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Music and Lyrics in Commercials: A Cross-Cultural Comparison between Commercials Run in the Dominican Republic and in the United States

Noel M. Murray and Sandra B. Murray

The use of music and lyrics in commercials run in the United States is compared with their use in commercials run in the Dominican Republic (D.R.). The authors briefly review present theoretical perspectives on the role of music in advertising and address the need to conceptualize music as a culturally situated variable. They discuss the structure of Dominican TV media and examine the influence of U.S. media culture in the D.R., then develop a set of propositions about cross-cultural differences in the extensiveness of music and lyrics in commercials, the style of music used, and the product meanings conveyed in lyrics. The propositions are tested in a content analysis of commercials. The findings support the propositions and indicate a need for sociological and interpretive approaches to the study of the role of music in advertising.

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Introduction

Relatively few studies in advertising have had music as the central focus. Bruner (1990) noted that as of 1990 fewer than 20 studies in marketing had concentrated on music. None of those studies examined the role of lyrics. Most of the work on music in advertising has pertained to either the effects of certain structural elements of music such as texture (Van Stone 1960), pitch (Scherer and Oshinsky 1977), and tempo (Holbrook and Anand 1990; Wedin 1972) or the global effects of music on behavior (e.g., Gorn 1982) or on affective responses (e.g., Park and Young 1986; Stout and Leckenby 1988).

An inherent but infrequently stated assumption of studies on the "effects" of music in advertising is that such "effects" are universal and thus occur equally across time, situations, and individuals. A second implicit assumption is that the effects of music can be studied adequately in isolation from other elements of commercials such as lyrics and video. That somewhat reductionist perspective is at odds with the rich literature on music from such music theorists as Iser (1978) and Meyer (1956, 1967) and from consumer behavior theorists such as Scott (1990), who argue that music, like language, has the potential to invoke complex, culture-dependent symbolic schemata. Researchers drawing from the classical conditioning or affective response perspective have seen no need to study the use of music and lyrics in advertising for different cultural contexts because presumably any cross-cultural differences would be insignificant. However, research showing that music and lyrics are used differently in different cultures would call into question the usefulness of a research tradition of manipulating certain structural elements of music and assuming that the effects are global and universal.

We empirically examine the use of music and lyrics in commercials run in the United States and compare it with the use of music and lyrics in commercials run in the Dominican Republic (D.R.). First, we briefly review present theoretical perspectives on the role of music in advertising and address the need to conceptualize music as a culturally situated variable. Second, we discuss the structure of Dominican TV media, the influence of

U.S. media culture in the Dominican Republic, and Dominican TV programming and commercials. We then develop a set of propositions about cross-cultural differences in the extensiveness of music and lyrics in commercials, the style of commercial music used, and the product meanings conveyed in lyrics. The propositions are tested in a content analysis of commercials sampled from two different cultures (the D.R. and the U.S.) with different language systems (Spanish and English). Finally, we discuss the implications of our findings for the study of music in advertising.

Approaches to the Study of Music in Advertising

Most large-scale studies of music in advertising have found little or no relationship between presence of music and commercial recall (Hecker 1984). Market research firms such as Burke Marketing Research (1978) and McCollum/Spielman and Company (1976) and advertising scholars such as Stewart and Furse (1986) and Stout and Leckenby (1988) have coded commercials for the presence or absence of music and correlated such measures with recall performance. Typically, the presence of music is not found to be correlated with commercial recall. Seldom, however, is any argument developed for *why* presence of music should be related to commercial recall. In his review of the role of music in advertising, Hecker (1984) concluded that by using the criterion of commercial recall we are simply using the "wrong measurement tool" to assess the effectiveness of music in commercials. However, because all measurement tools are theory bound (Anderson 1986), perhaps it is time to reassess our current conceptualizations of the role of music in advertising (Scott 1990).

Currently, the two dominant theoretical approaches to the study of music in advertising are the classical conditioning approach (e.g., Gorn 1982; Kellaris and Cox 1989) and the affective response approach (e.g., Mitchell 1986; Park and Young 1986). Classical conditioning is a process that is said to work in advertising by the pairing of an unconditioned stimulus (e.g., music) with a neutral stimulus (e.g., product) to produce a conditioned response (e.g., increased probability of purchase behavior). Music may be a conditioned stimulus or an unconditioned stimulus depending on whether or not the listener has been exposed to it previously. Classical conditioning research on music in marketing has focused exclusively on music as an unconditioned stimulus. Gorn's (1982) study was one

of the first in the consumer behavior literature to attempt to demonstrate classical conditioning effects empirically. In a laboratory experiment, subjects selected one example of music they liked and one of music they disliked. They also identified two colors of pens toward which they had neutral evaluations. When given a purchase opportunity, the majority chose pens paired with the liked music. Gorn concluded that the findings were consistent with predictions from classical conditioning theory. However, other researchers have not been successful in replicating his experiment (Kellaris and Cox 1989; Pitt and Abratt 1988).

