



## A FIELD STUDY ON SENSORY CUES AND CUSTOMER REVISIT INTENTION

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose-** Along with the changes in consumers' expectations, marketers have started to trigger the senses in their marketing activities after realizing the effects of senses on consumer decisions. Sensory marketing activities have become a key tool for retailers to keep and gain consumers. Retailers can create store environments where their customers feel comfortable through the use of sensory cues. In this study, the influence of sensory marketing cues on revisit intention of customers is analyzed.

**Methodology-** Restaurant and coffee shop businesses are among the most appropriate examples to offer attractive store atmosphere to persuade consumers for the next visit. The research is conducted with respect to third-generation coffee stores to be able to include sensory cues designed to appeal to all five senses. The data collected via online survey questionnaires are analyzed using SPSS 23 statistical package program.

**Findings-** Multiple sensory cues are found to be effective on revisit intention. It is revealed that the smelling, tasting and touching cues have an effect on customers' revisit intention, while sensory cues of sight and hearing have no effect.

**Conclusion-** This study offers implications to third generation coffee stores by emphasizing tactile, taste and olfactory cues. Retail companies can use sensory cues to increase consumers' shopping duration in the store with an enjoyable experience and make them revisit the same store. Developing a clear positioning strategy can help them to create an emotional connection with their customers and improve customer engagement to the store. Therefore, companies can benefit from the sensory marketing concept as a strategic tool to differentiate them from their competitors.

**Keywords:** Retailing, sensory marketing, sensory cues, store atmosphere, revisit intention

**JEL Codes:** M30, M31, M39

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As marketing primarily deals with influencing consumer purchasing decisions, understanding ever changing consumer needs and adapting accordingly to new conditions of the market have become critical for marketers. The retail sector is one of the most dynamic sectors directing companies to search ways to adapt to the changing market demands. The retail business today has been shaped with the integration of technology, application of new management practices, as well as mergers and acquisitions. Along with intensified competition, it is seen that retail companies put on their focus not only customer attraction, but mostly customer retention and keeping satisfaction of their retained customers.

The advent of e-commerce platforms offering a variety of opportunities has shaped the competition and online companies created new markets and attracted customers through personalized services. In addition, retailers face diversifying demand from consumers about unique products and unique services during shopping. Therefore, as more retailers admit the importance of unique customer experience as a key factor in their survival and growth performance, creating better experiences has become the key to achieve competitive advantage and ensure consumer satisfaction. Customer experience involves peoples' cognitive and

emotional assessments when making purchases (Klaus and Maklan, 2013). It can be observed in a customer's internal and subjective response to any direct or indirect contact with a company (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). As most of the direct contacts realize during the purchase, understanding consumer experiences and knowing how to design them to satisfy consumers can encourage shoppers to spend more time at the store. Better retail environments are critical to engage customers in the shopping process and build relationship with the retail store.

Sensory marketing practices have become salient to design comfortable and unique retail environments. To remain attractive to customers and compete with other firms, traditional retailers need to change and adapt the way they interact with customers. The ones that are successful in engaging consumers' senses into their marketing activities and thereby affect consumers' behavior stand ahead of their rivals. According to Krishna (2010) sensory marketing can be used to create subconscious triggers that define consumers' perceptions of abstract notions of the product or store. In sensory marketing, consumers' emotional and behavioral reactions are studied mainly by sending stimuli to the five senses. When performing sensory marketing activities, it is important to correctly understand the effects of the five senses on consumers while taking into account which senses have impact on which consumer groups. Although the literature covers various research studies focusing on taste, touch, smell, hearing, and vision, sensory marketing is still a growing field and there is much research yet to be done. This paper focus on new generation coffee shops, taking into consideration that such cafés are mostly seen as both social meeting places and expressing themselves for consumers. Therefore, designing appropriate marketing strategies by triggering consumer senses will provide implications on creating unique shopping experiences to be able to attract the attention of customers, satisfy them in their shopping journey, and increase their frequency of visit.

