



The influence of background music on consumer buying behavior in a casual dining restaurant

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Abstract

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<p>The purpose of this research is to look into the factors of background music that influence consumer response and buying behavior in a restaurant setting, with the help of psychological factors in music. This research focused on three characteristics of consumer buying behavior: demographic, social, and psychological. The objective of the thesis was also to map out the current state of background music, as well as to evaluate what can be done by the use of background music and what possibilities exist for restaurants.</p> <p>The thesis was divided into two parts: theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part discusses the characteristics affecting consumer buying behavior, music psychology, and the dimensions of music that are examined in the research (music tempo, volume, pitch, genre and compatibility with the atmosphere of a restaurant). The quantitative research method was used in this study, and the empirical part of the thesis contains a survey that was conducted over the internet. A questionnaire created in Webropol was used to collect data, and a link to the questionnaire was shared in various Facebook groups and among other people.</p> <p>The study's findings indicated that background music has an influence on consumer buying behavior. Background music has a significant impact on customer experience and satisfaction, as well as creating a pleasant atmosphere. Since the topic of this research was relatively new, more research on the same topic should be conducted to test the findings of this research.</p>
Keywords consumer buying behavior, background music, music psychology, restaurant

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1 Introduction

The subject of this thesis is to research how background music influences consumer buying behavior and decisions. The thesis topic took some time to come up with. The author was not sure what they wanted to research or how they could connect it to the hospitality industry. It occurred to them at some point that they could study music because they enjoy listening to it and attending live concerts. Therefore, the author began researching the topic and discovered that background music has been studied to some extent in marketing and commerce, but not nearly as much in the hospitality field.

The impact of music on society and culture can be seen clearly across history, as the music appears to be one of the most fundamental human actions. Music has long been known to have the ability to influence our bodies in both positive and negative ways, with both mediate and long-term effects. (O'Donnell 1999.)

Music is a vital part of people's everyday lives. Throughout the year, we listen to music for several hours, sometimes even without realizing it (IFPI 2019). There are several different types of music to choose from, so there is something for everyone. There are no limitations on how music can differ in terms of, genre, tempo, melody, or other factors. It is playing in the background when we are shopping, boarding, or eating at a restaurant. The author will focus on the influence of background music on consumer buying behavior in a casual dining restaurant in this research-based thesis. Depending on the restaurant's concept, background music can be the main character or a minor detail which, when combined with the other elements, creates the restaurant's atmosphere. (Palanchuk 2018.)

The music we hear in the background is an important part of our daily soundscape. Our ears do more than just receive sounds; they also send the messages they hear to our brains, where they create thoughts. The right kind of music, according to Kilpiö (2005, 99), builds comfort and atmosphere while covering up distracting sounds. Thus, the music played in the restaurant is an important part of the guest's first experience as well as the overall image. It can also influence whether or not they will return. Music has an effect on not only comfort but also buying behavior. As a result, the music played in the restaurant should not be chosen at random, but rather carefully selected and based on the business concept and familiarity of the target groups. Music has long played a significant and powerful role in enhancing marketing. The issue has also been studied through music psychology, which is considered a very broad field for commercial gain. (Louhivuori & Saarikallio 2010, 327-328.)

The impact that music has in retail settings has been the subject of several types of research. The Mehrabian and Russel (1974) model of environmental psychology has been used in several research to date. The way music affects the listener is influenced by psychological factors. A single song may make one person sad or nervous while another happy or comfortable. It is crucial for a restaurant to understand what types of music attract customers and encourage them to stay longer and spend more money, as well as what types of music cause customers to leave the restaurant as soon as possible and never return. The reason for the latter may be because the music is too noisy or the sound quality is bad, causing the consumer to become irritated. By combining the right kind of music, cuisine, and interior design, the atmosphere will be just right to achieve the wanted result, where customers are leaving the restaurant satisfied. (Palanchuk 2018.)

As previously mentioned, music is a common topic of study in a variety of fields, including psychology and marketing but it has received less attention in the hospitality industry. It is difficult to dismiss music's role in the hospitality industry because it has a direct influence on consumer's perceptions and emotional responses to music in a variety of settings.

1.1 Research problem and objectives

The fundamental aim of this thesis is to examine the factors of background music that influence consumer buying behavior in a restaurant setting, with the help of psychological factors in music and previous research on the subject. The aim is also to map out the current state of background music as well as the possibilities for restaurants and to determine what can be accomplished by using background music. One of the goals is also to understand how different dimensions of music impact behavior.

The main research question of the thesis is: How does background music influence consumer buying behavior in a casual dining restaurant?

The sub-questions in this thesis are the following:

- What does buying behavior mean?
- How do people feel when they hear music in a restaurant?
- Does the volume affect the buying behavior?
- Does the tempo affect the buying behavior?
- Does the music genre affect the buying behavior?
- Are customers satisfied or dissatisfied with the service?
- Should the music fit together with the concept of the restaurant?

The thesis will be a research-based thesis. In this thesis, quantitative research will be the primary method of research. The quantitative survey's aim will be to gather more data on the topic. The survey will be conducted among restaurant customers, and the results will be useful in determining whether music has an effect on consumer buying behavior. The

survey will include questions about the influence of volume, genre, tempo, and other factors. To strengthen the thesis reliability, the questions are created with the help of a theoretical framework and tested with test respondents.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

The introduction chapter is the first of six chapters in this thesis. The thesis topic, the research problem and objectives, the commissioning company, and key concepts are all introduced in the first chapter. The author will tell about consumer buying behavior and different characteristics influencing it in the second chapter. After which the author will discuss the importance of understanding music psychology and what happens in people's minds when they listen to music in the third chapter. The author will also explain background music and its dimensions, as well as how they will influence consumer buying behavior in a restaurant. In the fourth chapter, the research methodology will be discussed, as well as the research methods. In addition, the data collection process will be clarified and analyzed, followed by the questionnaire. In the fifth chapter, the research findings will be discussed. Finally, a conclusion about the subject will be drawn, and the research's validity and reliability will be addressed. The author will also talk about their own learning outcomes.

1.3 Commissioning company

The author's commissioning company, which will be referred to as R1 in the thesis since this restaurant wants to remain anonymous. R1 is relevant to the subject and supports it because music is a major part of their business. The author will not be doing a product for them but rather researching the market in general. The commissioning company is an international chain restaurant that is a popular tourist destination for dinner. The restaurant, which opened in 2012, is in the heart of Helsinki, just a five-minute walk from the central train station. It is a 240-seat restaurant, including a bar and a terrace during summer. The restaurant's music is unique and well-planned. The restaurant has a distinct theme that distinguishes it from all other restaurants in Helsinki, and the music playing on the premises is an important part of the concept. The restaurant hosts live events on occasion, as it is a great venue for gigs. On request, the restaurant will host birthday parties or a breakfast seminar. Classic American cuisines such as hamburgers, ribs, salads, and pasta are on the menu. Delicious signature cocktails can be found on the drink menu.

1.4 Key concepts

In order to bring clarity to the research and understanding the topic of the thesis, the main key concepts and most important terms will be defined in the following part.

Music, according to the Cambridge dictionary (2021), is a pattern of sounds created by combining various voices, musical instruments, computers, and possibly combining these elements together. Music communicates feelings and pleasure to those who listen to it through melody, rhythm, and harmony (Dictionary 2019).

Any type of music, whose primary purpose is to make the atmosphere pleasant for a particular situation is called **background music**. Background music is typically played while some other activity is taking place and the music itself is not the primary focus of people. (Collins Dictionary 2019.) It is often used in retail environments, such as supermarkets and restaurants. It can also influence consumer buying behavior emotionally and subconsciously. It can make one customer feel anxious and the other one relaxed and happy. This can lead the customer to stay longer in the restaurant and spend more money on food and beverages and generate more sales for the restaurant. (Zymeri 2019.)

