



# Examining the Impact of Sensory Marketing on Young Consumers: A McDonald's Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years research on sensory marketing has attracted the attention of marketing researchers and scholars alike. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of sensory stimuli that is used to create arousal, and to examine whether this arousal influences consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Previously documented literature was used as a foundation for this research while additional opportunities to expand this topic's literature was identified. While previous studies and results on sensory marketing exist, there is a lack of South African related literature on the concept. The quantitative research approach was used to measure the proposed conceptual model and hypotheses, and the convenience sampling method was chosen as the technique to acquire the required sample. To facilitate this study, a seven-point Likert scale was used with questions and statements adapted from previous literature. Of the 300 distributed surveys, 279 were returned, deemed viable, processed and interpreted. The findings of this study support all the proposed hypotheses. Furthermore, this study's findings and conclusions contribute towards comprehension of sensory marketing from a young consumer's perspective.

**Keywords:** Sight, Attitude, Purchase Intention, Sensory Marketing

**JEL Classifications:** M3, M37

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sensory marketing is a notion that has been mentioned within the marketing world for years, with little sense having been made of it and minimal utilisation of the practice Millennials in particular are being actively pursued as far as sensory marketing is concerned because they are viewed as the technology generation that will change the world (Singh et al., 2023). Consumers are bombarded with marketing stimuli that primarily engages their hearing as well as their sight, and consequently they have become immune to these marketing triggers due to the high volumes they are exposed to and the lack of uniqueness from one piece to another (Sendra and Carbonell-Barrachina, 2017). According to Krishna (2012), sensory marketing implies an understanding of sensation and perception as they apply to consumer behaviour. This definition is based on the notion that sensory marketing engages the consumers' senses and affects their behaviours. Hulten (2017) highlights

that a multi-sensory experience is a powerful brand-enhancer where a strong and lasting connection can be established with the consumer. A multi-sensory experience that is offered by a brand brings with it an emotional connection that potentially facilitates the creation of an individual and personalised experience. A firm develops sensorial strategies to distinguish their brand from competition, especially when functional or rational attributes such as price or quality are largely similar. Hence, sensorial strategies are based more on emotional and psychological elements than on functional attributes when clarifying a brand's identity and values. The main purpose of sensorial strategies is to facilitate the multi-sensory brand-experience that is expressed through means such as sensors, sensations, and sensory expressions in relation to the five human senses (Hulten, 2011).

By engaging a consumer's senses, sub-conscious triggers are created, and messages are cognitively planted. Sayadi et al.

(2015) explain that these triggers bring about a feeling within the consumer that impacts various parameters such as the time they spend in a store; the level of satisfaction it brings them to engage with the product or brand; the level of decision-making undertaken during the purchase, and the level of interest when doing so. Sensory marketing provides extra motivations to consumers and it can stimulate sensory stimuli thereby resulting in the formation of a relationship between the brand and the consumer (Sendra and Carbonell-Barrachina, 2017). Farhadi et al. (2017) acknowledge that the sensory stimuli that is associated with a product or a brand can translate differently from consumer to consumer, thereby emphasising that it is the aim of all the brands to solicit positive reactions from their consumers during all the 'moments of truths' that are experienced with a brand to invoke a positive perception.

According to Hussain (2014), several brands have trouble retaining consumers in highly competitive environments and through the strategic application of sensory marketing, a competitive advantage is plausible. The purpose of this study is to investigate and to assess the impact of sensory characteristics on the attraction and arousal to a product and whether this influences the consumers' purchase intention, with specific reference to McDonalds. In addition, this study aims to assess each sensory factor's level of influence. The study also intends to highlight which sense is foremost in establishing a positive predisposition or arousal, which in turn influences the consumers' attitude and purchase intention. The present study will contribute to existing literature by examining three theories which are, the Sensory Marketing Theory, the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Theory of Reasoned Action. The theories are discussed first and, thereafter the conceptual model and the hypothesis statements are developed.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The objective of the study is to determine the impact of the five senses; sight, taste, touch, smell and sound on product arousal, and the impact that product arousal has on consumer attitude and by extension on purchase intention. Based on the objective of the study, it was considered appropriate for the study to be grounded by the following theories: The Sensory Marketing Theory, The Theory of Planned Behaviour and The Theory of Reasoned Action. At the foundation of the Sensory Marketing Theory is the insight that much of the current literature on sensory marketing examines sensory techniques individually. It further reiterates that rarely do humans process marketing information this way. When a shoe marketer, for example, appeals to consumers, the colour and the texture of the shoe are ways that the multisensory cues are used to appeal to the market. The lemon or lavender smell of cleaning products and the use of packaging with bright colours such as white, pink and yellow is another way to dynamically engage consumers, thereby communicating the intended message.

