


## Article

# Application of Sensory Marketing Techniques at Marengo, a Small Sustainable Men's Fashion Store in Spain: Based on the Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk Model

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**Abstract:** (1) Background: the present research addresses sensory marketing to check its possible potential in making the consumer shopping experience in physical points of sale more sustainable and efficient, both for potential buyers and for the selling company. (2) Aims: the main purpose of this study is to check whether, by applying sensory marketing and merchandising techniques in a shop, the business can be more economically profitable and, thus, make it more sustainable. The main objective is, therefore, to find out how consumers respond to different communication strategies in an experimental men's fashion shop located in a Spanish municipality. (3) Methodology: researchers adapted the so-called Sensory Marketing Model to a real case. Based on scientific evidence and documentary review, an experiment of implementation of sensory marketing tactics (visual, sound, olfactory and haptic) and its subsequent quantitative analysis based on the before-after, cause-effect relationship was carried out. (4) Results: the results obtained shed light on the importance of sensory marketing, as this study showed a considerable increase in sales, customer retention and customer satisfaction in the shop, following the deployment of appropriate sensory marketing strategies. (5) Conclusions: the Sensory Marketing Model is valid and reliable for implementation, not only to increase sales, but also to make the store more sustainable, as all actions carried out involved a decrease in material resources typical of retail shops.

**Keywords:** fashion; sensory marketing; stores; sustainability

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## 1. Introduction

Sustainability is not a seasonal trend: it has reached the world of fashion to stay [1]. Customers of sustainable fashion look for higher quality and environmentally friendly products that are: made from sustainable fibers and fabrics, made by workers who enjoy a good working environment and labor conditions, durable in design, and that finally are reusable and recyclable [2]. This is quite a new phenomenon, and now after the coronavirus pandemic, people may be more concerned about the future; they think more about the impact on the planet and its inhabitants. As consumers are changing their consumption patterns and preferences, this can be reflected in the way consumer society and its trends, fashions, and habits are undergoing modifications based on ever-changing criteria. While some of these criteria are rational, others do not seem to have any logical structure underlying them. This is nothing new; some researchers [3,4] have given a detailed account of it in the past: when they claimed that the effect of repeated advertising and marketing and/or sensory exposures and impacts on brand evaluations moderated as a function of the ease with which the message was processed, concluding that increased exposures increased the effectiveness of a difficult appeal, and decreased and then increased the effectiveness of an easy appeal. In conclusion, the effectiveness of messages could be affected by the time available for message processing and the time required for that task affecting subjective and objective perceptions.

Dynamic markets very often compel companies to modify and bring their commercial strategies, including pricing, coordinated with the forces of demand and supply. To this end, market participants are constantly changing and innovating products, ideas, and methods, to avoid losing market share and sales revenue to the competition, and worse still, going out of business.

In their attempt to decode a rapidly changing market, retail businesses have expanded the “4P’s”, the variables in the traditional marketing mix (Product, Prize, Place, Promotion), to “7P’s” (Product, Prize, Place, Promotion, People, Problem, Proximity), because retail marketing is, certainly, changing. This is particularly so, when they refer to final sales, buyers, or final consumers, and, therefore, to points of sale—POS [5]. This is the most important reason companies are increasingly implementing various techniques to promote the sale of goods in retail outlets by influencing consumer behavior, both directly and indirectly, as part of their broader product marketing strategy. By so doing, they strive to attract potential customers, get them to engage with the merchandise, and help them simplify their purchase decision (“ease of purchase”). Here, the reference is not just to the traditional tasks of the retailer such as ensuring attractive displays (merchandising) or finding the right business location, but to a much broader arrangement of scenery and props, including lighting, in-store product placement, entertainment (e.g., music, virtual reality), or any other sensory marketing element that would appeal more tactfully to the psychosociology of consumers [6].

The information saturation to which potential buyers have been exposed means that, often, any communication is bound to lose its effectiveness and influence on them very soon. Apart from advertising overkill along multiple media (outdoor media such as traditional and digital billboards as well as online and offline media), the sustainable fashion market is flooded with products, invariably resulting in high levels of competitiveness [7]. Meanwhile, consumers have become immune or conditioned to easily forgettable run-of-the-mill marketing and advertising techniques. It is essential that going forward, marketers develop a deeper and more accurate understanding of how the consumer’s brain processes each advertising stimulus and every single message that is sent out to her/him.

