A Multi-Sensory Brand-Experience
– Sensorial interplay and its impact on consumers' touch behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Title: A Multi-Sensory Brand-Experience: Sensorial interplay and its impact on consumers touch behaviour

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Keywords: Sensory Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Servicescape, Human Senses, Multi-sensory Brand-experience, Sensory Cues, Styling Elements

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to explore to what extent different styling elements can be used within a retail store and how sensorial cues can affect customers buying behaviour by creating a multi-sensory brand-experience. Further, this project aims at contributing to the development of new knowledge regarding a multi-sensory brand-experience through the performance of an experiment.

Methodology: A quantitative research method with a deductive research approach has been used for this study, where theoretical concepts have been described and from which a number of hypotheses have derived as means to test the theoretical framework. In order to test our hypotheses, a research strategy in the form of experiments has been performed in the computer department at Media Markt, Kalmar. General assumptions have then been drawn from the analysis of the results in order to provide sound recommendations for marketers regarding sensory marketing in general and foremost the multi-sensory brand-experience.

Findings: The result of our study shows that it is beneficial for marketers to use styling elements and sensorial cues as means to connect with customers and enhance their emotional response. The study also shows that a combination of the sensorial cues of sight and sound together contributes to an experience that is positive and memorable for the customers. Additionally, the results of this study shows that a combination of these sensory cues leads to a change in customers behaviour and create approach behaviour through awareness of products that otherwise could be missed.
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1. INTRODUCTION

As many companies are competing to be noticed by customers in a world that is crowded by brands, it is becoming of high importance to create a brand experience where brand-related stimulus evokes “sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioural responses” (Brakus et al. 2009, p. 52). This experience often includes the physical environment with environmental cues of lighting, colour and music, which have all been shown to have a great impact on consumers, evoking emotional responses that affects the consumer’s behaviour (Bitner, 1992; Hoffman and Turley, 2002; Grönroos, 2008). In addition, it has also been recognized by Hultén et al. (2008) that customers of today want to be enticed by emotional elements where relationships can be created, making it vital to understand the components of emotional character that attracts and affect the behaviour of customers, influencing their perception (Martin, 2008; Zeithaml et al. 2009).

For the last decade, the five human senses have received increased attention in the field of marketing from both researchers (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Schmitt, 1999; Hultén et al. 2008; Krishna, 2010) and practitioners (Gobé, 2001; Lindstrom 2005, 2008; Underhill, 2009). Research on the humans senses have shown that sensory cues of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch all can affect our preferences, memories and choices (Krishna, 2010), where they play a crucial part in the creation of an emotional connection and experience of the process of purchase (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Schmitt, 2003). Krishna (2010) emphasizes the need to acknowledge the sensuality of products and defines sensory marketing as “marketing that engages the consumers’ senses and affects their behaviour” (p. 2). While there is existing research on the human senses in the field of consumer behaviour, there is a need to consider how multi-sensory interactions can affect consumers’ consumption behaviour (Peck and Childers, 2008).

1.1 Background to research

The marketplace of today has undergone a significant change, where we have gone from selling and promoting products and services to selling and enticing customers through experiences (Joy and Sherry, 2003). Consumers are spending more time making decisions about what to consume and the number of products to choose from has increased tremendously, making it harder and more time-consuming to decide what products to buy (Ekström, 2010). Despite having such a huge spectrum of choices in regards to products and services, the customers of today have proven to be dissatisfied (Pralahad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Reimann et al. (2010) states that the consumer’s basic needs have started to become content, creating a great need to fully understand what it is that affect customers’ throughout the process of purchase (Ajzen, 2008).

It is a well established thought that consumer behaviour is about the act to buy a specific product, but the researchers of today have an interest that goes beyond that and they want to understand the process of searching and selecting as well as the process of service (Ajzen,
Having previously been viewed as the interaction between a producer and its consumers at the time of purchase, the view on consumer behaviour has therefore shifted (Solomon et al. 2010). It is now looked upon as an ongoing process and not an isolated event of a consumer handing over money and thereby receiving the selected product (ibid.). Based on this, it is becoming important to understand what it is that influences the consumers and the choices they make, where knowledge of this can make it easier for companies and marketers to create an experience that provides the customer with satisfaction throughout the selection process (Bettman et al. 2008). Stated by Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) consumer behaviour involves more than the actual purchase of a product and they elaborate their reasoning by stating that consumer behaviour also includes an understanding for why, where, when, how, how often etc. a consumer will buy, use and dispose a product (ibid.).

Further, Pralahad and Ramaswamy (2000) explain that the customers of today want to be involved and shape their own experiences, both individually and together with other customers and experts. The importance of not forgetting the brand is therefore emphasized, where it is stated that “the experience is the brand” (Pralahad and Ramaswamy, 2004, p. 13). The authors explain that branding should be viewed as both a co-created and personalized experience (Pralahad and Ramaswamy, 2004) and that the idea with experiential marketing is that it focuses on the symbolic and esthetic nature of consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

As a response to experiential marketing, Reimann et al. (2010) underline a growing need to use aesthetics as a way to compete. Companies should appeal towards customers feelings, enabling faster responses (Pham et al, 2001), but also providing an opportunity to create an unforgettable experience where both mind and body is involved (Joy and Sherry, 2003). Creating an experience through the use of aesthetic design has been shown to trigger emotions and responses within the consumer that creates a willingness to purchase (Reimann et al. 2010). Russo and Chaxel (2010) discusses the effect of different sensorial cues in form of persuasive messages as a successful way to alter a recipient’s feeling towards an informational message, which has the ability to create an additional change of behaviour. The authors underline that these messages can affect customers in both conscious and unconscious ways (ibid.).

Taking a starting point in the experience logic, it has been recognized that the human senses play a crucial part for the experience as well as the emotional connection (Schmitt, 2003; Hultén et al. 2008; Krishna, 2010). The human senses have been identified as important factors in consumer behaviour, where they have been acknowledged as powerful cues influencing our emotions, perception and behaviour (Peck and Childers, 2008). With this in mind, Hultén et al. (2008) has emphasized the importance to create customer experiences through the human senses, where Kotler (1974) underlined that sensorial cues can affect consumers’ decisions in regards to purchases.
1.2 Problem discussion

Even though it has been recognized previously by some marketers, the importance of using the human senses in the field of marketing and advertising is still considered to be a field in its infancy (Krishna, 2010) where Hultén et al. (2008) highlights that the human senses are crucial for how a person experiences the purchase and consumption process. It is also emphasized by Peck and Childers (2008) that there is a need to recognize the human senses in the field of consumer behaviour. Further, the human senses have previously almost been exclusively recognized individually and therefore rarely been acknowledged in regards to the sensorial interaction (Elder et al. 2010; Hultén, 2011a).

With a previous focus on the human senses individually, the importance of understanding the interaction between multiple senses is highly underlined by Elder et al. (2010) who argue that it is much needed to fully understand these interactions in order to know how they affect customer’s perception, preferences and attitudes. According to Hultén (2011a, p.10) a multi-sensory brand-experience “refers to how individuals react when a firm, in offering and delivering brands, goods and/or services, participates in their purchase and consumption processes through the involvement of the five human senses”. The concept of a multi-sensory brand-experience underlines the magnitude of a sensory interplay between the five human senses in the process of purchase and consumption (ibid.). It is also argued that a multi-sensory brand-experience should provide customers with an experience of consumption that appeal to the human senses and our mind in an emotional way (Hultén, 2011b). Creating an experience should thereby be directed towards “fantasies, feelings and having fun” (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) where products should be considered “…artifacts around which customers have experiences” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000).

According to Underhill (2009, p.168) we are living in “a tactile-deprived society” where shopping has become a chance to “experience the material world firsthand”. Research has shown that touch is an important part of our social and emotional lives where both children and adults have an underlying urge to touch products (Harlow, 1958, Krishna, 2010). The sense of touch has been recognized as influencing customers shopping behaviour as well as their physical interaction with products (McCabe and Nowlis, 2003). Despite of these findings, the research on the sense of touch in the field of marketing is still scarce and should therefore be further studied and acknowledged (Peck, 2010).

Incorporating physical contact with the skin, the sense of touch is referred to as one of our most intimate senses (Klatsky, 2010; Peck, 2010) where our hands have been identified as our “principle source of input to the touch perceptual system” (Peck and Childers, 2003a, p. 35). The skin is not only important for developing our physical functions, but also for developing behavioural functions (Montagu, 1986) where our need to touch a product will vary from one individual to another (Peck and Childers, 2003b). This means that some individuals will be satisfied with touching a product while placing it in their shopping carts, while others will need more time to use their hands to better explore the product before making the decision to purchase it (ibid.).
Explained by Grohmann et al. (2007) it can be beneficial for retailers to allow their customers to touch and interact with products. Consumers like to evaluate products and gather information about them and their properties which are often done through the sense of touch (McCabe & Nowlis, 2003). This is a common and important element in retail stores where the sense of vision simply is not enough to provide all necessary information (ibid.). As stated by Underhill (2009) we are buying more products than ever before based on touch and trial. Being offered the opportunity to touch an object has also been shown to create a feeling of ownership of that product as well as the valuation of the product being increased (Peck & Shu, 2009). It is also emphasized that tactile input will have a positive impact on the consumer response as well as their perception of product quality (Grohmann et al. 2007).

Living in a society that is characterized by the third wave, where globalization, variety and pluralism are important features in combination with emotions and experiences (Hultén et al. 2008) it is becoming highly important to better understand the less researched area of a multi-sensory brand-experience. Krishna et al. (2010) discusses the need to include a combination of sensory inputs to provide the customer with an experience that can be enjoyed in full force and they state that sensory pleasure is a result of a combination of sensory inputs. Rodrigues et al. (2011) highlights that sensorial strategies can be possible for a company to use as a differentiation factor, but also as a means to impact consumers’ behaviour in their purchase and consumption process by testing the individual mind.

1.3 Specification of the research question

As discussed above, the marketplace of today has changed and it is becoming increasingly important to fully understand what it is that really affect customers and their behaviour in the process of purchase. With a focus on experiential marketing, where the five human senses are at core, we address the need of further empirical and theoretical research on the multi-sensory brand-experience in relation to the sense of touch by posting the following research question:

Main research question:

To what extent can a retail store use sensory cues as a means to provide customers with a multi-sensory brand-experience?

Further, research has shown that the senses of touch, sight and sound are important to recognize in regards to customers’ behaviour and evaluation as well as their overall experience (Areni and Kim, 1993; Henderson et al. 2003; Peck and Childers, 2003a; Hultén et al. 2008; Krishna, 2010). To date, few empirical studies have been performed in a real retail setting where customers’ touch behaviour have been studied and acknowledged. It is therefore of great importance that the multi-sensory interplay of sight and sound is acknowledged and understood in regards to how it can impact consumer’s willingness to touch a product. To be
able to draw conclusions and answer our main research question, we have the following sub-question:

**Research question**

To what extent does the interplay of the human senses of sight and sound impact customers’ touch behaviour?

Our research question concerns the interplay of the senses sight and sound, where we more specifically want to study to what extent the multi-sensory interplay of these senses can impact customers’ touch behaviour.

**1.4 Purpose**

This thesis sets out to explore to what extent retail stores can use sensorial cues when creating a multi-sensory brand-experience for their customers. With the purpose of better understanding the phenomenon of multi-sensory brand-experience and its affect on consumers’ behaviour we will:

- describe the concepts of consumer behaviour, servicescape and the interplay of the human senses
- perform an empirical study based on experiments in the retail setting of Media Markt, Kalmar where we can study the impact of a multi-sensory interplay on consumers’ touch behaviour
- contribute to the development of new knowledge in regards to multi-sensory brand-experience

**1.5 Case Company**

Our thesis was initiated by Media Markt, Kalmar, as a means to better understand how sensorial cues could be implemented in their retail setting as a way to create experiences for their customers. Being one of the largest warehouse chains in the world selling electronic products, Media Markt is represented with over 500 stores in 12 different countries. The first store was opened during the 1970’s in Germany with the purpose of offering customers a wide range of products at a low cost. With a turnover of 60 billion euro’s, Media Markt is today the market leader when it comes to volume and in Sweden alone there are currently 19 stores open. The stores are owned through a partnership between Media Markt and local entrepreneurs, and entails an overall concept for all stores that must be followed with an emphasize to offer and display a great number of products.
1.6 Delimitations

- We are only focusing on theory and empirical data believed suitable for this specific research problem
- We are only studying this phenomenon in the retail setting of Media Markt, Kalmar
- We are not studying the economical benefits or performed purchases, but are instead focusing on the customer’s behaviour
- We will focus on the sensorial interplay of touch, sight and sound and will therefore exclude the senses of olfaction and taste

1.7 Thesis outline

- **Main research question**
  To what extent can a retail store use sensory cues as a means to provide customers with a multi-sensory brand-experience?

- **Sub-question**
  To what extent does the interplay of the human senses of sight and sound impact customers’ touch behaviour?

- **Theoretical framework**
  - Evolution of marketing
  - Consumer behaviour
  - Servicescape
  - The human senses

- **Empirical findings**
  Observations and manipulation-check questions from Media Markt, Kalmar

- **Analysis**
  Theoretical framework and empirical findings

- **Conclusions and recommendations**
  Created from our theoretical framework, our empirical findings and our analysis of these findings

Figure 1: Thesis outline
2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research approach

According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) one can approach a scientific research in three different ways; deductive, inductive and abductive approach. In line with the reasoning of Bryman and Bell (2007) we took our starting point in already existing theory, since parts of our study is fairly new and to date have been treated somewhat scarcely. While the field of consumer behavior has undergone profound studies and is considered to be a well known area, the field of sensory marketing is according to Krishna (2010) still considered to be a field in its infant state. Due to this reason, we chose the starting point in gathering already existing theory of what is known and then testing the theory with hypotheses. Approaching a research project this way is according to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) and Malhotra and Birks (2007) recognized as a deductive approach, where a theoretical framework is assembled and from which a number of hypotheses derives that will test the theory being studied.

A deductive approach means that a researcher, from what is already known regarding a certain field, deducts one or several hypotheses which then are tested by an empirical examination (Bryman and Bell, 2005). It represents the most common perception in regards to the relationship between theory and empirical data (ibid.). In short, a deductive research approach is the testing of existing theories while an inductive approach is a theory generating process (Bryman, 2011). The abductive approach could shortly be described as a mixture of an inductive and a deductive research approach (ibid.). Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) states that the deductive approach is less risky since it assumes that a certain rule always applies in a specific occurrence, and that it not aims at explaining a certain phenomenon but rather to establish an already existing fact. Bryman and Bell (2005) also highlights that a researcher needs to be skilled in deducing relevant hypotheses and specify how the information can be collected based on the data that constitute the hypotheses. The authors here make a distinction between ‘grand theories’ and ‘theories of middle range’ where the former refers to more all-embracing theories with little advice in how to guide the researcher in the collecting of empirical data, and the later to more concrete theoretical data with the possibility to give a more solid guidance in the empirical data collection (ibid.). Yin (2009) also highlights the fact that collecting the right theory is of great importance since it will affect the whole research process.

