

## *Exploratory study of the role of sensory factors in the shopping experience*

دراسة استكشافية لدور العوامل الحسية في تجربة التسوق

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### **Abstract:**

The research's main objective is to explore the effect of sensory factors such as music, ambient fragrance, colour and light on consumer's experience inside a store. We followed a qualitative methodology including observation and a semi-structured interview using the N'Vivo11 and Sphinx IQ2 softwares. The results reveal that consumers are sensitive to sensory factors. Light and colours influence perceptions and promote approaching behaviour.

**keyword:** Sensory Marketing; Customer Experience; Emotions; Atmospheric Scents; Light.

**JEL classification code :** M31

### **ملخص:**

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى استكشاف مدى تأثير العوامل الحسية على تجربة المستهلك داخل المتجر حيث اعتمدنا على المنهج الاستطلاعي عن طريق دراسة نوعية بما في ذلك الملاحظة والمقابلة الشبه منظمة ومن خلال استخدام N'Vivo 11 و IQ2 Sphinx توصلنا الى النتائج التالية: المستهلكون حساسون للعوامل الحسية. يؤثر الضوء والألوان على التصورات، ويثيران ردود الفعل العاطفية ويعززان السلوك المقرب. الأجواء الصوتية تخلق المتعة، وتنقل المشاعر، وتضع العملاء في مزاج جيد وتؤثر على إدراكهم للوقت الذي يقضونه في المتجر.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التسويق الحسي؛ تجربة المستهلك؛ العاطفة؛ العوامل الحسية؛ الضوء.

**تصنيف JEL : M31**

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## 1. Introduction :

In an environment characterized by the evolution of the offer, the exponential growth of e-commerce (Frochot, 2014), brands must challenge their marketing model and position themselves in a more qualitative field through the development of a particularly pleasant and attractive purchasing context. (Rieunier, 2017) to understand the emerging behaviours and symbolic needs of subjects who are looking for pleasant and original shopping experiences (Lemoine, 2002).

Initially, marketing consumption was conceived in a purely utilitarian dimension, but as we moved forward in time, changes in the way we consume have steadily increased and consumption has gradually discarded from a strictly utilitarian conception based on the use value towards a purely experiential dimension (Carù & Cova, 2006). This is justified by the emergence of a hedonistic consumer, better informed and more involved in his consumption process (Batat & Frochot, 2014). The individual no longer seeks the utilitarian function in purchasing or consumption; he also seeks to conduct an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Thus, the consumer became more sensitive to the subjective and symbolic characteristics of the product or service (Jeanpert & Caudron, 2007).

Otherwise, we are then witnessing a new phase of consumer society: a phase in which the experiential value of consumption would prevail over the utilitarian value (Chakor, 2009).

Effectively, we know that several brands operating in different sectors play the experiential, sensory and emotional card (Ben Dahmane Mouelhi, 2007).

Along what have been cited, store managers must now pay attention to the "essentially intangible dimensions of the offer, which mainly rely on the imagination of the barge as well as both the symbolic and hedonic component of consumption". (Bouchet, 2004). This is the whole point of sensory marketing, which consists in using the environment factors of the point of sale for a single purpose: to influence the customer's behaviour. The use of bewitching mood scents, attractive colours, a softening and pleasurable sound atmosphere or stimulating light diffusion are all practices that can be observed daily in commercial spaces. It is therefore the notion of experience, with its emotional purpose, that is at the heart of today's consumer society.

From that point, affect plays a role in the purchasing process and the consumer is looking for sensory stimuli during his or her consumption experiences (Ben Dahmane, 2003) in order to achieve this, companies are therefore forced to pay more attention to the atmosphere in their sales areas, which are designated as living and theatrical spaces (Bouchet, 2004).

On the other hand, many studies have proposed reflections on ways to enhance the value of the offer inside the point of sale, by creating new sensations to stimulate the consumer, reward the act of shopping through the lived experience (Filser M, 2002) (Cova & Deruelle, 2010), the atmospheric variables (Filser, 2003) on the stimulation of the senses (Rieunier, 2009).

As far as our research is concerned, the aim is to help the professionals to understand the importance of point-of-sale expressiveness and its role in creating a rewarding experience.