In classical conditioning studies such as Gorn's, music is typically conceptualized as an unconditioned stimulus that produces an unconditioned response. The behaviors influenced by classical conditioning are assumed to be under the control of the autonomic nervous system, which controls the smooth muscles that produce involuntary behavior, not under the conscious control of the individual. Note that the response to an unconditioned stimulus thus operates at a physiological rather than a cultural level. The subset of behaviors called emotions are said to respond in a similar way.

A fundamental assumption of the classical conditioning perspective is that beyond the epiphenomenal level there is no semantic interpretation of the unconditioned stimulus. Notably, the original experiments by Pavlov were not on human beings, but on animals incapable of semantic interpretation. Further, Pavlov's experiments related very basic unconditioned stimuli such as meat powder to the physiology of indigestion rather than to the complex emotional responses that are often the topic of consumer research in classical conditioning. Shakespearian sonnets and the short stories of Hemingway are clearly not unconditioned stimuli because cultural learning obviously is needed to interpret them. However, when researchers use music as an unconditioned stimulus, they are making a paradigm assumption that music operates on a physiological level rather than being based on a culture-dependent set of listening practices. The repeated use of music as an unconditioned stimulus is comparable to saying that the response to music is physiological, like the response to meat powder, because unlike the response to the Shakespearian sonnet, it does not require prior learning. If the classical conditioning assumption is valid, we should not be able to detect differences in responses to music among different cultures because presumably everyone responds in the same way (see Sibatani 1980 for

an opposing view). If there are no differences in responses to music among cultures, there should be no differences in the use of music forms among cultures.

However, not only do music forms obviously differ among cultures, but even the notion of what is music depends on culture. Tribal chants, a half-spoken style of singing, or a computer program may or may not be considered music by members of a particular culture (Geard 1989). Structural approaches to studying music do not necessarily define what is and is not considered music. For example, many Muslims do not consider the chanting of the Koran to be a type of music, although the structure is similar to that of secular singing. Music must be understood in a particular cultural context. Industrial noises might be considered music in the context of an experimental concert conducted by an established composer. Similarly, "Revolution" by the Beatles has a very different symbolic meaning when played by a radio station as a piece of music to be listened to than it has when played in the context of a Nike commercial where the goal is to sell a product. Music is not universally valued across cultures. To Native Americans, music is a way to communicate with the spirits, in most Western cultures music is valued as an art form, and in Islamic culture music may have low value and is often associated to hedonism and sin. Hence, structural approaches to the study of music that neglect music's cultural context are not likely to prove fruitful.

Although the classical conditioning and affective response conceptualizations of music are very different, both imply that exposure to music in commercials may result in automatic, affective responses. In the former perspective, affective responses are viewed as overt behaviors, such as a smile; in the latter perspectives, they are viewed as internal feeling states of which we are not cognitively aware. Neither conceptualization acknowledges a semantic role for music. The assumption that music does not have an informational role is problematic (Scott 1990).

To date, no study in advertising has examined the use of music and lyrics in a cross-cultural context. That is a major oversight, as music is a basic form of expression of cultural values. Indeed, the cross-cultural implications of the use of music and lyrics in commercials are immense because it is difficult to see how music can be separated from its social and cultural context. The use of music and lyrics in commercials may reflect cultural differences not previously accounted for by cross-cultural studies of advertising. Research on music in commercials has overlooked the role of culture by adopting a narrow reductionist

conceptualization of music and has failed to recognize the importance of the semantic content of music and lyrics (Scott 1990). However, lyrics may perform many significant functions in a commercial, including creating a sense of relaxation, developing empathy, gaining attention, carrying news, creating imagery, carrying attribute and benefit information, or subtly communicating cultural values. To address the shortcomings of previous research, we undertook a cross-cultural comparison of the use of music and lyrics in TV commercials.

Music, Media, and Culture in the Dominican Republic

Background on the Dominican Republic

We chose the D.R. as an appropriate country for our comparison for several reasons. First, the D.R. has an indigenous television industry and programming environment that are not dominated by U.S. media influence (Alvarez-Vega 1993). Hence, local Dominican programming may reflect cultural values particular to the D.R. (Castillo 1993). Second, the D.R. is overwhelmingly Spanish speaking and has a distinct music tradition that is predominant in local programming. Hence, if music's use in commercials run in the D.R. is similar to its use in those run in the U.S., one could not refute the proposition that the effects of music in commercials are universal across cultures.

