

The Impact of Sensory Marketing on Consumer Perception in Indian Restaurants

Shahnawaz Ali

Under the supervision of Ms. Shruti Agrawal

MBA (DUAL)

School of Business, Galgotias University

Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 203201.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

This report will deal with marketing strategies in the out-of-home food market in India, with a focus on New Delhi. As this sector is vast and diversified, it is necessary to introduce and define its main components. Consumers' eating habits in New Delhi are continuously evolving, moving away from the conventional pattern of three meals consumed at fixed times. Increased work hours, long commuting distances, and more active urban lifestyles have led to a rise in out-of-home food consumption. According to reports by the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI, 2022), the share of household expenditure on eating out is growing annually. In urban cities like New Delhi, this figure is significantly higher due to the fast-paced lifestyle.

The Indian food service market was valued at over ₹4.2 lakh crore in 2022, and continues to expand rapidly. Out-of-home food consumption in New Delhi can be categorized into two main segments: **commercial** and **institutional (or collective) catering**.

Institutional catering focuses on offering affordable meals to large numbers of people and includes services in schools, hospitals, government offices, and large corporations. This sector in India is dominated by a few major players like Sodexo and Compass Group India, who benefit from economies of scale and account for a substantial portion of the total market.

Commercial catering, on the other hand, includes all types of food establishments such as:

- Traditional full-service restaurants, including standalone eateries and those within hotels.
- Theme-based or specialty restaurants offering regional cuisines (like South Indian, Mughlai), health-focused meals (e.g., organic or vegan), or international fare (e.g., sushi bars, Italian trattorias).
- Fast food providers: Quick-service restaurants (QSRs) such as McDonald's, Haldiram's, Subway, and local snack vendors like chaat stalls, sandwich kiosks, or food trucks. The fast-food market refers to the sale of food and beverages meant for immediate consumption.

In contrast to institutional catering, the commercial food industry in New Delhi faces intense competition, especially among small and mid-sized players with limited marketing budgets. However, the QSR segment remains highly profitable and continues to grow rapidly; for example, brands like Domino's India have reported a consistent rise in same-store sales over the years.

In New Delhi, the food service market is vibrant and diverse. Fast food outlets and street kiosks are growing rapidly, while an increased awareness of health and hygiene is positively influencing consumer preferences toward

sit-down and casual dining restaurants. Delhiites increasingly associate these traditional establishments with quality, authenticity, and ambiance.

As a result, restaurants and food service providers in New Delhi face the constant challenge of attracting new customers, building loyalty, and maintaining a consistent brand image. A broad range of marketing tools fall under the Marketing Mix framework. However, since traditional and fast food outlets often differ in budget and audience, they must find new, more innovative methods to market themselves beyond basic strategies such as low prices or speed of service. For example, fast-food chains often use value pricing to attract working professionals and students—at McDonald's India, a meal can start from just ₹99. In contrast, premium restaurants may charge higher prices in exchange for top-tier service, gourmet meals, and a refined atmosphere. These strategies are vital for both segments to remain competitive and stand out.

Time-saving is another essential element. In QSRs and takeaway counters, fast service is a key expectation for consumers. In contrast, traditional diners may willingly wait longer for a richer experience, better quality meals, and relaxed ambiance. Other widely used marketing tools in

India's food industry include digital advertising, discount campaigns, and influencer-led promotions.

Nevertheless, innovation in marketing tools is becoming crucial as consumer expectations evolve. Indian restaurants now increasingly adopt **digital platforms**—offering online ordering, reservation systems, social media engagement, and more. Having a well-designed website or an active Instagram page has become standard practice for urban eateries in Delhi.

One of the more subtle yet powerful tools now gaining ground is **sensory marketing**.

Have you ever been drawn into a sweet shop by the aroma of freshly made jalebis? Or felt relaxed in a café with soothing music and ambient lighting? These sensory cues are not accidental—they're part of a strategic marketing approach used by many food businesses.

According to leading branding agencies and sensory research firms in India, **sensory marketing** helps businesses tap into consumers' emotions and create deeper, memorable experiences. It explores how sights, sounds, smells, and tactile cues influence choices—allowing restaurants to strengthen customer engagement and long-term loyalty.

OBJECTIVES

In conducting an inquiry closely aligned with the food-service industry in Delhi, this Master Thesis aims to fulfill the following research objectives:

- To examine the current characteristics of promotional strategies used by restaurants, cafés, bakeries, and fast-food outlets in Delhi.
- To assess the general level of awareness among restaurant owners and managers regarding sensory marketing as a promotional tool.
- To explore how businesses apply sensory marketing techniques, including the specific senses they target and their rationale for doing so.

- To identify both short-term and long-term goals behind the implementation of sensory marketing in the food-service sector.

- To analyze the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of food-industry stakeholders in India toward sensory marketing and its value.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of sensory elements (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) in shaping customer experience and loyalty.
- To compare the sensory strategies of local brands versus global franchises operating within Delhi.
- To propose practical recommendations for enhancing promotional impact through sensory engagement.

Thus, the report will try to give an answer to the question:

How the food industry can use sensory marketing as a promotional advantage?

DEFINITIONS

Sense: Any of the faculties, as sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch, by which humans and animals perceive stimuli originating from outside or inside the body.

(Oxford English Dictionary)

Sensory marketing: Marketing techniques that aim to seduce the consumer by using his senses to influence his feelings and behaviour. (American Marketing Association)

Ensemble of all the variables of action controlled by the producer or retailer to create, around the product or service, a specific multi-sensory environment, either through the product itself or the communication or the environment in the point of sale (S. Rieunier)

Atmosphere: The physical characteristics of the store such as architecture, layout, signs and displays, color, lighting, temperature, noise, and smell creating an image in the customer's mind.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Rieunier (2002), the sensory marketing approach tries to fill in the deficiencies of the “traditional marketing” which is too rational.

Classic marketing is based on the idea that the customer is rational, that his behaviour is broke up in defined reasoned steps, according to the offer, the competition, the answer to his needs. By contrast, sensory marketing put the experiences lived by the consumers and his feelings in the process. These experiences have sensorial, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and relational dimensions, not only functional. It aims to create the adequacy of the products with their design and their packaging, and then to valorise them in a commercial environment to make them attractive.

There, the consumer is behaving according to his impulses and emotions, more than his reason.

For many marketers (and consumers), the affectivity, perception and pleasure are more important than the price, since many products are now technically similar: they have to be differentiated in another way¹¹. In the catering marketplace, this point is highly true. What can differentiate two bakeries, two pizzerias? The good taste of the product is not enough: the surrounding, the sensation of pleasure created by stimulating the senses of the consumer will give a competitive advantage.

Kotler (1973) had already mentioned the need for brands to position them differently that according to the price or the assortment. He started to explain the influence of the point of sales physical environment on the behaviour of the customers and gave a definition of the atmosphere as “the creation of a consumption environment that produces specific emotional effects on the person, like pleasure or excitation that can increase his possibility of buying”¹². He considered the creation of this atmosphere as the most important strategic way of differentiation for retailers.

According to Rieunier (2000), the components of atmosphere are:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| - Visual factors: | - Colours of the surrounding |
| | - Materials |
| | - Lights |
| | - Layout (space, cleanness) |
| - Sonorous factors: | - Music |
| | - Noises |
| - Olfactory factors | - Natural smells |
| | - Artificial smells |
| - Tactile factors | - Materials |
| | - Temperature |
| - Gustative factors | - Sampling |

Across the time, senses progressively appeared in marketer's strategy. In the 50's, brands first worked on the colours, the design of the products or the advertisements (colour and design of the Coca-Cola bottle for instance, to remind the consumer the forms of a woman) as most of the promotion was made by posters.

Then, music has been introduced, in commercials (with the apparition of TV spots) as in the point of sales. Today, there is no point of sales without music in the background, and 99% of advertising is focused on what we see and hear¹³.

The first blind-test appeared in the 70's: thanks to scientific advancement, brands were more and more able to modify the savour of their products and to adapt it to the taste of consumers. The use of smells is the latest technique to reach the consumer: from the first artificial smell in the 90's to the new USB "smell-printer"¹⁴, olfactory marketing is still growing up and is getting more and more used.

Today, marketers understood that the more senses you appeal to, the stronger the message.

Applied to the catering marketplace, appealing the senses of the consumers is the core activity. Sensory marketing is then an efficient tool for who wants to ameliorate his offer, as all the senses can be mastered.

Visual marketing

Sight is the most used sense in marketing, as it is the most stimulated by the environment. The choice of colours and forms in the conception of a product, the layout of a point of sale, the realisation of promotion campaign are key factors of success (or failure), well understood by marketers.

Colours and shapes are the first way of identification and differentiation. Many brands are associated to a specific colour, then it is memorised more easily in the consumers' unconscious: Coca Cola is red, Kodak is yellow... The company can be identified even though the customer didn't see the name! According to memory retention studies, consumers are up to 78% more likely to remember a message printed in colour than in black and white¹⁵. In the food and beverage industry, the impact of colours is obvious and sharply defined.

