

## Improving Customer Knowledge by Adopting Sensory Marketing an Analytical Study of a Sample of Restaurant Customers in Kirkuk City

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**Abstract:** The present study sought to ascertain the influence of sensory marketing, via its dimensions of sight, smell, and taste, on the enhancement of consumer understanding, as characterized by the physical environment and staff engagement. The study utilized a descriptive-analytical strategy, and data were gathered using a structured online questionnaire. The study sample comprised 380 respondents, randomly chosen among patrons of fast-food establishments in the city of Al-Elm. Descriptive statistics were employed to elucidate the correlations and effects among the variable dimensions.

The study reached several findings, the most notable of which is the existence of a positive correlation between sensory marketing and customer knowledge in the context of fast-food restaurants, as perceived by the study sample. Additionally, the study highlighted the role of the external environment of restaurants as a key factor in attracting customers and creating new knowledge.

The study recommends focusing on the importance of attracting, developing, and retaining employees who exhibit customer-oriented personalities. Accordingly, best practices and procedures in employee selection and recruitment should be implemented to ensure that frontline service employees are capable of attracting and providing personalized customer-oriented service. This would enhance customer knowledge and foster positive impressions toward the stores.

**Key words:** sensory marketing, customer knowledge, Al-Elm city.



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## Introduction

Human senses have often been overlooked in marketing, despite their significant role in shaping individual knowledge in various purchasing and consumption processes. Through sensory experiences, individuals become more aware of products and brands, enhancing their ability to perceive and differentiate them. For this reason, gaining deeper insights into human senses can make marketing strategies more effective and sensory knowledge more personalized. It is no longer sufficient for companies to rely exclusively on relational marketing strategies as they once did. Instead, sensory-based strategies grounded in sensory marketing models should be employed to understand how sensory cues and stimuli influence consumer behavior through human senses.

Customer knowledge has been a key concept in service research and management, encompassing areas such as service marketing, innovation, and retailing. With the advent of the "experience economy," a wave of research emerged focusing on customer knowledge, understood as an economic offering that creates a competitive advantage that is difficult to imitate or replace. Consequently, the importance of customer knowledge has been recognized as a strategy for creating value, enhancing satisfaction, achieving differentiation, and building a company's image and brand.

Over the past two decades, the world has witnessed a significant transformation, with fast-food restaurants dominating the global food market. Chains like McDonald's and KFC are clear examples of this shift. Iraq, like many other countries, has been notably influenced by this trend, with fast-food restaurants gaining substantial dominance over the local market. This dominance has been further bolstered by the emergence of delivery services. Therefore, it is crucial to shed light on this important domain and its associated marketing strategies that enhance customer experiences in the long term.

## Methodology

### 1. Research Problem

The Iraqi markets have undergone a gradual transformation from the consumption of goods to the consumption of goods, services, and experiences. The traditional value proposition of products is no longer sufficient to attract customers or establish differentiation. Companies must focus on customer knowledge, which is created through elements that businesses and stores can control and manage.

One of the main challenges faced by fast-food restaurants is the difficulty of delivering distinctive customer experiences that ensure repeated interactions and repurchases. This challenge has led to a noticeable decline in customer numbers, ultimately causing many businesses to exit the competition. Previous studies in this field have indicated that approximately 65% of fast-food outlets have failed due to their inability to build genuine customer knowledge and their neglect of the physical and emotional aspects capable of stimulating sensory triggers. These triggers positively impact consumer activities by evoking positive emotions, ultimately leading to behavioral responses such as purchasing, revisiting, or repeated interactions with the stores.

Based on this, the primary research problem can be summarized in the following question:

"Does sensory marketing enhance customer knowledge?"

Additionally, the research can be further clarified through the following sub-questions:

- a. What is the level of attention paid by the study sample to the dimensions of sensory marketing?
- b. What is the level of attention paid by the study sample to the dimensions of customer knowledge?

c. What is the relationship between the dimensions of sensory marketing and the dimensions of customer knowledge?