Music and Culture in the Dominican Republic

Music is a central defining element of Dominican culture (Roberts 1979). Native Dominican music called "merengue" is based on African drums and rhythms. It originated about 1850 (Dean 1991) and quickly became a news medium carrying gossip and perspectives on local political issues. Today merengue is a popularized and living music, exemplified by such highly regarded groups as Wilfredo Vargas, Grupo 4.40, and Johnny Ventura, who are popular not only in the D.R. but also in other Latin American countries and in the U.S. (Manuel 1991). There is little evidence of a decline in the popularity of merengue and Spanish ballad music in the face of competition from other international music forms. Merengue and Spanish ballad music in general are the most popular music forms in the D.R. (Dean 1991). Of the 225 FM

radio stations in the D.R., more than 130 variety music format stations feature merengue and it is the exclusive music format of 60 stations (McCann-Erickson 1993). Clearly, as reflected in the volume of airplay, music is a distinct and important manifestation of the content of Dominican culture.

The Cultural Content of Television Programming in the Dominican Republic

If we expect that music and lyrics play a different cultural role in the D.R. than in the U.S., we should also expect that TV programming content and genres differ between the D.R. and the U.S. Like most Latin nations, the D.R. counts on the U.S. and other industrialized countries to some extent for broadcast programming and technology. Nonetheless, Spanish-language TV channels in the D.R. have a significant audience for local programming. Six commercial stations and one government-owned station in Santo Domingo the capital broadcast to households throughout the country, 80% of which have at least one TV set (Straubhaar and Viscasillas 1991). Cable TV is available in Santo Domingo and in resort hotels. Although cable TV carries several U.S. networks, its market penetration was estimated at only 3% in 1991. In 1994, TV advertising revenue in the D.R. was estimated to amount to about \$136 million in U.S. currency, indicating a significant domestic TV advertising industry (Mercado 1993).

Some theorists have argued that with greater globalization of media, technologically advanced countries such as the U.S. will inevitably come to dominate TV programming worldwide (Martin-Barbero 1988). Indeed, television is considered to be the most transnational of broadcast media and thus most susceptible to Americanization. If that view were correct, there would be little need to investigate the role of music in cross-cultural contexts because in time all countries would be enculturated to consume imported programming, commercials, and presumably music styles.

The notion that globalization of media programming is increasing in Latin America is derived from dependency theory (Tansey and Hyman 1994). Dependency theory differs sharply from classical economic theory, which is often favored as a guiding economic philosophy by the industrialized nations. The argument is that economic, political, and cultural power is disproportionately distributed in favor of strong capitalist nations that realize lopsided gains from trade due to the historic and unfair trading

practices of colonizing nations in Latin America. Through their influence on media programming and advertising, industrialized nations are said to encourage conspicuous consumption by cultural elites in Latin America which in turn impedes economic development by diverting scarce resources from domestic capital investment. Dependency theorists (Hewlett 1980) have argued that ill-funded and ill-executed advertising produced locally puts Latin American consumer product industries at a competitive disadvantage. That view explains why foreign TV programming and advertising agencies frequently get a less than warm reception in many Latin American countries.

What evidence supports the notion of increasing globalization of the cultural content of Latin American TV? TV is said to be more at risk than radio for programming domination by outside producers because of the relative costs of production. U.S. producers that have already recovered production costs at home can "dump" programming or price it at whatever the local market can bear. Recent evidence suggests that the elite classes in Latin America who have obtained part of their educational and cultural capital in the U.S. show increasing preferences for U.S.-produced programming (Straubhaar and Viscasillas 1991). Because the middle class in Latin America, as elsewhere, looks to the elite classes for direction on cultural taste, such cultural imperialism may become more prevalent.

Evidence from Latin America, however, does not support the inevitability of cultural imperialism by U.S. media (Tansey and Hyman 1994). Varis (1984), in a followup of a previous study on media and cultural flow from the U.S. to Latin America (Nordenstreng and Varis 1974), found evidence that countries had reduced programming imported from the U.S. and had replaced it with a combination of domestic programming and imports from regional producers such as Mexico, Argentina, and Venezuela. Increases in the quality of less expensive TV production technology have led to more professional domestic TV productions, and regional imports have become more price competitive.