The following statement sums up the characteristics of each colour and their impact on consumer behaviour:

Red	Highest stimulation hue: strong excitation power. Red increases the pulse and heart rate, as it raises blood pressure, and stimulates appetite.	Really popular in restaurants as it increases appetite. However, due to its exciting properties, red is more likely to be used in bars.
Orange	Orange is friendlier than red, but still stimulate appetite and attract attention, especially among kids and teenagers.	Companies like Burger King or Dunkin Donuts use orange as main colour.
Pink	Sweet and appealing. The perfect colour for sweets.	Mainly used by candies producers as Sweet'N Low, and sweet shops.
Yellow	Comforting colour. It can also mean tangy, creamy or delicious connected to aliments.	Popular hue for tea houses or pastry shops.
Green	Meaning of refreshment and nature. Connected to vegetables, it is means healthiness for the consumer.	Green is a delicate colour, as if not used in the right environment it is not appealing but can be repelling.
Blue	Associated with sea and sky calmness, suggest trust and serenity.	As blue icy hues refer to purity and coolness, this is the ideal colour for products like bottled water.
White	Sign of purity, cleanness and coolness. White is the basic colour, as it brings out everything else.	In a restaurant, white is used everywhere the customer expects for cleanness (plates, kitchen...)
Black	On a packaging, black is symbol of top-of- range, quality and sobriety.	As it is the darkest colour, black is exclusively used to create a very specific environnement.

The light is also a major component of the environment. According to Rieunier (2002), the differences come from the light source and its intensity: natural light, or softened artificial one, will increase the well-being sensation and the time spent in a point of sale. On the other hand, artificial and intense lights will increase customers' dynamism.

In the food-industry market, this sense is one of the most important: the vision gives the first impression of the quality, for the product as for the environment.

Auditory marketing

To use sounds is known in advertising: to associate music to a message is a good way to make the consumer remember it. However, music is also important for sensory marketing users, since researches underlined the impact of music on behaviour, in a point of sale for instance.

The effectiveness of a selling environment depends on its capacity to manage the subjectivity of the potential customer (Célier, 2004). Music is in every point of sale or restaurant, and is an integrant part of the atmosphere, so are lightning or design, and whatever its place (discrete speakers or video-clips in a big flat TV) has a role to

play in the customer perceptions. Background music is the cheapest and the easiest factor of atmosphere to manage (one button and it is off or a track is skipped, another one and sound is louder...), but it is definitely not the less powerful. The power of music is in its capacity to contextualize the different articles and support emotional states and poses (Gumperz 1977; DeNora 1986). Music aims to put customer in a state of mind corresponding to the articles that are sold: play rock music in a guitar shop and the person will imagine himself playing with what could be his future purchase. Music can then, if connected to the product, be a way to act on the buying behaviour of the customer. It is also proved that high volume music in a bar will increase the consumption of the customers (North & Hargreaves, 1996).

Studies have been made to find what kind of music fits the best with the different kind of places: for instance, classical music will increase the quality sensation of a wine cellar (Areni & Kim, 1993) or a tea house (North & Hargreaves, 1996).

But music can also act on the “crowd management”, by influencing the time spent inside by the customer. For example, according to two studies from Roballey & Ali (1985) and Milliman (1986), a fast-tempo music will push the customer to leave earlier. In the other hand, a slow music played at low volume will increase the time and the money spends inside.

Same studies revealed also that clients will eat faster and consume less with a loud volume and fast tempo music. Another research from Smith & Curnow (1966) revealed that in a point of sales, customer adopts his walk speed according to the tempo of the music.

Music offers a wide range of possibility to the marketers to influence customers' behaviour and complete the atmosphere to create a coherent sales environment.

Olfactory marketing

Scientific studies have shown that 75 % of our emotions are generated by the smell¹⁷. This is maybe the reason why the use of smells in a commercial way is increasing every day. The most famous technique of olfactory marketing in the food industry is the use of artificial smells to appeal to customers in the street, subway or supermarkets.

Paradoxically, there are only few studies in this field, in comparison with researches on visuals or sonorous stimulus. Researches on the smells started these last 15 years, especially in the UnitedStates, so many questions are still unanswered.

However, the impact of smells on customers' behaviour has been definitely certified.

First, searchers proved the positive impact of a smell on the evaluation of a product (Laird, 1935; Cox, 1969). According to Spangenberg, Crowley & Henderson (1996), a pleasant smell influence positively the evaluation of the customer on a point of sale (and some of its products), the intent of walk-through, of buying, as on the time spent inside (real and perceived). But the precise olfactory characteristics that could be at the origin of these influences are not yet determined.

It is difficult in the way that perception of smells is different from a person to another, and there are plenty individual variants that marketers have to take in account.

The first one is the sex of the person: Hirsch & Gay (1991) have noticed that women are more sensitive to smells than men. However, each sex doesn't have the reaction faced on the same smell: for instance, men stay longer than women in a shelf perfumed with spicy scent (Wall Street Journal, 1990), when women are more sensitive to shampoo smelling than men. The age of the customer modify his perception, as according to (Doty 1984, 1985), the sense of smell break up as the person gets older.

In this way, there is also a difference between generations: persons born before 1930 are more likely to call up natural smells, when youngest report more food or artificial smell (Hirsh, 1992).

So the use of olfactory marketing can be interesting for a brand, provided that it knows how its target, to avoid a bad perception and then a negative impact.

Gustative marketing

This refers to the intrinsic attributes of a product which account for being an efficient way of differentiation notably in the alimentary market, but not only: many researches and innovations have been led by toys, baby's bottles pacifiers, cigarettes or medicine producers (Célier, 2004). Thanks to scientific advancements, this sense is now highly mastered and exploited by producers in order to adapt their products to regional preferences: e.g. German consumer likes the sweet-salty mix, softly sour for the British one (Célier, 2004).

Recent studies aimed to understand better the mechanism of taste and explore the existing relations between, for instance, taste and colours. Thus, scientists now know that the 4 basic gustative sensations, sweet, sour, bitter and salty, are respectively linked by consumers to the red, green, blue and yellows colours (Célier, 2004). This might be important in the packaging design process of a product for instance.

In a promotional way, companies often use gustative marketing to convince customers, by making blind-tests (through comparative advertisements for instance) or directly with sampling or free-tasting promotional operations. According to Rieunier (2002), such operations can be determinant in the food industry, as customers are more disposed to purchase a product that they already tasted and liked.

Tactile marketing

Marketers try to take in account the emotions sparked off by this touch during the conception of the product (pen, clothes, car steering wheel...) or its conditioning (perfume bottle, crisps pack)¹³. For instance, the bottle of the French mineral water brand *Valvert* evokes through its rough touching the natural origin of its source in the heart of the mountains

In a restaurant, the weight of the cutlery, the softness of the napkins, the comfort of a chair can affect the perception the customers has of the atmosphere since, according to Rieunier (2002), the touch is one of the major determinant of the well-being sensation.

Thus, sensory marketing is a deep and complex concept, as it deals with the unconscious of the consumers: their perceptions, feelings and tastes. This approach is necessary as it allows controlling the atmosphere factors.

Then, the aim of our research will be to sum up the different techniques used by catering marketers which appeals to the senses of the consumer.

CHAPTER 3.

METHODOLOGY

This part of the report will present the method that is going to be applied in order to carry through the empirical analysis which is going to be done. Indeed, there are different ways of presenting and analyzing the problem the Master Thesis came across with but only one research method will guide to the answer which is looking for. In order to achieve this task, it will be used as a guide the explanations and writings of authors who will give theoretical information about academic research. It will help the research to follow an organized research process and, this way will give coherency, reliability and relevance to the empirical analysis. Then, in order to define what kind of research method it will be used and why this method fit the best with the objectives, it will first be defined the problem. Secondly, it will be explained the choice for a specific research method. The, it will be presented the different types of research and explain why it has been chosen this way. Finally, this part will explain the plan for the sampling of the research and what kind of instruments it will be used in order to achieve this task.

Defining the problem

Defining the problem and research objectives is often the hardest step in the research process.¹⁹ Thus, the formulation of the research problem will be done in respecting the general problem of the Master Thesis which is *“how the food industry can use sensory marketing as a promotional advantage?”*

Indeed, the analysis has to give answers to questions such as *“do restaurants and fast-foods use sensory marketing among their promotional tool and how?”* and then *“what do they think they can reach with it (attract more customers through energizing their five senses, etc.)*. In fact, as a concrete action, the report will try to know if the food-industry’s actors in Halmstad (a 54000 people Swedish city), first of all, know the concept of sensory marketing, then if they use it, how they do it or, in the case they are not aware of it, why they do not use this tool. In short, it is sought to know how this tool, which is known in a theoretical way, is used in the real professional world.

Research methods

Generally, research methods fall into two major groups, qualitative and quantitative. According to Gummesson (2005), quantitative techniques are mostly used to try to pinpoint causality, usually between two or a few variables where the independent and dependent variables are defined. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. In the case of the report and according to the research objectives, a quantitative method is not adapted because the research is not going to measure phenomena or create statistics.

