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BRAND ASSOCIATION AND ITS LINK TO THE FIVE SENSES

Hanin Hamade¹, Muhammad Khan²

^{1,2} College of Business, Effat University, Qasr Khuzam St., Kilo. 2, Old Mecca Road.

P.O.BOX 34689, Jeddah 21478, Saudi Arabia.

¹hhamade@effatuniversity.edu.sa, ²mkhan@effatuniversity.edu.sa

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ABSTRACT

Brands are developed on the basis of the way consumers perceive them in their minds and by seeing, touching, hearing, smelling and/or tasting them. This work has evaluated brand association with regards to the five senses. This study is based on empirical research of 23 brands (national and international) across several industries. A survey was conducted with 244 respondents. The data was collected through questionnaire and was analyzed in terms of correlation analysis using SPSS software. The outcome of this work has shown that F&B brands depend chiefly on the feeling of taste to pass on their opulence, after which come sight and smell. The other two detects (sound and contact) have practically no impact on consumers' view of these brands' associations. In addition, this study also revealed that for service brands, the sight sense is the most significant sense, thus visual attraction is highly focus for its branding. Thus, this work has concluded that there is link between brand association and five senses.

Keywords: Brand; association; marketing; five sense

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the years, brands have become integral to both the manufacturer as well as the consumer [1]. In the eyes of the manufacturer, a brand acts as legal protection of unique features, and as a form of identification for the product [2]. As for consumers, a brand signifies a certain standard or expectation of quality and classifies the foundation of the merchandise and hence allocates obligation to the company [3].

When developing a clear brand proposition, the key message to be conveyed about the brand must be identified. Brand development comprised of few stages [4]. The first stage begins with discovery, where a company needs to start off by gaining a clear picture and understanding of the product that the brand represents as well as the environment surrounding it. The second stage is where A company must to creates its mission and vision, a unique name, a set of values that signals brand behavior. The third stage is implementation [4]. This is where the company creates a brand strategy that will help focus resources and manage

the brand. In this stage, the brand begins to communicate with consumers on different forms of media [5].

It is important to identify a brand's key differentiating characteristics that it chooses to focus on, thus setting the brand apart from its rivals [6]. Evidently, having a strong brand is a fundamental aspect and as such, its development is to be performed meticulously [7].

An interesting concept relevant to this research is "sensory branding" [8]. In brief, it is a type of marketing whereby the senses are considered a part of the branding process [9]. It is believed that a „multi-sensory brand experience“ – in other words, facilitating an experience for the consumer that involves more than one sense – can invoke an emotional attachment to the offering rather than just a functional one, which is ultimately much stronger and steadfast [9]

As for the five senses which are taste, touch, sound, smell and sight, and their main purpose is to help distinguish between different signals people are constantly exposed to; signals that carry information that allows them to function in their everyday lives [10] Brands now attempt to stimulate as many of the five senses as possible in order to achieve some differentiation from rivals [10]. During the 20th century, marketers concentrated solely on the sense of sight for branding. They played around with colours on posters to grab the most consumer attention. Later on when Television Commercials (TVC) gained popularity [11], sound became another issue of importance for marketers to consider. This continued until recently, sensory branding had begun to include all five senses, and it became generally understood that the more senses incorporated within the branding process, the more effective the branding will be [12].

Few works has been reported regarding sensory branding. A study done by Lindstrom [13] concluded that the more sensory touch points exploited when building a brand, the greater the number of sensory memories stored for the user. And thus, this leads to a stronger, possibly more sustainable relationship between the brand and the user. Mueller et al. [14] investigated the overall impact of bundling, naming, branding and sensory properties on preferring and purchase plan for wine product and found that buy expectation was affected by enlightened fondness, taste and value assessment. Berg et al.[15] investigated food places branding and found that that nourishment and its taste impacts the branding image and also the character of the food place. Yoon et al.[16] inspected if sensory intrigue inclinations in advertisements influence brand mentality and found that for brand imagine, sight was the most compelling sense for branding. Pawaskar et al.[17] developed a model dependent on multisensory advertising and how its utilized to upgrade tourism branding, and found that incorporating five senses enhances the branding image of the tourism place.