## 2. Significance of the Study

### a. Scientific Significance:

The current study aims to advance scientific research on sensory marketing and customer knowledge by conducting a comprehensive review and providing an overview of the latest insights addressing these concepts. It seeks to identify emerging trends in both research and practice, thereby expanding understanding of these variables. The study also attempts to highlight the importance of integrating marketing, operations, and customer relationship management, shedding light on researchers' and academics' perspectives by presenting the findings of their studies and research in this field.

### b. Practical Significance:

The fast-food sector is a rapidly evolving domain influenced by external environmental changes and the swift shifts in customer needs and preferences. These businesses must develop robust strategies to ensure their competitive presence. Observing the trends in this sector reveals a noticeable pattern: many fast-food outlets emerge and then quickly vanish, despite the high demand for their services and the lucrative market opportunities offering potential profitability. Therefore, this field requires focused attention to identify areas of weakness and deficiencies, offering solutions, improvements, and recommendations that can help sustain and enhance these businesses' competitive standing.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are summarized as follows:

- To determine the level of attention paid by the study sample to the dimensions of sensory marketing.
- To explore the level of attention paid by the study sample to the dimensions of customer knowledge.
- To examine the nature of the correlation and the impact relationship between the dimensions of sensory marketing and the dimensions of customer knowledge.

## 4. Hypotheses of the Study

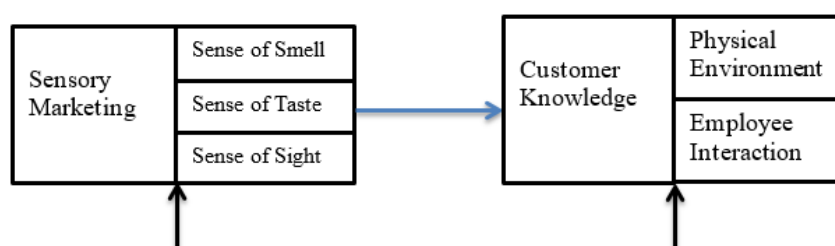
### a. First Main Hypothesis:

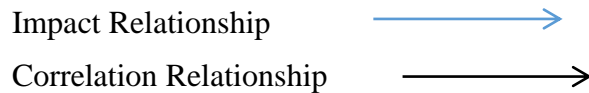
There is a statistically significant correlation between the dimensions of sensory marketing (taste, smell, sight) and the dimensions of customer knowledge (physical environment, employee interaction).

### b. Second Main Hypothesis:

There is a statistically significant impact of the dimensions of sensory marketing (taste, smell, sight) on the dimensions of customer knowledge (physical environment, employee interaction).

## 5. Conceptual Framework of the Study



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study****6. Scope of the Study:**

- a. Spatial Scope: The spatial scope of the study was limited to the city of Al-Elm.
- b. Temporal Scope: The temporal scope of the study encompassed the duration from June 15, 2023, to August 15, 2023, during which the researcher conducted the investigation.

**7. Research Tools:**

- a. Secondary Sources: The research utilized contributions from scholars and experts, including books, research articles, literature, prior studies, and library resources, which were collected and analyzed to enhance the theoretical framework of the present study.

**b. Primary Sources:**

The researcher predominantly utilized a questionnaire to gather primary data concerning the study variables, facilitating statistical analysis to evaluate the hypotheses. The survey had three segments:

- The first section included demographic information about the study sample.
- The second component comprised a series of inquiries pertaining to the independent variable, sensory marketing (visual, olfactory, and gustatory marketing).
- The third section contained a set of questions related to the dependent variable, customer knowledge, through its dimensions (physical environment, employee interaction).

The study relied on established and validated scales to measure the dimensions of the variables, as shown in the following table:

**Table 1: Scales Used in the Study**

Variable	Dimensions	Adopted Scale
Sensory Marketing	Visual Marketing	Al-Shanwani, 2021 Jebali & Bouguia, 2018
	Olfactory Marketing	
	Gustatory Marketing	
Customer Knowledge	Physical Environment	Ali, 2019
	Employee Interaction	

**C. Research Methodology and Tools:**

The descriptive analytical method was employed since it aligns well with the nature of the present investigation. The questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. As for the statistical analysis methods, descriptive statistics were used (mean, standard deviation, relative importance), simple correlation analysis (Spearman), and multiple linear regression analysis. The results were obtained using the statistical analysis software (SPSS V.26).

