

# A Study to Understand the Effectiveness of Sensory Marketing Strategies in Retail Stores

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**Abstract:** *Sensory marketing has grown significantly in popularity over the past few years because of its capacity to offer a point of differentiation among retailers, which is constantly required to provide customers with distinctive in-store experiences. We can only remember 1% of the things we touch, 2% of the things we hear, 5% of the things we see, 15% of the things we taste, and 35% of the things we smell, according to a study on neuro marketing done by The Rockefeller University.*

*As a result, physical stores have an advantage over internet retailers when it comes to interacting with customers through sensory marketing. This is because establishing emotional ties with customers is quite effective in influencing their purchase behaviour. Several big multinational brands now have in-store experiences that employ sight, sound, taste, touch, or smell to establish an emotional connection between customer, product and brand.*

**Keywords:** Sensory marketing.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A strong marketing strategy known as sensory marketing tries to engage at least one of the five senses to elicit significant, favourable reactions from the primary target market of a company, which will then lead to successful business outcomes. The experience that its target market has because of sensory marketing is more unique and memorable. Also, it is believed to function most effectively when more than one sense is targeted in a single message or campaign.

Nowadays, sensory marketing has been a popular topic for both marketers and businesspeople. It has been crucial to adjust to the current scenario and entice customers in new and innovative methods, especially now given the difficulties that marketing has experienced throughout the pandemic.

From ancient times to the present, sight has been the most frequently employed sense in marketing, but the other four senses have also developed into important marketing instruments. For the first time, in terms of colours, product designs, and marketing, in the 1950s, the importance of sight was realised. A Coca-Cola bottle, for instance, has a shape and colour that evokes the female form. Music was later used in commercials and in-store displays. Nowadays, music is played in practically every store. The use of blind tests in marketing literature began in the 1970s, at which point taste perception was included. Smell sensation was incorporated into the last strategies used.

Especially the atmosphere, created at retail stores to influence the purchasing decision, is the effort to design purchasing atmosphere to improve purchasing probability and creating emotional impact. Accordingly, sight is associated with colours, brightness, arrangements, and design; hearing is associated with sound and loudness of sound; smell is associated with artificial or natural fragrances whereas touch is related to softness, smoothness, and temperature. Sensory marketing is a type of marketing that influences perceptions, judgments, and behaviors of consumers through these factors having impact on the senses.

Sensory marketing is defined as "marketing strategies that attempt to entice the consumer by utilising senses to sway the consumer's emotions and behaviour." In this context, stimulants that target all, some, or any of the five senses, namely the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, attempt to impact customers' emotional and behavioural patterns. Consumer feelings and behaviours are influenced by factors including light brightness, speech volume, cloth softness, detergent fragrance, and coffee sample flavour at a market.

**Appealing to five senses:**

Although if sensory marketing is increasingly prevalent today, this does not imply that it is a simple task to complete. When employing the senses to elicit feelings and actions from your audience, there are several factors to consider. It's crucial that you select senses that are consistent with your brand.

**Sight:**

The use of sight in sensory marketing is one of the most crucial. People want to view items that are visually appealing and fascinating. This method of advertising has roots in the long-ago creation of papyrus posters by Ancient Egyptians to draw people to their markets. It goes without saying that there were other instances of visual marketing utilised in the past, but this one is an excellent illustration of how old this kind of sales strategy is. Currently, there are many different approaches to engage in sensory marketing.

**Hearing:**

Another excellent technique to build your brand and make it more memorable is to use sound into your sensory marketing plan.

**Touch:**

Also included in sensory marketing is touch. In some cases, it makes a lot of sense even if it may seem like an odd approach to promote goods or services. For instance, if you're buying a new car, you should first take it for a test drive to observe how it operates, how comfortable it is, and how it makes you feel.

**Taste:**

Taste can only really be used to describe suppliers of food and drink, such as beverage companies, eateries, cafes, cheese companies, etc. Taste and smell are tightly intertwined, and the other senses that surround a particular taste can influence how effective a taste is. It's no secret that taste is highly subjective and that not everyone enjoys the same flavours and tastes; the same can be said for noises, smells, and images. Make the customer hold the product is the first retail sales rule.

**Smell:**

Certain smells can transport you instantly to your childhood or a specific time in your life. It's important to remember the importance of smell in your sensory marketing approach.

