

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) Model in the Context of the ASMR Advertising Experience: A Qualitative Study

Uyaran–Organizma–Tepki (S–O–R) Modeli Bağlamında ASMR Reklam Deneyimi: Nitel Bir İnceleme

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Abstract

Despite the increasing use of ASMR content in advertising applications with digitalisation, in-depth studies examining the effects of this content on consumer perception and purchase intent remain limited in the literature. This study aims to investigate consumer perceptions and purchase intentions regarding the Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) –themed Oddly IKEA advertisement published on YouTube. Viewer experiences related to the ad were examined and analysed within the framework of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model. This study, conducted using purposive sampling—the preferred sampling method in qualitative research—involved semi-structured online interviews with 12 female and male consumers aged 18 and over living in three major cities in Türkiye. The data were analysed using thematic analysis with the AI-supported Transkriptor programme. The study was analysed under four main themes: the multidimensional effects of the ASMR experience; the impact of ASMR and emotional responses; consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions; and advertising and product perception. The results show that ASMR-based advertisements can powerfully evoke emotions

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and attract attention. However, their effects vary depending on personal characteristics, sensory sensitivity, and context. Therefore, selecting the correct ASMR elements and using them carefully is essential for the success of the advertisement. In terms of methodology, the study differs from other research in the literature, offering the opportunity to uncover more in–depth findings regarding consumers’ emotions and behavioural tendencies.

Keywords: New Media, ASMR Advertisements, Consumer, Purchase Intention, Semi–structured Interview

Öz

Dijitalleşmeyle birlikte ASMR içeriklerinin reklam uygulamalarında giderek daha fazla yer bulmasına karşın, bu içeriklerin tüketici algısı ve satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkilerini ele alan derinlemesine araştırmalar literatürde sınırlı kalmaktadır. Bu çalışma, YouTube’da yayınlanan Otonom Duyusal Meridyen Tepki (ASMR) temalı Oddly IKEA reklamına ilişkin tüketici algısı ve satın alma niyetini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Reklamla ilgili izleyici deneyimleri, Uyarın–Organizma–Tepki (S–O–R) modeli çerçevesinde incelenmiş ve analiz edilmiştir. Nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak gerçekleştirilen bu çalışmada, Türkiye’nin üç büyük şehrinde yaşayan 18 yaş ve üzeri toplam 12 kadın ve erkek tüketiciyle yarı yapılandırılmış çevrim içi görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Veriler, AI destekli Transkriptör programı ile tematik analiz kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma, ASMR deneyiminin çok boyutlu etkileri, ASMR ve duygusal tepkilerin etkisi, tüketici davranışı ve satın alma kararları, reklam ve ürün algısı olmak üzere dört ana tema üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, ASMR tabanlı reklamların duyguları güçlü bir şekilde harekete geçirebildiğini ve dikkat çekebildiğini göstermektedir. Ancak, bunların etkisi kişisel özelliklere, duyuşsal duyarlılığa ve bağlama göre değişmektedir. Bu nedenle, doğru ASMR öğelerini seçmek ve bunları dikkatli bir şekilde kullanmak, reklamın başarısı için önemlidir. Çalışma yöntem bağlamında literatürdeki diğer araştırmalardan farklılaşmakta, tüketicilerin duygularına ve davranışsal eğilimlerine ilişkin daha derinlemesine bulgulara ulaşma imkânı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yeni Medya, ASMR Reklamları, Tüketici, Satın Alma Niyeti, Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme

Introduction

In parallel with the rapid development of information and communication technologies, our era has emerged as one dominated by digital noise. In this environment, it is increasingly challenging to attract individuals’ or consumers’ attention, meet their needs, and influence them. The concept of ASMR, which has entered the literature in the last decade, has become an essential part of the new communication strategies that advertisers need to develop to attract attention, differentiate, and ensure memorability. ASMR is defined as a relaxing state or alteration of consciousness (Barratt & Davis, 2015) analysed by a pleasant tingling sensation that starts at the back of the head and travels down the spine (Ahuja, 2013) that some people experience when they hear gentle, repetitive sounds, such as whispered voices or fingernails tapping on a table (Goldsmith, 2019).

Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) videos have rapidly gained popularity on various media platforms, primarily YouTube (Barratt & Davis, 2015). This popularity has led to the emergence of a rapidly growing ‘ASMRtist’ (ASMR artist) community on YouTube. In particular, by 2023, ASMR has become the third most popular search term on YouTube (Mavrommatis, 2024). This situation has led to the community’s popular content creators’ videos being regularly viewed

millions of times. In particular, as of 2023, ASMR has become the third–most–popular search term on YouTube (Mavrommatis, 2024). ASMR videos often utilize the emotional power of whispering to create an intimate space between the creator and the listener. ASMRtists on YouTube increase viewership by allowing people who experience these feelings to watch, produce, and disseminate ASMR–evocative material (Andersen, 2014, p. 683). For example, the number of views of the content producer account named GentleWhispering increased from 88.311.107 in 2014 (Barratt & Davis, 2015, p. 2) to 831.962.628 in 2020 (Çerçi, 2021, p. 935) and to 1.183.772.704 in 2024.