The crisp sound emphasised in the marketing for potato crisps is used to signal the freshness of the product and the lack of this sound would be interpreted otherwise (Elder et al., 2010). As explored

by Dissabandara and Dissanayake (2019), the impact of sensory marketing affects the consumers' discernments and decisions, as well as their eventual behaviour. Literature further indicates that consumers can be influenced by visual, atmospheric, auditory, tactile and gustative elements. The Sensory Marketing Theory as a science, has been a topic of interest for academic practitioners due to its ineffectual methods of marketing (Hulten, 2017). The key objective of sensory marketing is to send communication to the brain so that it can; create curiosity, influence purchase decisions and create a lasting connection and impression (Dissabandara and Dissanayake, 2019). From a research standpoint, the Sensory Marketing Theory implies that an understanding of sensation and perception is linked to consumer behaviour (Farhadi et al., 2017). This study uses this theory or paradigm to measure whether the consumers are impacted by sensory marketing stimuli and if they affect their eventual purchase intention.

The Theory of Reasoned Action (ToRA or TRA) aims to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviours within human action. It is used mainly to predict how individuals will behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioural intentions. The TRA was built on the theoretical underpinnings of Fishbein's (1967) theory of attitude and previous research in social psychology, persuasion models, and in attitude theories. The primary purpose of the TRA is to understand an individual's voluntary behaviour by examining the underlying basic motivation to perform an action. The TRA, which is depicted graphically in figure 1 below, states that a person's intention to perform a behaviour is the main predictor of whether they perform that behaviour (Ajzen et al., 2007).

Developed from the Theory of Reasoned Action, was a theory that saw the addition of perceived behavioural control as a factor in determining behavioural intention. This theory is known as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Madden et al., 1992). The Theory of Planned Behaviour differs from the Theory of Reasoned Action as it acknowledges that perceived behavioural control has a direct effect on behaviour and an indirect effect on behaviour through intentions (Madden et al., 1992). Intentions determine the level of efforts an individual is willing to invest to perform a behaviour, and according to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, an individual will be more willing and will have a stronger intention to perform a behaviour if they hold a positive attitude towards it. The intention and capability to perform the behaviour therefore determines the likelihood of the behavioural action (McDermott et al., 2015).

### 2.1. Sight

To date, visual marketing remains the most used tactic to communicate to consumers, which is understandable given that it is the most seductive of the senses. It is reported that it takes 45 ms for the human eye to detect a visual object and it is also highlighted that 80% of all the information that is consumed is through the eyes (Liegeois and Rivera, 2011). Visuals facilitate information processing within the consumers' cognitive awareness and even in cases such as radio and written communication where visuals are not present, the communicator will often use descriptive language that allows the receiver to build a mental picture. The

underexplored elements of vision include colour, shape and size. Marketers explore these elements when deciding with what to associate their brand with because research has shown scientific evidence that these elements have a more subconscious effect than previously understood (Elder et al., 2010). Liegeois and Rivera (2011) argue that although visual cues are the primary tactic in marketing, they are also the hardest to change if the need arises. According to Zhou and Aitamer (2011), the interpretation of visual stimuli differs from culture to culture. Asian cultures for example tend to focus more on focal points, whereas Western cultures look at the whole object. Where colour is concerned, research has shown a general preference for the colour blue across all cultures while other colour interpretations will differ from culture to culture. McDonalds makes use of bright colours, patterns and shapes in its restaurant to emphasise the high energy environment. The play area is often painted in numerous colours to attract children and by effect, their parents (Lorre, 2017).

