

IMPACT OF AUDIO JINGLES ON ONLINE CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT IN SRI LANKAN CONTEXT

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Abstract: Branding has developed to a level that consumers are no longer just consumers but brand enthusiasts. Brands greatly incorporate visual branding strategies into their branding schemes but rarely incorporate and continue using sonic branding strategies that elevate brand recognition and create an emotional connection with the brand which leads to increased consumer engagement. (Jackson & Jankovich, 2013). Out of all sonic branding tools, audio jingles are a powerful branding tool that is often ignored by most of the brands in Sri Lanka because of the absence of academic resources regarding the subject and the lack of knowledge about the positive impacts of audio jingles. On the contrary, the brands that incorporate audio jingles in their branding schemes have evidently shown many positive impacts including elevated online consumer engagement. (R. Perera, personal communication, September 14, 2022). In this study, five top television commercial audio jingles that have ever been made in Sri Lanka based on the recommendation of four industry experts are selected and analysed in accordance with 'Ghuneim's typology of engagement', which is a framework that has been developed to measure online consumer engagement. This analysis reveals the capability of audio jingles to gain very high levels of consumer engagement, thus confirming the power of audio jingles to perform as an effective branding tool.

Keywords: Audio Branding, Effectiveness, Engagement, Jingle

1. Introduction

The use of audio jingles have become increasingly important in the world of marketing and advertising. According to Jackson (2003), audio jingles are short, catchy tunes or phrases used to promote a brand, product or service. They are designed to be memorable and easily recognizable, making them a powerful tool for creating brand awareness and increasing consumer engagement.

With the growth of e-commerce, the use of audio jingles has become even more important in online marketing strategies. (Terol, 2019). In the Sri Lankan context, where online consumer engagement is still in its early stages, it is important to explore the impact of audio jingles on online consumer engagement.

This study aims to investigate the impacts of audio jingles in television commercials on online consumer engagement so that it helps relevant personnel such as marketing and brand managers, advertising agencies, and communication consultants to develop communication strategies for brands and also, any person who conducts research on the above topic or studies about it.

The use of audio jingles is a relatively modern concept in the Sri Lankan market, and there is limited research on their impact on online consumer engagement. This study will contribute to the academic literature on the impact of audio jingles on online consumer engagement and provide valuable insights for marketers and advertisers in Sri Lanka.

The findings of this study will help marketers and advertisers in Sri Lanka to better understand the role of audio jingles in online marketing campaigns and develop more effective marketing strategies to engage with consumers online. Additionally, this study will contribute to the broader field of marketing and advertising by providing new insights into the impact of audio jingles on consumer engagement in an emerging market context.

1.2. WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE

An audio jingle is a short piece of music that is specifically created to communicate information about a product or service. (The sound agency, 2015). It is typically used in advertising and marketing campaigns and is designed to be catchy and memorable. Audio jingles can be heard on television and radio commercials, as well as in digital space. As Boule (2015), explains, they are often used to create brand awareness and to help consumers remember specific

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FARU Journal: Volume 10 Issue 1 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4038/faruj.v10i1.194>

aspects of a product or service. Audio jingles can be sung or instrumental and can be created in a variety of styles to appeal to particular audiences. When creating an audio jingle, companies will often put a lot of thought into the lyrics and melody to ensure that it effectively communicates the message they want to send. (Appleby, 2016). For example, a jingle for a car brand might use lyrics that emphasize speed and performance, while a jingle for a fast food restaurant might focus on convenience and affordability. Furthermore, audio jingles can be customized to target specific demographics, such as age, gender, or location. This allows companies to communicate their message in a way that is most likely to resonate with their target audience. (Huron, 1989).

