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Effects of Brand Music on Attitudes toward a Team Advertisement

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This research examined the effects of brand music on viewers' attitudes toward a collegiate football team advertisement. The brand music under investigation featured custom-designed song lyrics that embodied the unique brand attributes and characteristics of the Florida Gators, the athletics program of the University of Florida. Extant research on background music in advertising, as well as theoretical perspectives of conceptual fluency and semantic relevance, guided this investigation. Ninety-seven subjects were randomly assigned to two experimental conditions in which brand music or music from Billboard charts was featured in the background of a commercial advertisement for the Florida Gators football team. MANOVA was utilized to investigate a series of hypotheses and data were analyzed using multivariate and univariate procedures. Findings revealed that sport brand music had positive effects on perceptions of musical fit, brand attitude, and attitude towards the advertisement. Implications for sport marketing researchers and practitioners are forwarded.

Keywords: sonic branding, branding, conceptual fluency, sport marketing, sport advertising, intercollegiate athletics, music

Sport marketers have long affected the minds of sport consumers by using traditional media as effective means for brand communication. Over the last decade, however, traditional media have become saturated with marketing clutter surrounding contemporary sporting events and sponsorship (Burton & Chadwick, 2009), making it difficult for brands to create and sustain a competitive advantage (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). Further, the unrestricted proliferation of advertising in the marketplace has resulted in a negative perception of marketing tactics

among consumers (Drumwright & Murphy, 2009; Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlin, 2005). This untimely, yet prevailing trend has resulted in an increased difficulty for sport teams to create and foster identification among sports fans (Pyun & James, 2011). As such, sport marketers must begin to focus their efforts on building stronger emotional connections with consumers by applying more highly developed forms of brand communication.

One contemporary form of brand communication requiring further investigation is branded audio content, otherwise known as “brand music” (Bronner & Hirt, 2009; Lusensky, 2010; Treasure, 2007). Brand music is custom-designed music featuring structure and lyrics composed specifically to express brand characteristics and product features (Bronner & Hirt, 2009). For example, the Ohio State University athletic department recently collaborated with popular local music artists to create an entire 11-song album featuring original music tailored song lyrics. Songs on the album were written and recorded specifically for the Scarlet and Gray, and included titles like *Ohio On & On*, *Buckeye Land*, and *The Shoe*. The apparently ubiquitous nature of music in the marketplace has recently become an increasingly important aspect of marketing practice (Jackson, Jankovich, & Sheinkop, 2013; Lusensky, 2010). There is an extensive literature regarding the application of music as a basic marketing tool capable of influencing consumer attitudes and behavior. For example, evidence from the advertising literature suggests music is a tool of persuasion through which brand attitudes, recall of key benefits, and subsequent purchase behavior are all enhanced (Oakes, 2007; Scott, 1990). A further strand of literature demonstrates the ability of music to serve as an important brand signifier among others (e.g., name, logo, colors) used to ensure the stable and consistent delivery of brand messages (Balmer & Gray, 2003). As such, comprehensive understanding of the effects of brand music is therefore indispensable in today’s marketplace as it represents a possible means for improving brand communication and overall marketing strategy. Yet, there remains a certain “lack of confidence and methodological clarity in dealing with sound within professional communication” (Bronner & Hirt, 2009, p. 19).

Brand music is constructed through a process by which brands collaborate with music artists to develop original music that appeals to a diverse range of audiences, and reflects the attributes and personalities exclusive to the brand (Lusensky, 2010). While numerous individual components of music are measured (e.g., genre, tempo, voice), the integration of brand-specific concepts and meanings into semantically relevant song lyrics is a foremost concern (Jackson, 2003). Researchers have used the term “sonic branding” to describe this rapidly developing field of study and practice (Fulberg, 2003; Jackson, 2003; North & Hargreaves, 2008). Sonic branding is defined as “the creation of brand expressions in sound and the consistent, strategic usage of these properties across touch points” (Jackson, 2003, p. 9). The most commonly developed forms of sonic branding include audio logos (e.g., Coca-Cola’s 5-note melody) and jingles (e.g., State Farm’s *Like a Good Neighbor* theme). Brand music differs from these forms by following classic song pattern (i.e., verse and chorus), which provides marketers more applications for its use. Ballouli and Bennett (2012) indicate sport marketers are beginning to take a more proactive approach to sonic branding, identifying opportunities for artist-team collaborations. However, the application of brand music as a sonic branding tool remains a relatively new sport marketing strategy; thus, only recently has it been possible to investigate its effects in team advertising.

