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Linda Hollebeek Edward Carl Malthouse Martin Block

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## **Sounds of music: Exploring consumers' musical engagement**

## 1. Introduction

The global entertainment industry, which includes consumer magazines, newspapers, radio, television, music, filmed entertainment, video games, social media, mobile apps, etc., has been subject to steady growth since the post-World War II era. The industry has gained high economic importance, with global entertainment industry revenues exceeding US\$ 1.7 trillion in 2012, which are forecast to grow to over US\$ 1.8 trillion by 2016 (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2011). The entertainment industry, as a whole, reflects three key characteristics. First, a focus on creativity, including radical and incremental innovations by artists, and across the broader sector. Second, entertainment reflects a highly experiential nature of its offerings. Third, the paradoxical role of marketing management in entertainment research and practice, which, whilst becoming increasingly pivotal, is also potentially controversial (Koku, 1995).

As a subset of the entertainment industry, the music sector has experienced considerable challenges in recent years, including a shift from analog, to chiefly digital formats, which are easily copied and distributed; thus contributing to music piracy (Sinha et al., 2010). Further, digital music sales (e.g. mp3/mp4) are reported to have surpassed CD revenues. However, an opposing trend is also observed (e.g. increased music streaming generating reduced music profits). Hence overall, the global music industry provides a highly dynamic and challenging, yet stimulating and opportunity-rich marketing environment.

Scholarly interest in the music industry is also observed (Elberse, 2010; Kellaris et al., 1993; Kellaris and Cox, 1989; Holbrook and Anand, 1990). One literature stream investigates the role of music as a mood or affective state-inducing variable. Scherer and Zentner (2001) observe that music has the capability to not only reflect, but also to produce, specific emotive states in listeners (Bruner, 1990). Another literature stream focuses on the marketing of music as a product (Lathrop and Pettigrew, 1999). Combining these perspectives, music has the capability

to produce specific behavioral responses in listeners (e.g. amount of time spent listening to music, response to music advertising and music purchase behavior; Gorn, 1982; Smith and Curnow, 1966; Kellaris and Kent, 1992, 1993; Zhu and Meyers-Levy, 2005).

Based on the capacity of music to drive particular consumer responses we adopt uses and gratifications (U&G) theory, a socio-psychological perspective that develops an understanding of people's motives and selection patterns for specific mass media to satisfy their needs (Ruggiero, 2000; Schubert, 2004). Under U&G theory, consumers are assumed to act as media users who proactively integrate specific media into their lives. We investigate consumer engagement with music from a U&G theoretical perspective, which represents the first known investigation in this area. The establishment of a conceptual link between engagement and U&G theory is suitable based on both perspectives' focus on proactively generated, interactive, cocreative interactions and relationships.

Engagement, which is characterized by an inherent degree of interactivity between an engagement subject (e.g. a consumer) and a focal object (e.g. a musical brand), represents an area of significant current research interest. To illustrate, the Marketing Science Institute's 2014-2016 Tier 1 Research Priority of engagement asks: "*How should engagement be conceptualized, defined, and measured?*" (MSI, 2014). In response, we conceptualize consumers' musical engagement (ME), develop an ME measurement scale, and explore ME within a broader nomological network of conceptual relationships (Brodie et al., 2011). Further, engagement and U&G theory alike view consumers as proactive contributors to, and co-creators of, their own personal experiences with focal objects (e.g. musical brands; Brodie et al., 2013; Kellaris, 2008). We thus adopt a U&G theory-informed perspective of ME, thereby advancing theoretical insight into the interface of these perspectives. In terms of managerial relevance, our findings are relevant, predominantly, for music industry stakeholders (Custodero, 2005),

including marketing managers representing musicians, bands, record companies, music distributors (e.g. iTunes, Amazon.com, etc.), and other music industry participants (e.g. local symphony orchestras) seeking to engage their audiences and optimize their marketing strategies (Krishnan et al., 2014).

Our key contributions are as follows. First, from a U&G perspective, we conceptualize ME, which is not known to exist in the literature to-date. Second, we develop an ME scale, which is expected to be valuable for academics and music industry stakeholders to gauge ME and inform strategic decision-making. Third, we examine ME in a nomological network of key ME antecedents and consequences (Levitin, 2006; Kellaris, 2008). Fourth, we derive a set of academic and managerial implications arising from our analyses. This paper is structured as follows. First, we review literature on consumer engagement from a U&G perspective, followed by the development of our ME conceptualization. Next, we develop our research hypotheses, followed by an overview of our research methodology and procedures. We discuss our findings and conclude with an overview of limitations and implications arising from this research.

## **2. Literature review: Consumer engagement**

While ‘engagement’ has received considerable attention across several academic fields (e.g. psychology, organizational behavior), the concept emerged in the marketing literature only recently. In this literature, engagement is viewed as a promising concept that is expected to provide enhanced predictive and explanatory power of focal consumer behavior outcomes, relative to traditional concepts (e.g. consumer involvement/loyalty; Hollebeek, 2011a/b). Scrutiny of the literature reveals the following observations.

First, a number of engagement concepts is proposed in the literature, including ‘customer engagement’ (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2016a/b), ‘community engagement,’

‘reviewer engagement’ (Mosteller and Mathwick, 2014), and ‘media engagement’ (Peck and Malthouse, 2010), to name a few. Following Calder et al. (2009: pp. 321-2), we define ME as:

A second-order construct comprising four types of consumer experiences with music (i.e. identity-, social-, transportive-, and affect-inducing experience) that, collectively, comprise ME.

