



Sensory Marketing Strategies and Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Study of Shoprite Sango Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of sensory marketing strategies—namely visual appeal, auditory engagement, olfactory cues, and tactile interaction—on consumer buying behavior at Shoprite Sango Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. A survey design was adopted, and data were gathered from 560 respondents using structured questionnaires. The analysis of the data was carried out using descriptive statistics as well as through regression analysis through SPSS version 20. Findings from the research indicate that tactile touches, olfactory, as well as auditory engagement, have a big impact on buying behavior of consumers, with the highest influence being of tactile touch. On the other hand, visual appeal proved statistically insignificant. The research concludes that there is an important role of sensory marketing in influencing buying behavior of consumers, hence it is suggested that the retailers embrace multi-sensory approach—particularly focusing on touch, smell, and sound—to enhance customer experience as well as drive selling.

Keywords: Consumer buying behavior, sensory marketing, tactile touch, olfactory, auditory engagement, visual appeal.

1. Introduction

In the current competitive business landscape, companies consistently look for new methods of differentiation of their brands and customer engagement. Sensory marketing is one of the powerful tools companies have turned to that uses the five senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, touch—to produce distinctive, immersive brand experiences. Sensory marketing seeks to alter consumer perception and mood, finally determining the decision of purchase through stimulation of sensory responses.

Sensory marketing aids customer attachment by associating brand experiences with pleasant emotions, allowing companies to differentiate themselves within a crowded market place (Fong, Lei, Chow & Lam, 2023). Sensory marketing, according to Hultén (2020), is an integrated approach that helps companies build multi-sensory brand experiences within multiple environments—products, places, service encounters.

Contemporary consumption patterns focus on experiential value, not transactional exchanges. Consumers do not buy products anymore—consumers buy experiences. Brands that evoke emotional, sensory contact, as Iyadi (2023) posits, have a better chance of being recalled as well as of persuading customers into action. Sensory stimuli have the power of inducing powerful emotional responses, influencing the way people perceive, interact with, and post-interact with a brand.

Consumer behavior can broadly be described as how persons, groups, make their choices for products and service consumption, their utilization, as well as disposal, through satisfaction of their needs, desire, as well as aspiration. For a company, it is essential for a deep insight into consumer behavior—how sensory input influences decision-making—that is necessary for developing effective strategies. Sensory marketing is a viable route through which consumers' attitudes can be altered, satisfaction enhanced, as well as strengthened loyalty.

In view of the increasing prominence of sensory marketing within current retail settings, this research investigates how much visual appeal, auditory stimulation, olfactory impact, and tactile contact influence consumer purchasing behavior within Shoprite Sango Ota. It aims to offer actionable insights for commercial players who wish to streamline consumer experiences through strategic sensory stimulation.

Objectives of the Study

The primary goal is to evaluate the influence of sensory marketing strategies on Shoprite Sango Ota consumers' purchasing behavior. Notably, the study seeks to:

1. Find out the impacts of visual appeal on the buying behavior of consumers.
2. Examine the influence of audio involvement on the purchasing behavior of customers.
3. Evaluate the impact of olfactory influence on the purchasing behavior of customers.
4. Assess the impact of touch on the buying behavior of consumers.

Research Hypotheses

To guide the analysis, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. **H₀₁**: There is no significant impact of visual appeal on consumer buying behavior.
2. **H₀₂**: Auditory engagement has no significant influence on consumer buying behavior.
3. **H₀₃**: Olfactory influence has no significant impact on consumer buying behavior.
4. **H₀₄**: Tactile interaction has no significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Dimensions of Sensory Marketing

2.1.1 Visual Appeal

Visual appeal is comprised of the visual elements of a product or shopping environment that include color, shapes, typography, layout, and graphic elements designed to capture the attention of consumers.

