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SONIC BRANDING IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

In the current global marketplace brand visibility and emotional engagement play a pivotal role for consumers and brands. While visual elements such as logos, typography, and colour schemes are much more common and strategically explored for brand identity, such phenomena as neuromarketing is still not fully observed. According to Christophe Morin [1] it is “an emerging field that bridges the study of consumer behaviour with neuroscience” and it first gained formal recognition in 2002. Even instead of increased research according to this topic, due to the difficulty of obtaining appropriate equipment, possibility to measurements and biological specialties, it is still hard to conduct research. As a result, many mechanisms underlying emotional responses to marketing stimuli, particularly sound remain insufficiently understood. Moreover, cultural variability adds another layer of complexity because what evokes excitement and positive emotions in one culture may be perceived as intrusive or emotionally distant in another.

This creates a gap in both theory and practice regarding how brands can effectively use sound and music across different cultural markets. Although some global brands have successfully implemented sonic branding, many campaigns suffer from a lack of cultural adaptation and fail to consider how music interacts with consumers’ unconscious emotional states. Thus, the need to explore how music functions as a stimulus that evokes emotional and behavioural responses in culturally diverse environments has become increasingly relevant. Moreover, various musical components, such as tempo, pitch and timbre contribute to the overall psychological impact of a brand’s soundscape. However, their specific effects are not fully understood, these nuances can significantly alter emotional responses, making them crucial variables in the design of effective audio branding. In the modern technological age of AI-driven personalisation, brands have the opportunity to use advanced tools and algorithms to recognise cultural patterns, emotional triggers and preferred sound characteristics. This might enable them to adapt musical elements more precisely to different target groups and cultural contexts, ultimately enhancing engagement, emotional connection and consumer purchasing behaviour. And that is why deeper research into the emotional and cross-cultural functions of music in branding is needed for such strategies to succeed.

To illustrate how audio branding plays a central role in how consumers emotionally and cognitively connect with a brand, we took some prominent

examples [2–3] for our observation. Furthermore, the effectiveness of audio branding and its dependence not only on the sound itself but also on how well it resonates with the cultural values, preferences, and auditory norms of the target audience will be also discussed. The analysis of the five case studies reveals clear patterns and distinctions between global standardization and local adaptation in audio branding strategies. While some global brands successfully implemented uniform sound identities across markets, others experienced challenges due to cultural misalignment.

Global brands such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's have successfully used upbeat, fast-paced music to encourage emotional engagement in a variety of markets. Their sonic cues like familiar pop rhythms, product-related effects and catchy jingles consistently evoke pleasure, arousal and approach behaviour in line with the S-O-R model. Their successful strategies in balancing universal emotional triggers with culturally neutral audio identities achieved broad recognition while fostering positive brand associations, particularly in individualistic societies where personal enjoyment influences purchasing decisions. By contrast, the Heineken case illustrates the risks of mismatched audio branding. The high-energy music, which was intended to convey ambition and success, clashed with the Dutch cultural values of modesty and low masculinity. This reduced the emotional resonance and brand intimacy.

In conclusion this study has confirmed that sound in marketing is far more than a background element. It is a psychological stimulus that directly affects memory, emotion, perception and ultimately behaviour. Thus, global sound branding can strengthen brand recognition when adapted to cultural specificities and that local adaptation is essential to optimise emotional resonance and consumer response in culturally diverse markets. Neurological studies show that music activates the amygdala, a brain region closely tied to emotional processing and long-term memory formation. This neural connection explains why certain sounds elements remain associated with brands long after the initial exposure.

It is also worth saying that analysis of culture also plays pivotal role. The PAD model shows what may mostly guide consumer behaviour as well as Hofstede's cultural dimensions can help to ensure sound strategies appropriately are tailored appropriately and effectively across diverse markets.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that adapting modern technologies such as AI and biometric feedback tools is not only reasonable, but increasingly necessary. As neuromarketing methods advance through EEG, eye-tracking, and emotion recognition brands will gain the capacity to measure and respond to consumer emotions in real time. This opens new opportunities for personalized sound experiences and more successful purchasing outcomes on a larger scale.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that in the era of global modernisation music is not being used any less and in fact is becoming more and more integrated with

modern technologies. Overall, the intelligent and ethical usage of sound branding has the power to transform shopping experiences, increase emotional resonance and drive purchasing behavior in more responsible ways.

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