Given the increasing popularity of ASMR, it has high potential for use in advertising to increase consumer purchase intentions. This is not surprising, given the number of brands such as IKEA, Zippo, KFC, and Apple that use ASMR content in advertisements (Cohen et al., 2024). In addition to these, globally, ASMR–themed advertisements such as Renault Zoe (2016), Dove Chocolate (2015), and Nescafé Gold ASMR (2021); locally, Ülker Çikolata Hazelnut Dream (2016), LcWaikiki (2020), and Beko (2024) have garnered attention. In studies on advertising, there are findings that design containing visual elements (Olahut & Plaias, 2013; Shirin et al., 2021; Dilgen & Hasırcı, 2022) or the smell in the environment positively affects the consumer’s perception (Madzharov et al., 2015) and increases memorability (Lwin & Morrin, 2012). In this context, ASMR, which elicits pleasurable feelings through specific auditory and visual stimuli, can serve as a tool to create a calming, enjoyable environment by shaping individuals’ sensory experiences (Harrison et al., 2019). Contrary to this, some studies have found that unpleasant experiences (Swart et al., 2022) can cause frightening, disgusting, saddening, and angering (Çerçi, 2021), anxiety–inducing, and agitation feelings (Rouw & Erfanian, 2018).

In the history of advertising, the understanding that strategies based on shouting, loud, and sudden sounds should be adopted to make consumers notice products has been embraced for many years (Goldsmith, 2019). Today, however, advertisers emphasise that muting the sound could be the key to increasing marketing success (Shivoham, 2024). This situation is supported by research (De Kerpel et al., 2024; Gotsch & Gasser, 2025) showing that increased feelings of relaxation when watching an ASMR advertisement, compared to traditional advertisements, positively affects the intention to purchase the advertised product. However, although ASMR is reported to effect roughly one–third of the general population positively, little is known about the broader impact that ASMR adverts may have on consumer attitudes (Cohen et al., 2024).

This study aims to investigate consumer perception and purchase intention regarding the ASMR–themed Oddly IKEA advertisement published on YouTube. Viewer experiences related to the aforementioned advertisement have been examined and analysed within the framework of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model. The current study provides brands and advertisers with valuable outcomes for the effective use of ASMR advertisements. The study’s originality lies in its use of semi–structured interviews, which allow deeper insights into participants’ emotions and behaviors.

ASMR Concept and Usage in Advertising

ASMR represents a different experience offered by new media, with the calming effects of sounds or visuals on the viewers. A Robert and colleagues (2019) developed four scales to reliably measure the ASMR experience. These are relaxation (changes in arousal), impact (changes in emotional experience), altered consciousness (changes in perception and awareness), and sensation (the experience and spread of ASMR sensations throughout the body).

Del Campo and Kehle (2016) state that the ASMR phenomenon was first conceptualised by Jennifer Allen in 2010. After a decade of research, Allen came across a post titled ‘A strange feeling, it feels good’ on the steadyhealth.com forum and created a term that people sharing similar feelings could freely discuss: ASMR. This term became widely popular on online health forums, enabling people to share their experiences (Del Campo & Kehle, 2016).

Today, ASMR use for relaxation and mood enhancement is common in new media environments. Owing to the new media’s feature of increased audience interaction, individuals are involved in this cycle both as content producers and viewers. Furthermore, the emergence of online communities in digital media has accelerated the growth of ASMR videos, which are produced under different themes (Barratt & Davis, 2015). For example, the Instagram account of a special ASMR subreddit is followed by 889.000 people, and Gentlewhispering’s YouTube channel is followed by approximately 2.5 million people (Copeland, 2017). Türkiye’s most popular ASMR content creators are Mehtap Ziyagil ASMR (452,000 subscribers) and Selen ASMR (403,000 subscribers). According to Google Trends (2025), the countries that searched for “ASMR” most in the past year were China and Japan, while Türkiye ranked 55th out of 71 countries. This low interest in ASMR content in Türkiye may be due to viewers perceiving it as “strange or unusual sounds” (Barratt & Davis, 2015).

ASMR has also been adopted as an effective strategy in advertising. It was predicted that this phenomenon would be considered as a potentially efficient and effective advertising strategy (Spence, 2020). This technique, which attracted many advertisers due to its high viewing rates, has since been used in many advertising campaigns. An advertising practitioner in Mexico used the ASMR technique to promote detergents and toiletries by actively moving and touching the products placed in the frame (Portas–Ruiz, 2022, cited in Suci et al., 2023, pp. 1–2).