## 2. Theoretical Frame

### 2.1. Sensory Marketing

It is in this context that sensory marketing—a technique that involves reaching consumers along all five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), not just the visual, to appeal to their conscious, subconscious, and unconscious memory—emerges as a key activity in the overall retailing repertoire. Since the marketing message in this case triggers a mental process in the recipient that she/he is not fully conscious about or not conscious at all, she/he is likely to be less resistant to such communication versus a conventional ad with its explicit visual appeal.

To analyze the relevance of sensory marketing to contemporary sustainable retail formats, this study applies the sensory marketing model proposed by Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk [8] to a recent case study. So, in this research, the patterns adopted in some previous studies on sensory marketing are followed by observing and analyzing their correlation with sustainability [9,10]. The main objective here is to examine whether real and potential consumers recognize diverse sensory communication strategies implemented by Marengo, an experimental sustainable men’s fashion store in the Seville town of Lora del Río (Spain), and what such consumers feel about the same. The secondary objectives are to (1) determine the average time customers spent in this sustainable store; (2) gauge customer satisfaction; and (3) measure the shop’s total sales volume.

In fact, according to Lindstrom [11], sensory marketing has emerged as a tool to reach the subconscious mind of consumers. In this respect, the researchers feel that although over the years, marketers have addressed consumer senses in an increasingly more rigorous and systematic fashion, there is still room for more research on consumer psychology and

neuromarketing, which can throw more light on how the human brain works, processes information, and responds to marketing stimuli.

Sensory marketing is based on the analysis of how consumers understand and interpret certain brands and products via their senses. Taking the same line of argument further, the researchers feel that if they succeed in decoding the functions of the human brain in relation to how it figures out the messages received via the senses, they should be able to address many misconceptions about the decision-making processes and underlying motives of sustainable retail consumers.

According to some other authors [12–14], sensory marketing was first used tentatively back in the late 1940s, with the advent of postal mailing campaigns that were designed, above all, to be eye-catching, i.e., engaging the sense of sight. Similarly, Gavilán et al. [15] note that “for many years it was believed that marketing was all about seeing [ . . . ]. Now we realize that the consumer has more senses [than simply sight]”.

However, many other authors associate the beginnings of sensory marketing not with sight but with hearing, specifically with the arrival of television in the U.S., and Europe, from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s. Naturally, the sense of hearing soon became very relevant to advertising, especially on television (and this, even though radio broadcasting had existed since the 1920s). With the growth of television, marketers got to work creating catchy songs and jingles to ensure their brands entered the consumer’s psyche through the auditory channel [16].

Studies have consistently revealed that humans’ peak smelling ability ranges between ages 5 and 10. During those years, humans can experience many smells for the first time in their lives as well as the luxury of time to revel in them [17]. However, it was not until around 1970 that ‘new’ senses, e.g., smell came into play as advertising tools. Moreover, it was in the 1970s that companies began to deploy various scents in their store layouts with a view to creating an ambience that potential buyers found satisfying and to offer them more rewarding experiences [18]. In Pradeep’s [17] words “brands are probably the first and highest form of olfactory branding: Smell a Starbucks coffeehouse with your eyes closed, for instance, and you know you can be nowhere else [but Starbucks]”.

The integration of the senses of taste and touch occurred somewhat later in the 1990s because, among other things, touch-based (tactile or haptic) strategies are more difficult to implement [19,20]. Be that as it may, ever since the first studies performed on the senses in 1909 and especially after the emergence of neuromarketing as a field, researchers have frequently noted the relationships between the senses and perceptions of reality. Particularly in the latter part of the 20th century, the research community has placed greater emphasis on studies of various mental processes (such as perception, sensations, mental associations, memory and, most importantly, interactions between the senses), and marketing departments soon began to take notice of them.

A brief review of the scientific literature around neuromarketing reveals that Schmitt [20] was already addressing the issue of experiential marketing, which essentially aims to provide memorable experiences to the customer, back in 1999; but it was not until 2003 that he conceptualized this and other sensory interactions between the brand and the customer under the nomenclature ‘customer experience management.’ Previous research has already referred to emotional branding from the perspective of its ability to establish very deep emotional connections between brands and people [21,22], an issue supported by other research that has also studied specific types of sensory marketing in depth: such as the role of olfactory marketing in the broader framework of a brand’s overall marketing strategy [18], the influence of retail store decoration on the shopper’s senses (and its consequent influence and the emotional charm that produces the purchase) [11,23] or the role of experiential marketing itself through a journey through each sense [20]. As conclusions to these studies, we know the links between neuromarketing (and experiential marketing) and the motivations that move people to buy products [24,25].

