

## **INTEGRATIVE SENSORY MARKETING AND CONSUMER BUYING DECISION OF AUTOMOBILE FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigates integrative sensory marketing and consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. The main objective of the study is to find out the relationship that exist between integrative sensory marketing and consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. The population of the study comprises of 17 automobile firms in Port Harcourt. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamen's formular. A well-structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed statistically while the Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The SPSS 22.0 version was used to correlate the data of the study variables. The result revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between integrative sensory marketing and consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. Based on the findings, it was concluded that integrative sensory marketing positively moderate consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. We recommend that automobile firms should regularly update and innovate vehicle models to meet changing consumer needs and stay competitive in the market.*

***Keywords: Integrative Sensory Marketing, Consumer buying decision, Spontaneous Buying, and Regular Buying Decision.***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Integrative sensory marketing is an approach that combines various sensory elements to create a holistic and immersive consumer experience. It leverages sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste to engage customers and evoke emotions, aiming to create a more immersive and memorable consumer experience. By engaging various senses, businesses aim to evoke emotional responses, enhance brand perception, and influence consumer behavior. This approach recognizes the power of sensory stimuli in shaping customer perceptions and fostering stronger connections between consumers and brands. Sensory marketing, also called sense marketing, can be understood in a general way, as Krishna describes it, as marketing that W3Eaddresses the senses of consumers and affects their behavior. This implies studying sensation and perception as ways that modify consumer behavior (Krishna, 2012).

In the context of automobile firms, integrative sensory marketing can significantly impact consumer behavior positively through incorporating sensory elements, such as the smell of new car interiors, the tactile experience of materials, and the visual appeal of design, automobile firms can evoke emotions, because emotion connections often play a crucial role in influencing consumer preferences and decisions. Ultimately, integrative sensory marketing in the automobile industry is about creating a holistic and positive sensory experience throughout the customer journey, from initial exposure to the product to the actual ownership experience. This approach aims to establish a deeper connection with consumers, impacting their perceptions and choices in the competitive automobile market.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to addressed in this study:

- i. What is the relationship between integrative sensory marketing and spontaneous buying of automobile firms in Port Harcourt?

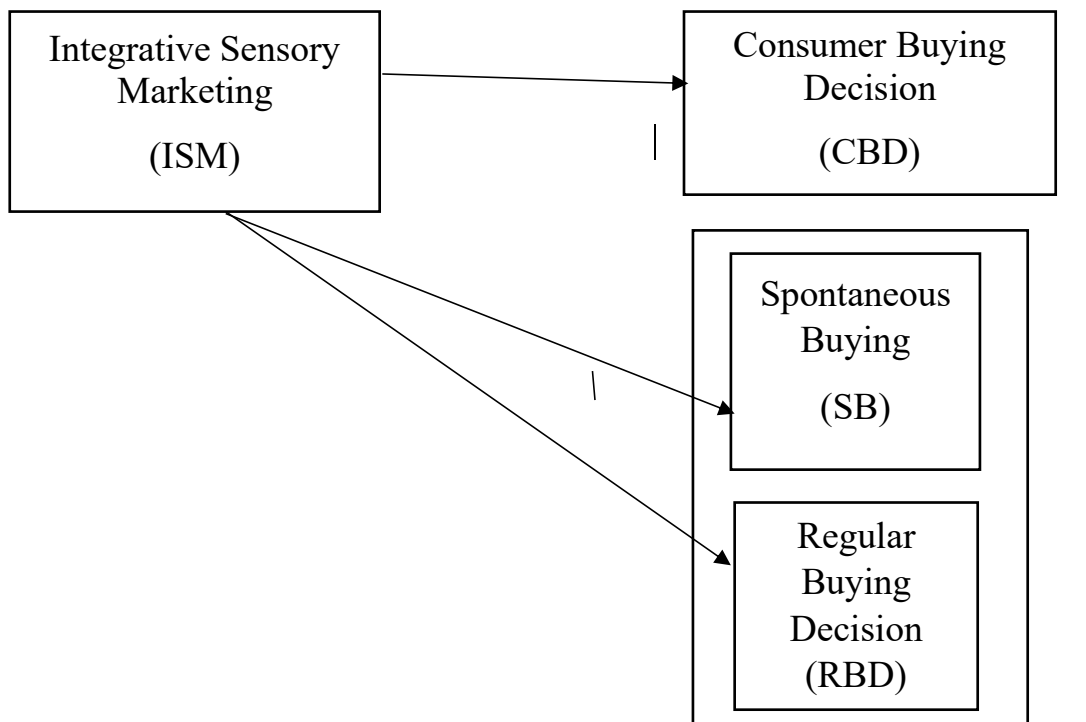
- ii. What is the relationship between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt?