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model provides a functional framework for systematically analysing ASMR content on advertising audiences. ASMR advertisements can be explained more effectively using the S–O–R model developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), which goes beyond classical cognitive models by directly eliciting physiological and emotional stimulation. This model explains how environmental stimuli (such as ASMR sounds) trigger emotional and cognitive states such as attention, pleasure, and relaxation in individuals, and how these states are transformed into behavioral responses such as product interest, purchase intent, and brand loyalty (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974 cited in Vieira, 2013; Madzharov et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2024). ASMR advertisements with unusual sensory and auditory characteristics create unique experiences at the organism stage as powerful stimuli, and emotional processes influence consumer behavior. In the model, the stimulus stage includes sensory elements such as whispers, clicks, and

touch sounds used in ASMR advertisements; the organism stage includes emotional and personal responses such as attention, pleasure, and relaxation that these stimuli create in consumers; and the response stage expresses behavioral outcomes such as product interest, purchase intention, and brand loyalty that result from these experiences (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Fredborg et al., 2017; Wens, 2021; Liang & Li, 2024; Kerpel et al., 2024; Gotsch & Gasser, 2025). In this context, the S–O–R model provides a practical framework for understanding the effects of ASMR-based advertisements on consumers.

The fact that ASMR appeals to various audiences allows brands to develop more specific strategies. Brands such as IKEA, Apple, and KFC have seen significant interest in incorporating ASMR content into their advertising strategies, and IKEA increased its sales by 5 per cent thanks to ASMR campaigns (Mavrommatis, 2024). According to Lee and Chen (2023), the primary reason is that the IKEA brand is perceived as more sincere and genuine by consumers, and their attention is focused on the advertised products in the desired way (Suci et al., 2023, pp. 1–2). In this context, the ASMR technique is noteworthy compared to traditional advertisements and enhances brand memorability (Mavrommatis, 2024). Compared with traditional advertisements, ASMR content has been shown to increase attitudes towards the advertisement, the product, and purchase intentions. According to Liang and Li (2024), the audio ASMR technique is an important strategy for brands to attract consumers' attention and increases their purchase intentions effectively. Moreover, some studies (Wens, 2021) have found that after watching ASMR adverts, consumers can imagine how the product in the advert smells and tastes. With this strategy, elements such as nature sounds and whispering can be used to enhance audience interaction (Mavrommatis, 2024). However, studies have concluded that this technique does not always have positive effects, and sometimes ASMR content can pose a risk for brands (Krishna et al., 2016). Cohen et al. (2024) revealed that while ASMR elements have positive effects on specific consumer segments, they have a widespread adverse effect on the general consumer mass. On the other hand, Antonova (2019) concluded that the level of impact of ASMR elements may vary within themselves.

ASMR Triggers

In the academic literature, Barratt and Davis defined Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response as a previously undefined abnormal sensory phenomenon in which individuals experience a tingling, static-like sensation in the scalp, back of the neck and sometimes further in reaction to specific triggers through auditory, visual, tactile and olfactory stimuli (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Fredborg et al., 2017, p. 247).

Common auditory triggers used in ASMR content include whispering, tapping, rustling paper, rhythmic finger sounds, water sounds, and soft speech (Barratt & Davis, 2015). These sounds are used to increase relaxation and focus, particularly in advertisements to attract the viewer's attention and establish an emotional connection with the brand. For example, Michelob Ultra's 2019 Super Bowl ad aimed to create this effect (Schultz, 2019, cited in Kim, 2020). Visual triggers include hand movements, repetitive actions, and close-ups. Tactile triggers, on the other hand, do not involve

direct physical contact but create a sense of touch through elements such as light contact with the face, makeup application, and finger touch. These triggers are particularly applicable to textile and cosmetic products. Additionally, interpersonal triggers such as personal interest, intimate care behaviors, and eye contact are included among ASMR triggers (Poerio et al., 2018; Poerio, 2020, p. 1).

Method

Prior to the data collection phase, a compliance report confirming the ethical suitability of the study was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Yozgat Bozok University, dated 23/01/2025, meeting number 21, and decision number 45.

The study used qualitative research methods, with semi-structured online interviews lasting an average of 30–40 minutes. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research, a coding scheme has been developed and is presented in Table 1. In addition, 1) Participants were informed, and a comfortable environment was provided (Karasar, 1998, p. 170). 2) Coding was performed with another researcher, and consensus was reached. 3) The researcher was familiar with ASMR but remained impartial (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Two researchers carried out the coding process. To increase coding reliability, the same interview transcripts were recoded at least two weeks apart (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and coding consistency was checked. The correlation between codings was calculated as 0.87, thus demonstrating the reliability of the agreement between coders. In addition, the data coded within the thematic framework were reviewed by an independent academic to ensure external control of the interpretation process. An deductive approach was adopted in determining the categories in the study. When creating the coding process, the themes were structured by adapting the following sources:

- 1) Dimensions related to Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) (Roberts et al., 2019; cited in Karpuz & Tüzel Uraltaş, 2024),
- 2) Statements related to ASMR triggers (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Fredborg et al., 2017),
- 3) Statements related to purchase intention (MacKenzie et. al., 1986; cited in Özer, 2016), and
- 4) Statements regarding attitudes towards advertisements (Mitchell & Olson, 1981; cited in Özer, 2016) were used as a basis.

