

The Impact of Sensory Marketing on Managing a Sustainable Fast-Food Business in Egypt

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Abstract

Fast food restaurants employ a variety of marketing strategies to increase their market share in the face of increasing competition. Creating a pleasant environment in which customers enjoy visiting plays an important role in determining customer satisfaction, visit duration, and intent to return to the restaurant again. Sensory marketing has become a strategy for influencing customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions by using the multisensory experience of the human five senses. The purpose of this study is to achieve better performance and a sustainable growth for the Egyptian fast-food industry by employing sensory marketing principles. The study explored the influence of using the five sensory marketing factors, customer perceptions, satisfaction, and repurchase or revisit intention. Online surveys were used to collect data. A sample of 176 participants who visited fast food restaurants in Greater Cairo was received. The statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 23. According to the findings of the study, restaurant customers place a higher value on multisensory experiences, which influences their perceptions, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. The findings met the study's research objective and the four hypotheses. The effectiveness of the five senses is enhanced when used together. Further, the senses of sight, smell, and touch have a positive significant impact on customer satisfaction in fast-food restaurants. In contrast, sound and taste factors have strong positive influences on customers repurchase intentions. The study provided a significant contribution to the fast-food restaurant industry by providing insight into sensory marketing strategies to improve customer perceptions, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions to maintain business sustainability.

Keywords: Multisensory Experience, Sensory Marketing, Sustainable, Fast Food, Business, Repurchase Intention, Satisfaction, Egypt.

Introduction

The fast-food industry is one of the most widespread industries around the world (Wright, 2016). The Egyptian fast-food business has experienced notable expansion since 1970, and sources predict the market will continue to grow annually at 15 percent. Approximately \$800 million is estimated to be spent on food franchises. Among the most popular chains are Auntie Annie's, Burger King, Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza, Cook Door, Papa John's, KFC, Hardees, McDonalds,

Dunkin Doughnuts, Starbucks, and Subway. Several franchise companies are growing in Egypt, as well as in the Middle East and North Africa region. The franchising industry in Egypt is valued at more than \$14 billion and is growing at a rate of 20 percent every year (Aly Hassan and Sadek, 2019).

Currently, there are about 600 franchises in Egypt, including food franchisees and non-food franchisees with hundreds of individual outlets. In Egypt, franchising has been widely developed over a short period, and is considered one of the most successful business models available. The industry in Egypt consists of 60% international franchises and 40% local franchises, and 30 percent of the international franchises are American chains. Franchise revenues in Egypt are estimated to be almost 30 percent attributed to franchisees (Egypt Country Commercial Guide, 2019). Despite the high level of competition in the fast-food industry, restaurateurs use various methods to gain market share while creating a pleasant environment for their customers, as stated by Hussain (2018).

As a result of the rapid increase in the number of fast-food restaurants, not only those belonging to global franchises but also those belonging to independent brands, companies are facing difficulties (Jang and Lee, 2019). In a competitive world where new market entrants are competing, companies across industries are placed in a competitive structure. Consequently, differentiated strategies are required to survive in the market (de Jonge and Peeters, 2019). Recently, the increasing awareness of these challenges and the need for solutions has led to an interest in business sustainability and the development of long-term strategies.

As a result, many studies discuss how to achieve sustainable business growth (Chams and Garca-Blandón, 2019). Fast food companies have also adopted successful long-term management practices in the food service sector. In addition, effective marketing strategies are required to achieve sustainable growth, particularly in the fast-food business (de Jonge and Peeters, 2019). According to Kuczamer-Kopotowska (2017), modern consumers demand a wider variety of shopping and consumption experiences. Also, consumers today place a strong emphasis on distinct sensory experiences, according to Kim and Jung (2018). This study aims to apply sensory marketing to fast-food restaurants as a new marketing strategy and to discuss the relationships between sensory marketing outcomes and fast-food restaurant performance.

