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The Impact of Sensory Branding on the Intention of Customers to Make a Purchase

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Abstract

Marketing practitioners and scholars are paying greater attention to sensory branding than to traditional marketing. This study investigated the notion of sensory branding in order to determine its impact on customer purchase intentions. A total of 180 management students were separated into six groups, five of which were treated with visual, auditory, olfactory, gustative, and tactile noodle sensations, with one group of students exposed to only one type of experience. To assess the influence of each experience against the control group, a group without treatment was employed as a control group. The results revealed that smell and taste were very important factors, sound and sight were somewhat significant factors, and touch was inconsequential in influencing noodles purchasing intention.

Keywords*: - Sensory Branding, Experimental Research, Purchase Intention, Noodles*

INTRODUCTION

Among the five sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin), sight is thought to be the most enticing since it dominates the other senses. Marketers focused on the aesthetic aspects of the product and its packaging, such as its form, size, and colour combination. Sound is said to be linked to an individual's mood, fragrance impacts taste, and skin is utilised to perceive the texture of things. Several research studies have been undertaken to determine the impact of senses on customer restaurant, food, retail outlet, buy

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amount, and so on. Background music has been shown in studies to have a favourable influence on supermarket buying behaviour (Duncan, 1996). Different genres of music have varying effects on perceived environment, purchasing mood, and food selection (Wilson, 2003). Employee productivity at banks, hospitals, and hotels has been proven to be influenced by the ambient environment (Bitner, 1992). Bone and Ellen (1999) discovered that odour had a major influence on consumer responses in retail business environments. Marketers use the phrase "sensory branding" to describe how inputs obtained by the sensory organs are amplified and utilised.

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), Sensory Branding is a strategy for seducing consumers by stimulating their sentiments and behaviour by employing sensory organs. Sensory Branding, according to Hulten (2011), is the intentional design and deployment of interaction activities between sensory orans and their reactions with regard to a brand for his/her long-term emotional attachment.

Sensory Marketing and branding have captivated practitioners and academics alike (Achrol, R. S. and Kotler, P. (2012); Hultén, B. (2015); Krishna, A. (2011)).

More of its research focused on service branding rather than product branding. Less studies were discovered to be undertaken on items of durable categories such as computers and mobile phones, and few on food products such as Coca-Cola and other Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs). Researchers observed that further research on the impacts of sensory branding and customer involvement on consumer purchase intention should be prioritised. Thus, a better grasp of numerous sensory elements may help academics expand their knowledge base and practitioners improve their branding sense. For this study, noodles (a FMCG product) with characteristics such as crunch (sound when eating), flavour, and cake form were utilised to investigate various stimuli. The goal of this study is to investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of sensory stimuli such as visual, aural, olfactory, gustative, and tactile elements (sensory branding) on consumers' buy intentions of instant noodles.

Market Scenario of Noodles Industry in Nepal

Noodles, formerly considered a luxury delicacy and available primarily to wealthy

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households, have now grown into a staple of regular people's diets. According to previous customer survey research conducted by corporations, the primary driving factors for sales are effective advertising and high-quality products. Except for a few organisations that use marketing methods, the majority of companies were discovered to be price driven.

The market's three major companies, Chaudhary Group (CG), Himalayan Snax& Noodles (HSN), and Asian Thai Foods (ATF), are well established, with strong brand pull, an efficient marketing strategy, and a well-established distribution network. While CG, HSN, and ATF are known for their general brown noodles such as Wai Wai, Mayos, Rum Pum, and so on, Himshree Foods (HS) has taken the lead in white noodles with its brand RaRa. These corporations control over 80% of the global noodles market, leaving little room for new competitors (company sources).

