

## USAGE OF SENSES IN MARKETING AND CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF FAST FOOD FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT

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### Abstract

*This study examines the relationship between Sensory marketing such as appeals to Sight, scent and sound, on customer patronage metrics such as repeat purchase, customer referrals and customer retention. Survey research design was adopted in this study. A Convenience sample of 357 was adopted; however three hundred copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and usable. Analysis of the data was made through spearman rank correlation coefficient of the SPSS version 21 package. The study concludes that sensory marketing strategies significantly influence customer patronage in varying degrees. It was therefore recommended that fast food firms should research into the sensorial needs of their target customers, in order to apply an integrated sensory strategy, which would help boost customer patronage.*

*Keywords: Sensory Marketing, Customer Patronage, Sight, Scent, Sound.*

### Introduction

In the dynamic business environment, organizations aggressively look for superior customer value. This is typical of the Fast food industry, where players seek service attributes that differentiate their offerings from those of their rivals. Scholars (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1984; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003) opine that the drive for differentiation is more intense in services given their heterogeneity, inseparability, simultaneity and intangibility. Further, because services bring greater concern to management, organizations strategically craft better breakthrough into its ingrained limitations in order to remain competitive. One of such breakthrough is the increased attention on sensory cues and sensory marketing, which of course recognize man's irrationality. Narat and Thandone (2011) are of the view that customers increasingly move from rational to emotional with sub-conscious mind predominantly dictating what, when, where and what quantity they buy. Being attracted by the delicious scent of a bakery or the kind of music in a restaurant can be a part of the comprehensive marketing plan of a firm.

The concept of sensory marketing have been studied by various researchers, Krishna (2011) looked at how to engage the senses to attract, perception, judgment and behaviour. Clarinda, Bertil, and Carlos (2011), saw sensory marketing as part of the branding strategy of an organization. Xue (2009) carried out a sensory study in restaurant interior design. Narat and Thandone (2011) in Thailand carried out a research on how sensory marketing can be used in hotel and restaurant in order to influence customer behaviour. In all these studies, none of the researchers established a clear link between sensory marketing and customer patronage of fast food firms in Port Harcourt and it is not clear if findings made from these studies can be applicable to fast food firms in Port Harcourt. It is against this backdrop that the current researcher is inquisitive to see how sensory marketing can act as a veritable tool to influence customer patronage of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

Fast food firms are expected to be making great sales, more especially in a densely populated place like Port Harcourt. The stiff competition amongst fast food firms has led to low sales, and hence, the folding up of some fast food firms. Perhaps this was as a result of not paying much attention to sensory marketing or lack of differentiation in the sensory appeals used by fast food firms. Thus the current study investigates the extent to which sensory marketing strategy relates to customer patronage. The major research question states: To what extent does sensory marketing relate to customer patronage of fast food firms in Port Harcourt?

#### Theoretical Foundation

**Information Processing Model:** This can be said to be an integrative framework used in conceptualizing the human memory, judgment, and decision making (Lachman, & Butterfield, 1979; Wyer, 1974, Krishna, 2014). This approach assumes that information is inputted in individuals through their senses (sight, scent, sound, touch, taste) and this information is converted into a common code that is different from the modality in which the information was acquired initially (Krishna, 2014). Solomon (2011) opines that individuals undergo Information processing just like computers in which information (stimuli) is received, processed and stored. Unlike computers, we do not passively process whatever information that happens to be present (Solomon 2011, Lachman, & Butterfield, 1979; Wyer, 1974), only few stimuli in our environment are noticed (selective exposure), out of the few stimuli, we notice and attend to a smaller number (selective attention), the stimuli that do enter consciousness might not be processed objectively (Solomon, 2011, Lachman, & Butterfield, 1979; Wyer, 1974). Each individual aligns the meaning given to each stimuli, to be consistent with their unique biases, needs, and experiences (selective distortion). Only those stimuli that are consistent with a person's unique bias, needs, and experiences are retained or stored (selective retention)' (Solomon, 2011).