Extensive literature concerned with the study of music in advertisements has mostly examined the effects of mood, tempo, and genre on various aspects of consumer behavior (see Bruner, 1990; Craton & Lantos, 2011; Oakes, 2007), largely neglecting the impact of lyrical content in the same regard (Olsen & Johnson, 2002). Some evidence shows lyrics as having the

unique ability to create meaningful relations among specific concepts and constructs in the minds of consumers (e.g., Allan, 2006; Craton & Lantos, 2011; Olsen & Johnson, 2002; Yalch, 1991). To this end, Redker and Gibson (2009) argue that lyrics of music in advertisements have the ability to influence consumer attitudes in a more enduring manner. Brodsky (2010) further posits that consumers are able to decode the intentions of marketers to express brand characteristics and product features through song lyrics. As such, it is plausible to assume relevant lyrics in a sport team's brand music can have a formative role in priming team-specific concepts and meanings among consumers.

Purpose of the Study

Motivation for this research was largely based on the observation of U.S. sport teams employing music in more dexterous ways, thus buttressing the need for empirical and theoretical evaluation of subsequent effectiveness. One trend in the sport industry points toward a focused partnership between sport teams and music artists to produce brand music reflecting the unique values and personality of the brand through song lyrics. For example, the Dallas Cowboys of the National Football League (NFL) recently collaborated with a music branding agency to create an original CD with music written and recorded by Texas music artists, such as Cowboy Troy and Los Lonely Boys, and featuring song titles like *Cowboy Stomp* and *Get Rowdy Cowboys*. In addition to college and professional sport teams, numerous other sport entities have created their own brand music, including sport organizations (e.g., NFL), broadcasting networks (e.g., ESPN, FoxSports), sport venues (e.g., Kentucky Derby, Bristol Motor Speedway) and sponsors (e.g., Coca-Cola, Full Throttle). Research suggests sonic branding efforts such as these may enhance consumers' experiences with the brand, which might improve their subsequent attitudes and behaviors (Fulberg, 2003; Jackson, 2003; North & Hargreaves, 2008). This study investigated the effects of brand music on sport consumer responses to a team advertisement, particularly examining the effects of two different music selections (i.e., brand music, generic music) on consumer ratings of musical fit, brand attitudes, and attitude towards the advertisement. By examining how brand music relates to our understanding of these commonly studied constructs, this study contributes to advertising theory and the broader literature on the effects of music in advertising, providing new discussion on how the theoretical perspectives of conceptual fluency and semantic relevance might relate to the effects of song lyrics in music used in advertisements. More specifically, the current study contributes to the sport marketing literature by highlighting the significance of original music owned by sport teams and applied in the advertising context.

Theoretical Background

This research was based on the theoretical perspectives of conceptual fluency and semantic relevance. Conceptual fluency refers to the level of consumer effort and precision in identifying a given object or target (Danesi, 1995; Hamann, 1990). Pragmatically, conceptual fluency ideology implicates select terms as enriching concept recognition and processing when applied in an appropriate and corresponding manner within a related contextual setting (Lee & Labroo, 2004). Prior research indicates the effects on individual decision-making based upon the degree of similarity among conceptual associations and relationships (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Conceptual fluency is a consequence of high-level associations linked to a stimulus, alluding to the expectation among consumers to experience germane stimuli in consumer settings (Shapiro, 1999; Whittlesea, 1993). For example, consumers might expect to hear classical music

played in the background of a lavish car commercial, but may not expect to hear the same genre of music played during a commercial advertisement for running shoes. Hence, the use of brand music should enhance conceptual fluency more than generic (i.e., popular, mainstream) music in advertising, manifesting itself among consumers and simplifying process of various stimuli.

Research further reveals conceptual fluency as producing favorable brand attitudes and attitudes toward the advertisement. Lee and Labroo (2004) found individuals evaluated a brand presented in a predictive context or primed by related concepts more favorably, attributing their attitudes to positive valence produced by the advertisement. Conversely, these authors observed less favorable attitudes when conceptual fluency was associated with negative valence. Thus, it is postulated that brand music, which by design embodies the attributes and image of the brand, may ease the processing of advertisement stimuli and play a formative role in priming desired concepts in the minds of consumers.

