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“The Effects of Sensory Marketing in Physical Second-Hand Stores”

A qualitative study of how applying sensory marketing in a physical second-hand store can influence consumers to choose more sustainable options while shopping for apparel.



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Abstract

The emergence of online stores specializing in fast fashion apparel has presented a significant challenge to brick-and-mortar stores and has had detrimental consequences for the environment. Consequently, it is essential for physical stores to stay informed about emerging trends in physical store design. Currently, the fashion industry is acknowledged as a highly detrimental sector in terms of its environmental impact, attributable to its extensive utilization of harmful chemicals, substantial consumption of energy and water resources, and contribution to waste generation and pollution. Therefore, it is imperative to adopt more sustainable practices when it comes to purchasing apparel, particularly in light of sustainability concerns. Moreover, physical second-hand stores play a crucial role in promoting sustainability by offering pre-owned items. To attract customers, these stores need to cultivate a more appealing ambiance and atmosphere. To achieve this, the implementation of a sensory marketing strategy within physical second-hand stores can be employed to enhance the customer experience. By engaging the senses of smell, touch, vision, and hearing in a cohesive manner, a sensory marketing strategy can potentially contribute to a more enjoyable shopping experience and attract customers to physical second-hand stores. This study adopts a qualitative approach, collecting empirical data through semi-structured interviews with female participants aged between 18 and 60 years old in Sweden. The interviewees consisted of individuals who frequently made purchases in physical second-hand stores, as well as those who did so less frequently. The empirical findings were subsequently analyzed in conjunction with the existing literature. The research findings conclude that the implementation of sensory marketing techniques in physical second-hand stores has the potential to enhance the store's image, market position, and overall attractiveness. Creating congruence among the senses can result in a positive customer experience and a pleasant atmosphere, thereby increasing the likelihood of customers choosing to purchase apparel from second-hand stores. Additionally, the study reveals a growing interest among customers in sustainable shopping choices, leading to an increased inclination to opt for second-hand items.

Keywords

Second-hand, Sustainability, Sensory Marketing, Physical Stores, Purchase Decisions, Customer Experience, Fast Fashion



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Table of Content

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Discussion	3
1.2.1 Theoretical Problematization	3
1.2.2 Managerial Problematization	4
1.2.3 The Research Gap	6
1.3 Research Question	6
1.4 Purpose	7
1.5 Delimitations	7
2. Literature Review	8
2.1 The Importance Of Buying Sustainably	8
2.2. Second-Hand	9
2.3 Customer Experience	11
2.3.1 <i>Customer Journey</i>	12
2.3.2 <i>Shopping Behavior And Store Loyalty</i>	12
2.3.3 <i>Word-Of-Mouth</i>	13
2.4 Physical Store Design	14
2.5 Sensory Marketing	15
2.5.1 <i>Smell</i>	17
2.5.2 <i>Hearing</i>	18
2.5.3 <i>Vision</i>	19
2.5.4 <i>Touch</i>	19
2.5.5 <i>Congruence between Sensory Cues</i>	20
2.6 Summary	21
3. Methodology	22
3.1 Research Approach	22
3.1.1 <i>Interpretivism Approach</i>	23
3.2 Research Strategy	23
3.3 Research Design	24
3.3.1 <i>Cross-Sectional Research Design</i>	24
3.4 Type of Data	25
3.5 Research Method	25
3.5.1 <i>Semi-structured Interviews</i>	26



3.5.2 <i>Collection of Data</i>	26
3.6 Selection of Interviewees	27
3.6.1 <i>Purposive Sampling</i>	27
3.6.2 <i>Participant Criteria</i>	28
3.6.3 <i>List of Interviewees</i>	29
3.7 Data Analysis	30
3.7.1 <i>Thematic Analysis</i>	31
3.8 Quality of Research	33
3.9 Ethical Considerations	34
3.10 Sustainable Considerations	35
3.11 Work Process	36
4. Empirical Findings & Analysis	36
4.1 The participants of the interviews	37
4.2 Sustainability and Concerns about the Environment	37
4.3 Customer Experience	42
4.3.1 <i>Word of Mouth</i>	44
4.4 The Smell in a Second-hand Store	45
4.5 Store Atmosphere and Its Influence on Purchase Decisions	48
4.5.1 <i>Visual</i>	50
4.5.2 <i>Touch</i>	51
4.5.3 <i>Background music while Shopping</i>	52
4.6 Participant's Suggestions on Potential Improvements to Second-Hand Stores	54
5. Conclusion	56
5.1 Answering the Research Questions	57
5.1.1 <i>How does sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores affect customer experience and influence sustainable purchase decisions?</i>	57
5.2 Theoretical Implications	59
5.3 Managerial Implications	60
5.4 Social, Ethical, and Sustainable Implications	61
5.5 Limitations	62
5.6 Suggestions for Future Research	62
7. References	64
Appendices	76
Appendix A - Interview guide - English version	76
Appendix B - Interview guide - Swedish version	79



List of figures

Figure 1: *Coding of empirical finding*

1. Introduction

The authors of this essay are going to start by introducing an overview of the central ideas explored in the thesis. The first chapter includes background information followed by a problem discussion exploring the issues related to the main subject, including theoretical and managerial problem identification. Additionally, this chapter will address the research gap, research question, purpose, and delimitations of this study.

1.1 Background

During the previous couple of years, there has been a decline in physical stores. This has led to physical second-hand stores having encountered various difficulties. These difficulties can be brick-and-mortar stores shutting down or strong competition from digital second-hand market platforms. Digitalization and online shopping behavior have had a significant effect on society. Individuals are constantly affected by advertising from fashion brands in digital words (Helm, Kim & Riper 2018). Even with the popularity of online shopping, it is not the better choice when it comes to purchasing apparel, due to it being more damaging to the environment, with all returning items. Customers often buy more than one size, which means they have to return items, causing excessive back-and-forth shipping and reinforcing the greenhouse effect (Rao, Balasubramanian, Vihari, Jabeen, Shukla & Chanchaichujit 2021). According to Kuehnl, Jozic, and Homburg (2019), a well-designed customer journey will bring positivity as customers appreciate thought-out experiences, leading to improved results for the company. Furthermore, Hiller Connell (2010) argues that second-hand stores often have the image of having less appealing items and poorly organized layouts, which makes it hard to find things. Further, it can prevent customers from having an enjoyable shopping experience. This perception of the store can result in customers refraining from visiting these particular stores. Evans, Grimmer, and Grimmer (2022) mention in their research that there has been an increase and development of second-hand marketplaces both online and physically. This is motivated by the growing awareness among consumers regarding the environment and sustainability and also the importance of avoiding shopping fast fashion, to be more sustainable during consumption. However, numerous consumers still choose fast fashion over second-hand when purchasing apparel (Evans, Grimmer & Grimmer 2022). A reason for this could potentially be that fast fashion brands have a habit of

beautifying and portraying that they are environmentally friendly when they do not quite reach the standard that is necessary to be climate-friendly (Veganfirst n.d.). Borusiak, Szymkowiak, Horska, Raszka, and Żelichowska (2020) acknowledge that during the preceding years, the environment is considered a main concern for consumers. The authors also bring up that it is the ones that have an awareness of the environment that generally choose to purchase second-hand rather than others. Furthermore, today's issues with global warming and environmental contamination are some of the most pressing concerns the globe is dealing with. All this is happening at a swift rate due to the circumstances of increasing utilization of products, services, and energy. Moreover, Niinimäki and Hassi (2011) mentioned in their research that the environment is suffering from the big issue of apparel being disposed of faster than needed due to all fast fashion trends that have a rapid pace and change from day to day.

According to Géci, Nagyová, and Rybanská (2017) is the use of sensory marketing to promote products or attract customers, an effective marketing strategy that goes back to the 20th century in European regions and global marketplaces. Moreover, utilizing the five senses, sensory marketing aims to encourage customers to purchase goods. When using sensory marketing, it is important that there is congruence, which shows how well the senses fit together (Krishna, Elder & Caldara 2010). Most previous research on sensory marketing in physical stores only considers one or two senses together. But during a shopping journey, all senses need to be considered to create a positive shopping experience (Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal & Roggeveen 2014). In the words of Muñoz, Pérez, and Zapata (2021) sensory marketing speaks to the reasoning function of the brain by providing knowledge of all senses. This will improve companies' recognition among customers and raise their worth. The goal of sensory marketing is to stimulate the senses of customers in order to impact their perception, decision-making process, and actions. Therefore, retailers consequently strive to create an environment in their stores that evokes an emotional and sensory response. This further can lead to positive consumer behavior such as increased time spent in the store and greater purchases. Studies have shown that several atmospheric factors including color, lighting, music, and fragrance can affect consumer's emotional reactions in relation to the retail environment, product review, period of stay, and impulse purchases (Doucé & Adams 2020). Smell is one of the most distinctive of the senses when it comes to physical second-hand stores, due to the common old unpleasant scent (New York Times 2018). Encountering unpleasant smells can lead to avoidance when it comes to second-hand stores (Lunardo 2012).

1.2 Problem Discussion

1.2.1 Theoretical Problematization

Throughout the years there has been a lot of research done about sustainability and how fast fashion affects the planet in a negative way. Nowadays, humanity has managed to surpass the earth's resource limitations, this situation requires a change. Encouraging consumers to reconsider their purchasing habits and prolonging the lifespan of products has become increasingly important (Borusiak et al. 2020). The fashion industry is believed to be the second largest contributor to pollution worldwide, posing a serious threat to the planet and its resources. This concern is shared by consumers who are increasingly conscious of the environmental impact of their purchasing choices. As a result, companies across various industries are responding by adopting eco-friendly production practices and introducing sustainable products. However, fast fashion brands are deemed unsustainable due to their untrustworthy characteristics, and their efforts to promote sustainability are frequently met with skepticism and perceived as insincere. Furthermore, individuals often feel powerless to address environmental issues independently (Neumann, Martinez & Martinez 2021). To avoid purchasing fast fashion, second-hand is a good option. By choosing to shop second-hand, individuals can contribute to reducing energy consumption in the manufacturing of new fashion apparel, thereby helping to protect the environment. Moreover, apparel that is sold in second-hand stores has been given a longer life cycle, resulting in a decrease in waste (Dooley 2019). It can be challenging for retailers to get customers to their specific stores. Due to this, businesses have to consider and strengthen their touchpoints of the customer-decision-making process (Stankevich 2017).

There are five steps in the customer-decision-making process and they are related to consumer behavior, from the awareness of the store to post-purchase behavior. The five steps are recognition of need, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Stankevich 2017). Creating value for customers is a significant factor for retailers. The encounters of the different touchpoints in the customer journey between customers and stores can create value. It is therefore important for businesses to understand customers and create a favorable customer journey. Implementation of touchpoints that engage with customers' sensors could take place here, as an example (Schau & Akaka 2020). Applying a sensory marketing strategy will boost sales, customers' attitudes, and the duration of the store visit (Jiménez-Marín, Elías Zambrano, Galiano-Coronil & Ravina-Ripoll 2021). Positive word-of-mouth has a strong connection with increased customer loyalty also with an

elevated level of spending. This leads up to positivity for both customers and businesses (Kokins, Straujuma & Lapiņa 2021).

The use of sensory marketing has become crucial for companies to provide customers with an intriguing experience when shopping and increase traffic back in their stores (Jiménez-Marín et al. 2021). Various studies have been undertaken to examine the influence of sensory marketing in traditional retail environments. When a store has an attractive atmosphere and store design that includes all the sensory touchpoints, it can generate beneficial emotions and behaviors from customers (Duong, Regolini, Sung, Teah & Hatton-Jones 2022). Being environmentally friendly is highly important, therefore sustainability and second-hand are two popular subjects in present-day (Seo & Kim 2019). Nonetheless, more research needs to be conducted on the subject of applying a sensory marketing strategy to physical second-hand stores. Thus, creating a more appealing environment for customers.

By leveraging sensory elements such as ambiance, aesthetics, and product presentation, sensory marketing can enhance the overall shopping experience and influence consumers' perceptions and behaviors (Abdolmohammad Sagha, Seyyed, Foroudi & Akbari 2022). Exploring this subject further is of interest to the authors as it sheds light on the importance of sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores. If second-hand stores were to incorporate sensory elements into their marketing strategies, it can create a more appealing environment for customers, leading to increased engagement and the likelihood of customers making sustainable consumption choices. By doing so, businesses can gain a better understanding of the need to incorporate sensory elements into their marketing strategies, which can evolve into a competitive advantage for retailers. Furthermore, little has been studied regarding the application of sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores and how these stores can be improved to result in consumers shopping more sustainably. Thus, further exploration of this topic can provide insights into the potential links between sensory marketing and sustainable consumption in the context of physical second-hand stores.

1.2.2 Managerial Problematization

Nowadays, brick-and-mortar retailers confront a pressing issue in the form of the rise of digital commerce, leading to heightened pressure on their physical stores as consumer shopping behaviors evolve. Therefore, many researchers mention that stores need to emphasize personalized attention and enhance the customer experience (Shüler, Maier

& Liljedal 2019). It is crucial for retailers to stay up to date on new developments, and remain current and relevant as a store (Mende & Noble 2019). However, this makes it essential to strategically create a pleasing store design and atmosphere (Ainsworth & Foster 2017). Present-day retailers particularly in the fast fashion sector are struggling to overcome the industry's negative effect on the environment (Fraser & Ven 2022). Despite its fast-paced production of inexpensive items, the business model of fast fashion has proven to be highly profitable. However, a contributing factor to over-consumption is fast fashion. Fashion retailers face multiple difficulties when it comes to spreading knowledge concerning the value of sustainability consciousness. Additionally, motivate consumers to shift away from fast fashion (Zhang, Zhang & Zhou 2021).

Customization and customer experience are vital factors to consider for retailers today (Shüler, Maier & Liljedal 2019). The act of shopping in a physical store offers an opportunity to get a unique experience, Through a systematic and thorough stimulation of the senses, the emotional connection of consumers can be enhanced and intertwined with a holistic brand encounter. Consequently, consumers may develop a strong bond with the brand, ultimately impacting their patterns of consumption (Shahid, Paul, Gilal & Ansari 2022).

Furthermore, digitalization and new technologies are something that develops fast in today's society and this is something that is affecting physical stores a lot. All new ways of shopping for example online have a more convenient approach than actually visiting a store, which makes it harder for physical stores to survive. This leads up to changes that need to be made in a store's strategy between the store and the customer (Jonsson, Egels-Zandén, Hagberg, Lammgård & Sundström 2017). Due to all new technologies, the customer journey needs to be improved to keep up with them and improve their attractiveness for customers (Hoyer, Kroschke, Schmitt, Kraume & Shankar 2020). There is a need to be creative for retailers in their store atmosphere to be appealing to customers (Abdolmohammad Sagha, Seyyed, Foroudi & Akbari 2022). Moreover, it is significant to research this subject on how to make physical stores more appealing to consumers. Which potentially could encourage consumers to purchase more sustainable fashion. Second-hand stores seek to achieve improvements for the environment, by making it possible to buy and recycle pre-owned garments. Taking everything into consideration it is important to consider everything affecting the customer experience to gain attention and customer satisfaction. Further, to create a more engaging environment inside physical second-hand stores. Moreover, to stay competitive among all retailers such as fast fashion brands and other retailers.

1.2.3 The Research Gap

The investigation has identified a significant research gap in the exploration of sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores. This unexplored area offers the potential for enhancing the customer experience and creating a favorable atmosphere within physical second-hand stores. Existing research has primarily focused on sensory marketing in physical stores in general (Duong et al. 2022), disregarding the specific context of physical second-hand stores and their utilization of sensory marketing strategies.

Previous research mention the importance of fully comprehending the impact of sensory marketing on consumer behavior in physical retail environments, it is crucial to recognize its value and the way it effectively engages the senses, influencing perception, judgment, and behavior (Baek, Choo & Lee 2018). Presently, there is a negative perception associated with apparel in second-hand stores, leading customers to avoid purchasing and visiting these stores due to the belief that the items are less appealing compared to newly produced ones (Hiller Connell 2010). This negative perception not only affects consumer behavior but also has environmental implications. Bridging this knowledge gap through further research is essential to investigate the potential implementation of a sensory marketing strategy within second-hand stores, aiming to enhance the shopping experience and promote sustainable consumption.

Several reasons underline the necessity for further investigation in this area. Firstly, physical stores need to withstand the trend towards a reduced number of physical stores (Helm, Kim & Riper 2018). Additionally, concerns about overconsumption have been emphasized by previous researchers (Evans, Grimmer & Grimmer 2022). Thus, exploring how physical second-hand stores can be improved to encourage sustainable shopping practices becomes crucial. Previous studies have suggested that shopping second-hand can be an alternative to fast fashion consumption, positively impacting the environment (Dooley 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how physical second-hand stores can enhance their image, attract customers, and create an engaging atmosphere.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the prior research outlined in the literature review and the identification of the research gap, the authors have concluded and summarized the implications into the following research question:

- How does sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores affect customer experience and influence sustainable purchase decisions?