**Research Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis are as follows:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between integrative sensory marketing and spontaneous buying of automobile firms in Port Harcourt.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt.

**Conceptual/Operational Framework**



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of integrative sensory marketing and consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt.*

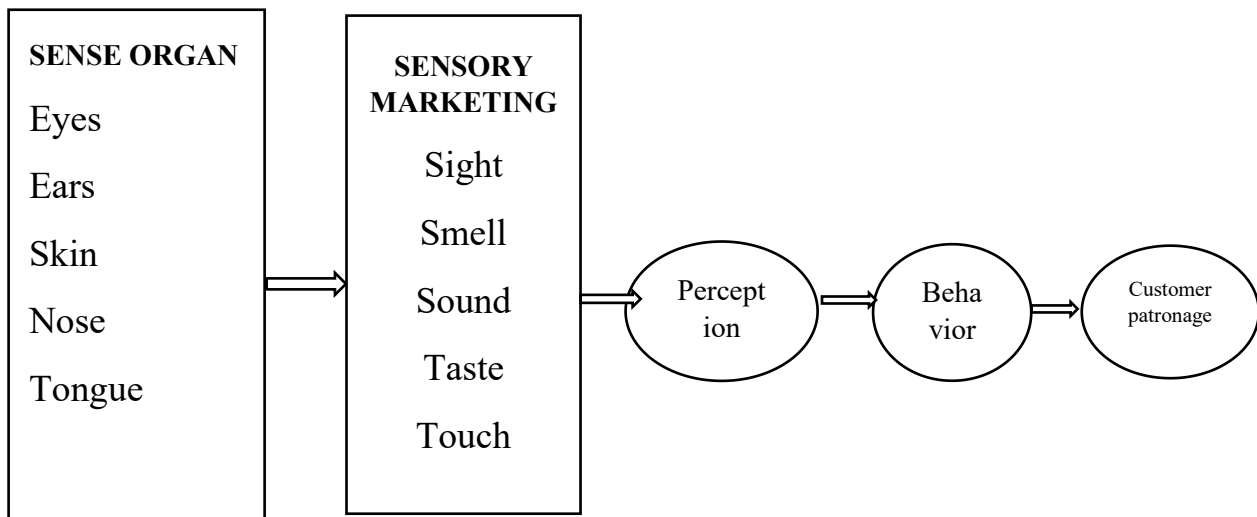
*Source: Akintayo (2018), Igani (2024)*

**Literature Review**

**Concepts of integrative Sensory Marketing**

Integrative sensory marketing is an approach that leverages multiple sensory stimuli, such as sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste, to create a holistic and immersive brand experience. By engaging multiple senses, businesses aim to enhance customer perception, emotional connection, often employed in retail and marketing to create memorable and distinctive brand interactions. Krishna (2010) defines sensory marketing as marketing that engages the consumer’s senses and affects their behaviors. Nowadays, some automobile firms in Port Harcourt have started employing some aspects of sensory marketing. Integrative sensory marketing in automobile firms is very crucial as it enhances customer experiences. Engaging multiple senses, such as sight, sound, and touch, in product design and marketing creates a memorable and immersive brand interaction. This can evoke positive emotions, strengthen brand loyalty, and influence purchasing decisions. In the automobile industry, where aesthetics and driving experience matter, leveraging integrative

sensory marketing can set firms apart and contributes to a more holistic and satisfying customer journey.



**Figure 2:** The Researchers Proposed Model

**Source:** Hulten, B (2011)

The Research framework (figure 2) above describes the relationship between the sensory receptors /five sense organs (eyes, ears, skin, nose, and tongue) and perception. Eyes for vision, ears for sound, nose for scent or smell, tongue for taste and skin for touch. Perception has been earlier defined as the way individuals interpret and make sense of sensory information from their environment. It involves the brain's processing of stimuli received through the five sense – sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. Perception goes beyond mere sensation, as it includes the organization, interpretation, and understanding of sensory input, influenced by factors like past experiences, cultural background, and personal reliefs. In essence, perception shapes how individuals perceive and comprehend the world around them.

In Integrative Sensory Marketing, behavior refers to the observable actions, and responses of consumers influenced by sensory stimuli. This can include how individuals interact with products, make purchasing decisions, and form preferences based on sensory experiences. Behavioral aspects in sensory experiences. Behavioral aspects in integrative marketing focus on understanding how sensory stimuli, such as visual aesthetics, sound, textures, or scents, impact consumer actions and choices. By strategically incorporating sensory elements into marketing efforts, businesses aim to influence consumer behavior positively, fostering engagement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty.

