

The Mediating Effects of Market Culture and Customer Service Skills in the Sensory Marketing and Non-Economic Performance Relationship of Ghana's Restaurant Sector

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Abstract: Today's business world brings in many new signals for companies to focus on well-established marketing tactics to succeed. Sensory marketing is focused on business strategy, whereby the company essentially follows not only financial gains, but also takes into account the process and results of all activities in relation to strategic and atmospheric issues of a business. The main aim of this paper is to evaluate the inter-relationships among sensory marketing and non-financial performance of restaurants in Ghana. Also, the study investigated the mediating role of market culture and customer service skills between the sensory marketing and non-financial performance link. The primary data was collected through questionnaire survey. A total of 482 questionnaires were distributed in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, through a stratified sampling, of which only 369 questionnaires were usable for analysis (approximately 76% response rate). Out of the total of 369 respondents, 38 were restaurants staff, while 331 were customers. Mediating analysis was done using Andrew Hayes process to determine the level of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This paper provides evidences from an investigation conducted at the various restaurants in the Region. A total of six hypotheses were tested. Descriptive research was carried out to address the research objectives. The information gathered informed the design of the survey, whose statistical data was analysed using SPSS. Both structural equation modelling (SEM) and Analysis of Moment of Structures (AMOS 23.0) were used to analyse the data. The findings concluded that the sensory marketing variables are positively related to non-economic performance. The result also shows that market culture and customer service skills does not mediate the relationship between sensory marketing and non-economic performance. This result makes theoretical and practical contribution to marketing practitioners on strategic issues on how the approach improves business performance. This study will serve as useful reference document for future academic researchers who want to undertake similar study.

Keywords: Sensory Marketing, Business Performance, Market Culture, Customer Service Skills, Restaurant Sector

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, there have been a lot of business challenges and the need to developing new marketing strategies to provide solutions for businesses in the long-term perspective. Eatery clients often view a restaurant food as part of bundle of a dining experience, and that they use a bundle of attributes when making restaurant decisions [17]. Distinguished strategies are required to survive in today's businesses, irrespective of the industry. There are questions

regarding the universal application of the sensory marketing strategies by practitioners [4]. Although, this study provides useful insights into differences in sensory factors based on the demographic characteristics of respondents, the study does not clarify whether cross cultural differences between Ghana and the Western world are significant enough to justify the standardisation of sensory marketing tactics. Thus, there are various studies on achieving successful business performance via sensory marketing. Researchers have conducted studies on sensory marketing strategies to help

curtail the situation [31, 43, 53]. However, most of these studies were conducted in the advanced countries. Some of these researchers posited that consumer behaviour in developing countries might differ from the developed world situation because of the differences in cultural orientations [17]. Addressing the sensory marketing tactics in an emerging market perspective seems important to fully understanding the consumption experience, and that is one contribution of this study. The focus of this study is about the adoption and implementation of sensory marketing, with an emphasis on non-economic performance using market culture and customer service skills as the mediators.

This research focuses on the Ghanaian restaurant industry as this sector shows a significant room for growth, especially in the big cities. Studies in Ghana indicates that restaurant foods are more and more relevant in urban cities as they conveniently offer energy-dense foods and accessible to working population who are unable to prepare food on a regular basis at home [8]. The study focuses on globally recognised fine dining restaurants where people eat with cutlery, fingers or both, together with drinks, and mostly in the company of other people, while taking culture context into account. In this study, data was collected from fine or casual dining restaurant or waiter or table service only, it did not include those restaurants who provide take-away, self-service, counter service, drive-through, buffet, door-to-door delivery, internet orders, and telephone orders. The study's data was collected in Ghana where the landscape of the restaurant sector and clients are totally different from the Western world. The classification of restaurants depends mainly on the precise food under consideration and the environment where the food is consumed. A lot of Ghanaian restaurants have places where people sit, relax, and chat while eating or socialising [7]. Studies showed that Ghanaian restaurants serve "globally recognized popular fast foods" including French fries, pizza, fried chicken, burgers and fried rice [7]. Some of these diets mentioned are not traditional Ghanaian foods, but they were imported and are now available in the country. The traditional Ghanaian foods include banku (a meal prepared from fermented maize and cassava dough) with ground chilli pepper and grilled tilapia, jollof rice (a one-pot dish prepared by boiling rice in tomato stew or sauce), plain boiled rice with stew, waakye (rice and beans [usually cowpeas], boiled together) with stew, and kelewele (diced spicy fried ripe plantain). These foods, usually hot and spicy, were mainly obtained from restaurants and check-check vendors [7].

The Ghanaian restaurant industry forms part of the largest and fastest growing part of the country's economy, growing at a yearly rate of 20% [23]. The restaurant and marketing literature revealed that, traditional food, fast food, casual restaurant and fine dining restaurant are the major types of restaurants in Ghana. The industry plays an increasingly important role in the economies of both developed and developing countries [60]. The sector is one of the key economic drivers which creates jobs, wealth, generates earnings as well as contribute tax revenue to stimulate other

sectors of the economy [7]. As noted, the sector craves for innovations and has emerged as an essential area that contributes significantly to strengthen the service sector [23]. In 2020, hotels and restaurants in Ghana contributed about 3.9 billion Ghanaian cedis, thus, 640.9 million U.S. dollars to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Within the period reviewed, a peak of nearly six billion GHS, 985.8 million U.S. dollars was registered in 2019, showing the continuing rising trend observed since 2014. The statistics shows that, 40% of the respondents are higher-income earners, 36.4% of them are in the middle-income class, and 31.7% of them are in the lower-income earners category eat from the restaurants on daily basis [23]. The restaurant business is one of quite a good business nowadays. The restaurant business has become highly competitive as a result of major changes that have been introduced by service providers as well as changing needs and preferences of customers. Over the past two decades, restaurant business has expanded in many developing countries. Throughout Africa, the restaurant business is growing at a rapid rate, and this caused by high income levels, swift urbanisation and changing eating habits as well as the lifestyles of the society. These days, consumers prefer to buy food from restaurants or cafes because of their busy activities and inadequate time to cook their own food [7]. The literature reviewed showed that young adults from 15 to 45 years were the biggest consumers of restaurant food in the country [23]. Firms are therefore expected to provide excellent products and services, and deliver them in ways that will satisfy the needs of consumers to attain high performance standards and to justify their purpose of existence.

