



# **The Impact of Sensory Marketing on Consumers in the Beauty Industry**

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Mathilde THIERRY

## **Supervisors:**

Olli KUIVALAINEN (LUT University Professor)

Peter SPIER (SKEMA Business School Professor)

## ABSTRACT

**Author:** Mathilde Thierry

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The aim of this paper is to study the impact of Sensory Marketing in the Beauty Industry: the effect on consumer's emotions, reactions, and buying decision. The question that will be answered is the following: How does Sensory Marketing impact our perception and behavior toward a beauty brand and how does it succeed in activating the buying process?

To answer this question, analysis of previous literature review has been made in the theory development. Then, a survey has been conducted with 63 participants to understand how people perceived sensory cues (smell, sight, and touch) when they were shopping in Beauty stores. The aim was to see which sense was the most important for people, which one has the biggest impact on the buying decision and how did all of it worked in practice.

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I'm now coming to the end of a great adventure: my studies! This Double-Degree Program was a great opportunity for me to discover a new educational system and a new country: Finland. I was always very curious about this country that always ranks as one of the happiest countries in the world, and I wasn't disappointed. The quality of life, the educational system, the cultural particularities, the beautiful landscapes never ceased to amaze me!

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I'm now very proud to say that I'll be soon graduated from both LUT University and SKEMA Business School.

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On to the next adventure ;)

Paris, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021,

Mathilde THIERRY

*“Almost our entire understanding of the world is experienced through our senses.”*

–Martin Lindstrom

## **I- Introduction**

The first introductory chapter presents the topic background, the literature review overview, the research questions, the delimitations of the study, the theoretical framework, the main definitions and the research methodology.

### **1.1 Background**

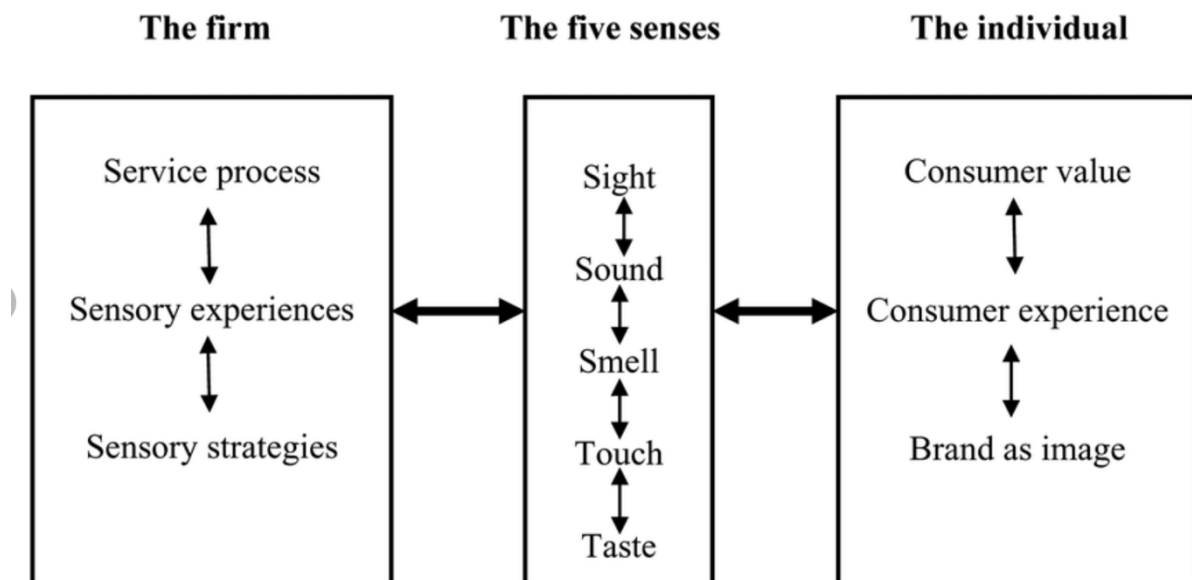
For decades, Marketing has been seen as a rational process that emerged with the consumer's need. Then, the consumer was making his choice based on product characteristics and the benefits offered but also based on concrete product factors such as price, feature, and utility (Longley, 2019). However, recent studies have shown that the buying process was not as conscious and rational as we first thought: when evaluating brands, consumers primarily use their emotions (based on their personal experiences and current feelings) rather than information such as facts, features, and brand attributes (Murray, 2013). In the Luxury Industry, non-rational buying is enhanced because this type of product isn't sold based on a specific need but based on the desire it creates in the consumer's mind thanks to Marketing and Communication. That's why when selling perfumes, marketers focus so much on creating attractive packaging, advertisement, and a whole story behind it that will create emotions.

Sensory Marketing appeals to the consumer's five senses (or sometimes only a few of them) to influence his feelings and behaviors toward a product or a brand. It can take many forms: through hearing (ambient music that can be either loud or more relaxed depending on the brands' goal), touch (by offering customers the possibility to try different creams for example), sight (store design, color, or product display), olfaction (ambient scent, recognizable scent for a product) or taste. Sensory Marketing tries to seduce the consumer to act on his behavior and lead to purchase. It has many goals: it can enhance competitive

advantage, differentiate the brand from the competition, improve its relationships with customers and brand loyalty, and increase sales.

Sensory Marketing affects people's perception, judgment, and behavior (Krishna, 2012). It can also be an asset to better segment a specific clientele based on its preferences. Sensory Marketing is about creating a whole experience that will lead to pleasurable feelings for the customer and make him buy; This will then determine how much they will stay in a store, how they feel about the brand, and how much they value it in the long term. By associating positive feelings with the brand, it will then maximize profits (Carter, 2013). Sensory Marketing allows to go beyond the product itself: the consumer value doesn't reside in the brand chosen or in the object possessed but in the consumption experience (Holbrook, 1999).

But, if we are aware of some of our senses involved when shopping, we're not fully conscious of the power they have over us in our final buying decision. According to Nielsen, 90% of the information is processed subconsciously in the human brain. Therefore, Sensorial Marketing can have an impact that we don't even realize. It also involves both the firm and the individual.



**Figure 1:** The firm, the five senses and the individual (Hultén, 2015).

If e-commerce has increased these last few years, especially during the pandemic, physical stores have still added value: the ability to connect emotionally with the consumers. Indeed smell, touch, and visual cues are very important when buying a beauty product. 78% of consumers state that a pleasant in-store atmosphere plays an important role in their decision to shop physically instead of online (Mood Media, 2019). A study showed that our capacity to remember our sensory experiences is based on 1% of what we touch, 2% of what we hear, 5% of what we see, 15% of what we taste, and 35% of what we smell (Khanna, P and Mishra, 2012). Being able to fully immerse consumers in Beauty stores by waking up their senses can be a real strength for Brands. A specific smell or recognizable typography or color can change the way an audience sees a brand and connects with it. Our brain can easily create associations through colors: blue is linked with sophistication and calmness, red with excitement (Longley, 2019).

Lush, the environmentally friendly, cruelty-free and vegan Cosmetics shop, is a successful example of Sensory Marketing. When entering the shop, the fresh ingredients of the different products directly trigger the customer's senses. He can use his sense of sight and touch to find out the different texture, weight, shape because most products are unwrapped. Most of them are very colorful and smell good so that it appeals to customers. Besides, the different products are described in detail with the ingredients used which can trigger the customer's imagination. At Lush, it's sometimes also possible to test directly some of the products. To make the experience even better, Lush uses real mood-enhancing fragrances with mainly natural ingredients such as essential oils, fresh fruits, and real chocolate that resonate with the values of their primary consumers (Hamilton, 2014). This can create an emotional response from customers that will lead to purchase.

Cosmetic brands also appeal to emotions through people's memories when using specific smells in their products or stores for Christmas for example with specific ingredients such as vanilla cinnamon, or gingerbread. When smelling their products, customers can be transported back to a specific time in their life or they can associate the product smell with ideas of warmth, family moments, and joyful time.

## 1.2 Literature review preliminary

Sensory Marketing is quite a recent phenomenon, but it has since completely changed consumer experience. Whereas communication used to be very monologues-based (companies talking and appealing to consumers), it is now much more interactive and multidimensional with brands finding their voices and consumers responding to it, most of the time, in a subconscious way (Krishna, 2015). It started slowly in the 1940s when marketers began using only the sense of sight in printed posters and billboards with different colors and fonts but it has grown even more in the 1970s. That decade, marketers started to see the efficiency of using certain scents on the consumer, resulting in a rise in sales for some (Longley, 2019). Nowadays it is used by many companies in different sectors (food, cosmetics, in hotels, spas, bakery, coffee shops).

|                        | <b>Mass Marketing</b>                                                               | <b>Relationship Marketing</b>                                                         | <b>Sensory Marketing</b>                                                                            |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Marketing              | Goods logic<br>Exchange<br>perspective<br>Transactional<br>Marketing                | Service logic<br><br>Relationship perspective<br><br>Relational marketing             | Experience logic<br><br>Brand perspective<br><br>Sensorial marketing                                |
| Strategic<br>marketing | Product focus<br>Customer<br>Acquisition<br>Transactional<br>Strategies             | Customer focus<br><br>Customer retention<br><br>Relational strategies                 | Sense focus<br><br>Customer treatment<br><br>Sensorial strategies                                   |
| Tactical<br>marketing  | Persuasion and<br>promotion<br>One way<br>communication<br>Production<br>technology | Interaction and<br>interplay<br>Two way<br>communication<br>Information<br>technology | Dialogue and online<br>interactivity<br>Multidimensional<br>communication<br><br>Digital technology |

**Figure 2:** From Mass Marketing to Sensory Marketing (Rolls, 2009)

Sensory Marketing is a way to appeal to all five senses of consumers by creating content that will interact with them. Compared to other types of marketing, Sensory Marketing is innovative because it focuses on the consumer experience by using sensorial strategies. It also provides multidimensional communication when marketing used to be either a one-way communication or a two-way dialogue.

First, the sense of smell is predominant in the Beauty Industry: it's used in Cosmetics, Perfumes, and it provides a real added value to every product. The sense of smell is the one that is the most powerfully linked to emotion, with over 75% of our feelings being generated



by odors. The sense of smell is so powerful because it can evoke images, memories, associations, and sensations (Lindstrom, 2006). For certain beauty products, scent is of such great importance that it is considered as a primary product attribute, such as perfume for example (Krishna, 2012). What makes it so powerful is that it is directly linked to the amygdala, the part of the brain that plays a primary role in monitoring emotions and memories. As a result, it directly affects consumer's moods (40% improvement after the exposure to pleasant smell).

Scents play a huge role in people's evaluation of a brand or a product: it has been found that pleasant scents resulted in more positive evaluations and played, therefore, a role in the purchase decision (Bosmans, 2006). The sense of smell is the slowest but also the most persistent and evocative one. It's the most emotional that's why it leaves the longest print in the consumer's mind (Krishna, 2012). We're able to recognize and recall scents that we have smelled long after a particular episode (Aggleton & Waskett, 1999; Lawless & Engen, 1977). A total sensory experience would at least double, if not triple, the consumer's ability to memorize the brand (Lindstrom, 2006). The sense of scent encompasses any set of the five senses and leaves a sensory impression in people's minds (Krishna, 2010).

Some smells are physiologically arousing (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001) while others are calming by nature (Gould & Martin, 2001). The sense of smell is very subjective: it's not innate and it is learned over time through people's different experiences. Therefore, the reaction could not be the same among consumers. It's also very dependent on the type of culture the consumer has grown in (Krishna, 2012). Olfaction affects emotions and mood through associative learnings, the process by which one event or item comes to be linked to another as a function of an individual's past experiences (Wasserman & Miller, 1997). When the consumer associates a specific odor with relaxation it will elicit a specific emotional state (sense of calm) because of his previous exposure to the smell. It will then determine his hedonic perception of the product, altering his thoughts and behaviors accordingly (Krishna, 2012).

Vision is the most powerful sense of all. It impacts consumer's experiences through a product design but also the store architecture, packaging fonts, colors, and graphic design and printed or digital advertisement (Longley, 2019). Product imagery on packaging affects consumer's beliefs about the brand and its global evaluation, especially when a product image is included on the package (Underwood, Klein, 2002).

The sense of touch is complementary to vision: it offers fast and precise access to a product (Krishna, 2012). It's of great importance in the Beauty industry because the consumer will be able to familiarize himself with the product before applying it to his skin. By touching a product, the consumer is going to gain insightful information on the product by testing the texture, temperature, weight, and feeling on the skin (Klatzky & Lederman, 1992). That's the reason why many Beauty stores give the opportunity to try products in stores (before the Covid-19 pandemic). It's also true when selecting a bottle of perfume: information received through touch can also have a powerful influence on product evaluations (Mooy & Robben, 2002; Peck & Childers, 2003). By touching a product, medical research has shown that the brain releases oxytocin ("the love hormone") that leads to feelings of well-being and calm (Longley, 2019).

Sensory Marketing impacts the subconscious. However, this can only be studied thanks to Neuromarketing. Neuromarketing is the use of Cognitive Neuroscience in Marketing and Communication; The main goal is to adapt theories and methods from Neuroscience and combine them with the ones from Marketing and related disciplines (Lim, 2018). It aims to influence consumer's behavior by provoking positive emotions. Neuromarketing techniques are wide. The main ones are: the Functional Magnetic Resonance Image (fMRI) which measures and maps brain activity by tracking changes in blood flow, and the Electroencephalogram which reads brain-cell activity using sensors placed on the subject's scalp and can track changes in brain activity. However, these techniques are very expensive and technically difficult to use. Other Neuromarketing techniques that focus on one sense such as the Eye Tracking Methods also exist.

90% of the information is processed subconsciously in the human brain. Emotions are very relevant in Marketing: they make advertising, store design and consumer experience more efficient (Singh, 2020). The first Neuromarketing study ever made showed the power of Sensory Marketing and Branding. In 2004 researchers at Emory University served Coca-Cola and Pepsi to subjects in an fMRI machine. When consumers couldn't identify the drink, researchers noted a consistent neural response. But when subjects could see the brand, their limbic structures (the brain area associated with emotions, memories, and unconscious processing) showed stronger activity. It means that an acknowledgement of a brand will have an impact on the consumers and their vision of a product.

To better understand the brain mechanism, it's better to know which parts of the brain are involved. The two main ones are the Amygdala and the Hypothalamus. First, a sensory input goes through the Thalamus, the sensory relay center that collects them and relays the information to the Amygdala and higher cortical regions for processing.

As seen above, the Amygdala plays a very important role in the regulation of emotions. It will coordinate them and generate emotional responses after acknowledging their importance. When the Amygdala stimulates the Hypothalamus, hormones such as adrenaline are released (Khoo, 2020). The Hypothalamus is known to be the expression of emotions: it compares different sensory inputs to make decisions and activates behavioral responses (Saper, Lowell, 2014).

Then, the Hippocampus is the brain part that is involved with memories: it will retain them and convert some of the short-term memories into long-term ones (Khoo, 2020). For example, a new product scent could impact the consumer in the long term and, every time the consumer will smell it, it will automatically calm him. He will then directly associate it with a sense of peace. Because memories are often emotional (especially long-term ones), they contribute greatly to decision-making (Khoo, 2020).

Many brands already Sensory Marketing in many different industries: Starbucks, the coffee-shop brand is known to use specific coffee scents that customers can smell when they arrive, packaging with coherent colors, and a cozy atmosphere thanks to the music played in the background. However, it's harder to find examples or paper research on the Beauty Industry. Yet, many brands already used it such as Lush, Yves Rocher, or Fresh. For all the reasons stated before, the Beauty Industry seems to be the right industry for further research. This thesis purpose will focus on the impact of the senses on the purchase decision.

### **1.3 Research questions**

Krishna already highlighted that products are sensual in nature. The more a brand appeals to consumers' different senses, the more successful it will be (Lindstrom, 2012).

Through Sensorial Marketing, the Beauty Industry succeeds to create a strong desire which, unlike need, is something that refers to the impulsive side of the individual and leads to a non-rational decision.

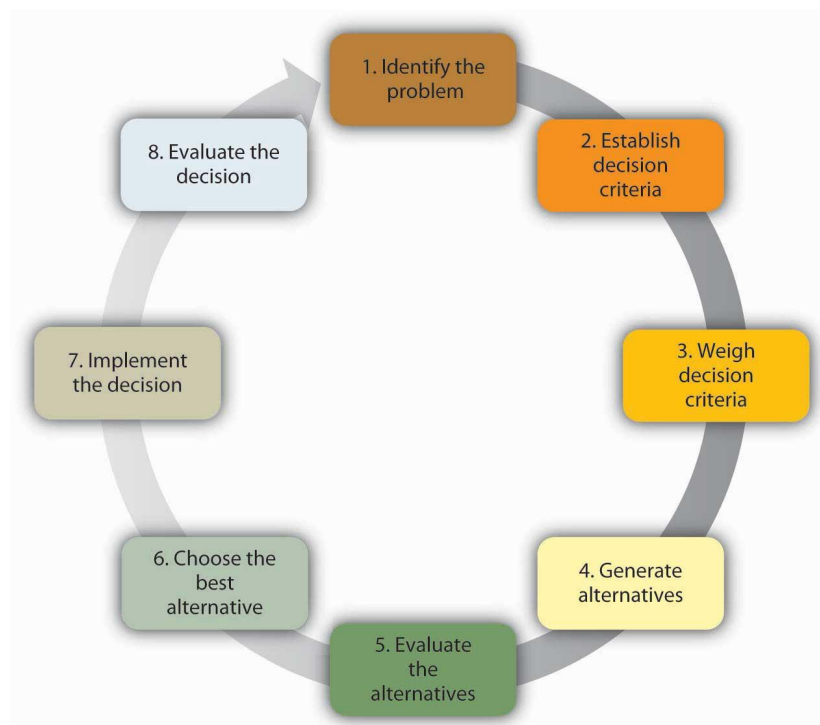
This thesis aims to go further in explaining this phenomenon in-depth: ***How does Sensory Marketing impact our perception and behavior toward a beauty brand and how does it succeed in activating the buying process?***

Therefore, the following research questions will be answered:

*“Why is Sensory Marketing used in the Beauty Industry?”*

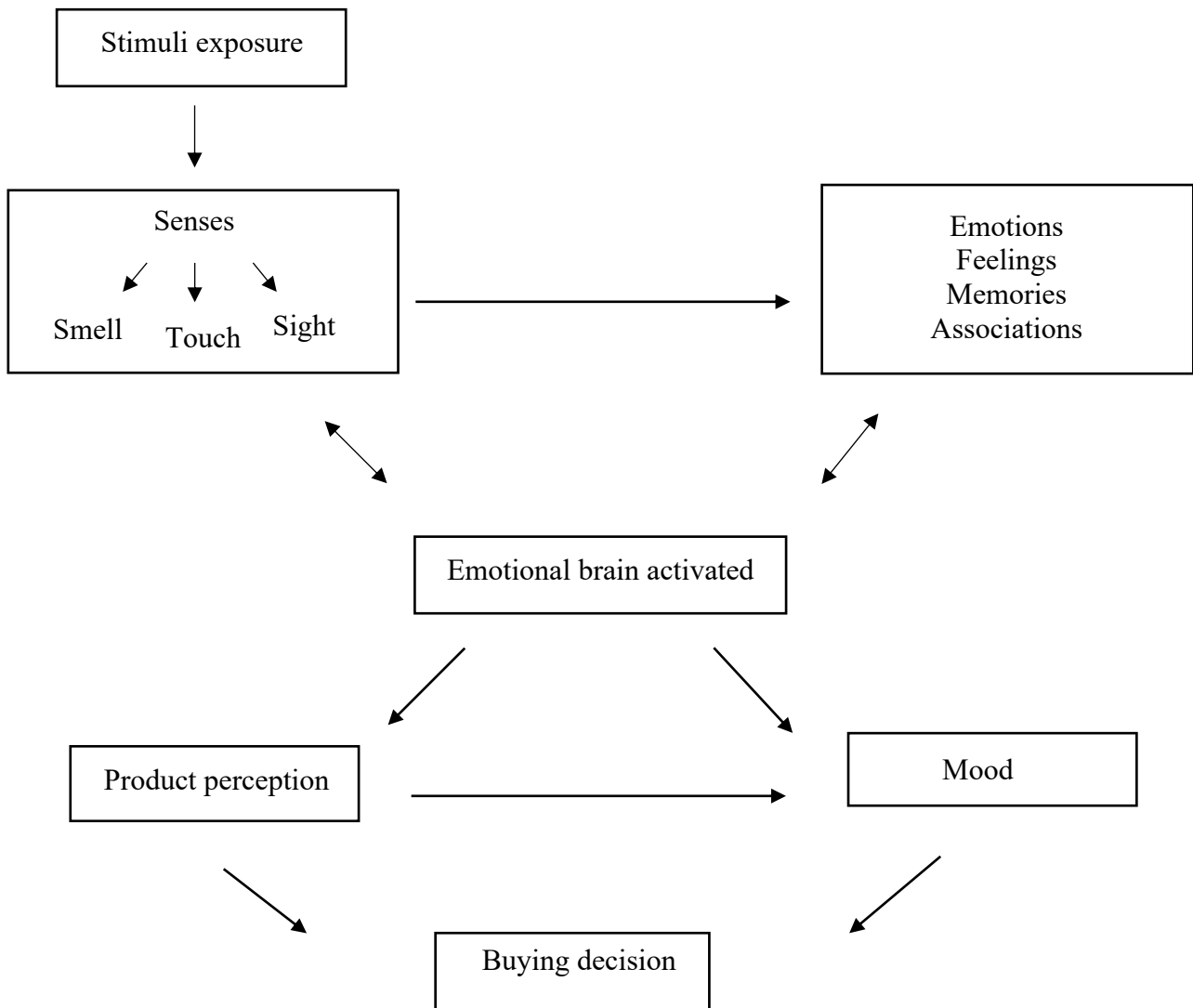
*“What are the main senses concerned and what are their impact on the purchasing?”*

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework



**Figure 3: The rational decision-making process (Lumen Learning, n.d.)**

This very rational decision-making process implies a non-emotional thinking which is quite unrealistic in action because the consumer’s mind is filled with different beliefs, emotions, prejudices, bias.



