


Chapter 11

The Power of Perception: Exploring the Influence of Sensory Marketing on Consumer Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the influence of sensory marketing on consumer's behavior, specifically looking into the effect of each sense element on consumer's perception, emotion, and decision-making process. To carry out this study, a qualitative study was conducted using structured interviews from creativity and business innovation students from a Portuguese HEI. The main results show that personal sensory elements have a substantial effect on consumer behavior. Visual elements, such as colours and store layouts, make the shopping experience for consumers richer, while sounds—especially background music—are linked to positive feelings and enhanced moods in consumers. The influence of smells differs, with some participants claiming they are greatly affected by it. The power to touch and feel products is a fundamental need for everyone, particularly when assessing certain aspects such as quality. The taste element, which is not mentioned often, has significance in certain situations like buying food-related items.

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INTRODUCTION

Sensory marketing is a thoughtful method and approach where the five human senses are employed to impact consumers' perceptions and behaviour, is becoming increasingly relevant in today's business practices (Krishna 2012). The key goal of this marketing technique is to make an overall experience that deeply connects with customers at an emotional level for better business recollection and loyalty (Hultén 2011).

Sensory marketing is based on the idea that human senses have a strong influence over consumer experiences and their decision-making processes. For example, we can look at visual factors including colour, light and design and how they greatly affect the way a consumer perceives a brand and/or product (Elder & Krishna, 2010). Furthermore, music and sound effects known as auditory cues, that may be playing in the background or simply by being in the surroundings, can impact consumer's moods and purchasing behaviour (Biswas et al., 2019).

Nowadays, with markets becoming more competitive and products/services having similar quality and price, businesses are forced to find ways to distinguish themselves from the rest, and out-perform their competition. This is precisely why we are witnessing an increase in the usage and application of sensory marketing strategies, as companies have the need to set themselves apart. By involving and engaging several senses simultaneously, companies can create special and unique experiences that stand out and are easily recallable by consumers (Spence, 2012). This approach not only has the ability to enhance the general customer experience, but also develops a deeper emotional relationship between the buyer and brand (Hultén et al., 2009).

Moreover, in the rapidly changing market, not only of sensory market, but also the general market in which companies operate in, it becomes extremely important for businesses to comprehend how this innovative approach can affect consumer actions.

This is precisely why this study has been conducted, as it focuses on understanding the impacts of sensory elements in influencing perceptions, feelings, and decision-making of consumers. This extremely interesting topic is yet to be explored and used to its full potential. This study hopes to, at least in some ways, give useful insights about how well these methods do and can work, as well as the possibilities that exist for companies willing to implement them.

Despite the increasing use and importance of sensory marketing strategies in various industries, there remains a significant gap in understanding, not only its full impact on consumer behaviour, but also on its full potential for businesses. There have been multiple researches on the emphasis of individual results of sensory elements on how consumers perceive certain stimuli and their actions towards them. It is also worth mentioning, that there is still limited knowledge regarding the combined

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