The objectives of this study are

- To evaluate the effectiveness of multisensory marketing strategies in fast food restaurants on customer perception and satisfaction.
- To examine the effect of multisensory experiences on customer revisit/repurchase intention in fast food restaurants.
- To determine which sensory elements are more effective at building customer perception, satisfaction, and repurchase intention.
- To develop a set of recommendations for fast food restaurant managers to improve customer satisfaction and purchase intentions.

Literature Review

Marketing in the fast-food industry

Before, fast food restaurants used traditional marketing techniques to sell their products instead of offering a full dining experience. This reduces the customer's eating choices to what they can see rather than what they can feel. Because traditional marketing is based on how the consumer feels, it ignores a large part of the fast-food dining experience (Kwansa, 2004). As stated by Gobe (2001), the traditional marketing approach should change from visual advertising to developing new, innovative, and creative marketing communications. By integrating the five senses with multisensory experiences and culturally competent strategies, brands can create long-term relationships with customers, bringing them closer to their brands. This has led to the practice of sensory marketing, which is a marketing strategy based on creating brand concepts and brand images, building meaningful synergies between a product or service and its customers, and increasing consumer consumption. This style of marketing emphasizes providing solutions and results rather than just products, and it views the customer more emotionally than rationally (Lindstrom 2011).

Sensory Marketing

Despite the strong competition in the fast-food restaurant market, the restaurant's ability to keep customers, make them loyal, and encourage them to return depends on the overall dining experience they receive from the organization. Today's consumers desire an enjoyable shopping experience that they will remember (Pine, and Gilmore, 2013). According to Hultén (2009), human senses must be understood, as they are key components in understanding consumption processes where behaviors and decision-making are important. In addition, hotels use the power of smell to create a scent that will stay in the customer's memory long after they have checked out of the hotel (Randhir *et al.*, 2016).

Liao and Liaw (2011) studied factors that can improve customer satisfaction in retail stores through in-store environment improvements. As long as most of the competitors offer similar products and the price differences are small, these factors will drive the store to distinguish itself from its competitors. According to their research, store atmosphere plays an important role in increasing customer satisfaction. Previous research has examined topics like store music and lighting, concluding that consumers who have positive purchasing emotions are more likely to be loyal to a store and will repeat it more often.

As first suggested by Schmitt (1999), sensory marketing is a marketing strategy that appeals to consumers' emotions rather than their rational judgments by appealing to their senses - sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. According to Krishna (2011), sensory marketing involves not only influencing consumers' senses but also their emotions, perceptions, judgments, and behaviors. The application process for sensory marketing has been described by Erdil (2015), and it involves creating stimulation based on external aspects that can influence consumer sensation. These external factors have an impact on consumers' emotions as well as their perceptions of the brand or product, which may ultimately have an impact on their purchasing behavioral intentions.

Sensory marketing aims to create a positive experience for clients through the five senses so that they become emotionally connected with the company before, during, and after dealing with it (Hultén *et al.*, 2009). The main goal of sensory marketing is to evoke strong emotions, which will increase brand awareness and enhance customer loyalty beyond the product's tangible attributes (Lindstrom 2011). It is widely accepted that sensory marketing explains most of our purchasing decisions in the marketing world. A sensory marketing approach can influence customers' perceptions of dining out in restaurants. It uses many aspects, including visual, olfactory, auditory, tactile, and gustatory marketing. It uses the senses to connect emotionally with customers as well. People perceive products, services, and other aspects of the service experience as images that challenge their perceptions and senses as part of the sensory experience.

The importance of the five senses in Sensory Marketing

Touching, hearing, smelling, seeing, and tasting all contribute to our understanding of a product or service. Therefore, being aware of these roles gives you a valuable competitive advantage in today's market. These five senses are images of our everyday lives, and by employing them, we can satisfy our requirements and desires. Sensory is important in developing consumer relationships with brands. It not only attracts consumers but also helps differentiate a product from others (Galande, 2019).