**Special fragrances that line up with your brand and your store.** For instance, Hollister and Abercrombie & Fitch make their customers feel content and enjoy browsing in the store by utilising their own senses.

**Scents that resemble the environment.** For instance, the aroma of newly cut grass or the aroma of the ocean. When customers are making purchases in a store, these scents can occasionally help to evoke favourable sentiments in them.

**The irresistible smell of food!** As a consumer passes by your restaurant, street food stand, food cart, etc., it would be a good idea to concentrate on the smell and make sure it's alluring and inviting. This idea is comparable to that of realtors who bake cakes or cookies in the property they are showing to make the location seem more "homey."

**II. HISTORY OF SENSORY MARKETING**

The branch of psychological marketing known as "sensory marketing" is an advertising approach meant to appeal to one or more of the five human senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch to build an emotional association with a certain product or brand. To establish a brand image in a customer's mind, an effective sensory branding strategy appeals to specific beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and memories. It's hardly a coincidence, for instance, if the aroma of pumpkin spices in October makes you think of Starbucks.

As marketers started examining the function of sight in advertising in the 1940s, sensory branding came into being. Advertisers started appealing to consumers' sense of sound as television spread to almost every American home. The first television ad with a memorable "jingle" is thought to have been Colgate-1948 Palmolive's Ajax cleansing campaign.

In the 1970s, marketers started looking at the use of fragrance in brand marketing and advertising because of the rising popularity of aromatherapy and its link to colour therapy. They discovered that carefully chosen smells could increase consumer attractiveness for their products. In more recent times, businesses have realised that spreading scents throughout their stores may boost sales. Multi-sensory marketing is becoming more widely used.

Early in the new millennium, forward-thinking businesses like hotel behemoth Marriott Worldwide began experimenting with sensory marketing. To encourage happy memories, ease stress, and calm customers, Marriott invests in the diffusion of carefully selected scents. According to studies, a hotel's customers can feel more at ease by choosing the proper smell.

Customer experience programmes are responsive to both functional and emotional experiences, according to Forrester Research. To put it another way, marketers have the chance to spend money on sensory parts of the consumer experience. In addition to encouraging them to overcome business-related similarities like identical products, pricing, and services, this will also assist them win over consumer loyalty. As fragrance produces 75% of all emotions, it is an effective marketing strategy since it doesn't have to skip the rational part of the brain.

### **III. SENSORY MARKETING IN RETAIL**

Nowadays, most shops focus on using email marketing, sponsored promotions, and significant discounts to draw customers. But one of the most effective marketing strategies is sensory.

Young adults are Abercrombie & Fitch's primary market, and the retailer employs strong colognes, low lighting, and loud music to make them feel sophisticated and fashionable. If you've ever been to an Apple shop, you'll notice that the functional displays, modern architecture, and open layout are meant to appear both futuristic and approachable.

The goal of sensory marketing is to elicit an emotional reaction from consumers by utilising all five senses. While the marketing methods of Apple and Abercrombie & Fitch are undoubtedly successful, subtle multi-sensory encounters may frequently have the same impact in physical locations.

Mental simulation and mental imagery as evoked by ad visuals enhance promotional effectiveness and Visual merchandising.

Multi-sensory stimulation in visual copy enhances actual taste perceptions.

Music in advertising affects attention and increases promotional persuasiveness.

Since it provokes a range of significant and lasting reactions from consumers, sensory branding is a potent strategy for firms. It has a significant impact on your capacity to establish yourself as a brand that consumers won't soon forget — one that clients and advocates can instantly identify thanks to a sensory reaction to your branding.

#### **Sensory Marketing by Apple:**

Apple's branding appeals to a variety of senses at once. Its storefronts, for instance, are all white, simple, and aesthetically pleasing; this gives clients the impression that they are dealing with a cutting-edge, high-end tech business. By a similar appearance, each packaging conveys the same emotion. Apple uses sound as one of its customer-targeting mediums in addition to sight and touch.

#### **Sensory Marketing by Starbucks:**

Because every Starbucks location is obliged to grind its own distinctive coffee beans, the fresh coffee fragrance is well-known to be potent at every location. As a result, consumers who enter the store may smell the coffee before they ever open it.