Customer patronage leads to repeat buying (a situation where the customer buys again and again), customer referrals (a situation where the customer refer other people to try a particular product, also called word-of-mouth advertising) and finally customer retention (a situation where the customer is loyal to a particular brand, sticks with it and never thinks of leaving). It is only when a brand has created a memorable experience that a customer retains it.

### The power of Sight

In integrative sensory marketing, the power of sight is harnessed to create a cohesive and engaging brand experience. Visually appealing elements, such as product aesthetics, packaging design, and in-store displays, contribute to a holistic sensory journey. When combined with other sensory stimuli like sound, touch and scent the visual aspect enhances overall brand perception and memorability. Integrative sensory marketing leverages the power of sight to create a unified and immersive environment, allowing consumers to connect with the brand on a deeper level,

fostering positive emotions, and influencing purchasing decisions. This is also emphasized by Messaris (1997) who argues that the sense of sight, besides the purpose of receiving attention, can elicit an emotional response towards a product and other things. Different colors say different things about a product.

### **The power of Smell**

The power of smell in integrative sensory marketing is profound. Scent can evoke strong emotions, trigger memories, and influence consumer behavior. Incorporating carefully chosen and appealing scents in marketing strategies can enhance brand identity, create a unique and memorable customer experience, and even influence purchasing decisions. In settings like retail environments or automotive showrooms, the strategic use of scents can complement other sensory elements, contributing to a cohesive and immersive brand encounter. The olfactory aspect in integrative sensory marketing adds a layer of depth, creating a multi-sensory experience that leaves a lasting impression on consumers.

### **The power of Sound**

The power of sound in integrative sensory marketing is significant, as it can evoke emotions, enhance brand identity, and shape the overall consumer experience. Thoughtfully chosen music, sound effects, or even the absence of sound in certain contexts can impact how consumers perceive a brand or product. Integrating sound into marketing strategies, especially in combination with other sensory elements, creates a more immersive and memorable environment. Whether it's the sound of a car engine in an automotive showroom or a carefully curated playlist in a retail store, sound contributes to a holistic sensory experience, influencing consumer perceptions and building a stronger connection with the brand. Studies have been carried out to show the kind of music that fits different kinds of places. E.g., classical music will increase sales in a showroom (Areni and Kim, 1993) while fast tempo music was seen to push the consumers to leave earlier than planned and slow music played at low volume will increase the time and the money a consumer spends (Milliman, 1986).

### **The power of Taste**

While taste may not be as commonly utilized in integrative sensory marketing as sight, sound, or smell, it can play a significant role in certain industries, for example, in the food and beverages sector, taste is a central element in marketing strategies, creating unique and enjoyable flavor experiences can enhance brand recognition and customer satisfaction. Additionally, in events or promotional activities, providing product samples allows consumers to engage with the brand through the sense of taste, creating a more comprehensive sensory experience. Integrating taste into marketing efforts can be particularly effective in industries where the sense of taste is closely associated with the product or service being promoted.

### **The power of Touch**

Integrative sensory marketing is an approach that aims to engage consumers through multiple senses to create a more immersive and memorable brand experience. While visual and auditory elements often play significant roles, the power of touch is a crucial component in this strategy. The sense of touch can evoke emotions, enhance product perception, and contribute to a deeper connection between the consumer and the brand. Here are some ways in which the power of touch is harnessed in integrative sensory marketing:

#### **1. Tactile Experience:**

Providing consumers with opportunities to touch and feel products before buying is a powerful strategy. This is commonly used in retail environments, where customers can handle merchandise, feel textures, and assess product quality firsthand.

#### **2. Texture and Material Selection:**

The choice of materials and textures in product design can influence how consumers perceive and interact with a product. For example, the luxurious feel of a fabric or the smoothness of a product's surface can enhance the overall sensory experience and contribute to a positive brand image.

### **3. Packaging Design:**

The tactile qualities of product packaging can leave a lasting impression. Brands may choose materials that convey a sense of premium quality or use unique textures to differentiate their packaging from competitors. The act of unwrapping a product can also create a sense of anticipation and excitement.

### **4. Interactive Displays:**

Incorporating interactive displays in-store or at events allows consumers to physically engage with products. This could involve touchscreens, tactile surfaces, or hands-on demonstrations, creating a multisensory experience that reinforces the brand message.