The restaurant industry was chosen for this study because it is one of the most regulated sectors in the country and also one of the most active and visited places in Ghana where data can easily be gathered. Consumers eating habits keep evolving every day because of more leisure, and out-of-home food consumption experiences for which restaurants are expected to meet customer needs more than ever before [28]. The transformation within the restaurant sector requires that industry players adopt strategies that create brand differentiation to help them succeed in this new era [6]. Restaurants are faced with the obligation of attracting more and more customers, developing loyalty and at the same time maintaining positive image. The challenges have revolved around understanding customer needs and expectations and meeting these needs profitably. Restaurants are therefore expected to provide excellent products and services, and deliver them in ways that will satisfy the needs of consumers to attain high performance standards and to justify their purpose of existence. The contribution of the restaurant sector to the economic development of a country cannot be over emphasised. This stems from the fact that, there are differences in environments, culture of the people and structures as well as the size of the firm. The difficulties in identifying the 'culture' of a location for instance, Hong Kong, or the Western and Chinese influence, suggest that things might be done more differently than supposed. There

are different views and interpretations about the content in terms of culture background, therefore, making comparison across studies difficult. Prior researchers suggested that culture is to a country's population while personality is to a person [29]. Since culture influences perceptions, emotions, and cognitive responses among other things, consumers' responses to sensory marketing technics may differ from one culture to another in reaction to the senses because, the SEMs model are more likely to generate a positive or a negative reaction from consumers from different socio-cultural context [19]. A country's culture may rely more or less on sight, sound, touch, taste and smell.

Even though this work is limited to Ghana, it fairly represents a developing country context in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Culture or sub-culture dissimilarities can alter the social needs of consumers. These scholars noted that, a country's culture remains distinct from one another [29, 35]. Therefore, there are important cultural differences between French, Italian or American, Japanese, British and 'African' consumers. In previous studies relating to sensorial marketing, there was a comparison between UK and France in terms of cultural variances [2]. The variables used measured consumer's sensitivity to "Smell", "Taste", "Sound", "Touch" and "Sight", respectively. They posited that, the English were known to be more sensitive than the French with respects to the last three variables of the sensory cues, whereas the contrary was true for "smell". These findings are contrary to the belief that, every individual has the same five senses, and so they tend to rely equally on these senses in the same way when making purchases, irrespective of their cultural differences. These findings reformed what one would otherwise consider to be true, that buyers all over the world rely equally on the five vital senses in purchasing situations. The insinuation is that, the French sellers cannot replica in England same sensorial marketing strategies used in France, and vice-versa. This is because, some cultures depend more on mutuality and collaboration and so the predisposition to peer influence is greater for these group of individuals. Past studies reveal that culture remain the prime influence on values, beliefs and attitudes of a given society and that culture is a long-standing phenomenon [61]. Consequently, the result of this study cannot be generalised or be applied globally because it was not possible to make comparison in the measurement of the variables between Ghana and the developed economies. Empirical studies conducted in the United States, Spain, China, UK and other developing countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Egypt and Uganda have all demonstrated that there are divergent views in the findings [3, 33, 66]. The mixed results arose from the different context, definitions, views, interpretations and operationalisation of sensory marketing cues, therefore, making comparison across cultures difficult. The results need to be interpreted, and are subject to the usual limitations of a survey research.

1.1. Problem Statement

From the late 1990s onwards, business focus has

transformed from the product-centred notion in the direction of the experientialist consumer-centred conception [22]. The concept of sensory marketing has become a mainstream topic for many scholars [38]. As noted, "consumers do not buy products with functional features and benefits anymore, but rather, they want products and services that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts and stimulate their minds and incorporate into their lifestyles [33]. Consumers patronise services with the aim of creating exciting, joyful, emotional and unforgettable experiences [79]. Because of this drastic shift, consumers are increasingly seeking holistic, authentic and memorable experiences that are associated with given products or services. Besides, customers are growing more resistant to traditional forms of marketing such as print advertising and television commercials. Fragmented media advertising does no longer have the power of enhancing the persuasion and practices that create customer satisfaction and loyalty sufficiently to maximise business performance [28, 37, 52]. Prior researchers noted that, issues on sensory marketing and business performance have largely been neglected in marketing literature research especially in the emerging markets, adding that, the few tested models are inadequate [62, 78]. They also stated that, because most of these previous studies were done in advanced countries, the application and effectiveness of these factors in developing countries is still opened for investigation.

In fact, as it stands now, there are still areas to discover in the sensory marketing conception which makes it difficult to articulate the relationship between these constructs in relation to firm performance as there was little empirical evidence. There is an ongoing debate about these associations because they have not been sufficiently studied [24]. This means that, most developing countries have not been able to develop such a vibrant marketing strategy needed to improve business performance. Despite the fact it was generally accepted that sensory marketing helps to advance business success, only a handful of research have tried to empirically investigate the sensory marketing-performance relationship in the restaurant sector of Africa [74]. For this reason, its operationalisation and measurement remain vague and needs further exploration. The research problem of this study is that, only few previous studies considered all five sensory factors. Earlier researchers were mostly focusing on one or two senses at a time rather than involving all the five senses in their research. It was noted in prior research that, most of the strategies used by traditional marketing focused on attracting new customers through the visual communication alone [32]. A great number of these researchers have restricted their studies to single sensory cues, such as sight or sound, circumventing the interface of all the sensory marketing indicators [43]. The other vital senses - smell, touch and taste have been largely neglected in literature, despite the fact that a customer uses every sense before deciding on a brand.

According to existing body of knowledge, there are limited studies that have comprehensively investigated the relationship between sensory marketing and business performance [3]. These changing circumstances make it

necessary for firms to try to penetrate the market of brands, by coming closer and knowing the customer better through multisensory brand experience [32]. To sum up, sensory marketing strategy empowers restaurants to harness their core strengths and resource capabilities to enable them achieve competitive advantage, as customers feel satisfied and thus are more probable to make repeat purchases, recommend their chosen brands to others and be less willing to accept offerings from the competition. The relationship between sensory marketing and firm performance and mediating influence of many external factors have been researched to some extent. However, little focus has been on mediating roles of market culture and customer service skills variables, which could potentially channel the effects of sensory marketing on performance. Research in this area remains scanty and inconsistent as there are contentions about the relationship between the variables which have not yet been confirmed by empirical analysis [72]. There was not sufficient present study with variables mediating sensory marketing and performance relationship straightforwardly in academic research which gives evident reasons why these constructs should be further studied [68]. In order to achieve greater market success, it is important to apply the strategy of sensory marketing to trigger emotional response beyond the tangible characteristics of the product to strengthen customer satisfaction and loyalty [68]. The outcome of this study contributes to building the theoretical framework as well as policy direction needed to implement the required business strategies to attract high levels of performance in the restaurant sector.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- 1) Identify the relationships between the five sensory marketing factors and non-economic performance of companies;
- 2) Identify the relationships among the sensory marketing dimensions;
- 3) Verify the significant level of the relationships among the mediating effects previously mentioned, according to restaurant management opinion (market culture and customer service skills).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Empirical Review of Sensory Marketing

Sensory marketing is a marketing strategy that stimulates consumer emotions instead of their rational judgment by appealing to the five human senses (sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch) [67]. It is also defined sensory marketing as "marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their perception, judgment and behaviour" [42]. As explained, sensory marketing creates stimulation based on external environmental factors that can appeal to consumer senses [31]. These factors affect not only consumer emotions but also brand evaluations. Therefore, these factors can

ultimately affect customer behaviour and firm performance. Sensory marketing is a tool that is used by sellers to influence consumption habits by having sensory and emotional influence on customers [51]. Studying the role and effectiveness of sensory marketing provides invaluable insights into the relevance of improving firm performance [15]. Sensory marketing helps in getting closer to the customer by appealing to the unconsciousness of the human mind, by means of feelings, perception and emotions, which are private part of each individual [31]. The knowledge about the senses of a person might make the marketing strategy more personalised and more successful.