In addition, Krishna et al.[18] inspected sensory branding and found that sensory promoting can be utilized to make intuitive triggers that describe purchaser impression of conceptual ideas of the item. Thomson et al.[19] presented study of sensory branding and its attributes on branding and found that controlling the sensory qualities of brand, pack, and item gives a methods for affecting the brand message and the passionate results it conveys. Dițoiu et al.[20] analyzed the experience of sensory branding for the travel industry and found that multi sensory is a vital viewpoint for the travel industry branding and image. Lund et al.[21] analyzed the effect of sensory interests in the retail condition, especially in design retail settings and found that clients like to

purchase attire dependent on physical feel and solace. Piqueras-Fiszman et al.[22] analyzed the impacts of desires on the sensory impression of nourishment by clients and found that pictorial data creates desire and will assume a major role on how the food is perceived by customers.

Based on the presented previous works, to the authors best knowledge, very limited resources exist that explicitly link the concept of brand association with the senses. Thus, in this paper, brand association was observed with regards to the five senses. This work has evaluated directly the link of senses with brand association at Saudi Arabia.

METHODOLOGY

This work was done based on qualitative and quantitative method. A research instrument was created in the form of an online survey (via surveymonkey) with 14 questions in total. It consisted of two sections; the first comprising of six demographic questions that provided the information necessary to make a well-rounded analysis when results are observed. The next section contained eight questions that focused on exploring the association between brands and the senses.

The questionnaire started off with attempting to understand how much power respondents believed the senses have over a brand experience, followed by a straightforward question that enquired if „brand association“ could be linked to the senses (open-ended). Next, the respondents were asked to determine the different communication tools that each sense can affect. After that, various brands (local and global) were tackled to understand what sense respondents believe is involved when experiencing said brand.

Respondents were then asked how they believe associations are created, and which brands are most successful from the ones listed, and why. The final question focused on five major industries and requested that respondents rank the five senses in order of importance relative to each of the industries. The five industries had been chosen on the basis that those industries happen to be among the most popular and thriving industries in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The survey was initially disclosed to 10 individuals made up of faculty members at Effat University and friends who were asked to fill it out and identify any shortcomings or possible improvements to be made to the survey. A few modifications were suggested in the phrasing of certain questions, which were corrected before the survey was sent out for data collection.

The online survey was circulated amongst different social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+) and sent out in a mass email to the entire population of Effat University (students and faculty). The required sample was to be any consumer that has had previous contact with brands, which led to a very wide target, and that has made the process simpler. However, this led to a difficulty in ascertaining a certain percentage of the population to target. Due to limited reach, the sample size was intended to reach 450 respondents, but 244 responses were received in the course of three weeks (54.2 percent of the intended sample size). The data were analyzed with correlation statistic using SPSS software and were presented accordingly.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics

To begin with respondents were asked a total of six questions that would determine their demographic backgrounds and thus shed some light on their mentality and rationale. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic respondents profile. Based on Table 1, demonstrates that the majority of responses came from 31-35 year-olds, with 62% of the sample being female, while the lowest percentage of respondents were aged 60 or above at 1.23%. Over half of the respondents (51.43%) were Saudi, followed by Egyptians (6.17%) and Palestinians (4.53%). The three prevalent professions observed were students (19.85%), marketing professionals who made up 14.65%, and university professors/instructors with 14.55%. Only 2.82% of responses came from entrepreneurs. The greatest portion (39.2%) of the sample's income level was between SR10,000 and SR15,000, and the second greatest portion was below SR5,000 at 20.1% - most of whom are possibly students who do not yet earn an income. The lowest chosen income group was earnings between SR 30,000 and SR 35,000. And finally, the highest percentage of responses came from individuals who'd obtained their 4-year college degrees, and the least proportion was those that had not yet completed high school.

