

# Multisensory experiences enhance sales and feeling of comfort in shops and restaurants

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According to research, the combination of food, lighting, colours, furniture, table setting, atmosphere, sound and environment create a multisensory experience that has an effect on consumers' behaviour and general feeling of comfort. The preliminary results show that sounds of nature that were played in the fruit and vegetable section of a grocery shop had a clear impact on the shop's sales. The sales of fruit and vegetables showed an increase of 20 percent compared to the previous week and 13 percent compared to the week that followed.

A two-year project was conducted in Finland to find out how factors such as presentation of the food, the built environment and characteristics of the space can influence customers' experiences and choices of foods in restaurants and grocery shops. The research combined methods from the fields of [music](#) research, food science, sociology, architecture and business economics. The project aimed at producing results that could be utilised for business purposes in the nutrition industry and in the planning of different [food](#) and eating environments.

The Sibelius Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki (Uniarts Helsinki) was in charge of examining how music and environmental sounds could be used in supermarkets, fine dining restaurants and in a lunch restaurant.

"By determining the optimal sound design for a grocery shop, we were able to influence consumers' personal and social behaviour. We assessed

the premises and the appliances together with the customers to see if there was something that was lacking or in need of improvement in terms of acoustic design," says researcher Heikki Uimonen, who was in charge of Uniarts Helsinki's contribution in the research consortium.

Researchers discovered that the volume of music and the acoustic features of the space, the multisensory experience involving the space and sounds, the interaction between the senses, and emotional experiences induced by music performances played a major role in the sound design for a restaurant. The research also showed that lunch time is largely defined by its social aspect, which can be either boosted or reduced by different features in the surroundings—such as music.

Provided by University of the Arts Helsinki

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