In the study, data from semi-structured interviews were analysed manually using a closed coding technique. Based on predetermined conceptual frameworks, similar codes were grouped to form thematic structures (Creswell & Creswell, 2023, p. 211; Stuckey, 2015, p. 8).

Table 1*Coding Scheme*

Main theme	Sub-theme	Theme definition
The multidimensional effects of the ASMR experience	Altered consciousness	Responses indicating that the viewer experienced a trance-like state
	Feeling	Responses reflecting a range of emotional and sensory experiences during ASMR, including unusual, pleasant, or ambiguous feelings.
	Relaxation	Responses indicating calmness, sleepiness
ASMR Triggers	Affect	Responses indicating enjoyment or peace of mind
	Auditory	Whispering, clicking, scratching, rubbing
	Visual	Hand gestures, close-ups of objects, details of surfaces
	Tactile	Touching objects, rubbing fabric
ASMR Experiences and Comparison of Traditional Advertising Methods	Oldfactory stimuli	Certain triggers can cause discomfort for the viewer.
		Consumers' responses regarding their experiences after watching ASMR-based advertisements and a comparison of these experiences with traditional advertising methods.
The Role of ASMR Advertisements in Product Perception		Responses related to the perception of product quality through ASMR elements
The Role of ASMR Advertisements in Purchase Decisions		Responses indicating whether the advertisement had a positive/negative impact on the decision to purchase the product, whether they considered purchasing the product, and their tendency to prefer the ASMR-advertised product over similar products.

The data collection tool is similar to a semi-structured interview format. In some cases, answers are deepened with follow-up questions. In the literature, the emotional effects of ASMR have generally been studied using surveys (Barratt et al., 2017; Barratt and Davis, 2015; Poerio et al., 2018). However, semi-structured interviews provide more detailed data when examining emotions (Asur & Huberman, 2010; Ruslin et al., 2022; Boswell, 2024). In this respect, the study differs from the literature.

In this study, a purposive sampling method was preferred for participant selection, as it allows for the identification of individuals most suitable for the research objective (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006 cited in Biçer, 2014, p. 183). Inclusion criteria include residing in Istanbul, Ankara, or Izmir, being 18 years of age or older, and having at least one experience of watching ASMR content or being exposed to an ASMR-format advertisement. The exclusion criterion is individuals without ASMR experience. Since it would be difficult to cover the entire country, three major cities were chosen to represent cultural diversity (TÜİK, 2025). Due to its focus on participants' experiences and the meanings of these experiences, the research is largely based on a phenomenological approach.

At least 12 participants are recommended in qualitative research (Guest et al., 2006 cited in; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007, p. 289). In this study, the number of participants was determined based on data saturation. Since no new themes or codes emerged after the 12th participant, data saturation was deemed to have been reached, and data collection was terminated.

In this context, the main research question of the study was formulated as ‘Do ASMR advertisements have an effect on participants?’ The following sub–questions were determined in order to answer this main question:

RQ1: Do Oddly–IKEA advert affect altered consciousness?

RQ2: Do Oddly–IKEA advert effect on feeling?

RQ3: Do Oddly–IKEA advert have an effect on relaxation?

RQ4: Do Oddly–IKEA advert have an effect on participants’ affect and emotional response?

RQ5: Do Oddly–IKEA advert influence consumers’ purchasing decisions?

RQ6: Do Oddly–IKEA advert influence perceptions of the advertisement and product?

To answer these questions, we used IKEA’s 25–minute ASMR–themed advertisement titled ‘Oddly IKEA,’ which was published on YouTube on 8 August 2017. The advertisement contains auditory (whispering, fingernail tapping, the sound of metal hangers), sensory (touching a blanket), and visual elements (close–up shots of products). The human message source featured in the advertisement is shown from certain angles, but their face is not clearly visible, and a product–focused verbal narration is preferred.

Although ASMR advertisements reach a wide audience on TV and radio, social media is the main communication channel for marketers (Lee & Chen, 2023). For this reason, YouTube was chosen for this study. Data was collected using a voice recorder, and transcription was performed using the AI–supported Transkriptor programme. Data was organised using a descriptive analysis method and focused on fundamental questions. Descriptive analysis involves defining the data pertaining to the variables in a study through means, standard deviations, and score ranges (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Participants were identified using codes such as P1 and P2 for privacy purposes.

Findings and Analysis

Under this heading, the demographic characteristics of the participants (Table 2), the subdimensions of the ASMR scale, the effect of ASMR and emotional reactions, consumer behaviours and purchase decisions, advertising and product perception are examined.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Participation	Age	Sex	Education	City
P1	42	Male	Postgraduate	İzmir
P2	19	Male	Student(University)	İstanbul
P3	21	Female	Student(University)	İstanbul
P4	23	Female	Undergraduate	Ankara
P5	20	Male	Student(University)	Ankara
P6	36	Female	Postgraduate	İzmir
P7	29	Female	Undergraduate	İstanbul

P8	44	Male	Undergraduate	İstanbul
P9	28	Female	Undergraduate	İzmir
P10	27	Male	Postgraduate	İzmir
P11	34	Female	Undergraduate	Ankara
P12	39	Male	Postgraduate	Ankara

Note. The average age of participants is 30.17.