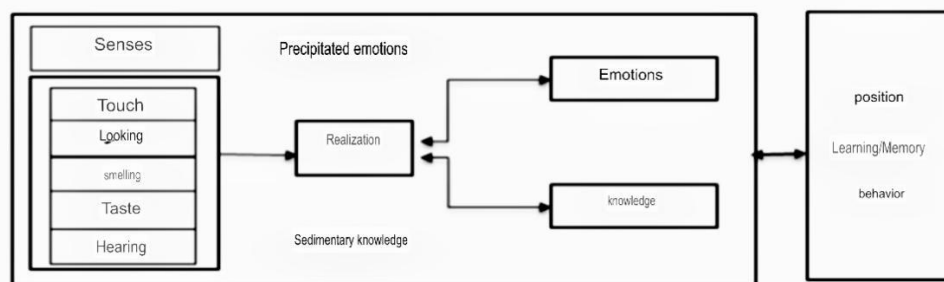
**III. Theoretical Framework****1. Concept of Sensory Marketing:**

Perception, in general, is the attempt to understand the environment through the five senses. Sensory organs are tools used to gather information from our surroundings. In fact, consumers want to see, touch, hear, smell, or taste a product. In other words, consumers need to feel a

product before actually purchasing it. This is due to their desire to reduce the perceived risks and efforts required to meet their actual needs (Erenkol, et al., 2015: 34).

Despite the utilization of human senses in marketing operations, prior studies have not adequately addressed this subject. Sensory marketing, initially introduced by Schmidt (1999), is a marketing technique that evokes customers' emotions rather than their rational assessments by engaging the five human senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell (Jang and Soo-Bum, 2019: 3). In this context, Krishna (2011: 334) characterized sensory marketing as a strategy that stimulates customers' senses, influencing their perception, judgment, and action (Nghiem, 2017: 5). Sensory marketing is the utilization of point-of-sale aspects (sensory, taste, and visual) to elicit cognitive reactions (thoughts) and behavioral responses (social interaction) that facilitate or enhance the purchasing process (Nassour, 2020: 79).

Sensory marketing engages customers by appealing to the five senses (touch, sight, taste, sound, and smell) to align with their perceptions, emotions, and preferences, so influencing their purchase decisions. Marketing engages customers' senses, influencing their perception, judgment, and action (Albert, 2020: 978). Sensory marketing is also defined as a set of sensory strategies that can be triggered by image, shape, scent, or sound, creating a sensory experience to encourage the acquisition of a particular product, which clearly affects customers' perceptions and feelings (Khalil & Dhnoon, 2021: 595). The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines sensory marketing as a marketing technique aimed at attracting customers by stimulating their senses to influence their emotions and behavior in the recipient's mind, leaving a unique and distinctive impression (Al-Shanwani, 2021: 317).



**Figure 2: Concept of Sensory Marketing**

Source: Krishna, Aradha, (2012), An Integrative Review Of Sensory Marketing : Engaging The Senses To Affect Perception , Judgment And Behaviour. Journal Of Consumer Psychology , Ross School Of Business , University Of Michigan .

Figure 2 presents an explanation of the sensory marketing model. It is important to note the difference between sensation and perception. Sensation is a physiological process that occurs at the nerve level and is affected by stimuli it encounters. In contrast, perception is a purely mental process that relies on current sensory data, as well as images, imaginations, and past memories. It is undoubtedly complex and varies from person to person. Sensations are the initial reactions that occur through the five senses: taste, sight, hearing, smell, and touch. Perception, on the other hand, is the result of interpreting these sensations and converting them into an organized cognitive process (Sadiq et al., 2018: 251), (Krishna, 2012: 3).