- **Vision:** Color elicits different responses in individuals and has a psychological impact on customers. Attractive logos, color schemes, packaging, design, and an appealing shape can all help to reinforce the image of the product in the minds of your customers. Visual cues can do more than just attract people's attention—they can also evoke feelings. As stated by Randhir *et al.*, (2016), colors are easily remembered by customers, so many brands have a specific color scheme, e.g., Coca-Cola has red, Kodak has yellow, and KFC has a red-and-white color scheme.

- **Smell:** Our sense of smell is closely related to our feelings and behavior. It plays a major role in influencing our behavior. A scented object is more attractive than one that doesn't smell, and it creates a lasting memory. Starbucks is among the best examples of this. They roast the coffee beans in-store instead of outsourcing the process. This spreads the smell of coffee around the store and provides customers with a deeper sensory experience (Randhir, *et al.*, 2016).

- **Sound:** When used correctly, sound can prove to be an effective tool for communicating consumers' unconscious needs. It can also positively affect their experience and even influence their purchasing decisions. In a study by Randhir *et al.*, (2016), over 80% of participants believed that KFC's music was relaxing, exciting, and enjoyable, which influenced customer mood and purchasing behavior.

- **Touch:** A product cannot be judged by the eye alone. Customers want to see and feel the products to get a better understanding of them, and they are willing to touch the products to make their experience better. Therefore, customer behavior and shopping attitudes are positively affected by touching products. Several things influence customers' perceptions of a restaurant, including how heavy the cutlery is, how soft the napkins are, and how comfortable the chairs and tables are (Ifeanyichukwu and Peter, 2018).

- Taste: The ability to create service excellence in today's competitive market is enhanced by adding a unique taste to your brand. Regardless of price, taste adds a unique flavor that allows consumers to replicate and extend the overall experience.

Objectives of sensory marketing

First principles view customers as emotional beings and thus argue that their decisions are more emotional than rational, which will lead to passionate decisions. A second principle states that emotions are responsible for customers' purchasing decisions, generated by positive or negative feelings about the product or service. Ultimately, this will create a special link between customer and product, referred to as "customer satisfaction." A third principle emphasizes the importance of understanding the emotions, values, beliefs, feelings, and cultures of customers in order to benefit the company. It is necessary to develop quantitative research methods that look beyond simply meeting the needs, problems, and expectations of customers to measure this. The fourth principle states the importance of persuasion strategies in the relationship between a company and a customer and drives them toward a specific behavior using emotional communication. The last principle of this theory discusses how to achieve satisfaction by creating a pleasant experience with the product or service. It also generates a positive impact through memorable moments of interaction with the company (Lindstrom, 2010).

As Krishna (2011) points out, products are sensual in nature, and customers require their senses to be affected by sight, taste, touch, sound, and smell. As a result, consumers are satisfied and intend to purchase again when their five senses create a memorable experience. A sensory marketing approach that appeals to the five senses of fast-food customers ("sight," "smell," "sound," "taste," and "touch") was employed in this study to achieve better performance and a sustainable growth model for the Egyptian fast-food industry.

Research Hypotheses

The study model was developed to assess whether there is a correlation between the multisensory experience, customer behavior, satisfaction, and revisit/repurchase intention based on a review of previous studies. Multisensory experiences improve customer perception, increase customer satisfaction, and increase the likelihood of customers returning to a company. There are four main hypotheses of the study, as follows, as accepted in Elangovan and Padma's (2017) study:

- H1: There is a positive correlation between Multisensory experience, Customer perception, Satisfaction, and Repurchase intention.
- H2: There is a positive correlation between Multisensory experience and Customer perception.
- H3: There is a positive correlation between Customer perception and Satisfaction.
- H4: There is a positive correlation between Customer perception and Repurchase intention.