It was noted that sensory marketing is positively related to performance of companies and helps in product and service identification and to be distinguished from the competition [42]. The significant contribution of sensory marketing was acknowledged by the numerous studies in the marketing field. Earlier researchers argued that sensory marketing results in customer satisfaction and loyalty, which is a must for long-term relationships between customers and organisations [73]. Sensory marketing as a concept has become very popular based on the evidence presented in literature. Due to this evolution, restaurants need to constantly put some of these innovative marketing strategies into action in order to prevail on the market [68]. The sensory experience was mostly studied in relation to general marketing efficiency rather than relating it to business performance, which this study has conceptualised. Understanding of the world is experienced through the five vital senses. These senses are our connection to memory and can tap right into emotion and behaviour. However, bringing on all five senses is expected to work well and emotionally connecting people to the rituals of faith than left to their individual roles. The combination of the music, colour, lighting and layout of a restaurant could have a positive impact on satisfaction of customers, loyalty and the degree of gladness and entertainment [48].

The theory underpinning this study is the Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs) which is the foundation of sensory marketing and is supported by Experience Providers (ExPros) as the strategic tools [67]. The fundamentals of the SEMs identified by Schmitt are -sense, feel, think, act and relate that determine the grounded theory of sensory marketing tactics. The SEMs introduces how the customer experience speaks to the sense, feel, think, act and relate. The aim of SEMs is to create the marketing campaigns which makes a "holistic experiences to mix individual experiences into a comprehensive experience via visuals and verbal identity such as signage, cobranding, spatial environment, and electronic media for overall brand experience [67]. In the modules, Schmitt noted that, there are different ways of grasping experiences. This process represents a learning cycle or spiral where the learning 'touches on sensory experiences (SENSE), affective experiences (FEEL), creative cognitive experiences (THINK), physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyles (ACT) as well as social-identity experiences that comes from relating to a reference group or culture (RELATE).

In this study, the SEMs framework illustrates the study's purpose to assess Ghana's restaurant business in determining the five cognitive factors (sight, sound, touch, taste and smell). The sense module appeals to the five human senses with the objective of creating memorable experiences. As suggested, the sensorial experiences involve the five vital senses together with the feelings, rational and emotional minds of the human body [68]. Sense marketing may be used to differentiate company's products, to motivate customers and to add value to brands e.g., through aesthetic pleasure, excitement or beauty [67]. For example, when customers enter into a restaurant, the eye will see the attractiveness of restaurant decor and layout, fresh and clean of dining rooms. As literature reveals, the five human senses are of crucial importance for the individual experiences of different purchase and consumption processes [12]. In this model, the customer experiences are said to be connected and interact with products or brand and services. However, there is conceptual confusion in the terminology [14]. Schmitt's approach lacks a solid foundation, because the concept of experience is still ill-defined in ideological terms as it occurs in the marketing concept. SEM modules were culturally biased as it represents the North American vision of experience which is anchored in the literature [58].

In this study, the choices of the non-financial factors discussed below are of the researcher's judgment that they are more appropriate and can be easily quantified in assessing the performance of restaurants in Ghana. Customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, repeat purchase, and positive word-of-mouth are the leading indicators to measure non-economic performance and key indicator in analysing the success of any business, particularly the restaurant sector. Integrating mediators to making the sensory marketing-performance relationship vigorous is likely to empirically reinforce the sensory marketing studies and offer an opportunity to ascertain why some restaurants do better than others [33, 49]. The ability of a firm to harness these vital senses in a positive way to improve on performance helps to create competitive advantage [1]. The researchers' choice of market culture and customer service skills was based on many empirical studies that have established a strong predictive power of these variables on performance of firms [54].

The sensory marketing elements are discussed next.

2.1.1. Sight Marketing

Several researches have been done on the sense of vision or sight [42]. Various terms including atmospherics, environmental psychology, services-capes and shelf-space studies have been used to describe studies about the effect of the physical environments on consumers [63]. The visualization aspects of marketing are considered to be easier for the processing of product information and usage. Sight is the most controllable dimension of the sense experience by which customers make premeditated decisions. The fact is, every product that people purchase is exhibited or packaged with the objective of selling more of it. Product appeals

communicate meanings to customers. The supremacy of using the right colour, shape and graphics in designing and packaging of a product can depict lifestyle imageries in the brand. The pictorial appeal or content helps consumers to make informed decisions during purchases. The initial perception of a product and its environment gives an individual a feeling as to whether they like or dislike a product. This swift judgment is referred to as "sensation transference" [68]. The essence of using the sense of sight in attracting consumers is that the product must speak for itself and to increase brand recall and sales. The issue to address is that not all product placements and displays always turn into increased sales. It is noted that, enticing consumers thru visual stimuli is a complex process in that decision making is impacted by psychological, sociological and demographic issues [51]. People pay special attention to the excellence of merchandise display (visual and verbal elements) on the shelf of a store [32].

2.1.2. Sound Marketing

A sound is a hearing or audible sensation in the form of voice, music, melody etc. which uses symbolism to positively influence a brand's success [70]. Study on sound in the purchasing experiences classifies that music in a retail store can attract and retain customers because music influence consumer perception. For example, slower music in-store brings in unhurried shopping patterns and more acquisitions are made since clients take much more time and progress at a slower pace thru the store [75]. This is due to the fact that, cognitive thinking of consumers shows that they enjoy the background music in the store and feel that they have to spend more time during the shopping period. Soars (2009) noted that sound has very significant part to play on purchase intention. This includes music heard in the retail space such as stores, restaurants, hotels etc. Sounds have the ability to convey meaning and probable create a distinguishing characteristic for brands in a competitive market [40]. Music has been known to be an influential tool of communication to create the correct sounds needed to grasp consumers' attention [69]. Most of the marketing communication messages are delivered via radio, television, songs and jingles to the consumer [42]. Music in advertising has been used for several years by millions of brands as it carries meaning for the brand and has the capability to induce feelings as well as referential memory [80].