**Figure 4:** Thesis Theoretical Framework (from stimuli exposure to Buying Decision).

In this case, the buying decision is based on an unconscious process that relies on the emotions, feelings, memories, and associations created in the consumer’s brain. Regarding olfactory preferences, most are purely focused on emotional associations (Fox, 2008). While most of the rational decisions are made by the reptilian brain, the emotional responses are triggered by the middle brain which can release chemicals, or neurotransmitters, such as dopamine - “the happiness hormone” (Ledger, 2021). The limbic system will therefore process and express the emotions. Because the sense of smell is very subjective, some will be directly associated with events, experiences, objects, memories or sometimes even people (Kirk-Smith & Booth, 1987). Some triggers will raise positive or negative associations and

will therefore have an important impact on the consumer's mood. Many research papers have indicated that mood influences behaviors (Krishna, 2012).

A visually attractive product design may improve creativity in problem-solving, as well as having an impact on mood (Norman, 2004).

### **1.5 Definitions/key concepts**

**Sensory Marketing:** marketing techniques that aim to seduce the consumer by using his senses to influence his feelings and behavior (Healey 2010).

**Limbic brain:** a collection of structures involved in processing emotion and memory, including the hippocampus, the amygdala, and the hypothalamus (Guy-Evans, 2021).

**Senses:** Humans have five basic senses (touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste). The sensing organs associated with each sense send information to the brain to help people understand and perceive the world around them. (Bradford, 2017)

**Sensory signature:** is a unique or combination of sensory impressions that are associated with a brand consistently across its various products or services, providing differentiation and identity. They can be related to one or more of the senses, although usually focused on key sensory criteria that can convey a distinctive experience. It's usually able to distinguish a brand from another (Gains, 2015).

**Episodic memory:** is a person's unique memory of a specific event. Therefore, it will be different from someone else's recollection of the same experience (Zimmermann, 2014).

**Associative learnings:** defined as learning about the relationship between two separate stimuli, where the stimuli might range from concrete objects and events to abstract concepts, such as time, location, context, or categories (Gallagher, Bulteau, Cohen & Michaud, 2020).

**Bounded rationality:** the idea that decision-making deviates from rationality due to such inherently human factors as limitations in cognitive capacity and willpower, and situational constraints (Jennifer S. Lerner, Ye Li, Piercarlo Valdesolo, and Karim S. Kassam, 2015).

**Decision-making process:** a decision-making process is a series of steps taken by an individual to determine the best option or course of action to meet his needs (Brush, 2020).

**Amygdala:** one of the two parts of the brain that affects how people feel emotions, especially fear and pleasure (Cambridge dictionary, 2021).

**Dopamine:** is a type of neurotransmitter that plays a big part in how we feel pleasure (Bhandari, 2019).

**Implicit memory:** also referred to as unconscious or automatic memory, it uses past experiences to remember things without thinking about them. The performance of implicit memory is enabled by previous experiences, no matter how long ago those experiences occurred (Zimmermann, 2014).

## **1.6 Delimitations**

This thesis focuses on Sensory Marketing in the Beauty Industry in the 21st century. The Beauty Industry is large. It includes Cosmetics, Perfumes, Hair products, and Make-up. For this thesis, we will only focus on Cosmetics and Perfumes. This usually includes Cosmetics branded shops, Big Retail stores with many different brands such as Galeries Lafayette, Sephora, or Marionnaud in France. It also includes Spas and Beauty Salons but that won't be the focus of this thesis. I will only study how customers are impacted by the strategy developed by beauty brands and big stores that sell Beauty products in their shops.

The study will concern both men and women and people of all ages.

I will only focus on three senses for our study: sight, smell and touch which are the main ones for this industry. Taste is not used here, and sound is not the most relevant sense.

The combination of both smell and vision is said to be very powerful. If smell is known to help people recall memories, it can also really enhance the effectiveness of visual cues (Krishna, Cian, Sokolova, 2016). Most of the studies on this subject have been made on the Food Industry only.

## **1.7 Research Methodology & data collection**

For this thesis, I have used a quantitative method (survey) that I have sent on Internet. This survey allowed to collect data by asking respondents specific questions about Sensory Marketing in the Beauty Industry regarding their attitudes, buying habits, feelings, tendencies, intentions through their buying process.

The questionnaire collected, first, information about the participant background (age, genre, geographical background), his buying habits towards Cosmetic/Perfumes, and his attitude towards Sensory Marketing.

This survey has been built to appeal to wide range of respondents: I chose to target both women and men in a large age scale (18 to 65 years old).

Respondents have many different nationalities but they all come from European countries. I chose to focus on European countries only because the culture is closer which will facilitate the process. Culture has an important impact in the way consumers perceive different colors, scent or music. The meaning and associations will not be the same in Asia than in Western Culture. There is an opportunity to study Sensory Marketing according to different cultures but it's not the aim of this study.



## **II- Literature Review**

This chapter describes what has been found in the earlier studies on the subject. The focus of this study is the Beauty Industry but it hasn't been too much discussed in previous literature that's why most of the example might concerned other industries.

### **2.1 The added value of Sensory Marketing**

The Beauty Industry has been growing more and more for the last decade, especially in some areas of the world such as China. As for many industries, the global Covid-2019 pandemic has really impacted Cosmetic sales, reducing it by 8% in 2020 while it was growing every year by 5.5% in 2018 and 2019 (L'Oréal, 2020). As for fragrances, results were different according to the market: it went down by 13% in the first quarter of 2020 in Europe and in the US but not in Latin America where consumers usually continue to buy perfumes no matter the economic or social climate (NPD, 2021).

New brands are emerging all the time, making the Beauty Industry a highly competitive market. In this context, the need for differentiation is of the utmost importance. Instead of focusing on functional attributes such as price or quality that are often more or less the same among brands, offering a sensory experience that appeals to people's emotions and mood can be the best way to impact consumers. Nowadays, consumers want to be treated as individuals and not only as a consumer group (Hultén, 2020). Instead of focusing on the customer (Relationship Marketing) or the product itself (Transaction Marketing), Sensory Marketing puts the Sensory experience as the focus. Using Sensory Marketing in stores is something that also changes the way products are being created (in terms of colors, graphic design, texture, smell) but also how they are sold: how the store is organized, the music, the ambient smell (Krishna, 2010).

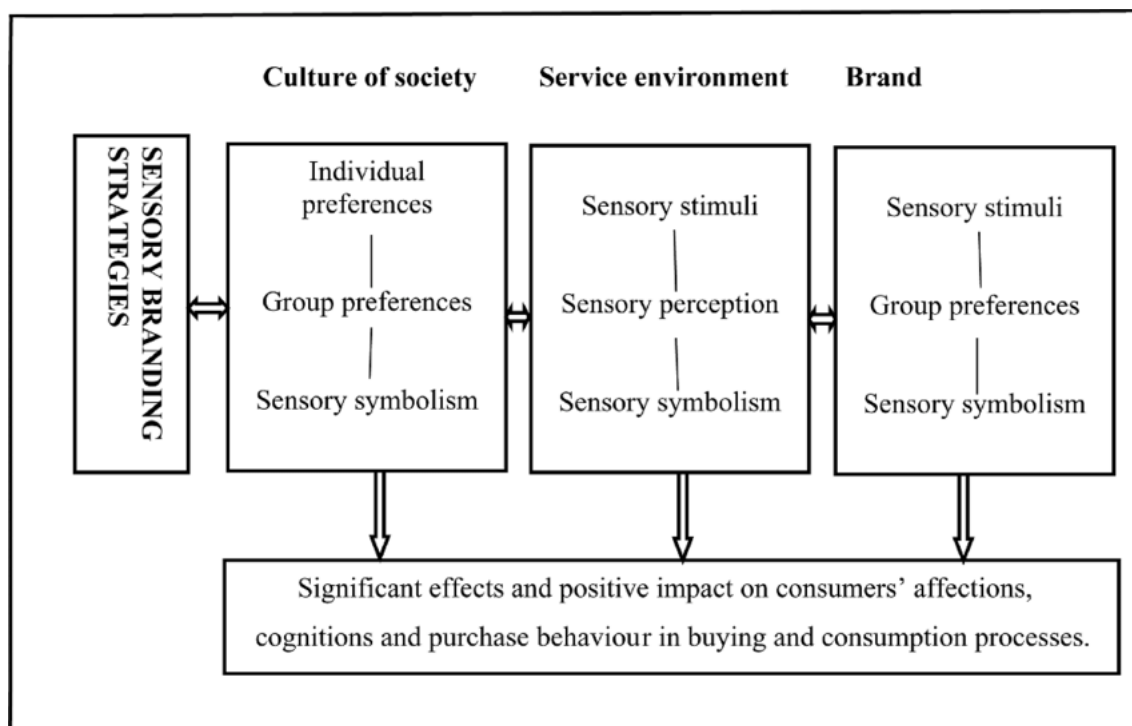
Thanks to Sensory Marketing, shopping has transformed into an experience for consumers. The Experiential perspective of consumption experience means that the consumer value doesn't reside in the product purchase itself (not the brand or product chosen) but in the satisfaction regarding the whole consumption experience. Hence, experience is placed at the center of the consumer value (Holbrook and Hirschmann, 1999). This first discovery was quite avant-garde at the time when Sensory Marketing was not as developed as now.

It has given birth to what we call today Experiential Marketing which relates to immersive marketing (thanks to AI for example), events creations but also Sensory Marketing. Nowadays, consumers look for and buy emotional experiences (Brembeck and Ekström, 2004; Ratneshwar and Mick, 2005). This experience must include fantasies and fun as well as more functional product attributes such as interesting prices and good quality (Hultén, 2020). The real difference with this type of marketing is that it aims to engage consumers and create stronger, more meaningful, connections between the brand and the consumer. Experiential marketing should amplify the feelings that come when they use the product. And this marketing has proven its efficiency: 71% of consumers say they've made a purchase based on experience quality, and 91% affirm that they are more likely to make a repeat purchase after a positive experience (State of the Connected Customer, 2020). Experiential Marketing is all about the images created in the consumer's mind and associated with the brand (Grönroos, 2008).

Therefore, Experiential Marketing has a real potential to create awareness about a certain company and to enhance customer loyalty. This process starts by considering every client as a person and not a number by creating a deeper connection each of them. Experiential Marketing emphasizes this need for human connection and interaction that has been hurt through the Covid-19 situation. Sensory Marketing, which is considered as a sub-division of Experiential Marketing, works the same way. If e-commerce has grown drastically during the Covid-19 pandemic, the ability to see, touch, and smell is something entitled to stores and remains a real sales advantage. Thus, amid lockdown, online beauty sales have increased by 73% compared to the previous year, over the same period. While consumers (especially Millennials) are increasingly turning to e-commerce to buy Cosmetics, in-store experience is still preferred. It offers the possibility to test products on the spot and to experience Sensory Marketing. Thus, 80.7% of global beauty product sales are still made in stores (Alioze, 2020). In-store shopping, and therefore Sensory Marketing, still has a bright future ahead of it.

Senses are stimulated by positive stimuli such as calming or dynamic music, nice scents, attractive visuals. It's the combination of all these stimuli (or sometimes only one) that will then lead to a positive experience and impact the consumer's emotional state and mood. The sense of smell is closely related to pleasure and well-being and is directly connected to emotions and memories because it has a direct line with the brain's limbic system (emotional part of the brain). Smell congruency is particularly important: it's what will lead to more

positive evaluations. A research has been conducted on Millennial women in cosmetics retail stores (offline and online) to measure their overall experience. Based on this analysis, the women that enjoy their experience in Cosmetic stores were in stores that had many sensory attractions instead of the usual retail design. Besides, a scent that provided comfort, or uplifting music played a role in their overall enjoyment. Store lighting is also very important: it can increase sales by 10% when done well. Because the sense of touch is also very important for the experience to be enjoyable, tester availability and try-on products are very important elements to have in a Beauty store. The customers can then feel fully immerse in the experience. He can also feel the different textures, product temperature, or other details that will be useful for him to make his final choice. Besides, product display must be tidy and attractive and the overall temperature in the store must be adapted to create the best possible experience for clients (Theopilus, Yogasara, Theredia, Ardine, 2021).



**Figure 5:** Sensory branding model (Hulten, 2017)

Senses are impacted differently according to their age or cultural backgrounds. Studies have already shown that the ability for an ambient scent to have a significant impact on consumers' expenditures was much more important in younger shoppers (Chebat et al, 2019). Many hypotheses can be advanced to explain this phenomenon. Psychological reasons can be advanced such as the level of impulsivity that which might be higher among younger

consumers. A biological explanation could also be that our sense of smell or sight deteriorates throughout the years (Hoffma, Ishii, & MacTurk, 1998). Cultural background can also have an important impact on product perception because colors, taste, and smell don't have the same meaning regarding the country (Krishna, 2010). And people may naturally respond differently to stimuli and have differences in sensory arousal (Krishna, 2012). That is something that the companies that aim to sell globally must consider.

## **2.2 The role of Emotions in Sensory Marketing**

All the senses we're going to study in this thesis (the sense of touch, sight, and smell) are strongly related to emotions in different ways in the Beauty Industry.

As we've seen above, the sense of smell is the most emotional. It takes twice as long to retrieve an autobiographical memory that's cued with a sense that one that is cued with a visual or verbal cue (Goddard, Pring, & Felmingham, 2005). It's also the sense that tends to evoke the most memories which explain why it's the most influential olfactory stimuli. Other research has also suggested that memories evoked by smells tend to be more long-lasting (Aggleton & Waskett, 1999). Besides, when a pleasant scent was present in a room, individuals spent more time looking product packages on a computer screen. Scent influences and enhances an individual's memory. It will then create associative learnings regarding a brand (Hultén, 2020).

As a result, we can hypothesize that emitting a recognizable scent can have a real impact on brand recognition and, therefore, on brand loyalty. The key to differentiating in the Beauty Industry is to enhance consistency and uniqueness (Lindstrom, 2006). This can be created through Scent Marketing that relates to the way companies use various scents in their marketing strategies (Krishna, 2010). Having a distinctive smell that will be directly associated with the brand in the consumer's mind is a real asset to distinguish from the competition. Beauty brands already use this kind of technique and often diffuse ambient smells into their stores through what is called nebulization technology: scents will be spray in the stores or will directly be distributed through a ventilation system. It will then give a first idea of the atmosphere they want to create (Hultén, 2020).

A Neuromarketing study has shown the first neurobiological evidence of the link between emotions, memories, and smell. By using fMRI to see the brain parts activated when two of

their senses were stimulated (sight and smell), researchers used two different perfumes: one that was connected to a personally meaningful memory (personally selected by the person studied) and another unmarketed perfume (the same for everyone). The results showed greater activation in the Amygdala when recalling the smell of the personally significant perfume than to any other cue. The olfactory perception relates to how consumers receive and interpret olfactory cues and stimuli in their environment such as temperature, wind condition, humidity that will have an impact on the perception of the smell. The particularity of the sense of smell is that it more based on hedonic rather than analytical. It doesn't require any cognitive or emotional efforts to experience it: the consumer will automatically like or dislike an odor. This very impulsive reaction is truly emotional in nature. And because each of us has a different culture and different experiences, everyone will be affected differently by smells. This unique scent identity is called a "fragrance fingerprint": it includes all the olfactory stimuli and cues that the individual will encounter during the day.

Olfactory imagery also is very often used in the Beauty Industry. They're used by brands that appeal to the reader's sense of smell by describing sensory experiences based on the sense of smell with words (it also exists for other senses such as visual imagery). They will use very vivid descriptions to appeal to the consumer's imagination and make him desire a particular product. We can find this type of description on the product's packaging but also on brand websites where they describe a product. By appealing to the consumer's imagination, he will feel fully immerse and imagine the feeling of the product on his skin, the texture, the smell, and the benefits it will have. It's not only used in Cosmetics but also for Perfumes that use olfactory pyramids with a brief description, but also beautiful pictures of the different ingredients used (Hultén, 2020). When it comes to perfumes, the ingredients used will have an impact on the consumer's preferences: some will prefer something more floral, others will look for something sweeter. Despite the individual's preferences, scents have very common effects on all people: Vanilla is a very attractive scent that can also reduce stress and increase comfort, Lavender also has this relaxing and calming effect and can therefore reduce anxiety while Citrus will improve mood and cognitive performance. This latest ingredient has also been used as an ambient smell for a study: despite improving consumers' mood, it also increased their propensity to buy products in the store (Chebat & Michon, 2003). Based on that, brands can adapt their marketing message and create an overall congruence that will incite consumers to buy (Hultén, 2020).

As we've seen, odors are learned over time, and people's perception of a smell can change. When a novel odor is experienced by a consumer and paired with an emotional event, that smell will be then directly associated by the brain with the associated emotion: it's called associative learning. It will then be hard for this one smell to be reassociated with another experience (Krishna, 2012). It can elicit positive emotions such as joy, and relaxation by directly relating to an individual's personal experiences that evoke powerful emotions. One research has shown that the presence of a pleasant ambient scent in a store had the power to increase (or on the contrary to decrease) the amount of money spent by 60% (Madzharov, Block, and Morrin 2015; Morrin and Chebat 2005). Some brands have already understood the power of a recognizable scent and have created their signature scent. Singapore Airlines fragrance, a blend of rose, lavender, and citrus are applied in the airplane interiors, on the towels and on the flight attendants (Lindström, 2005). Even if it's not registered as trademark, it creates associations with the brand and acts as a powerful symbol. The difference with a simple logo is that a scent will directly appeal to the individual's emotions and memories and will stay longer in the consumer's mind (Hultén, 2020).

The sense of Touch can also have a powerful impact on consumers in the Beauty Industry. Beauty brands will create strong desire and make people want to touch their products. Something that brands must also be aware of is that consumers will spend much longer in a store touching products with many tactile stimuli (Hultén, 2020). The sense of touch is indeed known to increase impulsive purchasing (Peck and Shu, 2009). Krishna states that when consumers are interested in seeing a product, it will automatically raise their desire to touch it. Therefore, the sense of sight and touch seem to be related in the Beauty Industry. In fact, around 50% of consumers would be turned off by online shopping because they can't experience it fully by touching the products. Peck and Wiggins found out that participants perceived a marketing message that incorporates a touch element to be more persuasive than those which do not, especially when the sense of touch stimulates positive sensory feedbacks (Peck and Wiggins, 2006). The UK Supermarket Asda made the experiment to not wrap the different toilet tissues in their stores. Therefore, the consumers could touch and feel the different textures and compare. It resulted in a significant sales increase and in shelf space for the products (Hultén, 2020). If we apply that to the Beauty Industry, it can be even more powerful because the more tactile characteristics a product has, the more people will want to touch and feel it. The Beauty Industry already did some experiments in advertisement. Lubriderm, a Cosmetic company, printed a picture of a model on slightly texture paper that

the reader could peel off to illustrate the rougher skin. The other page was printed on smoother paper to show the skin improvement after using the specific cream; The result of the campaign was a 16% increase in sales compared to the previous year (Hultén, 2020). Touch is related to information and feelings about a specific product through physical and psychological interactions (Hultén, 2011). At the same time, it's the sense that has been the most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Even when stores have reopened, many restrictions stopped people from fully experience their environment through their sense of touch. Several studies have shown how touch may influence product evaluation because it is linked to the affective part of the brain and the one related to persuasion (Krishna & Morrin, 2008). Jean-Paul Gaultier Fragrances, known to be a very sensual perfume, created “Beau” et “Belle”, two perfumes with bottles that represent the woman and man bodies. Once applied, the perfume spreads a very attractive smell. The sense of touch, smell, and sight are all activated to create a very sensual experience and then activate the emotional parts of the brain (Danziger, 2019). Many perfume brands focus on selling highly attractive products and sensuality.

