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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THEORETICAL OVERVIEW ON SENSORY MARKETING

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#### ABSTRACT

Sensory marketing creates an impact on the sense of the consumer, where it also affects perception, judgment and behavior. The main objective of the Sensory marketing is to send a direct message to the consumer's brain creating an interest, tempting the client to purchase that particular product creating a bond between the client and product. Since the five senses play an important role in the human life, establishing brands with great importance is a key factor in the ever increasing brands in the market. At the same time, Sensory brands help to create a powerful sensory relationship with the client. The literature on Sensory marketing suggests 5 different elements where sensory stimuli are created and consumers can be influenced. They are identified as Visual (Sight), Atmospheric (Smell), Auditory (Hearing), Tactile (Touch) and Gustative (Taste). The sensory elements create sensory expressions and influences grounded cognition and finally it impacts consumer behavior.

#### INTRODUCTION

As very common to human nature, many consumers use products based on how they feel after using a particular product. These are based on feelings, mental image and emotions. (Moure and Minor, 1992) Marketing trends based on human emotions were developed around the world by marketers (Kotler *et al.*, 2011) Key factors that were considered are time spent in a store, satisfaction gained by shopping, prioritizing, choosing retail marketing, store files, satisfaction gained from the product or service, desire, consumption oriented marketing, decision making based on styles, desire and interest of the consumer (Haghigi *et al.*, 2011). Research studies have been carried out in relation to various senses on the behavior of the consumer (Krishna and Schwarz, 2014) as a results it's found the concept of "Sensory marketing". Sensory marketing creates an impact on the sense of the consumer, where it also affects its perception, judgement and behavior (Krishna, 2012). The main objective of the Sensory marketing is to send a direct message to the consumer's brain creating an interest, tempting the client to purchase that particular product creating a bond between the client and product. (Costa *et al.*, 2012) However, this novel marketing trend has led the consumers more confused, frustrated, tire and more cynical when compared to the past. Since the five senses play an important role in the human life, establishing brands with great importance is a key factor in the ever increasing brands in the market. At the same time, Sensory brands help to create a powerful sensory relationship

with the client, by solving many advertisement challenges faced in the present market. In other words, Sensory Branding has established itself as an effective marketing communication tool. Researchers have found that the more senses a product has, it creates a better brand (Djurovic 2008).

#### Consumer behavior and sensory marketing strategies

Based on studies of Schmitt (1999) and Lindstrom and Kotler (2005), a consumer is very frequently attracted to a particular brand based upon its sensory experience. It was further revealed by Lindstrom and Kotler the human understanding of this world is based on the experiences gained through our sense. As per Isacsson and Alakoski (2009) a well-known fact is that our senses are so powerful that it can help you tap into your exact emotions. By trying to understand the exact senses of the consumer and the effect it may have on the product, helps the manufacturer to create their brands more uniquely with a personal touch (Dijrovik 2008). In the present context sensory branding or emotional branding is a marketing strategy used to enhance the relationship between consumer and the brand. As described by Hulten (2009) there are 5 sensors and sensory expressions. They are identified as Visual (Sight), Atmospheric (Smell), Auditory (Hearing), Tactile (Touch) and Gustative (Taste)

#### Visual factors (Sight)

Our Sight plays an important role in our life. In the same manner, sight is again a very powerful tool in marketing and so

considered as the strongest sense. As per Jayakrishnan (2013) more than 80% of the commercial and shopping communications are done using sight sense. It is very important that the creative teams use their creative talents to the full in order to design visually appealing campaigns and messages to capture the heart and mind of the consumer. Any product can be made visually attractive through Logos, Colour code creations, attractive packaging, etc., creating a branding strategy (Hulten, 2013). Talking about the Sight, the "Eye" is the most important component of sight. The lens focuses light through the vitreous humor, a clear gel-like substance that fills the back of the eye and supports the retina. The retina receives the image that the cornea focuses through the eye's internal lens and transforms this image into electrical impulses that are carried by the optic nerve to the brain. This is the process that enables us to get our Sight (Batema 2011). Sight keeps us going all day long from the time we wake up to the time we go to sleep. We rely on sight each moment as humans, enabling us to create pictures of our day to day moments. First impression counts !!!! a famous Quote practiced in the society. Thereby it is the ultimate duty of creative directors and teams to create that perfect image to capture consumer, where by simply looking at it, it is understood, creating an appealing impact.