The role of visual stimuli is critical in brand differentiation within a competitive marketplace where physical as well as virtual shopping overlap. Visual stimuli, as listed by Roggeveen, Grewal, as well as Schweiger, (2020) have a vast impact on product evaluation, mood of the consumer, as well as brand perception. It is quite essential for marketers to realize the subtle nuances of visual sensory input in order to develop engaging retail experiences (Sample, Hagtvedt, & Brasel, 2020).

In a competitive market where physical shopping meets ecommerce, visual stimuli is key for brand differentiation. Roggeveen et al. (2020) noted that visual stimuli have a powerful impact on mood, product assessment, and brand perception. Marketers need to grasp the nuances of visual sensory input, as Sample et al. (2020) tell us, to be able to build engaging retail experiences. Our most powerful sense is vision, and it is shaped by factors such as lighting, layout, package, and color—making it central to building powerful first impressions and brand identity.

2.1.2 Auditory Engagement

Music is an immensely influential factor that contributes to how customers behave, as well as how they feel, during their shopping experience. Used effectively—through background music, jingles, or brand audio—music can reinforce a store’s brand image and create the appropriate ambiance. Unlike visual stimuli, which are only within view, sound envelops customers, something that can be sensed from all sides (Roggeveen et al., 2020). When done well, music makes the experience more memorable, keeps customers in the store longer, and can even encourage spending. Matching the sound with the brand’s personality and customers’ preferences is very imperative in creating a positive and engaging shopping environment.

2.1.3 Tactile Interaction

Tactile interaction involves the perception of physical attributes such as texture, weight, temperature, and firmness. Touch is essential for evaluating product quality and establishing emotional connections with brands. As Iyadi & Oruakpor (2023) note, touch not only influences functional assessment but also contributes to a sense of well-being. Mokrý et al. (2022) add that packaging design and physical contact influence consumers’ evaluations and expectations. In experiential retailing, touch serves as a decisive factor, especially in product categories where physical inspection is vital—such as clothing, electronics, and food.

2.1.4 Olfactory influence

Olfactory cues—such as ambient scents and signature fragrances—are powerful emotional triggers. They activate brain areas related to memory and emotion, influencing mood, recall, and brand affinity (Biswas et al., 2021; Bosmans, 2006; Krishna et al., 2010). A pleasant in-store scent can encourage customers to stay longer and return more frequently. Hultén (2017) emphasized that smell is the only sense with a direct connection to the brain’s limbic system, which governs emotions and memory. Dr. John Medina, in *Brain Rules*, noted that the human nose can recognize up to 10,000 scents, and 75% of emotions are influenced by smell. Retailers can use scent strategically to reinforce brand personality and create lasting impressions.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model

The S-O-R model introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) is one of the classics of research in consumer behavior. It is based on the assumption that stimuli within the environment (S) influence internal organismic states (O), which further generate specific responses (R) as a consequence. The model, with the passage of time, was extended to retail settings for the study of how factors such as store atmosphere impact the emotions of customers, as well as their purchasing behaviors (Jaini et al., 2022; Karim et al., 2021). In sensory marketing strategies, sound, smell, and touch can influence customers' perception of a brand, as well as trigger further consumption or motivate them to purchase.

2.2.2 Shopping Patronage Theory

Sheth's (1983) Shopping Patronage Theory posits that shoppers are driven by both functional needs as well as emotional or social drivers. On the functional front, customers might desire actually being able to touch products so as to judge their quality (Workman & Cho, 2013). On the other hand, store ambiance, brand image, as well as social interaction opportunities, are all contributory factors. The theory emphasizes that shopping is not merely a transactional activity—it's an experience. In order for customers not only to be kept happy and loyal, but for them to have an optimal shopping experience, there is a need for both the emotional as well as sensory aspects of the shopping experience to be addressed (Peck & Childers, 2003; von Wallpach et al., 2020).

