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SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

**THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENSORY MARKETING IN FOOD  
AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**fMRI** – functional magnetic resonance imaging  
**mOFC** – medial orbitofrontal cortex  
**vmPFC** – ventral medial prefrontal cortex  
**dIPFC** – dorsolateral prefrontal cortex  
**PR** – public relations  
**ASMR** – autonomous sensory meridian response  
**OFC** – orbitofrontal cortex

# 1 INTRODUCTION

As globalization has increased competition among brands, it is getting harder for them to be recognized by consumers in the crowded markets (Koszembar-Wiklik, 2019). The saturation of information, advertising clutter, larger number of existing products on the market, and high levels of competitiveness make consumers more immune to firms' marketing communications (Jiménez Marín & Elías Zambrano, 2018). This consequently means that an immense number of advertisements are either ignored in the first place or in other cases forgotten after a few seconds (Kirk, 2022). Moreover, with social media, internet, and mobile applications becoming an integral part of billions of people's everyday lives (Stephen, 2016), companies have been focusing heavily on digital marketing, oftentimes neglecting their essential strategies, consistency and creativity of brand messaging and, most importantly, other media channels (Fromowitz, 2017), making their communications less effective. Furthermore, in contrast to the original economic theory advocating that consumers' decisions are rational, today we can observe that purchase decisions are oftentimes not based on rational actions but are rather impulsive and driven by emotions and senses (Jiménez Marín & Elías Zambrano, 2018).

These reasons strongly suggest the need for unconventional, well-thought-of, distinctive, and experiential marketing strategies that engage with customers based on live interactions and create emotions between them and the brand (Plumhoff, 2022). Moreover, the abovementioned reasons create potential for strategies, based on understanding how human brain processes stimuli and information, to ensure predictability of consumers' decision-making preferences, their actions, and behavior. This strongly applies to the food and beverage industry, where human senses dominate consumption and customer behavior. Just merely by walking into a bakery, the smell of freshly baked goods coming out of the oven can be the influencing factor for consumers to make a purchase. The sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch can be the elements of a psychological marketing strategy named "sensory marketing", designed to capture consumer attention and influence them to make a purchase (Longley, 2019).

Sensory marketing is a strategy and also tactics of using sensory triggers that engage human senses, through which it influences consumers' perception, desire and behavior (Krishna, 2012). These enriched sensory experiences can be created in both digital and physical environments. However, not all senses can be engaged online, hence the physical environment can offer even more opportunities of creating deeper connections between the customer and the brand through positive sensory cues that heighten the customer's appeal to the brand and its products (Labrecque, 2020). On account of human senses, a person can become more aware of specific brands, products, and companies. If a brand understands the functioning of the human brain in connection to the five human senses and uses it in its marketing strategy, it can target consumers more effectively, making them more perceptive and aware of the company and its products (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 1). Due to such benefits,

lately, the focus has been shifting towards using multisensory strategies, since it is believed that sensory stimuli impact consumer-decision-making by producing mental associations that improve brand and product recall (Rimkute et al., 2016). Such a form of product promotion has a direct influence on recipient's subconsciousness by involving the five senses – sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch (Koszembar-Wiklik, 2019). Each of the five human senses, as well as all together, create a so-called “sensory experience” – an outcome of sense's reactions to specific marketing triggers or stimuli (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 17). In today's age the most popular brands in the food and beverage industry such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Dunkin' Donuts, KFC, and many more are aware of the benefits of sensory marketing and use it to generate greater brand awareness and increase sales.

In addition, sensory techniques have been popular in recent years also in other scientific areas, such as, for instance, learning. Research has also shown that multisensory teaching has shown greater success in memorizing knowledge (Newman, 2019). It has the advantage of engaging individuals who have distinct learning styles, including the ones who are visual types of learners, as well as the others who are more auditory learners, which is why it shows to be more efficient (Shams & Seitz, 2008). These benefits can be applied to the field of neuromarketing, as with multisensory strategies brands can target the senses of all types of people (the visual, audio, and kinesthetic types), improve brand recognition and recall through better memorization, and consequently achieve superior marketing results (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 20).

Based on the aforementioned benefits, we can conclude that sensory marketing strategy can positively contribute to a firm's success on the market. Despite popular use among the most valuable brands, companies are still battling to understand its potential and use. In order to obtain better and deeper understanding of sensory marketing, especially applied to the food and beverage industry – a market where all human senses drive consumer decision-making and behavior, the purpose of this master's thesis is to analyze the functioning of sensory marketing, highlight the advantages of using such strategy, and demonstrate how brands in the food and beverage industry can leverage it to achieve greater marketing success.

The objectives of this master's thesis are:

- To obtain, through a scientific literature review, a better understanding of the functioning of human brain when exposed to marketing triggers influencing consumers' perceptions, responses, and decision-making.
- To study sensory marketing, neurological responses in connection to targeting human senses, the use, its advantages, and the influence it may have on consumer behavior.
- To discover through interviews what is the level of awareness among marketers and what are their perceptions of sensory marketing.

- To find examples of brands and marketers that utilize sensory marketing strategy successfully in the industry of food and beverage.
- To assess ethical implications of using sensory marketing in the industry of food and beverage.

This master's thesis will focus on answering the following research questions:

- What is the level of awareness among marketers regarding sensory marketing, what are their perceptions of it?
- If so, how and why have they implemented it in their marketing?
- How do marketers perceive the ethics of using sensory marketing in the food and beverage industry?

This thesis is divided into two main sections, the first one is theoretical and the second is empirical. The theoretical part is based on the analysis of scientific literature, articles, and online sources. It encompasses the evolution of sensory marketing and explanation of sensory marketing model. Next, it describes the development of consumer neuroscience and neuromarketing, its advantages of utilization, as well as brain responses to unconscious and conscious stimuli. It also presents a brand preference formation model, used to provide insights to consumer responses to different stimuli, behavior, and decision-making. The following part focuses on sensory marketing, its definition, advantages, and sensory branding. Afterwards, each human sense is explained in detail, explaining the brain responses behind each sensory trigger as well as practical examples of utilization in marketing. I also present multisensory marketing and focus on two practical cases of well-known brands in the selected industry. The last chapter of the theoretical part also analyzes ethical viewpoints of sensory marketing in the food and beverage industry. The part of empirical research first describes purpose and objectives, which is followed by research design and data analysis. The selected methodology are semi-structured-in-depth interviews with 7 marketers in the abovementioned industry. In addition to detailed questions about sensory marketing, marketers also viewed and rated four commercials, enabling even deeper understanding of their thoughts and preferences. The following chapter introduces a discussion, integrating empirical findings with theoretical foundations, presenting also limitations and future research recommendations.

## **2 THE EVOLUTION OF SENSORY MARKETING**

Marketing has been developed as an activity to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange valuable offerings for consumers, partners, clients, and wider society (American Marketing Association, 2017). For many years it has been viewed as a logical process that evolved in response to consumer's needs and demands. Traditional marketing has been based on the

principle that consumers make rational purchasing decisions, where they rationally evaluate factors such as price, utility, and other features before making a purchase (Longley, 2019).

## **2.1 Development of marketing models**

Transactional or mass marketing model has been focusing on obtaining consumers based on short-term exchanges and single purchases between active sellers and more passive customers. Other researchers expressed their doubts for it being too restrictive, due to short-term exchange focus (Rodrigues et al., 2011).

This led to the adoption of the relationship marketing model, focusing on long-term customer relationships, two-dimensional communication, and a consumer-centric approach in developing company strategies (Rodrigues et al., 2011). Nevertheless, questions of whether long-term relationships are profitable resurfaced (Egan, 2008), leading to new model development.

## **2.2 Sensory marketing model**

Afterwards Hultén (2009) saw a demand for an additional marketing model, which would be able to solve future marketing obstacles, and thus developed a sensory marketing model, integrating both the transactional and relationship approaches for achieving an effective multi-sensory experience seen in Table 1 (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 4, 5; Rodrigues et al., 2011).

Sensory marketing still however differs from transactional and relationship marketing, as it is based on the five human senses. It centers around the treatment of customers, encompassing logic, rationality, emotions, values but also the creation of brand awareness and sustainable brand image. Sustainable brand image and brand awareness are built upon sensory experiences that individuals have with the brand, which is often overlooked by both mass marketing and relationship marketing (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 4, 5).

*Table 1: The development of (sensory) marketing*

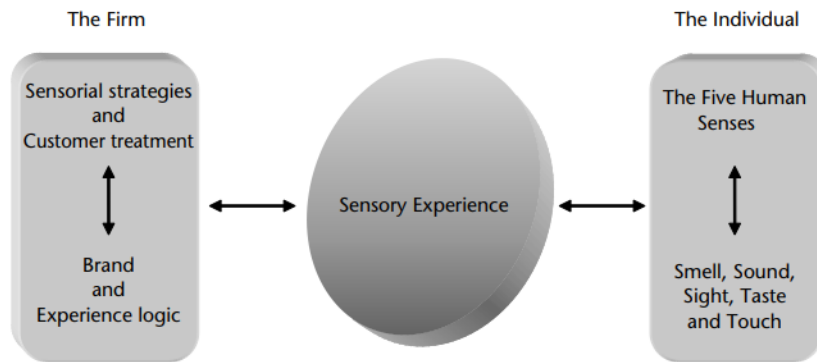
|                           | Mass marketing                                                                     | Relationship marketing                                                  | Sensory marketing                                                                       |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Marketing focus           | Goods logic<br>Exchange perspective<br>Transaction marketing                       | Service logic<br>Relationship perspective<br>Relationship marketing     | Experiential logic<br>Brand perspective<br>Sensory marketing                            |
| Strategic Marketing focus | Product focus<br>Customer acquisition<br>Transactional strategies                  | Customer focus<br>Customer attrition<br>Relational strategies           | Multisensory focus<br>Customer experience<br>Sensorial strategies                       |
| Tactical Marketing focus  | Persuasion and promotion<br>One-dimensional communication<br>Production technology | Interactions<br>Two-dimensional communication<br>Information technology | Dialogue and on-line interactivity<br>Multi-sensory communication<br>Digital technology |

*Source: Hultén et al. (2009).*

Consumers perceive and experience products and services through their senses, which can be seen in Figure 1. In the human brain mental processes and psychological actions are made, leading to sensory experiences. Sensory marketing is therefore centered around the human brain and its five senses. The brain is the place where consumers create brand associations and images that are based on subjective experiences, which Hultén calls “experience logic”. This logic is the outcome of how a person’s five senses perceive and translate experiences (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 5,6).

By using sensorial strategies for smell, sound, sight, taste, and touch the firm is able to create sensory experiences that are analyzed in individuals’ brain, where perceptions and associations with brands/products are formed (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 5,6). Hultén’s sensory marketing model (Figure 1) is consumer-centric oriented, where customers are value co-creators, as they interact with brands in numerous touchpoints from consumption to design (Rodrigues et al., 2011).

*Figure 1: Sensory marketing*



*Source: Hultén et al. (2009).*

By contrast to traditional marketing approach, sensory marketing believes that consumers will act in response to sensory stimuli and emotions, meaning the decision making is therefore made predominantly in the unconscious parts of the brain (Longley, 2019).

Two primary factors have influenced the development of sensory marketing. The first one is the evolution of neuroscience. Neuroscience enables understanding of the human brain and the processes that relate to perception, emotion, reason, and behavior. The second most impactful reason is also the evolution of economic markets into being global, cluttered, and highly competitive. Nowadays, brands' abilities to differentiate themselves from competitors are more significant than ever (Manzano et al., 2019). Studies have demonstrated that consumers' purchasing decisions are not always rational and calculated, but rather influenced by senses and emotions (Jiménez Marín & Elías Zambrano, 2018). Impulsive purchasing has become a trendy topic over the last years in the field of marketing and behavioral economics. It is also widely prevalent in food grocery stores and supermarkets and forms up to 60-80% of their total sales (Xuqi et al., 2021).

Sensory marketing originates already in the 1950s, era when marketers began analyzing the influence of sight in ads. Back then, the prevailing form of visual advertising were printed billboards and posters. The research in those years was focused on the influence of different colors and fonts used in printed forms. When the television was becoming widely adopted in households, marketers began focusing on the sense of sound in their advertising. The first "jingle" commercial that appeared on TV is believed to be an ad for Colgate's-Palmolive Ajax cleanser in 1948 (Longley, 2019).

As the markets have evolved, so have the marketing practices. The traditional mass marketing approaches have been gradually becoming obsolete and have been replaced by niche or fragmented markets, based on individualized product offers, made for specific consumer segments (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 3). Today, marketers are going to great strengths to understand consumer behavior and buying triggers, therefore consumer neuroscience and

neuromarketing studies have gained significant importance as they provide insights into human brain responses, consumer perceptions, reactions, behavior, and preferences.

The following parts will examine what is the purpose of the field of consumer neuroscience and neuromarketing (which also encompasses sensory marketing), how consumers perceive and respond to various stimuli, what happens in their brain processes, how can marketing triggers influence their behavior and decision-making, the logic behind unconscious and conscious choices, and, most importantly, how the insights of neuroscience studies can be used in marketing to generate effective communication with consumers.

### **3 CONSUMER NEUROSCIENCE AND NEUROMARKETING**

#### **3.1 Development and explanation**

Neuroscience is the study of the nervous system that aims to understand the biological foundation of behavior (Plassman et al., 2012). In the last two decades neuroscience has gathered significant attention from scientists as the study of the human mind (Manzotti & Moderato, 2010).

As it has always been known that predicting consumer behavior, knowing customers' needs and desires are the basis for providing profitable products and services, there has been a lot of demand in acquiring more profound understandings of human brain and behavior (Agarwa & Dutta, 2015). In the past fifteen years consumer neuroscience has contributed immensely to creating understandings connected with marketing and consumer behavior (Plassman et al., 2015). Consumer neuroscience is a study that merges psychology, economics, and neuroscience to examine how the human brain psychologically responds to marketing communications and advertising (Lee et al., 2007). Lee et al. (2006) describe neuromarketing as a study, which encompasses the use of scientific tools to study and understand consumer behavior from the viewpoint of markets. Consumer neuroscience is used for academic purposes to obtain an understanding how marketing affects consumer behavior, whilst neuromarketing deals with commercial use of neuroscientific tools to derive consumer behavior insights that ensure effective marketing communication which boosts the businesses (Ramsøy, 2015).

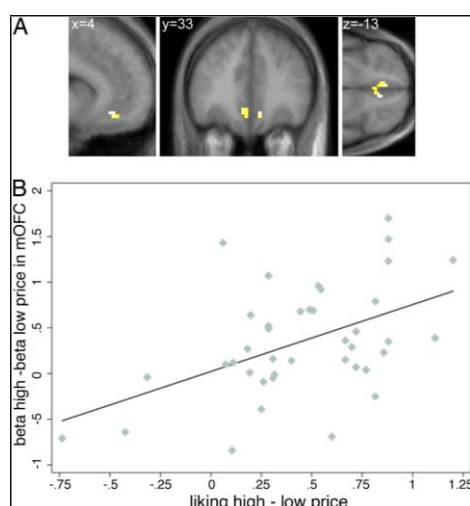
#### **3.2 Significance and advantages of utilization consumer neuroscience and neuromarketing**

It has been known for several years now that consumer neuroscience and neuromarketing methods can disclose behavior, intents, and emotions better than the traditional approaches such as questionnaires and interviews (Falk et al., 2012).

With these traditional methods individuals are too aware of their answers about their thoughts and experiences, providing absolutely no information about their unconscious mind and unconscious decision drivers. This is due to the fact that oftentimes consumers are incapable or unwilling to disclose these drivers. Moreover, marketing can influence their behavior so subtly that they do not even realize it (Ramsøy, 2015). Consequently, neuromarketing can be a great approach that enables the observation of consumers' mental processes without directly soliciting them for their thoughts (Ariely & Berns, 2010).

Neuroscience can unravel the unconscious drivers of consumer decision-making, as well as show true brain reaction of customers, when they are faced with a product or a service, are experiencing it, or during their decision process (Plassmann et al., 2012). Rather than being based on consumer's overly conscious answers, neuromarketing is based on the studies of brain-behavior relationships that is valuable for understanding the psychology behind consumer behavior and their decision-making (Plassman et al., 2012). A great example of using neuroscientific tools (e.g., functional magnetic resonance imaging - fMRI) to capture consumers' mental processes is a study conducted by Plassmann et al. (2008) which examined the effects of price changes on brain processing of wine tasting. They discovered that when participants tasted the same wine in two different experimental conditions (once with lower price and once with higher price), it impacted the brain activity in medial orbitofrontal cortex (mOFC), the brain area which is widely thought to encode for actual experienced pleasantness. With their experiment, they demonstrated that higher prices of wine increases taste expectations and consequently augments the activity in mOFC, which is also shown in Figure 2 below.

*Figure 2: The effect of price on experiencing pleasantness in brain activity*



*Source: Plassmann et al. (2008).*

In addition, researchers have proven that neuroscience can also be used to predict consumer behavior and their conscious choices. As neuroscience integrates advanced statistical models from the field of computer science with neuroscience information, it makes it more feasible

to predict individual behavior with greater accuracy compared to using traditional measures (Plassmann et al., 2012). This is greatly shown in a study, where individuals were scanned using fMRI and presented with a product for 4 seconds. In the following 4 seconds they were shown the price of the product and lastly given another 4 seconds to make the choice of buying the product or not. The participants stated their decisions only at the last 4 seconds of each round, however the fMRI data analysis revealed neural indicators of purchase already at an earlier time, more precisely to a period of 8-12 seconds before they reported their conscious decision choices (Knutson et al., 2007). These neuroscientific tools provide the potential for enhanced forecasts of decision-making patterns in various fields, such as neural, physiological, and behavioral predictors of consumer purchases, excessive spending, and unhealthy habits (Plassmann et al., 2012).

Not only does this approach enable an opportunity for better results, but it also represents a more cost-effective option, as it saves costs for brands, which would otherwise spend their budgets on deficient campaigns (Agarwal & Dutta, 2015). All in all, consumer neuroscience has helped researchers and marketers gather new comprehensions of various marketing elements such as: branding and brand perception (Milosavljevic et al., 2012), brand evaluation (Esch et al., 2012), brand preferences (Venkatraman et al., 2012), pricing (Lee et al., 2006), advertising (Vecchiato et al., 2011), new product development (Ariely & Berns, 2010), and more.

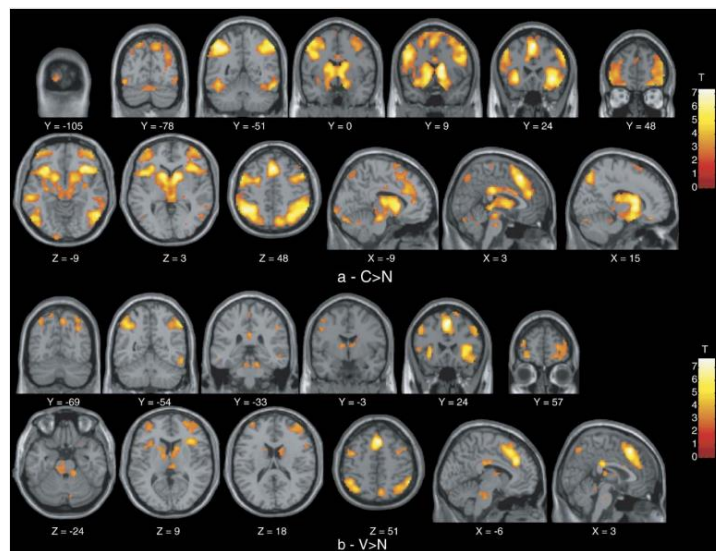
### **3.3 Brain's response to unconscious and conscious stimuli**

Consciousness means being aware of your feelings, thoughts, perceptions, experience, and the surroundings, whilst unconsciousness describes the opposite, therefore being unaware of them (Cvetkovic & Cosic, 2011, p. 2). As humans, our attention and consciousness are limited, meaning that what we “consciously” experience is at the cost of other things we could experience. To put things into perspective, the brain has the size of approximately 2% of body mass, however at the same time the brain takes up to 20% of the body's energy to function, meaning it uses lots of energy in comparison to the rest of human body. Therefore, to decrease this energy expenditure, it is normal for the brain to simplify the process, thus creating shortcuts or “autopilot behavior”. Consequently, consumers frequently behave automatically, for instance, when selecting an item in the shop, they exactly know where to find it. Therefore, it is quite logical for the brain to behave on “autopilot”, or in other words unconsciously, to decrease the energy expenditure (Ramsøy, 2015).

