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Tailoring customer responses in customer experience management through multisensory marketing

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Master's thesis

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Multisensory marketing is an area of marketing that is still quite unutilized in companies' toolkits. While still underrepresented across industries, it holds immense potential for driving customer engagement and achieving targeted goals. The aim of this study was to understand how multisensory marketing can be utilized in customer experience management to evoke particular customer responses.

The research questions were:

1. What role does multisensory marketing have in customer experience?
2. How can multisensory marketing, beyond just visual and auditory elements, be used to stimulate a desired customer response?
3. How is multisensory marketing and its effect on customer responses measured?

Multisensory marketing and customer experience management related literature was studied to get an overall picture. The main concepts involve the holistic interplay of different sensory impressions, grounded cognition theory, and as an example the role of luxury in multisensory and emotional experience. Luxury brands use sensory cues to emotionally engage customers, create loyalty, and build strong memories. What emerges from academic literature is that many studies emphasize sensory congruence and customers' perception of sensory cues, both of which contribute to improved customer satisfaction and, ultimately, brand loyalty. I developed a theoretical framework illustrating how sensory cues, customer behaviour, and brand strategy interact.

A qualitative study in form of interviews was conducted to dive deeper into the topic. The results suggest that congruent and carefully designed sensory cues—aligned with the brand identity and cultural context—create immersive experiences that evoke strong memories and loyalty. Technology provides tools to measure physiological responses whereas questionnaires help to capture consumers' subjective impressions, offering insights into their experience. However, fully capturing the individual emotional impact remains a challenge.

This research highlights the potential of multisensory marketing to create immersive, culturally adjusted, and emotionally resonant experiences that foster customer loyalty. Brands can create overall more meaningful customer experiences. Ultimately, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of multisensory marketing's role in shaping customer responses and provides actionable insights for brands seeking to remain competitive in increasingly dynamic markets.

Key words: multisensory marketing, brand, luxury, customer experience management, CEM

Pro gradu -tutkielma

Aihe: Moniaistinen markkinointi asiakaskokemuksen johtamisessa

Tekijä: Ilmari Salminen

Otsikko: Asiakasreaktioiden räätälöinti asiakaskokemuksen johtamisessa moniaistisen markkinoinnin avulla

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Moniaistinen markkinointi on markkinoinnin osa-alue, joka on edelleen melko tuntematon ja hyödyntämätön yritysten työkalupakeissa. Tästä huolimatta sillä on valtava potentiaali asiakasvuorovaikutuksen lisäämisessä ja tiettyjen asiakasreaktioiden saavuttamisessa. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli ymmärtää, miten moniaistista markkinointia voidaan hyödyntää asiakaskokemuksen johtamisessa tiettyjen asiakasreaktioiden herättämiseksi.

Tutkimuskysymykset olivat:

1. Mikä rooli moniaistisella markkinoinnilla on asiakaskokemuksessa?
2. Miten moniaistista markkinointia voidaan hyödyntää halutun asiakasreaktion herättämiseksi?
3. Miten moniaistista markkinointia ja sen vaikutusta asiakasreaktioihin mitataan?

Tutkimuksen teoreettinen katsaus syventyy moniaistisen markkinoinnin ja asiakaskokemuksen johtamisen käsitteisiin. Keskeiset käsitteet liittyvät eri aistimusten kokonaisvaltaiseen vuorovaikutukseen, grounded cognition -teoriaan sekä esimerkkinä ylellisyyden rooliin moniaistisissa ja tunnetason kokemuksissa. Ylellisyysbrändit hyödyntävät aistivihjeitä tunteiden herättämiseksi, asiakasuskollisuuden luomiseksi ja vahvojen muistojen rakentamiseksi. Akateemisessa kirjallisuudessa korostetaan usein aistien yhteensopivuutta ja asiakkaiden havaintoja aistivihjeistä, jotka molemmat parantavat asiakastyytyväisyyttä ja viime kädessä brändiuskollisuutta. Kehitin teoreettisen viitekehysten, joka havainnollistaa, miten aistivihjeet, asiakaskäyttäytyminen ja brändin strategia ovat vuorovaikutuksessa.

Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisena tutkimuksena haastatteluiden muodossa, jotta aiheeseen päästiin perehtymään syvemmin. Tulokset viittaavat siihen, että yhteneväiset ja huolellisesti suunnitellut aistivihjeet – jotka ovat keskenään linjassa ja brändin identiteetin sekä kulttuurisen kontekstin kanssa – luovat kokonaisvaltaisia kokemuksia, jotka herättävät vahvoja muistoja ja uskollisuutta. Teknologia tarjoaa työkaluja fysiologisten reaktioiden mittaamiseen, kun taas kyselyt auttavat tavoittamaan kuluttajien subjektiivisia vaikutelmia ja tarjoavat oivalluksia heidän kokemuksistaan. Yksilön tunteiden ja kokemusten täydellinen ymmärtäminen ja mittaaminen on kuitenkin yhä haastavaa.

Tämä tutkimus korostaa moniaistisen markkinoinnin kykyä luoda kokonaisvaltaisia, kulttuurisesti mukautettuja ja tunnetasolla vaikuttavia kokemuksia, jotka vahvistavat asiakasuskollisuutta. Hyödyntämällä moniaistista markkinointia brändit voivat tarjota asiakkaille merkityksellisempiä kokemuksia. Tämä tutkimus edistää teoreettista ymmärrystä moniaistisen markkinoinnin roolista asiakaskokemusten muokkaamisessa ja tarjoaa konkreettisia oivalluksia brändeille, jotka pyrkivät säilyttämään kilpailukykyä muuttuvilla markkinoilla.

Avainsanat: moniaistinen markkinointi, brändi, luksus, asiakaskokemuksen johtaminen, CEM

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the topic

Imagine stepping over the threshold into a world where every sense is awakened, and you feel as if your every desire has already been anticipated. This is not a product of coincidence, but the result of multisensory marketing that engages all your senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch to craft unforgettable experiences. Not only in the context of luxury, multisensory marketing creates elevated moments that make the customers feel better, make them more satisfied and thus increase ultimately sales (Spence et al. 2014, 473; 483). The second you enter the store designed to stimulate the senses, you are embedded in a calm, soothing atmosphere, similar to a sunrise, with soft light casting warm tones of yellow and orange across the room. The faint scent of new leather teases your sense of smell, while beneath your feet, the hard yet flawless marble floor gleams, so polished that you catch your own reflection smiling back at you, matching your expression of delight. In the distance, you hear the quiet clinking of glasses, followed by the soft pop of champagne being opened. As you continue walking, the gentle notes of a piano fill the air, and you are greeted with a warm welcome that feels personal and genuine. Every detail around you, from the tactile softness of surfaces to the harmonious blend of colours, scents, and sounds, is orchestrated with care. When your fingertips brush against the silky textures, they whisper softly against your skin, displaying elegance and refinement. The bubbly taste of champagne perfectly complements the ambiance. This is a world unlike any other—a world of timeless design and unparalleled sophistication. It is an experience so exceptional that it will linger in your memory for years to come. And each time you close your eyes, you can return to that moment, reliving the magic and enjoyment in it all over again.

This immersive description illustrates the power of engaging the senses, a tactic that especially luxury brands have learned to use to create unforgettable experiences. Beyond the immediate pleasure, these sensory elements form the foundation of effective multisensory marketing, where each detail is carefully designed to resonate with consumers on a deeper, emotional level (Hultén 2011, 268). Throughout history, mankind's survival and evolution have heavily relied on the five classic human senses. No wonder that during recent years marketers have realized even more the potential that leveraging of the senses to influence the customers might have, e.g., in luxury retail

context (Shahid et al. 2022), as well as to efficiently market products and services (Krishna 2012, 334) in a world where individuals actively seek out experiences to create personal value (Pine & Gilmore 1998, 97-98; Wiedmann et al. 2013, 62).

Luxury is according to Thomä (2015, 137-138) a multisensorial experience by nature that evokes emotions in the individual. It enhances the perceived duration of the experience by creating a deeper connection with luxury products compared to everyday items. Luxury products often pleasantly surprise consumers, making them want to prolong the experience as much as possible. They provide delight through their distinctive attributes and frequently provoke reflection, as these objects represent a demonstration of human creativity. This often leads to feelings of amazement and excitement. Because of its strong emphasis on sensory engagement and emotional impact, the luxury sector serves as an ideal example of how multisensory marketing and customer experience management can be effectively implemented.

In the past, as noted by Krishna (2010), companies overlooked the sensory aspects of their products. From the 1940s to the 1960s, emphasis was placed on pricing and functionality, while the popularity of branded goods emerged in the 1970s. It's only in the new millennium that there has been a shift towards a new approach to marketing, with a renewed interest in appealing to the senses. Even supermarkets have already started to implement sensory marketing: carefully selected music and artificial bread scent are used to shape the shopping experience and influence the customer response discreetly (Kurki & Rantavaara 2023).

It is essential to understand that the senses do not operate independently but work together to shape how we perceive and interact with the world, with much of this perception happening subconsciously (Pradeep 2010, 3-6). Sensory cues refer to the various stimuli that customers encounter during their shopping experience, which can influence purchasing decisions, mostly at a subconscious level (Aalto 2023). While marketers often focus on engaging individual senses or pairing two senses to capture conscious attention, they frequently overlook the broader synergies that arise when all senses work together, influencing the overall customer experience (Stead et al. 2022, 440). By synergy, I am referring to the collective interaction of the senses, which can have an intensified effect on shaping customer perceptions and experiences. In addition, marketers are still

constantly focused on visual and audial aspects of their products while neglecting the other senses (Harvard Business Review 2015; Lindström 2005, 87).

The growth of e-commerce and globalization intensifies competition, compelling businesses to differentiate themselves. At the same time, evolving customer preferences for multisensory experiences (Lindström 2005, 85-86) drive the demand for enhanced customer experience management (CEM) through sensory engagement and creating sensory delights. Moreover, the importance of customer experience and value creation along the customer journey is becoming ever more important (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 73). Companies must find new ways to create positive consumer responses that align with customer-centric value propositions while also benefiting the business.

Customer experience is shaped by how a product or service sounds, feels, looks, smells, and tastes (Helmefalk & Hultén 2017, 8). This also extends to customers' expectations of how a product should feel. For example, there is a common understanding of the sound a high-quality car door should make when it closes (Parizet et al. 2008, 12). Failing to meet high expectations and predefined sensory cues can lead to reduced satisfaction or even dissatisfaction due to a mismatch between customer expectations and the actual reality.

The full potential of sensory marketing within customer experience management is still being explored. Research suggests that stimulating multiple senses can significantly enhance emotional engagement and brand loyalty (Grewal et al. 2009, 1) but how these multisensory interactions work across different touchpoints in the customer journey is not yet fully understood and requires further investigation. Multisensory marketing offers promising opportunities to deepen consumer responses. Studies indicate that engaging different senses can lead to powerful emotional experiences (Shahid et al. 2022, 1407). More research is needed to determine the most effective ways to apply multisensory marketing at various stages of the customer experience. This is especially relevant as multisensory marketing seems to be gaining increasing attention within the context of customer experience management, with the luxury sector being one example (Wiedmann et al. 2016, 50-55). An increasing number of companies set specific goals for influencing customer behaviour, with customer loyalty being one example. Customer experience management plays a key role in guiding customers toward these desired responses. (Berry et al. 2002, 89.)

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how multisensory marketing can be utilized in customer experience management to evoke particular customer responses.

The thesis primarily focuses on the company's perspective, particularly emphasizing the utilization of multiple senses to guide customers toward the intended direction—an area that has not been extensively investigated thus far.

This leads to three research questions as follows:

1. What role does multisensory marketing have in customer experience?
2. How can multisensory marketing, beyond just visual and auditory elements, be used to stimulate a desired customer response?
3. How is multisensory marketing and its effect on customer responses measured?

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured as follows: The next chapter begins with a discussion of sensory marketing in broad terms, followed by an exploration of how multisensory stimuli enhance customer experiences, with the luxury sector as a key example. Moving on, the third chapter introduces the term customer experience and delves into customer experience management. In the subsequent fourth chapter, the connection between sensory marketing to customer experience management is explained and introduced a framework. In the fifth chapter there is introduced the empirical research method, a qualitative study. In the sixth chapter there are presented the results of the research and discussed the learnings. The thesis ends with chapter 7 that offers conclusions and managerial recommendations to bring together the models, concepts and research findings explored in this thesis.

Throughout this thesis, the luxury sector serves as a recurring example to illustrate the role of multisensory marketing in customer experience management.

2 Multisensory marketing

2.1 Principles of sensory stimuli and their impact on the mind

Every moment of every day, humans are exposed to a wide variety of stimuli that are captivated by their five senses, guiding their decisions, both consciously and unconsciously. The holistic interpretation of information from multiple senses significantly influences the decision-making process. This means that it's not just one sense that shapes how we interpret a situation; rather, it is the combined input from all our senses that plays a crucial role. (Lindblom 2023, 1-3.) The human senses are not only used for orientation in the environment, but they also help the individual to get an overall picture of the situation in different circumstances. Many perceptions are unconscious because the human conscious mind is very limited in its ability to perceive different stimuli. It is therefore not surprising that as many as 95 % of our purchasing decisions are triggered by subconscious influences. When activated individually or in combination, our senses directly influence the limbic system of our brain, which is associated with emotions and long-term memory. As a result, such experiences lead to stronger and more enduring memories, as well as to profound emotional effects. (Mitterfellner 2019, 129.)