## 2- The Importance of Sensory Marketing:

Like other marketing strategies, sensory marketing is of significant importance both for organizations and consumers. Sensory marketing can attract customers through programs and stimuli provided by organizations, whether integrated within the product itself or through the physical environment surrounding the delivery of the product to customers, especially when it is

presented alongside customer service (Al-Taai et al., 2019: 335). Additionally, sensory marketing helps provide consumers with experiences to create a favorable image of the company or brand and stimulate positive consumer behavior. Marketers can influence customer expectations by adopting sensory marketing strategies. For example, marketers can create sensory stimuli related to touch, smell, or taste that act as attractive and motivating factors for customers to repeat purchases or use (Woo-Hyuk Kim et al., 2020: 4). Furthermore, sensory marketing can add value to the brand of the organization and make customers associate with the brand based on a successful and unforgettable experience, encouraging them to share their experience with others, thus making the purchase decision a goal. The five senses help solidify knowledge in the minds of customers since the things perceived through their senses are more firmly anchored in their minds and emotions than things they have difficulty perceiving (Abdul Ghafour, 2021: 371). Finally, sensory marketing is a key factor in reducing competitive pressures on companies because customers cannot perceive all brands to the same degree. Therefore, companies integrate sensory influences into their products, distinguishing their products from competitors and creating an enjoyable and attractive experience during the purchase process (Mariam & Radhia, 2021: 8).

### 3- Dimensions of Sensory Marketing:

#### A- Visual Marketing:

Visual stimulus marketing is the most commonly used in contemporary marketing and is the dominant element in creating brand awareness. This is based on the fact that vision is the primary means of identifying and achieving differentiation between brands. As a result, many brands are associated with specific colors, which make it easier for customers to remember, recall, and distinguish the company's brand from others (Al-Shanwani, 2021: 317). Moreover, researchers have found that sight is a dominant factor in creating brand awareness and generating customer knowledge. It is the primary and strongest sense in the visual sensory system used in marketing, and more than 80% of commercial communication and purchases are based on the sense of sight (Abdul Qader et al., 2018: 33).

Visual marketing is the marketing strategy that relies on stimulating the consumer through displaying images, designs, colors, lighting, shapes, and the materials from which products are made. These visual influences play a role in driving the consumer to buy or repurchase (Al-Ghazwani and Al-Nufati, 2021: 52). It is evident that visual stimuli such as colors, designs, lighting, and the product's exterior shape have a significant impact on influencing consumer behavior, as they are the first thing the consumer's eyes are drawn to during purchasing and shopping activities (Khalil and Dhnoon, 2021: 721). Therefore, selecting colors and external designs for products is one of the main factors in a product's success or failure. Additionally, many brands are associated with specific colors that make it easier for consumers to distinguish them from other products. For example, Pepsi-Cola is linked with the color blue, while Coca-Cola is associated with red, and these colors are deeply ingrained in the customer's memory. Upon seeing these colors, the customer can immediately recall the brand (Abdul Ghafour, 2020: 378).

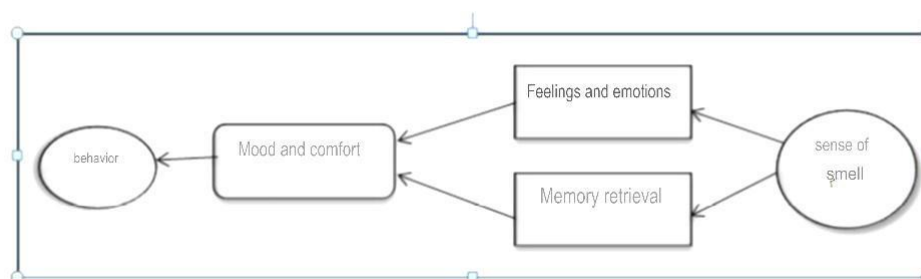
#### B- Olfactory Marketing:

The sense of smell is closely related to our emotional life, and scents can strongly influence our emotions. Humans can remember over 10,000 different smells, and scents can contribute to sensory experiences that create lasting memories for customers, build awareness, and establish a brand image (Hultén et al., 2009: 60). The sense of smell affects humans emotionally more than any other sense. Studies have shown that product scents influence approximately 75% of purchase motivations, especially in products known for their aromas and flavors, such as restaurant, food store, and coffee shop products (Rathee and Rajain, 2017: 127).