2.1.3. Taste Marketing

Every single taste of food that an individual experience is a blend of the five human senses [42]. For instance, it is problematic to talk about the taste of food if one is unable to smell it. The sense of taste is reliant on the other four vital senses. Researchers noted that, a brand's name can affect its perceived taste [46]. They also noted that, advertising disclosure of ingredient and well-being status of a product can have significance effect on the perception of it. Taste is the sensory cue primarily used to identify flavours of food or drink, to uphold likeliness or dislike towards the brand [76]. Sense of taste is a key driver of

product preference. It was recommended that, apart from getting customers attracted to a brand through the product features and benefits, the four basic taste sensations such as sweet, sour, bitter and salty, are respectively linked to customer preferences [46]. In some food stores, consumers are given the chance to generate their own flavour which is a great way to improve customer engagement as well as offer variety of choices. Taste marketing is considered vital in many organisations because it can be used to influence an entirely diverse sensory order for customers. It is stated that taste marketing complements the overall marketing efforts by incorporating the other multi-sensory attributes [69]. It was also noted that women are more receptive when their sense of taste is tested [20].

2.1.4. Smell Marketing

As noted, what people see, feel and taste are often influenced by what they smell at a particular time [70]. The motivation to create a scent “logo” for brand was to realise people’s emotional links with scents through which memories are triggered and a strong connection is formed. These researchers detailed that “scent or aroma” is very useful for branding but it should be applied in the best way to meet the needs of the target market and at the right time. Similarly, it also depends on how the marketer wants consumers to think of their brand, because both good and bad experiences linger on in the memory for longer. The application of scent marketing can be used for different levels of communication to reach customers’ inner self as deeply as possible. Products and services which do not have a direct link to scents, an imaginative thought process can be established to decode the sensory piece into the brand itself. This is possible because the emblematic smells are pretty sentimental as the world is moving towards the cyber space speedily. The sense of smell or aroma is the most influential and utmost under-exploited of all the senses in connection to the brand and the consumer [70]. The notion of smell in branding changed from the smell of products as the root to make the brand stand out, therefore making consumers loyal to a particular brand. The sense of smell in foodservice cannot be taken for granted since aroma of food has the ability to trigger emotional responses instantly [11]. Consumers are easily influenced by scents that emanate from the restaurant environment but are not part of the food.

2.1.5. Touch Marketing

In the marketing literature, creating experience through the sense of touch is also referred to as “tactile experience” [42]. People like to feel and handle or try the product, which is central to creating the feelings and aspirations in making a purchase decision. The sense of touch can be used beyond the traditional merchandising in-store approach to create experience via intangible products [70]. In this modern world, touch marketing is extremely important in product design by giving customers the opportunity to touch and try the product before buying. For example, the in-built touch screens, and comfortable sofas and samples of products in the restaurants have provided varieties to consumers to be able to make

choices. This has brought about increased brand familiarity and has simplified the decision buying process. It is important to note that, the sense of touch or “tactile interaction” is essential to the buyer engagement in a retail store. Visual presentations for products are very important for goods that are required to be touched, tried and the texture felt by the consumer [42]. Unfortunately, touch is one factor that cannot satisfy purchases made via online shopping medium. In terms of product valuation, classifying a product via the sense of touch, increases brand value and as a result, increases the sense of ownership and empowerment [70]. Touch marketing plays a very special role in terms of the buying decision making process for consumers. Consequently, it is imperative for marketers to appreciate how the use of the sense of touch can be augmented in sensory marketing [69]. Consumer visiting in-store are deeply reliant on the unique gratified value of the product to enhance the overall sensorial experience, and to meeting the purpose of their visit.

2.2. Factor Relationships and Research Hypotheses

Specifically, sensory marketing was measured against non-economic performance indicators including customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, repeat purchase, and positive word-of-mouth to determine the strategic position of the firms. Overall, sensorial marketing seems to influence the emotions and cognition differently according to their perception. Following the comprehensive review of existing literature, six research hypotheses were developed for testing in order to establish the relationship between the study constructs for the restaurant industry in Ghana. Sense of sight or visuals influences early stages of the decision-making process, which could start as early as the recognition and recall of a stimulus, that is before the formation of attitudes and evaluation of alternatives. Sight is the utmost used sense, and is extremely enthused by the atmosphere by means of colours and shapes as well as the physical environment [20]. Prior discussion has led to a brief examination of the existing literature and the development of the following hypotheses.

H1a: There is a significant direct relationship between sense of sight and non-economic performance.

Sense of sound is widely used in stores along with music, and verbal announcements or auditor stimulation. Music is played at almost every point of sale, and is an integral part of the restaurant atmosphere. This means that, it has a role to play in the customer perceptions. Background music is the cheapest and the easiest factor of the atmosphere to manage. In fact, by the click of a button, it is off or a track is skipped, another button and sound is louder, but it is definitely not the less powerful. The hypothesis is formulated below according to this knowledge:

H1b: There is a significant direct relationship between sense of sound and non-economic performance.

Researchers have proved the positive impact of a smell on the evaluation of products [20]. For instance, firms can adopt smell marketing in their restaurants as part of operational

strategy to enhance their business success. These practices are used for the reason that individuals not only make rational decisions based on price, or product features and benefits, but the subconscious mind such as emotions, perception, and memories must be considered [42]. The impact of scent has been established on consumer's cognitive and affective responses, attitudes, perceptions, memory, and behaviours [13]. It has been established in the literature that consumers tend to appreciate more of the smell they recognise, and are most familiar with. Consequently, based on previous study, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1c: There is a significant direct relationship between sense of smell and non-economic performance.

It is noted that the four basic gustative sensations; sweet, sour, bitter and salty, are respectively linked to consumer preferences [44]. Companies often use gustative marketing to convince customers by making blind-tests through comparative advertisements or directly with sampling or free-tasting promotional set-ups. In such situations, customers are more likely to purchase a product they have already tasted and liked [65]. On the basis of this proposition, hypothesis *H1d* below is propounded:

H1d: There is a significant direct relationship between sense of taste and non-economic performance.

Thus, sensory marketing is a deep and complex concept, as it deals with the unconscious mind of the consumers, their perceptions, feelings and the sense of touch. In a restaurant, the weight of the cutleries, the softness of the napkins, the comfort of a chair etc., can affect the perception that customers have of the atmosphere since, sense of touch is one of the major determinants of the well-being sensation [65]. According to the findings of previous researches, the following hypothesis is stated:

H1e: There is a significant direct relationship between sense of touch and non-economic performance.

