority of the composer links with the notion of sound as science, articulated here in terms of the engineering of music in advertising which requires a specific skill set.

Neff (2015) outlines a process that matches the attributes brands want to evoke with music or other sounds. "Brandsonics," a method developed by Sound Image, reflects Powers' (2013) second system of knowledge which consists of models developed by firms that help create a brand's unique sound. Brandsonics profiles the brand using up to 42 characteristics, distills them to the five most essential brand dimensions, and then matches these with sound or musical dimensions (Neff, 2015). Those guidelines might, for example, call for a 4/4 beat, organic textures, string instrumentation and a sample melody (Neff, 2015).

Our history has always been with the ad agencies, and we'd wait for them to dictate what we should be writing," said Sound Images CEO Jack Streitmarter. "The problem with that is that at most ad agencies, the people at the music level are not necessarily the same age or income or gender as the brand's customers, and they're making decisions based on their personal values. (Neff, 2015, para. 3)

In order to effectively apply music in advertising, Streitmarter's claim is suggestive of the need for a scientific or evidence-based approach based on audience research rather than the preferences of those working in ad agencies or brand marketing departments. Guidelines can also be used for matching brands with existing music, not just jingles or original scores. Streimarter also explains that this process can be a more cost-effective alternative to licensing existing songs, making it easier for brands to commission custom music from bands (Neff, 2015). Major ad agencies such as Omnicom's Interbrand and WPP's Landsor Associate have expressed interest in adding a sonic dimension to their brand identity work. Consistency is one of the "brand strength factors" that Interbrand looks to create for brands, said Rebeca Arbona, executive director for Interbrand, "and as brand builders we overlook too often the role that music and sound can play" (Neff, 2015, para. 9). These articles seem to suggest that the industry is taking the notion of sound as science a step further than the academic literature, as they not only touch upon using aspects of science to match music with brands and audiences, but also the importance of composing custom music according to audience data.

Organic Content

Aspects of guerrilla marketing and other forms of "organic content" could be found in many of the articles collected for this analysis. Tejada (2015) illustrates that the ways in which

musicians and advertisers work together has experienced a revolution in the last decade. Firstly, a friendly jingle is no longer enough for brand success; instead, marketers search for songs that tell stories because narratives can create lasting memories with consumers (Tejada, 2015). Second, artists aligning themselves with brands or sponsors are no longer considered to be “selling-out” (Tejada, 2015). Like Graakjaer (2015), Tejada demonstrates how today’s artists are collaborating with marketers as a method of monetizing their work, which can ultimately propel an artist to new levels if done correctly (Tejada, 2015).

As mobile media and audience data become rich territories for expanding the way consumers engage with music, Wilson (2016) reveals that brands and artists are turning to each other to take advantage of the growth of live video algorithms across all platforms. Arguably, this is a marriage of convenience rather than choice as artists are increasingly expected to do their own marketing (i.e. via social media) and labels invest less in the promotion of emerging or mid-level artists. For instance, the popular pop/rock band OK Go positioned themselves as one of the go-to music partners in business when they shot their video “The One Moment” for the company Morton Salt. OK Go is a Chicago rock band known for its visually-striking music videos and its dedicated millennial fan base. As Morton Salt was looking for an opportunity to better connect with millennials by enhancing the relevance of the brand for this group, the quartet seemed to be the perfect partner (Oster, 2016). “Salt *can* be viewed as a commodity,” said Morton’s director of communications and corporate brand strategy Denise Lauer, “that’s why it’s critical for Morton to connect with consumers on a more emotional level, not just on a product level” (Oster, 2016, para. 3). The video, while originally only 4.2 seconds long, was slowed-down to result in a music video for the band’s song. With over 19 million views, 148 thousand likes and 5,500 comments, the spot was a huge success for both the band and Morton

Salt.

Today, one can see how these music-product partnerships have essentially led to branded music videos, mirroring Serazio's (2013) idea of advertisers exercising a "subtle" governance over audiences. Poggi (2015) reveals that new partnerships between companies like Vevo and Mirriad allow marketers to insert their brands into music videos. The first collaboration of this kind was between Aloe Blacc and Levi's, in which the brand added in a billboard that didn't exist before in Blacc's video for "The Man." In the video, a Levi's ad was integrated as a billboard where there was no billboard before. In this model, according to Vevo, artists and recording agencies are involved the development process and have input into decisions about which videos "fit" with the brand (Poggi, 2015). The growing streaming service industry and DVR technologies are also responsible for these types of partnerships, as marketers need to find a way to advertise to an active audience without access to traditional commercial spots (Gerber & Mandler, 2010). The industry discourse regarding music and authenticity seems to have evolved into "organic content" or promotional content generated by audiences. While this content seems spontaneous, it is carefully planned through music-brand-message "fit" or congruence using music crafted by bands that are respected in the target market according to consumer research and the digital "augmentation" of music videos with visual ads for brands.

The Importance of Sound in Social Media Advertisements

One theme that was consistently present within the advertising industry literature was the need to ensure sonic communication with audiences in the social media environment. This concern with audience attention to ad messages aligns with Macgregor Wise's (2013) and Carr's (2010) claim that, in a clickable world, it is difficult to concentrate on a single task at a time.

There is no denying that social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat have altered the ways in which advertisers market their brand to consumers. *AdAge* author LaVecchia (2015) notes that as we now live in an era saturated with democratized content creation (i.e. Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube), marketers must embrace multi-layer narratives and experiences that can be designed for multiple screens and feeds. One of the newest trends in social media advertising is auto-video play, Facebook and Snapchat being the main drivers of this technology. Facebook in particular has changed their auto-play feature so that sound now plays along with video when scrolling through one's news feed (Sloane, 2017). When this feature first launched, sound in videos would not play unless the user tapped on the video. Since the introduction of this feature in 2014, advertisers have voiced their concerns about ads playing with the sound off, making it easier for audiences to scroll past their videos. Since audiences can scroll through their social channels at any given moment during the day, it is understandable that users may not always want a video or an advertisement to disturb their environment.

