

Sensory Marketing: The Strategic Use of Olfactory Stimuli on Consumers in Restaurant

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Abstract:- In the modern landscape of marketing, the integration of neuromarketing practice has become a pivotal influence on consumer's choice. Among the neuromarketing factors, Olfactory stimuli is the most essential one in restaurant as the satisfaction of food depends on not only in taste but also in aroma and scent. The study highlights how much positive aroma can significantly enhance the ambiance of restaurants, therefore drives consumers to the restaurant. Conversely, a negative aroma can deter potential customers and diminish their purchase intent. In the food industry, the relationship between fragrance and appetite is particularly pronounced. Therefore, by aligning the fragrance, a restaurant can determine their marketing efforts and enhance customer's preferences.

Keywords:- Neuromarketing, Olfactory Stimuli, Consumer Buying Behavior, Fragrance, Food Industry.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this highly competitive era of the multi-dimensional market, a new phenomenon, "Neuromarketing" has emerged to enhance the product/service experience of the consumers. Olfactory sense motivates the emotions of the consumers which leads to the ultimate decision making. The user experience is mostly dependent on the perceived benefit of the products/services. The olfactory sense enhances the likelihood of increasing the perceived emotional benefit that will allow the user to come to a conclusion about the product/service. It is crucial for the shop owners to align the scents or aromas with the consumer's wants. A good aroma creates a positive ambiance around the consumers that stimulates their purchase intention. Similarly, a bad aroma does the opposite. It drives the consumers away from the intention of buying things. For the cuisine industry, it does even more. Experts have uttered that there is a positive correlation between fragrance and hunger. It arouses the buying motivation of the customer (Mcnamee, 2014).

In recent times, brick-and-mortar food chains and restaurants have created a good sensory aroma surrounding the area. It improves the customer's intention approach of buying those things. According to the psychoanalytic theory of consumer behavior, a good aroma improves the likelihood of escape purchase.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Senses and Perception

Sight, hearing, smelling and touch are the sensory modalities that play a dominating role in spatial perception in humans, i.e the ability to recognize the geometrical structure of the surrounding environment, awareness of self-location in surrounding space and determining in terms of depth and direction the location of nearby objects. Information streams from these senses are continuously integrated and processed in the brain, so that a cognitive representation of the environment can be accurately built whether stationary or in movement (Hadjiphilippou, The contribution of the five human senses towards the perception of spaces, 2013). Perceptual variables may not only differ from sensory ones because the stimulus is more complex but also perhaps because they are under the control of mechanisms located as it is strictly higher level in the nervous system judging by extirpation experiments (J.N.Spuhler, 1967).

B. Brand Image and Sensory Factors

The purpose of sensory branding is to provide a systematic integration of the senses. Lindstrom mentioned that if the consumer's senses are more involved, it more strongly connect with the brand which means that It can increased willingness to pay more. Sensory interplay gives the consumer a deeper holistic sensory experience. The main reason behind creating a brand based on sensory appeal is because they are memorable, unique, instantaneous and support human-centered design. (R, 2015). Implicit perception acts through explicit perception, and brand experience plays a major role as a mediator between sensory perception and consumer responses (Janina Haase, 2018).

C. Sensory Factors and Marketing

The scent marketing, also called “Aroma Marketing”, is a part of a quickly developing trend in a marketing communication- the sensory marketing (Gryb’s-Kabocik, 2018). It was found that a pleasant scent can enhance consumers curiosity as to what the smell is and this could led them to approach the store. Hence, a subtle scent can have a subconscious effect on consumers, without them realising it, scent could lead consumers to approach and/or enter the store (Chantel van Niekerk, 2021). Marketers have found that human senses have crucial role in their shopping experience and through strategic stimulation of these senses, consumer buying behavior will be influenced in so innovative way. Sensory marketing puts the human brain, along with its five senses, in the center of the marketing and show that companies and retailers can have a positive impact on five senses of the consumer through different senses such as color, smell, music, taste and texture (Mojtaba Shabgou, 2014). Among the cognitive moderators potentially involved in these effects, perceived congruence is the most frequently reviewed one. In general, it is defined as a contextual fit between the scent and the product category (Dr Rupa Rathee, 2017). It is also important to note that fragrance is one of the elements of sensory expression to have a long-lasting impression on a retail consumer and it could be best exploited if goes together with other sensory cues like temperature, music layout (Shuvam Chatterjee, 2022). American fast food chain Burger King markets with the scent of meat. Called FLAME, the company says the spray is “ the scent of seduction with a hint of flame-broiled meat (BBC, 2008).

III. OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the study is;

- To understand how the olfactory sense stimulates consumers buying behavior for restaurants.
- To understand how the aroma and fragrance increases the perception of the taste of the food in restaurants.

IV. METHODOLOGY

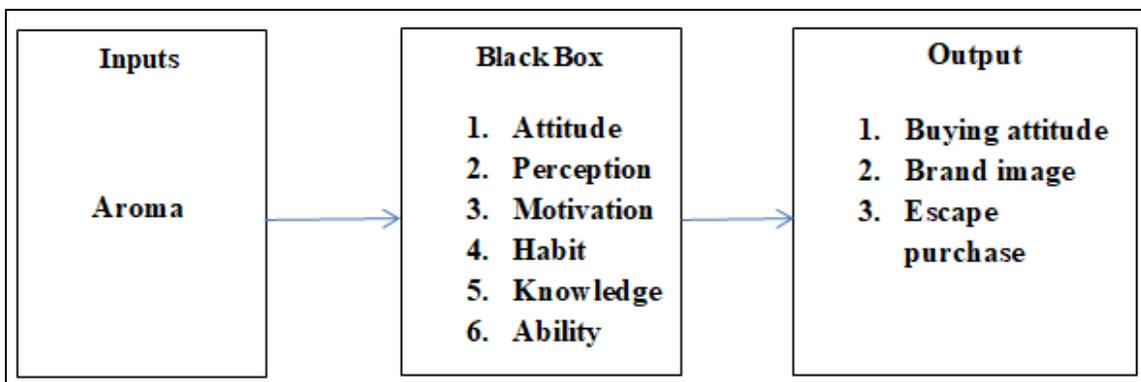
A. Data Collection

As aroma marketing is relatively new in marketing, the data is collected from primary sources. The study is qualitative and follows a comprehensive research design. A non-sampling method of purposive sampling is used to collect the data. As it focuses only on the cuisine industry, we have selected 120 people at random. Among them, 70 were male and the rest were female. A questionnaire was formed to collect the information. The questionnaire was categorized into the following sections: Memorable experience, Brand perception due to the aroma, Behavioral response incited to the aroma, Emotional response to the aroma, and the overall experience. A proper coding scheme was made to critically analyze the data. Atlas.Ai and NVivo are used to critically analyze the data.

B. Model

➤ **Black Box Model**

Black box model is a good factor to analyze the consumers behavior. This method is useful to identify the stimuli that triggers the consumers to buy products or services (J. Reeves Wesley).



(Consumers' Black Box)

• **Inputs**

As this study focuses only on the sensory factors, we use “Aroma” as the primary source of motivation in the input. The olfactory sense affects the black attitude, perception, motivation, habit, knowledge, and ability of the consumers.

• **Black Box**

- ✓ **Attitude:** Most of the respondents direct the fact that aroma certainly increases their intention to buy food. It also creates an urge to taste the product. Often, the aroma has the store recall capacity that incites the buyer to try the food. Even if they do not buy things instantly, they

definitely come to the restaurant later. It happens for the roadside restaurants.