However, the sense of touch is somehow limited compared to other senses like the sense of sight because it can only perceive one input at a time. Vision, on contrary, has access to a wide range of sensory information (Krishna, 2012). In her book, Krishna classifies two types of touch: Instrumental Touch (touch as a mean to an end) or Hedonic Touch (touch as an end in itself). The first type includes several levels: the first one is touching only to buy: the consumer has not any intention to gain new information, it's often quite an automatic purchase; He will buy the same brand as usual because he likes it and he's used to it. Next level is to touch the product this time to gain new information through visual or olfactory inspection (but non-haptic properties) such as information about the product written on the packaging or through its smell. Finally, it can be to gain haptic information: weight of the product, its texture, temperature, shape (specific material properties). The Hedonic Touch, on the contrary, implies touching to purchase and to live pleasant sensory experiences (Krishna, 2012).

Vision is the most powerful sense of all which is why brands spend of their money and time to try to offer qualitative visuals on their products, advertisements, in their stores, websites, and social media. In a consumption culture like ours, pictures and videos are everywhere, especially on social media. Our brain is faced every day with so much information that we

absorb mostly through our sense of sight. Research has found that visually-oriented ads were more effective than verbal ones. Besides, individuals respond on a more emotional level to a visual ad (Vessel & Rubin, 2010) which also implies that they will stay longer in the memory. In the end, it will create more positive emotions and attitudes toward a specific brand.

A sight strategy emphasizes the significance of such sensory expressions as color, light, graphics. All of these in brands' identity and brands' values (Hultén, 2011). People shop with their eyes and often ignore packaging information at first. The presence of a product picture can encourage the consumer to imagine how a product looks, feels, and smells (Krishna, 2010). Visual information such as colors or images are way more vivid than pure text and have therefore the ability to attract people's attention directly (McGill & Anand, 1989). Colors are also very powerful because they're able to elicit feelings and affect moods. Therefore, they represent a real asset for brands that use Sensory Marketing. Every color has a different effect: red stimulates the body and mind and increases circulation, blue is a color that calms and relaxes, orange is an energizing color that makes people more enthusiastic, and excited (Cherry, 2020). Therefore, the choice of color could have an impact on the potentiality of a consumer to be in a mood that will then facilitate or not his act of consumption.

Among all, design is a component that will have an important impact on consumers. Product Design is a whole process that incorporates material, texture, color, logo, and ornamentation. When doing properly, an attractive design will enhance sensory pleasure and, therefore, influence purchasing decisions (Hultén, 2020). It influences cognitive and emotional reactions and it's one of the most important elements. The first impression given by the aesthetic or shape of a product will stay in the consumer's mind. That's why perfumes bottled are often very beautiful and sophisticated. Lush, the UK Handmade Cosmetics, has organized all its shops in the same way: products that you can directly see because they're not packed, very bright colors that can make the consumer energized and happy but also different textures, and an organization that looks like a pastry. All of these with the association of the greedy, sweet smells plays with the consumer emotions and moods. Yves Rocher uses green as the main color of its shops and tries to recreate the idea of a "vegetal greenhouse". This color that creates balance, harmony, and calm can also have an impact on the consumer when he enters the shop and has this feeling of peace instantly. However, brands need to have



congruent sensory cues. This will later constitute the “brand signature”. Each sensory component contributes to the Marketing message: the smell in a store must be consistent with the smell of the product, and the colors and graphic designs must also all be congruent. A 2011 study showed the effects of the store environment and design and its effects on consumers. It can indeed trigger positive emotions such as excitement and inspiration. These feelings will then result in higher frequencies of impulse buying behaviors. The study also supported that there was a tie between hedonic motivations and the tendency to absorb sensory cues in the retail environment (Chang, Eckman, and Yan, 2011). Visual information impacts our product evaluation and can result in a more positive attitude toward a product or a brand and create stronger purchasing intentions. It has been found that visually oriented ads were much more effective than verbal ones because consumers tend to react more emotionally to a visual ad (Vessel & Rubin, 2012).

### **2.3 Multisensory Marketing**

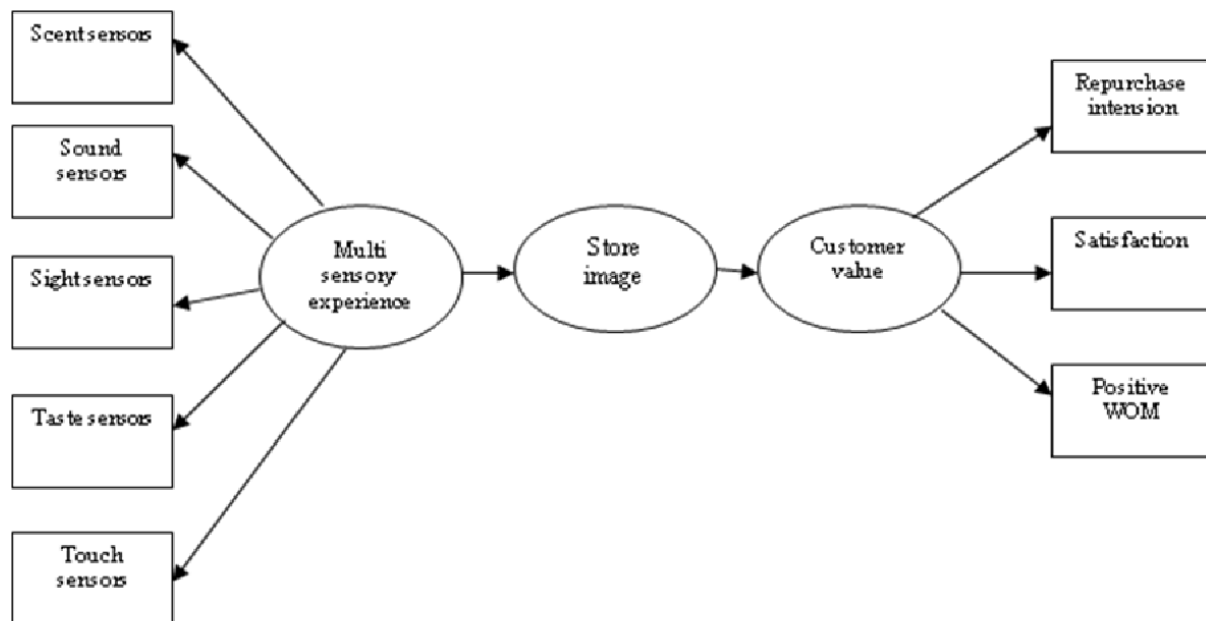
The key in Sensory Marketing is to trigger an emotional response from the consumer just before the conscious, rational part of his brain interfere (Danziger, 2019). As Martin Lindstrom stated, a brand that appeals to multiple senses will be much more successful than one that just focuses on one or two (Lindstrom, 2011). Multi-sensory perception relates to the way individuals receive and interpret the different stimuli, sensations, and sensory information from the five senses through sensory integration. To understand the outside world and its wide range of stimuli, individual need to integrate the sensory inputs he encounters daily. Sensory Integration is the neurological process through which the different stimuli (vision, touch, smell) are first managed as sensations that occurs in the body and mind and then perceived as sensory information (Hultén, 2020).

As we saw above, every individual has a different sensibility regarding each sense. It changes according to the age, cultural background, and other individual preferences. Therefore, each multi-sensory perception is unique and subjective. Multi-sensory perception happens every day in our highly stimulated world (through constant printed and digital advertisements, musical background or radio, smells in restaurants, in the streets, or in stores) which require constant sensory integration for people. It has been found that multi-sensory convergence zones exist in the human brain: this sense can be influenced by relationships with others (Driver & Noesselt, 2008). Everyday, our senses work together to assess a new product or a

brand. It creates a synergistic effect on their behavior, evaluation, and memory (Bresciani, Dammeier, & Ernst, 2006).

Some researchers have found that vision and touch were the most important senses when assessing a brand or product: visual information is thought to be very useful when judging details (size, shape, color) but the tactile information is superior in the consumer's mind when it comes to decision-making. An experiment at an IKEA store has been made to study the interaction of olfactory and visual stimuli. For this purpose, experimental groups visited the stores where the glass department was changed from a very functional store to something much more emotionally appealing (lighting was lowered, the design was rearranged to look more appealing, and a vanilla scent was spread all over the department). As a result, consumers spend much more time touching the objects (23 seconds against 15 seconds before) and stayed longer in the store (106 seconds compared to 75 seconds in the past). Besides, the people that spent the most time touching the objects were the ones who bought them at the end of the experiment. It also significantly influenced their purchasing decision with a sales increase of 217%. When doing well and in a congruent way, the combination of visual and olfactory stimuli can impact other senses such as touch and has a significant impact on the consumer's purchase behavior (Hultén, 2020).

Visual and tactile sensory information is also thought to improve product evaluation: the information received thanks to touch is supported through visual information. On the reverse side, visual information built up expectations for the tactile experience (when a consumer sees an appealing texture in a Cosmetic cream for example). Regarding product evaluation, it seems that tactile evaluation is superior to visual evaluation, resulting in more positive attitudes towards a brand. Besides, Hultén confirms in his book that multi-sensory seems to also result in more positive attitudes toward a brand and higher chances to purchase.



**Figure 6:** The impact of Multi Sensory Marketing (Elangovan, 2017)

According to Krishna, a multi-sensory experience follows several stages.

First, it's the initiation of the consumer's experience by attracting his attention. As we saw before, the Beauty Industry is very competitive which incites brands to find innovative ways to differentiate themselves. Visual salience is particularly important because it's often one of the first things that will attract consumer's attention. That's why design and packaging are of particular importance for Beauty brands: it must be attractive but also congruent with the brand. To increase visual salience, it's particularly important to focus on colors as we've seen before because each one generates a different emotion but it's not the only important feature: brightness, shape, size, or texture. Light plays also an important role because the brighter the packaging is compared to its surroundings, the more visually salient it will be. It's the same for size or shape: the more different it is from its surroundings, the more visually salient it will appear on the shelf. Studies have shown that the more a consumer spends focusing on one item, the more likely he will be to like it and choose it at the end. Besides, these findings highlight the complementarity of the different senses; If a product is visually salient, a consumer is also even more likely to touch it and then, to purchase it at the end (Peck and Childers, 2006; Peck and Shu, 2009). A smell can also impact perceived touch and visual imagery. As we saw earlier, the sense of smell is particularly linked to memory; Therefore, a consumer will better remember a picture if it has a smell associated with it.

The second step is to provide information and to set expectations. Once the consumer's attention is captured, he can give intention to the information provided on the packaging. Visual and verbal cues are important when buying a product. On Beauty products, benefits and application information are written on the packaging. For perfumes, it's important for the packaging to be luxurious, attractive, and congruent with the brand and the perfume sold. Besides, because perfumes are often gifted for Birthdays or Christmas, they must be eye-catching. Consumers tend to shop with their eyes (Dickson and Sawyer, 1990). Therefore, an image or graphic design will have an important impact on the consumer's attitudes toward the brand and can impact its purchasing behavior.

Thirdly, sensory cues must generate consumer engagement: packaging visuals can lead to an automatic engagement when using the appropriate orientation of the product (right hand for example), the colors as we've seen above, and the olfactory engagement. A study showed that sight and smell can work together when the visual of a product lead people to imagine smells. It's called "smellizing" and it's not only used for the food industry but also by beauty brands that use appealing visuals, colors of the main ingredients, or the main smell of the cosmetic or perfume. The sense of touch (haptic engagement) can also have an impact: studies have shown that a marketing message that incorporates touch was perceived as more persuasive than one without (Peck and Wiggins, 2006). Finally, packaging also has a significant influence on how much consumers will be willing to buy and pay.

However, Sensory Marketing is not as easy as it seems. Brands must be careful to not overwhelm the consumer. It's all about finding the right balance of stimuli to influence the consumer while keeping the whole experience pleasant: it must be high enough to provoke arousing but not too much to not cause discomfort (Raju, 1980). This concept has been described as the "optimal stimulation level (OSL). Indeed, people according to different factors (age, culture, quality of senses) will all have a different sensitivity to stimuli. Some studies have concluded that younger, educated and employed people seem to have a higher OSL than others. Age seems also to be an important factor. We'll see tanks to our survey if we find similar conclusions. In 2016, another author, McGlensey, went further. He explains this feeling of being overwhelmed as exhausting and sometimes even scary which could also lead to a meltdown in certain cases, especially if the consumer is hypersensitive or has other conditions such as PTSD or autism. We've all felt this way when a perfume had such a strong scent that it could be perceived as an unpleasant experience, especially if the sense of smell is

combined with another stimulus. In 2012, participants of a study were asked to imagine being in a store while the author described different sensory features. It showed that a too high level of stimulation was reached when three congruent atmospheric stimuli were used whereas when it was only two congruent stimuli, it was perceived as positive (Homburg, Umschloss and Kuhn, 2012). If more senses are stimulated, it enhances the positive experience, but it can also have the same impact as a negative one. Therefore, it might result in a consumer not buying and not returning to the store in the future.

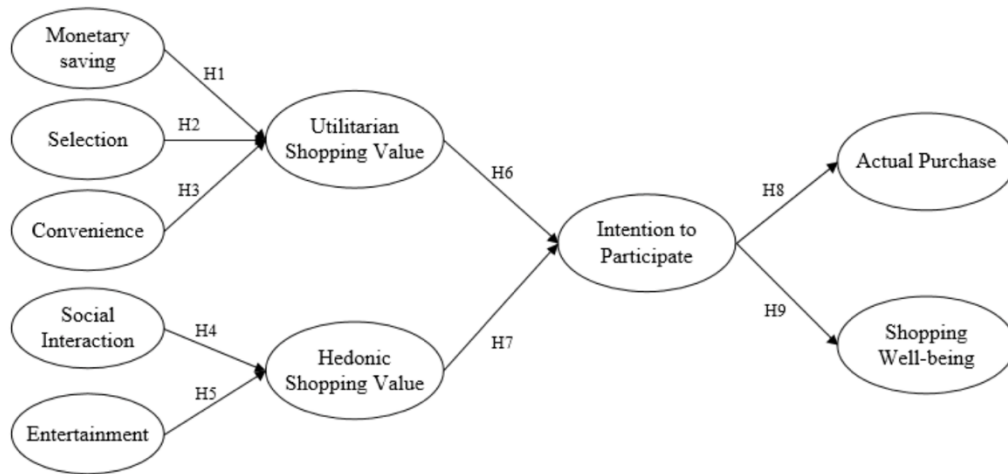
Ambient sensory stimuli have a real impact on the individual's enjoyment during an experience. A study in an American Spa chain measured the impact of these different stimuli on the individuals through a questionnaire after the spa visit. They asked about the different senses such as vision (colors, design layout, cleanliness), smells (fresh scents, fragrances), and touch (humidity, the softness of the equipment, temperature, etc). The findings showed that touch and vision had a huge impact on the experience's overall appreciation. If multiple sensory stimuli can have a positive impact on the consumers, it can also be experienced as sensory overload and each stimulus taken in isolation could influence the others in a negative way (Hultén, 2020).

In a visually dominant atmosphere (most retail stores), shoppers perceive non-visual cues to be more effective compared to an addition of new visual cues. It influences the time spent and the purchasing decision. Therefore, it means that brands should design their stores as a multi-sensory experience to appeal to consumers. The same study concluded that the addition of non-visual stimuli could impact the consumers to stay longer in the store up to 51%! (Hultén, 2010).

#### **2.4 Hedonic vs. Utilitarian Consumption Behavior**

Shopping patterns can also play a role in Sensory Marketing: utilitarian consumers appreciate the value of a product only based on the utility that the consumption of this product will bring them. This shopping pattern is more realistic and avoid the pleasure, more emotional aspects of shopping. Most utilitarian goods are seen as functional (Yilmaz, Koçoglu, 2018). On the contrary, Hedonic consumption is multisensory and provides experiential consumption, pleasure, and excitement. According to this view, goods are seen as subjective symbols (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Some products are already very hedonic in nature such as cell phones, apparel, or cosmetic goods. Perfume is also known to be a very hedonic product:

people will buy or offer it as a luxurious product. It can be used by consumers to increase seduction and attractiveness.



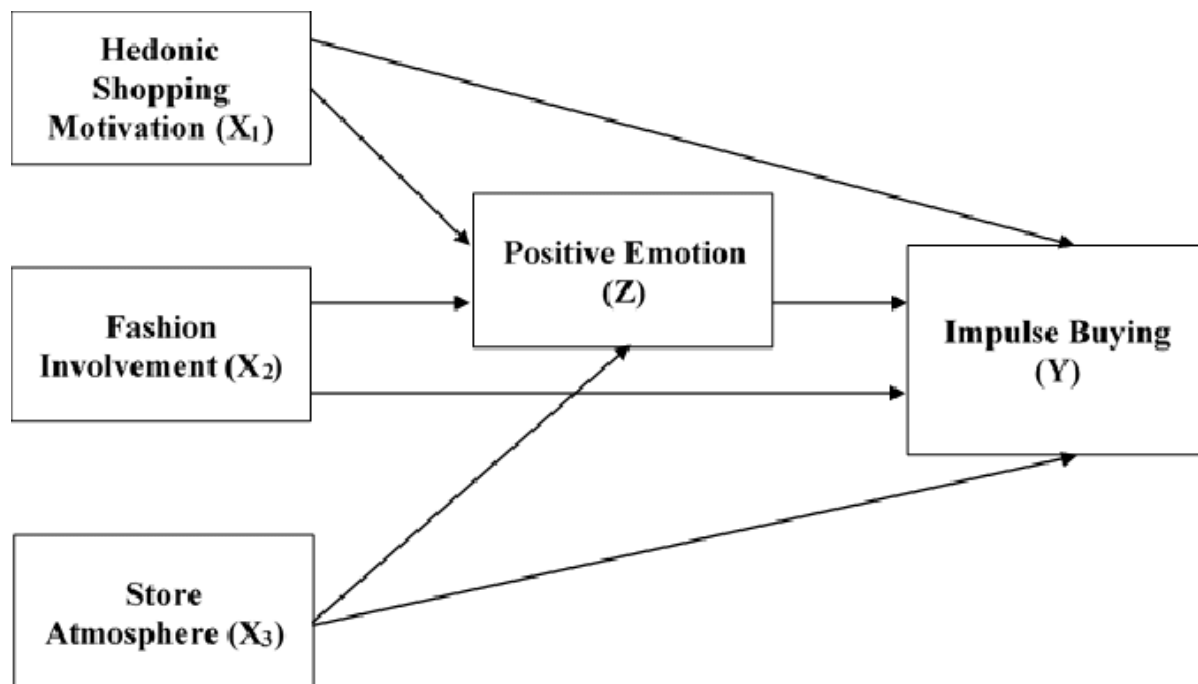
**Figure 1.** Research model.

**Figure 7:** Hedonic and Utilitarian Shopping Values (Yu, Zhang, Liu, 2018)

Offering low prices or discounts are not enough anymore, the entertainment dimension of retailing (all called “entertailing”) is one of the best ways to differentiate from the competition (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). The main difference between these two shopping patterns is that hedonism consumption evokes more feelings: they tend to be more affect-rich than the other (Khan, Shar, Wertenbroch, 2004). Besides, both shopping patterns have different shopping values: hedonic shoppers are much more involved in the satisfaction obtained through shopping (Kazakeviciute and Banyte, 2012). They shop for various reasons such as relaxation, socialization, desire for new trends, or just the pleasure to buy a gift for others (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003). That’s also why they tend to spend more time in stores: they find their shopping journey a reward in itself (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980). For all these reasons, hedonic shoppers are seen as impulsive buyers which is defined as a tendency to make unplanned, sudden, and spontaneous purchases (Paramitha et al., 2014). When utilitarian shoppers consider shopping as a necessary task and have more rational buying motives, hedonic shoppers are motivated by fun, amusement, and sensory stimulation which involves more impulsive behaviors. The feelings evoked through shopping can be very different from a person to another person: some will look for excitement whereas other consumers will see shopping as a relaxing activity (Khan, Shar, Wertenbroch, 2004). Hedonic value in shopping represents the overall emotional impressions that are generated through the shopping process (Collins, Kavanagh, Cronin & George, 2014). Therefore, brands must be

very careful when they create their store atmospheric: it must be congruent with brand goal and values.