Conceptual fluency is contingent on the relative contribution of semantic features to the meaning of a concept, or semantic relevance (Sartori & Lombardi, 2004). Semantic relevance considers the magnitude a semantic feature (i.e., a word or combination of words) contributes to an individual's overall recognition and comprehension of a concept. This principle suggests the effective application of semantic information (e.g., lyrics) may enhance the overall recognition and processing of a concept (e.g., brand) when information is congruent with the context and the individual's expectations. Fundamental to this claim is the nature of certain semantic features considered more significant in transmitting concept information. The meaning of a concept is believed to comprise semantic features stimulating concept recognition and distinction. As evidenced by Sartori and Lombardi (2004), verbal descriptions are considered an avenue for deriving such principal features:

For example, *has a trunk* is a semantic feature of high relevance for the concept elephant because most subjects use it to define elephant, whereas very few use the same feature to define other concepts. *Has four legs*, on the other hand, is a semantic feature with lower relevance for the same concept because few subjects use it in the definition of elephant while using it in defining many other concepts (p. 439, italics added for emphasis).

This illustration accentuates the potential for one concept to possess many semantic features, further categorizing only a select few as truly beneficial in producing distinction among other related concepts. Based on this observation, semantic features that are both dominant and distinct are considered to more efficiently advance communication efforts. Semantic features regularly cited in defining a concept (i.e., dominant semantic features) but seldom cited in defining other concepts (i.e., distinct semantic features) are more semantically relevant and obligatory for conceptual processing (Sartori & Lombardi, 2004).

Recently, studies have demonstrated consumers' processing of advertising stimuli to be "enhanced by the inclusion of context information that facilitates identification of the brand, and therefore increases the likelihood of associations being activated in memory" (Grimes, 2008, p. 79). Current research also suggests semantic representations of a brand applied in the auditory form produced more favorable attitudes and responses among consumers (Westermann, 2008). Since brand music is a communication tool consisting of semantic representations of the brand, one would be inclined to postulate an important role for brand music in advertising strategy.

Sonic Branding

The ubiquity of music in the modern marketplace renders it useful for creating unique and lasting impressions in the minds and hearts of consumers (Zander, 2006). Much like a visual image, an audio fragment can elicit recall (Hecker, 1984; Olsen & Johnson, 2002; Yalch, 1991; Wallace, 1994), stimulate emotions (Alpert, Alpert, & Maltz, 2005; Bruner, 1990; Morris & Boone, 1998; Oakes & North, 2008), and affect behaviors (Milliman, 1982, 1986; North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1999; Yalch & Spangenberg, 1990). Since visual and audio components have the ability to influence consumer behavior in similar ways, marketers oftentimes employ them in tandem, achieving the expression of brand identities across marketing channels. Yet, extant branding literature has relied almost exclusively on the visual domain (Westermann, 2008). Stahl (1964) argued for visual consistency across marketing channels more than half a century ago as a means to enhance brand communication. Although decades of research have undoubtedly advanced our understanding of brand communication through imagery, visual brand impressions are no longer the only salient identities of the brand. A recent strand of literature suggests sonic branding is ideally suited to evolve as an innovative and effective way to optimize brand-consumer relationships (Fulberg, 2003).

Sonic branding concerns the strategic use of music, sound, or voice within the framework of brand communication to create custom brand identities through audio (Jackson, 2003). The process involves synchronizing brand identities into an audio form both distinct and recognizable to the brand. Researchers argue sonic branding has the ability to create more memorable brand experiences and longer lasting brand impressions among consumers than its visual counterpart (Jackson, 2003; Lusensky, 2010; Treasure, 2007). Combining sonic branding strategies with other commonly used marketing practices provides firms unrealized potential to embed messages seamlessly at touch points “where sound is a factor in the nature of the experience” (Jackson, 2003, p. 5). As such, an increasing number of firms are developing innovative and integrative “sonic languages” devised to communicate messages across marketing channels (Jackson, 2003).