According to Collins dictionary (2019) **restaurant** is a business establishment where meals and beverages are purchased and served to customers by a waitress or waiter. Even though most meals are served and enjoyed on the premises, many restaurants now provide take-out and food delivery services.

Casual dining restaurant stands between fast-food dining and fine dining. Whereas casual dining restaurants offer full table service, fast-food restaurants do not. The menu is also higher-priced than in fast food restaurants, nevertheless affordable. The menu offers multiple options and often includes a wine selection. As compared to the formal environment of fine dining restaurants, casual dining restaurants are less formal, friendlier, and have a more laid-back atmosphere. The quality and consistency of the service and dishes are usually adequate. (Valerio 2019.)

When one is describing a mood, feeling, or tone of a place, one is talking about the **atmosphere**. It is crucial that the restaurant has a welcoming atmosphere where customers can enjoy their meals and feel relaxed. The atmosphere in restaurants has a major impact on the customer experience. No one wants to spend too much time in a restaurant where the lights are too bright, or it is too busy and loud. When considering the type of atmosphere the restaurant wishes to create, it is also important to take into account the music. People's emotions are enhanced by music, which can lead to them spending more money and staying longer. (Cambridge Dictionary 2021.)

2 Consumer buying behavior

Consumer buying behavior refers to the decisions people make before purchasing a product or service. This process includes a variety of offline and online actions, such as engaging with social media posts, doing research on Google, or seeing advertisements on television. Consumer buying behavior influences what they want to purchase, how much they are willing to pay for it, and where and when they purchase. (Cambridge Dictionary 2019.) Every individual behaves in their own unique way. Individuals may have varying levels of interest in purchasing something and varying amounts of time to commit to shopping on a regular basis. Individuals also have varying purchasing power, implying that others have greater financial resources to purchase goods and services. (Bergström and Leppänen 2015.)

The buying process is part of buying behavior. Consumers need a buying motive and purchasing power to make a final decision to buy something. Sometimes, just wanting to purchase something is not enough; the buyer often needs a stimulus to act. For instance, the stimulus may be a product or service that a friend particularly likes and has recommended on social media. In this case, a friend has recommended a restaurant that plays great music that fits the atmosphere of the restaurant. Once the interest has been reached, the consumer starts to search for information about the restaurant. Before making a purchase, the consumer goes through five phases of their decision-making process. The consumer recognizes the need, collects information, considers alternatives, and makes a buying decision during these stages. Following the actual purchase, the consumer engages in post-purchase behavior, in which they assess the degree of satisfaction received. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 177.) All these five stages are shown in figure 1. When a product is expensive or complicated, the consumer spends more time comparing the prices and features of competitive services or products. After gathering all the necessary details, the customer decides whether or not to purchase the product. (Verkko Varia 2016.) Businesses benefit from understanding this process because it allows them to better tailor their future marketing campaigns based on what has succeeded in the past (Ehrlich 2020).

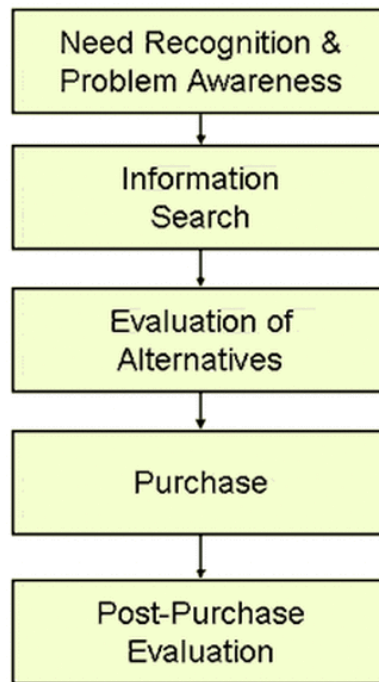


Figure 1. Consumer's decision-making process (Riley 2012)

Consumer buying behavior is influenced by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Culture, business marketing strategies, and economic conditions are examples of extrinsic factors. Habits, choices, and manners are examples of intrinsic consumer factors. (Verkko Varia 2016.) They do not result in a purchase if used individually, but when combined in various ways, the buyer is more likely to make a purchase. The characteristics influencing consumer buying behavior can be divided into demographic, social, and psychological characteristics. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.) The following chapters will be focusing on these characteristics.

2.1 Demographic characteristics

The demographic characteristics, also known as population characteristics, refer to various characteristics which are simple to solve, analyse and measure. They are the fundamental starting point when mapping out the potential market. Age, gender, race, income, education, marital status, religion, and family size are the most significant demographic characteristics and are easy to gather and evaluate. Many of these factors have an effect on consumer buying behavior in some way. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.)

We cannot understand why a customer prefers a certain product over others, why some are loyal to a particular brand or have a specific purchasing routine, based solely on demographic characteristics. However, we can address these issues by combining social and psychological characteristics, as they both impact an individual's lifestyle. Lifestyle refers to the ways how an individual lives their life, what are their values and norms, and

where they want to spend their time and money. That is to say, not only the fundamentals but also one's actions and personality, have an effect on one's lifestyle. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.)

2.2 Social characteristics

According to Bergström & Leppänen (2015), parts of social characteristics are categorized as soft lifestyle factors. These characteristics are elements of a person's environment that have an impact on how they perceive goods and services. When studying social characteristics, we must consider how a person behaves in various social groups, as well as how these groups can influence decision-making and the buying process.

People are spending an increasing amount of time online and on social media sites these days. As a result, social groups have a significant influence on consumer buying behavior in daily life. Word of mouth has grown in importance as people prefer to hear about other people's experiences with a product or service before purchasing it themselves. Honesty, mutual trust, support, and help are significant factors in the sense of community. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.)

Culture is a tangible environment that enables people to go about their daily lives. It refers to a specific group's way of life at a specific time. Customs, beliefs, values, history, and economic structures are all examples of cultural influences that are typically taught from a young age. Rituals and traditions, such as holidays like Christmas and Easter, are popular in cultures. People's personalities are shaped by culture as they adapt models and courses of action. People can influence culture by their own behavior, making it a constantly evolving phenomenon. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.)

Subcultures are smaller groups that exist within mainstream culture. Each subculture is defined by common and distinctive behavior and consumption patterns that do not always correspond to mainstream culture (Boyd 2020). Members of a group have something in common, such as values, occupations, religions, racial origins, or geographical locations. Subcultures, such as college students, may emerge in response to people's shared characteristics, interests, and behaviors, allowing businesses to create personalised goods for them. (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing edition 2015.) If a marketer can gain a foothold in a subculture, selling a product will become easier and sales will increase because the subculture will do the marketing itself as people recommend the product to one another within the group. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.)

2.3 Psychological characteristics

Personality traits, needs, habits, and patterns that can reflect consumer buying behavior are referred to as psychological characteristics of an individual. Furthermore, an individual's motives, values, emotions, and attitude toward a product or service can influence their buying behavior. It is important to understand how extrinsic and intrinsic factors influence consumer buying behavior. Since people's behavior is influenced by their interactions with others, psychological characteristics cannot be completely separated from social characteristics. (Verkko Varia 2016.) When approached with a product, a person's state of mind often determines how they feel about the product or service. As a result, in order to succeed in the market, companies must meet the needs of consumers. (Ehrlich 2020.)

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs (figure 2.) is a psychological theory of motivation that consists of five tiers of human needs, each of which must be met from the bottom up before the next tier's needs can be met. When the need is met, it no longer serves as a motivator, and the individual shifts their attention to the next most critical need. Physiological, safety, belonging and love, esteem, and self-actualization are the needs that rise up the ladder from the bottom. (McLeod 2020.)