However, these concepts are subjective and the difference between the two is the degree of perception. Buying a Beauty product could be seen as functional for a person who doesn't really like this type of products and only buy for the functional aspect while a Beauty lover who loves trying new Beauty products will enjoy all of the aspects offered by Sensory Experience in Beauty stores (Okada, 2005). Besides, it can sometimes be a mix of both: a Cosmetic product can provoke a more hedonic reaction and utilitarian through the physical changes such as body shape, wrinkle-free appearance, shining skin (Apaolaza-Ibanez et al., 2011). It's not realistic to assess a unique shopping pattern to someone: everyone will display different behaviors according to the moment but also to the location he shops. Hedonism deeply influences today's society. Shopping malls for example are designed to motivate people to adopt a more hedonic behavior by means of movie theatre, restaurants, various stimuli that encourage spontaneous responses (Babin et al., 1994). As a result, people spend more time in shopping malls which enhance their willingness to buy. Satisfaction thanks to hedonism consumption is very important because it can result in shopping repetition. Besides, literature suggest that the emotional experience created through hedonism shopping enhances brand loyalty afterwards because hedonic value has a stronger effect on corporate image (Jain and Mishra 2018). An experience led by Jain and Mishra showed that Millennials customers felt more motivated to visit the store several times when they had experienced excitement and enjoyment through their shopping journey. It showed that the younger generation tends to perceive the store with more positive attitude when they enjoyed their time in it compared to functional (utilitarian value).



**Figure 8:** Conceptual Framework of Research Model Hedonic Shopping Motives toward Impulsive Buying (Kosyu 2014).

Many factors can come into play regarding shopping patterns. Consumer hedonic motivation can vary from one culture to another. The main difference stands between individualistic and collectivist cultures. In the latest viewpoint, the individual pleasure resulting from shopping is seen as less acceptable than in individualistic cultures (Evanschitzky et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, urban consumers tend to display more often hedonic behavior. The main reason is that there are more shopping malls and retailers in bigger cities which means that consumers are more exposed to sensory stimulus (Atahan Yilmaz & Koçoğlu 2018). Gender can also play a role: women tend to display more hedonic behavior than men when shopping, especially the ones who live in urban areas. Women see shopping as an overall shopping experience (Tifferet and Herstein, 2012) and tend to also like a higher variety of products when they shop. Men, on the contrary, seem to be less impacted by stores' atmosphere: they are more likely to take into consideration the advice of the salespersons when they shop and display more utilitarian behaviors; They make their purchase decision based on information obtained about the product on various channels. They also look for convenience and practicality that will facilitate their life (Atahan Yilmaz & Koçoğlu 2018). They're less likely to have their emotions involved when making a purchase (Parker, 2011).



Age and generation can also have an impact. Baby Boomers seem to be more attracted to hedonic products (Lissitsa, Kol, 2019). Income level seems to also play a role: a positive correlation exists between income level and hedonic shopping behavior (Aydin, 2010). Besides, unemployed consumers seemed to be more hedonic (Yilmaz, Koçoglu, 2018).

Some researchers go further and state that shopping in stores can even be seen as a leisure activity. In stores, consumers are motivated by the Sensory Experience offered by brands: background music, lighting, store layout, and design (Nicholson et al., 2002). Purchase intention (the willingness to buy certain products or services after the product evaluation) varies because it reflects people's subjective values, goals, or expectations.

### III- Research Design

#### 3.1 Research methods and analysis

The purpose of this thesis is to find relationships between variables. I chose to use Exploratory Research because it will explore my research questions and intend to offer some insights. This type of method aims to offer a better understanding of a problem but will not provide conclusive evidence. The main aim of this research is to explore the research topic and to provide insights for future research that could be done more in-depth and with more financial resources such as Neuromarketing techniques or Interviews. Besides, because of sample is not very important, it would be hard to give definite conclusions to the research questions.

|                                                         | <b>Causal research</b>                                                                                                    | <b>Exploratory research</b>                                                                                                 | <b>Descriptive research</b>                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Amount of uncertainty characterising decision situation | Clearly defined                                                                                                           | Highly ambiguous                                                                                                            | Partially defined                                                                                                                                      |
| Key research statement                                  | Research hypotheses                                                                                                       | Research question                                                                                                           | Research question                                                                                                                                      |
| When conducted?                                         | Later stages of decision making                                                                                           | Early stage of decision making                                                                                              | Later stages of decision making                                                                                                                        |
| Usual research approach                                 | Highly structured                                                                                                         | Unstructured                                                                                                                | Structured                                                                                                                                             |
| Examples                                                | 'Will consumers buy more products in a blue package?'<br><br>'Which of two advertising campaigns will be more effective?' | 'Our sales are declining for no apparent reason'<br><br>'What kinds of new products are fast-food consumers interested in?' | 'What kind of people patronize our stores compared to our primary competitor?'<br><br>'What product features are the most important to our customers?' |

**Figure 9:** Main characteristics of research designs (Dudovski, 2018).

#### 3.2 Sample and data collection procedure

For this thesis, I chose to gather data through quantitative method -a survey- that was conducted from the 4th to 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021. This survey was created with Microsoft form. It is a web-based questionnaire and respondents could answer it by following the link which made it easy-to-use and quick. Survey is a very convenient data collection tool in this case because it allows to gather larger amounts of data quickly and with no financial resources. It also allows respondents to take the survey at a convenient time for them which allow their whole focus and attention.

| <b>BASIS FOR COMPARISON</b> | <b>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH</b>                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meaning                     | Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that develops understanding on human and social sciences, to find the way people think and feel. | Quantitative research is a research method that is used to generate numerical data and hard facts, by employing statistical, logical and mathematical technique. |
| Nature                      | Holistic                                                                                                                                     | Particularistic                                                                                                                                                  |
| Approach                    | Subjective                                                                                                                                   | Objective                                                                                                                                                        |
| Research type               | Exploratory                                                                                                                                  | Conclusive                                                                                                                                                       |
| Reasoning                   | Inductive                                                                                                                                    | Deductive                                                                                                                                                        |
| Sampling                    | Purposive                                                                                                                                    | Random                                                                                                                                                           |
| Data                        | Verbal                                                                                                                                       | Measurable                                                                                                                                                       |
| Inquiry                     | Process-oriented                                                                                                                             | Result-oriented                                                                                                                                                  |
| Hypothesis                  | Generated                                                                                                                                    | Tested                                                                                                                                                           |
| Elements of analysis        | Words, pictures and objects                                                                                                                  | Numerical data                                                                                                                                                   |

|           |                                                                            |                                                                         |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objective | To explore and discover ideas used in the ongoing processes.               | To examine cause and effect relationship between variables.             |
| Methods   | Non-structured techniques like In-depth interviews, group discussions etc. | Structured techniques such as surveys, questionnaires and observations. |
| Result    | Develops initial understanding                                             | Recommends final course of action                                       |

**Figure 10:** Comparison Chart for Qualitative and Quantitative Research (Surbhi S, 2018)

The link of this survey was sent on two of my school private Facebook groups (SKEMA Business School and LUT University) and was also posted on my LinkedIn profile. The main advantage is that these groups are only open to students and their identities are usually verified. Thanks to these different methods, I had quite a wide range of nationalities and of people living in different European countries.

### 3.3 The questionnaire

#### *a) Demographics*

The survey contained 14 questions including four questions about the consumer's background (gender, age, nationality, and education level). The questions were written in English because it was the easiest way to target people at a large scale. The responder's various nationalities and age group brought value to the analysis. Whatever their nationalities, all respondents are people who live in European countries.

There were 63 responses in total, from men (16 in total) and women (47 answers).

All respondents were divided into three groups depending on age: 18-30, 31-50 and 51-65. As we've seen above, age can have an impact on buying intention. Younger consumers might be more easily influenced (Daneshvary, Schower, 2000) because they tend to be more open to new experiences and less concerned by functional attributes such as prices.

The particularity of this survey was not to only target Beauty lovers because I wanted to have very broad answers and not only from people who might already be sensitive to this kind of products.

### *b) Aim of the Survey*

The objective of this survey was for the respondents to think about their experience in stores and the impact that their senses might have on their emotions, behaviors, and purchase decision. Thanks to this quantitative method, I will get insightful trends based on the meanings derived from the numbers obtained. E-Survey is very useful to get insights at a larger scale. It allows to gather data in a simple manner and a short period of time. The data I'll collect were then analyzed through in-depth descriptive analysis.

### *c) Writing questions*

I chose not to use open questions (except for the nationality) because it would have been harder for me to collect the answers and the responses would have been too different. The Quantitative method is very adapted here because the phenomenon measured (The impact of Sensory Marketing on the purchasing decision) is already known but we will measure to the degree to which it impacts the purchasing decision. Rather than focusing on reasons, I asked people to think about their experiences, feelings and emotions that lead them to a certain behavior.

After gathering data about people's demographics, the first part of my questionnaire aims to get insights about consumers buying habits regarding Beauty products on a scale on 1 to 10. I also asked about their shopping locations to see if they were used to shop in stores that use Sensory Marketing. This part also collected data about people's sensitivity to an environment where all their senses are stimulated and their preference in term of atmosphere. Then, questions target each sense and their importance for respondents on a scale of 1 to 10 to get their different degrees of implication.

For the second part, I targeted the impact of Sensory Marketing and people's emotions but also the impact it has on their purchasing decision. To scale that, I used specific affirmations and I used a Lickert scale to get hyper-personalized answers. With these last questions, I wanted to get the impact of senses on consumer's buying decision but also their willingness

to stay longer in the store and to come back. The last question is also very important because it aims to measure what the main motivation for consumers is when they buy something impulsively (with their “emotional brain”).

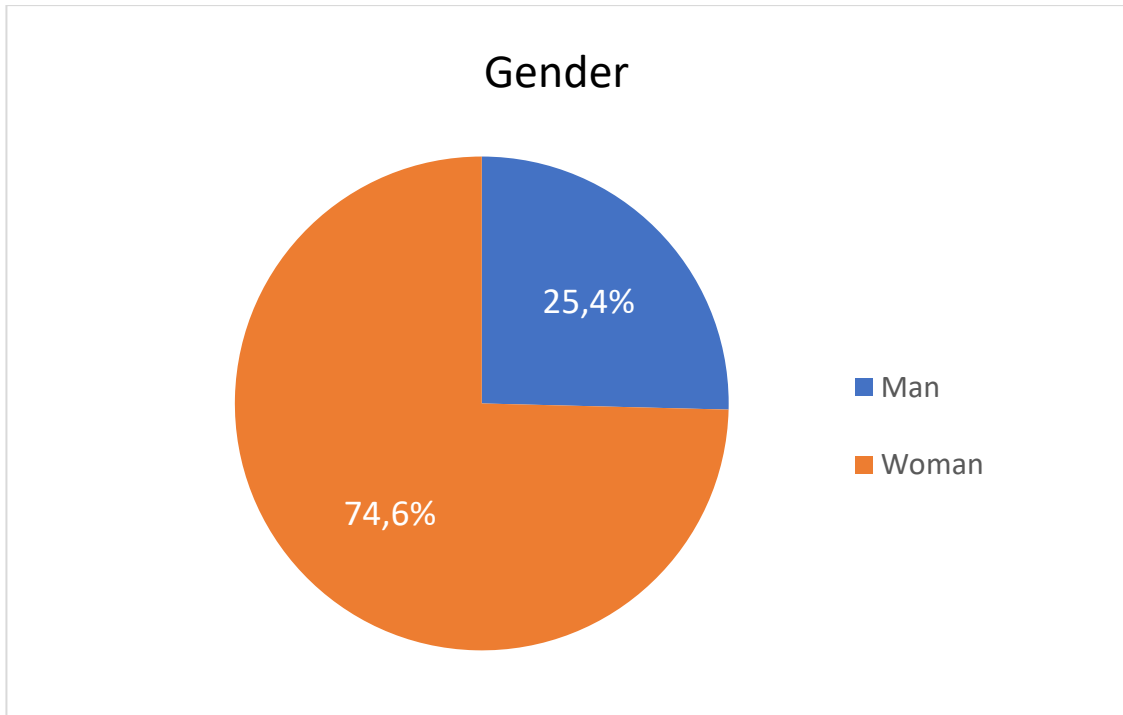
### **3.4 Reliability and validity**

Surveys are easy-to-use and don't consume too much time for respondents. However, they have some weaknesses. Because they're so quick (it takes around 5 minutes to answer), they can't go as much in depth as a face-to-face interview. Besides, it's not possible to make sure that respondents will answer honestly and that their answers will not be biased. With online surveys, body language can't be measured either. The last limitation is the role of the Subconscious on the purchase decision that simply can't be scale with surveys. I tried to make respondents think about their last impulsive purchase to get insights about the motivation that trigger their emotional behavior but it's not as efficient as Neuromarketing tools. The questionnaire was conducted in a way that no answer could be left behind, they were all mandatory to validate the survey at the end.

## IV- Findings

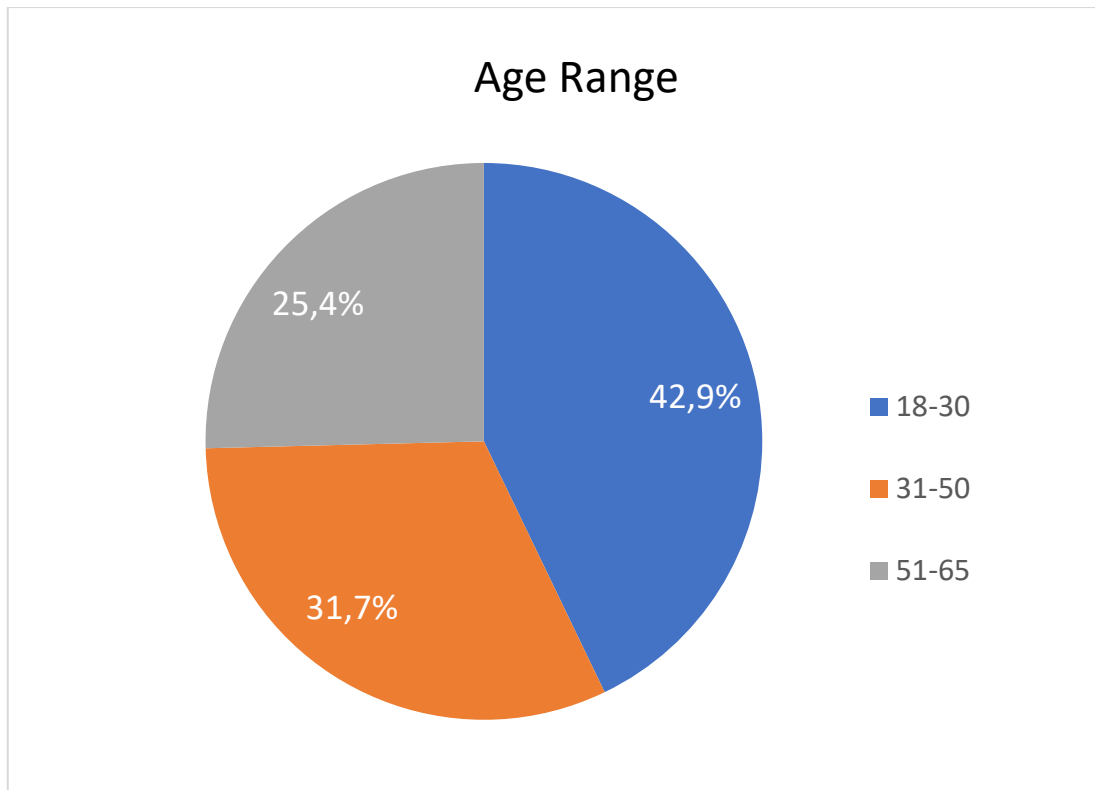
### 4.1 Survey analysis

The total amount of respondents collected with this survey is 63 which can sound quite limited at first sight but all age range are represented and the responses of both women and men were collected.



**Figure 11:** Gender distribution (in %)

As seen on this graphic, 74,6% of the people who answered this survey are women and 25,4%. It is not surprising because women are bigger beauty products consumers. Besides, the offer is more targeted for them. The questionnaire also let the possibility to not indicate the gender if respondents wanted to keep it anonymous but no one did.



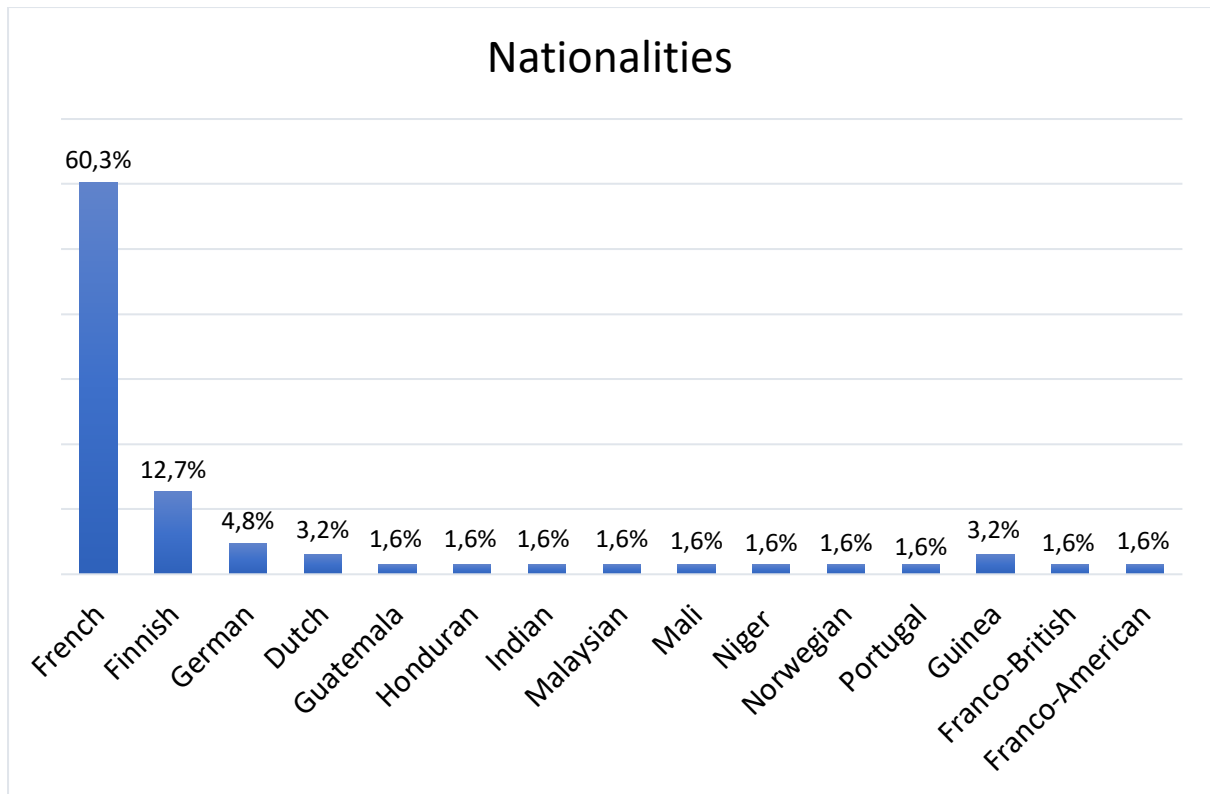
**Figure 12:** Age distribution (in %)

The next demographic indication was the age range. It's an important tool because previous researches have shown that people didn't consume the same way according to their age. Besides, their sensitivity regarding Sensory Marketing is said to not be the same.

42,9% of the respondents who answered the survey were young people between the age of 18-30 which seems obvious because the survey was sent through my University/Business School social networks. The second biggest group is the people between the age of 31-50 (31,7%) and the smallest was people between the age of 51 to 65 years old (25,4%).

