

MALL MAGIC...HOW THE DESIGN OF A MALL TRICKS OUR SENSES INTO SPENDING MORE

**HOW DOES SENSORY BRANDING OPERATE WITHIN THE SENSORY
CONTEXT OF THE CANAL WALK SHOPPING MALL?**

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to determine how the sensory cluttered mall space impacts on sensory branding endeavours. Research into sensory branding within the context of a mall is fairly important, as it is a topic which is internationally and locally neglected. The researcher has also noted that there is a general lacking with regards to research pertaining to sensory branding.

Sensory branding establishes both a physical and a psychological connection between consumers and the goods and services with whom they interact with. The utilisation of five senses in marketing creates a phenomenon known as a sensory experience. However, these sensory experiences are not universal whereby in the context of a mall, buying environments are known as servicescapes. These environments are designed to produce specific emotional reactions in the consumer. Hence, store atmospherics can negatively or positively alter the perception and attention of mall customers. Whereby in some cases, large amounts of sensory branding can result in a phenomenon known as “sensory overload”.

This research makes use of the Canal Walk shopping mall and randomly selected mall shoppers within the mall, whereby the feasibility of this study is based on ease of access for the researcher.

The data for this study was collected using three main research methods, thick descriptions undertaken by the researcher herself, the compiling of a "sensory map" prior to the research process, as well as a brief interview process, which consisted of a sample of 27 mall shoppers. After the research data had been collected, open coding and thematic data analysis were utilised. Whereby, some of the most pertinent data that the research process revealed is as follows:

- Three sensory rich areas are present in the Canal Walk mall.
- The mall space encourages and discourages mall shoppers.
- Malls make people feel very overwhelmed, whereby the experience the phenomenon associated with sensory overload.
- Most mall shoppers are not aware of the terms “sensory branding” and sensory overload.

- The Food Court is an area of rich sensory overload, whereby, due to the design of the Food Court, mall shoppers are trapped within this space, thus increasing the likelihood of a purchase.
- Shoppers make brand perceptions based on “store clusters” as well as mall atmospherics and surrounding sensory stimuli.
- Store clusters, mall atmospherics and surrounding sensory stimuli affect shoppers’ attention both negatively and positively.

This research will form part of a very rare body of work looking at sensory branding within South African malls, as well as sensory branding in a current South African context. The outcomes of this research could prompt further research across other provinces across South Africa, whereby "inter-provincial" comparisons of malls could be made. Further studies could also include the effect of socio-economic statuses in South Africa on the sensory branding endeavours in the space of a mall.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Consumers in the 21st century have a bewildering array of choices in brands available to them. Therefore, according to Neema and Bapna [s.a.], marketers and branders are realising the importance of sensory branding to ensure that their products have the competitive advantage as a means to increase sales. Lindstrom (2005) states that the reason for this is that sensory branding appeals to all of the five senses which in turn creates a strong emotional connection between the brand and the consumer. Consumers with a strong connection to a brand are more inclined to pay higher price margins for this brand, as loyalty generates an emotional attachment between a brand and its consumers (Frost, 2005). Dixon, Stone, Zednickova (2013) and Krishna (2011) therefore define sensory branding as an analytical technique which combines the five senses (touch, taste, smell, sight and sound) to create a memorable brand experience, to create brand awareness as well as affect consumer perception, judgment and behaviour. According to Hulten, Brito and Rodrigues (2011), previous sensory branding studies have revealed that senses are linked to memories, emotions and feelings. According to de Farias, Aguiar and Melo (2014), components of store atmospheres are hence manipulated using sensory techniques related to individual perception to generate certain responses from consumers in retail stores. Kotler (1973) thus argued that the atmosphere of a store can be more influential than a brand's product offerings. The physical environment and surroundings in which an organisation is active in is known as a servicescape (Bitner, 1992). These responses can be both negative and positive and thus, sensory branding can result in a phenomenon known as sensory overload.

Given that the mall space is a servicescape, this thesis describes research that was undertaken to determine how sensory branding operates within the sensoryscape of the canal walk shopping mall. This research will be looking at relevant sensory branding literature in a consumer psychology framework as well as additional primary research within the sensory overloaded context that is the canal Walk mall shopping mall.

The research is necessary as Hulten, Browes and van Dijk (2009) state that traditional models in marketing and branding ignore the significance of human senses and sensory experiences and therefore, further research that takes into account the significance of human senses and sensory experiences is required.

Another observation from compiling the literature review was that most mall oriented studies within a South African context did not focus on sensory branding but rather focussed on “how customer demographics impact on consumer perceptions of shopping mall stores” (Breytenbach, 2014), “how perceptions impact on consumer brand associations (Purushottam, 2011) and “South African class inequalities that are present within shopping mall spaces” (Seekings, 2010).

The notion to explore sensory branding within the context a mall is emphasised by Shabgou and Daryani (2014), who state that future sensory branding studies should be undertaken in an environment, such as a mall, whereby sensory marketing is studied in conjunction with a variety of brands. Pentz and Gerber (2013) stated that further studies could explore sensory overload, whereby these authors prompt marketers within the sensory branding realm to rethink their use of sensory marketing.

The research is relevant because it follows up on research by Middleton (2002) who found that the preference for a more “stimulating” versus a more “tranquil” shopping environment is based on a shoppers’ age. This research also ties into research by Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal and Roggeveen (2014), who state that introducing more sensory cues into a store atmosphere increases the number of sensory touch points, but it also increases the risk of sensory overload.

This study should be interesting to you, the reader, as it is something that has hardly been conducted in South Africa, especially within the context of a mall. This study should also be of interest to you as literature dictates how sensory branding creates an emotional connection between the brand and the consumer. The establishment of emotional connections between brands and their consumers is so vital in the 21st century, whereby consumers have a bewildering array of product/brand choices. Lastly, this study should be of interest to you, the reader, as it looks at the

unexplored topic of how sensory branding can lead to sensory overload, which can cause exhaustion, irritability, anxiety and a loss in brand perception and attention.

The rest of this chapter will look at the research problem, research paradigm, aims of this research, the research questions, research objectives, previous research, research methodology and design, sample, delimitations, assumptions, contributions and challenges of this study

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

As stated in Hulten, *et al* (2009), traditional models in marketing and branding ignore the importance of the human senses. In order for marketing to reinvent itself, marketers need to shift their focus from traditional marketing perspectives grounded on product focus, to a process centred on customers as individuals with senses. Breytenbach, (2014), Purushottam, (2011) and Spence, Puccinelli and Roggeveen (2014) state that class inequalities are present in shopping mall spaces within a South African context and demographics impact on consumer perceptions of shopping mall stores. Thus, since the focus of South African mall studies have been on the effect of demographics on the perceptions of mall shoppers, and not on the effects of sensory branding on this topic, there is a gap in the literature. This study wishes to fill this gap how sensory branding operates within the context of a South African mall and shift the traditional focus of marketing.

Given the above, the research problems are:

- The neglecting of human senses in branding.
- A Lacking of literature focussed on how brands compete within the sensory contexts of a shopping mall.

1.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

As this study is looking at the how sensory branding operates within the sensoryscape of the Canal Walk mall, it is anti-positivist in nature. According to Gupta (2011), an anti-positive approach states that society is subjective, where people have different perspectives on different phenomena, which cannot be quantified.

1.4 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This research aims to fill current gaps in sensory branding research, as it aims to analyse sensory branding within the context of a South African shopping mall. This research is an exploratory study aimed at growing a deeper understanding of the ways in which consumers respond to sensory branding techniques within the context of a mall. This study also aims to shed light on sensory overload and the physical symptoms associated with this phenomenon.

1.5 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the research problems and aims, the primary research question of this study is: How does sensory branding operate within the context of a South African shopping mall?

1.6 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the aims of the research, as well as answer the primary research question, the following secondary research questions have been formulated:

- What is sensory branding?
- What are the differences between attention and perception?
- How do different Canal Walk stores utilise different sensory branding techniques?
- What areas of the Canal Walk shopping mall are areas of significant sensory activity or “sensory hotspots”?
- How do shopping malls impact on sensory branding techniques?
- How does sensory branding within the sensory context of the Canal Walk shopping mall impact on perception and attention of mall customers?
- How does sensory branding in shopping malls deter or encourage mall customers?
- Are mall shoppers aware of the terms “sensory overload” and “sensory branding”?
- How aware are these customers of the sensory branding techniques employed?

1.7 OBJECTIVES

More specifically the objectives of the research are to:

- To define sensory branding.
- To establish if a difference is present between attention and perception.
- To establish if sensory branding techniques differ from store to store within the Canal Walk mall, and if so, establish how different Canal Walk stores utilise different sensory branding techniques.
- To establish the areas of the Canal Walk shopping mall that represent significant sensory activity or “sensory hotspots”.
- To establish how the Canal Walk shopping mall impacts on sensory branding endeavours.
- To establish how sensory branding, within the sensory context of the Canal Walk shopping mall impacts on the perception and attention of mall customers.
- To establish if sensory branding in shopping malls deter or encourage mall customers.
- To establish if mall shoppers are aware of the terms sensory overload and sensory branding.
- To establish the level of awareness of sensory branding techniques amongst Canal Walk mall shoppers.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

Sensory branding establishes not only a physical but also a psychological interaction between consumers and the goods and services with whom they interact with.