### **5. Haptic Technology:**

Haptic technology involves using tactile feedback to simulate the sense of touch in digital interactions. This can be applied in various marketing contexts, such as virtual reality experiences or interactive advertisements, to create a more immersive and engaging encounter.

### **6. Branding through Texture:**

Consistent use of specific textures in branding elements, such as logos, packaging, or promotional materials, can create a sensory signature for the brand. This helps in building a cohesive and recognizable brand identity.

### **7. Personalization:**

Offering personalized and customizable products allows consumers to have a hands-on role in the creation of their purchases. This not only caters to individual preferences but also creates a sense of ownership and connection with the product.

### **8. Emotional Connection:**

Touch has the power to evoke emotions and memories. Integrating touch into the marketing strategy helps create a more emotional connection between the consumer and the brand, making the brand experience more memorable and meaningful.

Finally, the power of touch in integrative sensory marketing lies in its ability to enhance the overall consumer experience, evoke emotions, and create a more memorable and engaging brand interaction. Brands that effectively incorporate tactile elements into their marketing strategies can differentiate themselves, build stronger connections with consumers, and leave a lasting impression.

## **Concept of Consumer Buying Decision**

Consumer buying decision refers to the process that individuals go through when choosing, purchasing, and using products or services ((Kotler et al. 2017). It involves a series of stages that consumers typically follow when making a purchase. These stages are often conceptualized as a decision-making process that includes the following steps:

- 1. Problem Recognition:** This is the first stage where consumers identify a need or a problem that can be satisfied through a purchase. The need might be triggered by various factors such as a desire for a new product, replacement of an old item, or an external stimulus like advertising.
- 2. Information Search:** Once the consumer recognizes a need, they start seeking information about the available options. This information can be gathered through various sources such as personal experiences, friends and family, advertising, online reviews, and other forms of marketing communications.

3. **Evaluation of Alternatives:** After gathering information, consumers evaluate the available alternatives. They compare features, prices, and benefits of different products or services to make an informed decision. Factors such as brand reputation, product quality, and personal preferences play a crucial role in this stage.
4. **Buying Decision:** Based on the evaluation, the consumer makes a decision to buying a particular product or service. This decision is influenced by a combination of rational and emotional factors, and it can be affected by factors such as promotions, discounts, and the overall perceived value.
5. **Purchase:** This is the stage where the consumer actually buys the chosen product or service. The buying can take place through various channels, including physical stores, online platforms, or other distribution channels.
6. **Post-Buying Evaluation:** After the purchase, consumers assess their satisfaction with the product or service. If their expectations are met or exceeded, it reinforces their positive perception. If there are issues or dissatisfaction, it may lead to post-buying dissonance, where consumers may regret their decision and potentially seek alternatives or return the product.

Understanding the consumer buying decision process is essential for automobile firms to develop effective marketing strategies. By identifying the factors influencing each stage, businesses can tailor their marketing efforts to meet the needs and expectations of consumers, ultimately improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

### Spontaneous Buying

Spontaneous buying is said to define the personality of a human. Naturally, this falls under two categories, the good and the bad. According to Winston Churchill spontaneous buying is a small thing that makes a big difference. If you are willing to perfect yourself, then you should watch your spontaneous buying decisions. One of the best things that bring a big change in a man or woman's Spontaneous Buying is positive thinking. If you are willing to make yourself good in front of other people, then the spontaneous buying will be one of the determining factors. The best thing about this simple spontaneous buying thing is that it can make you look like a winner or a runner at the same time. According to most people, the energetic and positive mindset combination can be said to be one of the best Spontaneous Buying for all people out there. Spontaneous buying comprises basically of mindset, viewpoint, beliefs etc. These basic elements add to the person you are. Your skill in facing the challenges of life and moving is often shaped by the Spontaneous buying you hold. The types of Spontaneous buying decisions in psychology that is often stated are

- Cognitive
- Behavioral
- Emotional

The first component is based on the knowledge we acquire and feel confident about the fact that we are educated on that subject and can present someone with the relevant information. This makes us confident. The emotional component deals with the giving out of emotional stimuli, such as overreacting at simple things. We should stay calm under all circumstances to be ready to deal with whatever comes to our mind. The behavioral component takes care of the way we react to certain things and is one of the primary things that we should take care off.

The four basic types of Spontaneous buying and behaviors that are positive, negative, and neutral.