Table 1: Demographic Respondents Profile

Criterion	Highest 3 choices			Lowest Choice
Age	31-35 (32.53%)	26-30 (20.58%)	20-25 (16.24%)	Above 60 (1.23%)
Gender	Female (62%)			Male (38%)
Nationality	Saudi Arabia (51.43%)	Egypt (6.17%)	Palestine (4.53%)	Denmark (0.82%)
Profession	Student (19.85%)	Marketing Professional (14.655)	University Professor (14.55%)	Entrepreneur (2.82%)
Income Level	SR 10,000-15,000 (39.2%)	Under SR 5,000 (20.1%)	SR 15,000-20,000 (13.7%)	SR 30,000- 35,000 (3.65%)
Education	College degree (32.22%)	High School (21.28%)	Master's Degree (16.82)	Less than High School (0.41%)

Correlation Analysis

Ten F&B brands were analyzed with the brand success characteristics as the correlation results is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 . Based on the results, for the brand of McDonalds, Sight was found to indicate reliability and price. Smell was an indicator for quality, and taste indicated quality as well, along with reputation and that it entices the senses. Sound and touch had little to do with McDonalds' success. For the brand of Tang, Sight was an indicator for price, while taste specified Tang's reputation and that it entices the senses. This means

that sound, touch, and smell have nothing to do with Tang's success. For the brand of Munch, Sight was a pointer to Munch's quality, price, and an ego satisfier. This points out that Munch has a strong visual identity. Taste lets people know of its reliability, reputation, and that it entices the senses, while the other senses had no correlation with success. For Fuddruckers, The sense of sight indicate Fuddruckers' price and ego satisfaction, while taste indicates its reliability, reputation, and enticing the senses. Smell is a pointed to the restaurant's quality. Sound & touch have no link to the brand's success. For Danube and other Bakeries, Sight had no link to the bakeries' success which means visual identity is weak and has room for improvement. Taste indicated the brands' reliability and quality. Smell is the main success indicator for reliability, quality, reputation and enticing the senses. This leads to the presumption that these brands depend mostly on the sense of smell for their success. For Doritos/Lays/Pringles, sight merely points out the brands' price, while taste indicates reliability, quality, reputation, and enticing the senses. Smell and touch have no use, while sound indicates quality. As for Pizza Hut/Dominos, Sight is an indicator for reputation and price. Both smell and taste indicate reliability and enticing the senses, while taste alone satisfies the ego and indicates quality. These three senses have strong links to the brands' success in relation to other brands.

In addition for Pepsi/Coca Cola, Sight indicates quality and reputation of Pepsi and Coca Cola. Taste leads to the indication of reliability and enticing the senses. Sound also entices the senses. It appears that smell and touch have no correlation to the brands' success. As for Starbucks, Sight leads to reliability, reputation, price, ego satisfaction, and enticing the senses, meaning that it is the main indicator for success for Starbucks, which showcases its visual identity's strength in the mind of the consumers. Smell indicated ego satisfaction and enticing the senses while taste only indicates quality. For KFC/Al Baik, taste only indicates quality, while smell is an indicator for the brands' quality along with reputation and enticing the senses. The sense of sight also plays as an indicator for reliability, reputation and price of the brands.

Thus, in summation, it is evident that F&B brands depend mainly on the sense of taste to convey their success, after which come sight and smell. The other two senses (sound and touch) have little to no influence on consumers' perception of these brands' success.