1.4 Purpose

The research purpose of this thesis is to investigate the effect of sensory marketing on customer experience in physical second-hand stores and whether it could influence customers to make more sustainable purchase decisions when it comes to apparel. The study aims to explore how sensory cues can improve physical second-hand stores in a positive way and how it affects their customers' perception of the store's atmosphere. The study's findings can help second-hand businesses better understand how to create an appealing attractive shopping environment that improves the customer experience and potentially encourages consumers to make more sustainable purchasing decisions.

1.5 Delimitations

The thesis is restricted to exploring the use of sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores in Sweden. In the context of fashion apparel, and how a sensory marketing strategy can affect consumers' behavior and emotions while shopping. The research is conducted from the customer's perspective and therefore it does not take into consideration the company's perspective on the subject. Therefore, investigating what factors a physical second-hand store needs to improve to gain customers and to become more attractive in the market.

In addition, the interviews of this research are limited to include individuals who purchase apparel in physical second-hand stores frequently and those who do it more rarely. The study also limited the participants in the interviews to only women between the ages of 18-60 years old. Due to the fact that they shop for other reasons than men, they usually see shopping as more enjoyable and also appreciate the social experience of the environment (Dennis, Brakus, Garcia Ferrer, McIntyre, Alamanos & King 2018). There were 20 interviewees participating in this thesis. Data saturation was reached which is why there were enough with only 20 interviews. This study is limited to only discussing four out of five senses, the sense that is excluded is taste. Due to the fact that taste and fashion are not closely related to each other. There are no compelling arguments for implementing it in physical second-hand stores. Also, taste and smell are related to each other.

2. Literature Review

In this chapter, the authors explain the main concepts of the literature review on which the study is based on. The first section of the chapter discusses sustainability in the fashion context followed by a discussion about second-hand shopping, sensory marketing, and the different senses, also customer experience. Lastly, the concept of physical store design and layout. This is concluded in a summary of the literature review.

2.1 The Importance Of Buying Sustainably

Sustainability has a significant role in society today, especially in the fashion industry. Due to all the negative aspects that occur by manufacturing and shipping, they have a dreadful effect on the planet. The fashion industry is an industry that has been in the spotlight for countless years of research. This industry is considered to be problematic as a business considering the several steps in the supply chain. These steps in the supply chain of this industry are the production, development of materials, the making of patterns for apparel, shipping, sales, and finally the end of the life cycle of fashion pieces (Yang, Song & Tong 2017). The fashion industry is known as one of the most damaging industries on earth, due to it having a huge negative impact on the environment (Ek Styvén & Mariani 2020). As mentioned by Escrig-Olmedo, Muñoz-Torres, Fernández-Izquierdo, and Rivera-Lirio (2015), the textile sector utilizes a significant amount of harmful chemicals, which also results in extensive water and energy usage leading to a massive volume of waste and contamination of the environment.

In the textile industry, fast fashion has the most problematic outcomes due to the fast-growing population and individuals' high consumerism (Gwozdz, Steensen Nilsen & Müller 2017). Fast fashion is a successful business model. This means rapid time in production, extremely low prices, stylish and trendy fashion pieces sold by many of the leading fashion retailers globally (Turker & Altuntas 2014). Out of this, the environment is impacted by all the low-quality produced clothing items, which are designed for only brief usage of the items, leading up to increased textile waste (Gwozdz, Steensen Nilsen & Müller 2017). Fast fashion is mass-produced which will impact the supply chain throughout the process. Mass-production of fashion items causes harmful effects on both society and the environment, this is often ignored due to the focus being on optimization, output, and financial gain (Evans, Grimmer & Grimmer 2022).

Nonetheless, the focal point is profitability and thereby low prices and easy access to fashion are some factors that have contributed to unfavorable impacts on the environment. Furthermore, materials that are mainly used in low-production fashion items are cotton and polyester. The heightened demand for these materials is a leading issue in the environment. A further environmental factor that is problematic is the human health and animals inhabiting nearby industries (Bick, Halsey & Ekenge 2018). There are huge consequences of all the toxic industries let out in the closeby water wells and streams, dyes that are unprocessed, heavy metals, and hazardous substances. Zhang, Zhang, and Zhou (2021) mention the substantially extensive carbon footprint that fast fashion items leave, due to the one-way international supply chain. Which impacts the environment more in the contribution of greenhouse gas emissions than the flight and shipping businesses are producing together. For this reason, fast fashion products are produced in only a limited number of countries and then transported all over the world. However, to be more sustainable, more and more people nowadays have begun to shop more environmentally friendly, by purchasing at second-hand stores.

2.2. Second-Hand

To address the issues linked with shopping fast fashion and to avoid these problems. Second-hand shopping offers a good solution, due to making it possible to avoid traditional fashion stores and through that decreases the amount of waste generated by the fashion industry (Evans, Grimmer & Grimmer 2022). Recently, people have tended to shop more second-hand. Second-hand shopping gained some traction in terms of trendiness, but it has not yet reached common acceptance. Currently, the main customer base consists of those with low incomes and university students who have a restricted budget (Seo & Kim 2019). However, there is another segment that is most likely to be shopping second-hand, which is environmentally conscious people (Yan, Bae & Xu 2015). In addition, Dooley (2019) emphasizes that the unique aspect of the second-hand industry lies in the sentimental value that some items hold for people. It could be an emotional connection while others may feel nostalgia which can have a bigger impact on customer demand. Moreover, second-hand stores offer an avenue for wealthier people to pass on their belonging to those with less financial means, and the market is adept at creating value through the resale of goods or the opportunity to purchase items at a lower price. The environmental benefits of reusing products also hold value for customers (Dooley 2019). Additionally, second-hand and vintage items are frequently confused as being the same thing, there are some differences between them in terms of price and quality. Apparel that is vintage frequently has a higher price tag and better

quality than second-hand apparel. Vintage apparel may also have a distinct style or from a specific time period (Seo & Kim 2019).

Currently, there are many thrift stores developed by non-profit organizations to generate funds for social causes in the community. Resulting in a more competitive environment between businesses (Liu, Eng & Sekhon 2014). The design, layouts, and strategy of a second-hand store differentiate them from traditional retail stores (Seo & Kim 2019). Furthermore, the most special thing about second-hand stores' products is their uniqueness. There is an extensive range of fashion items to choose from and everything comes in different conditions some are better than others. One type of second-hand store is for-profit which has the goal of earning as much money as possible, the other type is non-profit which exists for the reason to support communities (Liu & Ko 2013). Aaker, Vohs, and Mogilner (2010) point out that there is a substantial difference in how customers perceive these stores. The authors also state that there is a perception of a more cozy ambiance in the non-profit stores but they also acknowledge that there is an anticipation of lesser quality and lower prices on most products. Factors often associated with for-profit stores are higher quality, higher prices, excellent competence, intellect, and efficiency (Aaker, Vohs & Mogilner 2010).

According to Seo and Kim (2019), there is a rapid pace in how apparel turns from modern to outdated, generating consumers to purchase more fashion items than they need. Fast fashion brands often present themselves as climate-friendly and thinking about the environment, but these brands are actually the ones causing significant ecological harm, even with their conscious collection lines (Veganfirst n.d.). The authors also point out that this leads to loads of modern fashion products being given to thrift stores. Furthermore, Xu, Chen, Burman, and Zhao (2014) acknowledge that it is the low prices and encouraging offers that are the appealing factors for customers purchasing in second-hand stores. Further, it is highlighted that one of the leading drivers behind shopping in physical second-hand stores is the experience itself, the hunt looking through everything not knowing what exciting products to find. It results in an intriguing adventure for consumers to shop. On the other hand, Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015) argue that it is the unique products that can be discovered at second-hand stores that are the main attracting factor for customers, and that is the reason why they choose to shop there. Moreover, the authors also mention that consumers shopping at second-hand stores have an interest in and concern for the environment (Evans, Grimmer & Grimmer 2022). However, purchasing apparel second-hand does not necessarily mean that customers are environmentally friendly. It will not make companies in the fashion industry become more sustainable, on the

contrary, it will create difficulties for brands that are ethical that prioritize quality over quantity. Ethical brands are those that are dedicated to implementing eco-conscious solutions and materials, giving fair wages to workers, and also helping charities. The apparel that is in second-hand stores is often fast fashion items worn on a few occasions, this implies that purchasing second-hand still supports fast fashion in some ways. However, buying second-hand apparel is still a more favorable option than purchasing newly produced fast fashion pieces (Nizzoli 2022). Moreover, Second-hand retailers are still quite ignorant that they need to put more effort into attracting customers to their stores. The need to understand consumer behavior and also encourage consumers to shop more sustainably (Evans, Grimmer & Grimmer 2022). If retailers use a sensory marketing approach they can make their stores more appealing to customers, which could possibly make more people choose their stores over traditional retailers.

2.3 Customer Experience

Over the last 10 years, customer experience has gained focus in both marketing research and practice. It is mentioned by corporate heads that they believe the competitiveness of a firm is primarily determined by the customer experience (Becker & Jaakkola 2020). In today's society, customers are more demanding, due to the shift in where services are provided and experienced. Nowadays customers want an engaging and unforgettable experience when they enter a store (Gao, Melero-Polo & Sese 2019). Experiences are generated through the encounter, experiencing, or existence of events that offer sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral values (Jain, Aagja & Bagdare 2017).

According to Blázquez (2014), store ambiance influences the customer experience. This has a noticeable impact on making a purchase decision, both physiological and behavioral. Further, the value recognized by customers during the store visit is also connected to the store atmosphere. Kandampully, Zhang, and Jaakkola (2017) argue that from the start to finish of the customer journey, customer experience is mirrored throughout the whole process. Furthermore, Rantelina, Andiyani, and Widodo (2023) acknowledge that a favorable store environment can play a significant role in encouraging customers to make impulsive purchases. Due to it affecting shoppers' emotional states. The authors also state that store atmosphere is used as a marketing strategy to increase sales of their products. Included in this strategy are features such as atmospheric music, scents, key placement of products, advertisements such as posters,

and store ambiance. These different elements can influence consumer shopping behavior to some extent (Rantelina, Andiyani & Widodo 2023).

2.3.1 Customer Journey

In customer experience, the customer journey is included. At all stages of the customer decision-making process and consumption process, customer experience takes place. The different stages can be classified into three categories, which are pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase. From the full experience of all the different elements in these categories, customer value is created (Jain, Aagja & Bagdare 2017). The customer decision-making process can also be divided into five different steps that have a strong connection to consumer behavior, recognition of the brand to post-purchase behavior. The five different steps are recognition of need, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation (Stankevich 2017). Shavitt and Barnes (2020) characterize a customer journey as the comprehensive process of communication between businesses and customers, encompassing all stages leading up to the customers' purchase decision. Bairrada, Coelho, and Coelho (2018) recognize that the customer journey holds the potential to create value for customers, leading to favorable effects on consumer relationships and word-of-mouth communication. As indicated by Terblanche and Kidd (2021), customers' perception of the experience differs based on various aspects, including the extent of their involvement in physical aspects, emotional responses, rational considerations, spiritual elements, and sensory engagement. The authors also argue that all touchpoints the business sends out both online and offline and customers' expectations create an overall experience. Kuehnl, Jozic, and Homburg (2019) point out that the full experience initiates initially from the moment customers begin seeking items and continues until after consumption. The careful and thoughtful design of a customer journey holds great significance for stores, as it necessitates the seamless integration of vital touchpoints to create an enjoyable, exceptional, and complete shopping experience. The authors also point out that customer experience and the customer journey can be influenced by multiple factors, one of which is the customer's shopping mode and their level of store loyalty (Kuehnl, Jozic, and Homburg 2019).

2.3.2 Shopping Behavior And Store Loyalty

An essential aspect of awareness and administering customer experience is the capability to measure and track customer responses to a company's offerings particularly their attitudes and perceptions (Lemon & Verhoef 2016). The findings from Balaji and Maheswari's study (2021) reveal that customers' state of mind, while engaged in shopping significantly, impacts their overall perception of the store,

potentially evoking either unfavorable or positive emotions. Further, every feature a store possesses also has an impact on customers' attitudes. Kumar, Dalla Pozza, and Ganesh (2013) argue that customer satisfaction is an essential aspect to store loyalty. The authors also mention that a shift in customer satisfaction can impact loyalty intentions as time progresses. Francioni, Savelli, and Cioppi (2018) acknowledge that store ambiance is created from the physical store layout and visible traits, which will establish brand image. They also point out that customers tend to pay attention to the details of the store while shopping. There is a possibility that customers sometimes switch to other stores even if they feel happy with the ones they usually visit. This could occur when customers feel tired of following their usual routines. This is why it is crucial for stores to keep themselves up to date and upgrade the store, and boost customer interest (Francioni, Savelli & Cioppi 2018). If customers are happy with their store visit and are loyal to the store it can possibly lead to positive word-of-mouth amongst customers. Previous research shows that word-of-mouth has a huge impact on shaping behavior, particularly in information searching and the decision-making process (You & Hon 2021).

2.3.3 Word-Of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth is a powerful marketing tool for companies to use. When customers have positive experiences in a store, they are likely to share their experiences with their friends and family members. This can create a buzz around the store, which can increase the number of people who visit and ultimately make purchases (Hervas-Drane 2015). Both positive and negative sentiments have the potential to spread through word-of-mouth. A satisfied customer who promotes a company through positive word-of-mouth can be the most effective salesperson. Conversely, negative word-of-mouth from dissatisfied customers can be extremely damaging to the brand reputation and image of a company and also to the credibility, this can potentially drive customers into seeking out alternatives. Positive word-of-mouth tends to have less effect than negative word-of-mouth, which is stronger. However, if a company's sensory marketing strategies are carefully designed and implemented, they can generate positive word-of-mouth and thereby increase visitor engagement (Wangenheim 2005).

Word-of-mouth is the practice of using other people's suggestions to help guide customers toward finding new products that align with their wants and needs (Hervas-Drane 2015). The presence of multiple alternatives for similar items can affect customers' perception of a product's value, and this can be influenced by various elements such as the product's packaging, marketing strategy, and previous encounters with comparable products (Morris & Crane 2007). Customers experience feelings of

happiness and satisfaction when they are provided with a product that meets their expectations. The extent of satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping customers' post-purchase perception of the product and their willingness to engage in word-of-mouth recommendations. If they are happy with the product, they are more likely to recommend it to others (Herves-Drane 2015).

Consumers often take part in word-of-mouth as it can help them figure out for example which store is the best to make purchases at, and where to spend their money and time. When consumers hear good reviews and feedback from people they know it can be helpful to them when making decisions. It also helps customers to get an understanding of the product both its material and perceptual elements. A store's reputation and word-of-mouth among customers can have a huge impact on if customers choose to visit the store or not (You & Hon 2021). Therefore the physical appearance of the store has a significant role, both the inside atmosphere and the outside of the store (Balaji & Maheswari 2021).

2.4 Physical Store Design

The store's physical arrangement plays a critical role in influencing the mindset and responses of individuals during their shopping journey. Everything from the graphic representation to the product itself and the composition of the physical store space demands thoughtful planning, due to it being an essential component in the consumer buying process. An essential aspect for stores is establishing an efficient store layout, the benefit of this is increased sales and customers staying longer. Nevertheless, if the store's layout is characterized by poor organization and lack of coherence, it can result in customers refraining from making purchases and swiftly departing from the store premises (Lu & Seo 2015). Furthermore, Ainsworth and Foster (2017) also confirm that having an excellent layout design for the store is meaningful. The walking paths should be pleasant and satisfying and lead the customer to every aisle of the store in a perfect walkthrough in the store. The authors also mention that a welcoming store ambiance is necessary to maximize sales opportunities. Shopping intentions are closely linked to store design (2017), Cil (2012) also presents in his research that a positive store experience and a good layout can have a significant impact on sales and profits. Beautifully showcased goods are a way to get customers to buy more. The importance of having a carefully thought out layout and product placement, due to it possibly leading to customers looking through the whole store and not only one section. Additionally, if a store wants to catch customers' attention a well-designed layout can

help the retailer with that, which can also create a unique store character. That is why carefully considering the layout is vital to gain these benefits.

However, there are other factors that require careful consideration according to Balaji and Maheswari (2021) which are the exterior outlook of the store. The retail store exterior has to be appealing and parking is something that needs to be considered, due to it being a factor that can impact customers' store visits time. Furthermore, offering a captivating environment for customers is a key element that can contribute to increased time spent within the store. This could also influence customers' feelings about the store. Zhang, Chang, and Neslin (2021) emphasize that customers continue to favor brick-and-mortar stores due to the enhanced enjoyment associated with the physical shopping experience, compared to the simplicity of online ordering. This is why traditional stores remain highly significant. It is also brought up in the research that the need to touch, try products on and visually look at items before making a purchase decision brings value for customers when they can accomplish that action, which is possible when visiting a physical store. Furthermore, looking into customer experience in physical stores, a sensory marketing strategy is something that can enhance the customer experience in a positive way.