To understand this, a main question is asked: *How do we offer a rewarding consumer experience through the dramatization of the sales space?*

To grasp the contours of this phenomenon, other questions are interesting:

- How does the sound atmosphere influence the consumer both emotionally and behaviourally?
- What is the influence of ambient scents in retail outlets?
- How do light and colours affect the effectiveness of points of sale?

Our research will therefore aim to test in real-life situations the influence that sensory factors (ambient scents, sound atmosphere as well as light and colours) can have on the consumer's lived experience and behaviour inside the point of sale.

To answer these questions, we follow a qualitative methodology including two techniques, namely observation which is a study technique widely used in the social sciences, considered to be one of the most common techniques for collecting and analyzing verbal and non-verbal data (Batat & Frochot, 2014) and a semi structured interview.

The research theme is only about studying the ambient factors, more precisely music, ambient scents as well as light and colours.

## **2. Literature Review:**

### **1.2. Experiential Marketing and Consumer Experience:**

The study of consumer behaviour has evolved in recent decades. The research highlights the shift from a vision of a rational consumer to a more affective and emotional approach to consumption. The seminal work of Holbrook and Hirschman in the journal *Consumer Research* (1982a and 1982b) (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), one on hedonic consumer behaviour and the other laying the theoretical foundations for the experiential dimension of consumption. The consumer experience remains vast to define, complex to study, but open to different readings.

Norris (1941) emphasizes on the importance given to the moment offered by the product, considered superior to the product itself, its technical characteristics or its performance.

Later, Abbott (1955) considered the moment experienced with the product to be more important than the product itself. He argues: "*What people really want is not products but experiences*" (Abbott, 1955, pp.39-40).

Following these works, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) proposed a conceptualization of experiential perspective that defines consumption as "a subjective state of consciousness accompanied by a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonistic responses and aesthetic criteria". "*Holbrook and Hirschman's experiential model prompted three major theoretical. First, it underscored the existence of primary processes of fantasies, feelings and fun (what Holbrook and Hirschman called the 'Three Fs'), thus rebalancing consumer behavior research from a purely functional and utilitarian perspective of consumption to a Downloaded... Second, the experiential model led to a shift from a research focusing primarily on consumers' buying decisions to research centered on consumption per se... Third, while information-processing models consider information an important driver of behavior, the experiential model rather favors internal factors such as variety or sensory stimulation seeking*" (Damien , Renaud , & Rémi, 2018, p.4)

The individual is considered at the centre of the experience; he is the initiator and actor of the experience. While recalling, "the experiential perspective is phenomenological in nature" (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). This implies that the subject is an actor and no

longer just a receiver of the experience: he feels and refeels and at that time, he lives the moment of consumption.

In the same vein, Carù and Cova define the consumer experience as "a personal experience - often emotionally charged - based on the interaction with stimuli such as the products or services made available by the consumer system". (Carù & cova, 2002).

However, other definitions followed, based on different and complementary visions.

Filser defined experience as "the set of positive and negative consequences that the consumer derives from the use of a good or service". (Filser, 2002).

The emergence of the concept of the consumer experience was largely built around the emotional character sought by the consumer. "Enhanced with her emotional adjective." (Carù &cova, 2006)

Lipovetsky (2006, p.58) considers that for companies, "it is no longer just a question of selling services, we must offer the experience, the unexpected and the extraordinary that can generate emotion, connection, affects and sensations."

The experiential context is presented as the common denominator between the vision of a consumer experience and that of an experience produced by the brand (Roederer, 2008). In the first approach, the experiential context is any framework in which the experience takes place. The second approach refers to the framework proposed by the brand in order to immerse the individual in the moment of consumption (Carù & Cova, 2006).

The experience is part of the P.O.S (Person - Object - Situation) paradigm (Belk, 1975) It is therefore approached as: "an interaction between a person and a consumer object in a given situation". This interaction leads to the co-production by the consumer and the company of an event that is intended to be pleasant, memorable and meaningful (Kwortnik & Ross, 2007; Abbott, 1955).

In this interaction, the object-situation dyad constitutes the experiential context, a notion often analyzed even without the presence of the consumer.