This study aims to investigate the impact of sensory cues in consumer perception to be able to understand how consumers are affected by sensory marketing and analyze how they react to those sensory cues. The paper examines the sensory cues and their impact on consumer revisit intention of third generation coffee stores. First, focusing on the meaning and aims of it, the background of sensory marketing is provided, then the research model is presented and the method and analyses are offered. Finally, the conclusion and further suggestions are included in the last section.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Marketing management is related to creating successful customer relationships through satisfying consumer needs and to managing profitable customer relations over time (Kotler, 2010). In retailing, when a customer enters a store, the whole process inside can be considered as a sensory experience; namely visual, auditory, tactile, smell and taste cues have influence on the customers' purchase intention and experience, and even on the impulse of purchasing decision. (Krishna, 2012).

When store atmospherics was defined by Kotler (1974) as a new concept, he underlined the role of human senses in the store environment. Then, researchers started to study about the effects of the senses on consumer behavior in retail marketing. As the cost of reaching consumers through traditional media has increased and new types of media have emerged, competition has also increased. Consequently, companies looked for ways to trigger the five senses to gain comparative advantage.

Although the importance of the human senses has long been recognized, it is relatively new that senses have become an important focus in marketing communications. To explain the importance of involving senses, a chat with a friend can be given as an example. Today it is possible to stay at home and have a conversation with friends online. However, a physical meeting may be preferred in real life due to the lack of sensation in a typical virtual meeting. Senses have a strong influence on the perception of a product or brand and can trigger the emergence of strong sensory responses. It is not possible to draw a line where sensation ends and perception begins. The situation that stays in memory creates a strong link between the brand and the consumer. Memory and emotions affect the positive or negative responses of consumers related with brands. Using tools that affect senses in the store can clearly contribute to the retail sales environment that has its own specific characteristics. Therefore, sensory marketing has been used for selling products in an environment where sensory stimuli are promoted (Krishna, 2012). Sensory marketing puts the human brain with its five senses at the center of marketing (Simha, 2020).

In an increasingly competitive and globalizing environment, companies have to find innovative methods to gain consumers' attention. It is observed that shopping is not solely an act that serves to meet functional requirements, but it is an activity that provides psychological fulfillment and assessment of leisure. Consumers use all their senses in perceiving and feeling not only the product or service, but also the shopping experience. Sensory marketing can be used to create subconscious incentives that affect consumer perceptions by using abstract concepts (Krishna, 2012). On the other hand, to overcome the threat of online shopping on store management, retailers have to adapt effective ways to interact with customers through attractive sensory marketing practices. Gebarowski and Wojcik (2015) assert that usage of sensory marketing strategies will serve to build the experience of

consumers when they are in contact with a product at any time, of which we believe that can also build the bridge between offline and online retailing. Hence, sensory marketing practices might help retailers design the right sensory mix (color, shape, taste, smell, texture, and sound) for products and brands (Simha, 2020). Consumers want to see, touch, hear, smell or taste, in other words, to sense the product before they actually purchase it. This is also related with the desire to minimize the risk level perceived by consumers. As a result, consumers are affected by the stimuli created by the surroundings and they respond to them. With the aim of creating a nice and welcoming environment at stores to make customers feel comfortable in their shopping experience, companies have started to develop new store formats. These stores are seen among the key tools that guide consumers towards particularly pleasant experiences which create a favorable impression in their mind.