Noodles are one of the few commodities exported as a brand from Nepal. Many international and nearby nations enjoy Nepali noodles. Nepali noodles have become a globally recognised commodity. Nepali noodles have several hurdles in competing with global brands, and export figures have remained nearly constant over the previous decade. According to the Economic Survey report 2018/19 released by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, Nepal's noodles export to India in fiscal year 2007/08 was 533 million Nepali Rupees, and it was 537 million Nepali Rupees in fiscal year 2017/18. While the value of noodles sent to China in 2007 was 55.4 million Nepali rupees, it was 87.8 million Nepali rupees in 2017/18. These two nations are Nepal's top two noodles importing countries. Noodles are one of Nepal's top ten exportable goods. In terms of noodles production and consumption, Nepal ranks 15th (WNA 20012) in the world.There have been few marketing-related research studies undertaken in Nepal. Karki and Regmi (2016) investigated customer reactions to Nepali coffee. Gnawali (2019) investigated the perceived risk factors of used motorcycles in Nepal, Husen (2019) investigated the fish marketing system in Nepal, and Mishra and Shrestha (2019) investigated the variables influencing customer choice of cement brands in Nepal.

Conceptual Frame work of the Study

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) challenged the use of classical information-processing theory in consumer

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behaviour and proposed the experience model. The experimental model sees the consumer purchasing choice as a rational reasoning process that focuses on the multisensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of a product's encounters with the customer. The use of multisensory experiences in marketing refers to actions aimed towards five feelings obtained by a consumer via his or her sensory organs: visual, aural, tactile, gustative, and olfactory (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010). Communications, product presence, visual and verbal identity, signs, co-branding, spatial contexts, electronic media, and people are examples of how these phenomena are used in marketing (Schmitt, 1999). The significance of these types of encounters stems from the fact that they attract potential clients and cause their judgements to follow the sensory experience (Bloch, Brunel and Arnold, 2003). As a result, most customers base their purchasing decisions on their sensory experiences (Simonson and Schmitt, 1997).

Sensory branding encourages people to use all or parts of their sensory experiences in relation to a certain brand. Sensory regions of the human body offer feeling to the consumer, who is stimulated to engage in the brand experience and is more inclined to purchase that particular brand. The phenomena of Sensory Branding employs the notion of customer participation and division as such, where engagement and level signify a consumer's level of interest in an item. The closest sensory branding participation is experience involvement (Kumar, 2010). Table 1 lists the sensors, feelings, and sensory expressions utilised in marketing and branding by Hulten (2011).

Table 1.Sensors, Sensations and Sensory Expressions

Sensors	Sensations	Sensory expressions
Sight sensors	Visual	Design, Packaging and Style, Color, Light and Theme Graphic, Exterior andInterior.
Sound sensors	Auditory	Jingle, Voice and Music Atmosphere, Attentiveness and theme, Signature sound and Sound brand
Smell sensors	Olfactory	Product congruence, intensity and sex, aroma, Atmosphere, advertency andtheme, Scent brand and signature scent
Taste sensors	Gustative	Taste, Interplay, Symbiosis and Synergies Name, Presentation and EnvironmentKnowledge, Lifestyle and Delight
Touch sensors	Tactile	Material and Surface Temperature and weight, Form and steadiness

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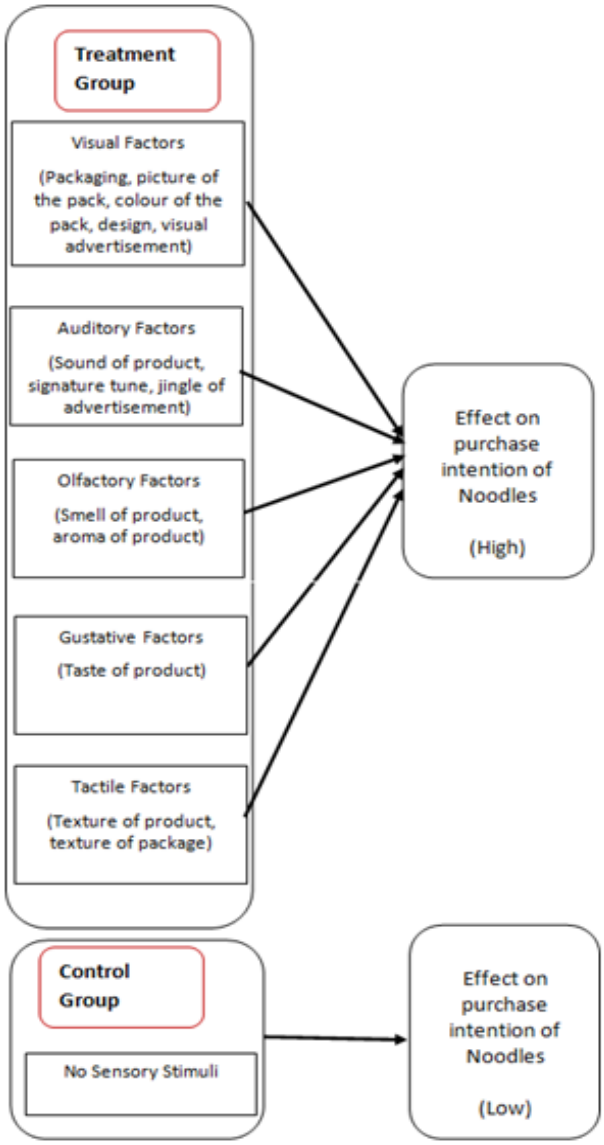