#### Sensory Marketing

Marketing activities that engage the senses of consumers and influence their actions and behaviors, is called sensory marketing (Krishna, 2010). Marketing activities that put the consumers' senses to work and influence their perception, judgment and behaviour (Krishna, 2010). From a managerial perspective, the use of sensory marketing enables subconscious triggers that defines the consumers' perception of abstract notions of the Product (e.g., its sophistication, quality, elegance, Innovativeness, Modernity, interactivity)—the brand's

personality' (Krishna, 2010). The perceived value of abstract attributes like its taste, color and smell, or shape, can be enhanced through sensory marketing (Krishna, 2010). The current researcher defines sensory marketing, as the marketing activity that researches into the sensory and emotional needs of customers, in order to appeal to them, create customer satisfaction and a profitable relationship.

Multi-sensory experience can be said to be when the customer is appealed to by two or more senses (Kreshna, 2010). Rieunier (2002) opined that sensory marketing approach covers the deficiencies of "traditional marketing" which is too rational. Consumers act in accordance to his impulses and emotions, more than his reason (Narat and Thandone, 2011). Krishna (2015) argued that in the past, that organizational communication with consumers were one sided, that is, companies just talked to consumers, without listening to them, later they evolved into a two sided communication, with customers providing feedback. Today conversations are multi-dimensional, with products promoting themselves (package design, scents, colour, etc) and consumers responding subconsciously to them (Kreshna, 2010).

#### Customer Patronage

Kotsiopullo (2003), argues that customer patronage can be defined as store choice behaviour that represents an individual's preference for a particular store for purchasing a product. According to Cambridge Advanced learners dictionary (2017), 'Patronage has to do with the business given to a shop or restaurant, etc. by its customers'. This research sees customer patronage, as made up of two parts - customer and patronage. As explained earlier, a customer is someone who buys from a particular firm or store; patronage goes further to tell you the level at which the customer buys, the frequency, the amount, etc.

#### Sensory Marketing and Customer Patronage

Based on the review of related literature, scholars have established relationships between the dimensions of sensory marketing and customer patronage. In this study the following relationships were established: sight and customer patronage, scent and customer patronage, and sound and customer patronage.

#### Sight and Customer Patronage

Wordweb dictionary (2015), argues that sight is an instance of visual perception. It stated further that sight is anything that is seen. Humans rely greatly on sight as the most dominant sensory system, it generates tangible and visible cues that creates attention for specific products and objects in the environment (Schiffman, 2001). Studies have shown that the sense of sight impacts more on the behaviour of consumers when it comes to decisions related to choice of a product, the quantity or consumption (Krishna, 2008). Cyril & Joseph (2008) argued that sight is the most stimulated sense in marketing; it is regularly stimulated by the cues from the environment. The design of a point of sale, its layout, the colour chosen and the form of a product, are key success factors that should be understood by marketers (Cyril & Joseph, 2008). Colours and shapes act as the primary means of identification and differentiation (Kotler and Keller, 2010). A brand can be identified with a specific color, e.g Coca Cola is identified with red. Memory retention studies show that, consumers are 78% more likely to remember a message printed in color than in black and white (Cyril & Joseph, 2008).

It has been suggested that an unattractive design on a product might result in people looking for, expecting and detecting problems, as well as observing details instead of ignoring

small problems (Norman, 2004). A visually attractive product design is likely to enhance creativity in solving problems, as well as impacting on the mood of the customer (Norman, 2004). He stated that, visual design as a stimulus, is likely to influence the approach of shoppers and their touch behaviour at the point-of-purchase. In addition, studies have confirmed the significant effects of color on individual affective and cognitive evaluations of products and store environments. Color has been emphasized as an important visual stimulus and it is through color that the sense of sight allows us to detect a store environment (Norman, 2004, Gor et al., 1997).

The emotions and feelings of people are significantly determined by color, which in turn affects how active consumers will be and how the products would be evaluated (Babin et al., 2003). The choice of color is very essential in a store environment or for the display of a product in creating attention, but especially with regard to what feelings could be evoked towards a brand (Gorn et al., 1997). We can appreciate logos, corporate colors, characters and other graphical tools with which one can identify a specific product (Babin et al., 2003).