The notion of experiential context refers to the framework in which the consumer experience takes place. Patrick Hertzfel (2002) rightly points out that the experiential approach consists of five actions: surprising, proposing the extraordinary, creating a bond, using the

brand to serve the experiential and stimulating the five senses via the sensory.

The consumer is in interaction with the consumer object. Carù and Cova (2006a) define an experiential context as an "assembly of stimuli (products) and stimuli (environment-activities) that can bring about the experience". The experiential context appears to be a favourable element for the unfolding of the experience without constituting the experience itself; the vision of the experience as a new offer of the so-called brand. The company does not produce a consumer experience but organizes an experiential framework that is conducive to its development (Carù and Cova, 2006a). The experience then remains subjective and linked to the consumer's experience.

## **2.2. Sensory Marketing:**

"Sensory Marketing" appeared in the 1950s, whose main objective was to study consumer perception of products. However, it was only in the 1990s that stores began to analyse the impact of their atmosphere on customer behaviour (P, Hetzel, 2002). Its managerial and academic interest remains undeniable and indisputable to this day, as its wide use in university research and in the discourse of marketing specialists (Ben Dahmane Mouelhi, 2007).

Daucé defines Sensory marketing as "a form of marketing that aims to stimulate purchases and strengthen the link between the brand and its customers through the solicitation of the 5 senses as part of actions carried out on the product, distribution and communication" (Daucé, Mercadoc.org, 2005).

As for Rieunier, he defines it as "the fact of using the store's atmosphere factors (music, scents, colours, tactile and gustatory sensations) in order to elicit favourable reactions from the consumer to the act of buying" (Rieunier, 2017).

From these definitions, we can deduce that the objective of sensory marketing is to seduce the shopper while stimulating his senses in order to positively influence his behaviour towards a product or within a point of sale, to place the consumer in a climate of confidence and to detach him from the intrinsic characteristics of the product.

The enthusiasm for this management tool continues to grow among researchers and distribution professionals (Bouchet, P, 2004) and it is now essential for distribution managers to identify shoppers' reactions

to the various environmental factors in order to stimulate certain desired behavioural responses (Lemoine, 2002).

The influence of the atmosphere on consumer behaviour dates back to the 1920s when the first research in environmental psychology was carried out. Psychologists' early work on atmospheric variables focused on the influence of light (Luckiesh, 1924), sound (Morgan, 1917; Gatewood, 1921) or the influence of colour (Davison, 1918; Pressy, 1921).

Thus, Kotler equates it to "creating a buying environment that produces emotional effects in the individual, such as pleasure or excitement that can increase the probability of buying". (Kotler, 1973). In the same vein, Derbaix (1987) defines it as "an emotionally oriented organization of space that aims to create impressions of well-being, welcome, joy, etc.» (Derbaix, 1987). Rieunier calls this "the set of store elements that can be controlled to influence consumers' emotional, cognitive and behavioural reactions. These elements can be multiple and include stimuli of atmospheres such as music, colour, light and smell as well as employee-customer interactions. ». (Rieunier, 2000)

### **2.2.1. The Music:**

The use of music for brand communication purposes is not new since as early as the 19th century itinerant merchants sang their offers (Julien J.R., 1989). Common sense attributes an extraordinary power to music: which can bring life to a place, transmitting emotions, selling or influencing behaviour (Rieunier, 2017). Many researchers in psychology and marketing are exploring the role of music on client behaviour. Vaccaro et al have shown that an appreciated musical atmosphere can be a source of loyalty (Vaccaro V, Yucetepe V, & Ahlawat S, 1996). Other researches have highlighted the value of pleasing customers by playing music that matches their musical tastes, so that they would spend more and make more impulse purchases (Jeon, Park & Yi, 2016).

Recent research, based on an analysis of 66 published studies on the influence of the presence of music (Vs its absence), concluded that the presence of music in retail outlets increased customer satisfaction, and their purchase intentions (Roschk H, Correia S.M, & Breithsohl J, 2017). The analysis obtained by researchers over decades shows that music objectively deserves special attention from retail managers

because it has a benefit in relation to silence and is likely to change consumer behaviour in stores.