As Pradeep (2010, 41-42) points out, humans have the unique ability to utilize all their senses and perceptions, unlike many species in the animal world. Although animals may have highly developed individual senses, humans are more versatile, even if their senses are not as specialized. Additionally, the human body is covered with sensory receptors, but they are unevenly distributed. The most sensitive areas include the hands, lips, face, neck, tongue, fingertips, and feet. For marketers, understanding human physiology and neuroscience is crucial for effectively appealing to and targeting specific sensory experiences through products. Pradeep calls this the *sensory capabilities* of a product. Therefore any product has great potential, if only marketers understand which attributes to focus on in their efforts to attract attention and create lasting experiences.

Furthermore, the human mind is highly selective in registering stimuli and assessing their relevance. Typically, we focus on information that aligns with our current thoughts or needs, while ignoring or even avoiding other input. Sensory stimuli, such as smells or sounds, must surpass a certain threshold to be noticed. However, the intensity of these stimuli can vary, and even small triggers may activate the senses. Additionally, our senses

work together to create a comprehensive understanding of our surroundings. (Lindblom 2023, 9-10.)

2.2 Defining multisensory marketing

Our senses play a holistic role in shaping our perception of the world around us. They detect various stimuli, which our brain processes to form our unique understanding of our environment (DeSalle & Wynne 2018, 7). While marketing literature has studied sensory marketing for decades, there is still confusion about how individual senses interact and how companies should apply both sensory and multisensory marketing to shape customer experiences. This is crucial for eliciting the desired responses at specific touchpoints (Wiedmann et al. 2018, 101-102). Effectively engaging one or multiple senses remains a key challenge for businesses.

It is only in recent years that the term sensory marketing has become familiar to a broader audience, including marketers themselves. According to Krishna (2010, 3), sensory marketing is the practice of utilizing any of the consumers' senses to influence their behaviour: This particularly involves generating novel sensations or highlighting existing ones that impact customers' emotions, perceptions, and preferences, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of a product or service. Multisensory marketing uses several senses simultaneously to create a cohesive and pleasant customer experience, with stimuli designed to complement each other harmoniously. In contrast, sensory marketing more broadly refers to influencing consumer behaviour through any one or more of the five senses. (Hultén 2011, 259.) Figure 1 illustrates the fundamental concept of sensory marketing: consumers encounter various sensations, which they perceive and process. This perception generates tangible emotions or cognitions, subsequently impacting consumers' attitudes, learnings and behaviour. Sensory marketing makes use of the senses to establish deeper connections with customers.

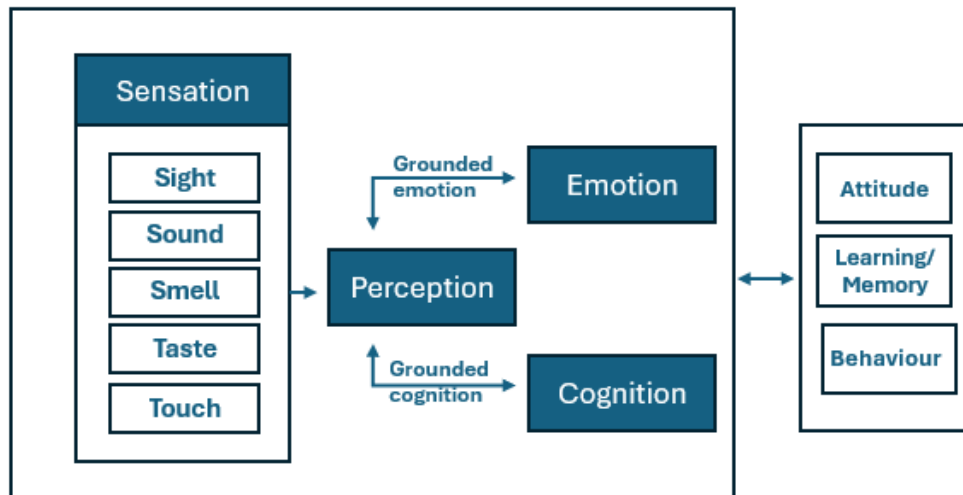


Figure 1: Sensory marketing framework (adapted from Krishna 2012, 335)

Krishna (2010) emphasizes that products evoke sensory experiences by appealing to the senses. Businesses must comprehend this aspect. By effectively marketing the sensory aspects of their products, companies can better attract consumers. In order to connect with the customers it is important that the sensory experiences are congruent with the expectations customers have for the product or service. Any mismatch may lead to a decline in customer satisfaction. (Mattila & Wirtz 2001, 286.) To better differentiate themselves from competitors, many companies still need to identify their *key sensory touchpoints advantages* (Lindström 2005, 86). These touchpoints are especially important for a product's appeal to specific customer senses. By recognizing and leveraging these sensory advantages, companies can set themselves apart from others and gain a competitive edge.

Sensory marketing offers many benefits, but Lashkova & Carmen (2020) point out a dual effect. On one hand, it strengthens customer loyalty by providing satisfaction through sensory experiences. On the other hand, it can trigger the *variety-seeking effect*, where customers are motivated to explore new options. This suggests that while sensory marketing can build loyalty, it may also encourage customers to explore new options, driven by their desire for fresh and diverse sensory stimuli. This happens when the sensory experience has occurred multiple times, leading to a feeling of saturation and satisfaction. Excess exposure therefore leads to a reduction in satisfaction and to variety-seeking.

In addition, the customer learns to know the stimuli associated with the experience and begins to take them for granted, as a minimum standard, so to speak, in order to be satisfied. Therefore, Lashkova & Carmen (2020) suggest that companies should tend to create satisfying experiences that prevent the customer from making too high demands in the future: while experiences should be occasionally refreshed with new elements, this should be done moderately to avoid raising expectations too much. Customers should be pleasantly surprised from time to time to maintain their interest, without pushing their expectations too high.

This is also in line with the research of Becker & Jaakkola (2020, 638-639) related to customer experience. They similarly emphasize that ordinary experiences, with customer reactions ranging from weak to neutral, should serve as a baseline to retain customers at a minimal satisfaction level without necessarily enhancing their experience. This approach also helps companies learn when customer reactions tend to be weaker or stronger in different situations, providing valuable insights for future improvements.

Duong et al. (2022, 218) found that stimulating multiple sensory channels leads to more positive emotional responses, improved perceptions, and greater perceived sensory intensity. In contrast, Douc e & Adams (2020) argue that incorporating too many high-arousal atmospheric cues, such as lighting, music, and scent, can cause *sensory overload*. This overload results in negative emotional, behavioural, and evaluative responses from consumers. Their research shows that sensory overload typically occurs when a third high-arousal cue, particularly from a dominant sense like vision or hearing, is introduced.

These studies highlight the need to balance multisensory experience marketing: on one hand, to positively influence customers, and on the other, to avoid overwhelming them with sensory overload. Particularly in multisensory experiences, it is important to prevent overload, as it may leave customers feeling overwhelmed rather than engaged (Spence et al. 2014, 481). Sometimes, surprising consumers with unexpected multisensory elements can enhance their overall engagement with the brand, without overloading their senses.

An interesting theory relevant to multisensory marketing is *grounded cognition*. One of the fathers of this theory is Lawrence Barsalou. In his work, Barsalou (1999) challenged the traditional view that cognition is abstract and non-sensory. Instead, he argued that cognition is based on neural representations derived from sensory experiences. When a person senses an object or experience, part of the sensory-motor activation is stored in

memory. Later, this stored information can be simulated to represent similar objects or experiences, showing that cognition is deeply linked to physical experiences.

Thus, our thoughts are influenced and grounded by bodily experiences, actions, and interactions with the world. Grounded cognition theory explains why multisensory marketing is so relevant and effective: sensory and motor experiences are strongly connected to cognitive processes like memory, decision-making, and emotion. By engaging multiple senses, companies can create stronger marketing experiences and foster long-lasting emotional attachments with consumers.

2.3 The luxury sector as a practical example of multisensory marketing

According to the Encyclopedia of Britannica Academy (2024), luxury refers to the consumption of wealth on non-essential products or services primarily for pleasure. However, there is no universally agreed definition of luxury. What one generation considers as luxury might be seen as a necessity by the next. The luxury concept is associated with high quality, significant price level, uniqueness as well as exclusivity and high aesthetics (Wiedmann et al. 2018). This concept places companies in a challenging position: they must differentiate themselves from the multitude of brands in today's market while also meeting the high expectations of a demanding clientele.

Wiedmann et al. (2013) suggest that several factors directly influence the perceived value of a luxury brand. They identify four key dimensions that shape customer perceived value: financial and functional aspects as well as individual and social dimensions. In addition multisensory stimuli as well as emotions play an important role in creating luxury value.

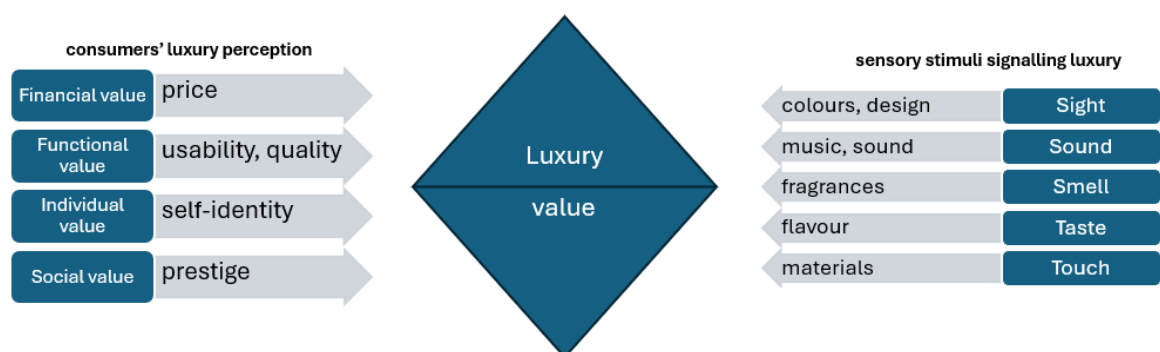


Figure 2: Perception of luxury value (adapted from Wiedmann 2013, 63)

As shown in Figure 2, the functional aspects that signal luxury include financial value, which relates to price, and functional value, which encompasses usability, quality, and uniqueness. Individual value is connected to self-identity, hedonic experiences which means pleasurable and indulgent experiences, and materialism, while social value is driven by prestige. Additionally, the perception of luxury is enhanced through sensory stimuli such as colours, music, and materials. Although financial criteria are also important for customers in the luxury sector, Wiedmann et al. (2013) emphasise that multisensory marketing can be a strategic tool for companies in the luxury sector to stand out from competition by creating unique and engaging experiences for customers.

Shahid et al. (2022, 1398-1399) highlight that it is particularly common for luxury brands, more so than in other sectors, to make multisensory experiences a central part of their strategies. Similarly, Amatulli and Guido (2011) suggest that luxury consumers are drawn to products that not only reflect their lifestyle but also fulfil their deepest desires.

The luxury sector is an area where high-quality customer experience and sophisticated sensory influence are vital. Customers do not primarily judge products and services based on favourable prices or practical purposes but rather on their presentation and the emotions they evoke. (Wiedmann et al. 2013, 60.) Therefore, it is essential for companies to carefully consider which behaviours they aim to influence by engaging multiple senses (Spence et al. 2014, 483).

Consumers in the luxury sector evaluate offerings based on the overall experience, with a strong emphasis on the emotional connection exclusive brands and products create. Marketers need to analyse the different touchpoints along the customer journey to identify where multisensory marketing can have a lasting impact and influence customers in the desired way. In doing so, they must maintain a balanced approach—ensuring that special *sensory delights* attract customers while avoiding overstimulation, which could lead to sensory overload or diminished excitement over time.

During recent years research on multisensory marketing has focused on better understanding the effects of this kind of marketing on customer emotional behaviours and willingness to purchase products. In order to get an overview of some crucial findings we will have a closer look into some of the research.

One interesting study by Sagha et al. (2022) involves four different experiments where the researchers focused on the influence of different sensory cues like colours and music on customer emotions and willingness to buy. They identified that sensory congruency of these cues is essential in order to create positive emotional experiences. This means that different sensory inputs are in harmony and complement each other to create a cohesive experience. Furthermore, they discovered that emotions guide consumers' decisions prior to their conscious evaluation, a concept known as *affective primacy*: in an experiment with products of strong sensory impact, such as coffee, in combination with different background colours and music caused strong emotional reactions. Moderators like price or scent impressions either weakened or strengthened the experience. Another important test revealed the importance of *cross-modal sensory cues* which means how different senses affect each other: for example scent affected the taste and the appearance of products. By strengthening the effect of one sensory cue it was possible to intensify the experience of the other senses and thus the overall experience. Lastly, the researchers examined the long-term effects of multisensory marketing and found that it not only enhanced the immediate shopping experience but also improved emotional attachment and memory of the brand.