Hulten, *et al* (2009) argue that each of the five senses contribute to an experience whereby marketers and branders who harness the power of all of the five senses create a phenomenon known as a sensory experience. However, these authors then go on to state that sensory experiences are not universal, as these subjective experiences that customers have with brands are referred to as experience logics (Hulten, *et al* 2009).

This literature review will aim to define the 5 senses in sensory branding, as well as define relevant branding terms such as perception, attention, awareness and sensory experience. As sensory branding experiences are consumer specific, this literature review will utilise a strong consumer psychology framework by applying and defining psychology terms such as classical conditioning and cognitive learning. The subjective nature of sensory branding also contributes to a phenomenon known as “sensory overload”, as noted by Cain (2012) and Malhotra (1984). Lastly, since this sensory study is specific to the Canal Walk shopping mall, this research has defined servicescape in relation to store atmospherics.

Most European literature on sensory branding focuses on either attention or perception, whereas this research focuses on both. The sensory branding context within shopping malls is a sparsely researched topic, especially in South Africa. As previously noted, former studies on malls in South Africa have mainly focussed on the effects of demographics on consumer perceptions of shopping mall as well as class inequalities present within the context of the mall. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a strong theoretical grounding on relevant sensory branding, consumer behaviour and psychology terminology. This literature review also aims to explore sensory branding techniques within the context shopping malls.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

du Plooy-Cillers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) state that qualitative research deals with the underlying qualities of subjective experiences and the meanings associated with particular phenomena. This research is qualitative as it is an exploratory study which deals with the feelings of mall shoppers within the sensory landscape of the Canal Walk mall.

1.9.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilises an exploratory applied research design. This type of research design looks at exploring a research topic with varying levels of depth. This research design was utilised as the topic of sensory branding within South African malls is fairly unexplored area, especially within the South African context. This unexplored nature of the topic, suites the exploratory applied research design, as the findings of such research normally form the basis of more conclusive research (Research methodology, [s.a]).

The advantages of using exploratory research is that it improves a researcher's knowledge of a topic as well as helps the researcher to make better conclusions, whereby knowledge of a topic helps to refine subsequent research questions and will significantly enhance the effectiveness of the findings of a study (Universal Teacher, 2015). However, a disadvantage of exploratory research is that it seldom offers adequate answers to research questions. The researcher has attempted to mitigate this disadvantage by using a variety of research tools as a means to adequately answer the research questions.

1.9.2 RESEARCH TOOLS

The researcher administered 3 research tools, a sensory mapping process to identify the areas within the mall that represent significant sensory activity, observations as well as 27 interviews with randomly selected mall shoppers. Open coding as well as thematic data analysis has been utilised to analyse the data generated from the above research tools.

1.9.3 SAMPLE

A narrow but representative subset of the total population of your study is known as a sample.

This study made use of non-probability convenience sampling, whereby the sample of this study will be 27 females or males aged 20 and above from the Canal Walk shopping centre.

1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The delimitation of this study is that it only looked at one shopping mall, the Canal Walk shopping mall in the Cape Town. As the researcher did not have the time and funds to interview respondents across all of the malls in South Africa. This study is also delimited by the fact that only 27 Canal Walk customers were interviewed. The study is then also limited by the fact that it only looks at one mall in South Africa, whereby the interview process only looks at 27 respondents.

1.11 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study assumes that the mall is a sensory rich space.

- This study assumes that sensory branding is present within the Canal Walk mall.
- This study assumes that there is a lacking of sensory branding research within the mall within South African literature.
- This study assumes that sensory branding endeavours affect the perception and attention of mall shoppers.

1.12 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

- To make mall shoppers aware of the sensory overload and its possible adverse physical effects.
- A chance for marketers to reconsider their sensory branding endeavours, bearing in mind that this study aims to shed light on how sensory branding can cause adverse physical symptoms.
- To contribute local research available on this subject matter.

1.13 POSSIBLE CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

- There is a limited amount of time and funds available to the researcher; the study is therefore limited to the resources available to the researcher.
- The sample is a small portion of the total population.
- Access to local literature pertaining to sensory branding within South African malls is limited.

1.14 LAYOUT OF THE THESIS

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Chapter 5: Recommendations and conclusions

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The contents of this chapter will include secondary research on the topic that is sensory branding within the context of an already sensory cluttered place, the mall.

This chapter layout defines the concept that is multisensory sensory branding. This literature then goes on to discuss the subjectivity of sensory branding, whereby based on customer perception of sensory stimuli is based on their personal biases, needs and experiences. The literature then goes on to look at a perceptual model, which indicates the subjectivity of sensory branding, as well as sensory overload, in the form of adverse physical effects in response to sensory branding. Once a stimulus has grabbed a consumer's attention, he or she will then interpret the stimuli by assigning meaning to said stimuli, a process known as interpretation. As noted earlier, attention can be defined as a focussed mental engagement on a particular item, whereby this literature will further define attention and the notion of unconscious attention.

As this study is focussed on the mall, the literature also focussed on how servicescapes, or the occurring physical environments and surroundings in which organisations are operational, impact on sensory branding endeavours and consumer perception. In conjunction to servicescapes, this literature will also define store atmospherics which refers to the conscious effort by marketers to design buying environments to produce specific emotional reactions in the consumer, as well as look at how malls are designed and how this can impact sensory branding.

Retail environments can therefore provide customers with a superior customer experience, a concept known as experiential marketing. Perceptions consequently lead to brand acceptance, which ultimately leads to an increase in sales. However, consumers do not actively seek brand information to form perceptions, and form brand perceptions through repetition. A process known as Behavioural learning.

Lastly, this literature will discuss how consumers do not actively seek brand information to form perceptions.

In order for marketers and branders to better understand the consumer decision making process, it is important to analyse all five senses in relation to one another. As stated by Lindstrom (2005), the most successful companies integrate the five senses.

2.1 THE FIVE SENSES IN MULTI-SENSORY BRANDING

2.1.1 SIGHT

According to Lindstrom (2005), vision is the most seductive sense. This author states that within wavelengths lights appear to us as colours. Schiffman (2001) notes that contrasts in colour can makes certain objects stand out in relation to the environment in which these products exist. Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2006) state that colours have a rich and symbolic value for consumers. For example, for British customers, the colours red, white and blue combined could evoke feelings of patriotism. These authors then state that different colours can also evoke different emotions; colours such as blue can be seen as calming whereas red tends to hype customers up. Colour preferences can also be culturally specific; for example, red symbolises luck in China and Argentina, but is seen as unlucky in German, Chad and Nigeria (Aslam, 2005)

Due to the subjective nature of sight, the visuality of a brand can therefore affect customers both negatively and positively.

Marketers and branders rely heavily on these rich cultural and psychological associations which people have with colours, as they incorporate these associations into their product, product packaging as well as store designs. Colours are thus used in retail settings to affect a customers buying mood (Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty, 1983). It is therefore not only important for marketers to consider the use of colour so that attention is maximised, but also so that these colour choices evoke positive feelings from their customers, which ultimately leads to positive feelings toward the brand (Stanger, 2012).

According to van Jaarsveld (2010), visual cues can also be in the form of lighting. Quartier, Christiaans and van Cleempoel (2008), emphasise the importance of store lighting in creating store environments, whereby these authors note that under bright lighting, products are examined and touched more than products under dim light

lighting. These authors also note studies done by Taylor and Sucof (1974), who note that people are drawn to light, and thus will be more inclined to frequent shops that utilise bright lighting

Studies done by Knez and Kers (2000) have shown that most people prefer a warmer, dimmer lighting as opposed to bright, white lighting.

An example of a retail space utilising light, is how clothing retailer Abercrombie and Fitch dim their store lights in order to create a night club environment as this is true to their brand's identity, or the unique set of brand associations that represent what a brand stands for (Aaker, 2009).

2.1.2 SOUND

According to Lindstrom (2005), sound is connected to moods and feelings. Elevator, pipe and classical music are often played in stores as these genres of music relax customers. It is in this way that music is known to contribute to the well-being of shoppers, thereby contributing positively to buying activity (Solomon *et al*, 2006).

According to Eriksson and Larsson (2011), the speech rate of a voice can have an impact on the persuasive power of a message. Solomon *et al* (2006), echoes this notion by stating that broadcasters often use a technique called *time compression*, whereby they speed up the announcer's voice in commercials to 120-130% of normal. This technique has been shown to positively persuade customers in some situations but negatively persuade customers in other situations. This speaks to the subjectivity of sensory branding. One can also see this subjectivity in sensory branding by again looking at Abercrombie and Fitch. This brand plays loud, club like music in their stores, music which appeals to their teenage target market, but is hated by the parents of this consumer group who visit the store (Solomon *et al*, 2006) It is thus important for companies to research their customer's preference in music, as a means to harness the power of the sense of sound.

Music in particular can be used to evoke memories, for example the distinct Nokia start up jingle. If a sound is continually repeated it will be entrenched in the consumer's memory. This is known as a sound logo (Illner, 2011). Sound repetition consequently contributes to brand recognition (Lindstrom, 2009). Sounds also aid in eliciting needs. According to van Jaarsveld (2010), the sound of a beer opening can make a consumer thirsty, as this sound evokes memories of thirst whereby this thirst can be satisfied by a beer.