Based on the above review of literature, the following hypotheses conceptualized:

Ho<sub>1</sub> : There is no significant relationship between sight and repeat purchase of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>2</sub> : There is no significant relationship between sight and customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>3</sub> : There is no significant relationship between sight and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt

#### Scents and Customer Patronage

Scent has a direct connection to a customer's memory and has the highest stimuli, this means scent has the capacity to influence customer patronage as well as repeat purchase (Bone & Ellen, 1999). Store atmospherics do not produce only positive outcomes among customers, but it produces positive impacts to its employees as well (Skandrani et al., 2011, Narat & Thanadon, 2011). Xue (2009) argued that smell affects areas of the brain that deal with emotions, feelings, and motivation, which can lead to a specific behavioral response. He further stated; in terms of restaurant design, smell plays a significant role. Smell enhances taste perception, taste and smell are complimentary and can also be regarded as alternative ways to experience similar phenomenon (Malnar & Vodvarka, 2004; Xue, 2009). Therefore, smell sensory design is especially important to restaurant and fast-food interior design. Krishna (2012) argued that within the domain of smell, consumer behaviour researchers have also looked at how it impacts product/store evaluation and time spent in a store. Researchers have found that pleasant scents can enhance evaluations of products and stores (Bosmans, 2006; Laird, 1932; Spangenberg, Crowley, & Henderson, 1996 ; Krishna, 2012) and increase variety-seeking behavior (Mitchell et al., 1995). Ambient scent instigates emotion-based semantic connections with memories (e.g., roses and babies) and improves product evaluation (Bosmans, 2006). The way customers evaluate products increases with ambient scent, even if they were low before (Spangenberg et al., 1996).

Cues from scents and other sensory modalities, have the capacity to evoke autobiographic memories, or memories of events that have taken place long ago (Mitchell et al., 1995). Fast food firms can manipulate the scents of meals, most especially traditional meals to

call up these memories, and hence influence the purchase behaviour of customers. Memories generated by scent retrieval cues had a higher emotional influence on customers than those evoked by the other cues (Herz, 2004). Scent cues compared to visual or verbal cues yielded more detailed autobiographical memories, and these memories play a significant role in the purchase decisions consumers make (Chu and Downes, 2002). Smell is the sense most linked to our emotional recollection, it can create instant connections between a brand and other memories i.e childhood memories, honeymoon memories, etc. (Willander and Larsson, 2006).

Based on the above review of literature, the following hypotheses were made:

Ho<sub>4</sub> : There is no significant relationship between scent and repeat purchase of Fast-Food firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>5</sub> : There is no significant relationship between scent and customer referrals of Fast-food firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>6</sub> : There is no significant relationship between scent and customer retention of Fast-food firms in Port Harcourt.

#### Sound and Customer Patronage

Sound can be defined as the particular auditory effect produced by a given cause (wordweb dictionary, 2017). Sound has a significant positive effect on consumer mood, preferences and behavior (Alpert et al., 2005).

Background music: Any music whose main function is to create an atmosphere rather than to have the audience's focus (wordweb dictionary, 2015). In a study carried out by Mowen & Monor, (2000), they found that in supermarket, the shoppers walk faster and slower depending on the tempo of the music and they also didn't have awareness of the music in the store. Ambient musics heard in hotels, restaurants, retail stores, and supermarkets, influence the mood of consumers, the amount of time spent in a location, and the amount of money spent (Mowen & Monor, 2000; North, Hargreaves, & McKendrick, 1999). Classical music enhances pleasure, while pop-style music increases arousal (Kellaris & Kent, 1993).