Table 1.Conceptual Framework of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of sensory elements on consumer purchase intentions for noodles. As illustrated in the conceptual framework in Figure 1, this study investigated the influence of numerous sensory characteristics on two groups of respondents: treatment and control. This study suggested that stimuli had a favourable influence on client purchase intentions.

A variety of hypotheses were chosen for testing based on the study's conceptual framework. The following theories were established:

H1: Visual factor has significant positive effect on purchase intention of noodles.

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H2: Auditory factor has significant positive effect on purchase intention of noodles.

H3: Olfactory factor has significant positive effect on purchase intention of noodles.

H4: Gustative factor has significant positive effect on purchase intention of noodles.

H5: Tactile factor has significant positive effect on purchase intention of noodles.

Research Methodology

Yin (2009) distinguished five types of quantitative research strategies: lab treatment, survey, archive analysis, history, and case study. The lab treatment (experimental) research approach was employed in this study, including a control and treatment group. Students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programmes at a management school in Kathmandu were chosen for the experiment. The reasoning for the selection was to target the youth demographic, who are more likely to be active noodles consumers. The lab was set up in a classroom, and participants were permitted to feel the sensory stimulation and respond objectively. To collect responses from respondents in the lab soon after they sensed the substance, self-administered survey questionnaires with reliability and validity were employed. The experimental study design advised that participants go through different rounds of experimentation.

The control group consisted of 30 people. The control group received no sensory input. The treatment group comprised of 150 volunteers divided equally into five groups of 30 people each. The sensory treatments were given to the treatment groups in different rounds. All of these groups were briefed about the research and method. Their participation was optional, and their choice was based on convenience. The purpose of selecting 30 students in each group was to get statistically meaningful data for analysis. Each sensory variable was operationalized in different sentences. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal validity of the data during the reliability test.

The chi-square test and analysis of variance were used to assess the correlations between hypotheses (ANOVA). The Chi-square test was used to compare observed and predicted data. Similarly, pair-test analysis was used to

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examine numerous sensory variables in response to different sensory stimuli.

Experimental Procedure

Initially, all participants were educated about the research methodology. Their permission was obtained to do the experiment. The focal brand (WaiWaiAlu Tama) of noodle was made accessible to the lab, along with the standard brand WaiWai(normal). The facility was set up for the therapy in such a manner that the necessary sensory stimuli could be supplied to the group with ease.

The control group received no manipulation. This group did not get any sensory stimuli. They were instructed to select one of the two available goods, WaiWai regular or WaiWaiAalu Tama (new product). The setup area was altered between rounds based on the sensory cues offered to the treatment groups. Only one sort of stimulus cue was shown to one treatment group of 30 subjects. Visual stimuli were presented for the first treatment group, auditory stimuli for the second group, tactile stimuli for the third group, olfactory stimuli for the fourth group, and gustative stimuli for the fifth group.

In the first round, a product package was made accessible in the lab, a TV commercial was broadcast via laptop and projector, and hoarding, posters, and dangler designs were displayed throughout the setup area.