Research Methodology

Means and standard deviations were used to define variables in descriptive statistics. Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables. To meet the study's objectives, further statistical approaches such as multiple regression are employed. Currently, the primary goal of hypotheses testing is to investigate the correlations between multisensory experiences and customer perceptions, between customers' perception and satisfaction, and between customers' perception and repurchase intention. The model analysis focused mainly on whether restaurant customers' perceptions of their multiple sensory experiences would influence their satisfaction, which would directly affect repurchase intentions.

Research Framework

As shown in Figure 1, the proposed research framework as adapted from Jang and Lee (2019) study, explains how the five senses (sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch) interact. The term "perception" was originally defined as a method for choosing, organizing, and interpreting sensations by individuals. Perception, in turn, guides their behaviors. Consumer behavior, according to Solomon (2010), is the study of how individuals and groups choose, use, dispose of, or purchase products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires. Customer satisfaction is also determined by consumer behavior. A satisfied customer makes repeat purchases (buys the same product again), refers others to try a particular product (word-of-mouth advertising), and keeps coming back to buy again and again.

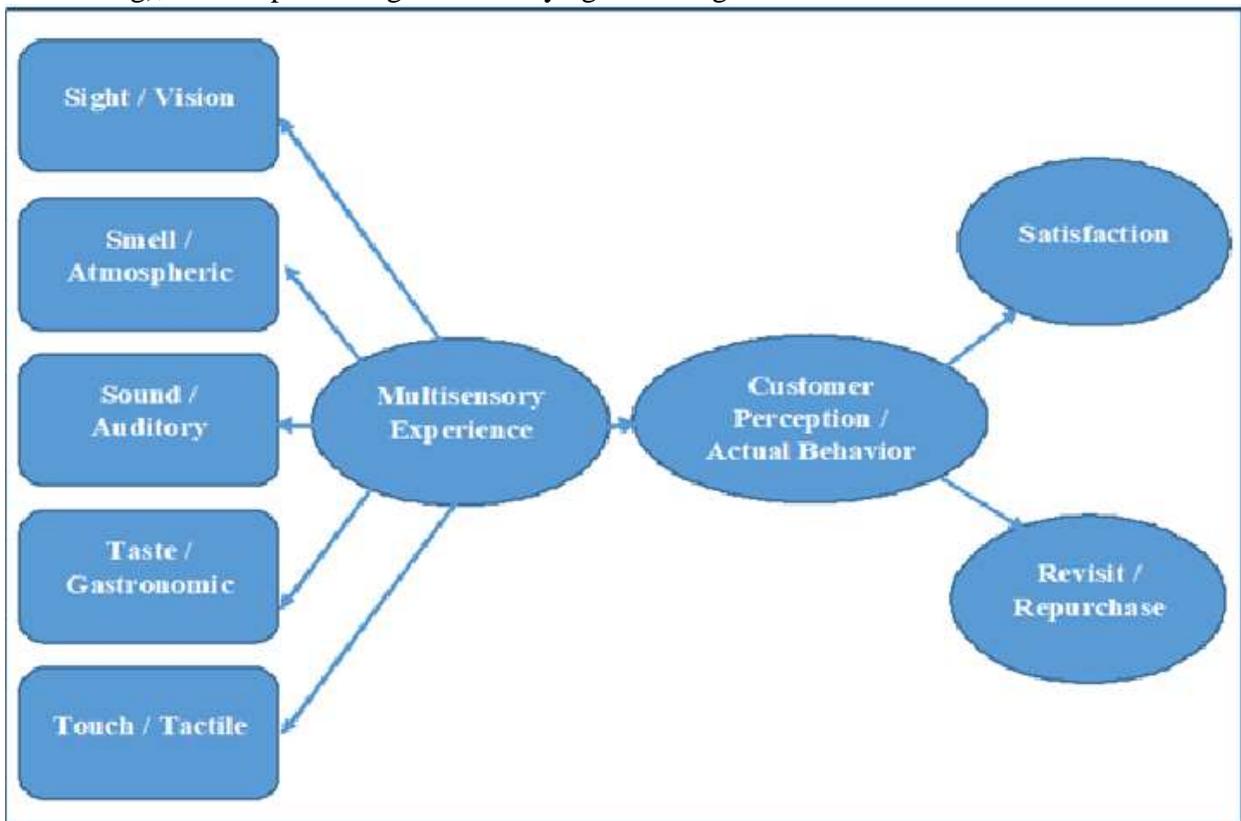


Figure (1) Research framework

Adapted from Jang and Lee (2019).

Only when the brand creates a memorable experience will the customer remember it and leading to better organizational performance and sustainability (Ko et al., 2014).

Questionnaire Development and Data Collection

The study model was developed using Elangovan and Padma's (2017) study model. The research strategy used an online survey, which is considered one of the most effective statistical methods for collecting data (Dillman, 2000; Veal, 2006). The questionnaire was designed to develop and validate a scale to measure the influence of multisensory marketing on consumer behavior. Several changes have been made to the study model. Some items were discarded, while others were paraphrased to clarify their meaning. At the end of the process, a total of 23 attributes were developed, divided into 8 main factors. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part contained demographic data about participants, such as age, marital status, gender, and occupation, and the second part was based primarily on Elangovan and Padma's (2017) survey. The 5-point Likert scale was selected for each question from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Additionally, Google Forms is used to create an online questionnaire form. The authors then shared the questionnaire link via email, Facebook, and WhatsApp with participants from December 1, 2022, to January 01, 2023.

Results and Discussion

Validity and Reliability