In 2011, for example, the Pittsburgh Steelers of the NFL adopted the song *Black and Yellow*, written and performed by rap artist and Pittsburgh native Wiz Khalifa, as the team’s “brand anthem” (Krumboltz, 2011). Although the song does not specifically identify the Steelers by name, the repeated use of the phrase “black and yellow” in the chorus was evidently reflective of the Steelers’ brand to the extent the song was prominently featured during home contests throughout the NFL season. More notably, the phrase “black and yellow” all but eliminated the chances other NFL teams would also utilize the song for their own marketing purposes, as the emphasis of these colors would assumedly provoke cognitive dissonance among fans. Based on the principles of semantic relevance, this phrase constituted a distinct and dominant feature used to facilitate desired concepts among Steelers’ fans. While sport teams have long used generic music to enhance the experience for their consumers, they seldom find music featuring distinct and dominant semantic features within song lyrics. As a result, sport marketers are adhering to a more preemptive method for the creation and development of a sonic identity, seeking expert collaborations with recording artists in the initial stages of sonic branding strategy (Ballouli & Bennett, 2012). While generic music has occupied a prominent placement in delivery of sport products and services, the emergence of music branding agencies specializing in sport marketing has lessened the necessity of licensed generic music among sport teams. Accordingly, sport teams are recognizing this prospect to more appropriately incorporate custom proprietary music within integrated marketing communication strategies.

Hypotheses Development

Research concerning the effects of music has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. Still, relatively few studies have explored the concept of musical fit, in which perceived congruence between music and a product, message, or brand leads to improved responses in consumer behavior (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Just recently, the Cincinnati Bengals experienced the negative effects of using a song that seemingly did not fit consumer expectations and perceptions during player introductions. Stadium personnel for the team apparently thought it wise to play Katy Perry's latest hit single titled *Roar* over as Bengals players were introduced due to fact the song featured a loose association between the song's lyric "hear me roar" and the team's catlike mascot. Yet, the level of fit was not enough to assuage Bengals fans in attendance, let alone positively enhance their attitudes, as negative sentiment poured out via social media sites both during and following the event (ESPN.com, 2013). Zander (2006) notes conforming music to fit an advertisement and its elements may positively influence consumers' attitudes because it reinforces their convictions about the advertisement's content. He examined musical fit in commercial advertising and found congruent music "to create differentiating effects on subjects' impressions of product endorsers and brands of an advertisement" (Zander, 2006, p. 465). North et al. (2006) also examined musical fit in advertising and found individuals had more favorable evaluations of the advertisement and had stronger, positive purchase intentions when the background music was perceived as congruent with other advertisement elements.

Yeoh and North (2010) argue the underlying principles of musical fit pertain to the concept of spreading activation (e.g., Collins & Loftus, 1975). Spreading activation is a component of semantic priming (Masson, 1995), in which the activation of one semantic node primes a network of interrelated semantic nodes and the consequential spread of activation to all other related semantic nodes (Collins & Loftus, 1975). Yeoh and North (2010) applied this principle to demonstrate how music can activate related concepts concerning certain products, thus improving the ability to recall these products relative to other unrelated products. Similarly, Grimes (2008) revealed background music in advertisements can prime the activation of concepts in memory, triggering the activation of related knowledge structures associated with the brand. Each concept is a fundamental part of many networks, and thus represents a "pathway for associating a vast amount of additional information to the brand" (Grimes, 2008, p. 76).

An underdeveloped area of musical fit is the role of lyrical content inherent to all non-instrumental music selections. Existing literature on musical fit has focused primarily on genre (Areni & Kim, 1993; Kellaris, Cox, & Cox, 1993; North, Hargreaves, MacKenzie, & Law, 2004; Yeoh & North, 2010) and structural elements (Chebat, Chebat, & Vallaint, 2001; Kellaris & Kent, 1991; Zander, 2006), providing only slight discussion of the potential for lyrics to play a role larger than other factors previously explored. Hecker (1984) argues music is an important factor in the total communicative task of presupposing information and communicating messages, and thus should not be examined remote from the semantic meanings accompanying it. Furthermore, Meyer (1956; 1973) maintains researchers must conceptualize music with regard for semantic content in order to accurately portray how music is experienced. As such, the following hypothesis was put forth:

Hypothesis 1: A team ad featuring brand music will result in a more favorable perception of musical fit than the same ad featuring generic song.