### **IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:**

The purpose of this study is to explore and study at the retail level, the effectiveness of mental simulation and mental imagery evoked by visuals enhancing promotional effectiveness. Touch, whether real or perceived, or improved consumer product ratings. Finally, music in advertising affects attention and promotes promotional persuasiveness. Smell improves memory for product descriptions and consequently influences product assessments.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To understand the behaviour of consumer according to the sensory tactics used in retail stores such as scent, music, visual and feel.
- To discuss the role of sensory marketing in driving retail scope effectiveness according to the shopping experience and purchase behaviour of the consumer.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

- To influence consumers senses and evoke their emotion affecting their buying behaviour and perceptions of the product or brand.
- To learn the customers senses to enhance their shopping experience in retail stores.
- To help to improve positive brand image by creating unique shopping experience.

**PRIMARY DATA**

The first-hand information was gathered using an organized questionnaire. An estimated 108 respondents were given the questionnaires.

**SECONDARY DATA**

Sources like the internet, topic websites, published material and various sources about the topic and data interpretation.

**HYPOTHESIS:**

- **H1:** Usually, the alternative hypothesis is the one that one wants to demonstrate.
- **H0:** The null hypothesis is the one you want to refute. So, the null hypothesis theory we're seeking to rule out, and the alternate hypothesis is everything else.

**V. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**According to Krishna2011:**

"Marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their perception, judgment, and behavior" is the definition of sensory marketing. Krishna and Schwarz (2014) emphasized the significance of "sensory marketing and embodied cognition," which outlines the belief that our physical sensations have a significant impact on the decisions we make beyond our consciousness and that we experience the world through our senses. In a critical sense, sensory marketing provides customers with a sensory experience that enhances the value of their purchases.

**Hultén, 2011; Roggeveen and others, 2020:**

The five senses of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing have been used to create a more emotional and serendipitous customer experience because of technological advancements in retail (Schmitt, 1999; 2004 (Vargo & Lusch). In theory, the common approach of increasing the number of sensory touchpoints with customers is a good one, especially to differentiate from competitors in the market.

**Vukadin, 2019; Wiedmann and other, 2018:**

Customers' emotions can be strengthened and connected to a comprehensive brand experience through systematic and comprehensive sensory appeal, as shopping in physical stores involves a unique premium experience. According to Turley & Milliman (2000), as a result, consumers may develop a personal connection to the brand, which may have an impact on their purchasing decisions.

**According to Amatulli & Guido 2011:**

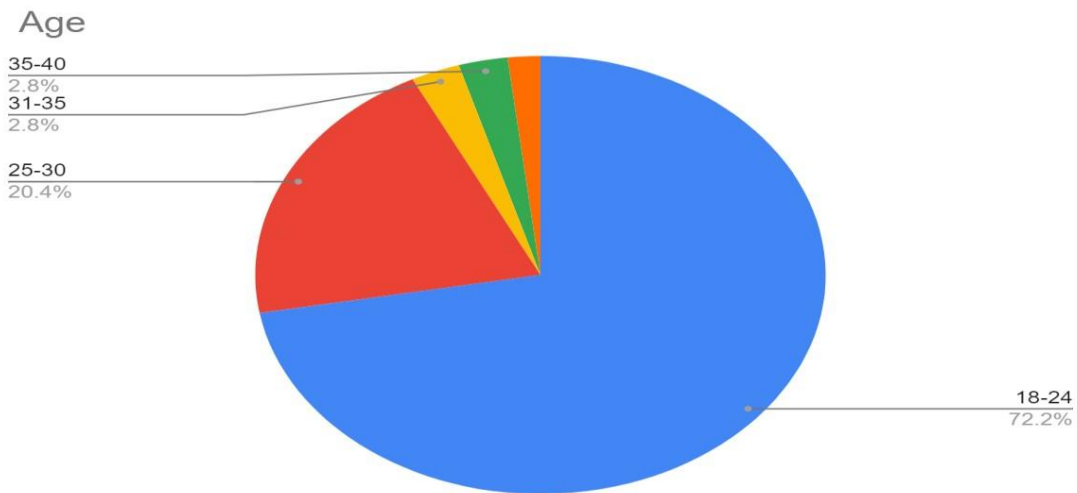
The luxury industry is defined by feelings and emotions rather than traditional attributes. In the luxury market, having a pleasant brand experience is widely acknowledged (Fionda & Moore, 2009). Additionally, a positive brand experience includes a customer's psychological and emotional "bond" with the brand, which in turn leads to brand loyalty (Park et

al., 2010) because it is similar to goal-oriented experiential marketing that looks at how all of the senses can be used (Lindstrom, 2005).