Our theoretical framework consists mainly of ‘theories of middle range,’ and believed to be most relevant for our study. Furthermore, the theoretical framework served, not only as a useful guide in order to know what type of data to collect and the best way to analyze it, but also gave us a profound understanding of the research field through an extensive reading and collecting of relevant theory.
2.2 Research method

According to Creswell (2009), the research method involves how the empirical data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted by the researchers. In regards to research method, one could according to Bryman and Bell (2005) and Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) either choose the qualitative or the quantitative method. We have in this thesis chosen the quantitative method. Quantitative method takes its starting point from the researchers’ point of view of what is going to be studied and focuses on numbers as a central unit to analyze, while qualitative method focuses on words and starts from the perspective of the study object (Denscombe, 2000; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008). It is further discussed by Bryman and Bell (2005) that qualitative and quantitative research clearly differentiate when it comes to the role the theory plays for the research, where a distinguishing feature of quantitative method is that it contains a deductive approach, where emphasize is on the testing of theories. Another distinguishing feature of quantitative method is that the researchers view on social reality is objective (ibid.). As the name suggests, quantitative method emphasizes quantitative collection of data and analysis thereof (Bryman and Bell, 2005). Christensen et al. (2010) states that, while qualitative data is something one tries to interpret, quantitative data is normally analyzed statistically. However, the authors highlight that quantitative data also is subject to interpretations and thus making the quantitative data qualitative in terms (ibid.). Christensen et al. (2010) also highlights the fact that quantitative data is something one can analyze objectively, making it more suitable for generalization.

Bryman and Bell (2005) highlights furthermore that a general description of quantitative research process is that, from the gathered theory, a number of hypotheses are deducted which then are tested. Bryman (2011) states however that a fairly large part of quantitative research do not take its starting point in the development of hypotheses, but rather use the theory itself as a fairly strict guidance for the collection of empirical data. According to the author, specifications of hypotheses are more likely to be found in experimental research (ibid.). As we have conducted a research based largely on field experiments, we found the use of hypotheses all the more relevant. Creswell (2009) further adds that quantitative method normally consists of pre- and post-test measurements.

Moreover, Bryman and Bell (2005) argues that scientists conducting a quantitative research are more interested in describing why things are in a certain way, as opposed to how it is that way. Causality is, due to this reason, an important part of quantitative research since it has an explanatory focus (ibid). The cause and effect of an occurrence is thus measured by independent and dependent variables, where the independent variable will measure the causal effect of the dependent variable (Bryman and Bell, 2005). In experiential research it is, according to the authors, the independent variable that will be manipulated (ibid). Alvesson and Sköldberg (2008) discuss in line with this and state that quantitative research most often consist of different sorts of variables describing the opinions and feelings of people, where the response alternatives consists of for example previously decided numbers. Creswell (2009) further notes that the variables normally varies from two categories or more and can be
measured on a scale. Moreover, Creswell (2009) argues that the theory acts as a bridge between the variables and explaining the link between them.

Bryman and Bell (2005) further highlights that quantitative research most often has the aim of generalizing the results so that it could be applied to groups other than those participating in the research, where a general conclusion could be drawn that is not just specific to the actual study. Since it normally is impossible to study for example an entire population, Bryman and Bell (2005) underlines the importance of an appropriate random sampling that will truly mirror the social reality and making it as applicable as possible. Creswell (2009) and Christensen et al. (2010) further states that the information in quantitative research is collected through for example experimental research or survey research presented most easily in the form graphs or diagrams.

Based on this, we have in this thesis used a quantitative method since we found it to be most relevant in order to answer our purpose, where the aim is to examine the effect different sensory cues have on consumers’ buying behavior. The quantitative method seems most appropriate since measurements are taken through field experiments where we relate the result to each other and aim at determine the cause and effect of the different variables. In order to generalize our results and make it applicable outside our study, we have aimed at being as objective as possible, which is why a quantitative method is believed to be most appropriate.

Bryman and Bell (2005) also highlights however that quantitative methods have been criticized since it relies on the measurement of standardized variables and thus making the connection between research and social reality somewhat fuzzy. The authors also highlights that criticism against quantitative method is saying that this kind of measurement gives a fairly false notion of accuracy and giving the social reality a somewhat static picture (ibid).

2.3 Research strategy

Stated by Yin (2009), the research strategy concerns how the researchers collect data and use the collected information during the research process. Bryman and Bell (2005) explains that the research strategy specifies how the data will be collected, that is to say if it is through interviews, observations or surveys and will serve as a guide throughout the research process of how one collects the wanted information and how it is analyzed. Creswell (2009) underlines that the research design narrows the decision making from general assumptions to more specific methods of empirical data collection and analyze thereof. Yin (2009) argues that the research strategy serves as the link between the research question and the empirical data collection and also, as Bryman and Bell (2005) states, serves as a guide throughout the research process.

According to Yin (2009) there are five different types of research strategies; experiment, survey, archival analysis, history and case study. Since we are interested in measuring
consumers’ behavior where focus is on the contemporary, we have in thesis chosen the strategy of experiments. We also want to control the independent variables, hence why the research strategy of experiments seems all the more appropriate. This is further stated by Yin (2009) who writes that experiments are performed when the researcher can manipulate behaviour in a direct way that is precisely and systematically. Christensen et al (2010) emphasize that experimental research is appropriate when a researcher have a clear purpose and aims at identify causal relationships between two or more variables.

Parasuraman (1991) describes two different categories of marketing research; exploratory research and conclusive research. Exploratory research is described as the preliminary investigation where the primary purpose is to highlight the problem (ibid.). Parasuraman (1991) further states that the exploratory research is most useful in the start of the research process where a researcher is aiming to understand a certain problem. This process is normally cost as well as time efficient, where information is gathered informally by reading similar case studies, conducting interviews and other sorts of secondary data collecting (ibid). In order to define our research problem and the purpose with our thesis, we conducted exploratory research in the form of gathering secondary data by reading related articles and literature, as well as discussing with relevant people as a means to gain a more profound understanding of the situation being studied. Parasuraman (1991) further highlights that exploratory research is conducted when the researchers are unsure of the specific direction of the research process. For us, the exploratory research clearly gave us very good insights and knowledge proven to be useful throughout the research process and gave us clear guidance for our research. As noted by Christensen et al (2010), the researchers themselves should not determine the research strategy, but that the problem itself should be indicator of what kind of strategy to be used. In line with this reasoning, we based our research strategy (experiments) on our exploratory research, from which a certain problem derived which in turn guided us in the choice of the most appropriate strategy. The research strategy was thus decided based on the problem and not by ourselves before-hand.

In regards to conclusive research, also known as confirmatory research, it is described by Parasuraman (1991) as a tool to help decision makers take the right course of action in a certain situation. According to Parasuraman (1991) the conclusive research is, not only more rigorous and non-flexible than explanatory research, but also more strict and formal, where data is normally collected through experiments, surveys or observations. The collection of conclusive research data is a more planned and rigid process, where the analysis of the results is normally more quantitative in nature, as opposed to the exploratory research which is more qualitative (ibid.). Parasuraman (1991) concludes however that the exploratory research and the conclusive research in general have the same research components but differ in terms of flexibility and degree of formalization. Based on our exploratory research, we gained insights in our field to be studied, upon which we then based our conclusive research method in terms of field experiments.
2.4 Experimental design

Experimental design has been gaining attractiveness in social sciences as well as in business (Hair et al. 1998). In line with the discussion by Yin (2009), Parasuraman (1991) argues that experimental research is a sort of conclusive research with the intention to generate data that confidently could describe the relationship between different variables, or in other words the causal interference between them. Stated by Kinnear and Taylor (1996), experiments in the field of marketing are used to identify causal relationships where different variables are manipulated or controlled by the persons performing the experiments. In regards to identifying causal relationships, Malhotra and Birks (2007) state that we never can prove causality and that we therefore should focus on understanding the relationship between cause and effect.

Christensen et al. (2010) describes experimental research as a study of individuals or certain groups that are subject to experimental changes in their environment and where the pre-test results are compared with the experimental results. The intention is to see whether the experimental changes are causing the given test-results (ibid.). According to Heiman (1999) experimental methods are used to test causal hypothesis that propose a cause and influence on behaviour. As explained by Malhotra and Birks (2007) experiments occur when a researcher manipulates one or more variables of independent characters, where its effects then are measured (ibid.). This reasoning is continued by Heiman (1999) who explain that the researchers manipulate the environment in an active manner that includes a proposal of how the manipulation can influence the behaviour, which can be measured through observations. Further, experiments as a research design differs from both surveys and observational studies in the way that experiments manipulate independent variables, which is not the case in research that is nonexperimental (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996).

Parasuraman (1991) highlight the fact that, if one wants to confidently determine whether one variable have a causal effect over another, the researcher must have as much control of the situation as possible. The best way to conduct experiments is thus, according to Christensen et al. (2010), to have it done in laboratories where full control of the experiment is possible. The authors’ state however that having marketing research done in laboratories is not only costly, but also very time consuming, hence why field experiments are common (ibid.). According to Roth (1988) laboratory experiments are performed in an environment that is more or less fully controlled by the experimenter, who has unimpeded access to the subjects that are being studied. On the contrary, field experiments are performed in an environment where few aspects can be controlled, and these experiments are therefore seen as helpful to bridge the gap between the controlled environment and naturally occurring data (Lewitt and List, 2009). Field experiments have therefore a possibility to study behaviour as it actually occurs in the existent world (Heiman, 1999). Based on this, field experiments can provide the researcher with a mix of control and realism that offer the opportunity to address questions that might otherwise be quite difficult to answer (ibid.).
It is explained that when using an experimental design one should involve four different specifications (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996). These specifications are: 1) specify what treatments that will be manipulated, 2) which test units that will be used, 3) which dependent variables to be measured and 4) which procedures to use for handling extraneous variables. Kinnear and Taylor (1996) define treatments as variables of independent characters that are manipulated and where the effects can then be measured. Examples of these can be price levels, product composition as well as how advertising is executed. Further we have test units which are explained as units to whom the independent variables are presented, which are then measured in regards to its response to the treatment. Here it is common that both human beings and physical entities like retail stores or the liking are used as test units. One then measures the way in which the test units is affected, and these are referred to as dependent variables which often includes awareness, sales or preferences. Finally, the authors also mention extraneous variables which are referred to as all other variables except from the treatments (ibid.). An extraneous variable could in our case be that Media Markt has an offer of lower prices on specific products while we are performing our experiments which could make it hard to make a correct observation of what it is that affects the customers’ behaviour.

As mentioned previously, we have for our thesis chosen the research design of field experiments, where we have performed experiments in the live retail setting of Media Markt, Kalmar. The reason for choosing experiments is that we find it to be beneficial, providing us with the opportunity to study the impact of chosen sensory cues in a real environment with the ability to control the setting without the persons being studied perceiving any of these controls as strange or unnatural. We also found the choice of experimental design as beneficial as we were to understand consumers’ behaviour, where this choice of design could provide us with critical data that could increase the knowledge and thereby the understanding of how the sensorial cues of sight and sound can impact consumers’ touch behaviour.

By manipulating the customers via different sensorial cues and study its impact on the consumers’ touch-behaviour, we are studying the causal effect one certain manipulated variable will have on other controlled variables. This is in line with the discussion by Parasuraman (1991) who writes that manipulation of a supposed causal variable and its impact on controlled variables are truly distinguishing features of experimental research. Even though it is impossible to control all variables in a field experiments, we have tried as much as possible to have a clear control of the research environment in order to truly mirror the social reality.

Based on the request from the department store manager of Media Markt, Kalmar we have performed our study in their computer department. The computer department is situated in the back of the store, adjoining the TV department. Currently the department is divided into three different sections including stationary computers, laptops and Apple computers. Taking into account the requests and wishes from the store manager of Media Markt, Kalmar, we decided to focus on one of four shelves of laptop computers, where we chose one specific computer as our main focus (appendix 1).
Our experiments was conducted during a time period of five weeks, starting on March 4th and ending on April 3rd, where we each weekend made observations on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 12 am to 4 pm at the computer department. As we started to plan our experiment we first did a trial experiment, where we tested our observation schedule in the real setting at Media Markt. This provided us with the opportunity to make a couple of minor changes to it before we started our experiment. After the observational schedule was tested and finalized in discussions with our supervisor we started our experiments.

2.4.1 Control group and experiment group

In what Bryman and Bell (2007) refers to as a classic experimental design, it is common to have two groups for manipulation – one experimental group and one control group. These treatment groups are often referred to as the static-group comparison or static group design, where one group will receive treatment while the other will not receive any treatment (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996; Malhotra and Birks, 2007). The control group will receive no manipulation, that is, no kind of change will occur of the independent variable (Heiman, 1999; Bryman and Bell, 2007). The reason for including a control group is to show how individuals in a certain setting behave without any treatment, which provides the researchers with a starting point of how individuals are affected by the variables added during the experiment (McBurney and White, 2004).

On the contrary to the control group, the experimental group is the group that will receive a manipulation. This group will experience a treatment of the independent variable, where the researchers hope is to find a causal relationship between the cause and its influence on consumers’ behaviour (Heiman, 1999). The findings from the observations of the experimental group can then be compared to those from the control group, where the researcher can feel confident that the results are depending on the performed manipulations.

Choosing the experimental design for our project, we decided to divide our experiments into two groups, the first group consisting of one phase and the second group consisting of two phases. In line with the reasoning of Bryman and Bell (2007), we decided to start our experiment with a control group. We felt it necessary to observe how customers were behaving at the current time, when no treatments were made and the store environment was in its original outline. Our control group was therefore performed as a means of comparing these observations to our experimental group. We created an observation schedule, including different variables regarding their behaviour and time spent at the department and time spent touching the computer (appendix 2). With this schedule, we then performed observations of the area at the department store, where we observed the respondents and their behaviour in the natural environment, where no changes had been made.

Once the first group was completed, we entered the second group referred to as our experiment group. For this group, we decided to divide the experiment into two phases, seeing as we were to add two different sensory cues, where the second experiment would include both. Each phase would last for two weeks, where the weekends would be used for
observations. We started our experiment group by adding the sensory cue of sight. This was done by adding a large sign that was put up behind the computer, with the message of *Touch me* (appendix 2). The sign and its message was used as a means to encourage the customers to touch, test and interact with the computer, factors that we ourselves regard as important when considering to purchase a computer. Using a sign and how it affects customers’ has previously been studied in the fruit section of a grocery store, where it was shown to have a great impact on customers’ impulse behaviour (Peck and Childers, 2006). Based on this we found it interesting to explore if a sign would have the same effect on another type of product in a much higher price category. The consumers’ behaviour was then observed with the same observational schedule as our control group, so that the observations from them would be compatible. As a new step in our study, we also used manipulation-check questions where we, during our third week, asked a few questions to the respondents that had been within the area for our study.

For our second phase of our experiment group we included the manipulation of sound. We chose to add the sensory cue of a voice – seeing as it has been scarcely researched about the effect a voice can have on consumers’ behaviour. We also found it important to implement a sound that would stand out in an already crowded servicescape where music from close by Hi-Fi department and TV department where already fully used. We added a voice sequence that lasted for 10 seconds, where the voice addressed the customers’ in Swedish saying:

“Hey there, you haven’t missed what I have to offer? Do you know that you are allowed to touch me, test me and pick me up to better experience me and my possibilities?”