According to Richardson (1989), a qualitative approach objective is to collect information with the help of discussion and observation of the studied subject. A qualitative approach will help the researcher to measure a small sample of customers or companies’ views and to focus on gathering information in depth, explores feelings, motivations, purchase drivers and inhibitors, purchase behaviour, and much more such as exploring restaurants feelings for a promotional tool. According to Mattar (1996), a qualitative method is a good method to work on attitudes, values, perceptions and motivation of the researched public (of restaurant for instance) with the main objective of understanding them deeply. The process of data collection, analysis and theory generation are much more closely linked in qualitative than in quantitative research (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Jorgensen 1989). According to those premises, it has been decided to develop a qualitative research method.

Types of research

After the problem has been defined and the research method has been chosen, it must be set the type of research. According to Yin (1993), a research methodology starts by identifying some specific types of research: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive.

Exploratory researches are sometimes considered as a prelude to social research for instance. According to Aaker (2001), the exploratory research will help to understand the problem, make primary hypothesis in order to draw a kind of directions that has to be followed but without giving conclusion as exploratory research will just give a few knowledge about what can be expected. The objective of exploratory research is to gather preliminary information that will help to define the problem and suggest hypotheses. This kind of research helps to determine the best research design, data collection method and selection of subjects. Related to the analysis, those research objectives are exactly what has been done. The second other type of research is explanatory research which may be used for doing causal investigations. Finally, descriptive research will require a descriptive theory to be developed before starting the project. According to Webb (1992), if the primary aim of an exploratory research, as mentioned previously, is to discover the important variables in a given situation, then the aim of descriptive research is to provide an accurate and valid representation of those variables; where exploratory research discovers something of interest and gives directions, descriptive research summarize it. Importantly, descriptive research does not attempt to show or establish any causal links between variables, it describes them. Wright (1995) describes descriptive research to mean any research where number counting and statistical techniques are not the central issues, where an attempt is made to get close to the collection of data in their natural setting. Therefore, it does fit with the kind of objectives the Master Thesis means to obtain: as before-mentioned, qualitative research and a descriptive type of research is appropriated as what is going to be studied which is “the companies’ side” and not “the customers’ one” which could give figures for instance.

Finally, the report started with exploratory research and, then, in order to collect the data, it will be used a descriptive type of research. The report will use at the end both of the types: exploratory and descriptive.

Population and sampling of the research

The next step of the marketing research process calls for determining the information needed and developing a plan for gathering it efficiently. The plan outlines the population who is sought and then the type of sampling that has to be done.

The population: as the research is a qualitative one, it does not look for a large population to make the sample. Furthermore, the analysis is concentrated on a specific segment of the companies’ population. It is sought either companies who know sensory marketing or others who do not. Indeed, it is important for the analysis to get information reflecting the reality in order not to give partial and biased results and conclusions. Therefore, the population is every restaurant in Halmstad.

Sampling plans: according to Webster (1985), a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. When dealing with people, it can be defined as a set of respondents (people) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey: indeed, the most important thing to keep in mind is that the population is defined in fitting with the objectives of the study. Then, sampling methods are classified as either probability or nonprobability²⁰. According to Samara (1997), in probability samples, each member of the population has a non-zero probability of being selected. Probability methods include random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling. In nonprobability sampling, members are selected from the population in some nonrandom manner. These include convenience sampling, judgment sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling. The advantage of probability sampling is that sampling error can be calculated.

Indeed sampling error is the degree to which a sample might differ from the population. Still according to Samara (1997), in nonprobability sampling, the degree to which the sample differs from the population remains unknown when choosing the elements that would be part of the sample.

As before-mentioned, the first type of sampling among probability methods is random sampling which is the purest form of probability sampling. The second one is systematic sampling which is often used instead of random sampling. The third type is stratified sampling which is commonly used probability method that is superior to random sampling because it reduces sampling error.

According to Webster (1985), the first type of nonprobability methods is convenience sampling which is used in exploratory research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth. Judgment sampling is a common nonprobability method as well. The researcher selects the sample based on judgment. This is usually an extension of convenience sampling. Another type is quota sampling which is the nonprobability equivalent of stratified sampling. Finally, snowball sampling is the last type from nonprobability methods which is used when the desired sample characteristic is rare.

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For the purpose of this research, **judgment sampling**—a form of non-probability sampling— was selected. In this method, the researcher identifies respondents based on specific criteria deemed relevant to the objectives of the study. These criteria may include business model, popularity, market presence, or type of service. Judgment sampling is appropriate when the researcher seeks to gain in-depth insights from those who are most likely to provide valuable and relevant data for the research question at hand.

In this study, the chosen sample includes **five restaurants across three distinct categories**: traditional full-service restaurants, fast food/QSRs, and cafés or coffee shops. The criteria for selection were based on **market status**, ensuring a balance between **prominent, well-established brands** and **smaller, independent establishments** to ensure a comprehensive representation of Delhi's restaurant landscape.

The selected restaurants are:

- **Traditional Segment:**

- *Karim's, Jama Masjid* – A historic and widely reputed Mughlai restaurant known for its culinary legacy and customer footfall.
- *SodaBottleOpenerWala, Khan Market* – A mid-sized, theme-based Parsi restaurant offering a nostalgic dining concept.

- **Fast Food/QSR Segment:**

- *McDonald's, Connaught Place* – A globally recognized brand with a standardized model catering to a high volume of customers.

- **Café/Bakery Segment:**

- *The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony* – A locally popular chain known for ambiance and comfort food.

- *Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket* – A specialty café focused on artisanal coffee with a minimalist and sensory-driven concept.

These establishments were chosen for their ability to collectively represent the diversity within

Delhi's restaurant industry. While *Karim's* and *McDonald's* reflect well-known and widely patronized brands, *Blue Tokai* and *SodaBottleOpenerWala* reflect a more curated, niche approach to dining and ambiance. This stratified approach ensures that insights drawn from the sample can be reasonably extended to the broader restaurant population in the city.

Instruments of data collection

In order to make the research as relevant as possible, an interview is the best way. Indeed, according to Aaker (2001), one useful technique to collect data in the qualitative method is a deep interview which is going to be applied in this multiple case-study. In fact, it is also one of the most common instrument and, therefore, a well-known instrument by companies. The interview which is going to be done will consist of a set of questions presented verbally to respondents for their answers.

As the interview is very flexible, there are many ways to ask questions: it has been decided to make it as a **semi-structured interview** which is perhaps the most commonly used interview technique in qualitative research. Indeed wanted information are those which can be compared and contrasted with other information collected in other restaurants. As it is a semi-structured interview, it will be created a **guideline**. It will obviously be created this set of questions in respecting carefully the research objectives which are sought in order not to have irrelevant information for the general aim of the thesis. The kind of questions will be **open- end questions**, which means that it allows as much as possible respondents to answer in their own words. According to Philip Kotler (1996) writings, open-end questions often reveal more than closedend questions because respondents are not limited in their answers. Indeed, it is wanted to know what companies think about sensory marketing, but not measuring how many people think this way as the sample is to tight to generalize to a larger population. Furthermore, those interviews will involve talking with people (managers, marketing officers or directors) in their "point of sales", in their restaurants. Indeed, the most important requirement for a person to be interviewed is the experience in the restaurant as this person must be aware of the general marketing strategy of the restaurant he is working for. Furthermore, this person has to be involved in this marketing strategy: a waiter for instance can have an important experience but is often not in contact with those strategies.

Those interviews will be recorded on a tape-recorder in order to transcript them on a paper to analyze it deeply.

DELIMITATIONS

As before-mentioned in the frame of references, the concept of sensory marketing is divided into 5 groups which refer to the five senses:

- Visual marketing
- Auditory marketing
- Olfactory marketing • Tactile marketing
- Gustative marketing

But it is important to say that we will limit our case research questions on **visual, auditory and olfactory marketing** concerning the restaurants in Delhi.

CHAPTER 4.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Collection of empirical data

As planned previously in the methodology part, the data have been collected by interviewing different actors of the catering industry. At the end, 6 persons were polled, from 6 different businesses in Delhi. 4 interviews have been realised on appointment, 2 others by visiting directly the persons. The directors or main managers exclusively have been interviewed, for the answers to be valuable and credible.

Guideline: our interviews followed a precise guideline to direct respondents toward main themes we wanted to address. It can be broken up in 3 different parts.

Identification of the respondent: to widen the results as much as possible, different kinds of restaurants have been selected. This first part has been made to get information about their organisation and functioning, in order for to facilitate the classification and compare them later. This part gathers questions about the restaurant itself (how many seats, employees), but about the respondent too (for how long has he been working here)

Awareness of the sensory marketing concept: before going deeper on the techniques using the customers' senses that the respondents can have, it has been asked if they know what the sensory marketing concept is. This is in order to verify their awareness, knowledge about it, and then determine the level of consciousness they have toward the promotional techniques they use. There are two possibilities after this question, according to the answer of the respondent:

- The persons don't know the concept: then it is explained to them, before asking if they use it in their restaurant.
- The persons know what sensory marketing is: then, they can be questioned to know if they use it. Why if not, how if yes.

Orientation toward the sensory marketing techniques: excepted if the respondent admitted to use sensory marketing and detailed everything he does or not (and why), was asked through this part precise questions about the environmental factors in the restaurants.