#### **Auditory factors (Hearing)**

Quote "the most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said" Unquote (Peter Drucker). Out of the five senses, hearing too play an important role in our day to day life. Our ears are capable of diagnosing a minimum of 16 to 2800 cycles per seconds (Batema 2011). Again in branding and marketing, sound is regarded as a strategy to improve the image of the brand. Sound, if correctly applied, can create a distinguish identity for its brand (Hulten, Broweus, Dijk 2009) Sound creates an influence on our decision making as well as comments in relation to products and services; it has been stated by (Lindstrom, 2005) that sound could influence on our behavior and habit of purchase as well. Music naturally lifts our spirits. Likewise sound helps us to improve our mood, and in marketing it is considered as important for consumer behavior as well. (Alpert *et al.*, 2005). It has been revealed by Kotler and Lindstrom, (2005) through their studies that Consumers have different kind of needs, and in marketing, sound has been used very effectively to communicate with the unconscious needs of the consumer.

#### **Gustative factors (Taste)**

It is very challenging to link food taste with the preferences of the consumers; what one might find tasty may not at all satisfy another's palate. Competition among food has always been fierce. In order to stay ahead, it is important to come up with innovative methods to make food taste better than your competitor in a healthy way. For example if you consider Coca Cola, it gives you that "Bite" or "Crispness" as soon as you take the first sip, uniquely creating an identity for itself (Jayakrishnan, 2013) As per the studies done by Klosse *et al.* (2004) for one to enjoy the taste, other factors such as ambiance, the way food is served must also contribute in a greater way. As consumers, we love to try new things, especially if it's soothing to your palate. It may be the same food we have every day, like Roasted Chicken, however if the same Chicken is in the menu Roasted Chicken with a Twist, definitely it will give more attraction. Likewise it is important

that Restaurant owners come with innovative and vivid names to attract more customers. As per the studies done by Wansink *et al.*, (2003) Restaurants sales have increased by 27% after introducing this strategic process. Further research done by Martin Lindstrom that 16% out of the 1000 Fortune companies have added tasting to their brand in order to boost the sales growth.

#### **Atmospheric factors (Smell)**

Quote "of the five senses, smell is the one with the best memory" unquote. Smell is all around us creating memories, eyes can be closed, ears can be covered, can refuse to taste, but the smell lingers on in the air (Lindstrom, 2005). As discussed by Kotler and Lindstrom, (2005) the sense of smell involves 45% of successful communication with brand, as smell is something that will linger within you, recreating memory. We can still remember our favourite food smells from childhood, smell of our grandparents, smell of rain recreating a sweet memory, or smell of flowers creating an image of sadness. Smell works very closely with our emotions and influences our behavior immensely (Mahmoudi *et al.*, 2012). We continue to use the same brand of perfume, simply because we smell good and feel good, sensational and sometimes revived. Likewise, smell play an important part in making purchase decisions and creating loyal customers. Smell also makes us happy, content, fulfilled and relaxed (Harrop 2007). Smell is able to create a long term or a short term image on the customer's mind. Appealing smells create a long term memory where consumers intend to make it a long standing brand in their day to day life. When we accompany our emotional experience and remember memorable images linked with a particular smell. This also could be linked to long term or short term marketing strategies (Hulten, Broweus, Dijk 2009).