This sequence was played with an interval of 60 seconds. For this phase we also chose to keep the previous cue of the sign, so that the cue of sound could be measured, but also the multisensory interplay. After gathering our observations on the customers’ behaviour and response to these stimuli, we continued our experiment with manipulation-check questions in the same manner as previously explained.

### 2.4.2 Random sampling

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) random sampling is when each unit of a specific population has the same probability to be included in a collected sample. Random sampling is a well used procedure of probability sampling because it provides more accurate results than other sampling might do (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996). One of the reasons for making a random selection of participants is to be able to make generalizations that better reflects the population (McBurney and White, 2004). This is further explained by Malhotra and Birks (2007) who compares random sampling to a lottery system where numbers are drawn independent of each other and in an impartial manner.

For our study, random sampling means that all customers that visited the computer department of Media Markt, Kalmar during the time period that we performed our experiment had the same probability to be incorporated in our statistics. By referring to Malhotra and
Birks (2007) we could once again refer random sampling as a lottery system where the numbers get drawn without any dependence of each other.

When performing our experiment, we had agreed on exactly where we drew the line for our observation area, so that we as observers would know when a respondent was a part of our experiment or not (appendix 1). To make sure we did not let any subjectivity affect which individual we studied, we let our agreed lines for our area direct us. If we were observing one individual we could not observe anyone else, instead we followed him or her as long as they were within our area. Moreover, due to the fact that our study was performed specifically at the computer department, we did not take any consideration to customers that might be active within the other departments of the retail store.

2.4.3 Observations

According to Merriam (1998) observations is one type of data collection strategy that makes it possible to collect data that addresses the stated research question. One of the advantages of using observations is that they take place in the natural environment where the data represents a firsthand encounter (ibid.). This statement is supported by Kinnear and Taylor (1996) who underlines that observations in a natural environment have the advantage of enhancing the probability that the observed behaviour will reflect actual behaviour patterns. Further, observations are a data collecting method that records the behaviour of the respondents, where the researcher seldom is affected by the respondents’ willingness to participate or contribute with information (ibid.). This is also emphasized by McBurney and White (2004) who explain that observational research concerns recording and studying behaviour that is ongoing, without any attempt to influence it.

When performing observations there are different roles that the researcher can undertake as the observations are performed. According to Bryman and Bell (2007) there are two major types of how one can conduct observations, and these are participant or non-participant observations. This is supported by Merriam (1998) who states that the researcher either can take on the role as participant observer or complete observer, where the researchers’ presence should not be known. Kinnear and Taylor (1996) also underlines the importance of using direct observations, meaning that the researcher observes customers and their behaviour as they occur, and do not view recorded documentations of behaviour that has already occurred.

For our experiments, we have used observation as a way to collect our data. As we are interested in human behaviour we have found it important to eliminate the chance of us affecting the participants, which is why we have taken on the role of complete observer (Merriam, 1998). By this definition we did not interact with the participants and the people being studied did not have to take us into account (Bryman and Bell, 2007). We chose to use direct observations, meaning that we observed the customers behaviour as they occurred, and not through observations that had been recorded in the past (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996).
To record observations in a good and reliable manner it is a crucial step to structure the observations that are to be made (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Having an observational schedule is therefore preferable as it provides the researcher with a clear focus of what to study; that is what behaviour to observe, during what time etc. (ibid.). Based on this reasoning we created our observational scheme, where we used different categories to describe the type of behaviour that was to be observed and thereby registered (appendix 3).

We observed the customers’ behaviour and whether they looked at, spend time by, and if they touched the computer. This means that we observed time, both in regards to time spent within the area of the computer department that we studied, but also time that was spent touching the computer itself. These variables were used as a way to observe if the customers’ behaviour would change as sensorial cues in the retail environment was introduced. To be able to time our respondents as we observed them we used two stopwatches, one in each hand, where one watch concerned the total time spent at the computer department and the other was for the time spent touching the computer. To make it easier for us as observers to know when to start and stop our watches, we together decided exact areas and places of where the customer had to be to enter our study. Important to state is that we have never taken into consideration the numbers of people active within the computer department at the same time, meaning that we have never observed more than one customer at a time. Our stopwatches started as a customer entered our area and did not stopped until the individual exited the area, where the watch started again when a new customer entered.

2.4.4 Manipulation-check questions

To strengthen the material gathered through observations we found it important to ask a number of manipulation-check questions to customers that had entered our area at the computer department at Media Markt (appendix 4). According to Heiman (1999) manipulation-check is therefore a measurement that enables the researcher to better determine whether the indented effect was achieved for the independent variables and their conditions. These checks are usually conducted after the observations are made, as it then is alright to approach the respondents and ask them to reflect about the manipulations influence. Including a manipulation check can provide us with more confidence that the experiment has worked as intended and it can also have an impact on the internal validity in explaining our results (ibid.).

Commonly used in marketing research, a Likert scale is preferable to use as it involves a number of statements that is related to different attitudes (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996). When using a Likert scale the respondent is required to state to which extent he or she agree or disagree with the statement, by giving a numerical score that is equivalent to the statements. A good example of a scale like this could be: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree (ibid.).

Our manipulation check questions where used in connection to both phases of our experiments, and therefore taking place after each sensory cue had been added. The reason for
including these questions was to see how the respondents felt about our manipulations and if it had any influence on them. In order to make generalizations and get a rich material, we asked over 100 respondents for each phase of our experiment.

For the first phase of our experiment where we added the sensory cue of a sign, we used five questions based on a Likert scale. The first four used this scale, where the respondent had the opportunity to grade their experience, where our fifth question was a yes or no question where we wanted to know if the respondent had bought a computer. Our first four questions concerned the customers overall experience of the computers, if they had notice the added stimuli, to which extent it had affected them and if they felt encourage to touch the computers.

Entering the experiments second phase we, as explained previously, added a sensory cue of a human voice speaking to the customers on a 60 second interval. Seeing as we had added a sensory cue we also had to rearrange and add to our previous manipulation check questions. We now decided to have a focus on the voice, where we kept the same questions as before, only exchanging the sign to the voice in the questions. As the stimuli of the sign were still present we decided to include a sixth question regarding if the respondent had noticed the sign or not.

2.5 Validity

Validity is connected to the question: if we are measuring what we are supposed to measure (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996). Simply, validity means that the researcher makes conclusions that are correct and true (McBurney and White, 2004). It is stated that validity in many ways should be viewed as the most important criterion when doing research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). When performing experiments, it is of great importance that we can draw valid conclusions and also to make valid generalizations (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). Yin (2009) states that validity includes different tests that make it possible to judge the quality of a research design. These tests are; construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability and will be further discussed below.

2.5.1 Internal validity

Explained by Malhotra and Birks (2007) and McBurney and White (2004) internal validity concerns the independent variables or treatments and whether they actually caused the effects that have been observed. Internal validity has further been stated as mainly relating to the matter of causality (Bryman and Bell, 2007) and it has commonly been used and received attention in experimental research (Yin, 2009). Kinnear and Taylor (1996) also states that internal validity is what a minimum should be present in an experiment prior to any kinds of conclusions can be made about potential effects. If a research were not to achieve the internal validity the experiment would be viewed as confusing (ibid.).

Discussed by Fisher (2007), internal validity can also be improved by the researcher if a variety of research techniques are used, where the findings from these can be triangulated.
Combining two types of techniques could therefore be preferable since it could make possible to connect and build them on each other, making the result more credible seeing as two techniques strengthen the findings (ibid.). This can also be referred to as triangulation, which Bryman and Bell (2007) explain are when the research is using more than one source or method when studying a social phenomenon. Yin (2009) seconds this and states four types of triangulation:

- Data triangulation
- Investigator triangulation
- Theory triangulation
- Methodological triangulation

From the stated types of triangulation, Yin (2009) foremost emphasize the first one with the encouragement to collect the information from multiple and different sources. Even though multiple sources are used, it will still be the same phenomenon that is sought after. When different events and facts have been supported by multiple sources, i.e. when more than one source has supported it, the data have been triangulated (ibid.).

2.5.2 External validity

According to Fisher (2007) external validity concerns the ability to generalize and prove that the same study, but in a new situation or with a new population could have the same result. This means that external validity is connected to if a result from a cause-and-effect relationship is generalizable or not is (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). Can a result be generalized beyond the specific situation that the experiment has been performed in and in that case, to what settings, times, populations? The authors continue to explain that threats to the external validity can arise when specific conditions of the experiments not take a natural interaction of other relevant variables into consideration (ibid.). Bryman and Bell (2007) develops the reasoning of external validity and states that, placed in a new context with a purpose of being generalizable, the selection of population becomes a crucial part of the process.

According to Yin (2009) some critics argue that single cases provide a meager foundation for generalization, which the author strongly disagrees with. Heiman (1999) however explains that that it is if an observation or its results are unique or atypical, then the external validity of the study can be threatened. This means that if the observation is unique, it will stand out in a way that makes it hard to make generalizations, since it might not be possible to accurately make generalizations as it may not be applicable in a different situation (ibid.).

Seeing as our experiment have included more than 900 observations and 200 manipulation check questions from customers that have entered the store of Media Markt, Kalmar, we feel as though we have a large enough sample. Based on this, we argue that our results are generalizable for other situations and companies providing us with a high validity.
2.5.3 Construct validity

Construct validity concerns the theoretical foundation on which the obtained measurements rely on (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996). The authors continue their explanation by stating that construct validity is related to the making of interest to other constructs; like that a theoretical framework is developed for the researched phenomenon (ibid.). In line with McBurney and White (2004) this means that construct validity concerns whether the theory used for the research is supported by the research results or not. Stated by Yin (2009) construct validity can be accomplished through the three tactics of 1) use multi source of evidence, 2) establish chain of evidence, 3) have key informants review draft case study report.

We have therefore aimed at using multiple sources of evidence to provide a strong theoretical framework where our findings can be presented which strongly support this framework. If the variables we have chosen to study do not reflect the construct from a specific theoretical standpoint, then our construct validity can be questioned. Based on this, we have through dialog with our supervisor developed the variables and measures for our experiment at Media Markt, Kalmar to be sure that they are correctly made.

2.6 Reliability

Explained by Bryman and Bell (2007) reliability is connected to the research question and whether the results of the study are possible to repeat. Merriam (1998) supports this reasoning and underline that reliability concerns a study’s replicability. As explained by Heiman (1999) a result or measurement of a study should be consistent without any measurement errors in order to be reliable. This means that if another person were to repeat your study, following the same procedures that you have accounted for, the researcher should end up with the same results and conclusions (Yin, 2009). The author strongly underlines that this concerns doing the same study, and not doing a similar study through another case. Further explained by Yin (2009) one should make it a habit to operationalize as many steps of the process as possible, where the study should be conducted as if you had someone behind you that always controlled your work and inspected what you are doing.

To make our project as reliable as possible, we have found it important to thoroughly document our data carefully. We have used the same observational schedule throughout our study, giving us the prerequisite to perform observations that are coherent, which easily could be done by other researchers if they used the same schedule for the same experiment in the same environment. As for our manipulation-checks, we have also used a standardized questionnaire with the Likert scale where we have used one for each sensory cue that has been added. This provides others with very good opportunities to perform our study with the same results. Further, both observations and manipulation check questions have been performed in high numbers with the aim to make our result reliable. By having empirical data deriving from a larger number of respondents/participants, it has been our aim to perform a study that can be regarded as dependable and reliable.
2.7 Method criticism

Using a quantitative method performing experiments, we find it important to acknowledge method criticism. During the performance of our experiments at Media Markt Kalmar, there have been some occurrences which have been out of our reach to control, which we feel might have affected some of our findings. As mentioned in our analysis and discussions regarding the study of the sensorial interplay of both sight and sound, there have been different factors present in the retail environment. The store has at one occasion used live-music in the store, where the music have been loud enough to drown other sounds, clearly affecting customers and their interactions with each other, products and personnel, sometime resulting in the customers leaving the department.

Apart from live-music, the products at Media Markt are equipped with security devices, where the computers and other products are connected to an alarm system which is highly sensible and sometimes sets off by the slightest touch. The high pitched noise from the ringing alarm have several times resulted in customers being scared away from the department instead of staying and continuing their product search. This security system is something that Media Markt uses throughout the store and is therefore out of our control, but still an important factor that we are confident affected our result.

Moreover, on many occasions we have noticed customers receiving a shock when touching the computer, resulting in a clearly unpleasant experience. According to the personnel working in the store it is a commonly occurring phenomenon. This is yet again something that is out of our control, but that we still feel could be a possible factor affecting our result in regards to customers’ touching our computer. If these factors were to be excluded, we argue that we might have received a different result concerning hypothesis 5 and 6.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 The evolution of marketing

The field of marketing has shifted from a focus on transaction and exchange to a focus on relationships (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995a, Grönroos, 2008). This shift is a response to the environment being more diverse with more choices which has made it increasingly important for companies to establish relationships with their customers and integrate them in the activities of marketing and development (McKenna, 1991). The customers of today want to enjoy their purchases through an experience that is engaging and memorable (Pine and Gilmore, 2000; 2008). Simply, customers do no longer want to be served in a standardized way (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995b) instead they are interested in personal service, products and brands appealing to their individual style and identity, creating an experience through the human senses (Hultén et al. 2008).

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<th>Relationship marketing</th>
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Table 1: From mass and relationship to sensory marketing
Source: Hultén et al (2009)

3.1.1 Transaction marketing

Transaction marketing descends from the 1950s, where the so called functional school made an entrance into the field of marketing with a clear focus on making a profit (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Stemming from microeconomics it is agreed by Harker and Egan (2006) that transactional marketing originates from the 1950s and more specifically from the very specific business environment of the consumer goods marketing in North America.

As a result of the rapid economic development in the western countries, following the industrial revolution, this time was characterized by a focus on mass production of standardized consumer goods (Gummesson, 2002), where the products went through a large
number of supply channels before reaching the end customer (Godson, 2009). This is supported by Gummesson (2008) who states that the industrial era is known for the mass production of standardized goods, which gave birth to mass distribution and mass marketing. Sharma and Pillai (2003) further acknowledge that the transactional orientation has a focus on exchange, and Auruskeviciene et al. (2007) states that transactional marketing often deals with isolated transactions.

In accordance with the reasoning of Rodrigues et al. (2011) transactional marketing is based on the assumption that consumers in a mass market have average needs where the main focus is to attract new customers, generating single transactions and short term exchanges between the passive buyer and the active seller. Donaldson and O’Toole (2002) argue that a transactional marketing approach means that a joint involvement between the company and its customers is neither desirable nor necessary. The authors further states that transactional marketing is coloured by a one-way communication (ibid.), where Gummesson (2008) underlines that the seller or buyer do not get sentimental or have any interest in a feeling of commitment. Gummesson (2008) further his reasoning by explaining that it is about offering standardized goods or products at the lowest price where it can be delivered within a specific time frame reaching a specific level of quality.

With a primary focus on exchange, decisions have been made based on the marketing mix, also known as the 4Ps (price, product, place, promotion) (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Hultman and Shaw (2003) argue that literature long has revealed that the marketing mix has been at core and therefore described as the school preferred in the field of marketing. This is emphasized by Harker and Egan (2006) that states that traditional marketing, since the 1960s, have been very strongly associated with the marketing mix management where the 4Ps have been at core.