According to Rossing (1997), sound can be categorised into wanted and unwanted sound. Rossing then goes to label unwanted sound as noise, and states that noise has an impact on communication as well as produces different psychological and physiological effects in consumers.

According to Hulten *et al* (2009), the human voice is a type of sound that has the ability to transcend emotions and affect a message being communicated.

2.1.3 TOUCH

According to Solomon *et al* (2006), tactile cues have meanings, as product quality is directly linked to touch. For example silk, which is smooth to the touch, is considered luxurious, whereas denim which is rough to the touch is considered to be durable. The reason for quality being associated to touch is because the processing of fabric is costly, and the smoother the fabric is the more it has been processed. Advertisers like Cadbury have been known to link the feel of silk as being luxurious to the taste of their hot chocolate as being like silk. Court, Elzinga, Mulder and Vetvik (2009) argue that consumers like to evaluate products before they purchase them. Consumers want to touch products as a means to gain information about the product before making a purchasing decision.

Touch also conjures up feelings of ownership. Therefore, if customers are allowed to touch or interact with products before purchase, they are more inclined to purchase these products. However, the need to touch a product before purchase differs from consumer to consumer (Eriksson and Larsson, 2011). These authors then go on to state whilst some consumer's "need to touch" will be satisfied by placing their product in their shopping cart, other consumers require more time to interact with the product before making a purchasing decision. Peck and Wiggins (2006), note that people with a high need to touch will be more affected by sensory marketing than those with a low need to touch.

2.1.4 SMELL

Lindstrom (2005) states that like all of the other senses, smell is linked to memory. Solomon *et al* (2005), echoe this notion by stating that some of our responses to scent are as a result of previous associations resulting from prior life experiences. An example of which being the "baby-powder" like scent that is frequently used in fragrances, as this smell generally connotes comfort and gratification. The reason for

this being that the baby powder scent subliminally recalls memories of us being soothed or cradled as a baby (Library of Fragrances, [s.a.]). Spencer (2013) states that the reason smells trigger memories is because the olfactory nerve which carries sensory messages from the nostrils to the brain is closely connected to the amygdala and hippocampus, areas of the brain which are connected to emotional memory. Consumer smell experiences are therefore subjective, as according to Solomon *et al* (2006), smells can evoke positive memories or cause consumers to relive stressful memories.

2.1.5. TASTE

Every average human tongue has ten thousand taste buds. However, everyone's sense of taste is different which is evident by the fact that a person's sense of taste changes as they grow older (Solomon *et al*, 2005). Taste buds are divided into four main types – sweet, salty, sour and bitter. This author also argues that the sense of smell is closely related to the sense of taste. van Jaarsveld (2010) echoes this notion by stating that the sense of smell in the consumer's memory bank can evoke certain tastes and memories. For example, when a consumer smells strawberry scented perfume, they are more inclined to buy this product if the smell of strawberries conjures up positive memories of eating strawberries.

2.1.6 SENSORY EXPERIENCE

According to Elder, Krishna and Carrera (2010), humans rarely process one sense at a time. The interaction between all five senses causes a sensory experience and as a result, a brand connection between the customers and the brand is created. According to Keller (1993), this connection is known as the relational approach to consumption, as it enables customers to feel a connection to the brand and therefore, develop a relationship with the brand. According to Larsson and Erikson (2011), sensory branding should serve as a means to create a brand experience in which customers feel like their emotions are expressed and their memories are evoked. This sensory experience can be seen in figure 1.

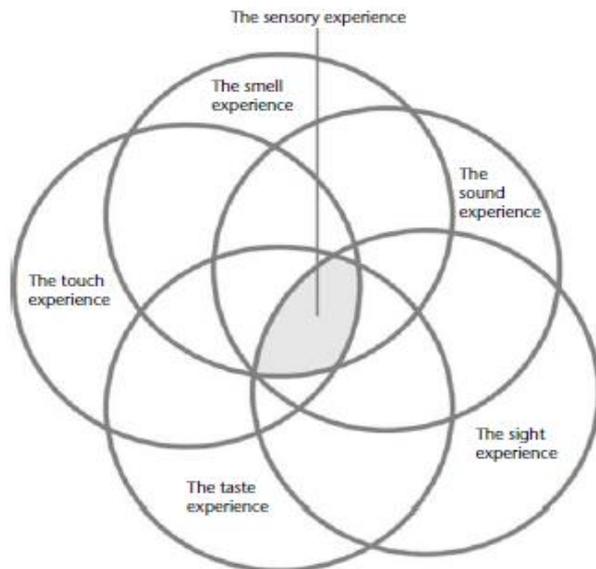


FIGURE 1: SENSORY EXPERIENCE (HULTEN, BROWEUS, VAN DIJK, 2009, PP.17)

2.1.7 PERCEPTUAL MODEL

Individuals respond to stimuli (sights, sounds, smells, touch and tastes) based on their personal biases, needs and experiences. The Free Dictionary [s.a.] defines a stimulus as an agent, condition or action that elicits or exacerbates a physiological or psychological response.

The perceptual process as noted by Solomon *et al*, 2006, which can be seen in figure 2, is as follows:

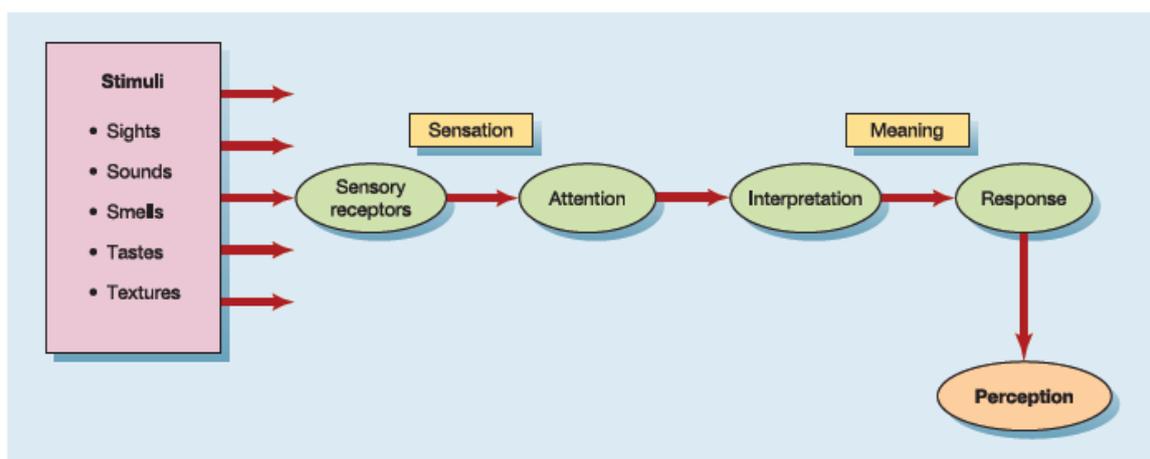


FIGURE 2: PERCEPTUAL PROCESS (SOLOMON, 2006, PP.37)

Sensation, the first stage of the perceptual model refers to the immediate response of our sensory receptors (eyes, ears, noses, mouths and fingers) to stimuli (light, colours, smells, tastes and textures). After the sensory receptors detect stimuli,

consumers will focus on stimuli within their range of exposure. This process is known as attention. Once a stimulus has grabbed a consumer's attention, he or she will then interpret the stimuli by assigning meaning to said stimuli, a process known as interpretation.

Interpretation is therefore based on an individual beliefs and feelings, or schemas. A response or a reaction to said stimuli is then generated.

Based on the above literature, one can therefore gauge the importance of multi-sensory branding in creating a sensory experience, as one can see that all of the senses work together to create a coherent sensory experience. One can also see from the above research the element of subjectivity associated with sensory branding which causes different emotions for different consumers based on their personal schemas.

A customer's feelings or perceptions of brands will then result in either a positive or a negative brand image. Due to the subjectivity associated with sensory branding, sensory overload occurs when the sensory experiences from the environment are too great for an individual's nervous system to process (NSPT, 2014). According to Campbell (2011), any sense can result in overload, noise from multiple sources, such as several people talking at once, bright lights or crowds, strong aromas or spicy foods as well as an overload of tactile sensations. This author then goes on to say that sensory overload often results in confusion, fatigue, anxiety and in severe cases muscle pain and depression. Malhotra (1984), upon which most sensory studies are grounded on, notes that one of the ways in which people respond to sensory overload is via ignoring sensory stimuli and its associated stimuli. This could lead to the detriment of sensory branding endeavours within the sensory context of a mall. This author also makes reference to "crowding"; a psychological phenomenon caused by the interaction amongst special, social, personal and physical dimensions, a subset of sensory overload. This author then notes that crowding renders one's ability to effectively cope with the perceptual or cognitive demands imposed by the environment, thus making crowding very possible within a mall space.

According to Cain (2012), extroverts are more capable at dealing with sensory and information overload, as introverts devote 75% of their cognitive capacity on interpreting information and 25% of their cognitive capacity on reflecting. This is compared to extroverts, who may spend as 90% of their cognitive capacity on task.