As respondents are maybe using unconsciously tools of sensory marketing, this part is important since it will reveal if yes or no the respondent is appealing to the senses of the customer.

The first group of questions deals with the sight: why did you choose those colours, materials, lights, decoration and layout?

Then come sounds and the choice of the music: do you pay heed to the music? Are you selecting it? If yes, what are the criteria to choose the music and what do you expect from it? Finally, the smell is addressed: How do you manage the smell in your restaurant (do you try to neutralize, spread them?) Have you got a system to spread smells outside of your restaurant? All these questions have been asked, however according to the answers of the respondents, few others came to bring more precisions.

1.1. Different empirical data sources

In order to collect empirical data in line with the sampling strategy, a set of interviews was conducted with selected restaurants and fast-food outlets in **Delhi, India**, which serves as the geographical focus of this study. This section

presents the selected establishments along with their key characteristics and customer experience environments. All of the restaurants are located in various prominent and culturally significant areas of Delhi, chosen to reflect diversity in terms of concept, clientele, and brand identity.

According to the sampling plan, interviews were conducted with **four restaurants**, including those that offer a combination of café, bar, and traditional dining services—commonly seen in urban Indian contexts as multi-service establishments—and **one fast-food outlet**. These establishments range from heritage brands with deep local roots to modern, experience-driven cafes and internationally recognized quick-service restaurants. This mix ensures that the data collected reflects the sensory strategies used across varied formats in Delhi's competitive and evolving food service sector.

The Two Traditional Restaurants:

Karim's, Jama Masjid:

Located in the heart of Old Delhi near the iconic Jama Masjid, Karim's is one of the most historic and culturally significant restaurants in the city. Established in 1913, this family-run establishment is renowned for its authentic Mughlai cuisine and continues to be a culinary landmark for locals and tourists alike. The restaurant's décor, while modest, carries a sense of history and tradition, with elements that reflect the heritage of Old Delhi—arched entrances, traditional seating, and vintage wall art. The visual atmosphere is rich in cultural references, offering an immersive experience into Delhi's royal culinary legacy.

Karim's plays a prominent role in Delhi's competitive restaurant scene by offering consistent quality, iconic recipes, and an ambiance that emphasizes cultural authenticity. Though not lavishly decorated in a modern sense, its legacy, smell of slow-cooked meats, and bustling dining area contribute powerfully to its sensory appeal. With seating spread across multiple sections and often extending to adjacent spaces during peak hours, Karim's can accommodate large crowds, making it a high-volume operation that continues to thrive.



Karim's Hotel, Jama Masjid

Soda Bottle Opener Wala, Khan Market:

Situated in the upscale Khan Market area, SodaBottleOpenerWala is a vibrant and theme-based restaurant that brings the charm of old Bombay Irani cafés to the heart of Delhi. Though relatively modern in establishment, the restaurant embodies a traditional feel through its quirky yet nostalgic design. The walls are adorned with vintage Bollywood posters, enamel signage, and humorous Parsi quotes, creating a warm, familiar environment for diners.

The main dining area is designed with dark wooden furnishings, mismatched chairs, and checkered flooring, giving it an intimate, home-style ambiance. Central to the interior is a classic wooden bar that draws attention and serves as a social focal point of the space. An outdoor section complements the indoor setting, operating as a semi-covered area during colder months and transforming into a lively terrace during pleasant weather.

Soda Bottle Opener Wala doesn't rely solely on its visual cues; its identity is reinforced through retro Hindi music, the scent of traditional Parsi and North Indian dishes, and friendly, character-driven service. This attention to detail across various sensory elements places the restaurant as a unique and culturally rooted player in Delhi's traditional dining scene.



Soda Bottle Opener Wala, Khan Market

The Two Cafés/Bakeries:

- **Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket:**

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, located in the bustling urban hub of Saket, is a café that exemplifies the modern third-wave coffee culture emerging in Indian metros. Known for its minimalist design and focus on artisanal quality, the café appeals especially to young professionals, students, and coffee aficionados. Its interiors follow a clean, uncluttered aesthetic with exposed brick, whitewashed walls, wooden furniture, and large windows that allow natural light to flood in—creating a calm and inviting environment.

One of the most distinctive aspects of Blue Tokai is the aroma that greets customers upon entry. The café roasts its own beans on-site, and the rich, earthy scent of freshly brewed coffee permeates the air, instantly signaling quality and care. Despite its simplicity, the ambiance is thoughtfully crafted to evoke a feeling of warmth, clarity, and contemporary sophistication.



Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket

The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony:

Located in one of South Delhi's most popular neighborhoods, The Big Chill Café is a classic example of a successful homegrown café and comfort food chain. It offers a wide range of dishes including pastas, sandwiches, shakes, baked goods, and desserts. The café is known for its rich and inviting décor—walls painted in deep hues, cozy seating arrangements including vintage-style couches, and an iconic collection of vintage Hollywood posters that adorn every corner. This visual aesthetic has become a recognizable part of the brand's marketing identity.



The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony

The fast-food:

McDonald's, Connaught Place:

Among the most visited McDonald's outlets in Delhi, the Connaught Place location stands at a busy corner in the city's commercial heart. Positioned advantageously among offices, retail stores, and metro stations, this two-story

outlet draws in a diverse crowd—from office-goers to students and tourists. It is designed to cater to high footfall efficiently, with a layout optimized for fast service and customer turnover.

The interior of this McDonald's features clean lines, bright lighting, digital menu boards, and modern furniture in vibrant reds and yellows—colors psychologically linked to appetite stimulation and speed. The music is upbeat, consistent with the brand's global identity, and the scent of French fries and burgers is ever-present, acting as a subtle but effective olfactory marketing tool. This outlet employs between 50 to 100 staff members across shifts, making it one of the busier fast-food locations in the area. As with all McDonald's restaurants, consistency in branding, service, and sensory cues is central to the customer experience.



McDonald's, Connaught Place

Description of empirical data sources

1.1.1. Awareness and use of the sensory marketing concept: This statement presents the answers of the respondent to the first questions: do they know the sensory marketing concept?

Do they think that they use it in their restaurant?

Karim's, Jama Masjid	The manager interviewed did not know the term "sensory marketing". After a brief explanation, he acknowledged using similar ideas in his restaurant without labeling them as such. "I didn't know that name before, but I understand what you mean," he said. Therefore, it appears that sensory marketing is used on purpose in this restaurant, especially through strong smells and visual cultural elements.
Soda Bottle Opener, Khan Market	The respondent was not aware of the term "sensory marketing." It also became clear that sensory marketing techniques are not used on purpose in this restaurant. Although there are visual and musical elements present, they are not intentionally used as part of a formal marketing strategy.

McDonald's, Connaught Place	The manager interviewed did not know the concept of sensory marketing. "I didn't know this before," he said. After explanation, he stated that he was unsure about using such techniques. "I don't know," he admitted. The use of sensory elements appears to follow corporate branding more than local intention.
Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket	The respondent did not know the concept initially. However, after an explanation, he agreed that sensory marketing is used. "Yes, for the smell, I have to say that we manage the aroma in the café," he explained. Thus, smell and ambiance are used intentionally as part of the café's customer experience.
The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony	The manager was not familiar with the sensory marketing term. But, after explanation and examples, she realized that visual and sound techniques are used. She stated that the posters, cozy lighting, and background music help to create the café's atmosphere.

Sensory marketing techniques: the use of the sight:

Will be gathered in this part all the results that concern the visual techniques: colours, materials, lights, layout or decoration.

Karim's, Jama Masjid	Managers of the restaurant did not know the concept of sensory marketing. However, after explanation, they acknowledged using some of its techniques. "I didn't know that name before, but I understand what you mean," one manager remarked. The restaurant worked with a professional designer to create soft and welcoming lighting, using small, non-aggressive lights and large windows for natural daylight. "He told us that the lights have to be soft and comfortable." The color palette and materials were chosen based on staff preferences, aiming for a modern and fashionable ambiance. "It is not too flashy, not too dark. It looks modern and fashion," explained the manager. They also apply suggestive techniques such as underlining special items on the menu to increase interest in premium offerings like desserts and wines. Sensory marketing is clearly used on purpose here.
SodaBottleOpener Wala, Khan Market	The manager was unfamiliar with the term "sensory marketing" and admitted that the design choices were based mostly on personal taste. However, there were underlying expectations about how colors would affect customer comfort. "The colors are not too light, not too aggressive," the manager said. "Maybe the customer feels more comfortable and enjoys more." The venue also functions as a bar, which influenced the choice of darker colors. Sensory techniques appear to be used intuitively, rather than as part of a deliberate strategy.