		McDonal ds_Sight	McDonal ds_Smell	McDonal ds_Taste	Tang_Sig ht	Tang_Ta ste	Munch... _Sight	Munch... _Taste	Fyddbruck ars_Sight	Fyddbruck ars_Smell	Fyddbruck ars_Taste	Danube Bakery_S mell	Danube Bakery_T aste
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.445**	0.551	0.61	0.465	0.45	0.43	.490**	0.534	0.583	.570**	.448**	.448**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.009	.010	.006	.009	.000	.009	.009	.000	.000	.000
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Quality	Pearson Correlation	0.445	.618**	.653**	0.476	0.607	.523**	0.585	0.605	.538**	0.681	.549**	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.000	.000	.009	.010	.000	.009	.040	.000	.009	.000	.000
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Reputation	Pearson Correlation	0.5	0.572	.580**	0.365	.651**	0.468	.612**	0.591	0.587	.622**	.573**	0.614
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.008	.000	.010	.000	.009	.000	.040	.009	.000	.000	.008
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Price	Pearson Correlation	.278**	0.3	0.358	0.269**	0.308	.319**	0.319	.354**	0.309	0.354	0.346	0.262
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.008	.000	.009	.000	.008	.000	.008	.040	.009	.040
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Ego Satisfier	Pearson Correlation	0.226	0.256	0.36	0.149	0.296	.247**	0.286	.272**	0.29	0.31	0.273	0.369
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.006	.009	.020	.008	.000	.010	.000	.009	.010	.009	.009
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Entices Senses	Pearson Correlation	0.238	0.345	.396**	0.29	.328**	0.253	.292**	0.309	.400**	.434**	.345**	0.29
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.009	.000	.006	.000	.009	.000	.009	.000	.000	.000	.009
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244

Figure 1: Significance between Correlations with F&B Brands part 1

As for service and other brands, the following Figure 3 outline the significances found between the different variables and discuss the association between them and their success factors in relation to the five senses. Thus based on Figure 3, for Virgin Megastore, the sense of sight led to the indication of the reliability, quality, and enticing the senses for Virgin. Sound entices the senses, and touch acts as an ego satisfier. Smell has no link to Virgin’s success. For HSBC, Sight is the only sense that indicates success of HSBC, more specifically its reliability, quality, and ego satisfaction. For FedEx/UPS, slight only indicates these service brand’s reliability and quality. For Faces/Gazzaz, sight only indicates these brands’ price and ego satisfaction. Smell takes the cake with it being an indication for quality, reputation and enticing the senses. For google, sight indicates Google’s reliability, quality and reputation. In summation, the result leads to the conclusion that service brands have little use of other senses aside from sight. This means that any service brand needs to have a very strong visual identity in order to be able to communicate its success to consumers in the only way it can: through the sense of sight.

	Doritos/Lays/Pringles_Sight	Pringles/Sound	Doritos/Lays/Pringles_Taste	HotDoritos_Sight	HotDoritos_Smell	HotDoritos_Taste	ca_Cola_Sight	ca_Cola_Sound	ca_Cola_Taste	Starbucks_Sight	Starbucks_Smell	Starbucks_Taste	KFC/Al Baik_Sight	KFC/Al Baik_Smell	KFC/Al Baik_Taste
Reliability	0.371	0.224	.557**	0.543	.520**	.581**	0.405	0.339	.503**	.449**	0.508	0.539	.449**	0.561	0.578
	.040	.025	.000	.009	.000	.000	.009	.009	.000	.000	.009	.010	.000	.025	.010
	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Quality	0.48	.182**	.688**	0.564	0.586	.712**	.452**	0.287	0.684	0.479	0.624	.617**	0.499	.680**	.631**
	.009	.004	.000	.025	.009	.000	.000	.012	.009	.025	.009	.000	.025	.000	.000
	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Reputation	0.481	0.25	.629**	.568**	0.558	0.635	.472**	0.347	0.64	.499**	0.597	0.626	.399**	.585**	0.587
	.040	.040	.000	.000	.025	.009	.000	.025	.009	.000	.025	.010	.000	.000	.010
	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Price	.246**	0.202	0.381	.374**	0.34	0.362	0.319	0.208	0.315	.283**	0.355	0.327	.283**	0.35	0.315
	.000	.009	.009	.000	.009	.010	.009	.009	.010	.000	.009	.010	.000	.025	.010
	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Ego Satisfier	0.243	0.278	0.314	0.259	0.303	.317**	.119	.124	0.364	.221**	.289**	0.32	0.221	0.273	0.31
	.009	.040	.009	.009	.009	.000	.064	.053	.009	.001	.000	.009	.009	.010	.009
	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Entices Senses	0.309	0.252	.371**	0.353	.405**	.331**	0.304	.209**	.423**	.245**	.396**	0.301	0.27	.410**	0.356
	.009	.009	.000	.009	.000	.000	.009	.001	.000	.000	.000	.010	.009	.000	.009
	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244