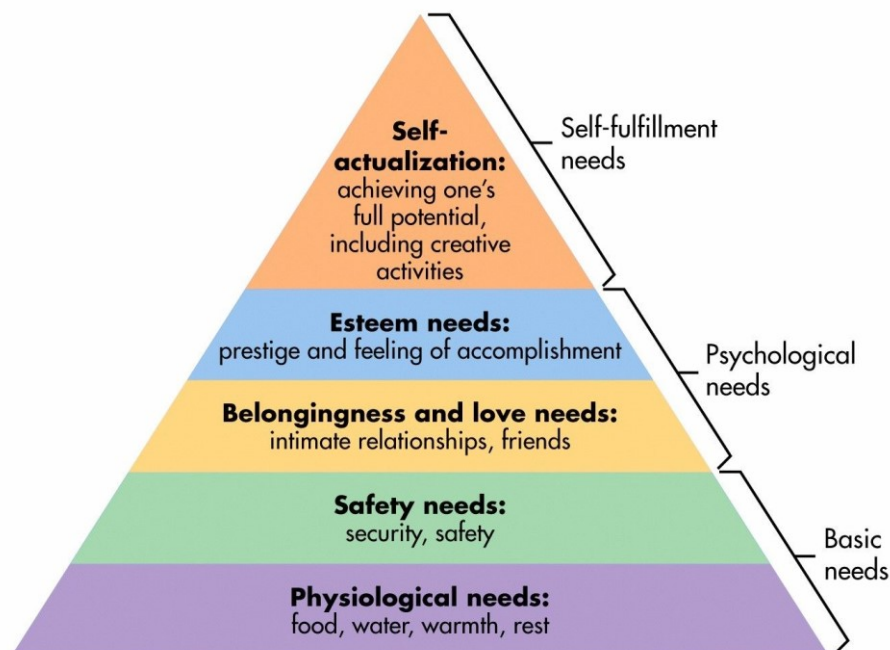


Figure 2. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (McLeod 2020)

Basic needs must be met since they are necessary for survival; one must eat and drink in order to survive. Fulfilling psychological and self-fulfilment needs, on the other hand, makes life more enjoyable; people want to do and try new things, activities, or gain status.

The challenge for businesses is to determine what their target audiences' needs are and whether or not they can meet them cost-effectively. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.)

Emotional buying motives are often subconscious and strong. The need for the product could be driven by popularity, social approval, individuality, or it could be driven by no rational explanation at all. Consumers do not purchase anything based solely on emotion, but rather on logic. The price of the product, availability, quality, and location are typically the logical reasons for purchasing it. (Verkko Varia 2016.)

Pleasure is a combination of fantasy, senses, and emotions that work together to create a positive product experience. These elements are used in marketing and advertising as they have a significant effect on consumer's sense of pleasure. Restaurants want their customers to have positive emotions while dining, since a customer's mood influences how they react and behave. Irritation has a negative impact on the customer service experience, whether it is the fault of the staff member, the customer, or other customers. (Bergström & Leppänen 2015.) Therefore, it is important for the restaurant to play the appropriate music at the appropriate volume. Customers will become irritated or anxious if the music is too loud, causing them to leave and wanting to return in the future.

In these chapters the author presented the basis of characteristics that influence consumer buying behavior. The author will focus more on music psychology in the following chapters, describing various dimensions of music and how they can influence consumer buying behavior in restaurants.

3 Music psychology

The study of behavior and the mind is known as psychology. The word psychology was formed by combining the Greek words psyche (meaning breath, soul, life) and logia (meaning word, reason, speech). It includes environmental factors, social pressures, and biological factors that influence how people act, feel and think. (Merriam-Webster 2019.) Gaining a more detailed and in-depth understanding of psychology will help people gain insights into their own behavior as well as a better understanding of others (Cherry 2005). Many categories of psychology, such as sports psychology, child psychology, and music psychology, are distinguished by the particular field to which they belong. (Merriam-Webster 2019.)

In this research, the author will be focusing on music psychology. According to scientific evidence, the most noticeable characteristics of background music are psychological characteristics. Music has played a significant role in increasing the effectiveness of marketing. It has been used as a tool to shape customers' and employees' behavior since 1920 when factory employee's efficiency was attempted to enhance by improving the background music. During that time, Muzak was one of the first companies to hire psychologists to plan specific soundscapes that improve efficiency. (Louhivuori & Saarikallio 2010, 327.)

Background music, as well as music utilized in marketing, has a strong influence on an individual's perceptions and thus acts powerfully both as a brand marketing tool and as an environmental factor influencing an individual's comfort. It is recommended to use music as one aspect of the whole brand and marketing, as music is a powerful stimulus that affects emotional state and behavior. The use of background music is well justified in the hospitality industry, where many facilities are packed with sounds. Because of the psychological impacts of music, it is recommended that similar music is being used for all company-related activities. The right music can be used to unify advertisements and connect all aspects of marketing and services which are visible to the consumer this way. It is easy to create a strong, affordable, and manageable brand identity by unifying music, and the rest of the company's sound world together. (Schmitt & Simonson 1997, 98-99.) As a result, restaurants should create a soundscape that complements the restaurant's concept and atmosphere, bringing the space cohesive.

Music psychology is viewed as a broad field when it comes to trying to achieve commercial benefits. Even though music has been used a lot in marketing, music science has not focused extensively on the use of subconscious musical factors in commerce. Making the most of music psychology as a trading tool necessarily requires a broader viewpoint and observation from field-specific theory as well as from commercial theory.

Typically, the issue is a lack of scientific studies and a simplified perception of background music. (Louhivuori & Saarikallio 2010, 328.) Therefore, it is crucial to be conscious of various demands in different fields, as well as environmental and individual differences and how they affect consumer buying behavior when using music psychology in marketing.

According to Mehrabian & Russell (1974, 197-216), from a consumer's perspective, background music can be classified as an external stimulus, along with other heard information. Visual and olfactory stimuli, as well as other related experiences, are included in the same definition of external sensory stimuli. As seen from figure 3, external stimuli from the environment are believed to cause an emotional response that leads to action or opinion.

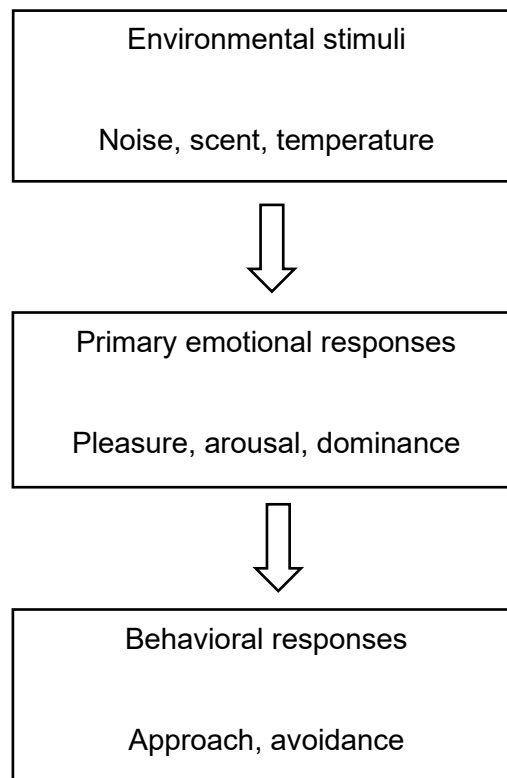


Figure 3. Model of environmental influence (Mehrabian & Russell 1974, 197-216)

Sound and music have long been effective marketing tools, and they often are used to combine emotional state or thinking process with the advertised product. The sense of colour and sense of touch of the product or dominant place can also be classified in the same group. It is crucial to avoid influencing other senses when selecting background music. The music equipment must be indistinguishable to the naked eye, and the music must not be too loud to hurt the consumer's ears. In this way, background music is able to achieve maximum and undisturbed effect while remaining completely in its own dimension. (Assael 1998, 207-211.) Restaurants should pay attention to where sound equipment is placed so that it does not upset customers by playing music too loudly.