McDonald's, Connaught Place	The manager interviewed was unaware of sensory marketing as a concept. Design decisions are not made locally; instead, when a new McDonald's opens, the design is selected from one of several global templates provided by the brand's corporate team. "If a new McDonald's is opened, we choose one style from the predefined ones," the manager explained. A professional designer is then assigned to implement the layout and style. The overall objective, according to the manager, is "to make it look modern, fashion," and "to make people enjoy." This reflects the standardization of branding and ambiance across the franchise
Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket	The manager initially did not recognize the term sensory marketing. After explanation, however, she acknowledged its relevance. "Yes, for the smell I have to say that we manage the aroma of the café," she explained. The layout, colors, furniture, and artwork were selected to appeal to young professionals and coffee enthusiasts. "We wanted a place that looks modern, with nice colors, nice seats, and nice pictures," she added. Although the terminology was unfamiliar, the application of sensory techniques—especially in olfactory and visual dimensions—was intentional and aligned with the brand's identity.
The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony	The design and layout of The Big Chill Café are carefully crafted to offer a consistent and recognizable experience across locations. The manager stated that while the concept of sensory marketing was new to her, the aim of the café's ambiance was to evoke familiarity and comfort. "If you enter a Big Chill anywhere, you know you're in a Big Chill because it's the same feeling, the same colors," she noted. The café's walls feature large, vintage-style posters that allude to classic cinema, often invoking Italy and the coffeehouse tradition. This visual consistency supports customer recognition and enhances the overall brand experience.

Auditory marketing techniques: is music inside the restaurant important of the restaurant manager? What are his general feelings about that? Do they put special music at different period of the day to interact with the behaviour of the customer?

Karim's, Jama Masjid	Managers of the restaurant did not know the concept of sensory marketing. However, after explanation, they acknowledged using some of its techniques. "I didn't know that name before, but I understand what you mean," one manager remarked. The restaurant worked with a professional designer to create soft and welcoming lighting, using small, non-aggressive lights and large windows for natural daylight. "He told us that the lights have to be soft and comfortable." The color palette and materials were chosen based on staff preferences, aiming for a modern and fashionable ambiance. "It is not too flashy, not too dark. It looks modern and fashion," explained the manager. They also apply suggestive techniques such as underlining special items on the menu to increase interest in premium offerings like desserts and wines. For music, they use a selection of soft tracks curated by staff to reduce stress and create a relaxed atmosphere. "It is important that they take their time, enjoy their meal, and drink good wine," the manager added. Sensory marketing is clearly used on purpose here.
SodaBottleOpener Wala, Khan Market	The manager was unfamiliar with the term "sensory marketing" and admitted that the design choices were based mostly on personal taste. However, there were underlying expectations about how colors would affect customer comfort. "The colors are not too light, not too aggressive," the manager said. "Maybe the customer feels more comfortable and enjoys more." The venue also functions as a bar, which influenced the choice of darker colors. Regarding music, the manager stated, "We have playlists we enjoy. At night when we open the bar, we put the music louder than in the day, but it's just music we like." Sensory techniques appear to be used intuitively, rather than as part of a deliberate strategy.
McDonald's, Connaught Place	The manager interviewed was unaware of sensory marketing as a concept. Design decisions are not made locally; instead, when a new McDonald's opens, the design is selected from one of several global templates provided by the brand's corporate team. "If a new McDonald's is opened, we choose one style from the predefined ones," the manager explained. A professional designer is then assigned to implement the layout and style. The overall objective, according to the manager, is "to make it look modern, fashion," and "to make people enjoy." For auditory elements, they play music through a contracted radio station, offering mainstream, upbeat tracks. "It's regular music like Justin Timberlake," the manager noted. This reflects the standardization of branding and ambiance across the franchise.

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket	<i>The manager initially did not recognize the term sensory marketing. After explanation, however, she acknowledged its relevance. “Yes, for the smell I have to say that we manage the aroma of the café,” she explained. The layout, colors, furniture, and artwork were selected to appeal to young professionals and coffee enthusiasts. “We wanted a place that looks modern, with nice colors, nice seats, and nice pictures,” she added. The café plays mellow jazz and acoustic music through a local radio station that suits its relaxing atmosphere. “Every café has to play music,” she noted, although she did not see it as a unique factor. The application of sensory techniques—especially in olfactory and visual dimensions—was intentional and aligned with the brand’s identity.</i>
The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony	<i>The design and layout of The Big Chill Café are carefully crafted to offer a consistent and recognizable experience across locations. The manager stated that while the concept of sensory marketing was new to her, the aim of the café’s ambiance was to evoke familiarity and comfort. “If you enter a Big Chill anywhere, you know you’re in a Big Chill because it’s the same feeling, the same colors,” she noted. The café’s walls feature large, vintage-style posters that allude to classic cinema, often invoking Italy and the coffeehouse tradition. Music is coordinated by the central brand team and follows a relaxed, chill-out theme in the morning, with more upbeat music played during peak lunch hours to match customer energy. “It depends on the time of the day,” she said. This visual and auditory consistency supports customer recognition and enhances the overall brand experience.</i>

Olfactory marketing: Do restaurants use artificial smell diffusers to attract people inside the restaurant? What do they think about the influence of the smell on the customer?

Karim’s, Jama Masjid	<i>“We don’t use anything like that.” As the manager stated, Karim’s does not rely on olfactory diffusers or any smelling strategy to attract customers. In fact, they try “to minimize it as much as possible, so the smells don’t overwhelm the dining area when customers are inside.” They want the customers to fully enjoy the flavors of their dishes: “It’s not ideal if there are overpowering smells in the restaurant. Customers should focus on the authentic taste of our food, especially with our signature biryanis.” For Karim’s manager, strong kitchen smells might even be a distraction from the overall dining experience.</i>
SodaBottleOpener Wala, Khan Market	<i>“We have a ventilation system to ensure clean air.” At SodaBottleOpenerWala, everything is designed to manage the kitchen’s air. The kitchen door is kept closed, and two separate ventilation systems are used: one for the dining area and another exclusively for the kitchen. “The kitchen’s air is vented directly outside, ensuring that it doesn’t mix with the restaurant space.” The restaurant doesn’t intentionally use any smells to attract customers, and the air from the kitchen is directed to a quieter street, ensuring minimal impact on the atmosphere.</i>

McDonald's, Connaught Place	"We don't use any olfactory strategies." As McDonald's manager clearly pointed out, there are no intentional efforts to influence the scent in the restaurant: "We don't do that at all." However, the manager did acknowledge that it might have a potential benefit: "It could help attract more customers, and maybe we should look into it in the future."
Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket	<i>"We manage the aroma of our space." At Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, the manager explained that they use a strategy to enhance the café's scent with the help of a ventilation system: "We ensure the aroma from the brewing coffee fills the air inside." The smell of freshly brewed coffee is part of their experience, and customers enjoy it. "People remember that inviting coffee smell, and it might encourage them to purchase more than just a cup."</i> However, they clarified that they don't intentionally focus on the outdoor smell; it's more about creating an inviting indoor environment.
The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony	<i>"We don't focus on that." The Big Chill Café does not employ a smell-based strategy to attract customers. According to the manager, "We don't do anything like that intentionally. admit that "it is really important".</i>

Summary of the 4 data collection's statements:

The general concept of sensory marketing, in theory, is something that interviewed restaurants' managers do not really know or at least, are not aware of. But, still when talking with them, it appeared that the problem is just related to the concept's name. Indeed, after having explained the concept with practical examples, some of the interviewers admit using it, in a way. Most of the respondents knew how the five senses' stimulation can be important for the customer general satisfaction.

The first sense the report suggested was **the sight**: every interviewed restaurants explained that the decoration, the colours, the paintings were set to give personality to the restaurants. Furthermore, it creates a special atmosphere which is either unique or in line with other restaurants (for Espresso House and Mc Donald's). Find the right atmosphere which can fit the best with the kind of customers the restaurant want to reach is one of the aims suggested.

Facilitate the recognition of the restaurants (of the brand) is another one.

Some of the respondents even hire special designer on this task.

Concerning the auditory marketing techniques, the answers were diversified again. The music is of importance and some restaurants interviewed have even a special CD for their place. The most caring of them plays different music at different time of the day in order to interact with the customer mood, to fit with it. Whatsoever music from a radio, from their personal choices or music imposed by the company owning the restaurant, the aim of it is, according to managers' thought, to make the customer feeling in the right place, well-being.

Except for one of the respondent (The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony), the use of the smell is not done on purpose among the interviewed restaurants. They are aware of the importance that such techniques can have for the customer.

Finally, the concept of sensory marketing, although being used partially among the restaurants interviewed, collected the agreement of everyone: it is important; it can play a role in giving a particular atmosphere to the restaurant.

Analysis of the empirical data

Concordance with the main theories

In many different ways, studied restaurants appeal to the senses of customers, sometimes on purpose, sometimes not. Among them, some illustrate the theories exposed in the frame of references.

First, the fact that every respondents admitted to care about the atmosphere of their place, by managing some of the factors of environment, endorse the Kotler's point of view²³ about its major importance in the differentiation process. Atmosphere is one of the most important ways of differentiation: in the highly competitive catering market, restaurants are attentive to it.

Visual marketing techniques: Mostly, the choice of the visual factors is pertinent. *Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters*, *Saket* for instance, chose the yellow colour for its walls: even if it is not on purpose, this colour is highly adapted to this kind of coffees, tea houses²⁴. The dark colours used in *Espresso House*, that softened the luminosity of the place, fit with the will to increase the wellbeing sensation of the customer.

