

Exploring how autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) enhances phygital fashion retail experiences

Abstract

Purpose: Despite the growth of online fashion retailing, the ability to translate sensory experiences relating to texture and tactile responses remains an unresolved opportunity. The aim of this research is to explore the potential for the growing ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) phenomenon to be used in retail marketing content in the fashion sector to enhance sensory aspects of online customer experiences.

Design/methodology/approach: The research took an interpretive exploratory approach, using audio-visual prompts and semi-structured interviews to provide qualitative insights into the experiences of young fashion consumers when watching retail marketing content created commercially using ASMR-related techniques.

Findings: The findings indicate that ASMR-related content can enhance all dimensions of online customer experience and improve product and brand perceptions. The ability to create tactile-like sensations through ASMR audio-visual techniques points to an opportunity for ASMR-conscious content to be used in phygital retail environments and communications, effectively enhancing product and brand attributes.

Originality: In this emerging field, this study represents the first investigation of ASMR within the context of digital service interactions in fashion retail. It advances understanding of the sensory and emotional dimensions of customer experience by demonstrating how cross-modal stimuli, specifically ASMR-triggering audio-visual techniques, can evoke tactile-like sensations. The study also identifies directions for future research on the potential of ASMR to enhance digital and phygital retail customer experiences.

Keywords: Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR), fashion retail, sensory marketing, customer experience (CX), multi-sensory retail, digital retail

Type of paper: Article

Category: Research paper

1. Introduction

Fashion continues to be an important sector of the retail industry, globally accounting for sales of \$1,817 billion worldwide in 2024 (Euromonitor, 2024). For industry reporting, the use of the term fashion normally includes clothing, footwear and accessories, although fashion retailers such as Zara and H&M are now active in the home furnishing market. The competitive landscape is fragmented and crowded (BoF/McKinsey, 2024), making distinctive retail marketing strategies crucial for differentiation. Although online fashion retailing is generally accepted to account for around 30% of retail sales globally (Euromonitor, 2024) digital environments by their nature lack sensory inputs, which can negatively impact customer experience (CX) (Mishra *et al.*, 2020). CX are increasingly phygital and unbounded by format definition, taking place in unsubscribed retail brand territories that blend and morph (Alexander, 2024; Gauri *et al.*, 2021) involving digital technologies delivered in virtual settings (Russel-Bennett and Rosenbaum, 2022). Within this contemporary retail landscape, we explore the opportunities afforded by a new sensory phenomenon, ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response).

ASMR is a unique human sensory response, “a combination of positive feelings, relaxation and a distinct, static-like tingling sensation on the skin” (Barratt and Davis, 2015, p.11) which can occur when triggered by certain audio and visual stimuli (Poerio *et al.*, 2023). Academic exploration of ASMR began around a decade ago (Barratt and Davis, 2015), but research on commercial applications of ASMR remain scarce. Extant literature concerning ASMR in marketing and retailing has focused on advertising (e.g. Cohen *et al.*, 2024; De Kerpel *et al.*, 2023; Sands *et al.*, 2022) and no study to date has considered the use of ASMR from a holistic sensory experience perspective in the fashion retail context. Ironically, building bonds between brands and consumers by stimulating the sensual and emotional parts of customers’ minds is becoming more important as life increasingly takes place online (Chae *et al.*, 2020; Pilny *et al.*, 2022) and phygital retail where online and offline channels seamlessly integrate, is ubiquitous (Batat, 2022). Pilny *et al.* (2022) suggest that marketing practitioners should consider the potential of the ASMR phenomenon in the design of digital service interactions, therefore in a narrower context, ASMR’s capacity to induce tactile-like sensations through audio-visual stimuli may offer a way to enhance sensory aspects of CX in a phygital fashion retail context (Chae *et al.* 2020). Biswas (2019) noted that there is often a time lag between the adoption of sensory retail practices and academic attention. This study therefore embraces the concepts of ASMR, multisensory retail and CX, to position nascent exploration of ASMR’s commercial application within a wider academic dialogue in a timely manner, aiming to provide insight on the following research question:

How can ASMR-related content enhance phygital fashion retail CX?

Given the exploratory nature of the research, an interpretative approach was taken using qualitative methodology to elicit an understanding of this phenomenon from the consumer perspective in a fashion retail context. The paper is organised as follows: first, a literature review brings together important theoretical perspectives on multisensory retail, phygital CX and the rise of the ASMR phenomenon. This is followed by a detailed explanation of the qualitative methods used within the study, proceeded by a discussion of its findings. The final section considers the academic and practical implications of the study and articulates directions for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Multisensory fashion retail

Sensory aspects of retail marketing were foundationally acknowledged by Kotler (1973) when he used the term store atmospherics to describe effects of retail space on customers' emotions, arguing that positive affective states created by visual, aural, tactile and olfactory stimuli can lead to valuable retail outcomes such as increased dwell time, positive retail brand and product perceptions, and ultimately purchase. Sensory marketing taken from a physical retail perspective still dominates the literature (e.g. Lindblom, 2023) although Biswas (2019, p.111) confirmed "sensory elements are an important aspect of both offline and online retail stores and can non-consciously influence consumer judgments and purchase behavior". Sensory experiences are increasingly recognized as integral to the overall CX within phygital retail servicescapes (Alexander, 2019). They serve to communicate brand narratives, such as heritage, values, and designed identity (Alexander, 2024), while also supporting meaningful retail service offerings (Grönroos, 2024) and delivering relevant service design, processes and experiences to consumers who are spending more time in virtual settings (Rosenbaum *et al.*, 2022).

Sight and sound exert the greatest impact on fashion consumers' sensory experiences (Alexander and Nobbs, 2016; Ballantine *et al.*, 2015; Grohmann *et al.*, 2007; Turley and Milliman, 2000) followed by the sense of touch, which contributes high impact on fashion purchase decisions, especially for products of high quality (Alexander and Nobbs, 2016; Workman, 2010). Olfactory engagement is less important from a fashion product specific perspective but can evoke emotions when used within physical retail space (Helmefalk and Hultén, 2017). Extant literature has considered the ability of visual images and written descriptions to convey tactile attributes of fashion products (Lee and Choi, 2021; Silva *et al.*, 2021) and while textual descriptions are found to enhance consumers' imagery (McCabe and Nowlis, 2003; Silva *et al.*, 2021), Rodrigues *et al.* (2017) observed that they can be undermined by unreliable descriptions written by retailers rather than by consumers. Although Biswas (2019) suggests the visual modality tends to dominate, especially in the absence of haptic (tactile) cues, Silva *et al.* (2021) found that visual depictions alone such as zoomed-in product details are insufficient for communicating complex tactile characteristics of fashion products, leading to uncertainty regarding product quality, negative product perceptions, and overall reluctance to purchase fashion products online (Bleier *et al.*, 2018; Duarte and Silva, 2020; Grohmann *et al.*, 2007). While Riedel and Mulcahy (2019) call for more research on the relationship between technical haptic capability, CX and retail outcomes, touch enabling technologies requiring specialist wearable receptors such as gloves, remain expensive and lacking in appeal in retail contexts (Peralta, 2023; Van Kerrebroeck *et al.*, 2017). Recent neuroscientific interest in cross-modal correspondences has extended to retail contexts (Imschloss and Kuehnl, 2019). Cross-modal correspondences describe the associations that occur between and among features, dimensions, or attributes that pertain to perceptual experiences across different sensory modalities (Motoki *et al.*, 2023). In their study, Imschloss and Kuehnl (2019) found that the perceived softness of music enhanced consumers' haptic perceptions of softness, suggesting that this cross-modal effect arises from the transfer of softness-related associations from the auditory to the tactile modality. This finding is particularly relevant to the present research given its focus on fabric-related retail experiences.

