Chapter 9

# Multisensory Dimensions as Interdisciplinary Study:
## Sensory Destination Branding and Post-Pandemic Scenario

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## ABSTRACT

*The multisensory dimensions of a destination, which are important for establishing an emotional connection between a visitor and a place, can be used and managed to create a sensory destination brand. Considering the destination's multisensory dimensions, this chapter focuses on the conceptualization of sensescapes, starting from multidisciplinary perspectives to sensory experiences in a post-pandemic context. It provides theoretical support for the research of the sensory tourist experience and how internal marketing contributes to improving multisensory experiences. It explores how human senses affect individuals' perception of the external environment which further affects emotional and behavioral responses. Finally, it provides implications for the marketing and management of tourist destinations, planning and management of territorial spaces, and finally sensory destination branding in post-pandemic scenarios. In conclusion, the literature review is presented as a conceptual framework that highlights the multisensory stimuli in experiencing destinations.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In tourism marketing, the exploration of sensory elements is related to destinations, and they positively affect customer loyalty and ensure destinations' competitiveness (Kirillova et al., 2014; Agapito et al., 2017). Besides sight, there are other senses that are related to specific places or are spatially determined and defined by the concept of sensescapes, i.e., visualscapes, smellscapes, soundscapes, tastescapes and haptiscapes (Porteous, 1985; Dan & Jacobsen, 2003). Through the five human senses, we receive sensory information from the environment. In return, our perception, memory, and emotions are affected but the focus is on people-place interplay that involves multisensory experiences (Krishna, 2010, 2012; Kastenholz et al., 2012; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017). Therefore, senses can be researched separately to illustrate a destination's sensory features and can be useful in the management field (Agapito et al., 2014; Pan & Ryan, 2009). For instance, tourist destinations may hold unique sensory features that can serve the purposes of destination communication and segmentation (Agapito et al., 2014).

The term "sense" can be interpreted in more than one way, meaning that both "sense" and "senses" refer to seeking new information and comprehending our surroundings, and serve both as a source of information and an intermediary of human experience (Rodoway, 1994). However, in this study, the term "sense" is referred to five sensory abilities, i.e. hearing, smell, touch, taste, and sight. The more abstract idea behind "sensescapes" (Porteous, 1985) refers to the multisensory experiences of the external world, where each sensory dimension is particularized; landscapes or visualscapes for sight experience, soundscapes or hearingscape for auditory experience, smellscape for olfactory experience, tastescape for gustatory experience and haptiscapes for touch experience (Agapito et al., 2016). Hence, marketing tourist experiences highlights the relevancy of stimulating these five senses to be able to reach tourists' hearts and minds (Agapito et al., 2013), especially because tourist destinations may be characterized by unique sensory dimension(s) that can encourage marketing of attractive tourist experience (Agapito et al., 2014). Moreover, the visitors' experience addresses a global destination's consumption experience (Andersson, 2007; Morgan et al., 2009; Mossberg, 2007; Neuhofer et al., 2012; Quan & Wang, 2004). In general, it is perceived as very complex, developed, and shared by tourists, service providers, and the local community, and is featured by specific destination attributes and resources that make a significant contribution to the latter (Kastenholz et al., 2012). In this paper, the idea of tourist experience reflects managerial implications. In the eyes of a tourist, experiencing a destination is an individual process and is usually influenced by different factors, but tourism managers can participate in the creation of the right environment, facilitating a positive tourist experience (Tung & Ritchie, 2011a).

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