The manager of *SodaBottleOpenerWala, Khan Market*, by selecting “*not too light*” colours and associated with soft lights, chose the right visual factors of atmosphere for the comfortable feeling he wants to give to the customers. The lights are also an important part of the atmosphere: they let natural light come in and use a soft artificial lightning. This is determinant in the relaxing environment managers created.

In *MacDonald's*, the strong artificial lights and the light colours of the restaurant room give an intense luminosity to the place: according to Rieunier²⁵, this increase the dynamism of the customers. This is coherent in a fast-food, where customers shall not spend a lot of time.

Auditory marketing techniques: All the respondents revealed having music in their restaurants. As shown previously, music is an important factor of atmosphere and is the most appropriate for marketers to manage real-time customer's feelings.

In 2 cases, the respondents admitted managing the music according to the time of the day, with expectations on the customers. First, in *SodaBottleOpenerWala, Khan Market*, the manager augments the volume of the music at night, when the bar is open: in such a place, showed that high volume music increases the consumption of the customers.

Then, *Espresso House* provides a special sound system to its managers, who played in their coffee places 3 different selections according to the time of the day: the slow-tempo music in the morning to make the customer take his time is pertinent .

The same strategy is developed in *Karim's, Jama Masjid*, where the manager plays “soft music”, for customers to “take their time”. However, no evolution in the music tempo as time passes.

Olfactory marketing techniques: Among all the sensory marketing techniques referenced, olfactory ones appeared to be the less mastered by respondents. In only one case, *Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket*, an olfactory strategy is used. By diffusing coffee and sandwiches smells from the kitchen to the restaurant room, the managers expect the customers, by liking it, “to buy more”: work that says that a pleasant smell influences positively the evaluation of the customer on a point of sale and some of its products, the will of buying, as the time spent inside. In another way, the will from the *Karim’s, Jama Masjid* managers to block the odours from the kitchen can be considered as a pertinent olfactory strategy: since the smells are the major source of sensorial emotions (75% are generated by the smell), give a smell-neutral atmosphere to the customers in order for them to “fully appreciate” their eating and drinking experience is a grounded strategy.

Discordances with frame of reference

Through the collection and the analysis of the empirical data figured out several “mistakes” from marketers regarding to the use of sensory marketing techniques.

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket and *SodaBottleOpenerWala, Khan Market* are spreading smells from their kitchen in the street thanks to their aeration system, but not on purpose. *Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket* manager is appealing to the smell sense of the customers inside the restaurant but does not think that it is important for outside, neither does *SodaBottleOpenerWala, Khan Market* manager. However, according to Spangenberg, Crowley & Henderson (1996), a pleasant smell has a positive influence on the intent of walk-through of customers. By not managing the smells they release around their business, these two managers may be losing customers. In MacDonald’s for instance, managers use the music of the local radio instead of the music compilations given by the chain, since the music are almost the same on both of them. However, the problem is not only about the kind of songs, but mostly about the tempo, as showed the studies from Roballey & Ali (1985) and Milliman (1986)²⁹. By not using the compilations, managers are respecting the spirit the chain wants for its restaurants, but they are certainly breaking a rhythmic dynamism that interact with the customers.

In *Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket*, utilisation of the music diverges from the developed theories. The respondent admitted playing music that people like, as he plays the most famous radio station. But then, the random selection songs can provide negative impacts on customers: according to Roballey & Ali (1985) and Milliman (1986), a fast tempo music decrease the consumption of customers as it reduce the time spent inside.

Critical examination of the results

Correlation between sensory marketing and success

Is sensory marketing a way of increasing success for a restaurant? It is important to remind that sensory marketing could be an additional success key’s factor but is not something fundamental for a restaurant. It actually depends on variables such as the size of the restaurant, its position on the market and its objectives.

Chains such as Mc Donald’s or Espresso House are huge, with important obligation to achieve current objectives and to get results constantly. The two chains interviewed have already a welldeveloped marketing strategy. Sensory marketing, which is not inevitably done on purpose in their restaurants, is still important and even stir up a particular attention from one of them (Mc Donald’s). Those chains have the obligation to maximize their strategy to stay competitive, to stay leader. In Mc Donald’s for instance, it is possible to say that the presentation for a new sandwich with a nice picture must play a role in the decision making process of the customer and then, is one of the reasons for his success. In another case for instance, the smell can play a role in the recognition of the

restaurants, of the brand Delhi city, it is possible to smell the kitchen from Mc Donald's 20 to 30 meters far from the restaurant. This must be strength for them: then, the customer is able to spot the restaurant among the others and even to recognize it from what he has already seen.

It appeared that other restaurants, which are not part of a franchise for instance, are not really aware of such a technique. Yet, in almost all cases, the five senses' stimulation is of importance among interviewed restaurants' managers. Indeed, they all admitted that the role played by the music, the paintings, the colours and the smell in a restaurant is of importance to create a coherent atmosphere which is the identity of the restaurant, in a way, a part of its added value. Those points confirm also the general definition of the concept as an additional promotion tool which comes to fill out a general marketing strategy.

Competition and sensory marketing

Restaurants can use sensory marketing as a promotional advantage. With such techniques, they can appeal to customers and create an atmosphere which is their main way of differentiation. Then, does it mean that the use of sensory marketing increases as competition is getting more intense?

If sensory marketing can be correlated with success for a restaurant, the link with the competition is obvious, since restaurants don't need to differentiate in a non-competitive environment: why would a restaurant spread artificial smells in the air to appeal to customers, if it is the only one?

This theory reflects to the limits of this survey. Halmstad is not a highly competitive environment, thus is the sample shrunken. Since the number of restaurants is quite low, is it easier for managers to differentiate their business, without especially developing sensory marketing techniques.

It would be possible to measure the impact of competition on the sensory marketing use, by realising this survey in a bigger city (Stockholm for instance), or the extremely competitive environment of French cities' restaurants streets (in Paris, Lyon). If this correlation is proven, the lack of competition can be an explanation why sensory marketing in Halmstad restaurant is still not well developed.

The awareness problem

If the research revealed positive points regarding to the use of sensory marketing techniques, a real lack of investment in these techniques from managers of the catering marketplace figured out. Indeed, even if the respondent showed taking care of the atmosphere of their places, few are voluntarily trying to influence customers by appealing to his senses. This part will explain this lack of developed sensorial strategy from marketers by the low-level of sensory marketing's awareness.

Among the respondents, no one knew what sensory marketing is: it seems surprising in an industry where its use is important. As marketers do not know the concept, it is then difficult to set up sensorial techniques to impact customers; therefore the use of some of these techniques is not done on purpose, or wrong utilisations are done.

The illustration of this theory is the sensorial strategies set up by chain as *Espresso House* and *MacDonald's*. The manager of Espresso House did not know the concept: however, the chain developed a sensorial strategy since it imposes a wrought design to its restaurants, special music compilations... It showed that higher in the company's organisation, sensory marketing has been studied and applied: specialists conceived a strategy; local managers just have to follow the instructions (in Espresso House case, play the music that is given).

On the other hand, traditional restaurants have a highly pragmatic conception of sensory marketing, based on the cause-and-effect connection they perceive, without knowing any of the basic theoretical concepts.

Therefore, it appears that better knowledge of the sensory marketing concept from restaurant's managers would increase its use in the catering market place.

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUSION

In conducting this inquiry, the main sought information was information such as knowing the general awareness of the food industry's actors for a specific promotional tool: sensory marketing. Then it was discovering the companies-usage patterns for sensory marketing: how do they use it? At the end, the Master Thesis targets the general thought that the food-industry in Delhi can have about sensory marketing.

Then, according to the analysis' results, the concept of sensory marketing is known among those actors. Not exactly as **"sensory marketing"** that is still a scientific word for them but as what they would perhaps call: creating and developing a special atmosphere for the restaurant. Indeed, every interviewed restaurant was aware that the atmosphere of the place is of major importance in the differentiation process. But they were not especially aware that this could lead to sensory marketing.

Everybody admit to say that the stimulation of the senses (in this case, the stimulation of the sight, the smell and the hearing) was of importance but still, the use of specific marketing techniques for each senses is not equally developed. The most unused techniques are the ones referring to the smell. Nobody used techniques such as artificial diffusers for instance. Even if they know that this is of importance in the perception of the place to the customer, they just take advantage from the natural smell to create an atmosphere, but they do not try to stimulate that, to develop a way of attracting customer by those techniques.

How the food industry can use sensory marketing as a promotional advantage?

That was the research question of the Master Thesis. Both frame of references and analysis of the data helped the report to answer this question. It is important to give an answer in dividing the restaurants in two different groups: the first group concerns food-industry actors which maximize sensorial techniques to attract customers and the second group concerns those which use sensory marketing in its basis, more to create a specific atmosphere for existing customers than to attract new ones.

In the first group, sensory marketing is fully used as a promotional advantage: the main aims are attracting people, create preferences by stimulating the senses of the customer, and develop tools such as artificial diffusers, different type of music at different time of the day,

specific decorations. In the second group, where Halmstad's restaurants belong to, sensory marketing is not really used as a promotional advantage yet, it is something that comes with the will to create a specific atmosphere. It is then more in order to keep existing customers in a comfortable environment than to attract new ones. In this group, restaurants develop more or less sensorial marketing techniques and, at least, develop it inside the restaurant (for customers enjoying the restaurant) and not outside (for potential customer to be attracted by it).