The music played in a store can determine the pace of shopping, slower music leads to slower shopping and results in purchase of more items, this is because customers move at a slower pace as they move through the store (Milliman, 1982). When consumers enjoy the background music, they feel they have spent less time shopping relative to the actual amount of time they have spent in the store; if they dislike it, despite the short amount of time they have actually spent in the store, they claim to have been there for much longer (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000)

Studies has shown that there is a relationship between the tempo of music and the sales volumes, i.e. higher sales volumes were consistently associated with the slower tempo music while the lower sales were consistently associated with the faster tempo music (Milliman, 1982). The music tempo in a restaurant can affect the time customers will take to complete a meal and the amount of money they will spend on alcoholic drinks (Milliman, 1982).

Service organizations use music to enhance their atmosphere and influence customer behaviour (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990). Customer's moods and unplanned purchases cannot only be explained by background music, it also depends on customer's perceptions of shopping time, age, expectation (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990).

Voice: Sounds emitted by products are not the only sounds that impact brand perception. The voices of spokespeople for the brand produce the same result; appear sexier to the consumer. This construct can be brought down to understand the effect of the voice heard when one enters a fast food firm (welcome sir or madam) and its effect on the customer patronage behaviour. Dahl (2010) suggests that “fundamental frequency (voice pitch) and vocal speech rate are two important influencers of listener response to verbal communication and that they can affect personal perceptions of the speaker. In general, low-pitched voices are evaluated more favorably than high-pitched voices (Brown, Strong, & Rencher, 1973 as cited by Krishna 2012) and listeners attribute greater competence and credibility to individuals who speak more quickly (Stewart & Ryan, 1982).

There are many sources of sound, in the environment around us, wanted and unwanted. Humans seem to experience sound highly individually and react in different ways to the same sound (Rossing et al., 2002). Music is not the only sound in the environment and especially noise creates physiological as well as psychological effects, which impact on communication.

Research has focused on music for decades examining the effects on consumer affections and behaviour in relation to different objects or products. The human voice has not received the same attention among researchers (Peck and Childers, 2008). However, it is evident from research that the human voice impacts on consumer behaviour in terms of its persuasive power, and its pitch and speed can enhance an advertising message. The human voice is different from other sounds in the environment, standing out in its own personal way. For that reason, the human voice can reinforce emotions and feelings, affecting the actual message through, for example: coughing, laughing, speech, yawning etc. (Schiffman, 2001). It has been argued that a language need not be heard, because the sound of a voice might create the feeling of a message being perceived and interpreted, even though the real meaning itself could be hard to understand. It is also possible to give human voice different characteristics, including flat, hollow, robust and sharp types of voices (Sonnenschein, 2001).

Based on the above review of literature, the following hypotheses were made:

Ho<sub>7</sub> : There is no significant relationship between sound and repeat purchase of Fast-food firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>8</sub> : There is no significant relationship between sound and customer referrals of Fast-food firms in Port Harcourt.

Ho<sub>9</sub> : There is no significant relationship between sound and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt.

#### Empirical Review

The concept of sensory marketing have been studied by various researchers, Krishna (2011) looked at how to engage the senses to attract, perception, judgment and behaviour. Clarinda, Bertil and Carlos (2011), saw sensory marketing as part of the branding strategy of an organization. Xue (2009) carried out a sensory study in restaurant interior design and discovered that sensory marketing plays an important role in the design of a restaurant and influences customers' perception. Narat and Thandone (2011) in Thailand carried out a research on how sensory marketing can be used in hotel and restaurant in order to influence customer behaviour.

#### Methodology

This research study is a cross-sectional research survey as primary data were collected from various fast food firms in Port Harcourt, concerning the relationship between Sensory Marketing and customer patronage.

The study Population was Port Harcourt which has a population of about 538,558 (<https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm2id=NGA033022>, 12-05-2017). The Krejcen and Morgan table was used to derive a sample of 357 (Krejcen and Morgan, 1970). The selection of the sample elements was done using convenience sampling technique. A total of 357 copies of fully structured questionnaire were issued to customers of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, but only 300 were retrieved and usable.

