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A STUDY ON CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SENSORY MARKETING AT RESTAURANTS IN ECR ROAD CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT:

Customer perception is nothing more than the attitudes that consumers have regarding any brand. Although it may seem straightforward, it is crucial for establishing and maintaining consumer loyalty. The study examined diners' perceptions of sensory marketing tactics utilised in Chennai ECR restaurants.

Purposive sampling was the method used for the study, and the sample size was 179. The study was done among patrons of high-end restaurants in Chennai using a survey method and a structured questionnaire.

With the use of SPSS version 21, procedures such as percentage analysis, independent sample t test, one way ANOVA, and correlation analysis were employed in the analysis. The findings indicate that among sensory marketing tactics, visual appeal is crucial, and that there are notable gender, age, and perception gaps when it comes to sensory marketing in Chennai restaurants.

Introduction:

Aradhana Krishna was the first to propose sensory marketing, in which marketers elicit an emotional response from consumers by appealing to their senses. Perception is defined as awareness, impression, views, or thoughts about a specific brand, product, or service that a consumer purchases. Any product or service can benefit from increased brand awareness and reputation due to customer perception. Customer perception is important since it influences a company's financial results. The majority of the time, consumers do recommend wonderful goods to others in their network, but this isn't always the case. Their opinion of a product's brand or services has a significant impact on how they spread the word about it. It is well established that customer impressions affect purchasing decisions since customers are more likely to share negative experiences than positive ones. The most realistic sensory marketing website is the one that consumers can most quickly recognise and perceive based on what they initially see (Jayakirishnan, 2013).

Recently, multi-sensory marketing has also been popular, in which businesses leverage the fusion of two or more senses to draw in clients. According to recent surveys, the hotel sector is still working hard to find new tactics and ways to set itself apart from its rivals. One of the major trends of the present day is sensory marketing, which makes use of all five human senses to appeal to consumers' hearts, minds, and wallets (taste, smell, sight, touch and sound).

According to Tsai et al. (2009), markets are becoming more competitive and dynamic as a result of global civilization, and consumers are seeking more variety, higher quality, greater reliability, and more efficient delivery (Farias et al., 2014). Visual appeal has long been acknowledged as a crucial component of good advertising. Elder and Krishna showed that altering a product's visual appeal can encourage more individuals to make purchases by making them more likely to picture using it. Below is a list of the numerous sensory marketing components.

Visual sensory marketing, gustatory sensory marketing, sonorous sensory marketing, tactile sensory marketing, and olfactory sensory marketing are examples of sensory marketing elements.

LITERATURE

According to Costa et al. (2012), establishing sensory stimulation for a product together with intuitive and impression components is crucial for increasing our awareness of the products we use. These roles are currently perceived as having a positive advantage in the market (Krishna, 2013). According to (Shabgou and Daryani, 2014), the primary goal of using sensory marketing is to increase consumer engagement with the product or service, purchase intention, and the likelihood that they will become repeat customers.

OBJECTIVES

- Researching consumer perceptions of sensory marketing in ECR Chennai restaurants
- Making recommendations to enhance sensory marketing

HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is significance difference among gender and perception on sensory marketing

H2: There is significance difference among age and perception on sensory marketing

H3: There is significance correlation among all sensory marketing elements and customer perception

Method of analysis:

Purposive sampling is used in conjunction with descriptive research as the methodology for the investigation. Customers who frequent Hi-Fi eateries in Chennai ECR served as the respondents for the study. 250 questionnaires were distributed in all, and 179 were chosen as the final sample size because there were insufficient data for the others. A structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert-style scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) was used to collect the data for this investigation. The t test, one-way ANOVA, and correlation are the analysis techniques utilised with SPSS 21.

DATA ANALYSIS**Table 1 Demography Analysis****Table 1**

S.No.	Particulars	Percentage
1.	AGE	
	18-25 years	34.6
	26-30 years	41.3
	Above 30 years	24
2.	GENDER	
	Male	56.4
	Female	43.6
3.	OCCUPATION	
	Business	61
	Employee	67
	Not employed	51

Demography Analysis

(Source: Primary data)

Interpretation

The key conclusions from the percentage study are that 56.4% of respondents are men, and 67% of respondents fall into the category of employees, with 41.3% of respondents being in the 26–30 age range.