Background music's key areas of influence can be divided into two categories. This grouping includes both subconscious and conscious influences (Mood Media 2019). Subconscious impulses, such as speeding up the passing of time or creating an ambiance, as well as perceived impulses, such as overcoming distractions, are all part of psychological factors. Influencing subconscious impulses is significant, particularly in the restaurant industry, because it can affect customer satisfaction, as well as the number of times customers spend in the restaurant. Background music can be used to prevent boredom and keep people entertained instead. (Sullivan 2002, 328.) Disturbing factors can include the loud interaction of other customers in a restaurant, the usual noise in a mall, or the sound of traffic in any location. All of these are often perceived as subconscious impulses that result in an ambiguous sense of urgency, noise, and an uncomfortable atmosphere. The wrong kind of or too loud background music can also be seen as a disturbing factor. (Louhivuori & Saarikallio 2010, 329-331.)

Conscious influences have a similar structure to subconscious influences. The perceived impulses are the same as the subconscious ones, but the background music or other soundscape is so clear that the consumer notices that the sensory perception in question causes pleasure, irritation, or other previously mentioned emotions. The conscious influences enable the background music and the consumer to interact. The possibility that the person who is the target of the background music can influence the form of the information heard, for example, by recommending a song, is one of the interactions. This is likely to act as a value-added feature in the form of additional service, benefitting the service provider. (Kotler 1973, 48-64.)

Individual preferences become important in restaurants. Music preference is an abstract concept because it is based on emotional factors as well as personal preferences and thus is not measurable. Strong positive, as well as strong negative feelings, evoked by a piece of music, are the extremes of music preference. It has been found that music with positive associations is connected to a positive emotional charge in the product that the consumer is purchasing. The music in advertisements is used in a similar way, it is deliberately chosen to complement the product or the values it represents. (Caldwell & Hibbert 2002, 898.)

The psychological dimension of the music influences the ease of the background music while also posing a challenge. The sense of hearing is used to experience music, while the sense of sight is used to perceive the size, brightness, and appearance of a place. The service provider has full control over the background music. It is up to them to decide on the audio equipment's placement and appearance, as well as the music selection and volume. (Kotler 1973, 48-64.) In the next chapters, the author will discuss the following

aspects of background music: volume, tempo, genre, pitch, and compatibility between the music and the atmosphere.

3.1 Volume

Volume can be defined in musical terms as the loudness of a sound measured in decibels (Merriam-Webster 2019). Loud music tends to reduce the amount of time spent in restaurants as opposed to quieter background music. Due to the cultural connections that different generations have with music, a connection between age and volume preference was discovered. Older people prefer music that is quieter and softer, whereas younger people prefer louder music. (Spangenberg & Yalch 1988.)

It can be very disturbing when music is played too loudly for one. Loud music can cause discomfort and make a person feel anxious and it can also make people believe that they spent more time dining than they really did. When a customer is feeling nervous or anxious, it can lead to certain behaviors, such as wanting to leave the restaurant earlier than was supposed to. (Kellaris, Mantel & Altsech 1996.) Activities that require concentration and focus, moderately loud music is the best. Moderate music may resemble one's level of comfort, but what defines a moderate volume level is subjective to the listener. Music with a volume level between 60 and 80 dba is generally considered moderate. In a study made in 1993, it was found that loud music (90dba) is less enjoyable than soft music (60dba). But generally, a volume level between 60 and 80dba is considered moderate. (Kellaris & Rise 1993.) According to Spangenberg and Yalch (1990), playing music at a low volume encourages more social interaction between customers and employees. This may influence a customer's decision to buy the product. Too soft and quiet music can also draw one's attention and making it hard to concentrate on the task. Therefore, having the right volume for the situation is critical in order to achieve the best results (Herrington & Capella, 1996).

3.2 Tempo

According to Merriam-Webster (2021) tempo refers to the rate at which a musical composition is performed. It is indicated by one of several notations, including *allegro* and *andante*, or by using metronome timing.

How fast the song's beat is, also known as the tempo, is one of the most influential aspects of music. Music is known to have a direct impact on a person's emotions, as well as the behavior and actions that these emotions cause. A faster tempo evokes feelings of movement, joy, and momentum, while a slower tempo evokes feelings of relaxation and sometimes more sensitive feelings. (Coloma & Kleiner 2005, 115.)

Studies going back all the way to the 1980s show that fast music has various psychological effects on everyone, as opposed to slow music. It was found that slow music resulted in a 32 percent rise in revenue as people spent more time looking at different products in a store. In 1999 researchers discovered that slow music increased the amount of alcohol to be purchased, as customers spend more time at the table, generating more sales. Faster music on the other hand caused customers to eat faster but making the table turnover also faster as a result. (Caldwell and Hibbert 1999.) Harmony or rhythm also influences whether the music is perceived as happy or sad, as well as the amount of money spent in stores (Knöferle, Spangenberg, Herrmann & Landwehr 2012).

3.3 Genre

A genre is a type of artistic, musical, or literary composition that is characterized by its style, form, or content (Merriam-Webster 2021). Music genres can be defined in a variety of ways, such as popular music and classical music.

Individual preferences for musical genres are common, so business owners should concentrate on music that their customers enjoy. According to some studies, listening to classical music increases sales, and listening to Christmas music increases purchases during the holiday season. (Ford 2013.) Lounge and jazz music seem to encourage people to spend more money, while other genres do not seem to have the same impact (Mandila & Gerogiannis 2012).

It has been discovered, that when classical music is playing in the background of a restaurant, people buy more portions of food, whereas when popular music is playing, people buy more soft drinks and snacks. However, the language of background music has been considered in order to influence the country of origin of the wine to be purchased. When French music is played, people buy more French wine than average. (Karjula 2006, 17-18.)

Several studies have discovered that the style of music has an effect on people's length of stay and spending in restaurants. Classical music, for example, has been found to have a financial effect on buying behavior in a restaurant when compared to popular music or silence. With classical music playing, the same number of foods and drinks were purchased, but significantly more expensive alternatives were chosen. In a 2003 study, classical music was found to have stronger compatibility with the restaurant's other elements. It was also believed that the customers' musical tastes favoured classical music. More importantly, classical music was discovered to create a much more luxurious

picture for consumers, resulting in a change in buying behavior toward higher consumption. (North, Shilcock & Hargreaves 2003.)

Wilson (2003, 97) studied the impact of music on perceived atmosphere and buying behavior in a restaurant. On different days of the week, the study used six different types of music (classical, jazz, popular, easy listening, controlled, and no music) during dinner time in a restaurant. In this case, the controlled genre referred to recorded world music and live African music. Every night, the music was played at the same volume level through a high-quality sound system. In the questionnaire, customers were asked about their past visits to the restaurant and how music influenced them this time. (Wilson 2003, 97-98.) The findings revealed that the music genre played a significant role in people's perceptions of space. For example, when no music was played, customers felt the least hopeful, classical music made them feel the most civilized, and popular music made them feel most optimistic. Customers perceived the space as the least calm and most refreshing when jazz was playing, whereas easy listening was the most tasteless. The customer's willingness to consume was clearly influenced by the music. When music was not played, it generated by far the least amount of revenue. (Wilson 2003, 99-101.)

There were also visible differences between customer retention and music genres. Customers left sooner when classical music and jazz were playing, whereas popular and controlled music made them stay much longer. This can be directly linked to the fact that slow music makes the passing of time feel slower and fast music makes the passing of time feel faster. There was also a clear correlation between music and the number of drinks consumed. Customers were more likely to enjoy drinks of three or more when positive music was playing whereas customers were more likely to enjoy drinks of three or less when classical music was playing. (Wilson 2003, 101-102.)