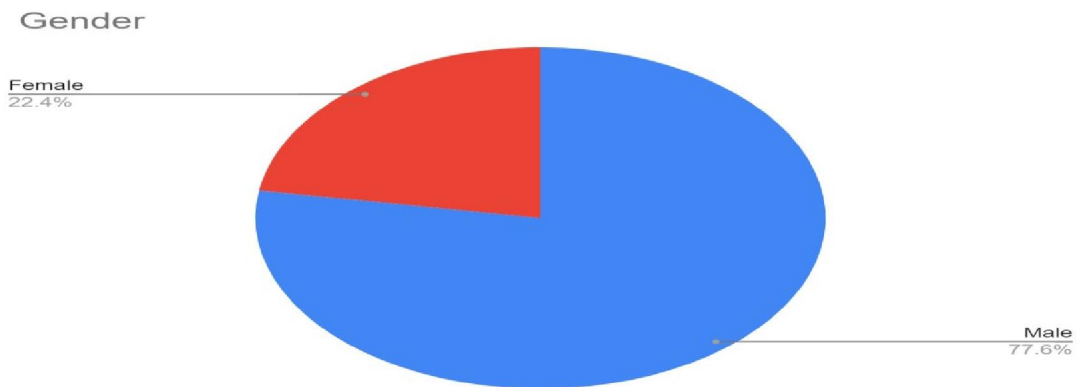
**According to Kauppinen Raisanen 2020:**

luxury stores serve as a foundation for the inclusion of consumer experiences in the service sector because they fulfil customers' desires to touch, feel, and experience a high-end product before making a purchase. 2019, Lunardo and Monague.

**VI. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:**

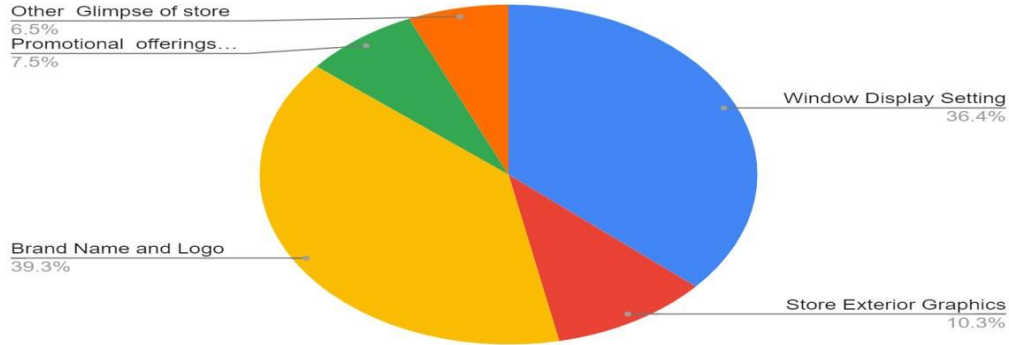


According to the graph, there were 72.2% of respondents from the 18–24 age group (blue), 20.4% from 25–30, 2.8 from 31–35, 2.8% from 35–40, and 1.8 from 40 and over (yellow).



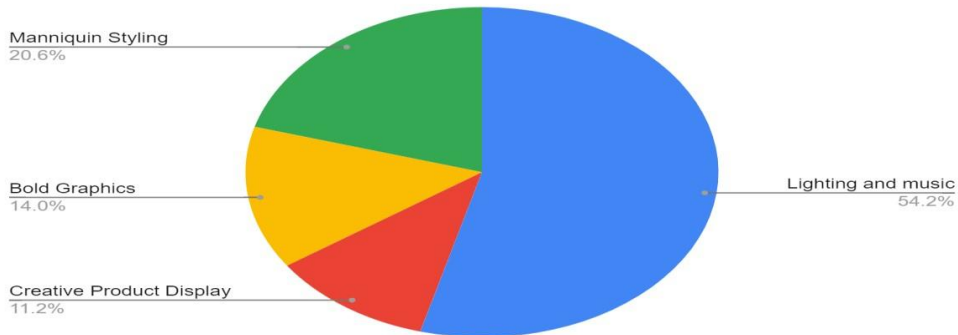
Men made up 77.6% of respondents (blue), while women made up 22.4% (red).