2.3. Mediating Effect of Market Culture and Customer Service Skills

The study used market culture and customer service skills as mediators, mediating variable, intervening variable or intermediary variable. Mediating is a procedure of determining the level of association among independent and dependent variables by the introduction of a third variable. In this study, the mediating analysis was performed by means of binary outcome variable with Andrew Hayes Process to establish the significant level of market culture and customer service skills in the relationship between sensory marketing and non-economic performance [26]. Instead of finding only the direct relationship between independent and dependent variables, it is important to identify the impact of mediating variable on the dependent and independent variable relationships. Integrating mediators to making the sensory marketing and non-economic performance link more robust in building the theory of sensory marketing comprehensively and to provide opportunities for firms to perform better strategically [66]. This also helps to determine the nature or degree of relationship between the dependent and

independent variables.

These mediating variables are items in the questionnaire requesting respondents (managers) to judge their company's performance for each mediating factor. Basically, there are three types of mediations: full mediation, partial mediation and zero/no mediation. When the intervention of a mediator causes complete intervention, then there is complete mediation; while a partial mediation is the process where the mediating variable causes partial intervention in the relationship between the dependent and independent variable. Full mediation implies that the researcher has been able to completely explain the process by which the independent variable influences the dependent variable and there is no need to test for further indirect effect [59]. The state of partial mediation dictates that the mediation variable accounts for some but not all of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable. This indicates that there is not only direct relationship between the variable but there is also significant indirect relationship among the constructs [59]. Market culture is a concept that collectively refers to the values, beliefs, ideologies, lifestyle, customs, norms, traditions, knowledge, and skills shared by the members of a society [19]. The ability of the firm to learn from its environment influences the speed with which it responds to changes in order to meet the demands of customers and overcoming competitive challenges. Instilling a strong market culture in an organisation makes intuitive sense. Market culture emphasizes goal achievement and is focused on the organisation's productivity, performance, and profit; control and order within the organisation; and external directionality. Rather than examining the internal elements of the organisation, market culture focuses on harmony with the external environment, where external factors, such as suppliers and customers as the main concern. Past researchers set out market culture and customer service skills to measure marketing efficiency in the hospitality industry [45].

Also, customer service skills enhance businesses via customer satisfaction, creating and sharing knowledge and promoting structural novelty and efficiency. The cornerstone of the marketing concept is customer orientation. If a business is to be successful, its workers should be oriented towards satisfying the needs and wants of its customers. Employees of an organisations should be able to understand and identify customers' needs and requirements. Concerns and responsibilities for marketing must permeate all areas of the business [46]. Putting the customer at the heart of the business requires a well-established customer orientation in which employees should possess a set of values and beliefs that are likely to consistently reinforce and permeate the customer across the organisation. Customer service skills, a major driver of business performance must be designed around customers' needs and complaints. This is a vital indicator of any organisation's success or failure. Competence-based performance refers to "what people are expected to do in their role as well as the knowledge and understanding required to carry out their work" [30].

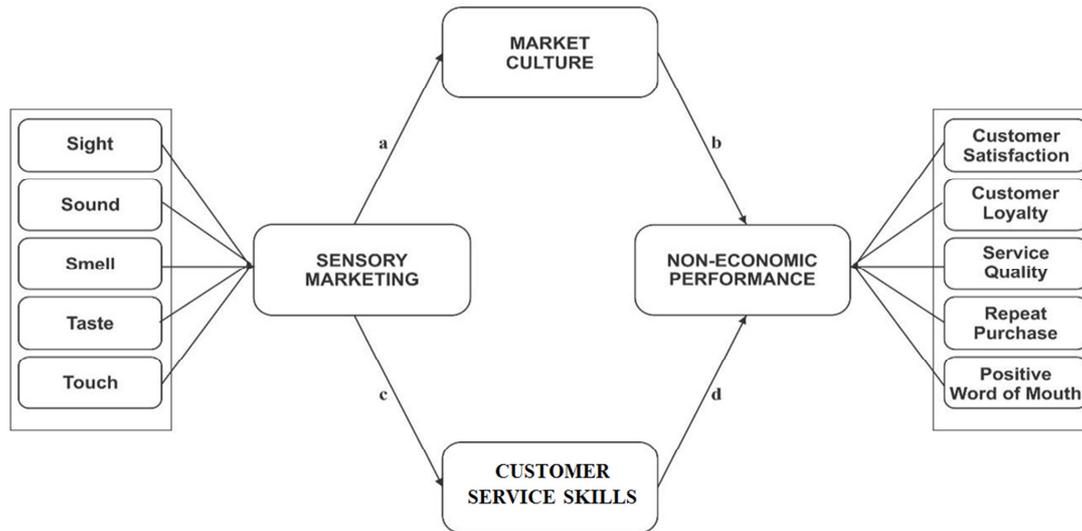
Customer service skills are normally part of a company's systems and structures that are likely to continue even when a worker resigns. In the food and beverage context, employees are the key success factor of the industry, as they are in charge of providing customer services. Customer service skills are vital indicators for an organisation's success or failure. It was found that market culture and customer service skills have mediating effect on the relationship between marketing efficiency and performance [47]. To validate the

above view, market culture and customer service skills are tested at the restaurant industry in the Ghanaian setting to confirm or disprove the claim that they mediate between sensory marketing and non-economic performance relationship.

On the basis of this proposition, hypothesis *H2* below is propounded:

H2: Market culture and customer service skills mediate the sensory marketing-noneconomic performance relationship.

2.4. Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Schmitt, (1999).

Figure 1. Sensory Marketing Model: Market culture and customer service skills as mediators.

A conceptual framework is a structure which the researcher believes can best explain the natural progression of the phenomenon to be studied. In this study, it is a framework that shows how food and beverage organisations might usefully implement a sensory marketing strategy to achieve maximum result. The following conceptual framework has been drawn to guide the development and testing of the proposed hypotheses. The research was conceptualised to provide the interrelationship between the sense marketing strategy and business performance. In this study, sensory marketing is used as independent variable whilst non-economic performance is used as a dependent variable. This model is a complex blend and interaction of the following key elements Sensory marketing applications utilise the sensory marketing modules that consist of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch expressed as independent variable in this study. The conceptual framework for this research was developed based on the models and constructs derived from the related literature [67]. Business performance measures are made up of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality, repeat purchase, and positive word-of-mouth. The conceptual framework for this research was developed based on the combination of models and constructs derived from the existing literature. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework which is developed for this study.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Data Collection Method

In this study, data was collected via questionnaire, which is made of two main sections. The first section of the questionnaire contains the socio-demographic profile of the respondents such as age, gender, educational level, income level etc. The second section consists of the sensory marketing indicators proposed as well as the non-economic performance indicators [10, 20, 27, 64]. The questionnaires were based on constructs that were measured using and adapting existing scale items in the sensory marketing literature [12, 50]. The study made use of 56 items from 6 constructs namely, Sight (6 Items); Sound (4 Items); Smell (4 Items); Taste (4 Items); Touch (5 Items) and Economic Performance (13 Items) on the seven-point Likert scale of the range from 1-strongly disagree to 7-strongly agree. In addition, the questionnaires were pre-tested in two ways. Firstly, to avoid the problem of misinterpretation by respondents, a professor and 5 research assistants were asked to assess the adequacy of the questions from the conceptual viewpoint, and the way in which they were posed. Secondly, 5 target respondents were also asked to evaluate the questionnaires for easy comprehension and completion.