Being a dominant field since the 1950s, transactional marketing started to lose its ground as a consequence of globalization and the recognition that customers and the relationship was of importance (Grönroos, 1994). This created a critique where the focus on the 4Ps were viewed as insufficient and was criticized of being hard to apply outside its original context (Harker and Egan, 2006). With this critique came the view that mass marketing simply was not as efficient and profitable as it once was, since many markets had become saturated where the supply of products often was larger than the demand (Grönroos, 2008). In connection to this, it also came to the companies’ attention that it was becoming harder to get new customers, making it that much more important to work hard on maintaining already existing relationships (ibid.).

3.1.2 Relationship marketing

During the 1980’s and 1990’s relationships became more highlighted as an important ingredient in developing an effective marketing (Sharma and Pillai, 2003). Relationship marketing is based on relationships and the interactions between a buyer and seller whom are
both active and adaptive (Rodrigues et al., 2011) and has according to Li and Nicholls (2000) been referred to as a new marketing paradigm. The authors state that relationship marketing not only aims at attracting new customers, but that there is a need and focus on enhancing the relationship with the already existing customer (ibid.). Brodie et al. (1997) emphasize this reasoning and underlines that it descends from a service context where the relationship and interaction is at core. Customers are therefore no longer viewed to be passive where one purchase or transaction is made; instead they are viewed as active co-producers that are active throughout the process of the value and service chain (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

With a major focus on transactions and exchanges during the last century, the perspective on marketing shifted and relationship marketing became a concept that was generally accepted (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995a; Grönroos 2008). One of the reasons that relationship marketing gained more attention was that most economies, if not all, were both producing and exchanging more services than goods (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Supported by Hultman and Shaw (2003) it is argued that relationship marketing stems from the fact that the service sector industry came to be dominant.

Despite many different definitions of relationship marketing, they have one thing in common, and that is that the companies of today are recognizing the need to compete through the creation and development of long-term relationships (Hunt, 1997). Wilson et al. (2008) argues that more demanding customers along with fast evolving technology and worldwide competition makes it very difficult for companies to gain competitiveness with just a physical product, and firms must instead compete with a total service solution in order to suit individual needs and preferences. The concept of relationship marketing is therefore not mainly about attracting new customers but to create valuable relationships which are mutually beneficial, as a means to retain the customers with the company and grow their business over time (Christopher et al. 2002, Gordon, 1998).

It is explained by Aijo (1996) that one of the reasons for the increased attention and recognized importance for close relationships between provider and customer is that the customers have been identified as an essential part of the marketing and delivery process. Bennett (1996) also stated that the purpose of relationship marketing is to create a long-term relationship that provides customers with trustful, committed and also co-operative relationships. Contrary to transactional marketing, relationship marketing is about creating loyalty, where you want the relationships to last long-term (Gummesson, 2008). These long-lasting relationships should also be characterized by an authentic concern about constantly delivering both goods and services that are of high quality as well as the willingness to sacrifice the ability to achieve short-term advantage when a long-term advantage can be made (Bennett, 1996).
3.1.3 Sensory marketing

Continuing the evolution of the field of marketing, it has been proposed by Hultén et al (2008) that marketing should have its point of departure in customers experience through the human senses, which is referred to as sensory marketing. Krishna (2010) explains that there is a need to understand and highlight the fact that products are of sensual nature, where we need to be affected through our senses – sight, taste, touch, sound and smell.

Marketing as a field is constantly under influence by different societal, political, economical and cultural influences (Hultén et al. 2008). Toffler and Toffler (1995) argue that the world is currently in the process of a major societal shift, where the previous two shifts refer to the agricultural revolution and the industrial revolution. Hultén et al (2008) emphasize that the present post-modernization of society represent this current societal shift, referred to as the third wave. This wave is characterized by a cultural change where modern values are questioned and replaced by post-modern values concerning economy, family, politics and so forth (Toffler and Toffler, 1995; Hultén et al. 2008).

As an important part of the post-modernistic society it has been recognized that fragmentation is important for the creation of experiences but also that the customers themselves have received a central role (Goulding, 2003; Simmons, 2008). Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995b) support this reasoning and argue that consumers today do not want to be served in a standardized way. Customers are therefore interested in products, services and brands that appeal to their individual style and identity (Grönroos, 2008; Hultén et al. 2008).

In connection to creating an individual lifestyle, it is also important to specifically highlight the importance of brands, since they have become an important aspect in the opportunity to express our identity (Hultén et al. 2008). This is supported by Keller et al (2008) who explain that brand becomes a tool that enables people to define their identity and who they are. Branding also serves an important purpose in becoming a favorable brand in the mind of the consumer, which is often achieved through positive feelings and associations (Riezebos, 2003). In regards to creating a reputation it is also important to recognize that a brand can have a positive and emotional appeal that can help build both trust and respect (Kapferer, 2008). Branding is also regarded as a very important and powerful source when creating long-term value as well as differentiation from competitors (Laforet, 2010).

Pointed out as a major part of the postmodern society it is stated by Verhoef et al (2009) that creating customer experiences is becoming one of the main objectives in today’s retailing. This is underlined by Kamaladevi (2010) who emphasize that creating a customer experience is important in order to compete successfully in today’s retailing environment and Verhoef et al (2009) even states that customer experience is a key factor in making the customer loyal. The importance of creating an experience through “a steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun” was recognized early where the fact that customers want emotional responses, esthetic enjoyment and sensory pleasures was emphasized (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).
Taking a starting point in the experience logic, it has been recognized that the human senses play a crucial part for the experience as well as the emotional connection (Schmitt, 2003; Hultén et al. 2008; Krishna, 2010). Even though recognized as early as in the 1970s, where Philip Kotler (1974) argued that store atmospherics was of great importance for consumer’s decision making in regards to purchases, this phenomenon have long been overlooked by companies in their marketing efforts (Hultén et al. 2008; Krishna, 2010).

**3.2 Consumer Behaviour**

As a research field, consumer behaviour mainly focuses on behaviour in relation to the purchase and consumption of products, a focus that more and more is moving its attention to factors that precede and follows the buying behaviour (Ekström, 2010). According to Broniarczyk (2008) consumer behaviour is connected to the process where the consumer makes a decision to purchase. Supporting this reasoning, Gabbot and Hogg (1998) explains that:

> "Consumer behaviour defines a wide range of activities and behaviour, the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences"

- Gabbot and Hogg (1998, p. 10)

Therefore, Bettman et al (2008) emphasize the importance to understand what it is that influences the consumers and the choices they make, where knowledge of this can make it easier for companies and marketers to provide an experience that provides the customer with satisfaction throughout the selection process.

Having previously been viewed as the interaction between a producer and its consumers at the time of purchase, the view has shifted and is now looked upon as an ongoing process that should not be isolated to the event of a consumer handing over money and thereby receiving the selected product (Solomon et al. 2010). This underlines the reasoning that consumer behaviour involves more than the actual purchase of a product, where researchers and practitioners need to recognize underlining factors like why, how often or when customers purchase their products (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997).

It is stated by Baumgartner and Pieters (2008) that the behaviour of consumers are goal-directed, meaning that our consumption could have the goal of providing us with happiness in the end, or other examples where an internal desired state is sought after. Motivation is therefore a fundamental term when it comes to human behaviour (Evans et al. 2006) and can be identified as a driving force that encourages people to act in specific ways. This is agreed upon by Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) who explains that consumer behaviour are depending on different motivating factors, which can be defined as inner forces that are directed towards individual goals. These inner forces can provide us with the motivation to consume a specific product if an ad informs us about benefits that appeal to us (ibid.). Postulated by Jones and
Fazio (2008), motivation and opportunity are two important determinants that will have an impact on the process of purchase and these determinants are likely to occur in different situations. This is why consumer behaviour often is linked to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Evans et al. 2006).

As pointed out, the view of consumers have shifted and consumers are now viewed as active in the process, communal and social beings (Moisander et al. 2010). Wänke (2009) states that there is a close connection between consumer behaviour and social aspects, where the choices consumer makes can have a central function for their social identity. This reasoning is supported by Hultén et al (2008) as well as Belk (1988) who explains that products can be viewed as an extended self, where products and brands can make individuals fit into specific social groups. Wänke (2009) underlines that consumption can provide people with joy and satisfaction as well as dislike or dissatisfaction, where the product itself together with the meager act of choosing are two sources that affect the customers experience and thereby their behaviour. Löfgren (2010) also states that these are all examples of factors that represents a change that has occurred which is affecting consumers behaviour.

According to Wanger (2002) there is a close link between consumer psychology and consumer behaviour, where the first is the science of consumer behaviour with both its inner and outer prerequisite. This indicates that consumers will evaluate their experiences of a specific situation depending on factors like their own and others experiences, price and advertising etc (ibid.). Further, Vargas (2008) argues that consumer’s behaviour can be, and often is, affected by different factors and forces that are outside consumers’ conscious awareness. Wolvén (1994) continues this reasoning by stating that the behaviour of consumers is linked with received information from the surrounding environment, where the overall behaviour of the recipient can be influenced by this information.

### 3.2.1 Perception

Within the field of psychology, perception is viewed to be our process of acquiring sensory information, interpreting it, selecting what is of interesting and then organize it (Peck and Childers, 2008). While sensation refers to an early process of both detecting and encoding the environment around us, perception is referring to what is called the product of psychological processes including context, relationships, meaning, past experiences and memory as key factors (Schiffman, 2001). Groome et al. (2010) makes a clear distinction between sensory impressions and perception, where sensory impression is referred to as “raw-material” that we receive from our sensory organs, while perception is stated to be our subjective experience of the sensory impressions.

It is stated by Solomon et al. (2010) that we are stimulated through the human senses, and how we select, organize and interpret these sensations (stimuli) makes out the process of perception. According to Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) it is first when a stimuli is registered by one of our human senses that a perception occurs. Humans have a perceptual selection that Gabbott and Hogg (1998) refer to as “a mechanism for limiting information” (p. 41). Further,
individuals will react differently, which will result in that some individuals might not even notice music in the background, while others will notice different visual attributes in the environment (ibid.).

Perception is a very complex process to understand and we usually take for granted, where different stimuli like visual impression makes us react and behave accordingly to that stimuli (Groome et al. 2010). According to Scholderer (2010), perception is resembled to a bottleneck, where we humans only have the ability to react to stimuli that stimulates our senses – taking away stimuli that do not interest us. The term perception is therefore used as a narrowing factor in refers to a selection process of what to pay attention to (ibid.).

3.2.2 Attention

Attention has been acknowledged as an important part of social psychology and has also been identified as an important factor and determinant when consumers are making their buying decisions (Ajzen, 2008). Based on this, Hoegg and Alba (2008) underline the connection between attention and perception and further acknowledge it as a part of the field of consumer behaviour and psychology. According to Davenport and Beck (2001) attention is defined as: “...focused mental engagement on a particular item of information” (p. 20) and the process of can be illustrated in the following way:

![A Graphic Model of Attention Processes](image)

*Figure 2: A Graphic Model of Attention Processes  
Source: Davenport and Beck (2001)*

Humans rarely focus and react on only one single stimulus at a time, even though one specific stimulus can appear stronger and thereby draw the majority of our attention (Groome et al. 2010). The process of attention therefore starts when we screen our surroundings, where multiple sensory inputs from around us are registered creating an awareness (Davenport and Beck, 2001). Depending on what interests us we will then select what to pay attention to which is referred to as the narrowing phase. From this phase we then move on to the decision phase where we decide whether and how to act on the information we received in the attention stage or not, putting us in the final stage of the attention process – action (ibid.).

In referens to William James (1890) Groome et al. (2010) defines attention as a mental concentration on something specific that excludes everything else. Discussed by Pashler (1998), attention has to do with people’s perception and their ability to be selective in what they experience and what it is that affects their behaviour. Noted by Nilsson (2006) we are
flooded with information that is received by our senses, where only a small fraction of all information is pertinent for us and our behaviour. It can thereby be argued that people see and hear what they want to hear, something that according to Pashler (1998) can be connected with attention that is selective.

Selective attention is when an individual consciously focuses on specific stimulus which is caused by a sensorial stimulation of one or more of our sensory organs (Groome et al. 2010). One example of selective attention can be when you are listening to a person in a room full of people that are all talking at the same time where you still hear and focus on the person you are talking to (Pashler, 1998). Apart from selective attention, Klingberg (2007) mention that there are at least three types of attention, where the first is called controlled attention that a person with its own power of will can control. The second type of attention is stimuli driven attention, where our attention constantly is drawn to new things in our surroundings and finally our third type of attention is connected to our level of alertness that easily can be affected be our level of tiredness (ibid.).

Further, Gazzaniga et al (2009) explain that human often react to stimuli and factors in an unconscious way. This has to do with the fact that most of the processes in our brain are unconscious, where we do not react and acknowledge all things that happen in our body and brain (ibid.). Rapaille (2006) continues this reasoning and states that the unconscious processes play an important part in consumer behaviour, where products can attract us in an unconscious way through different imprints. This further means that the unconscious processes play a big role when answering questions and evaluations, where we do not always respond accordingly to what we reacted to or how we felt, which is why some polls or studies might be misleading (ibid.).

### 3.2.3 Emotional engagement

Emotions are an important factor in today's marketing where advertising and marketing of different kind is characterized by a content that is used with the purpose of putting us individuals in a specific emotional state (Söderlund, 2003; Lindstrom, 2005). Examples of emotions that are used to attract and affect customers are humor, joy, beautiful people, sex or elements of surprise (Söderlund, 2003). The reason for applying emotions to marketing, is according to Lindstrom (2005) that they can help us to better understand consumer behaviour and why consumers chose to be loyal to a specific brand. Hultén et al. (2008) emphasize the importance of emotional segments by explaining that they are of great importance for the customer's total experience.

According to Öhman (2007) emotions are managed in the right side of our brain where an emotion can be explained as a subjective experience that only is available for the individual that experiences that specific emotion. This reasoning is supported by Söderlund (2003) who states that some emotions bring life to previous episodes of our life, where an interaction between the previous experienced emotions and currently felt emotions occur. This means that every individual will respond in different ways to the same stimuli (ibid.) and it is further
stated by Öhman (2007) that an emotion often is integrated in a social context, which will have an impact on our reaction as well.

Our emotions are stimulated by our human senses that activate our amygdala and send out signals that determine how our body should react (Gazzaniga et al. 2009). It is further explained that our emotions can be seen as a way to navigate through life, where emotions help us evaluate whether a situation is positive or negative (Öhman, 2007). Martin (2008) underlines that it is our emotions that let us know what is worth noticing and remember, emphasizing that it is important to become aware of the emotional components that affects and attracts us. This is in line with the reasoning of Öhman (2007) who argues that our emotions help us evaluate alternative ways to act, where our emotions get the power to hold the balance.

Further, it is argued that emotions provide us with information that is behaviour- and attitude specific and that the experienced emotion can influence our mood and thereby has an impact on how we behave (Cohen et al. 2008). Carver (2003) explains that if a person is in a good mood, positive emotions have the ability to create bigger attention and give them positive associations to what they are experiencing. This is supported by Gordon (2001) who declares that an emotional codification can decide our reaction to a brand and its stimuli, where our emotions are guided by our previous lived experiences and emotions. Rapaille (2006) concludes that there is a close relationship between emotions and learning, where the stronger an emotion is, the more likely we are to learn and remember something.