### **2.2.2. The Atmosphere Scents:**

Man has always attributed certain powers to smells. This is a key element in the atmosphere of a point of sale. Research on the influence of scent diffusion on humans is limited and comes from different disciplines: psychology, neuropsychology and marketing. (Rieunier, 2017). Among the places where such research has been carried out are shopping centres, gift shops, ready-made cloths shops. Marketing results are still few but give a first idea of what can be expected from the diffusion of ambient scents in a place of service on the evaluation of the product or point of sale and on the impact on approach behaviours (presence time in stores) (Chebat J & Michon R, 2003). Chebat and Michon studied the impact of the diffusion of a lemon smell on the perception of a shopping centre and products (Chebat J & Michon R, 2003). This is also the case for Leenders et al, who showed by a study carried out in a shopping centre the impact that the intensity of scents has on point of sale evaluations in general (Leenders M & Smidts A, 2016). In the presence of an ambient scent, consumers also tended to lose track of time. (Daucé B, 2000). Another research shows the effect of congruence between odour and the context in which it is diffused (Spangenberg E & Sprott D, 2006). A study carried out in 2006 shows that odours have the ability to evoke memories that are highly charged with emotions (Herz R & Schankler C, 2004).

### **2.2.3. Light and Colours:**

When opening a store, the questions of lighting and colour necessarily arise. Some colours may be imposed (Franchise), others will simply be chosen according to the taste and preferences of the operator.

Colour and light are themes that have always fascinated us, whether it is their perceptions, the sensation they evoke their meanings or their symbols (Rieunier, 2017). However, a limited number of studies have been conducted: about 20 studies have focused on colour and half a dozen on light intensity (Roschk H et al, 2016). The main constraints remain in the difficulty of handling these elements.

Regarding visual perceptions, the evaluation of a colored surface is variable according to its hue and brightness (Rouillet B, 2016). Colours

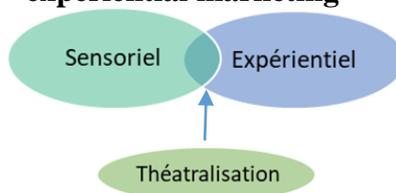
can affect olfactory performance. It would appear that the colour of an environment or object is likely to change the perceived intensity of an odour (Zellener D & Kautz M, 1990). Colours can also have an influence on affect in general and emotions in particular (Mehta R & Zhu J, 2009). Colours and light also influence cognition. Time flies in a warm shaded environment (Smets G, 1969). One study states that there is a congruence between illuminated stores and the number of visits (Yoo C & Park J, 1998) by creating excitement in the barge, and positively influencing its buying behaviour (Mehrabian A, 1976).

**2.3. From the experiential/sensory relationship to the creation of atmosphere dramatization of the offer:**

According to Rieunier (2009), the "theatricalization" of the point of sale is at the intersection of two concepts: sensory marketing and experiential marketing. Sensory marketing is therefore part of an experiential approach but does not cover a whole concept. Research shows us that these two concepts are interconnected and stipulate that "the sensory and at the service of the experiential". The figure below shows this reflection schematically (Daucé & Rieunier, 2002).

Indeed, the stimulation of the five senses is only one of the components of the experience, since it also includes surprise, proposing the extraordinary, but also creating the bond (Hetzl, 2002a). In 1973, Kotler mentioned the importance of various stimuli characterizing the atmosphere such as music, colours, smells or human density in order to give the brand a distinctive image (beyond price and assortment). Then, Filser and Jallais (1988) accentuated the reflection on the decor, the luminosity, the atmosphere of the store by developing on the example of visual, olfactory and tactile dimensions.

**Fig.1: Link between the concepts of sensory marketing and experiential marketing**



Source: Rieunier, 2009, page 7

The visit to the store is associated with pleasure and emotion through multi-sensory stimulation. Rieunier points out that sensory marketing is "the use of store atmosphere factors (music, scents, and

colours, tactile and gustatory sensations) to elicit favourable reactions from the consumer to the act of buying" (Rieunier, 2009, p.2).

As for Filser (2003, p. 6), he explains that it is "*a set of variables of actions controlled by the producer and/or distributor to create a specific multi-sensory atmosphere around the product or service, either through the characteristics of the product itself, or through communication in its favour, or through the product environment at the point of sale.*"

Thus, according to the literature, the brands will work on a sensory stimulation by The Atmosphere as a marketing action variable in order to make the consumer travel and live memorable, absorbent and unique experiences, charged with emotions and well-being.