## 2.2. Smell

Liegeois and Riviera (2011) explain that 75% of the human emotions are generated from and by the smell sense. A signature scent and ambient can often be remembered and it can create an environment that consumers want to be in because of how it makes them feel. According to Liegeois and Riviera (2011), the sense of smell takes up to ten times longer to register in the brain. When the memory of a smell registers, it is more likely to remain at the top of the mind in comparison to visuals, due to the efforts involved in registering a smell. Grzybowska-Brzezinska et al. (2013) argue that the generic smells that are linked to certain ambiances reach the brain a lot faster and are more direct than other senses. They do so unconsciously, thereby evoking powerful memories and sometimes changing human emotions. The use of fragrance in stores has been seen to positively impact the consumers' response. The consumers can either elect to stay longer in a store, thereby allowing for more time for the marketer to engage with them, or they can return to a store more often due to the positive experience and the feeling that is created by the scent.

## 2.3. Touch

The skin is the largest organ of the body. Research involving the haptic stimulus is still in its infancy. What has become apparent in consumer behaviour is that consumers need motivation to touch and the three key aspects that are important when making use of touch in marketing are: the consumer, the environment and the product. How individuals engage a product through touch and the perception that follows has been reported to be formed by individual and referent principles. For some, the interaction with the product through touch is a way of validating the quality of the product while others may be conscious of many other people who may have touched the same surface or product and would refrain from doing so for hygiene purposes (Elder et al., 2010). Touch is a way of evaluating a product for many consumers and prohibiting them from doing so could lead to frustration. To involve consumers in the purchase journey, McDonalds has introduced touch screens within selected restaurants, allowing those who choose to place and select their own orders to do so. This is a tactile marketing strategy and through touch, consumers can design their own meal experience by navigating through the numerous options that are

available (Suhonen and Tengvall, 2009).

## 2.4. Taste

Traditionally, taste as a marketing stimulus has seen limited exposure, as it is often reduced to taste demonstrations that are set up in some stores. What accompanies the display is an individual who will try to engage a prospect customer to purchase the product. This is not always a practice that is supported by shoppers due to the frequent forcefulness of the promoter (Hulten et al., 2009). Due to the challenge of first having to attract a consumer to taste a product, retail marketers are making visual advertisements and communication much more about taste. The technique relies on photographing food in the most appetising and appealing way, to simulate the act of tasting. In addition, fast food restaurants such as McDonalds, KFC and Burger King will often pilot a product in one or two stores to gauge the reaction of consumers before releasing it to the broader audience. The objective is to understand how audiences respond to the taste of the product, before deciding to make it available elsewhere (Machala, 2014). Taste can elicit very strong and often unchangeable attitudes towards a product.

## 2.5. Hearing

Sound in marketing is frequently used to enhance and dramatise an idea or communication and although some jingles and sounds that are associated with some brands may be short and simple, the development of a unique sound that accompanies a brand takes extensive detail to develop (Hulten et al., 2009). For many individuals, music and sound is a way of expression. Brands look to communicate to consumers through sound and the brave will often aim to do so using a jingle (Machala, 2014). For a brand such as McDonalds, the intended behaviour and mood its sound cues hope to evoke, is happiness. In 2003, Justin Timberlake was commissioned by McDonalds to record the 'I'm lovin' it' jingle for which he received a sum of \$6 million (Blistein, 2016).

## 2.6. Arousal

Arousal can be defined as the awakening or energising of the organism which results in a state of alertness (Belanche et al., 2014). According to Menon and Kahn (2002), psychology researchers have studied the effects of arousal under varying circumstances. Many have found that high levels of arousal can lead to a low level of decision making when favourable, and a high level of avoidance behaviour when less favourable. This means that if a high level of arousal is achieved by stimuli, an individual spends less time deciding on whether to act on a behaviour and will often do so impulsively. In the retail environment, a store environment with strobe lights and loud music can contribute towards the arousal of customers. The layout of a store and the atmosphere that is created through various stimuli is an important factor to arousal as it is a determinant to the time spent in store by the prospective customers.

## 2.7. Attitude

Attitude can be defined as a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2014). Attitudes are learned and developed as a result of a direct experience with the product, word of mouth or exposure to mass media advertising or social

media marketing (Sheiffman and Kanuk, 2014). Ikechukwu et al. (2012) add that attitudes are not always observable but are evident in what people do or say. Ikechukwu et al. (2012) further state that to understand the attitudes of consumers, one must either observe or ask questions relating to their behaviour. The challenge and opportunity for marketers is that the attitudes are often consistent and are long term. They can change if a new stimulus presents itself strongly enough to challenge the existing attitude but, in most cases, a formed attitude dictates subsequent behaviour.