Figure 2: Significance between Correlations with F&B Brands part 2

In addition, a third correlation was examined between how brand association is created and characteristics of brand success which is shown in Figure 4. Based on the results, It can be asserted that a correlation can be found between the two questions. Respondents that linked the success of a brand with it being an ego satisfier also believe that association is decided by the type of product rather than consumers or brand owners. Similarly, those that perceive success on the basis of price see consumers as the developers of association. As for the third success characteristic, which is reputation, this was linked to „brand association“ being created automatically. This may be interpreted in the sense that reputation can not only be credited for the brand, as consumers and various other factors play a part in the cultivation of said reputation. This could be why this variable was linked to an automatic creation of association. The fourth success characteristic – quality – was linked to association being created either intentionally, by consumers, or automatically. This can be explained in the sense that brand quality is communicated and spread via many sources which include the brand itself, word of mouth and other ways. Finally, reliability as a success factor was linked to association creation by consumers as well as the brand. This again is justifiable by the fact that reliability is a feature that is communication through the previously mentioned methods.

		Service							
		Virgin Megastor e_Sight	Virgin Megastor e_Sound	Virgin Megastor e_Touch	HSBC_Si ght	FedEx/UP S_Sight	Faces/Ga zzaz_Sig ht	Faces/Ga zzaz_Sm ell	Google_ Sight
Reliability	Pearson	.523**	0.374	0.358	.493**	.485**	0.527	0.383	.574**
	Sig. (2-	.000	.006	.008	.000	.000	.008	.007	.000
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Quality	Pearson	.663**	0.397	0.294	.666**	.610**	0.486	.601**	.711**
	Sig. (2-	.000	.006	.007	.000	.000	.008	.000	.000
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Reputatio	Pearson	0.655	0.374	0.307	0.677	0.638	0.546	.460**	.689**
	Sig. (2-	.010	.006	.008	.009	.010	.006	.000	.000
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Price	Pearson	0.374	0.251	0.241	0.342	0.327	.349**	0.282	0.378
	Sig. (2-	.009	.008	.008	.007	.008	.000	.007	.009
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Ego	Pearson	0.354	0.301	.213**	.320**	0.327	.268**	0.197	0.345
	Sig. (2-	.010	.008	.001	.000	.008	.000	.007	.007
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244
Entices	Pearson	0.388**	.267**	0.278	0.402	0.41	0.351	.378**	0.41
	Sig. (2-	.000	.000	.008	.007	.008	.007	.000	.008
	N	244	244	244	244	244	244	244	244

Figure 3: Significance between Correlations with Service Brands

	Why Successfu l_Relibilit y	Why Successfu l_Quality	Why Successfu l_Reputati on	Why Successfu l_Price	Why Successfu l_EgoSati sfier
Brand Association Created Intentionally	.471** .000	.400** .000	0.499 .060	0.283 .008	0.252 .009
	244	244	244	244	244
Brand Association Created by Consumers	.199** .002	.242** .000	.149* .020	.249** .000	.010 .879
	244	244	244	244	244
Brand Association Created by Type of Product	0.426 .008	0.51 .008	0.55 .006	0.267 .007	.178** .005
	244	244	244	244	244
Brand Association Created Automatically	0.404 .008	.503** .000	.466** .000	0.406 .006	0.196 .008
	244	244	244	244	244

Figure 4: Correlation between dependents of brand association and success factors