Second, engagement represents a motivational state (Mollen and Wilson, 2010), which occurs by virtue of the individual’s interactive experiences with a specific object (e.g. a music track, artist). While cited engagement subjects include customers/consumers (Brodie et al., 2011), engagement objects include brands, products, and organizations (Patterson et al., 2006). We adopt the engagement subject of the consumer, and the object of music (Krishnan et al., 2014).

Third, engagement is a multi-dimensional concept comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The specific expression of engagement dimensions, however, may vary across contexts. To illustrate, while Calder et al. (2009) identify eight online engagement tenets including ‘stimulation and inspiration,’ Mollen and Wilson (2010) propose the three engagement facets of ‘active sustained processing,’ ‘experiential value,’ and ‘instrumental value’ (Powell-Mantel and Kellaris, 2003). We conceptualize ME based on U&G theory’s four underlying consumer media experiences (Peck and Malthouse, 2010). First, ‘identity experience’ reflects an individual’s desire to project their identity through object interactions (e.g. with particular music). Second, ‘social experience’ reflects consumers’ desire to connect with friends, peers and family through the music they listen to, thus providing them with an enhanced sense of self-identity vis-à-vis salient others (Hargreaves and North, 1997). Third, ‘transportive experience’ reflects consumers’ desire for diversion, escapism, or relaxation by virtue of interacting with specific music (Wang and Calder, 2006). Fourth, ‘affect-inducing experience’ denotes the extent to which specific music can evoke particular feelings in

the individual (Scherer and Zentner, 2001). We hypothesize these experiences, collectively, to comprise ME (Calder et al., 2009). In turn, we expect ME to drive consumers' music-related behaviors, including the amount of time spent listening to music (Calder and Malthouse, 2009; Krishnan et al., 2014).

We expect consumers' music choices to be driven primarily by hedonic (vs. informational) motives (Reisberg, 1992). However, consumers' informational experience (e.g. learning more about particular artists/bands) can influence their ME. To illustrate, consumers may feel deeply immersed in informational sources while learning about their favorite artists (i.e. transportive experience), or utilize such information to show off their knowledge to others, thus aiming to enhance their social status (i.e. social experience; Hargreaves and North, 1997). We expect transportive music experience to incorporate consumer escapism, diversion (Wang and Calder, 2006), and potential flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Engagement plays an important role in broader nomological networks of focal conceptual relationships (Brodie et al., 2011). While engagement has been found to exhibit conceptual distinctiveness from other, related concepts (e.g. consumer involvement; Leckie et al., 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2014), insight regarding ME-based conceptual relationships is lacking; thus warranting the relevance of this part of our study. Further, while several engagement scales exist in the literature (e.g. Calder et al.'s (2009) online engagement, Hollebeek et al.'s (2014) consumer brand engagement, Sprott et al.'s (2009) brand engagement in self-concept), these instruments are highly context-specific; thus rendering limited relevance for ME. To illustrate the lack of applicability of existing engagement scales to ME, we cite a sample scale item from Calder et al. (2009): "This [web]site helps me better manage my money," which has limited relevance to ME. The unique characteristics of consumers' music consumption (e.g. Kellaris, 2008; Kellaris and Kent, 1992, 1993; Zhu and Meyers-Levy, 2005) thus limit the applicability



of existing engagement instruments to ME; thus rendering a need for the development of a new ME scale, which we undertake in this study.

### **3. Hypothesis development**

We now develop a set of ME-based hypotheses that address ME's association with ME antecedents/consequences. We predict three drivers of ME. First, an individual's musical behavior (music choice) at age 14 represents a significant predictor of one's musical choices later in life (Levitin, 2006: pp. 226-7). We measure consumers' musical behavior at age 14 by the amount of time spent listening to music at that age (Levitin, 2006). We thus hypothesize:

H1: An individual's musical consumption at age 14 has a positive effect on the individual's ME later in life.

#### **Figure 1**

Second, we predict individuals' level of music participation as a ME driver. Musical participation denotes the extent of music lessons taken, or years spent as a music performer (e.g. in a band/choir). Music performance can create a sense of meaningfulness in individuals' lives (Jaffurs, 2004), which in turn, is expected to influence ME (e.g. through self-identity enhancement, social gratification; Custodero, 2005). This rationale also aligns with Brodie et al.'s (2011) identification of participation as an engagement antecedent. We thus deduce:

H2: The level of an individual's music participation has a positive effect on ME.

Third, demographics are expected to exert an important effect on ME (Chin and Rickard, 2012; Kellaris, 2008). Similarly, gender and age have been found to affect on individuals' civic- and school engagement (Kellaris and Rice, 1993). We, therefore, control for these demographics.

Further, based on music's capacity to satisfy consumer needs (Levitin, 2006), ME is expected to

influence consumers' current and future music-related behaviors (e.g. the amount of time spent listening to music). Conceptually, this proposition aligns with the notion that the greater the level of a consumer's engagement with an object, the greater the expected returns (e.g. perceived value) from interactions with the object (Higgins and Scholer, 2009). We derive the following hypotheses:

H3a: An individual's identity experience exerts a positive effect on his/her music-related behaviors.

H3b: An individual's social experience exerts a positive effect on his/her music-related behaviors.

H3c: An individual's transportive experience exerts a positive effect on his/her music-related behaviors.

H3d: An individual's affect-inducing experience exerts a positive effect on his/her music-related behaviors.