Although changes in the economic structure of programming costs have enabled domestic production to increase, that fact alone does not explain its growth. Latin American television has not only acquired its own industrial base, but has also developed several programming genres unique to the region (Straubhaar and Viscasillas 1991). Regional *telenovelas* or daytime soap operas have grown in popularity at the expense of U.S. programming because they better

match the cultural capital of local audiences. Similarly, inexpensive locally produced shows *de auditoria* (extended live variety shows) and shows *de musica* (merengue and dance shows) have acquired strong audiences in the D.R. They are not simply Spanish-language versions of U.S.-style shows, but rather are different genres that reflect distinct cultural aspects of the content Dominican culture. The popularity of such shows (McCann-Erickson 1993) indicates a strong resistance to nonregional imports. That trend is evident not just in the viewing choices of the lower classes, but also in media choices among the middle classes—contrary to media imperialism theory. Moreover, locally produced commercials have increased in number in the D.R. since the late 1970s. Prior to 1980 most commercial jingles were produced outside the country. The growth in Dominican commercial jingle industry is fueled by the lower price of high fidelity recording technology such as DAT and closer relations between the Dominican music recording industry and the advertising industry (Mercado 1994). Thus, two conditions necessary for music in commercials to play a distinct cultural role in the D.R. appear to be present: unique TV programming genres and a viable and independent commercial music industry.

Use of Music in Commercials Run in the D.R. and in the U.S.

Frequency of Music in Commercials

Previous research on the role of music in advertising has manipulated several structural elements of music and searched for effects on several dependent variables such as affect, brand attitude, or recall. The aim of such research was to make claims about global effects of music on affective and cognitive structure. That approach ignored cultural differences in the processing of music in advertising because music effects were presumed to be automatically conditioned and thus not susceptible to learned modes of processing. Manipulating structural aspects of music and searching for global effects on cognitive structure without investigating the mediating effect of culture on the processing of music implies that cultural variation in the use of music is so small that we can ignore it. Presumably, there are no differences in the frequency of music *use* in commercials across cultures. If music effects are truly global, not only responses to music tones, but also music use should be consistent across cultures.

H1: Commercials run in the Dominican Republic differ from those run in the United States in the frequency with which music is used.

Frequency and Extensiveness of Lyrics in Commercials

Music is present in commercials in conjunction with executional elements such as video, voice-overs, dialogue, and lyrics. Clearly lyrics carry informational content about products, but they also communicate distinct aspects of consumption symbolism that we should expect to vary across cultures. If we conceptualize music and accompanying lyrics as a single entity, we should expect not only differences in the use of music in commercials across cultures, but also parallel differences in the use of lyrics. Greater frequency of use of commercial lyrics in one culture, for example, may indicate a heightened facility for symbolic processing of lyrical information in that culture. Similarly, finding more extensive lyrics in commercials in one culture than another may be indicative of a more sophisticated role for that mode of communication in that culture.

H2: Commercials run in the Dominican Republic differ from those run in the United States in (a) the frequency with which lyrics are used and (b) the extensiveness of lyrics.

Music Style

Each society has its own music styles and genres that act as a self-contained system of communication and must be learned to be understood. Considerable cultural capital is needed for symbolic processing of the samba music of Brazil, the vallenata of Colombia, the merengue of the Dominican Republic, and the urban rap music, industrial noise music, and jazz music of the U.S. (Roberts 1979). The cultural meanings associated with different music styles should be apparent to the listeners. In most societies different styles of music are associated with different cultural strata distinguished by degree of learning (e.g., professional vs. untrained musician), level of society (e.g., elite vs. lower classes), and manner of dissemination (oral or via mass media). Hence, for music, style is both substance and meaning. By choosing one music style over another, the advertiser makes a conscious choice among many possible cultural meanings to communicate to the audience.

If U.S. music culture has become the international norm, we should expect music styles in commercials in other cultures to mirror those used in the U.S. Finding that Latin music styles are used in Dominican commercials would indicate that music as a means for cultural communication is not a universal language. Even more interesting is the question of whether commercials for international brands run in the D.R. use the same music styles as commercials for domestic brands run in the D.R. Because the producers of commercials for brands produced in the D.R. are likely to be enculturated to music styles and lyrics prevalent in the D.R., we should expect more use of Latin-style music in commercials for domestic brands than in those for foreign brands.

H3: Commercials run in the D.R. for domestic brands are more likely than those run in the D.R. for international brands to use (a) Latin music as background and (b) accompanying lyrics.

Product Meanings in Lyrics

If the content of verbal information communicated differs between cultures, we might expect those differences to be reflected in the content of lyrics (Scott 1990, 1994a, b). The content of lyrics may focus narrowly on product characteristics with an underlying assumption that the listener is mainly motivated to process brand attribute information (Bettman 1979). Alternatively, lyrics may communicate more abstract, complex, self-related meanings with an underlying assumption that the listener is motivated to process self-related meanings. The means-end chain is one approach to classifying product meanings that range from concrete, explicit, and detailed to more abstract, implicit, and self-related (Guttman 1982; Olson and Reynolds 1983). It posits that two broad types of meanings may be communicated in a commercial: (1) product meanings such as concrete attributes, abstract attributes, and functional consequences of product use and (2) indirect, self-related meanings such as psychosocial consequences of product use and personal values. The latter type of meanings are said to be more complex, involving, and highly elaborated. The classification of a meaning depends on its use. Thus, "available at \$1.99" is classified as a product attribute meaning because it is measurable and can be intersubjectively verified, but "at a price that lets you feel like a wise shopper" is a self-related meaning because it refers to an instrumental value (being wise with money).