Particularly noteworthy to the overall framework of sensory marketing are the contributions of Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk [8], who studied the effects of applying specific

techniques to retail establishments and proposed a distinct model, as also the observations of some other authors [26].

In 2010, studies were conducted on the senses and their practical applications in marketing. That was not all; the first-ever results on consumer response times were also obtained [17]. In fact, some research [27] demonstrated that the application of neuromarketing and sensory marketing tactics can make shops more effective and efficient, and thus more sustainable. Thus, *The Study Advances in Marketing, Customer Relationship Management, and E-Services* [28] provides an important reference base when it comes to finding results on the use of sensory marketing in shops and its economic and social profitability (with special attention to the Spanish case study). Similarly, several studies have been contributing to the deepening of this concept and its results [29–34].

Senses and the purchasing process. In addition to engaging the sense of sight, as already noted, the application of sensory marketing (or sensory merchandising) involves stimulating the senses to try and create an in-store atmosphere that customers find very engaging, so much so that they end up spending more time there [6]. The use of different colors for different sections or departments in a store, music to muffle disagreeable sounds, if any, or aromas are all common-enough tactics. Shops that practice sensory merchandising are known to usually achieve very encouraging results. The core idea is to employ everyday techniques to harness all senses, one way or another, to increase sales [35]. Following is some of the technique's stores with a sensory focus typically employ:

- Olfactory-based marketing. Humans tend to remember around 35% of what they smell [36], and the human nose can identify nearly 10,000 different smells. With a huge capacity to associate certain smells with specific situations, humankind's olfactory sense is considered one of the most sensitive and emotional of all senses. Neuromarketing studies have revealed that 75% of human emotions are related to various smells; hence the sense of smell is significant in terms of its influence on customers' emotional state, and, in turn, buying behavior and consumption patterns. In this regard, several studies performed by the Sense of Smell Institute (SOSI), a division of the non-profit Fragrance Foundation, indicate that while humans are only able to remember 50% of the things that they have seen after a lapse of three months, in the case of smells, their recall rate is as much as 65% even after a year has elapsed.
- Sound-based marketing. After sight, the sound is the most used sense and serves to arouse strong feelings capable of influencing the relationship between consumers and brands. Specialized studies have claimed that people only remember 2% of the sounds they hear [36]; not surprisingly, sound-based marketing is invoked on fewer occasions than that involving the other senses. Nevertheless, music is a key element for building the image of a point of sale (POS) and the brand as such in the mind space of consumers, and, by extension, influences their buying habits at the POS. Likewise, using music to create the optimal shopping ambience can help stores achieve their commercial objectives. Some guidelines have also been framed around what kind of sales objective is served by different kinds of music [6]. For instance, slow music helps people relax and, therefore, to shop more sedately, thus helping increase sales. On the other hand, fast music encourages them to act and, therefore, shop more efficiently, though it does not necessarily translate into increased sales. All the same, it helps stores avoid bottlenecks and, furthermore, elevates customer satisfaction levels.
- Tactile (touch-based) marketing. The sense of touch has the potential to enhance a brand's identity as it involves an additional level of interaction, besides sight, between the customer and the product. According to recent studies, tactile marketing can also be considered to influence the "unconscious perceptions, sensations, and preferences of consumers" [37]. Tactile marketing can be employed in all contexts where consumers meet brands to subtly shape these interactions. Tactile covers the characteristics of the products themselves (e.g., texture, size, materials, etc.) and those of the POS.

- Taste-based marketing. Since the sense of taste is related to emotional states, it can influence how a person understands, interprets, and responds to a brand. Taste is usually one of the main lures of food and catering businesses, ranging from bars and restaurants that serve food with a recognizable flavor to supermarkets that attract potential buyers with food tastings, to even small appliance brands.

## 2.2. Sustainable Menswear Market in Spain

Furthermore, in this context, it is necessary to refer to the sustainable menswear market in Spain. In this sense, it can be stated that there are historical, economic, and socio-cultural factors that influence male consumer preferences and habits. Thus, the purchasing behavior of consumers in sustainable shops is directly linked to the Spanish textile tradition [38], if the percentage of the menswear market that prefers sustainability is residual despite the theoretical approach of consumers [39].