In 2016, Snapchat's Chief Strategy Officer warned against digital advertisements that played without sound, revealing that sound is a core part of the video-ad experience (Sloane, 2016). "Basically when you're buying advertising without sound," said Khan, "You're not really buying video, you're buying moving banner" (Sloane, 2016, para. 3). Snapchat boasted that 70% of its video ads play with sound and Google similarly declared that one of the benefits of its YouTube ads is that they typically play with sound (Sloane, 2016). Also, according to research by ListenFirst Media, the top five most engaging posts on Facebook last year were all videos that utilized sound to create an emotional quality and sense of urgency (Hia, 2016).

AdAge notes that advertisers are more attracted to sites that can provide a sound-on experience, as Facebook advertisers saw that as much as 80% of videos were viewed on mute

(Sloane, 2017). Thanks to marketing and advertising pressure, Facebook has adjusted its settings so that sound automatically plays with video if the users volume is turned on. “With this update, sound fades in and out as you scroll through videos in News Feed, bringing those videos to life,” Facebook said in a blog post (Sloane, 2017, para. 4). The soundless experience forced advertisers to be more creative with Facebook video by, for example, rethinking the first three seconds of their spots to capture attention with the volume off. Under new criteria, if the advertiser chooses, views will only count if the advertisement is played with sound and Facebook advertisers will now have the option to only pay for video ad views when the sound is played. This switch could bring advertising back to a traditional space on social media, one in which sound is just as important as visuals. One can also see how Powers’ (2010) “no earlids” claim is overly simplistic. More accurately, there seems to be a struggle between the industry and audiences to control the sonic environment of social media.

Key Themes within the Ads

By comparing similar themes within the previously mentioned literature to Oreo’s “Wonderfilled,” Nike’s “Unlimited Together” and Adidas’ “Original Is Never Finished,” this section will answer the first research question: based on scholarly assumptions, to what extent are advertisers’ assumptions about the power of sound and music articulated in the ads themselves?

Oreo “Wonderfilled”

Oreo’s 2013 “Wonderfilled” Anthem is a fast-paced, high energy original song performed by indie artist, Owl City. The visuals in the ad amplify the music, as the joyous tune is paired

with an animation of the lyrics and characters mentioned in the song. This is an example how advertisers can create a visual representation of musical content in case an ad is muted, also enticing the viewer to turn their sound on. The ad premiered during an episode of *Mad Men*, a placement that was intended to gain the attention of an adult audience. “Kids already have a sense of wonder in how they see the world, but adults have to be reminded of that,” said Oreo Director Janda Lukin. “The stories are going to resonate with different people, but overall, it's an adult campaign” (Diaz, 2013, para. 4). The audience of *Mad Men* not only consists primarily of adults (men and women between the ages of 18-54) but it is also an audience that is considered to have high purchasing power (Kissell, 2015). *Mad Men* was also selected in an effort to command an iconic brand presence like that of Coke or Nike. Before Oreo had changed its image in 2013 with culturally relevant Facebook posts and tweets, the “personality” of the brand was not clear to contemporary audiences. In particular, a Super Bowl tweet in 2013 is credited with the transformation of the company into a relevant and conversational brand with a wealth of personality, one that is cheerful and lighthearted (Sacks, 2014). Since its television premier in 2013, the Oreo Wonderfilled commercial has been shared on the brand’s Twitter, Facebook and YouTube channels.

The lyrics and visuals within the ad illustrate how classic villains, such as the Big Bad Wolf and Dracula, can take a turn for the better with the help of an Oreo cookie: “Wonder if I gave an Oreo to the Big Bad Wolf, how would the story go?” and “Wonder if I gave an Oreo to a vampire in a creepy show, would he not act so undead?” (Muhlenfeld, 2013). Since the lyrics to the song are in the first person, the audience is persuaded to adopt the role of the narrator/signer in the ad. The microphone technique also creates a close, personal sonic position for the listener – one hears the details of his voice without an echo or reverb, evoking the sense that the listener

is sharing that space with the musician and other audience members. Near the end of the spot, characters are shown sharing an Oreo with an individual who is considered to be their opposite – an astronaut hands a cookie to an alien, a sailor to a pirate, a crab to a chef, and a horse to a cowboy.

The music in the ad can be analyzed in more detail using Bruner's three structural elements of musical communication in advertising. Using these categories, one can see that Oreo's "Wonderfilled" uses time, pitch, and texture to evoke excitement and happiness in its viewers. The music used in the ad has a fast tempo, smooth rhythm and note-filled staccato to give the impression of lively and playful music. The Wonderfilled Anthem is also high pitched which results in a more energized and joyful tune. Finally, a piano is used to create a delightful melody which is loud in volume, creating a feeling of inspiration and glee. These various elements work together to encourage attention to sound through conveying brand values, personality, emotions, and building a relationship between brand and audience.

As Scott (1990) outlines, music is not a universal language since cultural and historical context is important for understanding the meaning and emotional response of the music. When Oreo's ad was first launched in May 2013, there was considerable fear in North America, which was recovering from traumatic events such as the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, the Boston Marathon bombings and Edward Snowden's NSA leaks. Oreo's "Wonderfilled Anthem" takes the social context of this period into account and create an alternative narrative, one that is filled with hope and positivity (Diaz, 2013). "It starts with a very simple premise, about how something as small as an Oreo cookie can bring about a positive change in perspective," said Janda Lukin, Director, Oreo at Mondelez International, Inc (Diaz, 2013, p. 1). Lukin's description relates to sound as "a universal language that works over the body," as it suggests

that the Oreo “Wonderfilled” Anthem can stimulate positive sentiments in audiences regardless of the social context. Indeed, the positive lyrics, upbeat tune, and fast tempo are used to evoke feelings of nostalgia, optimism, childlike wonder, and cheerfulness – characteristics which the ad attempts to transfer to the Oreo brand.