Based on these findings, much researches have focused on the influence of atmospheric variables on consumer behaviour (Turley and Milliman, 2000). We have, for example, work on ambient music (Siberil, 1994; Rieunier, 2000), the effect of colours as well as light on cognition (time seems to pass faster in an environment with warm tones) (Smets G, 1969) or even ambient perfume (Daucé, 2000).

One of the main contributions of this work is that the atmosphere seems to be positively valued by the buyer and that it would thus be a source of psychological gratification (Filser, Des Garets, Paché, 2012).

The marketing literature thus presents a way of using atmospheric elements of the point of sale in order to create a "packaging" favourable to purchase for the consumer. Lemoine (2003, p.84) explains that "the dramatization of the offer, using a specific atmosphere at the point of purchase, constitutes an alternative that is increasingly used" to create a privileged link between the consumer and the brand.

El Aouni (2006, p.87), defines the theatricalization of a point of sale as "the interaction of all the sensory signals that emanate from a store considered as a living theatre according to the contribution of the ambient, architectural and social environments" Once again, we find the importance of sensory variables. The store is ultimately a place that will emit different sensory signals - thanks to a way of using certain environmental factors.

When we interact from sensory marketing to experiential marketing, we see that this production of experience has several tools at its disposal to create a specific atmosphere, largely through the

stimulation of the senses. The latter is one of the components of the experiment. Rieunier (2009) emphasizes the importance of sensory marketing to enhance pleasure, differentiation and shopping comfort.

### **3. Methodology:**

Having the desire to better assimilate the sensory factors coordinated by the managers of the sales areas in order to offer the consumer an absorbing, i. e. extraordinary, shopping experience also to better understand their behavior within the store. We have chosen to carry out a study in the field and use ethnographic methods (Desjeux, 1997). These methods allow us to understand and apprehend interactions, to appreciate the emotional and symbolic dimensions that emerge in the experiences of consumers and groups of individuals, to check and control and to go beyond declarative (Frochot and Batat, 2014). In the light of the results obtained from the observation, one avenue of research is interesting and deserves to be explored further through a qualitative study: the role of atmospheric factors on the consumer's lived experience inside the point of sale.

#### **1.3. Non-participant Observation:**

We have chosen observation as our first mode of collection, which is a study technique widely used in the social sciences, and is defined as "the precise and systematic recording...of the activities in which people engage in their normal lives" (Evrard, 2009). Throughout the field activity, the main mission of the participating observer is to look, listen and interact with people, collect and gather information, while mixing with the community they are observing. (Georges Lapassade, 2016). Indeed, for five days, we carried out "disguised observation in a natural environment" (Filser, 1996).

The observation phase was conducted at the ARDIS shopping centre in Oran. Indeed, this store brings together all the factors that, according to literature, awaken all the senses: hearing through the music played, smell through the scents of the atmosphere, touch through self- service products and vision through light and colour. In addition, this space houses several boutiques of major brands that compete in ingenuity to captivate the eyes of customers such as Célio, Skechers, Sergent Major, Jennifer, Okaïdi and Adidas, offering the possibility of buying theatricalized products and showcasing them in display cases that perfectly blend into the setting of the place.

We chose the Célio brand, which by its strategic position and its shop window that allows us to see the interior that attracts their attention and encourages them to push its door. This brand presents a sober interior, with warm pastel tones, slightly saturated, first of all highlighting the range of men's clothing. The parquet floor gives a warmer atmosphere to the whole. A soothing and muffled music, an enchanting atmosphere scent, a subdued lighting contributing to the positive reinforcement of the brand. The observation took place in early April 2019 for 5 days, outside the sales period.

**Fig.2: Interior of the Célio store**



**Source:** Photos taken by the observer

### 2.3. Qualitative study:

The choice of this research method is motivated by the observation of Aubin-Auger et al (2008, p143) that "Qualitative research does not seek to quantify or measure, it most often consists of collecting verbal data (more rarely images or music) allowing an interpretative approach"; it highlights the subjectivity of the individual while preserving his or her life and experiences.