2.2.3 The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) extends the previous Theory of Reasoned Action by incorporating the concept of perceived behavioral control—how much control individuals believe they have over their behavior. The theory posits a person's intention to perform the action is influenced by their attitude, social influences (or norms), as well as their perceived control of the behavior. In the context of research for this project, sensory stimuli—such as sound, smell, or touch—can influence how people feel a brand as well as how much control they believe they have over purchasing choices. The theory provides a helpful psychological model for conceptualizing how, as well as why, sensory marketing can impact purchasing choices.

2.3 Empirical Review

Several empirical researches have examined the effect of sensory marketing on consumer behavior, providing insight into how multisensory stimulation can enhance brand experience as well as drive buying behavior. For example, Zha and Melewar (2024) examined the effects of the different sensory aspects—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste—on brand loyalty. They revealed that all of the sensory stimuli play a substantial role in enhancing customer satisfaction, emotional attachment to the brand, as well as the building of “customer love marks” of strong affection for the brand. Surprisingly, they further revealed that employees being empathetic help reinforce the role of sensory experience on loyalty, supporting the role of both human touch as well as sensory appeal in developing deep brand relationships.

Krupka (2023) conducted research on how sensory marketing influences brand perception in Croatia based on 189 respondents. Data were assessed based on factor and regression analysis, the research revealed that the use of multiple senses impacts positively the way consumers perceive a brand. Evidence from the research indicates that repeated sensory stimulation solidifies brand association. However, there is an unexpected twist: whereas repetition of sensory contact enhanced brand perception, sensory stimulus intensity had no statistically significant impact. This indicates that subtle, routine sensory stimuli could be more powerful than very intense stimuli.

Iyadi and Oruakpor (2023) studied the role of sensory uniqueness in service delivery within Nigeria's telecommunications sector. They found that tactile and auditory cues significantly influenced customer perceptions of service quality and sales force creativity. Their findings emphasize the importance of tailoring sensory strategies to industry-specific contexts.

Sagha, Seyyedamiri, Foroudi and Akbari (2022) explored the effects of multi-sensory marketing on consumer behavior and found that sensory-driven emotional changes significantly influenced customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study recommended that companies design emotionally resonant sensory experiences to foster deeper consumer engagement.

These studies collectively affirm that sensory marketing strategies have a measurable and meaningful effect on consumer perceptions, satisfaction, and purchasing behavior. However, the contextual application—such as cultural background, industry type, and consumer expectations—plays a vital role in determining the effectiveness of these strategies. Hence, the current study seeks to fill a contextual gap by examining sensory marketing within a Nigerian retail setting, specifically Shoprite Sango Ota.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design to collect first-hand information from respondents, which is crucial to achieving the study's objectives. The target population comprises customers of Shoprite in Ogun State, Nigeria. A sample size of 560 was determined using Godden's (2004) formula. Data for this research was gathered through a structured questionnaire. The analysis was conducted using both descriptive statistics (frequency distribution and percentage) and inferential statistics (regression analysis), facilitated by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Model Summary

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.807 ^a	.651	.649	.73609

a. Predictors: (Constant), Tactile Interaction, Auditory Engagement, Visual Appeal, Olfactory Influence

Source: Extracted from SPSS Version 20

In Table 1 the R-value of 0.807 suggests a strong positive correlation between the combined sensory marketing strategies and consumer buying behavior. The R Square value (0.651) indicates that approximately 65.1% of the variation in consumer buying behavior is explained by the combined influence of visual appeal, auditory engagement, olfactory influence, and tactile interaction. The Adjusted R Square (0.649) further confirms the robustness of the model by accounting for the number of predictors. Thus, sensory marketing plays a substantial role in influencing consumer decisions.

Table 2: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	555.916	4	138.979	256.500	.000 ^b
	Residual	297.463	549	.542		
	Total	853.379	553			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tactile Interaction, Auditory Engagement, Visual Appeal, Olfactory Influence

Source: Extracted from SPSS Version 20

In Table 2 the ANOVA result confirms the model's statistical significance, with an F-statistic of 256.500 and a p-value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 threshold. This implies that the combined sensory marketing strategies significantly influence consumer buying behavior.