3.4 Pitch

Pitch is the position of a single sound in the entire range of sound in music. The pitch of sounds is determined by the frequency of vibration of the sound waves that produce them. A high frequency (e.g., 2000 hertz) is perceived as a high pitch, whereas a low frequency (e.g., 500Hz) is perceived as a low pitch. (Britannica 2019.)

Besides tempo, the pitch is one of the most important factors influencing emotions. To the listener, different pitches can represent enthusiasm, romance, danger, sadness, or pure joy. When different melodies are combined, more nuanced pieces and emotions are created. (Levitin 2007, 33.) Music with a focus on high and major-key tunes is usually considered to evoke happier emotions than music with a focus on low and minor-key tunes, which is considered to evoke sadder emotions. (Coloma & Kleiner 2005, 115.)

3.5 Compatibility

The current environment has a significant impact on one's musical experience. This is thought to be caused by psychological input as well as the music played in that situation. In these cases, a certain style of music often enhances the existing emotion and consciously connects the information heard to the prevailing audience. When attempting to elicit specific emotions, it is important to remember that everyone processes music essentially the same way. Differences between people arise as a result of age, cultural differences, and musical abilities, but basic functions and comprehension occur as an almost primate reaction. Emotions elicited by music do not always appear as an outward display of emotions. For example, music perceived as positive may not make the listener laugh, and music perceived to be sad may not trigger the listener to cry. The person in charge of the space must be aware of the factors that allow the music to be manipulated while using background music as an atmosphere creator. (Ball 2011.)

When analysing tempo, volume, and other physical characteristics of music, one area that cannot be measured is usually ignored: the listener's personal emotion-based assessment of the world of sound and music around them. Because each person interprets and listens to music differently, it is impossible to compare the effects using common metrics. (Herrington & Capella 1994, 55.)

The compatibility of the background music with the atmosphere of the restaurant is something that restaurant managers should attempt to create. Wilson (2003, 103) implies that there is a connection between service experience, space, and music genres. For example, when jazz and popular music were playing, the service and atmosphere were described as cheerful, fresh, and exciting. Consumers also purchase more when the music is compatible with the restaurant setting. The main point of this dimension would be to examine what type of music fits the atmosphere of the place.

4 Methodology

The research methods that will help to reach a proper answer to the research question(s) will be discussed and explained in the following chapters. The methodology chapter will cover methods used in various research in general, the method used in this research, as well as the data collection and analysis process.

4.1 Research methodology

The study of the principles and theories that guide method selection is known as methodology. A method is a technique for gathering and analysing information, such as an interview or a survey. (Walter & Andersen 2013, 41.) To collect, identify and analyse information, the researcher chooses the research method type based on the research's objectives, aim and nature of the subject, and research questions. To conduct an accurate and successful study, it is critical to choose an appropriate research methodology. (Mohajan 2020, 50.)

Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies can be used to solve research problems and they are usually distinguished from one another by the data collection methods they use. An internet or postal survey are examples of quantitative data collection methods. For studies involving large groups of people, the quantitative research method is ideal. In quantitative research, statistical methods are frequently used as data is expressed in graphs, numbers, and tables. Inductive reasoning, which seeks to make generalizations and inferences from data, describes the qualitative research method. The goal of this method is to examine the data in detail and in depth. Discourse analysis and conversational analysis are two examples of qualitative research analysis methods. Table 1. below presents key features of both methods. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2008, 131-133.)

Table 1. Central features of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Hirsjärvi & al. 2008, 136, 160)

Quantitative research method	Qualitative research method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressed in numbers, tables, and graphs • Is used to test or confirm theories • Surveys • Many respondents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressed in words • Is used to understand thoughts, concepts, and experiences • Interviews • Few respondents

Quantitative research covers a series of classifications, comparisons, and numerical findings to describe the phenomena, while qualitative research focuses on the quality, characteristics, and aims of the research as a whole. (University of Jyväskylä 2015.) Quantitative research explains phenomena by gathering numerical data, analyzing them mathematically. Quantitative research tries to find answers to how much of something there is and presents results by answering questions like what, when, where, who, how many, how much, and how. (Mohajan 2020, 51.) Quantitative analysis requires an understanding of the phenomenon and the factors that affect it. It is important to understand the factors in order to calculate something and conduct quantitative research. Factors are transformed into variables, which are then analyzed using statistical methods. A questionnaire is the most popular data collection method for quantitative research since it allows generalization, which is what quantitative research aims for. In this case, generalizing involves gathering research data from a small probability sample using a questionnaire and then assuming it represents the entire population. The findings of the study can be presumed to represent the entire population affected by the phenomenon. (Kananen 2011, 13, 17, 18.) In the following chapter, the author will clarify why they chose to use a quantitative research method in this study.

4.2 Research method

A method is a procedure for searching information and solving practical problems that are driven by rules and the research method chosen is determined by the research topic. Interviews, questionnaires, documents, and various ways of observation are the most commonly used research methods. Received data and observations are based on questions asked to people in order to better understand why they behave the way they do. (Hirsjärvi & al. 2008, 178-186.)

The author chose to conduct this research in a quantitative approach. The research begins with a theory, from which hypotheses are created. According to the hypotheses, data will be gathered and analysed. The conclusion can be taken from the findings in order to validate or cancel out the hypothesis. (Taanila 2019.) A hypothesis for research can be used in conjunction with the research objectives that have been defined. The psychological effects of background music on consumer buying behavior in a restaurant were discussed earlier in the theory section and are used to define the research hypothesis. The following hypotheses were put forth:

H1. The volume of background music will influence the amount spent in the restaurant, purchase experience, contact with others, and enjoyment.

H2. A consumer's dining experience will be influenced by the music genre.

H3. Music tempo will influence time spent in the restaurant.

H4. Background music will influence consumer's intention to recommend a restaurant to others.

H5. The compatibility of music with a restaurant's atmosphere will have a positive influence on the dining experience.

A quantitative research method was chosen since a questionnaire is a popular research method for a quantitative approach. There are open questions in the questionnaire to get more comprehensive information from the respondents. Open questions allow respondents to reply in their own words, providing more personal information and making it easier to understand why people react the way they do. Surveys can collect data from a large number of units, most of which are individuals. Variables and characteristics that the researcher is interested in, such as age or gender, data on these characteristics is collected from the units. (Taanila 2019).

4.3 Data collection process

An internet questionnaire was used as the research method (appendix 1). The author decided to use a questionnaire as a method to collect data from a large number of diners and because the cost is low and minimal staff is required. Questionnaires are efficient because they save time and effort, and if the form is well-designed, the data can be easily analyzed. (Hirsjärvi & al 2008, 190.) A questionnaire can have both open and structured questions. Open questions are often more difficult to analyze, but responses may provide details that structure questions would not. They allow respondents to comment and bring up topics that the researcher has not addressed but are extremely important. (Kananen 2011, 30-44.) Structural questions can be presented as multiple-choice questions, in which the respondent selects one or more options as their answers. The Likert's scale, which is presented in either 5-steps or 7 steps, is a popular model for scaled questions. Scaled questions are those in which the respondent chooses how strongly they agree or disagree with any of the statements made. (Hirsjärvi & al 2008, 194.) To increase the chances of receiving more responses, the questionnaire needs to be well-planned. Good, practical questions should be written in an understandable way that the respondents understand them completely and in the same way. (Kananen 2011, 30-31.)