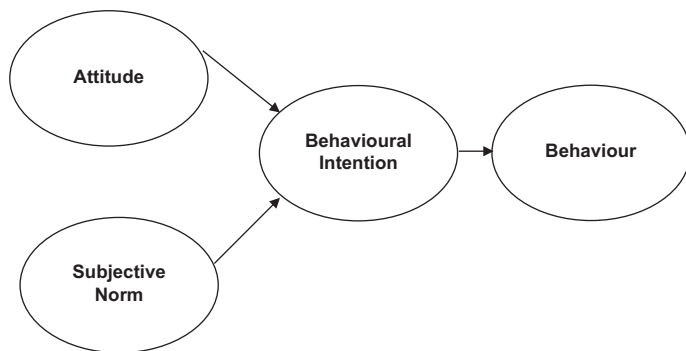
**2.8. Purchase Intention**

Anggie and Haryanto (2011) report that purchase intention can also exist because a certain level of satisfaction was acquired before. Ferrand et al. (2010) as cited by Dalle Ave et al. (2015) further mention that the consideration for repurchasing a specific product or service is also determined by the service attributes, price and previous purchase behaviour. The study's conceptual model and hypotheses development is presented in the following section.

**3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

Figure 2 represents the proposed conceptual model for the study.

**Figure 1:** Theory of reasoned action



Source: Madden et al. (1992)

The conceptual model also forms the basis from which the hypotheses statements are developed.

**3.1. Hypotheses Development**

**3.1.1. Sight and arousal**

Photoreception, brand identification and the arousal thereof primarily happen through the eye. Sight is the primary sense that is relied upon when driving initial impressions and arousals (Rupini and Nandagopal, 2015). Brengman (2002) as cited by Jang and Lee (2019) investigated the sense of sight and in particular store colours and their effect on desire and arousal in customers. The study acknowledged and provided evidence that such a relationship does exist. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between sight and arousal.

**3.1.2. Hearing and arousal**

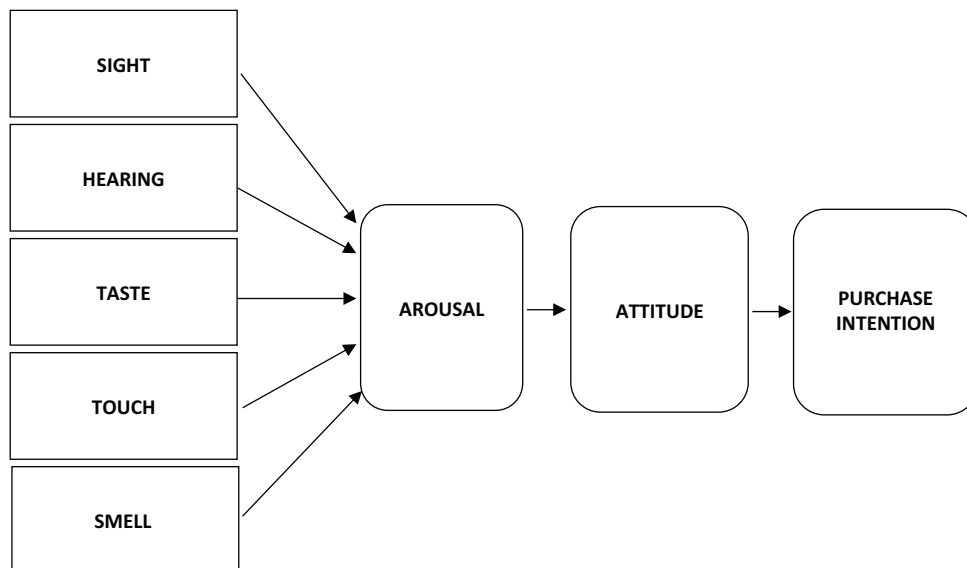
Numerous studies that reviewed the ability of music to induce a behaviour and thus arouse consumers to behave in a specific manner have been conducted. The two aspects that have been discovered by research where sound is concerned are music and time duration, as well as music and customer attention. Music if used correctly can act as a differentiating factor for a brand (Dalle Ave et al., 2015). Dalle Ave et al. (2015) further conclude that music can enhance the customer's experience in store. As such, the hypothesis is that:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between hearing and arousal.