Regarding ME outcomes, we posit ME to exert a positive effect on consumers' time spent listening to music (Leckie et al., 2016). Similarly, Hollebeek et al. (2014) report that the higher consumers' brand engagement, the greater their brand-related activation (i.e. investments of time and energy into brand interactions; Kellaris, 2008). Brodie et al. (2011) also posit that higher customer engagement generates greater object commitment and bonding. We thus deduce:

H4: A positive relationship exists between ME and the amount of time spent listening to music.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Questionnaire development**

We first developed a scale to measure ME. From a U&G perspective, ME is a second-order construct comprising four music experiences (cf. Literature Review), which, collectively, comprise ME. These experiences, in turn, are expected to generate perceived value (e.g. feeling happy). We commenced by examining North et al.'s (2000) and Peck and Malthouse's (2010) U&G theory-informed bank of media engagement items. The items were created from several hundreds of in-depth consumer interviews (Calder et al., 2009), and were tested using multiple survey waves and across different media types (e.g. websites, television, newspapers, magazines); thus rendering an expected level of applicability of these items to ME. While these items were not expressly developed for ME, many of Peck and Malthouse's (2010) engagement dimensions exhibited face validity for ME (e.g. 'using [music] to relax and unwind,' as confirmed by five expert judges). However, several of Peck and Malthouse's (2010) items, including 'using a specific media property to stay informed on current events,' or 'having a visual experience from the specific media' lacked relevance for ME, and were thus omitted from further analyses. Each of Peck and Malthouse's items that fit with our proposed ME-based social, identity, transportive, and affect-inducing experiences, were included in further analyses (North et al., 2010). We used five-point scales anchored in 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).

#### **4.2 Data collection**

The survey was administered by Prosper Technologies, Worthington, Ohio, as part of its *American Pulse* monthly syndicated survey. *American Pulse* is one of several products that Prosper offers to its commercial clients. The questionnaire was administered online to a random sample of adults (aged 18+), who were entered into a drawing for various prizes. The sample ( $n=2,547$ ) was weighted and balanced to reflect U.S. Census gender/age distributions. We randomly split the sample into two halves and adopted one half, hereafter called the 'first half,' to conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA); while adopting the other (i.e. 'second') half in a

confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Thus, separate datasets were used to conduct our EFA and CFA, which, collectively, were used to develop our new ME scale.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Exploratory factor analysis

Using the first half of the data ( $n=1,278$ ), we conducted an EFA using principal components estimation with varimax rotation. The original 25 ME items were included in the analysis. We also attempted factor analyses using squared multiple correlations, MLE, and iterated principal factor analysis; each of which produced nearly identical factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic was 0.973, thus exceeding the critical value of .6. Three eigenvalues exceeded the critical value of 1 (i.e. 13.4, 2.47, and 1.02; with subsequent eigenvalues reported at 0.71, 0.69 and 0.66, respectively). The scree plot also supported a three-factor solution.

Each of the three factors are interpretable. The first represented the social-identity experience (e.g. “I like to discuss my favorite bands and music on social media sites”). Based on U&G theory, we expected identity-based items (e.g. wearing t-shirts of favorite bands, perceiving band fandom as belonging to a club), to load onto distinct factors, relative to our ‘social’ items (e.g. “I like to give advice and recommendations to my friends about new bands or songs;” Peck and Malthouse, 2010). However, the EFA findings suggested consumers’ social- and identity experiences to reflect *a single* underlying dimension.

The second factor, transportive experience, includes items from Peck and Malthouse’s (2010) ‘timeout’ experience (i.e. consumers using music to relax, unwind, and escape). These ME items may generate feelings of satisfaction, pleasure or happiness in an individual (Calder and Malthouse, 2009). We purified the items by dropping those with large cross loadings, and those with moderate/low loadings. The final rotated loadings are shown in Table 1, where only a

single item showed a cross-loading exceeding .35 (i.e. .46 for the item “music sometimes touches me deep down”). The factors attain excellent reliability (internal consistency) scores (i.e.  $\alpha = .89$  for social-identity experience;  $\alpha = .92$  for transportive experience; and  $\alpha = .82$  for affect-inducing experience).

**Table 1**

### **5.2 Second-order confirmatory factor analysis**

Deploying the ‘second’ half of the data ( $n=1,269$ ), we estimated a CFA model to confirm our three-factor, 11-item ME scale (Table 1). Rather than estimating separate correlations for each factor pair, we hypothesized the factor correlations being due to a second-order factor (ME) that comprises a range of (i.e. 3) types of experiences (Calder et al., 2009). We thus view consumers’ social-identity, transportive and affect-inducing experiences specific manifestations of their overall ME. The CFA model provided acceptable fit to the data: GFI=.96, CFI=.98, NFI=.97, NNFI=.99, and  $\chi^2(41)=279$ . An overview of the estimated standardized factor loadings is provided in Figure 2. Using the loadings, we computed the average variance explained and composite reliabilities—Transportative experience: AVE=.68, CR=.90; Social-identity experience: AVE=.76, CR=.93; Affect-inducing experience: AVE=.66, CR=.85. For each of the factors AVE substantially exceeds the .5 Fornell-Larcker cut-off, and CR exceeds the .7 reliability cut-off.

**Figure 2**

We evaluated discriminant validity using the  $\chi^2$  difference test, confidence interval test and variance extracted test. The  $\chi^2$  difference test constrains each factor pair to have a correlation of 1. When two factors lack discriminant validity, the fit will be similar with and without the

imposed constraint. When the first and second factors are constrained to be perfectly correlated, the  $\chi^2$  statistic increases by 1,893 ( $p < .0001$ ); likewise an increase of 1,352 was reported for the first and third; and 629 for the second and third. Consequently, each of the three reported differences is highly significant, allowing us to reject the null hypothesis that the factors are perfectly correlated, and conclude that the factors are distinct. The 95% confidence intervals do not cover 1, also supporting discriminant validity: transportation-social .5866, [.55, .63]; transportation-affect .42698, [.37, .48], social-affect, .77064 [.74, .80]. For the variance extracted test, the squared correlations are less than the AVE values for both factors. We assessed convergent validity by examining the  $t$ -statistics, each of which substantially exceeded 2 (i.e. the minimum reported  $t$ -statistic was 42, with a maximum of 118), indicating convergent validity.