2. Tracing the Roots

When it comes to sound branding, audio jingles can be regarded as the first sales pitch. Jingles were first born into the world during the 1500s and 1600s. Audio jingles were invented by shop owners on the streets of London. These shop owners sang short musical chunks to the people walking on the streets. They were singing about the products that they were selling. These people have engaged in sound branding even before the beginning of branding. (Jackson & Jankovich, 2013)

Audio jingles were widely dispersed into the world through the radio as a touchpoint. According to Jackson (2003), audio jingles are “Short, catchy tunes”. Usually, they consist of verses that rhyme and they help the consumers to remember particular aspects of the brand regarding their products or services. In the 1920s, the radio became the most effective method to play audio jingles. Jackson (2003), introduces audio jingles as “a peak point in cultural sophistication”. Audio jingles have played a major role in the advertising industry for a very long time. Further, he explains that audio jingles consist of emotions, ‘trust and belief’. The first ever audio jingle that was recorded was named “Have you tried Wheaties?” by General Mills. This was recorded in 1926. (Jackson, Jankovich & Sheinkop, 2013)

During the 1960s to 1980s audio jingles developed into full songs which were recorded by popular artists. Brands like Coca-cola hired popular Artists like The New Seeker, Marvin Gaye etc. (Jackson, 2003).

Zander & Kapp (2007), stress the fact that audio jingles, audio logos and commercial songs have the ability to shape the nature of a particular advertisement. Moreover, audio jingles and commercial songs have the ability to increase the memory recall of a particular advertisement, (Wallace, 1994), which is essential for brands to maximise their consumer engagement.

3. Online consumer engagement in branding

The process of maintaining strong connections with the consumer that ultimately results in consumers buying products or services and participating in and maintaining interactions with the business is known as consumer engagement. (Forrester Consulting, 2007). Consumer engagement is divided into two categories such as online consumer engagement and offline consumer engagement. Online consumer engagement is the connections that the consumer maintains over the internet via forums, blogs, social media, and other platforms while offline consumer engagement refers to the physical interactions maintained with the business (Newman, 2022).

In conclusion, this study will contribute new knowledge regarding the impacts of audio jingles which cannot be found in written format within the Sri Lankan context. Thus, this study will be important to any individual that considers creating, studying, or conducting research about audio jingles in television advertisements.

The research will be conducted only regarding audio jingles among many aspects of audio branding such as sonic logos, soundscapes, product sounds, brand voice etc. The research design can be applied to other aspects of audio branding as well. The primary data collection will be done within the geographic boundary of Sri Lanka. The brand communication touchpoint used for the study is television commercials. It is possible to conduct further studies across other touchpoints apart from television commercials as well. Finally, online consumer engagement is analysed by only confining to “Youtube” because it is the most convenient platform for consumers to watch the selected advertisements.

4. Methodology

The ultimate aim of the study is to evaluate consumer engagement which will emerge due to the audio jingles in television commercials. Since ‘consumer engagement’ has been studied over the years, an already developed framework has been used academically to evaluate consumer engagement. A deductive research approach is used in this study by using Ghuneim’s typology of engagement (Degrees of engagement).

In this study, Youtube was selected as the platform to evaluate online consumer engagement of the selected five TV commercial audio jingles because Youtube is the only convenient platform to access advertisements that aired about a couple of decades ago on Sri Lankan television. For the chosen five advertisements uploaded to Youtube, the

first 100 comments or the available comments (less than 100) given by the viewers of those videos were chosen to analyse based on convenience. Thus, a convenient sample was adopted.

Youtube comment analysis was done in the form of content analysis which means the comments gathered from Youtube are analysed quantitatively as percentages. Here the information such as the percentage of positive comments in general, the percentage of positive comments regarding the audio jingle, and the number of contents created based on the original jingle such as the number of fan-made videos, number of cover songs and number of remixes are analysed deductively by using Ghuneim's topology of engagement to measure the level of consumer engagement for the selected advertisements. Here, the positive comments are separately identified by taking note of any specific words, phrases, or expressions that indicate a positive sentiment. As an example, positive comments often included words like "great", "love", "amazing" and "awesome" or expressions of appreciation and support. Similarly, the positive comments regarding the audio jingle are the ones that express a positive sentiment about the audio jingle.