2.2 Sensory phygital customer experience

The experiential view of CX considers consumption as "a subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and esthetic criteria" (Holbrook and Hirschman,

1982, p.132), while Schmitt (1999) emphasised sensory pleasure in relation to brand value augmentation through experience. The subsequent conceptualisation of CX by a substantive body of theorists (e.g. Alexander, 2024; De Keyser *et al.*, 2015; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) has established five main experience dimensions: cognitive, affective (emotional), sensory, social, and physical, yet according to Bruce *et al.* (2023) the sensorial dimension of CX is notably underexplored. The conceptualisation of CX in the online context by Bleier *et al.* (2018) logically omits the physical dimension but even within digital spaces sensory and affective aspects retain their place (Petit *et al.*, 2019). In the contemporary era of phygital retailing where channels are optimally integrated, CX transcends format boundaries (Alexander, 2024), while Peralta (2023) suggests sensory retail experiences move along a reality-virtuality continuum, from real, through mixed reality to fully virtual. Highlighting the role that sensory information has in mediating CX across the ‘real world’ and online environments, Petit *et al.* (2019) suggest the processing of sensory cues on websites to create an emotional response result in greater consumer confidence in purchase decisions. These decisions increasingly occur in phygital multidimensional ecosystems that create integrated customer value, while eliminating pain points for customers (Batat, 2022). Overall, Bruce *et al.* (2023) recommend the application of a multisensory marketing lens to more holistic studies of CX in less clearly bounded spaces. The challenge to create meaningful sensory content in digital retail space that enhances CX has led to an interest in using ASMR in retail marketing (Ken and Han, 2023; Peralta, 2023; Petit *et al.*, 2019)

2.3 The Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) phenomenon

ASMR was identified as a phenomenon around 2010 (Del Campo and Kehle, 2016) since when ASMR communities that create (ASMRtists) and consume digital ASMR content have thrived, predominantly on YouTube (Barratt *et al.*, 2017). Explained by De Kerpel *et al.* (2023, p.719) as “spontaneous (=autonomous) but not permanent (=meridian) experience (=response) pertaining to the senses (=sensory)”, academic interest began in 2015 (Barratt and Davis, 2015), gaining momentum in the fields of psychology (e.g. Hostler, 2022), physiology (e.g. Kim *et al.*, 2024), and neuroscience (e.g. Ludwig and Khalidi, 2024). The tactile (tingling) sensations and the calming and relaxing effects on viewers induced by ASMR content are well recognized (e.g. Chae *et al.*, 2020; Gautam *et al.*, 2023; Kaushik and Gokhale, 2021; Poerio *et al.*, 2018) although given the nascent stage of academic understanding (Gotsch and Gasser, 2024) scholars frequently draw parallels with other constructs such as aesthetic chills (Bannister, 2019), synaesthesia (Del Campo and Kehle, 2016), and the flow state (Barratt and Davis, 2015).

Extant literature refers to a variety of ASMR trigger types (Barratt *et al.*, 2017; Poerio *et al.*, 2023). Some triggers can be delivered by a person; examples include a kind expression of the ASMRtist or a gentle hand movement (visual triggers), whispering, fingernail tapping (aural triggers), and hair brushing (tactile trigger). Other triggers are non-personal such as the sounds of fabric brushing or the whirring of a sewing machine cited in a rare study concerning ASMR in a fashion context (Chae *et al.* 2020). While close-up visuals of ASMRtists and the items used to generate sound are common in ASMR triggering content, Chae *et al.*, (2020) consider sound itself as essential in ASMR triggering, using microphones and earphones working “as the listener’s ‘virtual skin,’ which lets them ‘feel’ the sounds presented in the alternate reality called ASMR” (p.462). ASMR videos often use binaural audio, which mimics human hearing with microphones lateralised to the left and right side and localised to each ear (Mahady *et al.*, 2023) and Foley techniques (named after the film sound artist Jack Foley), which recreate and/or exaggerate sounds. Regardless of a person’s experience of physical sensations, consumption of ASMR triggering content has been

found to exert significant positive influences on viewers' affective experiences in the form of relaxation (Barratt and Davis, 2015; Bogueva and Marinova, 2020, Chae *et al.*, 2020), reduced stress level and uplifted mood (Poerio *et al.*, 2018). We refer to the use of familiar triggering cues to generate ASMR sensations as ASMR techniques.

2.4 ASMR in marketing and retail

One of the first explicit commercial applications of ASMR was IKEA's (2017) 25-minute campaign video set in a bedroom furnishings context which used triggers familiar to the ASMR community throughout. Since then, brands across various retail sectors have explored ASMR as a way of using visual, aural, and tactile stimuli to create compelling and memorable marketing content. Chae *et al.*, (2020) cite Uniqlo and Chanel as brands that have used ASMR-like content in fashion online marketing communications, but despite interest from practitioners (Cybertek Marketing, 2024; Goldsmith, 2019) academic exploration of ASMR within marketing remains limited. Olga (2019) outlined three branches of ASMR marketing literature: advertising on ASMR channels, collaborating with ASMRtists, and brand-owned ASMR campaigns. Pilny *et al.* (2022) extended this categorisation by researching ASMR in the context of relationship marketing. Spence and Gallace (2011, p.292) suggest that "the inability to directly stimulate the consumer's skin does not mean that advertising cannot reach out to touch the consumer using their other senses", therefore it is not surprising to find extant studies using ASMR embedded advertising content to test its effectiveness on delivering tangible campaign outcomes such as recall, consumer attitude and purchase intention (Cohen *et al.*, 2024, De Kerpel *et al.*, 2023; Sands *et al.*, 2022), brand perception (Gotsch and Gasser, 2024) and brand engagement (Broadbridge *et al.*, 2023). No research to date, however, has been undertaken to explore the use of ASMR to enhance sensory aspects of retail CX.

2.5 ASMR use in fashion retail CX

Although the considerable body of CX literature acknowledges sensory and emotional dimensions to be significant, there are few studies that explore how these dimensions can be enhanced across phygital retail territories that integrate offline and online retail spaces (Batat, 2022). In particular, the challenge to enhance tactile aspects of the sensory experience that are so important in phygital fashion retail remains a pain point (Chae *et al.*, 2020; Silva *et al.*, 2021). The growing interest in ASMR and its popularity with young people as a multisensory experience which can be triggered in both physical and virtual environments may be an opportunity for retail marketers to create relevant and relatable content to enhance sensory online retail CX in phygital customer purchasing journeys (Biswas, 2019; Lee and Chen, 2023; Petit, 2019; Pilny *et al.*, 2022). By harnessing heightened visual and aural stimuli to convey and evoke tactile sensations, the inclusion of ASMR techniques in phygital fashion retail environments could promise richer sensory enhancement, and by creating content that invokes positive sensations and emotions by ASMR triggering, retailers could enhance both product and brand perceptions.