Recent evidence indicates background music applied in commercial advertising may significantly impact brand attitude (A_b). Brand attitude is the consumer's overall evaluation of a brand, and forms the basis for consumer behavior and future intentions (Keller, 1993; Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Spears & Singh, 2004). Beverland, Lim, Morrison, and Terziovski (2006) discovered when music was perceived to be congruent with the advertisement, subjects reported more favorable A_b . In addition, subjects reported the music played in advertising was an important indicator of the brand's values and personality. Park and Young (1986) found music in the background of advertisements had an overall positive impact on A_b relative to advertisements with no music in low involvement conditions, whereas no positive effects were found in high involvement conditions. Alpert and Alpert (1989) suggest this was likely due to a degree of incongruity among peripheral advertisement features.

In consideration of prior scholarly work showing conceptual fluency as leading to more favorable brand attitudes (Grimes, 2008), as well as studies demonstrating conceptual processing as sensitive to semantic priming (Lee & Labroo, 2004), an intriguing question becomes whether brand music can enhance the ease of conceptual processing for consumers and, consequently, influence their attitudes towards the brand. Consistent with these assumptions, the following hypothesis was provided:

Hypothesis 2: A team ad featuring brand music will result in a more positive consumer attitude towards the brand than the same ad featuring generic song.

A widely applied construct in advertising theory is attitude toward the ad (A_{ad}), which reflects the consumer's subjective evaluations of an advertising stimulus on a particular exposure occasion (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). Shimp (1981) argues advertising ought to create favorable attitudes among consumers in order to leave them with positive feelings long after processing the advertisement. Other researchers support the claim that advertisements must be liked in order for desired outcomes to be realized (Biehal, Stephens, & Curlo, 1992). Further, existing literature suggests A_{ad} is a significant predictor of consumers' intentions to purchase the advertised product or service (Mitchell & Olson, 1981).

Ample studies indicate the potential for congruency among advertising stimuli to positively affect A_{ad} (Brown & Stayman, 1992; Lutz, 1985; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Mitchell, 1986; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Park & Young, 1986). In particular, the application of congruent background music in advertising has been shown to be a meaningful indicator of advertisement success (Craton & Lantos, 2011; Kellaris et al., 1993; MacInnis & Park, 1991; North et al., 2004; Redker & Gibson, 2009). As mentioned earlier, research findings based on consumer perceptions of musical fit has been built on various factors, such as music likability (MacInnis and Park, 1991), music genre (Areni & Kim, 1993; North et al., 2004; Yeoh & North, 2010), and structural elements (Chebat et al., 2001; Kellaris & Kent, 1991; Zander, 2006). To date, there is a dearth of literature with a focus dedicated to the nature of song lyrics. Thus, the following hypothesis was offered:

Hypothesis 3: A team ad featuring brand music will result in a more positive consumer attitude towards the advertisement than the same ad featuring generic song.

Method

Pilot Study

The design of this research consisted of two experimental conditions: brand music (semantically relevant) and generic rock music (not semantically relevant). To satisfy the brand music condition, one song was selected from the music album titled *You're in Gator Country: The Official Music of the Florida Gators*. The song, titled *I Come From the Swamp*, was written and produced by acclaimed local music artist Red Jumpsuit Apparatus specifically for the Florida Gators, the intercollegiate sports teams representing the University of Florida (the authors explicitly use the university's name as means of providing theoretical context to this investigation). To satisfy the generic music condition, one generic rock song was selected from ESPN's *Artist of the Month* list (see ESPN.com/music), where one musician or band receives exclusive airtime during live event converge on ESPN, as well as prime placement on sister broadcast network ABC (Hamp, 2012). The artists selected for ESPN's programming playlist reflect current snapshots of what the vast majority of U.S. sport consumers are listening to at the time. Rock music was selected as the genre for this investigation since previous findings support the notion that rock music is the genre of music sports fans associate with sports teams and sporting events (Bateman & Bale, 2010). Shinedown's *Adrenaline* was selected on the basis its structural elements (e.g., genre, tempo) were closely related to that of the brand song that was chosen. Two coders trained in musical analysis performed separate content analyses on the songs to ascertain the extent to which their lyrics displayed semantic features related to the Florida Gators, as well confirm authors' judgments that these songs did not differ significantly in tempo and genre. A high degree of agreement was found for numerous semantic features related to the Florida Gators in the brand song. Some examples of semantic features coded as dominant and distinct included 'the boys in orange and blue,' 'everybody down in Gainesville,' and 'I come from the swamp.' A high degree of agreement between the coders was found on song lyrics in the generic rock music condition having no semantic features directly related to the Florida Gators. There was also a high degree of agreement among the coders that the songs contained complete phrases, were similar in tempo (i.e., 122 bpm for *I Come From the Swamp*; 118 bpm for *Adrenaline*), and shared the same musical genre (i.e., rock).