### 5.3 Variable measurement

We estimate the factor scores of our social-identity, transportive and affect-inducing experiences by using the simple means of the respective items comprising these factors. Following Calder et al. (2009), we measure ME as the average of our proposed ME factors. The criterion variable was individuals' time (hours) spent listening to music. Respondents were asked "How much time do you currently spend listening to [each of the following types of music] during a typical day?" Separate responses were recorded for nine genres including rock, pop/top-40, classical, rhythm and blues, rap/hip-hop, jazz, country, oldies, and other. Times for different genres were added, and the log was computed to symmetrize the distributions and stabilize the variance. This variable was called 'time<sub>1</sub>.' Respondents were also asked, "When you were 14 years old, how much time did you spend listening to [each of the following types of music] during a typical day?" The same nine genres were used, and the computed logged sum was called "time<sub>0</sub>."

A control variable was termed ‘music participation.’ Respondents were first asked whether they “took music lessons (e.g. piano, voice, guitar, percussion, etc.) as a child,” and if so, “How many total years did you take music lessons?” The respondents were also asked whether they were “ever been part of a performing musical group (e.g. singing in a choir or musical theater, playing in a marching, rock or other band/quartet),” and if so, how many years they performed. The logs of both variables were computed because their distributions were right skewed with outliers. We factor-analyzed the two variables, attaining eigenvalues of 1.47 and .53, respectively. Both factor loadings were .86. We used the standardized factor scores in subsequent analyses, which we term ‘participation.’ Further, we measured the respondents’ age (years) and gender as additional control variables. Correlations and descriptive statistics are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2**

#### **5.4 Mediation analysis**

We tested the research hypotheses, as shown in the conceptual model (Figure 1), by exploring whether ME mediates the relationship between the individual’s time spent listening to music at age 14, and their time spent listening to music today, whilst controlling for music participation, age and gender. Table 3 gives the results. The first step regresses time spent on listening to music today (i.e.  $time_1$ ) on time spent at age 14 (i.e.  $time_0$ ), whilst controlling for music participation, age, and gender. The first rows in Table 4 provide the estimates, with  $R^2=.51$ ,  $MSE=20.31$ , and  $F=647$  ( $p<.0001$ ). The findings suggest that an individual’s time spent listening to music at age 14 is the strongest predictor ( $t=43.72$ ), followed by age ( $t=-9.11$ ) and participation ( $t=8.59$ ).

Step 2 tests whether the causal variable is correlated with the mediator, ME. The next block of rows in Table 3 provides the estimates of a regression of ME on time spent listening to music at age 14, participation, age and gender, with  $R^2=.22$ ,  $MSE=.627$ , and  $F=180$  ( $p<.0001$ ). Time spent listening to music at age 14 ( $t=17.02$ ), and age ( $t=-11.43$ ) are the strongest predictors of ME.

Step 3 tests if the mediator affects the outcome variable. We regressed time spent listening to music today on ME, the causal variable, and the covariates. Estimates are shown in the last block of rows of Table 3, with  $R^2=.54$ ,  $MSE=19.06$ , and  $F=584$  ( $p<.0001$ ). The results suggest that ME has a significant effect on time spent listening to music today ( $t=12.82$ ,  $p<.0001$ ). Using the same regression, step 4 examines the change in slopes of the causal variables after adding ME to the model. The direct effect of time spent listening to music at age 14 is still significant (i.e.  $t=38.58$ ), although the slope is reduced from 0.5938 ( $se=0.0136$ ) to 0.5363 ( $se=0.0139$ ), estimating an indirect effect of  $0.594-0.536=0.575$ . The indirect effect was tested with the bootstrap using 1000 samples, producing the 95% confidence interval [0.0456, 0.0701]. Partial mediation was thus observed. While music consumption at age 14 has a strong effect on current music consumption, ME also has an effect.

Next, we fitted the first of two revised models for steps 3 and 4 to investigate the effects of ME in more detail. We first included the social-identity, transportive and affect-inducing experiences, which, collectively, comprise ME. Results are shown in Table 5, with  $R^2=.55$ ,  $MSE=18.8$ , and  $F=427$  ( $p<.0001$ ). While the social-identity ( $b=0.93$ ,  $t=9.3$ ) and transportive ( $b=0.50$ ,  $t=4.1$ ) experiences each have a significant effect on an individual's time spent listening to music today, affect-inducing experience is not significant ( $b=-0.024$ ,  $t=-0.20$ ). Specifically, the social-identity experience appears to be the strongest predictor of the time spent listening to music today. A contrast test shows that the slope for the social-identity experience is greater



than for the transportive experience ( $p=.0169$ ). This implies that music consumption can be increased, primarily, by creating social-identity experiences for fans. Further, while increasing transportive experience also affects consumption, the association is not as strong.

#### **Table 4**

Finally, we test whether ME has a nonlinear effect on time spent listening to music today, after controlling for the causal variable and covariates. We deploy a hinge function to examine any nonlinearity in the data. We mean center ME (so that its mean is 0), and include an additional variable that equals ME for positive values, and 0 when ME is negative. The estimate for this variable measures the change in slope for musical engagement at its average value (i.e. 0). Results are shown in Table 5, with  $R^2=.54$ ,  $MSE=18.8$ , and  $F=496$  ( $p<.0001$ ). Specifically, the change in slope is significant ( $p<.0001$ ), suggesting the existence of a steeper slope (i.e.  $0.79+1.59 = 2.38$ ) for higher, relative to lower (0.79), ME levels. Figure 3 shows the effect of ME on time spent listening to music today after controlling for the other factors.