3. Methods

To explore how ASMR-related content can enhance phygital fashion retail CX in multisensory service environments an exploratory, interpretative, qualitative approach was taken to generate depth of insight. This was guided by the holistic approach to inductive concept development

proposed by Gioia *et al.*, (2012) which is appropriate for describing emerging phenomena (Petrescu and Lauer, 2017) such as the commercial utilization of ASMR. To deliver managerially relevant research (Klaus, 2023) a dynamic and holistic approach to the topic was taken using consumer interviews. The methodology followed a systematic fieldwork process involving four stages: sample selection, development of research instrument, interview data collection, and data analysis (Alam, 2005).

3.1 Sample selection and retail context

Given young consumers are the prime focus for many fashion brands (BoF/McKinsey 2024) participants were purposely selected (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015) using the criteria of 1) aged between 18 and 30 and 2) those purchasing at least one fashion item per month, which accounts for 52% of online fashion consumers (Statista, 2023). Participants were recruited through the researcher's social media networks, specifically Instagram and YouTube. Although this recruitment method may introduce some diversity bias, these platforms are among the most widely used for fashion marketing engagement with young adults and were therefore considered suitable (Euromonitor, 2024). A sample size of 20 was deemed appropriate for this qualitative study (Baker and Edwards, 2012; Boddy, 2016; Hennink and Kaiser, 2022) and was aligned with Bogueva and Marinova's (2020) study of ASMR marketing experiences of young people in a different context. Participants were emailed advance information about the interview process and were asked to give signed consent for responses to be recorded, analysed and used in the reporting of the research.

To simulate an online shopping experience and to encourage a meaningful discussion about the use of ASMR techniques within phygital retail contexts, three videos were selected to be shown during the interviews (see Table I). To include the most appropriate content, a sampling frame of commercial videos was drawn up of those that 1) featured ASMR-type content across diverse sensory stimuli, 2) were around two minutes long in duration for comparability, and 3) were produced by either fashion brands or those where texture was an important product feature. An initial content analysis was conducted to identify the use of ASMR-type content in branded communications. Given the limited application of ASMR techniques in commercial settings, the sampling frame consisted of four fashion and two home furnishing brand videos from which three were selected for maximum relevance to the research purpose. The final selection was as follows:

1. An online campaign video from COS (premium clothing for women and men) which overtly uses Foley sound artist techniques. These produce an audio enhancing effect like the audio amplification used in ASMR video content.
2. A promotional video from COACH (accessible luxury clothing and accessories for women and men) which uses ASMR-triggering visual and sound techniques (slow-paced, close-up visuals aligned with amplified binaural audio and covertly enhanced sounds).
3. A two-minute section of a video created by IKEA in a home furnishing setting, deemed appropriate because of its emphasis on the characteristics of textiles and its explicit use of ASMR-triggering visual and audio techniques.

Table I gives detailed descriptions and links to video content used.

<< Insert Table I here >>

Audio-visual techniques featured in the videos were similar to those used in traditional ASMR triggering video content such as whispering, personal attention, crisp sounds, and slow movements (Barratt *et al.*, 2017; Poerio *et al.*, 2023). Rather than aiming to trigger ASMR sensations specifically, the techniques were used to convey brand and product content in a way that evoked ASMR experiences (see Table I). We have therefore used the term *ASMR-related* throughout our discussions to refer to content that uses similar techniques to those used by ASMRtists that aim to trigger ASMR sensations.

3.2 Development of the research instrument

The interview protocol followed the general structure of primary questions developed from literature review themes (McCracken, 1988) followed by sub-questions designed to probe deeper into participant responses (McIntosh and Morse, 2015; Silverman, 2014). A preliminary discussion to verify the sampling criteria (age and fashion purchasing frequency), to establish participants' understanding of ASMR, and their propensity for tactile engagement during fashion purchasing was conducted to focus the context of the research and the participants on the topic. For those unfamiliar with ASMR, a brief introduction to the nature of the sensations and established triggers were described. Questions on the proceeding topics followed: 1) the experience encountered during the video, with probes to uncover different experience dimensions (cognitive, affective, social, sensory); 2) the extent to which product perceptions, brand perceptions, shopping intentions and phygital purchasing journeys were, or could be, affected by watching the video and 3) other comments in relation to the videos or the use of ASMR content. Replicability and flexibility (Wholey *et al.*, 2015) were realised through a combination of the structured interview framework to ensure consistency and reliability (Alam, 2005) and open sub-questions to encourage unprescribed comments (Creswell, 2014). Table II provides the interview protocol followed.

<< Insert Table II here >>

3.3 Data collection - interviews

Semi-structured interviews gave a balance between structure and flexibility, ideal for exploring unknown territory with potentially important issues (Wholey *et al.*, 2015), while a descriptive, interpretive interview style using open-ended questions effectively gathered subjective data for substantiating, repudiating, or expanding on what is known in this nascent area of study (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). The three selected videos (see section 3.1) were used as visual prompts to stimulate rich and descriptive responses (Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015). After each one the same questions were asked, culminating with an invitation to contribute any further thoughts. The interviews, lasting between 60 and 90 minutes each, took place over a three-month period.

An abbreviated, participant-facing interview guide was distributed prior to each interview as a part of informed consent. A preliminary participant (not included in the analysis) was recruited to pilot the interview protocol, ensuring methodological rigor (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). No changes were made after the pilot. Interviews were conducted online, replicating the environment in which consumers typically engage with ASMR content as well as digital retail access, and were audio-recorded with real-time transcription for subsequent analysis.

3.4 Data analysis

Data analysis followed a phronetic iterative interpretation process (Tracy and Hinrichs, 2017), deemed appropriate in the context of an emerging real-world phenomenon. This involved rounds of analysis (hard copy based) with intermittent reflection on literature and retail practice. To begin, transcripts were checked for accuracy by two authors. The first round of analysis used descriptive and emotion coding (Saldaña, 2021) to capture the detailed experiences of consumers thereby ensuring an accurate reflection of participant-centred nuanced experiences (Gioia *et al.*, 2012). Around 40 codes (phrases) were captured and synthesised in a codebook. In addition, codes in the form of words were used to capture the range of sensory and emotional responses articulated by the participants. These (24 words) were subsequently amalgamated into 2 categories. Thematic saturation (Hennink and Kaiser, 2022) was reached after 16 transcripts, after which themes from the literature and current secondary retail research were revisited to check the coding scheme for relevance. During the second round of analysis, hierarchical coding (Gioia *et al.*, 2012; Tracy and Hinrichs, 2017) resulted in 9 categories (becoming the second order themes), guided by extant literature concepts and themes to give theoretical underpinning to the analysis. Deviant data was maintained within the 9 categories (see Figure 1). The second level themes were aggregated into four key dimensions used to guide the reporting of the findings. The resultant data structure, based on Gioia *et al.*, (2012) is shown in Figure 1. Interpretative understanding was supplemented with verbatim text excerpts (see Table III) to support the thematic analysis and retain the participant voice in the reporting of the research (Gioia *et al.*, 2012). The data structure was cross-checked and agreed by the authors (Aguinis and Solarino, 2019).

