AN EXAMINATION OF HOW MILLENNIALS IN IRELAND RESPOND TO EMOTIONALLY CHARGED MUSIC IN TELEVISION ADVERTISING

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ABSTRACT

Title: An examination of how Millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising

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The aim of this research was to examine how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising alongside key research objectives.

The research focuses specifically on television advertisements conducted by UK department store brand, John Lewis. Three objectives needed to be addressed. The first objective was to examine how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising. The second objective investigated the awareness levels that millennials in Ireland obtained in relation to the way in music in television advertisements is used to create and/or alter their perception of a brand. The third objective investigated the commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising.

This research took a qualitative approach by using focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The sample used for the focus groups was Irish millennials, male and female, from the Dublin area. A total of two focus groups took place, one female and one male. A series of questions were asked and participants were shown three television advertisements by John Lewis. The sample used for the semi-structured interviews were experts in the field of music and television advertising. Again, a series of relevant questions were asked. The thematic analysis approach was used on all data collected.

Findings from the focus groups show that millennials in Ireland are affected by emotionally charged music in television advertising and responded by sharing the advertisement with friends and family, becoming nostalgic and anticipating the next John Lewis advertisement. Female participants generated more positive responses, attitudes and purchase intentions than male participants. Findings also indicated that millennials in Ireland are aware that music is used in television advertising to create and/or alter their perception of a brand with congruency being significant in achieving this. Findings from the semi-structured interviews highlight relevancy and the licensing structure as primary concerns in the intent and approach to music in television advertising.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Valerie O'Reilly.

Thank you for your unconditional guidance and support.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The advertising landscape has greatly evolved over time. From the decline in print media to the proliferation of social media and other digital platforms, it is completely different today to the 1950s, when traditional media (television, print, radio, billboards and posters) was the only media available (Andriole, 2017). Today, advertising is ubiquitous and almost impossible to avoid (Ember, 2015).

These changes have not only affected the advertisers, in terms of how and where they can market their products, but it has also had a profound effect on consumers. It is estimated that consumers are confronted with over 5,000 advertisements per day, leaving them feeling "overwhelmed" by advertising efforts (Yakob, 2015). Over time, consumers become relatively numb to marketing messages resulting in them "blocking it out" on both traditional (Hill, 2013) and digital (Meeker, 2017) channels.

Television advertising has its challenges. Time-shifted viewing and video-on-demand services in this "age of the distracted viewer" (Gladdis, et al., 2015) results in broadcasters and advertisers working harder to cut through the clutter (Saunier, 1992) to succeed with brand engagement. Hollebeek (2011) identifies immersion as a crucial factor in terms of a consumer's engagement with a brand.

Music in television advertising has very powerful attributes. It can deliver emotive power (Cotter et al., 2017; Miu & Baltes, 2012; Lantos & Craton, 2012; Juslin & Laukka, 2004; Sanchez-Porras & Rodrigo, 2017), create a mood (Lane & Terry, 2000; Lantos & Craton, 2012; Houston & Haddock, 2007; Hecker, 1986), act as a recall device (Wallace, 1991) and develop higher empathy which is said to contribute to more positive brand attitudes

(Escalas & Stern, 2003). It also acts as a storytelling device, which appeals greatly to consumers as this is the way in which we have communicated with one another since the beginning of time and music is said to be "the literature of the heart, it commences where speech ends", (Meng & Pryce, 2015).

However, there are many implications to consider when choosing the music for a television advertisement. There are multiple categories of music used for advertising purposes and even more choice within each category itself: from original music (e.g. artists' music controlled by major and indie labels, such as Universal and Sony) to production music libraries, or content recorded specifically for commercial exploitation (e.g. Stock music) and custom music which is specially composed for the production.

The role of the music in the television advertisement (i.e. background or foreground etc.) (Hecker, 1986; Alpert & Alpert, 1991; Schatz, 2014) needs to be decided alongside ensuring there is a "right fit" between not only the music and the other stimuli in the television advertisement (such as visuals, voice-over and the brand message), but also that there is congruity (Lantos & Craton, 2012; Spence, 2011; Lavack, et al., 2008; Alpert, et al., 2005; WARC.com, 2017; Oakes, 2009; Angell, et al., 2016; Morris & Boone, 1998) between music and the brand itself. This has led to the use of audio style guides which help develop a "sonic identity" for the brand that sometimes include the composition of mnemonics or sonic logos, examples of which include Skype's ringtone, Intel's Leap Ahead sounds and Apple's start up sound (WARC.com, 2017).

Today music plays a significant role in peoples' lives, aided by the popularity of streaming services such as Spotify, making it more affordable and convenient to listen to music on the go and to create and share playlists with friends on Spotify, other platforms and on

social media. Thus, millennials are said to have a stronger relationship with music than previous generations (Resnikoff, 2016). Brands are becoming increasingly aware of this and the importance that music holds in the lives of consumers (Schatz, 2014).

Despite there being plenty of research on the use of music and television advertising, there has been no such research conducted that focuses on how emotionally charged music in television advertising affects millennials in Ireland.

Therefore, this research will take a qualitative approach to discover the influence of emotionally charged music in advertising and the impact on Irish millennials. It will further investigate the commercial intent and approach to using music in television advertising by obtaining insight from three high calibre professionals who work in the area.

The author currently works in the advertising sector in a media agency based in Ireland. When reviewing media campaigns, for both research and entertainment purposes, the author holds both a personal and professional interest in the music used in the television advertisements. Hence, the research topic presented here was born out of this curiosity.

The writer is not alone in her quest for more information, in the last decade there has been an increase in research into the area of "music and emotion" (Miu & Baltes, 2012), also referred to as a "recent upswing of research on musical emotions" (Juslin & Vastfjall, 2008).

"Music may well be the single most stimulating component of advertising…and often adds a form of energy available through no other source." (Allan, 2006).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Advertising

Advertising can be defined as "any paid form of non-personal communication about an organisation, product, service or idea by an identified sponsor" (Alexander, 1965).

However, the definition of advertising from 1965 is not reflective of the current landscape. Based on the evolution of the advertising industry, there has been a call for a new definition.

One such working definition is; "brand-initiated communication intent on impacting people". This definition is intentionally broad to capture elements of advertising from public relations to sales and promotions (Dahlen, 2016).

Richards (2002) also provides a contemporary definition of advertising which focuses more on the goal of persuading the consumer to take action rather than just impacting them: "paid, mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade the receiver to take some action, now or in the future".

The first ever definition of marketing was proposed by Daniel Starch in 1923 and the simplicity of this definition reflects the advertising landscape at the time; "selling in print". By comparing this description to the above, we can see how quickly advertising has evolved within less than a one-hundred-year period (Starch, 1923).

Advertising has undergone huge changes; from the decline in press (Slattery, 2016) to the advancement of mobile advertising (WARC.com, 2017) and will be a "central focus" in the history of the twentieth century. It spans across "economic, social, technological, artistic and cultural histories" and accurately reflects how people lived their lives (Pollay, 1978). For example, the increase in mobile marketing is the advertisers' and agencies'

response to consumers spending more time on mobile devices. 87% of people have their mobile phone with them night and day and 68% admit to feeling anxious without it (Grimshaw, 2017).

From an economic perspective advertising is a multi-billion Euro industry, with €92 billion spent on advertising in the EU in 2014. The industry also generates a significant return on investment (ROI): every €1 spent on advertising produces €7 on average for the economy, representing 4.6% of the overall EU GDP (IAB, 2017).

As a central promotional tool, advertising is used to communicate with a target market to sell goods and services and to stimulate demand. It is a valuable way to build brand equity and influence consumer perceptions (Belch, 2009). However, this definition does not include the many challenges that the sector faces to achieve these goals.

2.1.1 Challenges in the advertising landscape:

Today, advertising is the most fragmented discipline in marketing (Eisend, 2015) and heavily relies on consumers to actively seek it out and engage with it. This is done, for example, via the likes of YouTube (Rosengren, 2016) and social media (Colliander, 2015).

Buzzfeed is an example of a brand that are "pushing advertising boundaries" by executing the above seamlessly. Their ability to combine native content with text and video within the commercial messaging encourages consumers to engage because it is viewed as "more than just an advertisement" (e.g. they supply quick and easy food recipes) and "considers how consumers live their lives" (i.e. Buzzfeed understands that people are time poor and yet still want to eat tasty food) (Rayport, 2013).

Digital marketing, classified as the fastest growing category in 2014, has allowed for a two-way communication between consumers and brands. This has changed exponentially from when the landscape comprised of only traditional media and thus only a one-way communication between brands and consumers existed (Chunawalla & Sethia, 2008).

Brand engagement is defined as the level to which the consumers are "willing to invest their own personal resources; time, money energy; on the brand", beyond what is required to purchase or consume it (Keller, 2001). Correspondingly, Hollebeek (2011) expresses it as "the level of an individual customers motivational, brand-related and context-dependent state of mind, characterised by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct brand interactions". Hollebeek's definition focuses on the various factors that influence an individual's mood or mental state that reflect the level of brand engagement achieved through the interactions.

Hollebeek (2011) refers to immersion as a primary theme of brand engagement and defines it as a "level of brand-related concentration in particular interactions" and includes the brand-related thoughts that a customer has after their interaction with a brand.

However, it is still extremely difficult for brands to engage with consumers as the proliferation of online platforms has added to what is referred to as "advertising clutter" (Ha & McCann, 2008).

2.2 Consumers Are Overwhelmed by Advertising Clutter

Experts estimate that the average person is exposed to approximately 5,000 advertisements daily (Schroeder, 2016). The ubiquitous nature of advertising has resulted in consumers "drowning in irrelevant messages" across the numerous media outputs available (Rayport,

2013). This has implications for marketers as consumers pay more attention to advertisements deemed personally relevant and as such, process the information within the marketing message on a deeper level (Park & Young, 1986).

This has led to an onslaught of "advertising clutter", which is "usually perceived as the presence of a large amount of non-editorial content in an editorial medium…that exceeds a consumer's acceptance level" (Ha & McCann, 2008).

Although this term is referenced throughout recent literature on advertising, the concept of advertising clutter has been circulating since the early 1990s (Saunier, 1992). The inclusion of music in online videos (Breachman, 2016) and online media in general is growing, adding to the clutter. Globalisation is generating more competition for brands and more choice for consumers. Hence, "today consumers are empowered and informed" (Dunn, 2015). However, although Dunn (2015) is not alone in stating that the influx of choice derived from globalisation is a positive for consumers, with Iyengar and Lepper (2000) adding that this is most apparent when the context of choice is trivial and Herrmann et al (2009) also stating that although choice is costly for consumers, it is still beneficial. Conversely, Swartz (2004) claims that there is simply too much choice for consumers which is adding to this feeling of being "overwhelmed". Osnos (1997) highlights this with an example of when global brand P&G reduced the number of versions of their Head & Shoulders shampoo from 26 to 15 thereby minimising the choice, resulting in a 10% increase in sales. Rayport (2013), explains how in response to the increased competition, brands have increased their messages as they expect that the more information they provide, the better the chances of holding onto their customers and igniting engagement. Yet, for

consumers the sheer volume of marketing messages is not "empowering" but rather it is "overwhelming" and thus it is "pushing them away".

Additionally, the media landscape is becoming more complex for marketers and consumers alike as the increase in new media channels overwhelm them. Alongside competitor brands, marketers are now competing with amateurs for consumer attention and engagement, driven by the internet and social media enabling the publication of content as well as "one to one" communication (Granados, 2016).

Although the "tech-savvy" millennial cohort are more involved with media, they are more likely to minimise their exposure to advertising messages (via ad-blockers) as they "don't like brands interrupting their media consumption". Their exposure to "more advertisements" has developed a higher "technical competence" in advertising avoidance (Warn-Ford, 2016).

2.2.1 Consumers are blocking out advertising:

Consumers are "overwhelmed by advertisements" and advertisers are urged to treat consumers' attention as a "valuable resource" and not "abuse" it as consumers are switching off to advertising in response to this abuse (Yakob, 2015). However, Ha & McCann (2008) believe that brands just need to ensure that they are useful and entertaining across their advertising messages to prevent consumers from switching off. Ha & McCann (2008) focus on the "uses and gratifications approach" which states that when advertising is viewed as "useful" in terms of the product information it provides, or is part of the "media content" or the "entertainment", then it is not viewed in a negative light by consumers. Another optimist, Mercier (2017) states that even when an advertisement does exert

influence, the person is left better off (with a product he/she enjoys). However, Newman (2015) claims that millennials simply "don't respond to advertisements" as they rely on friends and family via through word of mouth for information on products and services.

Consumers physically blocking advertising is not the only challenge. The overload theory, which occurs when more information is presented than the ability of information seekers to process and handle the information (Swar, et al., 2017), proposes that pieces of information can be confused with one another (Schneider, et al., 1984). In a sense, the information is still being blocked, albeit mentally.

2.2.2 Advertising literacy:

Traditionally, advertising messages have been overtly manipulative in their intention to persuade consumers. The New York Times has even referred to advertising as "brainwashing" consumers (Singer, 2010).

Mercier (2017) challenges this by stating that in general, people are less gullible than is strongly believed. Sperber et al (2010) add substance to this claim, stating that people are equipped with mechanisms that allow them to "vigilantly evaluate communicated information". Mercier (2017) also adds that when faced with advertising, people are not gullible; "on the whole people tend to pay attention to sensible cues…".

"Sensible cues" refers to how humans weigh new pieces of information against what they have already learned through previous experience (Harris, 2013), thus allowing consumers to "reject most misleading messages", (Mercier, 2017).

Their ability to do this relates to what is referred to as a consumer's "advertising literacy" (Livingstone, 2006). This has been defined as a consumer's ability "to understand why advertisers use particular persuasive tactics" (Rozendaal Rozend & Buijzen, 2011). O'Donahoe and Tynan (O'Donahoe & Tynan, 1998) offer a vaguer definition, referring to it as consumers having "a flavour for what the advertising is trying to do". Older definitions are even more basic in their descriptions; Meadows (1983) states that it means "understanding the vocabulary, elements and styles of advertising" and Lannon (1985), defines it is consumers' "ability to decode complex visual imagery and make brand inferences from minimal cues".

