AROMA MARKETING - A MODERN MARKETING PHENOMENON

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Abstract
The smell has an advantage over other senses, because it is directly linked to the limbic system in the brain and immediately stimulates the human emotions. By using of fragrances, it is possible to comprise a connection with the customers at a deeper emotional level, which will bring them a memorable experience. The odor can attract new customers, increase the perceived value of goods and services, as well as increase the brand awareness and overall customer satisfaction. In a world overcrowded with advertising and visual overload, traditional marketing tools are becoming less effective. Thus, the current trend is communication simultaneously oriented on several human senses, which is represented by a modern phenomenon called aroma marketing. The paper deals the interdisciplinary research of selected aromas in laboratory conditions and their subsequent monitoring in real conditions in the chosen travel agency AVOCADO, where we’ve aromatized the place premises and thus we’ve influenced the purchasing behavior of clients. We examined this effect by observing the sales of tours in the months when the aroma was applied compared to months when any aroma was placed. Based on observations in real conditions, we have been able to demonstrate the influence of odor on the sale of tours/trips.

Key words: Aromachology, Emotions, Face reader, Smell, Travel agency

JEL Classification: M31, M39, M81
1 Introduction

Nowadays, there is a field of visual merchandising and in-store communication relatively discussed topic in the sphere of marketing. The environment of business and services constantly requires the changes that contribute to increased sales and customer satisfaction Berčík et al. (2016). The media are increasingly appealing to the importance of communication at the point of sale, and their claims are supported by studies conducted mainly abroad. Securing the convenience of the buyer is becoming more and more challenging, and because the retailers are constantly trying to make use of new technologies and provide to customers not only satisfy their needs but also to keep a shopping experience.

1.1 Visual Merchandising

The increasing of competition in the trade and service sector has forced the sellers to differentiate themselves from others and at this time the visual merchandising comes as a differential advantage of the company Holienčinová (2013). Visual merchandisers are responsible for the overall presentation of goods and services, creating a final corporate image, and are also involved in the placement of design elements in the retail space Pradhan (2009). Visual merchandising is a tool to achieve the sale goals, a mechanism of communication with customer, a set of elements, which all influence the customer decision and they are a tool of creative and efficient customer ‘education about the product. It’s all, what a customer see in exterior, interior of store, service provider and it’s made by positive image of a company (Bhalla & Annurag, 2010). Most people nowadays only don’t perceive a shopping as a matter of meeting primary needs, but also as the possibility of spending leisure time Paluchová, Berčík and Neomáňiová (2016). People who come to the shops or service providers are often affected by the problems of everyday life and are expecting some positive distraction from shopping. The emotions directly at the point of sale should contribute to making the experiences, not only to satisfaction of needs with a product/ service Vysekalová et al. (2014); Horská et al. (2014). Visual merchandising brings to the sphere of trade and service various theater cues (show elements), which make the shopping funnier and leading the customers to the store research Púchlo (2015).

1.2 Atmosphere of Store Spaces

There are several ways, how to distinguish from the competition. One of the most used ones is to offer original goods, respectively service. To the foreground is coming, store’s efforts to raise their overall atmosphere to the customer’s prolonged
stay or the influence of his/her purchasing decision. The atmosphere of the sales area is a summary of all elements that make the customer feel comfortable about visiting the store or specific space. Paluchová, Berčík and Neomaniová (2016) appeal to the fact that, if the retailer and service provider would be currently successful in the business sphere, they need to improve their products and services, offer them the required quality at reasonable prices and provide the buyer an unforgettable atmosphere. Pelsmecker et al. (2007) understand under the term of store atmosphere, an effort to provide the condition, that provoke to consumer the unforgettable emotional effect and thus the probability of buying a particular product will be increased in a store. The Figure 1 illustrates the impact of store atmosphere in a store from the first - emotions (e.g. happiness), cross the characteristics of each space, such as music, light etc., to the last one - the consumer behavior represented by spent time, willingness to shop.

**Figure 1 Influence of Store Atmosphere on Consumer Behavior**

Source: Pelsmacker et al., 2007.

### 1.3 Design of Store Space

According to Vorela (2016) design plays an important role in communication with the customer, contributes to a better perception of the space and increases the time spent in the store. Design is an important part of the business strategy and in many cases is a competitive advantage (Kubicová & Kádeková, 2017). Revitalization of the premises is carried out in cycles of three to five years. Kita (2013) presents two main attributes, which should be required for store design: operability and functionality.

### 1.4 In-Store Communication and Its Importance in Food Stores

Nowadays, people are very easily influenced. Even a small impulse can change the purchase decision that had previously thought. In-store communication offers a whole range of solutions that drive people to mindless purchases and they provide for sellers the growing of revenue (Šajbidorová & Lušňák, 2009). Boček, Jesenský
and Krofianová (2009) present, that in-store communication is a set of advertising applied inside of the point of sale, of service providers and are intended to influence the customer’s purchasing decision. Vysekalová et al. (2014) used for the description of in-store communication ‘functions, the EIEP model, which is based on four levels of effects:

a) exposure: to encourage on customer to spot it at the point of sale and understand what the seller wants with the in-store communication tell him/her, what brand is communicated and what category and so on.

b) interruption: disturbing the customer from his shopping routine with various functional or emotional impulses that ensure the interaction between him/her and the POP medium, respectively supported by product/service.

c) engagement: aroused of interest for buying the product, explaining why it’s good to buy the product/service.

d) purchase: to motivate to buy each product/service.