The perceptions of customers are influenced by servicescapes, which according to Bitner (1992), refers to the designed or naturally occurring physical environments and surroundings in which organisations are operational. Bitner then goes on to say that the context of servicescapes thus extends to ambient conditions, symbols, space as well as the interior and exterior design of an organisation. Interior and exterior design extends to the layout of a company, as well as the equipment, sound, lighting and store scents employed by companies. Botha, van Heerden and Durieux (2009) extend Bitner's definition of servicescape by saying that servicescape refers to the aesthetic appeal and design of hallways, walkways, food courts, restrooms, entrances and exits of businesses. The design of these elements, can aid in favour of, or in detriment to, a customer's ease of access to the surroundings of a company, as well hinder ease of access to said company's product offerings. According to Patrol (2010), sensory branding techniques are interwoven into the overall servicescape design, a process which occurs during the zoning of a shopping mall. Zoning, within a commercial context, refers to the process of planning for land use by allocating certain land areas of the total area occupied by the shopping mall plot, to certain shopping categories (Murray, [s.a.]). There are two methods of retail zoning, either a group of the same category of shops are grouped in one zone, or stores are randomly grouped together, regardless of store category. The effectiveness of sensory branding techniques employed by retail marketers will thus depend on the type of zoning employed by the retail planner and this can be troublesome for sensory marketers. For example, if music is played in the zoning area outside the store, this music should be suitable and relevant to the brand personalities and atmospherics (more of which is discussed at a later stage) of all of the stores present within the zone. However, in the event that there are different categories of stores present within a shopping mall zone, it becomes difficult to provide one genre of music or type of sound which is able to influence all of the shoppers, from all of the different store categories (Patrol, 2010). This issue is then heightened when individual stores present within a zone of varied store categories play in store music, which then has the potential to clash with external store music. The challenge for retail marketers is thus: to collate the sound experience with store zoning placements (Patrol, 2010).

As this study will focus on the Canal Walk shopping mall, the store categories present within this mall are:

- Arts, antiques and gifts.
- Audio, electronics, personal computers and cell phones.
- Banks.
- Books, cards and stationery.
- Clothing.
- Dance.
- Department stores.
- Eyewear and optometrists.
- Fabrics and sewing.
- Food.
- Footwear.
- Hair, health, beauty.
- Home and décor.
- Jewellery.
- Luggage and leather.
- Motorbikes.
- Movies and entertainment.

Servicescapes can influence a customer's overall satisfaction of an experience with a brand. The reason for this, according to Harris and Ezeh (2008), is that servicescapes can trigger emotional responses from customers and thus affect their decision on whether to continue or discontinue supporting a particular brand.

2.1.8 HOW SERVICESCAPES MANIPULATE OUR SENSES

Upon walking into most stores within a shopping mall, you are overloaded with sights, sounds and objects to touch; whereby Klosowski (2013) notes that the reason for this is that sensory branding within malls leads to customers spending more. This author then went on to note the following:

Most stores tap into one's sense of sight, whereby subtle cues cause mall patrons to spend more time in mall stores. For example, retailers often use colour to evoke feelings, as different colours have different associations. This is seen in the fact that red is often associated with sales, whereby this colour causes people to take action.

Store layout can also subconsciously increase spending, as retailers consciously create simple in store navigational roadblocks. For example, you go a store with the soul intention of purchasing milk; however, the milk is at the back of the store, which means that in order to get to the milk you will have to walk past other aisles, which could increase the likelihood of you purchasing unnecessary items. Retailers want you to get lost so that you get lost and see more of their products. Anand (2013) notes that malls are built like mazes and the escalators are a far distance from the shops as to encourage window shopping, whilst people navigate their way to the elevator. This author also notes that the entrances to cinemas are designed in such a way that movie goers do not have to come into contact with a large amount of stores, as they are most likely in a hurry and will not have time to shop. However, the exits of the cinemas are positioned so that the movie goers are “released” into the middle of the mall. The reasoning behind this is that after watching a movie, movie goers will be more relaxed and thus more inclined to make impulsive purchases.

Clustering, or the arrangement of store that offer similar product offerings, is another tactic that mall owners/designers deploy to increase purchasing intention. According to Anand (2013), clustering increases purchasing intentions, as a shopper might be able to resist the temptation of one store; this ability is drastically reduced when the number of stores is increased. Klosowski (2013) notes that the visuals in the forms of product displays in store create brand images whereby people feel that if they buy your products they can live the lifestyle associated with this brand image. Hence, stores like Mr Price Home set up product displays, by utilising their products to create “mock-rooms” to create a certain ambiance and associated lifestyle. Customers will come into the store, with the intention of purchasing a lamp, whereby they will see said lamp in the mock-room set up, and thus be persuaded to purchase other items within the room to recreate this lifestyle or ambiance portrayed by the mock-room set up.

According to Klosowski (2013), mall shops are designed in a way that encourages mall shoppers to constantly pick up store products, as to increase the likelihood of a purchase. This author also notes that if store items are located on a shelf we are more inclined to pick them up and that studies also show that people are more inclined to touch store items located on the centre of a shelf. Anand (2013) a shopping cart or basket is not just for convenience, when you have a shopping basket you are more inclined to purchase unnecessary items, as we will be more

inclined to mindlessly drop items into our shopping cart without giving these purchases much consideration.

Scent makes you more willing to spend, whereby an example of which would be walking into the swimming costume section of a store and smelling coconut. The rationale behind this is that the smell of coconut will conjure up the memory of summer, and thus increase the likelihood of a customer purchasing a swimming costume (Klosowski, 2013). This author also notes that music makes customers more willing to shop, whereby research has shown that music played at a high volume causes people to move through stores at a quick pace, whereas slow music causes people to spend longer in shops and make impulsive purchases. The tempo of music utilised is dependent on the wishes of the in store retailer. For example, if the retailer wants you to move through a place quickly, in the instance of a fast food restaurant he or she will utilise fast paced music. However, when retailers want the customers to stay longer, in high end shops, they utilise slow paced music. However, Malhotra (1984) notes that noise can interfere with the integration of sensory information as well as affect intellectual performance, act as a stress inducer as well prevent one's ability to focus on information cues.

2.1.9 SENSORY STORE ATMOSPHERICS

Closely related to servicescapes, is store atmosphere which refers to the conscious effort by marketers to design buying environments to produce specific emotional reactions in the consumers. Servicescape are hence used as a tool to increase the likelihood of consumer purchases (Kotler, 1974). Atmospherics are related to sensory branding, as store atmospheres are orchestrated by marketers to express specific sensory qualities of a store which in turn, elicits and evokes specific consumer responses. As a result, many retailers therefore use atmospherics to redefine themselves as providers of memories. This emotional connection between a brand and its customers thus goes beyond the traditional purpose of business – to provide customers with goods and services (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). These authors then notes that retail experiences have the power to turn once-off customers into repeat customers. Lindstrom (2005) seconds this notion of Pine and Gilmore, by stating that the past decade has seen a shift towards an increase in retailers using sensory branding techniques such as in store music, the altering of store layouts and décor as well as an increase in the utilisation of store specific aromas. However, this

author views these types of sensory branding techniques as “non-branded sensory progresses”, as he states that few retailers have developed their own “branded sound” or designed their own tactile oriented bags and packing. The author notes that the reason for this is that retail spaces are often centred and crafted around generating traffic as opposed to generating loyalty. However, the author then goes on to predict that in the foreseeable future many retailers will shift their non-branded sensory marketing techniques to branded techniques.

Kotler (1973) states that atmospherics are divided up into two categories: desired and perceived atmospheres. Desired atmospheres refer to a set of sensory qualities designed for an artificial environment in order to establish a particular ambiance. In contrary to this, perceived atmosphere thus refers to the fact that perceptions of atmospheres vary from one person to another and thus, organisational atmospheres cannot be fully controlled by retail marketers. Soars (2009) echoes this notion by stating that store atmospheres affect consumer behaviour in three ways:

1. Through the use of sights, smells and touch, atmospherics can be used to grab the attention of customers. Atmospherics can thus be used as a means of competitor differentiation.
2. Atmospherics can be used to transmit the characteristics of a particular environment.
3. Store atmospheres can trigger emotional reactions within consumers and increase the likelihood of a purchase.

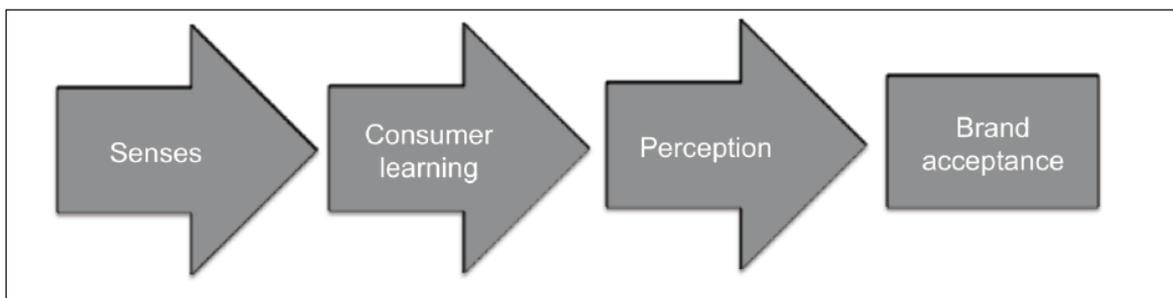
de Farias, Aguiar and Melo (2014) thus encourage retail marketers who are involved in planning store atmospherics to answer the following questions:

- Who is your target audience?
- What are the customers looking for in terms of shopping experience?
- What atmospheric variables can strengthen the beliefs and emotional reactions of shoppers?