#### **Table 5**

#### **Figure 3**

## **6. Conclusions, limitations and implications**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

This paper has investigated the following research objectives. First, we developed a U&G theory-informed model and scale gauging consumers' ME, which comprises three dimensions: Social-identity, transportive, and affect-inducing experiences. Second, we examined the association between an individual's musical behavior at age 14, and their ensuing ME level, whilst controlling for the covariates of music participation (i.e. any past/current musical lessons

or performance), and demographic information (gender, age). The findings revealed that the amount of time spent listening to music at age 14 exerts a significant effect on ME (Levitin, 2006); thus providing empirical support for H1. We also observed a positive effect of individuals' music participation on ME; thus supporting H2. We also attained support for the significant effect of consumers' age and gender on ME.

Third, we investigated the association between ME and its effect on musical behavior today, as measured by the amount of time spent listening to music. Specifically, social-identity experience and transportive experience were found to exert significant effects on music consumption; thus providing support for H3a-H3c. However, in contrast to conventional U&G theory, the proposed social and identity-based experience facets were found to represent a *single* dimension, rather than separate ones.

We found the social-identity experience to exert a significantly stronger effect on ensuing music consumption than the transportive experience. While the correlation between affect-inducing experience and music consumption was significant, its slope was not significant after controlling for the other two ME dimensions. Finally, our findings provided support for the hypothesis that the more engaged individuals are with music, the more time they spend listening to music, thus supporting H4. Moreover, the effect of ME on music consumption has a steeper slope (i.e. exerts a stronger effect) for individuals with above-average values of ME (i.e. 3.35-5 on a 5-point scale) than those reporting lower ME.

## **6.2 Academic implications**

This research indicates that ME: (a) Fits with the conceptual underpinnings of U&G theory, thus extending Calder et al. (2009); and (b) Exhibits significant associations with the antecedents of musical behavior at age 14 (Levitin, 2006), and consequences (musical behavior). ME is thus a

useful concept for scholars and managers seeking to predict or explain consumer behavior with respect to music choice and consumption.

By proposing a conceptualization and an associated diagnostic tool of ME, this research provides insight into ME's nature and dimensionality (Krishnan et al., 2014). Second, we respond to Brodie et al.'s (2011) identified need for further exploration of engagement in particular settings, which we explored in the ME context. Third, we provide initial insight into ME's conceptual relationships, including with consumers' musical behavior at age 14, and their current music-related behaviors. Fourth, by introducing ME and exploring its effect on focal consumer behaviors, this study adds insight to the music literature (Mattila and Wirtz, 2001; Kellaris and Kent, 1992, 1993; Yalch and Spangenberg, 2000; Turley and Milliman, 2000), as well as to broader marketing-based theoretical perspectives, including relationship marketing, S-D logic and consumer culture theory, which focus on the establishment and maintenance of value-laden, co-creative consumer/brand interactions and relationships.

Despite these contributions, this research is also subject to several limitations. First, despite our findings, future scale validation and application across different settings (e.g. local music sectors, different artists, music genres, record labels) are required. Future researchers could deploy the scale in alternate nomological networks incorporating different constructs (e.g. brand commitment, loyalty). Second, the cross-sectional nature of this research is limited to a snapshot of ME at a specific point in time. Thus, research adopting longitudinal (e.g. panel) designs would contribute insight into specific ME phases/cycles by describing focal patterns of ME change over time (e.g. by adopting time series/latent growth curve analysis). Longitudinal models may facilitate the investigation of ME trends, which can differ across users (e.g. frequent/high users vs. intermittent users, or across listeners using different music platforms, e.g. streamed music, Spotify, etc.). The adoption of longitudinal study is also expected to reduce

issues with respondents having difficulty remembering their music habits at age 14. Future research may also wish to address specific ME triggers and inhibiting factors (Rentfrow and Gosling, 2006, 2007).

Third, our questionnaire did not make explicit reference to the specific type of music delivery format, such as pre-recorded artistic works, versus those delivered in specific live formats (e.g. gigs). An additional future research avenue thus resides in exploring ME and its ensuing music-related behaviors across delivery channels. Fourth, the theoretical ambit of ME was limited to specific positively-valenced ME. However, negatively valenced engagement, or *disengagement*, may also occur (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Viswanathan, et al. 2016), including a beat annoying an individual, or a reminder of a former partner when a specific song plays; thus generating specific unfavorable, or negatively valenced, ME.

### **6.3 Managerial implications**

This research also generates several managerial implications. First, managers can use our ME instrument to measure consumers' ME, and develop specific tactics and strategies to foster and leverage ME. For example, ME was found to have a positive association with the amount of time individuals spend listening to music; thus establishing the strategic importance of this construct as a key music performance indicator in music industry managers' portfolio of diagnostic tools. Further, this association was found to be significantly greater for individuals reporting above-average (vs. below-average) ME. Our findings thus suggest that elevating consumers' ME represents an effective strategy for increasing music consumption - which is particularly effective for those who are already highly, or at least moderately, engaged with music.

We found three distinct ME experiences: social-identity, transportive and affect-inducing experiences. Of these, the social-identity experience exerted the strongest effect on consumers' music consumption. Successful appeals to consumers' social-identity experience are thus expected to generate increased music consumption, which is a key outcome for music industry stakeholders. We also identify several ways to develop social-identity experience, as discussed below. While the focus of this research has been on music, the finding that the social-identity experience is an important driver of future consumption likely applies to a wider set of media products, e.g. the *Walking Dead* is known for its effective use of social media to engage its fans.