**Q1 What is the most influencing feature that drives you inside the store?**



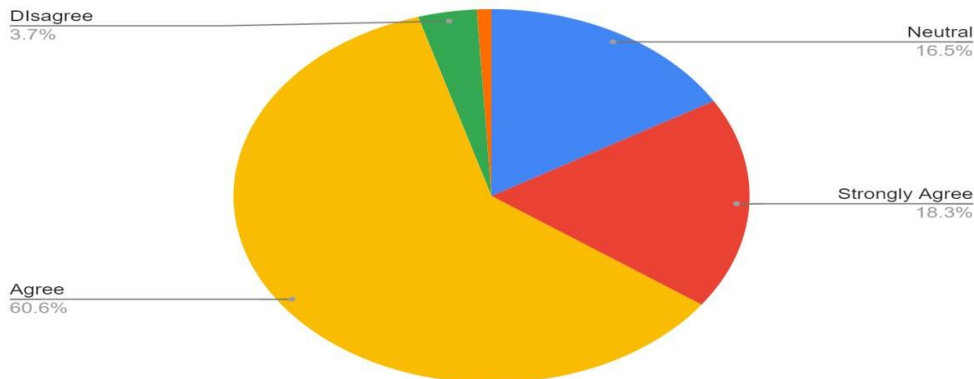
People are motivated to enter a store by the brand name and logo, as the pie chart's 39.3% (yellow) illustrates plainly. Some people are drawn to the window display setting with 36.4% (blue) as well. While some people are more comfortable with the other glimpse of the store (6.5% in blue), others are more interested in the promotional offerings (7.5% in green) and store exterior visuals (10.3% in red).

**Q2 What is the most noticed feature according to you inside store display**



According to the pie chart above, 54.2% of respondents (blue) are inclined to focus on lighting and music because it helps them feel relaxed. 20.6% of responders (in green) reported mannequin styling. While 14.0% of individuals are likely to notice strong visuals and 11.2% of them are likely to notice imaginative product displays.

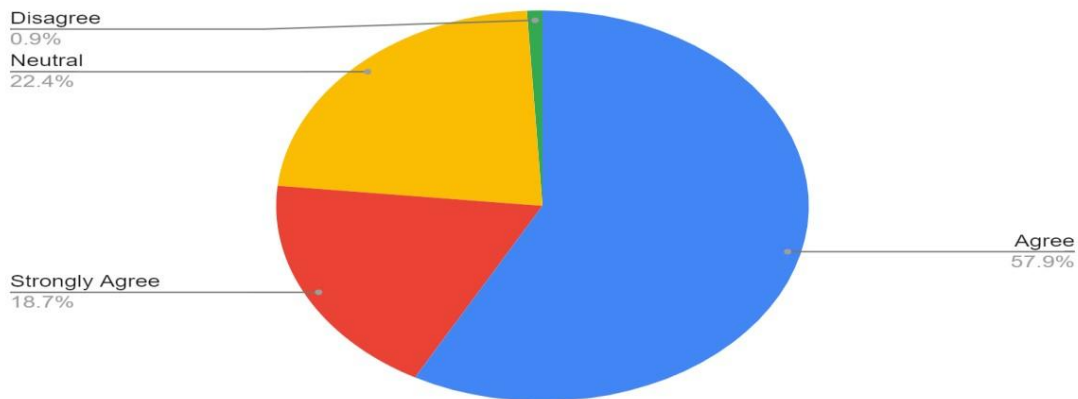
**Q3 Do you purchase a product based on its visual appeal?**