Regardless of their advertising literacy, being bombarded by advertising can make consumers feel resentful as they feel it is "violating" them (i.e. invading their privacy) (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). Clee & Wicklund (1980) support this further by explaining how this can result in consumers becoming resistant to advertising messages and even avoiding them completely.

Meeker (2017), explains how ad-blocking is on the rise as more and more consumers are concerned with data capture. There was a reported 615 million (desktop and mobile) ad-blockers by the end of 2016. This is up 142 million year on year (YoY) (Blanchfield, 2017).

Online ad-blocking has led to consumers also resisting traditional advertising using spam filters, on demand television services and caller ID (to block out cold calling) (Hill, 2013).

This marketing clutter mentioned above also affects television advertising. In 1965, a brand's advertising message on television could reach 80% of a traditional target audience with only three spots (three individual airplays). Less than forty years later, it would require approximately 127 spots to generate the same reach (Marsden, 2006).

Therefore, brands are planning their television activity to achieve very high levels of ratings to reach consumers but this behaviour is adding to marketing clutter and overwhelming consumers further.

Additional barriers for television advertising include time-shifting television habits with 86% of those watching time-shifted programmes fast-forwarding the advertisements (Plunkett, 2010). 61% of 16-34-year olds i.e. the millennial cohort (Mobolade, 2016), view time-shifted content (Taylor, 2015).

However, perhaps all is not lost for television advertising, the Director of media investment at Carat North America, Andy Donchin, highlights an alternative perspective by stating that "viewing television is still a passive activity" and Nielsen's (a global information, data and measurement company) statistics supports this statement saying that 46% of viewers ages 18-49 years of age for all four networks in the USA are watching commercials during playback (Carter, 2009).

That being, said the television landscape has changed significantly since 2009 with the rise of streaming services e.g. Netflix which results in consumers avoiding television advertisements completely. Then, when consumers do watch television, there also lies the challenge of them being distracted by a second screen i.e. consumers focusing on another screen such as mobile phone, when television advertisements are playing (Johnson, 2013). However, Netflix accounts for 4% of video consumption in the UK, television accounts for 75%. As such, Hill (2017) asks us to keep the so-called "strength" of streaming services in perspective.

Regardless of the sceptics, a recent global study carried out by Nielsen (2015) reported that 63% of respondents trusted television advertising and this was up 1% year on year (YoY).

Although this is higher than newspapers and magazines (60% and 58% respectively), it is lower than online channels with 70% of respondents stating that they trusted it. Surprisingly, millennials showed the highest levels of trust across online and traditional advertising formats including television advertising.

Despite the challenges, television advertising, when executed correctly, continues to be incredibly effective. According to a WARC report (2016), the effectiveness is measured by the proof that a campaign has met its set objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) and, "the most effective television advertising campaigns have an emotional appeal".

2.2.3 Cutting through the clutter

According to Schatz (2014), a brand's involvement with music reflects their connection with becoming content providers and is a way to cut through "the marketing clutter…music is just part of that trend and probably a little ahead of other kinds of media content."

Music is said to strengthen an advertisement's "subconscious seduction" (Heath, 2014). The basis of which is on "emotive power" and not the persuasive message used. This leads to favourable opinions of brands. Heath (2014) refers to findings by a behavioural psychologist who claims that the metacommunication (i.e. the tone) and the "non-verbal emotive" worked better than what was said (i.e. the communicated message). It is this tone of voice that creative agencies strive for to execute campaigns effectively.

On examining UK department store John Lewis' advertisements, the music is extremely effective, especially in emotional advertising terms. However, it is important that music is considered from the beginning of the creative process and not a last-minute "afterthought"

as when it is executed correctly it can increase brand perceptions by 11% as seen with a previous UK study (WARC.com, 2017).

2.3 Perception

Perception is the process in which "an individual receives, selects, organizes and interprets information to create a meaningful picture of the world." (Belch, 2009). Other definitions describe perception as peoples' primary form of cognitive contact with the world around them (Cohen & Wartofsky, 1966/1968).

"We do not just watch commercials, we hear them" and as such the music in advertisements influences consumer perceptions (Lowe & Haws, 2017).

The term "cross-modal correspondence" is the perceptual congruency of a stimulus perceived by one sense, with sensory experience in a different sensory modality (Spence, 2011). Hence, a particular element of sound, such as music, may influence consumer beliefs and behaviours "by virtue of the fact that it is intrinsically associated with other sensory characteristics unrelated to sound" (Lowe & Haws, 2017).

Areni (2003) and Bruner (1990) both suggest that decision makers often choose music with a restricted knowledge on how it could affect the product perceptions in the advertisement. Interestingly, Lowe and Haws (2017) showed that the differences in the pitch of the music in advertising can influence consumer perception about the product size (with lower pitch inferring a smaller size product and conversely, a higher pitch inferring a larger sized one). However, one primary implication of this study is that this one of the first attempts by academics to look at acoustic cross-modal correspondence in marketing and so further research needs to be done in this area to support claims.

Music in advertising is used to form a consumer's perception of a brand (Juslin & Laukka, 2004) and at times relies on what is called the "halo effect", which is described by Leuthesser et al. (1995) as "a systematic bias in attribute ratings resulting from raters' tendency to rely on global effect rather than carefully discriminating among conceptually distinct and potential independent brand attributes", e.g. of using a famous music artist's track in an advertisement which in turn creates a favourable perception of the product or brand (Gorn, 1982).

The musical genre used in advertising can "sway perceptions of image" as seen in a study carried out by Oakes & North (2013) on real and fictitious universities in television advertisements. Dance music was linked to being a "modern, exciting and trendy" and traditional music associated with "a more sophisticated perceived image". This concept also supported by MacInnis and Park (1991) who stated that slower, "more sedate" music was linked with an image of a "thoughtful and dependable service". However, Juslin and Laukka (2004) state that the same tempo can be used in a different "emotional expression" (i.e. a fast tempo can be used to for both "anger" and "happiness).

Conversely, Zhu and Meyers-Levy (2005) state that people may base their perceptions on verbal advertisement data because it is "more salient, accessible and seemingly more diagnostic than music". This depends on how intensely people process various advertisement components (including music). If processed "non-intensely" then viewers are likely to be insensitive to the "meaning imparted by music".

Dunbar (1990) stated that music is the "perfect vehicle to be integrated with advertising to deliver a message". The possibility for popular music to be "a stimulating component" and "the perfect vehicle" is a direct reflection on the ability of popular music to get people more

involved in advertising. This involvement, defined as "the number of conscious bridging experiences, connections, or personal references per minute that a viewer makes between his or her own life and a stimulus" (Krugman, 1965) is key because it "seems to mediate both the acquisition and processing of information through activating a heightened state of arousal and/or greater cognitive activity in an interaction between an individual and a stimulus" (Salmon, 1986).

Music can also be used to bypass perceptual filters and attract the "right customer" e.g. global fashion brand Abercrombie and Fitch's loud music appeals to teens but can be off-putting for older people (Anthes, 2010). This same tactic is used in relation to music in television advertising as discussed by Low Lai Chow (2014) when mentioning how Sony Music are doing a lot of work in this space by identifying up to 28 consumer segments in each market. From there, Sony Music can identify additional target markets for brands and use music to "plan the marketing around those artists".

John Lewis executes this brilliantly, by using nostalgic songs (e.g. "Your Song" by Elton John) and using contemporary artists to re-record (or cover) it with their own "fresh" style (e.g. "Your Song" by Ellie Goulding). Thus, the music in the television advertisement resonated with both older and younger consumers.

Yet it is a challenge for advertisers to engage with consumers when there are many barriers preventing consumers from simply seeing their advertisement as discussed previously. However, music in television advertisements can "grab" the consumer's attention as "you cannot look away from sound…it draws you in" (Carpenter, 2017). The proof of this lies in the data, amidst the distracted consumers, the John Lewis television advertisements captured their attention with awareness of their television advertisements increasing six-

fold (from 8% to 45%) (WARC.com, 2013). In this sense, music in television advertising can overcome the challenges generated by perceptual filters as it gains the attention of target consumers and shapes their image of the brand.

2.4 Music in Television Advertising

For television advertising to be persuasive it must "communicate something new, be relevant, believable and differentiating...", and it must also be "liked" as otherwise it could hinder its persuasiveness (Millward Brown Knowledge Point , 2006). Stalinski and Schellenberg (2013) agree with this last statement, with their conclusion that "listeners tend to remember music that they like" (Stalinski & Schellenberg, 2013).

WARC.com (2016), claims that the effectiveness of a television advertisement can be helped by utilising the first and last placements within a commercial break (i.e. the first advertisement after the programme and the last one just before programming resumes). WARC.com (2016) also states that certain types of programmes have stronger retention during the breaks (e.g. dramas) and that depending on your advertising message, the length of the advertisement can also have a great impact on the effectiveness of the overall television advertisement (e.g. shorter duration commercials work better for established brands who are communicating a simple message such as a price promotion and longer duration lengths work best for brand-building purposes).

Music is a key element of advertisements that have a sound dimension (i.e. television advertisements etc.) (Galan, 2009). Lantos & Craton (2012), state how a consumer's response to advertising music is intricate as it involves key influential variables that determine a consumer's perceptive and emotional musical responses as discussed below.

Lantos & Craton (2012) also touch on the role of music and whether it plays in the foreground or background of the advertisement. Music that plays in the foreground has a far greater role in the advertisement and the opposite applies to music that is played in the background (Alpert & Alpert, 1991). This is an interesting point to consider when we layer in findings from Allan (2008), where the research indicated that most production and jingle music was played in the background of television advertisements and most "popular" music was played in the foreground. There are "many roles of music" and so Hecker (1986) sought to provide a framework to understand them in relation to television advertising. The roles included background, excitement, relaxation, empathy, attention, news, imagery and finally, attribute and benefit communication (Hecker, 1986). One of the techniques described in this study is "mood" which is said to have the capacity to "move the listener towards a desired direction or create empathy or a rapport with characters or a brand". This is similar to the two affective components focused on below by Lantos and Craton (2012).

It is important to note the limitations with Hecker's (1986) descriptions. Firstly, it is dated 1986 and television advertising is vastly different today. Secondly, this is an American study and the author is interested in examining the millennial market in Ireland.

"Music in advertising includes instrumental scores, popular songs, sung jingles or sonic brand signatures. They can be new compositions or licensed existing music – the original or a new arrangement. Music can be a one-off for an ad or used consistently over time by a brand" (WARC.com, 2017)

With so many options available, it is no wonder that music is so widely used in television advertising. Appelbaum & Halliburton (1993), discovered that 89% of international television advertisements contained music. More recently, Allan (2008), revealed that 86%

of Prime-Time television advertisements in the USA contained music *(in Ireland this refers to advertisements played on-air between 18.00-23.30).*

Juslin & Laukka (2004) state that the "goal of music" is to change emotions and thus the goal of an advertisement that uses music is the very same. Music is used in advertising to manipulate consumers. However, Juslin and Laukka (2004) warn that due to the numerous areas that can be explored in relation to "music and emotion", researchers must be clear as to what area they are investigating.

Hence, Lantos & Craton, (2012) provide a list of cognitive and affective components to determine the attention to and recall of the television advertisement (using music) in question as well as the arousal of feelings and emotions.

2.4.1 Cognitive components of music

Music can be used to differentiate a television advertisement once the following cognitive components are incorporated (Lantos & Craton, 2012):

- Level and persistence of attention to music

- Surfacing and deeper level processing

- Features of music available

- Remembered features of music

- Images suggested by the music

- Musical distinctiveness

- Perceived fit between music and advertising message

This study focuses on two of the above cognitive components deemed the most relevant for the objectives of this study:

- Level and persistence of attention to music: refers to whether the music in the advertisement has added to the objective of achieving and retaining the consumer's attention. As such this affects the degree to which the consumer pays attention to the advertisement in its entirety.

To capture and maintain the consumer's attention the advertisement must be relevant to the consumer as previously mentioned (Millward Brown Knowledge Point , 2006). Thus, the music must also be relevant. However, relevance is key not just in music choice with regards to the product but also with the emotional tone and psyche of the intended audience. Happy music (music in major keys) is better remembered than sad music (music in minor keys) when listeners are in a positive mood and the opposite is true when in a negative mood (Houston & Haddock, 2007). However, Hunter and Schellenberg (2010) state that despite a general tendency to prefer positive music over negative, people often enjoy listening to sad-sounding music.

Lantos & Craton (2012) proposed that a consumer's response to music in an advertisement will vary depending on their activity at the time (i.e. eating, driving, in a group, alone, the programme content they are watching etc.) however, this has not been supported by any primary research.

- Perceived fit between music and advertising message: whereby the consumer judges how well the music in the advertisement suits the advertising message. The stronger the fit, the more favourable the attitude will be (Lantos & Craton, 2012). This element is deemed as "crucial" which is reflected in the literature.

This "fit" is also referred to as congruency and deemed greatly important when selecting the music for an advertisement. The most widely accepted definition of congruency is that it is a concept with two dimensions; relevancy and expectancy. This study will focus on relevancy as it relates to the degree in which the stimulus (e.g. music) contains the meaning of the advertising message and enhances it further so that consumers clearly understand the meaning of the advertisement (Galan, 2009). It is also important to note that the greater the congruency between the music selected and the general tone of the advertisement, the more positive the affective reaction (Lavack, et al., 2008).

2.4.2 Affective components of music

The affective components of music to be considered are as follows (Lantos & Craton, 2012):

- Emotions (feelings) evoked by music

- Mood induced by music

- Emotional memories activated by music:

- Emotional arousal response to music

- Hedonic response to music

Again, this study will focus on two of the above components that are considered the most relevant to the research objectives of this study:

- Emotions (feelings) evoked by music: This relates to whether "feeling states" are stimulated by the music, the intensity of the feelings evoked and how favourably the consumer views the emotional experience (Lantos & Craton, 2012).