The entire entertainment industry, including the music sector, has a longstanding, symbiotic relationship with the news media, which is always seeking 'talkers,' stories that will "give readers something to talk about" (Peck and Malthouse, 2010; Kellaris, 2008). A plethora of other examples of major stars creating fodder for talkers also exists. To illustrate, Madonna has been exceptionally successful in attracting media attention (e.g. her 1984 risqué performance of *Like a Virgin* at the *MTV Music Awards*, during which she acted out masturbation and sexual intercourse). Similarly, Janet Jackson's 'wardrobe malfunction' during her performance at the 2004 *Super Bowl's* halftime show, inadvertent or not, gave the fans, journalists, moralizers, media pundits and the general public 'something to talk about.'

However, musicians no longer exclusively depend on traditional media channels to 'get their story out,' as a consequence of the rapid developments in digital environments, including social media (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram), blogs, and other types of platforms facilitating the dissemination of content (Roggeveen and Grewal, 2016; Krishnan et al., 2014). These media enable users to connect and communicate directly with salient others (e.g. peers, fans), interact, or exchange information (Hargreaves and North, 1997; Hollebeek and Brodie, 2016).

On social media, musicians are able to cost-effectively contribute to their own media brands (e.g. by distributing content to their followers). For example, with just a video camera (iPod, smartphone), musicians are able to create interviews and other videos, and post them to YouTube or Facebook, thereby reaching large numbers of consumers/fans. To activate consumers' social-identity experience, interviews could address the artist's experiences while on tour, explain the inspiration that gave rise to the writing of a particular song, post concert photos, or update fans on the progress of a new album.

These emerging interactive tools and platforms thus help artists to develop/strengthen their 'brand concept' (i.e. what the artist/band stands for, and what they want fans to think about them; Reisberg, 1992). Having such concept provides strategic direction for content creation. Within this context, each new post or performance represents another chapter in an on-going narrative and dialogue with fans. To illustrate, Lady Gaga's and Madonna's strong brand concepts are reflected, as well as carefully engineered, not only by virtue of their respective performances, but also via their social media content. Further, Andrew McMahon (Jack's Mannequin and Something Corporate) has used Twitter (i.e. @jacksofficial) to describe his battle with leukaemia and connect with fans. In addition to giving fans something to talk about, his posts and songs are likely to inspire fans, thus providing another motivation for consumers to engage with the star (Peck and Malthouse, 2010: Chapter 6). Moreover, the band Phish has cultivated a community culture around trading bootleg recordings of their concert performances, which are improvisational and unique to every gig. The band now streams all of its live performances to its 'rabid' fan base.

Another musician who innovatively deploys social media to connect with fans is Jordan Rudess (Dream Theater). The Rudess brand concept is centered on being a virtuoso keyboardist who develops and uses new technologies to create unusual sounds. Specifically, he has built this

brand using YouTube videos. For example, he posted a tour of his home studio, featuring a conversation about his musical equipment (including different synthesizers), which attracted approximately 250,000 views. Similarly, his video showing how he set the ‘Official World Record Keyboard Speed’ for the *Guinness World Records* has attracted around 500,000 views. Moreover, his recent tribute to David Bowie, playing Space Oddity on his grand piano, has nearly one million views on Facebook, and gives fans something to share with others. Each of these videos are ‘on concept,’ creating specific social experiences for fans and high identification with the artist (Hargreaves and North, 1997).

In today’s dynamic environment, a challenge for music marketers lies in the identification and execution of tactics and strategies to most efficiently grow the category (Kellaris, 2008); that is, how to motivate consumers to listen to (and pay for) more music? Practitioners’ ability to measure and quantify ME is thus expected to help better understand consumers’ music-related behaviors, which can be used to achieve (sales) growth. Overall, we expect managerial cultivation of ME to generate heightened music usage. Finally, in the Introduction we noted the controversial role of marketing in the music industry. For example, musicians will typically object to marketers’ persuasive attempts (e.g. by suggesting a specific direction for their next album). Our findings, however, primarily advocate the adoption of consumers’ social-identity experience in music marketing; thus serving to help (not hinder) musicians in expressing their creative works and freedom.

**Table 1: Final rotated exploratory factor analysis (EFA)**

Item	Factor Number		
	1	2	3
Q34. I often “like” bands or musicians on Facebook	.851		
Q46. I like to discuss my favorite bands and music on social media sites	.830		
Q33. I like to wear t-shirts or other clothing with the logo or name of my favorite bands or musicians	.819		
Q43. Part of my role among friends is to keep them informed about new music or when bands will be touring	.799		
Q38. I often unwind and relax by listening to music		.857	
Q39. Listening to music is an escape		.836	
Q41. I feel less stress after listening to music		.798	
Q37. I lose myself in the pleasure of listening to my favorite music		.739	
Q45. Some songs send shivers up my spine or give me goose bumps			.795
Q49. I sometimes feel like crying after listening to certain songs			.775
Q44. Music sometimes touches me deep down		.458	.751

*Note - n=1,278 (first random half of the data)*



**Table 2: Variable correlations & descriptive statistics**

	<b>Time<sub>0</sub></b>	<b>Part.</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Engage</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Trans.</b>	<b>Affect</b>	<b>Time<sub>1</sub></b>
<b>Time<sub>0</sub></b>	1	.18	-.23	.050	.39	.36	.31	.30	.69
<b>Part</b>		1	-.031	.025	.20	.092	.17	.22	.25
<b>Age</b>			1	-.042	-.26	-.47	-.15	-.059	-.28
<b>Female</b>				1	.12	.037	.10	.21	.018
<b>Engage</b>					1	.76	.90	.81	.46
<b>Social</b>						1	.54	.41	.46
<b>Trans</b>							1	.68	.38
<b>Affect</b>								1	.32
<b>Mean</b>	5.95	0	48.8	0.55	3.35	2.41	3.64	3.79	6.04
<b>Std. Dev</b>	7.00	1	16.4	0.50	0.90	1.18	1.07	1.03	6.51
<b>Min</b>	-9	-0.96	18	0	0	0	0	0	-9
<b>Max</b>	36	4.62	78	1	5	5	5	5	36