As Šugrová et al. (2017) present, quality of products and services may be considered as a significant factor that contributes to creating a strong brand, or even a strong corporate business. In-store communication is a way to ensure the loyal and satisfied customers at the point of sale.

1.5 Short Explanation of Aroma Marketing

Nearly 75 % of the feelings which are experienced during the day are regulated by fragrances. The aroma directly influences the limbic system, which controls the feelings and memory sections in the brain. The odors have an emotional importance for humans, on average, man can recognize up to 10,000 fragrances, and 65 % of the fragrances which he/she already felt in the past are kept in the brain for up to one year Erenkol (2015). The smell perception is a subjective affair involving many other factors, such as culture or individual preferences. The impact of cultural aspects can be characterized by the type of preferred fragrances. In the USA, the sweet smells are preferred, such as vanilla, cinnamon, while in Finland, the fragrance of berries or coffee. And because, the most important is to find out those aroma, that will reach as many potential customers as possible Virkkunen (2015). At a time when the term “shopping experience” comes to the forefront, aroma marketing is a phenomenon that is experiencing a renaissance and becomes an essential part of in-store communication Sikela (2015). We can talk about a new generation of in-store communication tools to measure a consumer impact, a customer targeted influence and an interactivity. The current customer could be identified as a demanding, hedonist, unstable and individualist. The place of sale is an area, where he/she is looking for the new experiences, feelings
and emotions. In order to satisfy these requirements, tools of sensory marketing are used today. These tools are also a medium of comfort, an exceptional atmosphere that can extend the customer’s stay in a store, in service company up to 30 % Labská (2009). According to Sikela (2015) sellers and service providers are aware of the human subconscious’ influence on the consumer behavior during the purchase and for this reason they combine external impacts attracted on all human senses. As Pajonk & Plevová (2015) present, scent marketing includes a series of events where it is possible through the scent to stimulate visitors in the shops to purchase and the employees to a higher workload. Tarczydlo (2014) understands under the aroma marketing an art the use of scent in marketing campaigns, evoking the consumer’s desired emotions and convincing him/her for the correctness of buying the product/service. Aroma marketing strongly influences the customer behavior at the point of sale through carefully selected fragrances. Paluchová, Berčík and Neomániová (2016) wrote, that the pleasant smell released into the air keeps the buyer longer in the sales area, positively affects his/her desire for the product/service and at the same time increases his/her willingness to pay more money.

2 Data and Methods

The main purpose of the submitted contribution is to point the modern marketing phenomenon - aroma marketing. The research was conducted in the AVOCADO travel agency during one month in 2017 by placing of a flavoring unit. The application of the selected aroma was preceded by consultation with the owner of the travel agency and subsequent testing under laboratory conditions. After selecting two specific aromatic compounds “North Sea” and “Apple” by the owner and employees, was conducted a subconscious perception test by using of biometric somatic face recognition method FaceReader in the laboratory conditions.

For data collection were used:
- observation method using Microsoft Webcam: LifeCam Studio with 1080p HD Sensor, which captured expressions of respondents’ faces,
- questionnaires surveys: two; one conducted in the laboratory conditions on the participants and the second directly in AVOCADO travel agency on clients.

For data processing were used:
- facial expressions analysis based on basic emotions: surprise, fear, joy, sadness, disgust using FaceReader 6.1 from Noldus company,
Contingency tables: for better analysis and processing of graphical form of results from both questionnaires and calculation of average from the area of descriptive statistics.

Formula to calculate arithmetic mean - simple form (Matejková et al., 2013) is described in the following example:

where: \( x_i \) - i-th value of the statistical file,
\( n \) - range of the statistical file.

For a travel agency of approximately 40 square meters we have chosen a suitable flavor unit, namely Aroma Streamer 650. This model works automatically by setting the timer. It is therefore necessary to be permanently connected to electricity. It guarantees immediate conversion to the gaseous state from the liquid and thus guarantees a long-lasting effect. The model is powered with 12V and 10 Watts of power, covering up to 100 square meters of aroma spraying. The dimensions of this model are 210x230x62 mm.

Figure 2 Aroma Streamer 650 Flavor Unit and Refill

Source: Authors` own processing.