Cotter et al (2017) list various common emotions that can be evoked by music; "happiness, sadness, anger, calm, and excitement". However, when testing "listeners perception of emotion", greater variability is achieved when avoiding "forced choice" in making participants choose from a list of emotions and allowing them to give a "free description" (Juslin & Laukka, 2004).

- <u>Emotional arousal response to music</u>: A primary goal of advertising is to "alter the emotional arousal level" of the consumer and component concerns whether changes in emotional arousal occurred because of exposure to the music in the advertisement and again how favourably the consumer viewed this change (Lantos & Craton, 2012).

A study carried out by Miu and Baltes (2012) confirmed that emotions aroused were directly attributed to music. This was based on measuring the heart rate, skin conductance, respiratory rate as well as confirmation from participants. However, this study used two separate groups, each issued with a separate task (one group surrounded tasks geared towards generating high empathy, the other group was tasked with the opposite). Hence, the author would argue that bias may have occurred in the results.

It is important to note that a person's mood can influence their response to a stimulus (i.e. music) and this, in turn, can affect the mood induced by the emotional response. This is referred to as a "transactional relationship" between mood and emotion (Lane & Terry, 2000). However, Juslin and Sloboda (2010) state that emotion is a "brief but intense affective reaction" and mood refers to longer yet less intense affective states. Conversely, Kivy (1990) believes that music cannot induce "common everyday emotions" such as

happiness, sadness and anger". However, this literature was written in 1990 and therefore the author would argue that it is outdated.

Escalas & Stern (2003) examined the emotional responses to television advertising campaigns. From an advertising point of view, higher empathy is likely to drive more positive advertisement attitudes (Escalas & Stern, 2003). This is because when viewers are engrossed in a dramatic advertisement, they are more likely to generate "positive attitudes towards the advertisement that encouraged this response". Escalas & Stern (2003) also mentioned the time limitations with television advertisements. From a music point of view, this highlights the importance of selecting the right music as you only have a limited amount of time to communicate via the two stimuli available to you as an advertiser i.e. visual and sonic.

Empathy has also been identified as a central mechanism of "music-induced emotions" whereby the listener can presume the performer's experiences and emotions (Scherer & Zentner, 2001). Thus, one can assume that the same can be said for the characters in a television advertisement (i.e. the viewer mimics the emotions of the characters that are further communicated by the music). What is empathy? Decety & Jackson (2006) describe it as the "capacity to understand and respond to the affective experience of another person." Batson et al (1997) offer a similar definition stating that it involves the deliberate effort to imagine what the feelings and thoughts of another person are.

The above describes how music can evoke emotions, yet how effective is music in television advertising? Nielsen (2015) conducted a study on the effectiveness of 600 television advertisements (the majority of which contained music). The findings indicated that the inclusion of "some form" of music in television advertisements performed better

across the following key metrics; "creativity, empathy, emotive power and information power" compared to the advertisements that did not contain music.

In relation to the correlation between the category of music and achieving effectiveness, Julienne Schiffer of Nielsen Entertainment (2015) states that "it depends on the message you want to get across. Popular songs, for example, are the most effective at invoking some kind of emotional response. But, while pop songs deliver emotive power, other genres are better suited for price and promotional-based content that are trying to get information across to audiences. In fact, the study found that generic background music helps improve information power. Advertiser jingles help make the brand seem in touch, but they don't generate as much empathy as other forms of music."

2.5 Emotionally Connecting with Consumers is Key

Binet & Field (2013) claim that emotional advertising produces considerably more powerful long-term business effects than rational campaigns. Thus, marketers are constantly trying to emotionally connect their brand with consumers (Roberts, 2005). "If you can engage consumers, it definitely can impact the brand", (Schatz, 2014).

Therefore, music can be used as an effective way for humans to convey emotion. A successful example of this can be seen with Coca-Cola's advertising music which, through the correct use of "rhythm, melody and harmony", has communicated emotions directly associated to happiness (Sánchez-Porras & Rodrigo, 2017).

People have been telling stories all through history and it is still the most effective and persuasive way to communicate as our brains are hardwired to process information using this "story structure". This is how we will continue to communicate effectively and

persuasively and "music is the literature of the heart, it commences where speech ends", (Meng & Pryce, 2015).

Hence this storytelling tactic is used in advertising; "The idea behind branding is that companies, makers of things or services, can tell stories or position their products as useful components in those stories." (Beckerman, 2014). Storytelling can "unite ideas with emotions" (Kastenholz & Young, 2004) and according to Bobby Calder, professor of marketing at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, "Music is probably the strongest storytelling medium" (Schatz, 2014). Meng and Pryce (2015) also refers to music as a storytelling device, adding that "music is the literature of the heart, it commences where speech ends".

However, the type of music that is used holds significant importance as *"overall tempo, pitch, rhythm, instruments and mode are elements of music that have varying degrees of emotional interpretations"* as each individual element can be manipulated to generate a desired response (Strobin, 2015) . Alpert & Alpert (1991) did not address this.

Music in advertising is also used to achieve business results. The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) effectiveness cases (2017) state that advertisements featuring music can "increase in-market effectiveness" by boosting business effects by 20-28%. As such, music "appears to be a crucial ingredient in advertising effectiveness, particularly for emotional appeals".

Advertisers are constantly battling for share of voice, share of mind and even share of heart. This relatively new yet sought-after metric, share of heart, as the term suggests, is connection with customers on an emotional level and outside of simply offering just commercial or functional worth of the product or service (Sheth, 2017).

2.6 The Millennial Cohort

Millennials can be defined as those who are born between 1981 and 2000 or those who were aged between 16 and 35 in 2016 (Mobolade, 2016). This group is distinct from previous generations as they were the first to become adults in the digital age and will continue to be of vital importance to marketers, making up 50% of the global workforce by 2020 (Mobolade, 2016).

According to Bergh et al (2014) the key characteristics associated with millennials includes the following; they are happier and more positive than previous generations regardless of also being the most stressed and being bored or worse, boring, is one of their worst fears. This fear links directly to their constant search for distraction. In terms of being "millennial-proof" in the media clutter discussed previously, brands must "be like humans, be relevant, have a purpose, celebrate positivity, kill boring, share stories and communicate where and when relevant".

We live in what is referred to as "the era of the distracted viewer" where 87% of people who watch television are also second screening on their laptops, tablets and phones. Gladdis et al (2015) supports this by stating that it can be extremely hard to reach the "attention deficit generation". They are distracted by the likes of Snapchat, Twitter and WhatsApp on a constant basis which is fuelled by their intense anxiety to "be in the loop" and avoid "fear of missing out" on what their friends are doing.

In respect to television advertising and millennials, Hamill (2016) states that "television isn't dead but do it right", this is explained further with the following quote; "we think that the reason why channels are declining isn't because televisions no longer exist, it isn't

because they [millennials] don't own televisions… they're not watching traditional television broadcast programming because it's just not very good." (Hamill, 2016).

Millennials are particularly difficult to "pinpoint, hit and engage" (Adweek.com, 2016) as they have grown up in an age of digital disruption and their multi-tasking nature means that they are easily distracted as they move from one activity to the next (Beaton, 2017). Hence, their attention span is said to be extremely low. In 2000, the average attention span was 10 seconds. In a 2015 study carried out by Microsoft, this has dropped to 8 seconds. Considering that the attention span of a goldfish is 9 seconds, this is alarming for advertisers (Adweek.com, 2016).

Conversely, "Millennials have amazing musical attention spans" (Buckley, 2016). Resnikoff (2016) supports this by quoting a study stating millennials listen to 75% more music than the Baby Boomer generation, with 3.1 hours of listening to music daily compared with just 1.77 hours respectively. Not only do they listen to music across various daily activities (e.g. commuting, working out, housework, daily chores and working etc.) but it has also been suggested that they invest far greater emotional attachment in chart-topping hits than their predecessors. Hence, the emotional attachment between millennials and music is why advertisers are prioritising music. Schatz (2014), supports this in stating that music plays such a significant role in so many areas of consumers' lives that brands are even more eager to align themselves with music artists. These partnerships have been carried out for decades (and for as long as a century with Coca-Cola) but with music more accessible and affordable than ever, it has become engrained in our daily routine.

"Overall, music has become a bigger part of everyone's lives and how they express their feelings. I think brands have caught on to that," says Gustavo Lopez, an Executive Vice

President of Universal Music Latin Entertainment, a division of Universal Music Group. Brands say "music has [played] a very important role in our strategy. In our synchronization of music and commercials, it has been critical, but it goes beyond that. We need to be closer to the talent because we know how music and talent can move the masses." (Schatz, 2014).

A study by Kantar Millward Brown (2017) found that millennials are more likely to physically avoid advertising, with 50% of them doing so according to global statistics. This study also stated that "humour, music and a good story" are more likely gain receptive engagement from this group. It also found that millennials "emphasise music as a defining characteristic of a good advertisement".

Marketers are under excessive pressure to understand and categorise the "most scrutinised and labelled generation in marketing history". This has been driven by fear that this generation would become the "one that got away" and "refuse to engage with advertising" (Collins, 2016).

2.7 Brand Attitude

Brand attitudes are defined as "consumers' overall evaluations of a brand" and are significant because they frequently create the foundation for consumer behaviour (e.g. brand choice) (Keller, 1993)*.*

In relation to brand choice (i.e. purchase intent), Alpert, Alpert, and Maltz (2005) found "empirical support for the notion that when music is used to evoke emotions congruent with the symbolic meaning of product purchase, the likelihood of purchasing is enhanced". This concept of a "right fit" is an important theme throughout the literature. Morris & Boone (1998) highly recommend pretesting the fit of the ad with the music to ensure an emotional

response is aroused and any weak elements are removed. According to WARC (2017), music should be "chosen and crafted to fit the advertising" as it only has an effect when it fits the advertisement. The statistics from UK experiments support this claim with proof that advertisements with appropriate music were 16% more effective than those without.

Oakes (2007) provides an example that highlights the importance of pretesting the fit between the music and the advertisement; "More thorough pre-testing may well have detected the incongruity evident in a campaign for Nissan North America's Titan truck that featured "Colonel Bogey March" (a tune whistled by World War II allied prisoners of war while being forced to build a bridge for their Japanese captors in the 1957 film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*). The desired, positive image of Nissan as a Japanese company conflicted with the negative images of the Japanese soldiers evoked by the tune. The music was subsequently dropped after consumer complaints."

Gorn (1982) describes advertising from a classical conditioning point of view, which refers to a learning process that occurs when two stimuli are repeatedly paired, stating that positive attitudes towards the product or service being advertised can be developed via other stimuli that receive a positive reaction such as humour, colours and music.

Biel (1985) found that advertising was generally more liked than disliked and his results showed a "significant relationship" between liking an advertisement and liking a product. "This likeability has a persuasive affect over consumers in that if we like a brand's advertising then we are more inclined to like the brand also". Alpert & Alpert (1991) put forward the concept of music being the catalyst of transferring the affect associated with it toward the advertisement, product or brand. This highlights the importance of the music selection for an advertisement as it could potentially be the difference between the

consumer liking the brand or not. However, the statement; "advertising was more liked than disliked" is potentially misleading as it is extremely generalised. This research is also from 1985 and the author would argue that the advertising landscape is a vastly different today. Pereira et al (2011) also claim that aesthetic preferences (i.e. liking the music) are crucial to "making people emotionally engaged" and as an additional factor to "familiarity" with the music used. It is important to note that this "likeability" can affect the reach of the advertisement and "help deepen the level of information processing" but does not guarantee that it will persuade the consumer to purchase the product or service (O'Neill, 2003). Research illustrates that just because an advertisement may make you feel something, doesn't mean that you are going to do anything about it (Asghar, 2013).

2.8 Recall

Brand recall "relates to consumers' ability to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category or some other sort of probe as a cue" e.g. the music used in the brand's advertisement (Keller, 1993).

Wallace (1991) found that "recall" improves with the use of a melody because the melody "helps to enrich the encoding of accompanying information and may also provide a framework to guide retrieval."

An example of this can be seen with the ice-cream brand Cornetto. In a UK study carried out by Millward Brown (2008-2009), respondents were asked to share their "memories and associations" with the brand. Three-quarters of older consumers mentioned the music (*O Sole Mio*) even though it had not been used in over 12 years. This highlights the power of music in terms of brand recall.

Wallace (1991) recognises, in the context of advertising, if brand information is represented using music then the advertisement should be "quite memorable" and concludes that using a piece of a popular music in an advertisement may "enhance" the viewer's memory of the message for a product/brand.

In contrast, Sanglier (2008) states that a brand should not use chart music as it dates very quickly and this can translate to the product in question i.e. a song that is very "last year" that is associated with your product means that your product will also be viewed as "last year". As mentioned by Hsuan-Yi & Lien, (2010), it is nearly impossible to avoid the abundance of popular music in television advertisements. As such, advertisers should be aware of this when selecting the music for the television advertisement as they need to ensure that it cuts through. However, Youn et al (2001) suggest that the more the consumer likes an advertisement, the higher the likelihood that the viewer will remember the advertisement. WARC.com (2008) claims that levels of enjoyment are boosted when the music is "specifically adapted" for the brand and when "well-known" music is used. This has been supported by (Roehm, 2001) who adds that advertisements that use an instrumental version of a popular song will lead to greater attention and likeability. Oakes (2009), also supports this; "Music scored specifically for an ad campaign was more effective than chart hits in generating brand name recall". He also focuses on the congruency between the genre of music in the advertisement and the key product benefit as it enhances the visual recall of the advertisement scenes. Angell et al (2016) also support the link between congruency and recall.

O'Neill (2003) has investigated the effectiveness of music in advertising in relation to the Irish Market aged 18-35. Recall was tested alongside attitudes and the link to purchase intentions using clips of music from well-known campaigns from various brands and

categories. However, the prerogative to examine how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television remains.