3.2. Participants

Data collection was conducted in Ghana in 2021, in physical form in the selected restaurants in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana through a stratified sampling technique. Respondents answered several filtering questions that proved their engagement in the use of restaurant services. This approach resulted in a sample size of 500, of which 40 were restaurants staff and 460 consumers, whose ages ranged from 20 to 60 years. The sample size determination was based on the work of Krejcie and Morgan in the year 1970, regarding determining sample size for research activities [41]. However, a total of 482 questionnaires were distributed of which only 369 questionnaires were useable for analysis (approximately 76% response rate). The questionnaires were distributed to every customer who came to the selected restaurants used for the study during the business hours (8.00-14.00) from Monday to Sunday. Those who decided not to complete the questionnaire were eliminated from the study. The data collection took three months.

3.3. Data Analysis Technique

The data gathered were collected and analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM) supported by Analysis of Moment of Structures (AMOS 23.0) with maximum likelihood estimation to test the proposed hypotheses. SEM is a second-generation multivariate technique that combines multiple regressions with confirmatory factor analysis to estimate simultaneously a series of interrelated dependence relationships. SEM is a widespread technique in several fields including marketing, psychology and social sciences [16, 18]. Previous research investigated the moderating role of word-of-mouth (WoM) and old media advertisement (TMA) on food joint selection based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) which was analysed via hierarchical regression analysis [36]. In this new study, statistical data was analysed through SPSS. Both Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and Analysis of Moment of Structures (AMOS 23.0) were used to analyse the data whilst mediating analysis was done using Andrew Hayes process to find the level of relationship amid the independent and dependent variables.

4. Analysis of Results

4.1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Participants

Table 1 below displays the demographic profile of respondents (customers and management). The study used 38 management staff, 44.7% were males and the remaining 55.3%

females. Out of the total of 38, 68.4% were married and 31.6% single. The result shows that, 10.5% were junior high school leavers, 36.8% were senior high school graduates, 44.7% have obtained undergraduate certification, whereas 36.8% with postgraduate certification. The result suggests that 28.9% were CEOs, 26.3% were general managers, 15.8% were accountant and the remaining 28.9% were administrators. The result showed that 2.6% of the managerial staff have been in operation for at most 2 years, 18.4% have worked for their firms between 2-5 years, and 42.1% have worked for between 6-10 years whilst 36.8% have more than 10 years working experience. In the case of the customers, out of the total of 331 respondents, 61.6% of them were males and 38.4% representing females. The result shows that 33.5% were within the age group 20-29years, 36.9% were within 30-39 years, and 20.8% were between 40-49, 6.9% between 50-59, whilst those above age 60 represents 1.8%. The result shows that 46.2% were married and 53.8% represent those who were single. From the Table 1, 2.7% of the respondents have had primary education, 3% have had junior high school education, 19.6% have had senior high school education, those with undergraduate background formed 54.1% whilst postgraduate formed 20.5%. The analysis shows that 33.5% earn below GH¢2000, 30.8% earn between GH¢2100-3000, 17.8% earn between GH¢3100-4000, 11.2% represent those who earn between GH¢4100-5000 whereas 6.6% represent those who earn above GH¢6000.

It could be seen from the result that 7.6% of respondents visit restaurant facilities to sit there and work, 12.4% for business meetings, 3.9% to sit and study, 22.4% to socialise, 39.9% to eat whilst the remaining 13.9% represent those who visit for entertainment purposes. As shown in the result, 23.9% heard of the restaurant via advertisement, 12.7% through company website, 50.5% by means of friends, and relatives and the remaining 13% representing those who heard of the restaurants through marketers. The result indicates that, 2.4% spend less than 10 minutes at the restaurant when they visit, 16% spend 10-30 minutes, 38.7% spend 30 minutes -1 hour, 37.2% spend 1 hour -2 hours whilst 5.7% spend more than 2 hours at the facility for their food and drinks. Respondents were further asked how often they visit their restaurants and the result shows that, 3.3% many times every day, 10.3% about once a day, 23.3% few times a week, 29.9% once a week, 24.8% a couple of times a month whilst 8.5% indicating rarely. Lastly, the respondents indicated their profession and it was realised that 9.7% were business owners, 10% were students, 27.2% were self-employed, 26.3% were civil servants 24.2% works at the private sector whilst 2.7% represent those who have retired from active services.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic profile of sample.

Variable			Variable		
Customers	N=331	%	Customers	N=331	%
Gender			How You Heard of The Restaurant		
Male	204	61.6	Through advertisement	79	23.9
Female	127	38.4	Through company website	42	12.7
Age Group			Through friends & relatives	167	50.5

Variable			Variable		
<i>Customers</i>	<i>N=331</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Customers</i>	<i>N=331</i>	<i>%</i>
20-29 years	111	33.5	Through marketers	43	13
30-39 years	122	36.9	<i>Duration In Restaurant</i>		
40-49 years	69	20.8	Less than 10minutes	8	2.4
50-59 years	23	6.9	10Minutes to 30Minutes	53	16
60 years	6	1.8	30Minutes to 1Hour	128	38.7
<i>Marital Status</i>			1hour to 2hours	123	37.2
Married	153	46.2	More than 2Hours	19	5.7
Single	178	53.8	<i>How Often Do You Visit the Restaurant</i>		
<i>Educational Level</i>			Many times, everyday	11	3.3
Primary School	9	2.7	About once a day	34	10.3
Junior High School	10	3	Few times a week	77	23.3
Senior High School	65	19.6	Once a week	99	29.9
Undergraduate	179	54.1	A couple of times a month	82	24.8
Post graduate	68	20.5	Rarely	28	8.5
<i>Monthly Household Income</i>			<i>What Is Your profession</i>		
Below GH¢2000	111	33.5	Business Owner	32	9.7
Gh¢2100-gh¢3000	102	30.8	Student	33	10
Gh¢3100-gh¢4000	59	17.8	Self-Employed	90	27.2
Gh¢4100-gh¢5000	37	11.2	Civil Servant	87	26.3
Above GH¢6000	22	6.6	Works for private sector	80	24.2
<i>Reason For Visit</i>			Retired	9	2.7
To sit there and work	25	7.6			
For business meetings	41	12.4			
To sit & study	13	3.9			
To socialise	74	22.4			
To eat	132	39.9			
For entertainment	46	13.9			
<i>Management</i>	<i>N=38</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Management</i>	<i>N=38</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Variable</i>			<i>Variable</i>		
<i>Gender</i>			<i>What is your designation?</i>		
Male	17	44.7	CEO	11	28.9
Female	21	55.3	General Manager	10	26.3
<i>Marital status</i>			Accountant	6	15.8
Married	26	68.4	Administrators	11	28.9
Single	12	31.6	<i>How long has your company been in operation?</i>		
<i>Educational level</i>			Under 2years	1	2.6
Junior High School	4	10.5	2-5years	7	18.4
Senior High School	14	36.8	6-10years	16	42.1
Undergraduate	17	44.7	Above 10years	14	36.8
Postgraduate	3	7.9			