According to Söderlund (2003) our reactions to emotional messages are an important part of our every day decision making. This makes emotionally charged marketing a powerful tool that can trigger many kinds of actions and feelings that leads to the customer making a purchase of a product that was part of the emotional marketing (ibid.). Hultén (2007) argues that companies must recognize the increased importance of performing strategies that enables active customers to develop emotional bonds to a brand. The author continues his reasoning by stating that the customers need to feel something for the brand in order for a loyal relationship to be built (ibid.).

Further, emotions are a key player in regards to judgments’ and opinions, and emotions are by many viewed as a mean to control our actions (Fijda et al. 2006). Clore and Glasper (2006) also argue that emotions play an important part in regards to where we direct our attention. According to Murray (1971) emotions have a motivational effect on people’s behaviour, where they influence our perception, learning and performance. How we react to different stimulus around us will therefore be affected by previous experiences and taught stimuli as well as social situations (ibid.). This means that our emotions are both intimate and subjective and can provide us with feelings of anger, joy, shame, laughter etc. where a person’s emotional response is highly unique (Katz, 1999).
3.2.4 Memory

To fully understand human behaviour, it is important to create knowledge about the human memory and how it works. Our memory helps us to hold on to information that we have gathered at previous occasions (Bear et al. 2001) and according to Mantonakis et al (2008) our memory can be seen as the record of every person past. Besides being useful in remembering what has happened, our memory is contributing to our ability to learn, to behave different in different situations influencing us by prior experiences (ibid.). Since human beings constantly experience and learn new things we are built with a memory with huge capacity (Bear et al. 2001).

It is explained by Cohen et al (2008) that there is a strong connection between arousals intensity and how well people remember. Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) connects the ability of our memory to consumer processes, where the memory process can be about remembering specific products, services or customer experiences. In line with this, Martin (2008) underlines the importance that marketers and managers understand the relation between emotions, memory and decision making, since customers are looking for shortcuts that makes their existence easier.

Groome et al (2010) argues that our memory is essential for us to function as a human being, where it allows us to store information and experiences that makes it possible for us to function and handle different types of future situations by comparing with previous experiences. They also state that just about everything we do in life, is dependent on our ability to remember previous events and situations (ibid.). According to Hoyer and MacInnis (1997) humans can be seen as having three types of memories – sensory memory, short-term memory and long-term memory.

### 3.2.4.1 Sensory memory

Our memory are consistent of many different processes, where one of them is our sensorial memory, which becomes activated when our sensory organs receives knowledge through stimuli (Nilsson and Wigström, 1995). The sensory memory is usually exposed to stimuli that only last for a couple of milliseconds (Gazzaniga et al. 2009). Philippe et al (2009) address that emotional memories can be defined as memories of previous experiences or events, that have been emotionally triggering which have led to the memory being stored. Our experiences are throughout life registered in our memory, meaning that previous experiences that have ended up in our sensory memory can be of tremendous meaning for future experiences and how we will react and respond to them (ibid.).

The amygdala, which is part of the brains limbic system plays a key role for how we react to and remember experiences that affects us emotionally (Nyberg and Bäckman, 2007). This system is very important for our memory as well as our capacity to learn new things (Risberg and Widén, 1995). By comparing new impression with previous experiences, our limbic system determines which sensory stimulus to react to (Sjödén, 1995). Therefore, Martin
(2008) emphasizes the importance of understanding the limbic system to better understand the relation between emotions and our memory.

### 3.2.4.2 Short-term memory

Humans also have what is referred to as the short-term memory. In comparison with our sensory memory, which only holds information for a very brief time, our short-term memory can hold information somewhat longer. Instead of a millisecond to a second this memory has the capacity to hold a memory for seconds up to minutes (Gazzaniga et al. 2009). It is well established and agreed upon that our short-term memory has the primary task of a temporary storage for information (Nilsson and Wigström, 1995; Amber et al, 2000).

Once the information has been treated by the sensory memory, information of interest is picked and forwarded to our short-term memory. This memory is also referred to as our working memory that allows us to remember newly received information at the same time as we perform other tasks (Gazzaniga et al. 2009; Bear et al. 2001). Our short-term memory can also be viewed as an explicit memory, meaning that it is a process where we consciously can get stored information from our memory (Nilsson and Wigström, 1995).

### 3.2.4.3 Long-term memory

Besides having a sensory and short-term memory, humans also have a long-term memory (Gazzaniga et al. 2009). Just as the name indicates, the long-term memory allows us humans to remember information for a longer period of time, which can include a couple of hours or days but also up till several years. Thanks to our long-term memory, we can remember things that happened last week, but we can also remember specific events that occurred during our childhood (Gazzaniga et al. 2009). It is explained by Bear et al (2001) that not all information or memories end up in our long-term memory, where we sift through the information and might exclude information like what we had to dinner last week. Larsson (1991) furthers this discussion and states that our long-term memory has an unlimited duration and capacity.

According to Wolf (2009) our long-term memory can be negatively affected by stress, where it can interrupt our interpretation of different signals, making it harder for us to remember certain events. On the contrary, Buchanan and Tranel (2008) explain that stress also can have a positive effect where it can enhance a memory and therefore make it easier to remember a week or a year later.

### 3.3 Servicescape

The term servicescape was introduced in the early 1990’s by Bitner (1992) and is defined as the physical environment and surroundings in which an organization is active (Zeithaml et al. 2009). According to Bitner (1992) the servicescape includes different environmental dimensions which are defined as ambient conditions, space/function and signs, symbols &
artefacts (ibid.). These dimensions consist of both exterior and interior design, including surrounding environment as well as layout, equipment and sound, music, scent, lighting (Zeithaml et al. 2009), all which have been identified as factors influencing customer’s behaviour (Bitner, 1992).

According to Kotler (1974), consumers respond to more than the product itself, including the place where the product is sold. This means that customers rely on tangible cues or the physical evidence of the service environment when evaluating the service process (Wilson et al. 2008). The physical environment can thereby have a great impact on customers since it can influence customers overall satisfaction of an experience (Bitner, 1992) as well as how consumers behave through approach or avoidance (Zeithaml et al. 2009).

Figure 3: Servicescape framework
Source: Wakefield and Blodgett (1996)

Being identified as an important factor, it has also been concluded by Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) that the servicescape has an effect on customer’s satisfaction, where it can influence their perception of quality. This reasoning is supported by Reimer and Kuehn (2005) who states that different cues perceived prior to purchase will affect how the customers perceives the products quality. Harris and Ezeh (2008) explain that a servicescape can trigger emotional responses which will have an effect on the customers’ decision to either continue or discontinue their support of the brand as well as the product.
3.3.1 Store Atmospherics

As early as the 1970’s Kotler (1974) argued that the atmosphere of a place can be more influential than the product itself, underlining that the atmospherics can be viewed as the primary product. Store atmospherics are said to affect customers behaviour through its interaction with their perception (Puccinelli et al, 2009) and the thought of atmospherics is to create a positive experience that influences the customer’s perception, allowing them to expect positive things, including the possibility to try new things (Wanger, 2002). Store atmospherics is defined as “…an effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability” (Kotler, 1974) and concerns environmental cues that can have a potential effect on humans behaviour as well their perception (Smith and Burns, 1996).

In connection to the above stated definition by Kotler (1974), Sharma and Stafford (2000) state that design, ambience and social factors together makes out atmospheric cues. They further explain that environmental factors can have what they refer to as synesthetic properties – meaning that the factors can influence the persons in the environment by working together in a synergistic fashion (ibid.). The retail environment is therefore never neutral, instead it is full of cues and different messages communicating with customers (Greenland and McGoldrick, 1994). These cues, referred to as sensory cues are therefore of great importance in attracting the customer, creating an emotional relationship (Hultén 2011b).

Since the store environment is becoming more and more important with increased attention from both customers and store managers the stores must be designed with different styling elements in a conscious way with the aim to attract customers, affecting the buyers in different ways (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Solomon et al. 2010; Rodrigues et al. 2011). Kotler (1974) specifies that atmospherics are used to create a designed environment where consumers are emotionally affected. This reasoning is further developed by Summers and Hebert (2001) who states that atmospherics express specific sensory qualities of a store environment that can be used to evoke explicit consumer responses. The atmospherics are directly linked with our senses, excluding taste, through which we will experience different sensory channels like colour, shape, scent, volume or temperature (Kotler, 1974).

Store atmospherics are linked to a number of stimuli and different cues, where colour, lighting, scent and music and scents are included (Spangenberg et al. 1996; Wanger, 2002; Solomon et al. 2010), with an aim of impacting customers’ in a positive way through emotional responses at an unconscious level (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982).

3.3.2 Environment Experience

It is not longer just about the purchase; instead it is becoming more important to provide the customers with an experiential factor of the store environment (Solomon et al. 2010). It is therefore central that retail environments are created where superior customer experiences is at core (Verhoef et al. 2009). Stated by Kamaladevi (2010) retailers can only compete in a
successful way by focusing on the customers buying experience, where the goal should be to move satisfied customers to loyal and finally to advocate customers.

Providing customers with an environment experience it is important to include a composed mixture of clues that are detected by people in the buying process (Schmitt, 1999), where the environment often is filled with aesthetic expression which can all affect the experience in a positive but also negative way very quickly (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997). Further, the need to provide customers with artificial environments that are attractive is underlined by Kotler (1974), who also underlines that there is a difference between intended atmospherics and perceived atmospherics. The author explains that intended atmospherics is the sensory qualities that the artificial environment is thought to provide, while perceived is how the customer actually experience it (ibid.).

According to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) it is also becoming more important for companies to enable customers to co-create their experiences, providing them with unique experiences that make out a competitive advantage. Creating experiences in the retail environment has the purpose to create an emotional engagement for the customers (Bäckström and Johansson, 2006). This was early recognized by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) who also emphasized that consumption should be looked upon from an experiential point of view, where feelings, fun and fantasies should be included. It is also important to recognize that how an experience is perceived is dependent on different personal variables (Bäckström and Johansson, 2006), where individuals will have different experiences of the same situation (Harris and Ezeh, 2008).

In a society where the customer is referred to as experience-seeking it is highly important to recognize that retailers need to have a focus on environment experiences (Bäckström and Johansson, 2006). Atwal and Williams (2009) continues this discussion by explaining that customers that are interested in experiences should be offered memorable events that engage them in a personal way making them willing to pay for the possibility to spend extra time in the environment. With this in mind, a store has the possibility create a physical manifestation of the brand, and the store surroundings should be designed in order to capture the essence of the brand identity (Floor, 2006).

Floor (2006) states that stores need to become their own brands if they are to sustain the ever increasing competition, and that the emotional connection a customer can receive with a brand by interacting in a store environment is of great importance in order to build a positive image of the brand in the customers mind. It is acknowledged by Pucinelli et al. (2009) that retail performance is at core as a means for companies to enhance their customer’s satisfaction and the authors further emphasize the importance to recognize that customers are interested in achieving goals, which affects their experiences.
3.4 The Human Senses

The human senses have long been overlooked in the field of marketing, but have during the last decade received more and more attention, where it’s meaning for consumers experience and behaviour have been emphasized (Hultén et al. 2008; Hultén 2011a). Explained by Schmitt (1999) the purpose of using the human senses in marketing is to provide customers with excitement, satisfaction and pleasure, where the sensory experience is in focus. It is further stated by Hultén et al (2008) that the human senses needs to be understood as they are important elements in better understanding the consumption processes where individual behaviour and decision making are important factors.

3.4.1 Sense of vision

Today we are living in a visual based world (Lindgren and Nordström, 2009), where the sense of sight has been described as our most seductive sense having the power to convince us despite no logic (Lindstrom, 2005). Being described as our most seductive sense, vision is also pointed out as our most important sense, enabling us to understand the environment around us (Valberg, 2005). Vision is not only regarded as the human’s most significant sense but also the most dominant sensory system (Schiffman, 2001) where the consumers more or less rely on visible and tangible cues that attracts and draw attention (Ward et al.1992).

According to Henderson et al (2003), visual stimuli includes logos, names, packages, product design etc. and are regarded as a critical part that should be included in any strategy that concerns branding. It is further argued that the use of graphic information can make it easier for a product to stand out in the competitive clutter, having a positive impact on the customers’ consideration of a possible purchase (Kahn and Deng, 2010).

Further, visual stimuli have been shown to be of importance when verbal material is absent, creating a perception of quality which has a direct impact on the building of a strong brand (Henderson et al. 2003). Studies have also shown that the visuality of brands and other visual stimulus can affect consumers in both a positive and a negative way without processing any other information (ibid.). This is in line with the reasoning of Kahn and Deng, 2010), who states that graphic packaging can increase the aesthetic response toward a product. This is also emphasized by Messaris (1997) who argues that the sense of sight, beside the purpose of receiving attention, can evoke an emotional response towards a product and other things.

3.4.1.1 Lighting

According to Lindstrom (2005, p. 19) “vision is all about light”, and it is the transmitting of light patterns that is useful to us when translating these patterns into information. This is supported by Ackerman (1990) who explains that the sense of sight is used to gather huge amount of information from the environment around us, where we are stimulated by light in numerous ways that are then affecting our behaviour, feelings as well as our well being.
Lighting is said to be of significant importance in creating the store environment (Summers and Hebert, 2001). Light have been shown to affect us, where people have preferred a warmer and dimmer light instead of a cooler and whiter light that shines bright (Knez and Kers, 2000). This is agreed upon by Summers and Hebert (2001) who explains that consumers behaviour are affected by the use of light where they spend more time at the display as different levels of lights are used. It is also emphasized that lighting not only draws attention to products, but that a bright light can encourage customers to examine and touch products more (Areni and Kim, 1994; Summer and Hebert, 2001; Quartier et al.2008).

Besides having a positive impact on customers approach behaviour towards a product, there are also physical benefits, where a good choice of lighting can relieve tension on the eyes or even fasten up the process of noticing objects (Hsu, 2010). The author explains that lighting should be used to meet the customer’s physical and psychological requirements in order to affect the perception of the atmospherics (ibid.).

### 3.4.1.2 Colour

Apart from patterns of light, colour is also pointed out as being a very important element of vision that provides us with a broad range of visual dimensions (Schiffman, 2001). It is for example through colour that the sense of sight can detect the environment around us, making it more intense where contrasts of colours can make an object stand out (ibid.). Further, Gorn et al (1997) explain that it is well known that people’s feelings can be influenced by colour. It is stated that customers are influenced by the visual stimuli of colour which can affect consumers in how they evaluate products as well as how activated they become (Babin et al. 2003). It is therefore important to consider the choice of colour closely so that not only attention is maximized, but also that feelings are evoked leading to favourable attitudes toward the brand (Gorn et al. 1997). Colour is often used in retail settings to create a desired atmosphere with the attempt to influence the customers buying mood in a positive way (Bellizzi et al. 1983).

The liking of different colours and their affect on feelings are connected to cultural differences (Bellizzi et al. 1983; Chattopadhyay et al. 2010), where research has shown that the colours of red and blue are examples of two colours affecting us differently. Blue is a colour that is usually perceived as more relaxing, while red can have the opposite effect where blue has been shown to be the most preferred colour of the two (ibid.). According to Greenleaf (2010) colour can become important when the marketing communication becomes too demanding, since it might be more demanding to process in comparison to colour. The author even argues that black and white can be beneficial to use in a world where advertising and marketing are using many colours, and that black and white can be even less demanding to process than colour. It is further argued that black and white can be associated with elegance as well as artistic refinement (ibid.).