2.5 Sensory Marketing

Sensory marketing integrates the various senses of customers, thereby influencing their perception, assessment, and behavior (Krishna 2012). Human behavior and emotions are greatly impacted by the five senses, which include hearing, smell, vision, touch, and taste (Weßlau, Cloos, Höfling & Steil 2015). Businesses have the choice to utilize a sensory marketing strategy as a means to establish an appealing environment, allowing customers to engage with and experience the offered products. It is possible to increase consumption when using sensory marketing as a marketing tool (Nadanyiova, Kliestikova & Kolencik 2018). The store environment can be employed by companies as a powerful tool to influence emotions, enhance interest in making a purchase, maximize shopping effectiveness, engage interest, and create a memorable shopping experience (Abdolmohammad Sagha, Seyyed, Foroudi & Akbari 2022). In today's competitive marketplace, customers are often overwhelmed by the abundance of options available, making it challenging to make a purchase decision (Shabgou & Mirzaei Daryani 2014).

With the multitude of options available to customers, it is common for customers to face difficulty when trying to make a buying decision. The field of sensory marketing acknowledges the fundamental impact that customers' senses and emotions have on

their buying behavior, aiming to leverage this understanding to shape their decision-making process (Shabgou & Mirzaei Daryani 2014). Sensory marketing recognizes the crucial role that customers' senses and emotions play in their buying behavior and aims to leverage this understanding to influence their decision-making process (Shabgou & Mirzaei Daryani 2014). For companies to effectively implement sensory marketing, they must strategically incorporate the various elements of this approach and ensure that their efforts result in a distinct and differentiated brand. This approach requires companies to strategically incorporate sensory elements to create a successful brand value. While also providing companies with valuable feedback from customers to enhance customer relationships, meet their needs, and exceed their expectations (Nadanyiova, Kliestikova & Kolencik 2018). It is important to create an immersive experience for customers to establish a deeper connection and foster loyalty toward a brand (Zang, Chang & Nelsin 2021).

When customers buy a complex product from a brick-and-mortar store, they tend to ponder their physical interaction with it. This is because the experience is perceptible, concrete, and engages multiple senses, which facilitates the formation of meaningful insights about the seller (Zang, Chang & Nelsin 2021). To establish a deeper connection with customers and foster their loyalty, a novel approach to branding and consumption has emerged, which revolves to create an immersive experience that stimulates customers' senses and emotions. Through this method, brands can increase their likelihood of establishing lasting relationships with their customers. With the current market's intense competition, relying solely on conventional marketing strategies is no longer sufficient to differentiate oneself and capture the attention of potential consumers (Nadanyiova, Kliestikova & Kolencik 2018). Sensory marketing is a concept with the goal of targeting the subconscious minds of customers to create a positive purchasing experience by inducing pleasant feelings (Cristache, Susanu, Busila, Matis & Pricopoala 2022).

The primary purpose of sensory marketing is to stimulate impulse purchases and create deep emotional bonds between customers and the brand. Sensory marketing strives to target the subconscious minds of customers and understand their perceptions, with the objective of creating a positive purchasing experience by eliciting pleasant emotions. This approach enhances the brand's image and fosters enduring customer loyalty (Cristache, Susanu, Busila, Matis & Pricopoala 2022). Furthermore, incorporating the sensory cues of the store environment can contribute to a positive experience for the customers (Duong et al. 2022). By discussing sensorial touchpoints and sensory marketing, it is important to analyze each of the five senses and their usage. However,

the authors choose not to explore the impact of incorporating taste elements in physical second-hand, fashion stores. Because taste is not commonly associated with second-hand shopping. Taste is also closely linked to smell, which will be covered in the next paragraph. The same receptors are used when tasting and smelling something (Biology Liber texts 2022). One of the first senses presented is going to be smell. One way to impact customers is through smell, it can impact how long a customer stays in the store and also how much they spend in it.

2.5.1 Smell

The first scent to mention is smell. Scent, is defined as the connection of a particular fragrance with a product or brand. Has been identified by Fernández Muñoz, Arribas Pérez, and Zapata (2021) as one of the most effective tools in sensory marketing. In contemporary times, one of the most efficient forms of communication is fragrance, which is frequently used at the point of sale. Soars (2009) argue that the strongest connection among all senses is between a person's perception of scent and their feelings. Among the senses, scent stands out for its remarkable capacity to leave a lasting impact, evoking intense emotions and memories. According to Spence and Carvalho (2020) due to that olfactory marketing is a highly effective strategy used by companies to elicit emotions and establish positive, long-lasting relationships with potential customers. Physical stores often use perfumes to draw customers in as exposure to pleasant aromas such as coffee has been shown to impact customer behavior and prolong their stay. Additionally, coffee can generate interest in a product, and research indicates that alluring scents can increase approach behavior.

In addition, retailers acknowledge that the implementation of fragrances in their stores affects consumers' behavior (Möller & Herm 2013). The influence on consumer behavior is not only determined by the pleasantness of the scent but also by the congruency of the smell within the product category, as indicated by certain research findings. The pleasant scent of freshly laundered clothes in a second-hand store enhances the appeal of the item when it is being resold, as it creates a type of fragrance and makes the apparel feel unused. As a result, customers are motivated to buy significantly larger quantities in second-hand stores within this environmentally conscious context (De Groot, Walther & Holland 2022). However, it can be challenging to identify the most appropriate scents for various settings due to considerations such as age, culture, and individual traits (Möller & Herm 2013). Furthermore, for a scent to be attractive it needs to align with the store's design, merchandise, and intended audience. Retailers should be careful when incorporating fragrances, given their ability to influence emotions and purchasing behavior. Research has demonstrated that pleasant

scents can enhance brand awareness, foster risk-taking, promote exploration of new products, spark interest, and draw consumer attention (Orth & Bourrain 2005).

Second-hand stores commonly have a distinct and old smell that some people find unpleasant. This smell can vary in intensity, but it is often associated with a combination of factors such as the age of the items and previous storage conditions (New York Times 2018). When customers encounter an unexpected scent in a store environment, their skepticism is directed toward the retailer's motives. This situation can foster doubt, diminish the customers' enjoyment, and lead to negative attitudes, attributions, and reduced trust specifically towards the retailer (Lunardo 2012). In order to make the dirt and smell disappear from apparel in physical second-hand stores, cleaning is one way to do it. It is the process of removing dirt from textiles made of various materials (New York Times 2018).

2.5.2 Hearing

The second sense is hearing, Géci, Nagyová, and Rybanská (2017) mentions that customers' behavior during their shopping is impacted in a particular manner by the music being played. The presence of music in a store can influence both the duration of a customer's visit and the amount of money they spend. Furthermore, if customers enjoy the music being played, it can have a positive physiological impact, increasing the likelihood that they will spend more money on purchases. According to Krishna (2012), the role of sound in shaping the brand image and identity can not be underestimated, as it evokes certain meanings and emotions. Especially in physical fashion stores. However, the use of sound is crucial in setting the mood and ambiance, which ultimately impacts customers' level of interest and involvement. Helmfalk (2016) suggests that the correlation between sensory cues, the retail atmosphere, and the store image is equally important to shoppers as their perception of sensory cues.

The daily shopping experience of consumers is influenced by the background noise in a retail setting as it aids in the prompt recognition of items. Retailers need to bear in mind that such background music can stem from sources beyond their own control, for example, customer chatter or natural sounds in the store atmosphere (Helmfalk & Hultén 2017). Music can motivate individuals who are uncertain about their purchases in physical stores by uplifting their mood and making them feel more positive about the product and themselves. Previous studies, which have been conducted in Victoria's Secret physical stores, have shown that the music played has a more substantial impact on visitors' decision-making process than the actual products themselves (Soars 2009). The tempo of the music has a significant influence on consumer behavior, with faster music

generally leading customers to feel a greater desire to shop quickly. One business strategy retailers are using to attract customers is high-tempo music. By using high-tempo music in the background it will encourage faster visits and potentially attract more customers. However, research conducted in a store has revealed that playing slow music instead of fast music resulted in a 38% increase in sales (Soars 2009).

2.5.3 Vision

This leads the authors to the third in line which is sight. Jayakrishnan (2013) argues that the most commonly used sense in marketing is sight for the reason that sight is a dominant and powerful way of use in marketing. Visual input is the dominant form of communication in over 80 percent of commercial and shopping contexts. Customers' preferences can be greatly influenced by the shape, size, and style of a product, as the brain rapidly processes visual stimuli. The inclusion of contrasting and distinctive visual identity influences how it is recognized which in turn, enhances brand realization and recall (Jayakrishnan 2013). However, since its inception, advertising has depended on visual marketing strategies. It is ingrained in a brand's identity to use its company color combinations and symbols and to associate them with particular sentiments or feelings. The image and visual identity help set the product apart from its rivals and are frequently the buyer's first points of interaction. This type of marketing is prevalent in fashion shops, which typically have a neutral background to avoid deterring customers and emphasize the goods of the current season (Fernández Muñoz, Arribas Pérez & Zapata 2021). According to Helmfalk and Hultén (2017), lighting is used in stores to generate a particular atmosphere. The intensity and color of the lighting may have an impact on the time consumers choose to spend in the store and how long consumers look at products. Additionally, the store's lighting and color scheme can affect how consumers feel and perceive its goods, services, and rates. Stores that have considered and worked with aesthetics and visuals are often attaining a higher level of success.

2.5.4 Touch

The last one of all senses to mention will be touch, when it comes to the shopping experience for customers when utilizing the sense of touch is crucial because it enables one to fully experience and evaluate the product's characteristics. Apparel is a highly experienced product, which means this product has the requirement to be touched to make a purchase decision to fully understand all the information about the garment (Kim, Kim, Yoo & Park 2020). In the decision-making process when shopping for apparel touch is one of the crucial factors, which makes it possible to see the item up close to see and feel the characteristics of the garment and also be able to try it on. In

physical fashion stores, touch has an essential role for the store's customers (Soars 2009). The significance of the sense of touch when it comes to customers feeling satisfied with the item when wearing it. Hence, fitting rooms in physical fashion stores have been applied (Lund 2015). Interestingly, a significant percentage of purchasing decisions, ranging from 40% to 70% are made spontaneously during in-store shopping (Birčiaková, Mokřý, Slováčková, Stávková & Nagyová 2016).

When customers interact with products physically, using their sense of touch, feeling, and trial at a brick-and-mortar store, it makes the products more accessible and impacts their perception of the products. The act of directly interacting with products can promote a feeling of belonging, regardless of customers' previous awareness (Krishna & Schwarz 2014). The consumer's decision to touch a product and utilize haptic information during product evaluation is dependent on various factors, including the individual's preferences and the unique characteristics of the product (Ranaweera, Martin & Jin 2021). Krishna, Cian, and Aydınoğlu (2017) mention that when an individual looks at a t-shirt to assess its quality, they tend to use their sense of touch to determine its smoothness and weight by holding it, in addition to relying on their sight.

2.5.5 Congruence between Sensory Cues

It is important for all sensory cues to have congruence with each other to create an enjoyable atmosphere in stores. Congruence shows how well different sensory cues fit together (Krishna, Elder & Caldara 2010). Customers tend to sense the store atmosphere through sensory input, which allows them to assess the store emotionally and through that have a tendency to either move towards or move away from something (Helmefalk & Hultén 2017). During shopping customers are affected by numerous sensory cues at once, which creates a comprehensive experience. Using too many sensory touchpoints elevates the risk of sensory overload in a store, and how customers perceive sensory overload can be determined by customers' preferences. Stores need to consider their target market and see how many sensory cues that are appropriate for their store. When sensory cues do not fit together this can create an unpleasant environment and have a negative impact on customer experience (Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal & Roggeveen 2014). There is also a risk of sensory overload when an abundance of repetitive visual stimuli is already featured in the store (Helmefalk & Hultén 2017). Customers tend to favor congruency as it provides them a sense of validation for their expectations, due to it creating favorable feelings about their purchase decision. Furthermore, when individuals can easily perceive congruent cues within an atmosphere, it exerts a positive influence on them (Doucé & Adams 2020). The utilization of diverse sensory cues presented in a compelling manner within fashion

stores significantly influences customers' shopping behavior and their overall experience of the in-store atmosphere (Spence et al. 2014).

2.6 Summary

Due to the previous research, it is crucial to prioritize sustainability in the fashion industry. Moreover, sustainability is becoming increasingly important in the fashion industry due to the negative impact that the industry has on the environment (Gwozdz, Steensen Nilsen & Müller 2017). There are many previous studies on the fashion industry and its environmental impact throughout the clothing manufacturing process (Yang, Song & Tong 2017). Moreover, the fashion industry ranks among the most environmentally damaging ones owing to its extensive usage of hazardous chemicals, and substantial consumption of energy and water, leading to the generation of waste and pollution (Ek Styvén & Mariani 2020). For that reason, it is important to inspire people to make more environmentally conscious purchases (Gwozdz, Steensen Nilsen & Müller 2017).

Enhancing the appeal of thrift stores is a means of achieving this goal. By incorporating an impressive store layout, it is possible to draw in a greater number of patrons and influence their buying behavior in a positive manner (Cil 2012). The popularity of thrift shopping has increased, especially among individuals with lower incomes and students in college (Seo & Kim 2019). Another segment that tends to shop second-hand is those who prioritize environmental issues (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen 2015). Employing sensory marketing can be an effective tactic for businesses, as it enables customers to engage with their senses, encompassing hearing, smell, sight, touch, and taste. These senses have a profound influence on customers' perceptions, judgments, and actions (Weßlau, Cloos, Höfling & Steil 2015). The objective of sensory marketing is to capture customers' subconscious minds and elicit positive emotions, ultimately supporting the brand's reputation and fostering enduring customer loyalty (Cristache, Susanu, Busila, Matis & Pricopoala 2022). However, the authors of this study did not take into account the sense taste as it is irrelevant to physical second-hand stores.

Although there has been extensive research conducted on sustainability, sensory marketing, and physical stores, there is still a knowledge gap regarding the potential benefits of sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores. Further, to enhance customer engagement and promote environmentally conscious purchasing behavior. For this reason, applying a new strategy such as sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores may have a substantial impact on consumers' shopping preferences and behavior. Further exploration of this area is necessary to determine whether the

adoption of sensory marketing can encourage more consumers to purchase clothing from second-hand stores and by that be more environmentally friendly while shopping.

3. Methodology

In the following chapter of the thesis, various methods are presented, as approaches, and strategies used during the research. Furthermore, the selection of interviewees and data analysis are described. In addition, the authors explain the choice of selected methodology, and why it is suitable and significant for achieving the research objectives. This chapter is finalized with a conclusion on the quality of research, ethical considerations, sustainable considerations, and lastly work process.

3.1 Research Approach

Bryman and Bell (2017) argue that when conducting research, abductive, deductive, and inductive approaches are three varied ways that can be used during research. The inductive approach emerged as the most appropriate choice for this study, as it allowed the researchers to begin by collecting data and subsequently develop a theory based on the empirical findings (Bryman & Bell 2017). The inductive approach was chosen for this study due to its suitability for exploring an under-researched subject and generating new theoretical insight (Bryman, Bell & Harley 2019). As there was a lack of previous research on sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores, the inductive approach allowed the authors to gather data directly from customers and develop theories based on empirical findings. Its flexibility led the researchers to the characteristics of the physical second-hand stores that stood out and thus could also be improved by applying a sensory marketing strategy to attract more customers to their stores, while its exploratory nature enabled the authors to bridge the knowledge gap and make valuable contributions to the field of sensory marketing and retail research. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) state that the inductive approach has the power to form a deeper understanding of what different variables mean and how they are linked to each other. According to Bryman and Bell (2017), researchers that adopt a qualitative study are most likely to use an inductive approach (Bryman & Bell 2017). In this thesis, a deeper understanding is necessary to grasp the customer's feelings and their perception of a physical second-hand store. To discover if a sensory marketing strategy could potentially improve the image of a physical second-hand store.

In the context of this study, literature sources on the researched subject were used in the literature review. Over the course of the research, primary and literature data were collected. Data collected from interviews are presented as primary data. The literature data was obtained from books, peer-reviewed scientific articles, journals, and a few online sources. Further, all these literature sources are not older than 10 years old with a few exceptions. OneSearch was the database used to recover peer-reviewed scientific articles and journals (Kumar & Rahman 2015). The interview participants are individuals that frequently shop in physical second-hand stores and others that shop there more rarely. The keywords used when searching in OneSearch were “Second-hand”, “Sustainability”, “Sensory Marketing”, “Physical Stores”, “Purchase Decisions”, “Customer Experience”, and “Fast Fashion”. These keywords are connected to the main concepts of this thesis. In addition, a snowball sampling approach was employed to enhance the depth of comprehension, whereby relevant sources were obtained by examining the reference lists of multiple academic articles.

3.1.1 Interpretivism Approach

Considering different philosophical approaches for this research, the authors chose the interpretivism approach to gain fresh and more comprehensive insights and interpretations regarding social worlds and contexts. Interpretivist researchers strive to acknowledge this complexity by gathering data that holds significance for the participants of their research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). As the authors of this thesis are conducting qualitative research with an inductive approach and also semi-structured interviews, the interpretivist approach allows researchers to capture and interpret the rich and nuanced data obtained through interviews.

