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Emotional benefits of Coca-Cola advertising music

María José Sánchez-Porras* & Estrella Martínez Rodrigo

Universidad de Granada, calle Campus de la Cartuja, s/n, Granada 18011, España

Abstract

Human beings have multiple resources to transmit emotions. One of them is music which is quite effective in broadcasted publicity. In this work we have studied some of the emotions which can be transmitted by the main constituent elements of music. We have focused on the spots of Coca-Cola, one of the most important brands in the world. He have made use of content analysis as methodology, taking as an axis the main elements of musical organization: rhythm, melody and harmony.

It has been proved that in Coca-Cola spots a correct use of these elements is being done, so music transmits feelings and emotions directly related to happiness. This value has been included in Coca-Cola's brand image as an own one for a long time.

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1. Introduction

The aim of the present study is to remark the deliberate use of the unaware, communicative power of music in advertising of a well-known soft-drink brand. The importance for society is to make conscious the public (possible consumer of their product) of this intentional, advertising use of music, at least warning people about this influence in their choices.

The main components of music i.e. rhythm, melody and harmony, and its relation among them, arouse different emotions. It is necessary to know how each component can influence our feelings.

If we speak about rhythm, we must highlight its importance although it has been sometimes unnoticed. If melody and harmony are intrinsic and essential elements of music, rhythm is inherent in all art disciplines, spatial and temporal.

* Corresponding author. *E-mail address:* mjsporras@gmail.com

Moreover, rhythm is something within the human being; it is in its walking style, in its breathing or in its heartbeat. On the other hand, we find rhythm in the sun rise and the sun set, in the seasons and in the stars movement. Rhythm is everywhere in our lives. Within the scope of music we can define rhythm as the structural element that organises sounds in a musical passage.

Melody is the string of sounds (notes with different pitches) with different amounts of vibrations per second or hertz (frequency) produced in a musical sense. Harmony is the base of all music, so melody is the element that gives sense to it. It has the harmony in it and develops it along the musical discourse. It is sometimes compared with the output of spoken language. Music makes sense even if we listen to a melody without its accompaniment. This is supported by the huge amount of written music in history for monophonic instruments, which is a clear example of how the musical language flows with meaning. All music has at least one melody. The fragments left on the human mind after listening to a Beethoven's symphony or Bach's cantata are more melodic than a harmonic string.

As we have said, harmony is the base of all music. We can find rhythm, timbre and differences in the height and intensity of tone but if there is no harmony, there is no music either tonal or atonal. All melody has an inherent harmonic sense. Therefore, we can say that harmony is paramount in the construction of a musical work, piece or fragment. In the XVII century, harmony gained importance over polyphony so music started to be understood from a vertical point of view. In other words, music was considered an overlapping of melodic lines until the moment in which the bass coding is given importance and music is understood from the bass line (from low to high). In this way harmony defeats polyphony to enrich music colours and makes it develop itself.

We have followed Bruner's emotional expression pattern to make an analysis in this work. Listeners find quite natural adding emotion descriptive tags to the musical works they listen to. There is a broad agreement in the general categories of emotions in which works can be classified according to its musical parameters (Gabrielsson y Juslin, 1996). Public can describe music in a consistent way.

There have been unsuccessful tries to define the symbolism of music or, at least, not as successful as in literature or fine arts. This is due to the abstract quality of music which is given to cognitive and emotional associations than other disciplines.

Finally, we must point out that music has got a referential meaning thanks to the association of values that go beyond it because they don't have a strict relation with any musical parameter. Music gives to the advertisement and to the object values which have attached to it culturally. If music is not codified culturally, the values attached will be those of individual perception. However, if music already carries other values which have been established by its own publicity, those will be directly transmitted to the object (Sánchez Porras, 2008).

We will analyse these feelings together with the main elements of music in a sample of Coca- Cola spots broadcasted in TV and which can be found in common web sites such as:

- www.youtube.com
- www.anuncios.com
- www.tu.tv
- www.publitv.com
- www.lahistoriadelapublicidad.com
- www.marketingdirecto.com
- www.teacuerdas.com
- www.adlatina.com.

2. Objectives

The role of music in films is already known when rising different moods even opposite to the ones expressed by image. This is quite clear in horror and suspense films where different timbre, rhythms or melody patterns show the spectator when a scene is going to take place in the film. Even when it does not happen, the use of some musical resources can cheat the public.

If we extrapolate all this to broadcast advertising where calling to the attention of the public is one of the main goals, music is a key component to establish relationships between the scene and the product or between the product

and the public. The election of the spot music is not a trivial decision. The arbitrariness of its performance details and its position along the spot is pointless in the spot planning.

It is necessary to:

- Analyse the emotions which can be aroused through the basic elements of music in the Coca-Cola spots.
- Study if the basic elements of music in Coca-Cola spots provide emotional benefits.

3. Methodology

To achieve the established goals we have developed a content analysis where we have valued musical variables (tempo, tone and harmony) in relation to the possible feelings which can be expressed by music in the chosen sample.

In order to design the methodology record so as to get empiric data, we have valued different sources of information although our main framework is the data base to approach music in TV spot by Gómez Rodríguez (2005). It has been adapted according to our objectives to obtain our own data base which includes specific values for the chosen indicators. These will be analysed in a qualitative way later on.

