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Sensorial Marketing: A Comparison between UK and France

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Sensorial Marketing: A Comparison between UK and France

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Abstract

Purpose - When going global retailers have to decide whether to standardize or adapt their marketing strategy. This research seeks to question the assumption that: Because all people possess the same five senses, they would tend to rely on them similarly when shopping in a store, regardless of their culture of origin. This paper also tries to find-out whether culture has an effect on the likelihood of a consumer to recommend a store that has fulfilled his/her senses.

Approach - Based on a survey of French and English consumers, a Discriminant Analysis was conducted to illustrate the effect that a change of culture would have on the effectiveness of commonly used sensorial marketing tactics.

Findings - The differences between the French and English consumers were ranked as follows: “Store Induced Smell”, “Likelihood to Recommend a store”, “Verbal Announcements”, then “in-store Food Preparation”. These variables measured consumer’s sensitivity to “Smell”, “Experience sharing”, “Sound”, and “Sight”, respectively. The English were more sensitive than the French on the last three variables, while the opposite was true for “Smell”. These findings reshape what one would otherwise consider to be obvious knowledge, namely that consumers around the globe would rely equally on their five senses when making purchase decisions.

Practical implications - French retailers cannot duplicate in England the same sensorial marketing tactics used in France, and vice-versa.

Originality - The Schmidtt model of Experiential Marketing had been extended by adding the cross-cultural dimension to it.

Keywords International retailing strategies; Sensorial marketing; Cross-cultural differences; Standardization; Adaptation.

Introduction

With an increasingly sophisticated marketing mix, consumers are exposed to a better shopping experience that nurtures hedonic consumption. As a matter of fact, consumers make their choices based on practical (utilitarian), aesthetic, epicurean, experiential, and/or emotional needs (hedonic). Emotional and multi-sensorial experiences are now recognized as an integral part of the shopping experience along with the utilitarian aspects. Indeed (Lemoine, 2004) has shown the importance of sensorial marketing (music, smell, style and design of the store...).

Retailers however face the difficult task of adapting the sensorial marketing at the level of the shopping environment to the consumer's culture, or to keep it standardized across countries for consistency of their brand's image, see (Turley and Chebat, 2002).

(Lunardo, 2011) suggests three reasons stores use sensorial marketing: strategic positioning; relational tool; transactional approach. The first one is a strategy to differentiate one store from the competitors. For example; Abercrombie & Fitch is known for using scent and music with higher intensity than its competitors allowing consumers to immediately identify the brand. A second purpose is to build a relationship with the consumers and to create a bounding shopping experience. The store atmosphere conveys some emotions: coming to the store could provide a unique experience to the consumer as shown by (Filser, 2002) and (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The third purpose of sensorial marketing is to increase sales even though the literature does not prove the efficiency of sensorial marketing in terms of desired behaviors and increased purchases (it only demonstrates the effect of sensorial marketing on emotions). Nevertheless, Consumers may also react negatively if they feel manipulated as demonstrated by (Lemoine, 2003); (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Sensorial marketing can be powerful, as long as

consumers perceive it as an honest effort to improve their shopping experience and not a way to manipulate them.

When retailers are planning to go global, they face trade-offs between standardization of their merchandising technics, or its adaptation to the foreign markets. Few things are known so far about cross-cultural differences for in-store sensorial marketing, and some might even believe that because all people possess the same five senses, they would rely on them to the same extent, regardless of their culture of origin. This research fills that gap and aims at comparing two countries: England and France given the knowledge of the authors of each country, respectively. The study should clarify whether cross-cultural differences between France and England are significant enough to justify the adaptation of retailer's sensorial tactics, when operating in England vs. in France. Focusing on these two cultures is also interesting because France and UK are both in the top three markets in the Europe (with total retail turnover in 2012 of 418 billion of euros in France, and 378 billion in the UK that is mostly generated in England). Each country represents therefore a lucrative market for retailers.

Some gaps in the literature are addressed: lack of a comprehensive model that portrays/explains the effect of cross cultural differences on a physical shopping experience, limited research on non-US cultures, and paucity of studies on the impact of cross-cultural differences on sensorial marketing effectiveness.

The rest of the article is organized as follows. A literature review is first presented. Then a theoretical framework is proposed to improve the understanding of how culture can change the impact of sensorial marketing on consumers. Fourthly, some light is shed on the adopted methodology. Fifthly, the empirical study is described. Sixthly, the findings are interpreted. Finally, several implications for managers are covered and a conclusion is offered.

Literature review

In this section the cross-cultural and the sensorial marketing literature is covered in order to identify the areas where standardization of sensorial marketing **across cultures** can present some limits. With a historical perspective, the notion of shopping experience that has evolved into experiential marketing is defined. Some studies that show how the **filter of culture** can trigger different reactions are summarized.