Webropol was used to create a questionnaire for this research (appendix 1). Webropol was chosen by the author because it is a very simple, free platform for students to use and to create a clear questionnaire. A series of multiple-choice, scaled, and open-ended

questions were included in the questionnaire. The questions have been formed based on the theoretical framework discussed in this research. The age, gender, occupation, and income questions are the first on the questionnaire. These are asked in a multiple-choice format because they provide basic facts and are not opinion-based. It will be interesting to see if and how responses differ by these characteristics. Since this survey analyses respondent's perceptions regarding background music playing in restaurants, the author chose to use Likert's 5-step scale. When there is more diversity than just a simple yes or no in the response choices, there is a higher chance of receiving accurate and important answers from the respondents. (Jovancic 2019.) The aim of this survey is to find out how consumers feel about background music in restaurants, as well as the factors that influence consumer buying behavior. There is an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire that allows respondents to provide feedback and share more their own thoughts about the subject.

Before the questionnaire was published, it was tested. The test group consisted of three individuals and the author tested the questionnaire on different browsers and on a smartphone. It is critical to test internet questionnaires through a variety of browsers before sending them to ensure that the layout is as expected. (Taanila 2019). A link to the questionnaire was shared on various Facebook groups, reducing the sample's randomness. To shape an appropriate sample size, a convenience sampling method was chosen. Convenience sampling refers to taking samples from a population that is eager to take part and easily accessible. This sampling approach has the disadvantage of being the least accurate, and the results cannot be generalized. (Taanila 2019). The questionnaire was open for five days and received 73 replies, and it was conducted in English.

4.4 Data analysis process

Quantitative research examines hypotheses, considers cause and effect, and tests casual relationships. The results and final conclusions are usually presented in percentages. The presentation is more illustrative when presenting results as averages, but it does not take response distribution into consideration. (Kananen 2011, 85, 96.)

Webropol, Microsoft Excel, and Word are used to analyze the results. This gives the ability to numerically interpret and analyze the data. The use of Webropol helps to create simple and understandable graphics from the questionnaire results. The results are presented in percent, but the author will also use averages to make the presentation more understandable. To see if there are any similarities or any variations between genders, incomes, ages, and gathered results, some of the results are analyzed using the cross-tabulation method. It is critical to find similarities because it allows influencing things that

are relevant to research findings (Kananen 2011, 77). All the open responses will be addressed in Microsoft Word. There is no need to delete any data because this questionnaire does not contain any personal information from the respondents.

5 Findings and analysis

The results of the survey are the focus of this chapter. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions that focused on restaurant background music and consumer buying behavior. Question by question, the answers are analysed, and the findings are compared to the theoretical framework.

5.1 Demographic characteristics

The first question (figure 4) was about the respondents' age (n=73). The age distribution was divided into six categories. With 38% of respondents being between the ages of 18-25, this was the largest age group. 22% were between the ages of 26-35, 12% were between the ages of 36-45, 15% were between the ages of 46-55, 11% were between the ages of 56-65 years old and only 2% were over the age of 65.

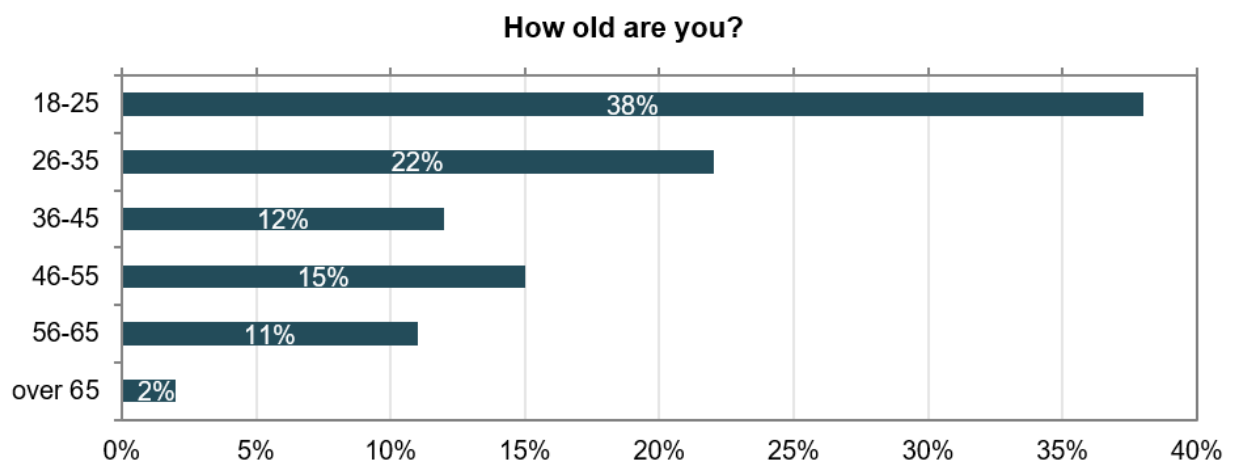


Figure 4. Age distribution (n=73)

Questions from 2-4 also focused on the background information of the respondents. Females made up 68% of the respondents, while males made up 32%. Figure 5 shows that more than 60% of respondents are employed. With 38% of the votes, students are the second-largest group of respondents. Only a small percentage of respondents are unemployed, senior citizens or chose the other option, which was explained as being a stay-at-home mom in the comments.

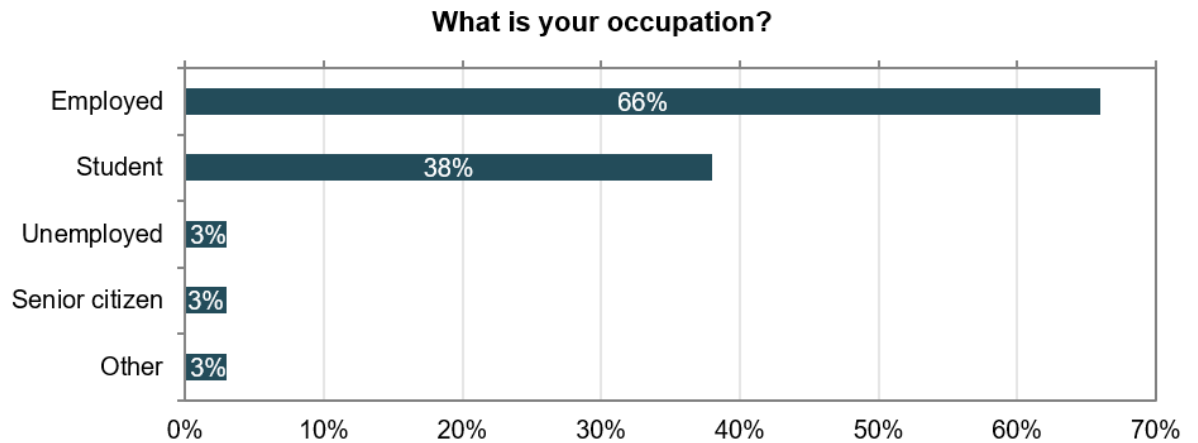


Figure 5. Occupation (n=73)

The final part of the demographic questions was to evaluate the financial situation of the respondents. This type of question allows the author to get a more detailed understanding of the target audience. Figure 6 below shows the personal income distribution of respondents last year.