<<Insert Figure 1 here>>

3.5 Research quality and ethics

Against the strategies for optimising qualitative research credibility outlined by Creswell (2014), this paper includes in-depth descriptions in findings and discussions, self-reflection of researcher bias, as well as discussion of discrepant findings. To achieve dependability, the methodological design and interview research instrument is detailed and transparent (Pratt *et al.*, 2020) - see sections 3.1, 3.2. and 3.3. The tandem analysis using themes and terms articulated by the participants and previous researchers provides a clear insight into the progression from raw data to conceptual themes, building qualitative rigour (Gioia *et al.*, 2012) into the paper (see Figure 1). Participant quotes are presented as raw data in the findings, mitigating researcher bias and contributing to the robustness of the findings (Miles and Huberman, 2013). Indicative quotes further support the analysis (see Table III). To improve transferability the methodology explains the context (i.e. phygital fashion retail), the actors (i.e. young fashion consumers), and the phenomenon of interest (i.e. ASMR). Ethical guidelines on confidentiality and anonymity were followed in accordance with the author's university's research ethics code of practice, to reinforce credibility (Creswell, 2014).

4. Findings and discussion

Our interpretative narrative is structured around aggregate themes (Gioia *et al.*, 2012) (see Figure 1) illustrated with quotations from participant transcripts. A broader selection of evidence items to support the development of second order categories and thereby the aggregate themes is provided in Table III. While the prompted interviews did not fully replicate a typical phygital fashion consumer journey (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) our systematic use of selected textile-related brand

campaigns provided the opportunity to begin the exploration of consumer responses to ASMR-related content from a participant centred perspective (Gioia *et al.*, 2012). The discussion begins with a consideration of how ASMR-related content might holistically enhance sensory aspects of online retail environments within the context of phygital retail CX journeys. It then focuses on how ASMR-related techniques might specifically create positive CX across the online CX dimensions (emotional, cognitive and social) in addition to the sensory element. We then discuss the positive contributions ASMR-related content can make regarding product and brand perception. We also report on findings that indicate ASMR-related content could bring heightened sensory enhancements, based on cross-modal correspondences and sensory emplacement.

4.1 Enhancing sensory experiences in retail settings

Our findings evidence that ASMR-related content can significantly enhance sensory aspects of digital retail CX. Specifically, auditory elements featuring sound amplification and Foley artistry effectively engaged consumers' senses and conveyed the sensory qualities of products and brands, contributing to more immersive online retail experiences. When these amplified auditory cues were combined with close-up visual content, the sensory, and particularly tactile, attributes of products were communicated more vividly. This effect was especially pronounced for complex products with multiple textures, such as handbags.

"Audio was engaging because it fits with the visual - they go hand in hand. I think it's [audio] almost more engaging than the visuals...one thing I think is interesting, there's no touch in this because I'm sat behind a screen, but you get this sense of realism. And I felt like my brain was putting two and two together... I can't really explain it too well, but I felt like my brain was connecting the sound with the touch. And it was almost like touching it...I would say definitely engaged two senses but felt like in my brain I was engaging with three" P5

The augmented sensory experiences, likely resulting from cross-modal correspondences triggered by the simultaneous amplification of sound and visual content (replicating ASMR-triggering content), appeared capable of evoking tactile sensations. Although one participant reported experiencing a physiological ASMR response during a video, no other participants described specific tingling sensations typically associated with ASMR. While ASMR-triggering videos commonly last between 30 and 60 minutes, participants indicated that such long-form content, and achieving a full ASMR experience, was neither necessary nor desirable within a phygital retail context. Accordingly, our findings suggest that ASMR-related techniques may be most effectively integrated into shorter-form commercial videos, such as those produced by COS and COACH, to enhance sensory stimulation without overextending viewer engagement.

4.2 Creating positive CX

Given the consensus in the literature that CX comprises different dimensions (Alexander, 2024; Bleier *et al.*, 2018; De Keyser *et al.*, 2015; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009), our findings provide evidence of sensory, emotional, and cognitive experiences among participants watching the videos. Notably, a wide range of predominantly positive emotions was reported, with *satisfaction* and *relaxation* being the most common, aligning with emotions elicited in existing ASMR research (Chae *et al.*,

2020; Gautam *et al.*, 2023; Kaushik and Gokhale, 2021; Poerio *et al.*, 2018). Other emotional descriptors included *pleasurable, memorable, soothing, exciting, relatable, entertaining, healing, and surprising*. This positive tendency is consistent with previous studies on ASMR-triggering content, although a small number of negative or neutral emotions were noted, all associated with the IKEA video (e.g. *boring, irritating, cringy, repetitive, repulsive, strange*).

“I really liked it [COACH video]. It was very satisfying, and I loved the close ups, and then you could see the texture of everything.” P15

“IKEA... I had a very strong emotional experience, because at first, I was like, this is so strange. And then felt very different...very relaxed. Yeah, halfway through. So, I had two very different emotions, but both very strong. And that was a very new experience for me.” P10

Regarding the cognitive dimension, ASMR-related content also fostered positive experiences described as *curiosity, intrigue, and interest*, and participants reported that the techniques supported their ability to receive and retain product and brand information (see Section 4.3). Sensory experiences were described using terms like *soft, cosy, comfortable, crisp, harsh, and scratching*. As expected, we found limited responses concerning the social dimension of CX. A few participants reported a sense of human connection with the voiceover in the IKEA video and the Foley artists in the COS video; however, overall, social experiences were not viewed as significant. Previous studies on CX dimensions (Alexander, 2024; Bleier *et al.*, 2018) suggest that a lack of social interaction could hinder the creation of a multi-dimensional retail CX. However, our findings indicate that focusing on sensory, emotional, and cognitive dimensions through ASMR-related content can sufficiently elevate the online experience for fashion consumers, fostering feelings of focus and immersion (in line with Barratt and Davis, 2015; De Kerpel *et al.*, 2023).

The widely reported positive emotions of relaxation and satisfaction are distinctive in terms of consumer experiences and align with previous research on ASMR experiences (Barratt and Davis, 2015). The emplacement of these emotional responses over and above the elimination of pain points in CX suggest ASMR-related techniques can effectively augment CX to the point of differentiation. Additionally, our findings suggest that such sensory-rich online experiences could serve as a catalyst for initiating a phygital shopping journey, bridging online and offline touchpoints while reducing the pain point of a lack of sensory engagement (Batat, 2022).

For example:

“Because again with the ASMR [related content] I felt like it kind of helped me focus a little bit, like getting the sound, or the very specific deep sounds to do with the visuals I was seeing. I feel like that helps [to] focus and engage more....I think it would be better than an e-commerce website or on apps... However, I'm not sure if it will be better than the physical experience itself...when I bring them [products] back home, I see, I almost feel those sounds and I feel the product on a deeper level...it's definitely better than only the visual experiences of a website”. P9

"I would [visit IKEA's website or store] if there's an easy entrance point for the product, for example, if when they are showing this bedsheet, there's a link to that product I would definitely go and check it out..." P20

4.3 Enhancing product and brand perceptions

Most participants mentioned positive ways in which ASMR-techniques enhanced the attributes of the products featured in the videos, adding *value* and *detail*, the *connotations of luxury* and *high quality* and being effective for *higher priced, complex* and *fashion purchases*. Taking a retail perspective, our findings suggest the use of ASMR-related techniques can augment a sensory phygital retail experience connected to product presentation and engagement.