Shopping experience

(Hirschman and Holbrook, 1986, page 219) define the shopping experience as ‘an emergent property that results from a complex system of mutually overlapping interrelationships in constant reciprocal interaction with personal, environmental, and situational inputs’. The environmental inputs can be a source of information and pleasure, appealing both to utilitarian and hedonist shoppers, respectively. The store atmosphere affects consumers’ five senses through music and announces, scent, possibility to touch and/or taste, and therefore contributes to improving consumers’ mood and their shopping experience (Spies, Hesse and Loesch, 1997). Shopping could fulfill other needs than the consumption itself, such as seeking pleasure, discovering new things, socializing, or just feeling better.

(Schmitt, 1999) considered that consumers are rational and emotional human beings and that marketing can enhance their shopping experience with five SEMs (Strategic Experiential Modules): sensory, affective, cognitive, physical, and/or social-identity experiences. These experiences are created through ExPros (Experience Providers) such as communication, people,

the environment, the brand, etc. In this article, the main focus is on one of the SEMs- SENSE: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. The RELATE dimension is addressed in a less extent. This research fits in the general research agenda of whether culture determines the effectiveness of an EXPROs (here the shopping *Environment*) on activating a SEMs (here *Sense*), in order to enhance the shopping experience. To answer this question, a theoretical framework that would take into account the cultural dimension is needed.

Cross-Cultural Values Theory

According to (Hofstede, 1980) culture is to a country's population what personality is to a person. "It is the software of the mind" which controls affective, cognitive and behavioral patterns for (Hofstede, 2001).

Hofstede, using a factor analysis, on data from forty countries collected among IBM's employees, classified countries with four dimensions (power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance). Two dimensions have been added later on (long term orientation and indulgence). Some limits of the so-called Hofstede cultural values framework are the fact that it ignores sub-cultures within a country. Other studies have been performed since to characterize cultures. (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1997) work is widely used to characterize culture. More recent results on cultural dimensions are due to the GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) Project team, which results from the collaboration of academics around the world. For a comparison of cross-cultural models and explanations about the dimensions of cultures see (De Mooij, 2015). This research relies mainly on recent studies inspired from that stream of influence which are (De Mooij and Hofstede,

2011) and (Wursten and Fadrhonc, 2012). Among the six culture-groups, two clusters are of particular interest for this research: the contest cluster (i.e. the Anglo-Saxon countries comprising England) and the Solar Cluster (e.g. France and Belgium).

This literature review is concluded by focusing on cultural differences with respect to smell.

According to research by Hofstede, the United Kingdom has a lower score than France on power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long term orientation, while it has a higher score on individualism and masculinity. These differences between the French and the English would be used later in the article to explain some findings regarding consumer's perception of sensorial marketing technics' effectiveness in enhancing the shopping experience. See Figure 2. The figure below is about the UK not England, but as the English population represents 85% of the UK population, this figure could be used to have an idea about the cultural dimensions of the English population.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Sensorial Marketing and Cross-Cultural Differences

Visuals are widely used in stores (labels, price stickers, advertising) along with music, and verbal announcements, but other senses than visual or auditory are also stimulated. For example, stores can diffuse wafting bread aroma near the bakery aisle, or the smell of freshly laundered sheets in the laundry section. Those techniques are used because people not only make rational decisions based on price, characteristics of the products, needs... but subconscious forces (involving emotions, perception, memories) are also at work as explained by (Krishna, 2012).

Consumers tend to appreciate more the smell they recognize, and they are most familiar with. However, few studies investigated cross-cultural effects on the sensitivity to odor. (Ayabe-Kanamura, Schicker, Laska et al 1998) found cultural differences in smell intensity ratings, between Japanese and German. Japanese people had a lower detection threshold for two of the different odorants tested: an odorant characteristic of the Japanese culture (Japanese ink) and an odorant characteristic of the German culture (aniseed). However an unpleasant smell is extremely off putting to shoppers. Indeed, (Wyer, 2008) also refers to the use of subconscious triggers which appeal to the rudimentary senses. The impact of scent has been established on consumer's cognitive and affective responses, attitudes, perceptions, memory, behaviors as demonstrated by (Rimkute, Moraes and Ferreira, 2016).

Overall Sensorial marketing seems to influence the emotions and cognition differently according to their culture. Culture influences early stages of the decision making process, which could start as early as the recognition and recall of a stimuli, that is before the formation of attitudes and evaluation of alternatives as shown by (Kastanakis and Voyer, 2014).