Table 3

Participants' Perception of Their Past ASMR Experiences

Participants	Are you familiar with the concept of ASMR? If so, how would you define it?
P1	"Yes, sounds that appeal to different senses"
P2	"Yes, whispering, relaxing"
P3	"Yes, whispering, clicking fingernails"
P4	"Yes, peaceful"
P5	"Yes, impressive"
P6	"Yes, irritating"
P7	"Yes, sound of touching, relaxing"
P8	Yes, calming"
P9	"Yes, relaxing"
P10	"Yes, uncomfortable"
P11	"Yes, relaxing"
P12	"Yes, calming"

In the study, the participants were first asked whether they were familiar with the concept of ASMR and to define it. All of the participants reported that they had heard of the concept, but they differed from each other in terms of describing the feeling it aroused in their minds (Table 3). While the majority of those who responded positively defined it as 'whispering, relaxing', the negative responses were 'irritating, uncomfortable'. This finding shows that the reaction to ASMR can vary from person to person. According to this finding, which is supported by research (Cohen et al., 2024), some people experience a strong tingling sensation, while others feel only a slight calmness.

Theme 1: The Multidimensional Effects of the ASMR Experience

In the context of the ASMR scale, the level to which the advertisement provides 'altered consciousness, feeling, relaxation and affect' is analysed.

Altered Consciousness: Firstly, in the category of 'altered consciousness', the participants stated that the ASMR experience induced a hypnotic or trance-like state (P2, P3, P4, P5, P11), partially induced (P9) or not induced (P1, P6, P7, P8, P10, P12). In response to the question about time perception, P2, P3, P11 stated that they did not understand how time passes, P1, P4, P6, P7, P8, P10, P12 stated that time passes slowly, while P5 and P9 stated that it varies according to the content.

Feeling: In the second heading, which focused on understanding the experiences of the participants about the feelings that occurred in their minds while watching the content; P1, P4, P6,

P7, P8, P9, P10, P11 said that it did not evoke an unusual feeling, pleasant, or ambiguous feelings while P3, P5, P12 said that it caused a feeling that they could not define.

Relaxation: For some participants, the relaxing effect of ASMR resulted in falling asleep or becoming close to sleep (P2, P3, P4, P5, P9, P11), while for other participants, this content may cause insomnia (P1, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11) or perceptual confusion (P12). Seven participants answered negatively about the content bringing happiness or peace of mind, two participants stated that the first impact of watching ASMR videos decreased over time, and three participants stated that the visual elements should be more prominent or the video should be shorter.

Affect: All participants reported their experiences as neither highly enjoyable nor memorable, highlighting the individual variability of ASMR and its differing effects. This situation can be explained by structural differences in brain regions associated with sensory and emotional processing (Kornelsen et al., 2023) an individual's neurotic or calm disposition, which may cause them to either seek out or be unable to tolerate stress–reducing activities (Greer, 2022) or the fact that individuals with misophonia are more tolerant of such sounds that do not provoke anger (Kumar et al., 2017).

Theme 2: ASMR Triggers

Within the scope of the research, two questions were asked in order to understand 'ASMR triggers': "Can you describe how the advertisement with ASMR sounds or visuals made you feel? Did it make you feel relaxed, uncomfortable, or any other emotion?", "How do the triggers (e.g., whispering, rhythmic sounds) affect you towards the product or service when watching an advertisement with ASMR content?"

Participants' responses to the first question were divided into two groups: positive and negative. Those who responded positively indicated that the use of ASMR in commercials triggered a sense of curiosity, was relaxing, and that they enjoyed watching it. Similarly, in the literature, Cox (2022) emphasised that ASMR content is relaxing and can even be used in therapeutic applications. Participants who responded negatively stated that the sound (whispering) or visuals (distracting visual intensity) used in the advertisement they watched distracted their attention and made it difficult to focus. They stated that the intense information transfer in the advertisement contradicts the main purpose of ASMR. This finding supports the claim that ASMR is excessively distracting in some cases (Gank Content Team, 2023).

Some participants (P1, P3) stated that the product or service's perceived qualities could vary depending on the type of ASMR trigger. For example, P3 mentioned that the mouth sounds heard during verbal narration were distracting. Furthermore, the narrator's face not being visible created a sense of visual and auditory dissonance, leading to discomfort. This finding indicates that auditory factors may negatively affect some individuals. On the other hand, visual or tactile elements are thought to increase interest in the product or service (P7). Indeed, previous studies have also shown that including tactile elements in advertisements can be beneficial. Messages involving touch are perceived as more persuasive, especially when they evoke neutral or positive sensory feedback (Peck & Wiggins, cited in Krishna et al., 2016).