"I think it makes it better - seeing it in a more 3D way, It's harder to visualize the texture if it's just in a 2D form, whereas in the video [Coach] to see how the leather bends and gets cut, so ...you feel closer to the product." P11

"But even if I didn't see the word Coach, I'd still have that connotation of luxury based upon the video not because of the brand." P5

The ability of ASMR-related content to strengthen positive retail brand associations emerged in two ways. First, like product enhancement, sensory stimulation conveyed brand attributes such as *luxury, high quality, cool* (trendiness), and *relevance*. Additionally, the integration of ASMR techniques not only reinforced existing brand perceptions but also led to positive shifts in how brands were viewed, consistent with Gotsch and Gasser (2024). For instance, COS was perceived as more fun, while Coach was seen as more caring. Moreover, many participants found ASMR techniques crucial in crafting sensory brand storytelling (Alexander, 2024) - highlighting elements like craftsmanship for Coach and creativity for COS - which fostered engagement (Broadbridge *et al.*, 2023) and reinforced brands' relevance through innovative retail marketing approaches.

"I think it's more of a brand [COS] than a product demonstration because honestly, I don't think they're probably going to make sounds like that. But I think overall the video is very in sync with its brand...the visual effect, it's very simplistic and then also the colour tones seem to be in line with what COS is. Yeah, I think overall, it's quite cool. And very COS". P11

"It increased my intention to explore more about the brand [Coach]. I would love to see how they apply the same craftsmanship video on other products and explore their website and store as well". P6

4.4 Evoking cross-modal sensory responses

Our findings suggest there is significant potential for ASMR-related techniques to evoke cross-modal correspondences (Motoki *et al.*, 2023). Specifically, audio techniques - such as authentic sound amplification or Foley artistry paired with texture-focused close-up visuals were found to give enhanced sensory experiences and unprompted emplacement of imaginary tactile sensations. This is a significant finding for retail environments and holds relevance across various fashion product categories. Sounds like metal clasps closing, buttons hitting hard surfaces, brushing fabrics, or footsteps conveyed haptic qualities of accessories, garments, and footwear, including textures of cloth, leather, and hardware.

While cross-modal sensory experiences are typically associated with incremental relationships between different sensory modalities (Motoki *et al.*, 2023), our study found that simultaneous increases of sound intensity with close-up and slow visual content (mimicking ASMR-techniques) could generate tactile responses. In addition, we found evidence of the ASMR-related techniques achieving sensory emplacement. The following quote demonstrates the illusion of not only tactile but also olfactory sensations in response to the COACH video:

“It was a mix of three sensory factors which were the touch, the sound and then I know this is another added element from it, which is the smell, and I think having those three characteristics mixed in it just makes for a more memorable experience...” P4

Interviewer: So, when you said smell what kind of smells did you smell?

“The bucket, the water – this is just my guess...very clean like detergent, then the smell of leather like whenever if I have a new leather bag, the smell of it is very attractive to me. I think that it was just those two scents honestly”. P4

Although cross-modal sensory response remains a relatively new field in neuroscience (Imschloss and Kuehnl, 2019; Motoki *et al.*, 2023), our findings suggest that integrating specifically designed ASMR-related audio-visual content into phygital shopping journeys could be particularly impactful in terms of generating tactile responses.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Theoretical implications

Given the paucity of research in sensory retail (Biswas, 2019) and the nascence of applications of ASMR techniques in fashion retail settings (Chae *et al.*, 2021), this paper makes a novel contribution to the sensory retail marketing research field by demonstrating the relevance of ASMR-related techniques in the creation of digital content that can deliver enhanced, immersive, multi-sensory and cross modal sensory experiences for fashion consumers. It complements extant quantitative empirical research investigating direct relationships between ASMR-related content and measurable outcomes in other marketing contexts (Broadbridge *et al.*, 2023; Cohen *et al.*, 2024; De Kerpel *et al.*, 2023; Gotsch and Gasser, 2024; Sands *et al.*, 2022) by helping us understand how and why the application of ASMR-related techniques could be a valuable ingredient in the pursuit of multisensory phygital retail.

To reiterate, *ASMR-related content* refers to the use of ASMR-triggering techniques intended to heighten the overall sensory response of viewers, rather than explicitly to induce an ASMR sensation. However, if ASMR is experienced, this is not considered detrimental, as it may further intensify the sensory experience. Sensory responses are categorised into two main types: those related to product attributes and those associated with brand perceptions. Together, these contribute to creating an enhanced and immersive online retail environment, which, from a pragmatic perspective, supports the phygital retail experiences that many fashion retailers are striving to achieve (Alexander and Varley, 2025; BoF/McKinsey, 2024). Cross-modal sensory responses appear to be particularly relevant for communicating product attributes, whereby the

perceived senses of touch and smell are generated using heightened audio and visual modal cues. The incorporation of ASMR-related triggers such as slow movements and crisp sounds appears to augment the sensory experience of product attributes in a positively affective way, with a longer sensory response than an aesthetic chill (Bannister, 2019). Multisensory storytelling plays a key role in shaping retail brand perceptions (such as craftsmanship in the case of COS) and the use of recognized ASMR techniques enhanced the perception of innovation in the selected brands. Nonetheless, the sensory effects of ASMR-related techniques on product and brand perceptions are likely to be mutually influential and interdependent.

Our findings support the potential to leverage consumers' willingness to move fluidly between online and physical retail environments as part of a sensory phygital decision-making process. Deeper sensory engagement online can both reflect and reinforce the tactile sensory experiences encountered in stores, while online content can also raise intrigue and interest in featured brands and products, prompting store visits. These findings underscore the importance of affective and sensory dimensions in fashion retail CX, challenging the traditional emphasis on merely removing pain points as a central tenet of phygital CX management (CXM) (Batat, 2022). Instead, we introduce the concept of *ASMR-conscious thinking* in CXM, wherein retail marketing content is intentionally designed using ASMR-related techniques to heighten sensory experiences, without necessarily seeking to trigger a full ASMR response. Rather, these techniques function by evoking recall of pleasant experiences, which are transferred to the retail environment. ASMR-conscious CXM thus extends beyond conventional multisensory design across retail touchpoints; it involves the deliberate generation and orchestration of deep multisensory experiences that elicit positive emotions and foster sensory emplacement in response to ASMR-related cues embedded within retail touchpoints. Given the exploratory nature of this study, our findings offer an initial foundation for understanding how ASMR-related techniques can enrich digital retail CX and help blur the boundaries between physical and digital products and brand experiences (Grönroos, 2024).