Finally, Oreo utilizes guerrilla marketing strategies by tapping into mainstream indie artist, Adam Young, aka Owl City. The playful tune was written by Martin Agency’s creative director Dave Muhlenfeld and performed by the indie artist, who was specifically chosen for how his point of view aligns with Oreo’s vibe. “One thing we’re definitely not trying to do is to make music to make it cooler, or for street cred,” said creative director David Muhlenfeld. “We needed an artist who's going to be as uncynical as Oreo itself. It had to feel honest and fun” (Diaz, 2013, para. 7). The original “Wonderfilled” song served as the campaign’s foundation. Later, the brand collaborated with artists of different genres, such as pop duo Tegan and Sarah and country star Kacey Musgraves, to reinterpret the tune. Additionally, as part of the campaign’s launch, around 500 college acapella singers were brought to the streets of New York City to rouse commuters at various subway stops during their morning commute with their own rendition of the “Wonderfilled” anthem. Owl City also joined the group to kick-off the event at Union Station, sparking a flow of social posts from on-lookers and brought even more momentum to the brand. These guerrilla marketing aspects reinforce the other elements of Oreo’s “Wonderfilled” campaign, including the meanings conveyed by the song, the persona of the artists, and the authenticity of the ad.

Nike's "Unlimited Together"

Nike's 2016 "Unlimited Together" ad is presented in the form of a music video to the song "We the People," and features rap artist Chance the Rapper and the USA men and women's basketball team as the central elements of the ad. The spot was promoted on the brand's social channels, including YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. The piano-driven soundtrack is accompanied by a black and white film featuring USA basketball's finest projected onto American architecture, including Brittney Griner, Kevin Durant, Kyrie Irving, Carmelo Anthony, Maya Moore, and several others. Nike commissioned Chance the Rapper to write "We the People" as an anthem for the USA Basketball team, also making the song available to download on iTunes, SoundCloud and Spotify. As the spot was created for the 2016 Summer Olympics, Nike had access to an international audience. However, given the content of the spot, the brand's target audience was arguably large segments of the American public who have a passion for sport (specifically basketball) and who identify with American nationalism. Historically, Nike's advertising strategy focused on teaming up with athletes to demonstrate how sport transcends social limitations such as race, gender, age, class, and disability. Many Nike ads do not feature products, but are attempts to sell Nike's overall brand image and philosophy. By applying Bruner's (1990) structural factors of music in advertising, it becomes evident that Nike's ad differs in key ways from Oreo's more upbeat commercial, as the former was executed at a much slower tempo than the latter. More specifically, the slow tempo of the song evokes feelings of tranquility and adds a sentimental tone to the music. According to Bruner's interpretive framework, the smooth rhythm, legato music and use of the piano in the ad inspire peaceful and dreamy elements.

Like Oreo's "Wonderfilled Anthem," Nike's ad aims to portray an uplifting message of

unity in the context of today's grim headlines, filled with stories of racially-motivated violence and discussions of a country divided. "People, people, we the people would like you to know that wherever you're going we're right by your side," sings Chance. "We want a W, we tired of picking different sides / I got your jersey, just a different size," he raps, urging unity and teamwork. Like the Oreo "Wonderfilled" ad, these lyrics encourage the audience to identify with a certain "we" (i.e. community, social group, etc.). The campaign taps into the emotions of American audiences especially, as the ad was created as a sort of tribute to the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the American people (Richards, 2016). Based on Scott's (1990) work, it can be argued that audiences will interpret Nike's original track in relation to past experiences of similar musical stimuli – in this case, the Star-Spangled Banner – which creates a more powerful emotional bond. Through the song's references to the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the imagery, the ad evokes a sense of nationalism – a common theme in professional sports in the United States and in American popular culture more broadly – and links these sentiments to the brand. The ad is also a clear example of Powers' (2010) argument that advertisers tend to use music to influence the emotional state of the viewer – a very powerful tool, especially in an environment in which consumers tend to avoid brand messages.

Like Oreo, Nike harnesses the power of guerrilla marketing by enlisting up-and-coming rap artist Chance the Rapper in the creation of an original ode to America. Interestingly, Treasure (2007) warns against using rap music, as it can often carry existing cultural stereotypes that may produce an unfavourable reaction when used in advertising. In following passage from his book *Sound Business*, Treasure notes that heavy metal and rap music

"...are strongly suspected of creating unhealthy psychological and attitudinal states, including misogyny, aggressiveness, and depression, and of causing a range of anti-social

and damaging behaviors” (Treasure, 2007, p. 135).

However, as Nike is a brand that has historically aligned itself with athletes who have grown up in such circumstances and fit the beloved “rags to riches” storyline, choosing a rap artist to star in their campaign continues the brand’s long history of individuals pushing past their boundaries. Rap music is also often associated with individualism, self-reliance, and a resilient attitude, values that the Nike brand has aligned itself with for decades. While Treasure may be correct that some rap music perpetuates stereotypes, it also seems important in this case that rap was born in the United States in the 1970s as a form of street art, which reinforces the ad’s appeal to nationalism (Ferrell, 1995). In his book, Serazio (2013) highlights several that brands have created mini-films to cut through traditional commercial clutter, such as Dove’s 2006 *Evolution* and BMW’s *The Hire*. There are three core reasons for this shift toward the min-film or music video style ad in marketing, according to Serazio: they are a practical way of responding to the growing popularity of ad-blockers; film directors, music video producers, and other media creators are increasingly willing to partner with advertisers; and advertising content in the form of entertainment enables a subtler form of consumer governance. By disguising their ad as a short film/music video which has no mention of any products, Nike projects a sense of authenticity onto the campaign.

Additionally, both basketball and rap music are linked with black culture. Following Scott (1990), when considering the historical context of Nike’s ad, race relations in the U.S. in 2016 were fraught due to police shootings and civil unrest that resulted from these. As basketball and rap are the two key cultural elements of the “Unlimited Together” ad, it is likely that Nike wished to tap into the public conversation about these tensions with the intention of putting the spotlight on Nike’s association with a culture that has been continuously oppressed. In

consequence, one can see some key differences between the “Star Spangled Banner” and Chance’s “We The People.” Whereas the former tends to be celebratory and reverential (“home of the brave”), the Nike song in comparison (especially the verbs – “we want,” “we tired,”) speaks more to the failure of the American Dream and to the black American experience of exclusion, resistance, and longing for inclusion and equality in American community. By acknowledging this, the brand utilizes the nation’s fragile state to generate a relationship of allegiance with the black community.