In conducting this survey, those interviews and in writing this Master Thesis, it has been learned a lot about the concept of sensory marketing. An interesting point that has been discovered in making this report is that sensory marketing, which is still partially developed in companies strategies for the moment, could be integrated in many marketing strategies in the future as it gives to companies "something more" than others, than the competition.

It has also been learned a lot when it came to make interviews to restaurants' managers as well. Managers have a tight schedule and then, short time to allow to those interviews: to find ways of making the interview as interesting as possible was the first aim. As sensory marketing is a really interesting subject, it has helped on this task. What was also really impelling was the subject itself: it is always interesting to study upcoming techniques, something that has not been fully used so far but that has his future in front of itself.

Finally, questions posed by this study and the results it revealed figured out the necessity of leading a survey on a bigger scale (biggest town, biggest competition, biggest sample). To go further in the concept of sensory marketing, it could be also interesting to lead this survey in another marketplace. Fields such as retailers could give another point of view of this marketing tool.

The study revealed that the use of sensory marketing suffers of a lack of awareness from the catering marketplace's actors. In order to make this tool gain in better knowledge, would not it be interesting to develop formation and practicing on this concept?

INTERVIEWS

Karim's Jama Masjid

The interviewers: First we would like to ask you few questions about you: can you please talk about your restaurant and yourself?

About me? Ok, I'm the manager of the restaurant; I've been working here for 8-9 years, well, mmhh...

Were you here since the opening of the restaurant?

No, no, the restaurant has been created in the 90's, so it's an old restaurant, and the current owner, they have it for like 12 years, so no, I'm not here from the beginning.

It is quite a big restaurant! How many customers can you have?

Well, about 190, up to 250. We have 2 floors... **Ok. Do you know what sensory marketing is?**

Sensory marketing? No, what is it?

It is all the marketing techniques you can use to reach the customers by using its senses. You see what I mean?

Oh yes, ok. I didn't know that name before, but I see what you mean.

Do you think that you use it in your restaurant?

Yes we do, we use the menu to sell more, by recommending special wines or dessert...

The menu?

Yes, we put some special wines or desserts in evidence, to sell them more, and it's working. We write suggestions, like this is a new wine, it is good to drink it with this meal. Then people know better what to choose, so they buy some.

Ok, can you tell me how did you choose the colours of your restaurant?

Oh, actually, about 2 years ago, this floor (the upper one) was a club. We decided to make it a part of the restaurant, and we all agreed about the colours to choose.

Did you expect something special from these colours or not? Why these ones?

Ah ah, no! We choose them because we liked it actually, that's all. It is not too flashy, not too dark. It looks modern and fashion, this is what we wanted to have.

And what about the lights?

Well, when we build this part, we took a professional designer to help us with that. He told us that the lights have to be soft and comfortable, so he suggested us to do this way.

So what kind of light do you use?

We have big windows downstairs, for the main room. So we don't have a lot of lights during the day, we let the natural light come in, it is enough to see clearly.

What about the music: do you have music in your restaurant?

Yes, we choose it ourselves; we have CDs that we like. We only play soft music, for the people not to be stressed out.

For the people not to be stressed out...

Yes, it is important that they take their time, they appreciate the meal, drinking a good wine. So soft music, for them to be relaxed you know... We don't put the sound too loud. Everything for people to enjoy and relax.

The music is the same at any time of the day?

Yes, yes.

What about the smell? Smells are really important to appeal customers, by spreading smells in the street for instance. Can you tell me how do you manage them?

No, we don't use anything like that. Well, the kitchen can smell a lot. But we try to block it as much as possible, for it not to enter the restaurant room when the customers are here.

Ok, you try to block the odours from the kitchen?

Yeah exactly. You know, I think it's not good if you have too strong smells in the restaurant room. When customers are here, they have to fully appreciate it. It's the same for the meal, you have to smell it.

Ok, thank you very much.

Soda Bottle Opener Wala, Khan Market

The interviewers: Good afternoon sir, we are here today in order to ask you a few questions. We are making a report for Halmstad University on the marketing strategy of restaurants in Halmstad. But, first of all, would you like to define your position in the restaurant?

I am the manager of the restaurant. This restaurant is a restaurant and a bar at night. We are six employees working here...and... [blank]...what else would you like to know?

For how long have you been working here?

I've been working here for 7 years now...but I did not open the restaurant, it was a restaurant before.

Ok. So we are making a survey for our University which the subject of it deals with marketing strategies of restaurants and, more precisely, on "sensory marketing among those restaurants". Do you know what "sensory marketing" is?

No, no...

Sensory marketing is a way of attracting your customers by the stimulation of the five senses of the customer. To precise a bit our subject, we are doing this report about three of the senses: the smell, the sight, the hearing. We will start with the smell. For instance, some restaurants are used to using artificial smell created by diffusers outside the restaurant in order to attract customers inside. Did you know that fact? Do you use that kind of strategy yourself?

No, no...the kitchen is...We have the smell of the kitchen, it is the only smell we have but...it is in the kitchen, not in the restaurant.

Then, would you let the door of the kitchen open on purpose to release a nice kitchen smell in the restaurant?

No, no. We have an aeration system to change the air in the kitchen. So it doesn't smell too much in the kitchen because sometimes, it smells too strong. But it's not the same aeration system as the restaurant one [he shows the dining room], there are two different systems. The aeration of the kitchen is going directly outside; it is not diffused in the restaurant.

Ok. If the smell of the kitchen is going outside, do you think that "potential" customer can be affected by that and then can be attracted inside your restaurant?

Hum...I don't know [blank] no, I don't know

You don't do it on purpose?

No, no. We just change the smell of the kitchen, that's all.

Ok. We would like also to talk about the sight, the second sense we are studying. How do you manage the decoration here, the color? What kind of spirit do you want to show?

I put colors that I like actually. But there are dark colors. At night, we are a bar so it's important not to have too light colors I think.

Do you think it is important for the customer?

Yes, for the colors...The colors used here are not too light, not too aggressive. So may be the customer feel more comfortable and then enjoy more the restaurant and...yes...

Finally, we would like to talk about the hearing with you. Do you have special music; Do you put a special kind of music for the customers?

No, not really, we have CDs but it's CDs that we like. At night when we open the bar, we put the music louder than in the day but...we don't have special CDs.

You don't use for instance a calm music for the customer to stay longer in the restaurant or something like that?

No, no, it's like...more Rock & Roll and...it's just at night, we change the music for the bar, that's all...but, yes, just music we like.

So we could say that you use sensory marketing in a way but not really on purpose. But for instance, in the future, would you try to develop your marketing strategy around this theory of sensory marketing? Do you think it's interesting, that it could work in your restaurant?

Yes, may be. Here it's working, the customers are happy in my restaurant, I don't really have a reason to change, may be if I would be a bigger restaurant but...no...no...for the moment it is ok.

Ok, thank you very much for your answers, it will help us a lot.

You're welcome

Have a nice day, goodbye

The same to you, bye

Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony

The interviewers: Good morning, we are students at Galgotias University university and we are making a survey about sensory marketing in restaurants. We have few questions to ask you, but first can you please talk about yourself and your restaurant?

Yes, sure, I'm the manager here. What do you want to know?

How many employees work here, when did you arrive here?

Ok, we employ 6 persons here. And concerning me, I've been working here for 4 years now in this restaurant, before I was working in Delhi for 3 years in another bar.

Great. So now we will ask you few questions about sensory marketing. Do you know what the concept of sensory marketing is?

No, not really.

Actually, sensory marketing is all the techniques that use the senses of the customers to influence their behaviour, like maybe coming in your restaurant, want to stay longer inside, make them consume more maybe... It can use all the senses, like the sight, the earring, the smell. Do you see what we mean?

Yes, yes ok.

So do you think that you use that kind of techniques in your restaurant?

Yes, then for the smell I have to say that we manage the smell of the restaurant, I don't know if it's what you mean, but we use this aeration system. So there is aeration from the kitchen, and the smells go outside and inside the restaurant. This is sensory marketing?

Yes, you mean that you use the smells from the kitchen? You spread it in your restaurant?

Yes. Then here it smells coffee a bit, and also the sandwiches that we cook in the kitchen, because of this aeration.

And you told us that the aeration goes outside too.

Yes, it's an aeration system, it takes fresh air and release the inside air outside.

Ok. What do you expect from these smells?

It is good to have a good smelling, we are in a coffee, so people like this smell.

Yes, it is for people to feel more comfortable.

Yes, more comfortable. People remind the smells, maybe they will buy more than a coffee, a sandwich maybe.

And how do you think that the smells can influence the customers outside? Even if you don't put in on purpose...

I don't knows if it influences the customers, the street behind is really small, few people pass here, so no I don't think so.

Now for the sight, so everything about the lights and the colours inside the restaurant, how did you choose this decoration for instance?

Yes, we choose it because it's nice. We wanted to have a place that likes modern, modern decoration. We put with light colours, nice pictures, not too many pictures, you see we have these few pictures on the wall.

Ok. Do you think that customers like this modern style?