In addition, P10 stated that the triggering elements used in the advertisement (whispering, nail sounds) would negatively affect the product or service. The participant stated that whispering conversations created a ‘feeling of personal space being violated’ and that nail sounds were ‘annoying’.

Theme 3: ASMR Experiences and Comparison of Traditional Advertising Methods

Two questions were asked under this theme. These questions were, respectively, ‘Have you ever watched a video or advertisement containing ASMR? If so, how did you find the experience?’ and ‘When you compare an advertisement containing ASMR with a traditional advertisement, which one left a more lasting impression on you? Why?’

When the participants’ answers were analysed, it was seen that some answered the first question about the experience by drawing comparisons with psychologically relaxing experiences, arousing curiosity (P5), or feelings that made them feel comfortable (P4, P7, P11). Similarly, Tokmak Danışman (2023) found that consumers generally find ASMR advertisements relaxing and positive, and that they display a voluntary and positive attitude towards rewatching these advertisements.

Research on the subject shows that viewers who react negatively after being exposed to ASMR generally report an unpleasant experience (Swart et al., 2022). Similarly, in the current study, participants (P8, P10) who did not like the advertisement they watched and stated that it disturbed them a lot were encountered.

A participant (P1) noted that experiences varied depending on the content, and certain triggers could cause significant discomfort. Specific sounds (e.g., nails scraping on the product) in ASMR videos may evoke negative emotions or physical unease, potentially indicating misophonia—a condition characterised by strong adverse reactions to particular sounds (Gank Content Team, 2023).

Although some of the participants stated that they watched and even enjoyed ASMR videos, they expressed their discomfort with the advertisements of this content. Based on this, the study found that watching ASMR videos creates a hypnotic effect during the sensory processing process, but that advertising this content causes focus problems. On the other hand, Lee and Chen (2023) stated that consumers focus only on the product and its features in ASMR advertisements and express a desire for the product featured in the advertisement. The findings obtained by Lee and Chen (2023) differ from those of the current study.

In response to the second question in this theme, most participants preferred traditional advertisements. The main reason for this was that traditional advertisements appealed to familiar emotions or had a faster, livelier flow. Participants expressed these emotions as reliability, sudden transitions, bright colours, and the use of celebrities. Given the participants’ average age, this finding supports research suggesting that ASMR can evoke positive emotions among younger audiences (Lee & Chen, 2023).

Some participants stated that, given the rather ordinary nature of traditional advertisements, ASMR advertisements would be more memorable, whether the memory was positive or negative. Similarly, Tokmak Danışman (2023) found that, although traditional advertisements were familiar

and reliable, ASMR advertisements were preferred because they were more eye-catching and innovative. Based on this, participants' responses to the follow-up question regarding which elements ASMR advertisements should contain to influence consumers emphasised the importance of clearly presenting product features (P7), improving video colour quality (P5), and enhancing sound processing (P1). These findings indicate that using professional equipment, such as cameras, lighting, tripods, and sound systems, can enhance the effectiveness of ASMR advertisements. Furthermore, this is supported by GPE (2023), which emphasises the necessity of high production quality to maximise the sensory and emotional impact of ASMR content in advertising

Theme 4: The Role of ASMR Advertisements in Product Perception

In the study, to reveal the effect of ASMR content in advertisements on consumers' perception of products, participants were asked the question, 'How do you think the sound or visual elements used in such advertisements affect your perception of product quality?'

Participants P2 and P3 perceived the hanger as metallic, hard, and high-quality based on the tapping sounds. P1 noted that showing the product's technical and visual features from different angles improved his understanding of its quality. P7 stated that the sound of touching the sheets helped her distinguish whether the material was cotton or nylon. Similarly, P5 felt that interacting with the quilt and pillow conveyed a sense of softness and high quality. These responses indicate that participants use sensory cues, particularly sound and visuals, to evaluate product quality in ASMR advertisements. Tactile sounds and close-up images help them identify materials and feel that the product is authentic. Thus, ASMR can simulate the sensory experience and increase consumer confidence. This is because ASMR ads use visuals and sounds that actually work (Lee & Chen, 2023, p. 342).

Another participant (P4) stated that they evaluated the content they watched as an ASMR video independent of the advertisement and ignored the products shown. This finding suggests that the participant perceived the content as a relaxing experience rather than an advertisement. Likewise, in Sands and colleagues' (2022) study, participants did not find a significant difference in perceived ad quality between ASMR and non-ASMR ads. This situation indicates that viewers, due to ASMR elements, focus on the experiential aspect of the advertisement rather than its content. So the study by Sands et al. (2022) supports the finding obtained in the current study.