Adidas’ 2017 “Original Is Never Finished”

Adidas’ 2017 “Original Is Never Finished” campaign features a modernized version of the Frank Sinatra classic “My Way” with a variety of stars such as SnoopDogg, Pretra Collins, and several others. The spot was created in January of this year and appeared on the brand’s social channels as part of the brand’s relaunch of its EQT shoe line, which was originally introduced in the 90s (Pasquarelli, 2017). Like Nike, Adidas has a long history rooted in sports. Through their marketing campaigns, the brand has worked to embed itself in the culture of sport with ads that center on inspirational messages about the power of sport (“Adidas’ Strategy Overview, n.d.). With eerie and dark visuals throughout the ad, tied with a slow rendition of Sinatra’s classic, one can assume that Adidas is targeting a youthful audience who may also think of themselves as daring creatives. The mysterious imagery compliments the song’s staccato rhythm and follows the switch from slow to fast tempo with more vivid figures and faster movements. This acceleration effect in the visual work may capture audience attention, encouraging viewers to turn their sound on.

When utilizing Bruner’s main structural factors, the listener realizes that the Adidas

campaign is unlike the others as the song ends at a different speed and tempo from which it began. At the beginning of the ad, the tempo, pitch and rhythm are very slow and firm, evoking a more serious and solemn tone. Near the end, the song begins to pick up as the tempo and rhythm, pitch and volume steadily increase. As Galan (2009) notes, the strongest responses to music arise from elements that induce activity in the nervous system. In Adidas' case, the fast-paced music better captures consumers' attention and encourages the processing of the ad's messaging. The listener is left feeling joyous, inspired, and excited – opposite from what one sensed at the start of the ad. Adidas' "Original Is Never Finished" is unique in that it brings its audience through different emotional states through strategic use of rhythm, speed, and pitch.

As Powers' (2013), Scott (1990) and North et al. (2004) illustrate, advertisements can help convert disengaged audiences into consumers as long as the song adequately reflects the brand. In the case of Adidas and their "Original Is Never Finished" ad, the track "My Way" was specifically chosen to highlight the theme of the ad, which Wes Phelan, creative director at Johannes Leonardo, summarizes as "the past empowers the future." "Starting with the music," Phelan explain, "we intentionally chose a track that had been done multiple times before to prove our point—original is never finished" (Pasquarelli, 2017). Meier (2011) indicates that in order to break through promotional clutter and compete for "cool," marketers often search for tracks from the past and repurpose them in their own way. Since "My Way" by Frank Sinatra is a well-known track and likely to be recognized by audiences, it is less likely to be ignored or filtered out when listeners hear the changes in the iconic tune. Additionally, since music has the power to tap into a person's emotional memories, by remixing a pre-existing track, advertisers can tap into those memories and make an emotional connection with their audience (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Viewers are more likely to have a positive emotional response towards an ad when advertisers

produce music and other ad elements to resonate with the cultural climate, social context, musical tastes, and memories of the target audience.

Like the two campaigns mentioned previously, Adidas also aligns itself with industry creatives that mirror its brand message. Unlike Oreo and Nike, Adidas juxtaposes cultural legends with up-and-comers to perform Sinatra's "My Way": it paired skateboard legend Gonz with amateur Lucas Puig, NBA legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar with newcomer Brandon Ingram. The effort also features artist Petra Collins' spin on Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" and Snoop Dogg's reinvention of his classic "Doggystyle" album cover (Diaz, 2017). Since, as Scott (1990) points out, the meanings conveyed by music in ads depends on the social and cultural context, Adidas appears to be tapping into the current interest in unexpected genre pairings and artist collaborations that resonate with aspects of contemporary pop music culture (e.g., mash-up and remix culture). The remix-style pairing of old and new communicates Adidas' brand mantra about originality through music.

Lastly, like the Nike "Unlimited Together" campaign, "Original Is Never Finished" is presented as a sort of mini film. The longer format, as Tejada (2015) argues, accommodates longer musical tracks that tell stories within an ad and which are more effective in creating a lasting impression with audiences than a simple jingle. The musical narrative selected by Adidas' for this ad enables the company to target millennials who desire to be different from the mainstream and display this difference by seeking out original content and products. While the spot does feature Adidas merchandise, the 90 second "film" has no mention of any product or product information, further blurring the lines between advertisement and cultural content. By disguising the ad as a short film, audiences are more likely to engage with the spot as original content rather than ignore it as a paid advertisement (Serazio, 2013). This encourages audiences

to watch and listen to the entire broadcast, recapturing the lost attention that is so valuable in today's economy.

Audience Reaction: Summary of Results

This section examines the success of the Oreo, Nike and Adidas campaigns based on user comments collected from the brand's ad on YouTube. In an attempt to find links between practice and theory, comments have also been compared against themes found within the academic and industry literature. The comments have been categorized by the following: positive or negative, mention of brand, mention of song, mention of artist, drive to purchase, and corresponding theme (if any). The comments displayed within Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 (see Appendix), are examples that corresponded with one of the aforementioned categories.

Oreo "Wonderfilled": The first category considers whether the user displays a positive or negative emotion towards the advertisement. Neutral was used if the user did not evoke a liking or disliking for the ad. For the Oreo "Wonderfilled" ad, 75% of user comments were positive, 1% negative, and 24% were non-applicable. Out of the 75 positive comments, 17% included the word "love" when describing the Wonderfilled Anthem, 14 mentioned the Oreo brand, 22 mentioned the song itself, and 13 mentioned the artist Owl City. The negative comment did not mention any of the above three categories, but described the ad as "strange" without giving any reasoning.