It so happens that, given the popularity of fast fashion and the accompanying issues, sustainability-related topics and how consumers perceive sustainability in the fashion industry are investigated by a large volume of research [39–45]. However, very limited research focuses on male Spanish people to explore consumer behavior towards sustainable products in the fashion industry [38]. These authors [38] express Spaniards will buy sustainable fashion products if they are aware and concerned about the environment and perceive themselves as green consumers. Furthermore, the beliefs toward sustainable fashion products foster the willingness to pay more [38]. Other research provides insights into male Spanish people's purchase behavior toward green products despite not focusing on the fashion industry [46,47]. Chamorro, Miranda and Rubio [48] apply the theory of planned behavior and noted that social norm is an influential factor affecting purchase intention towards green products. Chamorro, Miranda and Rubio [48] also observe less joyful or comfortable feelings accompanying using green products, which implies Spanish' negative perceptions of green products regarding their quality. Lu et al. [42] describe a growing number of male Spaniards who have environmental awareness and conduct sustainable behavior voluntarily. Those male consumers who own ecological awareness demonstrate a positive intention to purchase green products [49].

Moreover, we must consider that for many years, companies have found in the senses a way to make consumers feel attracted to a brand. Now, if we introduce the interaction of people with technologies, we can connect the physical with the digital and increase the value of the experience with the brand [50]. Nowadays, we can use as a tool for interaction the applications, also known as apps, which are present on all mobile devices, helping us to enhance the idea of belonging to a group and allowing us to group and allowing us to interact with its members. The study and management of the information that visitors generate in their queries allow us to modify and improve the offered services, according to the preferences of users, who will have a favorable or unfavorable influence on the image of the brand [51].

The fashion sector has maintained its position from 2019, keeping its weight in the Spanish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 2.8% and 4% in the labor market, according to the study *El sector de la moda en España, encifras*, promoted by Modaes.es with the collaboration of the Centro de Información Textil y de la Confección (Cityc) and Accenture [52]. Specifically, men's fashion accounts for 37% of the total economic transactions related to the fashion market in Spain. Of this total, approximately 8% (7.93%) is focused on the sustainable fashion segment, according to the same report [52].

Visual merchandising strategy is relatively new, obviously talking about not only placing products in a shop. There were no specific tactics for sound merchandising (piped music) or olfactory merchandising and the window display did not follow a theme. There was simply no visual merchandising strategy.

Broadly, the general practice differs greatly depending on whether we are referring to large chains (Inditex, for example, which does follow a clear strategy) or small independent



outlets, which in many cases do not have a clear visual merchandising strategy either, although they are gradually increasing and implementing it [53].

Concurrently, as another trend in the fashion industry, the menswear market is becoming one of the fastest growing sectors in the industry due to men's increasing involvement in fashion and clothing consumption. Alvarado [54] found that menswear consumption has continuously increased both in-store and online in recent years and projected that consumer demand for men's fashion is expected to reach about 83 billion euros by 2022, representing an important increase in current demand globally [55]. Among the consumer segments in the men's fashion market, Generation Y is receiving increasing attention from marketers [56], as it will soon become an important segment with high purchasing power and interest in men's fashion [57]. An important distinguishing characteristic of these consumers is that they are more concerned about global, social, and environmental issues than their older counterparts, as they have been more exposed to these issues than previous generations [58].

In this regard, as more and more consumers are concerned with social and environmental issues related to what they wear, a new trend has been introduced to describe these conscious lifestyle choices: the lifestyle of health and sustainability (LOHAS). Consumers with LOHAS are characterized by valuing the quality of life through concern for health and sustainability, and as a result, these consumers prefer local, environmentally friendly products that can help sustain their communities by making purchasing decisions that meet their standards of social and environmental responsibility [59].

In this way, sustainability and LOHAS trends have influenced the men's fashion industry and consumers' criteria for fashion products. More and more consumers have grown tired of fast fashion, made with unsustainable materials and production processes.

Thus, the concept of slow fashion has been introduced as an alternative to fast fashion, emphasizing the importance of quality clothing products, which are made from natural and durable materials, allowing consumers to wear clothes for longer and minimizing the environmental and social impact of clothing production [60]. In this sense, sustainability is becoming an increasingly important challenge in the men's and women's clothing sector in Spain, affecting both environmental and social sustainability [61].