Olfactory memory is crucial for storing scents and evolves during an individual's lifetime, as data regarding odors is collected and stored in a designated area of the brain that associates smells with



memories and emotions. The sense of smell is particularly prominent in the food and restaurant industry, where it facilitates customer engagement (Abd Al-Wahid and Suleiman, 2021: 19). The olfactory sense serves as a crucial element in consumer attraction, since agreeable aromas evoke memories and activate certain moments in the human psyche associated with initial encounters. Research has demonstrated that the olfactory sense accounts for up to 75% of our emotions and memories associated with a product, owing to its direct linkage to the brain (Albert, 2020: 980).



**Figure (3) Shopping through the Sense of Smell (Prepared by the Researcher)**

The previous figure illustrates the impact of the sense of smell on consumer behavior. Scents can be used to create unforgettable memories, as certain smells leave an impression on customers and make them more likely to return. Scents can also influence consumer attitudes by triggering associations in their memory, evoking different emotions such as relaxation, excitement, comfort, or the recollection of past memories. This, in turn, provides customers with a sense of comfort. Using scents in branding can create a unique and unforgettable impression for customers, making them more likely to return to a particular store or product. In short, the sense of smell plays an important role in consumer behavior, as it can influence emotions, attitudes, and spending habits. By understanding the impact of scents on customers, retailers and marketers can strategically use scent marketing to create a positive shopping experience and encourage repeat purchases.

C. Taste Marketing: Taste is defined as the sensation resulting from taste stimuli and the interaction of taste receptors with food materials, allowing the taster to identify and differentiate flavors and form sensory impressions toward different foods (Al-Shanwani, 2021: 319). Previous literature on the subject of influence and perception in relation to taste suggests that many taste experiences are primarily emotional, with cognitive components. In general, taste perceptions tend to be driven effectively by emotional stimuli, which increase consumers' behavioral responses (Rathee and Rajain, 2017: 126). In terms of perception, taste is closely associated with smells and flavors, as the combination of aroma and taste creates a sensation of flavor and evokes memories of past experiences. Additionally, the alignment between flavor and taste is a key factor in establishing a successful customer perception (Erenkol and AK1, 2015: 33). Studies have also pointed out that tasting helps build an emotional connection with the consumer, adds value to the brand, and supports its advantages, enabling the consumer to positively recognize it in their mind. This has been confirmed through various previous studies that eating and drinking are strongly associated with joy and pleasant memories (Albert, 2020: 981). It is also worth noting that conveying flavor and taste through description is difficult, which is why many brands offer free samples, as seen in many outdoor dining areas within shopping malls, where they offer food samples for consumers to taste, in order to influence their purchase and evoke the emotions of consumers and customers (Randhir, 2016: 281).

4. The concept of customer knowledge is derived from a sequence of contacts between customers and a product, firm, or its organizational components, which provoke reactions. This information is wholly personal and entails customers engaging at several levels (rational, emotional, sensory, physical, and spiritual). The second definition indicates that "customer knowledge is the internal and subjective response of customers to any direct or indirect contact with the company. This

contact typically occurs directly in the context of purchasing and using a service and is usually initiated by the customers" (Verhoef et al, 2009: 32). Notably, Payne and Gilmore (1999) were among the first researchers to introduce the concept of customer knowledge, stating that the emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual participation of each customer relates to experiences, thus emphasizing the subjective nature of customer knowledge (Hwang and Seo, 2016: 2220). In this regard, the concept of customer knowledge can be defined as an evolution of the relationship between the company and the customer. "Customer knowledge arises from a series of interactions between customers and a product, company, or part of its organization, which elicits responses from customers and consumers. This knowledge is entirely personal and involves customers participating at different levels (rational, emotional, sensory, physical, and spiritual)" (Gentile et al, 2007: 397). Customer knowledge is also an evolution of a person's sensory, emotional, cognitive, relational, and behavioral responses to the brand through a journey of touchpoints along the purchasing or repurchasing process (McLean, 2018: 4). Based on this, researchers assume that customer knowledge encompasses three main dimensions (sensory, emotional, and social). Sensory knowledge refers to aesthetics and sensory perceptions of the shopping environment, atmosphere, products, and services, while emotional knowledge involves the moods and feelings generated during the shopping journey. Social knowledge emphasizes relationships with others and the community (Zi-Ying, 2011: 6740). According to Johye (2018: 2221), customer knowledge consists of five main dimensions: (sensory experiences), relating to good sensory experiences like sight, touch, and smell; (emotional experiences), including emotional states; cognitive experiences pertaining to thought processes; material experiences and behaviors linked to customer knowledge of the product or its use; and social identity experiences arising from associations with a reference group or culture, encompassing an individual's social context and interpersonal relationships.