Nike "Unlimited Together": Upon analyzing 100 YouTube comments for Nike's "Unlimited Together" advertisement, 69% of the Nike comments were positive, 7% were negative, and 24% were neutral. Out these positive comments, 5 mention the brand, 21 mention the song and 34 mention the artist. Interestingly, while one negative comment mentioned the song and none mentioned the Nike brand, 4 out of 7 negative comments mention the artist: "most

overrated rapper”, “Chance the rapper is garbage”, “Chance never evolved... same old shit but worse” and “If chance the rapper is music these days is rather listen to Ashely Simpson lip singing.” Overall, Chance the Rapper was mentioned significantly more than other categories, suggesting that his presence may have interested consumers more than Nike itself.

Adidas “Original Is Never Finished”: Upon analyzing the Adidas YouTube comments, 86% were positive, 13% were negative and 1% were neutral. Out of these positive comments, 28 mentioned the brand, 20 mentioned the song, and 8 mentioned the artists featured in the ad. From this, one can see how Adidas was the most successful in gaining brand recognition, even though the company and its products were not mentioned once during the ad.

Thematic Analysis of User Comments

Sound as a Universal Language that Works Over the Body

This theme surfaced in comments about all three of the advertisements. Some user comments appear to confirm Powers’ (2010) point that audiences “have no earlids.” One user comment on Adidas’ ad seems particular relevant:

I fell asleep with some long random video last night and this spot appeared somewhere in the middle of it and my ears apparently listened to this music and kind of wake up wanting to see what was what my ears were listening to. I could only get to see it was a spot from Adidas before I fell asleep again. It was so curious because the spot caught my attention even when sleeping. Well done Adidas! (Table 3).

This comment is interesting as it suggests that music can tap into one’s subconscious at any moment and leave a lasting impression. It is also linked to music as a tool for capturing attention, as the ad gained the attention of the user and encouraged him/her to search for more.

Additionally, this suggests that the music has the potential to be the primary modality in this media environment, since the audio is perceived first and entices the user to view the ad.

Moreover, users throughout all the three campaigns claimed that they chose not to skip the ad once the song began to play. These findings suggest that the online media environment is not entirely “soundless” as industry professionals fear, as some users routinely keep their sound on such as music drives their interest in viewing ads. For example, one user commented on Nike’s ad saying, “Almost skipped this beautiful piece of work. Great work Nike” (Table 2).

Lastly, several comments appear to align with Powers’ (2010) suggestion that music can produce automatic reactions and influence behaviours when executed properly. “Is there a full song of this version ? 'Cause it gave me shivers,” said one user in relation to the Adidas’ commercial (Table 3). “Wow this gave me chills and still is ..” said another user in response to Nike’s campaign (Table 2). These comments suggest that the ads produced an automatic physical reaction, leaving the user wanting more. Also, users take these involuntary or automatic affective responses such as the chills, shivers, etc. as indications of “being moved” in the emotional sense. Audiences now seem to expect intense emotional experiences from ads and want to repeat the pleasurable experience of consuming them by replaying an ad as often as they wish, giving the consumer some control over their emotional response. The comments also suggest an intention to purchase a brand product after viewing the spot: “geesh i love frank sinatras music, and this commercial is epic, im no shoe head but Adidas can sell me a pair” (Table 3), “nike can you send me shoes plz” (Table 2) and “i would like to share an oreo right now!” (Table 1). This further strengthens the idea that, with the proper musical fit, music’s role within advertising seems to shift towards inviting people to seek out these advertisements on their own.

In connection with Scott (1990) and Hung (2000), several user comments suggest that

music is not a universal language, but is an element that may require past understanding or cultural background. “i don't know what is the purpose of this video. Weird” (Table 3), said one user in response to Adidas’ ad. “This is strange. I normally like strange, but this is strange,” commented another user in relation to Oreo’s “Wonderfilled” (Table 1). The musical meanings derived from the ads depend on the extent to which users have been immersed in the brand’s culture and have access to the stock of cultural knowledge necessary to interpret the ad.

Sound as “Pure” Emotion

In the comments on Oreo’s “Wonderfilled” campaign, one can see that Oreo successfully inspired feelings of joy through their “Wonderfilled Anthem,” which aligns with the theme of sound as pure emotion. As Powers (2010) explains, advertisers perceive music as a tool for accessing emotions in a way that other modalities cannot. In Oreo’s case, many of the listeners claim to feel happy, excited and amazed – ultimately leading them to share their love for the brand with thousands of others, further reinforcing the positive emotional associations with brand and product. For instance, one user commented: “I love this song! I smile every time I hear it. I’m gonna download” and another user said: “This is the cutest thing. It legitimately makes me happy. Truthfully. I just love when this comes on” (Table 1). This also indicates that Oreo was successful in projecting their brand values – joy, fun, happiness – into the anthem. One user in particular noted how the advertisement reminded him/her of a time in their childhood: “My childhood was about giving Oreos, not fighting over them. This just brought me back to the wonders of sharing” (Table 1). This exemplifies MacInnis & Park’s (1991) concept of indexicality, but here the music seems to stimulate recall of past experiences of the product and brand and generates feelings of nostalgia through listening and remembering.

As Nike's "Unlimited Together" campaign was considered to be an ode to America's national basketball teams, it evoked a sense of pride and patriotism among several YouTube users. "This should be the new national anthem," "nice to see people appreciate how good our country is. Amen," "This video made me proud to be an American and I ain't even from there.." said users in reaction to Nike's ad (Table 2). Also, no matter how apathetic a person may be in regard to commercial messages, they are not "made out of wood," as Powers (2010) puts it, suggesting that sonic stimuli may effectively reach even the most cynical viewers. If not directly through the music, then indirectly through user comments that appear to be authentic expressions of pleasure, enthusiasm, and interest in the ad's music. "This almost made me cry," "this made me shed a tear chance ftw," "this song makes me feel overjoyed," expressed three users in reply to the "Unlimited Together" advertisement (Table 2). While there were negative comments within the ad, they focused on Chance the Rapper and not elements of nationalism.