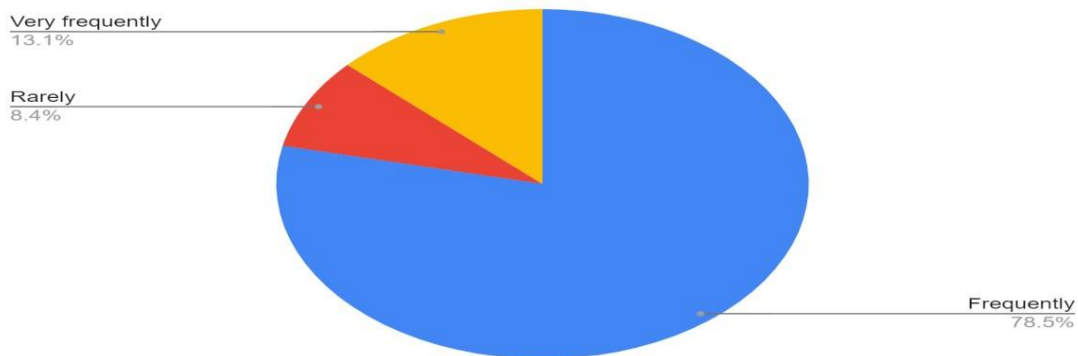
according to the pie graphic above. 60.6 (yellow) respondents concur that people purchase products based on the visual appeal of the packaging. 18.3% (red) of respondents said they would definitely buy a product based on its appearance. 16.5% of the blue respondents are undecided about the statement. 3.7% of the population (gree) disagrees with the assertion because they are more concerned with the product's functionality and worth than its aesthetics.

**Q4 Do you choose to shop in an outlet with good layout, moving space and ambience?**



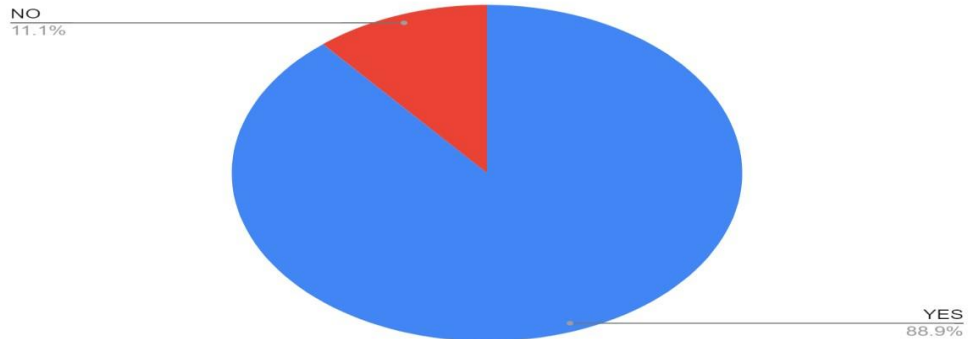
According to the aforementioned pie chart, 57.9% (blue) of respondents are willing to shop in a store with a pleasant layout and atmosphere. 18.7% (red) prefer to shop in attractive layouts in order to feel comfortable and have a clear head. Yellow, or 22.4%, are neutral because they feel at ease anywhere. 0.9% (in green) reject the assertion.

**Q5 How often do you enter in retail store on the basis of the visual appeal?**



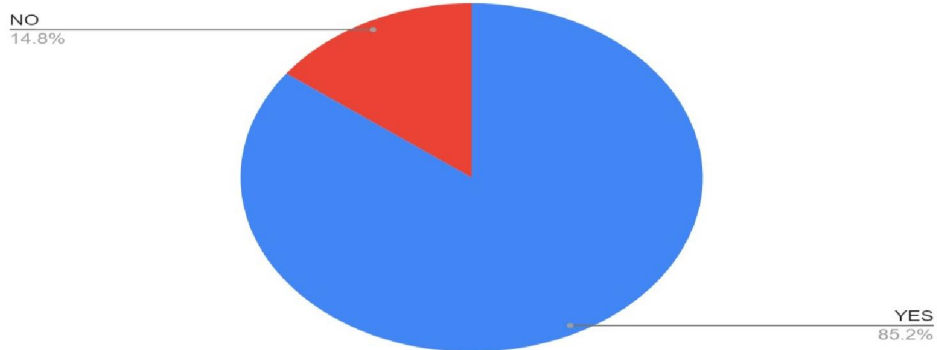
According to the aforementioned graph, 78.5% of people (blue) and 13.1% of people (yellow) like to visit according to how they are drawn to store graphics. This illustrates how people become thrilled if they see something that makes them want to buy something and drive towards the store. Due to aesthetic attractiveness, 8.4% (red) of respondents rarely enter.