*Note - n=1,269 (second random half of the data)*

**Table 3: Estimates from regression analysis for mediation analysis**

Parameter	Estimate	Std. Err	t-value	VIF
<b>Step 1: Predicting time spent listening to music today without mediator</b>				
<b>Intercept</b>	5.136	0.3350	15.33	
<b>Time at age 14</b>	0.594	0.0136	43.72	1.092
<b>Music participation</b>	0.789	0.0918	8.59	1.034
<b>Age</b>	-0.052	0.0057	-9.11	1.057
<b>Female</b>	-0.263	0.1817	-1.45	1.005
<b>Step 2: Predicting musical engagement</b>				
<b>Intercept</b>	3.487	0.0589	59.25	
<b>Time at age 14</b>	0.041	0.0024	17.02	1.092
<b>Music participation</b>	0.1129	0.0161	7.00	1.034
<b>Age</b>	-0.011	0.001	-11.43	1.057
<b>Female</b>	0.210	0.032	6.59	1.005
<b>Steps 3 and 4: Predicting time spent listening to music today</b>				
<b>Intercept</b>	0.198	0.504	0.39	
<b>Musical engagement</b>	1.416	0.110	12.82	1.29
<b>Time at age 14</b>	0.536	0.0139	38.58	1.22
<b>Music participation</b>	0.629	0.0898	7.00	1.054
<b>Age</b>	-0.036	0.0056	-6.31	1.11
<b>Female</b>	-0.560	0.178	-3.16	1.022

*Note - n=2,498*

**Table 4: Revised steps 3-4 including specific experiences (rather than engagement) to predict time<sub>1</sub>**

Parameter	Estimate	Std. Err	t-value	VIF
Intercept	0.108	0.501	0.21	
Social	0.930	0.1004	9.27	1.86
Transportive	0.497	0.1203	4.13	2.14
Affect-inducing	-0.024	0.1210	-0.20	1.99
Time at age 14	0.535	0.0138	38.65	1.22
Music participation	0.695	0.0899	7.73	1.07
Age	-0.021	0.0062	-3.48	1.34
Female	-0.375	0.180	-2.09	1.06