Colour is also making it possible for humans to detect different characteristics of the surface, including textures and patterns (Schiffman, 2001). And how we perceive colour depends on
how light is reflected from the object to our eye, but it can also be influenced by previous experiences – which can be referred to as memory colours (ibid.). It is further stated by Arnheim, 1997) that if something stands out visually it has a better chance of being recognized more easily by humans, as we tend to notice simple things as distinct colours, signs, movements or shapes, where our sense of sight works selectively.

It is argued that our ability to detect and recognize objects is important and also dependent on how we detect texture, colour and different motions around us (Forrester et al. 2008). Rughubir (2010) furthers this reasoning by suggesting that we make judgements through visual cues in three distinct but interrelated ways, which is: attention, imagery and finally neural activation. The author also states that as with most things, humans are individuals, meaning that there are differences regarding our need to rely on visual stimuli of different types when making our judgements (ibid.).

3.4.2 Sense of sound

The human sense of sound is second to be developed of our human senses (Montagu, 1986) and is vital for communication and learning and is the only sense that can provide us with warning signals from all possible directions (Lukács, 1993). The frequency of the human hearing is tremendous, with a range of more than nine octaves, topping the otherwise remarkable range of vision (Rossing et al. 2002). Being so sensitive and being able to pick up such a range of frequency, the ear is a remarkable physiological mechanism (Schiffman, 2001) where the sense of sound cannot be shut off and instead humans are living in symbiosis with the sounds around them (Hultén et al. 2008).

Sound comes from the vibration or motion of an object and these vibrations send out waves through the air, which are then captured by our ear (Lindstrom, 2005). This reasoning is developed by Rossing et al (2002) who states that there are different sources of sound including for example vibrations and changing airflows which can carry information from one point to another as well as transporting energy. How we experience sound is highly individual and different people will respond differently to the same sound (Kjellberg et al, 1991; Rossing et al. 2002). It is also explained that the sense of sound is more acute in children than adults, where children have the capacity to recognize a greater variety of noises that are also more easily memorized (Lindstrom, 2005).

Sound can be divided into wanted and unwanted sound, and Rossing et al (2002) explains that there are more to the world of sound in the environment than music – namely noise. The authors elaborate this reasoning, and states that noise have been said to have an impact on communication as well as produce different psychological as well as physiological effects (ibid.).
3.4.2.1 The sound of music

Stated by Schiffman (2001) music is one type of sound that is integrated psychologically, providing humans with “intensively experiences of aesthetic pleasure” (p. 381) and sound is therefore said to be able to influence where we chose to direct our visual attention. It is argued by Wallin (1991) that the organism of sound helps us to evaluate the world around us through emotion, memory, attention and learning, where the link to emotions is especially emphasized. Orbach (1999) agrees with this, stating that feelings are well connected to both the pursuit and the experience of music, where feelings evoked by music can include calmness, excitement, fear, satisfaction and sadness to mention a few.

Sound has long been used in the field of marketing (Hultén et al. 2008) and has been recognized as an important component that triggers and influences the consumer’s mood, behaviour and preferences (Bruner, 1990; Alpert et al. 2005). According to Kellaris and Kent (2001), music has the reputation to be the “shorthand of emotions” (p. 384) and have been used to evoke emotional responses in the consumer. With this in mind, music has been identified to play an important role in the lives of the consumers, where it is said to touch them in many different ways and contexts (Kellaris and Kent, 2001), where the mood and perception towards a specific product can be influenced by the music played (Gorn et al. 1993).

3.4.2.2 Type of music and tempo

According to Grewal et al. (2003), different types of music can affect customers in different ways. MacInnis and Park (1991) explains that there are three key elements that affects how a consumer interprets or feel about music; first it is how involved or interested the customer is, second is the consumers subjective perception of the music’s appropriateness in relation to the advertising, and finally, third how the musical elements is organized. This is further supported by Hui et al. (1997) who states that the individuals preference in music will affect if the advertising has a positive influence on the consumer or not, where Kellaris et al. (1993) underlines that the chosen music will have an impact on how the message is perceived or processed by the consumer.

Companies need to be aware of what type of music they are playing, using liked music with the aim to affect customer overall evaluation of the store environment and the experience of it (Cameron et al. 2003). In connection to individual differences in musical preferences, it is therefore important for companies to investigate what type of music their customers prefer (Areni and Kim, 1993). Classical music has been identified to have a positive effect on how the store atmospherics is evaluated (Grewal et al. 2003) and studies have shown that expensive products have increased in number of purchases when using classical music in the background (Areni and Kim, 1993).

Moreover, studies have been performed where the tempo of the music has been proven to be of importance (Gundlach, 1935; Wedin, 1972). Bruner (1990) states that fast tempo usually is
recognized as happy and pleasant while music of slow tempo has been shown to provoke more sentimental feelings. It has also been shown that music interpreted as either pleasant or unpleasant will generate different responses usually resulting in a positive or negative mood (Gorn et al. 1993). Using the right type of music has been proven to reduce negative effects of waiting for service (Hui et al. 1997). Being more aware of these factors, companies within the retail industry are putting more effort on using background music that will provide their customers with a pleasant experience as well as an appropriate atmosphere (Dubé and Morin, 2001).

3.4.2.3 The human voice

Explained by Sonnenschein (2001) the human voice can be seen as an orchestra of different wind instruments where we are able to create different sounds and harmonics through our vocal cords and cavities. Here, the vibrations of vowels and consonants can make out a distinctive communication (Sonnenschein, 2001) where the pitch and speed of the voice can affect how the sound is interpreted (Peck and Childers, 2008). The combinations of vibration, vowels, consonants, pitch and speed makes it possible for us human not only to hear speech but also to interpret emotions as well as identify who the speaker is as a person (Sonnenschein, 2001).

While most of the existing research on sound in the field of marketing includes music, there has been some research conducted regarding other characteristics of hearing (Peck and Childers, 2008). Stated by Hultén et al (2008) one of these characteristics are the human voice, that according to the authors can create a great opportunity for providing a sound experience. Explained by Schiffman (2001) the sound of our voice differs from other sounds, making it stand out, where the human voice has an ability to transcend emotions and personality that can affect the message that is being communicated (Hultén et al, 2008).

According to Sonnenschein (2001) our voice includes all sounds that come from our mouth, for example: laugh, speech, cough, yawn etc. This means that language not always have to be heard, since the sound of the voice still makes it possible for you to make out and interpret the feeling of the message even though the meaning might be harder to grasp (ibid.). Discussed by different authors studies have shown that the speech rate of a voice can have an impact on consumers in the way that it might enhance the persuasive power of the message (Peck and Childers, 2008; Dahl, 2010). Beside these characteristics, Sonnenschein (2001) states that the human voice can be given different more characteristics including robust, hollow, flat and sharp types of voices. As a result of the media, there have also been stereotyped characters and personalities of voices, where John Wayne as cowboy, Cary Grant as gentlemen and Mae West as seductress is mentioned as typical vocal characters (ibid.).

3.4.3 Sense of touch

The sense of touch is referred to as the most sensitive of our body’s organs (Montagu, 1986) and is the very first of our human senses to be developed (Field, 2001). Covering all of our
body, the human skin is the largest of our organs, where an adult human being, that is average in both weight and height, has a skin area of about 2 m\(^2\) that usually weighs around 4-5 kilos (Schiffman, 2001). Further, it is through the skin, as our receptor organ for touch, that we are in contact with the world around us (Gallace and Spence, 2010; Serino and Haggard, 2010). Even if all of our skin responds to touch or pressure, we are most sensitive in our hands, fingers, around our mouth and on our tongue (Ackerman, 1990; Schiffman, 2001; Hultén et al. 2008). With the use of our fingers, which are highly sensible to tactile stimulation, we are able to explore the physical world around us (Birznieks, 2003).

The skin is not only important for the physical development of human beings, but also plays an important role for our behavioural development (Montagu, 1986). Rolls (1999) develops this reasoning by stating that touch can create a tactile stimulation that creates a rewarding feeling of pleasure that activates our brain, impacting our feelings and behaviour. It can therefore be important to stimulate the skin in more profound ways, creating a more versatile surface that activates and stimulates the sense of touch connecting with the individual’s feelings (Schiffman, 2001).

### 3.4.3.1 Touching products

According to Underhill (2009, p. 168) we are living in a society that is “tactile-deprived” where shopping has become a chance to “experience the material world firsthand”. Consumers have a need to physically interact with products (Citrin et al. 2003), where touching have been found to have a positive impact on customer attitudes as well as intentions to purchase a product (Peck and Childers, 2003a). This is also underlined by McCabe and Nowlis (2003) who states that consumers like to evaluate products and gather information about them and their properties by using their hands and fingers, i.e. the sense of touch.

Being offered the opportunity to touch an object has been shown to create a feeling of ownership of the touched object (Peck and Shu, 2009), and Underhill (2009) states that consumers are buying more products than ever before based on touch and trial. According to Lindstrom (2005), it is therefore becoming more important for companies to acknowledge the need to apply the aspect of touch to a brand, thinking about texture a specific brand has, or should incorporate. Grohmann et al (2007) emphasizes that tactile input will have a positive impact on the consumer response as well as their perception of product quality.

The sense of touch has further been identified to have an influence on customers’ impulse purchasing where the encouragement to physically interact with a product have been proven to be effective in regards to number of purchased products (Peck and Childers, 2006). The need to touch a product will vary from one individual to another where some will be satisfied with touching a product while placing it in their shopping carts, others will need more time to use their hands to better explore a product before making the decision to purchase it (Peck and Childers, 2003b). People with a high need to touch (NFT) are more likely to be positively impacted by marketing that incorporates touch (Peck and Wiggins, 2006).
Further, Peck (2010) and Hultén (2011c) states that there are three categories of factors that motivates consumers to touch. Illustrated below, these factors are: Individual factors, Product/object factors and Situational factors.

Figure 4: Motivational factors of touch
Source: Hultén (2011c)

Explained by Hultén (2011c) individual factors include preferences, instrumental and hedonic factors and these can all differ from one individual to another individual. Product/object factors are related to the product category, product attributes and touch attributes, where a product can differ in its hardness or texture. This category can for example include product categories such as electronics and clothes. The third factor of the figure is situational factors and is often related to the store environment as well as the point of purchase and demand to touch (ibid.).

3.4.4 Multi-sensory brand-experience

“…sensory marketing can increase the quality of customer treatment, which can lead to stronger brand recognition and brand image in the long term”

Hultén et al (2009, p. 13)

Acknowledged by many, it is agreed that brands and their personality are important factors that influences customers in their relationship with brands (Aaker, 1996; Fournier, 1998; Nobre et al. 2010). This reasoning is in line with that of Keller (2003) who argues that there is a need for a relational approach to consumption. As stated by Fournier and Lee (2009) we are
living in a turbulent world that creates a need for people to feel a sense of connection with a brand, where companies are encouraged to develop commitment, support and engagement.

As an important part of consumption, brands are more and more viewed as partners, which are legitimized by highlighting different ways in which brands can be humanized but also personalized (Fournier, 1998). Brands play an important role in creating a relationship with customers and are often assigned a personality as a way to more easily connect with customers through different human characteristics (Aaker, 1997; Nobre et al. 2010). Aaker (1997) has developed a brand personality framework where dimensions of sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness are at core where it is postulated that brand personality is important in creating strong relationships.

It is further stated by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) that the contemporary customers have a need for fun, emotions and imagery, where consumption experiences are sought after in the everyday life. It has also been acknowledged that brands are a useful tool in establishing a closer relationship to the customers where individualization as a lifestyle is becoming more prominent (Hultén et al. 2008). It is therefore becoming more evident that both cognitive and emotional needs only can be fulfilled if a brands personality is built on sensorial strategies that provide customers with a multi-sensory brand-experience (Rodrigues et al, 2011).

Despite the recognition that humans rarely process information through one sense at a time, existing literature on how consumers’ processes sensorial stimuli are mainly focused on the human senses individually (Elder et al. 2010). The fact that the human senses mostly have been studied individually can be illustrated by empirical studies concerning the sense of sound (Yalch and Spangenberg, 1990; Kellaris and Mantel, 1996; Jackson, 2003; Garlin and Owen, 2006), the sense of smell (Bone and Ellen, 1999; Goldkuhl and Styfvén, 2007), the sense of taste (Kakhonen and Tourila, 1998; Edwards et al, 2003; Gustafsson et al. 2006; Henneberg, S. and Biededarken, 2006), the sense of sight (Areni and Kim, 1994; Turley and Milliman, 2000) and the sense of touch (Citrin et al. 2003; Peck and Childers, 2003a; Peck and Childers, 2003b; Peck and Wiggins, 2006: Peck and Shu, 2009).

A multi-sensory brand-experience occurs when we perceive more than one of our human senses during a consumption experience (Hultén, 2011a) and according to Elder et al (2010) it is important to study and understand the interaction of different sensory cues. All individuals experience both products and services through the human senses (Rodrigues et al. 2011) and by performing research on how the sensory cues interact and interferes with one another, researchers and practitioners can gain important understanding on how this interplay can affect customers in their attitudes, preferences and perceptions (Elder et al. 2010). Further, sensory marketing creates a possibility to attract customers in a more personal way, where emotions are produced and where memories can be both activated and created (Hultén et al. 2008). A multi-sensory brand-experience is therefore an important factor to consider as it creates meaning by attracting the human senses, creating an experience for customers that enable them to have fun, live out fantasies and have feelings (Rodrigues et al. 2011; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).
3.5 Hypotheses

The need to better understand what it is that influences consumers in their decision and choice-making has been greatly emphasized by researchers, where it has been underlined that having knowledge of this can improve the possibilities for companies to provide customers with satisfactory selection processes (Bettman et al. 2008). Seeing as consumers’ behaviour has been identified to be affected by factors that lie outside of their conscious awareness (Vargas, 2008), store atmospherics and environmental cues have been highlighted and emphasized as factors or forces affecting consumers’ behaviour (Smith and Burns, 1996). The physical environment has therefore been acknowledged as highly influential on how consumers behave, both in regards to approach and avoidance (Zeithaml et al. 2009), and the behaviour can therefore be closely linked with the information that is transmitted and received from the surrounding environment (Wolvén, 1994).

Stated by Greenland and McGoldrick (1994), a retail environment is full of sensory cues that communicate with the customers. These sensory cues are to be viewed as important since they can attract customers and help to create long-term relationships of emotional character (Hultén, 2011c). This leads to the recognized importance of deliberately designing stores with styling elements as a means to attract and affect customers in different ways (Turley and Milliman, 2000; Rodrigues, 2011). Therefore, the human senses needs to be understood in order to better understand decision making and individual behaviour as part of the consumption process (Hultén et al. 2008).

The human senses have the ability to affect and impact consumers’ behaviour. The sight sense has been identified as our most dominant sensory system, where it attracts us and draws our attention to tangible and visible cues (Schiffman, 2001; Ward et al. 1992). It is simply easier for humans to recognize something if it stands out visually in terms of shapes, movements or colours as our sight sense works in a selective manner (Arnheim, 1997).