An interesting perspective on the use of multisensory marketing in the online world is offered by Stancescu et al. (2022, 286-288). During the COVID-19 pandemic, luxury brands were forced to shift their selling and marketing efforts to online stores in order to sustain their businesses. Traditionally, multisensory cues were reserved for in-store experiences, but as the situation unfolded, new methods had to be developed to attract online shoppers. The researchers argue that sight is the most commonly engaged sense in online environments, with tools such as virtual reality, augmented reality filters, 3D models, and high-quality zoom features being widely used. In online luxury shopping, touch—through on-screen commands—plays a key role alongside sight in creating a more engaging experience. However, sensory experiences like smell and taste remain challenging to implement in the digital space.

In addition to influencing customer behaviour and purchase intentions, multisensory marketing has a positive effect on the overall experience and brand loyalty. Zha et al. (2024) identify in their study how the five senses impact sensory brand experience and, consequently, brand loyalty. Their research, based on 512 Chinese shopping mall customers, shows that sensory cues enhance the experience, leading to increased

customer satisfaction, stronger brand attachment, and deeper affection for the brand. The study concludes that a well-managed sensory brand experience can significantly influence brand loyalty.

Altogether, these studies highlight the important role of multisensory marketing in shaping customer experiences and loyalty within the luxury sector. The integration of sensory cues not only enhances immediate emotional responses but also fosters deeper connections between consumers and luxury products as well as their brands. As the luxury sector continues to develop, embracing multisensory marketing seems to be essential for companies to meet and exceed the sophisticated expectations of their customers. Beyond luxury, industries such as retail, hospitality, and food and beverage also recognize the power of engaging multiple senses to create memorable experiences, strengthen brand identity, and deepen customer connections (Fong et al. 2023, 2916-2917).

3 Customer experience management

3.1 Definition of customer experience

Customer experience refers to the overall combination of a consumer's sensory, emotional, cognitive, relational, and behavioural responses to interactions with a company or brand. (Lemon & Verhoef 2016, 71-72; Homburg et al. 2017, 384) The experience unfolds as the individual navigates through various touchpoints during the pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Customer experience is continuously evaluated by comparing it against the individual's established *thresholds for satisfaction*, which are shaped by concurrent experiences within their surrounding environment. (Homburg et al. 2017.)

While this definition of customer experience is widely accepted, it's important to note that there exists a significant diversity of interpretations regarding its precise meaning. Becker & Jaakkola (2020, 637) highlight the widespread confusion surrounding this crucial marketing concept, which poses challenges for conducting accurate research in this field. Consequently, they propose defining customer experience as the unintended, spontaneous responses to specific stimuli. This approach effectively distinguishes customer experience from both the stimuli that prompt customers' reactions and the deliberate evaluations that often follow.

While customer experience can be understood as the spontaneous response to specific stimuli, as previously discussed, Wiedmann et al. (2013, 62-65) examine how this concept applies within the luxury sector. They describe luxury customer experience as a crafted combination of staged events, personal memories, and subjective perceptions. It is designed to cater to the perceived values linked to luxury, including financial, functional, individual and social dimensions. They propose that intentionally selected multisensory stimuli affect how customers perceive the value of luxury goods and services.

Experiences influenced through different marketing strategies connect the customer to the brand in an emotional manner through the spontaneous reaction of the senses. Additional diverse marketing communication further strengthens this bond and links the emotions to the overall experience. (Turley & Milliman 2000; Rodrigues et al. 2011; according to Wiedmann 2013, 62.)

Lemon and Verhoef (2016, 70) conclude that practitioners widely agree on the multifaceted nature of customer experience, encompassing cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensory, and social responses to a company's products and services throughout the entire customer journey (Schmitt, 1999, 2003; Verhoef et al., 2009; according to Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, 70).

3.2 Definition of customer experience management

As it was discussed in relation to customer experience, research on customer experience management (CEM) appears to be fragmented as well, lacking a standard definition - a consensus on its precise definition has obviously yet to emerge (Homburg et al. 2017, 377-378). A definition aligned with Homburg et al. (2017, 378) could describe customer experience management as a comprehensive approach that involves defining the intended customer experience, designing and managing company-controlled stimuli, and monitoring and responding to uncontrollable factors and customer reactions in real time. According to Lemon & Verhoef (2016, 89) understanding, managing, and monitoring the customer journey through different touchpoints is challenging but essential to be able to control the interactions between company and customer. Another interpretation suggests that customer experience management involves providing customers with clear guidance through various cues about the nature of their experience. These cues encompass both the functional aspects of the product and the emotional responses it elicits within its environment. Customers gather this information from tangible indicators—such as the products themselves—and interpersonal interactions, known as *'humanics'*. (Berry et al. 2002, 85-86.)

According to Homburg et al (2017, 377), CEM is the answer to a changing marketing landscape that is particularly based on customer experience and its comprehension. Their definition implies that CEM involves understanding the customer's perception of the experience created by the company, strategically designing it to meet expectations, and consistently enhancing it. The ultimate goal is to foster enduring customer loyalty. Especially an emotional connection between companies and their customers ensures this long-term relationship and they are difficult to copy by any competitor (Berry et al. 2002, 89).

Becker & Jaakkola (2020, 641) emphasize that companies cannot manage customer responses or design the customer experience itself but they can try to influence the stimuli

to which customers react. They continue that there are touchpoints controlled by the company and others that are out of the control of the firm itself which both have effect on customer responses. This study focuses on the touchpoints controlled by the company and how to plant suitable stimuli to reach certain company specific goals.

In their research, Homburg et al. (2017) identify four CEM patterns that describe how different types of companies can strategically manage customer experiences based on company size and the type of relationship they seek to establish with their customers. These patterns are presented in Figure 3 and provide a general framework for applying customer experience management across industries.

		Exchange continuity of firm's core business model	
		Transactional	Relational
Firm size	Start-Ups / SME	<p>CEM Pattern 1</p> <p><i>Main cultural mindset</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential response orientation <p><i>Main strategic direction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency of touchpoints <p><i>Main firm capability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoint journey monitoring <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customizable e-commerce transactions • Mobile repair shops for cars/ motorbikes 	<p>CEM Pattern 2</p> <p><i>Main cultural mindset</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential response orientation <p><i>Main strategic direction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context-sensitivity of touchpoints <p><i>Main firm capability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoint adaptation <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career consultancy services • Self-supplying energy appliances
	Larger firms	<p>CEM Pattern 3</p> <p><i>Main cultural mindset</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoint journey orientation <p><i>Main strategic direction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic cohesion of touchpoints <p><i>Main firm capability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoint prioritization <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle-oriented food retailing • Fashion branding and retailing 	<p>CEM Pattern 4</p> <p><i>Main cultural mindset</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance orientation <p><i>Main strategic direction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity of touchpoints <p><i>Main firm capability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchpoint journey design <p><i>Examples</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital wallet services • Multimodal mobility systems

Figure 3: CEM patterns (adapted from Homburg et al. 2017, 394)

The four CEM patterns are determined by the size of the company and whether the firm emphasizes short-term transactional relationships focusing on immediate exchange of goods or long-term relational ones focusing on building and sustaining meaningful

customer relations. Smaller to mid-sized companies typically highlight personalized and reactive touchpoints, while larger companies focus on creating consistent and broad customer journeys across multiple channels. This CEM framework allows companies to efficiently tailor their customer experience strategies based on their specific business model and relationship goals. Additionally, multisensory marketing can enhance these patterns by engaging customers emotionally at various touchpoints, helping to create memorable and impactful brand experiences.

Berry et al. (2002) emphasize that companies should manage the entire customer experience by aligning the various clues encountered throughout the customer journey. These clues fall into two categories: functional, which refers to how well the product or service performs its intended purpose, and emotional, which includes sensory elements that influence how the customer feels during the experience. The key takeaway is that firms should systematically manage these clues to provide customers with a positive and consistent experience. The authors suggest conducting an *experience audit* to help companies closely observe customer interactions and use the insights gained to improve the different touchpoints along the journey.

Understanding the dynamics of customer experience is critical across industries, especially in the luxury market, where exclusivity and emotional connections are essential. In the next section, we will explore customer experience management in the luxury market, focusing on how multisensory marketing can meet the unique needs of its demanding customers.

3.3 Customer experience management of luxury products

Managing the customer experience for luxury product consumers differs significantly from managing experiences in other sectors. It's not just the profile of the products and services – such as price, quality, and exclusivity – that sets luxury apart but also the unique characteristics of its consumers. Expectations and demands are exceptionally high, and factors like social status and prestige play a crucial role. A company specializing in luxury products must adapt to these requirements to generate the desired customer response.

In their study, Klein et al. (2016) examined the impact of pop-up brand stores on enhancing the brand experience and driving word-of-mouth promotion for luxury brands. They found that the store atmosphere significantly influenced the brand experience,

showing that a pleasant and appealing environment heightened consumers' emotions and perceptions of the brand. Moreover, the study revealed that the store atmosphere indirectly impacted word-of-mouth intentions, mediated by brand experience. This suggests that improving the store atmosphere not only enhances the brand experience but also increases the likelihood of consumers sharing positive word-of-mouth about the brand.

This aligns with Spence's (2022, 2-4) research on the use of multisensory marketing to enhance hotel experiences. The interplay between different senses plays a crucial role in shaping the overall success and pleasantness of a customer's stay. The paper emphasizes that while visual elements are critical, neglecting non-visual senses can have negative effects on the overall guest experience. Not only are the hotel's design and the atmosphere created in public spaces or rooms important, but factors like creating long-lasting memories and integrating natural sounds, scents, and visuals to foster relaxation are also important. In the hotel industry, sound and smell are particularly important, as these are the factors guests most frequently complain about, according to the article. By creating pleasing combinations of sensory elements, satisfaction can be significantly improved. Additionally, customizing experiences to meet individual needs can enhance guest well-being and personalize the stay. All in all, Spence identifies numerous opportunities for hotel managers to *sensehack* their customers' experiences. By this, he means that managers can leverage multisensory marketing to enhance guest experiences at various touchpoints.

4 Multisensory marketing in customer experience management

4.1 Enhancing customer experiences with multisensory marketing

In the diverse world of business, companies face competition from various providers, making it essential to cultivate a satisfied and loyal customer base. The luxury industry serves as one example where using multisensory marketing at key touchpoints in the customer journey can significantly shape desired customer responses in line with the company's objectives. By conducting an audit of these touchpoints, companies can gain valuable insights into the potential effectiveness of such stimuli. As highlighted by Becker & Jaakkola (2020, 638), real-time measurement of customer feedback is crucial to avoid having to rely on memorizing experiences, thus ensuring accurate data collection and valuable insights.

By applying multisensory elements throughout the customer journey, companies may not only enhance customer perceptions of value across financial, functional, individual, and social dimensions (Wiedmann et al. 2013, 66) but also provoke specific responses that benefit the company. These responses include encouraging customers to spend more, prolonging their time in the store to boost the likelihood of purchases, promoting impulse buying, and tempting them to explore multiple items to increase the chances of making a purchase (Doucé & Janssens 2013; Spangenberg et al., 1996; Summers and Herbert 2001; Helmefalk and Hultén 2017; Peck and Childers 2006; according to Doucé & Carmen 2020). This bidirectional approach seeks to cultivate both loyal customer relationships and profitable outcomes for the company.

The visual and auditory aspect related to advertising must be in line with the expectation of the client: a company must carefully think where it is advertising itself, which magazine or movie and what kind of celebrities they want to be associated with (Nueno & Quelch 1998, 64; according to Wiedmann et al. 2013, 63) Multisensory elements may be introduced to customers through atmospheric elements related to store experiences. This might include lighting, design, auditory and olfactory elements in the store. It is all about creating a beneficial atmosphere in the store to support loyalty and motivate purchases as well as positive word-of-mouth.

In addition, when using the product or service itself the company should aim to integrate sensory features that activate the customer's senses and produce sensory delight.

Depending on what they are, such properties can be based on aspects like sight, sound, taste, touch or smell.

According to Becker & Jaakkola (2020, 643-644), it's crucial for firms to define their customer experience requirements with precision – this of course applies also to companies in the luxury sector. Overall this goes beyond simply aiming for a positive or memorable experience every time. In the luxury sector specifically, companies need to align their touchpoints with the value proposition, ensuring that they evoke specific reactions from consumers. Given that luxury products and services often evoke emotional and individual responses, employing multisensory stimuli can be particularly effective in influencing consumer perceptions and behaviours.

The objective should focus on unique methods of evaluating customer experience, rather than relying solely on generic measures of satisfaction or quality that do not enhance comprehension of the customer experience. Becker & Jaakkola (2020) emphasize the necessity for thorough consumer research to grasp the impact of various factors—such as customer preferences, situational dynamics, sociocultural influences, and contextual elements—on stimuli throughout the customer journey. Additionally, they highlight the significance of norms and values in shaping these experiences. Ultimately, they propose that companies should establish manageable touchpoints to strategically shape the customer experience according to their desired outcomes – simultaneously, they advise to develop means for understanding external influences on these stimuli, which are beyond the company's direct control. While companies may not be able to directly influence these external factors, they can mitigate possible disharmony through collaboration with stakeholders and by adopting facilitator roles.

4.2 A model for multisensory engagement in product experiences

To effectively shape customer responses within experiences through the integration of multisensory elements, it's imperative to introduce a comprehensive model that accounts for the interplay of various factors to influence customer responses to stimuli related with the overall experience. It is a combination of Wiedman et al.'s framework about luxury value in relation to multisensory communication and Becker & Jaakkola's framework about customer experience.