All stages of the clothing life cycle, from production to use and disposal, can create negative effects on the environment and need to be addressed. In this regard, some studies [62] conclude that, for some garments, the environmental impact of clothing is greater through use and maintenance than through materials and production stages, and that modifications made at the design stage should reflect this. Consumption problems in the men's fashion industry are therefore prevalent, and companies try to address them in a variety of ways, such as clothing recovery schemes, using recycled ocean plastic to create new yarns, using surplus fabrics, remodeling discarded garments, and raising consumer awareness [63,64]. Retail outlets also try to take actions that involve a reduction in terms of material and economic resources to generate less environmental impact, generating a circular economy [65].

### 2.3. *Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk Model*

The model in question was developed by Bertil Hulten, Niklas Broweus and Marcus van Dijk [8], presented in 2009 in their book *Sensory Marketing*. As part of the book, a model is shown for the application of sensory marketing in companies, to impact the emotions of consumers through the five senses. The model is composed of three main components: the firm, the individual, and the sensory experience. The first component of the model is the firm, which, before applying any sensory strategy, must carry out a strategic analysis of the brand's identity and values. Then, it must define the sensory strategy that involves the senses with a holistic view as a basis for addressing consumers. The firm must define the aspects to be developed in such a way that coherence is achieved between the sensory aspects and the brand identity, to create a logical experience. The second component is the individual. In an era where traditional mass markets are disappearing to give way to more

fragmented markets, defining the niche to which the brand will focus is crucial. The third component is the sensory experience, which acts as a mediator between the image created by the brand and the individual.

The sensory experience seeks to connect with consumers' emotions, setting aside the functional attributes and transforming the product into an experience. This experience puts the human brain at the center of the action, registering the brand in terms of mental conceptions. Thus, a better brand image will be the result of the experience the individual had with the firm or brand [8].

### 3. Materials and Methods

This study is based on the analysis of the application of different sensory marketing techniques at Marengo, a multi-brand men's sustainable fashion store. This single-employee stand-alone store caters to middle and upper-middle-class men aged 18 to 65 years. The catchment area of this retail outlet is Lora del Río province in the Spanish city of Seville, home to 18,861 people (as on 31 December 2018, Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia).

Customers' perceptions are not a direct reflection of what exists around them but rather interpretations that their brains make of it [66]. Therefore, it is essential to understand how each sensory stimulus affects the perceptions and emotions of individual buyers.

The methodology used in this study is based on the implementation of an experiment and the analysis of a series of variables.

- By way of a summary outline:
- Type of research: quantitative causal type, specifically quasi-experimental.
- Experiment specifications: before-after type, no control group.
- Treatments to be manipulated: store aroma, shop music, shop window, product rotation, POP (point of purchase) material, staff uniform.
- Test units: Marengo Man shop.

Dependent variables: customer satisfaction, time spent in the shop and total sales. The first two variables will be measured through intercept surveys (with a Likert scale and regression model), while the third will be obtained from the sales journal.

Procedures for handling constant variables: since the research conducted had no control group, special attention was paid to variables that could distort the effects of sensory marketing in the Marengo Man shop.

The main difficulty in calculating the sample was to determine the size of the population  $N$ . The truth is that it was impossible to estimate an  $N$ , since the shop has no record of each of its customers, nor any previous study that would allow an estimated population to be extracted. For this reason, it was decided to work with infinite populations and to choose a random sample that would provide an acceptable relative error for the research. Therefore, given the difficulty of the sample size, it was decided to calculate the relative error from an  $n = 50$ . In calculating the relative error for the research, the following quantitative factors were used:

- Confidence level: 90%.
- Criterion to be used: conservative (maximum variance) 50%.
- Sample size: 50%.
- Finally, the experiment to be carried out will work with a sample size of 50, resulting in a relative error of 11.63%.
- This experiment was chosen because it is a relatively recently implemented model in physical shops, the results of which have yielded interesting results in terms of profitability, as demonstrated in previous research. The aim was therefore to test, in addition to economic profitability, social profitability and sustainability.