Relational Need and Cross-Cultural Differences

Social mechanisms play a role in brand or product consumption or in the choice of a store. In its landmark paper, (Belk, 1988) concludes that a key observation in marketing research is that “our possessions are a major contributor to and reflection of our identities” and are such can be seen as our “extended selves”. (Bearden, 1989) has developed a scale to measure consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence. They consider it is an individual trait which can be defined “as the need to identify with or enhance one's image in the opinion of significant others

through the acquisition and use of products and brands”. It can have two dimensions: informative (by trying to learn about products and services from others) and normative (trying to comply with the expectations of others). In another influential paper, (Fournier, 1998) demonstrates through case studies consumers can develop strong brand relationship. Cultural differences can act as a filter and can moderate relational need. (Gentina, 2016) established that the relation between the need for uniqueness and luxury brand attitudes is stronger for American teenagers than for French ones. On the contrary, the relation between the susceptibility to influence (a social mechanism through peer relations) and the brand attitude is stronger for French adolescents than for their American counterparts. They explain this result with the fact that some cultures rely more on interdependence and cooperation (such as France) and therefore the susceptibility to peer influence is greater for these cultures. (Juan and Su, 2007) show that Asian consumers feel compelled to buy luxury products for face consumption motivated by other-orientation and also by conformity and distinctiveness.

Combining the cross-cultural literature on one hand and the sensorial marketing literature on the other hand, seems important to fully understanding the shopping experience, and that is one contribution of this article.

Theoretical Model

Considering the existing theoretical frameworks in the literature, an integrated approach is presented in Table 1. The rationale is simple. Since culture influences perceptions, emotions, and cognitive responses among other things, sensorial marketing technics that rely on one of the SEMs in experiential marketing that is “sense”, could be perceived differently from one culture

to another. Therefore, a culture may rely more or less on sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. Our goal will be to analyze with this framework, to which extent English and French consumers' responses to sensorial marketing technics differ, meaning which senses, if used in a sensorial marketing strategy, are more likely to generate a positive vs. a negative reaction from consumers. In this research, another element of the SEMs in experiential marketing that is "relate" is introduced. The difference between the two cultures concerning how consumers relate to their shopping experience through word of mouth is studied.

(Mayer and Sparrowe, 2013, page 917) discuss conditions for a successful integration of theories and list four approaches. Here the condition of the first approach is met as one single phenomenon (consumer experience) is studied embracing two theoretical perspectives. The two theories (the cross-cultural values model and the SEMs model) predict the same dependent variable(s) which is the shopping experience in this case. Integrating the theories may improve the prediction of the model compared to drawing upon only on one theory. As a matter of fact, people of the same culture share cultural values which shape consumer perception across the culture as stated by (De Mooij, 2004).

Insert Table 1 about here

Insert Figure 2 about here

Methodology

The objective of our research is both *descriptive* and *causal*. It is *descriptive* in the sense that it describes the reliance on senses when shopping, for the French vs. for the English consumers, and it also describes how consumers in both cultures *relate* to their respective shopping experiences. The objective of our research is also *causal*, because it studies through a discriminant analysis, the cause to effect relationships between the country of origin as the dependent variable, and the senses as well as the “relate” dimension as independent variables, which will enable us to predict the country of origin of a consumer based on the answers/values that s/he provides to the questions/independent-variables that are built on the *senses* and the dimension *relate*.

The *type* of data collected for this research was *primary* data, as specific variables were needed in order to study chosen relationships. Therefore, this type of data was most appropriate to tailor the questions to serve specific needs. The research *approach* most suited for the objective stated up-forth is the *survey*, as it provides a structured platform to conduct research. Indeed, when conducting a survey, *questionnaires* can be used as a research *instrument* to tackle the specific issues of interest. This contact method and data collection technic that involves administering the questionnaires to respondents face-to-face, allows to increase the response rate, the percentage of questionnaires that are filled-up properly, and to ascertain that questions are well understood by respondents.

The sample used in this study is made of adults that are 18 years or older, it is gender-balanced, and the structure of the English and French samples are similar, which is crucial in cross-cultural comparisons. Our sampling procedure was non-probabilistic, and more specifically convenience

sampling was used to select the subjects that would undergo the study, with screening questions in order to ensure that the sample is representative of the targeted population. The questionnaires were administered in Liverpool-England and in Lille-France at the end of 2015, and 250 people were interviewed in France and 200 in England.

As the goal is to focus on differences between French and English consumers, at the level of the “Sense” and “Relate” components of the SEMs, a discriminant analysis is conducted using the variables that fall under these two components, namely the *smell, sight, touch, taste* and *sound* that fall under “Sense”, and *word-of-mouth* that falls under “Relate”

Empirical Study

As stated above, in an effort to describe and explain the differences that may exist between the French and the English consumers, with respect to the Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) (Sense and Relate), and the senses that are more likely to contribute to the enhancement of a shopping experience, versus those that wouldn't, a Discriminant analysis was found to be the most appropriate method to use. The discriminant function takes the following form:

$$D = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \dots + b_kX_k$$

Where:

D = discriminant score

b 's = discriminant coefficient or weight

X 's = predictor or independent variable; called predictors because they allow as to predict the group belonging of each consumer.