As a collection method, we chose the semi-directive individual interview, also called the centred interview. The main objective of the collection using this method was to ensure an exchange between the interviewer and the respondent while preserving confidentiality (Malhotra, 2011, p111). A guide has been developed for a better conduct of interviews. The guide identifies the different themes that have been addressed, namely: Shopping habits, the consumer's experience in the store and favourable factors. Our sample consists of 21 individuals aged between 18 and 49 years old from different socio-professional categories. The interviews were recorded by a tape recorder with the agreement of the respondents and then transcribed in full. We then proceeded to the thematic analysis of the verbatim using the N'Vivo 11 software and the content analysis by the sphinx IQ2.

## **4. Findings:**

### **1.4. Observation Results:**

Several behaviours can be identified from this observation:

- A first type of behaviour related to customers who paid no attention to product prices: delighted and dazzled, trying several items at once.
- Many of these people were not shopping alone but rather accompanied by friends or relatives, consciously succumbed to an unexpected purchase and were carried away by this pleasant experience. They said to each other: "we came to the store and eat pizza and here we are with a shirt and pants in the bag" or "I came to buy jeans and now I'm going out with an extra t-shirt! ». They left the store very happily.
- Some people walked around the store for a long time and did not pay much attention to the notion of time, get carried away by the cosy atmosphere of the atmosphere that reigned inside the sign "you don't feel time once inside and it passes very quickly..." They gave the impression that they were insensitive to the experience offered by this store.
- Others would verbalize their satisfaction as soon as they entered the room with regard to the diffused scent and said "Mmmmmmm!!!! it smells good inside, it's lavender, doesn't it? ", "the smell is pleasant"
- A group of young people sang and rehearsed the words of the music played in the store while trying on t-shirts, pants and they seemed to be enjoying their purchase and having a good time inside the store.
- In most cases, the counsellor assisted the clients, tried the models on him to help them choose a shirt or sweater for their sons. Very quickly, the salesman fraternized with them and friendly ties were forged between them.

Following this observation period, we arrived at the following result: The majority of customers seemed to be sensitive to the sensory elements used by Célio. This atmosphere creates a sense of escape and encourages the consumer to immerse himself in a rewarding and memorable shopping experience, immersing them in a state of total disconnection: the visitor feels cut off from his usual environment to guide all his senses, emotions and intellect in the service of the experience he is currently living. Forget the time and enjoy trying all the models and talking to the seller and customers present. Some become hyper-excited and in a hurry like children in a toy store, others

are calmer, more serene, and take all their time and enjoy every moment of the experience before moving on to the act of buying.

#### **2.4. Results of the Qualitative Study:**

The analysis of the verbatim allowed us to identify a number of points that will be presented as follows:

**2.4.1. Sensory factors:** the majority of respondents (15/21) give very high importance to the experience lived inside the store and in particular to the sensory elements (visual, sound and olfactory)

**2.4.1.1. Light and colours:** During the analysis, we found that the visual (colour and brightness) is widely mentioned by respondents. Sober and relaxing colours, soft and subdued light favouring an approach behaviour, also provoking a positive reaction by evoking the cosy, noble, or neutral aspect. Light and colour seem to be important elements in a shopping experience. "... I am very sensitive to the visual, and colours are what I see first when I walk past a store..." (Female 38 years old). "...*pleasant colours and make you want to look and touch the products...*" (Female, 45 years old). "...*the light is very relaxing and highlights the colours of the walls and products... it's very cosy*" (Man, 28 years old).

**2.4.1.2. Background music:** Music is the element most discussed by respondents 19/21. According to the interviewees, it seems to bring life to a sales outlet, convey emotions, create pleasure, sell and influence the behaviour of shoppers.

"...*I feel pleasure in buying when I hear music in a store...*" (Male, 38 years old).

"... *When the music played is pleasant it makes me want to stay longer indoors...*" (Female, 38 years old).

"... *A soft music relaxes me...*" (Female, 41 years old).

**2.4.1.3. Atmospheric scents:** this element is significantly mentioned by the interviewees who stipulate that smells favour the approach behaviour and the time spent in the store and the evaluation of the latter. The olfactory atmosphere creates emotional and emotional reactions and improves the mood of the buyers

"...*The place was pleasant... a slight perfume of atmosphere came to decorate the place...*" (Female, 38 years old).