The timing of flavor unit was switched in the travel agency AVOCADO every working day, from Monday to Friday, in two intervals. This survey was realized from January 10 to February 10, 2017. During this month, revenues and number of sold tours in individual categories were monitored and then compared with the previous period and months. At the same time, all customers were asked to fill out a short questionnaire to find out their conscious preferences.
3 Results and Discussion

The research of two aromatic compounds was performed with 27 respondents (56% women, and 44% men) done in laboratory conditions, who in advance agreed that their data could be processed for research ‘evaluation of data. Each respondent got two samples of aromas, identified by numbers 1 and 2, so he/she was not able to identified, what sample is 1 and 2 and they were not influenced. In addition to the samples, respondents answered on questionnaire towards to fragrances. Respondents’ reactions were recorded by the Face Reader analytical tool, which immediately recognized the subconscious emotions of the respondents (Figure 3). From our survey, for the AVOCADO travel agency will be more appropriate to apply the smell of “North Sea”.

Figure 3 Detection of Micro Emotions Using Software Face Reader 6

Source: Authors’ own processing.

From the questionnaire survey (Figure 4), we found out that 52% of the respondents considered the most interesting sample of the “North Sea” fragrance, which was later applied in interior of travel agency AVOCADO. The reason may be the fact that the majority of women (most of the sample) associate the smell of “Apple” with a scent typical for the toilets.
Figure 4  The Most Positively Perceived Scents by Respondents

Source: Authors’ own processing.

Sample no. 1 “North Sea” we also chose because of the average mood’s values, which we obtained from the Face Reader device. Respondents were happier by sample no. 1 and sadder by sample no. 2. Since the happiness and sadness are the basic emotions of human, these values have been indicative for us. In Table 1 we highlighted grey them.

Table 1  Percentage of Respondents ‘Moods for Both Fragrances Based on Face Reader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moods</th>
<th>Fragrance no. 1 (%)</th>
<th>Fragrance no. 2 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>17.76</td>
<td>12.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>12.98</td>
<td>15.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>7.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>47.38</td>
<td>49.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>11.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprised</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgusted</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrified</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ own processing.

The effect of the place aromatization on the shopping decision making in AVOCADO travel agency was mainly observed during the month when the aromatization was placed and we compared it with the months without aromatization. In Table 2, we can see three columns that represent three periods, when AVOCADO was flavored and when not. The first column represents four categories of tours/ kinds of holidays. The second column indicates the period before aromatization. The grey column represents the number of tours sold during the aromatization of its agency. The fourth column illustrates the period after the aromatization. From
the values in the table, we can determine that the “First Moment” holiday, then the “Excursion tour and Exotic” as well as were the best sold during the aromatization period. It follows that the aromatization has an effect on consumer behavior, the number of sold tours are less than. Also, we compared the data with a last year 2016, and we support the fact that the increase of tours was higher in 21 % between January, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2016 - February, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2016. Except aromatization, we summary also other factors, which influence the clients buying the holidays/ tours:
- “First Moment” are price preferable tours,
- if a holiday/tour is bought in winter season, then it is usually cheaper than when it is bought after the start of the season - on May.

Table 2 Overview of Sold Tours in Chosen Months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of tours</th>
<th>No. of sold tours on December, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2016 - January, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2017</th>
<th>No. of sold tours on January, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2017 - February, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2017</th>
<th>No. of sold tours on February, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2017 - March, 10\textsuperscript{th} 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Moment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exotic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-day</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors´ own processing.

Except of these two factors, that are repeated year-by-year, we are supposed, we can say that when we compare two months - before and after aromatization, the month when we flavored the agency was the most successful. This result partly confirms the impact of the new trend in marketing communication in tourism too. We are able to demonstrate, that the new trend - aroma marketing has an impact on consumer behavior in the service segment, namely in the travel agency. The highest profits of the agency are in category “Exotic” and “First Moment”. When we compare these two categories with previous months, there is a clear increase in turnover in this month, when we placed the aromatization (Table 3).

Table 3 No. of Sold Tours in a Category „First Moment and „Excursion Tours“

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>First Moment</th>
<th>Excursion Tours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Month before</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month during</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month after</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In our questionnaire survey, we directly in an agency asked two questions (see Figure 5). First one: „How do you evaluate the interior environment of travel agency AVOCADO? And second question: „Is the aroma in an agency pleasant for you?"

**Figure 5 Results of Questionnaire Survey in an Agency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>First Moment</th>
<th>Excursion Tours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Together</em></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors´ own processing.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the obtained results, we propose for the travel agencies an investment in the aromatization devices despite the higher costs. But on the other side, can be expected the high return of cost after the first month. It was confirmed in our experiment, when the most tours were sold in the period of space aromatization (category of First Moment). In our chosen agency, we tested “North Sea” fragrance in the following of this research, we partially proved the impact on the sale of tours. From an economic point of view, it should be noted that the aromatization device is financially demanding because such devices range cost about 400 - 900 €, depending on the particular type of appliance and the flavor itself about 40 € per month depending on its size. These tours are profitable for companies because they are total sold, and it is also possible to assume a relatively high return on the costs of more efficient marketing at the point of sale in the form of aromatization. In conclusion, the aromatization in this service segment is justified by the fact that it has at least a slight impact on consumer behavior. Consequently, the experiment has its limitations, so we plan to perform similar research activity.
in other months. We also want to focus on factors of air quality and different intensity of aroma by the use of other types of aromatic compounds.

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