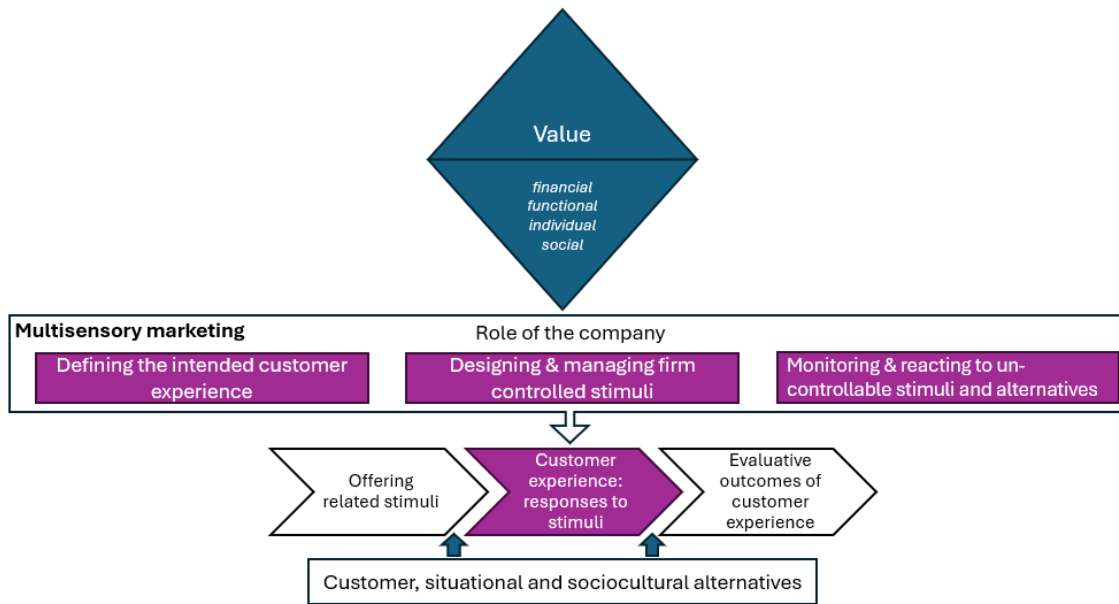


Figure 4: Model for CEM utilizing multisensory marketing (adapted from Wiedmann 2013,63; Becker & Jaakkola 2020, 638)

While Wiedmann et al. (2013, 63) focus on luxury brands, their value dimensions—financial, functional, individual, and social—apply across industries. Multisensory marketing communication and stimuli across different touchpoints must align with these dimensions. As figure 4 indicates the role of the company is to actively define what is the desired experience, to design and manage company-controlled stimuli and to monitor and react to stimuli that are out of the reach of the company. In this way, the company can have an impact on customer reactions and actively influence them and in the end orchestrate the experience into the desired direction.

5 Qualitative study

5.1 Research strategy

In order to get a better understanding of the multisensory marketing effect on customer experience I conducted a qualitative study. According to Flick (2018, 2) qualitative research focuses on the perspective of participants and their everyday observations of the topic in question. It offers the opportunity to learn from a practical perspective how interviewees relate to the studied phenomenon in the daily life at work.

The objective was to explore how multisensory marketing can be utilized in CEM to evoke particular customer responses. To gain meaningful insights, I conducted a qualitative study grounded in a phenomenological approach. As Moustakas (1994, 11-12) describes, this method focuses on analysing the lived experiences of individuals who engage with the phenomenon through their daily work, in order to uncover its core essence. This aligns with my research objectives. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2022, 23), this type of research focuses on multiple simultaneous factors, helping to develop theories and discover patterns. Semi-structured thematic interviews were conducted with marketing managers from companies offering luxury products and using traditional, sensory, or multisensory marketing strategies to shape customer experiences. In addition I also interviewed marketing professionals and scholars who were experts in the field of sensory or multisensory marketing or marketing in general.

Semi-structured thematic interviews allowed me to follow a set framework while still exploring key themes and hypotheses openly. As the researcher, I was aware that the interviewees had encountered specific situations, and I used the interviews to assess whether their responses aligned with existing theory, diverged from it, or introduced new insights into the topic. This approach allowed for open-ended comments and encouraged participants to respond more spontaneously to the questions. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2022, 46-47.)

5.2 Selection of the interviewees

The participants of the study were carefully selected: they were marketing professionals, marketing managers, marketing agency professionals and marketing researchers on doctorate level. In the case of marketing agency professionals, some interviewees had

direct experience in creating and implementing marketing strategies specifically tailored for luxury brands, ensuring they could provide valuable insights from both a strategic and operational perspective. According to Ko et al. (2019, 406) a luxury brand is perceived by customers as high quality, gives high value through functional or emotional benefits, has a respected image in the market, is considered worth its high price and is able to create profound connections and affection with the customers. As stated in the beginning of the thesis the luxury sector serves as a practical example of multisensory marketing and its features.

Additionally, the interview candidates actively used sensory or multisensory marketing efforts to influence customer experience, implementing well-planned strategies to achieve company-set goals. While some interviewees had a broader marketing background, they were all experienced in the field. To identify suitable individuals, I used LinkedIn's professional network to find appropriate marketing professionals.

During my research phase, a few individuals emerged who profiled themselves as sensory marketing experts, so I contacted them first. I also found a few people in my own circle of acquaintances who I thought might know more about the research topic. Through the experts and my own network, I also got more tips on whom I could contact about the topic, a technique called snowball-sampling.

The number of interviewees was designed to reach a certain saturation point. The goal was to explore the topic with sufficient resources so that at a certain point no new information emerged from the interviews. The initial target number of interviewees was eight to ten individuals.

5.3 Data collection

According to Puusa & Juuti (2020, 97) qualitative research is not just about finding and presenting information but about interacting with another human being. As a researcher, one steps into the social reality of the person being studied, and it is important to approach this with a humble and open attitude towards the details one uncovers.

I contacted some 50 people of which I had the opportunity to eventually interview a total of nine persons and interviews ranging from about 30 min to 100 min took place in Teams and in Zoom during September to December 2024 . Interviews were primarily held in

English – only one of the interviews was in Finnish and then translated to English later. An overview can be seen on the following page below in table 1.

Table 1: Interviewees' background information on key demographic and professional details

Interviewee number	Gender	Age	Experience (years)	Role/ background	Industry/ Products	Key senses used	Interview duration
N1	male	47	6	researcher/ lecturer	academia	all senses	101 min
N2	female	47	27	brand & customer experience manager	travel industry	hearing smell	62 min
N3	female	50	24	managing director	marketing	all senses	29 min
N4	female	52	33	chief operating officer	academia, food industry	all senses	60 min
N5	female	35	15	senior marketing manager	FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) industry	smell	37 min
N6	female	44	15	business director	advertising and marketing industry	all senses	46 min
N7	female	52	20	lecturer & customer service professional	luxury and travel industry	all senses	50 min
N8	male	42	15	brand creative lead	market research	visual, audio	38 min
N9	male	39	15	creative director	advertising	all senses	34 min

The interview structure (appendix 2) was semi-structured and built around the themes discussed in the theoretical section. The interview followed these themes, however, giving the interviewee room for more detailed responses. The questions to the research as well as the key concepts for the interviews have been gathered in the operationalization table below with examples of the interview questions. A comprehensive version can be found in the appendix 3.

Operationalization table

Table 2: Short version of operationalization table

Research questions	Key concepts	Examples of interview questions
What role does multisensory marketing have in customer experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multisensory marketing - Components of multisensory marketing: Visual, auditory, olfactory, tactical and gustatory marketing - luxury market as example for implementation 	<p>Theme 1: Multisensory marketing</p> <p>To start off, in your day-to-day work, please tell me about the importance of multisensory marketing for your product/brand? How do you use multisensory marketing? Theme 2: Components of multisensory marketing</p> <p>How do you decide which senses to focus on in your marketing campaigns? How do you bring them together to create a consistent brand experience?</p> <p>Theme 3: Luxury sector specialties as example</p> <p>How do you think the luxury market differs from other markets in regard to marketing?</p>
How can multisensory marketing, beyond just visual and auditory elements, be used to stimulate a desired customer response?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Multisensory marketing strategy -Influence on customer perception and behavior 	<p>Theme 4: Multisensory marketing strategy</p> <p>How do senses beyond sight and sound, such as smell and touch, influence consumer emotions and purchase decisions across various markets?</p> <p>Theme 5: Influence on customer perception and behavior</p> <p>How does engaging multiple senses influence consumer feelings about a brand and their purchase decisions?</p>
How is multisensory marketing and its effect on customer responses measured?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer experience management 	<p>Theme 6: Customer experience management</p> <p>What methods do you use to measure the impact of multisensory marketing experiences on consumer perception and behaviour?</p>

Table 2, the operationalization table, outlines how each sub-question of the thesis is addressed through themes and key concepts, using different interview questions. The aim was to understand the role of multisensory marketing in customer experience management, its impact on customer behaviour, and the customer experience. Specifically, the table helps to explore how companies influence customers at various

touchpoints and how this is achieved in today's marketing environment. The operationalization table ensures that the approach to each topic is structured and proceeds logically throughout the interviews.

5.4 Data analysis, interpretation and trustworthiness of the study

After I had conducted each of the interviews, I transcribed them with the help of an artificial intelligence program called Whisper in order to efficiently transfer the gathered data from speech to text. After that I transferred and proofread the text and colour-coded the resulting texts according to findings: role of multisensory marketing in customer experience, use of multisensory marketing to stimulate a desired customer response, measurement of multisensory marketing and its effects on customer responses. Thematic identification was conducted through inductive coding, where repeating patterns and key statements emerged directly from the data rather than being pre-imposed by the theoretical framework. I identified repeated mentions, patterns across different interviews, and particularly insightful statements that contributed new angles to the topic. These findings were then systematically gathered by me into an MS Word file, where I assembled the most relevant citations for further analysis.

According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016, 238-239) the main research goal of a qualitative study is understanding. The criteria for trusting such research must be founded in a strategy driving credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In line with these principles, my analysis aimed to maintain transparency and coherence throughout the coding and interpretation process. To provide transparency, I used direct quotes from the interviews, allowing readers to assess the connection between the data and my conclusions. In addition coherence was achieved through a logical structure, thematic consistency, and clear alignment between research questions, methodology, findings, and the conclusions. I ensured that all parts of the study were interconnected to let the reader follow argumentation smoothly.

Reliability assessment of the study

As Flick points out (2018, 8), researchers are not neutral factors in a study, as they actively participate in the process by observing interviewees and guiding them to reflect on their lives and histories, which may lead to meaningful insights for the research. At the same time, the researcher must be mindful of their own influence and how it affects the

reliability and validity of the study. This is also emphasized by Eskola & Suoranta (1998, p. 152): the researcher is one of the main tools of the study, and the reliability of the results is assessed based on the entire research process from start to finish. The research in qualitative study is more personal and involves a lot of reflection on the part of the researcher.

According to Puusa et al. (2020, 169), it is essential for researchers to justify their decisions at each stage of the study and present their thought processes in a way that allows readers to easily follow their reasoning. Interpretations should be transparent, logical, and well-supported by evidence. Given the subjective nature of qualitative research, researchers must also critically assess the impact of their own perspectives and background on the research outcomes. In line with these principles, I have carefully applied these guidelines by clearly explaining my decisions, ensuring that my interpretations are well-reasoned and reflective, and acknowledging how my background may have influenced the research process.

Validity assessment of the study

As this is a qualitative study, validity means credibility, authenticity and trustworthiness of the work - and not the accuracy of a measuring instrument as in a quantitative study (Creswell & Miller 2000, 125). According to Ali & Yusof (2011, 63) an important source for credibility can be triangulation by implementing multiple methods, informants or sites to verify findings. Although the number of interviewees in this study is relatively small, it appears to be sufficient to reach saturation, as similar observations began to recur across discussions, showing repetition in data. Additionally, many of these observations resonated with existing academic literature and aligned with previous findings from various researchers. Credibility is reached by truthfully quoting the interviewees according to the matching context and analysing them in a way that they are not altered or used to confirm own biases or predetermined outcomes. According to Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2007, 234) this inner credibility comprises also consistency, objectivity and trustworthiness whereas external credibility means transferability of results and assumptions. I have to my best knowledge applied these principles to not affect the results and I collected a reasonable number of interviews, to increase the possibility of transferability, though I recognise that these findings may not represent the truth holistically or universally.

Evaluation of research ethics

This study was conducted according to the ethical guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK 2023), which require that the researcher adheres to the principles of good scientific practice, stores data securely, ensures data protection, and verifies the consent and rights of research participants.

At the beginning of each interview, I informed the participant about the background of the study, that participation was entirely voluntary, and that individuals could not be identified from the results. The study complies with GDPR requirements, and I stored the data securely on my external storage device and I will destroy the data after five years. Additionally, I asked each participant if these guidelines were acceptable and if I was granted permission to record the conversation. Please refer to appendix 4 for detailed information about the research data management plan.

6 Results of the study

6.1 Role of multisensory marketing in customer experience

Multisensory marketing uses sensory engagement to influence customer behaviour. Insights from interviews with experts provided a deeper understanding of this concept and applications. A key finding revealed that while the theory primarily emphasized congruency in relation to customer expectations, the analysis uncovered a more nuanced perspective: congruency encompasses three interconnected dimensions: authenticity, consistency, and relevance.