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.204	.118		1.726	.085
	Visual Appeal	.072	.046	.065	1.542	.124
	Auditory Engagement	.221	.045	.210	4.876	.000
	Olfactory Influence	.304	.051	.286	5.957	.000
	Tactile Interaction	.338	.049	.322	6.910	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behaviour

Source: Extracted from SPSS Version 20

Table 3 presents the coefficient estimates, which examine the individual impact of each sensory marketing strategy—visual appeal, auditory engagement, olfactory influence, and tactile

interaction—on consumer buying behavior while controlling for other variables in the model. Visual Appeal has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on consumer behavior ($\beta = 0.072$, $p = 0.124$), suggesting that while aesthetics may draw attention, they do not directly drive purchasing decisions. Auditory Engagement has a significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.221$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that background music and in-store sounds enhance consumer experience and increase the likelihood of purchase. Olfactory Influence also exerts a strong and significant effect ($\beta = 0.304$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that pleasant scents in-store positively shape customer perception and behavior. Tactile Interaction shows the strongest influence on consumer buying behavior ($\beta = 0.338$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the importance of physical product interaction in retail environments.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The study affirms how sensory marketing influences customer purchasing behavior. Of the sensory aspects considered, touch emerged as most potent, reinforcing customers' desire for direct contact with products before purchase. This is confirmed by previous studies by Iyadi & Oruakpor (2023) and Luangrath et al. (2020) who noted touch as key to product quality assessments and emotional bonding. Similarly, smell contributed significantly, confirming Hultén's (2017) postulation that fragrances help evoke memories and emotions, enhancing the ambiance of the shopping site, as well as paving the way for revisits. Sound contributed positively as well, confirming Roggeveen et al. (2020) whose research proved how background music and audio within shops can define ambiance as well as nudge purchasing behavior. In a surprising turn of events, visually appealing stimuli—though captivating—did not have much bearing on purchasing choices within the study, perhaps as a result of visual overloads, as well as the dominance of other sensory stimuli within a crowded shopping establishment like Shoprite Sango Ota.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the impact of sensory marketing, specifically sight, sound, smell, and touch, on the purchasing behavior of consumers within Shoprite, Sango Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.

The findings demonstrate that sensory consumption plays an instrumental role in determining how customers act within the context of shopping. Of all of the sensory elements considered, touch produced the greatest influence, indicating that customers enjoy the capacity for tangible contact with products prior to making a purchase decision. Similarly, smell exhibited a strong positive influence, indicating that appealing, distinctive odors can promote product satisfaction, as well as repeat store visitations. Likewise, sound—in the forms of ambient music as well as in-store audio—was revealed to have a significant impact on purchase choices.

Surprisingly, visual appeal, so frequently emphasized within store layout, did not have a statistically significant impact on shopper purchase behavior within this research. This would suggest that although an attractive atmosphere can capture the customer, it is perhaps not sufficient on its own to generate actual sales.

In conclusion, research indicates that activating several of the senses—most notably, touch, smell, and sound—provides a richer, more engaging shopping experience than visual appeal. Those retailers employing multi-sensory techniques are more likely to increase customer activity and foster more lasting brand loyalty.

The study presents the following recommendations based on the above conclusions:

1. Retailers need to establish interactive displays that tempt customers to touch and experiment with products. These can be sample stations, demonstration units, or package displays with identifying textures allowing for higher-buyer confidence levels and additional sales.
2. Store managers should incorporate consistent, brand-fitting fragrances across areas of the store. For example, the use of mouthwatering food scents for food departments or soothing scents for clothing and lifestyle areas can enhance customers' mood and length of stay within the store.
3. Music should be strategically selected for consistency with the brand identity as well as for appealing to the target group. Tempo, genre, and volume have to be appropriate for the ambiance of the store, such as soft background music for higher-end stores or upbeat songs for youth-oriented stores.

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