According to Kaitcheve and Weitz (2006) as seen in de Farias *et al* (2014), in order to create a stimulating shopping environment, retailers need to utilise four basic constructs – motivation, orientation, arousal and pleasantness. Farias *et al* (2014), defines the above terms as follows: Arousal extends to an objective and or subjective release of energy representing the level of nonspecific physiological responses. Pleasantness refers to ones response to a stimulus, which is based on

the ability of said stimulus to achieve ones prominent goals. Stimuli that do not result in goal achievement are thus considered as unpleasant. Retail environments can therefore provide customers with a superior customer experience, a concept known as *experiential marketing*. However, customers often have different perceptions and reactions to organisational servicescapes and sensory stimulations (Farias et al, 2014). According to Cant, Brink and Brinjball (2002) as seen in van Jaarsveld (2010), marketers aim to influence consumer perceptions through information received through their senses. Consumers thus process sensory information and attach their own meaning to said information, upon which a brand decision is made. Perceptions consequently lead to brand acceptance, which ultimately leads to an increase in sales. This author then visually illustrates this process, as seen in the figure below:

FIGURE 3: CONSUMER PERCEPTION DEVELOPMENT (VAN JAARVELD, 2010, PP. 26)



Source: Adapted from Sheth *et al.*, (1999:298).

However, consumers do not actively seek brand information to form perceptions. Instead, consumers are repeatedly reminded of brands by companies as a means to build positive brand perceptions. van Jaarsveld (2010) refers to this process as behavioural learning, which extends to: classical conditioning, instrumental conditioning and observational learning.

2.1.0 BEHAVIOURAL LEARNING

Classical conditioning, a process coined by Ivan Pavlov is a process whereby marketers build positive brand associations utilising repetition to reinforce memories of a brand. Classical conditioning thus occurs through stimuli in the form of brand associations to evoke memories within the consumer. An example of classical conditioning is a brand jingle, as hearing the jingle will lead to the consumer being reminded of the brand.

Cognitive Learning, a process coined by Edward Tolma comprises of stimuli received via the senses which are mentally processed to form a perception of a

brand. This mental process results in memories and sensory memories. According to Nilsson and Wingstrom (1995) as seen in Eriksson and Larsson (2011), our memory consists of various processes, one of which being sensory memory, which is activated when our sensory organs receive knowledge via stimuli. According to Eriksson and Larsson (2011), sensory memories are grounded in emotional memories, or memories of previous experiences and events that have led to emotional triggers, thus leading to memories being stored. Once information has been processed by the sensory memory, information of interest to the customer is selected and transmitted to the short term memory or short term memory store for further processing (Eriksson and Larsson, 2011 and van Jaarsveld, 2010). Information in the short term memory is processed by repetition or association. Therefore, if marketers do not repeat sensory stimuli in ten seconds, sensory information will be forgotten (Eriksson and Larsson, 2011). However, if sensory stimuli are repeated and reinforced, these sensory stimuli will be processed further, which will lead to said stimuli reaching the long term memory storing stage. As mentioned in classical conditioning, marketers facilitate repetition through an utilisation of an assortment of symbols, icons and jingles.

Whilst perception is one's ability to make sense of the environment in which they find themselves in, attention is one's ability to concentrate (Ejim, 2015). The notion of perception is thus strongly linked to attention. Attention is an important concept to define for a study focusing on sensory branding. Davenport and Beck (2001) extends Ejim's (2015) definition of attention, by saying that attention refers to a focussed mental engagement on a particular item. Davenport and Beck (2011) further extends this definition of attention by saying that the first phase of attention is awareness, whereby we screen our surroundings and register multiple sensory inputs present around us. People pay attention to what interests them and this is known as the narrowing phase of the attention process. This author then states that the narrowing phase is followed by the decision phase, whereby people decide on whether or not to act on the sensory information provided to them. Eriksson and Larsson (2011) therefore argue that people see and hear what they want to see and hear, a process known by Pasher (1998) as selective attention. During selective attention people only attend to a small portion of stimuli of the variety of stimuli to which they are exposed to. This author then goes on to say that selective attention can be seen in the following scenario: You are listening to a person in a noisy room whereby other

people are simultaneously talking to each other. You can hear the people around you talking, but your focus in general, is on the person with whom you are talking to. In addition to selective attention, Klingberg (2007) as seen in Eriksson and Larsson (2011) notes three additional types of attention. Attention can be stimuli driven, whereby our focus is drawn to the happenings in our immediate environment. Attention can also be linked to our level of focus as well as our level of desire to control our attention. Lastly, attention can be perceived in an unconscious state, whereby we do not react and acknowledge every one of our brain's mental processes. Uleman and Bargh (1989) define unconscious attention as a process that:

- People are unaware of, for example you might “bob” your head to music you like without realising it.
- Happens without effort, for example when you speak you utilise words in your vocabulary without consciously doing so.
- Is unintended, for example you might, without intending to, call someone by a different person's name.
- Autonomous, or happens by itself, for example you might set your alarm for 8am, only to wake up by yourself at 7:59am
- Resists conscious control, for example a person might not be able to stop saying phrases such as “Um” and “like”.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, (2014), research methodology refers to the ways in which the data will be collected as well as the ways in which the data will be analysed.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was employed to explore sensory branding within the context of a shopping mall, and not to provide conclusive solutions to existing problems. This study is grounded in a fairly unknown area (sensory branding within shopping malls in South Africa) and thus, based on the above two reasons, this research study is based on an exploratory applied research design. This type of research design looks at exploring a research topic with varying levels of depth. However, because as noted above, this type of research is usually utilised to look into fairly unexplored areas, the findings of such research normally forms the basis of more conclusive research (Research methodology, [s.a]).

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

As noted earlier, Qualitative research deals with the underlying qualities of subjective experiences and the meanings associated with particular phenomena (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). These authors and Explorable (2009) define qualitative research as subjective and value sensitive, as this type of research seeks to understand human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. Adding to the subjectivity of qualitative research is that qualitative researchers often have the tendency to become immersed in the subject matter of their research (Explorable, 2009). Nieswiadomy (2011) extends the above definition, by stating that qualitative research is a process aimed at generating a complex and holistic view for analysing and describing the views of people within a natural context. QSR [s.a] states that the most common forms of generating qualitative data is focus groups, in-depth interviews, content analysis and ethnographic studies. However, open ended surveys, interviews, audio recordings, as well as various media such as videos, pictures and social media websites can also be used to gather qualitative data.

As the research looks at the subjective sensory experience generated from sensory branding, within the sensory context of a shopping mall, this research is qualitative in nature.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et al* (2014), qualitative data collection methods lead to rich and detailed data, as these data collection methods analyse complex and multifaceted phenomena within specific social contexts. Qualitative data thus allows researchers to see worldly occurrences through the eyes of its participants. The goals of qualitative data collection methods, according to this author, are to explore, understand and describe occurrences/phenomena, not to explain measure, quantify, predict and generalise phenomena.

3.3.1 SENSORY MAPPING

Firstly, this research has employed a sensory data technique known as sensory mapping, whereby a map of Canal Walk was utilised to fill out relevant and applicable sensory elements present throughout the centre, as well as identify sensory “hotspots”, or areas of significant sensory activity. This data collection technique is similar to the data collection technique employed by Lippincott, Dixon, Stone and Zednickova in a 2013 research paper entitled: *Engaging customers through sensory branding*. Refer to figure 4 for clarity on this technique.



FIGURE 4: SENSORY BRANDING MAP (DIXON, STONE AND ZEDNICKOVA, 2013)

3.3.2 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

After the sensory mapping process was conducted, this research made use of the participant approach, by making observations of phenomena in their natural environment. The field research approach prompts researchers to accept that the behaviour of individuals who have been observed has a purpose, and that the behaviours and feelings of said individuals are expressions of their personal feelings and beliefs. Observations are thus defined as examining people within naturally occurring situations or settings (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). This research thus made use of partial field research observation. The researcher was immersed in the shopping mall culture by experiencing the same mall conditions and occurrences

that the shoppers were experiencing, but at the same time, the researcher made observations from a distance. This meant that the researcher was able to immerse herself within the sensory experience present at Canal Walk, but also, since observations were done from a distance, this research will be partially objective. The chosen observational setting for this research process was the Canal Walk shopping centre, as it is a setting which is easily accessible for the researcher. This centre is also the biggest shopping centre in the Western Cape and the third largest shopping centre in Africa. During the observation process, this researcher utilised thick descriptions. Thick descriptions refer to detailed accounts of field experiences, whereby the aims of this type of research are to reveal the patterns present in social and cultural relationships (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006).