This can be seen in the research by Christensen et al. (2006), which studies what are the effects on the brain when individuals look at objects and observe them consciously as opposed to when they do it unconsciously. The researchers showed the participants a stimulus (line drawings of geometric figures) for a very short amount of time – from 16 milliseconds to 100 milliseconds and based on that observe their experience. The longer they were exposed to that stimuli, the clearer and more conscious experience they had of it. They

examined the part of the brain that was responsible for creating a feeling of seeing the stimuli. When comparing the two states where participants had clear feeling of seeing the stimuli as opposed to when they did not have any experience of seeing it at all, they observed that more regions of the brain are engaged when people are conscious of the stimulus, which is shown in Figure 3 below.

*Figure 3: Effects on brain activation triggered by conscious vs unconscious stimulus*



*Source: Christensen et al. (2006).*

According to Harvard Business School professor Gerard Zaltman (2003), 95% of decisions are made unconsciously, meaning that individuals are not aware of the reasons driving their decisions. This means that the ventral striatum part of the brain is not required to be consciously accessed, consequently meaning that it does not have to be a part of conscious experience for an individual to make the right decisions (Ramsøy, 2015).

These findings can be applied to marketing. For example, many customers say that before making a purchase they compare prices of competing products and choose the most rational alternative. Although, observations have unraveled that oftentimes they do not look for other options or brands of the desired product (Mahoney, 2003). This has been backed up also by Ramsøy's in-store attention study together with his company Neurons, showing that frequently we are not the owners of our purchasing decisions. The study consisted of three groups, where the first task was to look at different ads. The first group did not see the Valspar paint ad, the second group saw a 15-second version, and the third group saw a 30-second version of the Valspar ad. Afterwards, they went into the store with eye-tracking glasses and EEG, they were also given a shopping list with 5 items and paint was on this list (Neurons, n.d.). The aim was to find some paint that they would like to use in their living room. The results showed that 78% participants who were not shown the branded paint ad bought that particular brand of paint, among the experimental group 91% of those who saw a 15 second version bought that brand of paint, and 100% of those who saw a 30 second

version of the ad also bought it. Afterwards, the participants were asked why they had bought that particular brand of paint and none of them linked seeing the ad with their purchase decision. This shows that human visual attention can be affected by ads or other marketing communication unconsciously and that neuroscientific tools provide great understanding of consumer buying process (Ramsøy, 2015).

*Figure 4: In-store attention and ad effects*



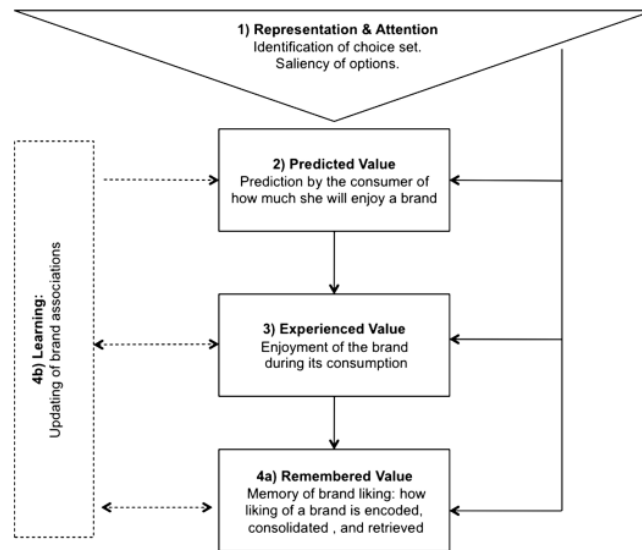
*Source: Ramsøy (2015).*

In addition, if we look at a personal-care product for instance, just its colors and fragrance can evoke a sense of social bonding experiences in consumer's unconscious mind and evoke feelings and emotions, which drives their decision-making (Mahoney, 2003). Another interesting fact is that out of 11 million bits of sensory information sensed by the human brain per second, only 2 to 60 bits per second are conceptualized by the conscious mind (Wu et al., 2016). As already mentioned before, the human brain can decide unconsciously up to 12 seconds before the individual is mindful of its choice (Koenig-Robert & Pearson, 2019; Knutson et al., 2007). However, since today's markets are flooded with products and advertisements, only a small part of information is processed by our perceptual system and fully accessed by consciousness.

### **3.4 Brand preference formation model**

The model that has been developed by Plassmann et al. (2012) can provide insights into how consumers perceive and respond to various stimuli and disclose the triggers that influence their behavior and decision-making. By understanding this model and these consumer insights, companies can use them to their advantage to positively influence consumer behavior in their favor. This framework consists of 4 components: 1) representation and attention, 2) predicted value, 3) experienced value, and, lastly, 4) remembered value and learning. These stages encompass activities in different brain areas and disclose what biologically occurs in the human mind that drives consumer behavior, hence providing valuable information to marketers on which they should base their marketing communications.

Figure 5: Brand preference formation model

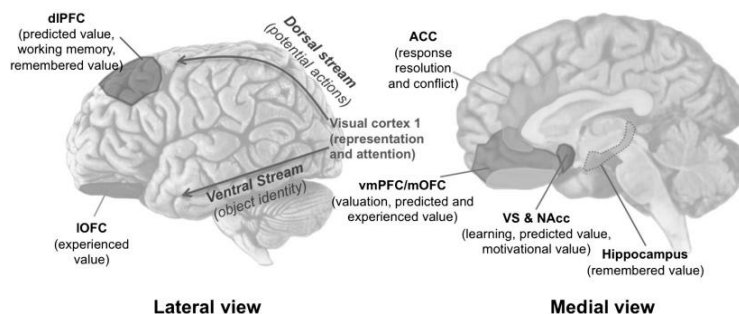


Source: Plassmann et al. (2012).

### 3.4.1 Representation and attention

The stage Representation and attention represents the first process that happens in brand decision making, which explains that consumers form the representation of their alternatives, hence identify different brand options. This step involves processing various information about brand offers (e.g., different water brands), which is then integrated with different internal (e.g., thirst) and external needs (e.g., location) that influence their attention. What is more, human beings heavily rely on visual information (Koch, 2004) and to process it the brain uses two cortical routes shown in Figure 6 below – the dorsal visual stream, associated with spatial allocation of attention, and the ventral stream that oversees object recognition (Plassmann et al., 2012).

Figure 6: Outline of human brain areas engaged in decision-making



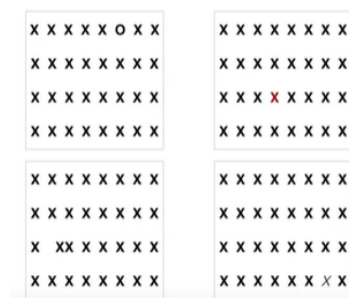
Source: Plassmann et al. (2012).

These findings can be applied to marketing. If we look at the image above from the marketing perspective, these visual pathways also enable fast identification of products and brands (Plassmann et al., 2012). The study conducted by Milosavljevic et al. (2011) has shown that customers can identify two distinctive brands of food and decide which one to choose in less than 400 milliseconds. In addition, it has been proved that unconscious processes in the representation stage can also shape our decision-making (Chartrand et al., 2008).

However, it is also very important to know what captures consumers' attention when they are exposed to many alternatives, especially because their attention is limited and they cannot process all the information. Due to this limitation, they need to choose which information gets preferable position compared to other alternatives. Thus, it is crucial for marketers to be aware how attention affects the human brain and what are its drivers. The components of attention that have been studied in the majority are top-down control, bottom-up saliency filters, and competitive visual selection (Plassmann et al., 2012).

Bottom-up saliency filters enable us to automatically direct our attention to the most important information or stimuli that is the most salient – based on colors, contrasts, sizes, shapes, brightness, movement, etc. (Suurmets, 2018); as an example Figure 7 below is given. What occurs is that some eye receptors are more responsive to stimuli than others. The receptors send signal to brain's thalamus, activating visual attention. The thalamus projects information back to primary visual cortex, located in the back of the head (Ramsøy, 2015).

*Figure 7: Bottom-up attention example*



*Source: Ramsøy (2015).*

These findings can be applied to marketing. Bottom-up saliency filters are also used by consumers to filter the most important information or, in other words, the most salient stimuli that will catch their initial visual attention, influencing their decision-making and behavior. For instance, when they are in front of a shelf in the supermarket observing the products, they are not able to process all the information for every product and use eye movement fixations instead, to compare the alternatives, mentally sort and choose the best option. With this, consumers reduce the demands of their working memory and rely on fixations to make decisions (Ramsøy, 2015; Milosavljevic et al., 2011). Furthermore, the study conducted by Milosavljevic and her colleagues (2011) has demonstrated that salient product features (such

as for instance brightness of the food product's packaging) influence customers' buying choices. More specifically, when participants had to make decisions quickly, they were more prone to select food products with brighter packaging, also in cases when they preferred the taste of other competing products. In addition, other automatic biases also impact consumer's attention. Research has shown that humans are driven to look at upper (Durgin et al., 2008) or/and right visual fields (Efron & Yund, 1996), or the center of computer screens (Tatler, 2007) which is very important also for marketing communications (points of sale, advertising, websites, etc.). Therefore, it is essential for brands to understand the visual stimuli that captivates consumer's eye movement and apply this to their product development and marketing communications to influence consumer behavior to their advantage.

Top-down control refers to attention influenced by internal and external factors, expectations, and objectives. As an example, if a consumer is searching to buy a Coca-Cola, they will focus on red visual areas and augment the neural sensitivity for that specific color (Theeuwes, 2010). With this approach, different brain areas are engaged compared to bottom-up saliency (Ramsøy, 2015). What influences consumers' attention are also their goals or expectations, since they will give attention especially to information that is relevant for their objective (Chartrand et al., 2008).

The last component of attention, visual selection, happens when the information that is the most important is chosen, or in other words, when attention is already given to a specific visual location area. Research has shown that as the number of alternatives increases, the person deciding is more selective in what location or information to process (Payne et al., 1993). Another important insight is also that consumers spend longer analyzing (fixating on) the alternatives that they eventually decide for (Glaholt & Reingold, 2009).

To conclude, representation and attention affect consumers' decision-making and with neuroscience, they illustrate valuable insights and enable deeper understandings of consumer behavior (Plassmann et al., 2012).

### 3.4.2 Predicted value

The expected value of a brand is equivalent to consumers' perception of the experience it will give them. Studies have shown that when customers are evaluating products and brands, at least three brain structures are engaged: the striatum, the ventral medial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC), and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (dlPFC). Neuroscience research has demonstrated that when consumers purchase similar clothes at distinctive retail shops (e.g., Zara vs H&M) the ones that are more loyal (measure based on value spent and frequency of purchasing) exhibit higher striatum activation compared to the ones that are not as loyal (Plassmann et al., 2007). There are several neuroscience studies that analyze how different brands associations affect the predicted value signals in the brain (Plassmann et al., 2012). Thus, it is fundamental for marketers to derive insights into how consumers respond to their

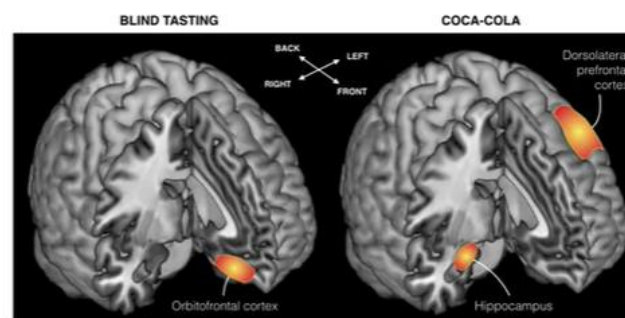
brands, and, based on that focus, on building strong brands that will provide higher predictive values.

### 3.4.3 Experienced value

Experienced value encompasses the pleasure that an individual gets from consuming a specific brand or product. This value is divided into valence and intensity of consumer experience. Human fMRI research has demonstrated that activity in the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) is connected to the feeling of valence or positive experiences when an individual is getting a reward (for instance olfactory experience, visual or secondary reward such as money). Intensity refers to the strength of the emotional and sensory experience an individual is experiencing (Plassmann et al., 2012).

This can be applied to marketing. Through neuroscience, studies have provided valuable insights into how branding can affect the experienced value in terms of valence. For instance, a study made by McClure et al. (2004) demonstrated that when participants were told in some experiments that they had been drinking Coca Cola and in others Pepsi, whilst it was actually the same drink, it triggered them to rate the taste of Coca Cola as more favorable, as well as produced greater neural activity in brain areas that are connected with memory and attention (hippocampus and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex – shown in Figure 8 below), which has not been found for Pepsi. This research illustrated that the brand associations influenced the actual experienced value signals. In addition, this change in preference triggered by the brand was facilitated by areas in the brain connected with declarative memory – a type of long-term memory which is involved with conscious information collection (Plassmann et al., 2012). What is more, the results of the study showed that when the participants did not know the brand of the drink, they couldn't truly tell the difference between the two brands. This exhibits the power of strong brands, which can significantly influence consumers' perception of the products and services or in other words the experienced value they are getting (McClure et al., 2004).

*Figure 8: Effects of brand knowledge on brain responses – Coke vs Pepsi experiment*



*Source: Ramsøy (2015).*

#### 3.4.4 Remembered value

Remembered value is about how distinctive brand associations are encoded in individual's memory. It also consists of both conscious and unconscious brand memories of past consumer experiences (Plassmann et al., 2012). It is a very important predictor of consumers' choices. For instance, when purchasing a beverage, consumers rely on previous memories of taste and smell, or even seeing an entertaining ad commercial of a specific brand. It is a common marketing practice to associate brands with experiences which influences recall and recognition (Plassmann et al., 2012). Not only that, consumers' choices can also be altered by the unconscious stimuli. A great example would be a consumer that is purchasing a new pair of socks and accidentally sees an ad for a luxurious brand such as Armani, or in other scenario Lidl (discounted, very low prices), on the way to the store. These ad exposures can alter his or her price elasticity and purchase decisions (Chartrand et al., 2008). Neuroscience tools have enabled us to attain greater knowledge about unconscious memories and neural processes, as well as predict conscious decisions (Plassmann et al., 2012).

## 4 SENSORY MARKETING

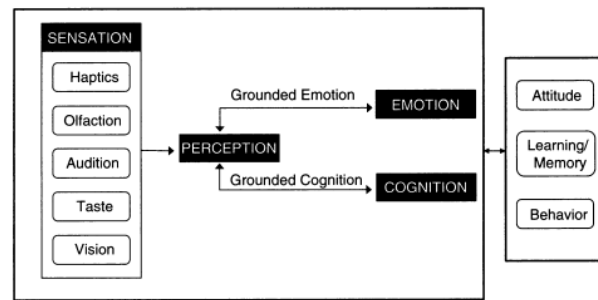
Brands utilize jingles, scents, sounds as part of their communication strategies with the consumers. This chapter will address how utilizing such sensation strategies affects consumers' minds.

Due to overflooded markets with products and increased advertisement, marketers need to choose strategies that have impactful and positive influence on consumers' perceptions and behavior. Sensory marketing has been accepted as an important strategy to develop greater connection between the customer and the brand by stimulating the human senses and generating emotions and unconscious memories (Manzano et al., 2019).

### 4.1 Definition of sensory marketing

Krishna (2012) describes sensory marketing as “marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their perception, judgement and behavior”. Sensory marketing is thus used to produce sensations and emotions, consequently stimulating the unconscious, subconscious and conscious memories, and learning processes (Jiménez & Elías, 2018). There are five human senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell (Figure 9) – that are vital for forming impressions, understanding information, feeling, learning, and thinking (Koszembar-Wiklik, 2019). These generate attitudes, behavior, and memories. We process these senses through two stages – sensation and perception. The first one occurs when the stimuli affect the cell receptors of a sensory organ, while the second one signifies being aware of the sensory information (Krishna, 2012).

Figure 9: Structure of sensory marketing



Source: Krishna (2012).

## 4.2 Advantages of sensory marketing

Sensory marketing is a communication strategy that can also be defined through key elements (4P's) of the marketing mix. For instance, by defining the first P – Product, a brand can also target visual and tactile sense, or when defining Place, companies can also consider the use of background music and/or scents to target auditory and olfactory sense. Similar also applies to Promotion with (sensory) advertising etc. (American Marketing Association, 2022). Therefore, by focusing on sensory stimuli companies can influence human senses to create perceptions, with the objective of influencing buying decisions, demands, and behavior. Its aim is to create a positive sensory experience which empowers the connection between the customer and the brand or product through mental processes that include both emotional and rational brain parts. Within this process the subconscious element promotes automated decision making and behavior based on past experiences. Another benefit compared to traditional marketing is also that increased use of sensory stimulation can create better consumer experience and less forgettable communication messages (Manzano et al., 2019).

Lindstrom (2005) has showed the connection between brands' success and sensory stimulus. Based on the results of his research (focus group experiments in various countries), brands have sensory profiles which are based on at minimum one sensory feature. He also indicated that brand loyalty of consumers stems from positive sensory experience. Many brands focus on more sensory attributes all at once – a great example is the brand Coca Cola which attracts consumers through sight (interesting curvy packaging), taste (well-known flavor), touch (feel of cool packaging), and, lastly, also sound (pouring the liquid into a glass). Lindstrom's (2005) research showed that all the five senses affected consumer loyalty differently, where taste had the highest impact and was followed by smell, sound, touch, and, lastly, sight. He also concluded that the more the brand appealed to different human senses, the higher the perceived value of the product it created. Consequently, following a sensory marketing strategy has an important, positive impact on consumers' emotions and overall experiences (Lindstrom, 2005; Yoon & Park, 2012).

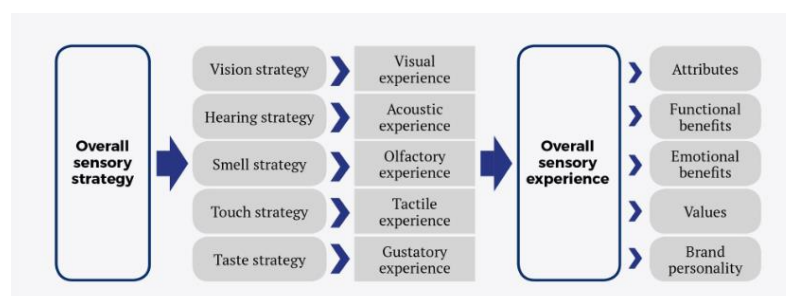
Research shows that sensory marketing holds the potential to have strong impact on impulse purchases. Through the sensory stimuli, brands can create sensory experiences that influence consumers' emotional states and drive the so called “urge to purchase” (Goel et al., 2023). Also, Krupka (2023) endorsed the influence of sensory marketing on impulse purchases, stating that it affects them by stimulating consumers senses, impacting their attention, perception, satisfaction, and, in the end, loyalty. It is something that goes beyond only the product/brand's functional features, as it also plays on senses and emotions and can create loyal customers.

### 4.3 Sensory branding

From the long-term perspective, the main goal of sensory marketing is to communicate the brand's image to consumers. Hence also sensory branding is based on a sensory marketing strategy which encompasses the use of senses to communicate the brand image, product benefits, and experiences. The key element of sensory branding is the so-called sensory signature which is grounded on a set of sensory stimuli that are used to differentiate the brand from its competitors, while creating positive sensory experiences for consumers and communicating the product's benefits and the brand image (Figure 10) – in other words, summarizing its positioning and competitive advantage. The selected sensory branding strategy is then used in all marketing activities – from the branding elements to advertising, promotions, and points of sale (Manzano et al., 2019).

To comprehend how sensory (neuro)marketing functions, we first need to look at sensation and the human senses with which we experience our surroundings. Out of all the five human senses, sight has been prevailing in marketing practices, however, also the other human senses, that have been ignored over a long period, have great significance on consumer behavior. On the other hand, some of the brands did recognize the potential of appealing to also other human senses, not only sight, and have achieved great results.

*Figure 10: Sensory branding strategy*



*Source: Manzano et al. (2019).*

The upcoming sections will explore how and why these five human senses can be used in marketing communications, as well as explain the brain processes behind each of them in more detail.

#### **4.4 Sense of smell – olfactory marketing**

Research has shown that information, which includes olfactory cues, lasts longer compared to information encoded with other sensory cues (Krishna, 2012). The principal explanation lays in the fact that the olfactory nerve is closely linked to both the amygdala – essential for experiencing emotion and memory, as well as the hippocampus which is accountable for information processing in memory functions. As a result, this direct and strong link to the neural foundations of memory and emotion is exclusive to the olfactory system and may justify why odor-encoded memories have such strong emotional impact (Herz & Engen, 1996). In addition, humans have the capabilities to smell from 10.000 to 100.000 distinctive scent variations (Buck, 2005).