P8 and P10 stated that triggers (such as whispering, clicking, scraping, caressing) should be present in order to create a perception of product quality, but that the advertisement could only support an impulsive purchase decision because the functions of the products (not showing how much the table lamp can be tilted and bent) were not detailed. This finding supports Chae et al.'s (2021, p. 463) claim that the primary goal of ASMR marketing is to prompt consumers to make unplanned, impulsive purchases of the product or service.

Some participants stated that ASMR-based advertisements positively influenced their perceptions of the product by clearly presenting price, quality, and usage information (P7, P11).

One of the key factors shaping consumer perceptions of product quality is the provision of detailed information in advertisements (Moorthy & Hawkins, 2005).

Following the second question, participants were asked a follow-up question: ‘What do you think about the future of ASMR usage in the advertising world?’ Will it become more widespread? ‘Why?’ The majority of participants (nine people) responded positively to the last question under this theme. P7 and P11 believe that ASMR ads will become more prevalent due to their ability to provide detailed information to consumers. P1 finds traditional ads increasingly boring and thinks that ASMR is more psychologically engaging due to its multi-sensory appeal. P5 emphasises the growing popularity of ASMR on social media. P9 and P12 point to global interest, especially among younger audiences. While P6 and P10 are not personally interested, they acknowledge that it could become more mainstream. In contrast, P4 thinks AI-driven content could replace ASMR ads, while P8 believes new ad formats could reduce ASMR’s popularity over time.

Theme 5: The Role of ASMR Advertisements in Purchase Decisions

Within the scope of the purpose of the research, four questions were asked of the participants in turn: ‘How do you think the sensory effects of advertisements can affect purchase decisions?’, ‘After watching an advertisement with ASMR content, do you think there is a change in your intention to buy the product promoted in that advertisement? Why?’, ‘Would you consider buying the product after watching the advertisement?’, ‘Would you prefer this brand when you buy a similar product?’

When evaluating participants’ responses to Question 1 under this theme, the majority stated that the sensory effects of ASMR advertisements had a positive impact on their purchasing decisions. A literature review reveals that sensory components, particularly increased feelings of relaxation, influence the purchasing behaviour of individuals who view ASMR advertisements (De Kerpel et al., 2024; Gotsch & Gasser, 2025). In this context, the study’s findings indicate that sensory elements such as attention, relaxation, and satisfaction positively influence purchasing behaviour. In addition, studies in the literature indicate that multisensory experiences (touch, feel, hearing, visual triggers) attract consumers’ attention and increase the likelihood of purchase (Kaushik & Gokhale, 2021, p. 5388; Henderson et al., 2003). Through visual stimuli, sensory marketing or sensory advertising can be used to motivate consumers and guide their purchasing behaviour. However, the findings of this study refute this assumption. Because some participants (P6, P3) stated that emotional stimuli such as tactile (touching the pillow with their nails), visual (creating perceptual confusion due to containing many elements), and auditory (the sound element being annoying) had no effect on their purchasing behaviour, but instead made them feel uncomfortable.

In response to the second question, most participants stated that ASMR advertising influenced their purchasing intentions but did not directly affect them. In this context, participants indicated that their purchasing tendencies were more related to “brand awareness” or “past experiences”.

In the study, some participants stated that the sounds in the advertisement disturbed them, but they liked the images. P1 stated that some of the sounds (such as the sound when she rubbed her fingernails on the duvet cover or pillow) were disturbing and that this sound gave the impression that

the product was of low quality. P3 stated that the sound emitted from the clothes hangers gave the impression that the product was metal and therefore durable. Based on this, it can be concluded that some factors negatively affect the purchase, while others support the purchase, and this varies from person to person. This can be explained by differences in sensory processing (Kornelsen et al., 2023), personal characteristics (Greer, 2022) or misophonia (Kumar et al., 2017).

In response to the third question three participants (P7, P11, P5) stated that they would consider purchasing the product(s); three participants (P1, P4, P10) stated that they would not consider purchasing. Five participants (P6, P8, P2, P3, P9) stated that the brand and its products would come first in their preferences if they needed the product. This finding reveals that advertising affects purchasing as a regulatory variable. P12 stated that he would buy the product(s) because he was familiar with the brand and had seen ASMR advertisements. Therefore, it can be concluded that the combination of an innovative advertising format and brand familiarity and experience resulted in purchase action by the participant (P12). However, it is striking that participants' purchase views were particularly influenced by the necessity component. Therefore, it is possible to say that even ASMR, one of the advertising formats that facilitate sensory interaction, can affect consumers' purchasing behavior in some cases. When responses to the final question were evaluated, it was observed that all participants stated they would choose the brand featured in the advertisement (IKEA) when purchasing a similar product.

Conclusion

When the results of this study, which aims to examine consumer perception and purchase intention of ASMR ads, are evaluated, it is seen that although the majority of the participants reacted positively (relaxing, impressive, calming, etc.) to the ASMR content regardless of the ad, most of the participants evaluated the ad with ASMR negatively (disturbing, irritating, annoying, etc.). The results reveal that although the effects of ASMR content on individuals are highly variable, the effects, such as pleasure, relaxation, or altered consciousness from these experiences, vary significantly according to participants' personal characteristics, neurological structure, and sensory sensitivity. This finding highlights the critical importance of audience analysis and personalization, especially when using ASMR in advertisements.