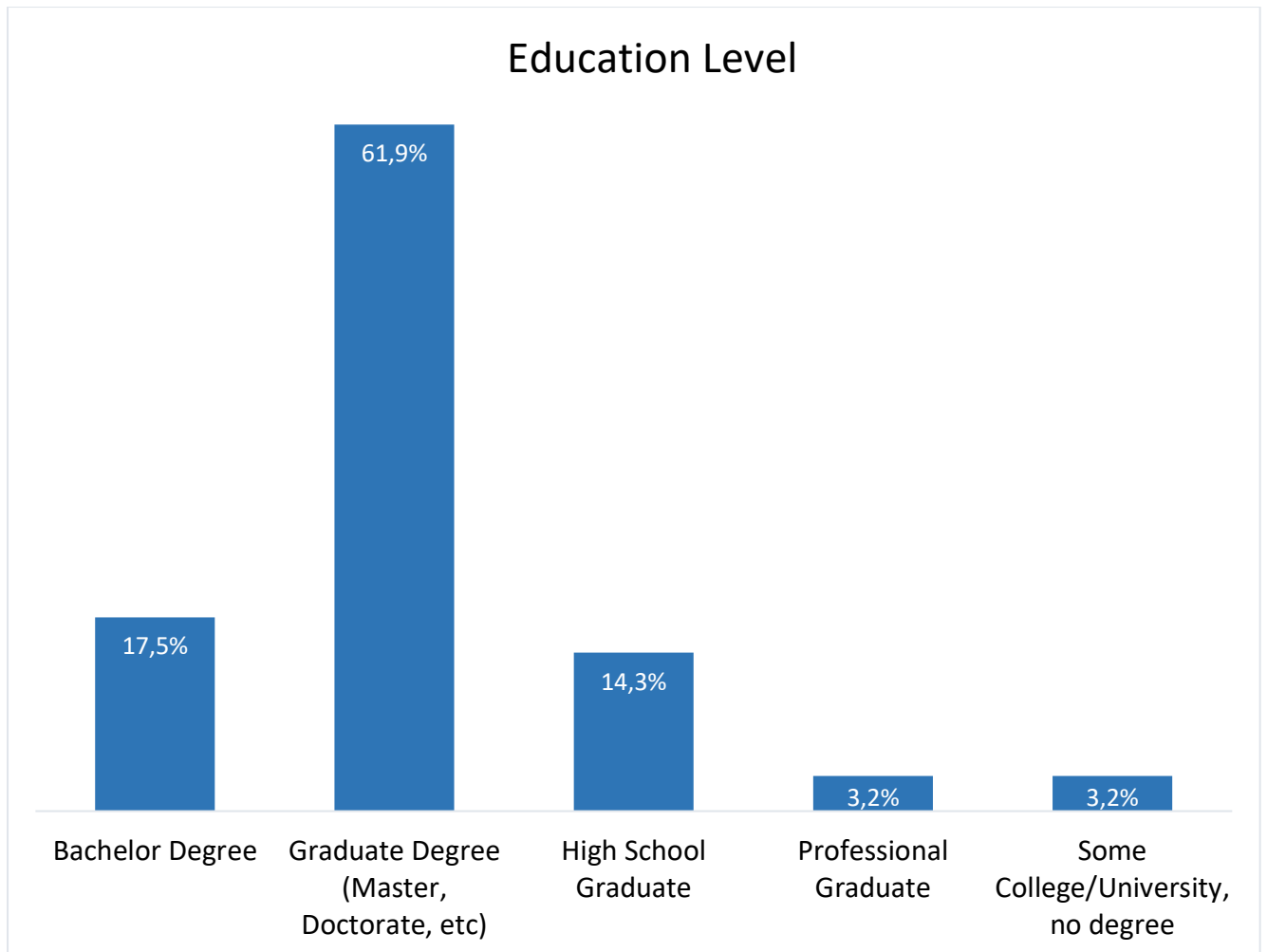
However, when looking at the age distribution, we have quite a good representation of all age categories and, therefore, a good representation of the population.





**Figure 13:** Nationalities (in %)

The nationalities of respondents were quite wide. However, I made sure that all my respondents were people that live in Europe because the goal of the survey is to scale Sensory Marketing only in Europe. The largest sample group, representing 60,3% of the respondents, is French. The second biggest group is Finnish representing 12,7% of the respondents (mostly respondents from LUT University). Then we have different European nationalities: Dutch (3,2%), Norwegian (1,6%), Portugal (1,6%) and then other nationalities from all around the world: Guatemala (1,6%), Honduran (1,6%), Indian (1,6%), Malaysian (1,6%), Mali (1,6%), Niger (1,6%), Guinea (3,2%). We also have respondents who have double-nationalities and can have therefore several cultural background: Franco-British (1,6%) and Franco-American (1,6%). Even if we have respondents from many different nationalities, we must remain careful because most of the nationalities are represented through such small percentages that we can't make generalities about each one.

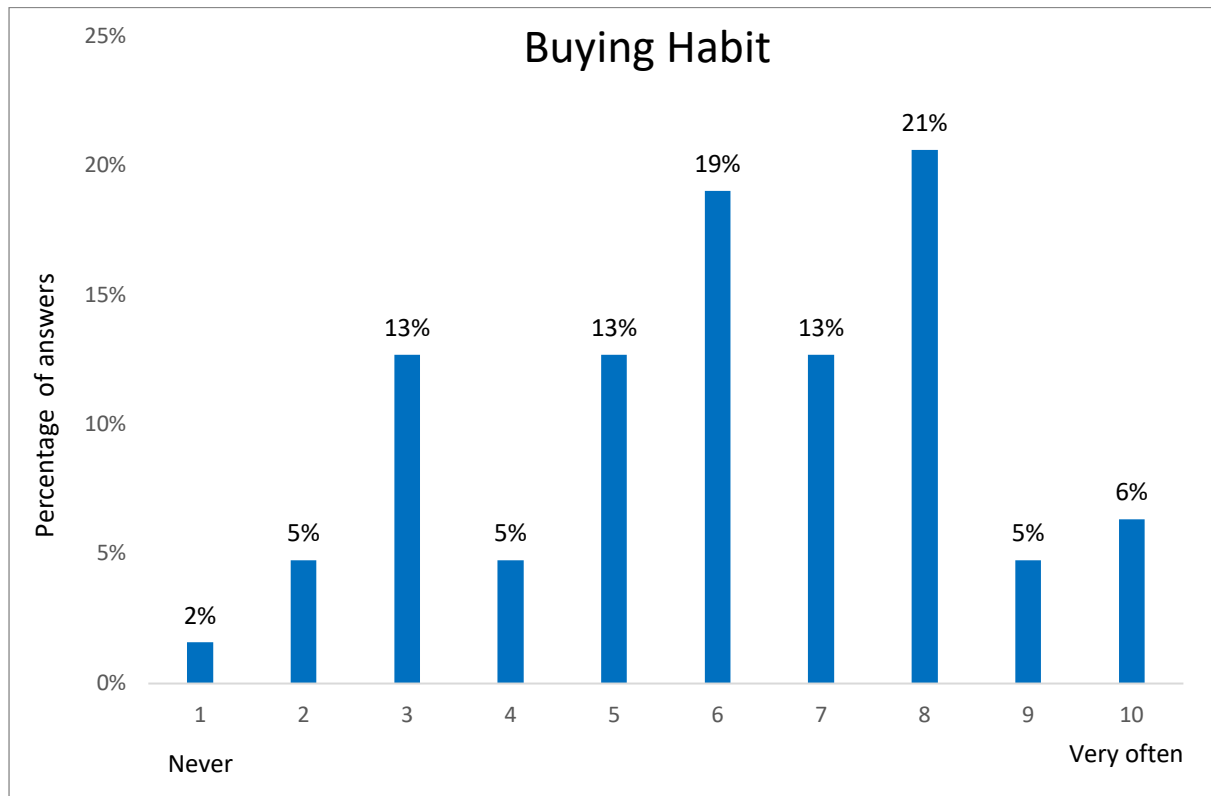


**Figure 14:** Education Level (in %)

Because the survey was sent through my Schools social networks, most of the answers were from students. Therefore, 61,9% of my respondents did complete a Graduate Degree and 17,5% a bachelor's degree.

14,3% of the respondents had reached High School Graduation, 3,2% were professional graduate and 3,2% did some College/University without graduating.

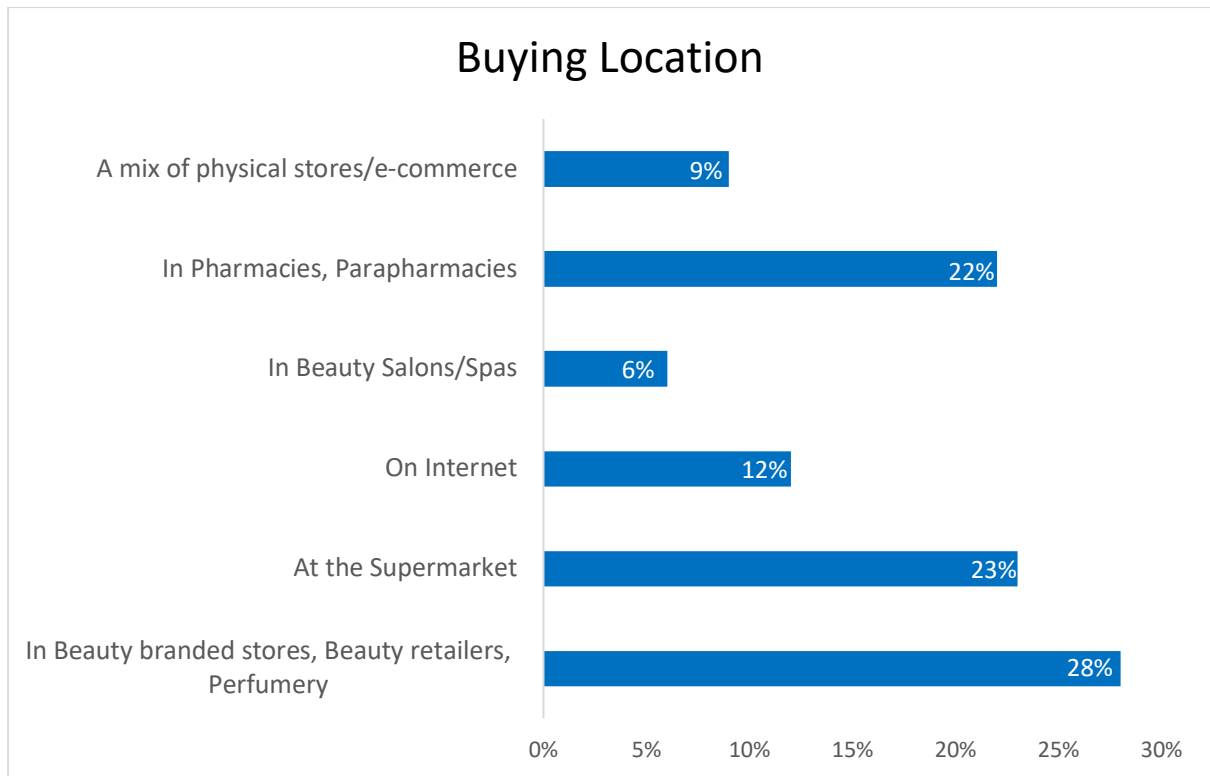
## 4.2. Buying habits



**Figure 15:** Buying habit (in %)

When sending my survey, I wanted to have a good representation of society. Hence, I included both genders but also people that are not especially Beauty lovers. To scale respondents' buying habits, I used a Likert scale to see if the people included in my sample were buying a lot of Beauty products. This will have an important impact on our findings.

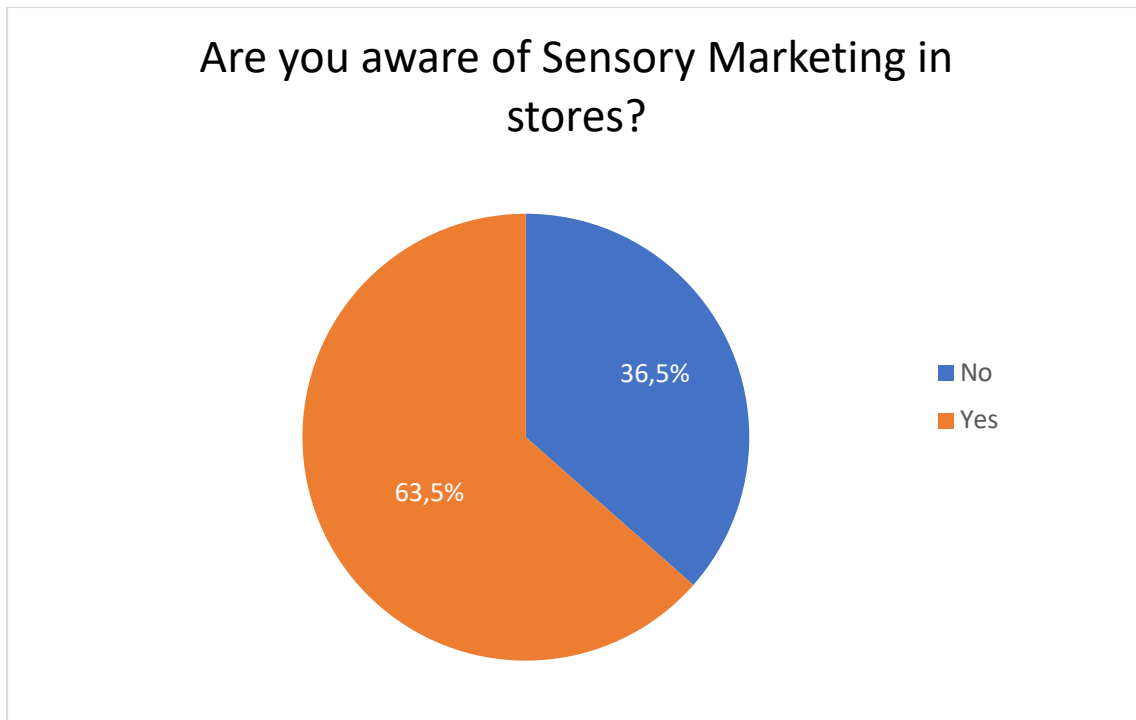
The mean for this question is 6,3 and the standard deviation is 4,11. This means that values are very little dispersed around the mean and that they are rather heterogeneous. Many respondents were quite low Beauty buyers: 31% have defined their Beauty purchasing between 3 to 5 on the scale of 1 to 10 and a big number of the respondents were quite neutral (19% have attributed 6 on the scale). However, the largest proportion (21%) is on the scale of 8 which means that the largest proportion of respondents are Beauty Lovers and regularly buy Cosmetics and Perfumes. It's interesting because it means that I could measure the impact of Sensory Marketing both on Beauty Lover and on people don't buy Beauty products often.



**Figure 16:** Buying Location (in %)

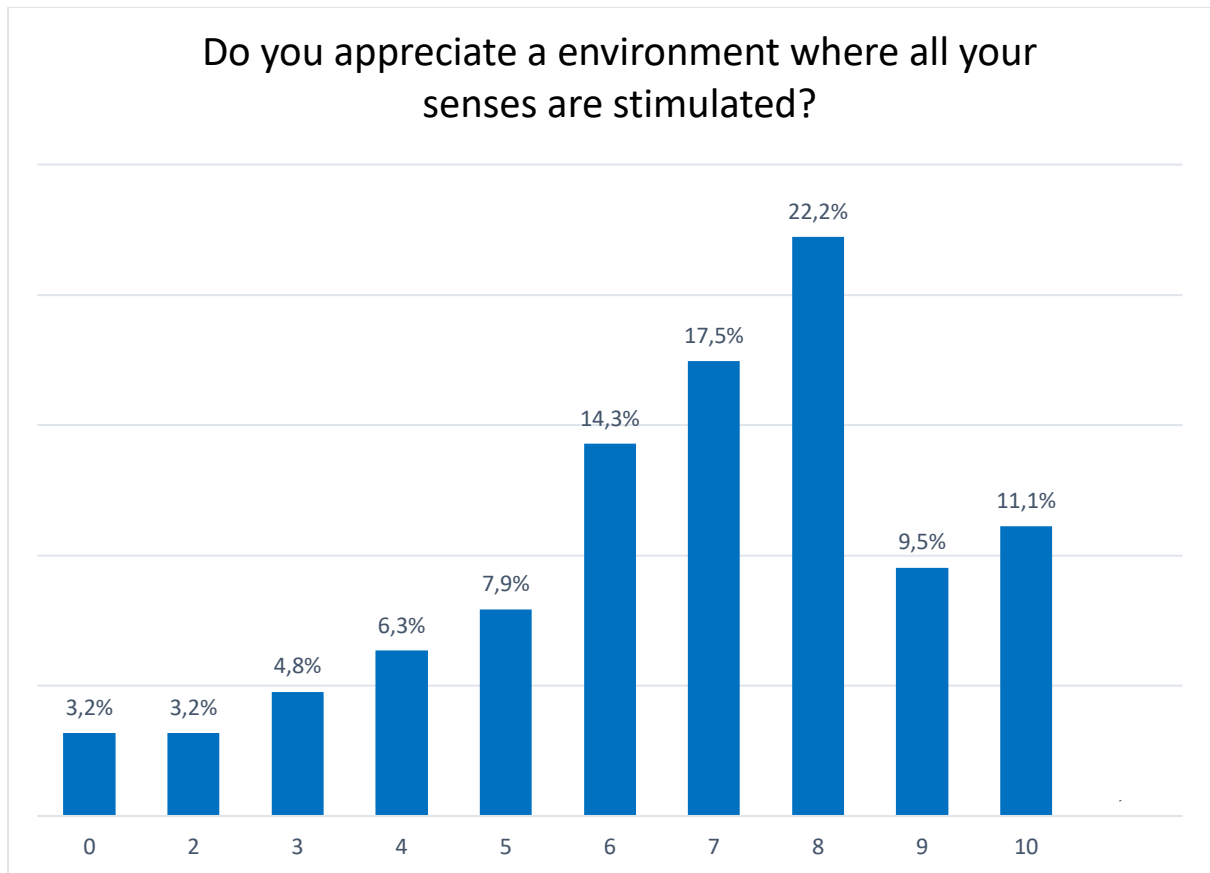
The aim of this question was to see if people where people bought their Beauty products and, more specifically, if they were still buying offline.

The biggest proportion of respondents (28%) buy mostly in Beauty branded stores, Beauty retailers and Perfumery which is where Sensory Marketing can be mostly used. Closely, 23% buy their Beauty products in the Supermarket, 22% in Pharmacies and Parapharmacies, and 12% buy them online. However, when I got deeper into the answers, many people chose several answers which means that their buying location might variate. Besides, 9% of people responded a mix of physical stores and e-commerce.



**Figure 17:** Awareness regarding Sensory Marketing in stores (in %)

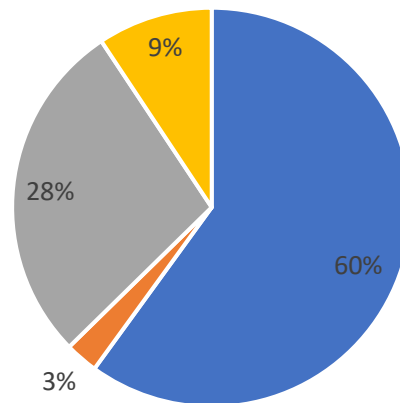
Awareness regarding Sensory Marketing is particularly important because, as we've seen in the Literature Review, a big part of this process is subconscious. With this question, I wanted to see to which extent people were aware that brands were using their five senses to incite them to buy products. Most people are already aware of it (63,5%) while 36,5% said they were not. It's however important to note that, even when people are aware of it, Sensory Marketing has an impact on the subconscious mind and impact the consumers in a way that they can't measure consciously.



**Figure 18:** Appreciation of an environment where all senses are stimulated (in %)

To scale respondent's appetite for Sensory Marketing in Beauty stores the following question asked was: "Do you appreciate an environment where all your senses are stimulated?". I used again a Likert scale to get people's insights on a scale of 1 to 10. The mean for this question is 6,3. The standard deviation is 4 which means that the answers are again quite dispersed.