Participants in the first treatment group were permitted to view all visual stimuli while in the lab. Only a jingle with the sound of the product's distinctive music was played for the second treatment group. In the lab, participants in this treatment group could only hear the sound (no visual). Participants in the third round/group were permitted to touch the packages and inspect the noodles inside in the setting. In the fourth and fifth rounds of the therapy, noodles were cooked, and initially, just the scent of noodles was made accessible in the lab. The participants were then given a tiny cup of noodles to try.

During the treatment procedure, participants' behaviour was observed, noted, and recorded using a manipulation check self-administered questionnaire that included a purchase intention question after being exposed to Wai Wai Aalu Tama and regular WaiWai sensory stimuli. The identical procedure was followed for the control group without any stimulation.

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Findings

Out of 180 participants 137 (76%) were males and 43 (24%) were females. Regarding the age group 6 (3%) participants were under 18 years, 122 (68%) were between 18-23 years, 47 (26%) were between 24-29 years and 5 (6%) were more than 29 years of age.

Result of Analysis of Chi-square ($\chi 2$) Test for Sensory Factors and Purchase Intention (PI)

The Chi-square test was used to determine the influence of sensory elements on consumer purchase intentions. Table 2 shows the test results. The analysis of data in Table 5 demonstrates that the sensory factors 'Sight,' 'Sound,' 'Smell,' and 'Taste' have a significant influence (p-value less than 0.05) on WaiWaiAalu Tama's purchase intention (PI), however the sensory variable 'Touch' has no effect on its purchase intention. Furthermore, the phi- and Cramer's V-coefficient of 0.471 indicates a modest level of influence of 'Sight' and 'Sound' on purchase intention. While the value of phi- and Cramer's V-coefficient of 0.623 indicate that 'Smell' and 'Taste' have a significant level of impact on customer purchase intention. Furthermore, the phi-& Cramer's V-coefficient of 0.136 indicates a very poor relationship between the sensory stimulation 'Touch' and purchase intention.

Table 2.Results of Chi-square test for sensory factor s (sight) and Purchase Intention (PI)

Sensory Factor	PI	Control Group	Treatment Group	Pearson-χ^2	p - value	Phi-coefficient	Cramer's V Coefficient
Sight	Yes	10	24	13.30	.000	0.471	0.471
	No	20	6				
Sound	Yes	10	24	13.30	.000	0.471	0.471
	No	20	6				
Smell	Yes	10	28	23.25	.000	0.623	0.623
	No	20	2				
Taste	Yes	10	28	23.25	.000	0.623	0.623
	No	20	2				
Touch	Yes	10	14	1.11	.430	0.136	0.136
	No	20	16				

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Results of Pair-test Analysis of Sensory Variables

To examine several sensory characteristics, a pair-test analysis was used. This investigation revealed the results of comparisons between various sensory inputs.

Table 3 shows the results of the pair-test analysis of the variables of visual factors.

Table 4 shows the results of a pair-test study of auditory factor variables.

Table 3.Pair-test analysis for variables in Visual Factor

Pairs	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p - value (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Packaging	4.03	.76	2.81	.009
	Picture of the pack	3.53	.77		
Pair 2	Packaging	4.03	.76	.90	.375
	Color of the pack	3.83	.79		
Pair 3	Packaging	4.03	.76	-.40	.690
	Design	4.10	.71		
Pair 4	Packaging	4.03	.76	1.51	.142
	Visual of the ad	3.73	.64		
Pair 5	Picture of the pack	3.53	.77	-1.51	.142
	Color of the pack	3.83	.79		
Pair 6	Picture of the pack	3.53	.77	-3.08	.004
	Design	4.10	.71		
Pair 7	Picture of the pack	3.53	.77	-1.14	.264
	Visual of ad	3.73	.64		
Pair 8	Color of the pack	3.83	.79	-1.39	.174
	Design	4.10	.71		
Pair 9	Color of the pack	3.83	.79	.51	.610
	Visual of ad	3.73	.64		
Pair 10	Design	4.10	.71	2.48	.019
	Visual of ad	3.73	.64		

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Table 4.Pair-test analysis for variables of Auditory Factor