**H1:** The sensory cue of vision yields a positive relationship with the number of people approaching the computer.

**H2:** A visual cue exerts a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer.

**H3:** The sensory cue of vision exerts a positive effect on time spent touching the computer.

Hypothesis 1 assumes that there is a positive relationship between the sensory cue of vision and approaching the computer as a response. Following this, hypothesis 2 assumes that when vision is used as a sensory cue more people touch the computer. Further, hypothesis 3 assumes that a visual sensory cue will have a positive effect on the time customers spend touching the product.
The human hearing has been acknowledged to have a tremendous frequency that cannot be turned on or switched off (Rossing et al. 2002; Schiffman, 2001). The human voice is different from other sounds, creating opportunities to create a sound experience that can create personality and emotions, which together can impact and affect the message that is communicated (Hultén et al. 2008) and thereby enhancing its persuasive power (Peck and Childers, 2008).

Moreover, the need for emotions, fun and imagery has been identified as important factors influencing the contemporary customer where an experience is highly wanted and the need to better understand how brands can create experiences are underlined (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hultén et al. 2008; Rodrigues et al. 2011). Continuing this reasoning, it is becoming crucial for researchers as well as practitioners to understand the interplay of different sensory cues in terms of how they interact and interfere with one another (Elder et al. 2010). It is therefore of great interest to understand the interplays’ effect on customers behaviour through their attitudes, perceptions and preferences, where emotions and memories are activated. We assume that introducing an auditory cue along with the visual sensory cue will increase consumers’ interest and response towards a product. The following hypotheses are tested:

**H4:** The sensory interplay of vision and sound yield a positive relationship with number of people approaching the computer.

**H5:** The sensory cues of sound and sight exert a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer.

**H6:** The sensory cues of vision and sound exert a positive effect on time spent touching the computer.

Hypothesis 4 assumes a positive relationship between the sensorial cues of sight and sound and the number of people approaching the computer. Further, hypothesis 5 postulates that the sensorial interplay of sound and sight will increase the number of people that touches the computer. Finally, hypothesis 6 assumes that introducing the styling elements of a sign and a human voice exerts a positive effect on how long customers’ stays at the computer department.
4. RESULTS AND ANALYSES

In this chapter we present the results and analysis of our hypotheses. The statistics are then analyzed and the main findings are presented in relation to our hypotheses. On the collected data from our experiment we have conducted descriptive statistics as well as a number of analyses of variance, ANOVAs and Pearson’s r.

4.1 Hypothesis 1

The process of purchase is nowadays viewed as an ongoing process (Solomon et al. 2010), and it is therefore becoming increasingly important to better understand what it is that consumers’ are influenced of and how marketers better can provide their customers with a memorable experience throughout the selection process (Bettman et al. 2008). A customers affective response may sometimes be influenced by factors that lie outside the consumers’ awareness of a brand (Vargas, 2008) and mind consciousness, where the selection is dependent on the human senses and how they perceive the sensory stimuli (Solomon et al. 2010). Vision has been identified as a key factor in branding strategy that can make a product stand out in the crowd of competing products and brands (Kahn and Deng, 2010).

The aim of using a sign with the text “Touch me” was to attract vision and create attention to a specific computer that otherwise disappeared in competition with all other brands on the same shelf of laptops. It was also our intention that a sign that visually stands out would include a segment of fun, appealing to the customers’ emotional engagement and thereby stimulate the customers through attraction, which is in line with the reasoning of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Öhman (2007). With this in mind we posted the following hypothesis:

\[ H_1: \text{The sensory cue of vision yields a positive relationship with the number of people approaching the computer.} \]

The result of the experiment shows that when the styling element of a visual sensory cue was introduced, through a sign, more people walked up to the computer and showed an interest in it. For the control group 29.2 percent of the respondents approached the computer, while 44.7 percent of the respondents in the experiment group of sight approached it, which is an increase of 53 percent. The difference between the two groups was statistically significant (F = 18, p < .000) confirming hypothesis 1. This finding shows that the styling element of a sign affects customers’ behaviour in the way that a more stimulating and encouraging retail environment makes them approach the computer (Table 2).
The experiment shows that the sign has a positive impact on consumers’ behaviour as it has made numerous customers smile and point towards the computer, while others have shown a reaction to it by discussing it with accompanying people at the computer department. The sign have sometimes attracted the attention of one respondent who then calls over accompanying people to look at and discuss the sign.

While our experiment shows a significant increase in the number of respondents that approach the computer when the styling element of a sign is introduced, our manipulation-check questions show that 84 percent, out of the 102 respondents state that they were not affected at all. This indicates that the effect of the sign could be unconscious, which would be in line with the reasoning of Rapaille (2006) who states that unconscious processes can make us answer a question in ways that do not reflect what we have actually experienced or felt. Some answers may therefore be misleading; creating a belief that the customers’ do notice the sign and thereby approach the computer without reflecting over the impact it has on them. This indicates that the processing of the human senses can sometimes be unconscious, but still effective.

Further, our memory can play a part in the customers’ reaction to the sign, where previous experiences and situations are example of what can influence our remembering (Mantonakis et al. 2008; Bear et al. 2001). In connection to this, Martin (2008) discusses the connection between emotions and memory, making it easier for customers’ to make shortcuts in their decision process. Our sensory memory is only activated for milliseconds by the stimuli from the sensory organs, which activates our emotions and how we react to them (Gazzaniga et al. 2009; Philippe et al. 2009). The short period of time that the memory is exposed to the stimuli might therefore explain why most of our respondents argue that they did not see the sign, even though the observations have shown that they did.

### 4.2 Hypothesis 2

According to Citrin et al (2003) customers’ need to be able to physically interact with products, where it gives them the opportunity to experience and evaluate the product with fingers and hands (McCabe and Nowlis, 2003). Adding the encouragement and stimuli to touch a product through the usage of a sign has previously been shown to have a positive effect on consumers’ in regards to number of purchases performed (Peck and Childers, 2006). Based on this research, we assumed that the introduction of a sign would have a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer.
**H2: A visual cue exerts a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer.**

The experiment shows that more customers touch the computer when the styling element of a sign was introduced above the computer. For the experiment group of sight, 14.6 percent touched the computer, compared to 8.2 percent in the control group. This shows an increase of 78 percent. The difference was statistically significant (F = 7, p = .009) confirming the hypothesis. Our finding shows that a visual sensory cue, in this case a sign, has a positive effect on consumers’ behaviour in that it makes more people touch the computer (Table 3).

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<td>Total</td>
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Table 3: Significance of people touching the computer between groups

A Pearson’s r test also shows the positive correlation between approaching and touching the computer, underlining the importance of using sensory stimuli as a way to create attention which attracts customers to approach and thereby touch the computer (Table 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Approach the computer</th>
<th>Touch computer?</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Touch computer?</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
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<td>N</td>
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Table 4: The significance of approaching and touching

These findings show that a sensory cue play an important part when a retail store is looking to stimulate customers’ touch-behaviour as a way to encourage them to test the products. The findings also underline the close relationship between attracting your customers to approach a product and actually touching it. As discussed and explained by Hultén (2011c) and Peck (2010), humans are motivated to touch through three categories of factors which are; individual, product/object and situational. This reasoning emphasizes the importance that the store environment can play for consumers’ behaviour in regards to touch, which our study strongly confirms.
When discussing figure 4: *The motivational factors of touch* in relation to the number of people touching the computer, it is also important to recognize that there are individual differences in the *need for touch* (NFT), meaning that some will have a high need to physically touch a computer before making a purchase, while others do not and instead rely on information and product specification (Hultén, 2011, Peck and Wiggins, 2006). Individual differences regarding the need for touch have been discovered in this experiment and can be well illustrated by the following quotations:

*“I wanted to approach and touch the computer instantly”*

*“I do not touch products, and a sign makes no difference”*

These quotations have been cited from two of our respondents who answered our manipulation-check questions and they clearly show how the same stimuli can affect individuals in different ways. While some individuals will feel an instant urge to approach and interact with the computer, others will feel no need to touch the product at all. These differences will be well linked with the individuals previous experiences and values in regards to the shopping process and need for touch (Peck and Childers, 2003a).

As stated by Rapaille (2006) products and brands can make imprints in consumers’ minds, without them noticing it and thereby becoming affected in an unconscious way. Comparing the results from the observations with the answers provided through the manipulation-check questions, 36.2 percent of 102 respondents claimed that they were stimulated to touch the computer to a high or highest extent. Connecting the result from our experiment with the reasoning of Rapaille (2006) underlines the fact that humans often become stimulated through unconscious processes.

**4.3 Hypothesis 3**

Being identified as our largest and most sensitive organ, where our fingers are used to discover the world around us, the sense of touch offers customers’ the possibility to touch an object (Field, 2001; Montagu, 1986; Serino and Haggard, 2010). The opportunity to touch a product has been found to sometimes create a sense of ownership, where products often are bought as a result of physical examination (Underhill, 2009; Peck and Shu, 2009). Postulating that the sensory cue of vision would have a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer, we also assumed that the styling element of a sign would increase the time customers spent touching the computer. We therefore posted the following hypothesis:

\[ H_3: \text{The sensory cue of vision exerts a positive effect on time spent touching the computer.} \]

The result of the experiment shows that when the sensory cue of a sign was introduced, customers’ touched the computer for a longer period of time. The mean value of the time spent touching the computer was 2.2 seconds for the experiment group of sight, compared to
the mean value of 1 second for the control group. This difference is statistically significant (F = 3.4, p < .065), thereby confirming the hypothesis (Table 5).

Table 5: Significance of time spent touching the computer between groups

In close connection to the reasoning of Verhoef et al (2009) who emphasize the importance of providing customer with experiences through exciting retail environment, a styling element encouraging customers to touch a product have been proven to be effective. This, yet again, shows a positive result where a servicescape that includes a sensory cue through different styling elements can attract the customers, providing them with an experience that engages and becomes memorable (Bitner, 1992; Gilmore and Pine, 2000; 2008).

It is also of meaning to underline that the sensory cue does not only attract the customers, but actually makes them touch, test and interact with the product, something that have been stated to improve the possibilities of impulse purchasing as well as number of products that is bought (Peck and Childers, 2006). While previous studies on sensory marketing and its effect on consumers have shown an increase in number of purchases (Hultén, 2011), this experiment have not shown a positive result regarding purchased PC computers.

Receiving tactile information has also been pointed out as having a positive impact on how the product is perceived and how the customers respond to it (Grohmann et al. 2007). The experiment thereby supports existing research that acknowledged the importance of servicescape, store atmospherics and sensory cues as a way to better connect with the customers and providing them with experiences that are entertaining and filled with fun and fantasies (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Hultén et al. 2008; Söderlund, 2003).

4.4 Hypothesis 4

As discussed by Kotler (1974), a place’s atmosphere can be of greater impact than the actual product itself. This reasoning states that the store environment has been shown to be influential where it can provide customers’ with experiences and expectations that creates different possibilities of positive characters (Puccinelli et al. 2009; Wanger 2002). It has further been underlined that customers’ are interested in experiences that are memorable and engaging, establishing a more personalized relationship (Atwal and Williams, 2009; Floor, 2006). This provides opportunities for stores to design the environment in a way that represents the brand identity and provide the customers’ with an experience (Bäckström and Johansson, 2006).
The sense of sound is commonly used in advertising and marketing, as it is a sense that cannot be turned off at convenience (Hultén et al. 2008). Usually, it is the sound of music that is used to promote products and create attention as a way to direct customers’ visual attention (Wallin, 1991, Schiffman, 2001). Seeing as music often is used, and that the servicescape of Media Markt in Kalmar was already using music in different departments, a voice was introduced. A human voice has been pointed out to have great opportunities to create attention and foremost provide an experience of sound (Hultén et al. 2008). We therefore postulate that a sensorial interplay can have a positive effect on customers.

**H4: The sensory interplay of vision and sound yield a positive relationship with number of people approaching the computer.**

When comparing the control group with the second experiment group of sight and sound, the experiment showed that customers where attracted and showed more interest in the computer when the sensorial interplay of vision and sound were introduced through the styling elements of a sign and a human voice, leading to them approaching the computer. Comparing the control group, where 29.2 percent of the observed respondents approached the computer, 48 percent of the experiment group of sight and sound approached the computer. The difference between these groups where statistically significant (F = 25, p < .000) showing an increase of 64 percent.

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<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5,693</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5,693</td>
<td>24,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>146,506</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>152,199</td>
<td>641</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Significance of people approaching the computer between groups, when a sensorial interplay is introduced.

The findings of the experiment show that a combination of sensory cues and styling elements for vision and sound have a positive impact on consumers’ behaviour, seeing as we find a statistical support for an increased number of customers approaching the computer when both a voice and sign are introduced. The percentage of observed respondents that approached the computer was higher than it was when only the styling element of sight was introduced (see discussion under 4.1). This result indicates that a sensorial interplay creates a more powerful stimulus, attracting more customers’ in creating something fun that stands out in a servicescape that is already crowded with brands.

Using the styling elements of a human voice and a sign can also be connected to the reasoning of Nobre et al (2010) who argues that brands that are given different personalities often more easily connect with customers through what they define as human characteristics. By making the computer we chose more personalized in adding a human voice of a familiar and well
known local radio profile makes this specific computer more appealing and thereby more competitive in comparison to other brands, where the brand of Apple stood out. Their computers have during our experiment been the competing factor that have attracted a majority of consumer’s through the use of cohesive white computers, with turned on screens where customers’ are welcome to test the computer, play with it and surf the web.

In our experiment the sensory cue of music and sight have been proven to be a successful change, where more people have approached the PC’s in comparison to the control group. We as observers have acknowledged that the styling elements of a sign and a human voice have created attention which has made customers’ leave the Apple computers and instead approach the computer under study. Our manipulation-check questions support the finding that these styling elements create attention, which can further be exemplified by the following quotations:

“**It made me curious. It is good to know that we are allowed to touch the computers.**”

“**It is a fun segment; it makes me stop as it is interesting and fun.**”

“**I expected something like this from Apple, but not from PC.**”

### 4.5 Hypothesis 5

The evolution of marketing, where we have gone from transactional and relationship marketing to sensory marketing, holds experiences as core and according to Schmitt (1999) it is crucial to include and introduce a mixture of cues throughout the process of purchase. These cues often entail aesthetic expressions that can impact the customer both positive and negative (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997). According to Underhill (2009) customers’ are provided with a great opportunity to physically experience products through shopping and Lindstrom (2005) highlights that companies need to incorporate the sense of touch into brands.

**H5: The sensory cues of sound and sight exert a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer.**

Our experiment shows that when comparing the control group with the second experiment group of both sight and sound, more customers were attracted by the sensorial interplay of sight and sound, making them approach the computer, leading more customers’ to touch it. However, the difference between the groups was not statistically significant (F = 1.3, p > .05). In the control group 8.2 percent touched the computer, while 10.8 percent touched the
computer in the experiment group of voice and sight. The increase of people touching the computer was 32 percent. Despite the increase the fifth hypothesis is rejected, where the difference between the groups simply are not enough to be statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,345</td>
<td>.247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>55,088</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55,204</td>
<td>641</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: The significance of people touching the computer between groups, when a sensorial interplay is introduced

As discussed and analyzed previously under 4.2 Hypothesis 2, there are different factors that motivates an individual to touch, where situational factors play an important role as the store environment can have an impact. This reasoning is supported by both Bitner (1992) and Kotler (1974) who states that sound, scent and the presence of other customers are some examples of factors that can have an impact on the experience.