Questionnaire responses were received from December 2022 to January 2023 via a web-based survey. A total of 176 valid surveys were received. The reliability of constructs was tested by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The coefficient was calculated 0.966 for constructs that provide reliable results (Hair *et al.*, 2010) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics of the study's variables

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.966	23

Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents

Based on the respondent profile of the collected samples in Table 2, 78.9% of respondents were in their twenties, and 15.8% were in their thirties. In contrast, only 5.3% were in their forties. More men (57.9%) than women responded. In terms of marital status, there were more single respondents (52.6% of them) than married respondents. Respondents' most common occupations were student (47%), professional jobs (21%), office jobs (16%), homemakers (6%), self-employed (5%), and other jobs (5%).

Table 2. Respondent profile

<i>Description</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Age		
Under 30 years old	139	78.9
30 to 39 years	28	15.8
40 to 49 years	9	5.3
Total	176	100
Gender		
Female	102	42.1
Male	74	57.9
Total	176	100
Marital status		
Single	93	52.6
Married	83	47.4
Total	176	100
Occupation		
Student	83	47
Office job	28	16
Self-employed	9	5
Professional job	37	21
Homemaker	10	6
Other	9	5
Total	176	100

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of sensory marketing variables. Among the independent variables, the lowest mean for sound, perception, and satisfaction was 4, which roughly indicates "agree," and the highest mean for sight elements was 4.7, indicating "strongly agree." It shows that respondents feel all five sensory factors are effective in the sensory marketing experience.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Sensory Marketing Factors

Factor/ Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sight	4.7	.94
Smell	4.6	1
Sound	4	1.1
Taste	4.5	1
Touch	4.2	.92
Perception	4	.82
Satisfaction	4	1
Repurchase	4.3	.81

Table 4 indicates there is a probability that all five sensory factors related to customer perception, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions are significantly correlated. Pearson’s correlation was used to find out the relationship between variables. As a result, the correlation coefficients for sight, smell, and touch were 0.842, 0.740, and 0.837, which are strongly positive correlated with customer satisfaction. While sound and taste factors 0.831 and 0.725 have the strongest positive correlation with customers repurchase intentions. In summary, it can be noted that all independent variables have positive coefficients of correlation with dependent variables. Therefore, this study has succeeded in determining whether sensory marketing elements influence customer perception, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. Thus, the first hypothesis of the research has been achieved:

H1: There is a positive correlation between Multisensory experience, Customer perception, Satisfaction, and Repurchase intention.