Q6 Do you like to visit store because of the fragrance ?



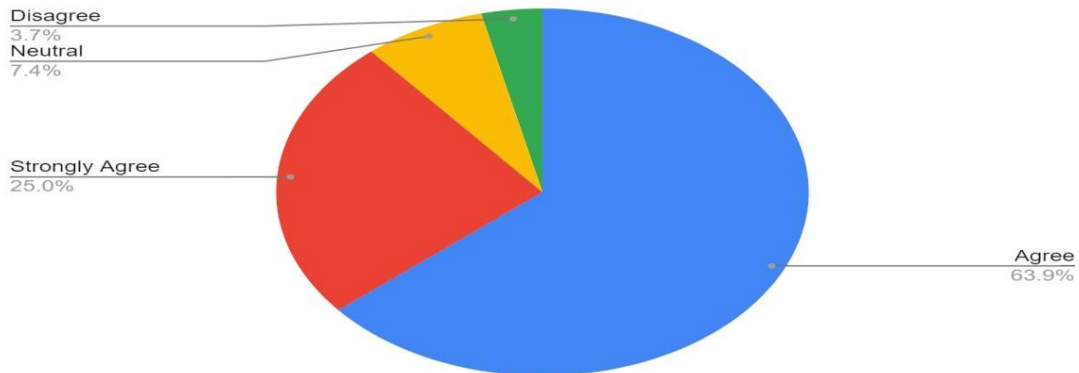
According to the above graph, 88.9% (blue) of respondents visit stores because they are drawn to the smell and fragrance. 11.1% (red) of customers avoid stores because of the scent.

Q7 Does the pleasant fragrance makes you feel to stay in the store for more time?



As per the above data, 85.2% (blue) respondents feels that pleasant fragrance of the store make them feel to wait in store for more time and 14.8% (red) does not feel the same.

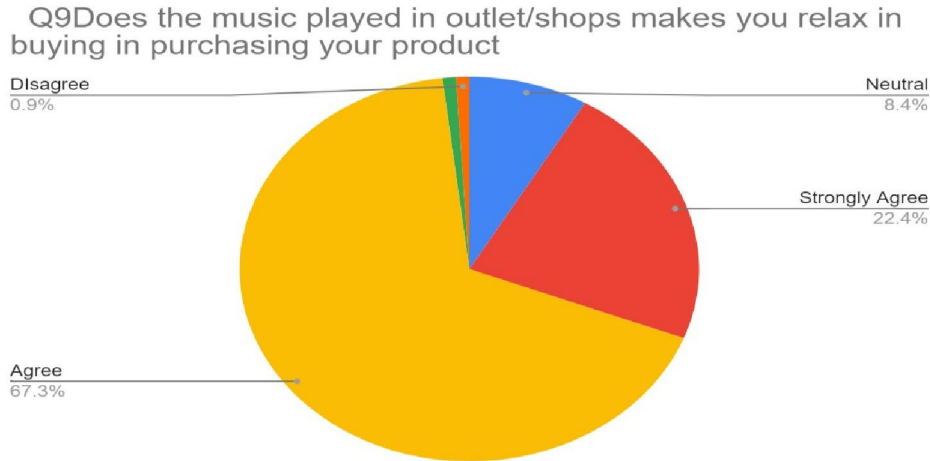
Q8) Does the fragrance of any outlet/shop effects your buying decision?



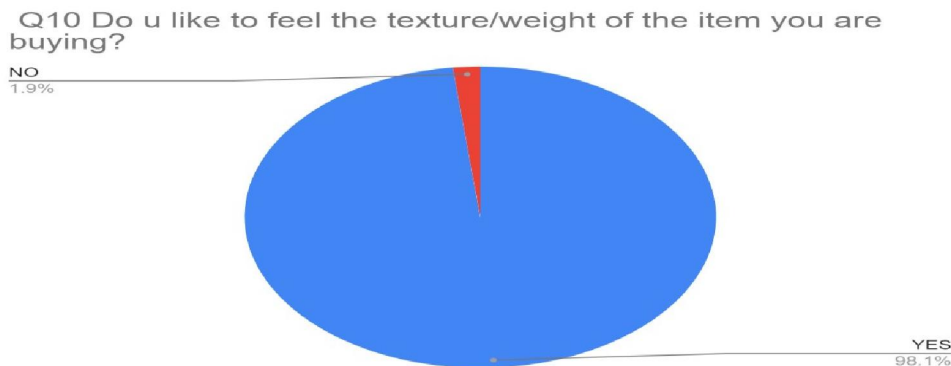
According to the graph above, 63.9% of respondents (blue) are drawn to the scent of any brand or retailer, which influences their choice to make a purchase. 25% (red) firmly concur that a brand's or store's aroma influences their