3.3.3 OPEN ENDED INTERVIEWS

The sensory mapping and observation data collection processes were accompanied by a set of open ended questions to be asked as part of a timeous interview process. This process utilised those people who are within close proximity to the identified sensory “hotspots” present with the Canal Walk shopping mall. This research utilised informal, semi structured or “conversational” type interviews to allow this research to be as open and adaptable as possible (du Ploy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), semi structured interviews follow a set list of questions or topics. However, semi structured interview questions are set-up in a way that enables a researcher to stray away from the recommended list of questions when he or she feels it is appropriate to do so. Open ended questions are free from presented or implied choices and thus, answers to these questions will reflect the respondents own perceptions, rather than reflecting the researcher’s perceptions on said questions (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, [s.a.] and Lewis Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004).

3.4. POPULATION

A population refers to all of the possible cases of people or entities (social artefacts or events) that constitute the known whole of a group from whom information is required (Yount, 2006 and du Plooy-Cillers *et al*, 2014). Population extends to the target population and the accessible population. The target population is everyone or everything that falls within the population parameters. This is in contrast to the

accessible population, which refers to the total section of the population who can be included in our study (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Thus, the target population of this study would be all shoppers of all of the malls located within Cape Town. However, the accessible population refers to all of the shoppers within the Canal Walk shopping mall.

3.5 SAMPLE

According to du Plooy-Cilliers (2014), researchers often find that their accessible populations include too many elements for them to analyse within their given time frame and budget allocations. They conclude that after researchers have identified an accessible population for their study; they then are the required to draw up a narrow subset of this population. It is necessary that this population subset is considered to be a representative of the total population. This process is known as a sampling.

This research made use of non-probability convenience sampling, as the findings of this study do not need to be generalised to the larger population. Convenience sampling thus refers to the sample of elements that we know of or have easy and quick access to. Convenience sampling can be heavily biased to the social or professional surroundings of the research (du-Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). The sample of this study is thus 27 females or males aged 20 and above from the Canal Walk shopping centre. This research utilises convenience sampling as the researcher interviewed those people who were easy to access during the interview process. This sampling process is an example of non-probability sampling, as all of the individuals in the population have not been given equal chances of being selected to participate in this study

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

After the data was collected, open coding was utilised to analyse the data. According to researchproposals [s.a.], open coding refers to the process of reducing data to small sets of themes in order to aid a researcher in describing the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher made use of open coding by reading through the entire text of the thick descriptions observational texts. Certain concepts or emerging texts relating to senses, as well as feelings towards sensory branding techniques

(within the context of a mall) were then identified. After this initial coding process, the researcher then reread and highlighted words present within the thick descriptions and interview texts based on the themes identified. The researcher then went on to compare concepts gained from rereading the text with concepts gained from the initial reading process. Open coding therefore utilises the processes of breaking down, examining, comparing, categorising and re-categorising of data (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

The researcher also made use of thematic research analysis, which according to Yliopisto ([s.a.]), refers to identifying, analysing and reporting patterns in the data. This process resulted in rich data descriptions.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014), it is easier to measure reliability and validity in quantitative studies as this type of research is often based on cause and effect relationships. However, quantitative studies do not explain in-depth understandings on why cause and effect relationships occur and repeating a qualitative study to yield cause and effect results is not possible. The above author suggests that validity and reliability can be measured in qualitative studies by using the term trustworthiness, which extends to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

This research has ensured dependability by guaranteeing that that the integration process that takes place between the data collection, data analysis and literature review is of a high quality. Credibility in this research has been guaranteed by ensuring that the data generated during the data collection process supports the findings and interpretations of this research. This has been achieved by ensuring that the research process is fully described within the research methodology section of this study (du-Plooy Cilliers et al, 2014).

3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

An ethical researcher is one who acts with integrity and adheres to the ethical principles and professional standards expected of a responsible researcher (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al*, 2014). According to Resnik (2011), ethics in research promotes the aims of the research, prohibits the falsification or fabrication of research data as

well as promotes truthful data. This author also states that research often involves a great amount of cooperation and coordination amongst a large number of people. Ethical standards therefore aid in promoting the values which are crucial to collaborative work. Lastly, this author states that ethics in research ensures that researchers can be held accountable to the public. This is particularly advantageous for researchers, as people are more inclined to fund research projects if they can trust the quality and integrity of said research.

du-Plooy Cilliers et al (2014) state that an important concern for many research participants is how their identities will be protected. This author thus provides various recommendations on how researchers can ensure that their study is ethical. These recommendations have been applied as follows:

During this research process, the researcher informed Canal Walk customers that their identities will remain confidential by ensuring the research participants that only the researcher will be able to match their identities to their interview responses. All participants were informed that they were taking part in a research study, and in doing so, the researcher gained the participant's consent or disagreement to participate in this study. This research process avoided wasting the participants' time by ensuring that the interview process was as timely as possible. Interview participants were not provided with incentives such as gifts and money. The interview did not require participants to recall emotionally painful memories, thus avoiding emotional harm to said participants.

Aside from the ethical concerns there are also ethical issues concerning the data analysis process. The research findings were not fabricated or distorted.

3.9 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted at the Canal Walk shopping mall using possible interview questions, and the interview questions were subsequently altered and refined.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

All of the data that has been captured and interpreted needs to be analysed to provide the researcher with findings, insights and possibilities for further research.

As noted earlier, trustworthiness of this research has been guaranteed by ensuring that this data analysis process is integrated with the data collection as well as insights gained from conducting a literature review. Although sampling has been elaborated on in the previous chapter, it is necessary to recap the sample, which consisted of 27 shoppers who at areas of most convenience to the researcher.

Data for this study has been obtained through three methods: direct observations of sensory rich areas within the Canal Walk mall, a sensory “map” of the Canal walk mall, indicating areas of high sensory prevalence as well as open ended interviews, which were guided by a questionnaire.

This chapter will clarify the findings of this study, by presenting insights gained from the direct observations and the open ended interviews, whereby (if possible) the findings will be graphically represented. This chapter will also compare the findings of the primary research with the findings of the secondary findings in the form of the literature review.

4.1 OBSERVATIONS

As per the direct observation process described in chapter 3, observations of the Canal Walk mall yielded the following findings:

4.1.1 THE MALL SPACE IS FAIRLY MUTED IN DÉCOR AND DESIGN.

I noted through my observations that most of the décor inside the mall is kept to a minimum. The tiling is off-beige; pale olive green, and maroon in colour. The lighting within the mall space is kept to a minimum. This surprised me, as it was contrary to the research done by Taylor and Sucof (1974), who noted that people are drawn to light, and thus malls are designed accordingly. The walls of the mall are adorned with white tresses, whereby hanging plants adjourn some of the areas of the mall's wall space. The décor is based around the adaptation of three basic colours, beige, white, pale maroon, burnt orange and pale olive green. Glass areas overlooking the stores are located on the top level of the mall, which creates open space and encourages the centre to feel fluid and not overly crowded. The shops on the top floor of the mall enjoy the pleasure of natural light which cascades into the shopping mall through a large skylight. In contrast to this is how several of the shops on the lower levels, as well as their surroundings appear dark. On the whole the centre is fairly minimalist in nature. The mall is designed so that you are walking amongst the crowds in a walkway, whereby the shops are positioned to the left and to the right of said walkway. This means that the shopper is always surrounded and inundated by brand choices. In and amongst these wide walkways are benches. These seating areas provide relief to the sensory overload of the amount of shops present in the mall.

To conclude, if the mall space is muted, the stores and their sensory branding endeavours will be highlighted and emphasised even further, as the surroundings do not interfere with said branding endeavours.

Mall designers are thus attempting to mute the mall space as much as possible in an attempt to allow for minimal customer distraction, and thus increasing the impact of the sensory branding techniques utilised.

This primary research is corroborated by the secondary research conducted by Bitner (1992) that states that malls exist within man-made or natural occurring environments and servicescapes.

4.1.2 THREE SENSORY RICH AREAS EMERGED FROM THE OBSERVATIONS:

What I noticed through my observations is that most stores decided to stimulate one or two sense. Examples to substantiate this would be Le Crusset, who utilise visual sensory stimuli in the form of brightly coloured crockery. This crockery is openly on display, and therefore it also stimulates the sense of touch.

One can also see this in the fact that most clothing, shoe and book stores only engage in tactioception and audiception. As seen in the example of Exclusive Books, one can touch the books and one's senses of hearing are stimulated by in store music.

The three areas of the mall I have selected as areas of "rich sensory activity" stimulate more than two senses and are collections or clusters of sensory rich stores located together.

I have also defined these areas as "sensory rich", as when one finds themselves in these areas, it seems as if all of the surrounding stores are "competing for customer attention". This can be emphasised in a particular scenario whereby I encountered during my observations, whereby I was seated in Kauai. Whilst sitting at Kauai whereby I could hear the sound of the loud smoothie blender and the in store Kauai music, but I could also hear the loud in store music from the adjacent stores, Jt One and Factorie. Whilst in Kauai I could also see the flashing pink lights of the Jt One store and the flashing video advertisement on a board in the window of Sunglass Hut.