**3.1.3. Smell and arousal**

The studies in consumer behaviour that have sought to analyse the effect of odours in retail environments indicate that scents have a positive effect and could potentially result in a positive product or environment arousal. The review of products, the image perception of a store, whether a customer will return to it or not and how likely they are to purchase could be influenced by a positive scent. Although scent is a lot more difficult to

**Figure 2:** Research conceptual model



Source: Authors' own work (2023)

identify than other stimuli, it is said that its arousal after-effects are more long-lasting (Goldkuhl and Styven, 2007). As a result, the hypothesis is that:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between smell and arousal.

#### 3.1.4. Touch and arousal

The need for touch and its link to interest for purchase is derived from the consumers' preference to use touch to obtain more information and security on the product, motivate for its acquisition, understand its shape and size and as a determinant of its quality (Manzano et al., 2016). Research supports retailers who encourage consumers to touch the product as this strategy allows more favourable responses (Sendra and Carbonell-Barrachina, 2017). Therefore, the hypothesis is that:

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between touch and arousal.

#### 3.1.5. Taste and arousal

Sayadi et al. (2015) documented taste as an important factor where competition in the marketplace is fierce and marketers are looking for ways to arouse consumers in order to have them behave in a certain manner. Restaurant owners use descriptive wording when detailing the characteristics of a meal as a way to appeal to consumers, thereby arousing them to select the said meal. Therefore, the hypothesis is that:

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between taste and arousal.

#### 3.1.6. Arousal and attitude

When consumer arousal is achieved by a brand, a feeling of understanding and joy is said to be evoked. When this occurs, a favourable attitude is formed and a positive cognitive state is established (Hameed et al., 2019). Belanche et al. (2014) advise that arousal is challenging to analyse, with some authors, indicating that the use of neuroscience may be the best way to identify the existence of arousal in consumers. As such, the hypothesis is:

H<sub>6</sub>: There is a positive relationship between arousal and attitude.

#### 3.1.7. Attitude and purchase intention

The relationship between attitude and purchase intention is one that has been extensively studied and documented by researchers with the Theory of Planned Behaviour which is primarily referenced as the grounding theory for this relationship. Attitude directly and positively impacts intention (Koenaitte et al., 2019). Furthermore, Yang et al. (2014) note that behavioural intention is one's likelihood to perform an action and this is likely to be affected to some degree by their attitude. The authors further document that attitude has been discovered to be an important predictor of how consumers not only perceive and understand certain behaviours but also how they decide to act in moments when deliberating whether to purchase or not. There is thus a strong indication that a relationship is prevalent between these two variables. The hypothesis is that:

H<sub>7</sub>: There is a positive relationship between attitude and purchase intention.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research study was quantitative and deductive in nature, and a positivist approach was employed to examine the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The measurement item was compiled by adapting the existing scales from prior literature. Data was collected from 279 young consumers who purchased fast food from McDonald restaurants located in Johannesburg, South Africa. Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires consisting of close-ended questions. The questionnaire made use of a seven-point Likert scale with consumer responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The variables that were used were measured by adapting existing scales: sight (Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibanez, 2012), hearing (Jain and Jain, 2016), taste (Jang and Lee, 2019), touch (Grohmann et al., 2007; Randhir et al., 2016), smell (Gvili et al., 2017; Sliburyte and Vaitieke, 2019), arousal (Jang and Lee, 2019), attitude (Roudposhti et al., 2018; Ližbetinová, and Weberova, 2016) and purchase intention (Roudposhti et al., 2018; Ližbetinová and, Weberova 2016). The following section presents the data analysis and interpretation of results.

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 5.1. Descriptive Statistics

This study recorded a stronger response rate from females as they accounted for 64.9% of the total sample. Males represented the remaining 35.1%. With respect to age, most individuals belonged to the 26-35-year-old category (36.6%) or the 36-45 years old category (29.7%). The remaining respondents fell within the other classifications. From an ethnic perspective, the majority of individuals indicated that they are either Caucasian (50.5%) or black African (40.5%). The remaining respondents indicated that they are either coloured (4.7%), Indian (3.9%) or other (0.4%). The sample profile is illustrated in Table 1 below.