5.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this study offer rich insights into the use of ASMR-related content in digital fashion marketing to enhance brand perceptions, product representation, and shopping experiences. The data suggests that ASMR-related techniques elevate the sensory aspects of consumer-oriented content, contributing positively to CX and phygital customer journeys. The use of close-up imagery and sound amplification to create an enhanced perception of tactile sensory information was widely appreciated by participants who gained sensations of texture (e.g. fabric, leather, metal). It also suggests *sounds of products in use* (such as buttons popping, clasps clipping, chains rattling and so on) are effective in communicating sensory aspects of fashion products while *sounds of products being made* (e.g. water splashing, sewing machine whirring, leather cutting) enhanced the perception of product attributes such as quality and luxury. Both amplified sounds and Foley artistry in sound production were effective in transmitting sensory information, which could extend to the texture of tweed, complex knitted structures, lace, sateen and so on. When the ASMR-related sounds techniques were carefully aligned with slow moving close-ups of product details and/or hand-stroking of materials, the impact on the senses was particularly pronounced. The ability of these techniques to engage consumers and create positive affective experiences (e.g. relaxation, satisfaction, pleasure) bodes well for their application in digital content across various fashion categories – including outerwear, designer dresses and suits, lingerie, footwear, accessories and home furnishings – and for initiatives aimed at encouraging consumers to move between digital

and physical retail environments. Potential applications include embedding links in ASMR-related content (e.g. from social media to websites or stores, or from a landing page to a product page) and leveraging imagery to trigger sensory experience recall, such as displaying ASMR-inspired visuals on in-store screens.

However, while the effectiveness of ASMR-related content is evident, its use in fashion is constrained by high production costs and time requirements. As noted by participants, such techniques are unlikely to be useful for fast fashion, where small batch production and rapid stock turnover makes elaborate content impractical. Conversely, their use is well supported for premium and bridge brands like COS and COACH, where higher-value and complex products justify greater investment in sensory brand storytelling. Similar techniques are also well-suited to luxury brands, where they align with desired brand connotations. Our study used two-minute videos for each brand, aside from the IKEA section drawn from a longer 25-minute video. Findings suggest that long-form ASMR content is unnecessary, and even undesirable, for fashion marketing, with negative reactions (e.g. boring, irritating) reported for extended content. Shorter clips embedded on website product pages could, however, effectively boost sensory engagement and encourage purchases or physical store visits.

Of particular significance is the capacity of ASMR-related techniques to generate cross-modal sensory responses (Motoki *et al.*, 2023), offering a promising avenue for fashion marketers to engage with emerging neuroscientific research and practice. Across all cases examined, participants expressed enthusiasm for novel and culturally resonant marketing approaches, which in turn enhanced brand perceptions. Although the use of ASMR-related techniques may currently appear niche and carries the risk that their novelty may diminish over time, we propose that a more open, ASMR-conscious CXM can support broader application and scalability within phygital retail service design.

5.3 Limitations and avenues for future research

The research emerged from both personal and professional interest in ASMR and sensory fashion retail. While we acknowledge ASMR's popularity and its association with positive feelings like relaxation and pleasant tingling, we do not consider direct ASMR-triggering experiences as practical in retail settings due to time constraints and context. Nonetheless, understanding ASMR principles may help environmental designers create spaces that evoke positive emotions identified in this study, such as relaxation, satisfaction, memorability, and comfort. Future research could refine these emotional associations and develop constructs for evaluating retail design and CXM, advancing what we describe as ASMR-conscious sensory retail. Further controlled studies to refine cross-modal correspondence while incorporating ASMR techniques would help to identify placebo effects associated with sound and visual manipulation. Moreover, further research is needed to confirm our assertion that ASMR-conscious sensory retail results in augmented positive emotions and perceptions of content as well as deeper immersion.

Interviews with industry professionals could uncover motivations behind creating ASMR-related content, helping to mitigate potential researcher bias in content selection (Creswell, 2014). Studies in different fashion product categories could further guide retailers in tailoring their approaches and assessing the alignment between their intentions and consumer responses, leading to clearer

managerial insights. Additionally, one participant suggested that ASMR-related techniques might enhance the sensory aspects of sustainability in fashion products, using such content to convey transparency and reinforce sustainable production practices. This represents a promising direction for future research.

Our findings indicate that sound amplification can deepen and enhance the sensory retail experience. However, a debate emerged concerning the authenticity of such sounds, as some participants perceived sound effects produced through Foley artistry to be “fake.” Future research, potentially using larger scale surveys, could investigate which types of sounds consumers interpret as inauthentic enabling these to be identified and avoided. Given the increasing public sensitivity to misinformation, perceived authenticity may become a critical factor in multisensory retail design. We therefore propose an *authenticity spectrum* for both sounds and visual elements, which could be further examined through experimental studies incorporating AI-driven affective computing and sensory augmentation.

The scope of this study imposes limitations, being confined to the cultural contexts of the Global North and younger consumers. Geographical variances in ASMR marketing adoption were noted in previous research (Olga, 2019), therefore exploring consumer responses across more global geographies could yield fruitful insights. Given the increasing fashion spend of older generational cohorts (BoF/McKinsey, 2024) and their increased confidence online accelerated by the pandemic (Rosenbaum *et al.*, 2022), the inclusion of more age groups could also contribute a broader understanding of sensory responses to ASMR-related content. It was evident from this study that ASMR-related techniques are applicable in the context of higher value and more complex fashion products, and have an association with luxury brands, therefore future research focused on the impact of ASMR-related techniques in a luxury goods context could lead to important findings for this sector. Pilny *et al.* (2022 p.49) suggest that “services that comprise a high level of stress or discomfort for customers and/or strong need for customer intimacy might enhance customer contacts by integrating ASMR successfully”. A complementary research avenue would be the exploration of ASMR-related techniques in fashion related physical personal retail service settings, for example in bridalwear or intimate clothing.

Several scholars have highlighted ASMR's therapeutic benefits for individuals with psychological disorders such as depression or anxiety (Barratt and Davis, 2015; Poerio *et al.*, 2018) while neurodiverse people such as those with autism spectrum condition (ASC) who experience heightened psychological stress and sensory sensitivity, may also benefit from ASMR content. Research involving these specific groups could be particularly meaningful, potentially extending the relevance of ASMR-related techniques into the emerging fields of inclusive and restorative retail (Butling *et al.*, 2025; Shin and Alexander, 2023). Overall, this study confirms the continued relevance of the sense of touch in phygital retail settings (Riedel and Mulcahy, 2019) and supports calls for retail marketers to develop and use tools that enables the delivery of intentionally designed, multisensory experiences (Petit *et al.*, 2019).