For marketing application, studies have demonstrated that also ambient scents can generate an enhanced shopping experience in retail, more specifically, consumers perceived to have spent shorter amount of time looking at the products and waiting in lines compared to having no-ambient scent in the store (Spangenberg et al., 1996). Not only that, ambient scent has also been positively connected with better product evaluations, more positive mood of consumers, as well as enhanced brand memory (Morrin & Ratneshwar, 2003). Furthermore, Morrin & Ratneshwar (2003) have demonstrated that if the store has an ambient scent, which does not have to match with the product category, it can augment the consumers' attention towards the brand-related stimuli. Additionally, their research also proved that ambient scents could enhance consumers' memory from the terms of brand recall and recognition.

Moreover, the enticing smells of food products can also significantly impact consumer's willingness to purchase, which is what companies are aware of. A good example of a brand who uses this to their advantage is Cinnabon in the USA, selling cinnamon rolls. The bakery uses scented marketing very tactically to lure consumers in by baking cinnamon rolls every 30 minutes and having their ovens placed in front of the store to produce strong scent. They tried putting the ovens in the back of their bakery, but when the sales dropped significantly due to less powerful cinnamon smell, they now always put them in front (Shah, 2014). It is however important to note that the perception of smell is dependent on individuals' physiological state, more specifically the scent of food will be perceived as pleasant for a hungry individual whereas the degree of pleasantness declines if the food is eaten to satiety (Rolls & Rolls, 1997). Research has also demonstrated that scents can generate emotion as they are linked to emotional memory, as well as improve the overall mood, reduce anger and anxiety, etc. (Kadohisa, 2013).

In addition, lately it has been quite popular to incorporate scents into marketing gimmicks, a practice done by the big fast-food chains. For instance, in 2020 KFC launched a

collaboration with Crocs – a limited-edition footwear that smells and looks like fried chicken, which sold out in only 30 minutes. Also, McDonald’s launched scented candles in 2020 that smell like buns, ketchup, beef, pickles, onion and cheese - also selling out rapidly (Kelso, 2020). By using such tactics both brands created great public relations (PR), influenced consumer buying behavior, enriched brand connections with consumers, and, after all, also increased sales. Moreover, brands also found a way to incorporate scents into billboard advertising. For instance, Kotányi upgraded their regular billboards with cinnamon-scented posters in December, to appeal to Ljubljana’s public passing by, which can be seen in Figure 12. The billboards engaged passersby to rub them and consequently trigger the smell of cinnamon and created the smell of Christmas holidays (Marketing Magazin, 2022).

*Figure 11: Kotányi’s scented cinnamon billboards*



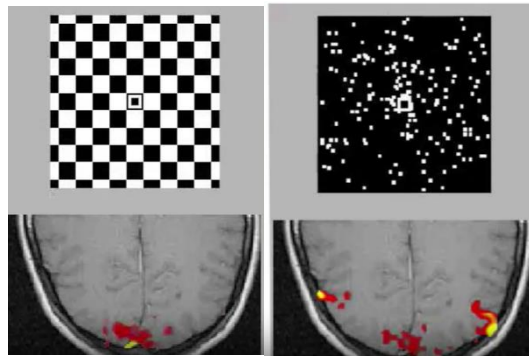
*Source: Marketing Magazin (2022).*

We can conclude that olfactory marketing can provide important benefits, as it can affect emotions and memory through which it can lead to greater recall, brand recognition, awareness, and image (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 7), therefore brands in the food and beverage industry should aim to implement this into their marketing strategy.

#### **4.5 Sense of sight – visual marketing**

Sight is believed to be one of the strongest human senses through which humans develop experiences and perceptions about the surroundings, as well as certain products and brands. (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 9). When we look at objects, different brain regions are activated. Color, shape, and movement are all processed in distinct brain areas which all work together to present one coherent perception. Figure 13 below shows the activations of different brain areas, where the first one illustrates the reaction to a flickering board (activation of primary visual cortex) and the second one the reaction to movement (activation of primary visual cortex and additional movement areas on each side of the brain) (Ramsøy, 2015).

*Figure 12: Activations of brain regions due to visual exposure*



*Source: Ramsøy (2015).*

For marketing application, if a company wishes to stand out amidst the advertising clutter, it, most importantly, has to be seen. Brand's identities are frequently communicated via visual marketing elements, such as advertisements, logotypes, websites, and points of sale (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 9). Usually, shapes and colors are one of the earliest means of differentiation and identification with the product or brand. It also has been shown in studies of memory retention that people are more likely to remember information with color, in comparison to strictly black and white (Roopchand et al., 2016).

Consequently, brands have been trying to develop color associations in hopes to create instant brand recognition with their target audiences (Smith, 2015). Colors can influence the human nervous system and cerebral cortex through which they may stimulate thoughts and memories. Each color can also have distinguishing psychological effects on the human brain and value associations (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 96). As a result, we can detect color patterns even in industries – fast food is generally represented by red and yellow since these colors make people hungry and excited (Smith, 2015).

Moreover, research in the field of neuroscience has revealed that visual characteristic, which have an impact on stimuli, can affect how long customers look at intricate store displays, as for instance supermarket shelves or even vending machines, meaning that they look more visually salient (attention grabbing) items for longer in comparison to those that are less. In addition, the longer they focus on a specific item, the higher the likelihood of choosing such item (Milosavljevic et al., 2012). In the study conducted by Milosavljevic et al. (2011), we can learn that in cases with fast moving consumer goods, where purchase decisions do not require as much brain energy as with luxury products (such as for instance buying a house or a car), consumers are heavily relying their choices on visual attention features. In this study, researchers showed the participants different products for different durations while influencing the visual saliency by changing the products' brightness and contrast. They concluded that their choices were influenced by visual saliency of the options, however only until approximately 200 milliseconds. In other words, if a product was displayed for just about 100 milliseconds the saliency of its packaging would affect their final choices. On the

other hand, if participants had been exposed to a product for longer time, then their internal preference prevailed when deciding for a product.

Even in the past, as well as today, visual aesthetics have played a key role in ads efficiency. A product's position in an ad can have a strong influence on image interactions and the consequent purchase intention. Figure 14 shows that placing a spoon on the right led to higher mental stimulation and increased purchase for consumers that are right-handed (Elder & Krishna, 2012).

*Figure 13: Example of visual aesthetics*



*Source: Elder & Krishna (2012).*

Movement and dynamic ads also demonstrated better results compared to static, generating higher viewer engagement. This has been proven with a study conducted by Cian et al. (2014) who used an eye tracking device to measure engagement (number of fixations and gaze duration). This also applies to the current trends, especially social media. TikTok favors dynamic videos, with different transitions and dynamic video captions. Also, on Instagram more dynamic reels perform better in comparison to the ones that are less dynamic (Polise, 2022). Brands who follow their visual strategies have an outlined style of their visual content, including images, color palettes, and fonts, enabling them cohesiveness and consequent greater brand recall, as well as memorability. Illustrative cases are Coca-Cola and McDonald's which can be seen in Figures 15 and 16 (White, 2022).

*Figures 14 & 15: McDonald's and Coca-Cola visual advertising*





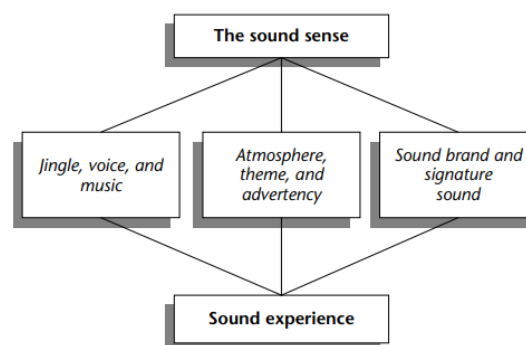
Source: White (2022).

#### 4.6 Sense of sound – auditory marketing

Sound has always represented a particularly important human sense. We not only use it to sense the environment, but we also use it to express (verbally) and identify ourselves through music for example. It has been proven that music can influence people's moods, emotions, and even memories, as well as unconscious and conscious actions (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 8, 69, 74).

For marketing application, we can hardly imagine marketing without sound. It can be used as a background music in commercial, online video, radio ad, or in a store, restaurant, hotel, it can be used as (audio) logo, jingle, and part of branding, it can be the voice of a salesperson, or even a sound in the product (Lowe & Haws, 2017). Sound is a very influential stimulus which has been proven historically by musicians and researchers, therefore companies must be mindful when choosing the music and spokespersons, as the elements such as pitch, tempo, accent, intonation, and volume can influence brand and product perceptions (Bruner, 1990). A company's sound sense experience can be divided into three categories, shown in Figure 17.

Figure 16: Sound experience



Source: Hultén et al. (2008).

Studies have revealed that music can affect ad persuasion by influencing the viewer's mood (Park & Young, 1986) as well as the level (high vs low) of involvement of customer's ad processing (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Jingles are also quite popular in advertisements, as they strengthen associations between the brand and the customer, take for instance McDonald's jingle "I'm loving it" (Krawczak, 2016).

In the past, it has been demonstrated that ambient sounds can also have an effect on consumers' shopping time – faster music speeds up their shopping pace, in contrast to slower music (Milliman, 1982). Additionally, when consumers like the music playing in the background, they perceive to have spent less time shopping than in reality (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000). Not only can companies use sounds to create a good atmosphere and better ad performance they can also be deployed as a form of branding. Moreover, sound also has a strong influence on taste perceptions for specific food products and drinks (e.g., crispiness and potato chips) (Zampini & Spence, 2005).

Audio logos are oftentimes overlooked, however, they can have significant impact on brand awareness and recognition and have lately achieved quite a popularity due to the success of Netflix and Mastercard (the financial service company spent \$15 million on a new jingle in 2019) in the recent years (Armstrong, 2019a). Only a few brands have implemented audio logos as part of their sonic branding and managed to create strong brand associations through it. One of the best brands in the domain of sonic branding based on the Best Audio Brands 2022 report has been Mastercard (Ghosh, 2022). In 2019, one of the best sonic brands was the fast-food giant McDonald's (Armstrong, 2019b). Also, the selection of the actors' voices in commercials can have significant effect on the sensory marketing strategy as well as brand identity, which is why BMW has had the same, carefully selected actor for their commercials in United Kingdom for more than 10 years (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 73).

Furthermore, the importance of sounds has become even more powerful with the rise of social media, especially TikTok. The platform has revolutionized the sound industry by putting the power back to creators, allowing them to express their creativity. In addition, TikTok has claimed that its users perceive the sound as vital for their user experience, as it improves the viewer's experience and allows brands and creators to achieve better video or ad performance, engagement, and awareness if they use a trending sound (TikTok for Business, 2021). Additional emerging trend on social media targeting the auditory sense has been autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR). In 2023 it was the third most searched topic on YouTube (Cohen et al., 2023). Researchers describe ASMR as a tingling sensation, a feeling of well-being, chills, and/or thrills, which occurs as a response to gentle stimuli, oftentimes specific sounds (Spence, 2020), such as microphone whispers or other soft noises. These auditory triggers create a pleasurable experience which people use also as a form of relaxation (Andersen, 2015). Due to the popularity of ASMR among social media users, companies such as KFC and IKEA have also used it in their advertising. Moreover, researchers have shown that ASMR can positively influence ad recall (Sands, et al., 2022).

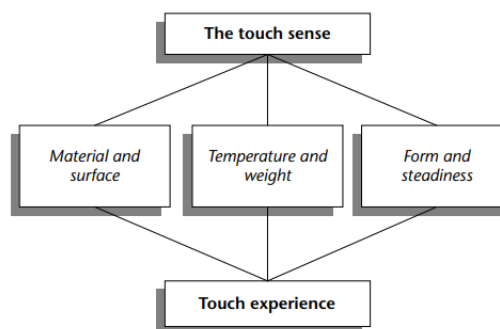
However, it is worth noting that everyone does not find ASMR as a pleasing experience and some may not have a sensory response to it (Andersen, 2015; Cohen et al., 2024).

#### 4.7 Sense of touch – tactile marketing

Touch represents one of the first senses that humans develop, in fact we develop it already in the uterus, and one of the final senses we usually lose by aging (Krishna, 2012). Through tactile receptors on the skin we experience touch. We are able to feel warmth (heat, cold), pain, contact, pressure, vibration. These tactile receptors transmit signals to specific brain areas in cerebral cortex. Some body parts are more sensitive than others. For example, hands and mouth areas are more sensitive, as the gap among tactile receptors is smaller (less than 1 mm) compared to the back, where the gap is larger (more than 70 millimeters) (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 137, 138).

How can this be applied to marketing? This sense also has an important persuasive impact on perceptions and consumer behavior (Peck & Wiggins, 2006). Materials, temperature, and weight, as well as forms and steadiness create a touch experience, which is also presented in Figure 17. All these factors can attract customers, equip them with additional information and influence their perceptions about the products' quality (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 142, 143).

*Figure 17: Touch experience*



*Source: Hultén et al. (2008).*

Toblerone is a splendid brand who took advantage of form and used it as a part of their branding and differentiation feature, or also Pringles, who used a unique form of packaging with which it stands out from other competitors. Coca-Cola's glass bottle also has a very distinctive shape which they constantly use in their commercials (you never see Coca-Cola in a can) (Hultén et al., 2009, pp. 142, 143). Moreover, KitKat also has a distinctive product form that is very recognizable and differentiates the brand from the competition, which they also use in a very creative way also in their advertising as seen in Figure 18 (Foiret, n. d.).

*Figure 18: KitKat advertising example*



*Source: Foiret (n. d.).*

An example of another impressive marketer who understood the importance of sense of touch was Steve Jobs. He always made sure that Apple's products felt luxurious to the touch. Even the products' boxes have been elegantly designed and superior compared to competitive products (Gallo, 2021). Not only that, the company also knew that with the sense of touch customers feel more connected to the product and obtain a more interactive experience. Thus, it was one of the first in its industry to open stores with displayed products so that consumers could touch and try out the products (Kendu, n. d.). Furthermore, recently Mastercard has introduced a haptic logotype to ensure "pampering experience" for their customers. This haptic logotype encompasses vibrations that are felt through the phone when conducting online purchases or using payment terminals. Mastercard's global chief marketing officer, Raja Rajamannar, explained this new feature strengthens customer trust, security and satisfaction during the payment process (Kovič, 2024).

Even though the use of online shopping has been increasing in recent years, offline tactile marketing still shows numerous benefits, as it can leave stronger imprints in the brain's unconscious memory (Talbot, 2019). Research has revealed that by touching products consumers can experience higher purchase intentions and more positive attitudes, as well as greater confidence and better product evaluations in comparison with online shopping where touch cannot be experienced. Consequently, touch plays a significant role in affecting choice preferences, information gathering, and brand judgements (Peck & Childers, 2003).

In terms of food products, touch is an important factor when consuming or using the products (texture, mouthfeel), consequently influencing food acceptance and consumption. Moreover, when consuming foods, we also pay attention to how the surrounding elements feel to touch: clutter, plates, furniture (Hyper & Hyper, 2022).

#### **4.8 Sense of taste – gustative marketing**

Humans have about 10,000 taste buds that transmit information to the nerve cells and brain. With them, we can recognize 5 different tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and savory or also known as umami (Lindemann, 1996). Another interesting thing is that we perceive these

tastes differently on distinctive parts of the tongue. For instance, ice cream does not taste the same if we taste it on the tongue and below the tongue (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 114). Even though we humans eat daily, we do not thrive in differentiating tastes from one another, especially when we are relying only on the sense of taste, without combining it with other senses. Consequently, many researchers state that smell specifically has a very strong influence on taste perception (Spence, 2015). Especially in terms of food products, without the other senses; sight, smell, touch (for instance the food temperature and textures), and sound (for example the sound of chips cracking), we cannot distinguish it well and cannot enjoy the full experience (Krishna, 2012).

In marketing, when brands are creating ads for food products, they should try to target all the five senses to stimulate positive sensory experience, portray more powerful taste, and generate a more influential advertisement, rather than just trying to target the sense of taste (Krishna et al., 2016). Moreover, marketers and restaurant owners can enhance the taste experience of foods by naming them more descriptively, as it has been demonstrated that it drives sales (e.g., long-lasting chewing gum, juicy oranges, etc.) (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 119).

Hofer Slovenia for instance uses descriptive words of taste, alongside illustrative pictures in their advertising, to communicate the product's great taste. An example of their advertising can be seen in Figures 20-22 below (Marketing Magazin, 2020 & 2023).

*Figures 19 & 20: Hofer's advertising examples*



*Source: Marketing Magazin (2023).*

*Figure 21: Hofer's advertising example*



*Source: Marketing Magazin (2020).*

By implementing the taste strategy, it can help a brand achieve greater differentiation on the market. Take Ikea as an example; a company that specializes in affordable furniture has managed to differentiate itself from other retailers by offering their infamous meatballs. It has been said that Ikea sells more than a billion meatballs every year, making them its bestselling item, which is interesting taking into consideration that they are a furniture company. The firm has managed to strengthen its brand image by deploying gustative marketing and connecting it to its central marketing strategy (Meyersohn, 2022).

#### **4.9 Multisensory marketing**

According to Hultén et al. (2009), multisensory marketing occurs when more than one of the five human senses influence the perception of sensory brand experience. In more precise terms, a multisensory brand experience reinforces value creation for consumers, how they interact with brands and purchasing processes through engaging more than one of the five human senses, in order to create consumer experiences, value, and, consequently, support brand image (Hultén, 2011).

Human senses also interact with one another which has been supported by a study of sensory, emotional, and cognitive processing within the human brain, conducted by Thesen et al. (2004). It disclosed that more senses are connected with each other; for instance, auditory, tactile, and olfactory sense interface with vision. Kumar (2014) suggests that the interaction of more senses together generates synergies that create deeper brand experiences for consumers. As multisensory marketing has emerged in various different industries, this reveals the emergence of new marketing approaches. For multisensory marketing, the consumers' five senses are at the focal point of a brand's marketing strategy.

##### **4.9.1 Dunkin' Donuts' multisensory marketing strategy**

A great example of a company in the food and beverage industry which developed and implemented a multisensory marketing strategy successfully is Dunkin' Donuts. When they entered the Korean market in 2012, they realized that they were dealing with customers who are busy and do not have time to grab coffee with friends or grab a morning coffee before work. In addition, coffee was not something consumers thought of when thinking of Dunkin' Donuts', which they strived to change. Thus, they developed "Flavor Radio" campaign (Marinkovic, 2020).

Their marketers realized that most consumers use public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: smell, sound, and sight. To target people's sense of sound they created a jingle which included a short dialogue (Marinkovic, 2020):

Woman: "I got coffee for you too, honey!"

Man: “Wow! Where did you get this? It smells delicious!”

Woman: “At the Dunkin’ right here!”

Announcer: “Dunkin’s coffee is waiting for you right at your stop.”

In addition, to target the sense of smell they also developed a spray dispenser which released the scent of freshly brewed coffee that was triggered when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned and appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin’ Donuts’ stores (Marinkovic, 2020). And lastly, to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin’ Donuts store (Marinkovic, 2020).

The outcomes resulted in 350,000 ad exposures and in 29% increase in sales at Dunkin’ Donuts shops, and most importantly, they were able to imprint the name of the brand in the minds of consumers when they think of their morning coffee (Marinkovic, 2020). This carefully thought-out strategy combined multiple senses triggered in specific sequence that evoked attention and purchase.

#### 4.9.2 Coca-Cola’s drinkable campaign

In 2015 Coca-Cola wanted to introduce consumers to Coke Zero and created drinkable billboards with straws through which people could taste the product (Deighton, 2015).

*Figure 22: Coca Cola’s drinkable billboard*



*Source: Deighton (2015).*

Furthermore, they created an interactive ad that required audio recognition. When consumer “Shazamed” (used an app Shazam) on their mobile phone the Coke Zero poured from TV/video screen to their phone and when they filled their glass, they got a free Coke Zero voucher. In addition, they also made print ads that converted to cups, flyers that could be used as straws, created tweets with imitating sounds of pouring Coke Zero and drinkable posters that consumers “Shazamed” and used “digital” straws (simply blowing into the phone’s microphone) to drink it demonstrating that advertising can look, sound and even taste delicious (Dipdrop Branding Solution, 2015).

*Figure 23: Coca Cola's drinkable poster*



*Source: Dipdrop Branding Solution (2015).*

The campaign obtained great results, especially compared to their previous ads where they just focused on telling consumers to try the product and enticing them with it. The objective of this “drinkable campaign” was that more consumers would try the new drink and the amount of the redeemed coupons to get the free drink would be above their benchmark with a 15% conversion rate (Smiley, 2015). This campaign surpassed all previous efforts by delivering a record number of samples in only one weekend, as well as attaining an impressive reach of over 44 million impressions across PR and social media platforms (WARC, n. d.). In addition, that year the ad became the most Shazamed in history, amassing over 200,000 hits on the app. This illustrates that using the sense of taste with new technologies can reap outstanding results.