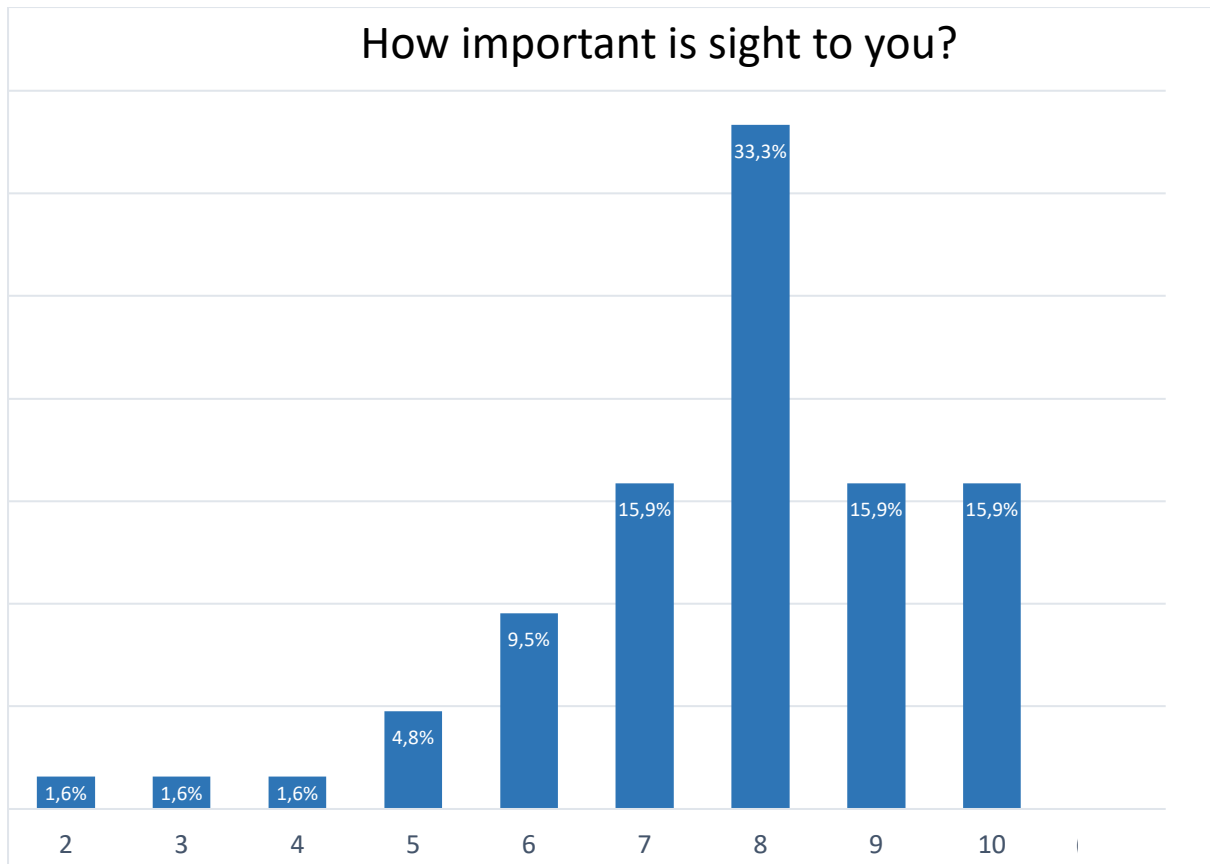
## When you're in a Beauty store, do you prefer?



- A relaxing atmosphere with calming smell, music and colors
- A dynamic background with loud music and attractive smell and colors
- A very modern store with the latest music, sweet smells and colorful design
- A silent store, neutral colors and smell

**Figure 19:** Atmosphere preferred in a Beauty Store (in %)

When shopping in a Beauty store, a large part of consumers (60%) tend to prefer a relaxing atmosphere with calming smell, music, and colors while 28% prefer a very modern store with the latest music, sweet smells, and colorful design. 9% will tend to prefer a dynamic background with loud music and attractive smell and colors and only 3% will prefer a silent store, with neutral colors and smell.

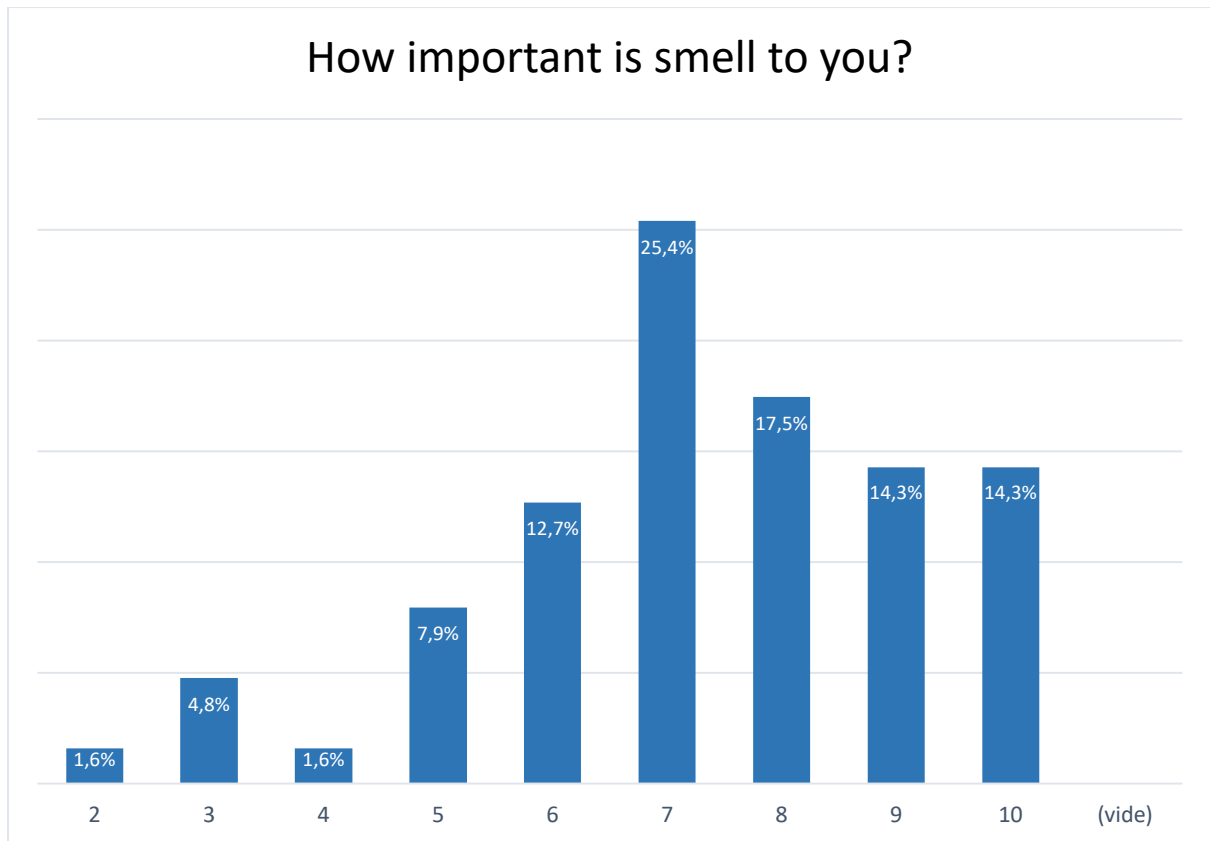


**Figure 20:** Importance of sight in store (in %)

Before attesting the importance of sight on the buying decision, I measured how important was each sense for respondents on a scale of 1 to 10. Responses are detailed in these three different figures.

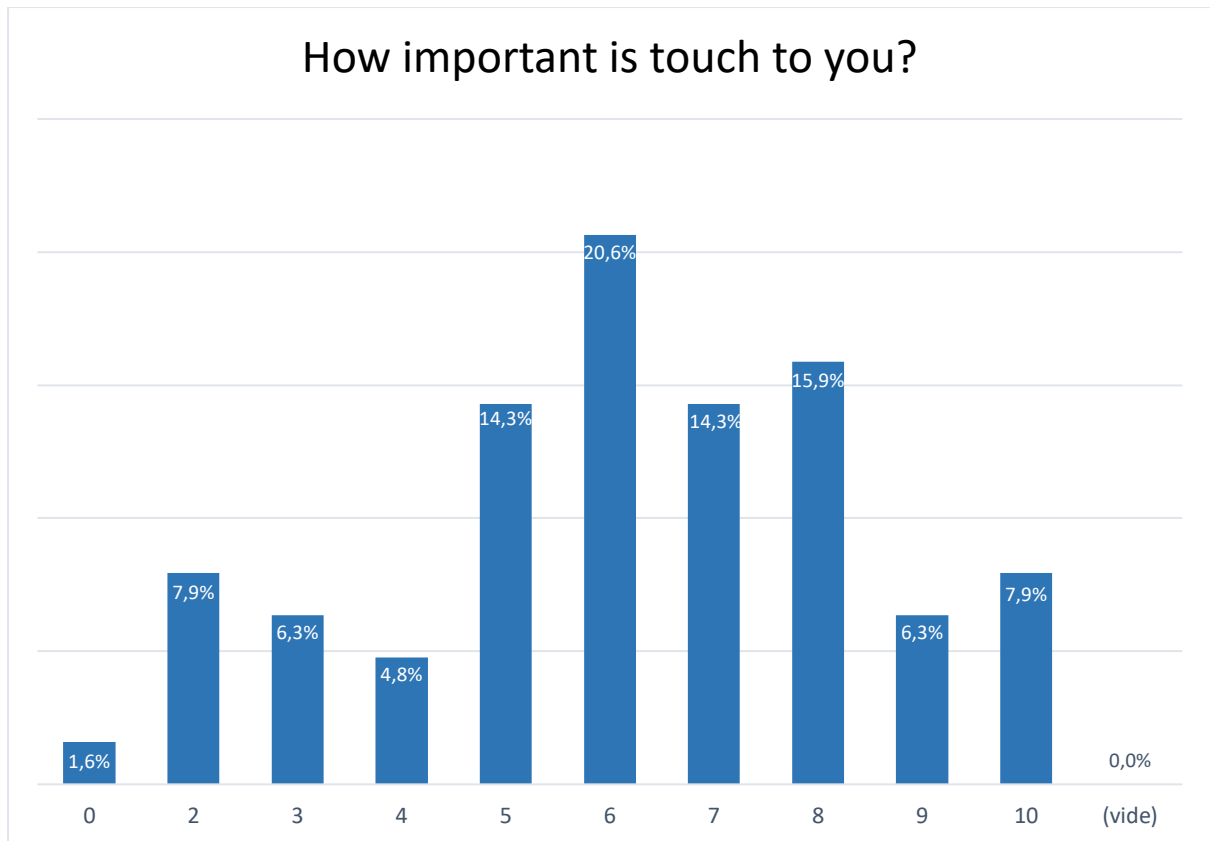
Regarding the sense of sight, answers all go in the same direction: 33,3% responded 8 while 31,8% chose either 9 or 10. Therefore, the large majority think sight is important to very important when they're purchasing Beauty products in stores.





**Figure 21:** Importance of smell in store (in %)

Regarding the sense of smell, the majority of my respondents (25,4%) chose 7 on a scale of 1 to 10. In total, 46,1% of the respondents chose 8 and above. However, a small non-negligible part of the sample (8%) chose a number from 2 to 4.

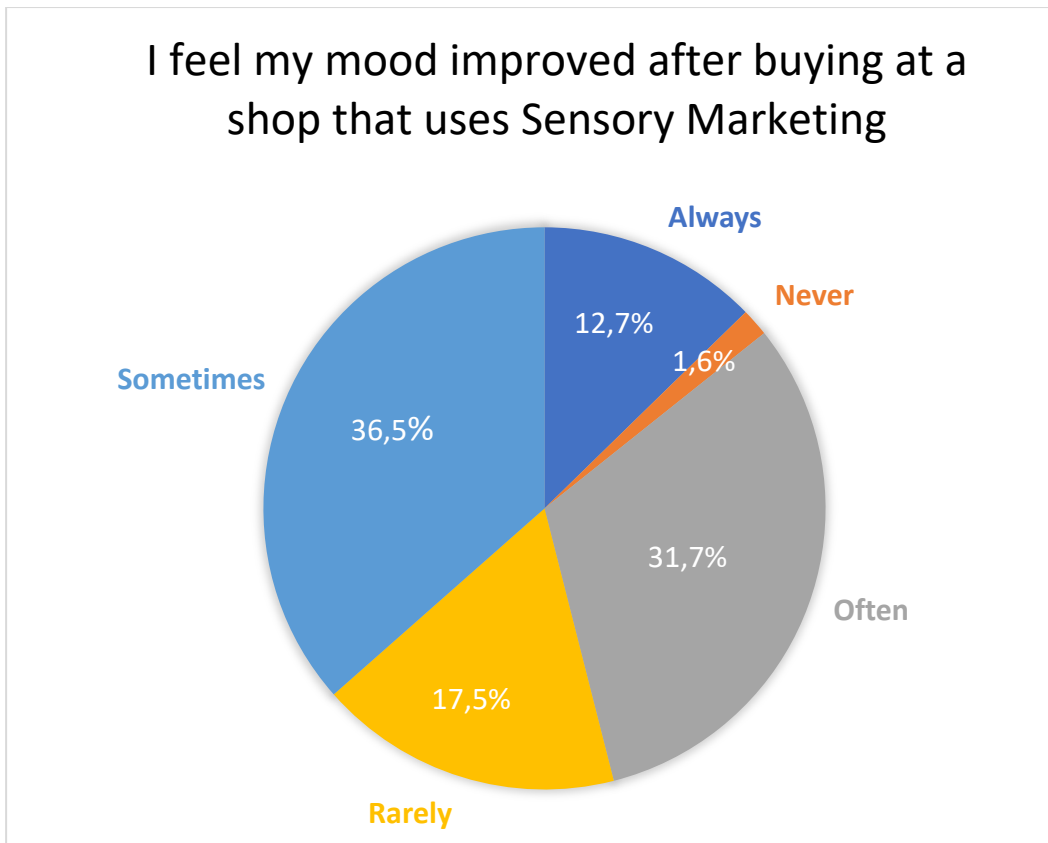


**Figure 22:** Importance of touch in store (in %)

|       | Mean        | Sd          | Variance |
|-------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Sight | <b>7,74</b> | 1,71        | 2,91     |
| Smell | 7,28        | 1,92        | 3,69     |
| Touch | 6,12        | <b>2,31</b> | 5,34     |

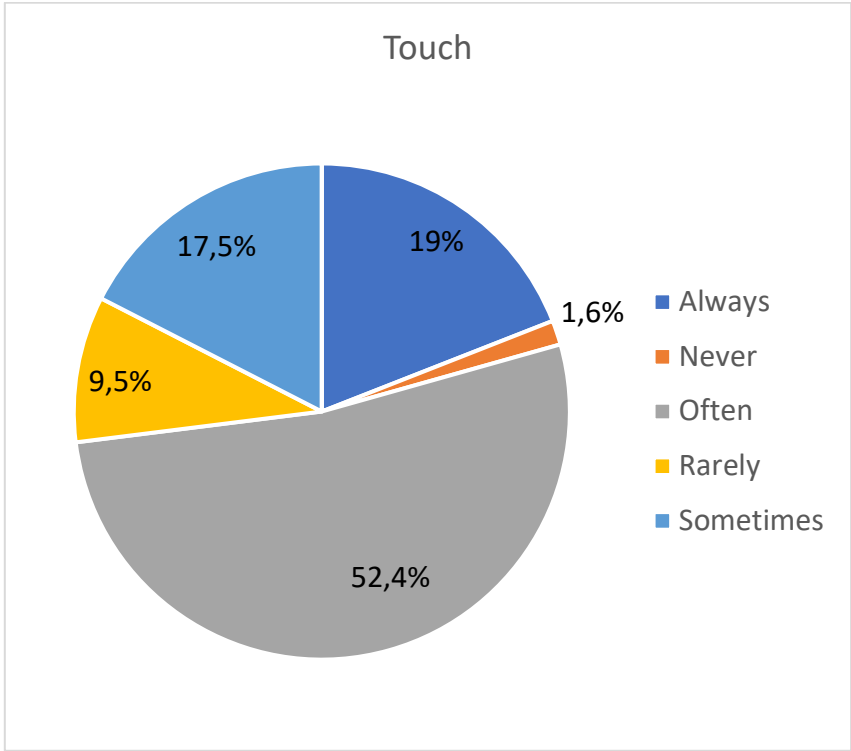
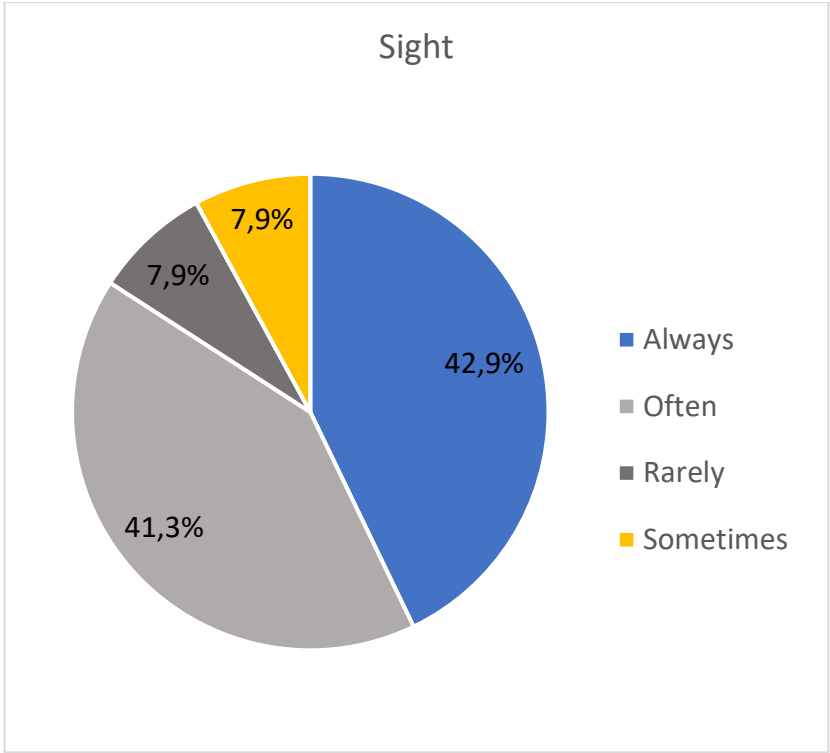
**Table 1.** Overview of the importance of Sight, Smell and Touch in stores

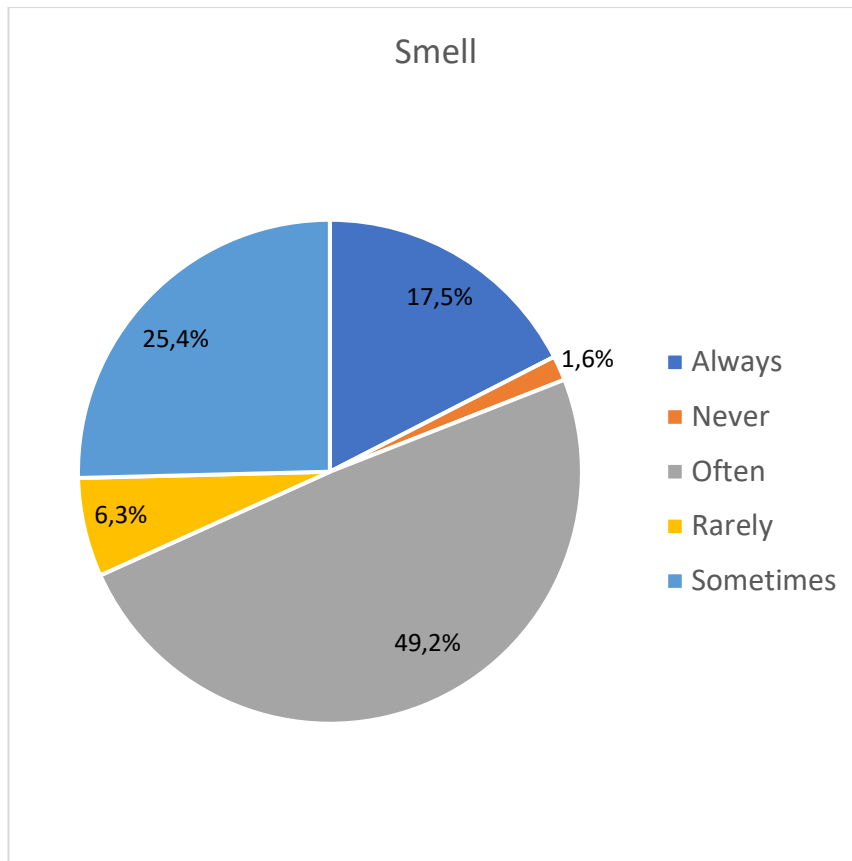
Sight seems to be the most important sense for respondents with a mean of 7,74 followed by smell (7,28) and Touch (6,12). Answers for the sense of Touch were much less homogeneous than for Sight and Smell: its standard deviation is 2,31 which shows that answers among people varied more importantly than for other senses.