References

- Aguinis, H., Solarino, A.M. (2019) "Transparency and replicability in qualitative research: The case of interviews with elite informants." *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 40, pp. 1291-1315. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.3015>
- Alam, I. (2005) "Fieldwork and data collection in qualitative marketing research" *Qualitative Marketing Research*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 97-112, [10.1108/13522750510575462](https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750510575462)
- Alexander, B. (2019) "Commercial, social and experiential convergence: fashion's third places", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 257-272. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-04-2018-0116>
- Alexander, B. (2024) *Customer Experience in Fashion Retailing: Merging Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge Publishing. ISBN 9781032453002.
- Alexander, B. and Nobbs K. (2016) "Multi-Sensory Fashion Retail Experiences: The Impact of Sound, Smell, Sight and Touch on Consumer Based Brand Equity", Alessandra, V. (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Global Fashion Management and Merchandising*. Hershey: IGI Global, pp. 39-62.
- Alexander, B. and Varley, R. (2025) "Retail futures: Customer experience, Phygital retailing, and the Experiential Retail Territories perspective", *Journal of Retailing & Consumer Services*, Vol. 82, 104108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.104108>
- Baker, S.E. and Edwards, R. (2012) "How Many Qualitative Interviews is Enough", *National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper*; NCRM: Southampton, UK.
- Ballantine, P.W., Parsons, A. and Comeskey, K. (2015), "A conceptual model of the holistic effects of atmospheric cues in fashion retailing", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 43 No. 6, pp. 503-517. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-02-2014-0015>
- Banks, M. and Zeitlyn, D. (2015) "*Visual Methods in Social Research*", London: SAGE Publications.
- Bannister, S. (2019) 'Distinct varieties of aesthetic chills in response to multimedia', *PLOS ONE*, Vol. 14 No.11, e0224974. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0224974>
- Barratt, E.L. and Davis, N.J. (2015) 'Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): a flow like mental state', *PeerJ*, Vol. 3, pp. E851. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.851>
- Barratt E.L, Spence C., and Davis N.J. (2017). Sensory determinants of the autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR): understanding the triggers. *PeerJ* Vol. 5, pp. e3846 <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.3846>
- Batat, W. (2022) 'What does phygital really mean? A conceptual introduction to the phygital customer experience (PH-CX) framework.' *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 32 No. 8, pp. 1220-1243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2022.2059775>
- Biswas, D. (2019) "Sensory Aspects of Retailing: Theoretical and Practical Implications", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 95, Issue 4, pp. 111-115 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022435919300892>
- Bleier, A., Harmeling, C. M., and Palmatier, R. W. (2018). "Creating Effective Online Customer Experiences", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 83 No. 2, pp. 98-119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222429188099>
- Boddy, C.R. (2016) "Sample size for qualitative research", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 426-432. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-06-2016-0053>
- Bogueva, D. and Marinova, D. (2020) "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) for Responding to Climate Change", *Sustainability* Vol. 12, pp.6947. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12176947>

- BoF/McKinsey (2024) "The State of Fashion 2025: Challenges at Every Turn", *Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company*, available at <https://www.businessoffashion.com/reports/news-analysis/the-state-of-fashion-2025-bof-mckinsey-report/> (accessed 10 December 2024).
- Broadbridge, V., Mangió, F., and Domenico, G. D. (2023) "How Brand Managers Can Maximize Engagement with ASMR YouTube Content: Influencers Who Give You the "Tingles" through Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response Cues. *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 63 No.4, pp. 313–334. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2023-026>
- Bruce, H.L., Krolikowska, E. and Rooney, T. (2023) "Guest Editorial: Investigating the effect of the physical context on customer experience", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 689-699. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-05-2023-0163>
- Butling, B., Alexander, B. and Varley, R. (2025) "The Phenomenon of Restorative Retail Experiences in UK fashion retail servicescapes", in Alexander, B., Quartier, K., Munster, M., Murialdo, F. and Khan, Z. (Ed.s) *The Future of Retail and Service Design: Sustainable, Phygital and Community*, Abingdon: Routledge. ISBN: 9781032830162.
- Chae, H., Baek, M., Jang, H., and Sung, S. (2021) "Storyscaping in fashion brand using commitment and nostalgia based on ASMR marketing", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 130 June pp. 462-472. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.01.004>
- Chitrakorn, K. (2022) "From Jacquemus to Balenciaga: Luxury fashion brands go hyperphysical", *Vogue Business*, available <https://www.voguebusiness.com/consumers/from-jacquemus-to-balenciaga-luxury-fashion-brands-go-hyperphysical-retail> (accessed 10 July 2022).
- Cohen, J., Sands, S., Campbell, C., and Mavrommatis, A. (2024) "Sonic sensations: Navigating the mixed outcomes of ASMR in retail advertising", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol 80, September, pp. 103900 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2024.103900>
- Creswell, J.W. (2014) *Research Design*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Cybertek Marketing (2024) "Mastering the Art of ASMR Marketing For Sensory Driven Brand Experiences", *Cybertek Marketing*, 25 March 2024, available <https://cybertekmarketing.com/digital-marketing/mastering-the-art-of-asmr-marketing-for-sensory-driven-brand-experiences/> (accessed 4 February 2025).
- De Kerpel, L., Van Kerckhove, A. and Tessitore, T. (2023) "Can you feel the advertisement tonight? The effect of ASMR cues in video advertising on purchase intention", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp. 716–745. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2023.2262328>
- De Keyser, A., Lemon, K.N., Keiningham, T. and Klaus, P. (2015) "A Framework for Understanding and Managing the Customer Experience", *MSI Working Paper* No. 15-121, Marketing Science Institute, Cambridge, MA.
- Del Campo, M.A. and Kehle, T.J. (2016) "Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) and frisson: Mindfully induced sensory phenomena that promote happiness", *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 99-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2016.1130582>
- Duarte, P. and Silva, S.C. (2020) "Need-for-touch and online purchase propensity: A comparative study of Portuguese and Chinese consumers", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 55 July, p.102122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102122>
- Euromonitor (2024) "Where consumers shop for Apparel and Footwear", *Passport, Euromonitor*, September 2024. <https://www.euromonitor.com/where-consumers-shop-for-apparel-and-footwear/report>

- Gauri, D.K., Jindal, R.P., Ratchford, B., Fox, E., Bhatnagar, A., Pandey, A., Navallo, J.R, Fogarty, J., Carr, S. and Howerton, E. (2021) Evolution of retail formats: past, present, and future.’ *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 97 No.1, pp. 42-61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2020.11.002>
- Gautam, P., Mariano, G. and Hammonds, F. (2023) "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) Use in College Students," *Modern Psychological Studies*, Vol. 28 No. 2, Article 5. <https://scholar.utc.edu/mps/vol28/iss2/5>
- Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G. and Hamilton A.L. (2012) “Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology”, *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 16, No., 1 pp. 15-31 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428112452151> (Original work published 2013)
- Goldsmith, C. (2019) “Advertisers turn to ASMR for marketing inspiration”, *European CEO*, available at: <https://www.europeanceo.com/lifestyle/advertisers-turn-to-asmr-for-marketing-inspiration/> (accessed 5 August 2022).
- Gotsch M. and Gasser, F. (2024) “The effect of autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) messages on consumer brand perceptions and intentions”, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 24 No.1, DOI:10.1002/cb.2370
- Grohmann, B., Eric R. Spangenberg, E. R. and Sprott, D. E. (2007) “The influence of tactile input on the evaluation of retail product offerings”, *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 83 No.2, pp. 237-245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2006.09.001>
- Grönroos, C. (2024) "Service-informed marketing reform", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 38 No. 10, pp. 32-43.
- Helmefalk, M. and Hultén, B. (2017) “Multi-sensory congruent cues in designing retail store atmosphere: Effects on shoppers’ emotions and purchase behavior”, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 38, pp. 1–11 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.04.007>
- Hennink, M., and Kaiser, B.N. (2022) “Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests”, *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 292, 114523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>
- Holbrook, M.B. and Hirschman, E.C. (1982) “The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 9 No.2, pp. 132-140. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208906>
- Hostler, T (2022) “The Importance of Rigorous Methods in a Growing Research Field: Five Practices for ASMR Researchers”, *Meta-Psychology*, Vol. 6, pp. 1-12 <https://doi.org/10.15626/MP.2020.2626>
- IKEA (2017) “Oddly IKEA”, available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uLFaj3Z_tWwb (accessed 20 June 2024)
- Imschloss, M. and Kuehnl, C. (2019) “Feel the Music! Exploring the Cross-Modal Correspondence between Music and Haptic Perceptions of Softness,” *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 95 No. 4, pp. 158-169
- Kaushik, S. and Gokhale, N. (2021) “Online Sensory Marketing: Developing Five-Dimensional Multi-Sensory Brand Experiences and its Effectiveness”, *Revista Gestão Inovação e Tecnologias*, Vol.11 No.4, pp. 5375-5391. <https://doi.org/10.47059/revistageintec.v11i4.2567>
- Kim, H-J. and Han, S.M. (2023), "Uncovering the reasons behind consumers’ shift from online to offline shopping", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 9, pp. 1201-1217. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-02-2023-0060>
- Kim, Y., Cho, A., Lee, H. and Whang, M. (2024) “Impact of Sound and Image Features in ASMR on Emotional and Physiological Responses”, *Appl. Sci.* Vol. 14, pp. 10223. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app142210223>

