This text analyses the importance that sensory advertising and marketing can have in the act of consumption and what uses arise with this approach. Based on human senses as an unconscious channel to influence in consumer brand perception, this study tries to reveal new possible methods to make consumers experience more pleasant and beneficial for the brand. The research presents the results of an empirical analysis related to an experiment that measure if music can condition consumer evaluation of a product's consumption. We conclude the sensorial addition is positive to reinforce the experience of consumption. The text ends with purposes that can be done in communication field as a consequence of those new findings that open a broad range of possibilities that can be done in this area.

Keywords
Sensory advertising and marketing; communication; ambient; brand position; brand retention; music
1. Introduction

In light of growing obsolescence of traditional brand positioning methods, new alternative and more optimal ways emerge such as sensory advertising and marketing. Focusing on the senses of hearing and smell, this study pretends to show the possible benefits of creating a particular atmosphere during the act of consumption. It is known that there is a relation between these senses and brands retention, although empirical analysis is not compensated for the theoretical content.

Through their senses, human beings gather information about all the circumstances that take place around them. Applying this assumption to business, it raises sensory advertising and marketing as a tool for enhancing customer brand engagement and awareness. Its primary purpose focuses on setting specific ambient stimulus that could condition abstract consumer perception of the product. However, sensory marketing can also be valid and efficient for ameliorating consumer consumption experience that could drive into better brand conceptual notions.

Although the term was not assigned until the last part of the previous century, sensory advertising and marketing has accidentally existed since people have used a fragrance to please the people around them or have used makeup to transmit particular appearance. Senses have been innate to humans, but the use of them to form hidden emotions on others unexpectedly arose without being noticed. Sensory experience means how individuals react when a firm, in offering and delivering goods and services, participates in their purchase and consumption process through the involvement of the five human senses (Hulten, 2011).

Sensory advertising and marketing focuses on drawing out hidden feelings such as joy, affiliation or nostalgia; to establish some relation between the stimuli and that emotion. Emotion gets our attention through our senses - which then influence our decision-making processes. Brands that create an emotional connection to consumers are stronger than those that don’t (Lindstrom, 2010). Triggers can create self-generated brand attributes on our desired targets, rather than been verbally provided. They are more powerful and alluring than a simple preconceived statement (Sengupta, & Gorn, 2002; Labroo & Nielsen, 2010).

Focused on the business point of view, nowadays we are living the era were sensory advertising and marketing efforts revolve around engaging all five of customers’ senses to create the multisensory experience they seek (Krishna, 2010) in the Broadband Society (Fondevila Gascón, 2013).

Although sight sense predominance has been a constant in sensory advertising and marketing practice; in recent times, the other ignored senses have been sharply increasing (Schmitt, 2000; Gobe, 2010). Companies are gradually shifting their expenditures from conventional marketing strategies to create a unique and ideal environment while the product is purchased and consumed building emotional linkages simultaneously to rational ones (Havas et al., 2010).

From the struggle from advertising and marketing sectors that advocate from a mass marketing to micro marketing (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2000) and others with a customer-centric view found on relationship marketing (El-Ansary, 2005), sensory marketing arises as an alternative because it departs from the individuals' brain.

Sensory stimulus can evoke the past as a consequence of a previous experience but also they can unconsciously or not push consumers to imagine experiences that they have never actually lived (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Two perspectives have been presented about imagination (Huang & Mitchell, 2014): a) imagination has the same effect as perception to represent information (Unnava, Agarwal & Haugtvedt, 1996; Schau, 2000; Petrova & Cialdini, 2008); b) imagination involves its connection with fantasy. The difference between imagination and perception is that the second one evolves and shapes human knowledge (Hopp, 2011).

Music, uniquely among the arts, is both completely abstract and profoundly emotional. It has no power to represent anything particular or external, but it has a unique power to express inner states or feelings. Music can pierce the heart directly (Yorkston, 2010); it needs no mediation.

Lots of sensory advertising and marketing tools are auditory, some of them because of the channel limitations such as the radio where is the only way to enhance consumers, others like retail stores where ambient music can condition consumer behaviour. Many studies in the past decades (Sherman & Smith, 1987; Dawson, Bloch & Ridgway, 1990; Grossbart et al., 1990; Baker, Levy & Grewal, 1992; Tai & Fung, 1997; Sherman, Mathur & Smith, 1997) have all coincide with the idea that atmospherics have a direct impact on cognitive and affective states of the shopper (Gulas & Schewe, 1994). Furthermore, those studies have also focus on other aspects such as music style (classical versus variety) (Areni & Kim, 1993), volume, familiarity (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000), tempo (Kellaris & Mantel, 1996; Milliman, 1982; Milliman, 1986) and nationality (North, Hargreaves & McKendrick, 1999) in service and retail settings.
Several sense hearing experiences can impact in our targets. Diverse manners of transmitting our message intentionally or not as shown in Figure 1, where the fundamental fact to care for while creating or choosing the sound is if it produces a correlation with the brand’s identity (Jackson, 2003). The sound has to be consistent with the brand image to form a sensory stimulus unforgettable, adaptable and genuine.