Even though Adidas had the highest number of negative comments out of the three ads, users expressed the most affection towards this campaign. The word "love" appeared 21 times within the user comments: "I love this futuristic video ... i gone buy Adidas , push the future now" (Table 3). Similarly, another user wrote, "I honestly love Adidas ads they make me want to buy the whole store" (Table 3). It is important to note here how users express their love and enthusiasm for the ad by buying, or stating their intention to buy, the brand's product. This supports Galan's theory that by producing an affective response in consumers, music can have an effect on the likeability of a brand or product, ultimately influencing their purchasing behaviour.

Sound as Science

As Powers' (2010) and others suggest, music can be carefully engineered to produce predictable outcomes and create emotional reactions within audiences. When interpreting audience reactions through Bruner's (1990) three main structural factors, one can see this theme of "emotional engineering" at play. Since Oreo's ad is fast-paced, high-pitched, and loud in volume, users expressed feelings of joy, excitement and happiness: One users exclaimed, "I love this song! I smile every time I hear it. I'm gonna download" which another reported that "This is the song that makes me happy no matter what mood I'm in" (Table 1). While Adidas' ad starts with a slow paced and monotone composition, it gains momentum with increases in tempo, pitch and volume, which listeners found inspiring: "Every moment in this ad inspired me. when this song flowed from the TV, my heart beating. fantastic. colorful. dreamlike. and activity. good job adidas advertising agent !! You got new fan" (Table 3). From these examples, it is clear how the careful engineering of music according to ad message and audience preferences can influence a listener to feel a connection with an advertisement. Nike's ad, on the other hand, has a much slower tempo and softer volume, evoking sentimental feelings: "this made me shed a tear chance ftw" (Table 2). Finally, differences in the number of references to the brand in the user comments for each ad seem to support Galan's (2009) claim that fast tempo music has a stronger influence an individual's processing of the advertising message; Oreo and Adidas were mentioned significantly more often than Nike in the user comments, suggesting that users were more aware of the brand messaging within up-beat musical ads.

Musical Fit

In the Oreo "Wonderfilled" ad especially, users claimed that the anthem was "catchy" and

that they could not get the tune out of their heads: “IT'S STUCK IN MY HEAD AND NOW I CRAVE OREOS!!!!DANG U CATCHY TUNE!!!!”, “im goin to say ITS A GOOD SONG I LOVE IT its catchy” and “WHO COULD DISLIKE THIS!? IT'S SO DAMN CATCHY” (Table 1). Given that aspects of brand recall and recognition occur more efficiently when music-message congruency is high, these comments which stress the memorability of the tune and the brand would seem to suggest that the “Wonderfilled” Anthem and the Oreo brand are an excellent fit for one another.

In the Adidas ad, users recognized and admired the authentic and original image the brand was attempting to project through their ad: “This is an important piece. Well done- I loved it. Thank you for taking risks;” “the definition of being ‘original’ ! Love the video;” “This is about being original and not a cookie cut out in life because we are all unique. Be original!” (Table 3). These attributions of originality to the brand relates back to the idea of musical congruency; Adidas’ musical choice conveys the brand’s overall message and contributes to its understanding (MacInnins & Park, 1991).

In classic Nike style, the brand successfully sold their ideology without having to endorse any products throughout the advertisement. Several user comments reflected the lyrics sung by Chance The Rapper, calling for unity and togetherness. One users wrote, “all our minorities come together! I hope that women get equal pay I hope minorities stop geting hated on. I hope America stands for something other then greed. I hope,” while another stated, “Powers. No heroes here. No night lights no highlights. U get results u get results. The result is u. Make it happen. -one huned” (Table 2). One user in particular praised the commercial for its association with black culture: “Beautiful retrospective on black pro sports culture. Rich, haunting piano track that drives the dark contrast imagery further towards unity, black unity” (Table 2). By

tapping into the current public discourse about racism, this comment suggests that Nike was successful in their attempt to appeal to the black community and, in the view of some users, fostered a deep connection with black culture. Like their past campaigns, “Unlimited Together” used an up-and-coming artist from a genre of music that reflected their brand values and resonated with their target audience to create music-message congruency.

User Comments from a Critical Perspective

Battle for Consumer Attention

User comments not only demonstrate the success of the three ads, but also speak to the problems stemming from shifts within the advertising industry. One of the major issues highlighted in both the academic and industry literature is the battle for consumer attention. LaVecchia (2015) claims that amid rapid cultural and technological change, the resource all marketers are competing for is attention. YouTube comments on each ad highlighted this problem: “I typically do not invest time into commenting or ads for that matter, but this ad captivated me for length,” “was gonna skip it but sounded deep,” and “I’m so glad I didn’t skip this!” Even though these comments suggest the brands were successful in capturing the attention of their audiences, they also indicate that users rarely watch an ad in its entirety and often skip the spot if they have the option. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram have also made it easier for consumers to disregard ads by providing soundless options on their feeds. On Oreo’s “Wonderfilled” commercial, one user commented: “Now here is a commercial I wouldn’t FF or mute. Cute and funny!” Such comments again challenge Powers’ (2010) “no earlids” claim and reveal that when it comes to the Internet, audiences do indeed have an “earlids” option.

Authenticity

Another issue advertisers have recently encountered is consumers' hunger for authentic content. In order to answer this desire for authenticity, advertisers have designed several strategies that result in ads that do not resemble traditional marketing efforts, including native advertising, influencer content, and others. However, such advertising is not always successful and can result in backlash towards the brand. Chelsea Thompson O'Brien, strategic planner at digital agency Mirum Canada, argues: "You can tell when a person is faking it. They come off as inauthentic. It's the same for a brand" (Wright, 2017, para. 31). In addition, thanks to social media, the backlash is now immediate and jarring. As revealed in previous sections, the campaigns analyzed in this Major Research Paper faced some negativity in relation to their efforts in creating authentic content. In Nike's "Unlimited Together" ad, several users called out Chance the Rapper for being an inauthentic artist, claiming that he is "overrated" and a "sellout." Adidas' ad also received criticism from users, as many comments criticized the brand's commercial for having "nothing to do with sneakers" or other Adidas products. This re-emphasizes the importance of musical congruency and fit within an advertisement, as well as understanding what kind of consumer messaging will attract your brand's target audience.