3.2 Research Strategy

The main strategies for conducting business research are quantitative and qualitative. A mixed-method approach can be used and this implies that both qualitative and quantitative methods are combined together (Bryman & Bell 2017). By utilizing the qualitative approach, it becomes possible to undertake a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the conducted interviews, leading to detailed outcomes (Bryman & Bell 2017).

A qualitative research strategy was selected based on the purpose and approach of the thesis. The aim of this research was to investigate and gain comprehension of how the concepts of a sensory marketing strategy could be put into practice in a physical second-hand store. Using a qualitative approach makes it possible to benefit from a more in-depth insight and understanding of how physical second-hand stores can

benefit from applying sensory marketing strategies. As mentioned by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) employing a qualitative research approach is crucial to attaining a more profound comprehension of the research concerns (Merriam & Tisdell 2016). Moreover, the need to gain a more in-depth understanding of the subject led to a qualitative research approach. Due to the restricted knowledge of these ideas, it was the better choice. Further, the interviewee can have a more improvising approach during the interview depending on what answers they get from the participants (Gray 2019).

3.3 Research Design

The study's design serves as an instruction manual for the researchers as they attempt to respond to the research question and analyze the data gathered for the study (Bryman & Bell 2017). In order to comprehend and finish the study, the study's design demonstrates a framework for how the empirical results are discovered and how the data is examined (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2020). In the context of conducting research, there are five different design approaches that researchers can take into account, which are case study, cross-sectional, comparative design, experimental, or longitudinal (Bryman & Bell 2017).

3.3.1 Cross-Sectional Research Design

The researchers chose to have a cross-sectional approach in this study. Bryman and Bell (2017) provide a description of the cross-sectional design, explaining that it involves the researcher incorporating variations in data collection methods. For instance, this variation can occur among individuals, institutions, or regions. Following the insights of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), who highlights that a cross-sectional study typically employs a qualitative approach and is conducted within a brief timeframe. The authors also mention that it is likely that your research will adopt a cross-sectional approach, focusing on examining a specific phenomenon during a specific time period.

For this reason, the authors felt that the chosen time horizon was most appropriate, given the limited duration of the study. By choosing a cross-sectional approach, they were able to take advantage of a short and predetermined time frame to conduct semi-structured interviews, during which important data for the thesis was collected. This study revealed differences among individuals, as the researchers observed variations while examining the behavior of customers who shop regularly compared to those who shop less frequently in physical second-hand stores. The interviews were conducted within a concise time frame.

3.4 Type of Data

In order to investigate the research question, two forms of data can be employed: primary data and secondary data. The classification of data as primary or secondary is dependent on the connection between the investigator and the gathered data. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), primary data encompasses the data that investigators collect firsthand as part of their study, with the purpose of addressing their research question directly. The selection of a specific method for collecting primary data is dependent on several factors including the nature of the study, the resources available for the research, as well as the skills of the investigator (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). Additionally, secondary data refers to the original data gathered for previous studies, which are subsequently utilized for future research purposes (Kumar & Rahman 2015). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), such data may encompass unprocessed information such as transcripts from prior studies, or condensed data obtained from organizations or institutions that could hold significance in addressing research inquiries.

The information for the thesis was gathered through both primary and literature sources. As previously stated, literature sources were sourced from journals, books, and online sources as the theoretical foundation for this study. Primary data, on the other hand, was gathered through interviews. The focus of this report is on the theoretical concepts related to how customers evaluate alternatives and make purchase decisions, and how sensorial marketing can impact these processes. The present study adopted a qualitative research methodology and utilized semi-structured interviews as the means to gather primary data from the participating customers. The aim was to obtain both an overview and a detailed discussion on the effects of sensory marketing on customer experience and sustainable purchasing decisions in physical second-hand stores. Given the limited existing understanding and investigation on the implementation of sensory cues in second-hand stores, the primary data was deemed crucial for this study.

3.5 Research Method

A technique aimed at gathering crucial and relevant data to support a thesis is referred to as a research method. The method used in quantitative research is data collection, which can be characterized as numerical. Surveys with questions about the subject are either open-ended questions or they can be different scales. Scales with numbers have the potential to be analyzed due to the different answers of the respondents (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). When conducting a qualitative method interviews with participants are the way to implement it. There are several ways to conduct interviews,

one is to have a focus group which means there is a small group of individuals that discuss the questions. This is a good way for the researcher to hear different points of view on the same question. There is also the possibility to conduct in-depth interviews where there is only one participant during the interview. Interviews are a good way to get a more deep understanding of the subject that the research is about (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). A positive thing with interviews is the possibility to conduct them both online or face-to-face depending on what suits the participants best. Interviews can be valuable as a resource, to gather dependable and accurate data that aligns with the research question and objectives (Bryman & Bell 2017). Interviews can either be semi-structured or unstructured. Unstructured interviews typically cover loosely defined topics, whereas semi-structured interviews have a preplanned selection of particular subjects that the interviewer aims to address during the interview. Both interviewing techniques provide a certain level of adaptability, allowing the interviewer to veer off-topic to explore and gain more profound insights (Bryman & Bell 2017). Nevertheless, considering the objectives of this research, the semi-structured interview method emerged as the most appropriate approach.

3.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews involve conducting interviews with individuals while minimizing the predetermined structure, in order to gain insights into the participants' experiences and opinions on a particular subject matter (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). By employing a semi-structured interviewing method, the researcher can ask follow-up questions and assist the participant in receiving more insightful responses if they run into any difficulties during the interview. Utilizing a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer the opportunity to adjust the questions' order to get an easy-going and natural conversation as possible (Bryman & Bell 2017). Semi-structured interviews gave participants the chance to talk about a particular subject and then follow up with questions based on their responses. In order to keep the data gathering and enable the resolution of the research question, semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate way of conducting the method in this study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). The semi-structured interviews were also favored for the reason that there is little research combining the principles of using sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores. In this thesis, 20 interviews were conducted, until data saturation was reached.

3.5.2 Collection of Data

In this study, the authors took the decision to utilize semi-structured interviews due to their potential to yield a more thorough understanding of the topic being studied, as

well as provide a platform for a more in-depth discussion that cannot be achieved through surveys. A detailed interview guide was created to cover every aspect that was important to gain an understanding of and also to guide both the interview and the participants.

The authors took the decision to have one interview guide in English (see Appendix A) However, a translation to Swedish was made due to it being more convenient for the participants of this study (see Appendix B). All questions are formulated in a way that aligns with the purpose of this study and is advantageous for it also. In addition, the authors split the responsibility during the interview. One had a responsibility to take notes and the other one led the interview. Each interview was documented, transcribed, and showcased in the empirical findings section. While conducting the interviews both authors' mobile phones were used to record and to ensure the sound was recorded properly and with good quality. Streamlining the transcription process was achieved by performing it immediately after the conclusion of each interview. The interviews were conducted between the 17th of April- the 23rd April 2023.

3.6 Selection of Interviewees

A non-probability sampling technique is better suited for qualitative research. For the reason that the goal of qualitative research is not to apply findings from a sample to a larger population (Bryman & Bell 2017). Another reason for choosing a non-probability sampling is that the study has focused on gaining a more profound comprehension of a particular problem within a particular context. Furthermore, to reach a deeper understanding of the subject and through that have the capacity to address the research question, also to reach theoretical saturation instead of relying on a larger sample size. Theoretical saturation indicates that there is a need to increase the sample size until the authors have reached a point where no more information provides any new knowledge of the subject (Bryman, Bell & Harley 2019).

3.6.1 Purposive Sampling

In qualitative research, purposive sampling is the most commonly utilized method to use among the various sampling techniques. Purposive sampling can be advantageous as it enables researchers to obtain targeted knowledge and information from the participants. Moreover, purposive sampling is a method that frequently is employed to gain a more comprehensive understanding (Bryman & Bell 2017). According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) this type of sampling technique, which is non-probability, entails gathering the sample that will best be able to respond to the

research questions and the objectives. Further, by using this method, researchers can obtain high-information cases that are relevant to their study.

With the aim of this study, the reason for selecting the purposive sample method was due to the advantages provided above. Given that the emphasis of this study is sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores, the decision was made to employ this sampling method. Therefore a criterion could be used when selecting the sample. For this study, it was the criterion that the participants of the interviews were individuals who have participated in second-hand shopping in a physical store. There was also the reason for being able to answer the research question of this study.

3.6.2 Participant Criteria

There should be certain criteria established when using a purposive sampling method in research. This needs to be considered for the reason to be able to answer the research question completely. Therefore, the selection of the sample was concluded at the start of this research as purposive sampling (Bryman, Bell & Harley 2019). The participants selected for the interviews follow the established criteria listed below.

Criteria for interviewee:

- Women between the ages of 18-60
- Living in Sweden
- Have made purchases in physical second-hand stores, both the ones that do it frequently and the ones that do it more rarely.

The participants used in the interviews were found in different groups that talk about second-hand, on Facebook. The different groups on Facebook where participants were found were named: Märkeskläder och design-saker, loppis och secondhand, and another group called Secondhand. In the groups on Facebook, the authors did a post and mentioned that they were looking for interview participants for the study and then people reached out to the authors that they were interested in participating in the study. They were also found through Instagram, from the hashtags #secondhandsverige, and #stadsmissionen. The approach to finding people through hashtags was looking through recent posts with those hashtags and contacting the individuals that felt were suitable for this study. Participants were also found by approaching customers in local second-hand stores. The participants that were selected for the interviews were chosen for the reason that they had the knowledge and some experience of the subject that the research was about. This was done due to it increasing the likelihood that the

participants have relevant information and experiences that can contribute to this thesis's results.

The selection of choosing participants of different ages between 18-60 was due to their different life experiences and opinions. By interviewing these different individuals the researchers gained a broader understanding of the subject. The participants of this study were from different places in Sweden, some live in bigger cities such as Gothenburg, Uppsala, Norrköping, or Stockholm and others live in smaller cities which were Varberg, Oskarshamn, Kalmar, Visby, and Helsingborg. This was possible due to the researchers using social media to find different participants for the interviews. The authors conducted 20 interviews. The participants that were found through Facebook and Instagram, were interviewed by both authors in a Zoom meeting. The interviews were recorded through the Zoom program and saved to the computer and transcribed directly after. One of the researchers asked questions and the other one took notes of the most important key points that were mentioned. This helped the authors later when finding the most important information that could be used for this thesis. The other interview participants that were found in local stores were interviewed in person. A meeting was arranged and then both researchers were present, one took notes and the other asked questions. Both researchers' phones were used to record the interviews due to the importance of ensuring the high quality of the recordings.

3.6.3 List of Interviewees

Participant	Age	Interview Length	Interview Type: Zoom vs In-person
Strand	29	16 Minutes	Zoom
Axelsson	52	14 Minutes	Zoom
Jakobsson	31	22 Minutes	In-person
Olsson	23	35 Minutes	Zoom
Ljung	40	12 Minutes	Zoom
Andersson	25	26 Minutes	Zoom

Nilsson	23	22 Minutes	Zoom
Gustafsson	22	30 Minutes	Zoom
Larsson	35	25 Minutes	Zoom
Svensson	24	31 Minutes	Zoom
Berg	60	16 Minutes	In-person
Lindh	30	16 Minutes	In-person
Björklund	23	25 Minutes	Zoom
Åberg	22	17 Minutes	In-person
Ek	25	24 Minutes	Zoom
Månsson	24	30 Minutes	Zoom
Wiklund	42	12 Minutes	Zoom
Karlsson	56	10 Minutes	In-person
Halling	18	15 Minutes	Zoom
Bergman	27	14 Minutes	Zoom

This list shows the interviewees and their age, how long the interview lasted, and how the interviews were conducted either in Zoom or In-person. Some were longer and others shorter depending on the participant's varied experience in second-hand stores.

3.7 Data Analysis

Thematic theory is one approach commonly used for the analysis of qualitative data (Bryman & Bell 2017). The ambition and focus of the thematic analysis are to discover recurring patterns and themes within the qualitative data, with the objective of uncovering connections and relationships (Gray 2019). This process of looking for connections is done until no new data is discovered. The thematic analysis approach has more flexibility and is a more independent approach. This analysis technique

possesses a remarkable capability to produce complex and comprehensive outcomes, thereby facilitating authors to effectively answer the research question (Gray 2019).

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

According to Gray (2019), the objective of utilizing the thematic analysis approach is to explore, examine and uncover patterns' underlying meanings within qualitative data to classify them into themes, thereby uncovering relationships among them. Additionally, the analysis is considered to arise organically from the identification of overarching patterns or themes that depict the attributes of the data and its discoveries. This implies that the theme evolves and takes form as the researcher thoroughly examines and investigates the data. As a result, a significant theme is recognized when it encompasses factors that assist the researcher in tackling the research questions. By categorizing data into a diverse range of themes, thematic analysis enables customizable interpretation, which simplifies the handling of large volumes of data (Gray 2019). After implementing the classification of themes and patterns in transcribed interviews, the empirical results were presented in the empirical results chapter.

The themes that emerged from the empirical findings were associated with the categories in the literature review to create a structure and enable a comparison that addressed the research questions. The purpose of the study was to examine how sensory marketing affects customers' experience and their decisions to make sustainable purchases in physical second-hand stores. In order to comprehend how sensory marketing impacts customers' experience and their sustainable purchase decisions in physical second-hand stores, a thematic analysis was employed. The analysis results were outlined within the chapter presenting the empirical findings.

The researchers did the coding in the empirical findings, by starting to color-code the different subjects in the transcriptions. The various subjects were found through similar characteristics. This was done in the transcription of every interview. Then it was compared to each interview and it was compiled into one document. Sub-themes, which are smaller themes, were discovered in the different documents, which were also color-coded. Out of this, it was possible to analyze the found data and reach the final themes. The themes are supported by the empirical findings that were collected through interviews. The choice to use a color-coding technique was due to it making it easier for the researchers to keep track of the different themes and sub-themes, also making it easier to identify patterns and trends in the data. A model was designed to show how the researchers executed the coding and established the different themes.

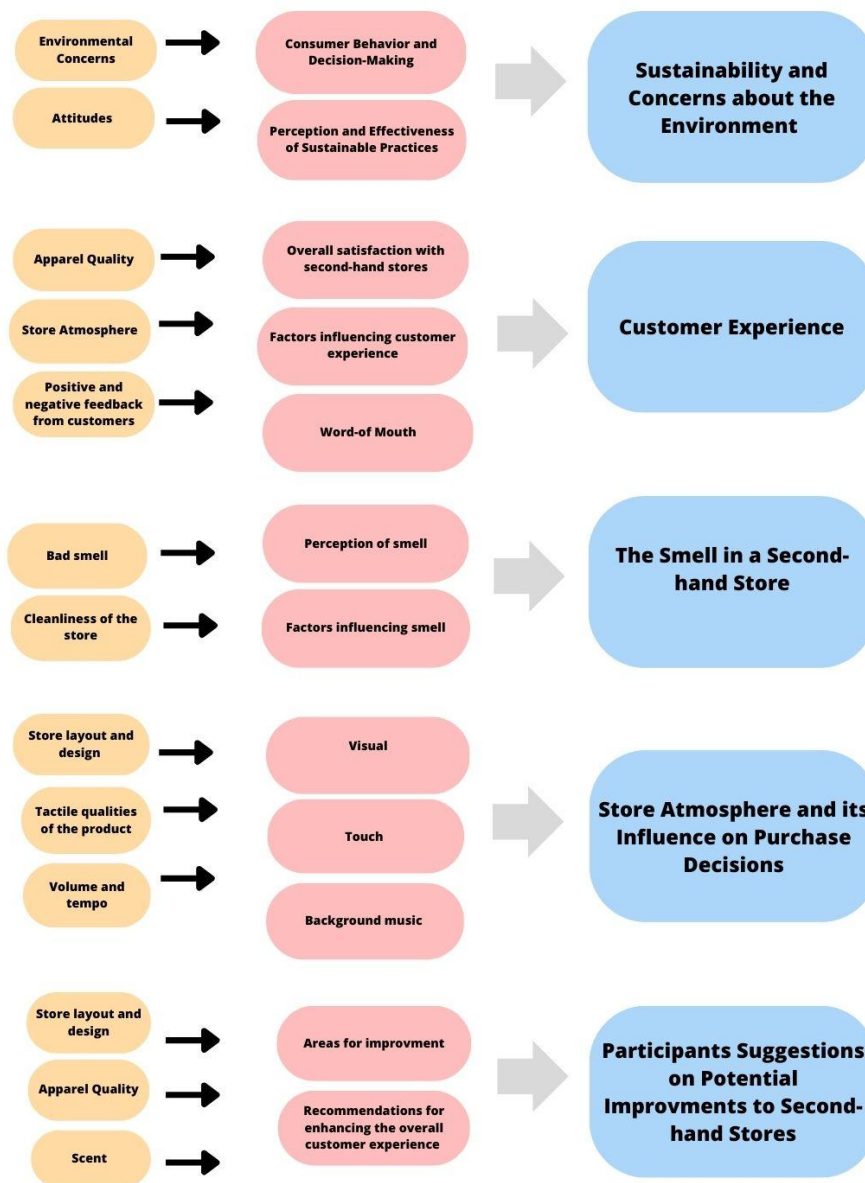


Figure 1. *Coding of empirical findings*

The model was created to be able to discover the themes of the empirical findings. Outlined in this model are the key themes and sub-themes which are based on empirical findings in this thesis. The first row on the left is called the *overview row* and this shows a broader context of the main theme and sets the step for the more specific sub-themes discussed in the row following it. The second row as mentioned before is called *sub-themes* and this shows information in categories that help communicate the

main themes. They are also components that help the reader understand the reason behind the main themes more in-depth. The final row is the *main themes* which are the themes described in the empirical findings. These themes emerged from the overview and the sub-themes that were found. The main themes show a comprehensive understanding of the subject this thesis is researching. The model provides insights into the participants' attitudes towards sustainability, shopping behavior, and the factors influencing their experience at second-hand stores. It also highlights the importance of having a favorable shopping atmosphere, which is clean, has a pleasant scent, is well-organized, has a positive sensory experience, and influences more sustainable purchases when it comes to apparel.