The following are areas which I thought were the most sensory rich within the mall space:

AREA 1	AREA 2	AREA 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kauai 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forever 21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food court
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tsonga 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aca Joe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sissy Boy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surf Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gstar Raw 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunglass hut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guess 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jt One 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colette 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factorie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carole Boyes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B Café 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunglass Hut 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earth Addict 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lush 	

FIGURE 5: 3 SENSORY RICH AREAS (CLAIRE HOWARTH, 2015)

Within Area 1 and 2, loud and conflicting music from the stores within these areas can be heard, whereby the in store music clashes. Almost all of these stores employ bright lights, as well as large window displays whereby lavishly dressed mannequins and interestingly displayed products or bright lights can be clearly seen.

Examples of which can be seen below:



FIGURE 6: LUSH STORE (AJAM, 2013)



FIGURE 7: COLETTE STORE (CANAL WALK, 2015)

4.1.3 AFTER APPROXIMATELY 8 SHOPS THERE WAS A RESTAURANT

I made the above deduction that the reason for this was because even if shops did not utilise olfactory sensory branding techniques, the different smells of the various

restaurants lingered in the air, and thus attracted me to various shops. For example, Vida is located next to Pandora. I love the smell of coffee but I was not intending to purchase a coffee. However, because the smell of coffee was in the air surrounding the Pandora shop, I decided to enter the shop, even though I know that the overpriced jewellery is no match for my student budget. From the above, I have deduced that the arrangement and servicescapes of the mall is designed so that the smells imitating from surrounding restaurants coax people into the shops surrounding said restaurants, thus encouraging spending and increasing the likelihood of a purchase. Thus, this secondary research is in line with the primary research of Bitner (1992), who states that malls are designed to produce specific emotional reactions in consumers.

4.1.4 THE FOOD COURT IS THE MAIN AREA OF SENSORY OVERLOAD WITHIN THE MALL WHEREBY THE DESIGN PROMOTES SPENDING AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTES TO THE DETRIMENT OF IT

4.1.4.1 RESTURANTS

The layout of the Food Court is circular/oval, with the restaurants: Calamari King, Debonairs Pizza, KFC, Steers, Subway, Anat, Mc donalds, John Dorry's, Tong Lok, Spur, Sausage Saloon, Mcafe and Joe's Diner on the outside with the eating area located in the centre. These above fast food restaurants are surrounded by the following fastfood kiosks: Cinnabon, KFC icecream, Waffle Mania and Yummi. Thus, the sheer amounts of restaurants already contribute to an olfactory overload. As one would imagine from such a diverse array of restaurants, the Food Court also causes confliction and overload of smells. These collections of restaurants also contribute to a audioception overload, as each one of these restaurants have a light up sign board depicting their logo located outside of the restaurant. These signs are fairly large and bright, and the colours utilised in these signs are fairly conflicting. This makes it really difficult to focus on one sign, and cause me to feel extremely overwhelmed, as I did not know what sign to look at, whereby the bright reds, yellows, purples and blues from the signs clashed. The vast amounts of restaurants also make for an auditory overload, as the employees from the 17 restaurants are all simultaneously taking and relaying orders, as well as the customers involved in this order taking process.

4.1.4.2 EATING AREA

Within the eating area, there are approximately 25 televisions which are on pillars, as well as a massive screen on the wall in the forefront of the Food Court (which is the only television to have sound emanating from it). There are also approximately three different channels playing on these television's, whereby the clusters of said televisions are in fairly close proximity to each other. It's a visually and audio sensory overload. One does not know what television to focus your attention on. You thus end up watching more than one television at once. However, the only television that sound emanates from is the large screen on the centre wall of the Food Court. This only heightens sensory confusion. Most people would also be stimulating their sense of taste within a Food Court, in addition to being very highly visually, auditory and olfactorily stimulated.

4.1.4.3 EXTERNAL TO THE FOODCOURT

Located external, but still within the realm of the Food Court is "wonderland" game arcade. This place is a sensory experience on its own, but with reference to how one experiences it from the food court, the sounds of the games can be heard as well as the lights flashing from the games can be distinctively seen.

Adjacent to the Food Court is the "centre court" designed as a space for events at the mall. At the time that this research took place there was no event taking place within the centre court, however, experiences of the past have proved that these events can be fairly noisy as well as have quite a few visual stimuli, such as a variety of performers, car shows and popup stores to name a few. Therefore, if there is an event commencing at the centre court, this could add another element of sensory overload to an already overloaded area.

To conclude, one could argue that the circular shape of the foodcourt has been designed so that once you are "inside" the Food Court you are essentially trapped within it. This is due to the vast amounts of people within the periphery of the Food Court, and the forward flow of crowd traffic, you only exit the Food Court once you have walked around it in a full 360 degree revolution. Thus, the purposive design of the Food Court and the vast array of sensory stimuli present is a means to increase purchasing intention.

This primary research confirms the following secondary research as noted by Klosowski (2013), whereby he states that store layout can subconsciously increase

spending, as retailers consciously create in store navigational roadblocks. This author also noted how the interaction amongst special, social, personal and physical dimensions can lead to sensory overload. This primary research also confirms the secondary research of Malhotra (1984) notes that noise can interfere with the integration of sensory information.

4.2 OPEN ENDED INTERVIEWS

The following insights were gained from open ended interviews conducted at the Canal Walk mall on the 13th- 20th Of September 2015. The sample size of said interview was 27 mall shoppers of a variety of genders, ages and races.

4.2.1 THE MALL SPACE ENCOURAGES AND DISCOURAGES MALL SHOPPERS

When asked, to describe the Canal Walk mall in three adjectives, the shoppers described the mall as follows:

NEGATIVE RESPONSES	POSITIVE RESPONSES
Big	Filled with variety
Time consuming	Elegant
Tiring	Classy
Huge	Eccentric
Confusing	Vibrant
Overwhelming	Attractive
Hot	Innovative
Depressing	Exciting
Disorientating	Colourful
Full	Warm
Exhausting	Fun
Smelly	Retail therapy
Fast-moving	Convenient
Dirty	Glamorous
	Diverse
	Casual
	Inspiring

Light
Exciting
Clean

From these responses we can see that the mall shoppers either perceive the mall space as negative or positive. Hence, this primary research confirms the secondary research of Hulten, *et al* (2009), who states that sensory experiences are subjective and referred to as experience logics as they are not universal. These primary research findings also confirm the research of Solomon *et al* (2006), who similarly notes the subjectivity associated with sensory experiences.

4.2.2 THE SIZE OF THE MALL CONTRIBUTES TO A VISUAL STIMULI OVERLOAD

50% of the respondents referred to the mall as being:

- Crowded
- overwhelming
- Huge,
- Confusing
- Full
- Disorientating
- large

Thus, the primary research confirms the secondary research of Klosowski (2013), and his notion of “crowding” with reference to the large physical dimensions of the mall acting as sensory overload, as seen in the literature review.

4.2.3 OTHER SHOPPERS IN THE MALL ACT AS SENSORY CLUTTER IN THE MALL

60% of the respondents noted that people within the mall space annoy them, whereby some of the shoppers had the following to say when asked if they experience any physical symptoms at the mall:

- People in the mall annoy me.
- People in the mall make me grumpy.
- Annoyed by children running in the mall.

- Annoyed as the shops are often too full.
- Annoyed because there are too many people in the queues.
- Annoyed at crowds.
- Annoyed as the crowds make the mall appear chaotic.

A vast majority of participants stated that they entirely avoided the food court area due to the vast amount of people in said area:

- I avoid the Food court due to sheer volume of people there.
- I avoid the seating area in the food court because it is always full and makes me feel overwhelmed and uncomfortable, as if people are watching me eat.
- I avoid the food court as it is busy and chaotic.

Thus, the primary research confirms the secondary research of Klosowski (2013), and his notion of “crowding” with reference to the large social, personal and physical dimensions of the mall acting as sensory overload, as seen in the literature review.

4.2.4. INTERVIEWS REITERATE HOW THE FOOD COURT IS OVERWHELMING

More than 50% of the respondents had the following to say about the food court:

- Busy and chaotic
- overwhelming and uncomfortable because its messy
- Loud and crowded
- Unhappiness.
- Disappointment
- Bright
- Disgusted
- Nauseous
- Annoyed
- Loud and lots of children
- Foul smells,
- Annoyance at the queues
- Irritable

One can see from these responses that mall shoppers regard the food court as overwhelming. Additional research revealed that 40% of the respondents completely avoid the food court, due to the sheer volume of people which makes them feel

irritated. This confirms the primary research that noted the food court as a sensory rich area, but it also reiterates the notion of clutter, as seen in the secondary research.

4.2.5. SHOPPERS MAKE BRAND PERCEPTIONS BASED ON “STORE CLUSTERS” AS WELL AS MALL ATMOSPHERICS AND SURROUNDING SENSORY STIMULI.

50% of the respondents stated that they avoided sections of the mall. Either based on the fact that one shop was particularly overwhelming to their senses, or based on the sensory elements of the surrounding design of particular areas of the mall. These designs then had an effect on the stores within said areas of the mall. For example one, one respondent stated that they avoid the bottom level of the mall as it is busy and overwhelming to navigate through, whereby this area of the mall feels dark.

Thus, this research reveals that customers make brand perceptions not only based on the servicescapes and atmospheres of one brand/shop, but also on surrounding stores. This research also sheds light on the fact that malls are difficult spaces to navigate through. This confirms the secondary research by (Klosowski, 2013) who stated that store retailers consciously create simple in store navigational roadblocks.