2.9 Music in Advertising – John Lewis

John Lewis is a prime example of how music can leverage certain behaviours and attitudes as well as evoke strong emotions when used in advertisements (Hall, 2011). Although the John Lewis campaigns have become part of a Christmas tradition and as such have generated a certain level of hype, it would be particularly interesting to use in this study of the Irish market as it is a UK department store chain, not currently in Ireland. Hence, it is unlikely that there will be a bias towards the campaigns due to an in-store experience and / or an experience with a product(s) from one of the stores.

In 2010, amidst the economic recession when majority of retailers were struggling to survive, John Lewis had their most successful Christmas holiday period in the company's history followed in January 2011 with their best sales figures on record. There is a correlation between this success and the retailer's Christmas 2010 television advertisement for which Ellie Goulding re-recorded a version of Elton John's "Your Song" (Hall, 2011).

The John Lewis campaigns are "renowned for running highly emotional television advertising in which music plays a central role". This has led to consumers seeking the advertisements online, resulting in "more than 10 million YouTube views" and it has been estimated that this free media exposure potentially increased the power of the campaign by approximately 75%. The music was one of the key reasons why people sought the advertisements online and Google searches reached record levels with a large share related

to the music. The music became so popular that each track made it into the charts (WARC.com, 2013).

2.10 Conclusion

"Music, when used appropriately, is the catalyst of advertising. It augments pictures and colours words, and often adds a form of energy available through no other source", (Hecker, 1986)**.**

The literature reveals how music in television advertisements evokes emotions (Cotter, et al., 2017; Miu & Baltes, 2012; Lantos & Craton, 2012), changes emotions (Juslin & Laukka, 2004) and can communicate a specific emotion e.g. happiness (Sánchez-Porras & Rodrigo, 2017). Music is used in storytelling (Meng & Pryce, 2015; Schatz 2014), aids recall (Wallace, 1991), influences consumers (Lowe & Haws, 2017), forms consumers' perceptions of brands (Juslin & Laukka, 2004) and gets consumers more involved in advertising (Dunbar, 1990). It also discusses how a consumer's response to music in advertising is intricate as it involved affective and cognitive variables (Lantos & Craton, 2012). However, there are gaps in the literature surrounding how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising.

The literature highlights that advertising's ubiquitous nature (Ember, 2015) is generating "advertising clutter" (Ha & McCann, 2008) as it continues to evolve to reflect consumer behaviour (Pollay, 1978). It explains how irrelevant advertising messages (Rayport, 2013), confuse (Schneider, et al., 1984) and overwhelm (Yakob, 2015) consumers and hence, they have resorted to blocking out advertising (Ha & McCann, 2008 ; Yakob, 2015) on digital (Meeker, 2017 ; Blanchfield, 2017) and traditional channels (Hill, 2013). Consumers' are

informed (Dunn, 2015) and their advertising literacy (Livingstone, 2006) in conjunction with streaming services (Johnson, 2013) and time-shifted viewing (Plunkett, 2010) allows them to reject misleading messages (Mercier, 2017). Yet, there are gaps in the literature surrounding whether millennials are aware that music in television advertising is used to create and /or alter their perception of a brand.

The literature demonstrates the importance of congruency (Lantos & Craton, 2012; Spence, 2011; Lavack, et al., 2008; Alpert, et al., 2005; WARC.com, 2017; Oakes, 2009; Angell, et al., 2016; Morris & Boone, 1998), and the type of music (Oakes, 2009; Strobin, 2015; Gorn, 1982; Oakes & North, 2013; MacInnis & Park, 1991; Stalinski & Schellenberg, 2013; Hsuan-Yi & Lien, 2010; Oakes, 2009) when selecting the music for a television advertisement. However, there are gaps in the literature in terms of insight into the commercial intent and approach from those working in the sector.

Hence, to conclude this literature review, the author would like to present the research question and objectives drawn from gaps in the current secondary research available:

Research Objective 1: An examination of how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising

Research Objective 2: Are millennials in Ireland aware that music in television advertising is used to create and/or alter their perception of a brand

Research Objective 3: An investigation into the commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising

This study will carry out focus groups with millennials in Ireland, male and female, from the Dublin area. It will also conduct three semi-structured interviews. The interviewees all

currently work in the music in advertising sector (including television advertising) and include; Bobby O'Reilly, CEO of proTunes, a global music discovery and licencing company, Joshua Burke, the Global Head of Music Licencing for TCCC (The Coca-Cola Company) & Steve Knill, Executive Vice President of Music and Entertainment at GMR Marketing (part of the Omnicom Group).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the methods used to obtain this research. It will include an overview of the chosen research philosophy, the research instrument and the reasoning behind this decision, an outline of the sample being examined, the data analysis method carried out and any ethical considerations required. The limitations of this research will be included throughout the chapter.

The area that this dissertation aims to investigate is the impact of emotionally charged music in television advertising. There has been scant research carried out on this topic focusing on Irish millennials. Therefore, the research question is as follows:

An examination of how Millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising.

Additional research objectives of this study include:

Research Objective 2: Investigating if millennials in Ireland are aware that music in television advertising is used to create and/or alter their perception of a brand, focusing on a split between male and female millennials in Ireland.

Research Objective 3: Investigating the commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising. This objective will focus on the insight gained from three key professionals working in the music in advertising sector.

Saunders' (2016) Research Onion was consulted to decipher which research method would be most relevant for this study. A diagram of the Research Onion and each of the six sections, is illustrated below:
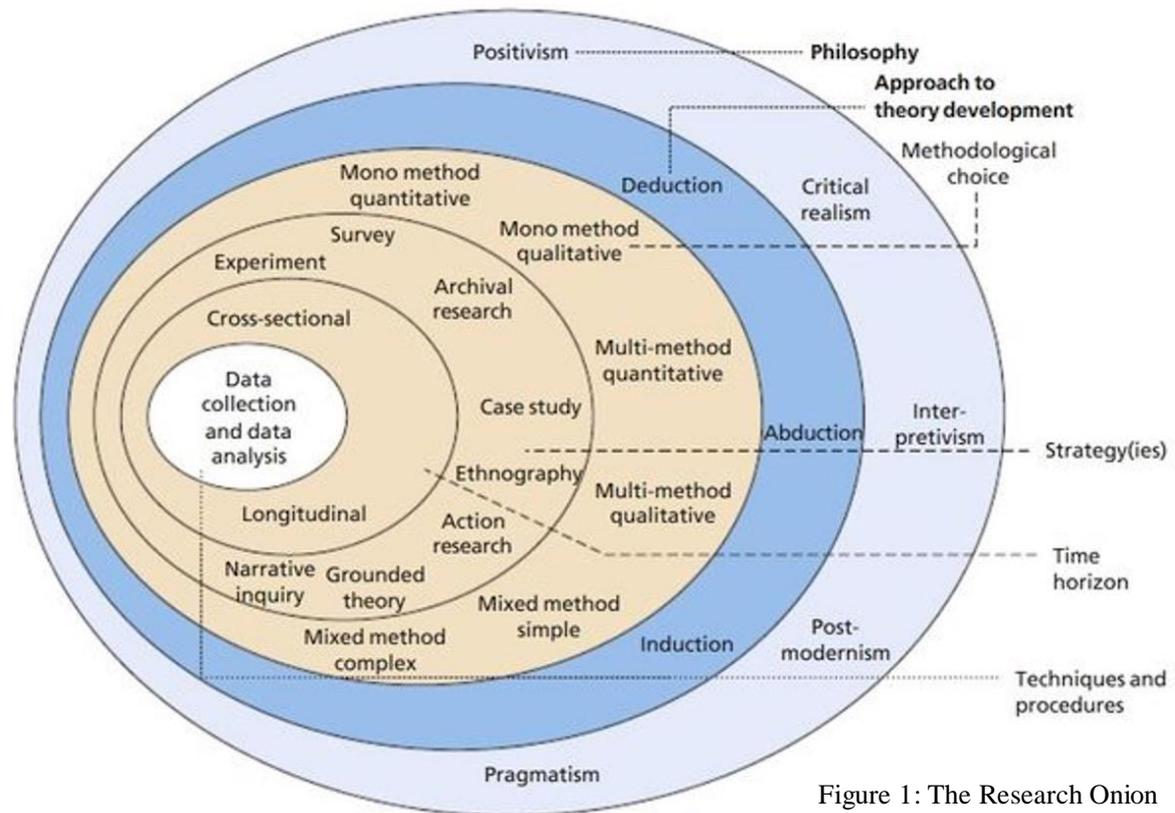

Figure 1: The Research Onion
Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016

As mentioned above, Saunders' (2016) Research Onion is divided into six layers:

- Philosophy

- Approach

- Strategy

- Choice

- Time horizon

- Data collection and analysis

3.2 Research Philosophy

As can be seen in figure 1 above, the research philosophy is the outermost layer of Saunders' (2016) Research Onion and as such is where every research process begins. This research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge and will shape all aspects of the research study (Saunders, et al., 2016).

Although there are five directions that a researcher can choose, the author will focus on the three main ones: positivism, critical realism and interpretivism. The author will give a brief description of each direction to highlight the appropriateness of the choice for this study.

3.2.1 Positivism

Positivism relates to the philosophical stance of the natural scientist and works with an observable social reality to produce law-like generalisations. Whilst taking this approach, a researcher will most likely use existing theory to aid in the development of a hypothesis but Saunders' (2016) highlights that this is not always the case as all-natural scientists will gather data and observations prior to assembling and testing a hypothesis.

However, as Remenyi et al (1998) explains, in this type of research the researcher is merely an observer and does not influence nor is influenced by the study and the contents of the research. This is supported by Crotty (1998) who states that as a positivist researcher would attempt to remain as detached as possible from the research to avoid affecting the findings. It is most likely that the positivist research philosophy will choose a quantitative approach (Saunders, et al., 2016).

3.2.2 Critical realism

This philosophy focuses on what we see and experience as a researcher. Reality is the most important philosophical consideration with a structured ontology considered crucial (Fleetwood, 2005). Critical realism surrounds the concept that a reality exists but so too do factors that can influence people's perception of this reality, whether they are consciously aware of this or not. As a researcher, one should strive to maintain awareness of potential biases that may influence the research and as such, be as objective as possible. As with positivism, critical realism takes a scientific approach when generating data.

3.2.3 Interpretivism

Interpretivism emphasises that humans differ from physical phenomena because they create meanings and therefore need to be studied differently (Saunders, et al., 2016). The purpose of interpretivist research is to create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts. According to Myers (2008), in this direction the researcher assumes that a reality can only be determined via social constructions such as language, investigation of consciousness and shared meanings.

This is a natural approach to collecting data and information through interviews, observations and conversations (Collins, 2010).

With a focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretations and meaning-making, this direction is explicitly subjectivist. It is crucial that the researcher adopts an empathetic stance and understands that there are challenges associated with understanding the world from the research participants point of view (Saunders, et al., 2016).

This philosophy direction involves observatory and investigatory measures to understand the reality (Remenyi, et al., 1998).

This study will take an interpretivist approach as it aims to investigate how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising, whether they are aware that music in television advertisements is used to create and/or alter their perception of a brand and to investigate the commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising.

3.3 The Research Approach

There are three approaches that a researcher can undertake during their study according to Saunders' (2016) Research Onion. These approaches comprise of either a deductive approach, an inductive approach or an abductive approach.

If the research starts out as theory based, in which case the research strategy is developed from readings in the literature review, then this is a deductive approach.

On the other hand, if the research begins with the collection of data by the researcher to explore a phenomenon and the theory is generated based on the gathered information, then this is an inductive approach.

Finally, the collection of data to explore a phenomenon, recognise themes and clarify patterns to either generate new or modify an existing theory which is subsequently tested, is referred to as an abductive approach.

The chosen approach for this study is an inductive one as the research question and sub-objectives of the research involve gathering insights into the responses of people and

ultimately analysing what has led them to this response. In short, it aims to discover and examine the meanings behind the actions of the research participants.

3.4 Methodological Choice

The two most frequently used research methods comprise of either using quantitative methods or qualitative methods. There is also the option of a mix-methods approach which is considered by Bryman & Bell (2007) to be the best combination of the quantitative and qualitative methods. Regardless of the mix-method being considered "the hallmark of good research design" it is certainly not straightforward to generate findings (Munro, 2010). Azorin & Cameron (2010) state that a mixed-method approach is challenging as it requires additional time and financial resource.

Quantitative methods tend to be more focused on numeric data whereas qualitative methods focus on non-numeric data such as words, images and other similar material. The subjective nature of this study means that all individuals will have different views on which context is being considered.

Aggelidou and Georgaca (2017) used a qualitative method in their study as they deemed it "the most appropriate way to explore and highlight the meaning of an experience as it is communicated by those who experienced it."

As such, the author has chosen to follow a qualitative method for this study.

3.5 Research Strategy

As seen in figure 1, Saunders' (2016) Research Onion, requires the researcher to select a research strategy. Qualitative research is associated with various strategies. These are as follows: action research, case study research, ethnography, grounded theory and narrative research.

Although it is possible to use more than one research strategy, the author has chosen to utilise case study strategy for this research.

3.6 Case Study Strategy

A case study strategy refers to an in-depth inquiry into a topic or phenomenon within a real-life setting (Yin, 2014).

There are diverse types of cases to choose from including, but not limited to, a person, a group, an organisation, an association, a change process or an event for example.

Once defined, the case study researcher aims to understand the dynamics of the topic being examined within its setting or context (Eisenhardt, 1989).

A case study strategy can produce insights from rigorous and thorough research into the study of the phenomenon in its real-life context which leads to rich and observed descriptions and expansion of theory (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

Hurmerinta and Sandberg (2015) used a case study strategy to "focus on understanding the dynamics present with single settings".

3.7 Purpose of Research Design

Case study research is divided into the following three categories: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Yin, 2014).

The author will use an exploratory research design for this study as it is a valuable way to make open enquiries to discover what is occurring and gain insights about a topic of interest.