**Figure 23:** Impact of Sensory Marketing on Mood (in %)

For this question, answers varied a lot. When shopping in a store that uses Sensory Marketing, 36,5% of consumers said they would sometimes see an impact on their mood, and 31,7% said they would often see an impact on their mood. Only 12,7% said they always see an increase in their mood, 17,5% rarely and 1,6% never see an impact on their mood.





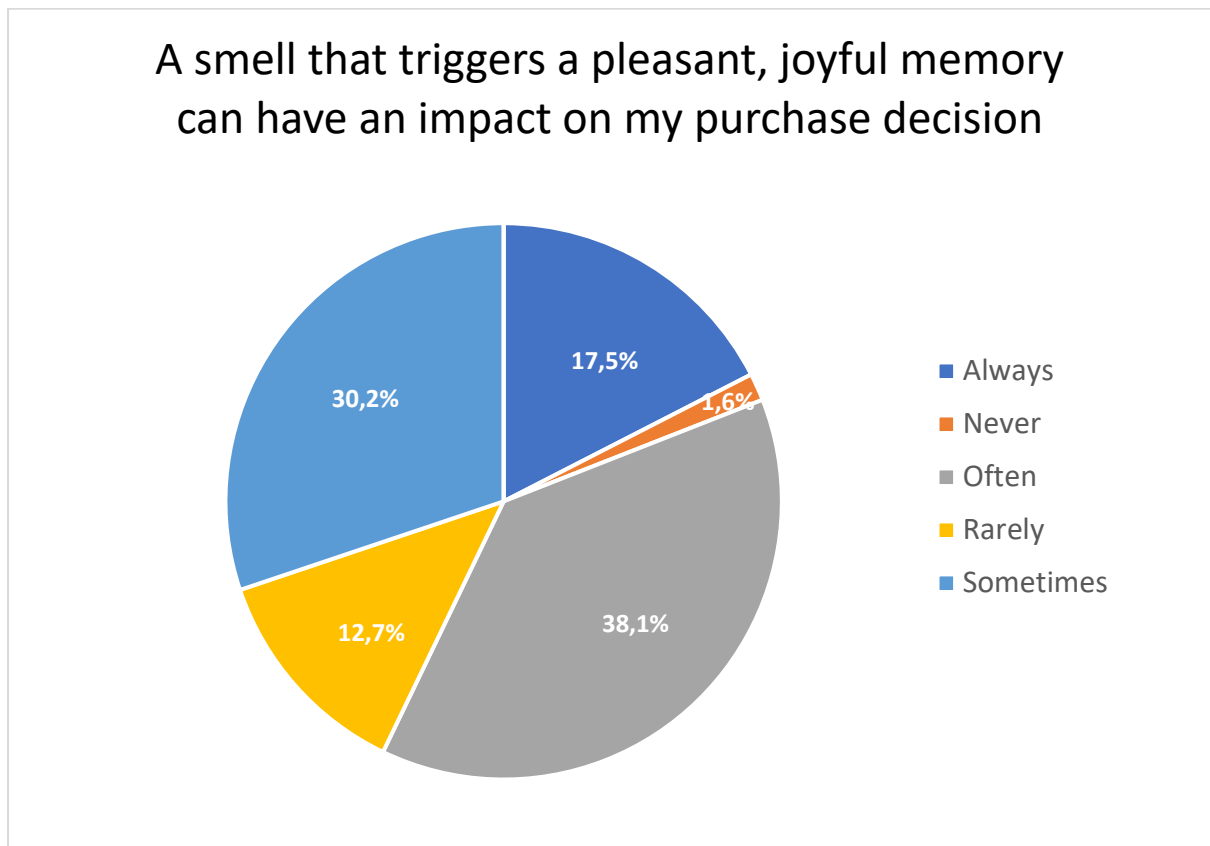
**Figure 24:** Impact of each sense (sight, touch, smell) on the buying decision (in %)

These three figures provide precious insights on the impact of each sense on the buying decision. In order to scale each of them, the following affirmations were stated, and respondents could answer them thanks to a Lickert scale: “I feel more willing to buy in a store where products are very well arranged and designed”, “I feel more willing to buy in a store where I enjoy the ambient smell” and “Trying products make me more willing to buy them afterwards”.

Regarding the sense of Sight, 84,2% of respondents chose either Always or Often as an answer. For the sense of Touch, it was 71,4% and 66,7% for the sense of Smell. Therefore, the sense of sight seems to have the biggest impact on people’s purchasing decision. Not any respondent chose the answer never for this sense which means that sight seems to have at least a small impact on all people’s purchasing decision.

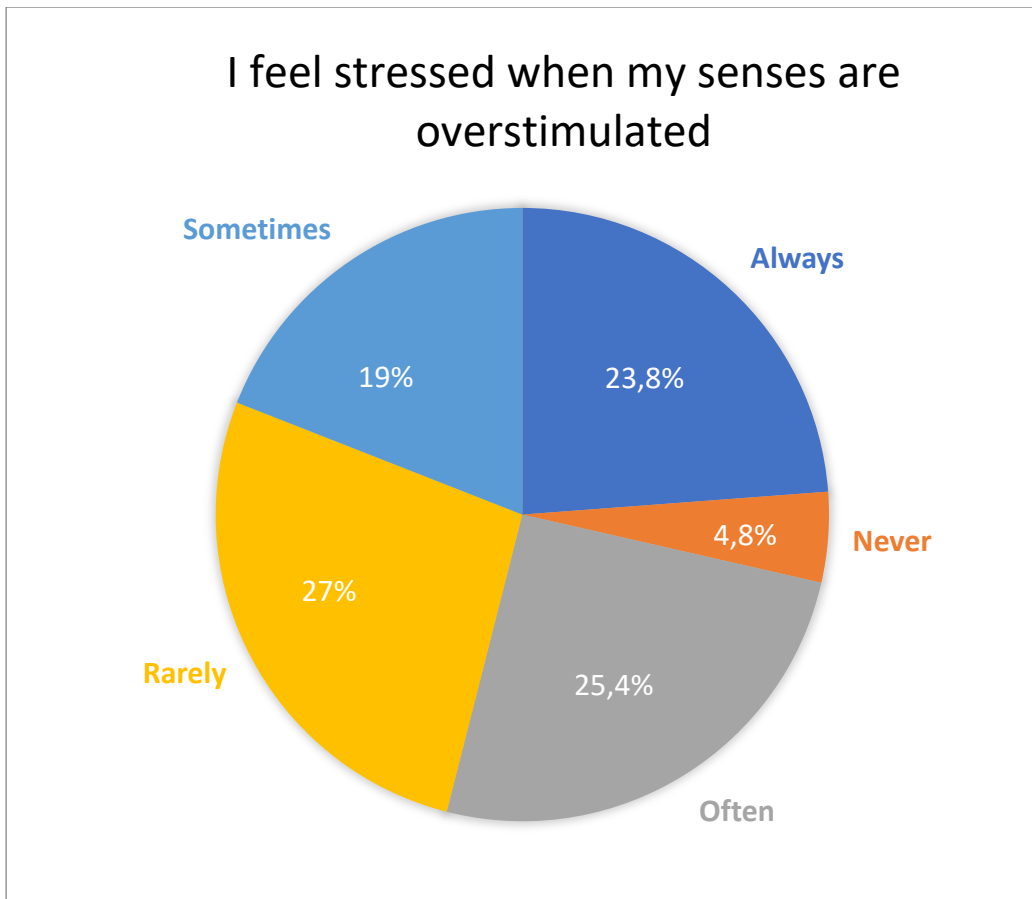
In total, all these three senses tend to have an impact on people’s purchasing decision. However, for the sense of Touch and Smell, people seem to adopt more neutral answers with

many respondents choosing the answer sometimes: 17,5% for the sense of Touch and 25,4% for the sense of Smell.



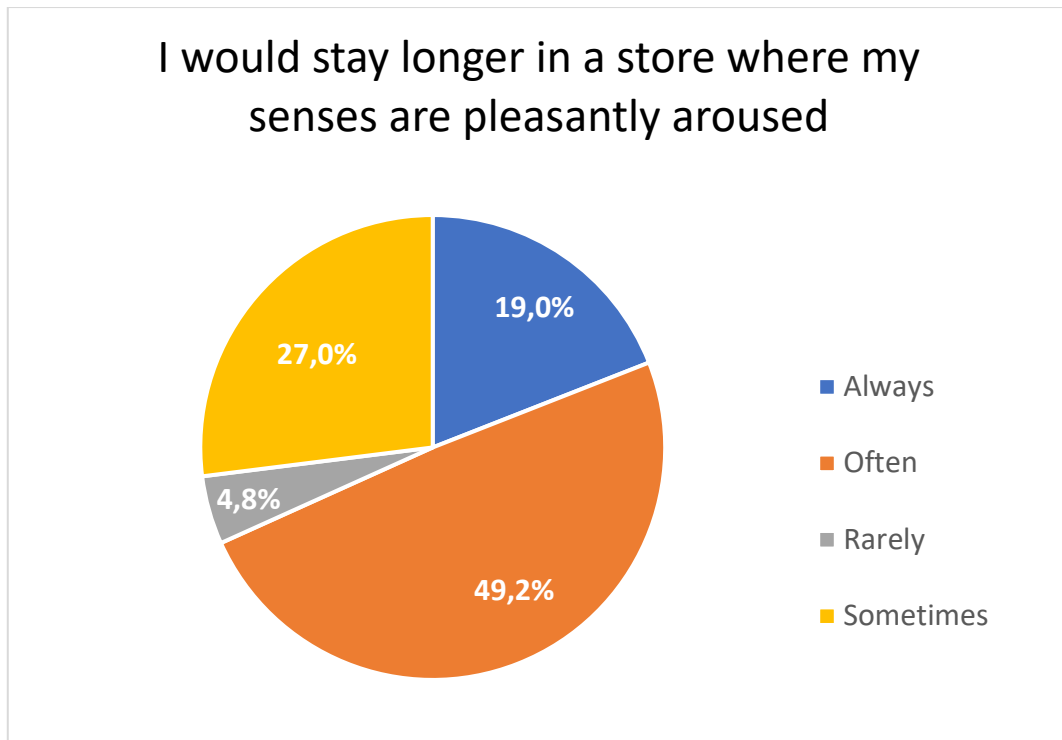
**Figure 25:** impact of a pleasant smell that triggers a memory and impact the purchasing decision (in %)

To get a more in-depth overview, I also decided to scale the impact of an Olfactive Memory on the purchasing decision. 55,6% responded either often or always, a large part of the respondents was quite neutral: 30,2% said they would sometimes be impacted by it and 12,7% said they would rarely be impacted. Only 1,6% said they were never impacted. However, we should always bear in mind that Olfactive Memory is a very subconscious process, which could explain the large number of neutral answers.



**Figure 26:** Measure of Senses Overload (in %)

Following the literature review, I decided to measure senses overload with this question. When asking about the negative impact of senses stimulation and the stress it can create, the largest part of my respondents (27%) said they would rarely be stressed when their senses are overstimulated, 25,4% said they would often be stressed by it, 23,8% responded always, 19% sometimes and 4,8% never. Again, we see here that people's sensitivity regarding Sensoriality is very different.

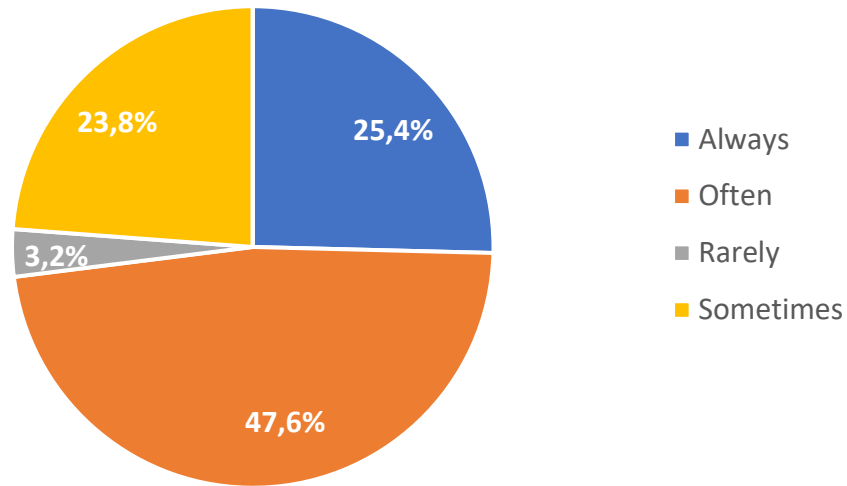


**Figure 27:** Time spent in a store that uses Sensory Marketing (in %)

The largest part of respondents said they would indeed stay longer in a store where all their senses are pleasantly aroused: 49,2% responded often, and 19% always. An important part of respondents was quite neutral with 27% responding sometimes and only 4,8% responding rarely.

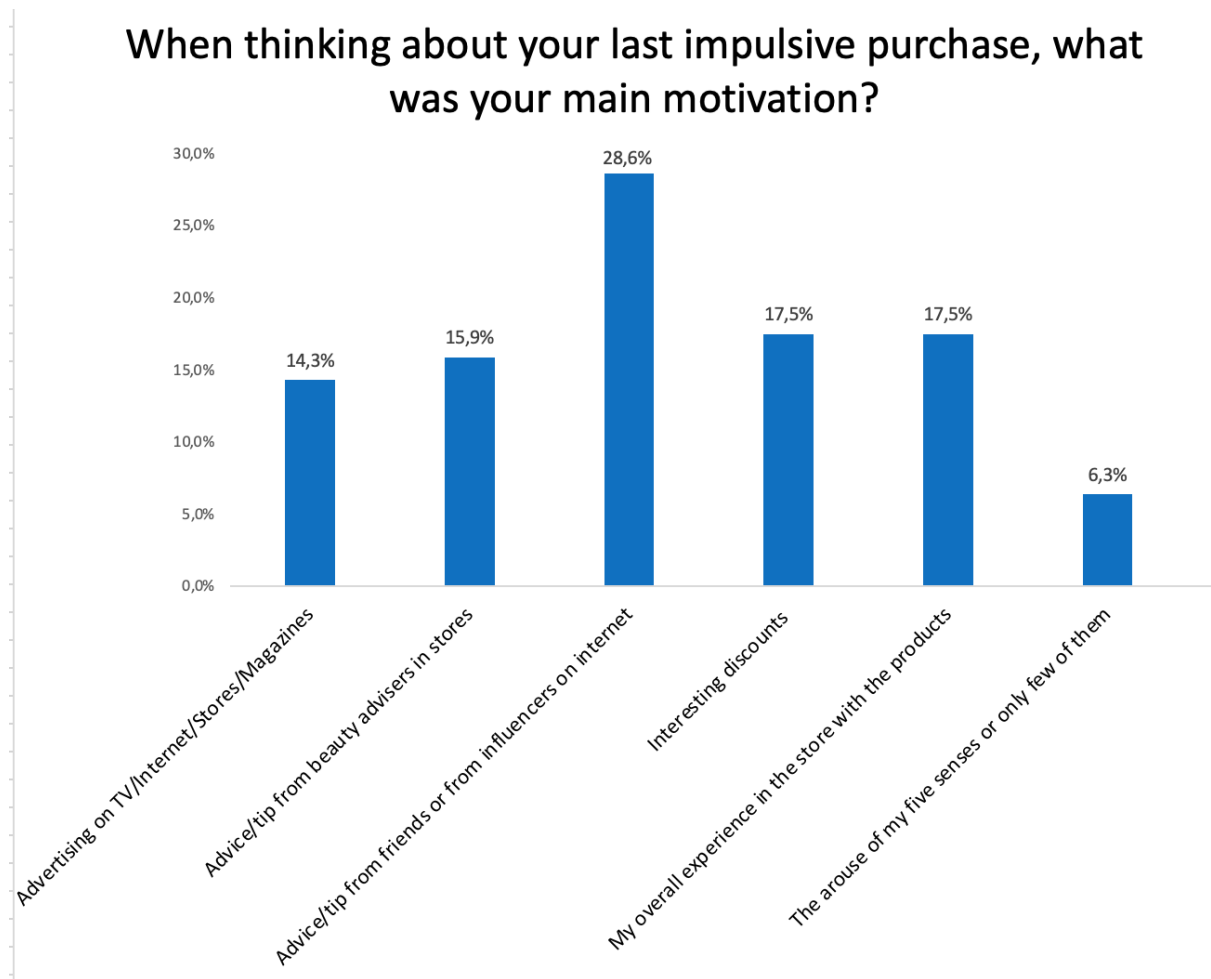


I would go back to a store where all my senses are pleasantly aroused



**Figure 28:** willingness to come back after a good experience at a store that uses Sensory Marketing (in %)

The answers for this question are quite similar to the ones above: people will always want to come back to a store where all their sense were pleasantly aroused at 25,4% whereas 47,6% said they would often choose to come back. 23,8% were quite neutral and respondents they would sometimes come back against 3,2% who said they would rarely come back. No respondent said he would never come back.



**Figure 29:** Motivation regarding impulsive Beauty Product purchasing (in %)

By asking my respondents about their last impulsive purchase, my main goal was to see what raised impulsion among consumers: is it a question of price, advice, or something more emotional such as the arouse of their five senses?

When asking about their last recent impulsive purchase, 28,6% of respondents said they were mostly motivated by advice from friends or influencers, 15,9% answered that they took into account the advice of beauty advisors in store, 17,5% were influenced by their overall experience in the store, and 17,5% by interesting discounts. The arouse of the five senses or only a few of them come as the last reason when shopping impulsively (6,3%).

#### **4.2 Answers to the Research Questions**

As we've seen above, our answers to the research questions will not be as precise as with other analyses. This survey aims to bring some insights that could pave the ground for future research.

At the beginning of this thesis, I stated the following research question: ***How does Sensory Marketing impact our perception and behavior toward a beauty brand and how does it succeed in activating the buying process?***

To help answering this question, several sub-questions were formulated:

*“Why is Sensory Marketing used in the Beauty Industry?”*

As we’ve seen above the Beauty Industry is a very competitive one. Therefore, a Sensory Strategy can be a real asset to differentiate from the competition. Using this type of Marketing is the opportunity to enhance consistency and uniqueness (Lindstrom, 2006). Even if people’s sensitivity regarding Sensory Marketing is very different, most people would mostly like to have at least some of their senses aroused while shopping. In total 74,6% of respondents chose 6 or above on a scale of 1 to 10 when asked if they liked when all their senses were stimulated. However, choosing the right environment is very important. Otherwise, it could have the reverse effect and end up in repelling most of the clientele. Most people said they would prefer an environment that is relaxing with calming smell, music, and colors (60%). The extremes are usually not preferred by people: an environment that is very dynamic and loud would be liked by only 9% and a neutral environment would be preferred by only 3%. Therefore, we can see that people like Sensory Marketing but to a certain degree. Besides, 49,2% of respondents said they would either often or always feel stressed when their senses are overstimulated.

As we’ve seen above, Sensory Marketing can appeal to the subconscious mind. By doing that, brands can influence people’s behaviors in their favor. When asked if they were aware that many Beauty stores were already using this technique, 36,5% of respondents said they were not. However, even when people are aware that a store uses this technique, it can still have important effect on them.

Sensory Marketing can also be a way to make people stay longer in stores which enhances the probability that they will make a purchase afterward. 68,2% of respondents said they would either often or always stay longer in a store where all their senses are pleasantly aroused. Sensory Marketing can also have an impact on brand loyalty. 73% of respondents said that they would come back to a store where their senses are pleasantly aroused.

Therefore, brands choose to use this technique to leave a print in people's minds and increase their willingness to come back.

*“What are the main senses concerned and how are they used in Marketing?”*

Based on the literature review, we could first think that the most important sense would be the sense of smell because it is the most emotional and the most persistent. However, our study showed that it was not the case: people tend to first think the sense of sight the most important in stores with a mean of 7,74 on a scale of 1 to 10 followed by smell (7,28) and touch (6,12).

When it comes to the impact on the purchasing the sense of sight comes again first (84,2% said they would either often or always see an impact on their purchasing decision), then the sense of touch (71,4%), and, finally, the sense of smell (66,7%). Therefore, consumers might think that smell is not a primary attribute when they purchase a Beauty product because it acts on a more subconscious level. When it comes to touch, it seems to be seen as an important argument when buying Cosmetics or Perfumes.

We know that one of Sensory Marketing's main goals is to awake feelings and emotions while shopping. 49,2% of respondents said they would often or always see an increase in their mood after buying in a store that uses Sensory Marketing. Because a large part of respondents said they would sometimes see an impact on their mood (36,5%) it's difficult to generalize that Sensory Marketing has a strong impact on the mood.