#### **4.10 Ethical viewpoints of sensory marketing**

Sensory marketing engages consumers’ senses and can influence their decisions without them consciously being aware of it. Therefore, they might not discern this type of communication as marketing and might not respond with the same resistance as they would in the case of traditional marketing (Baretić et al., 2021). Hence, consumers can potentially have less power in their decision-making, as they are being influenced by sensory stimuli and, oftentimes, they are not even being conscious of it (Garraud, 2021). Consequently, the question arises if such manipulations of the human mind are ethical?

Firms that use sensory marketing and neuromarketing advocate that with such approaches humanity is able to obtain more knowledge about the human brain, which can also be used for medical purposes. Nevertheless, the budgets are higher in marketing and such practices are more used for commercial purposes. In addition, many researchers think that in cases where clients are not ill their privacy is violated and they’re being unconsciously influenced, meaning that using neuromarketing and sensory marketing is controversial. In addition, firms advocate that consumers do not truly know what they want but companies do. Nonetheless, rather than being told and manipulated about their preferences, consumers should possess a certain degree of decision-making authority, free from the weight of being influenced by sensory stimuli at every turn (Garraud, 2021).

Sensory marketing and engaging the sense of taste can be controversial especially when targeting consumers that are dealing with obesity and food addiction. Addiction is normally applied to drug abuse which activates the brain's reward pathways, however during recent years compulsive overeating has become more prevalent, especially with foods that are salty, sweet, containing high fat percentages, and showing similar potential of abuse compared to pharmaceuticals (Salamone et al., 2003). Brands use (sensory) marketing to promote foods and beverages that are low in nutrients, have poor quality and high calories, giving rise to significant ethical concerns that can have harmful effects on human health (Baretić et al., 2021). Thus, if brands use such types of marketing strategies to promote foods and beverages they should strive to produce high-quality products that have positive effects on consumers' health and not promote overconsumption.

Generally, primary criticisms towards the use of sensory marketing involve psychological manipulation. As sensory marketing impacts consumers' subconsciousness, causing them to change their perception or behavior without their awareness, it can be seen as a form of manipulation (Garraud, 2021). However, it can also be a practice that generates positive sensory experiences that have more pleasant effect on the consumer, compared to traditional marketing approaches. It is also a great practice to strengthen the relationships between the customer and the brand and create more memorable experiences (Manzano et al., 2019).

## **5 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENSORY MARKETING IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY**

### **5.1 Purpose and objectives**

The purpose of the empirical research is to analyze, based on in-depth interviews, how marketing specialists in the food and beverage industry perceive sensory marketing and leverage it to achieve greater marketing results (improve brand recognition, build a stronger brand image, differentiate themselves from competition).

The objectives of this empirical research are to discover whether marketers in food and beverage industry are aware of this strategy, analyze its potential from their viewpoints, and see how they use it in practice. The research questions addressed in this empirical section are:

- What is the level of awareness regarding sensory marketing among marketers?
- What are their perceptions of it? What are their views of its advantages, also compared to traditional marketing strategies?
- Have they implemented it in their marketing, and if so, why?

- How do marketers in the food and beverage industry perceive the ethics of using sensory marketing?

These research questions were selected to reveal and enable obtaining targeted information, yet allowing interviewees to express thoughts, opinions, discussions, and consequently disclose more information. As the interviews were conducted with marketers of different age groups and positions, the selected questions were inclusive whilst not too specific to enable better quality data. The questions ranged from participants' theoretical knowledge of sensory marketing to practical examples in selected industry, in other words, how they potentially successfully implemented sensory marketing in their past campaigns and what do they believe are the benefits of use. Additionally, I wanted to know whether they had any ethical reservations regarding the use of sensory marketing in industry of food and beverage. The list of exact questions can be found in Appendix 1.

## **5.2 Research design**

For the empirical part of master's thesis I have selected a qualitative research design, using semi-structured-in-depth interviews with marketers, who have practical and professional experience in order to obtain primary data. The combination of literature reviews, research studies, well-known brand examples, and, additionally, my own empirical research with industry marketers can provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The interviewee mix encompasses a diverse spectrum of marketers that can be found in the field from industry professionals with many years of experience and international marketing successes to early-career marketers working in start-ups, enabling the potential for realistic understanding of sensory marketing based on practical applications in common industry settings. The interviews were conducted either in-person or online via Zoom platform, adapting to candidates' availability. The interview process started in September 2023 and lasted until February 2024.

With these semi-structured-in-depth interviews I gathered information and knowledge of what marketers think of sensory marketing, do they use it, what is the added value from their experiences, do they recognize it as a strategy that can help companies in the food and/or beverage industry stand out amidst the advertising clutter and improve brand recognition. The interview questions (Appendix 2) were predominantly more open so that the participants could articulate their opinions, thoughts, and perceptions. Semi-structured format enabled flexibility - tailoring questions to align with the candidates' relevant experiences and allowing the ability to go deeper into relevant topics.

Interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes on average. In-depth interviews have proven to be valuable when seeking comprehensive insights into an individual's thoughts and behaviors and in this case also the reasons behind such thinking (Boyce & Neale, 2006) which is one of the main reasons behind choosing this method.

Additional methodological benefits with in-depth interviews include (Lamont & Swidler 2014):

- enabling and promoting attention to research design,
- emphasizing the potential for comparisons across situations and different individuals,
- opportunity to unveil emotions that may not be apparent through observing behaviors,
- exploring different settings and social contexts to validate precision.

For conducting in-depth-semi-structured interviews I have chosen the purposive sampling method and selected the interviewees based on their alignment with objectives of this master's thesis, their possession of predefined characteristics, as well as valuable marketing experiences in the industry of foods and/or beverages. The reason behind the selection is to obtain as much information and knowledge from practice in sensory marketing of chosen industry. However, I am aware that my findings will not be generalizable to the broader population (Vogrin, 2008, p. 56).

The participant mix includes marketers from well-established companies, competing on regional and global level, as well as smaller companies, more specifically startups with significant growth potential. Interviewees also have distinctive positions, ranging from marketing directors, brand managers, marketing specialists to marketing associates. Consequently, the candidates differ in professional experience, skills, age, presenting an opportunity to gather diverse perspectives and insights. Unfortunately, I cannot disclose brands or companies the interviewees work for, to preserve anonymity. In-depth interviews were performed with 7 candidates (Table 2), all women. The average age of interviewees was 36 years old. The sociodemographic characteristics of interview candidates are described in Table 2.

*Table 2: Sociodemographic sample characteristics*

| Interviewee | Age | Position/job title                                                        | Industry             | Company                                                | Education         | Years of Experience |
|-------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1           | 50  | Marketing director                                                        | Food industry (FMCG) | Regional leader in production and distribution of FMCG | MBA               | 6                   |
| 2           | 20  | Founder, head of marketing, event organizer, business development manager | Food and beverage    | Startup - food marketing agency                        | Economics student | 2                   |
| 3           | 51  | Regional brand manager                                                    | Food supplements     | Global pharmaceutical & consumer health company        | Bachelor's degree | 12                  |
| 4           | 25  | Head of marketing department                                              | Beverage - wines     | Startup – E-commerce wine shop                         | Bachelor's degree | 2                   |
| 5           | 29  | Marketing specialist                                                      | Retail               | Shopping center (contains large FCMG retailers)        | MBA               | 1                   |
| 6           | 28  | Marketing associate                                                       | Food and beverage    | Regional leader in delivery services                   | Bachelor's degree | 5                   |
| 7           | 47  | Media and consumer research marketing manager                             | Beverage             | International brewing company                          | Bachelor's degree | 8                   |

*Source: Own work.*

### 5.3 Data analysis

The first step of data analysis was transcribing all the recorded interviews to create a textual, detailed overview of answers serving as a base for further analysis. Interview questions are attached in Appendix 1, whilst transcriptions can be seen in more detail in Appendix 2. The analysis of interview data will be categorized into 10 topics, each subjected to a comprehensive and detailed analysis.

### 5.3.1 Use of neuroscientific tools

One of the first questions was related to the use of neuroscientific tools to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of advertising campaigns. The obtained results revealed that marketers in larger companies (Interviewee 1, 3 & 7) test their campaigns and use neuroscientific tools to gain a better understanding of consumer behavior. Interviewees 3 and 7, who work in global corporations, explained further that their companies use such tools on international market level, whereas local marketers do not use them directly, but however receive insights from the global level (Interviewee 3 & 7). Notably, Interviewee 1, who works for a multinational corporation with headquarters in the Balkan region, stated that they use neuroscientific tools to pre/posttest their campaigns, as it provides interesting information. She also mentioned that this data is not representative, due to the small sample size, however, sees the benefits of use, especially combined with other qualitative methods (Interviewee 1). On the other hand, Interviewees 2, 4, 5, and 6, who work in smaller and local companies, do not use neuroscientific tools, as they have smaller budgets. Nevertheless, they stated to rely on analytics and constant data monitoring to gain insights into consumer behavior and determine what kind of advertising works best (Interviewee 2, 4, 5 & 6).

### 5.3.2 Sensory marketing

The questions following were about sensory marketing, beginning with whether they have ever heard about it in their career and what do they think it represents. All candidates except Interviewee 7 are familiar with it. Some have a very clear understanding of its definition, for instance, Interviewee 1 describes it as: “Marketing that tries to appeal to human senses – one or more at the time” (Interviewee 1). On the contrast, Interviewees 3 and 7 may not have a completely clear understanding of this term, but still have a general idea of what it means. For example, Interviewee 3 describes it as: “By engaging with a particular product through its impact on human senses, one can establish a connection that aids in making informed purchase decisions” (Interviewee 3 & 7). Only Interviewee 2 lacked an understanding of what sensory marketing represents (Interviewee 2).

Afterwards, I wanted to know whether they have ever used it in their career. Interestingly, all the candidates have used sensory marketing in their career. Interviewee 1 acknowledged an interesting observation, namely that sensory marketing is easier to use in some industries (for instance telecommunications, where you have control over the shops) than others (FCMG distributors who do not possess their own stores). In such cases, you do not have control over sensory elements such as lightning, music, and scents, making it more difficult (Interviewee 1).

One example of sensory marketing application is the use of words to express smell and taste in copies for social media, as Interviewee 2, who is a chef and runs a food marketing agency, stated in her response: “For instance, lately, I have really tried to articulate the smell of apple

strudel in copy for social media, through descriptions and use of the words such as mmmm, yummy, etc.” (Interviewee 2). This approach is also followed by Interviewee 6, who works in a food delivery company and uses similar words for social media posts, newsletters, reminders, and voiceovers. Not only do they give emphasis to strong visuals with juicy food, they also use sounds from the app in their commercials to strengthen audio branding. With this, they try to ensure the consumers connect more elements with their brand, such as sounds and brand colors. She explains it is imperative to underscore appealing visuals, displaying tasty food that stimulate hunger and drive purchases (Interviewee 6). Multisensory commercials are also developed in the company of Interviewee 7 (media and consumer research marketing manager), who has used sensory triggers in marketing campaigns quite often. Some of their current commercials incorporate sensory marketing, using elements like a specific voiceover artist paired with dynamic visuals. This approach targets both sight and sound while depicting a “tasty” beverage that promises to quench thirst (Interviewee 7).

For Interviewees 3, 4, and 7, products samplings represent an integral part of their sensory marketing strategy. Since they are aware that taste represents one of the most influential factors for purchasing their products, they do it often. Interviewee 3 stated that one of the key reasons is that product’s effectiveness is hard to determine in the short term which is why taste and texture are important product characteristics, as they are one of the first things consumers notice (Interviewee 3). For Interviewee 4, events, such as Open kitchen in Ljubljana, are fundamental to reach new potential customers, where they perform samplings- She also elucidates there are different types of consumers they can observe when sampling; 1) one type does its own research, screens products on the website beforehand, to then sample them afterwards and capture all the product’s information, 2) the other type has no prior information and bases purchase solely on sampling or in other words, through sensory marketing (Interviewee 4). Additionally, Interviewee 7 also samples quite often, as she works in the research department. Most recently, they organized a blind tasting for a specific beverage at a bar, where they sampled the new product to their target group to gain more consumer insights (Interviewee 7).

Companies can also enhance their branding and marketing through experience. This can be done by creating events that contain sensory stimuli. A great practical example is from Interviewee 5, as they host various thematic events such as concerts with food, drinks, and music in their shopping centers to enhance shoppers experience and their brand (Interviewee 5). Also, Interviewee 4 from an online wine company hosts monthly events where a selected topic from the world of wine is chosen and visitors learn about unique wines through degustation, conversation, and games. Tastings have different themes, for instance blind tastings, romance, etc., and they are also held on different locations. At such events, visitors can familiarize themselves with different sorts of wines, purchase the product as well as get a unique wine experience. With such events, marketers boost sales and enhance consumers’ experiences with their brands or companies to build positive long-term relationships, consequently strengthening the brand image and recall (Interviewee 4 & 5).

### 5.3.3 Benefits and downsides of sensory marketing

Next, I wanted to discover what do interviewees see as the benefits and downsides of using sensory marketing. As already stated in the previous chapter, one of the benefits of sensory marketing is that it can capture more attention in the clutter of products and advertisements, which was also highlighted by Interviewee 3 (regional brand manager) and Interviewee 7 (media and research manager), believing it is a great approach for the beverage and food industry, as it captures attention and stimulates the urge to purchase (Interviewee 7). Interviewee 3 also stated that, especially for nutritional supplements, it is a great way to get consumer familiar with the product's texture and taste to ensure informed decision making (Interviewee 3). Another benefit mentioned by Interviewee 5 (marketing specialist working in retail) is that it can strengthen the bond between the customer and the brand, through creating pleasant experiences. They organize a lot of different events and thus enable consumers to truly experience their shopping center, resulting in a more positive long-term relationship and memorability (Interviewee 5). Similarly, Interviewee 6 (marketing associate in food delivery company) sees it as a great branding strategy. By focusing on targeting different human senses and incorporating different elements, it can strengthen the brand in consumer's mind, due to more impactful marketing triggers (Interviewee 6).

On the other hand, the downside of sensory marketing can be that it does not have as strong influence on consumers that are loyal to other brands, and on non-impulsive buys of higher priced goods (e.g., a house, car, etc.), where the buying decisions are calculated (Goel et al., 2023). This was highlighted by Interviewee 1 (marketing director) who elucidated it has stronger effect on "on the spot" purchases which is also its advantage (Interviewee 1). This is also something that was also highlighted by Interviewee 6 (Interviewee 6). Another downside that Interviewees 1 and 3 pointed out is that in some retail structures you do not have control over the points of sale (such as scents, lightning, sampling), making it more difficult to implement (Interviewee 1 & 3). It can also be difficult to think of ways to stimulate all (or many) senses in marketing communications (Interviewee 6 & 7). In addition, sensory marketing can be quite expensive, especially for small startups – something that Interviewee 4 mentioned. This expensive aspect was also highlighted by Interviewee 5 who mentioned the high costs of developing your own signature retail scent/perfume. In addition to increased expenses, one also must be very careful, as it can quickly become irritating and "too much" to some consumers (Interviewee 5).

### 5.3.4 Five senses in sensory marketing – viewpoints from practice

Afterwards, I wanted to get a better understanding of how marketing experts use five senses in their marketing activities. Interviewee 1, who works in FMCG, mentioned that having appealing audio-visual ads is nowadays also crucial. Different styles of music vary based on the type of communication – if the ad is more informative, music is used as a background, whereas for brand building commercials the music is bolder. Furthermore, they strive to have

dynamic, attention-grabbing point of sale (POS) materials, by using lightning, robots, special designs, etc. Furthermore, also Interviewee 7 mentioned she has frequently used sensory marketing in her career in food and beverage industry, primarily by focusing on visual (e.g., cold beverage) and audio (e.g., sound of bubbles, opening the bottle) triggers depicting great taste of the product and stimulating thirst (Interviewee 7). To target specifically the audio sense, Interviewee 5 explains they use their own internal radio for background music in the shopping center. They recently added Slovenian music, discovering afterwards that their shoppers noticed and appreciated it. In their marketing campaigns, they also constantly use the same voice artists, strengthening their audio branding.

Notably, the most junior interviewee (Interviewee 2) highlighted the importance of products or services being appealing to the eye. She also referred to the influence of captivating social media content, especially videos (the scenery, colors, food, etc.) and how they affect users' choice of restaurants. Also, Interviewee 5 (marketing specialist in retail industry) emphasized the significance of marketing communication being appealing to the human eye, especially the younger population. Therefore, their marketing efforts are focused on fast-moving, catchy creatives that capture lower attention spans of Gen Zs. Moving on with the visual sense, in the logotype they use strong colors (such as red) helping them to stand out. They also experiment with diverse lighting to improve shopping experience. Furthermore, whilst designing the shopping center, special attention was also directed towards ensuring natural lighting by adding windows.

Continuing with the visual sense, in my theoretical part I have mentioned that consumers are more likely to remember information presented with color, therefore brands have been developing color associations to enhance brand recognition, which is why I wanted to explore how marketing experts perceive them in practice. Most participants reported bright color selection for the brands they work for to ensure visibility. Most of them had not been involved in the brand developing process from the beginning, however, they knew what associations the selected brand colors triggered in consumers' brains. For instance, Interviewee 3, regional brand manager of nutritional supplements, explained the color associations of their brand: "Orange and yellow are very energetic, as well as enable greater recognition on the shelves. With new product launches they also test if the color is associated with the product's claims." The following interviewee, marketing specialist working in retail, stated that the reason behind their color selection (red) is the fact that it represents a strong and attention-grabbing color (Interviewee 5). Interestingly, one participant explained they used to have a much darker color for branding in the past and changed it afterwards to a brighter one. She says it is more pleasant now, warmer, positive, and recognizable (Interviewee 6). Only one participant provided a thorough explanation of the brand color selection. She detailed that their color of branding is based on deeply rooted connection to the product's origins. For instance, red color coheres with the city of origin (Ljubljana) and with the symbol in the logotype (dragon). In addition, it also enables the product to stand out amidst competition (Interviewee 7).

Packaging can target both the visual and tactile sense. Interviewee 1 agrees that packaging is very important, because it represents the consumer's first contact with the brand. She states that it must capture attention, communicate the product as well as contain some legally required information. Moreover, bold colors are often used in FCMG primarily to grab consumer attention and stand out (Interviewee 1). Another participant also states that packaging can play a very important role, especially deriving from the case of their company's products (wine bottles). Winemakers play with different symbolics and put special stories with unique drawings on their labeling. She explains that foreigners "go crazy" for such wines (Interviewee 4).

Regarding targeting the tactile sense, specially developed point of sale materials were already mentioned by the marketing director in this section (Interviewee 1). Additionally, regional brand manager describes how they also follow a tactile strategy with their point of sale (POS) materials, hence ensuring their materials, products, and gimmicks are pleasant to feel (Interviewee 3).

To discover the influence of taste in sensory marketing, I asked Interviewee 4, who is the head of marketing in an online wine store, if big physical events, such as *Odprta kuhinja* (Eng. Open kitchen – an event in Ljubljana city center), have large impact on sales. She surprisingly answered: "Not as much as we expected." But she did mention that they have clients that repurchase the wines they tried on such events. Furthermore, she also said that the taste preferences are very personal or specific, as some like red ones, the others white, some like the ones that are lighter, etc. Interestingly, she explains the color of the wine itself on the other hand is not as important as taste. She also mentioned that smell can hinder specific wine characteristics, for instance temperature can alter the taste and smell (Interviewee 4). In addition, for Interviewee 3 (regional brand manager for nutritional supplements) product samplings represent one of the core sensory marketing activities. She says taste is one of the key factors influencing the purchasing decision for nutritional supplements, mainly because it is difficult to determine the product quality on the short term, as already explained above. Similarly for Interviewee 7, who works for an international beverage company, samplings are crucial, especially for new launches to gain more consumer insights.

Curiously, interviewed marketers have not had much experience in targeting the sense of smell. As quite a few stores have developed their own signature scent, which has become a part of branding, I also asked if Interviewee 5 had developed something similar. She said no, at least not yet, as it represents quite an expensive and extensive project. She also pointed out that marketers must be careful when developing it, as many people are sensitive and it must not be too irritating. Additionally, Interviewee 1 also said they have not yet implemented scent marketing, due to complexity of implementation compared to other senses. In contrast, one participant mentioned that they did target the sense of smell whilst advertising to healthcare professionals (e.g., doctors). When launching new product, throat

pastilles with strawberry flavor, they developed a gimmick of Post-it notes infused with the scent of strawberries, accounting for greater product memorability (Interviewee 3).