3.8 Quality of Research

As stated by Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2019) there are two different measurable criteria, which are reliability and validity and these need to be implemented in business research to analyze the quality of the research. Trustworthiness has significant importance in qualitative research. This is evaluated through four alternative criteria that have been deemed more suitable. In the next section, the four criteria will be discussed and shown how it has affected the research that has been carried out. The four criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, these outline the quality of the thesis and the assurance of high authenticity/trustworthiness. (Bell, Bryman & Harley 2019).

In qualitative research, the criteria of internal validity are represented by credibility, and external validity is represented by transferability. The concept of credibility refers to the application and execution of research in relation to the actuality of the social environment, while transferability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be extended to other contexts, the degree of their generalizability (Yin 2018). The choices made by the researchers to validate the credibility of the research were to carefully follow all the prescribed rules for the thesis. By doing so, the researchers could achieve reliability in research, which also involves minimizing errors and biases that may occur during the study (Yin 2018). To meet the standards for transferability, the researchers of this thesis conducted several interviews with different women of a variety of ages from Sweden. According to Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2019) by doing many interviews, it made it possible to collect increasing primary data, which enables the transferability of research to future studies.

Furthermore, Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2019) mentioned that there are factors that need to be considered and those are dependability and confirmability. Dependability is

referred to as capturing every step in the research process in a thorough, clear, and understandable way. Confirmability addresses whether the researchers avoided imposing their individual beliefs or theoretical perspective on the research process and the derived outcomes (Bell, Bryman & Harley 2019). In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted, and both authors were involved during the interviews. Recordings of every interview were made. The interviews followed the interview guide that was created, however, there was a possibility that during the different interviews, there were some minor changes and adjustments done to the questions also in the order of the them. These small changes made it possible for the authors to be able to ask follow-up questions and through that get a more in-depth understanding. The researchers had an objective approach and no personal thoughts are included in the final results. The interview guide can be found as an appendix, both in Swedish and English. In this thesis, the transcripts and recordings of interviews are not included, but they are available upon request. Participants of the interviews were sent the transcripts to review them, for the reason of assure the authors have made a correct interpretation of the information.

Reliability occurs when a researcher comes to the same conclusion and findings during a repeated process of the same exact case study (Bell, Bryman & Harley 2019). To reach reliability in this thesis a profound explanation of the research process was written. The authors achieved this by establishing a connecting element across the study with an essential explanation of each section. The authors have been aware that their own thoughts could influence the study while conducting this research. However, the authors are fully convinced that this is not the situation here, no own thoughts had an effect on this study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The design of the thesis follows stringent ethical principles to comprehend the participant's experiences without manipulating their responses into something else (Husband 2020). When conducting the project, it was essential to consider ethical considerations. There is a possibility that ethical considerations are portrayed differently depending on the various phases of the thesis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). As Bryman and Bell (2017) outline, the authors first clarified to the participants the purpose and usage of the information the authors gathered during the interview. Secondly, it was emphasized that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point. Thirdly, ensuring that all information collected was securely stored, and participants had the choice to remain anonymous. Fourthly, reassuring participants that the information would only be used for the project at hand. Fifthly it

was emphasized that the final analysis would be genuine, based on truthful outcomes from the findings. Finally, the interviews were carried out in a manner that respected the participants and their workplace, ensuring sensitivity and avoiding any potential offense (Bryman & Bell 2017). Additionally, the interviewer prepared relevant interview questions by conducting research in the relevant field. The authors utilized a scientific approach learned in the research methodology course to generate insightful inquiries. The source of the gathered data was included in the thesis and can be found under references and the interview guide can be found in the appendix.

Furthermore, the authors were cautious not to plagiarize someone else's work when writing the thesis (Kumar 2018). Hence citing and acknowledging the right author correctly was crucial, to avoid any misunderstandings on what was written and by whom. Another consideration that the authors worked with was that all information that is written is correctly a reflection of the original text that is found, to deliver the same meaning and not be misinterpreted in any way. This was considered while working on the literature sources for the thesis along with the analysis of the interview transcripts (Kumar 2018).

3.10 Sustainable Considerations

The term sustainability encompasses a wide-ranging-field, which can hold varying meanings in different contexts. Fundamentally, sustainable development refers to the ability of human beings to meet their present needs but also without harming the upcoming generations' requirements. Utilizing resources consciously to ensure that future generations have access to them is crucial. When a community is sustainable it prioritizes the environment, looking after both the population and nature. If humans do not make an effort to be cautious with the earth's resources, they will eventually disappear, which makes it very important to be sustainable (TWI Global 2023). In this research project in the area of fashion and shopping behavior, the authors emphasize the importance of sustainability as a key topic. The primary focus is to explore ways of making second-hand stores more attractive to consumers. Due to the fact that people must reconsider their consumption habits in light of the environmental damage resulting from the creation of newly produced apparel. By shifting towards more sustainable options and moving away from fast fashion, consumers can play a vital role in reducing damage to the earth (Neumann, Martinez & Martinez 2021). The fast fashion industry is characterized by apparel that is frequently worn for a limited duration before being disposed of. As a consequence, there is a rapid production of new apparel, which is quickly discarded without being given the opportunity to be utilized

by another consumer (Niinimäki & Hassi 2011). This is precisely why second-hand stores must take a further step and increase their appeal to customers, encouraging them to consider second-hand options more often while making purchases.

Responsible Consumption and Production is the twelfth goal in the UN Sustainable Development Goal and this thesis covers it. This goal includes working against manufacturers of apparel as well as consumers who purchase fashion. Included in this work is to influence what consequences this has both environmentally and human beings. One of the United Nations (2020) goals in this part is 2030 to ensure everyone all over the world has access to the necessary information and has the understanding of engaging in sustainable behaviors. Further to live in harmony with nature (United Nations 2020). Planet, people, and profit are all included in the model, which is called the triple bottom line (TBL). The authors employed all three in this essay (Miller 2020). Firstly, from an economic standpoint, the project entailed informing the interviewees that their participation was of their own volition and would not result in any form of compensation. Secondly, from a social standpoint, the authors prioritized ethical considerations when interacting with the participants, as outlined in the ethical considerations part. The authors maintained open communication with the interviewees throughout the process. Lastly, from an environmental perspective, the authors conducted most of the interviews online to minimize the carbon footprint and facilitate the involvement of participants from different locations. In cases where a participant was nearby, bicycles were used to minimize emissions. To reduce waste, physical papers were avoided and instead digital documents were used.

3.11 Work Process

The authors have divided the work equally while carrying out the research and writing the thesis. Most of the time the authors have sat together and written. There were only a few days when the authors were apart, then the different parts of each chapter were fairly divided. These days apart, the authors still talked to each other at least once per day to discuss what they had formulated and what they needed to do next to create an excellent composition and standard for the study. There was also a plan for each week of what was to be achieved that week in order to complete all the work on time.

4. Empirical Findings & Analysis

The upcoming section is presenting the empirical results derived from the semi-structured interviews combined with the analysis. A combination of these was

chosen to avoid the repetition of information. This chapter examines the results of the primary data collection by connecting them with the literature review. As the data undergoes thematic analysis, a model was created that shows how the themes were found. It can be found in section 3.8 Data Analysis of how the themes in the empirical findings were found. The data were categorized into the following themes that emerged from the model: Sustainability and Concerns about the Environment, Customer experience which includes the sub-theme: word-of-mouth, The Smell in a Second-hand Store, Store Atmosphere and Its Influence on Purchase Decisions which includes the sub-themes: Visual, Touch, and, Background music while shopping and lastly Participant's Suggestions on Potential Improvements to Second-hand stores.

4.1 The participants of the interviews

The individuals who participated in this thesis preferred to retain anonymity. In consideration of their wish for anonymity, the authors have opted to refer to the participants with fictional surnames.

4.2 Sustainability and Concerns about the Environment

One participant acknowledges that one of the main factors of shopping second-hand is the environmental aspect, another aspect is the low prices (Månsson). Another interviewee agrees with these factors of why she purchases second-hand and adds *“It feels like you can with a clear conscience buy stuff that you might not really need if you have bought it second hand”* (Ek). This statement agrees with Seo and Kim’s (2019) statement that consumers often tend to purchase products they do not need. This does not help with the issue of over-consumerism, currently one of the most pressing issues today due to the earth's resources being used and polluted. One informant reported that she almost only purchases apparel from second-hand stores. *“It is very rare that I purchase something newly produced and when it happens I carefully consider it before making a purchase”* (Månsson). This statement aligns with the findings that there is a segment of individuals that mainly purchase second-hand. The factors influencing this shopping pattern are environmental causes (Yan, Bae & Xu 2015) unique items, and lower prices (Dooley 2019). One individual stated that in the last two years, she has become more considerate of the environment compared to before when shopping was more for fun (Ek). It was indicated by a participant that it is difficult to stay away from fast fashion these days:

“I think it is hard to stay away from buying fast fashion because you are constantly fed with advertising on both Facebook and Instagram. As soon as I

find something that I like, I put it in my camera roll or save the link and then it is very difficult to keep myself from buying later” (Åberg).

This statement is in agreement with previous studies that fast fashion is an outstanding business model (Turker & Altunas 2014). This is seen in the easy access to fast fashion (Brick, Halsey & Ekenga 2018) both online where individuals are continuously impacted in the digital world by their advertising (Helm, Kim & Riper 2018) and in their rapid production and delivery time (Niinimäki & Hassi 2011). Lindh on the other hand, does not necessarily think about the environment when buying apparel:

“As I am a student I would say that it is mostly an economic question if it was not that expensive with quality clothes, I would have thought it was more important to buy fewer garments that are more durable at a higher price, but it all comes down to what kind of finances you have yourself at the moment”.

This statement is in agreement with previous studies that students are the main segment that purchases second-hand due to their low income (Seo & Kim 2019). As one interviewee put it: *“I would not say that second-hand shopping is something I do because I want to contribute to a better environment. It is mostly because I think it is fun to make some bargains”.* Later she explains that it might be an alternative if people want to incorporate the second-hand concept into everyday life by purchasing furniture, apparel, and other products at physical second-hand stores instead of buying everything newly produced (Larsson). One of the participants chose to shop second-hand primarily for environmental reasons, given the negative impact of fast fashion on the environment, such as the release of harmful chemicals and poor working conditions for employees. Buying second-hand allows clothes to be reused and contributes to a circular economy. Wiklund also sells apparel she no longer needs to further reduce the environmental impact (Wiklund). This agrees with the statement that another segment that also purchases second-hand apparel does it for environmental reasons only (Yan, Bae & Xu 2015). On the other hand, another one of the participants shops second-hand mainly to save money but indirectly considers the environment (Andersson). Furthermore, another participant also stated that she takes the environment into account when shopping for clothes and buys a lot of second-hand items. But she chooses not to buy certain types of clothing such as workout clothes, underwear, and socks because of the uncomfortable feeling of wearing used items in these categories. It was also mentioned by the participants that she recognizes the problem of fast fashion and feels conflicted about supporting these companies despite the negative impact on the environment. She is considering changing her shopping habits to reduce her

contribution to this issue (Nilsson). Svensson on the contrary mentions that she rather purchases something that is more expensive and therefore gets higher quality than purchase from fast fashion brands. But this way of thinking started when she had finished her studies and began working and earning money. One participant mentioned that she has a concern about fast fashion's effect on the planet:

“I think companies need to act much more sustainably. H&M, for example, are very good at saying that they are so sustainable and that they work for the environment and they often show a lot of numbers and statistics and so on that they are climate-friendly” But I just think it is a lot of nonsense and that they use nice words. Because they still produce new collections every week. It is not sustainable, but they can twist and angle everything so it looks sustainable to the person reading their website”.

This statement from a participant highly aligns with the findings in the literature review that fast fashion brands often try to portray themselves as climate-friendly with their different collections that are named conscious collections, but these brands are still the ones that cause the most damage to the environment (Veganfirst n.d.). She adds that this is something she has noticed from most fast fashion companies, namely that is something that she thinks needs to change (Månsson). One individual stated that the rapid pace of new trends today is concerning for the environment (Ek). Another participant commented that it is horrifying that in fashion everything happens at a very swift pace. *“I think brands like Zara, when they have a new idea and want to launch, it takes 2-3 weeks and then it is out on the market”.* The interviewee also mentions the concerns about working conditions at factories and that much clothing is thrown away, which negatively affects the earth's resources (Svensson).

However, one of the participants does not have any major concerns about the environment but points out that sometimes she is reminded when watching a documentary about the negative effects of fast fashion (Åberg). Another interviewee, when asked about the concerns about fast fashion's effect on the environment, said that there are a lot of foreign fast fashion companies, for example, Shein that grows at a rapid pace. Shein is a company that is very good at replicating other brands, they also have a very low price *“which makes people motivated to shop and to purchase a lot because it is easily accessible and cheap. It is fast shipping and they have easy returns and that is something people like”.* She continues to add that fast fashion makes a living by sending out advertising to their right target audience and has apps that can detect their customer's shopping patterns, and through that send out discount codes, which will make their customers very attached to that particular company (Björklund).

Talking about the issue of fast fashion's negative effect on the environment an interviewee said *“I think it is hard to break something that has been around for long, you have all these fast fashion brands like H&M, Cubus, and others. After all, they have contributed to the fact that you change your clothes often”*. This interviewee also argued that she thinks it would be hard to get more people to purchase more sustainably, due to the fact that there are several different reasons why people avoid second-hand stores. It can be everything from a feeling that it is a little nasty to use clothes that someone else once wore or a germ scare, also that fast fashion is more accessible and easy to purchase from. She agrees with the statement that Björklund mentioned about fast fashion (Berg). The findings highlight the nuanced perspectives of the participants, Åberg who emphasized that she does not have any major concerns about the environment, unlike Björklund and Berg who has a concern for the environment and all the damaging effects of purchasing fast fashion. Both the participants do not think it would be easy to break this pattern of buying fast fashion, due to the fact that individuals today are so used to it everywhere and all the easy access to it, it would be hard to break that pattern. This aligns with previous research from Turker and Altuntas (2014) who stated that the business model of fast fashion has been a success globally, with its mass production and easy access to trendy new apparel.

Other responses to the question about if it would be better for the environment if more people chose to purchase apparel at second-hand stores included: *“Yes, definitely. But everything is about supply and demand. If there is a demand for fast fashion, it will continue to be produced, but if there is a bigger demand for second-hand, the supply will increase”*. The participant has noticed that in recent years it has moved more towards second-hand shopping, especially becoming more popular with people in their twenties *“which is very good because it is, after all, the shopping of the future”* (Svensson). It is added by another respondent that *“you will have to find a balance between new and old items, also consider quality before price. As we live in a very price-focused world which easily can become quite dangerous due to the negative impacts on the environment”* (Strand). In one case, one of the participants thought that everyone likes different styles and that makes it possible for everyone to find something for themselves in second-hand stores. *“I would say that we would probably have managed with what we have right now. If only we had been able to exchange with each other, it would probably have been much better for the environment”* (Åberg). Unlike findings in the previous research, Åberg mentioned a valid point to the researchers of this study in her previous statement, which is something that needs to be considered in

today's society. Currently, the existing apparel would possibly be enough for everyone and if everybody would exchange clothes with each other this would make the clothes last longer and individuals would also get new clothes even though they would be reused. This would be better for the environment that manufactures new apparel constantly. This aligns with previous research that mentions the harmful effect mass production of fast fashion items has on the environment, the harmful chemicals needed when manufacturing the apparel which causes damage to both the environment and the people living nearby factories. The brief usage strategy that fast fashion brands have of the apparel also encourages customers to frequently purchase new items in large quantities (Gwozdz, Steensen Nilsen & Müller 2017; Evans, Grimmer & Grimmer 2022; Bick, Halsey & Ekenga 2018; Zhang, Zhang & Zhou 2021). Commenting on if it would be better for the environment if more people chose second-hand instead of fast fashion, one of the interviewees said:

“It would not be possible to just buy second-hand either. Because we may not notice this in Sweden, but in many developing countries they make a living by making clothes, they make a living by us in richer countries order in abundance and then if we stop with all that, then they do not have any jobs. Nor will they bring in any money for the country. It will be a disaster for those countries”

There needs to be a cut back on buying fast fashion and acquiring an overflow of commodities, as well as purchasing items solely for the purpose of showcasing them, for example, in a TikTok video. This is unnecessary, but at the same time someone has been working with the shirt you bought and earned a few Swedish krona (SEK) from it, and maybe that made them get food that day, so it is really hard to know how to act and think concerning this matter (Ek). In contrast to the findings in the literature review, the previous statement from a participant mentions aspects from a different angle, which implies that it would not work in today's society to only purchase second-hand, due to developing countries being in need of income to be able to survive. Another interviewee thinks it would be very problematic to go back to how it was before when you bought fewer consumer goods and had fewer options

“The thing about how we humans work is that as soon as we have something, it is very difficult to go back to how it was before. Today we can go into a store and there are 1000 different options and you can always find your size on what you want I do not think it would have helped the environment if more people had chosen to shop second-hand” (Månsson).