### 3.1. The Experimentation

For this reason, this study applied a dual methodology. On the one hand, the researchers undertook exploratory documentary research to review the literature on sensory marketing; on the other, they performed a quantitative analysis based on before-after and cause-and-effect relations without a control group. The idea was to contrast the perceptions of customers at a store where sensory marketing techniques have not been deployed versus the perceptions of shoppers at Marengo, where the strategies have already gone live. Based on this analysis, the researchers planned to develop a set of sensory strategies. Since the groups in which the possible impact of sensory marketing was measured are different, the study could be considered as quasi or partly experimental. Even so, to keep biases and differences down to a minimum and ensure a certain degree of parity between the groups, research was conducted on three consecutive days though at different times of the day as follows:

- Thursday, 17 January 2019. From 10 to 12 a.m. (compared to the previous Thursday at the same time).
- Friday, 18 January 2019. From 6 to 8 p.m. (compared to the previous Friday at the same time).
- Saturday, 19 January 2019. From 12 a.m. to 2 p.m. (compared to the previous Saturday at the same time).

The exploratory nature of the methodology employed by this study should be apparent from its sample size set in a small province with a well-defined population and variables (e.g., geography, weather), which also directly affect footfalls and sales at a store, remaining constant. To that extent, certainly, the methodology underlying this study has sufficient scientific basis.

The model developed by Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk in Sensory Marketing [8], comprises three elements, namely, the company, target, and sensory experience, and this model was employed in this study. First and foremost, the sustainable company must perform an overall analysis of the identity of its brand and the value it commands in the eyes of the customer. Further, it should define the aspects to be developed, to provide the customer with a consistent shopping experience. The target, i.e., the consumer, must be clearly defined. The sensory experience must be such as to be able to establish an emotional connection with the customer, dispensing with the logical and physical attributes of the product in question as selling points. Essentially, the attempt is to transform the product into an experience or mental conception capable of engaging with the human brain. Thus, “a better brand image will be the result of the experience that the individual had with the firm or brand” [8].

The sensory aspects engineered at Marengo included the following:

- Smell. A soothing and energizing atmosphere was created at Marengo using a distinctive air freshener, which was specially developed based on insights derived from an interview with the head of Sandir Olfactory Branding, a specialty provider of corporate fragrances for men.
- Sight. A professional window dresser José Silgado was hired to design a shop window for Marengo to perk up its visual marketing and kindle shoppers’ curiosity. The second prong of this approach was product rotation, wherein the merchandise was rotated at least once every fortnight to position Marengo amongst its target shoppers as a store that strongly believes in the constant renewal of its high-quality stocks.
- Hearing. A playlist was compiled based on a 2015 survey by Fundación Autor-SGAE [67] of the musical tastes of Marengo’s target customers. Songs that made it to the playlist were those with the highest listenership on radio, most frequently requested by radio listeners, and most frequently purchased and downloaded from music streaming sites, e.g., Spotify and iTunes.
- Additionally, it was decided that the volume of the music should not be more than 50 decibels (“average” intensity) while its rhythm should be varied depending on the



number of shoppers in the store at any point of time. Intense and rhythmic music was reserved for times with increased foot traffic and rush hours in the store and slower tracks for other occasions.

- Touch. To ensure potential buyers were able to touch and feel the products on sale without much effort, all the shelves at Marengo were lowered below the average shoulder height (1.65 m), leaving only those products catering more to the shopper's sense of sight at shoulder height. In addition, a display with accessories was placed next to the checkout counter, so customers could browse and touch other products while paying for their purchases. This exercise helped trigger impulse sales requiring low involvement (on the part of the lone shop executive).
- Taste. There was no scope for taste-based sensory marketing since the merchandise under consideration was sustainable men's clothing.

Some images of the point of sale can be found in Appendix A: Figure A1a,b.

### 3.2. The Study Variables: Likert Scale

The total investment was €424.99: €125 spent on aromatherapy, €250 on window dressing and €49.99 on the display unit. The study variables were (1) customer satisfaction (2) time spent by the customer at the shop or retention within the system, and (3) total sales.

Customer satisfaction was gauged by means of a simple and brief questionnaire (reproduced below) completed by the customer, with specific scales questions.

1. Do you like this shop?
2. Why?
3. How often do you shop here?
4. Why?
5. Have you previously shopped here?
6. Rate your shopping experience here on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very bad and 7, very good)
7. Say whether you intend to shop here in the future on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 is very unlikely and 7, is very likely)

Questions 1 to 5, far from drawing out any significant information, served as an introduction to the customer. The crucial questions were 6 and 7, which were designed to evaluate the shopping experience and the customers' intent or otherwise to revisit the store in future. To measure the overall impact of the model, information was collected during two periods: prior to the experiment and during the experiment as such.