### Positive Spontaneous buying decisions:

This is one type of Spontaneous buying decisions in organizational behavioral. One needs to understand how much a positive Spontaneous buying decisions it takes to keep the work moving and progressing. It means that keeping a positive mindset and thinking about the greater good, no matter whatever the circumstances are. A positive Spontaneous buying decisions has many

benefits which affect out other kinds of behavior in a good way. For example, a person who has a positive Spontaneous buying decisions and mindset will look for the good in other person's no matter how bad they behave or how bad is their Spontaneous buying decisions. The former person thinks about the greater good and that is why he is called a person with a positive Spontaneous buying decision. These persons generally don't care about the hurdles in life. They nurture their skills daily and overcome almost anything and everything that comes in their way. The best way to maintain a positive Spontaneous buying decisions for the beginners is to avoid naysayers and believe in themselves. These persons know about their earlier mistakes and instead of being ashamed of them, they have vowed not to repeat the same thing. If you have a positive Spontaneous buying decision, then you should have some list of Spontaneous buying decisions, let's follow them:

Confidence is good Spontaneous buying decisions and one of the basic things in the list of positive Spontaneous buying decisions. Generally, people with a plus or positive mindset are rewarded with this automatically. Confidence is necessary to approach life with zest. Looking at things confidently and saying " I'm up for this", is enough to reflect your Spontaneous buying decisions towards life in general and Spontaneous buying decisions in particular. Confidence in other elements in the world will start with being confident with self.

- Happiness

Happiness is the next type of Spontaneous buying decisions in the list of positive Spontaneous buying decisions and behaviors. A happy Mind is an abode for all the good things to self. Confident people are quite happy as they are not worried about results interviews, etc. and other similar things in life that are meant to test us. Look within yourself; you will find happiness.

- Sincerity:

An individual with a positive mindset is often found to be quite sincere. He or She is aware of the work to be done, and they know that the only way out of a situation is through it. Sincerity is one trait that you should never let go off or compromise.

- Determination:

A determination is one of the primary rewarding points for a person with a positive Spontaneous buying decision. A right dose of hard work, effort and determination are essential to get things the way you want. A person who is driven and properly determined will overcome all impossibilities.

### **Negative Spontaneous buying decisions:**

A negative Spontaneous buying decisions is something that every person should avoid. Generally, people with negative Spontaneous buying decisions ignore the good things in life and only think about whether they will fail. They often find a way out of tough situation by running away from it. They often compare themselves with other person's and find the bad in them only. In short, he is exactly the opposite of the one with a positive mindset. There are certain bad effects that a person with a negative mindset has to face.

- Anger:

A person with a negative mindset is often found to be angry most of the time. Sometimes there might not be any kind of specific reason behind their anger. Anger is the root cause of self-destruction. While some amount of anger is good, extreme cases of anger only lead to destruction.

- Doubt:

A person can question himself but he or she should never doubt themselves. Unfortunately, if you have a negative mindset, then you will often doubt yourself. Self -doubt will lead to no progress and will often lead to low confidence.

- Frustration:

A negative person is a frustrated person. As said earlier, Spontaneous buying decisions defines the person and that is why if you are frustrated that will show on your face and you will be facing some serious difficulties. Frustration will not help you build your career. It is an irritant and will keep preventing you from taking any positive step forward.

### **Neutral Spontaneous Buying Decisions:**

This is to another type of Spontaneous buying decisions that is common. That mindset is a neutral one. There is no doubt. Neither is there any kind of hope. The people generally tend to ignore the problems in life. They wait for some other individual to take care of their problems. They generally have a lazy life and they are often unemotional. It is as if they don't think about anything that's much and doesn't care for the same as well. They never feel the need to change themselves as they can simply live with the way they are.

He or she will feel disconnected quite often and that is why having a neutral spontaneous buying decisions is very bad and should be fixed as soon as possible. However, a person with neutral spontaneous buying decisions if changes can only go to the path of a positive Spontaneous buying decisions. In most cases, it has been seen that the spontaneous buying decisions adjustment metal therapies have led persons to a road filled with positive feelings only.

### **Regular buying Decision**

Regular buying decision refers to routine purchase made by consumer for familiar products or services. In these situations, the buyer typically follows a habitual purchasing pattern, often based on brand loyalty, convenience, or routine needs, without extensive research or deliberation. Examples include everyday items like groceries, toiletries, or common household goods.

It is vital to know the regular buying decision. The regular buying decision process are the decision-making processes begin by a customer to buy the goods or services in exchange of money in a routine bases, (Lumen, n.d). If the marketer is successful to understand the regular buying decision according to the consumer needs, then it may be successful for selling its goods or services (Kotler at el. 2017).