The measurement instrument was tested for reliability, any cronbach alpha coefficient more than 0.84 indicates a good level of internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951; Nonnally and Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al, 1992). In this study, the following alpha values were gotten, Sight: 0.85, Scent: 0.86, Sound: 0.85, repeat purchase: 0.88, customer referrals: 0.87, customer retention: 0.85. These indicate a good level of internal consistency. The measurement instrument was tested for face validity by other scholars and professionals in the field. The questionnaire was designed to assess the extent at which sensory cues, appealing to sight, scent and sound, can influence customer patronage. In terms of Analysis, the spearman rank order correlation coefficient was employed.

#### Data Analysis

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Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Sight	300	0.002	0.587	Accept
Repeat purchase	300			H <sub>01</sub>

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between sight and repeat purchase. There was a fair positive relationship between sight and repeat purchase which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .587$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .002$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

##### Sight and Customer Referrals

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Sight	300	0.000	0.666	Accept
customer referrals	300			H <sub>01</sub>

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between sight and customer referrals. There was a moderate positive relationship between sight and customer referrals which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .666$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant

probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

#### Sight and Customer Retention

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Sight	300	0.000	0.635	Accept
customer retention	300			$H_{01}$

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between sight and customer retention. There was a fair positive relationship between sight and customer retention which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .635$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .001$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

#### Scent and Repeat Purchase

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Scent	300	0.000	0.765	Accept
Repeat Purchase	300			$H_{01}$

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between scent and repeat purchase. There was a moderate positive relationship between scent and repeat purchase which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .765$ ,  $p = .0009$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

#### Scent and Customer Referrals

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Scent	300	0.000	0.835	Accept
Customer Referrals	300			$H_{01}$

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between scent and customer referrals. There was a strong positive relationship between scent and customer referrals which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .835$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

#### Scent and Customer Retention

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
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Scent	300	0.000	0.760	Accept
Customer Retention	300			H <sub>01</sub>

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between scent and customer retention. There was a moderate positive relationship between scent and customer retention which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .760$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

#### Sound and Repeat Purchase

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Sound	300	0.000	0.871	Accept
Repeat Purchase	300			H <sub>01</sub>

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between sound and repeat purchase. There was a strong positive relationship between sound and repeat purchase which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .871$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

#### Sound and Customer Referrals

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Sound	300	0.000	0.884	Accept
Customer Referrals	300			H <sub>01</sub>

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between sound and customer referrals. There was a strong positive relationship between sound and customer referrals which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .884$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .00$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) and accept the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

#### Sound and Customer Retention

Variables	N	Level of sig	Sig	Decision
Scent	300	0.000	0.841	Accept
Repeat	300			H <sub>01</sub>

Source: Extracted From SPSS version 21 Output, 2017.

A spearman's rank-order correlation was run to determine the relationship between sound and customer retention. There was a strong positive relationship between sound and customer retention which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .841$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant

probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ).

#### Discussion of Findings

This study is meant to fill the gap that exists in sensory literature. The relationship between sensory marketing and customer patronage was established.

The first hypothesis, stated that there was no relationship between sight and repeat purchase of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated that there was a fair positive relationship between sight and repeat purchase which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .587$ ,  $p = .002$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .002$ ) is less than 0.01. The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted ( $H_1$ ), which states that, there is a significant relationship between sight and repeat purchase. This shows that 58.7% repeat purchase can be explained by sensory cues from sight.

The second hypothesis, stated that there was no relationship between sight and customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated that a moderate positive relationship exists between sight and customer referrals which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .666$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that, there is a relationship between sight and customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, was accepted. This shows that 66% of customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be explained by sensory cues from sight.

The third hypothesis, stated that there was no relationship between sight and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated that there was a fair positive relationship between sight and customer retention which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .635$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .001$ ) is less than 0.01, we rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ), which states that, there is a relationship between sight and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt was accepted. This tells us that 63.5% of customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be explained by sensory cues of sight.