H4: Commercials run in the Dominican Republic differ from those run in the United States in terms of whether the lyrics are product focused or self focused.

Method

A total sample of 56 hours of prime-time TV programming was taped each night during two weeks from Monday, July 4, to Sunday, July 17, 1994 (28 hours in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and 28 hours in Wilmington, Delaware, USA). For the American sample, on-air programming between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm was taped for the four major networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox). That time period was chosen because it is considered prime time in the D.R. and overlaps well with what is considered prime time in the U.S. Networks were assigned randomly to tapes for approximately even allocations to each network. Similarly, for the Dominican sample, on air programming between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm was taped for the four major networks (Color Vision, Teleantillas, Telesistema, and the government-owned Radio Television Dominicana). After deletion of duplicate commercials, consistent with the approach of Healey and Kassarian (1983) and Weinberger and Spotts (1989), the samples yielded 336 unduplicated U.S. commercials and 193 unduplicated Dominican commercials. The difference in yield is due to a combination of a smaller base of Dominican commercials and less commercial time per hour of programming in the Dominican Republic.

The lyrics in Dominican commercials were translated into English by one of the authors who is a native Dominican Spanish speaker. Commercials were coded for the presence of music, general copy lyrics, slogan lyrics, and extensiveness of music and lyrics per commercial. For a 30-second commercial, if music and/or lyrics were present for 15 seconds or more, such commercials were coded as having music and/or lyrics present for half or more of commercial. Similar pro-rata coding was done for 15-second and 60-second commercials. The extensiveness of lyrics in commercials was measured by a count of the number of words in the lyrics. Music role was coded by one author and an assistant into eight distinct categories: (1) no music, (2) music in background only, (3) music in slogan only, (4) music in background and slogan, (5) music with lyrics for less than half the duration of the commercial, (6) music with lyrics and slogan for less than half the duration of commercial, (7) music with lyrics for more than half the duration of com-

mercial, and (8) music with lyrics and slogan for more than the half duration of commercial.

Product Meaning Coding Scheme

After an initial review of 30 D.R. and 30 U.S. commercials with lyrics, we developed a four-category lyric content coding scheme. Lyrics were coded by one author and an assistant for the presence of a product meaning such as concrete attributes, abstract attributes, and functional consequences or for a self-related meaning such as psychosocial consequences. All commercial lyrics but two were codable. See Table 1 for examples of commercial lyrics. The interjudge agreement rate for two coders was 82%. Disagreements were resolved through discussion between the coders. The following definitions were used in the coding scheme.

Product-related meanings:

Concrete attributes	Tangible, physical characteristics of a product such as a specific price (e.g., \$3.99)
Abstract attributes	Intangible, subjective characteristics of a product (e.g., delicious tasting)
Functional consequences	Immediate tangible outcomes of product use that can be directly experienced by consumers (e.g., now you can overtake easily)

Self-related meanings

Psychosocial consequences	How the product makes you feel about yourself (e.g., now you're on top of the world) or how the product affects the way others view you (e.g., for those times you need to smell good)
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Music Style Coding Scheme

The same 30 D.R. and 30 U.S. commercials were used to create a categorization scheme for music style and presence/absence of lyrics. Latin music was defined as music that fit into the following illustrative, but not exhaustive, set of categories: merengue, salsa, rastafarian, ska-style, rocksteady, calypso, steel pan, mambo, and samba.

We quickly found that the Latin/non-Latin beat music without lyrics category could usefully be expanded. Hence, background music without lyrics was further coded into fast tempo/non-Latin beat and slow tempo or soft melody/non-Latin categories. The music classification was done by one author and an assistant and the interjudge agreement rate was 84%. Differences were resolved through discussion between the coders.

Coding for Domestic versus International Brands

A senior account supervisor at the McCann-Erickson advertising agency in Santo Domingo coded all Dominican commercials as advertising for domestic or international brands. Non-Dominican brands were defined as international brands whether or not they were manufactured, fabricated, or packaged in the Dominican Republic. International franchises such as Pizza Hut were also coded as international because franchisees are subject to advertising restrictions framed by their home country. The account supervisor who coded for international versus domestic brands had a high degree of confidence in her classifications and when in doubt sought confirmation from other senior agency personnel.