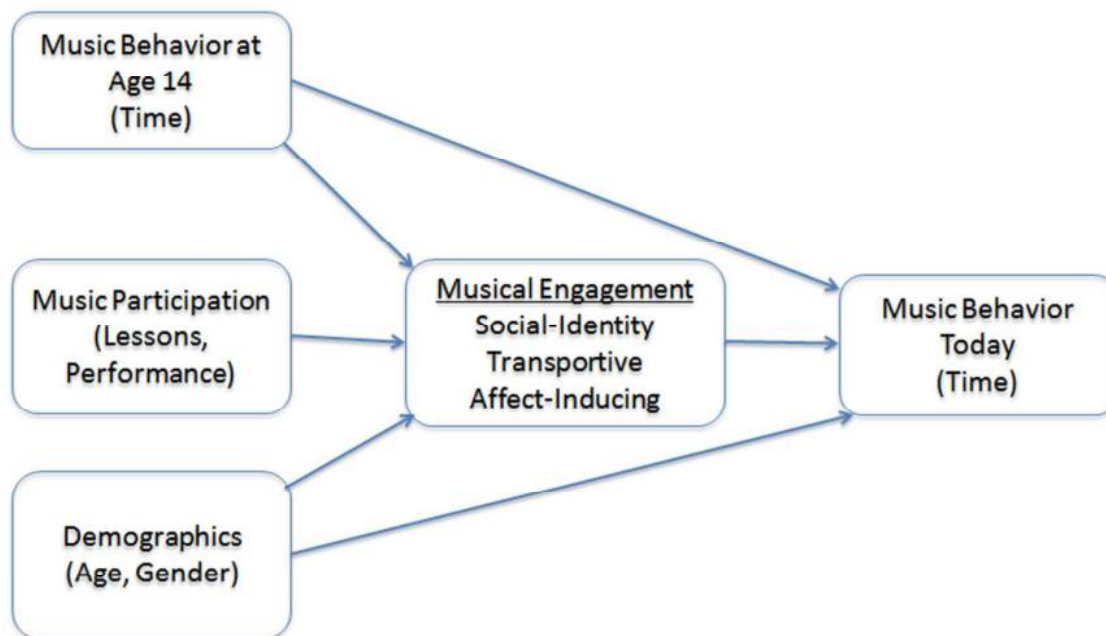
Note - n=2,498

**Table 5: Nonlinear effect of consumers' ME**

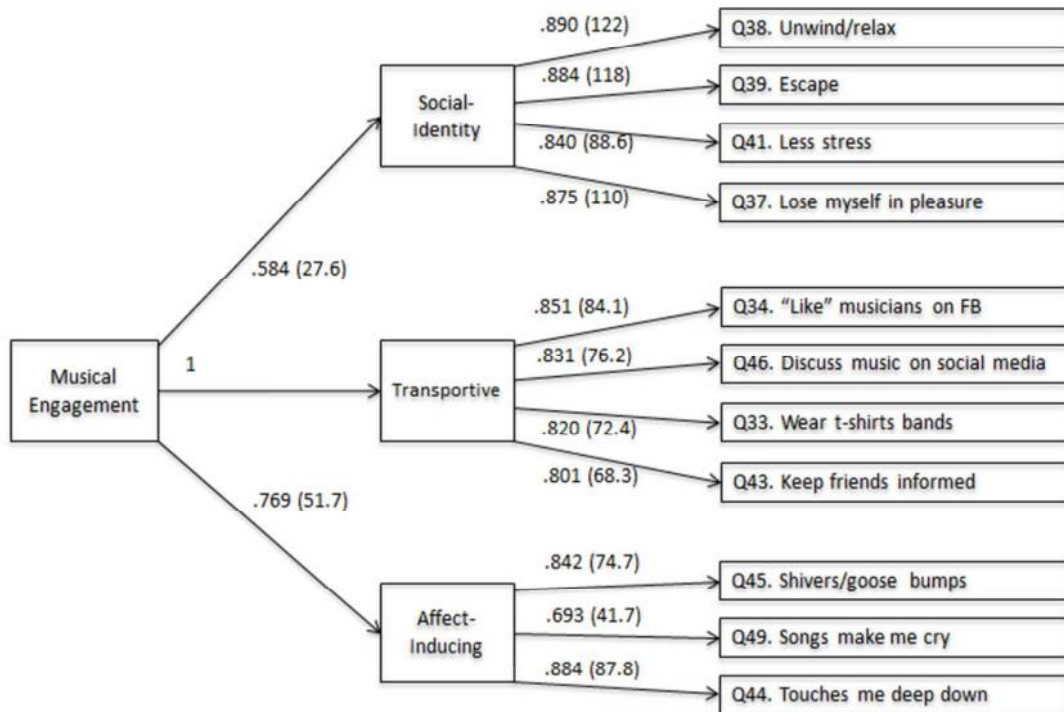
Parameter	Estimate	Std. Err	t-value	VIF
Intercept	4.105	0.354	11.59	
Engagement	0.791	0.1639	4.83	2.87
Max(Engage, 0)	1.590	0.309	5.14	2.86
Time at age 14	0.531	0.0139	38.26	1.23
Music participation	0.631	0.0893	7.06	1.05
Age	-0.030	0.0057	-5.35	1.14
Female	-0.591	0.177	-3.34	1.02

Note - n=2,498

Figure 1: Conceptual model

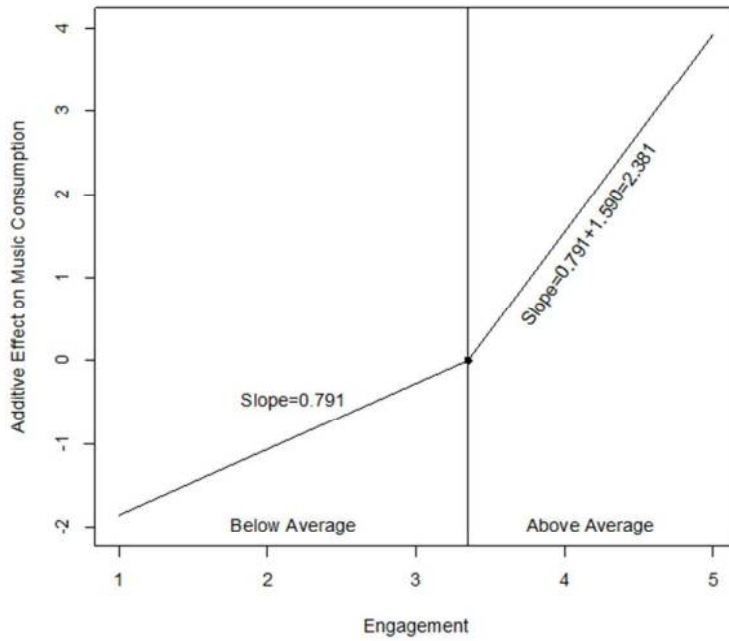


**Figure 2: Estimates - Confirmatory factor analysis**



*Note - n=1,269 (Second randomly selected half of the data)*

**Figure 3: Nonlinear effect of ME on music consumption (After controlling for consumption at age 14, music participation, age & gender)**



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### **Author Biographies**

Linda D. Hollebeek, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland's Graduate School of Management, and an Associate Professor at NHH Norwegian School of Economics. Her current research interest is in customer/consumer engagement, and interactive consumer/brand relationships. Linda's work to date has been published in the *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *Marketing Theory*, *Managing Service Quality*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, among others. She is also a co-editor of the

Routledge title *Customer Engagement: Contemporary Issues and Challenges*, and is on the editorial board for the *Australasian Marketing Journal*.

Edward C. Malthouse, PhD, is Theodore R. and Annie Laurie Sills Professor of Integrated Marketing Communications at the Medill School at Northwestern University. Edward is acting as Research Fellow at the Media Management Center, a partnership between Medill and Kellogg. His research interests center on media marketing, database marketing, advertising, new media and integrated marketing communications. He develops statistical models and applies them to large data sets of consumer information to help managers make marketing decisions. Malthouse is also currently the co-editor of "Medill on Media Engagement." He was the co-editor of the *Journal of Interactive Marketing* from 2005-2011. His professional experience includes software engineering for AT&T Laboratories, corporate analytics training for Accenture, BNSF, Digitas, Nuoqi and Capital One, and developing segmentations for Cohorts and Financial Cohorts and Motorola.

Martin P. Block, PhD, is a Professor in Medill's Integrated Marketing Communications program at Northwestern University. Martin teaches graduate level marketing mix models, marketing research and analytical techniques, sales promotion, advertising management, direct marketing and entertainment marketing courses. He joined the faculty in 1985 and was Director of Graduate Advertising within Medill until 1991 and again between 2001 and 2002.