Other objectives of the Discriminant Analysis are, to examine whether significant differences exist between the groups being studied, in terms of the predictor variables, to determine which predictors contribute to most of the intergroup differences, to classify cases/consumers in one of the groups (in this case being French or English) based on the values of the predictor variables, and finally evaluate the accuracy of that classification.

The criterion that the Discriminant analysis relies on when conducting comparisons is the “country of origin”, and the independent variables are, the likelihood that different Sensorial elements, for example, would enhance consumer’s pleasure during shopping. Therefore, respondents were asked for instance “How likely would the distribution of *free samples* enhance your shopping experience/enjoyment?”, and they had to answer on a continuum scale from “0” to “1”, which stands for “Very unlikely” and “Very likely”, respectively. As a result, the average of any independent variable stated up-forth, be it for the French or for the English consumers, can be interpreted easily. Indeed, an average approaching *zero* for a specific independent variable, would mean that the likelihood that the independent variable being examined would contribute to the enhancement of hedonism in a shopping experience is slim, while an average approaching *one* for any independent variable, would mean that the likelihood that the independent variable being examined would contribute to the enhancement of hedonism in a shopping experience is high.

Besides shedding light on factors that may affect differently the French and the English consumer’s pre-purchase behavior (Senses), a factor that enables to spot differences between the two groups at the level of their post-purchase behavior (Relate) is added. To study the potential effectiveness of the SEM “Relate, consumer’s likelihood to recommend to a friend or relative a store that uses the right combination of sensorial elements and that succeeded in creating a

hedonic experience for the consumer is studied. Word-of-mouth is studied here as it is an important element of how consumers “relate” with their purchase experience. The respondents had to use a five-level scale (“1” denoting “Very unlikely to recommend”, while “5” denoted “Very likely to recommend”). In sum, six independent variables have been used, in order to discriminate between French and English consumers. The results are shown in Table-2 below.

Insert Table 2 about here

From a preliminary examination of the means table, one can note a similarity of means between the French and the English sample, for the variables “Free samples” and “Music”. Concerning the “Free samples” variable, the Means-Table shows an average of 0.81 and 0.76 for the French and the English samples, respectively. Similarly, the Means-Table shows averages for the “Music” variable of 0.66 and 0.75 for the French and the English samples, respectively. These averages insinuate that French and English consumers do not differ with respect to their perception of the likelihood of “In-Store Music” and “Free samples” to contribute to the enhancement of hedonism in a shopping experience, and that both groups believe that these variables can have a positive impact on the level of hedonism that they could experience while shopping. Therefore, these two variables are expected not to play a significant role in discriminating between the two groups (French and English consumers), while significant variables in discriminating between the two groups, could be expected to be among the remaining four variables, namely “Induced in-store smells”, “Verbal announcements”, “Fresh in-store product preparation”, or “likelihood to recommend”. But, the results of the Discriminant analysis will confirm or weaken this observation.

Multi-Collinearity

Before running the Discriminant analysis and estimating the coefficients of the Discriminant function, it is necessary to ascertain that the independent variables considered in the discriminant function defined above are not highly correlated, in order to avoid the effect of Multi-collinearity. From the correlation table below (Table-3), one can note the absence of high correlations between the independent variables. The highest correlation is 0.346 and is between the independent variable “How likely to recommend” and the use of “Free samples”. Most of the other correlations are below 0.200. This is crucial, to ensure the signs as well as the values of the coefficients are not biased for the calculated discriminant score Z .

Insert Table 3 about here

Chi-Square

Now that the absence of Multi-collinearity has been ascertained, the Discriminant analysis can be run. The table below shows the results of a Chi-Square test that evaluates the discriminating power of the discriminant function, and whether it is possible to significantly discriminate between the two groups or not. No further analysis should be done until it is certain that the function being used enables to discriminate between the two groups. So, a Chi-Square test is conducted. The Null hypothesis (H_0) is the following: in the population, there is no difference between the French and the English consumers with respect to the factors that contribute to the enhancement of hedonism in a shopping experience (meaning that it is not possible to discriminate between the two groups). The essence of any hypothesis test is to generalize the

findings from the sample to the whole population with a margin of error called α . From table-4 below, one can see that the calculated Chi-Square is 105.97, and that the degree of freedom is 6. With a margin of error of $\alpha = 5\%$, the Chi-Square value from the Chi-Square statistical table is 12.59. As the calculated Chi-Square of 105.97 is larger than 12.59, H_0 can be rejected. It can be concluded that in the population, there is a difference between the French and the English consumers with respect to the factors that could contribute to the enhancement of hedonism, in a shopping experience.