Firstly, it involves crafting holistic sensory experiences that authentically reflect and align with the brand's heritage, ensuring every sensory interaction feels genuine and reinforces the brand's identity. Secondly, congruency requires alignment among all sensory cues to avoid confusion, enabling customers to form a clear and consistent impression of the brand, which fosters emotional connections. This is also related to the expectations that customers have towards the brand and its products. Thirdly, congruency highlights the importance of tailoring these sensory cues to resonate with the customer segment, ensuring relevance and deepening engagement.

Authenticity – Brand alignment

The first dimension, at its core, represents a congruent sensory experience that fully immerses the customer, aligns with the brand's heritage, and feels authentic. N2 emphasized that “honest materials” should be used to create an experience that is credible and remains true to the brand whereas N5 mentioned category norms to consider:

“... the fact that where your brand is from or what is the story that you want to tell ... and I think from there it came for instance that always use if you can ... very honest materials in their very honest finishes” (N2)

“... you need to consider the category norms. You need to consider the brand, in a way, the portfolio hierarchy and how you communicate the branding itself. So you need to find a good balance of how to integrate and implement sensory aspects for your brand specifically.” (N5)

Consistency for a long period of time is also mentioned by N3 and N8:

“... you have to be consistent. You have to do [so] for many years. You have to follow the line. Even though it might change a little bit. You have to growth-hack to find out what is best for you. But you have ... to work many years to get the right balance.” (N3)

“... often and as a guideline, whatever the brand is doing, whatever the unique or distinct idea or activation is, it should be really consistent for a long period of time. Regardless, if it's multi-sensory stuff or anything more traditional.” (N8)

The same idea is reflected in the collaboration that N2 mentions with a Finnish company that only uses natural oils. The heritage of the brand should be respected, for example, by using natural scents to reflect the Finnish nature and stay faithful to the brand's identity:

“So then we luckily bumped into the company ... made in Finland with all natural elements ... they are not artificially made, they don't stay in your skin that long, it doesn't evoke migraine or allergic reactions because they are completely natural oils that are used in those products so we came up with an idea that we start partnering with them” (N2)

As N2 emphasizes, the individual elements are so well and carefully chosen that the customer cannot necessarily pinpoint specific reasons why the environment and experience are so incredibly pleasant. This is also consistent with Krishna's (2010) view, which emphasizes that congruent and well-aligned sensory cues further enhance the brand's appeal.

N3 has observed something similar, as highlighted in our conversation. N3 provided the example of the MasterCard brand, which uses senses to its advantage from branded perfumes to soundtracks to evoke emotions and memories in customers:

“... at Master card, they have events. ... they get people feel [the] experience. ... they launch their own music album. ... They have done their bakeries. They have opened their own restaurants in New York and also elsewhere. ... they have a perfume. ...So that's how you get the smell, the sound, you get the feeling, emotion for your brand.” (N3)

N2 also emphasized the importance of cultural alignment of the brand:

“...if you're doing a lot of ... marketing gimmicks and I mean fun little things that you think that would emphasize the experience. That doesn't normally work unless it has a link to the brand or their existence ... And what we noticed is that as long as we stay true to the Finnishness and sort of the more quiet luxury, as I always say, it feels luxurious and expensive, but you don't know why... I think that's the key to success.” (N2)

Wiedmann et al. (2013, 60) emphasize the importance of sensory cues for creating an emotional connection with customers. N3 takes this even further, suggesting that these cues must be carefully utilized across both physical and digital touchpoints.

Authenticity plays an important role in the luxury experience as Spence (2022, 2-4) stressed in his findings about hotel experiences. Especially in traditional settings, the senses must be used congruently, as Helmefalk & Hultén (2017, 8) note. Similarly, this must also happen in the digital world to reinforce the brand's identity. That is why it is important that the sensory touchpoints of a luxury brand align with the core identity of the brand, as N3 noted. It is crucial that the different touchpoints are well planned even though the customer response might be different than planned:

“But in luxury marketing, you have to have a touchpoint very well planned so that you know to whom you are marketing and who you want to be ... and which level you want to be. ... when we speak about senses, it's also a very sensitive field. And each of us, we feel it differently.” (N3)

The use of scents also holds great potential but must be approached with caution, particularly regarding intensity and extent. N2, for example, described an unpleasant experience at a luxury hotel where the brand scent lingered and followed home. This illustrates how companies must use scents carefully to avoid estranging customers. At the same time, brands can evoke powerful emotions with scents, such as comfort and well-being, thereby reinforcing their image.

Today's brands face the challenge of standing out from the crowd while staying true to their brand heritage. However, N5 has observed that many brands are able to challenge their boundaries more than regular brands and do so boldly:

“... nowadays you get ... fine fragrances ..., in a packaging that resembles... the canned jar where you would have your canned fish sold ... in your near supermarket. So ... brands ... have more confidence in trying to break through the clutter and highlighting something even a bit weird or odd in them So you don't need to conform yourself to the category norms anymore that much as in the past.” (N5)

Consistency – Multisensory alignment

The second dimension of congruency emphasizes the alignment of all sensory cues in a way that avoids confusion. Sensory elements must work together to create a clear and consistent impression. This sensory alignment ensures that customers can form emotional bonds with the brand. As N2 explained, multisensory design elements, such as the acoustics of a room or tactile surfaces made of wood or stone, create a calming and extraordinary atmosphere for the customer:

“... if it's natural wood, if it's natural stone it feels better for us humans and we like to be tactile and we like to touch things ... it's sort of grounding for humans to have those tactical elements. It's totally different if you have a plastic chair versus a chair with the leather... .” (N2)

“...it's the overall experience ... you have a great staff who is kind and like talking to you the way you like, you have a nice chair, you have a great drink ... and you are not bothered by the overall noise and then you just feel good but you can't pinpoint one thing, because it's not a one thing, it's 360 [degrees].” (N2)

Scent, sound, and material quality must all be aligned across physical and digital touchpoints to align with the brand’s heritage. N2 points out that even in the digital world the brand must feel and look the same as in a retail or real-life environment through for instance brand colours and the interaction with the brand:

“... so it should ... feel like one entity that ... the customer wouldn't sort of even try to separate them... .” (N2)

This guarantees that the interaction with the brand is smooth, whether in the real world or through digital channels. Lindblom (2023, 1-3) notes, sensory experiences operate on both a conscious and unconscious level, influencing the individual’s decision processes.

The primary focus is therefore on creating a holistic experience that fully absorbs the customer. It is not only about offering a high-quality product but also about maintaining and further developing the brand image through every sensory cue.

Particularly the automotive and cruise industries have long made use of multisensory marketing, as N4 and N8 highlighted:

“... in cars, the measurement of sensory experiences has been taken quite far; there is the sense of touch, smell, and hearing. There are specific, branded sounds and all that, so they are quite advanced in that area. Then another field is, for instance, the cruise business, where multisensory experiences have been created, involving visual aspects, scents, touch, and all senses being utilised.” (N4)

“... car dealers, they want to get you to the test drive because they are confident that the look and feel and smell of the new car will get you excited to actually buy the car.” (N8)

An important factor is also the overall sensory design and the design of spaces, as expressed by N2 and N4 in the interviews. Aspects such as acoustics, materials, and the spatial ambiance itself have a significant impact on the emotional state of customers. N2 mentioned crowded spaces where poor acoustics can cause discomfort, or even nervousness and anxiety among customers.:

“For instance some cafes if there's so much noise that you can't really focus on what your friend or partner is saying while you're having a coffee that makes ... [a] sense of nervousness happening ...” (N2)

This aligns with the opinion of Berry et al. (2002, 85-86): functional and emotional cues should be coordinated to enhance the customer experience.

Incompatible sensory cues can lead to negative experiences and may even deter customers. As N5 pointed out, the clash of mismatched sensory cues results in less liking of the product and disappointment because expectations are not met. N5 provided an illustrative example during the discussion and N9 pointed out the possibility of significant mismatch of cues when not well-planned:

“... imagine ... you're in a restaurant and you're going to enjoy a glass of red wine that looks super velvety, smooth and intense in colour and in a very fancy

setting, and then you taste it and it would be just like ... juice and very light and no tannin at all. You would be disappointed, right?” (N5)

“... if you also don't know where and what you're doing and to whom you are doing to, then you can get into the problems of using different, let's say, voices or smells in the places that they ... just aren't supposed to be there.” (N9)

Sagha et al. (2022) found that too: sensory congruency, where cues like colours and music harmonize, is key to fostering positive emotions and enhancing purchase willingness. N5 also mentions sensory intelligence of the customer as a key factor to consider when planning implementation of sensory cues:

“... at the same time, of course, we shouldn't underestimate the sensory intelligence of consumers because we've just also shown that if you have a product where the sensory aspects do not match, so they are in a way contradicting one another, they are incongruent with one another, then that's when that often leads to a lower liking, a poorer perception of the product itself.” (N5)

This is in line with the theory of multisensory marketing that repeatedly emphasizes this aspect of congruency as well (e.g. Sagha et al. 2022).

As became clear during the various conversations, each sense creates a unique influence on the individual, and this often happens in harmony with one another. N4 provided the example of differently coloured drinks shaping expectations:

“For instance, if the same juice is presented in green, yellow, and red, and people are asked which looks sweetest without tasting, 80% say the red one. Similarly, when asked which seems sour, it's the yellow one.” (N4)

As we already know from academic literature, sight and hearing are the most dominant senses. Visual elements like colour, shape, and lighting have a significant impact on how things are perceived. To engage customers effectively, sensory experiences must align with their expectations for the product or service, as any mismatch can reduce customer satisfaction. (Mattila & Wirtz 2001, 286.)

Relevance – Target group alignment

The third dimension of congruency highlights the importance of tailoring sensory cues to resonate with the intended target group. This ensures relevance and creates a strong connection with the customer. N2 shared an example of Finnish nature sounds used in a New York store, which failed to resonate due to the cultural disconnect:

“ ... people were always contacting the sales staff ... And they were very confused, it didn't work out there at all, because of course they were born ... in New York, they've never probably heard any of the nature sounds as we here in Finland hear them ... ” (N2)

While congruency creates harmony, contrasts can add depth and excitement to the customer experience. When used strategically, contrasts emphasize the uniqueness of certain elements and elevate the perception of the brand. N1 shared an example of how transitioning from the vibrant environment of an amusement park to the calm atmosphere of the Näsinneula restaurant enhances the experience:

“... whereas everywhere else, it's basically a bit more wild, maybe. ... And there you are, once again, in a totally different environment, in a totally different atmosphere...Then you go to a restaurant ... Näsinneula. It's calm, it's quiet, classical music, or slow jazz. So the atmosphere goes, you know, ... 180 degrees in the opposite direction.” (N1)

In retail settings, contrasts also help differentiate luxury brands. N6 noted the powerful sensory differences between Stockmann and Sokos, with premium retailers using lighting, scent, and design to create a refined ambiance:

“... it's so much different walking into Stockmann's than it is walking into Sokos, even though they kind ofsay, they sell the same stuff and I think it's much to do about the ... atmosphere and the premises and everything but to me it's.... it's really much to do about smell as well that what are the sort of senses that you get from there.” (N6)

Brand experiences demand thorough sensory planning to create a premium ambiance. Every detail, no matter how small, contributes to the overall impression. As N6 noted:

“... if you want to own something you need to make sure that it's everywhere ... and the devil is always in the details, so you can like really win things or lose things with these kind of like ... small stuff...” (N6)

N1 also describes this pursuit of perfection using the example of fine dining at Näsinneula:

“Wine glasses need to be certain sort. Plates are basically made for you from order. ... and it was thought about beforehand, you know, everything was thought about colour-wise, shape-wise, stuff like that.” (N1)

Through this quality and precision, the image of excellence and high professionalism is reinforced, creating the impression that everything is carefully planned and considered.

Sensory elements often operate on a subconscious level, and the staff plays a crucial role in helping customers recognize and appreciate these nuances. N5 described how guiding customers to notice subtle sensory details can enhance their experience:

“ ... you need to describe it very well to help them find those nuances and give them the satisfaction, you know, almost like when you're having your glass of wine that you feel like, ah, I'm an expert... I can find the nuances of leather and berries and oak in this wine... .” (N5)

It is therefore crucial that the staff makes the customer aware of the sensory aspects, so that they can fully appreciate them and don't go unnoticed or maybe even misinterpreted. Additionally not only the highlights in an experience should be emphasized but also what is in between, so the breaks should be appreciated and paid attention to as N7 argues:

“ ... the companies and brands ... are keen to create multi-sensory experiences ... And it's quite common that they are developing and designing the extraordinary multi-sensory experiences, so the peak experiences. ... But if it's about a longer weekend or a longer evening in a restaurant, or even a week-long holiday or two, one cannot, I mean a customer, digest many peak experiences, one have to rest in between. So therefore, then, in a way, the valleys, ... more focus should be paid also to these pauses in between the peak experiences, because if we are tired, we cannot enjoy the peak experiences. So that ruins the peak experience. ” (N7)

In the end it might be even that the customer remembers these pauses in between the peak experience more vividly than the highlight itself as N7 emphasized in the interview.