Yes, yes. You know, our customers, they are young, they are people who work, they just come, take something to drink or a sandwich. Well, we are on the main street of Halmstad, so they are a lot of active people.

Yes, persons who work and want to take a break come here...

Exactly. For the lunch, you know, we open at 11:00am.

Ok. How do you manage the music in your restaurant? Do you pay attention to that?

Well, we put the music of the radio.

Do you think that music can have an influence on customers?

Yes, maybe. We put the radio to have music inside, because every coffee has to put music. We put a famous radio, normally Rix FM, because it is popular, I think it's the kind of music that our customers can like. But, the music is not loud, so it is not really determinant. Just for people who come alone maybe. Every café has to play music, to make people feel comfortable.

You mean that people don't come here for the music? No, we are not a bar, people don't care about music, I think. **Ok. Thank you very much.**

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket

Interviewers: Good afternoon, we are making a report which the subject of it is "how restaurants, coffees and bakeries attract customers to their point of sale?" So first, could you introduce yourself and your restaurant? For how long have you been working here?

I've been working here for 2 years, before I worked for Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters in the center but not as a manager but as a waitress only. Here in Delhi, Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters is a coffee place. We have over there Coop [she shows coop Forum which is a supermarket and restaurant in front of the Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters], you know the Coop Restaurant, that's a lunch restaurant where you can eat lunch and...yes, and they have more food. We are more a coffee, we have cakes, bakeries and we sell coffees, teas...

Do you sell sandwiches here as well?

Yes sandwiches but not the warm food

You do not make food in a kitchen for instance

No, no, not warm food, but just salads and more sandwiches

So in order to precise a bit our thesis subject, it is about "sensory marketing" exactly, I don't know if you know what it is?

How we... [blank]..No, not really...

It is like how you make your coffee attractive in stimulating the five senses of the customer. Do you use the senses of the customer in order to make it attractive?

You know in Espresso House, we have, generally for all Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters in the whole

Delhi...they don't like a...do commercials and stuff because we want...huh...we don't do commercials in newspaper, advertising, not, not anything because we want to sell ourselves just like people talk about that and people come here and talk to there friends about us. So we don't have anything in the newspaper and stuff.

Ok. So for instance, to define “sensory marketing”, you have the five senses: the sight is obvious actually, it concerns pictures, wall-arts in the place, which colors are there and so on...

Yeah, we have, we have like art style inside and outside just small signs to say that we are here just for the people around us to see us but still nothing in newspaper.

And do you know for instance if inside the restaurant, is there a kind of spirit that Espresso House has to respect? Do you have the choice for the “visual organization”, the colors, the pictures and the general atmosphere of your place? Or is it up to Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters?

Yes, it's Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters. Yes, we have the same everywhere, if you come here or if you come in the Espresso Houses in Stockholm, you can know that you are in Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters because it's the same feelings and the same...huh...colors so you can know when you walk in.

So do you know for instance why they have chosen those colors, those pictures? When they told you to do this way for the decoration and so on, do they tell you why?

No, no...I think it is different...each Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters is the same for the background but some stuff in the interior are different. But I don't know why they choose those colors or those pictures. I know that they have those pictures for instance [*she is showing pictures on the wall*], really original. They are from Italy so it reminds coffee and stuff.

Ok. Then, the two other senses we would like to discuss are the smelling: there are for instance sometimes some restaurants that put artificial smelling system like diffusers for the customer to be attracted from outside to inside the restaurants. Do you use that kind of strategy?

No, no. We don't do anything like that, but...huh...as I work here everyday, I do not really feel the smell of the coffee.

Yet, do you think it is important for the customer?

Yes, that's really important. I know myself that if I go to a bakery or a restaurant, if I smell the smell of a new bred or a good kitchen, I would tell myself: “*hmmm, I want to go there*”. Yeah, that's really important. Here, the only thing that smell is may be the sandwiches.

But you don't do that on purpose?

No, no no.

You don't especially try to keep this good smell inside the coffee? For instance, when you cook the sandwiches, you do it just behind the bar; you don't go in special places like a little kitchen in the back of the coffee?

No, we have the grill just behind there [*she shows the bar*] and we cook everything there.

So when you do it everybody can smell it?

Yes, yes. But nothing is on purpose.

Then we would like to discuss the music. Do you have special music you have to put? Is it your choice?

No it's not my choice.

Have you got special CD given by Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters then?

Yes, we have an Ipod with many songs on it. Those songs are the same everywhere in every Espresso House. Most of them are like background, chill out, lounge music. And we have a music in the Ipod for the morning, a morning mix, then lunch music and then in the afternoon, it is just up-tempo music.

What is it for?

It is like for the mood of the customer. In the morning, it is more cool music, relax music. In the morning people come here, want a quiet place while drinking their coffee, reading their newspapers...and then in the lunch, it is getting faster and faster.

In order to get more customers?

Yes, yes

And do you think that it can affect the time they spend here or even the number of drinks that the customer can take? For instance, in the morning, if you put up-tempo music, do you think they would leave faster?

Yes, yes. I know some people when they come in the morning they say: *"oh, what a great music you have, really relaxed, you can sit down and enjoy yourself a coffee in the morning, really relaxing place"*. But if you have an up-tempo music, they have bad feelings about that. It doesn't fit with the morning.

And do you think that, because of the music, people stay longer in the morning than in the afternoon?

Yes, for sure. People in the morning take their time, read newspapers but in the afternoon, most of them take a coffee and go. But if they enjoy the music, they can sit down longer.

Ok, thank you very much. The interview is over. Thanks for your help on our task. Hope we didn't disturb you too much.

No, no, thank you for coming and, yeah, good luck for your thesis.

Yes, thank you. Bye.

Bye

McDonald's

The interviewers: First, can you tell me who you are and describe your restaurant?

I'm the general manager of this Mac Donald's. There are 200 hundreds Mac Donald's in Sweden, 2 in Delhi.

How many employees do you count? How many seats?

We have more than one hundred seats, I don't know the exact number. We also provide food to take away. And for the employees, it depends of the period. In the winter we are around 45, and in the summer, we reach 100. So now we are around 70.

For how long have you been working here? How did you arrive here?

I've been working here for 2 years and ten months. I come from Gothenburg, and I moved here in 2004, I've been one year in a military. ... Then I started to work here, but I was about to start to study something else, I just needed to work for a short period. But today I'm still here.

Ok. So now I'd like to ask you if you know about the sensory marketing concept. Have you already heard about it?

Sorry, about what?

Sensory marketing. It is to use the senses of the customer, like the sight, the hearings, etc... to influence his behaviour. Do you understand?

Yes, ok. No I didn't know this before.

Ok. But do you think that you are using techniques of sensory marketing in your restaurant?

I don't know. No I don't think so. Is it legal?

Yes of course! It is just promotional techniques, like spreading smells outside to attract customers, make them know that there is a Mac Donald's somewhere, make them hungry...

Yes, ok, no we don't do that.

Ok, can you explain me the design of your restaurant? How did you choose the colours, the layout, the lights...?

Oh, you know you don't have the choice when you open a Mac Donald's. You have to choose between several defined styles, I think there are 8 different styles.

8 different styles...

Yes, you have to choose between these remodelling.

Ok, do you know who designed these models? Do you know what is expected from them?

Do you mean, with sensory marketing? I don't know if there is something expected from that, I don't even know who designed the models. I think it's just a guy who try to put everything together, try to make it modern, fashion, a good design you know to make you enjoy, I don't know...

Yes, you think that it is important.

Of course yes (silence). I think that customers enjoy the modern design, it's cool. The seats, everything...

Great. And what about the music? Do you have some in your restaurant?

Yes of course. We have a contract with one radio station, but just for this restaurant. For others restaurants, we have our own Mac Donald's CDs, but we don't use it here. But it is just regular music, like Justin Timberlake or something, it's nothing special.

Which radio do you have a contract with in your restaurant?

Oh No...

Don't you think that it is a problem not to use the Mac Donald's CDs?

No, no I don't think so, you know the music are the same, it is new songs, famous ones. The music we have on the CD, you can hear it on the radio, most of them.

Ok. Finally, for the smell, how do you manage smells in your restaurant?

What do you mean?

I think you know it, but there are some special machines that can spread odours over the air outside. Do you use one here?

No we don't. I've never heard about it (silence).

Ok, maybe you have an airing system in your kitchen that releases outside?

(Laughing) No we don't.

Because sometimes during the day, it is smelling a lot in town: it is easy to know that there is a Mac Donald somewhere around...

(Stop laughing) Really? No, I'm not sure, we really don't do anything for that, but that is an idea maybe we could make people hungry (smile). Maybe something smells but I'm quite sure that we're not using anything. We have to think about it!

Maybe you know if in others Mac Donald's restaurant, they use such techniques?

No, I don't know and I don't think so.

Ok. So I think that is over for us.

Ok, great.

Thank you very much.

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APPENDIX

Appendix No. 1: Interview at Karim's, Jama Masjid

Appendix No. 2: Interview at SodaBottleOpenerWala, Khan Market Appendix No. 3: Interview at The Big Chill Café, Kailash Colony Appendix No. 4: Interview at Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Saket
Appendix n°5: Interview in Mc Donalds