Insert Table 4 about here

This conclusion means that it is possible to discriminate between the French and the English consumers at the level of the whole population with 95% confidence. The last column entitled “Sig” which stands for the level of significance, also confirms that the discrimination between the two groups is significant as $p = 0$ is smaller than $\alpha = 5\% = 0.05$. If H_0 could not be rejected in this Chi-Square test, the Discriminant analysis and the interpretation of the outputs would have been interrupted. But, given that H_0 is rejected, it is possible to discriminate between the two groups (using the discriminant function that will be described shortly), and therefore, the SPSS outputs can be interpreted and analyzed.

Anova

As part of the Discriminant analysis, a one-way analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was conducted, in order to test the null hypotheses (H_0) that the means of each independent variable are not significantly different between the French and the English population of consumers. The

hypothesis tests stated above are based on an F-test, and table-5 below provides the calculated F-values (to be compared with the theoretical F-value (1; 369; α (5%)=3.84).

Insert Table 5 about here

The mean of UK respondents who like receiving free samples in stores is 0.76 (versus 0.81 of French). The standard error of this frequency is respectively 0.428 for UK and 0.391 for France. There is no significant difference for free samples at 5% because the calculated F-value is 1.42 and is inferior to the theoretical value which is F-value (1, 369, α =5%) =3.84. It would be significant only at α = 23.4%. Therefore it is not possible to reject the null hypothesis. The latter is defined as Ho: The French and the English population of consumers do not differ significantly in their perception of the contribution of *free samples* in enhancing shopping experience. Following the same procedure, used to test *Touch and/or Taste* (through free samples), differences between the French and the English consumers have been tested with respect to their perception of the contribution that other variables have on enhancing the shopping experience, namely the contribution of *Sound* (through verbal announcements, or in-store Music), *Sight* (through in-store Food preparation), and *Smell* (through store-induced smell). Four variables are significant in discriminating between the French and the English population: “In store smells” (0.52 for France Vs 0.21 for UK), “How likely to recommend” (3.52 for France Vs 4.01 for UK), “Verbal announcements of Promotions” (0.22 for France Vs 0.42 for UK) and “Fresh in-store product preparation” (0.63 for France Vs 0.80 for UK).

It is therefore possible to reject the four hypotheses that the means of each independent variable are similar in France and in England. Indeed, French differ significantly from English consumers. More specifically, “In store smells” is more likely to enhance shopping experience for French consumers than for English consumers. On the contrary, “Verbal announcements of Promotions” and “Fresh in-store product preparation” is more likely to enhance the shopping experience of English consumers relatively to French consumers.

Classification

After making sure of the absence of multi-collinearity, verifying the significance of discriminant analysis, and shedding light on the variables that discriminate between the French and the English consumers, the coefficients related to each of the independent variables are inserted in the discriminant function, and the classification process by which people are allocated to the French or to the English population is described.

A *discriminant function* is the linear combination of the independent variables (our sensorial mix and the likelihood to recommend a store), which will best discriminate between the French and the English consumers. The estimated discriminant function (or score D) takes the following form:

$$D = -1.826 - 0.822 * (\text{Free Samples}) - 1.74 * (\text{In store smells})$$

$$+ 0.635 * (\text{How likely to recommend}) + 0.204 * (\text{Music})$$

$$+ 0.887 * (\text{Verbal announcements of Promotions}) + 0.610 * (\text{ Fresh in-store product preparation}).$$

Robustness check was conducted. After replacing the predictor variables in the equation above by the answers provided by each respondent, the discriminant score for each respondent was computed. Then the average of the discriminant scores for the French and for the English respondents (called *Centroids*) was calculated. The centroid of the French respondents is negative (-0.455), while the centroid of the English respondents is positive (0.734). If a negative discriminant score (D) was obtained, after inputting the answers of a specific respondent to the predictor variables in the equation above, then the respondent was classified as French (and as English otherwise). Table-6 below shows the classification results. The *hit-ratio* was equal to 75.2%, meaning that 75.2% of people in the sample were correctly classified.

Insert Table 6 about here

Table-7 below illustrates the relative discrimination power that each independent variable has on differentiating between the French and English consumers. It ranks the independent variables in a decreasing order of their discrimination power, based on the values of their respective *standardized* coefficients, as follows: First is “In store smells” (0.55), second is “How likely to recommend” (0.39), third is “Verbal announcements of Promotions” (0.36), and fourth is “Fresh in-store product preparation” (0.28). “In-Store Music” and “Free Samples” came fifth and sixth respectively, and were not found to be significantly discriminating between the two groups in the “Test of Equality of Means” above. Note that in ranking the discrimination power of the coefficients, the negative signs are ignored, and only the absolute values are considered for that purpose.

Insert Table 7 about here

Given that two variables namely, “Music“, and “Free Samples” were not significant in discriminating between the French and English consumers, another discriminant analysis was run, this time with only the other four variables that were found to be significant. Results vary very slightly (the *hit-ratio* would then be 71.4% and does not drop when the cross-validation is conducted and therefore remains at 71.4%, it is not shown here).