Some participants also heavily focus on events, as part of their sensory marketing. For instance, Interviewee 5 illustrates that at their events they target all human senses (multisensory marketing) to make shopping experience much more pleasant and memorable. In the summer, they had a free cinema event for which they collaborated with a popcorn company, because they were aware that customers would connect the scent of popcorn with the thought of going to the cinema. They also organize concerts and combine them with food and drinks to create an even better experience. These events are also accompanied by advertising and targeting visual and audio senses, to ensure greater reach. I wanted to know more about the effect of such multisensory communication, so I asked how it impacts their business. Interviewee 5 stated that these events increased the visiting time shoppers spent in their stores, caused more frequent visits and greater sales of also bars and restaurants. Another participant also caters monthly thematic events, where they educate consumers about the products and provide the ability to sample them. At their events, they also play music (light jazz) to create a better atmosphere, accompanied also with good food (Interviewee 4).

An additional great example of multisensory marketing from practice has been presented by v 6, who works in food delivery services. As already mentioned, they use strong visuals that show food as very tasty, delicious, and juicy. They have their own team of photographers to make sure the visuals of the food are of the highest quality. In addition to that, they also do audio-branding and use sounds from the app in their commercials to strengthen their brand identity in consumers' minds. Furthermore, they use words in their socials, voiceovers, newsletters, and commercials that convey tastiness. In addition, they hold offline activations and events for new launches. They also try to include their team in brand communications, especially in offline promotions, which is why they created an activation where consumers could take a picture of their employee, with a specific animal mask on the street, and get a discount coupon in return. Moreover, they organized a live event/charity project with their disabled employee, generating large media exposure (Interviewee 6).

An interesting example illustrating how big of an effect senses play on consumers was elucidated by Interviewee 2, explaining her experience of having dinner in the dark. She articulated it represented a unique dining experience, as it occurs in the dark, therefore you cannot count on the sense of sight. Even though the food was not very tasty, what made an impression was the experience. Meaning that other senses (olfactory, audio, tactile) prevailed compared to taste, usually known to be the base for a great restaurant experience (Interviewee 2). This intriguingly shows that unique experiences may have the ability to potentially shift well-known industry beliefs and consumer preferences.

### 5.3.5 Most effective advertising communication

The question of what they perceived as the most effective advertising communication followed. For this question, participants offered varying responses. Marketing director for leading regional producer and distributor of FCMG products believes that the most effective advertising communication is a mix of different marketing objectives, depending on market performance, more precisely, a combination of building brand awareness, emphasizing occasions, price promotions as well as ensuring strong support on points of sale (Interviewee 1). On the other hand, head of marketing of food marketing agency highlighted the most popular advertising communication currently in the food and beverage industry, which are videos. However, she added: “The skill of making good videos is crucial.” She explains that not every photographer knows how to capture food the most effectively and that the videos must be of high quality and authentic (Interviewee 2).

Similarly, advertising “pleasing to the eye” was selected by marketing specialist in retail industry. She also added the use of different channel mixes to target distinct customer segments (i.e. groups) (Interviewee 5). Adapting the communication to different channel mixes (newsletter, social media, YouTube) was also highlighted by marketing associate in food delivery services. Based on her experience atypical ads generate the best results (Interviewee 6). The following most effective approach mentioned was word of mouth advertising. Regional brand manager of food supplements pointed out that in her industry this is the most powerful and influential marketing (Interviewee 3). In addition, integrated marketing communication was noted as most effective by marketing specialist for online wine shop, in other words, conveying one key message across different marketing communication channels (Interviewee 4). Lastly, meaningful advertising with elements of differentiation was also recognized as the most effective in selected industry by media and consumer research marketing manager of beverage producer (Interviewee 7).

### 5.3.6 Example of Dunkin’ Donuts’ multisensory campaign

The purpose of explaining Dunkin’ Donuts’ multisensory campaign was to communicate an example of a successful multisensory campaign and discover if the participants have used similar examples in practice. To summarize, all participants have used multisensory marketing in their careers. Especially in the industry of food and beverage, the senses that are mostly targeted together are sight and audio. This has been implemented via video commercials (applicable to all participants). One example of multisensory video ads has been described, mentioning that during the summer season they use sounds of the sea, sounds of pouring wine into the glass, as well as sounds of opening the bottle, combined with visual representations (Interviewee 4).

Some participants have also targeted the sense of taste in combination with other senses, through offline promotions or online communication. In particular, one participant stated that during the summer, they had promotional activities on the beach and in the mountains,

giving away free breakfast (their products) (Interviewee 1). On the other hand, cases where taste sense is targeted through social media via videos (visual and audio) and descriptive words (captions or subtitles on the content) were also mentioned (Interviewee 2).

There were only two examples that targeted also the olfactory sense among other senses. One of them was the example of the abovementioned scented Post-it notes and samples for the doctors (Interviewee 3). The following example not only included the olfactory sense, but all the senses through an event hosting. For reference, the marketing specialist working in retail industry explained how they hosted an open cinema event where in addition to streaming movies, they also sold popcorn and offered free blankets for extra coziness. Furthermore, before the event they also did print and social communications. They frequently organize concerts, where multiple consumers' senses are targeted through music, food, special decorations, and lighting to make it cozier and more pleasant (Interviewee 5).

The majority of the interviewees (five out of seven) expressed their opinion to find Dunkin' Donuts campaign inspiring and would consider implementing it in the future, if the budget allows. For instance, regional brand manager said: "This campaign represents a great example, as it has various touchpoints creating stronger advertising effect" (Interviewee 3). Media and consumer research marketing manager also conveyed an interesting detail, elucidating the importance of distinctive market structures: "This is an example of a great campaign, as it is implemented holistically, targeting multiple senses. However, similar campaign would be harder to implement in Slovenia, due to smaller fluctuation of people compared to Korea" (Interviewee 7).

On the other hand, interviewees (2, 4 & 6) explained they have not implemented something similar yet, due to budget constraints, highlighting the fact that such multisensory campaigns with various touchpoints have high costs that many companies cannot afford.

### 5.3.7 Influence of sensory marketing on attention, brand awareness and sales

Consecutively, I aimed to uncover participants' opinions of the influence of sensory marketing on attention, brand awareness and sales. All participants consider that sensory marketing has an influence on all three – attention, brand awareness, and sales. For example, Interviewee 7 (media and consumer research marketing manager) explained: "If you succeed in creating a campaign similar to Dunkin' Donuts, the impact can be huge on all three. If the campaign is implemented holistically, such as this one (where they were first targeted with jingle and scent, then the awareness phase with posters and lastly the points of sales) and all these steps are in place, the sales can also be impacted."

However, three out of seven participants believe that it has the largest and most direct impact on attention. For instance, one who is head of marketing believes that consumers unconsciously give more attention to sensory communication, but they are not necessarily aware of why. She thinks that it can also increase brand awareness but not in a direct and

intense way as it can influence attention. Furthermore, she believes it also can increase sales, as people mostly take impulsive decisions (Interviewee 2). On the other hand, two participants (Interviewee 1 & 3) expressed that on sales also other factors play important role, such as shopping journey, discounts, price, word of mouth, etc. More precisely, regional brand manager said that it has a large influence on attention and brand awareness, as it makes you memorize the brand more. However, she mentioned that there are many additional factors that influence sales. Generally, yes it has an influence, if the scenario is simple. Nevertheless, in their industry, where intermediaries are involved and the market is clustered, with numerous promotional activities, it can complicate the purchasing journey (Interviewee 3).

### 5.3.8 Ethical viewpoints of sensory marketing

The following question was focused on ethical viewpoints of sensory marketing. Since sensory marketing can unconsciously trigger consumers and capture their attention more, compared to traditional marketing, I wondered if marketers perceive it ethical, particularly in such industries where there is a risk of obesity and alcoholism. All in all, I can conclude that interviewed marketers do not see sensory advertising as unethical. This is mainly because consumers have all the information to make the right, healthy choices and final decisions, explained for instance by Interviewee 1 (marketing director): “Marketing has shifted from one-way to two-way communication, meaning that also consumers hold control over their decisions and have all the information available to make the right decisions.” Some marketers also state that it can depend on the product quality, as well as marketing tactics. This was highlighted by Interviewee 3 (regional brand manager). She opines that if the product does not harm the consumer it is not ethically objectionable, especially based on the example of Coca-Cola: “For instance, Coca-Cola still exists nowadays.” However, the percentage of consumers that are more aware and striving for the best quality has been increasing, meaning that the ads of poor-quality brands will not influence them. On the other hand, if marketers are aware they have high quality products, but without a competitive edge, she thinks that advertising by using sensory marketing is ethically acceptable (Interviewee 3). Interviewee 4 (head of marketing) sees it as depending on how “pushy” marketers are. Furthermore, some interviewees also promote responsible consumption. In greater detail, the company sells alternative products that are alcohol-free. Furthermore, the legislation in such industry (alcoholic beverages) is quite rigorous. Therefore, she believes they are doing okay from an ethical standpoint (Interviewee 7).

### 5.3.9 Rating commercials

The subsequent topic focused on evaluating commercials and uncovering marketers’ preferences and insights on what ads are more effective. Marketers had to view four different ads, the first two advertising beer and the last two McDonald’s products. Two commercial examples in each category contain more sensory triggers, whereas the other two contain less.

The first commercial also contains autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) triggers. This, alongside with link examples, is presented in Table 3.

*Table 3: Evaluated commercial examples*

| Advertised product<br>(Example number) | Intensity of sensory engagement | Link                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Beer – Example 1                       | High-Sensory (ASMR)             | <a href="https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/norrlands-guld-ljus">https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/norrlands-guld-ljus</a>                                                                                           |
| Beer – Example 2                       | Moderate-Sensory                | <a href="https://www.carlsberggroup.com/newsroom/carlsberg-launches-new-global-campaign-with-mads-mikkelsen/">https://www.carlsberggroup.com/newsroom/carlsberg-launches-new-global-campaign-with-mads-mikkelsen/</a> |
| McDonald's – Example 3                 | High-Sensory                    | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phZaIJ7t_wQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phZaIJ7t_wQ</a>                                                                                                                 |
| McDonald's – Example 4                 | Moderate-Sensory                | <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX8LQccLy0Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX8LQccLy0Y</a>                                                                                                                 |

*Source: Own work.*

Interestingly, the interviewees did not provide a unified response on their advertising preferences. Most participants (four out of seven) preferred moderate-sensory ads that were more traditional, whilst the others (three out of seven) favored high sensory ads.

Most participants (four out of seven) believed that traditional, moderate-sensory ads could have a better influence on sales, brand awareness, and memorability. On the other hand, even though Interviewee 1 (marketing director) did not favor the high-sensory ASMR ad, she explained: “However, I am aware that we are different. In relation to the first commercial, I also want to mention that when launching our new product that was made in collaboration with Michelin chef, we also developed music with a composer and philharmonic orchestra to create a sound experience, which has won many awards. We do have such similar innovative approaches in our collection” (Interviewee 1). When asked about why they favor the less-sensory beer ad compared to ASMR one, they mentioned that because it is shorter (Interviewee 3 & 4), it is more focused on selling beer rather than the feeling of drinking it, as well as because more things are joined in one video (celebrity, robots, space, facts about the company) (Interviewee 5). Furthermore, some of the reasons why they also preferred the less-sensory McDonald's ad were: it focuses more on community, socializing, occasion, emotions, and since their products do not look as tasty in real life (Interviewee 1), you do not get “sick of it” as much (Interviewee 3), it has a story and emotions behind it (Interviewee 4 & 5).

In contrast, some participants (three out of seven) favored high-sensory commercials. Some also found them more convincing in terms of purchasing, as well as memorable. Sensory elements, such as whispers, which were included in the ASMR beer commercial, captured their attention more compared to less-sensory commercials (Interviewee 2). Some also favored it being unconventional and liked the “ASMR vibes” (Interviewee 6). However, interestingly, two participants noted that they do not find this ad more influential for purchasing, as it is less typical and cannot achieve many key performance indicators (KPIs), mostly because it is so different that most of the target group might not understand it (Interviewee 6 & 7). Similarly, they also preferred McDonald’s more sensory ad, found it to be more influential for purchase, memorable and enjoyable. Some of the reasons why they also preferred it more are because they found it more convincing and memorable, due to precise emphasis of the product, determinant music, and convincing voiceover (Interviewee 2), being more straightforward and “juicy” (Interviewee 6). For instance, Interviewee 7 (media and consumer research marketing manager) explained: “Sensory marketing works in such industry, at least from my point of view and experience. The second, less sensory McDonald’s ad is so typical that it isn’t memorable and influential.”

Interview observations show that the participants who do not enjoy ASMR also do not favor the high-sensory ad examples. This can be observed from Interviewee 1, 3, and 4. Interestingly, Interviewee 2 and 6 are the youngest and prefer high-sensory ASMR ads. Additionally, Interviewee 7, who is 47 years old, favors high-sensory commercials and believes they are more memorable and enjoyable. This correlates with the study conducted by Cohen et al. (2024), demonstrating that ASMR ads can have positive as well as negative effects on consumers’ responses to such kind of advertising and the consequent brand perceptions.

#### 5.3.10 Future of (sensory) marketing

When asked about the prevailing marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry for the future and whether sensory marketing will be used, almost all interviewees (six out of seven) believe sensory marketing is here to stay and will be used in the future, especially in the industry of food and beverage, which was well explained by Interviewee 7, who said: “Sensory marketing will absolutely be used in the future, as it works really well in this industry.” Participants also mentioned some other marketing strategies that they believe will prevail in the future, such as: new technologies (Interviewee 1), artificial intelligence and personalized marketing (Interviewee 3), emotional storytelling (Interviewee 5 & 6).

## 6 DISCUSSION

This chapter will focus on an in-depth explanation of the main research findings. It will also include limitations and future research recommendations.

The purpose of this thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of the functioning of sensory marketing, to discover the benefits of such strategy, as well as to demonstrate how brands in the food and beverage industry leverage it to achieve greater marketing success. Guided by this purpose, the research questions encompassed 1) what is the level of awareness among marketers regarding sensory marketing, what are their perceptions of it 2) if so, how and why have they implemented it in their marketing, and, lastly, 3) how do marketers perceive the ethics of using sensory marketing in the food and beverage industry.

## **6.1 Main research findings**

On the whole, the findings of this research imply that most marketers are aware of sensory marketing and have a good understanding of what it represents. Some benefits of sensory marketing that interviewees highlighted were that it captures attention and stimulates the urge to purchase, which correlates with the literature presented by Krupka (2023) and Goel et al. (2023) stating that sensory marketing has strong impact on impulse purchases as it stimulates consumers' senses, impacting their attention and perception. Other mentioned benefits were that it strengthens the bond between customer and the brand and that it strengthens the brand image. This has also been supported by Lindstrom (2005) showing the connection between sensory marketing and customer loyalty and brand image. Furthermore, all interviewed marketers recognize the positive influence it has on attention, brand awareness, and sales. Some believe it has the largest direct impact on attention and some articulated that also other factors play an important role in terms of influencing sales. Analyzing the Dunkin' Donuts example, I can conclude, based on the achieved results of this campaign, that it can influence all three whilst also agreeing with interview participants that other factors also influence sales (i.e. price promotions, shopping journey, word of mouth, etc.).

Proceeding with the comparison of sensory marketing to traditional marketing, the interviewees did not provide a unified response on their advertising preferences when rating four commercial examples that were divided into two categories: (high) sensory and moderate-sensory (traditional) ads. Most participants preferred moderate-sensory (traditional) ads, whilst the others preferred high sensory ads. Several believed that traditional ads could have better influence on sales and brand awareness, whilst they agreed that sensory-intensive commercials had greater effect on attention. The others considered that ads rich in sensory elements also had positive influence on sales (as they created stronger desire to purchase) and brand awareness. Based on the results obtained from the interviews, I assume that if individuals do not enjoy ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, a tingling sensation to visual or auditory triggers), they also will not enjoy high sensory ads, especially the ones where the sense of sound is heavily targeted. Interview insights are consistent with the study conducted by Cohen and his colleagues (2024), revealing that ASMR advertising can have both positive and negative effects on consumer experience and brand perceptions, namely implying that such an approach is not universally appealing and

cannot be used for broad targeting. It is worth noting that also the traditional commercials included smaller, however still moderate level of sensory triggers compared to high-sensory ad examples.

Lastly, almost all marketers believe that sensory marketing will continue to be used, especially in the industry of food and beverage, recognizing it as inevitable due to its potential in this sector.

All interviewed marketers use it in their marketing practices; however, some senses are more targeted than others. Notably, most marketers focus on targeting auditory and visual senses, while the olfactory sense remains less commonly utilized, despite the benefits on longer-lasting impact on memory that has been studied by Krishna (2012) and Herz & Engen (1996). This can potentially be due to easier and less costly implementation, alongside the rise of digital advertising (Fromowitz, 2017). Scent marketing is in general more expensive and complex to implement, as it requires signature scent development, physical locations some brands have no control over, and specialized equipment (scent diffusers as for instance in the Dukin' Donuts example). Additionally, to target the sense of taste and touch, brands oftentimes offer samples which can also be costly. On the other hand, auditory marketing can potentially be easier to implement, especially from the viewpoint of greater control and lower cost of digital advertising compared to retail. Furthermore, interviewed marketers also recognize the benefits of using different styles of music in videos, in addition to carefully selected use voiceover artists. This coheres with literature presented by Hultén et al. (2009, pp. 8, 69, 74) stating that music can influence moods and perceived time spent shopping (Yalch & Spangenberg, 2000), the study of Park & Young (1986) explaining the effect of music on ad persuasion, the study on the level (high vs low) of involvement of customer's ad processing (MacInnis & Park, 1991), and the impact of actor's voice on brand identity (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 73). Analysis also reveals that some marketers also heavily focus on audio branding, by for instance incorporating sounds from their app into commercials to strengthen it. This coheres with literature suggestions that audio logos can often be forgotten, however can have significant impact on brand awareness and recognition (Armstrong, 2019a). Interview data reveals that marketers believe appealing audio-visual communication is crucial nowadays. Dynamic point of sale materials (special designs, robots), physical lighting, and captivating digital and social media videos can grab the attention of consumers, especially the shorter attention spans of Generation Z. This is consistent with theoretical perspectives, demonstrating that movement and dynamic ads show better results compared to static, generating higher viewer engagement (Cian et al., 2014), as well as current trends in digital and social media (Polise, 2022). Most of interviewed marketers reported using bright colors for the brands they work for, which enables them to grab consumer attention. This has also been supported by the study of Milosavljevic et al. (2011) demonstrating that consumers heavily rely their purchasing decisions on visual attention features. Most marketers were aware of the color associations their brands represented, correlating with the theoretical part, stating that companies strive to create color associations (Smith, 2015)

impacting human nervous system and cerebral cortex, to stimulate thoughts and memories (Hultén et al., 2009, p. 96). For targeting tactile sense not many interviewees shared their examples from practice, except for the two who follow a tactile strategy for point of sale (POS) materials and ensuring their materials, products, and gimmicks are pleasant to feel. This gives consumers additional information and influences their perception of the product's quality as stated by Hultén et al. (2009, pp. 142, 143), therefore has important persuasive impact according to Peck and Wiggins (2006). Next, to target the sense of taste some marketers use product samplings often. They believe taste is one of the most influential factors for consumer purchases, especially in some industries, for instance the food supplements where product quality (i.e. effectiveness) cannot be determined in the short term. Hence, characteristics such as taste and texture are very important because they are one of the first things consumers notice. Furthermore, for new product launches samplings can be very beneficial for the consumers (who familiarize themselves with the product's characteristics) as well as for the marketers (who gain new insights about their product and consumers' perceptions). On the other hand, researchers such as Krishna et al. (2016) suggest that marketers should strive to target all five senses to stimulate more positive sensory experiences and illustrate powerful taste. This approach is also used by some of interviewed marketers with the use of strong visuals, focusing on portraying delicious food, using experienced photographers, specific words on social captions, voiceovers, and newsletters to convey tastiness, as well as holding offline activations and events to truly strengthen the taste of products.

Leading to the subsequent point, multisensory marketing which aims to target multiple senses at once, all marketers are using multisensory marketing by targeting auditory, visual, and taste sense. However, some are targeting all five senses in combination with offline promotions such as thematic events that contribute to enhanced consumer experiences. This view is additionally upheld by Hultén (2011) describing that multisensory experiences contribute to enhanced value for consumers, improve their interaction with brands, stimulate purchases, as well as support brand image. Interview results disclose that marketers recognize the benefits of holistically implemented multisensory campaigns, such as Dunkin' Donuts example. On the other hand, they also recognize they can be difficult to implement considering different market structures and high costs.