4.1 GHUNEIM'S TYPOLOGY OF ENGAGEMENT

'Ghuneim's typology of engagement' or the degrees of engagement introduced by Mark Ghuneim is a way to quantify or evaluate online consumer engagement. In this framework, the levels of social engagement are categorised as 'low, medium, high and highest'. Figure 1, shows the levels of consumer engagement and the actions performed by the consumer related to that particular level of consumer engagement.

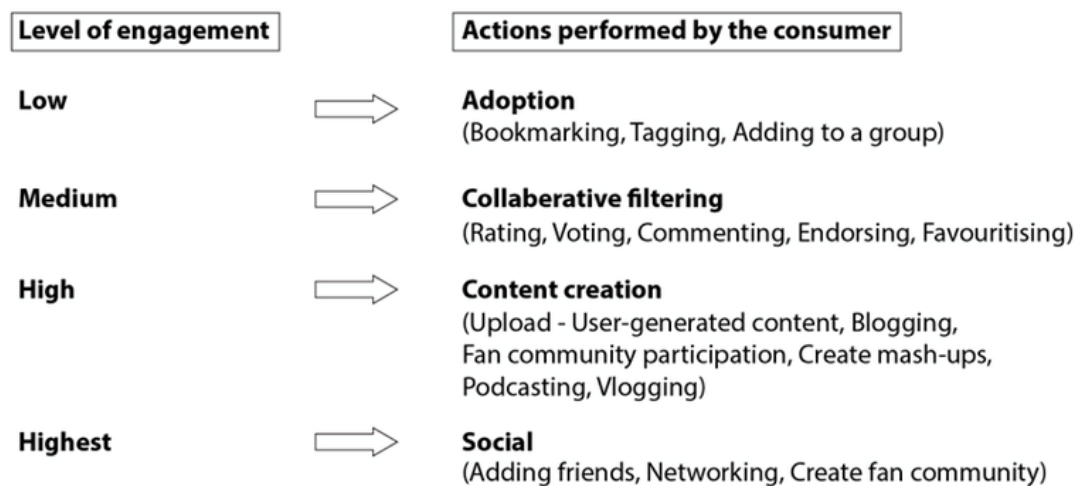


Figure 1, Ghuneim's typology of engagement (*Source: Ghuneim, 2008*)

By referring to the above diagram, the actions performed by the consumer in the online space within "Youtube" are considered and tabulated. As an example, if the audio jingles have gained comparatively a large amount of comments it is considered as a medium level of consumer engagement and if content such as mash-ups and other videos are created, inspired by the original audio jingle, it is concluded as a high level of consumer engagement. Since Youtube only accommodates these actions, only medium and high levels of consumer engagement can be measured with this method.

5. The Analysis and Discussion

In this section, five advertisements that contain audio jingles have been chosen and analysed in accordance with Ghuneim's typology of engagement. The five TV commercial audio jingles selected for analysis in this chapter are based on the recommendations of industry experts as discussed above. The selected audio jingles for the analysis are;

1. Api wenuwen api – Defense Ministry of Sri Lanka
2. Heta dawase weerayo - Ceylinko Life
3. Obamai ma hadawathe - Kandos
4. Mangala mudu mala walalu - Vogue Jewellers
5. Sunlight redi sodana saban kate – Sunlight

'Api wenuwen api' campaign jingle was one of the best and the most influential jingles ever created in Sri Lanka. This jingle describes the humanity and the charm of the members of the Sri Lankan military. The impact of that jingle was very high that the perception of the forces in Sri Lanka in the minds of the people totally altered. More and more young civilians started joining the forces after the launch of that campaign. Furthermore, people started to grow an inevitable affection for the forces. The love, respect, and affection for the people in the forces escalated suddenly and immensely. (R. Perera, personal communication, September 14, 2022).