Ways in which to carry out an exploratory research design include an in-depth literature review, interviewing experts within the topic, conducting detailed individual interviews and carrying out focus groups. The advantage with exploratory research is that it is flexible in nature and so changes can be adapted.

This study carries out an in-depth literature review, interviews with experts on the subject and focus groups with a sample of the millennial population in Ireland.

3.8 Establishing the Ethics of the Research Design

The author has ensured that ethical considerations have governed this study. Following a thorough analysis, the author can declare that the data collection for this study will not disadvantage participants. The nature and associated objectives of this study alongside its publication have been made clear to all participants and consent has been given by all.

3.9 Choosing a Time Horizon

There are two time horizons to choose from; the "snapshot" cross-sectional time horizon and the "diary" perspective longitudinal time horizon.

The nature of this study is academic and the associated time and financial constraints associated with this type of study have created limitations. As such, this study will carry out a cross-sectional time horizon.

3.10 The Role of the Researcher

As the author is in full time employment and studying part time, the role of an external researcher will be assumed. As such, the researcher will need to negotiate access to participants who will generate the richest insights for this study. Existing contacts will be explored as this route is more likely to create a trusted relationship between the researcher and the participants (Buchanan, et al., 2013). The author deems that a trusted relationship is key to gaining insightful data from participants. To avoid bias, the researcher will ensure that a fair and accurate recording and interpretation of all participant responses occurs.

3.11 Sampling - Select the Sampling Technique

There are two sampling techniques available to the author for this study. These include probability and non-probability sampling. According to Saunders et al (2016), with probability samples, the chance of each case being chosen from the target population is known and usually equal for all cases. For non-probability samples, the chance of each case being chosen from the target population is not known and it is "impossible to answer research questions that require you to make statistical inferences about the characteristics of the population" (Saunders, et al., 2016).

Therefore, the sample population selected for this study have been selected by non-probability sampling. As such, an element of selective judgement is included. This choice of sampling is due to budget and time constraints.

3.11.1 Define the population

According to Maisel (1996), a population is the "total set of entities we want to know about". There are studies in which data is collected from the entire population, such as the census for example. However, it would be impractical for the author to collect data from the entire population due to budget and time constraints.

As this study examines how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in advertising, the target population chosen consists of the millennial cohort in Ireland. The sample population selected is representative of millennials in Ireland who are targeted with television advertising and therefore, exposure to music in television advertising.

The secondary objective of this study is to investigate the commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising. This will consist of three semi-structured interviews with the key professionals currently working in the sector (music in television advertising). As previously mentioned, the author used existing contacts to gain access to such high calibre interviewees.

3.11.2 Specify the sampling frame

To address the research question, the author will use a non-probability sample of the sample population due to time and economic constraints. There is no sampling frame required for

taking a non-probability sample (Hawkins, 1993). The characteristics identified for the non-probability sample are generation (millennial), race (Irish) and sex (one focus group containing males, the other of females). Again, this is due to time and economic constraints.

3.11.3 Specify sampling units

Members of the public within the millennial cohort in Ireland, in the Dublin area, who have been exposed to music in broadcast media namely via television advertising.

3.11.4 Selection of the sampling method

As mentioned previously, a non-probability sample will be used for this study. This is supported by Hawkins et al (1993) stating their use in; "exploratory situations…where there is a need to get only an approximation of the actual value quickly and inexpensively."

3.11.5 Limitations of a non-probability sample

As stated by Hawkins et al (1993), a non-probability sample can often contain unknown amounts of both variable and systematic errors. Although this method is used widely, it is prone to bias and influence outside of the researcher's control. However, Saunders (2012) states that this type of sample often meets purposive sample selection criteria that are relevant to the goal of the research.

3.11.6 Determine the sample size

A sample size of 11 was deemed sufficient for this research by the author with a split of 5 males and 6 females within two separate focus groups. The limitations of the sample size are due to both time and economic constraints.

3.11.7 Specify the sampling plan

The sampling plan involves the specification of how each of the decisions made thus far is to be implemented. For this dissertation, the candidates will be selected at random from the Irish population on the basis that they were within the millennial cohort and have had contact with media (specifically television) which broadcast advertising using music.

Each respondent will be asked the following questions prior to being selected:

1. Are you between the ages of 16 and 34?

2. Have you exposed to television that broadcast advertisements containing music?

3. Are you willing to participate?

4. When would convenient for you to take part in a focus group?

3.11.8 Select the sample

To address the research question and second objective of this study, the author carried out two focus groups with the respondents over a two-day period in July 2017, with a split of 5 males and 6 females.

For the third research objective, the author conducted semi-structured interviews with three key professionals who work in the (music in television advertising) sector. This took place

during a 7-day period in August 2017. The timing of these interviews was based on the availability of the professionals. The author remained flexible to ensure the relationship, and furthermore the research, was not compromised during this time.

3.12 Focus Groups

A focus group consists of a group interview whereby the subject is clearly defined and there is a clear focus on encouraging and documenting the interactive discussion between participants (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

In terms of the numbers of participants required, this normally spans from approximately 4 to 12 participants that have been chosen using non-probability sampling. The reasoning behind using focus groups is the belief that a great deal will be learned from the participants as they are "information rich" (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Questionnaires tend to be methods of data collection in which each participant is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order (Vaus, 2014). Hence, this method was rejected by the author as data collected in this manner is not as descriptive as focus groups.

Ideally, the research would carry out three or four focus groups with the same type of participant until you have reached saturation and no new information can be acquired (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Due to time constraints, the author was unable to do this. As such two focus groups were carried out with the same type of participant (Irish millennials) but with a different gender used in each. The reasoning for this was simply due to the availability of the participants. One prime limitation is that sometimes an issue can arise

whereby one participant is more dominant and this can influence and lead the answers of less dominant participants (Smithson, 2000).

Participant interaction is a key aspect of the focus group structure and the researcher must ensure equal contribution among participants (Saunders, et al., 2016).

An advantage of using focus groups is that they can provide rich insight in a shorter time frame than quantitative methods (Saunders, et al., 2016).

According to Krueger (1994), a positive aspect of focus groups is that they "place people in natural, real life situations". However, the author would like to point out the limitation of this statement as focus groups are, in most cases, artificially structured and usually take place in a location that is not natural to the participant.

3.13 Interviews

A research interview is a "purposeful conversation between two or more people" and this process requires the interviewer to establish a relationship, ask brief and unmistakeable questions to which the interviewee responds willingly and with attention (Saunders, et al., 2016). Interviews may take place on the phone, face-to-face, or online (Bougie, 2010).

Active listening is a key skill that is required by the researcher (Kvale, 1996) and establishing personal contact with participants is important (Saunders, et al., 2016).

The three primary types of interview are as follows:

- Structured interviews: using a standardised and predetermined set of questions
- Semi-structured interviews: involves a list of themes and key questions but the use of questions may vary from interview to interview

- Unstructured or in-depth interviews: use a formal process. There is no predetermined list of questions although a clear idea of aspects to cover is recommended. The researcher can engage in a free conversation in relation to the topic

Although structured interviews are less time consuming (Horn, 2009) , they were deemed too limiting for this research by the author. In contrast, unstructured or in-depth interviews were considered too difficult to manage in the timely and efficient manner required for this study.

Thus, the author has chosen to carry out semi-structured interviews for this study. Saunders et al (2016) warn that the researcher needs to be knowledgeable in the research topic as well as the "situational context" in which the interview takes place. As mentioned previously, the author currently works in the advertising industry and as such has gained a rich understanding of the topic from this exposure. The thorough literature review has added to this knowledge and the researcher ensured that additional research was carried out on the interviewees prior to the interviews. This research covered their experience, the companies they work for as well as their employment status. LinkedIn (business and employment social networking site) proved to be very useful during this research.

3.14 Research Instrument

Semi-structured interviews, alongside focus groups, were chosen for this study. This choice allowed the researcher to make appropriate changes to the questions based on the individual interviewee, their job role and their expertise in the field of music and television advertising (Saunders, et al., 2016).

Both the semi-structured interviews and focus groups challenged the researcher. The main challenges were as follows:

- Time management: organising, conducting and analysing three interviews and two focus groups required exceptional time management skills. As the author is also in full-time employment, this at times was very challenging.

- Cost: Research was required to identify the most cost-effective way to carry out two interviews based in the USA. Eventually, ZOOM video conference software was identified as the optimum solution at €13.99 for a "Pro-account" which allowed for unlimited recording and usage.

- Scheduling: Due to the time difference between Ireland and the USA, the researcher had to conduct two interviews during working hours. This had to be negotiated with the authors' place of work.

- Recording and transcription: each hour of transcriptions took approximately 7 hours to transcribe which is in line with Saunders et al (2016) findings.

3.15 Focus Group Questions

As mentioned previously, the author's topic is concerned with the millennial cohort in Ireland. As such, the researcher carried out two focus groups consisting of Irish millennials, one male and one female. Each focus group consisted of 30 questions. These questions may not have been asked in the same order and some may not have been mentioned due to the topic being covered in a previous answer.

Question 1 was used as introductory question to gain a sense of the current emotional state of participants to see if the advertisements affected their mood similar to how Miu & Baltes (2012) tested how participants' emotions responded to music:

1. *Can you briefly describe your current mood?*

Questions 2 to 6 provided an insight into the participant's opinions on advertising in general and their relationship with it. Probing questions were used to determine if participants felt overwhelmed by advertising as seen in the literature (Yakob, 2015) and how they responded because of this feeling. They were asked if they ever seek out advertising and/or actively avoid it as mentioned in the literature (Mercier, 2017; Ha & McCann, 2008). These questions were used at the beginning to get the conversation flowing:

2. *What do you think of advertising?*

3. *Do you ever actively seek it out?*

4. *Do you ever activity avoid it?*

5. *What elements in a television advertisement do you find particularly effective?*

6. *Do you think that advertising has any effect on you?*

Question 7 determined what elements of television advertisements the participants found particularly effective:

7. *What elements of a television advertisement do you find particularly effective?*

Question 8 was used to gauge the advertising literacy levels of the participants as the literature indicates consumers are informed (Dunn, 2015) and understand advertising tactics (Rozendaal Rozend & Buijzen, 2011):

8. *What is the primary goal of advertising in your opinion?*

Questions 9 and 10 determined how participants were affected by music in television advertisements, whether they found this appealing and the link between music and recall was also tested as the literature indicates that it improves with music (Wallace, 1991):

9. *How does the music in a television advertisement impact you?*

10. *Do you find music in television advertisements appealing?*

Question 11 deciphered whether participants felt that a television advertisement's attempt to evoke a particular emotional response had any effect on them as the literature indicates that millennials "do not respond to advertising" as they rely on word of mouth (WOM) from family and friends (Newman, 2015):

11. *When a brand attempts to evoke a particular mood or feeling, do you feel this has an effect on you?*

At this stage of the focus group, participants were shown a series of John Lewis television advertisements. See Appendix 1-3.

Questions 12 to 17 determined how the John Lewis television advertisements made them feel, identified the leading stimulus contributing to this feeling as well as their opinions on whether the advertisements are effective or not. They were specifically asked how the music in the television advertisements shaped their view of John Lewis as a brand and the emotion they would attach to the brand after seeing these television advertisements. Their advertising literacy of John Lewis' intentions was also queried.

12. *How do these television advertisements make you feel?*

13. *What would you say is the leading stimulus making you feel this way?*

14. *Would you describe these television advertisements as effective?*

15. *What emotion or feeling would you associate with John Lewis after seeing these television advertisements?*

16. *What do you think the advertising goal for John Lewis is?*

17. *What does the choice of music in the television advertisements make you think of John Lewis as a brand?*

Question 18 to 20 focused on the level of brand recall John Lewis' television advertisements currently had with participants on a conscious level, the advertising literacy for how music is chosen for a television advertisement was tested and participants were asked whether music is the leading stimulus that gets their attention:

18. *When you hear the music used in the John Lewis television advertisements, what do you think of?*

19. *What is your understanding on how music is selected for a television advertisement?*

20. *Do you think that the music is the leading stimulus that gets your attention in a television advertisement?*

Question 21 examined whether the music in the John Lewis television advertisements would be strong enough to cut through and gain their attention when distracted as Schatz (2014) claims music has the power to do this:

21. *Do you think that the music in the John Lewis television advertisements are strong enough to capture your attention when you are distracted?*

Question 22 looked at whether participants felt that there was congruity between the music in the John Lewis television advertisements and the marketing message as the literature indicates that congruity is imperative (Lantos & Craton, 2012; Spence, 2011; Lavack, et

al., 2008; Alpert, et al., 2005; WARC.com, 2017; Oakes, 2009; Angell, et al., 2016; Morris & Boone, 1998):

> 22. *Would you associate the music in the John Lewis television advertisements to what the brand message is?*

Questions 23 to 27 examined the persuasive nature of the John Lewis television advertisements across various elements as factors from genre (Oakes & North, 2013) to pitch (Lowe & Haws, 2017) can affect consumers' perceptions:

> 23. *Is the music in the John Lewis television advertisements the leading stimulus that gets your attention?*
>
> 24. *Does the music used in the John Lewis television advertisements change the way you perceive the information about the advertisement?*
>
> 25. *Would the music used in the John Lewis television advertisements make you want to go to the John Lewis store if it opened in Ireland?*
>
> 26. *Do you think that the John Lewis advertisements are persuasive?*
>
> 27. *Do you think that the advertisements would be as persuasive with no music or just a jingle (instead of the music chosen)?*

Question 28 determined if the John Lewis television advertisements succeeded in changing the emotional state of the participants (to compare with question 1):

> 28. *How do you feel now compared to before you watched the John Lewis advertisements?*

Question 29 examined the participant's advertising literacy and knowledge in the reasoning for John Lewis using particular music in their television advertisements:

29. What do you think John Lewis' goal was in selecting the music in these advertisements?

Question 30 looked at the connection between the music in John Lewis' television advertisements and the trust of the participants. This question was also used to see if the music linked to an action (i.e. going into the John Lewis store in Ireland if it were possible) as Alpert et al., (2005) state that the advertising music can lead to purchase intent:

30. Does the music make you feel as though you can trust John Lewis as a brand?

3.16 Interview Questions

The opinions and insights from practitioners within the sector (music in television advertising) is extremely beneficial to this study.