#### **Tactile factors (Touch)**

Touch is the first sense we acquire and the secret weapon in many successful relationships. In a human body touch is the largest sensory organ. As per the studies done by Kotler and Lindstrom (2005) the sense of Touch associated with brand building share is 25%. The feeling of happiness or peacefulness felt by touch is amazing, similarly it has been revealed by Peck and Wiggins (2006) that by simply allowing the consumer to touch the products, creates a positive energy within the store and uplift the attitude in shopping. With the development in technology touch screen has rapidly changed the lifestyle of the humans. Everything is within your reach with a touch of a button! Studies of Peck and Wiggins (2006) further suggests that shopping through a touch screen device encourages the shopper to interact with the product more closely online. When it concerns electronic devices such as mobile phones, computers, stereos, it's a human nature to touch and experiment all the options that are available in that particular product. It has been revealed by Hulten (2013) that enabling the consumer to touch the products creates a positive attitude towards purchasing the item, which might have not, if not allowed to touch. Allowing the consumers to touch the product not only encourages them to purchase, it also builds up a relationship with the product creating a trust upon the quality of the product. Consumers tend to shop in carefree mindset; it is important that the environment of the store must be customer friendly, creating a happy carefree environment for the consumer to shop freely. Restrictions in a store puts the customers away. Therefore, it is very important that the

retailers must always create a carefree shopping atmosphere to the client, enabling them to freely touch and feel the products. This has been studied and revealed by Hulten, Broweus, Dijk (2009). Coca Cola is World's favourite soft drink. Since it's a drink Coca Cola comes in bottle with lot of history into it, more than 155 years' worth, as a fact. As revealed by Hulten, Broweus, Dijk (2009) the original Coca Cola Bottle is a lean sample of shape marketing. Initially Coca Cola was served in a glass; however, it was only when a strong bottling system was developed that Coca Cola became the world's famous brand as it is today. Initially Coca Cola had the straight sided bottle which was common among its competitors and was getting confused with other copycat brands. In 1915, the Root Glass Company of Indiana, designed the famous contour shape, which was introduced to the market in 1916. Due to this delicate curvy bottle, the consumer can enjoy a pleasant feeling while holding the bottle.

### Sensory marketing related theories

As stated by Krishna (2011) research on each of the five senses, focusing on key elements that can generate future big-step insights within each of them. Begins with haptics including work on person-product, person-person and person-product haptic interaction and also a discussion of disgust. Smell is discussed with a concentration on perception and learning. This is followed by work on audition and then on taste, Vision receives little attention given the enormous work in advertising in the past. The five senses provide the right scaffold on which to build our discussion of grounded cognition in other words cognition grounded in the senses. Following figure explains the conceptual framework for sensory marketing (Krishna, 2011).

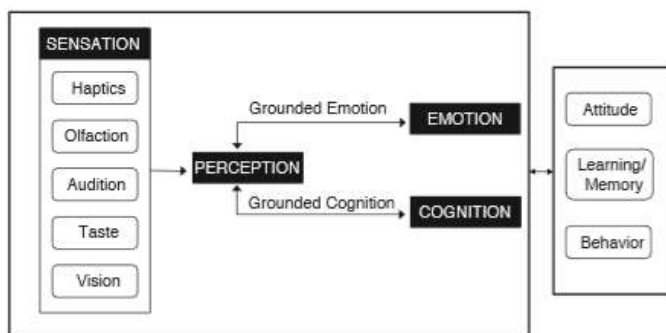


Figure 1. Extracted from conceptual frame work of sensory marketing (Krishna, 2011)

### Perception affects grounded cognition

As described by Krishna (2011) the theory of "grounded cognition" is one of the based theories for sensory marketing. Based on studies, no argument seemed to have taken place stating how ones perception impacts the attitude, behavior and memory of an individual. However discussions on whether ones thoughts are kept in the manner by which it was perceived have been debated on. Accepted studies and theories on cognition presents thought as separate from perception. However Barsalou (2008) speaks of another view on thought, which mentions how ones bodily state, situated actions and mental simulations together produce ones cognitive doings. There is evident growth among the people that support theories on grounded cognition. Similarly recent psychology and marketing related work have been contributing towards structuring off grounded theories on cognition (Hung and