Discussions about the senses often focus only on the traditional five senses, overlooking other less known senses that also play a role as N7 noted:

“ ... so for me, multisensory means also those senses, and I think all of these senses, there might be even more senses, which I don't know the name, but we still sense those consciously or unconsciously, and they do effect in our practices and how we experience the world” (N7)

N7 added that people may hesitate to address these less commonly mentioned senses due to discomfort or shame. Temperature is for example an important factor in the customer experience that is often overlooked. Sensory experiences not only create lasting memories but also evoke deep emotional impact on customers (Mitterfellner 2019, 129).

Overall, the insights from the interviews show that multisensory marketing plays a very important role in customer experiences, especially in the luxury sector, as also noted in the theory part at the beginning of the thesis. It is not just a crucial strategic tool but almost an art in its diversity. It requires a deep understanding of one's brand and customer base, as well as a high level of commitment to excellence and the ability to create coherent and diverse experiences that move and touch the customer. When applied correctly, sensory cues can evoke deep emotions and strong memories, fostering loyal customer relationships. Achieving the right balance in everything the company does is of great importance.

6.2 Use of multisensory marketing to influence customer responses

The core of successful multisensory marketing lies in its ability to tailor sensory experiences to the context, culture, and expectations of the target audience. Throughout the interviews, it became evident that sensory cues are not universally effective; their impact is heavily dependent on the environment in which they are applied. For instance, while loud music and strong scents can stimulate drink sales in a nightclub setting, they would likely create discomfort in a shopping mall, where a calmer atmosphere encourages customers to linger and explore. As N1 noted:

“And same thing with the malls, ... the music is not that loud there, because they want to keep the arousal levels low, so people spend more time ... in the mall.”

(N1)

This is in line with the literature: when companies use their products or customer experiences to engage the senses of their customers in the right way, they can stand out from the crowd and influence customer behaviour (Krishna 2010). However N7 also points out that rhythm and movement are not that much taken into consideration in the experiences yet.

“ ... rhythms can be found everywhere in our everyday life. But if we think about hospitality context, maybe one of the most obvious is the hotel night. We know that the breakfast is from six to ten [a.m.] ... lunchtime is till two [p.m.] and dinner starts at six p.m. ... so we had to kind of adjust our own rhythm to the rhythm of the hotel program in a way. So it might be that it's not suitable for our rhythm. If we wish to, if we are jetlagged and we would like to have breakfast later on or ...go early in bed and have dinner earlier and so on and so on. So finding the appropriate rhythm ... is crucial in many ways. “ (N7)

Sensory overload presented itself as another significant challenge. Overwhelming customers with excessive high-arousal stimuli, such as loud music or overpowering scents, can lead to negative reactions and diminish consumer satisfaction. As N1 highlighted:

“... the biggest challenge is sensory overload... music is too loud, maybe there's too much smell” (N1)

This aligns with research indicating that dominant senses like vision and hearing can quickly become overstimulated, leading to adverse consumer responses (Doucé & Adams 2020).

Different senses also play distinct roles in shaping customer perceptions. Sight and hearing, as dominant senses, have a profound impact. Visual elements like colour, lighting, and shape influence how products are perceived. For example, lighting is crucial for presenting products attractively:

“... and then again in a grocery store the light has to always be ... super natural ... , especially in the way you sell the fruits and vegetables and things... so that the colour will pop out ...” (N2)

Similarly, auditory cues can subtly influence purchasing decisions:

“So when there's a slower tempo music played in a grocery store ... People tend to purchase more healthier options, more healthier food.” (N1)

Scents, meanwhile, evoke emotional and behavioural responses, influencing buying behaviour. As noted by N3 a restaurant needs to smell like the food it is offering:

“... the smell is very important. Like if you go to a restaurant and there's no smell, you are not hungry.” (N3)

And N4 even adds:

“Similarly, ... scents of freshly baked goods encourage bread purchases. Fresh herb scents in the produce section enhance the perception of freshness. Used appropriately, scents clearly increase sales.” (N4)

Touch, too, shapes perceptions of quality and trust. A sturdy, well-crafted container can make a drink seem more satisfying than one in a flimsy bottle:

“I think touch can be used as an increase in trust or decrease in trust. For some it can be just a pure enjoyment, but then touch can also influence taste. ... the beverage ... from the firm bottle tastes better than from a flimsy bottle” (N1)

Emotional engagement through multisensory cues fosters trust and customer loyalty. Familiar smells, sounds, and visuals can evoke powerful memories, creating a strong emotional connection with the brand. For example:

“I think the emotion is number one. ... we trust what we see. And then ... we trust what we hear.” (N3)

“Like when I was young, I was ... playing some game ... and it's still when I get that smell, I get that same emotion and same moments that I had when I was younger.” (N9)

Sensory experiences of the environment not only contribute to customer satisfaction but also strengthen their loyalty to the brand. This also appears in the hospitality industry, Spence (2022, 2) talks about so-called *sensehacking*: strategically applied multisensory cues can be particularly effective in a service context, creating a calming and emotionally engaging effect. N4 supports this theory with the view that well-planned sensory design contributes to customer satisfaction:

“Once we have measured the experience with relevant customers, we help the company develop it so that it can create a better experience for the customer. We say that we are developers of ideal sensory experiences; that is our goal, and it is part of our daily work.” (N4)

The element of surprise can also play a powerful role, leaving a lasting impression when sensory experiences are unexpected yet meaningful:

“I think the strongest impact again... [is] when you least expect it kind-of-thing works...” (N6)

Accessibility and simplicity are equally vital. Ensuring that sensory experiences are easy to decode and accessible to a diverse audience broadens a brand’s reach:

“And then when you're standing in front of the shelf in the store and you're looking for a new product or even just finding ... your current one, you need to make sure that ... you're easy, ... to process. ... we talk about this process in fluency. How easy it is to, to decode the information ... that you're sharing about your product.” (N5)

N3 emphasizes that accessibility is crucial for audiences with diverse sensory sensitivities. Inclusive experiences should consider a range of senses, rather than focusing on just a few, to ensure that individuals, including those who are visually impaired, are not excluded. In this way companies make sure that they may use the full potential of their clientele.

Ultimately, companies can evoke precisely the responses they desire – among others building lasting loyalty and trust – when using multisensory marketing with carefully planned sensory cues, aligned with brand identity that are strategically placed across various touchpoints.

6.3 Measurement of multisensory marketing and its effects

The interviews provided valuable insights into ways of measuring multisensory marketing and its effects and how measurement may be done more precisely to further develop strategies.

The importance of different technological solutions to measure and better understand various aspects of consumers' reactions is highlighted in many interviews. As N1 points out, tools such as room sensors or skin conductance sensors can objectively measure physiological reactions, such as how aroused the individual is or likewise the relaxation level:

“... we have so-called room sensors ... And they measure ... room temperature, room humidity, CO2 levels, ... Then they also measure decibels, so how loud it is in there, and they also measure lumen, so how bright it is in there...But probably the most interesting for us there is... skin conductance responsiveness, or skin responsiveness. So basically ...the amount of sweat in your skin, and from that measure you can make fairly good assumptions about the arousal or relaxation level of a person” (N1)

This aligns with Lemon & Verhoef's (2016, 70) definition of customer experience: it is a diverse construct which includes cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensory, and social responses to a company's products and services throughout the entire customer journey.

Despite the technological possibilities that are already available today, it is still not possible to measure the full range of a customer experience: there is a certain gap between objective physiological measurements and the actual subjective customer experience. Sensors can therefore take over the objective measurement of physiological responses, but the real emotional and social components, which also play a role in customer experience, are not yet directly measurable with sensors, at least not today. This finding aligns with Jaakkola and Becker's (2020, 641) research, which highlights that companies should focus on influencing sensory cues, because they cannot consciously affect what a customer's emotional reaction is or reliably predict their behaviour. Objective measurements can provide guiding indications about how a person perceives an experience, but they do not provide a comprehensive understanding of what that

subjective experience is. Customer surveys can be a useful addition to these measurements, as they incorporate the subjective customer perspective. As N1 points out:

“ ... although the survey answers are always subjective, but ... you still get good information from that and useful information. ... I wouldn't discount them ..., because that is still ... the most common way to do science in quantitative research. So ... also the different kind of scales that have been validated and used a lot. I would ... also put those ... in there.” (N1)

However, the interviews also make it clear that there is a certain reservation regarding the reliable measurability of customer experiences. N6 emphasizes that traditional test environments and the resulting responses carry risks: test subjects may be inclined to overthink their answers if they are aware that they are being observed. N6 said:

“I'm gonna sound like I don't believe in testing, but I do believe in testing... but you need to do the testing in a clever way as well because people tend to ... overthink that and they kind of start thinking that what is the right... like what would be the right way of doing this and that's not how people act...” (N6)

This perspective challenges theories that support structured measurement of customer responses. Instead, it favours unobtrusive, natural observation of situations and suggests that CEM would benefit more from this approach. Homburg et al. (2017, 378) advocate for systematic measurement of customer responses in the moment, while some interviewees fear that this method may not necessarily capture how the customer experience is genuinely felt and perceived. Some interviewees also point out that they feel that companies don't measure enough and therefore only base their choices on trial and error. In the interview N4 explained related to testing and the overall understanding of the customer that companies are not doing enough and that it is rather a wild field:

“... they [companies] present it like this: asking why they would do it [testing] when they can just bring this scent here, and now this is a brand scent, and that's it. ... they don't measure much whether it's too strong or how well it is associated with the brand ... Some things, in my opinion, can just be lightly tested. Not everything needs to be researched all the time, but if you make larger changes, you can't know what effect they will have unless you measure it with the customers. ... All this service design is very much on the surface ..., if a lot of

money and consultants are used to build that service journey with service design methods, it's important that it is also measured—not just as a purely subjective experience, but because that experience is formed through the senses, so those sensations should be measured too. Often, that is something that people cannot articulate when they are asked about overall satisfaction on a certain scale.” (N4)

This reflects the still-predominant difficulty of accurately measuring customer responses while balancing the act of measurement with the need to avoid influencing the experience itself. Here, Jaakkola's and Becker's (2020, 641) research comes into play: they make a distinction between managing the stimuli of the customer experience and controlling the customer reactions. They argue that sensory cues can be adjusted and influenced whereas the reaction itself is beyond companies' control. Therefore the objective should shift towards unique and insightful methods of evaluating customer experience, moving beyond standard satisfaction or quality metrics that fail to capture the complexities of customer interactions. Becker and Jaakkola (2020) highlight the critical need for in-depth consumer research to understand the effects of variables like individual preferences, situational context, sociocultural influences, and environmental factors throughout the customer journey.

The interviews also made it clear that measuring customer responses has its limitations. It is not possible to consider all factors, backgrounds, and influences, partly due to technological constraints, but also in terms of time management and financial as well as human resources. As N1 suitably put it:

“I know a whole lot of things that actually influence our behaviour that I have no chance of measuring. I don't have the resources ... what were my hormone levels yesterday. ... What were my hormone levels a week ago? ... What were my hormone levels a month ago? So ... the cycle goes on and on. And ... then if we, ... go ... way back ... was my mother stressed when I was a foetus? Because that influences the structure of my brain and what hormones it, you know, elicits more and what hormones does it elicit less and all that sort of things. ... basically, you can ... continue the cycles hundreds of years...back. What were my ancestors like?” (N1)

Lemon and Verhoef (2016, 89) made a similar observation: understanding, managing, and monitoring the customer journey through different touchpoints is challenging.

Wiedmann et al. (2013, 62-65) emphasize that customer experience depends on personal memories and subjective perceptions. Therefore, in order to cater for the different needs and backgrounds of the customers it seems natural to not try to predict or control customer's reactions precisely but focus on evoking the desired outcomes alongside the customer journey and overall for the company.

One aspect to the measurement of the customer responses is also that it costs time and money and therefore testing seems to be widely skipped although experts acknowledge that testing would help in understanding more about the experience and the customers' perceptions. N2 explained:

"... it should be done by testing, but normally the companies they don't have time for that or money because that would mean that you would extend ... your project timeline a little bit and you would have to put some money to the testing part as well - but that's normally skipped." (N2)

N3 agreed with this view and even added that this is something that specifically seems to be common in Finland compared to for example Sweden:

"It costs money. And that's why we don't do that enough here in Finland. In Sweden companies ... do test markets much more. Because campaigns are more for consumers. And they are bigger campaigns. ... it's [testing] important. But it's always a question of the money. And of course a question of the time, but more about the money." (N3).

All in all, we can conclude from the information gathered through the interviews that customer experience management and multisensory marketing are closely connected, and multisensory marketing can be an important tool for influencing actions desired by the company. While technological solutions provide an indication of customer reactions, they cannot fully capture the entire spectrum of customers' emotions and responses. Therefore, it is important to also use qualitative tools such as questionnaires and scales in the evaluation process.

The ideal of comprehensive measurement and the practical constraints of time, resources, and cost reveals a pressing need for balanced strategies. Companies must recognize that while they cannot fully control customer responses, they can strategically influence sensory cues to create more impactful experiences. The principle of excellent customer

experience lies in understanding its complexity and individuality. The challenge for brands is to navigate this complexity by investing in strategic, multidimensional approaches.

6.4 Summary and discussion of findings

The following table 3 shows the findings and insights from the interviews in connection to the literature and presents them in an easily digestible format. It provides a structured overview, guided by the research questions, of key insights into the role, use, and measurement of multisensory marketing on customer responses.