The semi-structured interview method allows the researcher to collect a rich and detailed set of data (Saunders, et al., 2016). In the interest of structure, the author will use B1 for questions aimed at Bobby O'Reilly (CEO of proTunes), J1 for Joshua Burke (Global Head of Music for TCCC – The Coca-Cola Company) and S1 for Steve Knill (Executive Vice-President, Music & Entertainment for GMR, part of the Omnicom Group). The questions aimed at Joshua Burke and Steve Knill were almost identical apart from mentioning two different places of work (TCCC versus GMR). In total, they were asked 16 questions. The interviews were conducted by ZOOM video conference software so that the researcher could record the sessions and because it was much more economical than by telephone (both Joshua Burke and Steve Knill are based in the United States of America).

As Bobby O'Reilly works in a different aspect of music in television advertising (music search and discovery), he was asked some of the same questions as the others where relevant, and also some additional questions in order to maximise insights from his expertise. Although proTunes is also based in the United States of America, Bobby O'Reilly took part in a face to face interview as he was in Ireland during the month of August. Each of the three interviews took approximately one hour to carry out and subsequently each interview was transcribed.

Each question may not have been asked in the same order and questions may have been omitted due to being answered in a previous question.

Question 1 required B1 to explain what proTunes does as a company. This question was included as proTunes may be less well known in Ireland than TCCC and/or GMR. Also, music search and discovery is a hugely complicated field and a concise explanation from an expert would benefit this study:

1. **(B1)** *Please provide a brief explanation of proTunes as a company?*

Question 2 determined the commercial perspective on how advertising causes consumers to feel overwhelmed as seen in the literature (Yakob, 2015) and as such, how they respond to this:

2. **(J1 & S1)** *Do you think that consumers today are overwhelmed by advertising in general? How do you think they respond to that feeling of being overwhelmed? How do you combat this problem for TCCC /GMR (in relation to television advertising specifically)?*

Question 3 aims to find out how music contributes to the effectiveness of a television advertisement and as such discover if academic sources are in line with practical knowledge such as cutting through the clutter (Schatz, 2014) contributing emotive power (Heath, 2014):

3. **(B1, J1 & S1)** *How does music (specifically), in your opinion, contribute to the effectiveness of a television advertisement?*

Question 4 strives to understand how proTunes, and in turn the licencing structure, contributes to music in television advertising:

4. **(B1)** *How does proTunes contribute to music in television advertising?*

Question 5 seeks out whether cognitive and affective components are used when differentiating music as seen in the literature (Lantos & Craton, 2012) and what the most crucial elements are:

5. **(J1 & S1)** *Do you agree that music can be differentiated by both cognitive and affective components? If so, which element(s) do you deem to have the highest importance and why?*

Questions 6 and 7 aims to decipher whether the challenge of connecting with millennials is felt in practice as mentioned in the literature (Adweek, 2016; Collins, 2016; Warn-Ford, 2016) and gain insight into how the advertising professionals think millennials are affected by emotionally charged music in advertising:

6. **(J1 & S1)** *Do you find it challenging to connect with the millennial cohort? How do you overcome the barriers?*

7. **(J1 & S1)** *How do Millennials respond to emotionally charged music in advertising?*

Question 8 strived to conclude if there is set checklist of variables when selecting music for advertising as mentioned by Lantos & Craton (2012):

8. **(B1, J1 & S1)** *Do you agree with the statement that there is a "checklist of variables when selecting music for advertising"? Do you have your own checklist?*

Questions 9 and 10 were directed towards B1 in order to analyse the landscape of music in advertising and also attempt to answer the call of O'Neill (2003). Due to time constraints, this is not a primary objective of the study but the author wanted to maximise the value of interviewing a key expert in this field and, in doing so, benefitting future researchers:

9. **(B1)** *Can you explain the current landscape for music in advertising? Has this changed? If yes, how so?*

10. **(B1)** *Is the short-term economy of using pre-recorded or library/production music cost effective in the longer-term and can it come close to matching up to originally composed music?*

Question 11 to 17 uses the opportunity with the experts in this field to identify similarities or otherwise against the current literature available in this area of music in advertising across key topics: empathy (Escalas & Stern, 2003), emotion (Sanchez-Porras & Rodrigo, 2017; Cotter et al., 2017; Miu & Baltes, 2012; Juslin & Laukka, 2004; Lantos & Craton, 2012;), mood (Lane & Terry, 2000), brand attitudes (Escalas & Stern, 2003; Lantos & Craton, 2012), cut through (Schatz, 2014), the role of music (Alpert & Alpert, 1991;

Hecker, 1986), the link to buying intentions (Alpert, et al., 2005) and recall (Wallace, 1991).

11. **(J1 & S1)** *Does music affect overall attention to the advertisement, inspire brand essence/development, formulate positive brand attitudes, circumvent distracted/selective attention and develop buying intentions?*

12. **(J1 & S1)** *Emotionally connecting with consumers is a primary goal for advertisers. Can you give an example on how you (on behalf of TCC/your clients) used music to engage Millennials? What campaigns have worked best and why?*

13. **(J1 & S1)** *Music and creating mood/ atmosphere/ selecting target market/ halo effect. How does music achieve such intricate objectives?*

14. **(J1 & S1)** *How can 30/60 seconds of music be effective/ disruptive in a television advertisement?*

15. **(J1 & S1)** *In your experience, how does background or foreground music affect a television advertisement? i.e. what is the main difference of each and its impact on the television advertisement. Which is more effective and why?*

16. **(J1 & S1)** *If a consumer likes the music – will they like the product? Discuss if music develops buying intentions?*

17. **(J1 & S1)** *Music and recall. Discuss?*

Question 18 aims to gain commercial examples of music in television advertisements affected key performance indicators (KPIs):

18. **(J1 & S1)** *Can you give me any examples of when the music used in a television advertisement had a direct impact on your (TCCC's/ client's) KPIs (positive / negative)?*

Question 19's intention is to identify the risks involved in using music in television advertising and more importantly, how to avoid them:

19. **(B1, J1 & S1)** *What are the challenges and risks of using music in television advertising? How can risks be avoided?*

Questions 20 and 21 were directed at B1 due to his Irish links (previously ran a post-production studio in Dublin and therefore would be aware of John Lewis via the influence from the UK whereas it would be less likely that J1 and S1 were familiar):

20. **(B1)** *Opinion on the music used in John Lewis' television advertisements?*

Question 21 aims to clarify the potential reasoning behind John Lewis re-recording original tracks for their campaigns:

21. **(B1)** *Why do brands get an artist to record a song rather than use the original track?*

Question 22 is important for future research purposes. For now, it will satisfy the researchers curiosity and in the future the reality may be compared with what was predicted by experts in the field of music and television advertising in 2017:

22. **(B1, J1 & S1)** *What is the future of music in advertising in your opinion?*

3.17 Data Analysis

Both the focus groups and interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed by the researcher. Field notes were also taken to document the reactions of the participants. As such, when the author refers to the "data" it is regarding the transcripts in tandem with the field notes.

Both focus groups were treated as separate entities and from there they were cross-analysed. The three interviews followed the same process. The researcher kept the cross-analysis of the focus groups and interviews separate to gain rich insights from each perspective (the consumer and the commercial).

Thematic analysis is the method of data analysis chosen for this study. Braun and Clarke (2006) consider it to be the "foundational method for qualitative analysis". Saunders et al (2016) describe the purpose of this approach as identifying patterns or themes within the data. To do this, researchers must code their qualitative data. This involves categorising data with similar meanings with a code. The code, refers to either a single word or short phrase extracted from the data. Although it is a systematic approach, it is a flexible and accessible way to analyse the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Large and Montague (2015) carried out four semi-structured interviews with female participants in their study. The data was recorded and transcribed. Then, thematic analysis was used and successfully derived two key themes: the initial move from family life to independence and the flat environment. The findings (UK based) were similar to that of a US study with room for future research.

According to Saunders et al (2016), this approach can help the researcher with the following:

- Understand large and often disparate amounts of qualitative data

- Integrate related data from other transcripts

- Identify key themes

- Produce a thematic description of the data

- Develop and test explanations/theories based on the patterns

- Create and verify conclusions

The researcher will identify the key themes from both the semi-structured interviews and focus groups and use codes to label the themes.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter will provide a summary of the primary research carried out and it will be divided among the three objectives of this study.

4.1 Research Objective 1:

Research Objective 1: An examination of how Irish millennials respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising
Themes: Perception Socialisation Nostalgia Buying Intentions Fame and hype associations with John Lewis

This research objective was investigated by conducting focus groups among millennials in Ireland. The writer observed the facial expressions and general mood of participants when conducting focus groups and documented this via field notes. Unlike in the experiment carried out by Miu & Baltes (2012), the author did not manipulate the participants with sad

and happy music performances but rather a selection of John Lewis television advertisements.

To protect the anonymity of participants, the females will be referred to as F1-F6 and the males M1-M5.

4.1.1 Perception

One of the main themes that arose from analysing the focus groups was the participants' perceptions of advertising in general, as well their perceptions of the John Lewis advertisements shown.

The general perception of advertising from the female perspective was negative:

> F1: "I feel like advertising ignites envy among people… that kind of scares me."

> F4: "It sort of brainwashes people into buying stuff they probably don't need."

> F3: "It is brainwashing because they have paid money to influence you."

However, the males obtained a more positive perspective on advertising;

> M1: "I am a big fan of advertising."

> M2: "I think it is an absolute essential…it keeps me in the know about different products."

> M3: "It is extremely effective when used correctly."

In terms of the ubiquitous nature of advertising, both groups perceived that advertising was everywhere and the majority agree that there is "no point" trying to avoid it apart from one female participant:

> *F1: "I delete my [internet browser] cache. To be honest it is more so to stop my flights getting expensive rather than avoiding ads."*

However, the differences stand in how this makes the participants feel:

> *F2: "It can be extremely intrusive and annoying at times."*

> *F3: "The fact that it is everywhere is creepy."*

> *M5: "It is absolutely everywhere, you cannot get away from it... I actually quite enjoy it... I am a big fan of TV advertisements."*

> *M4: "Yes I agree... It's brilliant."*

From analysing the qualitative data, it appears that the type of music used by John Lewis is perceived in a negative light by male participants:

> *M2: "It is very depressing."*

> *M3: "Yeah you would not choose to listen to that sort of music unless you're feeling down."*

> *M4: "It is annoying because it is so obvious that they're using that music to be manipulative."*

> *M1: "I much prefer upbeat and happier music in ads to be honest."*

> ***All the male participants agree***

One male participant also found the re-recording confusing as he thinks of the original artist yet hears a different voice:

> *M5: "I actually find it confusing... I find the voice swap weird."*

It is interesting that the male participants assumed that females would prefer the John Lewis advertisements:

M2: "It would be more persuasive for a different target market like for women."

M4: "Yeah they're definitely more geared towards women because they're more family orientated and broody."

M5: "Yes women are definitely the target market."

All the male participants agree

When asked what elements of an advertisement they perceived to be particularly effective, male participants preferred when famous people were used in an advertisement whereas the female group preferred testimonials from "real" people:

M2: "When a famous person is used in an ad it makes it more memorable."

M4: "Yeah I like when there is a famous artist's song used. I really liked that ad where Beats by Dr Dre collaborated with Hozier."

M3: "I really liked the Nike ads a while ago with all the different players from different teams playing together."

F1: "It is good when a well-known song is used but not so much a well-known artist."

F3: "Yeah so the artist doesn't take over the ad."

F2: "It annoys me when I see the likes of Rodger Federer in an ad... It is so obvious that he has just been paid millions to do that."

F4: "Yeah and I much prefer when ads use testimonials from real people."

F6: "Yeah the Nivea ads were great for using real women and I like seeing that because it is something I can relate to".

All other female participants agree enthusiastically.

Another point of difference with this question is that the female participants placed a strong emphasis on music whereas the males didn't even mention it:

F1: "I Love when they use emotion and music really well."

F5: "I really like the John Lewis ads and the music they use. It is just so emotional and there is a real story behind them."

All other female participants agree enthusiastically.

4.1.2 Socialisation

Similarities between the two groups were found in relation to seeking out advertising with majority of participants only doing this to show a "good advertisement" to a friend or family member, and this surfaced throughout the focus groups. Thus, the theme of socialisation arose. Here the John Lewis advertisements were mentioned by both groups unprompted.

M1: "Yeah I would only really do that to show someone an ad I liked."

M3: "Yeah like the John Lewis ads and that's also because everyone is talking about it."

F3: "My friends and I are always tagging each other in cool ads."

F5: "Yeah especially at Christmas when the John Lewis ads come out."

The male participants also referenced how "every girl shares the John Lewis advertisements at Christmas time on Facebook".

4.1.3 Nostalgia

Nostalgia was another theme that derived from the data. The groups continuously mentioned how characters in the John Lewis advertisements made them "feel nostalgic" as did the general link to Christmas time:

> *M1: "I would say that it makes me feel nostalgic. I remember being a young boy and how Christmas was a big part of that."*

> *F5: "It definitely makes you feel nostalgic, like remember how important your toys were to you like they were your friends."*

It also made participants think of their own family members:

> *M2: "It makes me think of my Granddad... I should see him more often."*

One male participant was adamant that the John Lewis advertisements did not affect them in this regard:

> *M4: "[It is]is too obvious like it is almost obnoxious. I would prefer if it was more subtle like the Guinness Christmas ads from ages ago."*

Both groups also recalled advertisements from some years ago where they found the music to be particularly powerful:

> *M4: "The Guinness ads a few years back... I remember really liking the music in it... always remind me of Christmas as a kid."*

F1: "The Samantha Mumba song from ages ago always reminds me of that car crash ad and time in my life back then."