The retail atmosphere is created through the use of different senses, hearing and smelling sensations as well as visuality, which have a strong influence on the customer perception. Although sight is critical in contributing to the creation of brand identity, in cases where information containing only visual elements are not enough, other sensory tools are used to affect target market and increase brand awareness. For instance, it is seen that touching can affect product evaluation (Peck and Childers, 2003). Tactile experience can be rewarding as a form of approach behavior as Mehrabian (1981) asserted that approach behavior can stimulate liking, preference, and a positive attitude. In fact, each of the five senses is interconnected and can generate a link between the consumer and the brand. Retail companies have realized that they have to trigger multiple senses if they want to create strong brands and long-lasting consumer bonds (Hussain, 2018). As the number of senses stimulated increases, the stronger attachments are created with the consumer. For instance, the difference can easily be observed when a muted or a screen-off horror movie and a movie with both audio and image is compared (Lindstrom, 2005). Starbucks is one of the successful brands that always stays in consumers' minds by including all five senses in their marketing strategies: the fresh coffee scent, the music, the sensation of the temperature of the coffee, specific aromas and the store design. Today, companies are providing multi-sensory brand experiences because triggering more than one of the five senses contributes more to the effective sensory experience. For example, at Ferrari World in Abu Dhabi, visitors have the opportunity to experience the sight, sound and smell of Ferrari's driving simulation. Another example is that Nissan is planning to launch in-car aromatherapy forest air conditioning, which will spread fragrances that prevent sleeping. These examples show how physical sensations can create deeper emotional connections by the usage of sensory cues.

Consumers face a variety of stimuli triggering their five senses during the shopping journey. The aim of using sensory marketing is to be able to better control the perception of these stimuli. All these cues should not be used at random and it is important that each of the senses should be in harmony with the others in order to create a consistent brand image. While using sensory marketing, companies aspire that the consumer will not only like and buy the product, but also advocate the brand and be part of the brand community. As a result, it is expected that the customer will ensure continuity by keeping on purchasing and encouraging their social circle towards the brand.

The first step in applying sensory marketing in retail settings is always to know the target customer well. Knowing what the target customer feels, wants and needs allows the brand to set a route. This is a dynamic process which requires to pay attention to the reactions of the customers and make the revisions if necessary. Thus, companies should give importance to find out which emotions can mobilize the target audience. Choosing a theme for the store is also important since it reflects representation of the company. Lack of consistency in the theme might lead to an unpleasant experience. Unplanned or inconsistent sensory cues can cause a customer to be confused or lost (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). According to Lindstrom (2005), it is not possible for a brand to achieve success by strategically addressing the senses of sound, smell, image, taste, touch one by one, since the customer must live the full experience. To create a strong impact, the brand must first plan the experience it aims to create, and then design the sensory cues that will make this experience possible. The goal of successful sensory marketing should be to transform the concept on which the brand is based into an experience that will have influence on the consumer. The greater number of senses a brand appeals and more quality synergy between senses are established, the stronger bonds will be created between the brand and the customer (Helmefalk, 2019).

Sensory marketing is used for several purposes in retailing such as affecting consumer perceptions positively, influencing preferences and consumption habits, extending customers' time spent in the store, generating more sales in a pleasant environment, creating brand image and brand identity, increasing revisit intention, creating competitive advantage, and providing customer loyalty. Brand image is simply what consumers feel when they hear about the brand name. It can be strengthened by senses and emotions which provide a better memorization of the brand. Another purpose of businesses to use sensory marketing is to create brand identity. Likewise, since brand identity differentiates the company from its counterparts, sensory cues could be used to generate a unique image for the company. Sensory marketing ultimately aims to reach customer loyalty or store loyalty when a combination of a number of features are offered to consumers. Although customer loyalty is the ultimate goal for

companies, it is not a simple or linear process in real life. Therefore, this study questions consumers' revisit intentions as affected by the usage of sensory cues. Store revisit or product repurchase intentions and customer satisfaction are connected with each other and change according to the customer experience. Repurchase thinking is an attitude that emerges after the purchase is complete, and it shows that customers are satisfied with the product, brand or service they have purchased. Similarly, the customers' decision to engage with a specific retailer in the future is often referred to as revisit intention (Hume et al., 2007). It is argued that consumers will have willingness and intention to return to the store if they have a positive or rewarding store experience generated by the five sensory cues.