Labroo, 2011; Labroo and Nielsen, 2010; Mazar and Zhong, 2009; Williams and Bargh, 2008). Further, there is work by marketing researchers that follow on the above stated. However these work do not specifically carry the title "grounded cognition" but are fundamentally based upon the theory of grounded cognition. Strong examples are the research by Cacioppo, Priester, and Berntson (1993) and by Tavassoli and Fitzsimons (2006). As mentioned previously, Barsalou incorporates ones bodily functions, actions and mental simulation into defining grounded cognition. However the terms bodily state and situated actions are not being provided with detailed and exact definitions by both Barsalou and other researchers.

### History of grounded cognition

Lotze (1852) and James (1890) contain the earliest mentioning of the grounded cognition theory. The theory proposed by James-Lange speaks of how emotional experience is majorly caused by the experience of bodily changes. Accordingly Darwin (1872/1965) makes a similar statement, mentioning how an individual's emotional experience can either be strengthened or weakened by associated muscular movement. Followed by a much longer pause, statements on grounded cognition resurfaced in psychology work. In such work, Zajonc and Markus (1982:130) spoke of attitude, mentioning how attitudes could have several representations and the somatic ones which are related to the body, having a difference from that generating from the mind seemed more significant. If this seems to be it, why then has a revival taken place? The main reason could be the recent developments that took place in neuroscience. For example, mirror neurons have been discovered and the activity that was observed is simulated within the monkeys' motor systems (DiPellegrino *et al.*, 1992). In like manner Adolphs, Damasio, Tranel, Cooper, and Damasio (2000) involved themselves with both patients with brain damage and normal individuals. The output indicates how areas involved with motor and somatosensory are occupied in entirely perceptual activities such as stimulus identification.

### Metaphors and grounded cognition

One area under grounded cognition that has gained recent popularity is metaphors. A few metaphors such as fishy smell, clean person or warm heart are inclusive of sensorial content. As yet another example, Williams and Bargh (2008) discusses how holding onto a warm or cold cup effects the judgements of an individual to them being warmer or colder. Further, holding a warm cup as opposed to holding a cold one leads to a major possibility of one purchasing gifts for friends as opposed to getting something for oneself. This occurrence is put to test with the use of neuroscience proof that the insula is the one taking into account the processing of physical warmth denoting temperature and also social warmth which is in terms of trust. Numerous studies discuss how metaphors representing sophisticated emotions, are prone to have a more neutral underpinning while some may be of a more rigorous nature in comparison to others. For instance, fishy smells are capable of kindling suspicion (Lee and Schwarz, 2011). Nevertheless, fishy smell and suspicion show a bidirectional association. Hence under this light, when a person is suspicious, a fishy smell is a fishy smell. Similarly, the feeling of coldness and the feeling of loneliness have a bidirectional link between each other (Ijzerman and Semin, 2009; Zhong and Leonardelli,

2008). Isanski and West (2010) and Landau, Meier, and Keefer (2010) provide an outstanding sketch related to research done on metaphors. All researches prove that there is so much more to be discovered under the subject grounded cognition. What has been found thus far on the topic is the mere surface. Further work could be carried out based on how perception impacts cognition. However the need for research on how perception could impact learning, ways in which physical sensation is susceptible to a-modal information and the degree to which knowledge on language is bodily grounded surpasses other needs.

### Final remarks

Throughout the review article the author has tried to identify basic elements and concepts of sensory marketing and tries to identify the based theory for sensory marketing strategies which may also have the capability of encouraging more research on this particular subject area. Additional research article would have the space and means to generate novel ideas along with creating a much greater difference. Sensory marketing is one domain that is in great need of research.

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