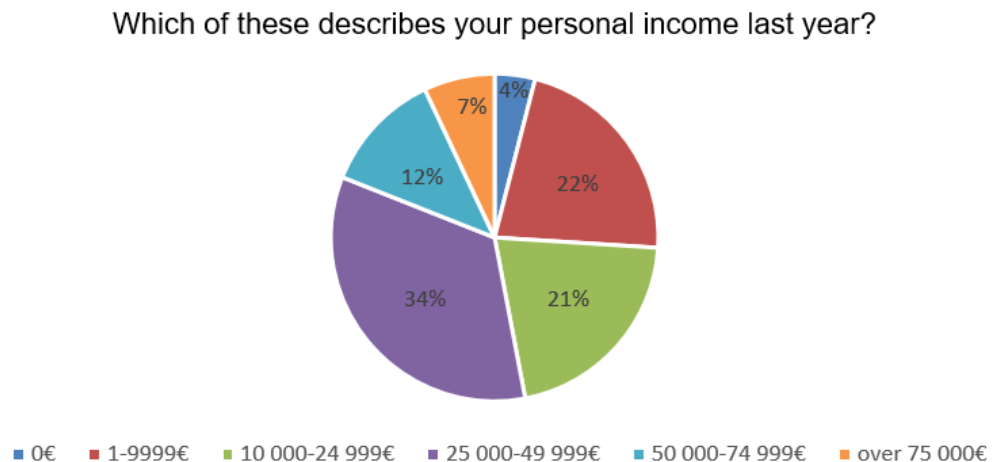


Figure 6. Personal income (n=73)

5.2 Background music

In questions related to background music, the author wanted to see how respondents agreed on various issues. 37% agree, and 11% strongly agree that listening to music they enjoy causes them to spend more money at restaurants (figure 7). As a result of this, the author can conclude that the music genre has an influence on the buying behavior of the majority of consumers. Pleasing music also extends the customer's stay in the restaurant, which may result in additional orders. The background music, however, does appear to have only little effect on what is ordered. Tempo appears to have a minor impact on the passing of time, with an average of 3 (moderately agree). The restaurant's background

music influences whether or not customers will recommend it to others. 58% of respondents agree and 11% strongly agree with the following statement.

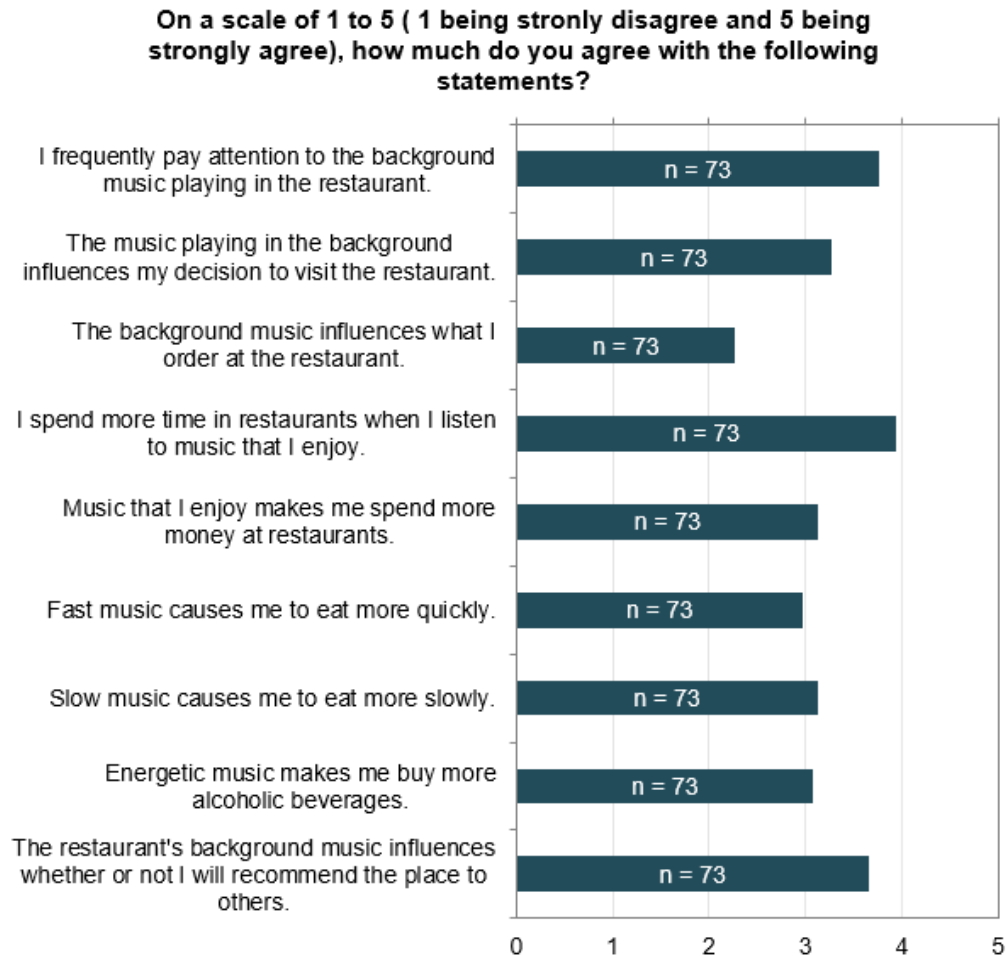


Figure 7. Agreement (n=73)

The following question helped to understand the significance of various factors. Figure 8 demonstrates the importance of music volume in particular. The open-ended questions that the author will open later make it clear that especially loud music is perceived as disturbing. The compatibility of the background music and music genre, have an influence on the dining experience. On the other hand, the language of background music is not perceived as being as important.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not important and 5 being very important), how important do you think the following factors are in your dining experience?

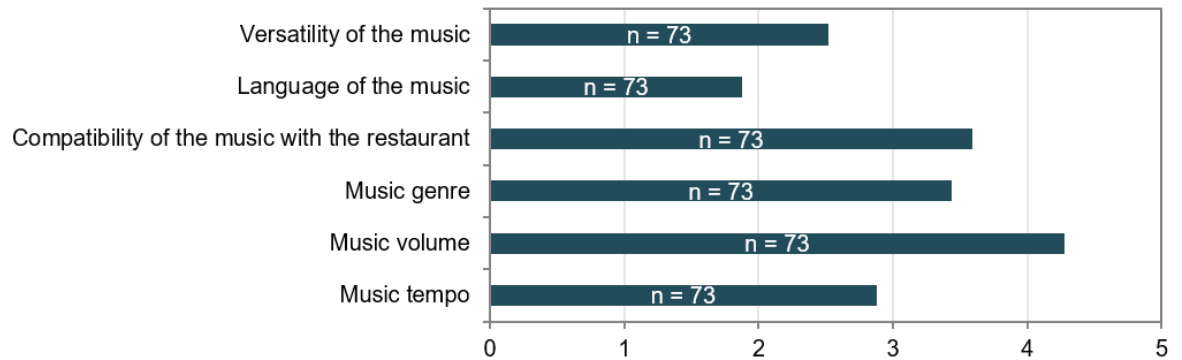


Figure 8. Importance (n=73)

The goal of this question was to determine which is more important from the customer's point of view. The quality of the restaurant's food and beverages, or the background music, as all of them influence the customer experience. According to figure 9, up to 73% of respondents believe that background music is more important. When it came to selecting an option, there were no major differences between respondents' genders and age groups.

Which restaurant would you choose to dine at?

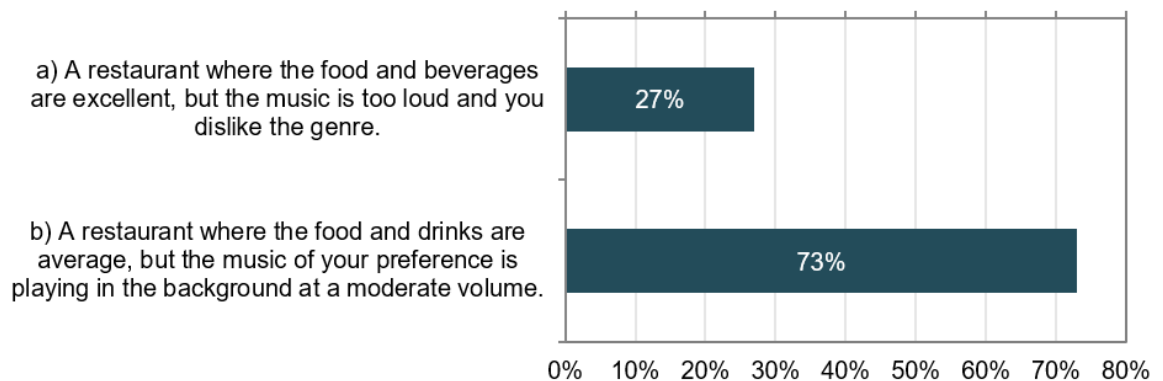


Figure 9. Volume versus food and beverages (=n73)

5.3 Open-ended questions

This questionnaire had two open-ended questions. The first question encouraged respondents to share their opinions on whether their attitudes toward background music changes when they dine with others versus when they dine alone. Some said that it does not really matter but many of the respondents said that they prefer the music to be lower when dining with friends or family members so that they can hear and hold a conversation with each other. When dining with others, music should be present but not disturbing.