Results

Frequency of Music in Commercials

We found a significant difference in frequency of music use between commercials run in the D.R. and those run in the U.S. ($\chi^2 = 30.8$, d.f. = 7, $p < .0002$). Music was present in the majority of commercials run in both the D.R. and in the U.S., but 94.3% of Dominican commercials contained music versus 84.5% of U.S. commercials (see Table 2). Hence, H1 is supported.

Frequency and Extensiveness of Lyrics in Commercials

In Table 2 we see that if we combine the categories containing lyrics (categories 5 through 8), 21.8% of commercials run in the D.R. contained lyrics versus only 12.8% of commercials run in the U.S. That finding supports H2(a), that commercials run in the D.R. differ from commercials run in the U.S. in the frequency with which lyrics are used. H2(b), that commercials run in the D.R. and those run in the U.S.

Table 1
Sample of Product Meanings in Lyrics

<i>Concrete attribute: U.S. commercial lyric</i>	"1.99 are you out of your mind? Just 1.99?"
<i>Concrete attribute: Dominican commercial lyric</i>	No commercial lyrics in this category.
<i>Abstract attribute: U.S. commercial lyric</i>	"Prix* mist last a long time. Prix mist last for hours. Prix mist last for hours. Prix mist last for hours."
<i>Abstract attribute: Dominican commercial lyric</i>	"How delicious! How delicious to eat at Prix. And you don't have to be rich to eat at Prix."
<i>Functional consequence: U.S. commercial lyric</i>	"When static stops you get Prix. When static stops you get Prix. Prix lets you go. Don't let static stop you, get Prix and get going."
<i>Functional consequence: Dominican commercial lyric</i>	"Each day demands new energy, and Prix nourishes you. Each day it nourishes you, gives you energy and refreshes you."
<i>Psychosocial consequence: U.S. commercial lyric</i>	"Mommy wow! I'm a big kid now."
<i>Psychosocial consequence: Dominican commercial lyric</i>	"An energy shock runs through your veins every day. It's like a storm that you don't notice. It reaches your soul and it touches you. It's pure emotion and it makes you shiver. It awakens a strange pleasure in you. A sensation that urges you to do strange things that make your body tremble."

*Prix is a term substituted for all brand name references.

differ in the extensiveness of lyrics used, is also supported. The mean number of words is 27.0 (S.D. = 19.5) in the D.R. sample and to 17.7 (S.D. = 14.8) in U.S. sample. A *t*-test for comparison of two means shows that the difference is significant at $p < .01$ ($t > 2.58$).

Music Style

We found a significant difference in music style between D.R. commercials for international brands and those for domestic brands ($\chi^2 = 42$, d.f. = 5, $p < .001$). H3(a), that domestic brand advertisers use Latin background music in their commercials more often than international brand advertisers, is supported. Only one international brand advertiser used Latin background music without lyrics versus 12 (10.9%) domestic brand advertisers (see Table 3). H3(b), that domestic brand advertisers use lyrics with Latin music more often than international brand advertisers, is also supported. Nineteen (17.2%) of domestic brand advertisers used Latin music with lyrics versus two (2.6%) international brand advertisers. Indeed, 28.1% of domestic brand advertisers in the D.R. used Latin music (with and without lyrics) versus only 3.9% of

international brand advertisers.

No predictions were made about the tempo of background music containing no lyrics, but D.R. commercials for international and domestic brands appear to differ in music tempo: 41.6% of international brand advertisers used fast tempo/non-Latin background music versus 20.9% of domestic brand advertisers. However, only 32.5% of international brand advertisers used slow tempo (soft melody)/non-Latin background music versus 40% of domestic brand advertisers.

Product Meanings in Lyrics

H4, that commercials run in the U.S. contain more lyrics with product-related meanings than commercials run in the D.R., is supported ($\chi^2 = 5.9$, d.f. = 1, $p = .02$). Table 4 shows that lyrics in commercials run in the U.S. made more frequent reference to product attributes and the functional consequence of product use (82%) than lyrics in commercials run in the D.R. (60%). Moreover, 40% of lyrics in D.R. commercials made reference to psychosocial consequences of product use versus 18% of lyrics in U.S. commercials. If we further subcategorize product meanings in lyrics,

Table 2
Frequency of Music and Lyrics in D.R. and U.S. Commercials

Commercial Category	D.R. (N=193)		U.S. (N=336)	
	No.	%	No.	%
1) No music	11	5.7	52	15.5
2) Music background only	121	62.2	223	66.4
3) Music slogan only	5	2.6	8	2.3
4) Music background and slogan	14	7.2	10	3.0
5) Music w/lyrics < half commercial	4	2.1	16	4.7
6) Music w/lyrics and slogan < half commercial	9	4.7	9	2.7
7) Music w/lyrics > half commercial	5	2.6	5	1.5
8) Music w/lyrics and slogan > half commercial	24	12.4	13	3.9

$\chi^2 = 30.8$, d.f. = 7, $p < .0002$.