Another participant mentioned that *“even though people nowadays tend to shop second-hand online from Sellpy, the clothes there are from fast fashion brands, so it probably does not help that much for our environment”*. The interviewee also said that this still contributes to higher consumption of apparel, despite the fact that garments are reused. *“I think to solve this issue we need to get politicians to introduce new laws to what companies can when it comes to manufacturing, for the sake of the environment”* (Strand).

4.3 Customer Experience

Månssons' experiences with second-hand stores have been both positive and negative. She lives in Stockholm and has noticed that there are two types of different second-hand stores there, one that differs from the others are a second-hand store called Judits Second-hand, which has a more exclusive selection of apparel. Furthermore, she mentions the other type called Stockholms Stadsmission, there is a large range of products, and the condition they are in varies a lot, a dress can be dirty and have holes in it. *“Prices at Stadsmissionen are absurd, such as a shirt with the price of 100 kr with a print for someone's birthday”*. Månsson continues to mention that there is a blend of bad and good products, and the good products often have a much higher price almost such as the original price. Andersson agrees and mentions that when the prices of apparel are almost the same as the original, she would rather purchase at a fast fashion store to get the new item. Månsson also commented:

“As a customer, there is a need to figure out if you are willing to purchase something similar to the original price and browse through a cluttered second-hand store to maybe find something in an acceptable condition for a low price or instead visit a more exclusive store and pay more for a product but be certain that the quality is better”.

The viewpoints expressed by the participants Månsson and Andersson are consistent with prior studies, suggesting that there are different types of second-hand stores some are non-profit which have lesser quality and often lower prices, and others are for-profit with a more exclusive assortment with higher quality, these stores often have a selection that is vintage rather than the typical assortment of a non-profit second-hand store. Previous research also indicates that individuals may hold varying perceptions of these types of stores (Liu, Eng, & Sekhon 2014; Liu & Ko 2013; Aaker, Vohs & Mogilner 2010). In contrast with previous studies, the insight from Månsson is that even if she purchases something at a non-profit second-hand in Stockholm the prices are going to be much higher than what the item is worth. This also suggests that prices in a bigger city in a non-profit store are going to be higher than in a smaller city.

According to Björklund, second-hand stores are often perceived as messy, but this chaotic atmosphere can also be part of their charm and enjoyed by many. She has noticed that while it can be overwhelming for her personally, with an excessive amount of products to browse through, for others, it can be a pleasant sensory experience. Additionally, she mentions that the second-hand store named Busfrö, which has a more selective selection process, is a place where she feels more at ease buying clothing. This is due to the belief that the store carefully inspects the incoming garments before presenting them for sale, unlike other stores. Another participant prefers shopping at Busfrö due to the clean and high-quality atmosphere, where clothes are washed before being displayed for sale (Lindh). The perspectives expressed by the participants Björklund and Lindh are in line with established research, reinforcing customer experience as an important factor for customer satisfaction, shaping their attitudes and mindset towards that particular store. Customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in potentially influencing customer loyalty to a store (Balaji & Maheswari 2021; Kumar, Dalla Pozza & Ganesh 2013).

One individual stated that shopping for clothes at second-hand stores feels more personal and unique. This is because they offer a chance to discover pieces that are not typical or mass-produced, as seen in fast fashion stores. Instead, shoppers can uncover one-of-a-kind products that are limited to one single size and the product may be several years old, also the apparel can have more character than new clothes. This participant reported that she perceives this as a highly beneficial aspect of shopping second-hand (Andersson). One informant reported that the number one reason for her to shop second-hand is the environmental aspect, but it would also be circular shopping. However, she also feels that it is the excitement of not knowing what to find and the possibility to find something unique that you can't find anywhere else, *“it definitely takes longer time to find items at a second-hand store but when you find something that is unique, you will be the only one to wear it, then it is worth the time spent in the store”* (Svensson). This aligns with previous research that the excitement of not knowing what to find when looking through everything is an intriguing experience and a motivator for customers who shop in physical second-hand stores (Xu, Chen, Burman & Zhao 2014). One interviewee mentions that online shopping and shopping through apps are not as fun as visiting a physical store. *“Walking around in a store is a fun activity that I like to do, online shopping is not as a fun experience. When I am out shopping I want to have a unique store experience”* (Strand). This statement is in line with previous research which mentions customers today want an unforgettable store experience that is interesting due to a more demanding society (Gao, Melero-Polo & Sese 2019). Another interviewee acknowledges that visiting a physical second-hand

store is an enjoyable social experience. *“I like to go with my friends to second-hand stores and see what interesting and unique products we can find”*. The respondent also mentions that for her it is important that the whole experience in the store is satisfying, she wants the store to be clean, fresh, and organized. *“If a store has those attributes the atmosphere and the experience could possibly be perfect”* (Åberg). This aligns with previous research that states that store atmosphere has an effect on customer satisfaction and that the customer journey in the store needs to be well thought out as it impacts the satisfaction of customers. Every different touchpoint needs to be considered to create a pleasurable experience in the customer journey (Blázquez 2014; Kandampully, Zhang & Jaakkola 2017; Kuehnl, Jozic & Homburg 2019).

4.3.1 Word of Mouth

Nowadays influencers have a huge influence on everybody especially when it comes to where to shop and what to wear. They post their outfits on their social media and mention where every clothing piece is bought (Björklund). She continues by mentioning *“When you see influencers wearing something you like, it is usually extremely easy to visit the linked page they have provided and that is clearly very worrying and a huge factor driving fast fashion consumption”*. However, as one interviewee put it: *“Many influencers have begun to shop second-hand. I think it is positive that you see influencers purchase something second-hand, for example, a biker jacket which then creates a buzz around this type of shopping, making more people choose second-hand”*. Some influencers also mention the store atmosphere *“I visited this second-hand store in Stockholm which has the coolest vibe and the atmosphere is great”*, that is something that one participant mentioned that she has seen on influencers social media posts. Which makes her interested in visiting that specific second-hand store (Strand). The viewpoints expressed by the participants are consistent with prior studies, suggesting a satisfied customer is the most successful sales representative for a company. Also aligned with the findings in the literature review, customer store engagement and positive word-of-mouth can be increased if a company has thoroughly designed and implemented a well-planned strategy in their stores (Wangenheim 2005). In contrast to this statement, Björklund mentioned that influencers are the ones who drive people to continue to buy fast fashion today and consume quantities of it as well, which negatively affects the environment, something that was not found in previous studies.

Most of the participants agreed with the statement that they all visited second-hand stores due to hearing good recommendations from friends and family (Axelsson; Jakobsson; Olsson; Ljung; Strand; Björklund & Andersson). The observations made by

the participants in this research resonate with existing literature provided by (Herves-Drane 2015; You & Hon 2021) who both emphasized that customers tend to recommend stores to friends and family when they had a positive experience themselves when visiting a specific store, which will generate customers to visit it. Another participant stated the reason why she was encouraged to start second-hand shopping, which was due to the popularity of second-hand in today's society. Seeing others frequent thrift shopping inspired her to give it a try. Initially, she bought items such as books and vases, but eventually, her focus shifted to clothes (Nilsson). One participant commented that she was inspired to start shopping second-hand due to her sister's love for it and also due to her hanging out with her grandmother who also liked visiting different second-hand stores and they always talked well about second-hand stores. *“Now it is more that I hear from friends they recommend different stores and then I also go with them so it has become a fun social activity to do”* (Åberg).

4.4 The Smell in a Second-hand Store

During the interviews, one of the main factors that emerged was the distinct scent the majority of second-hand stores have. Agreed by every participant that is something they notice directly when entering the store. Svensson mentions that smell is one of the first elements that she notices more in a second-hand store than in comparison to a regular fashion store. *“I think I’m more accepting when it comes to smell in a second-hand store rather than a normal store”* (Svensson). This finding was unexpected and not found in previous research. This suggests that there are some individuals that do not have the same expectations as when visiting a regular physical fashion store. It implies that these customers are more accepting if they come across a store that has an unfavorable smell. It would not be a deciding factor for them when it comes to making the choice to visit a second-hand store. The interviewee elaborates that she is more open to the idea of a second-hand store having a distinct aroma and a certain aesthetic, in contrast to a typical fashion retailer. But it depends on how substantial the difference is between a regular store, which usually is well organized and clean compared to a second-hand store. Such elements contribute to enhancing the overall shopping experience (Svensson). Lindh agrees that smell has a big impact while shopping. She also mentions that in most cases apparel has been washed and this makes the smell in the store more neutral, but there are still some second-hand stores that have the old and dusty smell. Björklund and Ek both acknowledged that the narrowed atmosphere and stale scents which often are associated with second-hand stores could potentially have a negative effect on the shopping experience, but this can vary from store to store. Ek comments the opportunity of finding something good in a

second-hand store is limited when there is a bad scent “*but the funny thing is that place is usually where I find the most interesting and rare items, so considering that there is a chance that it will be a positive experience even though it is initially negative*” (Ek). This finding was unexpected and implies that when there are some negative factors it might not always mean that the outcome will be less favorable, sometimes it can turn out positive in the end. Axelsson observes that the intensity of the store's smell influences the duration of her visit. She then explains:

“If the store smells good, I tend to stay longer because it gives me a feeling that the products are more luxurious and cleaner. However, if the clothes smell bad, I feel like they are dirty and old, and it discourages me from spending more time in the store” (Axelsson).

The observations made by the participants in this research resonate with existing literature, emphasizing that companies that implement a scent strategy create positive feelings and emotions and attract customers to the store, which potentially can result in longer stays by customers and also in the store (Spence & Carvalho 2020). She was also clear in expressing that not all second-hand stores have a smell, the second-hand stores that primarily have a smell are often the larger ones because these stores usually have the largest selection which leads to more products being present. Jakobsson agrees with Axelsson regarding the impact of the store's scent on the duration of their stay, as well as the perception of product cleanliness when the fragrance is unpleasant. “*If it smells bad in a second-hand store I would not be there very long*” (Jakobsson). Lindh also agrees with this statement. However, Jakobsson further elaborates that when searching for a particular item for an extended period, one might disregard an unpleasant smell and choose to buy the item, planning to launder it at home with the expectation of eliminating the scent. However, if she encounters an item with a bad fragrance it may result in a choice not to buy it. Olsson partly agrees with Jakobsson about the smell, she mentions that she would buy clothes even if it smells a bit bad. She wanted to clarify:

“I always wash everything I buy second-hand before I use it. In fact, I recently bought a sweater and even after washing it, there was still a strong smell. It seems that the smell is deeply embedded in the fabric, unfortunately, it made me not want to wear it”.

However, even though she is not as sensitive as Axelsson and Jakobsson to the smell in a second-hand store, a strong scent can affect her choice to use that particular garment

that she bought (Olsson). Another participant is more particular about the smell in second-hand stores, as it influences her shopping experience and a strong smell discourages her from shopping second-hand (Gustafsson). She observes that the scent can vary significantly from one second-hand store to another. Second-hand stores such as Stadsmissionen have a stronger smell (Gustafsson). Stadsmission is a non-profit second-hand store that is located in ten different cities in Sweden (Stadsmissionen 2023). The viewpoint expressed by the participant is supported by existing research and emphasizes the existence of a distinct and unpleasant smell in second-hand stores such as Stadsmissionen. The smell in these types of second-hand stores can create a perception of uncleanliness, leading customers to avoid purchasing the apparel. The smell is likely caused by factors such as previous storage conditions and the age of the items (New York Times 2018). The interviewee further mentions *“There is a second-hand store where I live called Arkivet. This store is very clean and I do not notice any distinct smell like I often do in the majority of second-hand stores I have visited”* (Gustafsson). Arkivet is a second-hand store located in both Stockholm and Gothenburg. This store has a more modern approach and puts extra effort into the experience of the store and only accepts clothes that are modern and in good condition (Arkivet 2023). Another participant explained *“The smell of a sweater can be a deciding factor for me when making a purchase. Even if the sweater is visually appealing, a repulsive smell could lead me to believe it is unclean, and I might not purchase it”* (Karlsson). This is in line with previous research that states that store layout and atmosphere have a significant impact on the customer purchase decision-making process. Creating a positive environment leads to customer satisfaction (Lu & Seo 2015; Ainsworth & Foster 2017). This implies that the second-hand store Arkivet has a successful strategy in its store environment.

However, both Berg and Månsson acknowledge that smell does not affect them while shopping. Berg states that *“if there is a certain smell there are ways to get rid of it. In some cases, when clothes have been stored for a long time they can take on a certain smell, but washing them often makes them smell fresh again”*. Månsson states that apparel that is older can obtain a certain smell even after being washed several times, which most people are aware of. She adds by saying *“I understand that people are more aware of a second-hand store scent, compared to the scent they smell when visiting an H & M”*. She further explains that, in her opinion, second-hand stores have the habit of having too much merchandise in their store at once, which makes it more complicated for them to sort and organize the products effectively (Månsson). Berg further explains that a strong unpleasant scent can have a negative impact on her

shopping experience, making her less inclined to purchase anything. Åberg agrees with this, she then adds *“there are times when I enter a store and immediately think, I do not want to buy anything here and question why I even came in the first place”*. The insights shared by the participants are in line with established research, reinforcing that there often is a certain distinct smell in second-hand stores, that customers find unpleasant, these factors could have emerged from previous storage conditions and the age of the garment (New York Times 2018). Also in line with previous research, these unfavorable feelings can generate negative attitudes towards the store (Lunardo 2012). This combined evidence highlights the significant impact of the smell on customer behavior and attitudes in second-hand stores.

There are more negative aspects than positive when visiting a second-hand store, *“the smell in a second-hand store is the worst above all scents, it is unpleasant and the stores are often packed with too many items”* (Nilsson). Nilsson wants to clarify that not all of them are packed with items, there are two different types of second-hand stores. She mentions Arkivet as it is bright, airy, and well-sorted, but in some others, there is too much stuff. *“I buy the clothes, but I get the sense that the clothing item has not been well-taken care of. I am not sure if they have been washed since the store acquired them, and I worry about mold or pests”*. Further Nilsson explains that mold and pests can be present in apparel for sale at second-hand stores due to various factors, such as the age of the clothing and its previous owners and locations. *“I am afraid of it when I buy from second-hand stores”*. Mold and pests are some examples of negative reasons and risks when shopping second-hand. This finding one participant mentioned to the researchers was unexpected and suggests that an important aspect could scare some customers away. They have not yet been studied closely, which are mold and pests. These are factors that can give apparel a bad smell and make the condition of the garment less appealing.

4.5 Store Atmosphere and Its Influence on Purchase Decisions

Olsson discusses the impact of an unorganized store layout.

“I perceive unorganized and messy second-hand stores as less clean. If the staff is unaware of the store's structure, how can we know if they care about cleanliness? I would say these two are linked to each other. I also believe that the stores with a layout similar to Zara and H&M are preferable, as they give me the feeling of walking into a regular store.”

Furthermore, Månsson acknowledges that some stores have color-coordinated and arranged merchandise nicely. *“But in other stores, it is just pure chaos. It can be overwhelming because a wedding dress might be hanging right next to a pair of sweatpants, and I do not know where to start”*. Andersson and Wiklund also prefer second-hand stores to be color-sorted and well-organized. Andersson finds it helpful when stores have mannequins in display windows to provide an idea of available items before visiting the store. However, she explains that either an organized environment or conscious chaos is preferable. *“Organized chaos can be fun because it can create a different atmosphere where details stand out and inspire”* she says. For instance, when there is a method behind the chaos (Andersson). Månsson mentions that the appearance of the store has an impact on her purchasing decisions, if it looks appealing, she is more likely to be attracted to it. However, if it appears cluttered and overwhelming, she might not even bother checking because it would take up too much time and effort, which is not worth it for her (Månsson). The perspectives shared by the participants Andersson and Månsson align with existing research findings. An essential element for stores to achieve an efficient store layout lies in its ability to enhance sales and the amount of time customers spend in the store. Conversely, a deficient and disorganized layout can result in customers refraining from making purchases and swiftly departing the store (Lu & Seo 2015). Both the store's visual appeal and its layout hold considerable importance in influencing customers' decisions. A visually enticing store attracts attention and interest, while an efficient layout contributes to increased sales and extended customer stays. However, if the store has a bad and messy layout, customers may choose not to buy anything and leave the store quickly.