In terms of ethical viewpoints, all marketers shared the view that sensory marketing is ethically acceptable in the industry of food and beverage. They believe consumers are equipped with all the information to make informed decisions and opt for the best choices. However, a minority has mentioned that it can also depend on product quality, as well as marketing tactics (i.e. how pushy companies are). Nevertheless, there are opposing literature views, stating that it can be controversial in the cases of obesity and addiction, where the products are not of good quality in terms of ingredients (Salamone et al., 2003). Primary criticism of sensory marketing is aimed at psychological manipulation, due to impacting consumers' subconsciousness, causing them to change their perception or behavior without

their awareness, which can be seen as a form of manipulation (Garraud, 2021). Interestingly, these views have not been shared by any of the interviewed participants.

## **6.2 Limitations and future research recommendations**

Deriving from analysis of available literature and insights from empirical research, it can be determined that this thesis also has certain limitations. It is worth noting that, despite sensory marketing gaining interest and importance in recent years, the literature on the topic is still limited, as many articles use models and theory from only a few (same) researchers. Furthermore, the qualitative research has been conducted with a limited and relatively low number of interviewees. Moreover, despite capturing different age groups, there were no males included, due to zero response rate among male marketers. What is more, interviewees' time constraints accounted for interviews that were as brief as possible, limiting the possibility for greater in-dept research.

Therefore, my suggestion for future research would be to include more interviewees of different genders and age mix, with a larger number of questions to gain even better understandings and results. Moreover, geographical limitations were also imposed, as the majority of the interviewees live in Ljubljana, therefore it would be interesting to see how the answers would differ in other cities, countries, and cultures as well. Additionally, due to time and financial constraints, I only performed qualitative empirical research, which enabled to obtain a better understanding of marketing experts' viewpoints, reasoning behind them and their experience. As a possibility for future research, it would be highly beneficial to also conduct quantitative research with neuroscientific tools to disclose brain activity and subconscious responses, thus providing additional insights that cannot be captured with interviews or traditional questionnaires with objective and more accurate data. Moreover, the approaches and results of sensory marketing should be compared also within different industries, to see whether there are some specifics and what can potentially be generalized. Finally, I believe that sensory marketing will become even more used in the future, thus it would be advisable to revise new literature, practical brand examples and conduct more empirical studies to observe latest results, possible new trends, and creative approaches.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

This study analyzes the functioning of the human brain to sensory stimuli, the sensory marketing, its advantages, as well as practical use of successful brands in the food and beverage industry. From neuromarketing perspective, it explains and demonstrates the positive effects on greater brand recognition, stronger brand image, differentiation from competition, and consequent greater brand success. The paper also provides practical examples from both globally well-known brands, as well as less recognized companies, portraying how sensory marketing strategies can be applied on different scales. Furthermore, it also discusses ethical viewpoints of using such an approach in the selected industry of food and beverage.

Some leading marketers such as Raja Rajamannar, Mastercard's Global Chief Marketing Officer, believe that advertising is dead and the solution lays in offering valuable experiences to consumers, who are bombarded with information and advertising messages. Consequently, he strives for authenticity and timeless elements affecting human emotions. His goal is to create experiences and connect with customers through all five senses (Kovič, 2024). Similarly, some of the most successful brands continue to use sensorial (branding) strategies to target human senses. Sensory marketing thus enables opportunity for more memorable and deeper experiences that engage consumers subconsciously. By developing sensory brand strategies, companies can capture consumers' attention and generate greater brand experience, resulting in enhanced satisfaction, recognition, recall, and, ultimately, loyalty. It is also of great importance for marketers to understand brain processes (how human brain reacts to marketing stimuli) and consumer behavior, in order to effectively develop (sensory) marketing strategies, whilst understanding the reasoning behind specific outcomes.

The thesis's empirical findings lack a unified pattern, showing the potential for further research with larger sample of participants, as well as additional quantitative research to provide additional insights and solve the observed inconsistencies. The results of this research illustrate that most marketers are aware of sensory marketing and have knowledge of its representation. All interviewed marketers use it in their marketing practices, whilst some senses are targeted more than others. They recognize the positive effects of its use and believe it will be used in the future, especially in the industry of food and beverage. Nevertheless, results display that marketers have different views and advertising preferences which were revealed when rating four commercial examples. Most participants preferred moderate-sensory ads that were more traditional, whilst the others favored high sensory ads. Furthermore, several believed that traditional, moderate-sensory ads could have better influence on sales and brand awareness, whilst they agreed that sensory-intensive commercials had greater effect on attention. The others considered that ads rich in sensory elements also had positive influence on sales (as they created stronger desire to purchase) and brand awareness. Furthermore, interview findings also revealed that some marketers believe typical sensory commercials where product placement is prominently featured have a greater influence on their purchasing decisions, thus creating desire to buy, whilst others prefer the storytelling ads focusing more on emotions. Drawing from the interview results, I deduce that if they dislike ASMR, they consequently will not enjoy high-sensory ads, especially the ones where the sense of sound is heavily targeted. This is aligned with the study conducted by Cohen and his colleagues (2024) suggesting ASMR advertising can have both positive and negative effects on consumer experience and brand perceptions, implying such an approach is not recommended for broad targeting. Taking into consideration the interview data and abovementioned study, similar can apply for high-sensory marketing strategies.

Lastly, the paper also presents suggestions for future improvements and research on the selected topic to address existing gaps and further advancements in the field of sensory marketing.

To conclude, sensory marketing has been successfully used by well-known brands, such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Dunkin' Donuts, Starbucks, Apple, and many more, hence showing potential for brands to differentiate themselves on the cluttered market. In addition to the benefits mentioned above, marketers must consider potential negative effects of sensory overload, causing consumer dissatisfaction hindering brand success. Evaluation of costs and testing which sensory elements yield the greatest brand impact is essential for successful implementation of sensory marketing strategy to generate future brand success.

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## **APPENDICES**



## **Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language)**

V magistrskem delu so bile raziskane priložnosti senzoričnega trženja v panogi hrane in pijače – panogi, kjer človeška čutila poganjajo odločanje in vedenje potrošnikov. Namen magistrskega dela je bil poglobiti razumevanje delovanja senzoričnega trženja, raziskati prednosti tovrstne strategije ter prikazati, kako jo blagovne znamke v omenjeni panogi uporabljajo za doseganje uspešnosti. Raziskovalna vprašanja so bila naslednja: 1) ali se tržniki zavedajo senzoričnega trženja, kakšne so njihove predstave o njem in njegovih prednostih na splošno in v primerjavi s tradicionalnim marketingom; 2) če da, kako in zakaj so ga implementirali v svoje trženje; 3) ali je uporaba senzoričnega marketinga v izbrani panogi etična z njihovega vidika.

Zaradi globalizacije, visoke konkurenčnosti, ogromne ponudbe izdelkov, digitalizacije in poplave informacij je blagovnim znamkam težko pritegniti pozornost potrošnikov ter zgraditi (ali ohraniti) močno podobo oziroma prepoznavnost blagovne znamke. Porast spletnega nakupovanja zmanjšuje potrebo po otipanju in testiranju izdelkov, zato se postavlja vprašanje učinkovitosti senzoričnega marketinga. Ravno nasprotno pa nekateri vodilni tržniki verjamejo, da je oglaševanje mrtvo in da je rešitev v ponujanju dragocenih izkušenj potrošnikom, ki so tako rekoč bombardirani z informacijami ter oglasnimi sporočili – v avtentičnosti, z brezčasnimi elementi, kot je npr. povezovanje s kupci preko petih človeških čutil (sluh, vid, vonj, okus, dotik). Senzorično trženje tako omogoča priložnost za bolj nepozabne in globlje izkušnje potrošnikov, ki jih podzvestno pritegnejo. Z razvojem senzoričnih strategij blagovnih znamk lahko podjetja ne samo pritegnejo pozornost, temveč tudi ustvarijo večje zadovoljstvo in zvestobo potrošnikov ter večjo prepoznavnost svojih blagovnih znamk. Prav tako je zelo pomembno, da tržniki poleg vedenja potrošnikov razumejo tudi človeške možganske procese in odzive le-teh na trženjske dražljaje, da lahko učinkovito razvijejo (senzorične) trženjske strategije.

V nadaljevanju magistrskega dela sem se v teoretičnem delu poglobila v predstavitev senzoričnega trženja, nevroznanosti in nevrotreženja ter možganskih odzivov na (ne)zavedne dražljaje. Prikazala sem tudi prednosti uporabe senzoričnega trženja kot strategije in preučila trženje preko posameznih človeških čutil, kjer sem predstavila, kaj se z možganskimi procesi oziroma odzivi dogaja v ozadju, obenem pa sem prikazala praktične primere podjetij ali blagovnih znamk. Nato sem se poglobila tudi v multisenzorično trženje (trženje, v katerem je vključenih več človeških čutil hkrati) in njegove prednosti proučila na primerih globalnih blagovnih znamk, kot sta Coca-Cola ter Dunkin' Donuts. Sledila je analiza literature, ki prikazuje različne, nasprotujoče si poglede etičnosti senzoričnega trženja v panogi hrane in pijače.

Za pridobivanje primarnih podatkov je sledila empirična raziskava, opravljena s pomočjo intervjujev, ki so prikazali, kako tržniki v praksi v izbrani industriji dojemajo senzorično trženje in ga izkoristijo za doseganje boljših rezultatov (izboljšajo prepoznavnost, zgradijo močnejšo podobo blagovnih znamk ter se razlikujejo od konkurence). Kvalitativna raziskava je zajemala polstrukturirane poglobljene intervjuje, in sicer s kombinacijo vnaprej

pripravljenih in dodatnih vprašanj, prilagojenih odgovorom ter ozadju posameznega intervjuvanca. Raznolik spekter kandidatov je zajemal tako strokovnjake z dolgoletnimi izkušnjami v multinacionalnih podjetjih kot tudi tržnike, ki so v začetkih svoje kariere v novoustanovljenih podjetjih. To omogoča možnost za realističen vpogled v senzorično trženje na podlagi praktičnih aplikacij v vsakdanjem okolju. Z intervjuji sem poskušala ugotoviti, ali tržniki poznajo senzorično trženje in kakšno mnenje imajo o njem, ali so ga v svoji karieri tudi implementirali ter če da, zakaj. Nazadnje me je zanimalo, če intervjuvani tržniki smatrajo uporabo senzoričnega trženja v panogi hrane in pijače kot etično.

Rezultati intervjujev so pokazali, da je večina intervjuvancev dobro seznanjena s senzoričnim trženjem in njegovimi prednostmi. Največje prednosti so prepoznali v večjih možnostih pritegovanja pozornosti, stimuliranju impulzivnih nakupov, izboljšanju vezi potrošnika z blagovno znamko in močnejšo podobo blagovne znamke. Poleg tega ga vsi uporabljajo v svojih trženjskih aktivnostih, je pa potrebno omeniti, da se na nekatera čutila osredotočajo bolj kot na druga. Ob primerjavi senzoričnega trženja s tradicionalnim intervjuvanci niso podali enotnega odgovora o svojih preferencah pri ocenjevanju štirih primerov oglasov, ki so bili razdeljeni v dve kategoriji: visoko senzorični in tradicionalni (zmerno-senzorični) oglasi. Večina je menila, da bi tradicionalni oglasi lahko bolje vplivali na prodajo in prepoznavnost blagovne znamke, medtem ko so se strinjali, da imajo senzorično-intenzivne reklame večji učinek na pozornost. Ostali so menili, da imajo oglasi, bogati s senzoričnimi elementi, pozitiven vpliv tudi na prodajo (saj ustvarjajo večjo željo po nakupu) in prepoznavnost blagovne znamke. Na podlagi intervjujev in rezultatov strokovne literature sem sklenila, da takšen visoko-senzorični pristop ni vedno optimalen za široko ciljanje potrošnikov, saj ima lahko pozitivne in hkrati negativne učinke na potrošniško izkušnjo ter dojetje blagovne znamke. Skoraj vsi tržniki verjamejo, da se bo senzorično trženje še naprej uporabljalo v prihodnosti in ga priznavajo kot neizogibnega zaradi svojega potenciala, zlasti v industriji hrane in pijače. Z vidika etičnosti uporabe senzoričnega trženja v izbrani panogi so vsi tržniki mnenja, da je le-to etično sprejemljivo. Verjamejo namreč, da so v današnjem času potrošniki opremljeni z vsemi informacijami za sprejemanje premišljenih odločitev, ki jim omogočajo najboljšo izbiro.

Na koncu pričujoče naloge so predstavljeni tudi predlogi za izboljšanje nadaljnjih raziskav in izpostavljene omejitve empirične analize. Zaključujem, da senzorično trženje blagovnim znamkam predstavlja potencial za razlikovanje na prenasičenem tržišču, kar potrjujejo uspešni primeri iz prakse, predvsem npr. McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Dunkin' Donuts in mnogi drugi. Poleg zgoraj omenjenih prednosti izpostavljam, da morajo tržniki upoštevati tudi morebitne negativne učinke senzorične preobremenjenosti, ki bi lahko vplivali na nezadovoljstvo potrošnikov. Vrednotenje stroškov in testiranje tega, kateri senzorični pristopi imajo najoptimalnejši vpliv, je bistvenega pomena za uspešno izvajanje strategije senzoričnega trženja in posledičnega uspeha blagovne znamke.

## Appendix 2: Interview questions

1. Age, gender, position/job title, company/industry, education, years of experience in the industry?
2. Have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Do you think it is useful considering the cost and effectiveness of using such methods?
3. Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand by sensory marketing? (If not, I explain it to them)
4. Have you ever used it in your career? If so, what are the benefits and downsides?
5. What kind of strategies have you used for advertising food and/or beverages – in terms of sensory marketing? (In connection to visual, sound, touch, taste - sub-questions: for instance, have you used jingles in commercials/background music in restaurants/stores – do you think they are important?, is packaging a differentiative factor – how much importance have you given to developing it?, what is the story behind the selection of colors, how do you incorporate smell and taste in your advertising activities (how frequent have you used tastings, events, scented billboards?) – brands and names do not have to be disclosed).
6. What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in the food and beverage industry?
7. What do you think of multisensory strategies in food and beverage industries?  
I present them with the multisensory strategy of Dunkin Donuts', ask whether they sometimes implemented similar strategies or would do so in the future.
8. In what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness, and sales?
9. Do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in the food and beverage industry? Why?
10. Rating commercials

This section requires you to observe four different commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products. Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

1. ASMR Beer commercial: Examples 1 and 2
  - a. ASMR: <https://www.trendhunter.com/trends/norrlands-guld-ljus> vs
  - b. Carlsberg: <https://www.carlsberggroup.com/newsroom/carlsberg-launches-new-global-campaign-with-mads-mikkelsen/>

Which beer ad did you like best?

Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers?

Which one do you find more memorable?

All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why?

2. McDonald's commercials: Examples 3 and 4

a. McDonald's – emphasis on taste:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phZaIJ7t\\_wQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phZaIJ7t_wQ)

b. McDonald's – emphasis on storytelling:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX8LQccLy0Y>

Which McDonald's ad did you like best?

Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers?

Which do you remember more (is more memorable)?

All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why?

11. What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay?

## **Appendix 3: Interview transcriptions**

### **INTERVIEW 1**

1. N: How old are you, what is your position title, what is your education and how long have you worked in the food industry?

I1: 50 years old, Marketing director, Industry: Food – FCMG, Education: MBA, Experience in the industry: 6 years.

2. N: Have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Do you think it is useful considering the cost and effectiveness of using such methods?

I1: Yes. Many times, we pre/post-tested our campaigns. It provides interesting information, however on a small sample size this means that the data is not representative. Although it is good to use in combination with other qualitative methods.

3. N: Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand with sensory marketing?

I1: Of course. Marketing that tries to appeal to human senses – one or more at a time.

4. N: I also assume you use it then as a part of your marketing strategies?

I1: Yes, however also this industry has certain limitations. In my previous industry, the telecommunications, you had much more control over the stores, and you could use sensory marketing more easily – for instance by adjusting the lighting, using music, scents, however in FMCG we don't have our own stores, hence we don't necessarily have the control over all the senses, which makes it a bit harder.

N: What do you think the benefits and downsides are of using sensory marketing as a strategy?

I1: In FCMG industry there is always competition for the attention of the shoppers. We also used methods of technology to monitor their shopping journeys – how to capture shoppers' attention in hypermarkets, however in the category of savory spreads, majority of the shoppers know in advance which brand they will purchase – not on the spot, meaning that sensory approaches have more influence in some categories and less in others.

5. N: What kind of strategies have you used for advertising food and/or beverages – in terms of sensory marketing?

I1: In our audio-visual ads, music is very important, or in other words we are aware of its importance – approximately as much as having child in the ad. We used authorized music, however it depends on the type of communication – if it is a communication with big amount of information, music is used more as a background, whereas for brand image commercials it is more important. While on POS we do a lot – we used robots on many markets, we used all kinds of materials that try to capture attention. We have not used scents because it's a bit harder, but we have used lighting and dynamic, attention-grabbing POS materials.

Packaging represents the first contact a consumer has with a brand, therefore is especially important. Two years back we did a re-design, on which we worked for a year, we also test it a lot. Our brand color is trademarked, and others cannot use packaging in the same color as we. Packaging must capture attention however it also has to contain all legally required information, and also communicate differences between SKUs. Our packaging is also made from entirely sustainable materials, which is also one of our main brand characteristics.

N: Are you aware of the meaning behind the use of your specific brand color?

I1: I am not specifically aware, as this was many years before my arrival. I am convinced there is a reason behind it, I can assume, to capture attention on the shelves. But it was not because the director was a fan of this specific color in his personal life.

6. N: What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in food (and beverage industry)? Do you focus more on storytelling or on communications that create hunger and desire?

I1: All of that. It's hard for me to say only for one market, as we are present on 35 markets. In regions where we are Nr 1 or 2 it is completely different compared to Sweden, Germany etc., where we don't have built awareness, and the category isn't as recognized. On the markets where we are Nr 1 and developed categories we also have a communication focused on strategic building brand awareness and tactical activities. We always have investments that are oriented towards advertising and POS activities, as well as price promotions. If we look at markets where there is still lots of potential, we emphasize more occasions, therefore showing consumers when and how the product is used, as well as also focusing on building awareness. Overall, a combination of brand awareness as well as strong support for POS, including price promotions.

N: Do you have some examples of campaigns that were not as effective?

I1: Of course. Each campaign has its own KPIs. We do not have campaigns that aren't successful but have campaigns that we learned a lot from. This is easier to monitor and test on digital, which one performs better and then choose which creatives to use. However, it is also important to look at what competition is doing, seasonality, micro and macro environment. But yes, of course there are campaigns that are best practice and benchmarks and campaigns which we analyze, learn from and try to forget.

7. N: Have you ever heard of Dunkin' Donuts' multisensory campaign? What do you think of multisensory strategies in the food and beverage industry?

I1: Yes, I have, however I don't remember it in detail.

N: Let me refresh it for you. When Dunkin' Donuts entered the Korean market in 2012, they wanted to promote coffee. Most consumers used public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: 1) sound, 2) smell and 3) sight.

1) They created a jingle which was played on the buses.

2) They also developed a spray dispenser that released the scent of freshly brewed coffee, which released when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned - appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

3) And lastly to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

Have you sometimes implemented similar (multisensory) strategies – what senses did you target? If not, would you do so in the future?

I1: At every launch of new flavors, we have sampling and tasting activities that are key. We know that when we launch new products to the market, the likeability is 98 %, however we need to get to that number. This means that on more developed markets we launch new flavors and on less developed markets we use our best sellers. One of our most important occasions is breakfast and seasonality summer, therefore we try to capture them in the summer, on the beach, in the mountains and offer them breakfast with our products. We have lots of such activities.

8. N: In what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness and sales?

I1: This is more of a rhetorical question. Yes, otherwise marketers wouldn't use such approach, however it is also a fact that when you go shopping on a weekend and are bombarded with such activities from different brands you have to be mindful also of the play of events that happen before, during and after of the consumers' shopping journey. There are activities that are costly and effective. However, they are an indispensable part of our brand's activities. To us it is the most valuable information to know that when a consumer tries the product becomes a fan.

9. N: Do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in the food and beverage industry? Why? Especially as with sensory marketing individuals have less "control" or resistance to such communication, also from the point of view of food addiction and advertising food with low nutritional value (not for your brand but in general)?

I1: Not anymore. In marketing it shifted from one-way to two-way communication. In my perspective, consumers hold control over their decisions, have all the

information available to make the right decisions. Being informed, awareness and transparency today are high, hence consumers can make their own decisions.