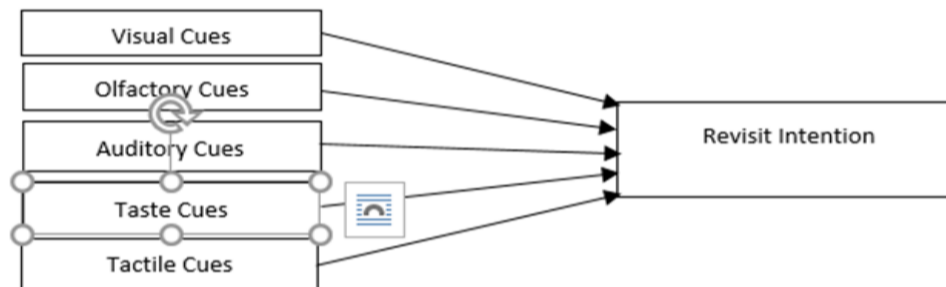
### 3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopts an exploratory approach in order to discover consumers' assessments about the sensory cues provided in the new generation coffee stores and their impact on revisit intention. With the support of the literature review, a conceptual model is developed relying on the theoretical framework, a list of hypotheses is proposed and quantitative research was conducted. A total of 384 responses was collected via online survey questionnaires. The research methodology including sampling procedure and data collection tool and analyses are given below after presenting the research model.

#### 3.1. Research Model and Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual background from the domain of environmental psychology (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), to the contemporary multi-sensory perspective of atmospherics (Spence et al., 2014), the role of the retail company in understanding and designing cues as stimuli affecting consumer behavior in retail atmospheres. It is critical to keep customers coming to the retail store and enable their engagement by analyzing the impact of these sensory cues on consumers' perception and behavior. Therefore, the research model below is offered by including all five senses related retail cues and questioning their impact on consumers' responses in terms of revisit intention.

Figure 1: Research Model



According to the research model in Figure 1, the variables related to the store atmosphere form the independent variables and the revisit intention is the dependent variable. The research is conducted with respect to third-generation coffee stores to be able to include sensory cues designed to appeal to all five senses. Based on the above research model, hypotheses are developed to test if customers' revisit intention is affected by the sensory experience.

- H<sub>1</sub>: Sensory marketing of sight has a positive influence on customers' revisit intention.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Sensory marketing of smell has a positive influence on customers' revisit intention.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Sensory marketing of sound has a positive influence on customers' revisit intention.
- H<sub>4</sub>: Sensory marketing of taste has a positive influence on customers' revisit intention.
- H<sub>5</sub>: Sensory marketing of touch has a positive influence on customers' revisit intention.
- H<sub>6</sub>: The revisit intention of the participants differs significantly in terms of gender.
- H<sub>7</sub>: The revisit intention of the participants differs significantly in terms of age.
- H<sub>8</sub>: The revisit intention of the participants differs significantly in terms of education.

### 3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

The sample was calculated using ratio method at 95% confidence level and with a standard deviation of 0.05. The p and q values were taken as 0,50 since no data were found about the population of third-generation coffee drinkers or a ratio of new generation coffee consumption in the population. The following formula was used while calculating the sample (Nakip and Yaraş, 2016):

where n: sample size, E: sampling error

$$n = \frac{Z^2(pq)}{E^2} = \frac{(1,96)^2(0,5)(0,5)}{(0,05)^2} \cong 384$$

An online questionnaire is used as the data collection tool in this study. The questionnaire form created through Google Forms, online survey preparation program, was accessed by all potential participants through sending a link to collect data. The questionnaire consists of four sections. In the initial section, firstly, the definition of a third-generation coffee store is given in order to be sure that all respondents are on the same ground in terms of their patronage of such retail stores. Then, the participants are asked about their most frequently visited third-generation coffee stores and their visiting habits in terms of their purpose of visit, frequency of visit and the approximate duration of stay in store. In the second section, statements about sensory marketing cues are evaluated by participants based on the Likert type scale. The third section includes questions about the revisit intention and the last part serves to collect data about demographic characteristics.