### 5.2. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

For further scrutiny of the study's data, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used. SEM is best used for hypothetical

**Table 1: Sample profile**

Descriptive	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	181	64.9
Male	98	35.1
Total	279	100.0
Age		
18-25	46	16.5
26-35	102	36.6
36-45	83	29.7
46-55	27	9.7
56 and older	21	7.5
Total	279	100.0
Ethnicity/Race		
Caucasian	141	50.5
African	113	40.5
Coloured	13	4.7
Indian	11	3.9
Other	1	0.4
Total	279	100.0

constructs that are represented by latent variables (Hox & Bechger, 1998). The study's R squared, and Q squared values are discussed below. Regression analysis is a goodness-of-fit measurement, measuring the strength of the relationship between the model and the dependent variables under the assumption that all the other factors remain static (Hamilton et al., 2015). According to Frost (2019), studies such as this one where human behaviour is being explained or examined, the R squared values of less than 0.5 are common. Although a figure closer to 1, is more favourable. Q squared values are attainable through two methods: Cross

validated communality and cross validated redundancy. For this study, the latter was used and attained by forecasting the uncertain blocks using the latent factors. Researchers have indicated an acceptance level of 0.5 for Q squared levels with some acceptance of values between 0.4 and 0.5 at times. The figures in the below table were deemed acceptable (Table 2).

**Table 2: R and Q squared values**

Variable	R squared values	Q squared values
Arousal	0.623	0.442
Attitude	0.651	0.425
Purchase intention	0.661	0.454

**5.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Through SEM, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed. CFA was used to measure the relationships between the indicators and the factors. The scale accuracy analysis is detailed in the table below. This is followed by a discussion of the measurement scale's reliability and validity.

Table 3 above illustrates accuracy scale statistics. All necessary thresholds were met. The mean and standard deviation values

**Table 3: Accuracy scale statistics**

Research construct	Descriptive statistics				A Value	CR Value	Ave Value	factor Loadings
	Mean value	Standard deviation						
Sight								
S1	4.650	3.960	0.992	1.785	0.760	0.764	0.522	0.593
S2	4.650		1.811					0.819
S3	4.140		1.669					0.656
S4	4.100		1.874					0.676
Hearing								
H1	5.510	5.360	1.566	1.504	0.857	0.894	0.678	0.808
H2	4.960		1.379					0.870
H3	5.610		1.366					0.839
H4	5.370		1.704					0.773
Smell								
SM1	4.510	4.030	1.941	1.365	0.728	0.842	0.644	0.650
SM2	4.340		1.757					0.877
SM3	5.190		1.646					0.504
SM4	3.230		1.760					0.847
Touch								
T1	4.270	4.760	1.497	1.466	0.802	0.872	0.630	0.824
T2	4.320		1.596					0.842
T3	5.370		1.189					0.752
T4	5.090		1.582					0.752
Taste								
TA1	4.730	4.360	1.624	1.732	0.796	0.868	0.625	0.869
TA2	4.110		1.750					0.810
TA3	4.600		1.859					0.830
TA4	4.990		1.696					0.634
Arousal								
AR1	3.940	3.720	1.685	1.666	0.899	0.928	0.723	0.886
AR2	3.690		1.602					0.907
AR3	3.480		1.625					0.921
AR4	3.110		1.726					0.852
AR5	4.340		1.692					0.657
Attitude								
ATT1	4.060		1.639					0.773
ATT2	4.580	4.020	1.767	1.732	0.871	0.907	0.663	0.879
ATT3	4.370		1.735					0.879
ATT4	5.270		1.840					0.835
ATT5	4.790		1.679					0.689
Purchase intention								
PI1	4.720	3.560	1.831	1.928	0.893	0.922	0.702	0.827
PI2	4.170		1.788					0.857
PI3	4.480		1.936					0.878
PI4	4.780		1.901					0.774
PI5	5.650		2.183					0.850

α Value: Cronbach's alpha, CR: Composite reliability, AVE: Average variance extracted

**Table 4: Hypotheses testing results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient	T value	P-value	Result
H1	Sight and Arousal	0.146	2.436	0.015	Supported and significant
H2	Hearing and Arousal	0.014	0.398	0.691	Supported and insignificant
H3	Smell and Arousal	0.174	2.440	0.015	Supported and significant
H4	Touch and Arousal	0.078	1.574	0.116	Supported and insignificant
H5	Taste and Arousal	0.504	6.916	0.000	Supported and significant
H6	Arousal and Attitude	0.807	36.12	0.000	Supported and significant
H7	Attitude and P.Intent	0.813	40.37	0.000	Supported and significant

showed normal distribution with the mean values all being close to each other and the standard deviation values ranging from -2 to +2. Cronbach's alpha values all exceed 0.7 which is required for reliability and the composite reliability values all surpass the recommended value of 0.6. The average variance values all exceed 0.5 necessary to confirm validity and the factors loadings also surpass the recommended value of 0.5 for validity. Table 4 below presents the results of the hypotheses and path coefficients, and it is followed by a brief discussion.