Regarding the sense of smell, it's more and more used to appeal to people's memory. Many brands have chosen to play with a smell that reminds people specific time in their life (childhood, teenage years) or even some locations, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their main goal while doing that is to create Nostalgia, a very powerful feeling. Nostalgia is defined by Erica Hepper, lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Surrey in England, as a “warm, fuzzy emotion that we feel when we think about fond memories from our past. It often feels bittersweet – mostly happy and comforting, but with a tinge of sadness that whatever we're remembering is lost in some ways”. But if Nostalgia includes a part of sadness, it still leads to great benefits for people. A study in 2012 showed that Nostalgia can increase the feeling of social connectedness to others, raise happiness, increases optimism

self-esteem, and make us feel warmer (Leardi, 2013). That is something that many brands have understood; The Library of Fragrance created “the Memories of Childhood”, fragrances with famous smells that impacted consumers when they were children such as Peanut Butter or other concepts such as “Christmas in New York” or “Play Doh”. In the same vein, the Bookstore Powell created a perfume that replicates the smell of old paper and books and has received great success. It also shows that fragrances are not only used to increase attractiveness and seduction. Since the pandemic, more and more consumers are looking for comforting or smells that raise their emotions.

When I asked people about the impact of a pleasant Olfactive Memory on their buying decision, the answers were quite heterogeneous because this is again a very subjective and subconscious mechanism. Hence, 55,6% responded that a smell that reminds them of a pleasant memory would have a positive impact on their purchasing decision and a large part (30,2%) responded only sometimes. Therefore, we can't affirm that Olfactive Memories have a strong impact on people's purchasing decisions and it would need more in-depth studies to study the impact on the brain.

## **V- Discussion and Conclusions**

This Master's thesis aimed to assess the impact of Sensory Marketing on perception and behavior towards Beauty products and the role it plays in activating the buying process. To answer this question, I conducted a survey in August 2021. Altogether, 63 responses were received during the one-week period. In this chapter, I will first discuss the theoretical contributions of the findings and then the managerial implications. Finally, I will talk about the limitations of my study and evoke the future directions.

### **5.1 Summary and theoretical contributions**

In face of the growing need to provide unique experiences to consumers, Sensory Marketing strategy has taken an important place in recent years as an element that makes a difference. The research of my thesis focused on Sensory Marketing in the Beauty Industry. Studies on the Beauty Industry were practically inexistant. Therefore, my research can bring new insights on the subject in this Industry. My thesis subject focuses specifically on the impact of Sensory Marketing on our perception and behavior toward Beauty brands and the impact on the purchase decision.

First, an important insight that was brought by my survey is that consumers still prefer buying in physical stores. It was already shown in previous research: 80.7% of global beauty products were still made in stores (Alioze, 2020). My research confirmed this: only 12% of my respondents prefer buying on Internet against 79% in different physical stores (pharmacies, supermarkets, beauty branded stores, perfumery, beauty retailers, beauty salons/spas). Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, people still prefer an environment where all some of their senses can be stimulated.

In the literature review, different shopping patterns were shown: the hedonic and utilitarian shopping behaviors. Hedonic was associated with the feelings, emotions, and experiential aspects of shopping (Khan, Shar, Wertenbroch, 2004) while the utilitarian focused more on functional aspects such as price (Yilmaz, Koçoglu, 2018). My survey showed that most consumers would still adopt a utilitarian behavior while shopping. Even when thinking about their last impulsive purchase, most respondents seem to turn themselves to other attributes than the arouse of their senses (only 6,3% said it was their main motivation). Most of them are impacted by external factors such as their friends' or influencers' advice or beauty

advisors' insights. They can also choose a product because of very functional attributes such as interesting discounts (17,5%). However, 17,5% said they would be influenced by their overall experience with the product which can also relate to the hedonic behavior. A Neuromarketing study that scales people's reactions when shopping in Beauty Stores might be more adapted to have better insights on this matter.

Martin Lindstrom stated that: "a brand that appeals to multiple senses will be much more successful than one that just focuses on one or two" (Lindstrom, 2011). The results of my study showed that responses were very heterogeneous among my sample. Most people still tend to prefer an environment where all their senses are stimulated: 52,4% of respondents chose 5 or over on a scale of 1 to 10 with 22,2% choosing 8. This is not a large majority and people seem to have very different sensitivity regarding the arouse of their senses.

This leads to the concept of sensory overload that might occur when consumers feel overwhelmed when brands try to appeal to too many of their senses at the same time. The "optimal stimulation level" was said in the literature to be high enough to provoke arousing but not too much to cause discomfort (Raju, 1980). Previous research showed that when three congruent atmospheric stimuli were used, the level of stimulation was too high whereas two congruent stimuli were seen as positive (Homburg, Umschloss and Kuhnle, 2012). When I scaled the negative impact on people's emotions (stress) during overstimulation of their sense, the answers I received were very heterogeneous which can be explained by the differences in people's age and gender, and sensitivity regarding Sensory Marketing. 31,8% of my respondents answered either rarely or never, 19% responded in a neutral way (sometimes) and 49,2% responded they often or always felt stressed when their senses were overstimulated. In total, it means that 81% said they would often to always feel stressed which might then impact in a negative way their time spent in the shop but also their purchasing decision.

The main goal of my study was to measure the impact of each sense on the purchasing decision. For this purpose, I used the following affirmations: "I feel more willing to buy in a store where products are very well arranged and designed", "I feel more willing to buy in a store where I enjoy the ambient smell" and "Trying products make me more willing to buy them afterward".

|           | <b>Sight</b> | <b>Smell</b> | <b>Touch</b> |
|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Never     | 0%           | 1,6%         | 1,6%         |
| Rarely    | 7,9%         | 6,3%         | 9,5%         |
| Sometimes | 7,9%         | 25,4%        | 17,5%        |
| Often     | <b>41,3%</b> | <b>49,2%</b> | <b>52,4%</b> |
| Always    | <b>42,9%</b> | 17,5%        | 19%          |

**Table 2:** the impact of each sense on the buying decision (Lickert scale)

Visual information such as colors or images are way more vivid than pure text and have therefore the ability to attract people’s attention directly (McGill & Anand, 1989). Design especially is a component that will also have an impact on consumers. Product Design is a whole process that incorporates material, texture, color, logo, and ornamentation. When doing properly, an attractive design will enhance sensory pleasure and, therefore, influence people’s purchasing decisions (Hultén, 2020). This is confirmed by my survey: 42,9% said they would always be impacted by it and 41,3% responded they often would. Design and tidiness of products in stores seem to be of great importance for people. Store environment and design trigger positive emotions such as excitement and inspiration and these feelings, in turn, result in higher frequencies of impulse buying behaviors. As for Smell and Touch, they seem to be quite important for people as well.

According to the literature, the sense of smell is the sense that is the most linked with emotions and memory. Previous research has shown that that a pleasant smell in a store could increase by 60% the amount of money spent (Madzharov, Block, and Morrin 2015; Morrin and Chebat 2005). It is confirmed by our survey because 66,7% said their purchasing decision would often or always be impacted by a pleasant smell. However, it’s important to keep some distance here because a large part of the sample responded sometimes (25,4%).

Regarding the impact of an Olfactive Memory on the purchasing decision, 44,4% of respondents said they would often or always be impacted by it and the largest part responded that they will only sometimes be impacted (36,5%). Knowing that this question is difficult to evaluate for people from a conscious level, 44,4% seems to be an important percentage even if it’s not the majority. Some odors are often paired with an emotional event, and it is



associated by the brain with the associated emotion: it's called associative learning. It can then elicit positive emotions such as joy, and relaxation. It sometimes directly relates to an individual's personal experience that's why it can evoke such powerful emotions which are called Scent Marketing.

Experiential and Sensory Marketing seem to create consumer loyalty because it has the power to create awareness about a certain company. Holbrook and Hirschmann have even been further affirming that the consumption experience was placed at the center of the consumer value (Holbrook and Hirschmann, 1999). Former surveys stated that 71% of consumers would make a purchase based on the quality of their experience in-store and 91% affirmed that they were more likely to make a purchase after a positive experience (State of the Connected Customer, 2020). When asked about the degree to which they would return to a store after a positive experience, 68,2% of respondents said either often or always. Therefore, we can see that the degree to which consumers enjoy their experience thanks to Sensory Marketing will have a real impact on their willingness to come back to the same store afterward. There is a real potential there to measure in more depth the impact of Sensory Marketing on Customer Loyalty.

## **5.2 Practical implications**

By focusing on consumers' preferences and their behaviors in Beauty stores, my study provided some important insights for brands. Because my respondents didn't focus only on people that are big beauty consumers, it can bring some important insights regarding how to attract new clients and how to keep the people that already buy many beauty products.

First, regarding people's preferences in terms of atmosphere, previous research stated that Millennial women tend to prefer their shopping experience when uplifting music or comforting smell were used because it tends to increase their overall enjoyment and their mood (Theopilus, Yogasara, Theredia, Ardine, 2021). My study showed that, when shopping for beauty products, people tend to dislike an atmosphere that would be neutral and silent (only 3% prefer a silent store, with neutral colors and smell). This showed that Sensory Marketing is still preferred but it should be congruent. On the other side, an atmosphere that is very dynamic with loud music and attractive smell and colors is not liked by many people when shopping for products (only 9%). Overall, my respondents tend to prefer a very relaxing

atmosphere with calming smell, music, and colors (60%) which is what many Beauty brands like Rituals or Yves Rocher already choose with peaceful smell, music, and sometimes colors (the green that inspires peace and balance for Yves Rocher). The second option preferred was a very modern store with the latest music, sweet smell and colorful design (28%). This could provide insights for different Beauty brands on people's preferences.

The biggest insight we got from this survey is that sight and the overall presentation and tidiness of the products seem to be very important for consumers when buying Beauty products: 84,2% of respondents said that a store that was well arranged and designed was either often or always impacting their buying decisions. Therefore, brands should invest in Category Management staff and adopt a Marketing strategy that is very congruent.

When buying Beauty products, trying, and touching products seem to be also very important for people and it can make people more willing to buy them afterward. Indeed 71% of respondents said that trying products would make them either often or always buy the product afterward. Therefore, having a strategy like the Lush stores that showcase the product and allow to try it (its texture, softness, temperature) can really have a big impact on consumer's purchasing decision. Besides, Beauty products are very hedonic in nature and people would expect more interaction with these products than with products of different industries. It's always useful to try a cream or a perfume before buying it.

Thanks to the study, we can see that Sensory Marketing has the power to impact consumers if done correctly and when appealing mostly to their sense of sight and touch. It's very important for brands to allow consumers to interact with products because that's what differentiates physical from online shopping. Regarding store atmosphere, the biggest challenge for brands will be to try to find the right balance because the use of too much Sensory Marketing might repel consumers while a very neutral atmosphere will not make people buy the products.

Appealing to the emotion thanks to scent strategy seems to be the main strategy adopted by brands (especially in Perfume). The recent pandemic has changed the way people consume perfume. As Isabelle Ferrand, CEO of Cinquieme Sense, stated: "The pandemic has brought the problem of anosmia to the fore and raised global awareness of the importance of smell. By comparison, there is growing interest in perfumery; not only for a more in-depth knowledge of perfume but also of the impact of smell on well-being and psychological

balance.” Therefore, more and more fragrance brands focus now on bringing this sense of comfort and relaxation thanks to aromachology or by creating smells that relax such as the brand Maison Margiela that offer very relaxing and comforting scents such as “Matcha Meditation” or “Lazy Sunday Morning”. Some brands like Vyras Emotive Fragrances go further and try to disrupt the fragrance industry with intriguing smells that are said to have healing powers and allow consumers to connect to themselves.

Finally, the main benefit of a good Sensory Marketing strategy can lead people to showcase more brand loyalty as we’ve seen thanks to the survey.

### **5.3 Limitations and future research**

There are several limitations that can be highlighted regarding the thesis.

First, it’s very important to look at the sample we got for the survey. Most of the respondents were women (74,6%) which seems obvious because they’re currently the main consumers and brand’s main target. Regarding the age, most of my respondents were young people between the age of 18 to 30 (42,9%), and 61,9% of them had a Graduate Degree, and 17,5% a bachelor’s degree. Therefore, my sample focused mainly on people who are educated which can have an impact on people’s perception and behavior while shopping as we’ve seen in the Literature Review.

Finally, my respondents were of many different nationalities. However, they were only a few percentages of each of them. As a result, most of the respondents were either French (60,3%) or Finnish (12,7%) which doesn’t represent the European population. Hence, it’s not possible to generalize the results of my survey to the whole population.

Another limitation involves the study itself. I tried to ask questions for people to imagine themselves in a store but it’s not as efficient as if they were for real. Besides, many people were not able to go to a Beauty store for months because of the pandemic. Therefore, it might be hard for them to remember their experience, and the feelings and emotions it used to elicit. I also asked questions that can be hard to answer from a conscious level because most of the time, people are not aware of the impact an experience in a store can have on their mood, memories, or feelings. Hence, it’s quite hard for people to really scale their main motivation when asked about their last impulsive purchasing. They might think that it was the advice of

a friend or beauty advisor but the arouse of their five senses might have played a role they didn't realize. Another limit of surveys is that we can be sure of people's accuracy when answering the questions. Some respondents might respond quite fastly without really making the effort to think what their reactions would be. Besides, a common behavior in surveys is that people tend to answer what they would like to answer (their preferred behavior) than what they would really do. Therefore, it can cause some bias.

Finally, some people never or very rarely buy Beauty products which make it harder for them to answer the questions and to imagine themselves in Beauty stores because they rarely go and make most of their purchase in Supermarkets or Pharmacies were Sensory Marketing is quite inexistant. Besides, a part of the respondents makes probably most of their purchases online, so they're never really faced with Sensory Marketing.

I chose not to measure the difference between different demographic groups (gender, age, or education) because it was not the focus of my study. However, it could be interesting to have some studies that focus on that aspect. Hence, we could see if there are differences regarding the age and the sensitivity to Sensory Marketing for example. We could also see if women are indeed more hedonic consumers than men and if they are more impacted by Sensory Marketing. There is plenty of hypotheses that can be tested regarding Sensory Marketing and demographic attributes. Besides, more men use Beauty products, and this number should increase even more in the future. In fact, The men's personal care industry is predicted to hit \$166 billion by 2022 and \$276,9 billion by 2030 (Allied Market Research, 2030). Men become new brands' target which means that Beauty stores might target them more efficiently. Hence, a study on Men and their sensitivity to Sensory Marketing could be very useful for the future.

Another study that could be done would be to focus on Sensory Marketing and its impact on brand loyalty. As we've seen from my study, Sensory Marketing seems to have an impact on people's willingness to come back to a store when the experience provided by Sensory Marketing was positive. An idea could be to only focus on Beauty Lovers because it would be easier to scale and they would be more willing to answer the questions. It would also be easier for them to immerse themselves in stores.

Secondly, this thesis could be answered with a different tool. One of the ways to avoid the bias stated before would be to scale the impact of Sensory Marketing directly in stores and

asking questions afterward. Hence, consumers could answer more honestly because their experience just happened. Researchers could choose a group of people and scale their behavior in real-time. It would be also interesting to choose an observer who looks at people's behavior and scale it. We could also go further and take someone that would measure and interpret people's micro-expressions. Indeed, it could be a way to see emotions that people are not conscious of.

Finally, the best way to scale people's subconscious would be to use Neuromarketing but these techniques are expensive and technically more difficult to use. Electroencephalogram reads brain-cell activity using sensors placed on the subject's scalp to track brain activity. fMRI can also be used to measure and map brain activity to track changes in blood flow. It could be useful to scale touch for example and see the impact on the brain.

Hence, emotions and the subconscious could be measured more accurately. To scale each sense, researchers might also use eye tracking to see what is more appealing in a store to help brands know if it is efficient or not.

Therefore, the field of Sensory Marketing has a bright future ahead of it and it will continue evolving in the near future. To conclude, I will use a sentence of Linstrom who gives an overview of what we will experience soon: "The brand building of the future will move from a two-sensory approach to a multisensory approach" (Linstrom, 2005). 5D Branding (promoting products in a way that transcends both space and time) will take brands to a new dimension and create the Marketing of the future.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Microsoft form survey

# Sensory Marketing in the Beauty Industry

Hello everyone,

As part of my double-degree in International Marketing and Business Development (SKEMA Business School/LUT University), I'm writing a thesis on the impact of Sensory Marketing on consumers in the Beauty Industry.

Sensory Marketing is the process of attracting consumers and winning their attention, trust and loyalty by appealing to their five senses (touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste). It's used by many beauty brands whether we're conscious of it or not. For this thesis, I will only focus on three senses: sight, smell and touch.

The aim of this survey is to have a clear vision on whether Sensory Marketing has an impact on our behavior toward a beauty brand and how it manages to activate the buying process.

I kindly ask you if you could please fill in this quick survey, which won't take more than 5 minutes. All answers will remain anonymous.

I'll be collecting the following data regarding demographics information: age range, gender, nationality. None of the data will be disclosed or transferred to anyone. It will only be used for the thesis purpose which is to gain an insight into consumers and their experience with Sensory Marketing in stores. All the data will be stored for the duration of this project which is due to end in end of September 2021. Then, it will be deleted. There will be no follow-up research.

By responding to this survey, you give your consent for me to use your data.

Thank you for your support!

Mathilde

...

\* Obligatoire

1. What's your gender? \*

- Man
- Woman
- Prefer not say

2. What's your age range? \*

- 18-30
- 31-50
- 51-65

3. What's your nationality? \*

4. What's the highest education level you have completed? \*

- No formal education
- Secondary School
- High School Graduate
- Professional Graduate
- Some College/University, no degree
- Bachelor Degree
- Graduate Degree (Master, Doctorate, etc)

5. Do you regularly buy Beauty Products? \*

Whether it's Cosmetics or Perfumes

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Never

Very Often



6. Where do you usually shop for your Beauty products? \*

Think about a normal context, not during Covid-19 times  
Multiple answers possible

- In Beauty branded stores, Beauty retailers, Perfumery
- At the Supermarket
- On Internet
- In Beauty Salons/Spas
- In Pharmacies, Parapharmacies
- A mix of physical stores/e-commerce
- Other

7. When you're in a store, brands can try to appeal to your sense of smell with a very pleasant smell or a color that will make you feel a certain way. In some beauty stores, they can also directly appeal to your sense of touch by making you directly try the product. If it helps for this survey, you can think about a Beauty brand that uses this type of Marketing (such as Lush, Yves Rocher, Sephora, the Body Shop, etc) that you particularly like. Imagine you're in a store and all your senses are aroused. If you do not think about one in particular, think more generally.

Are you aware that many Beauty brands already use Sensory Marketing in stores? \*

- Yes
- No

8. Do you appreciate an environment where all your senses are stimulated? \*

(bright light, strong smell, appealing packaging and products texture)

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Don't appreciate it

Really like it

9. When you're in a store, how important is sight to you? \*

(colors, graphic design, store organization, advertising)

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Not important

Very important

10. When you're in a store, is smell important to you? \*

(smell in stores, smell of the products)

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Not important

Very important

11. When you're in a store, how important is touch to you? \*

(shape, texture, temperature, effect on your skin)

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Not important

Very important

12. When you're in a Beauty store to buy Cosmetic/Perfume, do you prefer? \*

Multiple answers possible

- A relaxing atmosphere with calming smell, music and colors (tone of blue, pastel colors)
- A dynamic background with loud music and attractive smell and colors
- A very modern store with the latest music, sweet smells and colorful design
- A silent store, neutral colors and smell

13. To what degree do these affirmations apply to you? \*

|                                                                                                      | Never                 | Rarely                | Sometimes             | Often                 | Always                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I feel my mood improved after buying at a shop that uses Sensory Marketing                           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel more willing to buy in a store where products are very well arranged and designed             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel more willing to buy in a store where I enjoy the ambient smell                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel stressed when my senses are overstimulated (very bright lighting, strong smell, strong music) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Trying products make me more willing to buy them afterwards                                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would stay longer in a store where my senses are pleasantly aroused                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A smell that triggers a pleasant, joyful memory can have an impact on my purchase decision           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I would go back to a store where all my senses are pleasantly aroused                                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

14. Now think about the last beauty product you bought impulsively. What was your main motivation to buy this product? \*

- Advice/tip from friends or from influencers on internet
- Advice/tip from beauty advisers in stores
- Advertising on TV/Internet/Stores/Magazines
- My overall experience in the store with the products
- The arouse of my five senses or only few of them
- Interesting discounts

Envoyer

Ne communiquez jamais votre mot de passe. [Signaler un abus](#)