However, when dining alone respondents prefer louder music to make them feel less lonely. Some of the respondents also find the loudness of the volume to be less disturbing when dining alone.

“When I’m dining with others I don’t want to have to scream over the music, but when I’m eating alone the music makes me feel less lonely, so louder volume doesn’t bother me.”

The second open-ended question and last question in the questionnaire asked if there was anything else that is relevant when it came to background music played in restaurants. Because this question was not mandatory, it received only 19 responses. What stood out the most was that the most disturbing factor when dining in a restaurant is the loud volume. Respondents also feel that the compatibility of the background music with the atmosphere of the restaurant is essential. Respondents also highlighted the importance of the entire sound system: the sound quality should be great, and the speakers should be placed in such a way that they do not bother customers.

“I think too loud music is the worst-case scenario. Calm music in the background making it possible to make a conversation is the best way to make restaurant cosy.”

“I think it’s very important that the background music matches the style and atmosphere of the restaurant, creating a multisensory experience for the customer.”

“It’s not only the music, but the whole also “sound system” is important, no massive speakers where people can sit right under.”

6 Conclusion

In this final chapter, the research's validity and reliability are discussed and the author also addresses if the study answered the research questions and what restaurants should focus on in the future when it comes to background music. Finally, the author shares their learning experiences during the thesis writing process.

6.1 Validity and reliability

Quantitative research includes a variety of statistical methods for determining the reliability of the meters. The research's reliability means that the results of a study can be replicated, implying that the research can achieve results that are not coincidental. Furthermore, reliability also refers to the ability of a study to be repeated with identical outcomes or the findings show any consistent patterns. The validity on the other hand refers to the ability of research to calculate exactly what it claims to measure. Validity issues can arise from respondents interpreting survey questions differently than the researcher, for example. This becomes a challenge if the researcher analyses the data using their original way of thinking, making the results inaccurate. (Hirsjärvi & al. 2008, 226-227.)

Before sending the questionnaire to the respondents, it was tested several times, it was also sent to the research supervisor in order to ensure that the questionnaire was clear and unambiguous. The fact that there is so little research on this topic raises concerns about the study's reliability. Because the questionnaire was also sent to the author's circle of acquaintances in order to receive as many responses as possible, the questionnaire's reliability may be weakened. However, the findings of this study were consistent with previous studies, indicating that the survey is reliable. Respondents provided many open answers, indicating that the questions they were asked encouraged them to give more detailed information and share their own thought about the topic. Respondents were able to comment honestly because the survey was completely anonymous. They also chose the "neutral" answer option at a low rate, suggesting that the questions and the research subject were understandable. The questionnaire, theory base, and findings were all compatible because the questions were based on the information in the theoretical framework. Since the results fit the hypothesis and the study's research questions, the research was found to be valid.

6.2 Answers to the research questions and future recommendations

The research question of the study was "How does the background music influence consumer buying behavior in a casual dining restaurant?" Sub questions were designed to

support the process of getting an answer to the main research question. The study answered the research questions and showed that background music can be used to influence consumer buying behavior in a casual dining restaurant. Especially volume of the background music influences the overall customer experience and satisfaction. Customers will be able to talk with one another and feel less uncomfortable if the background music is not too loud. Too loud music can cause customers to avoid the restaurant or not return, resulting in decreased sales. When music is played at moderate volume are more likely to spend more time in a restaurant. Also, the tempo affects the passing of time of a consumer but does not always result in purchasing more food and beverages. Although the language of background music does not appear to have as much of an influence on consumer buying behavior as volume or tempo, the music genre should still be compatible with the restaurant's concept and atmosphere in order to create a coherent environment.

In order to generate more sales and keep customers satisfied, the author recommends that restaurants pay close attention and really consider what type of music they play, at what volume, and whether it complements their concept. Not only is the music itself vital, but so is the rest of the music equipment, as well as the sound quality and speaker placement. It is essential that consumers have a positive impression of the restaurant and want to return to dine there in the future.

6.3 Learning outcomes

Writing the entire thesis in professional written form, in English, was one of the most significant academic learning outcomes, and it was surprisingly difficult. The author learned a lot of new phrases and words while working on the thesis, which will most likely support them in their future careers in the hospitality industry. Searching for reliable sources for the theoretical part has also strengthened the author's media literacy, meaning that the author has learned to be more critical of various online articles and sources.

Writing this thesis took a long time and has taught a lot. The author believes that time management, in particular, is an area that can be improved. Despite the fact that writing the thesis took longer than expected and the author's life being affected by the ongoing pandemic, the author is particularly proud of their determination. During the last six months, the thesis slowly but steadily came together. When the findings were analysed, it was obvious that this was a subject on everyone's mind.

Overall, the author learned how to make the best out of a difficult situation, put together a good theoretical framework, and even picked up new skills in the process. The survey

went well, the findings were interesting and hopefully useful to R1. The thesis' objectives were met, and the process of writing a thesis is now completed. In addition, the author's overall awareness of music psychology and the influence of background music in restaurants and marketing grew. The author believes that from now on, they will always pay attention to the background music when dining in a restaurant.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Background music in a restaurant questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a bachelor's thesis about how background music can influence consumer buying behavior in restaurants. With the help of the results, I examine the different factors impacting the behavior. The thesis is commissioned by an international chain restaurant that wishes to remain anonymous.

This questionnaire takes approximately **5 minutes** to complete and both Finnish and foreign people are welcome to participate! All answers will be anonymous.

Thank you very much for your effort!

Kind regards,
Laura Kuusinen
Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

1. How old are you? *

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- over 65

2. What is your gender? *

- Female
- Male
- Other

3. What is your occupation? *

- Employed
- Student
- Unemployed
- Senior citizen
- Other

4. Which of these describes your personal income last year? *

- 0€
- 1-9999€
- 10 000-24 999€
- 25 000-49 999€
- 50 000-74 999€
- over 75 000€

5. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree), how much do you agree with the following statements? *

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
I frequently pay attention to the background music playing in the restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The music playing in the background influences my decision to visit the restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The background music influences what I order at the restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend more time in restaurants when I listen to music that I enjoy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music that I enjoy makes me spend more money at restaurants.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fast music causes me to eat more quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Slow music causes me to eat more slowly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energetic music makes me buy more alcoholic beverages.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The restaurant's background music influences whether or not I will recommend the place to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. How loud should the background music be at the restaurant? *



7. Does your attitude toward background music change when you dine with others versus when you dine alone? For example, do you prefer quieter music when dining with others and louder music when dining alone? *

8. Which restaurant would you choose to dine at? *

- a) A restaurant where the food and beverages are excellent, but the music is too loud and you dislike the genre.
- b) A restaurant where the food and drinks are average, but the music of your preference is playing in the background at a moderate volume.

9. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not important and 5 being very important), how important do you think the following factors are in your dining experience? *

	1 Not important	2 Slightly important	3 Moderately important	4 Important	5 Very important
Music tempo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music volume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Music genre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compatibility of the music with the restaurant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language of the music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Versatility of the music	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Is there anything else you think is relevant when it comes to background music in restaurants?