A pilot study was conducted to ensure the music applied in the main experiment was identifiable as brand music or generic music. The study consisted of 40 subjects drawn from the same population as the sample used in the main experiment. Each subject was played both songs from the brand music and generic music conditions. After hearing the each song, the subject were asked to respond to the following: 'What genre of music is playing', 'Do you like the music playing', and 'Does the music remind you of a brand; if so, what is it?' The subjects classified both into rock genres, as well as reported liking both songs equally. Consistent with prior judgments, all subjects reported *I Come From the Swamp* reminded them of the Florida Gators, whereas no brands were reliably reported when *Adrenaline* was played.

Subjects

The subjects were 97 upper-level undergraduate sport management students from the University of Florida (UF), a public research university located in Gainesville, Florida. The sample comprised of 57.8% males and the average age was 20.54 years ($SD = 1.43$). Ninety-three percent of the subjects were Caucasian, 4% were African American, 2% were Hispanic,

and 1% were Asian. Participation was voluntary and confidentiality was assured.

Procedure and Measures

Testing was conducted in groups of 10-15 in a lecture hall on the UF campus. The subjects were recruited via e-mail, requesting student volunteers for research in which they would complete a paper-and-pencil questionnaire in return for course credit. Subjects were required to watch a 90-second advertisement and respond to all questions in the questionnaire. The subjects were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups. The first group viewed an advertisement for the Florida Gators, the intercollegiate sports teams of UF, which featured the brand song *I Come From the Swamp* as background music. The second group viewed the same advertisement, but the generic song *Adrenaline* was played in the background. The advertisements were created by a leading music branding agency.

A four-item scale based on MacInnis and Park (1991) was used to measure musical fit with the advertisement: “The music fits the images in the ad,” “The music fits the message in the ad,” “The music fits the other elements in the ad,” and “Music fits the brand in the ad.” These items were measured on seven-point response scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Attitude toward the advertisement (A_{ad}) was measured using four seven-point semantic differential items anchored by like/dislike, effective/not effective, favorable/unfavorable, and unappealing/appealing. This scale was designed to measure the subjects’ overall evaluation of the advertisement (Holbrook and Batra, 1987). Brand attitude was measured using four seven-point semantic differential scales (good/bad, favorable/unfavorable, unappealing/appealing, and likable/dislikable) based on Batra and Stayman (1990). This scale was designed to measure the subjects’ impression of the brand. The reliability estimates were in a range necessary for a high degree of internal consistency for each scale ($\alpha > .90$).

In order to neutralize potential confounding issues related to subjects’ fandom, it was deemed appropriate to measure and control for team identification (Wann and Branscombe, 1993). Team identification has been shown to predict cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of sport consumer behavior (Kwon et al., 2005). To conclusively state the effects of brand music on the abovementioned dependent variables, any significant differences concerning the subjects’ affinity for the Florida Gators had to be determined. A three-item scale developed by Trail and James (2001) was used to measure levels of identification with the team: “I consider myself to be a “real” fan of the Florida Gators,” “I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the Florida Gators,” and “Being a fan of the Florida Gators is very important to me.” Items were measured on seven-point response scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” and together resulted in a high reliability estimate ($\alpha > .85$).

Results

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations were calculated to determine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. A summary of these results is shown in Table 1. It is important to note that music was coded as 0 (brand music) and 1 (generic rock music). Findings revealed the advertisement featuring brand music in the background resulted in more favorable ratings of musical fit ($r = -.53, p < .01$), A_{ad} ($r = -.28, p < .01$), and A_b ($r = -.24, p < .01$). Results also showed subjects who viewed music as a better fit with the ad ($r = -.53, p < .01$), expressed more favorable ratings of A_{ad} ($r = .44, p < .01$) and displayed more positive ratings of A_b ($r = .41, p < .01$). A one-way ANOVA was performed to assess mean

levels of team identification between the groups. This analysis indicated no significant differences between the groups based on team identification $F(1, 95) = 1.86, p = .19$, meaning the effects of music on the dependent variables were not contaminated by differences among subjects' affinity for the Florida Gators.