- ✓ *Perception:* Aroma creates a good patronage intention of the buyer. It gives a impression of hygiene, cleanliness of the restaurant. But it is for the well-decorated restaurants only. The roadside restaurants do not create a hygienic impression on the respondents.
- ✓ *Motivation:* Aroma arouses the consumers buying intention approach and motivates them to buy new things. The aroma of the condiments along with the smoke of the foods instigate the consumers to taste the foods.
- ✓ *Habit:* A few of the respondents have said that it becomes a habit to taste the fragrance of the foods. In that way, It becomes a habit for them to go to the restaurants often and try the foods.
- ✓ *Knowledge:* Aroma gives an expression of perception of foods. It motivates the impulse buying behavior and urges the consumers to know the foods. In that way, they eventually try the foods. Often, the incipient impression of any restaurant comes from the curiosity of the aroma.
- ✓ *Ability:* Among all the components of black box, ability is the catalyst one. Consumers always are motivated by aroma but the intention of buying the foods come from the ability to taste the foods. The aroma along with the ability to buy new foods often directs the consumers to buy new things.
- *Output*
- ✓ *Buying attitude:* Aroma, a good fragrance, enhances the attitude of the buyer's attitude. It creates an impression of positivity towards the restaurants. Even if it is a small roadside restaurants or good well-decorated restaurants, it helps the buyers to have a good impression of the restaurants. Vice-versa, if the aroma or fragrance is not so good, the overall attitude of the buyers take wrong turns and creates a bad impression. A good fragrance creates lifetime value for the restaurants.
- ✓ *Brand image:* Aroma increases the brand image by creating a good feeling. It creates trust and a sense of good quality of the restaurants. Fragrance also creates a sense of originality in the minds of the consumers. In that way, the roadside restaurants create brand image. Again, all the condiments along with the smoke give an impression of authenticity.
- ✓ *Escape purchase:* Often a good fragrance unintentionally arouses the buyers intention to buy foods. Even if they are full, aroma increases the hunger and urges them to buy the aromatic foods in an instant.

V. FINDINGS

Although aroma marketing is a new addition to the marketing, it significantly affects the overall marketing activities. A good fragrance is an essential thing to arouse the consumers' intention of buying new things. For the food industry, it even works as a new condiment to increase the taste of the foods. On the contrary, a bad fragrance gives a bad impression of the total restaurants. A bad aroma will enhance the negativity even if all other things remain good. A bad fragrance spoils the appetite.

Therefore, when it comes to the fragrance and consumer choices, several things are important to collectively enhance the consumers' choice. Only Aroma and good fragrance is not enough to motivate the consumers to buy the foods from any restaurant. A good fragrance only increases the consumers to try a restaurants for the first time. But if the taste of the food is bad and all the ambience is not up to the mark, the restaurants will lose the consumers for good. Subsequently, a pungent and raucous aroma increases the possibility of gastric. It affects the losing of appetite in the long run. Most of the respondents suffer the fact that they can not try the home-made food due to the excessive aromatic fragrances of food. For the white collar employees, the aroma creates digestion problem. But for the young and students, fragrances work effectively.

VI. LIMITATIONS

The data collected for the analysis purpose is through non-sampling purposive sampling which creates an observational bias. The small size of sample does not represent the overall population at once. Moreover, demographic differences have been overlooked as aroma works differently for different demography.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Given the fact that, today most of the people prefer to spend more time outside, they do not sit at the diner table together and have to eat outside. Despite having an extensive research by the researchers, researcher found that the aroma creates a strong sense of the foods of outside. The aroma leads the consumers to the restaurants to taste the foods. Aroma subconsciously affects consumers. The opposite is also true. A bad smell creates a bad impression.

Therefore, a restaurant should focus on the taste of the foods as well as the surrounding factors to lure consumers into the store. Although the main focus should be on the taste, but the ambience, taste, touch, looks, fragrances of the foos are also important for goodwill of the restaurants. Aroma is a side factor that only improves the notion of the taste of the foods in the restaurants. Fragrance urges the usage of the foods again and again an if it tastes good, it will create a lifetime value to

the restaurant owners as well as the consumers buying intention will also increase.

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