

# INFLUENCE OF SENSORY RETAILING ON CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOR

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of sensory retailing on consumers' buying behavior in restaurants. The researchers collected data from 145 consumers in 10 popular restaurants in Nagercoil Town, using a structured questionnaire with multiple-choice questions. The study found that sensory retailing has a positive influence on consumers' behavior, leading to recommendations, repeat visits, and excitement about specific dishes. However, consumers remain mindful of their limits and budget constraints. The researchers also found that there is a significant difference in sensory experiences based on age groups or monthly income levels. The study concludes that retailers can continue implementing sensory strategies in their restaurants to

**Keywords:** Sensory retailing, sensory experiences, restaurants, consumer buying behavior

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's consumer landscape, sensory experiences play a crucial role. Customers not only seek functional satisfaction but also desire memorable and engaging moments. Retailers, including restaurants, recognize this shift and are actively working to create unique experiences for their patrons. Restaurants, in particular, have transformed from mere dining spaces to entertainment hubs.

Sensory retailing is a deliberate process that incorporates various senses to leave a lasting impression on customers. By appealing to sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound, retailers can differentiate themselves and create unforgettable experiences that cannot be replicated online. This approach turns one-time customers into loyal brand advocates.

This study is an empirical study undertaken to examine how sensory retailing influences consumers' buying behavior in restaurants. It also seeks to determine whether there is a

significant difference in sensory experiences among different age groups of consumers and investigates whether monthly income levels affect sensory experiences in restaurants.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Hussain, S., & Azeem, M. A. (2018)** in their paper titled, “Making Sense in Marketing: Sensory Strategies for International Quick Service Restaurants” aims to identify if sensory factors influence customers’ selection of a QSR. Data from 1600 respondents were collected from four international QSRs (KFC, McDonald's, Domino's, and Subway) across four cities (Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad) in India. Factor analysis revealed three components, namely: Sensory influence, Promotional influence, and monetary influence, due to their high factor loadings. Further, Multiple regression analysis indicated that the Sensory factor contributed significantly to the model followed by Promotional and Monetary Factors. The study concludes that Sensory Factor is the most influencing factor for customers to select a QSR contrary to the general belief of Promotional and Monetary factors.

**Ifeanyichukwu, C. D., & Peter, A. (2018)** in their study titled “The Role of Sensory Marketing in Achieving Customer Patronage in Fast Food Restaurants in Awka” examines the relationship between human senses/sensory cues and customer patronage. Also, it seeks to find out how fast-food restaurants should apply sensory cues to enhance customer patronage. 150 regular customers of Nourisha fast food restaurants in Awka were used as respondents, and a structured questionnaire was administered to elicit the required information from the respondents. Results showed the powerful and tremendous effect of the concept of sensory marketing which is inevitable for the success of a firm in this highly competitive market.

**Hultén, B., Broweus, N., & van Dijk, M. (2009)** in their book chapter titled “What is Sensory Marketing?” A sensory marketing framework is discussed and compared with mass and relationship marketing. Five sensorial strategies are suggested that emphasize the human senses as the center of a firm’s sensory marketing. At the end of the chapter the importance of the human senses, the brand, and experience logic in sensory marketing is discussed.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the impact of sensory retailing on consumers buying behavior in restaurants.
- To test whether there is a significant difference between the age group of consumers and sensory experience in restaurants.
- To test whether there is a significant difference between the monthly income levels of the consumers and sensory experience in restaurants.

#### 4. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- There is no significant difference in sensory experiences based on age groups.
- There is no significant difference in sensory experiences based on monthly income levels.

#### 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

##### 5.1 Sample size

The study includes 145 consumers from 10 popular restaurants in Nagercoil Town.

##### 5.2 Sampling technique

Non-probability sampling, specifically “convenience sampling,” was employed.

This method selects samples based on individual convenience for participation in the study.

##### 5.3 Sources of Data

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected through surveys using structured questionnaires. In addition, secondary data from various sources such as books, journals, magazines, and websites were also incorporated into the study.

##### 5.4 Research Instrument

The study collected original data using a carefully designed questionnaire with multiple-choice questions. These questionnaires were directly distributed to respondents at popular 10 restaurants in Nagercoil Town by the researcher.

##### 5.5 Tools Used for This Study

- Descriptive Analysis
- ANOVA

#### 6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

##### 6.1 Impact of Sensory marketing on consumer’s Buying Behavior in restaurants

To analyze the impact of sensory marketing on consumers buying behavior descriptive mean statistics and rank analysis were used.

Table 1.1

**Impact of sensory marketing on consumer's buying behavior in restaurants**

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
I will invite my friends and relatives also to these restaurants	3.34	1.19	I
I am willing to recommend these restaurants to others	3.30	1.18	II
I will often dine in these restaurants in the future and also	3.26	1.33	III
I got crazed about a particular dish	3.26	1.35	IV
I came to know about many new varieties of dishes	3.26	1.23	V
I was willing to spend more than my estimated budget	2.84	1.26	VI
I was willing to eat more than my limit	2.79	1.11	VII

**Source:** Primary Data

Based on the mean scores, it is observed that the highest mean score is for the statement "I will invite my friends and relatives also to these restaurants" (3.34), the second-highest mean score is for the statement "I am willing to recommend these restaurants to others" (3.30), the third-highest mean score is for the statements "I will often dine in these restaurants in the future," "I got crazed to a particular dish," and "I came to know about many new varieties of dishes" has a relatively high mean score (3.26).

On the other hand, the lowest mean score is for the statement "I was willing to eat more than my limit" (2.79). Similarly, spending beyond the estimated budget also received a relatively low mean score (2.84).

