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# BEHAVIOURAL EVOLUTION IN POPULAR MUSIC: THE TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL TO NEW MEDIA CONTEXTS IN RECORDED MUSIC DISCOVERY

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ABSTRACT

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# ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the construct of music discovery. Music discovery is the behavioural process consumers employ when encountering new music for the first time and what leads them to act on this new discovery. On reviewing literature around music and discovery and exploring this abstract idea, it was found that there is a gap in theory surrounding this context and situation in psychology and consumer behaviour fields. The dissertation is a qualitative examination employing the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) to observe, record and thematically analyse participant responses in or to the discovery moment.

The gap identified in the literature is context of music discovery. The literature review examines the foremost construct of the dissertation, being consumption contexts. Consumption context is defined as the situation, environment, setting or disposition the consumer is placed in before or after consumption which gives clarity or meaning to their behaviour. A consumer's contextual stance can be observed detailing their prior behaviour influencing current choices in the behavioural perspectives model (BPM). Consumption context is often measured through the pleasure-arousal-dominance (PAD) model. Critics of the PAD model believe correlation is not clear evidence of predictive behaviour and the model was internally focussed and did not capture the full scope of situational, or contextual variables, that are possible.

The literature is reviewed for the background of music consumption contexts. Here, it is shown that little research looks at why consumers came to listen to certain music in the first place. Music consumption is rooted in a phenomenological hedonic consumption paradigm. Reviewing music consumption literature revealed many side-lined contextual variables which informed the thematic analysis of this dissertation. The differences between music discovery through traditional and new media highlights key conceptual differences between technological, discovery and consumption contexts. Behavioural processes within the 'discovery moment' include active, passive, private and social discovery as well as elements of consumer control and consumption anticipation.

In the research design, the theoretical framework reasons, from applicable literature, that measuring contextual effects would be best accomplished from obtained PAD measurements from participants for the discovery context. As the PAD model is based upon the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model, thus the S-O-R model of behaviour would be an applicable framework. But, in order to quantify these emotional states, an understanding of the music discovery context is needed. I concluded that the context of music discovery was firstly needed to be understood, qualitatively, before applying quantitative methods. As such, a mixed-method approach would later be employed. ESM was then identified as an applicable methodology and thematic analysis was conducted on participant responses to analyse the discovery context.

Music discovery is a relatively new concept within a consumer behaviour or consumer culture theory. Music discovery, as defined as a sub-category of the broader construct of hedonic discovery, is a music metastimulus response interrelated to the discovery situation and behavioural context of the consumer. Discovery is neither simply selecting nor finding music.

Findings conclude that music discovery is far easier in transitioning from traditional to new media, as consumers employ new media to identify and acquire music found in traditional media. Music on new media is highly salient, whereas traditional media only reinforces candidate music until salience is reached. Policy recommendations include wide-spread digital aggregation of new vulnerable music to improve discovery.

Through examination of music discovery as one category of content and as a lens to understand the discovery process, other entertainment could be explored. Further research is suggested to confirm findings and to build a theory of an encompassing *hedonic discovery.*

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