### **5. Importance of Customer Knowledge:**

Customer knowledge plays a crucial role in determining customer preferences, which subsequently influence their purchasing decisions. Generating enjoyable shopping knowledge leads to numerous positive outcomes. For instance, customers with favorable shopping knowledge are more likely to repurchase products, leading to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth referrals (Zi-Ying Yang, 2011: 6741). Additionally, customer knowledge enhances brand preference through great experiences, increases sales revenue, and improves customer loyalty. Moreover, customer knowledge can help reduce costs by decreasing customer churn over time (Wereda and Grzybowska, 2016: 200). It is important to emphasize that customer knowledge facilitates quicker and easier access to products, and it gives customers the feeling that they are the center of attention for the service provider. This sense of being valued leads to satisfaction, ultimately fostering loyalty to the company's products and services (Hasfar.M, 2020: 89).

### **6. Dimensions of Customer Knowledge:**

**A. Physical Environment:** The physical environment refers to the essential components required to deliver a product or service to the customer. This environment includes the design of buildings, architectural style, furniture, the arrangement of furnishings, and equipment that affect functionality. It also includes spatial arrangements that enhance comfort, surrounding elements, and cultural resources. These cues directly influence how customers behave and respond during their purchase or service experience (Ali, 2019: 71). The physical environment encompasses the conditions around the products and services, including the materials used in service delivery, the general atmosphere of stores and institutions, and the comfort it provides to customers, which creates a positive impression of the institution (Dumitrescu et al., 2012: 2). It is worth noting that the aesthetics of physical facilities, such as interior design, furniture, pictures/paintings, plants/flowers, or wall decorations, have a profound impact on the revenue of restaurants and fast-food stores. Many restaurants rely on these aesthetics to create positive experiences in customers'



minds by focusing on generating positive emotions, enjoyment, and excitement. These stimuli increase the desire for purchases and enhance customer knowledge and memory (Tuzunkan and Albayrak, 2016: 9).

C. Employee Interaction: Employee interaction refers to "the interaction between the organization and its customers with the aim of modifying its product/service offering to meet the individual needs of the customer." Scholars agree that "customer interaction represents touchpoints that an organization may utilize to engage with its clients." Many researchers have pointed out the fact that "customer interaction occurs through a variety of touchpoints, and each organization may use a subset of these." Some of these touchpoints involve direct human-to-human interaction (Owuso, 2022: 17). This interaction is referred to as the "moment of truth," where service employees provide what the customers need. These moments highlight the level of engagement between frontline staff and customers, emphasizing the importance of frontline employees. Their performance can significantly impact customer knowledge (Ali, 2019: 72). Employee behavior has a positive impact on customer satisfaction, as research has indicated that appropriate behavior and positive interaction with customers create unforgettable experiences. Therefore, frontline employees and those responsible for providing the product or service must demonstrate empathy, attention, and a respectful approach when dealing with customers (Dumitrescu et al., 2012: 74).

#### Fourth: Field Framework of the Study

1. Assessing the Reliability of the Study Instrument: The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was employed to evaluate the reliability of each item within the dimensions associated with the variables. The results are shown in Table (2).

**Table (2): Results of the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient**

Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Visual Marketing	5	0.895
Auditory Marketing	5	0.798
Gustatory Marketing	5	0.853
Physical Environment	5	0.898
Employee Interaction	5	0.878
Overall Variables	25	0.947

Table (2) clearly indicates that all Cronbach's Alpha values for the variable dimensions exceed 70%. The aggregate Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the variables was 0.947, indicating a very high level of reliability. This signifies that the dependability is substantial, validating its application for the objectives of the present study.