Guerrilla Marketing

Based on user YouTube comments, there is considerable evidence that guerilla marketing captures audience attention in the current media environment more effectively than traditional advertising. As Serazio (2013) explains, guerilla marketing enables subtle governance over consumers as it is often disguised as something other than advertising. Several users shared that either they were not aware that the video was in fact an ad or they knew the video was an ad but

interpreted it as cultural expression or art work: “This is no ad, this is art in all ways and i love it,” “this is too good to be just an ad ...” and “I thought this was a movie trailer at first. Maybe it should be. Was good.” Another way in which all three brands used this strategy was by featuring artists respected by target audiences in their campaigns. Graakjaer (2015) notes that working with an established or up-and-coming artist can enhance the authenticity of an ad, a trait that marketers often strive for when producing branded content. Many users revealed that it was the artist who inspired them to watch the ad, as exemplified by the following comments: “Because of Owl City, best commercial ever!”, “snoop dogg was the best part” and ““right about to hit skip, but I heard Chance and I just couldn't.”

In the Adidas ad, it is worth noting that several negative comments focused on the guerrilla marketing aspect of the ad. Many viewers expressed that they did not understand the purpose of the ad, as it was not actually selling them anything. “what does this commercial got to do with shoes,” one user asked. “I hate when People try to advertise there Company by making Commercials That don't have to do with the product ;-; there just putting Random crap,” noted another user. Further, some users develop resentment towards the ad, as they feel manipulated and lured into believing that it is something it is not. Rather than seeing Adidas’ effort as authentic content, consumers see the brand’s spot as something that is extremely *inauthentic* and call out the retailer for attempting to sell an ideology rather than a product. It is possible that Adidas’ attempt at showcasing its core message, “Original Is Never Finished,” did not fall within some consumers’ interpretation of the brand, causing disapproval. Whether the comment was positive or negative, this strategy drove audiences to these campaigns and made a lasting impression.

Conclusion

My analysis of YouTube comments from all three of the chosen ads produced findings that speak directly to key themes in scholarly and advertising industry discourses about music in advertising. In line with Scott (1990), and contrary to Powers' (2010) assumption that music is a universal language, considering the cultural and social context of a musical ad is key to brands' efforts to connect with consumers. The Oreo, Nike and Adidas campaigns generated user comments in which the emotional associations intended by producers were reflected in positive user comments – a finding that aligns with Powers' (2010) and Galan's (2009) claim that music provokes an emotional response from consumers and can influence the recall and likeability of a brand. YouTube comments also revealed that both authenticity and musical fit, two common themes found in my review of the scholarly research, were vital elements in determining the success of an advertisement. Interestingly, even when viewers praised the three advertisements, their comments point to challenges stemming from continuing transformations in the advertising industry, specifically those in an always-on digital world.

Certain characteristics of this Major Research Paper limit the paper's findings, offering opportunities for future research. First, since one of the key features of this study was analyzing ads without verbal messaging, future research should examine how musical advertisements with a strong verbal dimension influence audiences. Second, this study focused on brands that sell standard consumer goods and it would be fascinating to replicate this study with other product types, specifically durable goods or services. It would also be interesting to examine how non-profit organizations utilize music within their campaigns as well as the extent to which the ads and comments reflect key themes in academic and industry discourse. Additionally, although this research paper examined YouTube comments from online users that did not indicate their age,

race, class or gender, it would be worthwhile to develop studies in which demographics can be better identified. This would potentially reveal what type of musical advertisements would resonate best with a particular audience and improvements brands can make to reach a broader demographic.

Appendix

Table 1. Oreo “Wonderfilled”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFsZ6BO4LU0>

Comment (Date: Ranging from 3-4 years ago)	Positive/ Negative	Brand Mention	Song Mention	Artist Mention	Drive to Purchase	Correlating Theme
This is the cutest thing. It legitimately makes me happy. Truthfully. I just love when this comes on.	Positive			Yes		Sound as pure emotion
if you gave an Oreo to me. .I'd eat it.	Positive	Yes				
Owl City+ cream that does wonderful things inside a chocolate sandwich dream= :D	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
OMG I love this song! Who doesn't?	Positive		Yes			Sound as pure emotion
Good choice letting Adam sing it! I LOVE HIM!	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
So awesome Oreos rock	Positive	Yes				
I love this song <3	Positive		Yes			Sound as pure emotion
I knew it was Owl City! ^_^ Watching yt videos and this ad comes up. I don't skip it 5 secs in b/c it's animated :D Then I hear the song and am very sure it's Owl City :) It's a little like Peppermint Winter and Paper Tigers <3	Positive		Yes			Guerrilla marketing
OMG I love this song! Who doesn't?	Positive		Yes			Sound as pure emotion
Good choice letting Adam sing it! I LOVE HIM!	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
	Positive					
This song is stuck in my head I love it!!	Positive		Yes			Musical fit
The thing that makes it better is that Owl City sings it.	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
Sounds like owl city	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
Trying to learn the lryics	Positive		Yes			
If he gave me an Oreo I'd frame it cuz Adam just gave me a freakin Oreo!	Positive	Yes		Yes		Guerrilla marketing
WHO COULD DISLIKE THIS!?! IT'S SO DAMN CATCHY :D	Positive		Yes			Musical fit
I'm reminded of the Owl City Key of Awesome. Hmmm...	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
Awesome catchy and deserve s way mor likes	Positive		Yes			Musical fit
I love this song! I smile every time I hear it. I'm gonna download.	Positive		Yes			Sound as pure emotion

My childhood was about giving Oreos, not fighting over them. This just brought me back to the wonders of sharing.:)	Positive	Yes				Sound as pure emotion
I've watched this commercial 17 times and I'm going to keep on watching it until I can say every line of it without watching it	Positive					
i would like to share an oreo right now!	Positive	Yes			Yes	Musical fit
I love this song but it makes me sad watching Adam change so much the last few years :c	Positive		Yes	Yes		Sound as pure emotion
My childhood was about giving Oreos, not fighting over them. This just brought me back to the wonders of sharing.:)	Positive	Yes				Sound as pure emotion
i would like to share an oreo right now!	Positive	Yes				
Ahahaha, it's cute how it's sung by Owl City. Well done Oreos.. Well done %a'	Positive	Yes		Yes		Sound as guerrilla marketing
i love this song so much im eating oreos also i know no one cares about the oreos	Positive	Yes	Yes		Yes	Sound as pure emotion