In summary, sensory retailing positively influences consumers' behavior, leading to recommendations, repeat visits, and excitement about specific dishes. However, consumers remain mindful of their limits and budget constraints. Retailers can confidently continue implementing sensory strategies in their restaurants to enhance customer experiences

## 6.2 A significant difference between sensory retailing factors in restaurants concerning the age group of consumers

### Hypothesis: 1

**Null Hypothesis (Ho):** There is no significant difference among age groups of consumers concerning sensory retailing factors in restaurants.

**Table 1.2**  
**ANOVA for factors of sensory retailing in restaurants concerning the age group of the consumers**

Factors of Sensory Retailing	Age Group in years				F value	P value
	20 - 30	31 – 40	41 - 50	Above 51		
Tactile Experience	29.06 (11.04)	34.93 (8.85)	38.4 (3.69)	41.5 (5.19)	6.808	<0.001**
Visual Experience	19.96 (7.70)	24.51 (6.63)	26.86 (3.79)	24.75 (11.81)	6.044	<0.001**
Smell Experience	8.76 (3.50)	10.16 (2.64)	11.8 (1.85)	12.75 (1.25)	6.172	<0.001**
Hearing Experience	8.57 (3.92)	9.58 (2.59)	10.00 (2.26)	13.50 (1.29)	3.327	0.022*
Taste Experience	15.82 (5.94)	18.61 (5.11)	21.33 (2.41)	21.25 (2.21)	6.299	<0.001**
Overall experience in Sensory retailing	82.20 (29.80)	97.80 (22.60)	108.40 (6.58)	113.75 (19.60)	6.955	<0.001**

Note: 1. The value within the bracket refers to the SD

2. \*\* denotes significant at 1Percent level.
3. \* denotes significant at 5Percent level.

Since the P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 1% significance level for tactile experience, visual experience, smell experience, taste experience, and overall sensory retailing.

Similarly, if the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 5% significance level for hearing experience.

Therefore, there is a significant difference among age groups of consumers concerning these sensory dimensions in restaurants.

The mean scores indicate that the above 51 age group has a greater influence on tactile, smell, hearing, and taste experiences compared to other age groups. Visual experience, however, is more influenced by the 41–50 age group. Overall sensory experience is highly observed among the above 51 age group.

In summary, age plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions of sensory factors in restaurants. Retailers should consider these age-related differences to enhance the dining experience for various customer segments.

## 6.2 A significant difference between sensory retailing factors in restaurants concerning the Monthly Income of consumers

### Hypothesis: 2

**Null Hypothesis (Ho):** There is no significant difference between the monthly incomes of the consumers concerning sensory retailing factors in restaurants.

**Table 1.3**

**ANOVA for factors of sensory retailing in restaurants concerning monthly incomes of the consumers**

Factors of Sensory Retailing	Monthly Income					F value	P value
	<10000	10001 - 25000	25001- 50000	50001- 100000	>100001		
Tactile Experience	25.33 (11.47)	33.90 (7.57)	36.84 (7.87)	34.68 (7.20)	38.87 (8.50)	10.966	<0.001**
Visual Experience	17.10 (7.37)	24.40 (5.76)	25.78 (6.73)	22.56 (5.59)	26.00 (7.74)	11.694	<0.001**
Smell Experience	7.69 (3.64)	10.09 (3.04)	10.81 (2.33)	10.75 (1.69)	11.62 (2.77)	8.460	<0.001**
Hearing Experience	7.83 (3.98)	9.46 (3.60)	10.00 (2.73)	10.00 (2.52)	10.50 (3.54)	3.054	0.019*
Taste Experience	14.08 (6.34)	18.06 (4.39)	20.06 (4.52)	19.18 (4.02)	18.62 (4.53)	8.300	<0.001**
Overall experience in Sensory retailing	72.07 (30.77)	95.93 (20.49)	103.51 (20.81)	97.18 (17.15)	105.62 (24.77)	11.105	<0.001**

Note: 1. The value within the bracket refers to the SD

2. \*\* denotes significant at 1Percent level.

3. \* denotes significant at 5Percent level.

Since the P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 1% significance level for tactile experience, visual experience, smell experience, taste experience, and overall sensory retailing.

Similarly, the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 5% significance level for hearing experience.

Therefore, there is a significant difference in the monthly incomes of consumers concerning these sensory dimensions in restaurants.

The mean scores indicate that consumers with a monthly income above Rs. 100001 exhibit greater influence toward tactile, visual, smell, hearing, and overall sensory experiences compared to other income groups.

Taste experience, however, is more influenced by the monthly income group of Rs. 25001-50000.

In summary, monthly income plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions of sensory factors in restaurants. Retailers should consider these income-related differences to enhance the dining experience for various customer segments.

## 7. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study findings highlight the positive impact of sensory retailing on consumer behavior in restaurants like inviting friends and relatives and willingness to recommend these establishments. Additionally, a strong relationship exists between sensory experiences, age groups, and monthly incomes of consumers.

The restaurant owners can confidently embrace sensory retailing strategies. However, it's essential to tailor these strategies to different age groups and income levels. For instance, younger respondents may benefit from theme-based restaurants, adventurous experiences, and interactive elements. Creating memorable dining moments through music shows, games, and unique recipes can enhance the overall sensory experience.

## 8. CONCLUSION

From this study, it is concluded that sensory retailing has a positive influence on consumer buying behavior. Specifically, customers aged above 51 and with an income level exceeding Rs. 100001 tend to have more pronounced sensory experiences in restaurants. Overall, sensory marketing plays a beneficial role in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions.

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