In our sustainability commitments we for instance do not advertise to children, even though some of our SKUs' TG are children. We also communicate the nutritional values of our products; therefore, I believe we are a step ahead of the minimum requirements and other competition. However, also the consumer is different today than in the past, now if you don't want to see the ad you don't have to. In the end of the day consumers have the power to choose, making it harder for brands to influence their decisions. However, the right brands build relationships and don't scream their communication vigorously at customers. I'm sure that some brands aren't as ethical, however I can only say what drives us.

10. N: This section requires you to observe four short commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products.

Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

ASMR Beer commercial vs Carlsberg

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I1: Second

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I1: Second

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I1: Second and the first one I think is stupid. I do not see why they would give sounds of beer – because for me, that is a very frustrating experience. Also in the office, if you give me the sound of sea and waves, you will not be able to make me envision that I am there, but that is just me. Also, Carlsberg, as one who invented beer as one of the best marketing pranks. However, I am aware that we are different. In relation to the first commercial, I also want to mention that when launching our new product made in collaboration with Michelin chef, we developed music with a composer and philharmonic orchestra and created a sound experience who won many awards. We also have similar innovative approaches in our collection.

McDonald's commercials: Juicy Jane Burger vs Chicken for everyone

N: Which ad did you like best? I1: Second

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I1: Second

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I1: Second

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I1: Second.

I1: I must however say that I do not drink beer and don't go to McDonalds, they only thing I occasionally eat from them are chicken nuggets. Because with the first ad, you know that the final burger doesn't look like that in reality. This is the reason I

choose the second, which emphasizes community, socializing, an occasion, emotions.

11. N: What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay? Will sensory marketing be used in the future?

I1: I can say that with AI we have unlimited potential and our brand, as something innovative, we also take advantage of that. However, we are also challenged with increasing prices of raw materials and retail pressures and profitability challenges things can sometimes be difficult. I can say that there are more opportunities, also with the new technologies, however there are also increasing number of brands and products, consumers are changing, thus we will have to be up to date in different areas – teach them, build relationships with the etc. Sensory marketing will be used also in the future.

## INTERVIEW 2

1. N: How old are you, what is your position title, what is your education and how long have you worked in the food industry?

I2: I am 20 years old and am currently working on three different projects. I am the founder of a food marketing agency and am running it, for the second project startup project (developing a marketplace, where consumers can hire well known expert chefs to come to their home and cook) I am head of marketing and event organizer. And for the last project (which aims to develop first marketplace in Slovenia that contains all the restaurants and wineries on one place, making it easier for consumers to make a digital reservation) I am a business development manager.

I am a student of economics, I work in this industry from the second year of high school, I was also one of the youngest candidates in Slovenia to enter Slovenian MasterChef and I made it to TOP 10.

N: That's sounds very innovative, how exciting! What services do you offer in your food marketing agency?

I2: Managing social media for companies that sell food products as well as restaurants, food photography, recipe development. In Europe, as per my research, there aren't many food marketing agencies that provide full services. I was really interested in having something of my own. The aim is to provide a full service to a company with food products – from marketing to food packaging design and legal services.

2. N: I am aware that your agency is quite young with a limited budget, but I must ask, have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Or have you ever heard of it?

I2: No, we haven't. But I have listened to a lecture at the Faculty of Economics who showed the case of Gavrilovic spreads, where they showed its use and benefits, if you have the budget, seems quite beneficial.

3. N: Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand with sensory marketing?

I2: Yes. That a person detects for example an ad, that captures his/her attention and has a specific perception and response to it, which triggers a change in their thinking.

N: Ok. More specifically sensory marketing aims to target consumers by appealing to their human senses – there are 5 human senses – sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste.

4. N: Have you ever used it in your career? If so, what do you think are the benefits and downsides?

I2: Yes. For instance, lastly, I have really tried to articulate the smell of apple strudel in copy for social media, through descriptions and use of the words such as mmmm, yummy etc.

5. N: Great! You also said that you organize events, do you also have degustation, how do they look like?

I2: Yes, usually there are menus with drinks and music.

N: Would you say that in a restaurant all human senses influence the experience?

I2: Yes definitely. Especially in this digital age, people decide based on how things look. For instance, if I take as an example Slovenian influencers "Gremojest", I decide to eat based on their videos – where they filmed the best view and scenery, the colors etc., where the videos were the best, nicely captured. For instance, also if you have heard about dinner in the dark – here what counts is the experience, not food as such, as many commented that food was nothing special.

N: Do you also produce print materials or focus more on social?

I2: Yes, but not many, we currently focus more on social. But my mother worked for Kraš and I remember that they had a campaign, where you could customize the name on the packaging – I have a KRAŠ on \_\_\_\_\_. And it was remarkably interesting and successful.

6. N: What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in the food (and beverage industry)? What do you think doesn't perform as best?

I2: Currently the most popular are videos. However, you must know how to make good videos. Even if you have a photographer, it doesn't mean that he will capture it

the best. We in this industry and at our agency really know from which angle burger looks best etc. Video needs to be high quality; you need to show food in the way that you portray it best and communicate desire.

It pains me when restaurants take stock photos for their foods and menus, if you take a picture with your phone – at least it's authentic. Google is very important when choosing where to eat – I for instance look at photo's others took and decide based on that. It doesn't matter that they are high quality, but they are authentic.

7. N: Have you ever heard of Dunkin' Donuts' multisensory campaign? What do you think of multisensory strategies in the food and beverage industry?

I2: No, I don't think I have.

N: Let me refresh it for you. When Dunkin' Donuts entered the Korean market in 2012, they wanted to promote coffee. Most consumers used public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: 1) sound, 2) smell and 3) sight.

1) They created a jingle which was played on the buses.

2) They also developed a spray dispenser that released the scent of freshly brewed coffee, which released when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned - appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

3) And lastly to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin' Donuts store.

Have you sometimes implemented similar (multisensory) strategies – what senses did you target? If not, would you do so in the future?

I2: Yes. Especially for videos – sight and sound are two senses that are always present. This campaign is very interesting to me, I would use it as an inspiration.

8. N: In what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness and sales?

I2: I think that consumers unconsciously give more attention to that specific communication, but they aren't necessarily aware to why, it can also increase brand awareness but not as in direct and intense way as attention, it also can increase sales, as people mostly take impulsive decisions.

9. N: Especially since you mentioned that sensory marketing captures consumers' attention unconsciously, do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in food and beverage industry (where there is food addiction and emphasis on high quality foods)? Why?

I2: This is a very undefined question, with no specific answer. I think that just know how to influence the consumer, they do adapt the communication and use it to their

advantage, but consumers have all the information required to make healthy decisions.

## 10. Rating commercials

N: This section requires you to observe four short commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products.

Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

### ASMR Beer commercial vs Carlsberg

N: Which beer ad did you like best? I2: The first.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I2: First

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I2: First

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I2: I really liked the whispers and it captured my attention more, as well as the commercial mentioned where you can't drink beer, this prohibition makes me want to do it ha-ha. Visually I did prefer the second one, but all in all the first is better to me, because similarly to TikTok, authentic raw videos also perform okay if the content is good.

### McDonald's commercials: Juicy Jane Burger vs Chicken for everyone

N: Which ad did you like best? I2: First

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I2: First

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I2: First

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I2: First, they very precisely emphasized the product, music was very determinant, the way the VO said Juicy Jane was convincing.

## 11. N: What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay?

I2: Trends are very short-term, we see it on TikTok, digital is also very strong, I think that as long as brands can adapt and have good brand awareness are ok. You have to build on the quality of your brand and not only follow trends. Sensory marketing is used and definitely will be used in the future.

## INTERVIEW 3

1. N: How old are you, what is your position title, what is your education and how long have you worked in the food industry?

I3: 51 years old, Position: regional brand manager, Industry: pharmaceuticals, Education: bachelor's degree, Experience in the industry: 12 years.

2. N: Have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Do you think it is useful considering the cost and effectiveness of using such methods?

I3: Locally not as much – but yes sometimes. I know that our company has used AI glasses, we also tested campaigns for brand memorability (whether it has increased by using sonic branding for instance). Globally our company does pre-test certain campaigns with neuroscientific tools.

3. N: Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand with sensory marketing?

I3: Yes, however I haven't put much thought and details into it. By engaging with a particular product through its impact on human senses, one can establish a connection that aids in making informed purchase decisions.

N: What do you think are some benefits and downsides of it?

I3: I think especially with food products consumers haven't tried before and food supplements, it's a great way to get consumers familiarized with the product (for instance with samplings) and ensure informed purchase decisions. By targeting different human senses, it also enables companies to stand out and grab more attention.

The downsides, hm I don't know. Maybe in some retail structures it's harder to pursue sensory marketing. Such as for instance in online shops you cannot really use scent, the same applies for pharmacies.

4. N: Have you ever used it in your career as part of your marketing strategy?

I3: Yes, especially with product samplings, where the taste is important. I also used to work in the cosmetics industry, where perfume testers truly influence the purchase decisions. Here, if we are aware that taste is good and one of the influencing factors on buying decisions, we mention it on the packaging and our advertising. With food supplements, you cannot determine their effectiveness on the short term, which is why the taste and texture is very important, as this is one of the first things a consumer notices.

N: How often do you do samplings?

I3: More often with new product launches. At that time there is a higher probability of the production plants manufacturing samples, as they do not make them for every

product. We also do samplings through the internet more so for this sensory effect - so consumers can try the product and get to know the taste.

N: Packaging is also the first contact consumer has with the product, appealing to the visual sense. I am curious to know how long did you develop it?

I3: Hm, I think that on average 1 year. You can start to develop it from zero for many markets, or you take the packaging from existing markets and adapt it for the new markets – here you have more freedom. You can even launch the same products under different brands for different markets.

N: What do you think is the story behind the selection of colors for your brands?

I3: Orange yellow is very energetic. However, when you have a large assortment of products with quite a few colors (purple, green), I assume that globally there has been an initial objective of communication behind every color. One of the main reasons behind such colors is also getting noticed on the shelves. Recently we did concept tests for new product launching and the interviewees connected the colors with the product's claims.

N: Have you ever used scent in your marketing campaigns?

I3: Usually with our POS materials we follow tactile strategy – so that something is pleasant to feel. We have used scent – when we launched pastilles for kids with the flavor of strawberry, we also made Post-its which had strawberry scent.

N: What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in your industry? Do you focus more on storytelling or on communications that communicate taste?

I3: In this industry I believe that taste is not the primary factor of choice, but rather the effectiveness of the food supplement. If someone says that the product will work, I think this is the most powerful trigger. Especially for kids it is important that the taste is good, otherwise they won't take the product, however for adults' taste represents an added benefit. If you know something will work for you, you will take it regardless of the taste. But in both cases, you are targeting adults – even for kids' products, you must convince the parents that the product is good.

7. N: Have you ever heard of Dunkin' Donuts' multisensory campaign? What do you think of multisensory strategies in the food and beverage industry?

I3: Hmm. Tell me about it.

N: Let me refresh it for you. When Dunkin' Donuts entered the Korean market in 2012, they wanted to promote coffee. Most consumers used public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: 1) sound, 2) smell and 3) sight.

- 1) They created a jingle which was played on the buses.

2) They also developed a spray dispenser that released the scent of freshly brewed coffee, which released when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned - appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

3) And lastly to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin' Donuts store.

Have you sometimes implemented similar (multisensory) strategies – what senses did you target? If not, would you do so in the future?

I3: No. But I do think it's a great idea to have this communication at various touchpoints and it has a bigger effect. Usually, they say you must see it 7 times. I think in our case the campaign with Post-its was the most similar. When launching these strawberry pastilles, we gave Post-its and product samples to the doctors. And the Post-it notes would recommend the doctors also after consuming the samples about it. We also had strawberry stickers for kids – so we also had communication at various touchpoints. However, now that you mentioned this campaign I see that there definitely is room for more.

8. N: In what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness and sales?

I3: It has a big influence on attention. Brand awareness? Yes, but more on attention, however it also has influence on awareness – because you memorize the brand more. Sales? Here there are many factors. In general, yes if the scenario is simple – you try it and buy it and repurchase it after the use. However, in our case, where intermediaries are involved, if your brand is not in their focus, it can complicate this purchasing journey. Also, price, discounts, what others advise etc.

9. N: Do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in the food and beverage industry? Why? Especially as with sensory marketing individuals have less “control” or resistance to such communication, also from the point of view of advertising food supplements with low quality formulations (not for your brand but in general)?

I3: I think that if the product doesn't harm the consumer, it's not ethically objectionable. For instance, Coca Cola still exists. However, the percentage of more aware consumers (regarding the best quality) is increasing, therefore your ads won't influence them. On the other hand, if you recognized that the product is good, but without a competitive edge, I think that it is ok.

## 10. Rating commercials

N: This section requires you to observe four short commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products.

Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

#### ASMR Beer commercial vs Carlsberg

N: Which beer ad did you like best? I3: The second

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I3: Second

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I3: Second

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I3: Second. The first one is a bit long. It's good in the sense of a teaser not an actual ad, because one has more questions after watching it. However, the second is also a typical celebrity commercial.

#### McDonald's commercials: Juicy Jane Burger vs Chicken for everyone

N: Which ad did you like best? I3: Second

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I3: Second

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I3: First, because it was juicy and slow.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I3: Second, as it's more dynamic. In the past I enjoyed the first type of ads, however now I see it as a typical marketing trick. Also, after you have seen it a few times you get Therefore, I prefer the second one.

11. N: What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the food and beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay? Will sensory marketing be used in the future?

Artificial intelligence will be used a lot, also personalization and individualization of marketing. Sensory marketing will also be used, for some industries this is inevitable (cosmetics, perfumes, food & beverages).

#### INTERVIEW 4

1. N: How old are you, what is your position title, what is your education and how long have you worked in the food industry?

I4: I'm 25. Head of the marketing department. Marketing graduate. 2 years of experience.

2. N: Have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Do you think it is useful considering the cost and effectiveness of using such methods?

I4: As this is not a big company, we mostly rely on google analytics and social media metrics (engagement). If possible, yes of course.

3. N: Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand with sensory marketing?

I4: Yes. A method to bring your product closer to the consumer so that he/she can feel it (for instance touch – firms create pop ups to get closer to consumers as they can feel the product). For us the event Odprta kuhinja (Open kitchen) represents something similar.

4. N: Have you ever used it in your career as part of your marketing strategy?

I4: Of course. Degustations are important for us, we do it through Odprta kuhinja (Eng. Open kitchen) and monthly events. There are different types of consumers regarding degustation and sampling. One type does its own research on your website and the other type buys it based on degustation – sensory marketing. At such events we also have experts that provide more information about wines but in an interesting way.

N: Would you say more people rely on sensory marketing or on the information from your website/communication? Because having specific descriptions of taste also represents sensory marketing.

I4: we really have detailed descriptions on our web. And it really helps if we do IMC – on the web, on social media, on events. They often say this taste really reminds me of what I read.

N: What do you think the benefits and downsides are of using sensory marketing as a strategy?

I4: For us from the view from degustation – it's good because a lot of people can try 1 vine. Or in the opposite case sometimes some of these expensive wines stay open.

5. N: Do events such as Odprta kuhinja (Eng. Open kitchen) have significant impact on sales?

I4: We had to wait a bit for it to pay off. But not as much as we expected. And tracking is also a bit difficult if no other activations (giveaway) are present. But we do have clients that say, “we tried this wine there and want to buy more”. Also, when we see at those events that a bit of wine was left, we pour them more for free, so we do not throw it away and they also appreciate getting more free wine. There we also have wine experts, as it is especially important for clients that they have knowledge about the specific wines.

N: How important would you say taste, packaging, smell and color are?

I4: Packaging of the bottle can play a particularly important role. Winemakers play with symbolics and have special stories written on labels, as well as unique drawings. When you sell such wines to foreigners, they go crazy for it. Some winemakers also write on packaging what consumers can expect from it. The color is not as much of importance, as the taste is more. Taste is very specific, some consumers like red wines, but the ones that are lighter. Smell can hide specific characteristics about wine, for instance temperature can change the taste and smell.

6. N: What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in your industry? Do you focus more on storytelling or on communications that communicate taste?

I4: Integrated communication is important I believe. For alcoholic beverages you have specific customer segments – for students for instance which price is the most important. Their budget gets higher with age, but you can always “spoil” them (inform them, engage, invite them to events) as they will eventually become your perfect customer. Have in focus where your customers are and where you can target them the most effectively.

N: Do you also use food at your events?

I4: For serious tastings not recommended, as it can influence the taste of wine. For monthly events something casual – Parmigiano Reggiano, nuts etc.

N: What about music – what kind?

I4: Yes, light jazz, but then as debate evolves, I believe it is not as important.

7. N: Interesting. Let us move to the next question. Have you ever heard of Dunkin’ Donuts’ multisensory campaign?

I4: No. Tell me about it.

When Dunkin’ Donuts entered the Korean market in 2012, they wanted to promote coffee. Most consumers used public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: 1) sound, 2) smell and 3) sight.

1) They created a jingle which was played on the buses.

2) They also developed a spray dispenser that released the scent of freshly brewed coffee, which released when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned - appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin’ Donuts’ stores.

3) And lastly to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin’ Donuts store.

Have you sometimes implemented similar (multisensory) strategies – what senses did you target? If not, would you do so in the future?

I4: In videos we used frequently sounds and visuals – for summer the sound of sea, sound of pouring the wine in the glass and opening of the wine. Similar campaigns we didn't do due to the budget.

N: Would you do it?

I4: Omg yes. My dreams. I wish to make a huge billboard with grapes and soil and a pipe to pour wine.

8. N: Amazing, all you need is a bigger budget hehe. Ok, in what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness and sales?

I4: It has the biggest impact on attention. Especially if I learn from your example – the smell of coffee would grab attention, it could be pleasant or irritating but it would grab attention. Brand awareness and sales – also yes, but less than for attention, as other factors also influence them. If we have wine workshops every day and people don't have time to come, it's useless. Also, it takes some time to drink the purchased wine cases – they might not need it yet.

9. N: Do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in the industry of alcoholic beverages? Have in mind addictions and the fact that sensory marketing individuals have less “control” or resistance to such communication?

I4: I think yes but depends on how “pushy” you are. In Slovenia, the ones that have wine shops you can see that they do it due to their passion. Also, we have more luxury wines, with which the purpose is not to “get drunk”. We have a lot of difficulties on FB ads, as we must put the legal disclaimer “The Health Minister...” and they ban our ads as we use the word “Minister.” Due to that we focused more on events and educational posts and did not focus so much on CTAs & selling, as it works better.

## 10. Rating commercials

N: This section requires you to observe four short commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products.

Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

ASMR Beer commercial vs Carlsberg

N: Which beer ad did you like best? I4: The second, because I did not like the first one.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I4: Second. the first one is like what? What do you want to sell me, headphones?

N: Have you ever watched ASMR videos? I4: No.

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I4: First, but in a negative sense. The second one is very typical but sympatico.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I4: Second, I was kind of scared of the first one.

McDonald's commercials: Juicy Jane Burger vs Chicken for everyone

N: Which ad did you like best? I4: Second. Because the first was “too classic”, nothing special.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I4: Second. If I saw this ad and said, do you want to go to McDonald's? If I saw the first one in front of McDonald's restaurant, I might buy the burger impulsively.

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I4: Second. Because it has a story, first one is nothing special, you see this in marketing a lot.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I4: Second.

11. N: What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay? Will sensory marketing be used in the future?

I4: From the viewpoint of degustations they will stay, therefore sensory marketing will be used in the future. Especially events, they are becoming popular now.

## INTERVIEW 5

1. N: How old are you, what is your position title, what is your education and how long have you worked in this industry?

I5: 29, marketing specialist, marketing specialist, MBA, 1 year.

2. N: Have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Do you think it is useful considering the cost and effectiveness of using such methods?

I5: No not specifically. We did, however, have team buildings where we got to know what people think when talking to them but more from the aspect of strengthening negotiation skills.

3. N: Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand with sensory marketing?

I5: 4Ps nowadays aren't enough, so you need to do more and consider human senses and target them in advertising. We all know that when for instance when something says, “do not touch”, it just creates a bigger desire for you to touch it. It can also be represented as part of branding – some of our stores have specifically developed

scents that they use in shops, which also represents an example of sensory branding in terms of smell.

4. N: How did you use it as part of your marketing strategy? Does your shopping center have developed its own scent?

I5: We do not have an already developed scent, as this represents a quite extensive and expensive project. You must be also careful, as many people are also sensitive, and you have to be careful not to be irritational. I also worked in a hotel, so I know that the hotels use this a lot.