2. Descriptive Analysis of Sensory Marketing Variable: Table (3) shows the ranking of the sensory marketing dimensions according to their relative importance. The olfactory marketing dimension ranked first in terms of relative importance from the perspective of the study sample, with a mean of 3.75, a standard deviation of 0.70, and a high relative importance of 75%. Meanwhile, the other dimensions (visual marketing and gustatory marketing) ranked lower, respectively. This result reflects the study sample's level of interest in sensory marketing dimensions and provides an answer to the second question raised in the study's problem regarding the level of interest in sensory marketing dimensions from the perspective of the study sample.

S	Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Importance	Level of Importance
1	Physical Environment	2.84	0.97	%56	2
2	Employee Interaction	3.37	0.82	%67	1
Customer Knowledge		<b>3.11</b>	<b>0.81</b>		

**Table (3): Mean, Standard Deviation, and Relative Importance of Sensory Marketing Dimensions.**

### 3- Descriptive Analysis of Customer Knowledge Variable:

Table (4) delineates the hierarchy of consumer knowledge factors based on their respective significance. The employee contact dimension was rated highest in relative significance by the study sample, with a mean of 3.37, a standard deviation of 0.82, and a significant relative importance of 67%. The second component, the physical environment, had a mean score of 2.84, a standard deviation of 0.97, and a relative importance of 56%. This outcome indicates the degree of interest of the research sample in customer knowledge aspects. These findings also address the third research question about the amount of interest in customer knowledge from the standpoint of the study sample.

**Table (4): Mean, Standard Deviation, and Relative Importance of Customer Knowledge Dimensions**

S	Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation	Relative Importance	Level of Importance
1	Visual Marketing	2.85	0.98	%57	3
2	Olfactory Marketing	3.75	0.70	%75	1
3	Gustatory Marketing	3.73	0.72	%74	2
Sensory Marketing		<b>3.44</b>	<b>0.64</b>		

4- Testing the First Hypothesis: There is a significant correlation between sensory marketing dimensions (visual marketing, olfactory marketing, gustatory marketing) and customer knowledge dimensions (physical environment, employee interaction).

To test this hypothesis, the Spearman correlation coefficient was used, and the results are shown in Table (5).

**Table (5): Correlation Results Between Sensory Marketing Dimensions and Customer Knowledge Dimensions**

Correlations				
Spearman's rho		Visual Marketing	Olfactory Marketing	Gustatory Marketing
The Physical Environment	Correlation Coefficient	.998**	.495**	.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	380	380	380
Employee	Correlation	.623**	.534**	.540**

Interaction	Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	380	380	380
<b>** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</b>				

Through the correlation matrix table (5), the results showed a positive and statistically significant correlation between sensory marketing through its dimensions (visual marketing, olfactory marketing, and gustatory marketing) and customer knowledge through its dimensions (physical environment and employee interaction). All the correlation results between the dimensions were positive. Based on these results, we accept the first main hypothesis, which states that there is a statistically significant correlation between sensory marketing in its dimensions (visual marketing, olfactory marketing, gustatory marketing) and customer knowledge in its dimensions (physical environment and employee interaction).

Additionally, we can observe that the correlation results between the sensory marketing dimensions (olfactory and gustatory) were lower compared to the correlation with visual marketing. This is attributed to the fact that the perception of scents and food tastes differs from person to person, and there are many individual variables that marketers need to consider, such as gender and age. Women are generally more sensitive to odors than men, although each gender reacts differently to the same scent. For example, men are more sensitive to the scent of spices than women, while women are more sensitive to the scent of shampoo than men. Additionally, a customer's age affects their perception of food taste as they grow older, as indicated by the study of Randhir (2016: 288).

5- Testing the Second Hypothesis: There is a significant effect relationship between the dimensions of sensory marketing (visual marketing, olfactory marketing, and gustatory marketing) and customer knowledge through its dimensions (physical environment and employee interaction). To test this hypothesis, multiple linear regression was used, and the results are shown in Table (6).