Table 1, “Api wenuwen api” in accord with Ghuneim’s typology of engagement

Jingle - “Api wenuwen api” Client - Defence Ministry of Sri Lanka Video source - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=con5Z_iGp7o&t=2s			
Level of engagement	Actions performed by the consumer		
Medium	Collaborative filtering		
	246 Total comments	100% overall positive comments	29% positive comments regarding the audio jingle
High	Content creation		
	14 Fan-made videos	29 cover songs	

(Source: Author)

According to Ghuneim’s typology of engagement, if a consumer has performed actions such as “rating, voting, commenting, endorsing and favouriting” to particular content, that content has surpassed the medium level of consumer engagement. On Youtube, out of these actions, comments are the activities that can be analysed because other actions are not accommodated on Youtube. Accordingly, in Table 1, out of the 246 comments received for the advertisement, 29% of positive comments are regarding the audio jingle of the advertisement. Not only that, a comparatively high amount of content has been created on Youtube based upon the original video such as 14 Fan-made videos and 29 cover songs. Therefore, it can be concluded that this audio jingle has achieved a ‘high’ level of consumer engagement according to Ghuneim’s typology of engagement.

Another influential audio jingle which was made in Sri Lanka is the ‘Ceylinco Life Pranama’ audio jingle also known as ‘Heta dawase weerayo’ jingle. This jingle describes the enthusiasm of children to be successful in the future and create a better country when they grow older. This audio jingle had a great impact on both parents and children in the 90s. It can be considered one of the most nostalgic jingles that have ever been made. The consumer engagement gained by this jingle was so massive that many cover songs are being made by the fan community. (R. Perera, personal communication, September 14, 2022).

Table 2, “Heta dawase weerayo” in accord with Ghuneim’s typology of engagement

Jingle - “Heta Dawase Weerayo” Client - Ceylinco Life Video source - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIIBVgn6owE			
Level of engagement	Actions performed by the consumer		
Medium	Collaborative filtering		
	113 Total comments	100% overall positive comments	28.6% positive comments regarding the audio jingle
High	Content creation		
	34 Fan-made videos	33 cover songs	17 remixes

(Source: Author)

When analysing in accordance with Ghuneim’s typology of engagement, this particular audio jingle also has been able to achieve a medium level of engagement because it has gained a total of 113 comments and out of this, 28.6% are positive comments regarding the audio jingle. Also, without a doubt, it can be stated that this jingle has also achieved a ‘high’ level of engagement because consumers have replicated the jingle in the form of 34 Fan-made videos, 33 cover songs and 17 remixes of the original jingle.

Kandos 'Obamai ma hadawathe' is another impactful audio jingle that was aired on television in the late 90s. The melody for this jingle was adopted from a Western song named "Sweet, sweet smile" by the Carpenters. This jingle elaborates on the youthfulness, laughter, joy and togetherness which emerge through Kandos Chocolate. This advertisement immediately became famous when it started airing on television. (U. Tennakoon, personal communication, September 16, 2022).

Table 3, "Obamai ma hadawathe" in accord with Kirkpatrick's levels of engagement

Jingle - "Obamai ma hadawathe" Client - Kandos Video source - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_CVjAwOndI			
Level of engagement	Actions performed by the consumer		
Medium	Collaborative filtering		
	99 Total comments	100% overall positive comments	18.4% positive comments regarding the audio jingle
High	Content creation		
	2 cover songs		

(Source: Author)

"Obamai ma hadawathe" jingle, in accordance with Ghuneim's typology of engagement, has reached a medium level of consumer engagement by receiving 99 total comments and 18.4% positive comments regarding the audio jingle. Comparative to the previous audio jingles these numbers are less but still it has achieved a medium level of engagement. Again, the content creation relating to this audio jingle confines to only 2 cover songs inspired by the original jingle. Even though this number is also comparatively less, since the jingle has influenced the consumer to a level where cover songs are made, it can be stated that the jingle has slightly achieved a high level of consumer engagement.

The jingle 'Mangala mudu mala walalu' sung by Sonu Nigam for Vogue Jewellers was also immediately became famous. This jingle shows how trustworthy and reputable the jewellery shop known as "Vogue Jewellers" is. This jingle attracted consumers immensely because of a couple of reasons. Firstly, it was sung by the great Bollywood singer Sonu Nigam who is loved by thousands of Bollywood fans in Sri Lanka. Secondly, this jingle was a remake of the original jingle which played to the original tune years ago. This jingle was a direct tool to recall memories of that original jingle. (S. Amunukanda, personal communication, September 17, 2022).