Table 3
Brand Country of Origin Effects on Music and Lyrics for Commercials Run in Dominican Republic

Type of Music	International Brands (N=77)		Dominican Brands (N=111)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Latin/lyrics	2	2.6	19	17.2
Non-Latin/lyrics	16	20.8	7	6.4
Latin/no lyrics	1	1.3	12	10.9
Fast tempo/non-Latin/no lyrics	32	41.6	23	20.9
Slow tempo(soft melody)/non-Latin/no lyrics	25	32.5	44	40.0
Other	1	1.3	6	5.5

$\chi^2 = 42$, d.f. = 5, $p < 0.001$.

five of 50 lyrics in commercials run in the U.S. made reference to a concrete attribute but none of the D.R. lyrics did so.

Commercials run in the D.R. and the U.S. were coded into 14 product categories (see Table 5). Those run in the U.S. featured mainly food (20.8%), autos (15.5%), and personal care products (10.7%). Those run in the D.R. most commonly featured retail stores (16.1%), food (10.4%), and personal care products (10.4%).

Overall, the data support the notion that the use of music and lyrics is more prevalent in commercials run in the D.R. than in those run in the U.S., although both music and lyrics are common in the

sample of U.S. commercials. In the D.R., domestic brand advertisers are more likely than international brand advertisers to use Latin music in their commercials. The product meanings contained in lyrics differ between the U.S. and D.R. commercials. Specifically, lyrics in commercials run in the D.R. include more abstract self-related meanings and those in commercials run in the U.S. contain more direct product-related meanings.

Discussion

Our findings provide support for the notion that music plays a prominent role in the creative execu-

Table 4
Levels of Product Meaning in Lyrics of D.R. and U.S. Commercials

Type of Meaning	D.R. (N=50)		U.S. (N=50)*	
	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Product Meanings</i>	30	60	41	82
Concrete attributes	0		5	
Abstract attributes	15		18	
Functional consequences	15		18	
<i>Psychosocial Consequences</i>	20	40	9	18

$\chi^2 = 5.9$, d.f. = 1, $p < .02$.

* Two U.S. commercial lyrics were not codable into the above categories.

Table 5
Breakdown of Commercials by Product Category and Country of Origin

Product Category	D.R. (N=193)		U.S. (N=336)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Food	20	10.4	70	20.8
Personal care	20	10.4	36	10.7
Retail	31	16.1	26	7.7
Ethical drugs	8	4.1	23	6.8
Restaurants	7	3.6	22	6.5
Auto	14	7.3	52	15.5
Alcohol	19	9.8	3	.9
Household	18	9.3	14	4.2
Pet food	0	0	5	1.5
Media (mags, newspapers etc)	6	3.1	2	.6
Bank	11	5.7	16	4.8
Utilities	11	5.7	14	4.2
Corporate	9	4.7	11	3.3
Other	19	9.8	42	12.5

tions of commercials run in the Dominican Republic. In comparison with commercials run in the U.S., those run in the D.R. are more likely to contain music, to have lyrics, to have extensive lyrics, and to have self-related meanings. Hence, there are systematic differences in the kinds of information carried by music and lyrics in the two countries. The difference in the number of lyrics suggests a difference in processing of information in a musical context. Our findings are consistent with and lend support to a theory of music

that incorporates culture as a key element. They do not fit well with present conceptualizations of music based on classical conditioning or affect response theories that posit global and invariant effects of music across all populations.

To date research on music in advertising, based on the classical conditioning and affective response approaches, has not included cross-cultural studies. That is a significant omission, as none of the studies explicitly acknowledge that the findings reported can-

not be generalized beyond the United States. The limitations of student samples are sometimes addressed, but are often glossed over by the claim that the processes under investigation are not affected by demographic factors. That is a dubious assumption if one accepts the experience of advertising practitioners who claim that younger viewers prefer fast-paced music. Nonetheless, we are informed with confidence that "the natural or preferred pace for music tends to exist somewhere between about 70 and 100 beats per minute" (Holbrook and Anand 1992). When we speak of "fast" or "slow" tempo in the U.S., we do not know that a similar calibration will apply in other cultures. Preferred music tempo is clearly a cultural behavior learned as a result of exposure to particular music forms. What is perceived as fast tempo in one culture may be perceived as slow in another.