**Table (6): Results of Regression Analysis Between the Dimensions of Variables**

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	sig	B	T
<b>Sensory Marketing</b>	Customer Knowledge						
<b>Visual Marketing</b>	Physical Environment	0.998	0.997	283.98	0.000	0.996	989.98
<b>Olfactory Marketing</b>						0.540	0.191
<b>Gustatory Marketing</b>						0.636	0.412
<b>Visual Marketing</b>	Employee Interaction	0.746	0.557	157.733	0.000	0.340	9.90
<b>Olfactory Marketing</b>						0.227	4.35
<b>Gustatory Marketing</b>						0.373	7.93

The findings shown in the multiple regression coefficients matrix table (7) demonstrate that the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) is equal to 0.998. This result indicates that the influence of sensory marketing and its dimensions accounts for 99% of the variance in the physical

environment aspect of consumer understanding. The residual 1% is ascribed to components excluded from the measurement model. Moreover, the positive coefficient of (B) signifies that a one-unit variation in visual marketing results in an increase of (0.99) in the physical environment. A one-unit alteration in olfactory marketing results in a 0.54 rise in the physical environment. A one-unit alteration in gustatory marketing leads to a 0.63 rise in the variability of the physical environment of consumer knowledge.

The findings indicated that the correction coefficient ( $R^2$ ) is 0.55. This score signifies the magnitude of the influence of sensory marketing and its aspects, accounting for 55% of the variance in the employee interaction dimension. The residual 45% is attributable to items excluded from the measurement model. The results indicated that the coefficient (B) is positive, signifying that a one-unit rise in visual marketing corresponds to a 0.34 increase in employee interaction variation. A one-unit alteration in olfactory marketing leads to a 0.22 rise in employee contact. A one-unit variation in gustatory marketing results in a 0.37 rise in employee interaction.

The value of (T) was below (0.05) in all instances at the significance level (Sig) of (0.01). Consequently, we endorse the second hypothesis, which posits a significant relational effect between the dimensions of sensory marketing (visual, olfactory, and gustatory) and customer knowledge via its dimensions (physical environment and employee interaction).

### Conclusions

1. The results clearly show that all sensory stimuli have a significant positive impact on customer knowledge, ranked by their strength. The most impactful sensory stimulus is vision, followed by taste, and then smell, based on the perspectives of the study sample.
2. Sensory stimuli (taste, vision, and smell) are the most strongly linked to emotional customer engagement and positive customer knowledge. This confirms the fact that a good taste, distinctive flavors, and the appearance of stores with their external colors leave a lasting impression on the memory for extended periods.
3. The analysis results revealed a significant correlation between the dimensions of sensory marketing and customer knowledge. The strongest correlation was with visual marketing, followed by gustatory marketing and olfactory marketing, according to the study sample. This is justified by the fact that the physical environment is the first thing a customer notices, so the design and color of restaurants play a significant role in shaping customer knowledge.
4. The important role of service providers in building emotional relationships through their interactions with customers was highlighted, as this helps in creating a good mood for the customer by engaging their emotions and feelings, which in turn affects their behaviors toward the services offered.
5. Restaurants can develop their unique identity and build lasting customer experiences by engaging human senses in marketing and purchasing processes. This emphasizes the importance of satisfying customers' emotional desires, in addition to meeting their material needs. Emotional satisfaction is the hidden influencer in the hearts and minds of customers.

### Recommendations

1. A sensory guide covering the five human senses should be developed, where sensory strategies can be identified through sensors, sensations, and sensory expressions as means of providing a unique brand footprint for customers. This can guide managers in building and establishing successful multisensory relationships with the brand experience.
2. It is important to emphasize the significance of attracting, developing, and retaining employees who exhibit a customer-oriented personality. Therefore, best practices should be

implemented in selection/recruitment procedures to ensure that frontline service staff embody customer-focused behaviors.

3. Restaurants should have signature dishes that are well-known for their distinctive taste and flavors, which have a strong impact on the emotions and behaviors of their customers.
4. It would be beneficial to dedicate a day for hosting public competitions among restaurants to offer the best dishes to the public. This would allow customers to experience the flavors provided by the restaurants for free, thereby reinforcing their knowledge of the dishes in their minds.
5. It is essential for restaurants to pay attention to the design and structure of their premises, aiming to replicate the designs of internationally recognized restaurants known for their branding and successful customer experiences.
6. Restaurants must focus on creating comfortable atmospheres and suitable spaces that influence the mood and comfort of their customers.

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