The table highlights how aligning sensory cues with authenticity, consistency, and relevance can enhance emotional connections, while also emphasizing the need for careful management to prevent overstimulation and ensure accessibility. In addition, it points out the importance of combining objective and subjective methods when evaluating multisensory marketing's effectiveness, as emotions and subconscious influences can hardly be assessed by traditional measurement tools.

Table 3: Summary of findings and their relation to previous research

Research question	Key empirical findings	Connection to literature
Role of multisensory marketing in customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congruency in multisensory marketing has three key dimensions: <i>authenticity, consistency, and relevance</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authenticity: Multisensory marketing should reflect the brand's heritage and identity - Consistency: Aligning all sensory cues to customer expectations to foster emotional connections - Relevance: Multisensory marketing should be tailored to cultural and target audience to deepen engagement • Brands often experiment with sensory elements but must balance innovation with tradition • Poorly designed multisensory marketing can create discomfort and deter customers 	<p>Adds new perspectives to congruence discussion in literature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krishna (2010): Congruent sensory cues enhance brand appeal. • Wiedmann et al. (2013, 60): Sensory cues foster emotional connections with customers. • Helmfalk & Hultén (2017, 8): Congruent sensory use is crucial, especially in traditional settings. • Sagha et al. (2022): Harmonizing sensory cues (e.g., colors and music) fosters positive emotions and increases purchase willingness. • Mattila & Wirtz (2001, 286): Sensory alignment with customer expectations prevents dissatisfaction. • Mitterfellner (2019, 129): Sensory experiences evoke emotions and create lasting memories.

<p>Use of multisensory marketing to influence customer responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overstimulation can lead to negative responses and reduce consumer satisfaction • Different senses play distinct roles: sight and hearing dominate, scent triggers emotional responses, and touch affects trust and perceived quality • Strategic use of surprise elements enhances memorability and emotional connection • Simplicity and accessibility are key features; brands must ensure sensory cues are easy to process and inclusive • Rhythm and movement in multisensory experiences are often overlooked but can enhance engagement • Retailers and hospitality businesses use sensory cues to influence customer behavior and perceptions • Emotional engagement through sensory marketing fosters trust and strengthens customer loyalty • Customers subconsciously associate colours, sounds, and textures with certain product qualities, influencing purchasing decisions 	<p>Broadens the theoretical discourse on influence of multisensory marketing on customer responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krishna (2010): Engaging customer senses effectively helps brands stand out and influence behavior. • Doucé & Adams (2020): Overstimulation of dominant senses like vision and hearing can lead to negative responses. • Spence (2022, 2): “Sense-hacking” (strategic multisensory cues) in hospitality can create calming, emotionally engaging experiences. • Lemon & Verhoef (2016, 70): Customer experience involves sensory, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social responses across the customer journey.
<p>Measurement of multisensory marketing and its effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective measurements track physiological reactions but cannot fully capture emotions or subconscious influences • Subjective methods such as customer surveys complement objective data • Testing sensory elements is often neglected due to time and cost constraints • Understanding customer experiences requires both quantitative and qualitative research to capture emotions, perceptions, and behaviors • Over-reliance on structured measurement methods may lead to artificial responses 	<p>Expands existing understanding of multisensory marketing measurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaakkola & Becker (2020, 641): Companies can influence sensory cues but cannot fully control emotional reactions or customer behavior; evaluation should go beyond standard metrics. • Homburg et al. (2017, 378): Advocates for real-time measurement of customer responses during experiences. • Wiedmann et al. (2013, 62-65): Customer experience is shaped by personal memories and subjective perceptions, requiring tailored approaches to account for individual differences.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Theoretical contributions

Overall, this study highlights the importance of multisensory marketing, especially in the luxury market: multisensory marketing advances brand perception and image while strengthening customer loyalty. Through engaging experiences that richly involve the senses, brands can build a more personal connection with customers, surpassing the impact of traditional marketing methods. By examining different ways of utilizing multisensory marketing, this study helps to better understand how companies can strategically apply it to reinforce their identity and establish emotional bonds with their customers. Below, the results are further discussed in relation to the research questions.

The first research question focused on the role of multisensory marketing in customer experiences. As this work shows, it is essential in shaping the experience. Multisensory marketing not only helps enhance the perception of quality but also supports the creation of an atmosphere aligned with brand values and brand identity. This aligns with Mitterfellner's (2019, 129) view that sensory engagement evokes strong emotions and enduring memories. Brands, therefore, use elements such as natural materials, lighting, or subtle scents to create an atmosphere of high quality and authenticity. To ensure a successful implementation of multisensory marketing, these carefully implemented elements must align with the three dimensions of congruency—authenticity to the brand, consistency towards customer expectations, and customer relevance—creating a cohesive sensory experience across both real and digital environments. While visual and auditory cues often dominate, it is crucial to engage all the senses. Thus this study introduces a more detailed understanding of congruency in regard to multisensory marketing, showing that congruency is more than only harmony between sensory cues. In addition, the study emphasizes the need to balance sensory innovation with brand tradition: poorly executed multisensory marketing can lead to discomfort and turn away customers.

The second research question focused on how multisensory marketing, beyond just visual and auditory elements, may be used to stimulate a desired customer response. As highlighted by Krishna (2010, 3), this study confirms that sensory engagement significantly influences consumer responses: For example, a calm and welcoming store atmosphere can create an impression of high quality, which in turn may encourage

purchasing decisions. Refined sensory surprises can effectively influence customers and create memorable experiences. Focused analyses on sensorial responses have remained scarce in customer experience management literature. This study contributes to the understanding of how multisensory marketing influences customer responses by emphasizing the importance of balance and simplicity, showing that overstimulation can weaken satisfaction. Easily processable and inclusive sensory cues enhance the overall experience—an aspect less stressed in earlier works. A new viewpoint is also the role of rhythm and movement in driving customer engagement. Moreover, the strategic use of surprise elements to improve memorability and emotional bonds, offers a more detailed view on how sensory cues can enhance long-term brand connections beyond only capturing attention.

The third research question concentrated on the measurement of multisensory marketing. Sensory cues affect customer experiences, but as the study underlines companies cannot control how customers react. Technology helps to measure information like arousal and relaxation, but it isn't possible to measure the subjective emotional response precisely. Physiological reactions represent only a part of the whole truth. As Lemon and Verhoef point out, customer experience is a complicated construct (Lemon and Verhoef 2016, 89). Combining objective measuring methods with subjective evaluations of customers is essential to understanding multisensory experiences. The study adds a real-world perspective to the literature, underlining that measuring the complexity of multisensory experiences requires a mixed-method approach to combine objective data with subjective insights to fully capture the emotional and subconscious dimensions of customer experiences. Previously customer experience measures have often overlooked or insufficiently captured sensory aspects.

All in all, this research shows the high potential of multisensory marketing to create contextually and culturally adjusted experiences that extend emotional connections and foster brand loyalty. By aligning each sensory cue with the brand identity and by developing measurement practices to capture both objective and subjective experiences, brands can design memorable customer journeys that resonate deeply with the customer.

Based on the presented results, the model introduced earlier, which was based on Wiedman et al.'s and Becker & Jaakkola's studies, can be enriched and modified to better

reflect the obtained insights and they are marked with numeric circles corresponding the following numbers:

(1) Congruent multisensory marketing has three key dimensions: authenticity, consistency, and relevance. The model should place greater emphasis on aligning sensory cues with the brand identity: Sensory stimuli must be coordinated across different touchpoints and be consistent with the desired experience. In addition it must be relevant to the target audience.

(2) Feedback loop with qualitative & quantitative data. It would be important to introduce a feedback loop to measure customer responses in real time, as far as current technology allows. This should include the ability to measure and exclude external influences that have negative impacts. A mix should be used that incorporates both objective measurements and the subjective perceptions of the customer to create a comprehensive picture.

(3) External stakeholders: in this process, it would be essential to work closely with stakeholders to positively influence external factors and align them with the company's strategy.

(4) Impact: the diagram has been adjusted to illustrate the impact of multisensory marketing on customer responses and the resulting benefits for the company. When customer responses are influenced by multisensory marketing, it leads to higher interaction and recall, influenced purchase behavior, greater brand loyalty, positive product perception, and stronger emotional connections.

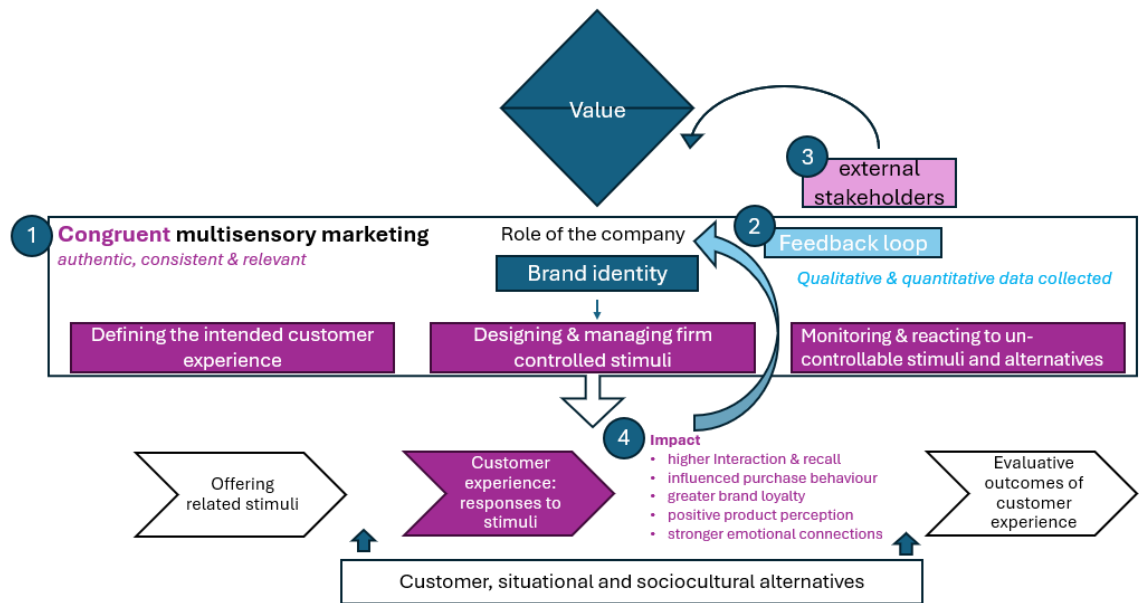


Figure 5: Enriched theoretical framework (adapted from Wiedmann 2013,63; Becker & Jaakkola 2020, 638)

7.2 Recommendations for management

The study can provide several recommendations for customer experience management with a focus on multisensory marketing. Utilizing different senses can help brands create an immersive experience in which various cues are aligned with the brand identity. This includes the use of natural, high-quality products that evoke tactile sensory experiences and are mutually consistent, whether in a physical or even digital environment. The strategic use of contrasts can further enhance the experience by changing the rhythm and feel from one environment to another, thus creating unique moments. Brands should implement a feedback loop to monitor customer responses to sensory elements in real time, using technology to improve and optimize the experience.

Authenticity and preservation of brand culture play a major role in remaining competitive. Brands should match sensory elements to their identity to avoid incongruency that might confuse customers. Training staff to highlight specific sensory details can enhance brand experience, as employees may then appropriately guide customers to appreciate sensory nuances that might otherwise go unnoticed, thereby again strengthening engagement. Innovation can be recommended to brands to stand out from the competitors as long as experimentation is balanced with brand consistency. Brands can differentiate themselves

with unconventional packaging or sensory elements, but the experiments must remain true to the brand identity to avoid estranging customers.

Collaborating with stakeholders to manage and mitigate external factors that may negatively impact the sensory experience can further align efforts with the brand's strategy.

7.3 Limitations of the research and recommendations for future research

The limitations of my study relate to the selection of interview candidates and the interpretation of the results which may have impacted the interpretation of the findings. A larger sample size could have provided more robust insights and increased the transferability of the results to real-life scenarios. I may not have identified all relevant experts in the field, and the opinions gathered may not represent the general consensus on the topic, given the relatively small number of interviewees which make it difficult to apply the findings on a very broad spectrum. Additionally, the interpretation of results is influenced by the researcher's background and knowledge of the subject as well as deliberate selection of the candidates. While objectivity was the goal, some biases may still have occurred.

Additionally, all interviewees were Finnish, which means that cultural and local factors may have influenced their opinions. Including participants from other countries in future studies could potentially lead to different findings and a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Furthermore, the majority of interviews were conducted in English, which may have affected how clearly participants could express their thoughts. Communicating in a foreign language is often more challenging than using one's native language, so some opinions and insights may not have been fully captured.