Therefore, contrary to what a general belief might be, and despite the fact that all people possess the same five senses, they do not rely on them similarly in all cultures, and the results of this comparative study between French and British consumers, support this statement.

Interpretation of Findings

In this section it is explained why certain variables that represent specific senses, such as hearing, smell, and sight, along with the variable “Relate” facet, were found to be discriminating between the two groups, while other variables were not.

Sound (Variable: Verbal announcements)

This sense was found to be significantly discriminating between the two cultural groups studied as can be seen in the output above. Indeed, English consumers would appreciate the use of verbal announcements in stores, more than the French consumers would. As the UK scores higher on

individualism and lower on power distance and uncertainty avoidance, they meet the description of (De Mooij, 2011) for people that are more verbally oriented. Moreover, according to (De Mooij, 2011) Individualistic cultures are low context communication cultures with an explicit verbal communication, and want to get to the point fast, as could be the case in a sales process. Also, cultures that are more verbally oriented tend to be those that are individualistic, with low power distance and low uncertainty avoidance.

Smell (Variable: Induced in-store Scent)

The sense *Smell* was also found to be significantly discriminating between the two cultural groups, where English consumers stated that they were less attracted by scent than the French. Like the English, Americans belong to the Anglo-Saxon cultural group, and are known to be less attracted by scent. As a result, they do not rely very much on this sense (Hall, 1966). (MacPhee, 1992) explains that the cultural perceptions of odors are different due to historical reasons, perception of self-control and the environment. Because of a lack of hygiene in the middle age, more specifically during the time of the "Tudors" in the 15th and 16th century, people used to throw trash from the 1st and 2nd floors straight into the streets, and racks of trash were left in the open air, creating bad odors in the towns. As a result, the British people were forced to oppress the use of the sense "Smell" in order to block these bad odors. Since then, the word "Odor" was associated with bad smell, and has a negative connotation, contrary to France. Moreover, the French have been historically exposed to more diverse types of smell, and have been called to rely on their smell in choosing the right perfume, wine, cheese or to appreciate the wide array of scents in the French cuisine. So it could be said that it's in the French DNA.

Sight (Variable: Fresh in-store product preparation)

Another sense that was also found to be significantly discriminating between the two cultural groups is Sight. Indeed, English consumers appreciate to have Fresh in-store product preparation before their eyes more than French consumers. The fact that consumers expect tailored service, made to request good and service as it is the case in the *Fresh in-store product preparation*, is consistent with the fact that the UK has one of the highest individualist scores, that is “89”, contrary to a more collectivist society, where consumers would be content with a standardized product. A fresh in-store product preparation enables consumers to stand out from the crowd, by consuming personalized products, which reinforces the individualistic orientation of English consumers. It could also be connected with a higher consciousness of hygiene in England compared with France (confirmed by justifications by English respondents about the fact that it gives evidence of hygiene, freshness, quality). For instance, baguettes are served by employees in the retail store or picked by consumer using their bare hands, while in England this gesture would offend consumers and would be perceived as lacking the minimum standards of hygiene.

Relate (Variable: Information sharing through Word-of-Mouth)

English consumers seek more actively word of mouth recommendation than French. It is consistent with the fact that individualistic cultures of low power distance tend to actively acquire information via friends to prepare for purchases. As stated by (Wursten and Fadrhonc,2012) personal opinions are more valuable in societies with a low Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI). And societies with a higher (UAI), which is the case of France relatively to England, would tend to value expert’s opinion rather than personal opinions. Therefore, this consciousness of the English population about the importance of personal

opinions tends to encourage them to recommend a store that succeeded in offering a good shopping experience, more than the French would.

In sum, contrary to (Shaw and Onkvist, 2004) statement that French appreciate use of senses by stores more than English, this research found that they were equally welcoming free samples (*Taste/touch*) and music (*Sound*), that the French had more appreciation for store induced smell (Smell) and relied more on it when shopping, while the English consumers were more in favor of verbal announcements (*Sound*) and in-store Food preparation (*Sight*).

These findings reshape what one would otherwise consider to be obvious knowledge, namely that consumers around the globe would rely equally on their five senses when making purchase decisions.

Implications for Managers

When planning the internationalization of their retail, managers have to trade-offs between the standardization of the sensorial mix and its adaptation. The results of the previous sections therefore have important implications for marketers and urge them to treat French and English consumers differently, at least with respect to the variables that have shown a significant difference between the two groups. Combining the results of Tables 2 and 5, the sensorial options that contribute the most to enhancing the shopping experience in the two countries are Free Samples, Live Preparation and Music. For these three sensorial alternatives, there is no significant difference between the two countries except for live preparation which is more appreciated by the English consumers. However, “In store smells”, “How likely to recommend” and “Verbal announcements of Promotions” are less frequently acknowledged as enhancement

factors of the shopping experience and besides can be tricky to standardize. Indeed, smell is a good example of how culture matters. Only 21% of the English people believe “in store smells” add to their shopping experience while 52% of the French believe it does. The contrary is true for “Verbal announcements of Promotions”. Only 22% of the French believe it adds to their shopping experience while 42% of the English consumers believe it does.