Finding items in a disorganized second-hand store can be more challenging compared to a structured one (Halling & Nilsson). A structured store allows for a more accessible overview of the available selection (Nilsson). Another interviewee agrees with this viewpoint and highlights that a well-organized store tends to spark her enthusiasm and desire to keep on shopping (Ek). Two of the participants prefer stores with a smaller selection of clothes, as it allows them to thoroughly browse through the available options. Which gives them the opportunity to see most, if not all, of what's available (Gustafsson & Bergman). Additionally, it is mentioned by one participant that if a store has tall shelves, it can be challenging to get a good overview of everything and it is hard to know where to begin. Therefore, the appearance of the store's premises is an important factor (Ek). According to Larsson, it is important for the layout of a store to be well-planned, so that customers are guided through the store easily. There is no point in having a large space where everything is disorganized, causing customers to miss out

on the majority of the product. Instead, there should be a clear path to follow through different product sections (Larsson). Lindh highlights the importance for the store to have well-planned paths, particularly when customers are accompanied by children or pushing a stroller, in order to ensure a smooth and easy shopping experience. According to Jakobsson, lighting can impact whether she will purchase something. It can be hard to see colors when the store is too dark. Finding a better-lit area to be able to analyze the item could be too demanding to even try (Jakobsson). This statement supports the findings of Helmfalk and Hultén's (2017) research, which emphasizes the significant impact of a store's lighting and color scheme on consumers' emotions and perceptions of its offerings, services, and prices. Both Jakobsson's viewpoint and Helmfalk and Hultén's study recognize the crucial role played by aesthetics and visual elements in the success of stores. Prioritizing appealing visuals and aesthetics tends to lead to higher levels of success for stores, as demonstrated in the previous research. In accordance with this, physical stores can benefit from having a well-planned layout and organized assortment, to make the store more appealing for customers.

4.5.1 Visual

According to Nilsson, there is a higher likelihood of purchasing clothes with stains and holes at second-hand stores compared to regular ones. In some cases, due to poor lighting inside the second-hand store, one might unknowingly bring home clothes with stains and holes. Although Nilsson always washes the clothes, there is always the risk that some stains may not disappear, and fixing garments could be time-consuming and require loads of effort. However, given the low prices, this is something that one should anticipate. Nilsson notes, *"I am not as disappointed if there is a hole in a second-hand garment as if there would be a hole in a newly produced garment. Then I think, "I should have noticed it"*. One participant commented that she believes that the presentation of products has a significant impact on whether customers will notice and find items that appeal to them. In other words, how products are displayed and presented can greatly influence the shopping experience and ultimately determine whether customers will make a purchase or not (Larsson). Additionally, *"When products are well-presented, it helps me envision how a jacket would fit with items I already have at home, which may lead to a purchase"* (Berg). This aligns with the previous research that customer attitudes in the store are influenced by every touchpoint in the store (Balaji and Maheswari 2021).

One informant reported that she prefers soft lighting in second-hand stores, while also acknowledging the importance of sufficient brightness to properly be able to evaluate clothing colors and the condition of items. *"Having windows is even better since it*

allows natural daylight to come in” (Lindh). Axelsson agrees with Lindh and adds, the lighting should be soft enough to make the colors and quality of the clothes visible. *“Nevertheless, the lighting alone would not be the deciding factor in my purchase if I really like the garment”* (Axelsson). The observations made by the participants on lightning resonate with existing literature, which are emphasizing that lightning has a crucial effect in creating a certain atmosphere. Also, the strength and brightness have an impact on how long a customer stays in the store (Helmefalk & Hultén 2017). Furthermore, one participant mentions that while soft lighting is preferred, stronger lighting can be used to highlight specific items in the store, making it easier for customers to see them (Berg). Another interviewee argues that she does not prefer dark lighting because it makes it difficult to distinguish colors, such as whether a garment is black or dark blue. However, the participant does not want it to be too bright because it can feel overwhelming. *“Strong lighting, combined with crowded spaces, can be annoying”*. She also mentions, *“I think second-hand stores really need to find a balance between nice and soft lighting”* (Jakobsson). It was brought up by two of the participants the importance of having good lighting in-store fitting rooms (Berg & Åberg). As one interviewee put it *“When I am in a fitting room and the light makes me look big when I try something on, which immediately makes me avoid buying anything in that particular store”* (Månsson). One individual stated that *“If the fitting rooms are poorly lit, I probably will not purchase anything, it is not like I want to try on the garment out in the store with other customers around me”* (Åberg). Unlike the findings in previous research, one important factor mentioned by several participants of the interviews was the importance of a well-planned lighting strategy for in-store fitting rooms, which is a factor that can determine if customers will purchase anything at all. This is something that especially second-hand stores need to improve to increase sales. As one interviewee put it:

“In my opinion, suitable lighting for a second-hand store depends on the situation. I think it should be bright enough to see the clothes and colors clearly. However, I think that there can be a different feeling in the store if it is a little darker and when there are spotlights that shine in specific places. It can make the atmosphere feel more luxurious, which I personally like”.

Furthermore, the participant mentioned various suggestions that she thinks would be something for second-hand stores to implement. For example, she explained that considering their lighting choices and strategically placing light fixtures enhances the shopping experience (Gustafsson).

4.5.2 Touch

One informant reported that physical stores are where she prefers to shop. *“I like to be more spontaneous and visit a store whenever I feel for it, to get the whole experience. I also want to be able to touch the clothes I am looking at, which is difficult through a screen”*. Being able to squeeze and touch all products is an advantage of physical stores, and it has a huge effect on people's purchase decisions (Åberg). As one interviewee put it *“being able to touch and feel the fabrics on a garment makes me more motivated and sure if I should make a purchase or not, also the possibility to be able to try the garment on”*. This aligns with previous research that mentions fitting rooms applied to physical fashion stores as a strategy to make customers feel more sure and help their decision-making process while considering purchasing a garment (Lund 2015). The participant adds that she has bought apparel online but when touching it in real life the garment often does not reach her expectations. That is why she prefers to visit a physical store (Strand). These statements provided by the participants are in line with previous research, which has emphasized that touch has a significant role in product evaluation (Ranaweera, Martin & Jin 2021). There are several benefits to buying second-hand items in a physical store. One of these advantages is the ability to calmly browse around the store, feel and try out the products. It can be challenging to determine whether a clothing item will fit and be comfortable when shopping online. However, online shopping is convenient and efficient, allowing shoppers to use filters and see the entire range of products (Axelsson; Jakobsson; Olsson; Gustafsson & Larsson).

“Personally, I prefer to shop for second-hand items in physical stores because I can touch the clothes and try them on. Smaller physical second-hand stores are also appreciated because they offer the opportunity to see the entire range of products” (Olsson).

The perspectives expressed by the interviewee are in line with established research, reinforcing that touch is a crucial factor in the decision-making process when it comes to purchases in physical stores (Soars 2009). Many people prefer physical stores because they allow shoppers to see the true colors of the clothes and feel the fabric. This is a significant advantage when purchasing clothes for the majority of the participants (Axelsson; Jakobsson; Bergman; Olsson; Gustafsson & Larsson).

4.5.3 Background music while Shopping

For most of the interviewees, music had a positive influence as long as it was not too loud. On the other hand, there were some who were not affected by music at all and did not even consider whether there was music playing in second-hand stores or not. It was

mentioned by one participant that she thinks that music affects customers unconsciously on how long they will stay in the store. *"It also affects the whole vibe you get when entering the store"* (Svensson). One of the participants is not bothered by going into a second-hand store without music. *"I do not think it is important because I would not mind shopping without music"*. However, she acknowledges that if the second-hand store would play music of her preferences it could have a positive effect on her, she ends the discussion with *"Good music may impact my mood and inspire me to explore the entire assortment of a second-hand store"* (Jakobsson). One participant mentioned that music can contribute to a better mood and a more positive overall vibe in the store. However, the interviewee explains that she prefers some up-tempo pop music. *"Customers get more energy and become more motivated to shop"* (Andersson). According to Soars (2009), music has the ability to positively impact individuals' moods and inspire them to explore a wider range of products when shopping in physical stores. This finding aligns with the statement made by Jakobsson, who suggests that good music can influence her mood and increase her motivation to explore the assortment of second-hand stores. The convergence of theoretical and empirical evidence supports the notion that music has a beneficial effect on individuals' moods, ultimately leading to increased motivation and engagement with the available products. Olsson argues that *"We all do have some kind of connection with music, we get impacted by music every day even if we do not think about it"*. She explains that she instinctively switches to another song when she comes across a bad one. However, she continues, *"If a second-hand store plays good music, I think you actually want to stay longer in the store"*. The perspectives expressed by the participants are in line with established research, reinforcing that music in a store can affect how long a customer stays in the store as well as how much money they spend (Géci, Nagyová & Rybanská 2017). As one interviewee put it: *"Shopping with chill lounge music in the background makes me almost feel at home when I walk around in a store, it has a positive effect"* (Svensson). This statement aligns with previous research by Krishna (2012), who mentioned that sound can evoke certain emotions and feelings, especially in physical fashion stores. This implies that setting a good mood in a store is crucial due to its effect on their customers, level of interest, and involvement.

Second-hand stores have a tendency to have very loud music, and that is something some customers strongly dislike. *"Loud and uptempo music can in many cases distract me, I get overwhelmed and get stressed out. Which makes me quickly exit the store after a very brief visit"* (Olsson). Larsson also agrees that the more up-tempo the music is, the faster you move through the store and leave. Another participant commented that

she feels stressed in general when being in environments that are crowded, and this often makes her visits in these situations shorter and faster (Åberg). Contrary to previous research, the statement by the interviewees mentions that up-tempo music makes you want to leave the store quickly, and in contrast, previous research shows that to attract customers, retailers are employing a business strategy that involves incorporating high-tempo music. The utilization of such music in the background is intended to foster faster visits and potentially attract a greater number of customers (Soars 2009). This highlights and shows that there are differences depending on the individual's responses to music, indicating that while high-tempo music may be an effective strategy for some customers, it can have adverse effects on others, leading to a shorter and faster store visit. One individual stated that *"because there are so many different products in second-hand shops it can be overwhelming, the tempo of the music has to be slow and calm because it is important that people take the time to look through everything before they go"* (Björklund). Andersson mentions that background music is probably preferable. She further explains that *"It can be a bit of sensory overload if there is really loud music, lots of people talking and products everywhere"*. This aligns with previous research from Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal, and Roggeveen (2014) who highlight that excessive use of sensory touchpoints in a store can lead to sensory overload, with customers' perception of this overload being influenced by their individual preferences. Consequently, it becomes crucial for stores to consider their target market and carefully determine the appropriate number of sensory cues to incorporate in order to address this issue effectively (Spence et al. 2014).

In contrast, two of the interviewees mention that music with a soft style, for example instrumental, classical, or jazz, would make them have a slightly slower pace when browsing the store's assortment (Larsson & Berg). As one interviewee put it: *"Music should be calm and not too loud so I can think"* (Lindh). Another participant argues that there should be calm music playing in the background of a second-hand store, it does not need to be any specific genre but the music should be at a low volume so that people can talk inside the store and move around calmly. *"I do not think music affects how long I stay in a second-hand store, but calm music at a low volume is something I prefer"* (Karlsson). This aligns with previous research, which has shown that there was an increase in sales when the music was softer and not that up-tempo (Soars 2009). To draw a final point, preferences for music are different among customers, and it can determine the time spent in the store. However, softer music could possibly be the better choice for second-hand stores.

4.6 Participant's Suggestions on Potential Improvements to Second-Hand Stores

It was suggested by one participant that she would prefer to see more second-hand stores use the same strategy as the second-hand store Arkivet. She further explains that Arkivet has more branded clothing, which is something that makes it feel more luxurious even though it is a second-hand store. The apparel in Arkivet also has a newer feeling compared to other second-hand stores' apparel. The participant concludes that Arkivet takes better care of its apparel and presents it better visually in its store than most other second-hand stores do. *"They have successfully displayed a better assortment of clothes in color codes and the space in their stores is more open rather than tiny and crowded than most other stores, which is more enjoyable"* (Svensson). This unforeseen result implies that creating a more luxurious feeling can enhance the physical second-hand store's brand image and make them more attractive to customers. Incorporating a more pleasant shopping experience could potentially be favorable for physical second-hand stores.

As one interviewee put it: *"A second-hand store's scent is the most crucial part, due to most of them having a bad and old smell which makes people avoid them. I think they should use linen spray to get a fresher smell"* (Månsson). Another participant mentioned that second-hand stores should think about what they as a store allows to be in their assortment. *"In my opinion, there are often many clothing pieces that are dirty and worn out. If they skipped that it would be nicer and it could make the store atmosphere feel cleaner and probably improve the smell as well"* (Strand). One participant discusses the unpleasant smell that is often common in second-hand stores due to the amount of leather and unwashed clothes. *"I do not want to buy clothes that haven't been taken care of and may smell bad"* (Andersson). Another participant suggests that if the store would provide information about the smell, and explain that this is common with older apparel it could make people more understanding about the smell. All of the statements according to the participants (Månsson; Strand & Andersson) align with previous studies that second-hand stores often have a unique and musty smell that some people find unpleasant. The smell's strength varies but is typically caused by factors such as the item's age and previous storage conditions (New York Times 2018). When customers encounter this unexpected scent, they become skeptical about the retailer's intentions. This doubt reduces their enjoyment, fosters negative attitudes, and affects their overall experience (Lunardo 2012). The importance of addressing unpleasant smells in second-hand stores to enhance customer experiences. Suggestions by the interviewees include using linen spray, organizing the

assortment carefully, and providing information to deepen understanding. The suggestions to eliminate dirt and bad smell from apparel in physical second-hand stores according to New York Times (2018) cleaning is an effective approach. Cleaning involves the process of removing dirt from textiles composed of different materials.

“After all, clothes may have absorbed smells, and getting some tips on how you can get rid of the smell could be good. I understand that most stores can not do that, but it could be good to contribute in some way to helping the customer to be more understanding” (Berg).

This finding was unexpected and suggests that information could be a possible key to spreading knowledge about scent in a second-hand store, which could potentially lead to a higher customer turnover. Olsson explains that price and selection are huge factors that affect if a second-hand store is good or not. Her explanation is:

“I think it is a lot about the price but also about the selection. What they are promoting in the store is also an important factor, if it is something you are interested in or not. Also if you go into a store that smells really bad and you see a rack with a bunch of jackets that you think are ugly, then you may not go in and continue looking. It is really about that first impression that plays a pretty big role, I would say”.

Talking about this issue a participant argue that if the apparel is clean and well taken care of, there would not be any strong scent. The participant also mention that if the apparel is displayed nicely she will gladly stay longer in the store. *“Adding scent is not something that I think is necessary, as the standard of the clothes is what determines the smell”* (Axelsson). Lindh agrees with Axelsson and adds that a neutral scent in the stores would be best suited. It is agreed and suggested by two participants that improvements in second-hand stores could include the store being more selective in what clothes they accept, and always washing apparel before selling them, even though it may result in higher prices (Andersson & Olsson). Based on this it can be concluded that there are several findings that came as a surprise and indicate that there are strong opinions from customers of second-hand stores about different improvements they would like to see, such as a more luxurious atmosphere, not necessarily only regarding the store appearance but also in the selection of garments included in the store. Another thing is the scent, which could be favorable to adding a neutral scent to make the shopping experience more pleasant. In conclusion, it can be significant for all the senses to be in congruence, alignment, or harmony to create an enjoyable atmosphere.

5. Conclusion

The last chapter in this thesis is the conclusion, in which the authors present the answer to the research question. In relation to the literature review, empirical findings, and analysis. Further, the authors also emphasize the research's theoretical and managerial implications and social, ethical, and sustainable implications. Furthermore, the limitations of this thesis and suggestions for future research are mentioned.

5.1 Answering the Research Questions

As a result of the increased demand to create a more appealing atmosphere in a physical second-hand store to attract more customers. Physical stores need to improve their strategies to create a more enjoyable experience for customers. Thus, in this thesis, the purpose of this study has been to research the impact of applying a sensory marketing strategy and how this could affect the customer experience and influence customers to purchase apparel from physical second-hand stores and, through that, be more sustainable. Furthermore, the research question is: How does sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores affect customer experience and influence sustainable purchase decisions? will be discussed in detail in the following section.