The expressions related to the senses of sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell are adapted from Hultén (2011), Peck and Childers (2003) for the context of third generation coffee stores. The measurement for revisit intention is adapted from the study of Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Malhotra (2005). The data collected via online survey questionnaires are analyzed using SPSS 23 statistical package program.

### 3.3. Reliability Analysis

As a measure of the consistency of the measurement, reliability analysis shows how accurately a scale measures the property it wants to measure. According to Twycross and Shields (2004), Cronbach's alpha is an appropriate reliability measurement tool for measuring the internal consistency of the scale questions. Cronbach Alpha reliability values of the scales used in the study are shown in Table 1. It is seen that the values 0,70 and over are satisfactory to proceed.

**Table 1: Reliability analysis results**

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sensory Experience	0,927	31
Revisit Intention	0,771	2

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 2. It is seen that 58,1 % of the participants are female and 41,9 % are male; 41.4% are in the 26-35 age range and the majority of the participants have high level of education.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants**

Gender	N	%
Female	223	58,1
Male	161	41,9
18-25	92	24,0
26-35	159	41,4
36-45	50	13,0
46-55	35	9,1
56 and above	48	12,5
Elementary School	1	0,3
High School	17	4,4

Bachelor's Degree	238	62,0
Master's Degree	119	31,0
PhD Degree	9	2,3

In addition to demographic characteristics, participants were also asked about their habits of visiting third-generation coffee stores. The respondents are required to declare their favorite coffee store. Table 3 shows that Voi Coffee, MOC and Petra Roasting are top three new generation coffee stores based on the declaration of the most visited coffee stores by respondents. When the complete list is observed, it is seen that although popular and chain retail brands are revealed, nearly 17% of the respondents highlighted various coffee stores from different neighborhoods, mostly in the form of independent specialty retailers. This could be important in terms of presenting the complexity of the competition in the sector and implying that such independent stores have a degree of brand awareness and could improve if they take into account customers' expectations.

Besides top preferred coffee stores, the respondents' habits about third generation coffee stores are explored in terms of their frequency of visit, purpose of visit, and time of stay in store. Table 4 depicts the information relating to these attitudinal characteristics.

**Table 3: Most Frequently Visited Coffee Stores**

Coffee Stores	N	%
Voi Coffe Company	118	30,7
MOC	116	30,2
Petra Roasting Co.	86	22,4
Cup of Joy	70	18,2
Walter's Coffe Roastery	70	18,2
Kronotrop	49	12,8
Coffe Sapiens	42	10,9
Coffee Department	33	8,6
Other third gen. coffee stores	65	16,9

**Table 4: The Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Visit Habits**

Purpose of visit	N	%
Opportunity to taste different coffee beans	128	33,3
Quiet and comfortable working environment	55	14,3
Interesting interior design	56	14,6
Warm and friendly atmosphere	134	34,9
Other	11	2,9
Frequency of visit		
Everyday	14	3,6
Several times a week	135	35,2
Once a week	111	28,9
Every two week	65	16,9
Once a month	56	14,6
Less than once a month	3	0,8
Time of stay		
Less than 1 hour	53	13,8
1-2 hours	236	61,5
3-4 hours	84	21,9
More than 4 hours	11	2,9

It can be seen that the store atmosphere and taste of the coffee were relatively more important in affecting the customer's visit. Nearly 35% of the participants preferred third-generation coffee stores because they create a warm and friendly atmosphere and another 33.3% would go to them to taste different coffee beans.

In order to focus on the main hypotheses of the research, a regression analysis was conducted to find out whether there was any association between sensory experience factors and the revisit intention. With this analysis, it was aimed to find out which sensory cues would affect the participant's intention to revisit the coffee store. Regression analysis results used in the testing of the hypotheses are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that Anova test (F) sig. value is less than 0.05 (and Durbin Watson value is between 1.5-2.5), which means that the regression model developed is appropriate. Also, all VIF values are lower than 10, indicating no multiple linear connection. When the standardized beta coefficients and the p statistical significance values, which show the individual effects of sensory experience factors on customers' revisit intentions, were examined, it was determined that the smelling, tasting and touching cues with p values of less than 0.05 would have an effect on customers' revisit intention.