Interview Analysis

Interviews was conducted with brand owners in order to gain a glimpse of their perspective as well as to validate the survey findings. Doe Sandwich Shop, Halwani Bros, and Munch; all of which operate within the F&B industry in Saudi Arabia. However, due to time constraints on the ends of both the interviewers and interviewees, only Doe Sandwich Shop was contacted. A phone interview was conducted with the entrepreneur, Ms Abeer Al-Saud. Al-Saud had agreed with most respondents that senses do have a great deal of impact on consumer experience with brands. She, however, does not believe that senses could have a strong enough impact to be viewed as an association

that consumers have with brands. “It depends on the industry, some types of products can be related to the senses, but some cannot. Senses are a powerful influencer, however they are not the deciders of success or failure of a brand”. When asked about how associations occur, Al-Saud was quick to answer saying that it is purely dependent on the type of product. Thus it is considered an automatic association that occurs with the help of brand owners who attempt to manipulate marketing in such a way so as to emphasize possible associations to its advantage. She also believes that reputation is the major determinant of success for a brand, as opposed to its ability to entice the senses, elaborating that in today’s interconnected world, consumers have the power to choose between countless products in the market. They do not necessarily care about how engaging a brand is, but rather about the service it provides compared to its rivals.

Al-Saud was informed of the correlations found between brands, the senses and success characteristics and asked to provide some insight on the findings. She asserted that with the food industry in general, all five senses are interrelated. That is to say that the three main senses (taste, smell and sight) are crucial in ensuring that an offering is up to a certain standard for both the reputation and quality that a brand wants to be known for. In that sense, she stressed that one cannot specify particular attributes to individual senses given their interrelatedness. As for service brands, she remarked that they have very little use of senses, which is why people tend to go for the faster and better service, thus not all brands can rely on senses being their key to success.

When asked about the senses she utilizes for her shop (Doe Sandwich Shop), she mentioned that taste, smell, and sight are a given for an F&B brand. She further went on to remark that her shop is most visited by businesspeople whom are in a hurry that spend a maximum of 15 minutes in the shop. That is why she has not yet considered implementing the use of sounds such as background music seeing as their main focus at the moment is on service speed.

Overall Discussion

Thus overall, the findings of this work showed that F&B brands depend mainly on the sense of taste to convey their success, after which come sight and smell. The other two senses (sound and touch) have little to no influence on consumers’ perception of these brands’ success. Hussain [23] analyzed effect of five sensory on purchasers of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) and found that taste factor has most noteworthy effect on KFC buyers, followed by visual and smell parts of it. Then again, material and sound-related effects on the tactile parts of KFC customers are lesser separately. This was also supported by Randhir et al. [24] where sensory advertising of buyers with a specific reference to KFC was evaluated and it was observed that smell to be a huge sensory factor for purchasers decision. Thus, the outcome of this work is similar to the reported findings of Hussain [23] and Randhir et al.[24].

In addition, the finding of this work showed that service brands have little use of other senses aside from sight. This means that any service brand needs to have a very strong visual identity in order to be able to communicate its success to consumers in the only way it can: through the sense of sight. This is agreed by the work of Wade Clarke et al.[25] where it was stated that sight sense was a influential factor in enhancing consumers choice for fashion materials. In

addition, the work done by Dalle Ave et al.[26] also confirmed that sight sense is a significant factor on consumer's purchase decision.

In addition, the analysis between how brand association is created and characteristics of brand success has shown that reliability, quality, reputation, price and ego satisfaction are an influential factors in brand association among consumers. Sasmita et al.[27] analyzed the impacts of brand affiliation, brand dependability, brand mindfulness, and brand picture on brand value and found that brand mindfulness prevalently influences brand value and brand association among consumers. Work by Koll et al. [28] also supported this as it was found that shoppers with high brand affiliation coordinate show increasingly positive brand reaction. Thus, the outcome of this analysis is inline with the previous reported works.

CONCLUSION

This work has evaluated brand association with regards to the five senses. The findings of this work showed that although previous research findings dictate that sight dominates the five senses, when it comes to the F&B industry in particular, taste and smell take the lead, followed by sight. Thus, this brings about the possible conclusion that brands in distinct industries utilize different senses or combinations of senses to become powerful. For service brand, the result showed that sight sense is most significant sense compared to the other senses. Thus, it can be concluded that there is link between brand association and five senses. However, the authors recommend diversified sample with an enhanced size as further future study.

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