Table 4: Correlations between dependents and independents variables

Independent /Dependent variables		Perception	Satisfaction	Repurchase
Sight	Pearson Correlation	.666 ^{**}	.842 ^{**}	.596 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.007
	N	176	176	176
Smell	Pearson Correlation	.532 [*]	.740 ^{**}	.580 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.000	.009
	N	176	176	176
Sound	Pearson Correlation	.573 [*]	.641 ^{**}	.831 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.003	.000
	N	176	176	176
Taste	Pearson Correlation	.661 ^{**}	.669 ^{**}	.725 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002	.000
	N	176	176	176
Touch	Pearson Correlation	.675 ^{**}	.837 ^{**}	.706 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.001
	N	176	176	176

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis Testing

The study's first hypothesis, which demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between multisensory experience, customer perception, satisfaction, and repurchase intention, had been met previously. As shown in Table 5, all hypotheses were verified by analyzing the path coefficients. All predictions positively affected the perception, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions of fast-food restaurant customers. However, the second hypothesis was supported: multisensory experience, including the five senses, had a positive significant effect on customer perception ($\beta = 0.271$, $p \leq 0.000$), implying that multisensory experience and customer perception have significant correlations. Following that, customer satisfaction is positively affected by their perception ($\beta = 0.810$, $p \leq 0.000$), confirming the third hypothesis. Finally, customer perception had a positive effect on repurchase intentions, with ($\beta = 0.626$, $p \leq 0.000$) validating the fourth hypothesis.

Table 5: Path coefficients

Hypotheses	Path	Beta (β)	t-Values	p-Value
H2	Multisensory experience → Customer perception.	0.271	7.51	0.001**
H3	Customer perception → Satisfaction.	0.810	4.701	0.000**
H4	Customer perception → Repurchase intention.	0.626	3.844	0.001**

Notes: ***p < 0.001.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In fast food restaurants, the five senses—sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound—have a significant and strong influence on customer satisfaction. Marketers should change their strategies from traditional marketing toward sensory marketing. As a result of sensory marketing, a customer gets to interact with a product or service in a real, personal way, creating a real, personal experience with the company. As a result, they purchase more of the product and recommend it to others, resulting in an emotional connection with the company. A sensory marketing approach that appeals to the five senses of fast-food customers ("sight," "smell," "sound," "taste," and "touch") was employed in this study to achieve better performance and a sustainable growth model for the Egyptian fast-food industry.

This study confirmed that sensory marketing strategy had a positive effect on customers' perception, satisfaction, and revisit/repurchase intentions, which resulted in increased profits. This has contributed to the growth of the fast-food industry in Egypt. The study tested four hypotheses about how sensory marketing factors influence customers' perceptions and how this perception affects their satisfaction and repurchase intentions at Egyptian fast-food restaurants. A quantitative approach was used as a method to test the study hypotheses. The data collection procedure for this study used an online survey to collect data from 176 participants who shared their opinions on sensory marketing elements. Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 23. The results of the study have been considered significant, and all hypotheses and objectives were met.

The results of this study suggested that restaurant managers or owners should consider multisensory aspects as a key element in attracting customers. Multisensory aspects help them to evaluate services consistently and influence customer perception, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. The study proposed a detailed method of assessing service value and how it impacts customer perceptions, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions, with the aim of maintaining business sustainability. Managers of fast-food restaurants should understand how customers connect with products and services through their senses:

Sight: Logos, posters, menus, color, and the restaurant's staff uniform are all visual elements. It is recommended that fast food companies improve their visual elements to increase customer satisfaction.