Therefore, verbal announcements for instance should be avoided in France, as the majority of the population would be reluctant to have them in the stores, and it would decrease rather than increase shopping experience. On the other hand, verbal announcements could still be used in England since the market is split between those that are for it and those that are against it, meanwhile further studies are necessary in order to locate which segment of the English population is for it, and which one is against its use.

Concerning live preparation, it needs to be used more in England than in France, as most of the English population appreciates it for the reasons stated above, while the French are split between those that welcome it and those who do not see it as adding value. Again, further analysis is required in order to locate which segment of the French population is for it, and which one is against.

From the results related to recommending a store or not, marketers should understand that they can rely more on word-of-mouth in England than in France to spread a positive word of mouth, even if both populations show an above average likelihood to recommend a store that create a hedonic experience to a friend or a family member.

Finally, the induced store smells should not be used in England, but could be used in France, as the majority of the English consumers do not believe that smell would contribute to enhancing their pleasure in shopping. Moreover, stores should not expect the induced smell to generate

more sales in France, as French consumers do not believe smell affects their aptitude to purchase in the short term. On the other hand, stores in France could rely on induced smell to attract consumers that enjoyed their previous shopping experience back to the store, and to keep them longer in the stores, which could generate more sales in the medium term.

Marketers should be aware of these differences when designing their sensorial mix. In England for example, it is useless and even counterproductive to intensify the use of smell, while it could enrich the shopping experience for the French consumers. Therefore, a French retailer cannot duplicate the same sensorial mix being used in French stores to stores in England, and vice-versa.

A possible limit of this study is that it doesn't investigate the reasons behind the French and English consumer's attitudes towards the sensorial technics set-forth. In other words, the study doesn't uncover the "whys" and "why nots" of their respective preferences. Digging into the common points between the two cultures, such as the use of music and free samples in store, to see whether the French and English consumers have different reasons for their common position of welcoming the use of music and free samples by retailers is left for future research. Even if these two groups may not differ on welcoming the use of the latter items, it doesn't mean that they will have the same reasons for doing so, and that's what future work can uncover. Last, but not least, future research could consider other SEMs (such as ACT, THINK, ...) in combination with other ExPros (such as Communication, People, ...) than the ones covered in this study.

But, as an end-result, this research would have extended Schmidtt's model of experiential Marketing by adding the cross-cultural dimension to it, and therefore confirms that consumers do not rely on their five senses similarly across cultures, contrary to what some might believe.

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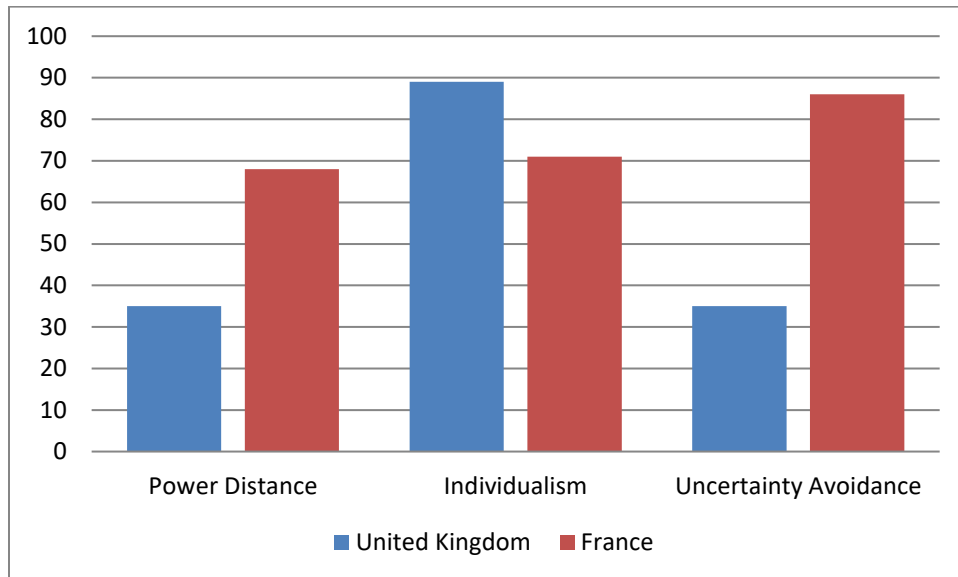
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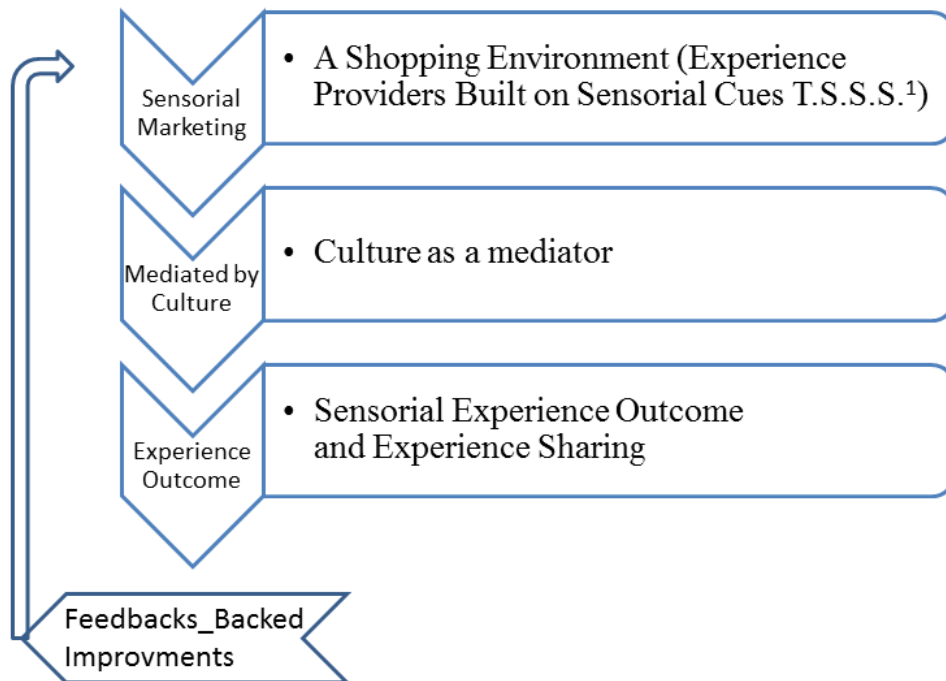
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Figure 1: Dimensions of Cultural Values for the United Kingdom versus France