Pairs	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p - value (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Sound crunching	4.27	.57	-1.36	.18
	Special sound taking soup	4.47	-1.36		
Pair 2	Sound crunching	4.27	-1.36	-1.42	.16
	Jingle	4.50	-1.42		
Pair 3	Sound crunching	4.27	25.87	25.87	**.00**
	Signature tune	1.00	-.27		
Pair 4	Special sound taking soup	4.47	33.23	-.27	.78
	Jingle	4.50	37.69		
Pair 5	Special sound taking soup	4.47	.57	33.23	**.00**
	Signature tune	1.00	.00		
Pair 6	Jingle	4.50	.50	37.69	**.00**
	Signature tune	1.00	.00		

The pairings 3, 5, and 6 were discovered to have a considerable variation between them. The crunching sound in pair number three was discovered to be distinct from the characteristic music. Similarly, in pair number 5, it was discovered that special sound taking soup has a considerably distinct feeling than trademark song. Furthermore, Jingle was discovered to have a much different sensory response than the characteristic song. Thus, when compared to other auditory variables as sensory stimuli, the sound of crushing noodles, distinctive sound of consuming soup, and jingle had a different sensory response than trademark song.

Table 5 shows the results of a paired t-test between the variables of Olfactory, Gustative, and Tactile Factors.

Touch is an undoubtedly effective motivator in the industry. The findings of Hulten (2011) revealed 'the chance to touch the goods resulted in skyrocketing sales'. However, in this study, touch was found to have no significant influence on the development of buy intention for noodles. This experimental research study backs up the findings of previous studies by Khanna and Mishra (2013), Lin (2004), Bitner (1992), Duncan (1996), Alpert, Alpert, & Maltz, (2005), which emphasised the role of sensory variables in

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the creation of consumer reactions in terms of emotions and quality perception.

This research study can assist practitioners in the noodles marketing industry in using sensory branding as a method to the analysis found no difference between the sensory stimulation of olfactory, gustative, and tactile elements.

DISCUSSION

In terms of colours and forms in product idea, sight is the most employed sense aspect in marketing. Marketers understand that the layout of a point of sale is a crucial determinant in success (or failure). Colors and forms are used to identify and differentiate items (Khanna & Mishra, 2013). Several brands are linked with a certain colour, such as Coca-Cola, which is red, and Kodak, which is yellow. This is consistent with the study's findings, which show that visual is fairly significant. According to this study, packaging and design are more effective than colour in influencing purchase intention. Sound is a crucial component in increasing attractiveness as sensory branding, and it is also vital in noodles consumption. Duncan (1996) discovered that background music had a favourable effect on consumers' buying behaviour in a supermarket, where musical preferences influenced the amount of time and money spent in the store. This study also discovered that sound of crunching, distinctive sound when consuming soup, and jingle were crucial variables in sensory branding. Taste and smell are closely related elements, and both are vital in creating sensory appeal in product selection and consumption (Kumar, 2010). The outcomes of this study on noodles are likewise consistent with Kumar's findings (2010).

Table 5.Pair-test analysis for variables of Auditory Factor

Pairs	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p - value (2-tailed)
Pair 1 (Olfactory)	Smell of uncooked noodles	4.70	.46	.32	.74
	Aroma of cooked noodles	4.67	.47		
Pair 2 (Gustative)	Taste of uncooked noodles	4.47	.50	.23	.81
	Taste of the cooked noodles	4.43	.50		
Pair 3 (Tactile)	Texture of noodles	2.83	1.28	.11	.91
	Texture of noodles package	2.80	.99		

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CONCLUSION

Table 2 data show that Hypotheses H1 through H4 are supported, but Hypothesis H5 is rejected. As a result, the visual, auditory, olfactory, and gustatory factors have a substantial positive influence on the buy intention of noodles, however the tactile component has no significant effect on the purchase intention of noodles.

The pairedt-test analysis findings allowed the study to conclude that overall packaging is more important than the image on the box. Likewise, the whole design is more successful than the image and visual presented on the pack. Thus, design was discovered to be the most effective element in influencing consumers' purchase intentions of noodles, followed by packaging.

Among the different variables in sound as sensory stimulus, sound of crushing noodles, distinctive sound of consuming soup, and jingle were discovered to be more effective than signature song. There was no significant difference between internal variables of gustative, olfactory, and tactile aspects in the investigation.

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