F3: "Yes the music is so important. I love the music in that Three ad reminds me of good times."

F4: "Yes same the Fleetwood Mac one – it's so good."

4.1.4 Buying intention

Another consistent theme surrounded the buying intention linked with John Lewis resulting from the advertisements shown. It was interesting to see that all female participants stated that they would visit John Lewis [if it opened in Ireland] to shop there and conversely, all males would be less inclined:

M1: "I wouldn't avoid it but I wouldn't rush in. To be honest I just prefer ads that are more upbeat I think."

M4: "I don't think people are looking forward to ever going to John Lewis."

M2: "The music used in John Lewis doesn't put me off the brand per se, I just wouldn't be too keen on going into the shop."

M3: "I would be curious to see it but wouldn't go out of my way to go there."

4.1.5 Fame and hype associations with John Lewis

The next theme found in the qualitative focus group data was the consistent fame and hype associations with John Lewis. This was an emerging pattern throughout both groups. The

author suggests that although this was somewhat pre-empted, the intensity potentially impacted how the participants responded to the advertisements as a bias may have been present from the hype generated by the campaigns on social media and among peers.

M5: "Yeah it is more that people are looking forward to when the ads are released."

M4: "People look forward to seeing the production when the ads are released"

F1: "I really like the John Lewis ads and the hype around that."

All the female participants agree

F2: "Yeah they are definitely the most Googled ads of all time."

F4: "It is like a seasonal thing like you wait for Christmas and you wait for the John Lewis ad."

This was communicated further when asked to comment on the advertising goal for John Lewis:

F1: "It is most likely to be top of mind in relation to Christmas because I guess that is what they are known for now."

F3: "Yeah they definitely need to keep up the hype."

F6: "I'd say each year they are like what are we going to do next because everyone else is wondering the same thing so I would say they're under a lot of pressure."

M1: "Well they have a name for themselves so now they need to push the boundaries…yeah, they need to keep the fame up."

All male participants agree

4.2 Research Objective 2:

Research Objective 2: Are Millennials in Ireland aware that music in television advertising is used to create and/or alter their perception of a brand.
Theme: Congruency

This research objective was also addressed in the focus group sessions.

It was clear during both sessions that a strong advertising literacy level is evident among participants on a general basis. Their knowledge in how music is used in television advertising is also quite robust, at least on a basic level.

4.2.1 Congruency

One consistent theme that was mentioned by both groups is an understanding that there should be congruency between the music and the television advertisement. Hence, congruency is the next theme:

F2: "When they link it to the visuals or the emotion it is so effective."

F1: "The music and the ad should work together. The music is what connects you to the brand."

F3: "You need to be careful what artist you choose for your ad because it 100% influences people's perception of you."

F4: "Yes because if you don't like the artist you probably won't like the ad."

All female participants agree

F6: "The music tells the story of the ad so it is really important that it fits well with it."

M2: "I am guessing that if it's a sad message then play sad music and if it's a happy message then play happy music."

Both focus groups agree that the music in the John Lewis television advertisements "fits" the brand:

F2: "The music in the John Lewis ads tells the story."

F3: "Yes especially the way the music attached itself to the events on screen like it got higher or more intense at certain parts and even the lyrics "it's real love" connects with you because you remember the love that you had for your toys as a child."

All other female participants agree

M1: "Yeah the music is clever, it works very well with the ad."

M4: "Like with football for example, you would need to make sure that you have a really punchy tune that is upbeat and fast. That way people will associate that with the product. If you used the slow songs in John Lewis for football boots people would associate the product with being a slow and boring player and that is not what you want in football."

All other male participants agree enthusiastically

M3: "I would also probably take into account the time of year, so if it's Christmas then play more John-Lewis-type-music but if its summer then more upbeat."

M2: "Yeah it makes sense that the ad is using John-Lewis-type-music."

It was interesting that "John-Lewis-type-music" was also mentioned by the female group:

F2: "The music is very John Lewis."

All other male participants agree

However, the general feeling among participants is that the music and the advertisement in general, doesn't fit with the products the brand sells:

F1: "Yeah like only because I know it is a department store do I understand that the different products are seen throughout the ad like the toy and kaleidoscope etc. but if you didn't know that it would be really unclear."

All female participants agree

M1: "Yeah like you would have no idea from that ad what John Lewis sells."

M3: "Same like I actually would be curious to know but would have no clue based on those ads."

All male participants agree

4.3 Research Objective 3:

Research Objective 3: Investigating, through qualitative research, the commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising. This objective will focus on the insight gained from three key professionals working in the music in advertising sector.

Themes: Relevance

                Licencing

To address this objective the author conducted semi-structured interviews with three industry experts. Two themes that consistently came through each of the interviews was the importance of being relevant to the consumer to achieve your brand's objectives and the way in which licensing can both protect and impede the process of selecting music in television advertising. It is believed that these two themes will shape the future of music in television advertising.

The author will use the following to refer to the experts for convenience reasons:

B1: Bobby O'Reilly, CEO of proTunes

J1: Joshua Burke, Global Head of Music at TCCC (The Coca-Cola company)

S1: Steve Knill, Executive VP, Music & Entertainment GMR

4.3.1 Relevance

Communicating with consumers in a relevant way and selecting music that is relevant to the message the brand wishes to communicate are key according to the three experts.

The experts believe that it is this lack of relevance that is causing consumers to ignore advertising:

> *J1: "I think that overwhelmed is the wrong word.... there is so much advertising…that people are bored, uninterested and therefore desensitised to advertising.… advertising has been overtly manipulative…led to people distrusting it and ignoring it. I also don't think that young people have short attention spans it's just that content is really bad and boring. To combat this…brands need to be more relevant and they cannot be boring."*

> *S1: "I think that people have learned over time to ignore advertising that is not relevant to them. This is no different to previous generations. The only way people are going to pay attention to advertising is if it is relevant to them, has some meaning in their lives and impacts them."*

B1 also emphasises the importance of relevance as he described the challenges the industry faces in finding music with the abundance of genres, artists and tracks to choose from:

> *B1: "How do they [the advertising professionals] find anything, never mind relevant music? And it's all about relevancy."*

B1 describes how proTunes, a music search and discovery platform, helps professionals in their quest to find relevant music within the quick turnaround time required:

> *B1: "Finding relevant music is a challenge for the industry. proTunes has solved this problem…we invented algorithms to… automatically compare all music in terms of tempo, density, timbre, and may other properties. We effectively find the DNA of each track so we understand the sonic relationship between them – how similar a track is. In looking for music a user may have a particular sound in mind, once they identify a track that is relevant… they can immediately surface dozens more that share the same sonic characteristics. This search and discovery process has reduced hours, if not days, of tedious searching to just a few minutes."*

To illustrate his point, J1 used examples of how Coca-Cola overcomes the barriers with connecting with millennials by being relevant to them:

> *J1: "At Coca-Cola we focus on moments in their lives be it after school or summer or a first date etc. It is more about how the product serves a purpose in the role it plays in people's lives. That is how you are relevant to consumers."*

S1 also explains how he overcomes these same barriers for his clients:

> *S1: "I think that it all comes down to simply relevance, who they are and what they are trying to do and delivering the message in way that will engage them and say something to them that will stop them doing what they are doing".*

S1 also shares an example of where not testing the congruity of the music with the target audience, regardless of a fit between the music and the message, can be a costly mistake. S1 explains how Coors Lite used a 70's song "Love Train" for a long time in their communications. Over time, it grew ever more expensive to use this song due to licencing and publishing costs increasing year on year. Eventually S1 asked the client if they had

ever tested whether this song resonated with the target market, hence testing was carried out:

> S1: "They found that at best this song was "irrelevant" to the target audience and at worst felt "old" and "dated" and they "had no relationship to it". They only continued to use it for a short time after that."

However, the preference of a decision maker, even when it disagrees with data, frequently decides on the music chosen:

> J1: "That happens more times than you would believe."

> S1: "Executive choice is one of the challenges we face. I have seen it before when choosing between two pieces of music and audience testing overwhelmingly picked one piece of music but even still the CMO of the brand will pick the other one because they (personally) prefer it. It's a fight with reality."

However, S1 also shared an example of how the congruency between a brand and a song works so well that consumers get attached:

> S1: "United Airlines used a Gershwin song for 30/40 years and interestingly when they changed ad agencies, the ad agency decided to change the music saying that it was old etc. and this received such tremendous backlash from consumers that they had to go back to the original song. It was because people identified it so much with the brand that they were horrified they would change it."

This theme also relates to how millennials respond to emotionally charged music in advertising because music is relevant in their daily lives. S1 reveals that younger audiences (i.e. the millennial cohort) are more active consumers of music from listening more often

to sharing with friends. This tends to drop off as the consumer gets older as their priorities change.

> *S1: "I think you would respond more to emotionally charged music in advertising if you are a more active user of music, which is geared towards millennials."*

> *J1: "Listening to music has never been particularly passive… but now specifically music has become almost exclusively interactive as it is now about sharing and commenting etc."*

The music in television advertising being relevant to the message is of vital importance according to the experts. Regardless of the artist or exact song chosen, the priority should be in supporting the message as this affects the relationship between the brand and consumer:

> *S1: "This gets back to whether it connects to the brand and not just the ad execution… one particular piece of work doesn't necessarily do it…it takes a while for any consumer to understand what a brand is all about and how it is relevant to their life whether they agree with the level of relevance there."*

J1 uses an example to explain this further:

> *J1: "So if you are working on a TV ad that takes place in a circus… then the music behind is most likely going to be carnival music and that works because it supports the story. It doesn't matter how innovative the hip hop artist is or how amazingly relevant the rock star is. The most important box in the checklist is does this piece of music support the message. That should be the number one priority. It should be the number one to number five honestly."*

S1 supports this:

> *S1: "I think the most important element depends on what the creative wants the message to do in relation to the overall creative production.… what is its role in the overall communication."*

The experts all mention that if music selected fits not only the communicated message but also the brand itself, then this can lead to creating a "sonic identity":

> *J1: "The brand then has the opportunity to establish a sonic identity…. so that regardless of the communication, there will be some sort of a common thread that ties the music strategy together with all of the occurrences of the brand …establishes a musical identity for the brand that can be recognised by the consumer even when the product is not visible or named. That is the ultimate goal."*

S1 claims that the use of audio style guides can help a brand in achieving this sonic identity:

> *S1 "Without an audio style guide there is no congruity on how a consumer perceives the brand from a music or sound perspective. It is the ultimate checklist as everyone can access the appropriateness of a particular piece of music for an ad… that to me is the most important checklist: what is the tonality that the brand wants to present across all of its communications and the audio style guide allows you to identify that and share it with others who are either curating or creating the music for the brand."*

B1, previously a production director, explains how budgets and the vast inventory of music can be a challenge. He states how a known sonic identity can help with this. He notes that

sonic identities are a relatively recent development that was not available 20 or 30 years ago:

> *B1: "The selection process has become much more sophisticated particularly for large brands… sonic branding determines much of the selection process or audience testing… to ensure the music elements are on-brand and communicate the required mood or feel. That never existed 20 or 30 years ago. Music was selected on gut feeling. Choice is another change – literally millions of pre-recorded tracks from a very diverse range of suppliers… then search and discovery become a problem – hence proTunes."*

Achieving recognition by the consumer without a visible cue to the brand name or product is, as J1, described, "the ultimate goal". S1 shared the results of a study that they carried out which proved the power of mnemonics (a sound logo e.g. Intel's Lead Ahead) versus visual brand taglines:

> *S1: "It was very interesting that the audio taglines or mnemonics, were recognised at a rate of 4:1 compared to the visual ones."*

> *J1: "When consumers hear something without seeing or hearing the product name and have them recognise that this song, completely out of context, sounds like a brand, that is successful music engagement in advertising."*

Interestingly, J1 stated that positive music was more relevant to consumers:

> *J1: "It has to be positive (for the majority) … and you want people to buy or engage with the product which is why the vast majority of advertising music is positive and energetic and happy. You don't want your brand to be associated with something depressing or sad or too emotionally dramatic."*

4.3.2 Licencing

B1, J1 and S1 made continuous references to how the "complicated" licensing structure has a huge effect on the process of using music in television advertising. B1, an expert in the field of music licencing, clarified many aspects of the process.

From the sheer expense of licencing particular songs to legal issues, it is a major concern for the industry:

> S1: "But for the song, each year the licensing fee would get more and more expensive."

> S1: "Copy-right infringement, which is growing, is another main challenge. There was a big case here ... between the Marvin Gaye estate against Pharell Williams and Robin Thicke... a $7 million pay-out for them appropriating Marvin Gaye's music style etc.... if a brand like Pepsi had have licenced that song then they would have been in the middle of the litigation... caused poor public opinion and loss of focus and money as they would have been tagged for an infringement... the problem with the major labels and publishers is that they only indemnify to the value of the licence. So, in this example, Pepsi could have licensed this piece of music for a million dollars because that is what the publisher/ record label indemnified them for but if it was a $5 million judgement, then Pepsi are out $4 million, or the agency more than likely, would have been... becoming a bigger issue and we are having a lot of conversations with publishers and record labels lately about how do we better protect our brands."

The digital landscape is encroaching on the investment in music in television advertising. B1 urges practitioners to move forward and learn from previous mistakes, (such as

embracing streaming services much earlier instead of combatting them). In this sense, B1 indicates what the future holds for music in television advertising:

B1: "Global advertising spends continue to increase… 2017 is estimated to exceed $600 Billion dollars and arguably half of this or more is for commercials that require an audio-visual element – this means more music sync licensing… with the increasing dominance of digital advertising we are seeing a slow reduction year on year in the licensing of music for traditional television commercials. Digital advertising costs are cheaper… the music industry needs to adapt and provide cost structures that reflect the digital economy. Overall demand for music has never been higher and this will continue. The industry needs to respond by aligning their business model and practices to the new economy – if they do they will reap the rewards, but don't hold your breath."