This primary research also shed light on the fact that the areas of the mall whereby dimmed lighting is utilised, this has an adverse effect on the brand perceptions of a variety of stores with a large section of the mall. This is confirms the research of Taylor and Sucov (1974), who emphasise the importance of light in increasing the likelihood of consumers to frequent your store. This primary research also confirms the secondary research of Klosowski (2013), who states that “like” stores are arranged in “clusters” as a means to bombard the customer. This bombardment then reduces the customer’s ability to resist unintentional purchasing intentions.

4.2.6. THE PERCEPTION AND ATTENTION OF MALL SHOPPERS IS ENHANCED BY VISUAL BRANDING ENDEAVOURS BUT NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY OLFACTORY AND AUDITORY BRANDING ENDEAVOURS:

The primary research indicated that 48.15% of respondent agreed that strong visual elements in the mall (Colours, store layout, lights, store signage as well as package design) made their shopping experience more pleasant and aided in capturing their attention. The study also revealed that 47.62% of mall shoppers stated that they were the most sensitive to the sight of the colours/materials utilised in store. This primary research confirms the secondary research of Lindstrom (2005), who stated that vision. Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2006) also stated that colours have a rich and symbolic value for consumers. van Jaarsveld (2010) and Quartier *et al* (2008), emphasise the importance of store lighting in creating store environments, which aid in increasing consumer purchasing intentions.

However, 56% of the respondents strongly agreed with the fact that sounds in the mall annoy disorientate them and cause them to feel overwhelmed. Whereby 40% of the respondents felt that loud in store music and smells caused them to develop headaches, as well as result in irritation.

29.63% of the respondents stated that fragrances in the mall cause them to feel overwhelmed, whereby 20% of the respondents whereby two shoppers noted that Lush irritates their noses and gives them headaches.

This primary research confirms the secondary research by Solomon *et al* (2006), who notes that Individuals respond to stimuli (sights, sounds, smells, touch and tastes) based on their personal biases, needs and experiences. However, it is contrary to the research of Klosowski (2013), who states that scent makes customers willing to spend, as well as contrary to the research of Solomon *et al* (2006) and Klosowski (2013), who state music is known to contribute to the well-being of shoppers, thereby contributing positively to buying activity.

4.2.7 PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SENSORY OVERLOAD UNBEKNOWNST TO THEM

The interviews revealed that on average, the shoppers interviewed spend 2-4 hours at the mall. This is a fairly substantial amount of time, making sensory overload and the resulting symptoms high possible. More than half of the respondents did not

know what the terms sensory branding or sensory overload meant. However, by comparing the secondary research on sensory overload with the mall shoppers' responses on physical symptoms experienced during their time in the mall, it was apparent that they were experiencing the symptoms associated with sensory overload. The most common physical symptoms as a result of time spent in the mall were as follows:

- Irritation
- Irritability
- Exhaustion
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Frustration
- Annoyance
- Nausea
- Fatigue

As noted in the secondary research, sensory overload can lead to incorrect brand choices as well as brand rejection, whereby crowding, a subset of sensory overload renders consumers unable to cope with the perceptual or cognitive demands of an environment. Malhorta (1984) notes that sensory overload causes customers to ignore sensory stimuli and its associated stimuli. Therefore, sensory overload can result in consumers ignoring your sensory branding messages, or abandoning your brand messages for that of a similar brand.

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on the data analysis of the data collected in this research study. The observation process revealed that the mall space is fairly muted in décor and design, as this will minimise attention focus on the mall and maximise attention focussed on the sensory branding endeavours utilised in the mall. The observations also unveiled three sensory rich areas within the Canal Walk shopping mall, whereby the food court emerged as the main area of sensory overload. On the whole, the interviews confirmed previous secondary research of Malhotra (1984), Solomon *et al* (2006) and Klosowski (2013), be referring to the fact that sensory branding both encourages and discourages mall shoppers, whereby the perception and attention of

mall shoppers is enhanced by visual branding endeavours but negatively impacted by olfactory and auditory branding endeavours. However, I was surprised by the fact that the perception and attention of mall shoppers was negatively impacted by olfactory and auditory branding, as this is contrary to the research of Klosowski (2013) and Solomon *et al* (2006). The primary research confirmed my suspicion of the presence of sensory overload within the mall, whereby most mall shoppers are overwhelmed by the size of the mall and the volume of people present in the mall as well as experiencing the physical symptoms associated with sensory overload. However, one of the most shocking findings is that mall shoppers are experiencing sensory overload unbeknownst to them, as they are unaware of the terms “sensory branding” and “sensory overload”

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the final chapter of the research study and according to Hunt (2010), recommendations are utilised to guide future readers with tips, suggestions or plans of actions that they can utilise for future studies. According to Baker and Foy (2011), implications and recommendations of a study convey the impact of said study in terms of its contribution to knowledge, understanding, theory development and its implications for future research.

This chapter will be discuss and reflect on future recommendations and implications of the study by utilising the findings (as seen in Chapter 4) as well as the secondary research as seen in Chapter 2.

The main research question that plagued the research was “How does sensory branding operate within the context of a South African shopping mall?” whereby this question was answered through the secondary research questions as well as the primary and secondary research conducted by the researcher.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

On the whole, the primary research corroborated with the secondary research. One can deduce from this that sensory branding affects South Africans in the same way that it affects Europeans, based on the fact that most sensory branding research was undertaken within a European context. The primary research also confirmed the subjective nature of sensory branding as conveyed in the secondary research. Lastly, the primary research confirmed the researchers suspicions of the presence of sensory overload in the mall, as well as the purposive arrangement and design of mall servicescapes in a manner that encourages purchasing.

5.2.1 CONDUCT A SIMILAR STUDY IN OTHER PROVINCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

As noted in abstract, sensory branding is a neglected topic within a South African context. As this researcher was limited by resources, the study could only be conducted at one mall within Cape Town. This however leaves room for future studies. Whereby, sensory branding endeavours across a variety of malls can be compared on a provincial level. So for example a researcher looking at all of the

sensory branding endeavours at all of the malls within a particular province in South Africa, as a means for comparison and clarity brought upon by increasing the studies population. With a large amount of funds this study can be extended further and looked at on a country wide level, by comparing malls from a variety of provinces with each other. This study can then be extended further by looking at the how demographics can impact on the how sensory branding operates within the context of South African shopping malls.

5.2.2 INCREASE THE SAMPLE SIZES AND THE LENGTH AT WHICH THE OBSERVATIONS ARE CONDUCTED.

As previous noted the researcher had limited resources. Thus, it would be interesting to re-conduct this exact study, but utilise a greater sample size as well as spend a longer time conducting observations. The findings of this hypothetical study can then be compared with this study.

5.2.3 CONDUCT A STUDY, BASED ON COMPARING HOW SENSORY BRANDING OPERATES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MALLS OF DIFFERENT SIZES

This recommendation is based on the fact that the research revealed that the size of the mall as well as the volume of amounts of people within a mall space act as sensory clutter and contribute to a visual stimuli overload. Thus, by conducting a study comparing sensory branding in malls of different sizes will shed light on the effect of crowds on sensory overload, as well as shed light of the size of the crowds necessary to induce sensory overload.

5.2.4 MARKETERS SHOULD BE MINDFUL OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SENSORY OVERLOAD

As noted in the secondary research, sensory overload can lead to confusion and impulsive purchases. However, the secondary research and primary research also revealed, sensory overload can lead to adverse physical effects, whereby customers complete ignore sensory stimuli. Recommendations would be for sensory branders and retail designers to be aware of sensory overload, whereby they utilise sensory branding requiring the interpretation from the five senses in a subtle manner. This study also revealed that the perception and attention of mall shoppers is enhanced

by visual branding endeavours but negatively impacted by olfactory and auditory branding endeavours. Thus, recommendations based on this would be for marketers to engage in more visual branding but utilise olfactory and auditory branding sparingly.

Another recommendation for future mall designers would be to design malls that have a vast amount of exits to the areas outside of the mall space, perhaps areas with benches and trees. These spaces will offer customers a quiet space away from the mall a place where they can overcome sensory overload.

5.2.5 A CALL TO ACTION FOR MALL SHOPPERS

As this study focuses on the negative implications of sensory overload, it could serve as a platform to make mall shoppers aware of sensory branding. This call to action is in the hopes that this study will inform mall shoppers on sensory overload, in the hopes that they will spend shorter durations in the mall and in turn prevent unnecessary and impulsive purchasing decisions.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

One could argue that the strengths of this study would be rooted in the researcher's ability to capture the emotions and feelings of mall shoppers as well as explore a fairly unexplored topic. However, the sample size was small and the researcher was limited by time.

The mall is a sensory rich space that has been specifically designed to bombard our senses. Metaphorically, the mall is a magician and we are the magician's audience. However, if you are aware of sensory branding endeavours and the potential negative physical effects associated with sensory overload, these can be avoided. Similar to this, is the notion of if you are aware of how a magic trick is performed... it's no longer "magic" but rather trickery. Thus, magic tricks are less impactful on those who are aware on how they are performed, sensory branding is less impactful on those who are aware of it, and avoid its negative associated effects.

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