Figure 1: Diverse manners of transmitting a message intentionally

![Diagram of sound senses]

Source: B. Hulten, N. Broweus, and M. van Dijk, Sinnesmarknadsföring (2008)

With respect to our study, there are some of those experiences that are of our interest. One of them is the voice; that contributes to ameliorating the sensory experience in the service landscape. Being possible to influence positive or negatively on brands perception, the voice is more powerful when there is a lack of knowledge about the speech content by the consumer.

To this same group belongs music, a useful method to create long-lasting memory on consumers (Reda, 1998) and has the power to lead people and create a sense of group belonging (Radocy & Boyle, 2012).

Ambient music as a stimulus has two ways to impact in our consumer’s ears: a) Indexicality is known as the extent to which music arouses emotion-laden memories while b) fit means the subjective perception of the music’s fitness or relevance to the brand's message by consumer.

Regarded as the language of emotions, in retail is usually planned to set a mood, invoke particular brand perceptions, or influence the favourableness of attitudes of consumption more generally. The sense of hearing is commonly combined with visual elements, albeit it seems not equally compelling depending on the circumstances.

The link between music and emotions have been studied by a considerable relevant amount of researchers, but one of the most popular distinctions among those relations is (Sloboda, 1999):

a) "Episodic associations" created by a specific composition of music that generates a remembrance with a particular genuine emotional experience.

b) "Iconic associations" when the piece of music evokes or seems similar to a conventional or familiar sound (e.g., waves).

c) “Structural expectancies”, are hot spots that usually involve particular structural events which tease structural expectancies.

Although consumer psychology states that mode influences listeners’ temporal perceptions, there have been considerable proofs that have suggested that it may not have that much impact (Droit-Volet et al., 2010). However, studies (Kellaris & Kent, 1992) discovered that minor modes are sensed as shorter than major modes causing underestimation of time spent. This subjective misperception of time can alter time expended in a store (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). An increase in time spent per shopper would have been translated into more likeability interacting with sales personnel. Important to retailers of course is the fact that customers spending more time in a store are more likely to interact with sales staff, an increment in
expenditures and unplanned purchases (Inman, Winer & Ferraro, 2009). The multi-sensorial approximation of perception, allow us to understand sensory advertising and marketing as a whole being critical to understanding and explaining customer experience.

Several studies have shown that experience is even more efficient while it interacts with other sensory elements on the environment (Oakes, 2000). The correlation between them ensures a desired consumers’ categorization of a retail outlet and positively affects emotions and cognitions, as well as the overall store evaluation (Lam, 2001).

Retailers value information received as a whole set of feelings created by the overall stimuli received, they have developed strategies to create positive in-store atmospheres that augment the consumers buying experience and improves their purchase satisfaction. In recent studies acknowledged that the combination of listening (music) and olfactory stimulus (vanilla scent) had considerable significance on shoppers’ emotions and comfort levels.

When looking at similarities among both stimuli, scents (Gilbert, 2008) are effective impacting consumers’ decisions when a) there are innate to the product (Bone & Jantrania, 1992), b) when the scent has product congruency with the class that belongs to the product or c) when there is product congruency with the consumers’ gender (Spangenberg et altri, 2006). Therefore, it is shown that music-scent association is capable of constituting nothing but efficient and optimal sensory advertising and marketing experience and emotions in our target consumers (Spangenberg, Grohmann & Sprott, 2005).

2. Methodology

In particular, the research aspiration is to respond to these questions: a) is it possible to establish a link between those stimuli and the brand during the consumption? b) why companies might be interested in creating the optimal atmosphere while the consumer experiences the use of the product? and c) what new B2C potential practices emerge?

To answer all these questions, the study will follow the successive structure. First, the article presents the objectives of this research, as well as the hypotheses that are intended to verify. It summarizes everything that has been studied so far highlighting the evidence that has been accomplished, how it is currently used in industry and its different forms. Subsequently the methodology, the procedure has been carried out in experiment and the results obtained.

The study contrasts the consumption of the same product (in this case wine) in two different atmospheres. Both atmospheres were completely diaphanous in pursuance of not having another stimulus that could alter our experiment. The only difference between them was the existence of ambient music in one of them.

The sample is composed by 80 students (half male, half woman) without any knowledge of the experiment where the only information given was that their evaluation was going to help a new wine brand in releasing one of their new products.

This sample was almost around 19 and 24 years old with roughly the same average age (twenty-one years and five months old for the non-music-environment ones and twenty-one years and one month for the ambient music environment) and with the same nationality.