4.2. Descriptive and Correlation Analysis

The descriptive analysis was examined by mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) and the results (see Table 2): Sensory marketing (M=3.912; SD=0.202); Non-Economic Performance (M=4.066; SD=0.161); Market Culture (M=3.508; SD=0.424); Customer service skills (M=3.821; SD=0.456). The results suggest that respondents to a large extent agree to the questions asked under each construct. The result reveals that, there were considerable relationship between the constructs except (non-economic performance; Customer service skills and market culture ($\rho = -0.039$; $\rho = -0.053$)). Also, there was no significant correlation between sensory marketing and market culture ($\rho = -0.069$).

4.3. Measurement Model

The measurement model was examined using reliability and validity tests. As showed in Table 2, all constructs have

reliability value above 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Convergent validity of the items was examined with the standardised loading. Previous studies indicates that, an item must have load of at least 0.50 to be considered acceptable [25]. The result of the confirmatory factor analysis shows that the standard regression weight or standard factor loadings of all observed variables are adequate ranging from 0.503 to 0.929. This finding indicates that the constructs conform to construct convergent validity. The independency of the constructs was examined comparing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value with correlation squared [21]. Discriminant validity is achieved when the AVE of two constructs must be more than the square of the correlation between the given two constructs as evident in Table 2, no correlations were equal to or greater than the square root of the AVE indicating there was discriminant validity. Each AVE value is found to be more than the correlation square; thus, discriminant validity is supported, or in other words multicollinearity is absent [9].

Table 2. Reliability and Correlation analysis.

		M	SD	CR	CA	AVE	1	2	3	4	
1	Non-Economic Performance	3.912	0.202	0.750	0.839	0.786	1	0.887			
2	Customer service skills	4.066	0.161	0.794	0.891	0.744	2	-0.039	0.863		
3	Market Culture	3.508	0.424	0.800	0.901	0.841	3	-0.053	0.763***	0.917	
4	Sensory	3.821	0.456	0.810	0.941	0.856	4	0.236**	-0.375***	-0.069	0.925

Note: The square root of the AVE is shown on the diagonal of the table.

4.4. Structural Model

The model adequacy was tested using series of model fit indices before the test of relationships among the constructs were examined. This model formed a chi-square of 457.703 with 348 degrees of freedom, which was statistically significant at 5% level, signifying that the data do not fit the data gathered well. For this reason, other fit indices were used to evaluate the adequacy of the model such as CFI=0.903, GFI=0.95, AGFI=0.89, NFI=0.934; IFI=0.924, TLI=0.954) and exceeded the threshold of 0.90 and more for

model fit. In addition, the RMSEA=0.049 and RMR of 0.03, indicated a good fit. Based on the fit indices as showed in Table 3, the model was deemed a good fit for testing the hypotheses [71]. Also, the amount of variance explained by each of the constructs were given as follows as shown in Figure 2: Market culture (19.4%); Customer service skills (34.1%) and cumulatively the impact of all constructs on non-economic performance is estimated to be approximately (60%), indicating that the explanatory power of the model may be considered satisfactory and that the model fits the data and is appropriate to test the hypothesis.

Table 3. Goodness-of-fit Indices for Structural Model.

Fit indices	Accepted Value	Model Value
Absolute fit measures		
Chi-Square (χ^2)		457.703
df (degrees of freedom)		348
χ^2 /Df	<3	1.315
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	>0.90	0.950
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	<0.10	0.049
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	>0.90	0.890
NFI (Normed Fit Index)	>0.90	0.934
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	>0.90	0.903
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	>0.90	0.924
TLI (Tucker Lewis Index)	>0.90	0.954

4.5. Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1a to 1e shows the association between sensory marketing and non-economic performance. Hypothesis 2 postulates the mediation role of market culture and customer service skills in the relationship between sensory marketing and non-economic performance. As evident in Table 4, hypothesis one is supporting ($\beta=0.264$; $p<0.05$). In the case of hypothesis 2, the indirect effect between sensory and market culture shows significance ($\beta=-0.40$; $p<0.05$) and

market culture with non-economic performance showing insignificant relationship ($\beta=0.02$; $p>0.05$). This suggests that no mediation effect exist. Hence, market culture and customer service skills does not mediate the relationship between sensory and non-economic performance. The indirect effect of the relationship shows significant ($\beta=-0.40$; $p<0.05$); and non-economic performance ($\beta=0.05$; $p>0.05$). This implies that, market culture and customer service skills do not intermediate the association that exist in the sensory marketing and non-economic performance link.

Table 4. Summary of Hypotheses.

			β	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remarks
Direct Effect							
Non-Economic Performance	<---	Sensory	0.264	0.074	3.142	0.002	Support
Mediation Effect (Indirect Effect)							
Market Culture	<---	Sensory	-0.395	0.221	-5.462	0.000	Support
Customer service skills	<---	Sensory	-0.401	0.163	-5.267	0.000	Support
Non-Economic Performance	<---	Customer service skills	0.055	0.029	0.783	0.434	Not Support
Non-Economic Performance	<---	Market Culture	0.018	0.019	0.275	0.784	Not Support

Note: β = standardised beta coefficients; S.E. = standard error; C.R. = critical ratio; * $p<0.05$

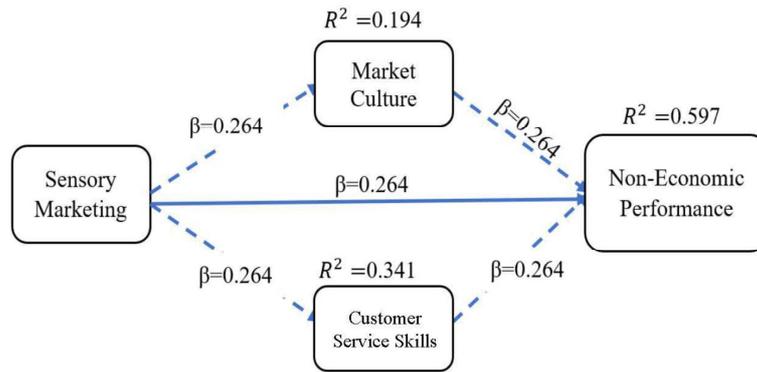


Figure 2. The Result of structural model (Standardised Path Coefficients).