Time spent by the customer at the shop or retention within the system was captured by recording the customer's time of arrival and departure at the store using a system supported by cameras already installed in the shop. The total sales figure was obtained from the cash register at the point of sale.

To prevent other external variables from skewing the research results, during the days of the experiment, Marengo was disallowed from launching sales promotions, discounts, or anything that might have potentially affected the price variable; to measure the effectiveness (and, subsequently, the efficiency) of the Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk model [8], the efficiency threshold was set at 20% for the three variables measured, namely, increase in (1) customer satisfaction (2) time spent by the customer at the store, and (3) total sales.

The Likert scale anticipated the following responses in line with the model proposed by Cañadas and Sánchez [68]:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Mostly at odds
3. Disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. All right
6. Mostly in agreement
7. Totally agree

Six issues were posed to the sample of 50 individuals:

1. The store is more attractive
2. It is easier for me to buy now
3. The store is more pleasant
4. Easier to shop at this store now
5. It is cheaper than before
6. Is the store more engaged with the environment and development

There was no previous visual merchandising strategy, although there were concrete actions that were being implemented by chance, so the implementation of this strategy was a break from the previous marketing method.

### 3.3. The Study Variables: Multiple Regression Model

With the implementation of multiple linear regression, we have tried to fit the linear model (the experiment) between one dependent variable (sales) and more than one independent variable (sensory marketing tactics).

Heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity, and specification conditions have been previously tested. With this, the range of reference individuals, weighting factors, interaction variables, interrelationship, etc. was configured.

The variables, therefore, were: visual, olfactory, haptic and sound marketing.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Economic and profitability Results

The result of the implementation of this strategy was clear and straightforward: increased sales, customer retention and customer satisfaction resulting in a positive impact related to sales and dwell time. In this sense, to understand the comparison between the existing and the result of the implementation of this strategy, we report here the fact that consumers were asked about the reasons for their purchase, need or desire, objective or subjective. Specifically, the concrete results of the study are as follows, as we can see in Table 1:

**Table 1.** Experimentation results.

	Date	Sales	Average Retention	Customer Satisfaction	Intention to Return
PRIOR INFORMATION	Thursday, 10 January 2019, from 10 to 12 a.m.	€126.43	7 min	4	5
	Friday, 11 January 2019, from 6 to 8 p.m.	€136.15	7 min	4	5
	Saturday, 12 January 2019, from 12 a.m. to 2 p.m.	€221.59	16 min	5	5
EXPERIMENT	Thursday, 17 January 2019, from 10 to 12 a.m.	€183.25	14 min	6	7
	Friday, 18 January 2019, from 6 to 8 p.m.	€189.78	15 min	7	7
	Saturday, 19 January 2019, from 12 a.m. to 2 p.m.	€250.46	19 min	7	7

Source: own elaboration.

For the calculation of the impact in the case of the unit of measurement “sales” as well as “customer dwell time”, the arithmetic mean was used as the unit of measurement.

In this line, it can be seen how the point of sale, in its social networks, boasted how, in its support for sustainability in the process of marketing and production of its fashion products for men, they switched to low-impact LED lighting and with a greater number of local suppliers. We can observe this question in Figure A2a,b, in Appendix A.

#### 4.2. Senses Perception

To address the impact of the variables studied, the multiple regression model was used, whose data can be seen in Table 2: the correlation is 0.751 indicating that sensory marketing elements have a positive association with image and customer loyalty. The coefficient of determination is 0.532, which is 42.3% improvement in sense tactic image and customer loyalty. The table below shows the increase in perception, in relation to the brand, of each of the sensory marketing actions implemented. Data are collected on a sample of 50 individuals.

**Table 2.** Sense image perception post experimentation.

	Visual	Olfactory	Sound	Haptic
Prior	27	2	24	5
Post	43	39	44	15

#### 4.3. Likert Scale

For customer satisfaction, the preferences for sustainable men's fashion choices were considered, which could be observed using the Likert scale. The following Figure 1 shows the results:



**Figure 1.** Perception of the store after the experimentation.

#### 5. Discussion

Sales increased by €139.32 (€56.82 + €53.63 + €28.87), which is approximately less than a third of the investment made for the six-hour experiment in aromatherapy, window dressing, and the display unit.