5.1.1 How does sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores affect customer experience and influence sustainable purchase decisions?

The evidence presented in the study suggests and provides a new understanding that physical second-hand stores could greatly benefit from implementing a well-crafted sensory marketing strategy. By creating a more appealing and pleasant customer experience and fostering a better store atmosphere, such a strategy addresses customers' desires for cleanliness, proper maintenance of clothes, and an absence of unpleasant smells. The absence of unpleasant smells, in particular, plays a significant role in customers' purchase decisions. Therefore, the implementation of a sensory marketing strategy not only enhances the overall customer experience but also significantly influences their purchase decisions. Hopefully, this research can contribute to promoting more sustainable fashion purchases among customers through the implementation of effective sensory marketing strategies. The findings of the research imply that consumers are increasingly concerned about the harmful environmental impact of fast fashion. This also suggests that fast fashion brands need to change the way they present themselves to their customers and not state that they are

climate-friendly when they clearly still have many factors in their business that harm the environment and need to change that before they state this climate-friendliness. Despite fast fashion brands portraying themselves as environmentally friendly, there are significant ethical issues that require attention.

To sum up, the results revealed that fast fashion is a concern for most participants, although some did not consider the environment when purchasing apparel. This discrepancy in awareness may be attributed to factors such as limited knowledge of the harmful effects of fast fashion. However, the findings do not conclusively indicate that purchasing second-hand apparel is inherently more environmentally friendly. Some participants expressed reservations about solely relying on second-hand items, which could be attributed to the abundance of fast fashion items in second-hand stores or concerns about the ethical implications of production in developing countries. Nevertheless, purchasing second-hand remains a more sustainable option due to the potential for reusing clothing and is more beneficial for the environment compared to buying newly produced fast fashion apparel. Taking into account the significance of sensory marketing, the implementation of effective strategies can further enhance overall understanding and response, providing additional benefits in terms of purchasing second-hand apparel and the reusability of already worn garments.

Further, these results added valuable knowledge and increased the author's understanding of the importance of customer experience which has a crucial role in creating an enjoyable and intriguing environment for customers in a physical second-hand store. As a result, it can be concluded that a physical store with an excellent experience can lead to favorable word-of-mouth from customers to their friends and family. This can influence others to visit the store with a positive attitude towards it. Furthermore, an expected result was that most of the participants mentioned that scent in a physical second-hand store would significantly have an impact during their store visit. There are several possible explanations for this result. One reason could be that a bad smell has the effect of creating unfavorable feelings. This can create an avoidance attitude towards places and also items, such as apparel. If a clothing item has a bad smell, which is common in second-hand stores due to them being older and might have been in storage for a longer time, it can become a factor that makes customers avoid these stores. Derived from this, in sensory marketing smell has a huge impact on the physical second-hand store's appearance, both in their apparel and in the store atmosphere. One suggestion from an interviewee was that second-hand stores could potentially use a linen spray in their store to enhance the scent. It was also the idea to present some information about why there is this distinct old smell to customers

to create a better understanding of it. The participants also brought up the importance of washing every product before presenting them in the store to create a fresh and clean feeling. This could be an excellent idea for second-hand stores to try out. The findings also show that there are several factors in sensory marketing that second-hand stores need to consider when it comes to the visual aspects, such as the presentation of their assortment, and the lighting strategy in the store both in fitting rooms and outside them. This may affect their purchase decisions if it is not planned in a favorable way. Ultimately in physical second-hand stores the sense of touch is highly significant as it can potentially determine a purchase for customers and help with the evaluation of the product. Another discovery in the empirical findings was that music has a different effect depending on the individual due to music preferences being different from person to person. However, physical second-hand stores, by incorporating sensory marketing strategies such as playing calmer music in the store, could create a more stress-free environment and enhance the overall experience for their customers.

To answer the research question the authors have concluded from the findings, that by applying sensory marketing in a physical second-hand store the store could enhance its brand image and strengthen its market position. If the results collected are considered, it suggests that a sensory marketing strategy could possibly create a better store atmosphere but only if the senses of touch, hearing, smell, and vision are in congruence, which will potentially lead to a positive and favorable customer experience. As a result of the analysis of this thesis out of all senses, smell had the most significant impact on customers' attitudes toward physical second-hand stores. This makes it the most crucial point in the sensory marketing strategy and where the focus should be. Researching all the relevant senses that can be applied to a physical store environment, shows how important it is to have a balance between them to be able to create a positive and enjoyable atmosphere. This may also attract more customers to choose sustainable shopping options rather than fast fashion. In addition, it fosters a better presentation of themselves as a store and establishes a more inviting store environment with a cleaner and fresher atmosphere. This could help physical second-hand stores gain customers, encouraging customers to visit, interact, and share positive experiences with others and hopefully influence more environmentally friendly purchase decisions.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

The investigation has identified a significant research gap in the exploration of sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores, which offers the potential for enhancing the

customer experience and creating a favorable atmosphere within these stores. Existing research has primarily focused on sensory marketing in physical stores in general (Duong et al. 2022), overlooking the specific context of physical second-hand stores and their utilization of sensory marketing strategies. However, previous research emphasizes the importance of fully comprehending the impact of sensory marketing on consumer behavior in physical retail environments, recognizing its value in effectively engaging the senses and influencing perception, judgment, and behavior (Baek, Choo & Lee 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes by introducing new possibilities and limitations that have not been emphasized before in the theory of using sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores. The findings suggest that sensory marketing can be employed as a strategy to attract customers and influence their purchase decisions in the store, creating an appealing and enjoyable environment where customers can interact with and experience the presented products (Nadanyiova, Kliestikova & Kolencik 2018). However, there is a risk of sensory overload when there is excessive stimulation, which can negatively impact customers (Spence, Puccinelli, Grewal & Roggeveen 2014). Additionally, the study reveals that smell plays a crucial role in influencing Swedish female customers' decision to visit a physical second-hand store, while the congruence between senses also significantly impacts the overall customer experience. These theoretical implications highlight the potential benefits of using sensory marketing in second-hand stores but also emphasize the need for managing sensory stimuli appropriately to create a positive and engaging environment.

5.3 Managerial Implications

Considering the managerial viewpoint in this thesis, it strengthens the fact that physical second-hand stores potentially could gain a better reputation and more customers by incorporating a sensory marketing approach to their stores. Given the role of senses in the context of physical second-hand stores, incorporating a sensory marketing approach holds significant managerial implications. This thesis sheds light on the importance of sensory marketing for these stores, emphasizing the need to create an enjoyable experience that attracts customers. As there is a lack of research on this subject specifically applied to physical second-hand stores, this study serves to highlight the untapped potential and raise awareness among industry professionals. By recognizing the value of sensory marketing, physical second-hand stores can potentially enhance

their reputation and attract more customers. This research underscores the significance of creating a sensory-rich environment that engages customers and leaves a lasting positive impression. Such an approach can contribute to improved customer satisfaction and ultimately drive increased sales for second-hand stores. The insights from this study offer valuable guidance to managers and practitioners in the second-hand industry, providing them with a better understanding of the importance of sensory marketing and its impact on customer behavior. Implementing sensory marketing strategies can help these stores differentiate themselves in a competitive market, cultivate a positive brand image, and effectively communicate the unique benefits of second-hand fashion to potential customers.

To summarize, this research emphasizes the potential benefits and implications of adopting sensory marketing in physical second-hand stores, highlighting the need for these stores to create an enjoyable and immersive customer experience to attract and retain customers. By leveraging sensory marketing techniques, the second-hand industry can tap into the highlighted possibilities and foster a better understanding of the significance of creating a compelling and engaging environment for customers to visit and explore their stores.

5.4 Social, Ethical, and Sustainable Implications

The findings of this thesis have opened up new possibilities for how physical second-hand stores can strengthen their appearance by adopting a sensory marketing strategy. The integration of a sensory marketing strategy in physical second-hand stores can have significant impacts on consumer behavior and perception. By leveraging the power of the senses, these stores can create immersive and engaging experiences that foster a deeper connection between customers and pre-owned apparel. Embracing the sensory experience and recognizing the benefits associated with second-hand apparel, these stores contribute to a more circular and sustainable fashion economy. This approach supports the notion of extending the life cycle of garments, reducing waste, and preserving the Earth's resources by recycling and reusing existing apparel. Ultimately, the adoption of sensory marketing strategies in physical second-hand stores not only offers economic benefits but also aligns with the broader goals of promoting social responsibility, ethical fashion choices, and environmental sustainability.

As the fashion industry has huge ethical and social issues, the use of this strategy could contribute to more individuals choosing to purchase apparel second-hand rather than newly produced fast fashion items. From a sustainability perspective, working with a

sensory marketing strategy could potentially increase interest in shopping in physical second-hand stores. As a result, adopting this approach fosters a more sustainable mindset that promotes the longevity of clothing, thereby reducing the need for additional resource consumption and contributing to environmental sustainability by encouraging the reuse of existing apparel. By creating an immersive sensory experience, physical second-hand stores have the potential to reshape consumer behavior, foster conscious consumption, and address the environmental challenges associated with the fashion industry.

5.5 Limitations

The researchers made several limitations of this thesis. The first limitation was that the study was limited to Swedish physical second-hand stores. This perspective can be regarded as overly limited and potentially biased, given that both authors of this thesis come from Sweden. The second limitation of this study was the choice of only interviewing women, it could be considered a potential gender bias. The next limitation of this study was to limit it to a customer perspective and not include the perspective from a company's side on the subject. It could be considered a weakness as companies could have highlighted valuable information. However, this research aimed to see from a customer perspective and to see if applying a sensory marketing strategy could make physical second-hand stores more attractive. Including the company's perspective would have resulted in a thesis with a less targeted focus.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

This study implies that second-hand stores would profit from applying a sensory marketing strategy. This thesis establishes a strong groundwork for future research examining the impact of sensory cues on the customer decision-making process. Further research on this subject could be done by conducting a quantitative study, this could allow researchers to draw conclusions that can be generalized to a larger population, enhancing the study's external validity. Using a quantitative rather than a qualitative study could give the reader more insight into how a sensory marketing strategy could enhance the appearance of a second-hand store. In addition to the current study focusing on interviews conducted with only women, further research on this subject could be conducted by doing interviews with both men and women. This expanded approach would provide an additional perspective and offer a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. By including both genders in the interview process, researchers could gain insights into potential gender differences in relation to

the subject matter, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the findings. This approach will contribute to a richer understanding of the topic and provide a broader perspective on the effects of sensory marketing strategies. Furthermore, another research alternative could be to examine the subject from a company perspective rather than focusing on the customer perspective. This alternative approach could shed light on a different facet of the subject, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the topic. By investigating the impact of sensory marketing strategies on second-hand stores from the company's standpoint, researchers could gain valuable insights into factors such as brand perception, competitive advantage, and operational considerations.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Interview guide - English version

The questions listed in the appendix have been designed to lead the interviewer while conducting the interviews, which are going to be semi-structured interviews. The presented questions are intended to address the author's research question. Some of the questions may not be brought up depending on what answers the participants have responded to the previous question. Unplanned follow-up questions that are not part of the script will be prompted by the participant's answers.

General questions

1. **Do you agree to be recorded during this interview?**

2. What is the main reason for you to shop second-hand?
 - just for fun, or low prices, sustainability, and unique things?
 - There are many other reasons that might also influence, such as the entire experience in the actual store. Is there something you think affects?

3. **Do you consider the environment when you are shopping for clothes?**
 - Or do you only shop for fun or when necessary?
 - Are you concerned about the impact of fast fashion on the environment?
 - Do you think it would be better if more people shopped second-hand for the environment?

4. **In general where do you prefer to shop second-hand?**
 - Online, physical stores, or both?
 - What makes you prefer one option over the other?

5. **Can you describe your experience of shopping at second-hand stores?**
 - Most positive or negative experience?
 - why do you think you feel this way?
 -

6. What sensory elements do you notice when shopping in a second-hand store?

(Clarify what sensory elements are. They are our senses, how we perceive phenomena using them. This can involve stimuli related to smell, sight, hearing, and touch).

7. Do you think the sensory elements in second-hand stores affect your purchasing decisions?

- Does it affect you if you can feel the product, touch the material, etc.?"

8. Can you tell me how the smell of second-hand stores affects your shopping experience?

- Does the smell matter to you?
- Do you notice the smell more in a second-hand store rather than in a normal store?
- Does smell impact you negatively or positively?
- What would make you stay longer?

9. Do you prefer shopping in second-hand stores with background music or without?

- Why?
- What type of music do you prefer while shopping?
- Is music important for you while shopping?
- Do you think music affects how long you stay in the store?

10. Can you tell me how the layout of the store affects you when shopping?

- Does it affect you if the store is messy, or unorganized, or if it is organized?
- Why do you think you feel like this?

11. Can you tell me the role of lighting in second-hand stores, why do you prefer it?

- Does strong lighting annoy you?
- Does soft lighting annoy you?
- What type of lighting do you prefer in a second-hand store?
- Does the light affect your purchases?

12. Are there any changes you would suggest to improve the sensory experience of shopping in a physical second-hand store?

13. Do you think it is different to visit a second-hand store in a bigger city compared to one in a small city?

- Why? Give me an example of why
- Do you prefer big second-hand stores or small ones? and why do you prefer it?

14. How did you first hear about second-hand stores, and what factors influenced your decision to visit any of the stores?

- Do people mostly speak positively or negatively about second-hand stores, in your opinion?

15. How often do you shop second-hand?

- Frequently - why do you think you do it often?
- Occasionally - why do you think you do it so infrequently?

16. How old are you?

- For how long have you been doing second-hand shopping?
- Is it okay if I (we) reach out again if we need anything else?"

Appendix B - Interview guide - Swedish version

- 1. Godkänner du att bli inspelad under den här intervjun?**
- 2. Vad är den huvudsakliga anledningen till att du handlar second-hand?**
 - Är det bara för att det är kul, eller de billiga priserna, eller för hållbarhet eller för att hitta unika saker?
 - det finns ju många anledningar som också kanske kan påverka som tex hela upplevelsen i själva butiken, är det något som du tror påverkar?
- 3. Tar du hänsyn till miljön när du handlar kläder?**
 - Eller handlar du bara för nöjes skull eller vid behov?
 - Är du oroad över (fast fashion) snabbmodets påverkan på miljön?
 - tror du att det skulle bli bättre om fler handlar second-hand-för miljön
- 4. Var någonstans föredrar du att handla second-hand?**
 - Online, i fysiska butiker eller båda delarna?
 - Vad får dig att föredra det ena alternativ över det andra?
- 5. Kan du beskriva din erfarenhet av att handla i second-hand-butiker?**
 - Har du haft positiva eller negativa upplevelser?
 - varför tror du att du känner så?
- 6. Vilka sensoriska element märker du när du handlar i en second-hand butik?**
 - Förtydliga vad sensoriska element är. Det är våra sinnen, hur man uppfattar saker med hjälp av dom, det kan vara lukt, syn, hörsel, känsel

7. Tror du att de sensoriska elementen i second-hand butiker påverkar dina köpbeslut?

- påverkar det dig ifall du kan känna på produkten, ta på materialet osv.

8. Kan du berätta hur lukten i second-hand-butiker påverkar din shoppingupplevelse?

- Spelar lukten någon roll för dig?
- Märker du lukten mer i en second-hand-butik än i en vanlig butik?
- Påverkar lukten dig negativt eller positivt?
- Vad skulle få dig att stanna längre?

9. Föredrar du att handla i second-hand-butiker med bakgrundsmusik eller utan?

- Varför?
- Vilken typ av musik föredrar du att höra medan du handlar?
- hög låg?
- Är musik viktig för dig när du handlar?
- Tror du att musiken påverkar hur länge du stannar i butiken?

10. Kan du berätta hur butikens layout påverkar dig när du handlar?

- Påverkar det dig om butiken är rörig, oorganiserad eller om den är organiserad?
- Varför tror du att du känner så här?

11. Kan du berätta om belysningens påverkan i second-hand butiker och varför du föredrar det?

- Stör stark belysning dig?
- Stör mjuk belysning dig?
- Vilken typ av belysning föredrar du i en second hand butik?
- Påverkar ljuset dina inköp?

12. Finns det några förändringar du skulle föreslå för att förbättra den sensoriska upplevelsen av att handla i en fysisk second-hand-butik?

13. Tycker du att det är annorlunda att besöka en second hand butik i en större stad jämfört med en i en mindre stad?

- Varför? Ge mig ett exempel på varför.
- Föredrar du stora eller små second hand butiker och varför föredrar du det?

14. Hur hörde du först talas om second-hand-butiker och vilka faktorer påverkade ditt beslut att besöka någon utav butikerna?

- Pratar folk mest gott eller dåligt om second-hand tycker det?

15. Hur ofta shoppar du second hand?

- Ofta- Varför tror du att du gör det ofta?
- Ibland- Varför tror du att du gör det så sällan?

16. Hur gammal är du?

- Hur länge har du shoppat second hand?
- Är det okej om jag (vi) hör av oss igen om vi behöver något mer.