Regular buying decisions are often influenced by a combination of factors, including product quality, brand reputation, pricing, convenience, and personal preferences. (Kotler & Keller 2016). Additionally, positive past experiences and recommendations from friends or online reviews can play a significant role in shaping these decisions.

### ***Steps to be taken by automobile firms to maintain regular buying by customers***

- 1. Marketing Strategies:** Implement effective marketing campaigns to create awareness, engage potential buyers, and differentiate the brand from competitors.
- 2. Customer Loyalty Program:** Introduce loyalty programs and incentives to retain existing customers and encourage repeat purchases.
- 3. After-sales-Service:** Provide excellent after-sales service, including maintenance and repairs, to build customer trust and satisfaction.
- 4. Flexible Financing Options:** Offer flexible financing solutions to make vehicle purchases more accessible to a broader range of consumers.
- 5. Environmental Consideration:** Address environmental concerns by incorporating sustainable practices in manufacturing and promoting eco-friendly vehicle options.
- 6. Regulatory Compliance:** Stay informed and compliant with industry regulations and standards to avoid disruptions in production or sales.
- 7. Adaptation to Technology:** Embrace technological advancements, such as electric vehicles, autonomous driving features, and connectivity, to meet evolving market demands.
- 8. Customer Feedback:** Actively seek and incorporate customer feedback to improve products and services, ensuring they align with consumer expectations.
- 9. Global Expansion:** Explore opportunities for global expansion to tap into diverse markets and reduce dependence on specific regions.
- 10. Risk Management:** Develop robust risk management strategies to navigate uncertainties like economic downturns or supply chain disruptions.



## **Theoretical Review**

Sensory marketing is a marketing approach that aims to appeal to consumers' senses to create a stronger and more memorable connection with a brand or product. Various theories and concepts underlie sensory marketing, helping businesses understand and leverage sensory experiences to enhance their marketing strategies. Here are some key theories of sensory marketing:

### **Sensory Thresholds:**

This theory suggests that individuals have different sensory thresholds, meaning the minimum level of stimulation needed for them to detect a particular sensory input. Marketers can use this theory to tailor their sensory stimuli to match the target audience's thresholds, ensuring that the experience is engaging without being overwhelming.

### **Sensory Congruity:**

This theory proposes that there should be consistency or congruity between the sensory stimuli and the product or brand image. When sensory elements align with the brand's identity, it creates a harmonious and integrated experience. For example, a luxury brand may use high-quality materials and elegant scents to reinforce its premium image.

### **Cross-Modal Correspondence:**

Cross-modal correspondence refers to the tendency of stimuli in one sensory modality to evoke a similar response in another modality. For instance, certain colors may be associated with specific tastes or scents. Understanding these cross-modal correspondences allows marketers to create a multisensory experience that reinforces the desired brand perception.

### **Sensory Hedonics:**

Sensory hedonics theory suggests that consumers derive pleasure or hedonic value from sensory experiences. Marketers can enhance consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty by focusing on creating positive sensory experiences. This could involve appealing to emotions, nostalgia, or creating a pleasant atmosphere through music, lighting, or scents.

### **Sensory Branding:**

Sensory branding involves creating a distinct and consistent sensory experience associated with a brand. This helps in building a strong brand identity and making the brand more memorable. Each sensory element, such as logo design, colors, sounds, and scents, contributes to the overall brand perception.

### **Sensory Adaptation:**

Sensory adaptation theory suggests that prolonged exposure to a particular sensory stimulus may lead to a reduced sensitivity or response over time. Marketers need to consider this phenomenon when designing sensory experiences to maintain consumer interest and engagement.

By understanding and applying these theories, businesses can create more effective sensory marketing strategies that resonate with their target audience and enhance the overall brand experience.

## **Empirical Review**

Chioma, Dili Ifeanyichukwu & Abude Peter carried out a study on the role of sensory marketing in Achieving customer patronage in Fast food restaurants in Awka. Their study aims at examining the relationship between human senses/sensory cues and customer patronage. 150 regular customers of Nourisha fast food restaurant in Awka were used as respondent, and a structured questionnaire

was administered to elicit the required information from the respondents. Multiple regression was used to test for the significance of the five hypotheses proposed for the study. The results of their study show the powerful and tremendous effect of the concept of sensory marketing which is inevitable for the success of a firm in this highly competitive market.