Authors' Figure with data from Hofstede (Source: <https://geert-hofstede.com/united-kingdom.html>)

Figure 2: Culture determines the effectiveness of an EXPROs (in our case the shopping *Environment*) in activating a SEM (in our case *Sense & Relate*), in order to enhance the shopping experience.



¹ Touch; Sound; Sight; Smell Providers

TABLES

Table 1: Determinants of Consumers' Response to Experiential Providers

SEM Model Schmidtt (1999)	Hofstede 5-D (2001)	Shopping Experience Outcome
SENSE (sensory experiences)	Power Distance	Positive
FEEL (affective experiences)	Uncertainty Avoidance	Negative
THINK (creative cognitive experience)	Individualism	
ACT (physical experiences and lifestyles)	Masculinity	
RELATE (social-identity experiences)	Long term orientation Indulgence	

Table 2: Means-Table

	English Mean	French Mean
Free Samples (sense : <i>touch</i>)	0.76	0.81
Verbal announcements of Promotions (sense : <i>sound</i>)	0.42	0.22
Fresh in-store product preparation (sense : <i>sight</i>)	0.8	0.63
Music (sense : <i>sound</i>)	0.75	0.66
In store smells (sense : <i>smell</i>)	0.21	0.52
How likely to recommend (relate)	4.01	3.51

Table 3: Correlation Table

Correlation	Free Samples	In Store Smells	How likely to recommend	Music	Verbal announcements of promotions	Fresh in-store product preparation
Free Samples	1	0.136	0.346	0.203	0.100	0.151
In Store Smells		1	0.33	0.138	0.130	0.063
How likely to recommend			1	0.243	0.130	0.106
Music				1	0.131	0.143
Verbal announcements of promotions					1	0.012
Live preparation						1

Table 4: Wilks' Lambda:

Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	.749	105.975	6	.000

Table 5: Tests of Equality of Group Means

	Wilks' Lambda	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Free Samples	.996	1.420	1	369	.234
In-Store Smell	.907	38.056	1	369	.000
How likely to recommend	.950	19.464	1	369	.000
Music	.990	3.683	1	369	.056
Verbal announcements of Promotions	.958	16.216	1	369	.000
Fresh in-store product preparation	.973	10.183	1	369	.002

Table 6: Classification Results^{a,b}

Country			Predicted Group		Total
			Membership		
			France	UK	
Original	Count	France	173	56	229
		UK	36	106	142
	%	France	75.5	24.5	100.0
		UK	25.4	74.6	100.0
Cross-validated ^b	Count	France	173	56	229
		UK	39	103	142
	%	France	75.5	24.5	100.0
		UK	27.5	72.5	100.0

a. 75.2% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

b. 74.4% of cross-validated grouped cases correctly classified.

Table 7: Structure Matrix

	Function
	1
In store smells	-.554
How likely to recommend	.396
Verbal announcements of Promotions	.362
Fresh in-store product preparation	.287
Music	.172
Free Samples	-.107