Table 2. Nike “Unlimited Together”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6DFLoN3JosA>

Comment (Date: 10 months ago)	Positive/ Negative	Brand Mention	Song Mention	Artist Mention	Drive to Purchase	Correlating theme
Chance is here, it's official, Nike is the best.	Positive	Yes		Yes		Guerrilla marketing
I need to find the link to this song asap rocky	Positive		Yes			
This... is an awesome track. Good job Chance!	Positive		Yes	Yes		
this is a nice rap song. whats the title?	Positive		Yes			
all our minorities come together! I hope that women get equal pay I hope minorities stop geting hated on. I hope America stands for something other then greed. I hope	Positive					Musical fit
just here for chance ôñ ôñ	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
chance should put this song on his next album	Positive		Yes	Yes		Guerrilla marketing
Yes Chancellor! You betta highlight your glorious talents!	Positive			Yes		Guerrilla marketing
We see that fist at the end chano. Power	Positive			Yes		
Wow. Chance is killing the game right now.	Positive			Yes		
Powers. No heroes here. No night lights no highlights. U get results u get results.	Positive					Musical fit

Pump Up the Jam: How Music in Brand Advertising Can Create Deeper Connections with Consumers

The result is u. Make it happen. -one huned						
His Vocals Are Dope Asf. Tho	Positive		Yes	Yes		
best nike advert in all of time, well done nike, well done chance. bliss	Positive	Yes		Yes		Musical fit
Chance never evolved... same old shit but worse	Negative			Yes		
chance the rapper is arguably the best out right now	Positive			Yes		
I was gonna skip this ad until I saw chance	Positive			Yes		Sound as a universal language
Gosh Chance aint never switched up. His tracks been banging. Gotta love him.	Positive			Yes		
Saw the ad & Chance. IMMEDIATELY started searching. Dope song, instrumental is smooth.	Positive		Yes	Yes		Guerrilla marketing
Beautiful retrospective on black pro sports culture. Rich, haunting piano track that drives the dark contrast imagery further towards unity, black unity.	Positive		Yes			Musical fit
Chance the rapper is garbage	Negative			Yes		
If chance the rapper is music these days is rather listen to Ashely Simpson lip singing.	Negative			Yes		
this song makes me feel overjoyed	Positive		Yes			Sound as pure emotion
This song is amazing love chance the rapper	Positive		Yes	Yes		Guerrilla marketing
send me nikes plz	Positive	Yes			Yes	
most overrated rapper	Negative			Yes		
So glad Chance is finally getting a spotlight :D	Positive			Yes		
wow this shit gave me chills and still is ..	Positive		Yes			Sound as a universal language
this made me shed a tear chance ftw	Positive			Yes		Sound as pure emotion
He should do a verse and drop this a single or something. Sounds so dope	Positive		Yes	Yes		Guerrilla marketing

Table 3. Adidas “Original Is Never Finished”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cv53BKMYsy0>

Comment (Date: 5 months ago)	Positive/ Negative	Brand Mention	Song Mention	Artist Mention	Drive to Purchase	Correlating Theme
this is adidas. GOOSE BUMPS!	Positive	Yes				Sound as a universal language
Damn.... this ad makes me wanna get a pair of Adidas LoL. Û÷â Û÷â Û÷â	Positive				Yes	
geesh i love frank sinatras music, and this commercial is epic, im no shoe head but Adidas can sell me a pair Û÷â	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Guerrilla marketing
Dang it's like Nike and addidas are fighting for the conceptual artwork trophy I love it	Positive	Yes				Musical fit
These new Adidas kicks suck..only good thing that is O.G is Snoop Dogg and the Frank Sinatra song...	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Hey Adidas very beautiful spot. It is possible to know the name of the director?	Positive	Yes				
I fell asleep with some long random video last night and this spot appeared somewhere in the middle of it and my ears apparently listened to this music and kind of wake up wanting to see what was what my ears were listening to. I could only get to see it was a spot from Adidas before I fell asleep again. It was so curious because the spot caught my attention even when sleeping. Well done Adidas!	Positive	Yes	Yes			Sound as a universal language & Sound as attention gaining
adidas is soooo much better than Nike	Positive	Yes				
wow thank for introducing this song to me Ûª and amazing video loved the raw nature ÛÔART%oI	Positive		Yes			Musical fit
I honestly love Adidas ads they make me want to buy the whole store.	Positive	Yes			Yes	
One of the best ad campaigns I've EVER seen. Damn congrats adidas	Positive	Yes				Musical fit
Thank God for my partnership with adidas! Such a great company!	Positive	Yes				
Very cool, usually only wear Nikes, but why not this commercial has me feeling Adidas!	Positive	Yes			Yes	
who did this remix of my way? i want to listen to it on repeat	Positive		Yes			
Frank Sinatra My Way cover, how do I find it on YouTube?	Positive		Yes	Yes		Guerrilla marketing
this was a really cool ad, more like a piece of art, super uber	Positive					Guerrilla marketing
I love this man, also my favorite song from	Positive		Yes	Yes		Guerrilla

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Sinatra						marketing
That was interesting, actually. I want that song more than the shoes.	Positive		Yes			Musical fit
What did I just watch? Where are the shoes? The product? Original Adidas were thrown over power lines as almost everyone who could afford them, everyone knew who they belonged to. Usually a new kid moving on, trying to leave his mark. If this is Adidas, where is the break dancing and diverse clothing? Original what?	Negative	Yes				Guerrilla marketing
This is an amazing interpretation of Frank Sinatra. Well done, Adidas. Well done, indeed.	Positive	Yes	Yes	Yes		Musical fit

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