Table – 2 Descriptive Statistics of Sensory Marketing Elements in restaurant

Factor	Mean	Standard deviation
Visual sensory marketing	3.87	0.262
Gustative sensory marketing	3.72	0.412
Sonorous sensory marketing	3.08	0.213
Tactile sensory marketing	3.22	0.245
Olfactory sensory marketing	3.94	0.262

The table examines the responses' evaluations of statements in various sensory aspects using a five-point Likert scale. The responses are collected using a five point Likert scale (1 to 5).

The results demonstrate that all of the claims are above the average level, demonstrating the importance of all of the sensory marketing-related factors. It is discovered that all of the comments the researcher judged to be sensory marketing aspects are viewed favourably by the respondents.

Table 3 t-test

H1: There is significance difference among gender and perception on sensory marketing

Gender	N	Mean	SD	S.E	t	p
Male	101	57.45	3.27	0.84	13.26	0.001
Female	78	30.27	5.17	1.93		

Interpretation

The t-test results of the respondents' perceptions of customer receptivity to sensory marketing for male and female respondents were retrieved from the table. H2 is rejected at 5% level of significance since the p value is less than the level of significance for all the variables, indicating that there is a significant association between the perceptions of consumers regarding sensory marketing among male and female respondents.

Table 4 ANOVA

H2. There is significance difference among age and perception on sensory marketing

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	p-value
Between Groups	17.22	2	8.61	6.587	0.00174
Within Groups	231.42	177	1.307		

Interpretation

It is clear from Table 4 that the H4—which claims that there is a significant difference between age and perception for sensory marketing—is rejected since the p value is less than 0.05.

Table 5 Karl Pearson's Correlation

H3: There is significance correlation among all sensory elements and customer perception

	Sensory elements	Customer perception
Pearson Correlation	1	.521
Sig.(2 tailed)		.000
N	179	179
Pearson Correlation	.521	1
Sig.(2 tailed)	.000	
N	179	179

Table 5 above demonstrates that sensory elements and consumer perception have been found to be positively correlated. Customer perception and sensory marketing components have a strong positive link with a score of 0.521 that is significant at the 1% level. According to table 5, H4 is supported at a 1% level of significance. Consequently, there is a substantial connection between sensory components and customer impression.

Suggestion:

The analysis makes it abundantly clear that customers have favourable perceptions of sensory elements such as visual, gustatory, sonorous, tactile, and olfactory sensory marketing. As a result, industries should concentrate on developing their strategies that ignite the customers' sensory appeal in order to successfully compete in the market. Marketers must use innovative strategies to appeal to their clients, which will in turn leave a favourable impression of the product.

Marketers must also be careful not to overwhelm customers with information because this could damage their opinion of the product. Marketers can employ eye-catching colours and visuals to draw customers in and keep them focused on a product or brand. The retail area for a brand's goods can have mood-enhancing lighting and a calming aroma. Companies can let customers test their products in-person, but it would also be a good idea to consider how to capture the full sensory experience of a client by fusing the senses.

LIMITATIONS

The study's primary limitation is that it only examined how customers perceive sensory marketing in the hotel industry, though it may be expanded to other sectors as well. Another limitation is that it only examined hotels along Chennai's ECR Road; other significant cities were not taken into account.

CONCLUSION

Theme parks like those operated by Disney are a wonderful example of sensory marketing, which makes use of fragrance as a tactic. Smeltizer, a patented aroma, generates a nice smell around the park to keep guests waiting for attractions.

By engaging the customer's five senses and subtly evoking good feelings toward the company, sensory marketing has evolved into a crucial instrument for forging a connection between the customer and the brand. The customer is kept interested and motivated through sensory marketing for the things they sense. In order to maintain their position in the market for a long time, marketers must correctly take advantage of opportunities that stimulate customers.

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