"...*The diffused smell is very pleasant; it makes me want to stay longer in a store...*" (Female, 45 years old). "...*An unpleasant smell makes me*

want to run away from the store... for me the presence of a pleasant smell is essential..." (Female, 38 years old). "...I feel good in a store that places perfume diffusers..." (Female, 38 years old). The themes that emerged are shown in Figure 3

Fig.3: Cloud of words: Ambient factors



Source: Nvivo11

**2.4.2. The content of the experience:** By asking the question "Tell us about your experience?" 14/21 states that they had pleasant and pleasant experiences while shopping "... The place was pleasant; everything is clean in such a way that our eyes were captivated by only one element at a time..." (Woman, 54 years old), "... it smelled like vanilla and lavender since there were lots of candles, and the atmosphere was more like COSY..." (Female, 38 years old). This state of immersion will have the role of altering his sense of reality "... In such a shop I forget myself, I enter a new world and I want to buy everything..." (Woman, 40 years old). A pleasant experience can make a product extremely attractive and desirable to the consumer "... The products I buy are not necessarily essential or indispensable but rather for pleasure..." (Female, 45 years old)

Fig.4: Word cloud: Experience inside the store



Source: Nvivo11

**2.4.3. Emotion:** Consumption is considered an experience that creates feelings and emotions. Joy represents the most frequently cited feeling

in for the emotional state of the barge  
 "...I am very happy with my visit..." (Female, 48 years old) "...I felt happy once in the store..." (Male, 38 years old) The themes that emerged are shown in Figure 5

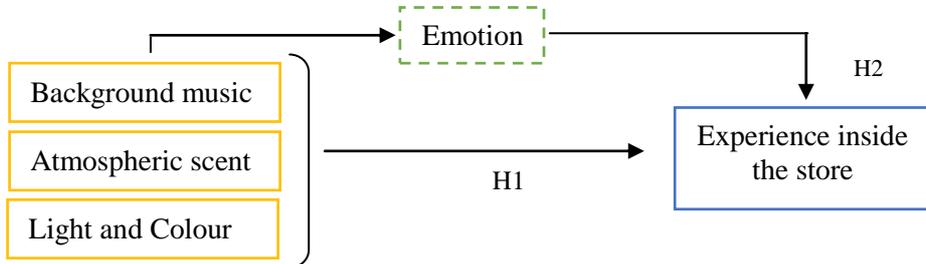
**Fig.5: Cloud of words: Emotions felt**



Source: Nvivo11

In the light of the results obtained from the qualitative study, we were able to build a conceptual model and formulate the resulting hypotheses.

**Fig.6: Proposed conceptual model**



Source: Prepared by the authors

**H1:** Sensory factors influence the content of the experience in the store.

**H2:** Background music influences the consumer's experience through the mediation of consumer affect.

**5. Conclusion:**

The main objective of our research is to explore the effect of sensory factors such as music, ambient fragrance, colour and light on the consumer's experience in a store.

With a view to deeply understand the role of environmental factors on the experience of shoppers, we explored the field by mobilizing an interpretative approach: non-participant observation in a real field and interview as parts of qualitative study.

The observation made us understand that the atmosphere elements mobilized by the store create a feeling of escape and encourage the consumer to immerse himself in a rewarding and memorable shopping experience, immersing them in a state of total disconnection: the visitor feels cut off from his usual environment to guide all his senses, emotions and intellect in the service of the experience he is living.

The results of the interview reveal that consumers are sensitive to sensory factors. Light and colours influence perceptions, evoke emotional reactions and promote approaching behaviour. The sound atmosphere creates pleasure, conveys emotions, puts customers in a good mood and can change the perception of time spent in the store. The results also show that odour increases the time spent in a store and has an influence on the consumer's perception.

Despite the managerial interests brought by this research, was not exempt from methodological and empirical limitations. Methodologically, the limitation lies in the fact that the observation is limited by a spatio-temporal window. We observe individuals over a period of time and in a given place. We do not know anything about their experiences until we get into the field of investigation. As for the empirical plan, the limitation lies in the exploratory nature of the study and the small sample size, which must be supplemented by a quantitative study with a large number of clients where a measurement of the impact of sensory variables on the purchasing experience will provide a path for future research to validate the proposed model.

## **6. References :**

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