During our experiment of sound and sight, there have been a number of factors in the retail environment that could have impacted the customers’ and their behaviour which calls for acknowledgement. For example, some customers’ that have approached the computer and moving to touch it have received a shock, providing them with an unpleasant experience which has made them either back away from our computer, or sometimes even leave the entire computer department. As computers’ are rather expensive products, Media Markt have tagged all of them with an alert/alarm that is supposed to prevent any stealing. Working for a positive outcome, these alarms have been shown to have a negative effect on some customers’ behaviour, where customers’ that have approached the computer or already are touching it, have chosen to back away as soon as the alarm sets off.

As the experiment has been performed, there has at one occasion been live-music in the store, creating a sound or noise high enough to overpower everything else in the store, creating a discomfort for some. All of these examples can be related to figure 3 *Servicescape framework* showing different environmental dimensions, but also to figure 4 *Motivational factors of touch*, which illustrates what might impact a customers’ touch-behaviour. Of course, there are also individual differences to a customers’ touch-behaviour as well as product categories or attribute, which can influence their ability or interest to physically touch a product.

4.6 Hypothesis 6

The need to touch has been acknowledged to be great, as the sense of touch helps us discover the world around us (Birznieks, 2003) and it has been stated that our purchases of products are made based on touch and trial (Underhill, 2009). It is therefore becoming important for brands
to recognize the need to stimulate customers’ skin through different surfaces and in other similar ways (Schiffman, 2001).

*H₅*: The sensory cues of vision and sound exert a positive effect on time spent touching the computer.

The findings from our experiment shows that when the sensory cues of sound and sight where introduced in the retail environment, the time spent touching the computer did not increase. This result stems from the comparison of the control group and the second experiment group of sight and sound, where the mean value regarding time spent touching the computer was 1 second for the control group and for the experiment group of sound and sight it was 0.5 second. This difference is therefore not statistically significant (*F* = 0.7, *p* < .409), rejecting the hypothesis.

![Table 8: Significance of time spent touching the computer between groups, when a sensorial interplay was introduced](image)

Providing customers with an experience through the use of the human senses have been highly emphasized by Hultén et al (2008) where Schmitt (1999) further have underlined the human senses importance for creating pleasure, excitement and satisfaction. Despite a positive result in regards to number of customers approaching the computer, the styling elements of a human voice and a sign have not yield an increase in customers touching the computer.

This is however, in line with the result presented for hypothesis 5, where the findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference in number of people touching the computer in comparison to the control group. This can be explained by some of the previous mentioned situational factors, where customers’ sometimes received a shock when reaching to touch the computer, the alarm was set off on a numerous amount of times and there was other noise from for example live-music. All of these observations of situational factors and forces that were present during our experiment are factors that could have affected the customers’ overall experience, thereby impacting their interest to touch as well as the time spent touching the computer.
5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Hypotheses

To answer our main research question “To what extent can a retail store use sensory cues as a means to provide customers with a multi-sensory brand-experience?” as well as our sub-question “To what extent does the interplay of the human senses of sight and sound impact customers’ touch-behaviour?” we posted six hypotheses. Below it is presented whether the hypotheses were confirmed or not.

**H1:** The sensory cue of vision yields a positive relationship with the number of people approaching the computer.

The first hypothesis of this thesis is confirmed. The experiment shows that the styling element of a sign has a positive effect on the number of people approaching the computer, where the number of people approaching has increased with 53 percent. Since the significance level is $p < .000$ it strongly supports our prediction that the sensory cue of a sign can increase the number of people approaching the computer.

**H2:** A visual cue exerts a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer.

The second hypothesis is confirmed where it is shown that a visual cue has a positive impact on the number of people touching the computer. This yield an increase of 78 percent and it underlines the close relationship between approach and touch. The obtained sample size was meaningful ($n=660$), showing a high level of significance of $p < .009$, thereby supporting our prediction, providing us with a generalizable result.

**H3:** The sensory cue of vision exerts a positive effect on time spent touching the computer.

The thesis third hypothesis is confirmed and shows an increase of 1.2 seconds in time spent touching the computer. The significance level of our third hypothesis is accepted at a 5 % level ($p < .065$), but since we have a meaningful sample size of 660 observations, we argue that it is a generalizable results that supports our prediction.

**H4:** The sensory interplay of vision and sound yield a positive relationship with number of people approaching the computer.

The forth hypothesis is confirmed. It shows an increase in number of people approaching the computer of 64 percent. The result of our fourth hypothesis has the significant level of $p < .000$, showing a strong support for our prediction that a sensorial interplay will increase the number of people approaching the computer.

**H5:** The sensory cues of sound and sight exert a positive effect on the number of people touching the computer.
The fifth hypothesis is not confirmed. Despite showing an increase of 32 percent of people touching the computer, our prediction was not supported, showing a significance level of $p < .247$. Even though the number of observations was meaningful ($n=641$), we cannot prove statistical support for hypothesis 5.

**H6:** The sensory cues of vision and sound exert a positive effect on time spent touching the computer.

The sixth and final hypothesis is not confirmed as the time spent touching the computer did not increase. With a significance level of $p < .409$, our prediction that the sensorial interplay has a positive effect on consumers’ touching time cannot be statistically supported despite a meaningful sample size of 641 observations.

### 5.2 Discussion

In answering our main research question we have firstly identified that the sensory cue of sight through the styling element of a sign with the text *Touch me* alone can have an impact on customers’ in regards to creating attention and encouraging them to touch a product. Moving on from the sensory impact of sight we have further identified that the sensorial interplay of a sign and a human voice encouraging customers’ to touch, test and pick up the computer creates attention, where a vast majority of our respondents have acknowledged the styling elements. While some customers’ only have acknowledged the stimuli by lifting their head and from a distance look at the computer, many people have left whatever it is that they were doing to approach the computer. Some respondents that are just about to leave the department have chosen to turn back and approach the computer as the voice is heard. These findings show that creating a multi-sensory brand-experience through the sensory cues of sight and sound are great at creating attention to specific products, making consumers’ curious and interested in a product that they might otherwise have passed by. The attention is created through a fun segment that results in feelings and excitement which is in line with the reasoning of Holbrook and Hirschman (1982).

Secondly, the use of sensory cues, especially in regards to the human voice leads to a personalized brand with more human characteristics that creates good prerequisites for connecting with customers’ and thereby a foundation for creating relationships. A personalized brand often stands out in the competition which have been proven in our study, where consumers’ have left the attractive and stimulating interaction with computers of the brand Apple to approach or even interact with our computer instead. This clearly acknowledges the importance of and also how a retailer can use sensory cues as a means to provide a multi-sensory brand-experience to the customers’.

Our thesis sub-question concerns the human senses of sight and sound and to what extent it impact customers’ touching behavior. Our results and analyses of hypothesis 4 makes it possible to conclude that the multi-sensory interplay of the styling elements of a sign and a human voice has a huge impact on the customers’ in regards to catching their interest, making
them leave one place to go to another where they, up close and personal can see the product. In a way, the human voice and a sign which both have the same message of physical interaction together provide guidance and encouragement from a distant as well as up close. Despite showing an increase in the number of people touching the computer, hypotheses 5 and 6 have not statistically confirmed that the multi-sensory interplay leads to more people touching the computer for a longer period of time. Even though these results have rejected the fifth and sixth hypotheses, we would still argue that the sensory interplay of sight and sound has had an impact on consumers’ approach and touch behavior, where factors that lie outside of the experiment should be taken into consideration as possible forces seem to have affected the result.

First, our manipulation-check questions have shown that there are individual differences where some customers’ do not want to touch a product at all, while others need to touch in order to get the information needed to purchase a product. Secondly, the store has also had live-music in another department of the store during the experiment of the sensorial interplay, clearly affecting people where some have chosen to leave the department instead of enjoying the products and playing with them. Customers’ have on a number of occasions been close to touching the product but have instead of a pleasant experience received a shock from the computer. This has made them turn to another computer of a different brand or leave the department. Others have unfortunately been scared away by the alarm going off as they touched our computer or other computers that are displayed close to ours. These are of course our speculations, but we find them to be well grounded in our observations as well as in the answers of some of our manipulation-check questions. Despite being speculations, it is our belief that they should still be seen as important factors that could have affected the result, being the difference between a confirmed or not confirmed hypothesis, at least in the case of hypothesis 5.

Our experiment has shown that the human senses through sensory cues play an important role for customers’ certain behaviour, where thought through styling elements can provide customers with a memorable brand-experience. Our research builds on the theoretical reasoning of Hultén et al. (2009) and Pine and Gilmore (2000; 2008), to only mention a few, which have stated and emphasized that customers’ of today want experiences that are memorable and of emotional character. Existing research has also shown that the human senses through interplay can affect customers’ behaviour in that it creates experiences that make customers’ linger and interact with the products.

With four statistically significant hypotheses, and a fifth that through the descriptive statistics still indicates an increase of people touching the computer, we have identified that sensory cues impact customers’ in different ways. Our experiment has in different ways demonstrated to what extent a retail store with small means can create changes that have a positive effect on customers’, creating an evident and important foundation for relationship creation. This foundation could affect the customers’ relationship with the product brand but also the relationship with the retail store and its environment, including the customers’ willingness for interaction with personnel and new experiences.
5.3 Theoretical implications

This thesis project and experiment presents verification that the field of sensory marketing is important and should be further acknowledged as the human senses are shown to affect the initial purchasing behaviour, viz. consumers’ approach and touch behaviour. The results have valuable implications for the human senses of sight, sound and touch which in relation to products of computers are of significant meaning in the process of decision making and purchase. The human sense of sight, as well as the multi-sensory interplay of sight and sound show how customers’ behaviour can be affected in terms of making something more appealing, leading to approaching and involving the sense of touch.

The sensory cue of sight has been proven to have an unconscious impact on the behaviour of customers’ where it not only creates attention by attracting the sense of sight, but also encourages customers’ to use their hands, incorporating the sense of touch. The research has also confirmed that a multi-sensory brand-experience where the sensory cues of sight and sound are used can create an experience that is memorable and that creates a positive and emotional reaction that interests the customers, resulting in a change of behaviour where products that might otherwise be missed are acknowledged. This underline and demonstrates how important styling elements are in creating an experience of the retail environment, where more focus should be put on store atmospherics. This experiment also support previous research of Kotler, (1974), Bitner (1992), Wakefield and Blodgett (1996) and Harris and Ezeh (2008) whom all have emphasized the servicescapes crucial role for customers’ reactions in regards to emotions, perception of quality and the brand.

As competition is fierce, our experiment has indicated that brands that are given different personalities are given better prerequisites, where relationships more easily can be built. While Apple is a major brand, that noticeably is a strong competitor that dominates in regards to the customers’ attention, our experiment has shown that styling elements of a human voice and a sign can make the customers’ leave Apple’s computers for other computers. Encouraging and stimulating customers to touch and try the computer out, have clearly drawn attention and created an emotional character that has foremost affected customers’ approach behaviour, but also their touching behaviour.

5.4 Practical implications

Our experiment shows how practitioners in retailing can use sensory marketing as a means to enhance customers’ emotional response and behaviour. Foremost the study’s result prove that sensory cues and styling elements have a positive impact as effective ways to connect with customers by offering a stimulating environment that creates attention leading to acknowledgement of products that might otherwise have been missed. The study has also shown that the sensory impact of sight can be highly influential, as can the multi-sensory stimuli of sight and sound together in creating a multi-sensory brand-experience. This research also indicates that sensory cues and styling elements are inexpensive ways to create stronger brand images where B2C relationships are in focus.
First, our findings suggest that customers are more likely to react and interact with a product when the environment and atmosphere is emotionally charged and encouraging. In relation to our experiment, the introduction of a sign and a human voice as styling elements affected the customers’ behaviour and response, making them notice and approach the computer leading to laughter, pointing and discussions among many of our respondents. In regards to the sense of sight, it also stimulated the customers’ to touch the computer.

Secondly, practitioners should become aware of how their store appeals to the customers’ through the human senses, where they should decide more specifically how they want the store to appeal to the customers. Becoming aware of the human senses impact on customers’ behaviour and overall experience provide managers and other practitioners with the ability to create a store atmosphere that is different from their competitors, making them stand out on a crowded market.

In conclusion, our study and experiment advocate that implementing the human senses through styling elements is a powerful and valuable strategy that provides great opportunities to strengthen customers’ emotional responses and behaviour. Using sensory cues and styling elements should also be seen as factors that will increase awareness and attention towards specific products or departments and also an increase in how long people touch and interact with products.

5.5 Future research

This research was conducted at the computer department at Media Markt, Kalmar, meaning that the same experiment could yield different findings if it was perform in another retail setting with other sensory cues in focus. We therefore find it interesting and well needed to perform further research, not only in regards to different combinations of sensory cues, but also in regards to other retail settings as well as other product categories. When discussing the need for future research, we would also like to mention the need to research similar products that are in different price categories.

Even though research on all human senses and different sensorial interplay between them are of interest, we especially feel that there is a need to further perform research on the impact of the human voice, where it would be interesting to study its impact in different settings, for different products. It would also be of importance to study the voice in terms of tempo, message and if there are any differences in using a male or a female voice.

Our project has had a focus on consumers’ behaviour, and we feel the need to perform further research on behaviour as it would provide both researchers and practitioners with an opportunity to better understand what it is that impacts customers, and how sensory cues can be used in different combinations to create an emotional atmosphere.
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Appendix 1

Overview of studied area at the computer department
Appendix 2

Pictures of our computer at Media Markt, Kalmar
Appendix 3

Observational scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender: ________</th>
<th>Age: ________</th>
<th>Time: ________</th>
<th>Date: ________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>In company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is active?</td>
<td>The observed</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer approach the computer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch the computer</td>
<td>________ minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of computers touched</td>
<td>________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent at department</td>
<td>________ minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buys a computer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other observations:</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Appendix 4

Manipulation-check questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender: _________</th>
<th>Age: _________</th>
<th>Time: _________</th>
<th>Date: _________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1:</strong> How was your experience of the computer?</td>
<td>Very negative</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2:</strong> Did you notice the sign/voice?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>To high degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3:</strong> How were you affected?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>To high degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4:</strong> Were you stimulated to touch the computer?</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>To high degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5:</strong> Did you notice the sign? <em>(only used for the experiment group of sound)</em></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>To some extent</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>To high degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6:</strong> Did you buy a computer?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Appendix 4 is a table designed to gather feedback on the manipulation-check questions regarding the computer experience, the notice of the sign/voice, and whether the participant was stimulated to touch the computer. The responses range from 'Not at all' to 'To highest degree', with options for gender, age, time, and date. An additional question asks if the participant noticed the sign, and if so, whether it was only for the experiment group with sound.*
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On 1 January 2010 Växjö University and the University of Kalmar merged to form Linnaeus University. This new university is the product of a will to improve the quality, enhance the appeal and boost the development potential of teaching and research, at the same time as it plays a prominent role in working closely together with local society. Linnaeus University offers an attractive knowledge environment characterised by high quality and a competitive portfolio of skills.

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