As indicated in the above table, all hypotheses are supported, however, two do not meet the required threshold for T and P values (less than 1.96 and 0.02 respectively) and are therefore deemed insignificant. It can therefore be concluded that the relationships measured by hypotheses H2 and H4 are supported, however, they have no significance due to the fact that the required confidence interval was not attained (5%). Upon further analysis, the relationships between arousal and attitude as well as attitude and purchase intention are the strongest of all hypotheses that were developed with a path coefficient of 0.807 and 0.813 respectively, and a T value of 36.12 and 40.37 respectively. The remaining hypotheses (H1, H3, H5) show a moderately significant relationship between the said variables thereby indicating that there is a positive relationship between these variables.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The study intended to investigate the impact of the various senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch) on arousal and attitude and by extension on purchase intention. A quantitative study was adopted in which 279 questionnaires were completed. The developed conceptual model proposed that sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell influence arousal, and by extension attitude and purchase intention. The study was successful in that all the hypotheses were supported, however, the relationship between hearing and arousal (H2) and touch and arousal (H4) was deemed insignificant. In addition, the study provided insight into how marketers can make use of stimuli to best appeal to consumer senses and increase purchase intention, thereby highlighting the most important senses to engage.

### 6.1. Implications of the Study

By measuring the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables as outlined by this study's hypotheses and conceptual model, this study has empirically demonstrated that sensory marketing has an impact on product arousal, consumer attitude and purchase intention. While some relationships were shown to be weak between variables, all of them were supported.

The study contributes to the existing theory and knowledge by re-iterating the importance for marketers to engage consumer senses with their various stimuli. The study was successful in demonstrating that sight, smell and taste have a strong impact on product arousal, while hearing and touch have a lesser impact on product arousal. The study also shows the importance of techniques such as store merchandising, colour palette selection, demonstrative photography and motionless storytelling when wanting to create product arousal and appeal. In an environment where practitioners are not only competing with other competitors, both in and out of categories but also small screen visual advertising, the use of multisensory marketing is a strategy that needs to be explored for sustainable competitive growth.

### 6.2. Limitations of the study and future research

In terms of further research from a conceptual perspective, potential hypotheses not tested in the present study could be examined. For instance, direct relationships between all five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell) and attitude as well as direct relationships between these five senses and purchase intention. Testing these potential hypotheses could help explain young consumers attitude towards purchase intention of fast food. Stemming from a practical perspective for limitations were observed. The first recognised limitation and future research opportunity is geographically related, where the study's sample was made up of South African based individuals only. While the insights and recommendations will contribute to future literature, a comparative study done in other countries could give further insight, specifically in countries where McDonald's has a bigger footprint. The second limitation and future research opportunity relates to the used method of research.

While there is merit to the used quantitative research technique, it does not allow for further exploration where there may be a requisite. A future study to carry forward the insights from a quantitative research, into one that is exploratory in nature would provide further and potentially more accurate conclusions. The third limitation and future research opportunity concerns the lack of health benefits of McDonalds that may have influenced how respondents answered the survey. The fourth limitation and future research opportunity is in relation with South Africa's economic state, the number of individuals who can afford McDonalds, and how accessible and available McDonalds is to the population of South Africa. According to Stats (2020), 23.3% of South Africa is unemployed and the standard of living within the majority of the country remains below an acceptable standard. In addition to all of the above, McDonald's restaurants are predominantly positioned in more urban areas in South Africa. The study was centred on a single restaurant using a sample of respondents of similar age

groups all from a single region. This could have created respondent bias as all the participants were exposed to the same environment. Further research could consider a more diverse sample, more geographical regions and more than just one restaurant brand or franchise so that a more diverse pool of insights can be obtained.

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