The extent to which even our research metaphors for music are culture bound and thus influence the construction of our experiments is revealed in the way Latin and U.S. cultures view the notion of "heat" in music. Latin music is commonly described as "hot" or "sizzling." In the U.S. we speak of "warmth" in advertising. How does "heat" relate to the happy/sad dimension frequently associated with fast tempo? The answer is not clear. Similarly, because the classical conditioning and affect response models of music ignore the semantic or significative content in music, lyrics have been neglected in consumer research. Nonetheless the literature continues to report experiments that are generalized beyond the U.S. condition to the human condition. The implicit generalization is problematic because all peoples' response to music is assumed to be similar to that of late twentieth century North Americans. It thus represents a systematic bias in the literature and affects even the design of our experiments.

Our data suggest that even within the D.R., commercials for domestic brands may differ in important respects from commercials for international brands. Specifically, the use of music, Latin or non-Latin, varies with the country of origin of the advertised brand. Thus, commercials run in the D.R. for domestic brands are different not only from commercials run in the U.S., but also from commercials in Spanish run in the D.R. for international brands. Although most of the international commercials are produced outside North America, many are produced by U.S.-owned advertising agencies based in Argentina or Puerto Rico. The international commercials thus reflect aspects of both North American and Latin culture, but cannot replicate the indigenous culture of

each specific Latin American country. Indeed, commercials produced in, say, Argentina or Puerto Rico for their domestic markets may differ in formal features from those produced for a pan-Latin American audience. Learned ways of music production and assumptions about audience response to music are likely to be culture specific. Past research in international advertising has not distinguished between the content of domestic and international brand advertising within a country. The purest expression of home cultural values is likely to be found in commercials for domestic rather than international brands and research that neglects that distinction may miss significant cultural aspects of a country's domestic advertising.

Furthermore, content analysis studies of commercials in international advertising research address content areas that are emphasized by our psychological models of advertising and that are typically studied in the U.S. — the verbal message (e.g., Johnstone, Kaynak, and Sparkman 1987; Zampour, Chang, and Catalano 1992) and to a much lesser extent the visual setting (Childers and Houston 1984; Mitchell 1986). Ethnocentric approaches from a U.S. perspective may underdocument commercial content in a different culture because symbolic forms of communication such as music and lyrics may not be considered to contain semantic content and hence may be underrepresented.

Our findings are descriptive, not normative. To say that music plays a larger role in commercials run in the D.R. than in those run in the U.S. is not to claim that commercials with music are more effective in the Dominican Republic. However, the collective industry experience of Dominican advertisers leads them to believe that extensive use of music and lyrics is very effective for their target audience. Our findings certainly suggest that lyrics in the Dominican Republic, and perhaps even in the U.S., play a much greater role in carrying symbolic product information than current perspectives among advertising scholars would suggest.

Our findings demonstrate that future research on music in advertising would benefit greatly from broadening of theoretical and methodological approaches. Present psychological theories need to be supplemented with sociological approaches to the study of music whereby historical, political, economic, and cultural perspectives can be acknowledged and accounted for in the study of music in advertising. Music is symbolic communication that receives its meaning from the context within which it is perceived. Interpretive approaches such as those used by Sherry and

Camargo (1987) offer many advantages over psychological approaches to the study of the role of music across cultures. First, interpretive approaches explicitly acknowledge the role of culture in music and do not treat culture as a mere background variable. Second, interpretive approaches examine music as it is actually used in society rather than stripping music of its natural richness for experimental manipulation. Naturalistic inquiry, for example, provides a method for thematic analysis of the lyrical content of music. Third, interpretive approaches afford more opportunity for generating theoretical insights into music because their paradigm assumptions are less restrictive than those of psychological approaches. Fourth, a greater openness to the insights and cultural knowledge of foreign consumers is possible because such input is sought in the interpretive method.

Generalizing our findings from the D.R. to other countries in Latin America would be premature. We chose the Dominican Republic as a purposive sampling opportunity because it has a strong indigenous programming environment not dominated by U.S. media influence. We expected more Latin music in that country than in more economically developed Latin countries that have more open economies and perhaps more exposure to foreign media. We studiously avoid using the word "Hispanic" because of the tremendous cultural differences among Latin American countries. Many researchers who readily take for granted the notion that European French culture is very different from European German culture are surprised that Venezuelan culture is equally different from Brazilian (the two countries do not even have a common language!). Similarly, the island of Hispaniola, one third of which is Haiti and two thirds of which is the Dominican Republic, is smaller than the state of West Virginia yet the two countries speak different languages—French and Spanish, respectively—and are very different in racial makeup and history. Future research clearly must address both similarities and differences in the advertising environments of Latin cultures before we can speak confidently of *Latin advertising*.

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