A study conducted by Miebaka et al. (2019) on sensory marketing pattern and patronage of made in Nigeria bags (A survey of bags producers in Rivers State, Nigeria) evaluated the reasons for consumer preference of made in Nigerian goods to foreign made goods (Bags). The study adopted the descriptive survey method as well as questionnaire method to enable consumers respond to their preference of either made in Nigeria goods (Bags) or foreign made bags. The study sample size of 120 was drawn using non-probability sampling method (convenience) for generalization. Three hypotheses were stated and tested using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and the major findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between sensory marketing pattern and patronage of made in Nigeria goods (Bags) in preference to foreign made goods (bags). It was therefore, recommended that producers should always carry-out constant research on the perception and behavior pattern of consumers towards their product. Government of Nigeria should invest in markets that can boost their economy. Nigeria government should also protect the local bag companies by enacting favorable government policies.

In another study conducted by Ayuba (2014) in Nigeria titled, "assessment of factors influencing consumer satisfaction: a survey of customers of Nigerian manufacturing companies." The main objective of the study was to investigate the key variables having strong influence on customer satisfaction and the purchasing decisions of customers. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were adopted for the study. The study consists of a population of 145 current and potential customers of the manufacturing companies listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) as at December 2013. The sample of the study is 100 selected based on stratified random sampling techniques. The data was analyzed using descriptive Statistics (mean, standard deviation) and regression analysis to assess the satisfaction-rating in line with the objectives of the study. The findings revealed that price is the primary factor influencing consumer buying behaviour in Nigeria. The results also showed that consumer experience with a particular brand changes the buying behaviour of consumers. The study concluded that three key variables namely; pricing dimension, product quality and consumer buying behaviour influences consumer satisfaction of manufacturers' products in Nigeria.

Also, in a study conducted by Singh et al (2014) in India titled Factors Affecting sensory marketing of Rural Consumers. The objectives of the study includes to identify factors affecting buying decisions of rural consumers and to study the importance of identified factors affecting sensory marketing of rural consumers by age and income of respondents. The sample of the study is 146. Data was collected using questionnaire on five point scale. Frequency, mean and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that rural consumer vary with age and income. The effect of price and quality on sensory marketing of rural consumer increases significantly with increase in age and income. Advertisement and brand of products found significantly very important to high income rural consumers than lower income consumers. Friends and family members' recommendations had significantly more impact on sensory marketing of lower income consumers than high income consumers. Packaging had significantly more impact on buying decision of lower income consumers than high income. The study concludes by identifying eight factors i.e. price, quality, warranty, advertisement, brand, friends recommendations, family members recommendation and packaging which rural consumers consider while making purchase decisions consumers. Daramola,

Bello, (2019), conducted a study in Nigeria titled the Effect of sensory marketing and Attitudinal Tendencies towards Purchase Decision (A Case Study Of Unilever Nigeria Plc, Cadbury Nigeria Plc United African Companies Plc.). The study's main objective is to examine the effect of sensory marketing and attitudinal tendencies towards purchase decision using Unilever Nigeria plc, Cadbury Nigeria plc, United African companies' plc as case studies. Other specific objectives

includes to examine adequacy of factors usually considered in reaching the individuals and groups consumers; to measure the extent to which merits and demerits of individuals and groups consumers behavior affect the marketer/producer; to establish incentives that could encourage consumption by the individuals and groups and to assess the effect of inability in providing information by the marketer/producer in reaching the individuals and groups at right time and place to fasten purchase on organizations goods and services. Questionnaire was used in collecting data while the sample size is 110. The researcher used tables and percentages for presentation, scoring and analysis of data. The hypotheses were analyzed with the help of chi-square (X<sup>2</sup>). The findings revealed that the life cycle in a product influence purchase to very much extent and that in some cases there is joint purchase decision in individuals and groups. Similarly, the research discloses that education has a part towards determining purchase in any individual or group. The study concludes that management of firms should always carry out a thorough research on the effect of consumer income, educational level, occupational level, life style cycle, individually, or jointly decision that affect purchase behavior

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The researcher used a correlation survey research design

### Population

The population of the study comprised of 17 automobile firms in Port Harcourt. <https://www.finelib.com/cities/port-harcourt.com>

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

Based on the population of the study, which amounted to 17 automobile firms in Port Harcourt, the study adopted a census approach and studied the entire population with a focus on top management staff of the automobile firms in Port Harcourt.

### Research Instrument

The research instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire comprising of 15 items of four (4) point scale, strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). A respondent was expected to indicate him/her agreements or disagreements to the statement provided in the validation of the collection. The instrument was subjected to scrutiny by experts in marketing, measurement, and graduation to ensure that it will measure what is expected measure.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the field of study was organized in tables, the use of Pearson product correlation, and supplemented with SPSS version 21.0

### Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between integrative sensory marketing and spontaneous buying of automobile firms in Port Harcourt.