5. Discussion of Results

The empirical results supported the prediction that sensory marketing have significant relationships with non-economic performance of businesses. The result reveals that, there were significant association between the constructs except (non-economic performance; customer service skills and market culture). Earlier studies shows that consumers have extensive range of choices to make in the restaurant [63]. This is vital because customer expectations of quality levels have gone up and the industry is competing hard for increased market shares. This implies that, sensory marketing enhances business performance via the interaction between the customer and the brand. This study finding is of strategic importance to businesses because the independent variable has exerted the highest effect on non-economic performance. Regarding the individual relationships in our hypothesized model, the results showed that these relationships were not all at the same direction, but with different levels of influence. Our results found a positive relationship between sensory marketing and non-economic performance, supporting *H1a to H1e*. This finding is well supported in marketing literature [4, 33, 64]. Moreover, our analysis revealed the non-economic performance dimensions positively related to sensory marketing dimensions, supporting *H1*. Furthermore, enhancing organisational market culture and employees' customer service skills were found to be important factors to influence non-economic performance of the restaurants business. In contrary to what we hypothesised, we found that the mediation effect of market culture and customer service skills in the relationships between sensory marketing and non-economic performance dimensions were negative, thus, rejecting *H2*. Our sample was drawn from people who visit the restaurants for businesses, to sit and study, to socialize, to buy food and drinks and for entertainment purposes.

Earlier studies suggest that both word-of-mouth (WoM) and traditional media advertisement TMA significantly moderate the relationship between customers' gratifications and fast-food joint selection [36]. Specifically, the study found that WoM plays a stronger moderating role than TMA. Additionally, they study identified four key gratifications that influence customers' fast-food joint selection to include social interaction, convenience, price, and quality. The findings of this study

confirm the work of [8], that foodservice providers do not usually have marketing skills and knowledge in the foodservice establishment and thus are more likely to lack knowledge, attitude, and practices on food safety and hygiene principles. Contrarily to other findings, this study found that both market culture and customer service skills have no mediation effects on the relationship between sensory marketing and non-economic performance. This finding is well established in the literature which asserts that sensory marketing is necessary to enhance strategic performance, which lead to achieving competitive advantage [33]. As indicated in prior researches, customers that experience a high level of satisfaction, and service quality from a company are likely to remain with their existing operators and maintain their loyalty and positive word-of-mouth that leads to future businesses [3]. The general inclination for out-of-home eating is driven by convenience; lack of cooking skills; increasing distance between workplace and home; limited time available for people to cook because of their increasing participation in work related activities [17]. In a similar study, researchers assessed and analysed foodservice providers' hygiene and safety knowledge, attitudes, and practices for serving consumers [8]. In this study, a high level of customer service skills and friendly organisational culture becomes the selling point to attract customers' attention and is the most important and significant driver of firm performance. Additionally, this research provides an important theoretical contribution manifested in the finding that market culture and customer service skills do not mediate the relationship between sensory marketing and non-economic performance. This study findings supports earlier findings and call for continuous education, training, and motivation of foodservice providers to change their attitudes and ensure the best practices and rules of the profession are adhered [8]. Restaurant owners must train their staff to enable them improve on their customer service techniques; friendly and positive response to customer needs, communication skills, and acknowledge. In Ghana, there are institutions and laws governing bodies such as Food and Drug Authority, Ghana Standard Authority that ensure that all foods sold operate under the appropriate food safety and hygienic rules [8]. It is believed that the atmospheric environment of a restaurant is extremely important for better performance in as much as it is to hospitals, banks, airlines and schools [63]. Managers can use restaurant design, layout, interior

decorations, etc., to address a wide variety of marketing issues. The physical environment of a firm has the capability to influence consumer purchase behaviour for services such as hotels, restaurants, sports and leisure as documented in service literature [36]. Practitioners therefore need to find ways to distinguish themselves from the competition and physical environment offers one of such distinctions.

6. Conclusion

The research findings do provide some insights and feedback for the restaurant business in terms of marketing strategy. This conclusion is echoed in the finding that all of the sensory marketing factors have direct and significant relationship with non-economic performance. This study findings provides practical implications for fast-food operators in developing effective marketing strategies to attract and retain customers. Restaurant providers should emphasize the degree of sense experiences among their staff for the purpose of enhancing their performance level. Firms should adopt an integrated approach to develop determinants in evaluating the customer experience. Based on the results, this study makes the following contributions. First, the study empirically showed the moderating role of market culture and customer service skills in the relationship between sensory marketing and firm performance. There has been little empirical research on the mediating effects of market culture and customer service skills on sensory marketing and firm performance. The present study contributed to the sensory marketing literature by showing the mediating role of market culture and customer service skills in the relationship between sensory marketing and performance. Second, the results of the present study suggest that each of the mediating variables has different effects on the relationship between sensory marketing and firm performance. In organisations with a strong market culture and customer service skills, the positive relationship between sensory marketing and firm performance was strengthened. In this sense, managers in an organisation with a strong market culture and customer service skills should consider both human and material resources fully when initiating sensory marketing activities. Without doubt, the study makes significant contributions and therefore could be said to set a new benchmark for future research to guide future researchers to apply sensory marketing to their research. It will also become part of line or tradition of inquiry which other researchers can check, replicate or build upon. This study serves as an opportunity for further testing of these relationships in other national settings to facilitate the establishment of the universal significance of sensory marketing practices on a firm's non-economic performance.

7. Limitations of the Study

Although our research contributes to the sensory marketing literature in multiple ways, the study nevertheless faced limitations. First, this study is limited to the restaurant industry, and therefore the external validity of the findings is

an issue. Secondly, this study relied on primary data, where sensory marketing indicators were measured by survey data. Although it seems suitable to measure sensory marketing, this measure does not fully reflect the entire dimensions of sensory marketing, especially the omission of personal interviews which are commonly used. The study was based on cross-sectional data. Due to the inherent limitation of cross-sectional study, the research findings cannot be accepted as the universal precedent.

8. Recommendations for Further Research

Due to the limitations of this research, some recommendations are proposed for further research such as the adoption of longitudinal study. Future study should gather data pertaining to various industries. This is vital to elucidate the fundamental relationship that exists by means of a longitudinal method. It would be imperative to conduct further investigation on the relationship among sensory marketing, and firm performance in various countries, especially in the developing country setting, to help develop a more comprehensive business model. To expand the marketing literature, imminent researchers need to emphasis more on the different types of sensory marketing tools used by firms and across different types of culture in terms of national and international background. It would also be thought-provoking to look at the influence of different types and sizes of restaurants in future studies.

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