In order to analyze differences in ad responses across the two groups, a one-way MANOVA with background music (brand, generic) as the independent variable and ad response measures (musical fit, brand attitude, attitude towards the ad) as the multivariate dependent variables was performed. The objective of this analysis was to establish whether or not significant differences occur in subjects' perceptions and attitudes toward advertising featuring two types of background music with varied degrees of semantic relevance. For each measure, mean scores of individual items were used as the dependent variable. Table 2 illustrates the results for this analysis. Significant group differences were found among the dependent variables at the multivariate (Wilks $\Lambda = .72$; $F = 25.43$; $p < .05$) and univariate levels. MANOVA results revealed a significant overall difference in ad response ratings between the two groups, which indicated the extent to which brand music influenced subjects' overall responses to the advertisement. The univariate analyses showed brand music played in the background of the advertisement had a greater positive impact on subjects' perceptions of musical fit than did generic rock music, which is supportive of Hypothesis 1. Results of the univariate analyses also revealed a positive relationship between type of background music in the advertisement and A_b . Consistent with Hypothesis 2, subjects who viewed the advertisement with brand music had significantly greater ratings of A_b than did subjects who viewed the advertisement with generic rock music. The univariate analyses further indicated subjects in the brand music condition had significantly greater ratings of A_{ad} than did subjects in the generic rock condition, which supported predictions outlined in Hypothesis 3.

Table 1 - Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations of Independent and Dependent Variables

Table	M	SD	1	2	3	5
1. Music _a	.53	.50	–			
2. Musical fit	4.77	1.43	-.53**	–		
3. Attitude toward the advertisement	4.79	1.52	-.28**	.44**	–	
4. Brand attitude	4.62	1.48	-.24**	.41**	.54**	–

^a Music was coded as 0 = brand music, 1 = generic rock music.

** Indicates alpha values less than .05.

Table 2 - MANOVA Results Indicating Group Differences at the Multivariate and Univariate Levels

Variable	Experimental group _{ab}	
	Brand music	Generic rock music
Musical fit	19.53 (2.53)	18.65 (2.81)
Attitude toward advertisement	19.49 (2.88)	18.83 (2.52)
Brand attitude	18.86 (2.67)	18.13 (2.93)

Variable	Univariate statistics		Multivariate statistics		
	F-values	p-Level	Wilks Λ	F-value	p-Level
Musical fit	3.86	0.028	0.72	25.43	0.021
Attitude toward advertisement	3.92	0.019			
Brand attitude	3.67	0.018			

_a Means (Standard Deviations)

_b Means reported for all variables were based on summed-item scores.

Discussion

While the sport marketing literature is rich with studies that suggest consistent visual identity across touchpoints builds trust and loyalty among sport consumers, the utility of music in the development of the sport consumer experience has received very little attention. According to Fulberg (2003), music has the potential to build a coherent approach to brand communications that is remarkably flexible. Therefore, research designed to explore the construction and strategic implementation of brand music currently underway in the field of sport marketing is necessary. This investigation provides insightful implications in this regard. The results of this research also provide sport marketers some direction in applying music more effectively in team advertising, as the brand music studied in this investigation demonstrated significant potential for affecting ad responses to a team advertisement. Since the construction of brand music emphasizes the attributes of the brand through style and lyrics, subjects in this research likely responded more favorably to the team advertisement with brand music because the visual and aural stimuli were tightly linked. As noted, team advertisements traditionally feature licensed generic music of various genres largely to appease the current preferences of the vast majority of consumers. This research depicts a scenario where brand music of the Florida Gators surpassed generic rock music in relation to subjects' perceptions of musical fit with a Florida Gators advertisement. Despite the ubiquitous use of music in sport advertising, much of discussion on the effects of background music has overlooked lyrical content as a means for effective brand communication. Hence, a major implication of this study is one from the standpoint of sport advertising, as brand music is considered to be more influential of viewers' perceptual and attitudinal responses.