According to the study's findings, the triggers used in ASMR content differ among viewers. Triggers that elicit positive responses include rhythmic clicking, the sound of products (fabric, hangers), and visually organised presentation. Those who responded positively described the advertisement as 'relaxing' and 'enjoyable to watch.' This finding aligns with Cox (2022), who found that ASMR is a relaxing form of content and can be used in therapeutic applications. However, triggers that evoke negative responses—particularly whispering sounds—were found to be irritating to many individuals, and some associated them with a sense of personal space being violated. The sound produced by scratching with nails was defined as physical discomfort (goosebumps). Additionally, the absence of the human message source's face in the advertisement and the use of

only audio narration created a visual–auditory mismatch for the viewer. This sense of mismatch also negatively influenced participants’ perceptions of the product.

The positive effect of multisensory stimuli in advertising was evident in participants’ statements. This finding is consistent with Rovira’s (2021, p. 25) study, which found that multisensory stimuli elicit greater attention and impact than single–sensory stimuli. However, this study differs from Rovira’s (2021, p. 25) findings in that the length of the advertisement and the inclusion of too many product promotions led to difficulty focusing and perceptual confusion among participants.

Some participants found traditional advertisements more appealing due to their reliability, vivid visuals, and use of celebrities, while others found ASMR advertisements more memorable regardless of sensory triggers. However, contrary to previous studies suggesting that ASMR advertisements positively influence purchasing (De Kerpel et al., 2024; Gotsch & Gasser, 2025), this study presents different views. When correlated with age, participants aged 31 and above were found to be more critical of auditory triggers (e.g., nail sounds). This group found ASMR advertisements effective only in certain product categories (food, personal care, cleaning, fashion, etc.), indicating that they adopted a more selective attitude. In contrast, younger participants (19–30) showed a generally more positive attitude toward ASMR ads. According to a survey conducted by Ipsos in 2022, Generation Z enjoys watching ASMR videos that include relaxing content (Swildens, 2023). The high level of interest shown by participants in this age group in ASMR advertisements suggests that using ASMR advertisements could provide an advantage to brands whose target audience is in this age group.

ASMR–based advertisements function as ‘stimuli’ within the S–O–R model, while sensory responses such as attention, relaxation, and satisfaction emerge at the ‘organism’ stage. While the literature (Kaushik & Gokhale, 2021; Henderson et al., 2003) suggests that such stimuli are attention–grabbing and encourage purchasing, the findings of this study partially challenge this assumption. Some viewers have noted that multi–sensory elements (e.g., tactile nail sounds, visual clutter, and unpleasant sounds) can cause discomfort and negatively impact purchase intentions. This situation demonstrates that, according to the S–O–R model, not every stimulus may elicit a positive response and behaviour. Therefore, while ASMR advertisements have the potential for emotional impact, it is important to select stimuli that are appropriate for the target audience. Additionally, purchase intent is not solely related to sensory stimuli but also to factors such as brand awareness, previous experience, and need level. This finding aligns with Nirwana’s (2023) study. In conclusion, while ASMR advertisements may have an emotional impact, contextual factors play a decisive role in eliciting behavioural responses.

In the study, some of the viewers stated that sensory triggers such as stroking and whispering are effective in increasing the effectiveness of ASMR ads, but that auditory and visual elements must be well processed and the functional features of the products must be highlighted. Additionally, participants emphasised that incorporating these functional features into ad content supports conscious and rational purchasing decisions rather than impulsive ones.

Research findings indicate that ASMR content will be used more widely in advertising in the future due to its multi–sensory structure, information transfer potential, and increasing popularity

on social media. In a highly competitive environment, advertisers can leverage personalised ASMR experiences to capture consumer attention. However, it is essential that such content be used in a manner that is appropriate and balanced with the sensitivities of the target audience to prevent any potential negative effects.

In the Turkish literature, studies have been conducted on ASMR's role in creating emotions (Çerçi, 2021) and experiential marketing (Karpuz & Uraltaş, 2024), as well as on consumer insights and attitudes (Tokmak Danışman, 2023). The present study differs from other studies in terms of methodology, as it opts for a semi-structured interview method to measure consumers' purchase intentions in depth. Future research could evaluate the effectiveness of different types of ASMR advertising, considering that natural advertisements created by ASMRtists through product placement may differ from traditional ASMR advertisements. In addition, in subsequent studies, ASMR advertisements can be discussed in the context of cultural norms, perceptions of privacy, or advertising consumption habits. This study utilised a single advertisement, a limited number of participants, and unnatural conditions. Data were collected only from three major cities, and impressions were measured rather than behavioural effects. Furthermore, reliance on manual analysis rather than software-supported analysis limits the systematic rigour of the study. These factors constrain the generalisability of the findings.

Author Declarations

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