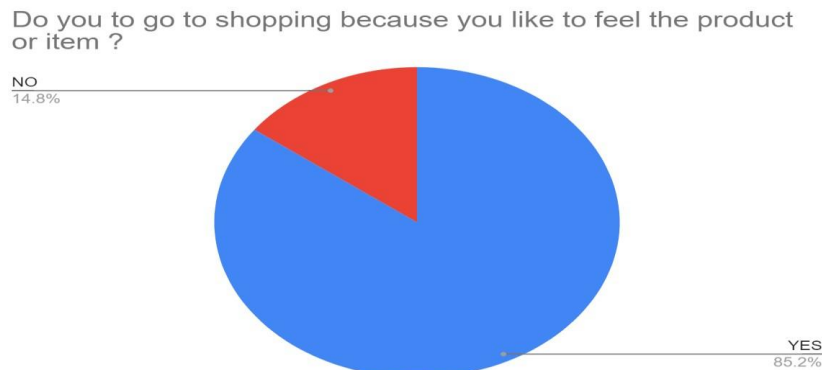
choice. While 7.4% (yellow) are more interested in the store's smell and the performance of the brand or product. 3.7% (green) disagree because they concentrate on various other store or product views.



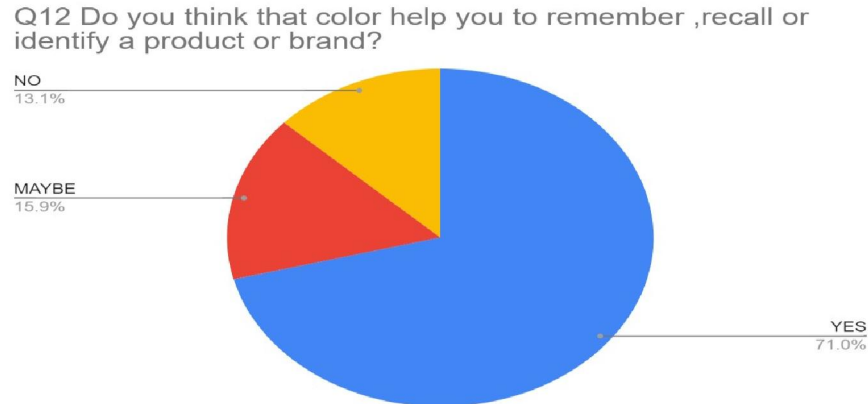
According to the graph, 67.3(yellow) feel at ease while making a purchase as a result of the music playing in the shop. Due to the same reason, 22.4% (red) of respondents strongly agree with this. 8.4% of respondents (blue) had a neutral opinion on the statement. 0.9% (brown) reject the assertion. Abercrombie and Fitch, for instance, play loud, joyful music with heavy bits and electro music. In its teen-focused business, it produces a vibrant atmosphere akin to a nightclub.



The majority of individuals (red) don't want to feel things, while 98.1% of respondents (blue) are likely to feel the weight of the item they are purchasing.



According to the graph above, 85.2% of respondents (blue) go shopping because they prefer to touch the goods. 14.8% (red) of respondents said they did not, citing their preference for online shopping or price comparison.



As per the above chart, it indicates that 71%(blue) of respondent likely to remember brand of product by the colour.

## VII. CONCLUSION

As per the project, sensory marketing in retail stores have been proven highly effective. When retailers engage multiple senses of customers, it enhances their overall shopping experience and increase the propensity to make purchases. Some effective sensory marketing strategies include playing pleasant background music, using calming scents and aromas, lighting to create good mood, appealing visuals. Moreover, appealing to consumer's senses can also help in developing brand loyalty, as consumers are more likely to return to a store where they have had positive sensory experience. Retailers are encouraged to invest sensory marketing strategies to create enjoyable experience to the customers.

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