The store's image and customer pull improved considerably, following the deployment of sensory marketing techniques. The rise in sales and customer satisfaction indicates that it is highly likely that the shop's portfolio of frequent customers has increased appreciably, thanks to the changes made; in turn, it can be concluded that, overall, customers like the store and its offerings. Considering these, it can be inferred that the objectives of the study were met for the most part.

The analysis shows that the store maintains its target public, but there is an evident improvement in all the factors under study, raising their percentage levels in almost all cases to the “very satisfied” segment.

This leads us to think of an improvement in the overall image, while the economic profitability and return on investment is demonstrated by having high levels of “strongly agree” and low levels of “disagree” or “strongly disagree”.

It can be observed that there is a positive increase in the image of sustainability perceived by people with respect to the store, after the application of sensory marketing, while, with quantitative data, it is also shown that the investment and the use of materials is also lower, thus, certainly, increasing the levels of sustainability.

It is also worth noting the increase in the level of sales with the application of sensory marketing, which shows that it is likely that the store has increased its volume of “frequent customers” thanks to the changes made in the store.

As regards the three variables measured, the application of sensorial marketing techniques at a sustainable men’s fashion shop such as Marengo was very effective, especially from a profitability standpoint, the most important consideration for any for-profit business. As mentioned earlier, almost a third of the investment was recovered in just three two-hour time slots on consecutive days. It may not be too prudent to claim that a full return on investment can be achieved over a period of seven days; even so, it is highly likely that the same could be recouped before the end of the month. So, all things considered, the researchers believe the Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk model [8] is valid, reliable, and workable for a small sustainable men’s store such as Marengo.

## 6. Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Lines of Research

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above data. Firstly, significant differences in customer spending were observed on weekdays (say, Thursday) and on weekends (Friday and, most of all, Saturday). Similarly, closer to the weekend, average customer retention was longer and the changes in the store were more positively assessed. Finally, all three items measured (sales, customer retention, and satisfaction) showed an appreciable upward trend on the back of the successful implementation of right-fit sensorial marketing strategies.

So, we can conclude that sensory marketing can help to increase sales, customer retention, and customer satisfaction for small sustainable men’s stores such as Marengo. It can therefore be concluded that the Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk model [8] is valid, reliable, and workable for any small sustainable men’s store.

Possible limitations of the study include the eminently local character of the establishment and the lack of comparison with other establishments, which is why further research is being carried out in this area to advance and develop a visual merchandising model for the retail trade [69].

As a limitation of the study, it is noted that a three-day experimentation method was used for a couple of hours. Thus, in order to validate and endorse the results, and as a future line of research, a second experiment with the same method is proposed in order to provide more empirical evidence.

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## Appendix A



(a)



(b)

**Figure A1.** Interior (b) and exterior (a) of the point of sale. Source: own elaboration, 2020. (The English translation of "REBAJAS" is "SALES").





**Figure A2.** Screenshots of Marengo’s Facebook Fanpage. (Due to the store is in Spain, its comments were captured in Spanish. See, therefore, the translation: “#Marengo, in its support of sustainability in the marketing and production process of our men’s fashion products, now with low impact led lighting and more local suppliers. #Marengo #Sustainability #LocalShopping”. (Own translation)) Source: own elaboration, 2020.

## Appendix B

### Consent for Survey

**Principal Investigator:** Gloria Jiménez-Marín, María del Mar Ramírez Alvarado and Cristina González-Oñate.

**Title of Study:** Application of Sensory Marketing Techniques at Marengo, a Small Sustainable Men’s Fashion Store in Spain: Based on the Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk Model.

You are invited to participate in this survey of your visit and shopping. I am interested in finding out your views about satisfaction with the experience and purchases at this point of sale.

Your participation in this study will require participation in a survey and possible completion of a questionnaire. This should take approximately fifteen minutes of your time. Your participation will be confidential and anonymous, and you will not be contacted again in the future. You will not be paid for being in this study. This survey does not involve any foreseeable risk to you and there are no direct benefits. However, the benefits of your participation may impact society by sustainability awareness in commercial establishments and customer perception and profitability.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. We will be happy to answer any questions you have about this study. If you have further questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact me, Gloria Jiménez-Marín at gloria\_jimenez@us.es. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Seville Institutional Review Board (IRB) at <http://investigacion.us.es>, accessed on 5 September 2022. An IRB is a group of people that reviews research studies to make sure that participant rights and safety are protected.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this study.

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