

Christmas shopping left you broke? Blame the festive music

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Have you done your Christmas shopping yet? Has the incessant Christmas music in shops started to get on your nerves?

Well, however many times you've heard *All I Want For Christmas* or *Jingle Bell Rock* in recent weeks, research from Royal Holloway shows that these songs will make you want to put your hand in your pocket and spend that little bit more on the high street.

"Festive jingles are force-fed to Christmas shoppers in a bid to change their mood, influence their sense of time and what sort of products they buy. In other words, this is an attempt to manipulate your [shopping habits](#) in a way that you might barely be aware of", said Dr Alan

Bradshaw, Senior Lecturer in Marketing at Royal Holloway.

"Often we are told that we have the freedom to choose where we want to shop, but during Christmas the use of music in this way is so ubiquitous that our freedom to choose disappears."

Dr Bradshaw, from the School of Management at Royal Holloway, and Professor Morris B. Holbrook, from Columbia University, investigated the idea of culture being imposed on consumers.

They found that examples based on the use of [background music](#), or "Muzak", support concerns that culture is degraded by marketers as a means of social control.

Many retailers have been found to "dumb down" the [music](#), to ensure the customer is at ease and is subconsciously influenced. "Not only is this bad for musicians and the dignity of their work, representing a triumph of commercial greed over artistic creativity, but it can have negative [social implications](#) such as promoting a culture of non-listening", said Dr Bradshaw. "Whether you've finished your [Christmas shopping](#) or not, it's important for us all to be more aware of what we are listening to!"

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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