In addition a focus group has been carried out in order to determine which of the initially defined indicators are more significant, allowing us to develop a more detailed analysis. Thus, six experts on either music or advertising watched fifty spots from the two hundred and three ones studied initially. In each spot were analysed the following indicators (table 1):

Table 1. Musical variables related with feelings

Variables	Grades
1. Rhythm	A. Slow B. Medium C. Fast D. None
2. Melody	A. High B. Medium C. Low D. None
3. Harmony	A. Concordant B. Discordant C. None

We will take into account the following emotions expressed by music:

- Joy
- Sentimentalism
- Humour
- Emotion
- Earnest
- Majesty
- Serenity
- Sadness
- Fear
- None

To analyse all information we have made use of descriptive statistic indicators (frequency, percentage, and variability and central tendency measures) as well as a multivariate statistical tool which has helped us to develop

interesting processes of triangulation analysis following the model of Rodríguez & Gutiérrez (2005) and Rodríguez, Pozo & Gutiérrez (2006).

We have also made approximations of non-parametric inferential statistics to the comparative-casual study in the qualitative characters. This has been the main objective of this study. The non-parametric estimations of inferential statistics has been the estimation of χ^2 for each variable and contingency tables for the possible matches among characters.

4. Results

In order to carry on with our studies, we have analysed and studied separately each variable and later on their combinations. At this stage we will show the combinations to value possible results.

4.1. Rhythm and music-feelings

We have combined the main elements of music together with the considered feelings. First of all, we have associated the different rhythms (slow, medium, high or none) to the feelings expressed by music. Thus, we have observed that the slow tempo, the least used in the studied spots, is used in almost a quarter of them to transmit earnest and, with less frequency, serenity (17%). Music with slow tempo is also majestic, funny and sentimental in percentages above the 10% in the analysed cases.

In the graph we can see that the slow tempo, the least used in the studied spots, is used in almost a quarter of them to transmit earnest and, with less frequency, serenity (17%). Music with slow tempo is also majestic, funny and sentimental in percentages above the 10% in the analysed cases.

If we focus on the most used tempo, the medium one, it is the one that transmits the widest variety of feelings, being joy 39% and humour 19% the highest. It is the medium point when speaking about rhythm, this is the reason why it can transmit the widest range of feelings. Other feelings also transmitted by a 10% are majesty, emotion and sentimentalism.

Finally in the fast tempo we see that the most transmitted feeling is joy (67%) followed by humour (25,6%) whereas the other feelings' representation is null. The feelings found in the fast tempo are the closest to happiness. The fast tempo brings us to funnier situations.

To sum up, the majority of medium and fast tempos of music expresses funny and happy feelings whereas the slow one expresses seriousness. Coca- Cola is making use of the tempo to make the music express happy feelings and give added value to the product.

4.2. Melody and music-feelings

The association between different kinds of melodies (slow, medium and high tone) and feelings expressed by music produces more results. Firstly, the most vivid feelings, joy and humour, are the most transmitted ones, even without taking into consideration the used melody.

Unexpectedly, low tones express funny feelings in the majority of cases (39%) as well as joy and sentimentalism (17%). Coca- Cola is willing to make identify its product with happiness so it transmits feelings to ease that association with the brand even with a low tone, which is normally related with seriousness. This is achieved by the combination of other different elements such as visual ones.

If we look at the second graph again, we see that in the combination of the medium tone with the feelings expressed in the spot, feelings such as joy (35%), humour (19,3%) and sentimentalism (12%) are heading. The sponsor wants its product to get related with the idea of well-being and happiness. However we can find the medium tone in spots were fear is to be transmitted.

Finally, the spots where a melodic tone is used transmit joy (43%), and humour (16,8%). High tones also express majesty (10,2%) and earnest (8%). We can see it in the famous spot Hilltop 1971, an emblem and key in the audiovisual history of Coca- Cola. All in all, feelings related to happiness are the most transmitted in the studied Coca- Cola spots with no relation with its melodic tone. However, these three tones can evoke feelings considered different from the commonly associated, if they are related to other non auditive element.

4.3. Harmony and music-feeling

We analyse now the combination of the different kinds of harmonies with the feelings expressed by music.

As we can see, concordant harmony is the most used. The most expressed feeling with this type of harmony is joy (39%). On the other hand, related to the discordant harmony, the most common feeling is humour with a 55%, followed by joy with a 32%. This harmony has been just used in one spot transmitting earnest, in another with majesty and in two with fear. The sponsor avoids the discordant harmony due to its negative connotations. However, we must point out that Coca-Cola can make use of this kind of harmony to express feelings related to happiness, its ultimate goal.

We clearly see how Coca-Cola makes use of the universal code of music to transmit chosen feelings. The assimilated harmony is used for the vast population, the concordant one to transmit happiness whereas the discordant one – unknown and unpleasant for the public- is used to transmit another feeling in our way to happiness, the comic one, a less coded feeling in the music world

5. Conclusion

Along the present study it has been shown how the use of music in Coca-Cola audiovisual advertising results in emotional benefits to the public because it arouses positive feelings that lead to happiness. The aim of the brand is to convince the consumer that if they drink its product they will be happier and to get that music is necessary in its spots. In fact, when we watch the spots in mute, not in all of them the feelings transmitted by pictures are related to happiness, so the use of music is demanded. The use of music is key in the cases where image by its own cannot transmit any feeling. Music can evoke feelings in all spot to the customer. Coca-Cola is always trying to identify happiness with its consume.

We have noticed how music can drive advertising to positive emotions in two different ways; in a direct way or with a comic change i.e. something with a negative connotation is changed into a positive one.

In most of the spots music is synchronised with images with rhythmic, melodic and harmonic movements. Medium and high rhythms are used to give movement and life. Melodies are middle tessiture and catchy linking with concordant and nice harmonies that take us to a general well-being feeling. This helps the association of the brand with happiness, main cause of the use of music in its spots.

Our results proved that this brand, as well as other well-known ones, whatever the product they sell, manipulates the public using the persuasive and communicative power of music by choosing carefully its basic constituents.

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