## Relationship between Integrative Sensory Marketing and Spontaneous buying

### Correlations

		Integrative Sensory Marketing	Spontaneous Buying	Decision
X				
	Pearson Correlation	1	.908	Rejected
<b>Integrative Sensory Marketing</b>	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	
	N	101	101	
<b>Spontaneous Buying</b>	Pearson Correlation	.908	1	

Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
N	101	101

**\*S= Significant  $p < 0.05$**

**Source: Research Survey, 2021**

Data in the table indicate the relationship between integrative sensory marketing and spontaneous buying of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. This result shows that the P-value of 0.009 is lesser than 0.05 level of significance, this shows that integrative sensory marketing has a positive relationship with spontaneous buying of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. This result indicates 0.908 (90%) co-efficient. The null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted. This implies that there was a positive significant relationship between integrative sensory marketing and spontaneous buying of automobile firms in Port Harcourt.

### Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt

### Relationship between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision

#### Correlations

		Integrative Sensory Marketing	Regular Buying Decision Decision	
<b>Integrative Marketing</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.807	Rejected
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	
	N	101	101	
<b>Regular Buying Decision</b>	Pearson Correlation	.807	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		
	N	101	101	

**\*S= Significant  $p < 0.05$**

**Source: Research Survey, 2021**

Data in the table indicate the relationship between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. This result show that the P-value of 0.006 less than 0.05 level of significance that means there was a positive relationship between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. This result indicates 0.807 (80.7%) co-efficient. The null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted. This implies that there was a positive significant relationship between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt.

### Discussion of findings and Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship that exist between integrative sensory marketing and consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. we examine the dimension which is integrative sensory marketing and the two measures which are spontaneous buying and regular buying decision. The five senses (Smell, Touch, Taste, Sight, and Sound) have a tremendous and powerful effect on consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. Of no doubt, many marketers have moved from mass marketing to sensory marketing. When the senses are reached, customers can effectively have personal experience with the brand. As a result, they buy more of the product and recommend it to others. This leads to the creation of emotional ties with the consumers. It is a known fact that the actual personality of a brand only exists in the mind of the consumer. In other words, everyone has their own experience that makes up their impression of a brand, and no two impressions are exactly alike. Therefore, to make a profound impression, the senses have to be incorporated. This is because relying on packaging and labeling to make an impact is no longer encouraging.

In the first hypothesis, the focus was on the relationship that exist between integrative sensory marketing and spontaneous buying. The results of this study indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between integrative sensory marketing and spontaneous buying of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. Several studies have investigated the impact of sensory marketing on consumer buying decision (spontaneous buying and regular buying decision) that indicates a positive impact of these factors on consumer buying decision. The result of this hypothesis is in line with other studies on integrative sensory marketing that indicates that there was a positive significance relationship between the two variables.

Another hypothesis was examined to know the relationship that exist between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. This hypothesis was supported and revealed a significant and positive relationship that exist between integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision of automobile firms. In previous studies, the relationship between these two variables was investigated and indicated a positive impact of integrative sensory marketing and regular buying decision. Therefore, the results of this study are consistent with previous studies. Moreover, according to the results of hypothesis it is concluded that there was a significant relationship between integrative sensory marketing and consumer buying decision of automobile firms in Port Harcourt.

In conclusion, Integrative sensory marketing plays a crucial role in influencing consumer buying decisions, especially in the context of automobile firms in Port Harcourt. As consumers increasingly seek holistic and memorable experiences, leveraging multiple senses in marketing strategies becomes paramount for automotive brands. Integrative sensory marketing is a powerful tool for automobile firms seeking to influence consumer buying decisions. By creating immersive, emotional, and memorable experiences that engage multiple senses, these firms can differentiate themselves in a competitive market, enhance perceived quality, and build lasting connections with consumers. As the automotive industry continues to evolve, the strategic incorporation of integrative sensory marketing will likely remain a key factor in shaping consumer preferences and driving successful purchasing decisions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Market Research:** Continuously conduct market research to understand consumer preferences, industry trends, and emerging technologies.
- 2. Product Innovation:** Regularly update and innovate vehicle models to meet changing consumer needs and stay competitive in the market.
- 3. Quality Assurance:** Ensure rigorous quality control measures in manufacturing to maintain a reputation for reliable and durable vehicles.
- 4. Supply Chain Management:** Establish efficient supply chain processes to minimize disruptions and maintain a steady flow of raw materials and components.
- 5. Dealer Network:** Strengthen and expand the dealer network to enhance the availability of vehicles and provide better customer service.

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