It appears that the licencing process will have major implications for the future of music in television advertising:

S1: "We argue back and forth all the time with the music rights owners on what is an ad, what is a piece of branded content, because the cost for ad usage can be double that of brand content so we try to do a little bit of that on both sides."

J1: "Music rights structures are very complicated and it is very risky and proTunes has dedicated a lot of time to try and help brands to sort this out. I think the biggest and most time-consuming thing is negotiating the rights…understanding the rights, the structure, the rules of engagement …that's the biggest challenge."

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the finding from chapter 4 and will be structured based on the three objectives set for this study. As such, this chapter will be divided into three main sections covering:

- Irish Millennials' response to emotionally charged music in television advertising.

- Irish Millennials' awareness surrounding the use of music in television advertising to create and/or alter their perception of a brand.

- The commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising across a range of factors.

5.1 Research Objective 1:

Irish Millennials' response to emotionally charged music in television advertising

The primary objective of this study is to examine how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in advertising.

As the structure of the literature review suggests, for millennials in Ireland to respond to emotionally charged music in advertising, first they need to be exposed to television advertising. However, as the literature demonstrates, there are barriers to millennials even seeing television advertisements.

Advertising has evolved over time and as such has developed a ubiquitous nature (Ember, 2015). The literature review supports the concept that consumers are overwhelmed and are "switching off" to advertising efforts (Yakob, 2015). Supposedly, this is especially true for

the millennial cohort (Collins, 2016). The experts interviewed disagree with the literature and claim that the millennial generation is no different nor more difficult to engage with on an emotional level.

The experts relate the barriers in emotionally connecting with millennials to manipulative advertising over time making them "desensitised" to advertising that is not "relevant" to them.

Brands' attempts to cut through the clutter to emotionally connect with consumers has taken form in content (Ha & McCann, 2008). J1 refers to the majority of current content being "bad" and "boring". Again, the reference to "bored" or "boring" is quoted in the literature as being millennials' greatest fears (Bergh, et al., 2014). Thus, it is no surprise that millennials are not engaging with brands based on these efforts.

From the focus groups, there is a general acceptance of advertising's omnipresent nature yet female participants appear to be more concerned about this than the male. However, most participants stated that they did not actively avoid advertising which conflicts with the literature (Warn-Ford, 2016; Yakob, 2015; Newman, 2015; Meeker, 2017).

To emotionally connect with consumers, notably the millennial cohort, brands are turning to music as the importance of it in their lives has been recognised in theory (Schatz, 2014) and practice:

> S1: "I think you would respond more to emotionally charged music in advertising like with anything else, if you are a more active user of music, which is geared towards millennials."

Therefore, based on the data, brands should use music to remain relevant to millennials through their advertising efforts on television. This has been carried out by John Lewis who have used a popular song from another era and re-recorded it with a "fresh" contemporary artist, who is also popular.

The literature argues the pros and cons of using "popular" music in television advertising.

There are academic supporters who believe that popular songs are "the most effective at invoking some kind of emotional response" (Nielsen.com, 2015), "lead to greater attention and likeability" (Roehm, 2001), "enhance" the viewer's memory of the message for a product/brand (Wallace, 1991) and also encourage involvement (Dunbar, 1990). The pros are supported by the primary research:

> *F1: "I love that Fleetwood Mac song in the Three advertisement."*

> *M4: "Yeah I like when there is a famous artist's song used. I really liked that ad where Beats by Dr Dre collaborated with Hozier."*

In contrast, the literature hosts concerns with a popular song's ability to cut through (Hsuan-Yi & Lien, 2010) and the negative association with how fast it will date and become "last year", affecting the associated brand (Sanglier, 2008). Primary research also supports this:

> *F4: "It also goes the other way too. Like if you used a James Blunt song that wouldn't be good because nobody likes him anymore."*

B1 also provides additional insight, stating that budgetary constraints prevent many brands from even considering the use of popular music in their television advertisements:

> *B1: "I think the most recent John Lewis commercial cost over £1 million sterling to produce. That kind of budget is simply not available to most brands for such a*

short seasonal television exposure. As a production director, my first question concerned budget – no point recommending Coldplay or another major artist when the client has a few hundred Euro to spend on the sync licence."

The data shows that male participants are more likely to prefer a popular song than females who feel that it "takes away from the ad". The experts also support this with reference to popular music overwhelming an advertisement if the "message is not strong enough". The experts also highlight that it doesn't really matter what song you use so long as there is a "fit" between the music and the advertising message and, ideally, the brand.

Although the males tended to be more positive towards advertising on a general basis, the females were more enthusiastic about the John Lewis television advertisements:

> *M5: "It is absolutely everywhere, you cannot get away from it. In terms of how that makes me feel I actually quite enjoy it. I am a big fan of TV advertisements. I like a comedic advert and maybe a nice song."*

> *F5: "It's so lovely it's like Christmas in July."*

From analysing the data, it is apparent that the music is the key factor driving the females to emotionally connect with the series of advertisements:

> *F2: "The music in the John Lewis ads tells the story."*

> *F3: "Yes especially the way the music attached itself to the events on screen like it got higher or more intense at certain parts and even the lyrics it's real love connects with you because you remember the love that you had for your toys as a child."*

The lack of emotional connection between the males and the advertisements appears to be linked to the music also but on a more negative note:

M2: "It is very depressing."

M3: "Yeah you would not choose to listen to that sort of music unless you were feeling down."

M4: "It is annoying because it is so obvious that they are using that music to be manipulative."

M1: "I much prefer upbeat and happier music in ads to be honest."

B1 provides an insight to the percentage of television advertisements using each type of music, the reasons behind the selection and illustrates changes in the landscape. Accurate and recent findings on this was not available within the literature:

B1: "Let's eliminate one falsehood – production music is no longer the poorly recorded "stock" music of years ago. In many cases today the same producers and musicians on hit records also write and record production music… it provides a valid income, particularly today with disappearing album or physical sales. Secondly, not many commercials can justify a custom composition or major artist track… production music accounts for over 40% of the sync revenues in advertising and over 80% of licensing volumes… most television commercials have a finite life span of the specific campaign and clients make more commercials than before, so there is no "longer-term" in this case."

This is apparent in the literature with liking the music being linked to liking the advertisement (Alpert & Alpert, 1991). It is the type of music John Lewis uses that the males associate with terms such as "depressing" and "boring". The literature (Bergh, et al., 2014) highlighted, that one of millennials greatest fears; "to be bored, or worse, boring".

One male participant even referred to John Lewis being manipulative in their choice of music as it was "obvious" that they were attempting to gain an emotional response. As the music was not relevant to the males, an emotional connection was not formed.

B1's insight adds to the above:

> B1: "Sometimes the most obvious [music] isn't always what works best."

J1 stated that happier, more upbeat music tended to be more successful in gaining an emotional connection with consumers. However, the author would like to highlight a limitation with this statement. Coca-Cola's brand image is associated with feelings of "happiness" and as such a potential bias may have been included here as J1 works within this company.

5.2 Research Objective 2:

Are Millennials in Ireland aware that music in television advertisements is used to create and alter their perception of a brand

Throughout the focus groups, the participants' "advertising literacy" was greater than the author had anticipated (Livingstone, 2006).

The female participants were initially warier of advertising efforts than the males. However, their enthusiasm and positivity towards the John Lewis advertisements, regardless of their concerns, was interesting. Conversely, the male participants were more positive towards the general concept of advertising and grew more sceptical as conversations surrounding the John Lewis advertisements progressed. The author would suggest that the music in the advertisements aided in both results.

The literature supports the concept that music can break through perceptual filters (WARC.com, 2013) and shape a consumer's perception of a brand (Anthes, 2010; Juslin & Laukka, 2004). It can "grab" consumer attention and "draw them in" (Carpenter, 2017) as well as create favourable perceptions using famous artists (Gorn, 1982) and the halo effect (Leuthesser, et al., 1995). The primary research supports this:

> *M4: "Like with football for example, you would need to make sure that you have a really punchy tune that is upbeat and fast. That way people will associate that with the product. If you used the slow songs in John Lewis for football boots people would associate the product with being a slow and boring player and that is not what you want in football."*

Participants were also aware of the importance of congruency as it "links to the visuals", "works with the ad" and "connects you to the ad". There was also an understanding on how genre and tempo influences perceptions and how music (including lyrics) are used to tell a story. There also appeared to be an (albeit subconscious) awareness of sonic identity; "it's very John Lewis".

5.3 Research Objective 3:
The commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising

The literature (Ha & McCann, 2008) states that advertising is deemed less annoying when relevant and entertaining for consumers and this was wholly supported by the experts, with the term "relevant" becoming a theme of the third research objective. The data from the focus groups also supported this, particularly among female participants; "*you feel like you can relate to it.*"

As anticipated by the researcher, the experts provided rich data from which key insights could be extracted in relation to music in advertising from a commercial perspective. A summary of the key insights can be found below:

- Congruency is of utmost importance and testing should be carried out. In short, ensuring that there is a "fit" between the music and the brand message as well as the brand and the target audience is crucial. Failure to ensure this may result in failure to connect with the target audience and a waste of investment (in terms of a licensing fee). This is linked with the importance of being relevant (to the consumer, sonic identity and message).

- Ad-hoc processes (music selection, briefs, prioritisation), take place in reality and as such the use of audio style guides can help to maintain focus.

- A sonic identity, a common thread that ties the music strategy together with all of the occurrences of the brand, is the goal of music in advertising but requires considerable work and time to develop.

- The licensing structure is complicated and potentially fatal to a campaign's success and can incur significant financial penalties if not thoughtfully considered.

- Music is often the last element considered for a campaign and yet the most scrutinised.

- The future of music looks to be "challenging" yet "exciting": With companies like proTunes guiding the licensing process, the use of data resulting in a more even split between "art and science" and the increase of music across digital channels.

CHAPTER 6: LIMITATIONS AND SUCCESSES

6.1 Limitations

This study aimed to examine how millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising. Although the author ensured that limitations were avoided as much as possible, there remains those that were out of the author's control.

6.2 Sample Size

Due to time and economic constraints, the researcher could only carry out two focus groups. In total, this amounted to 11 Irish millennial participants, 6 females and 5 males.

Had the researcher more time, multiple focus groups would have been carried out based on the millennial cohort in Ireland until such a time as no "new information" could be extracted.

6.3 Bias

There may have been occurrences throughout the focus groups where dominant participants inflicted their bias upon the rest of the group. This can be seen throughout the findings where participants unanimously agree to a number of statements.

6.4 Successes

The author hopes that this study will enable future researchers to benefit from this study and build upon it.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Research

The author recommends that future research examines further the "gender" differences that surfaced in this study. It is recommended that bigger sample sizes, a combination of mixed gender and single gender focus groups are carried out and that researchers continue to run focus groups until no "new information" can be generated.

The author would also recommend that television advertisements are also selected from a brand with less hype and fame associations than that of John Lewis. This would complement the findings of this study. The author also recommends that future researchers build upon other key concepts such as use of music alongside awareness, perception, brand impact.

7.2 Practice

The data extracted from the semi-structured interviews identified the benefits of using audio style guides in practice. The author recommends that professionals in the Irish market (and beyond) look to adapt this strategy in their places of work where relevant.

The author would also recommend that practitioners ensure they understand the licencing process to avoid financial and legal issues.

Finally, this study has highlighted the power of the correct use of music in television advertising yet music is often considered last in the advertisement campaign process. The author recommends prioritising music earlier in the process to allow for testing and associated amendments.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine how Millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged television advertisements.

Arising from the above, this study also sought to identify if millennials in Ireland are aware that music in advertising is used to create and/or alter their perception of a brand. Finally, an investigation into the commercial intent and approach to music in television advertising was also a key component of this study. Literature relating to music in television advertising was analysed during the secondary research phase.

To conduct the primary research, qualitative analysis was adapted and focus groups and semi-structured interviews were carried out with the relevant parties, covering both a consumer and commercial perspective. Rich data was extracted from the primary research.

Findings indicated that millennials in Ireland respond to emotionally charged music in television advertising by sharing the advertisement with friends and family (e.g. Facebook), becoming nostalgic (memories, family, Christmas) and anticipating the next advertisement (John Lewis fame and hype associations). However, the fame and hype associations with John Lewis may have incurred a bias. Female participants generated a more positive response (to the John Lewis advertisements) than male participants which led to positive brand attitudes and purchase intentions. The male participants generally preferred positive music and the use of "famous people" or "music artists" in television advertisements.

Results indicated that millennials in Ireland are aware of advertising's intent (on a general basis) and of how music is used in television advertisements to create and/or alter their perception of a brand. As such, key findings highlighted their knowledge surrounding

importance of "congruency" (i.e. fit between the music and the brand message, sonic identity and target audience). This was also emphasised from a practical perspective (by the experts).

Relevancy (i.e. between the music and the target audience as well as between the advertising message and the consumer) also proved to be critical from the practical perspective, in gaining consumer attention and "cutting through the clutter".

The semi-structured interviews revealed that the music licensing process is complicated yet practitioners are working to resolve this. Selecting music for advertisements does not always follow a process (i.e. executive choice often overrides data, poor briefs are generated, music is not prioritised) and it can be overwhelming (with numerous options available).

The results from this study highlight the need for additional research in this area to fill the current gap in the literature relating to millennials in Ireland. If conducting this study again, the author would carry out more focus groups and also use advertisements from a brand with less fame and hype associations. In terms of the commercial aspect, it would be interesting to include an expert from a creative agency in addition to the current participants.

This study emphasises the importance of music in television advertising and as such, careful consideration should be made when engaging in the process of selecting the music as supported by experts in the area.

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APPENDIX

a) **Monty the Penguin**

https://www.theguardian.com/business/video/2014/nov/06/monty-penguin-john-lewis-christmas-advert-video

b) **Man on the Moon**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMqMNV_raB4

c) **The Long Wait**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBtHj0674Is