N: What do you think are the benefits and downsides of sensory marketing?

I5: I would for the downsides say that in some cases it can be quite expensive, such as for instance developing your own scent. Furthermore, it can be quite irritating and overwhelming to some, so you must be very careful. Regarding the benefits, I believe you can strengthen the bond with the consumer and the brand, especially from the “experience” standpoint. We organize a lot of different events, where we enable consumers to truly experience our shopping center and build a better long-term relationship and memorability.

5. N: What kind of strategies have you used for advertising food and/or beverages – in terms of sensory marketing?

I5: As we said we don’t have a developed scent, however there is present the scent of food is quite strong from food shops. We focus a lot on visual sense by using creatives that are fast moving and catchy; to capture lower attention spans and Gen Z, we also advertise on LED displays. However, one of our main things are also events. In the summer we have cinema days and collaborate with a popcorn company, because if you smell popcorn you may think of going to the cinema. We also organize concerts and connect it with food and drinks to ensure pleasure on these free events and concerts.

N: Do you have a lot of visitors? Does this impact sales significantly?

I5: In addition to concerts, we had also organized zumbas, salsas, basketball streaming. Due to these events shoppers increase their visiting times of our shopping center or visit it more frequently. It also positively impacts the sales of bars and restaurants.

N: Great!

I5: We also have an internal radio and added Slovenian music. A lot of people noticed this and appreciated it as they do not hear it in other shopping centers. We will also soon start with Christmas marketing actions appealing to the visual, olfactory, and audio senses.

N: You say that you have an internal radio, as I have researched that music has an important effect on shopping experience, but not only music but also lightning. Do you also “play” with different lightnings to improve the shopping experience?

I5: Yes, we also try to play with it. We have a lot of natural light in our shopping center, we try to be very sustainable. The center also heats and cools through the glass. It also gives the feeling of coziness.

N: Also, the design of this shopping center is quite differentiative.

I5: Yes, I agree. When building they really gave their attention to architecture and collaborated with well-known architects.

N: Do you think that music, lightning, events contribute to sales?

I5: Yes, but I believe that it is important the whole picture and how they all work together. If we look at for instance a cake, the taste is not enough if it looks bad on the outside.

N: Your slogan is good and the voice actor you use is great.

I5: Yes, we try to always use the same person and the same tone.

N: This also represents a form of audio branding. I would also like to know more about your logotype, do you know why these specifics colors?

I5: Yes, this is part of our CGP, we have selected pallets that we use throughout our communications. Red, yellow and orange are really strong colors.

6. N: What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in the food and beverage industry? Do you focus more on storytelling or on communications that communicate taste?

I5: Visually, it is important that it looks appealing, however it must taste like it looks, hence live up to the expectations. That it is selling also what is marketed. Also in our shopping centers, customers can try a taste of an ice cream before buying the whole scoop, to ensure that they are not disappointed. When defining what works best it is also necessary to have in mind different customer segments. We also do print advertising of our food restaurants with prices stated, this is especially for the older generations, who prefer to read in print. Furthermore, we also had Happy hours on Fridays with a DJ, whilst the younger population loved it, the older population did not as much and some of them would prefer to eat in quiet. It's hard to satisfy all different consumer targets with one activation, especially in the food and beverage industry. You cannot add too many different scents because it will all mix up, too much music, too little music, etc. In the summer months, we were also streaming basketball matches outside and customers could watch them while eating, some loved it and some it bothered. For food and beverage, it is specific what you are combining it with.

7. N: Interesting. Let us move to the next question. Have you ever heard of Dunkin' Donuts' multisensory campaign?

I5: Mmm I do not recall.

N: When Dunkin' Donuts entered the Korean market in 2012, they wanted to promote coffee. Most consumers used public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: 1) sound, 2) smell and 3) sight.

1) They created a jingle which was played on the buses.

2) They also developed a spray dispenser that released the scent of freshly brewed coffee, which released when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned - appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

3) And lastly to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

Have you sometimes implemented similar (multisensory) strategies – what senses did you target? If not, would you do so in the future?

I5: Well with our events we are constantly targeting different senses – taste, visual, auditory and olfactory senses are usually targeted. For instance, with Cinema days (open cinema event), we sell popcorn and offer free blankets in addition to playing the movies. Before the event we also have print and social communications. In addition to cinema days, we also have concerts as I mentioned before. At these events we have special decorations and lighting to make it cozier. Also, for birthdays celebration, we hosted a concert. As the weather was unpredictable, we ordered raincoats and gifted them to customers to ensure they felt good and they didn't worry about getting wet.

N: Oh great! You mentioned your birthday activations, could you explain more about them?

I5: We had events planned for a whole week. More specifically, we had a person doing caricatures for free, the lines for this were huge. We also had photobooth, workshops for kids and for the grand final we had concert with 3 well known Slovenian artists.

8. N: Sounds great! Moving on to the next question, in what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness and sales?

I5: Well, I would say all three. For instance, we had stands from specific Slovenian brands that consumers could test and familiarize with the product and then purchase in supermarkets. We saw an increase in sales of those specific products.

9. N: Do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in the food and beverage industry? Why? Especially as with sensory marketing individuals have less “control” or resistance to such communication, also from the point of view of advertising food supplements with low quality formulations (not for your brand but in general)?

I5: I believe that in the end we make our own purchase decisions. Some are more prone to being marketing victims, the others can spot marketing tricks right away.

Then companies such as Starbucks, who successfully target consumers and are very hyped, but when u try it it's nothing special, however it's such a strong brand. Generally, I think that we are responsible for our own decisions.

## 10. Rating commercials

N: This section requires you to observe four short commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products.

Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

### ASMR Beer commercial vs Carlsberg

N: Which beer ad did you like best? I5: The second.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I5: Second.

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I5: First, but just because it's longer and you wish it will end soon.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I5: Second, because it is shorter and it sells you beer, whilst the first one doesn't sell you beer but rather the feeling of beer, which isn't the same. More different things are joined in the second one – celebrity, robots, space, facts about the company, what to me is more important. However, the second one does have more information meaning that you must process it faster. On the other hand, looking from a marketing standpoint taking into account seeing it at least twice: watching second one I would gather additional information, whilst for the first one I would be keen to see it end as soon as possible, it's too sensorics, too much some things that don't sell the product.

### McDonald's commercials: Juicy Jane Burger vs Chicken for everyone

N: Which ad did you like best? I5: Second.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I5: Second.

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I5: Second.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I5: Second. Because it sells emotions, it has a story, gets closer to an individual, shows the everyday of an average person and articulates the need of a cozy evening, while the first one only shows the products.

## 11. N: What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay? Will sensory marketing be used in the future?

I5: Yes, I think that in this industry it must be used. Because many times you don't need many details, you are not interested in how a certain product is made, but rather

a story behind it, emotions, attention triggers, therefore I believe there will be more of it in the future. Now the videos are popular, maybe in the future we will go back to pictures, you never know.

## INTERVIEW 6

1. N: How old are you, what is your position title, what is your education and how long have you worked in this industry?

I6: 28, bachelor's degree in communications, pursuing master's degree in marketing, marketing associate in a food delivery company, 5 years in food and beverage industry.

2. N: Have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Do you think it is useful considering the cost and effectiveness of using such methods?

I6: No, but in analytics I can monitor what had more clicks and more purchases. I see which banner performed best. Trends are continuing to change, something that worked a month ago doesn't work now. Also, for visuals – you must change them to have effect.

3. N: Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand with sensory marketing?

I6: Yes, I had a Sensory marketing course in university. I really enjoyed it; it was one of my favorite courses and the professor was great too.

N: What do you think are the benefits and downsides of sensory marketing?

I6: I see it as a great strategy to communicate the brand. By focusing on targeting different human senses and incorporating different elements, it can strengthen the brand in consumer's mind, due to more impactful marketing triggers. Moreover, especially for food and beverage products, it can stimulate impulse purchases. Downside? Hmm, maybe the fact that you must be a bit more creative to stimulate more senses.

4. N: Have you ever used it in your career as part of your marketing strategy?

I6: I had an internship where we launched their new space. And to launch it we had to target all human senses, so we focused on how does an individual feel when he or she enters it (for instance is the lighting ok, the scent, visual layout and design etc.).

N: Wow, very interesting! Wait, I remember your competitor also had a lot of commercials where they used singles. Do you do that as well?

I6: No, we haven't yet used singles, but we do have our own signature sound. We also use sounds from the app in commercials to strengthen the audio branding. We try to ensure the consumers connect more elements with our brand, such as sounds and color.

5. N: Great, this is sensory marketing in practice. Now that you have mentioned color, do you maybe know the reason behind this color selection?

I6: I am positive we have that written somewhere, but do not have it on me. However, I can say that they changed it. At first it was much darker, and the writing of the logo was more sharp. Now it's brighter and the writing is softer. So now it is more positive, recognizable and more pleasing.

N: I also want to know, when you create commercials and social media content what details are you focused on to portray the food more delicious?

I6: I remember the instructions that my colleagues gave to the designer when I first started working here, it was always: "Make it juicier! Please use burger but make it juicy." We also started using 3D foods, such as spaghetti for instance. Sometimes these 3D food animations in the app will perform great, but sometimes not, because it is not so juicy as a close up of a burger. When we open new restaurants, our photographers take pictures of each food.

N: Do you have some tricks to make the food look juicier?

I6: Hm, I must say that we do not use some kind of "marketing tricks" such as extra oil to make it look better. The food is the same as in reality. However, for instance pizzas are always photographed from above, whilst you cannot photograph sandwiches like that but rather from the side. Also, the chefs know that they are preparing the food for the photographers, so they put in extra effort.

N: Ok, so understandable you put in effort for the visuals to look juicy. Let us also investigate the copies – how do you come up with them on social media?

I6: We try to keep it as short as possible. Also, for the ads, we try to keep it short as people do not read long texts. Straight to the point and short.

N: What about words that describe taste such as "mmm", do you use them?

I6: Yes, a lot. For social media, newsletters, reminders, voiceovers. Especially for voiceovers we always start with something similar and catchy.

N: Are you mostly digital or do you do also offline promotions?

I6: A lot of times we also print fliers, balloons, events for new launches. We also did a charity project with a disabled employee, which also resulted in media exposure. Furthermore, we have an employee who has an animal mask, and we have a

promotion for customers if they catch him and take a photo, they get a discount coupon. We try to include our team in brand communications, especially for offline promotions.

6. N: What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in the food and beverage industry? Do you focus more on branding/storytelling or juicy food? What is the ratio?

I6: For us, the communication differs based on the channel that we are using – is it CRM newsletter, social media, YouTube. For social media what performs best is also how much our employees make. Also, in terms of food, prices are important, therefore discounts truly push sales. In addition, taste tests have satisfactory results. Furthermore, we tried to test and have a worst photo contest to portray pictures of real food, however the restaurants didn't like it, so we stopped. I believe that this type of communication would generate more clicks as it's something a bit out of the ordinary.

N: What do you then think is less affective communication in general, regarding food and beverages?

I6: Hmmm...

N: What about for instance using influencer marketing? Have you found this effective?

I6: It was in the beginning, when we entered the market, it has been effective. However now, as we have big penetration, we do not get as many new customers and isn't effective. We still do it to some extent (more from the viewpoint from maintaining not to get more sales and bigger consumer base), to stay in the minds of consumers.

7. N: Clear. Let us move to the next question. Have you ever heard of Dunkin' Donuts' multisensory campaign?

I5: No, I have not.

N: When Dunkin' Donuts entered the Korean market in 2012, they wanted to promote coffee. Most consumers used public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: 1) sound, 2) smell and 3) sight.

1) They created a jingle which was played on the buses.

2) They also developed a spray dispenser that released the scent of freshly brewed coffee, which released when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned - appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

3) And lastly to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin' Donuts store.

Have you sometimes implemented similar (multisensory) strategies – what senses did you target? If not, would you do so in the future?

I6: Uh, seems interesting but those are corporate budgets on another level hehe. No, we have not. With the animal mask – there is also music. Our owners that are very big in America have the budgets to do such things, they also advertise on Superbowl, but we have small budgets and our leaders want us to follow “startup” marketing expenditures. To have campaigns like you have mentioned would be a dream.

8. N: Perfect! Ok so in what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness and sales?

I6: We previously mentioned colors and sounds for brand awareness. It is important that brands have slogans, colors and sounds, scents and other things are of course nice to have from brand awareness perspective. You mentioned attention, hm if I smelled something it would get my attention faster and for longer compared to a billboard and of course the conversions (sales) would be greater.

9. N: Do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in the food and beverage industry? Why? Especially as with sensory marketing individuals have less “control” or resistance to such communication, also from the point of view of advertising food supplements with low quality formulations (not for your brand but in general)?

I6: If we look at it from this standpoint, even basic marketing is controversial, not only sensory marketing. I do not eat meat and when I pass this section in the store I can smell it, but it's like ok it's here and I am not interested. It's very subjective to preferences. As I said, it's not any less ethical to traditional marketing.

## 10. Rating commercials

N: This section requires you to observe four short commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products.

Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

ASMR Beer commercial vs Carlsberg

N: Which beer ad did you like best? I6: The first one was more attention-grabbing. It's not typical, I liked the ASMR vibes.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I6: Second. The first one didn't truly convince me into buying.

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I6: The first one, they had my attention throughout the whole commercial and as it's not a typical one due to ASMR it's more memorable.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I6: The first one. I really enjoyed ASMR, and it was unpredictable.

McDonald's commercials: Juicy Jane Burger vs Chicken for everyone

N: Which ad did you like best? I6: First.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I6: First one, as it is straight to the point. I do not care if the pair is in love, what does this have to do with McNuggets?

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I6: Both are quite equal. I can't decide which one.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I6: The first one. As it's straighter to the point, juicy etc.

11. N: What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay? Will sensory marketing be used in the future?

I6: Marketing has recently gone into selling a story just like this second commercial. I think Slovenia will stay in this trend for a few years. Emotions sell more, which also supports our experience when we did the charity projects, which was a very emotional story. Therefore, I believe that the focus will be on selling stories and emotions.

Sensory marketing will also be used in the future. Also in Slovenia, a lot of people still read newspaper, watch TV etc. So, I think some things will stay similar.

## INTERVIEW 7

1. N: How old are you, what is your position title, what is your education and how long have you worked in this industry?

I7: 47, bachelor's degree, media and consumer research marketing manager, 8 years of experience in food and beverage industry.

2. N: Have you ever used neuroscientific tools (e.g., fMRI, EEG, GSR, etc.) in your career to understand consumer behavior and test the effectiveness of your advertising campaigns? Do you think it is useful considering the cost and effectiveness of using such methods?

I7: Yes of course. On a local level we do not use it, however we use it on a global level. My whole career I have worked for corporations, and I have experienced that on smaller markets we do not use these tools, because it's expensive. Although, we do get research findings from global, where the budgets are much higher.

3. N: Have you ever heard of sensory marketing? If so, what do you understand with sensory marketing?

I7: Not specifically. We've recently done research, where we tested a new product launch, which is also a form of sampling, I believe this is an example of sensory marketing.

N: Yes, correct! More specifically, sensory marketing is used to target consumers via the 5 human senses – sight, smell, audio, taste and touch.

4. N: Have you ever used it in your career? What do you think are the benefits and downsides of sensory marketing?

I7: I think it's great for this kind of industry (food and beverage), as captures attention and stimulates the urge to buy. A downside could be that it's more difficult to implement, as I believe you must be more creative to stimulate more senses.

5. N: How have you used it?

I7: Well, as I work in the research department, we use it often as part of our research. Recently we organized a blind tasting for a specific beverage. We were at a bar, where we sampled the product to our target group to gain more consumer insights. In my career I also have used sensory triggers in marketing campaigns quite often (sound of bubbles, opening of the bottle, pack shot of the product displaying the beverage being cold etc.). Some of our current commercials also use sensory marketing, for instance specific voiceover artist with dynamic visuals, targeting sight and audio senses while also portraying "tasty" beverage that will quench thirst.

N: Great! Do you believe smell and taste are influential factors in this industry?

I7: Of course! They are very influential and have an impact on purchase intent.

N: Have you ever used scent in your end to consumer marketing activations?

I7: No, I do not think so. In the industry that I am working in currently, it is also highly regulated.

N: Do you know the meaning behind the selection of colors for the brands on which you are currently working?

I7: Yes, one of them has earthy colors – green, gray, brown. Our brand employs earthy colors to portray an association with nature in the minds of customers, reflecting the natural origins of our product and the country, which is made from hops cultivated in natural environments. The other brand uses red, which is a very strong and attention-grabbing color that also coheres with a symbol of the dragon also used in the logotype, as well as the city of origin – Ljubljana.

6. N: What kind of advertising communication do you think works best in the food and beverage industry? Is it better to focus more on branding/storytelling or the product?

I7: I believe it must be meaningful for the consumers, it has a point, as well as has the element of differentiation – to offer something different.

7. N: Clear. Let us move to the next question. This campaign also inspired me for my master thesis. I do not know if you are aware of the multisensory marketing campaign that Dunkin' Donuts developed in Korea?

I7: No, I do not think so.

N: When Dunkin' Donuts entered the Korean market in 2012, they wanted to promote coffee. Most consumers used public transport to get to work, so they decided to target them on their way in the morning by focusing on their three senses: 1) sound, 2) smell and 3) sight.

1) They created a jingle which was played on the buses.

2) They also developed a spray dispenser that released the scent of freshly brewed coffee, which released when the jingle was playing on the buses. The timings were also strategically planned - appeared when the buses were approaching stops close to Dunkin' Donuts' stores.

3) And lastly to target the sense of sight the visual ads were placed on the bus stops for the moment when they got off the bus, articulating the location of the closest Dunkin' Donuts store.

Have you sometimes implemented similar (multisensory) strategies – what senses did you target? If not, would you do so in the future?

I7: I haven't done anything similar in my career. Wow, that is a great campaign! It's amazing. However, I think that something like this would be much harder to implement in Slovenia, because the fluctuation of people is much smaller than in Korea.

8. N: I'm glad you like it! Ok, so in what ways do you expect sensory marketing to affect attention, brand awareness and sales?

I7: If you succeed in creating a campaign like Dunkin' Donuts the impact can be huge. And if the campaign is implemented holistically, where they were first targeted with jingle and scent, then the awareness phase with posters and lastly the points of sales – if you have all these steps the sales can also have a significant impact.

9. N: Do you think sensory marketing is ethical, especially in alcoholic beverage industry, where there is also addiction or alcoholism?

I7: We promote consuming our products with responsibility. We also sell alternative products that are alcohol-free. Furthermore, the legislation in our industry is quite rigorous. Therefore, we are doing okay from this ethical standpoint.

## 10. Rating commercials

N: This section requires you to observe four short commercials that are divided into two segments: 1) one segment is focused on beer and the 2) other on McDonald's products.

Please carefully observe the commercials and answer the following questions. Your aim is to determine which one you prefer and believe holds a more favorable influence on consumers.

### ASMR Beer commercial vs Carlsberg

N: Which beer ad did you like best? I7: To me, as a marketing enthusiast the first one. Because it tells you everything, but in a sophisticated and subtle way. If I look at it from the point of view of what sells more, the other - in terms of achieving KPIs. Because the first stream is different, I don't know if most of the target group would understand it.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers?

I7: If I look at it from the point of view of what sells more, the other is more convincing - in terms of achieving KPIs. Because the first one is so different to the "traditional marketing communication", I don't know if most of the target group would understand it.

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I7: The first one, because of the sound.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I7: The first one, mostly because of the sound.

### McDonald's commercials: Juicy Jane Burger vs Chicken for everyone

N: Which ad did you like best? I7: Absolutely the first one. Because every time I see product only ads of McDonald's I have the urge to order their product on Wolt. I of course am aware that the burger you are getting isn't as juicy, but it makes my taste buds crave McDonald's.

N: Which one do you find more convincing in terms of buying decision for consumers? I7: First one, the only thing I liked about the second one is the music. It's very ordinary, plain, it stirs nothing in me.

N: Which one do you find more memorable? I7: The first one. The second one is so typical that it's not memorable to me. If there weren't any branding, I wouldn't know it's for McDonald's.

N: All in all, which one do you enjoy watching more and why? I7: The first one. Sensory marketing works, at least for me.

## 11. N: What do you think will be the prevailing marketing strategies in the beverage industry in the future? Do you think that sensory marketing is here to stay? Will sensory marketing be used in the future?

I7: Absolutely. Sensory marketing works well in this industry and will be used in the future. Marketers that have been working for brands for a long time forget about these

trivial things from time to time. So, it's good that we did this interview, it definitely gave me ideas for the future.