**Table 5: Regression Analysis Results**

R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.	Durbin Watson
0,232	0,222	0,639	22,897	0,000	2,042
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig.
(Constant)	1,347	0,296		0,087	0,000
Sight	0,107	0,075		0,087	0,153
Hearing	0,067	0,066		0,054	0,314
Tasting	0,204	0,082		0,148	0,014
Smelling	0,105	0,053		0,117	0,049
Touching	0,205	0,063		0,202	0,001
					VIF
					1,810
					1,432
					1,758
					1,733
					1,881

Multiple sensory cues were effective on customers' revisit intentions (14,8% for taste, 11,7% for smell, and 20,2% for touch). However, sensory cues of sight and hearing had no effect on customers' revisit intention. Hence, H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>4</sub> and H<sub>5</sub> hypotheses are accepted, but H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> are rejected.

Comparison tests were conducted to explore how the sensory experience cues and revisit intention levels change according to some demographic characteristics. The independent sample t- test was used if the variable for the difference of mean levels of the scale dimensions was presented with two options. One-way analysis of variance (Anova-F test) was used when there were more than two options. The results show that the revisit intention differed according to gender, hence, the H<sub>6</sub> hypothesis is accepted (Table 6).

**Table 6: Revisit Intention by Gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Revisit Intention	Female	223	4,146	0,710	
	Male	161	3,972	0,734	
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
		F	Sig	T Test	
Revisit Intention	Equal variances assumed	3,450	0,064	2,332	0,020
	Equal variances not assumed			2,320	0,021

Table 7 displays the results of one-way variance analysis test results regarding the difference of the elements of the revisit intention according to age. The revisit intention of participants was significantly different in terms of age, while there was no difference in terms of education levels. Thus, the H<sub>7</sub> hypothesis is accepted, but H<sub>8</sub> hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 7: Revisit Intention by Age Groups**

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Revisit Intention</b>	18-25	92	4,038	0,778
	26-35	159	4,142	0,742
	36-45	50	4,150	0,702
	46-55	35	4,129	0,506
	56 and above	48	3,792	0,634
	Total	384	4,073	0,724

			Mean		
Revisit Intention	Sum of Squares	df	Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5,062	4	1,266	2,449	0,046
Within Groups	195,896	379	,517		
Total	200,958	383			

This study has examined the relationship between sensory experience and revisit intention. The hypotheses tested within the scope of the study and the results of the hypotheses are given in Table 8. The results in Table 8 indicate that taste, olfactory and tactile cues enable to trigger consumers' revisit intention in a third-generation coffee store, while visual and auditory cues do not seem to exert a significant influence on consumers' revisit intention for the participants of this study. Moreover, the results show that there is a significant difference in revisit intention according to gender and age, while no significant difference is found in revisit intention according to education level.

**Table 8: Overview of Hypotheses Results**

Hypothesis	Evidence	Statement
H <sub>1</sub>	Rejected	Sensory marketing of sight has a positive influence on customer's revisit intention.
H <sub>2</sub>	Accepted	Sensory marketing of smell has a positive influence on customer's revisit intention
H <sub>3</sub>	Rejected	Sensory marketing of sound has a positive influence on customer's revisit intention
H <sub>4</sub>	Accepted	Sensory marketing of taste has a positive influence on customer's revisit intention.
H <sub>5</sub>	Accepted	Sensory marketing of touch has a positive influence on customer's revisit intention
H <sub>6</sub>	Accepted	The revisit intention of the participants differ significantly in terms of gender.
H <sub>7</sub>	Accepted	The revisit intention of the participants differ significantly in terms of age.
H <sub>8</sub>	Rejected	The revisit intention of the participants differ significantly in terms of education level.



## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Surrounded with lots of attractive offers, customers today are freer to switch from one store to another, and as active receivers of information from various channels, they are much more knowledgeable. Therefore, retail companies are in search of ways to increase consumers' shopping duration in the store and enhance their purchasing with an enjoyable experience. Sensory marketing is used by retailers to affect consumer decision making, make the customers feel special and gain an edge over competitors. If positive emotions are generated during the store visit as a result of a pleasant atmosphere, consumers tend to come to the same place again in the future.

In this study, the sensory cues and their effects on consumers in terms of revisit intention to third-generation coffee stores are studied. These new generation coffee stores are among the ones where consumers are open to receive stimuli with all of their five senses. These retail settings are important platforms to understand if revisit intention of customers is affected by the influence of sensory cues. It is found that there is significant relationship between taste, olfactory, tactile stimulants and consumers' revisit intention. Tactile stimuli have been determined as the most effective sensory cues in new generation coffee stores. Experiences relating touching induce motivation and consumers deliver more positive response (Peck and Wiggins, 2006). This finding should lead the retailer to care about the comfort of the seating areas, the material of the plates and glasses, the temperature of the environment and even the manners of the service employees. This study revealed two additional sensory cues that affect the customers' revisit intention related to taste and scent. This is not very surprising since the coffee product is mainly at the focus of the consumer experience. This finding is in line with studies of Jacob et al. (2014) and Chebat and Michon (2003) in terms of scent and with Erenkol and Ak (2015) in terms of taste related cues' impact on the consumer purchasing decision. When it is considered that the retail context is about third generation coffees in this study, the flavor and smell should be surely used as sensory cues to differentiate any company in positioning in this competitive sector.

Although Randhir et al. (2016) determined that playing music inside stores provides a sense of comfort for customers and has a positive effect on customers' feelings, the present study does not find a significant impact of auditory cues on revisit intention. In many cases the music as background sound can affect the mood of consumers arousing positive or negative feelings, but it might not be as powerful in affecting their coffee store visits. Likewise, sensory cues related to sight are not found to be effective on revisit intention, contradicting with some earlier research (Spence et al., 2014), which claim that visual cues have a major effect on consumers. One possible reason for the finding might be the similarity in visual cues used by retailers especially in those new generation coffee stores where customers are becoming more accustomed, perceiving no differential impact.

Regardless of the industry, one of the most important goals of companies is to keep their customers. A key to customer retention in retailing is to encourage store revisit, a behavioral intention largely developed based on consumer-brand relationship. The emotional engagement with the store can be critical to create such intention. According to Krishna (2012), stimuli targeted to the subconscious of customers through the senses may be a more efficient way to engage consumers. Therefore, to understand the sensory perception and design and apply effective sensory cues could provide competitive advantage for the retailer. Another inquiry is made in terms of the impact of demographic characteristics on revisit intention, and significant differences are revealed in terms of gender and age groups. It can be concluded that female and generation Y participants indicate a higher tendency of revisiting third-generation coffee stores.

The results of this study can guide managers in creating successful sensory experiences for customers as opposed to more traditional brand relationships. Since the most important sensory cues that directly affect the revisit intention of third generation coffee customers are tactile, taste and olfactory cues; the comfort of the seats, the optimum air conditioning of the store environment, the taste and the variety of products, the freshness of the ingredients and strong smell of coffees should be considered while designing the retail atmosphere and service mix. The differences reported on revisit intention based on gender and age bring about the need for thinking based on customer groups and design robust targeting strategies.

The study is not free of limitation. Research data are collected from Istanbul residents; therefore, the findings are not generalizable. Also, the level of sensory marketing might differentiate based on the different types of coffee stores, which can be a barrier to perceive the sensory cues appropriately. The online questionnaire method was used to collect data and the responses were derived based on self-reporting, delving into customers' memories of third-generation coffee store experiences before the pandemic. Further data could be collected within third-generation coffee stores or the study could be supported by experimental designs where the impact of sensory cues can be grasped better.

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