The hypotheses are the next:

H1: Subjects consuming the wine in an ambient music environment will appreciate the wine more than subjects in the non-ambient-music environment.

H2: Subjects consuming the wine in an ambient music environment will exhibit a higher recall of brands than participants in the non-ambient-music environment.

The experiment consisted in a wine tasting where the volunteers were placed in an empty room. Once there, they had a brief description of the wine specifications, the description was the same for everyone and commented by the same speaker for not having any kind of difference on the voice tone.

Time spent hearing the speech was used to acclimate the ear to the music or non-music environment. After a few minutes later, the speaker taught them how to taste the wine. The first step was to take a deep breath of the product for acclimating the nose and creating an impression of the flavour. Then the first sip was taken, a little one for making the taste buds used to the wine acids. The second step was taking a bigger sip to experience the feeling with greater clarity.
For ambient music, we chose classical instrumental music to create good atmosphere without being a disturbing element during the tasting. The piece of music streamed was “Clair de Lune” in $D\flat$ major, song composed by Achille-Claude Debussy in his “Suite Bergamasque”. We considered that this piece was useful evoking feelings of joy, peace and relaxation.

To conclude, a survey was carried out. It contained questions such as age, gender or nationality. The following questions were related to their experiment experience:

1) Did you like the wine taste?
2) Name three wine brands
3) In a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is “I don't like”, 2 is I don't like it much, 3 is “Neither I like it or not”, 4 “I like it”, and 5 is “I really like it”) rate how much is your satisfaction degree of this wine.

3. Results

About stimulus and materials, as mentioned before, no more stimulus materials were placed quite apart from the ambient music established in the second room. We did not consider the taste and smell of the wine as stimulus materials taking into consideration the one that was differential from both atmospheres.

About results & findings, after doing the experiment to a sample of eighty people, results were analyzed, and different conclusions were achieved. Attending to the control question of naming three wine brands, the aim was to know if they had a few notions of wine knowledge or background, although they previously stated not having any knowledge about how to taste wine. Being knowledgeable about wines could be a significant factor that we did not want to take into account. While well informed and trained people could focus more on the technical matters such as colour, smell or the different tastes that appear in your mind; non-used wine drinkers would aim attention at the feelings on a more hedonistic point of view.

The subjects were a relatively equally distributed amount of people between the knower and the non-knower spreading that amount in three groups: a) People who recognized one or none wine brands, b) People who identified two wine brands and c) People who knew three or more wine brands. The results are shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Wine brands identification](source: own elaboration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brands named</th>
<th>Non-music</th>
<th>Music Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non or 1 brand named</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 brands named</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or more brands named</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to the question asked about if they liked or not the wine, the results showed that 65% of the subjects savoured the wine while 35% disliked it in the music-less environment out of forty volunteers. On the side of the ambient music added environment 88% of the surveyed people liked it while 12% disliked out of forty volunteers.

Finally, the wine grading revealed a particular influence on ambient music on the degree of consumer satisfaction. With the total average score of 4,025 out of 5, the ambient music-added environment appears to be more satisfying for wine consumption than a non-music-added environment that got 3,225 points out of 5.

As results show, there is particular variation between both scenarios. This situation could allow us to say that environmental music can cause and impact in consumers' product perception although it might not be as determinant as we thought.
4. Discussion and Conclusion

As a consequence of all the studies done it can be said that sensory advertising and marketing enhances consumer experience and creates relations with the brand. Store atmospherics have an enormous impact on shopper behaviour while engages him with the brand during the time it is exposed to those stimuli.

Returning to our study, ambient music is determinant for ameliorating consumers’ satisfaction of a product adding an improved brand recall and perception. Likewise, scent branding effectively can please shoppers’ purchase experience up to the point of correlating the scent with the brand and creating long-lasting emotions with it. Positioning your brand with a signature sound or fragrance would create a genuine signature feel.

Concluding, cognitive and affective neuroscience and marketing research have shown us how a previously selected sensory experience can turn into highly qualitative customer experiences and stronger affections with them.

The first barriers we have encountered is the sample size. Although it still being relevant, we considered that more respondents would have to lead us to more accurate results.

In the experiment, future experiments could research if different music genres would affect the same way consumers’ perception. Additionally, it would have been attractive to see what music genre would have changed more consumers’ impression of the product. It would be interesting to measure if different age segments would have had a different response.

In future researchers would be interesting doing the investigating with the same senses but mixing them to measure how the effect of both or a single one is more beneficial for consumer experience.

Additionally, those two are so versatile that can be joined with the remaining ones. Thus, it might seem appealing to work with all of them for researching how optimal is the use of all, none or just a few.

This study would be suitable to understand how is the ideal way to associate them in contemplation of consumer brand perception maximization. All of the senses affect shoppers’ perceptions and behaviours, however, the combination of them have to be even greater than the sum of their parts.

5. Bibliographical references


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