Table 4, "Mangala mudu mala walalu" in accord with Ghuneim's typology of engagement

Jingle - "Mangala mudu mala walalu" Client - Vogue Jewellers Video source - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Epvnm42a8x0			
Level of engagement	Actions performed by the consumer		
Medium	Collaborative filtering		
	78 Total comments	98% overall positive comments	40.8% positive comments regarding the audio jingle
High	Content creation		
	48 Fan-made videos	8 cover songs	6 remixes

(Source: Author)

The "Mangala mudu mala walalu" jingle has also surpassed a medium level of consumer engagement when analysing it in accordance with Ghuneim's typology of engagement. It has gained a total of 78 comments and 40.8%

comments out of them are positive comments regarding the audio jingle. Not only that this jingle has also reached a high level of consumer engagement since there is an astounding number of 48 fan-made videos, 8 cover songs and 6 remixes which have been made by the influence of the original audio jingle.

According to (N. Kumarihamy, personal communication, September 18, 2022), the Sunlight audio jingle was also one of the most successful jingles ever because it was able to attract many consumers towards the brand. It became so successful that the clients approached advertising agencies asking for an audio jingle similar to the Sunlight audio jingle. This jingle is a short catchy jingle which explains the product “Sunlight soap” in a simple and harmonious manner.

Table 5, “Sunlight redi sodana saban kate” in accord with Ghuneim’s typology of engagement

Jingle - “Sunlight redi sodana saban kate” Client - Sunlight Video source - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_bljSRicxM&t=1s			
Level of engagement	Actions performed by the consumer		
Medium	Collaborative filtering		
	99 Total comments	100% overall positive comments	16.2% positive comments regarding the audio jingle
High	Content creation		
	7 Fan-made videos		1 cover song

(Source: Author)

“Sunlight redi sodana saban kate” audio jingle has apparently reached a medium level of consumer engagement when analysing it in accordance with Ghuneim’s typology of engagement since it has gained a total of 99 comments through Youtube and 16.2% of the positive comments are regarding the audio jingle. It has also slightly reached a high level of consumer engagement because 7 fan-made videos and a cover song have been made inspired by the original jingle. Comparative to the jingles that were discussed earlier these numbers are slightly low. However, it is evident that it has reached a high level of engagement according to Ghuneim’s degrees of engagement.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

According to this analysis, it is evident that audio jingles are a branding tool that has the capability of gaining higher levels of consumer engagement. According to Ghuneim’s typology of engagement, the analyzed audio jingles have achieved medium and higher levels of consumer engagement easily. According to Ghuneim, these audio jingles have achieved a medium level of engagement because comparatively a high number of people have engaged with them on Youtube by commenting on those videos and a considerable percentage of those comments are positive comments regarding the audio jingle. Also, according to Ghuneim’s typology of engagement, these jingles have achieved a high level of engagement because people have created content such as cover songs, fan-made videos and remixes based upon the original jingle.

By considering these levels of engagement, it can be concluded that audio jingles in television commercials have the ability to reach their target audience in unexpected ways. The results from this study portray the ability of audio jingles to perform as a great branding tool. Therefore, when creating communication strategies for brands, relevant personnel should focus on creating the right audio jingles along with other branding strategies. This study proves the power of audio jingles, hence they should be used along with visual branding.

In this study, due to several limitations such as confidentiality and unavailability, the authors could not gather statistical data from relevant brands about their performance after releasing audio jingles. Therefore, the authors recommend studying and analysing those data as well to anyone willing to continue research regarding this topic.

Also, successful sonic branding consists of some more aspects apart from audio jingles such as brand voice, product sounds, soundscapes, sonic logos etc. In order to successfully incorporate sonic strategies brands should consider all these sonic branding aspects. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted regarding these aspects as well.

Finally, this research is focused on television commercials as a touchpoint for audio jingles. Further research can be conducted regarding other touchpoints such as radio, social media, telephone, mobile apps etc. to reveal more information about audio jingles and sonic branding and how they impact the consumer.

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