The fourth hypothesis, stated that there was no relationship between scent and repeat purchase of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated that there was a moderate positive relationship between scent and repeat purchase which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .765$ ,  $p = .0009$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accepted the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that, there is a relationship between sight and repeat purchase of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. This tells us that 76.5% of repeat purchase of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be explained by sensory cues of scent.

The fifth hypothesis, stated that there was no relationship between scent and customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt; the data analysis indicated a strong positive relationship exists between scent and customer referrals which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .835$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accepted the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that, there is a relationship between scent and customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. This tells

us that 83.5% of customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be explained by sensory cues of scent.

The sixth hypothesis, stated that there was no relationship between scent and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated a moderate positive relationship between scent and customer retention which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .760$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accepted the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that, there is a relationship between scent and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. This tells us that 76% of customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be explained by sensory cues from scent.

The seventh hypothesis, states that there is no relationship between sound and repeat purchase of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between sound and repeat purchase which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .871$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accepted the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that, there is a relationship between sound and repeat purchase of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. This tells us that 87% of repeat purchase by customers of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be associated to sensory cues from sound.

Hypothesis Eight, states that there is no relationship between sound and customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between sound and customer referrals which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .884$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .00$ ) is less than 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that, there is a relationship between sound and customer referrals of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. This tells us that 88% of customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be associated to sensory cues from sound.

Hypothesis nine, states that there is no relationship between sound and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt, the data analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between sound and customer retention which was statistically significant ( $r_s = .841$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Since the significant probability value ( $p = .000$ ) is less than 0.01, we rejected the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accepted the alternate hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that, there is a relationship between sound and customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. This tells us that 84% of customer retention of fast food firms in Port Harcourt can be associated to sensory cues from sound.

## Conclusions

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between sight and customer patronage. Haven reviewed relevant literature, and tested derived hypotheses, the following conclusions were made in line with the objectives of this study:

Appeals to the sense of sight, like the colour, the view of the menu and other aesthetics have a fair positive relationship on customer patronage behaviour, like repeat purchase, customer referrals and customer retention. This agrees in a way with work of Cyril and Josph (2008), schiffman (2001), Krishna (2010), Norman (2004), Babin et al. (2003), Gorn et al. (1997). Though appeals to the sense of sight play a role in influencing customer patronage, it should be

combined with other sensory cues to portray a consistent integrated message (Schultz, 1993; Fawcett, 1991).

The appeals of scent, like Fragrance and aroma from the menu has a moderate positive relationship with customer patronage, this is in line with the work of xue (2009), Malnar and Vodvakar (2004), Krishna(2012), Bosmas(2006), spangenberg, Crowley and Henderson(1996), who posited that the sense of scent helps in favourable evaluation of a product and hence encourages patronage.

Sound cues from background music, the tone of contact staffs to customers, proved to have a strong positive relationship with customer patronage. This supports the view of scholars like Mowen and Monor (2000), North, Hargreaves and mkendrick (1999), kellaris and kent, (1993), milliman, (1982), Yalch and spangenberg (1990), Rossing et al.(2002), Peck and childers(2008).

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

Managers of fast food firms should pay more attention to sensory marketing, as indicated from our discussion of findings, as having a positive significant relationship with customer patronage, which is a desired objective in solving the earlier identified problem of fast food firms in Port Harcourt. An integrated approach has to be taken in the application of sensory marketing, as no single sensory appeal can work in isolation of the other. The sense organs play complimentary roles, what the nose perceives has to be confirmed by the eyes and other sense organs and vice versa.

Managers of fast food firms should pay more attention to the quality of sound in their firm, as this has proven to have the highest influence on customer Patronage.

Broadly, fast food firms should concentrate on sensory cues and understand how customers perceive them. This would help them appeal to the customers' emotions, and influence their patronage behaviour.

### Suggestions for Further Studies

Sensory marketing is broad, and more research is needed in this area of study to unveil its huge potential. The current researcher recommends that similar study be carried out in other states and countries to know if the same result would be obtained. This study only covered three out of the five sense organs; hence the current researcher encourages other scholars to carry out research on the other dimensions of sensory marketing and customer patronage.

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