Smell: The study discovered a positive relationship between scent factors and customer satisfaction. The smell of food was certainly the most critical component. It is suggested that artificial or natural fragrances should be used to improve the overall atmosphere of the restaurant.

Touch: The findings revealed a significant relationship between customer happiness and touch variables. Touch factors are the ambiance and setting that the customer perceives. It is

recommended that tactile components, including tableware, tables, seating layouts, and ease of movement inside the food service area, be adequately regulated and specified.

Taste: The coefficient of correlation indicated a strong correlation between taste qualities and their influence on customer repurchase intentions. The most critical factor in restaurants is taste. Taste is directly tied to competitive advantage. Therefore, chefs and restaurant managers should use a variety of flavors and culinary techniques when creating their menu items.

Sound: Some customers prefer to interact in a quiet environment and will avoid loud restaurants. However, young people prefer western fast music, while the elderly like slower music with less background music.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study has many academic and practical implications, it also has some shortcomings and leaves some questions open for future study. Sensory marketing is present in many aspects of daily life and consumption. But this study only focused on fast-food restaurants. Future research should investigate more diverse strategies across a wide range of businesses and areas to extend the scope of sensory marketing research.

تأثير التسويق الحسي على إدارة أعمال الوجبات السريعة المستدامة في مصر

المستخلص

تستخدم مطاعم الوجبات السريعة مجموعة متنوعة من استراتيجيات التسويق من أجل زيادة حصتها في السوق في مواجهة المنافسة المتزايدة. خلق بيئة ممتعة يستمتع فيها العملاء أثناء الزيارة تلعب دورًا مهمًا في تحديد رضا العملاء ومدة الزيارة ونية العودة إلى المطعم مرة أخرى. أصبح التسويق الحسي استراتيجية للتأثير على رضا العملاء والنوايا السلوكية من خلال استخدام التجربة متعددة الحواس للحواس البشرية الخمس. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحقيق أداء أفضل ونمو مستدام لصناعة الوجبات السريعة المصرية من خلال استخدام مبادئ التسويق الحسي. استكشفت الدراسة تأثير استخدام عوامل التسويق الحسية الخمسة ، وتصورات العملاء ، والرضا ، ونية إعادة الشراء / إعادة الزيارة. تم استخدام الاستطلاعات عبر الإنترنت لجمع البيانات. تم استقبال عينة من 176 مشاركًا زاروا مطاعم الوجبات السريعة في القاهرة الكبرى. تم إجراء التحليلات الإحصائية باستخدام الإصدار 23 من SPSS. ووفقًا لنتائج الدراسة ، يولي عملاء المطعم قيمة أعلى للتجارب متعددة الحواس ، مما يؤثر على تصوراتهم ورضاهم ونواياهم لإعادة الشراء. حققت النتائج الهدف البحثي للدراسة. تم دعم الفرضيات الأربعة من خلال النتائج ، والتي أظهرت أن جميع الحواس الخمس لها علاقة إيجابية قوية بإدراك العملاء ورضاهم ونية إعادة الشراء. يتم تعزيز فعالية الحواس الخمس عند استخدامها معًا. علاوة على ذلك ، في مطاعم الوجبات السريعة ، يعد البصر والرائحة واللمس أكثر عناصر التسويق الحسية فعالية لأن لها تأثيرًا كبيرًا على رضا العملاء. في المقابل ، فإن عوامل الصوت والذوق لها تأثيرات قوية على نوايا إعادة الشراء للعملاء. قدمت الدراسة مساهمة كبيرة في صناعة مطاعم الوجبات السريعة من خلال توفير نظرة ثاقبة لاستراتيجيات التسويق الحسية لتحسين تصورات العملاء ورضاهم ونوايا إعادة الشراء من أجل الحفاظ على استدامة الأعمال.

الكلمات الدالة: تجربة متعددة الحواس ، تسويق حسي ، مستدام ، وجبات سريعة ، أعمال ، نية إعادة الشراء ، رضا ، مصر .

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