The current research also made an effort to provide some new discussion on how the theoretical perspectives of conceptual fluency and semantic relevance might relate to the effects of song lyrics on some commonly studied ad responses. The findings demonstrate how, when tempo and genre are held constant, song lyrics written expressly for brand music might play an

important role in facilitating desired concepts listeners' minds. This is a rather important finding as it suggests that song lyrics in music can be a strong factor in enhancing (or detracting from) the perceived fluency of concepts in a marketing context or setting. Thus, a second implication of this research is that carefully constructed brand music might emphasize the attributes of a brand conceptually to a greater extent than generic music. Rather than playing generic music available to all teams at a premium cost, sport teams should look to join with music artists in designing and creating music the firm can proprietarily own and manage. Sport marketers should provide information to the artists regarding the purpose behind the project, including information about the image or personality of the brand, or demographic information about the audience to which the music is to be directed. Artists can then use this information to create original music written, arranged, and produced specifically for the team. The primary objective should be to create a mutually beneficial relationship in which both the team and the artist achieve an overall increase in brand equity. Our findings suggest that lyrics with distinct and dominant mentions of the sport team and its brand associations can lead to a stronger response to audio than generic music that may fit with the sport team based on genre and style alone. More than likely, a consulting agency specializing in music branding and sport marketing will be needed to facilitate this process. The sport and entertainment industry is now booming with such agencies that have been contracted to develop brand music and soundtracks for intercollegiate and professional sport teams, as well as sponsoring organizations of teams and events. However, less expensive approaches also exist for universities and professional sport organizations that do not have the money to engage in sonic branding practices at the agency level. These organizations can still demonstrate some strategy and creativity when using music in marketing beyond traditional and commonplace licensing methods. In fact, many universities boast some rather popular hometown musicians who might relish in the request to perform live at a sporting event or produce a song for an alma mater. If such an opportunity exists, brand music can be a new way for university athletic departments to connect with their fans in ways before unrealized.

Limitations and Future Research

The authors selected the brand music of the Florida Gators to serve as the primary focus of this research. It is possible that brand music designed for sport teams with varying degrees of brand equity and brand value could impact subjects in future studies differently. Furthermore, it is plausible to assume other structural elements of brand music could be more or less relevant to the brand than merely lyrics. Future research should consider examining whether consumers perceive a particular tempo or genre as fitting with the image of the sport team. Findings presented here may also be limited with respect to observed responses in other sport settings. Future studies are encouraged to evaluate the effects of brand music in the background of sport video games, live sport events, and team retail environments, to name but a few. Another potential limitation in this study involves the possibility for sample bias in the design of the research. Although previous researchers have shown that "greater homogeneity does not appear to uniformly translate into more powerful hypothesis tests or larger effect sizes than would be observed for samples of nonstudents" (Peterson, 2001, p. 458), future research obtaining data from a larger representation of nonstudents, including greater representation of minorities and older age groups, might further substantiate these findings to a larger population or provide equally significant alternative results.

A further limitation to this investigation includes the fact that a 'no music' control group

was not used. Whereas the presence of an additional group that did not experience music while viewing the advertisement would have added to the scientific value of this investigation, this research lends itself more to the discussion of whether semantic differences between analogous music in team advertisements can affect viewers' perceptions and attitudes differently than to the discussion of whether music should be played at all in such contexts. Music occurs widely in sports and its milieu, so much so that the psychological and sociological dynamics of sports are presaged by and captured in the consumption of music (Ballouli & Bennett, 2012). In particular, U.S. and European sports teams almost always feature music in advertisements and promotions, and the genre of music most often played is rock music (Bateman & Bale, 2009). Though a 'no music' condition may have further enriched the breadth of this study, our hypotheses were concerned specifically with examining differences between traditional sports music (i.e., generic rock music) and a more novel version (i.e., brand music).

Lastly, future studies are also encouraged to consider sonic branding efforts in terms of branding benefits garnered by the music artist. Sport teams and live sport events provide unique distribution channels through which music artists can increase exposure. As such, these outlets provide an alternative means for music artists to enhance their popularity and potentially boost sales of artist-related products and services. For instance, many professional and college sport teams play in relatively large venues in front of hundreds of thousands of sport fans annually, a kind of audience most music artists are hardly ever exposed to. In addition, sport teams have the financial resources vested interest to push aggressive marketing strategies for such projects. For example, the Atlanta Falcons recently partnered with music artist Sevendust to create an original song, featuring the title *Falcons on Top*, and music video to be played behind TV advertising and during promotions in the Georgia Dome. Such advertising methods and exclusive access are expensive and relatively uncommon in the music industry. However, because the sports team was willing and financially able to front the bill, Sevendust was able to reap the benefits of such mass exposure in the local market. Future researchers should examine sport consumers' opinions of artists featured in brand music, and how perceptions of musical fit affect these opinions.

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