However, the results from the interviews and their interpretations are largely linked to the existing research from the field. This can increase the robustness of the findings.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: AI usage declaration of the thesis

- Has AI been used for this thesis? YES
- I take full responsibility for the content of the work based on AI usage
- Which AI tools were used?
 - i) Whisper
 - ii) Chat GBT
- Purpose of the AI usage:
 - i) Transcription of interviews
 - ii) Translating one of the interviews from Finnish into English
 - iii) Get an idea about what definitions of different terms should include as bullet points
- How AI tool was used
 - i) use of command “whisper audiofile.m4a” in command field of folder to transcribe interviews
 - ii) “translate word/ sentence/ text from Finnish to English”
 - iii) “list all relevant themes I should include in the definition of multisensory marketing as bullet points”

Appendix 2: Interview structure

Project	Thesis
Time	September – December 2024
Implementation of the research	8-10 thematical interviews Teams/ Zoom
Target groups	Marketing managers according to these criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works in the luxury sector AND /OR is specialized in (multi-) sensory marketing • Uses (multi)sensory marketing actively/has knowledge about marketing • Company's customer experience management is specialized into targeted consumer responses
Commission	No commission
Target length of the interview	30-60 min/interview

Interview structure for multisensory marketing expert in the luxury sector:

Meaning and goal of the interview (5 min):

I'm conducting a qualitative study for my master's thesis at the Turku School of Economics. My goal is to explore how multisensory marketing can be utilized in customer experience management (CEM) to evoke particular customer responses.

I'm interested in hearing about your own experiences in this area, so feel free to share your thoughts openly.

The interview will last for about 60 minutes.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the interview:

All insights and findings from the interview are confidential. The information from the interview will be analysed and included in my thesis, but it will not be linked to any

individual. All responses will be reported anonymously. The results of this research will be used solely for this study. Participation is completely voluntary, and if there are any questions you prefer not to answer, we can simply skip them during the interview.

Data security:

This study will be conducted in accordance with GDPR requirements and files will be stored accordingly. The university recommends a retention period of 5 years, after which the researcher will destroy the data.

Recording of the interview:

The interview will be recorded, but the material will only be used for this study.

Confirmation:

Are you comfortable with the confidentiality and security measures I've outlined, and do I have your permission to record our conversation?

Themes 1-3: Multisensory marketing, its components and the luxury market specialty (20 minutes):

Goal: Understand the use of multisensory marketing in companies, possible challenges but also advantages. In addition, understand how the luxury sector differs from other sectors.

Key components of multisensory marketing: Visual, auditory, olfactory, tactical and gustatory marketing

Questions:

- Please shortly introduce yourself: how many years of work experience in your field do you have, in which kind of company/industry do you work in and what does your work include? As part of the demographic data for my research, could you please share your age?
- To start off, in your day-to-day work, please tell me about the importance of multisensory marketing for your product/brand? How do you use multisensory

marketing? Can you give examples? Does that help to create a better experience for your customers?

- When did you first notice the impact that sensory details could have on your customers? Was there a moment or campaign where it really stood out?
- How do you think using multiple senses influences how your customers interact with your brand? What has worked well for you, and what challenges have you faced when trying to bring sensory elements into your marketing?
- How do you decide which senses to focus on in your marketing campaigns? How do you bring them together to create a consistent brand experience?
- How do you think the luxury market differs from other markets in regard to marketing?
- How do you find the right balance between keeping things refined and elevated while still creating memorable sensory experiences in your luxury marketing?

Theme 4-5: Multisensory marketing strategies and consumer perception and behavior (15 minutes):

Goal: Understand how the integration of multisensory marketing strategies beyond just visual and auditory elements impact on consumer perception and behavior

- How do senses beyond sight and sound, like smell or touch, influence their emotions and what they decide to buy in the luxury market?
- How important do you think it is to keep the sensory experience the same / consistent across different touchpoints with your brand, so they remember it and stick to it?
- What changes have you noticed in consumer reactions when you add things like scent or texture to a marketing campaign?

Theme 6: Customer experience management and means of measurement (15 minutes):

Goal: Learn how multisensory marketing can be used to stimulate a desired customer experience and how to measure this.

- What kind of experiences does your multisensory marketing aim to create and how?
- How can brands use multisensory marketing to make the customer journey more personal and memorable?
- How do you measure experiences? And how do you measure multisensory marketing experiences?
- What kind of feedback or tools do you think work best to see if multisensory marketing is really improving the customer experience?
- How can brands make sure the customer experience feels the same across different places—like online, in-store, or at events—when using multisensory marketing?
- How can brands use multisensory marketing to gently encourage customers to do things like spend more or talk positively about the brand?

Summary (5 minutes):

Goal: Gather the interview findings

The aim of this research was to explore how luxury brands use multisensory marketing in customer experience management to shape and influence customer responses in a specific, desired way. Let's summarize the interview findings:

- Based on our conversation, can you share the three most important ways to meaningfully influence customer responses by multisensory marketing?
- Is there anything you'd like to add, or do you feel there's something we haven't covered enough in this interview?
- Could you advise me whom I could contact next in this matter? Who would be an expert in multisensory marketing in general or marketing expert particularly in the luxury sector?

Thank you for your time and your valuable contribution!

Interview structure for sensory marketing expert in general / marketing expert in general

Meaning and goal of the interview (5 min):

I'm conducting a qualitative study for my master's thesis at the Turku School of Economics. My goal is to explore how multisensory marketing can be utilized in customer experience management (CEM) to evoke particular customer responses.

I'm interested in hearing about your own experiences in this area, so feel free to share your thoughts openly.

The interview will last for about 60 minutes.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the interview:

All insights and findings from the interview are confidential. The information from the interview will be analysed and included in my thesis, but it will not be linked to any individual. All responses will be reported anonymously. The results of this research will be used solely for this study. Participation is completely voluntary, and if there are any questions you prefer not to answer, we can simply skip them during the interview.

Data security:

This study will be conducted in accordance with GDPR requirements and files will be stored accordingly. The university recommends a retention period of 5 years, after which the researcher will destroy the data.

Recording of the interview:

The interview will be recorded, but the material will only be used for this study.

Confirmation:

Are you comfortable with the confidentiality and security measures I've outlined, and do I have your permission to record our conversation?

Themes 1-3: Multisensory marketing, its components and different markets specialty (20 minutes):

Goal: Understand the use of multisensory marketing in companies, possible challenges but also advantages. In addition, understand how the luxury sector differs from other sectors.

Key components of multisensory marketing: Visual, auditory, olfactory, tactical and gustatory marketing

Questions:

- Please shortly introduce yourself: how many years of work experience in your field do you have, in which kind of company/industry do you work in and what does your work include? As part of the demographic data for my research, could you please share your age?
- To start off, in your day-to-day work, please tell me about the importance of multisensory marketing for your work? How do you use multisensory marketing? Can you give examples? Does that help to create a better experience for customers?
- When did you first notice the impact that sensory cues could have on customers? Was there a moment or campaign/ project where it really stood out?
- How do you think using multiple senses influences how customers interact with brands? What has worked well, and what challenges have you faced when trying to bring sensory elements into marketing?
- In your research, how do you determine which senses have the strongest impact on consumer perception and behavior? From your studies, how do different senses work together to create a cohesive and effective brand experience for consumers?
- How do you think the luxury market differs from other markets in regard to marketing?
- How do different markets differ in their approach to multisensory marketing, particularly in terms of crafting customer experiences?

- How do you find the right balance between keeping things refined and elevated while still creating memorable sensory experiences in your luxury marketing?
- How do marketers balance the need for brand consistency with the goal of creating memorable and engaging sensory experiences across different types of brands?

Theme 4-5: Multisensory marketing strategies and consumer perception and behavior (15 minutes):

Goal: Understand how the integration of multisensory marketing strategies beyond just visual and auditory elements impact on consumer perception and behavior

- How do senses beyond sight and sound, such as smell and touch, influence consumer emotions and purchase decisions across various markets?
- How important is it to keep the sensory experience the same /consistent across different touchpoints, so that the consumer remembers a brand and sticks to it?
- Based on your research, how does engaging multiple senses influence consumer feelings about a brand and their purchase decisions?

Theme 6: Customer experience management and means of measurement (15 minutes):

Goal: Learn how multisensory marketing can be used to stimulate a desired customer experience and how to measure this.

- What types of experiences have you observed in multisensory marketing in your research, and how are these experiences triggered?
- Based on your research, how does engaging multiple senses make the customer journey more personal and memorable?
- What methods do you use to measure the impact of multisensory marketing experiences on consumer perception and behavior?

- In your research, what tools or methods have you found most effective in assessing whether multisensory marketing improves the customer experience?
- How does your research suggest that brands can create consistent multisensory experiences across different settings, such as online, in-store, or at events?
- Based on your findings, how does multisensory marketing influence consumer behavior, such as encouraging higher spending or promoting positive word-of-mouth?

Summary (5 minutes):

Goal: Gather the interview findings

The aim of this research is to explore how (luxury) brands use multisensory marketing in customer experience management to shape and influence customer responses in a specific, desired way. Let's summarize the interview findings:

- Based on our conversation, can you share the three most important ways to meaningfully influence customer responses by multisensory marketing?
- Is there anything you'd like to add, or do you feel there's something we haven't covered enough in this interview?
- Could you advise me whom I could contact next in this matter? Who would be an expert in multisensory marketing in general or marketing expert particularly in the luxury sector?

Thank you for your time and your valuable contribution!

Appendix 3: Full operationalization table

Research questions	Key concepts	Interview questions
<p>What role does multisensory marketing have in customer experience?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multisensory marketing - Components of multisensory marketing: sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch - Difference of the luxury market compared to other markets as example 	<p>Theme 1: Multisensory marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To start off, in your day-to-day work, please tell me about the importance of multisensory marketing for your product/brand? How do you use multisensory marketing? Can you give examples? Does that help to create a better experience for your customers? • When did you first notice the impact that sensory details could have on your customers? Was there a moment or campaign where it really stood out? • How do you think using multiple senses influences how your customers interact with your brand? What has worked well for you, and what challenges have you faced when trying to bring sensory elements into your marketing? <p>Theme 2: Components of multisensory marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you decide which senses to focus on in your marketing campaigns? How do you bring them together to create a consistent brand experience?

		<p>Theme 3: Luxury sector specialties as example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think the luxury market differs from other markets in regard to marketing? • How do you find the right balance between keeping things refined and elevated while still creating memorable sensory experiences in your luxury marketing?
<p>How can multisensory marketing, beyond just visual and auditory elements, be used to stimulate a desired customer response?</p>	<p>-Multisensory marketing strategy -Influence on customer perception and behavior</p>	<p>Theme 4: Multisensory marketing strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think mixing different senses changes the way people feel about luxury and quality? • How do senses beyond sight and sound, like smell or touch, influence their emotions and what they decide to buy in the luxury market? • How important do you think it is to keep the sensory experience the same across different touchpoints with your brand, so they remember it and stick to it? <p>Theme 5: Influence on customer perception and behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think using different senses in your marketing affects how people feel about your brand and what they end up buying?

<p>How is multisensory marketing and its effect on customer responses measured?</p>	<p>- Customer experience management</p>	<p>Theme 6: Customer experience management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of experiences does your multisensory marketing aim to create and how? • How can brands use multisensory marketing to make the customer journey more personal and memorable? • How do you measure experiences? And how do you measure multisensory marketing experiences? • What kind of feedback or tools do you think work best to see if multisensory marketing is really improving the customer experience? • How can brands make sure the customer experience feels the same across different places—like online, in-store, or at events—when using multisensory marketing? • How can brands use multisensory marketing to gently encourage customers to do things like spend more or talk positively about the brand? • How do you measure the results?
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Appendix 4: Research data management plan

This document shows how I have managed my research data.

1. Research data

Research data type	Contains personal details/information*	I will gather/produce the data myself	Someone else has gathered/produced the data	Other notes
Data type 1: <i>Interview recording</i>		x		
Data type 2: <i>Quotations from the interview</i>		x		
Data type 3: <i>Researcher's notes</i>		x		
Data type 4: <i>Transcriptions</i>		x		
Data type 5: <i>Work file of thesis</i>		x		

* Personal details/information are all information based on which a person can be identified directly or indirectly, for example by connecting a specific piece of data to another, which makes identification possible. For more information about what data is considered personal go to the Office of the Finnish Data Protection Ombudsman's website

2. Processing personal data in research

I informed the research participants about the use of their data and storing before collecting the data

The controller** for the personal details is the student themselves the university

My data does not contain any personal data

3. Permissions and rights related to the use of data

3.1. Self-collected data

Necessary permissions and how they are acquired:

Data type 1-5: Permission by the participant before the interview on audio file.

- Permission to record the interview.

- Permission to use the information for this study.

3.2 Data collected by someone else

No data collected by someone else

4. Storing the data during the research process

Where will you store your data during the research process?

In the university's network drive

In the university-provided Seafile Cloud Service

Other location, please specify:

- my own computer hard-drive

5. Documenting the data and metadata

5.1 Data documentation

To document the data, I will use:

A field/research journal

A separate document where I will record the main points of the data, such as changes made, phases of analysis, and significance of variables

A readme file linked to the data that describes the main points of the data

Other, please specify:

5.2 Data arrangement and integrity

I will keep the original data files separate from the data I am using in the research process, so that I can always revert back to the original, if need be.

Version control: I will plan before starting the research how I will name the different data versions and I will adhere to the plan consistently.

I recognise the life span of the data from the beginning of the research and am already prepared for situations, where the data can alter unnoticed, for example while recording, transcribing, downloading, or in data conversions from one file format to another, etc.

5.3 Metadata

I will save my data into an archive or a repository that will take care of the metadata for me.

I will have to create the metadata myself, because the archive/repository where I am uploading the data requires it.

I will not store my data into a public archive/repository, and therefore I will not need to create any metadata.

6. Data after completing the research

What happens to your research data, when the research is completed?

I will store all data for 5 years.

If you will store the data, please identify where: Researcher's storage device