- Klaus, P. (2023) "Where is customer experience (CX) research heading? A personal commentary", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 37 No. 6, pp. 700-705. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-05-2022-0169>
- Kotler, P. (1973-1974) "Atmospherics as a Marketing Tool", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 49 No.4, pp. 48-64.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239435728_Atmospherics_as_a_Marketing_Tool
- Krishna, A. (2012) "An integrative review of sensory marketing: Engaging the senses to affect perception, judgment and behaviour", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 22 No.3, pp. 332-351. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2011.08.003>
- Lee, S.S. and Chen, H. (2023) "Can We Turn ASMR Experiences into Advertising? College-Age Consumers' Perceptions of ASMR Contents and Advertisements. *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 63 No.4, pp.335-348.
- Lee, H.K. and Choi, D. (2021) "Touch Effect of Mental Simulation in Online Fashion Shopping - The Role of Instrumental and Autotelic Needs for Touch", *Journal of Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles*, Vol. 45 No.2, pp. 376-389. <https://doi.org/10.5850/JKSCT.2021.45.2.376>
- Lindblom, A. (2023) *Sensory Marketing in Retail: An Introduction to the Multisensory Nature of Retail Stores*, Palgrave Macmillan: Cham. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-47515-3>
- Lindstrom, M. (2005) "Broad Sensory Branding", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 84-87. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420510592554>
- Ludwig, D. and Khalidi, M.A. (2024) "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) and the Functions of Consciousness", *Cognitive Science*, Vol. 48: e13453.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.13453>
- Mahady, A., Takac, M. And De Foe, A. (2023) "What is autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR)? A narrative review and comparative analysis of related phenomena, *Consciousness and Cognition*, Vol. 109, March, 103477.
- McCabe, D.B. and Nowlis, S.M. (2003) "The Effect of Examining Actual Products or Product Descriptions on Consumer Preference", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 431-439. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327663JCP1304_10
- McCracken, G. (1988) *The Long Interview*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- McIntosh, M.J. and Morse, J.M. (2015) "Situating and Constructing Diversity in Semi-Structured Interviews", *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393615597674>
- Miles, M.B., and Huberman, M.A. (2013) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*, 3rd ed., London: Sage.
- Mishra, A., Shukla, A., Rana, N. P. and Dwivedi, Y. K. (2020) "From 'touch' to a 'multi-sensory' experience: The impact of technology interface and product type on consumer responses", *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 38 No.3, pp. 385-396. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21436> (accessed 22 July 2022).
- Motoki, K. Marks L.E, and Velasco, C. (2023) "Reflections on Cross-Modal Correspondences: Current Understanding and Issues for Future Research", *Multisensory Research*, Vol. 37 No.1, pp.1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134808-bja10114> PMID: 37963487.
- Olga, A. (2019) "Three Ways to Use ASMR-Technologies in Modern Advertising and Marketing", *Modern Economics*, Vol.17, pp. 6-10. [https://doi.org/10.31521/modecon.V17\(2019\)-01](https://doi.org/10.31521/modecon.V17(2019)-01)
- Palinkas L.A., Horwitz, S.M., and Green, C.A (2015) "Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research", *Administration and Policy in*

Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, Vol. 42 No. 5, pp. 533-544.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y>

- Peralta, A. (2023) "Sensory Enabling Technologies are Radically Reshaping the Future of Digital Retail, Retail Touchpoints", available at: <https://www.retailtouchpoints.com/topics/retail-innovation/sensory-enabling-technologies-digital-retail> (accessed 24 June 2024)
- Petit, O., Velasco, C., and Spence, C. (2019) "Digital Sensory Marketing: Integrating New Technologies into Multisensory Online Experience", *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, Vol. 45, No.1, pp.42-61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2018.07.004>
- Petrescu, M. and Lauer, B. (2017) "Qualitative marketing research: The state of journal publications", *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 22 No. 9, pp. 2248-2287. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss9/1>
- Pilny, H.L., Papen, M.C. and Niemand, T. (2022) "Transfer of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) to Relationship Marketing: Potential Effects on Perceived Customer Intimacy", *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, Vol. 22 No.1, pp. 29–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332667.2022.2132105>
- Poerio G.L., Blakey E., Hostler T.J. and Veltri T. (2018) "More than a feeling: Autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) is characterized by reliable changes in affect and physiology". *PLoS ONE* Vol. 13 No. 6, e0196645. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0196645>
- Poerio, G.L., Succi, A., Swart, T., Romei, V. and Gillmeister, H. (2023) "From touch to tingles: Assessing ASMR triggers and their consistency over time with the ASMR trigger checklist (ATC)", *Consciousness and Cognition*, Vol. 115, p.103584. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2023.103584>
- Pratt, M.G., Kaplan, S. and Whittington, R. (2020) "Editorial essay: the tumult over transparency: decoupling transparency from replication in establishing trustworthy qualitative research", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 65 Issue 1, pp. 1-19, [10.1177/0001839219887663](https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839219887663)
- Riedel, A. and Mulcahy, R.F. (2019) "Does more sense make sense? An empirical test of high and low interactive retail technology", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 33 No. 3, pp. 331-343. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-12-2017-0435>
- Rodrigues, T., Silva, S.C. and Duarte, P. (2017) "The value of textual haptic information in online clothing shopping", *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 88-102. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-02-2016-0018>
- Rosenbaum, M.S., Russell-Bennett, R. and Contreras-Ramírez, G. (2022) "Editorial: Research priorities in the new service marketplace", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 36 No. 8, pp. 1009-1014. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-06-2022-0190>
- Russell-Bennett, R. and Rosenbaum, M.S. (2022) "Editorial: Opportunities in the new service marketplace", *Journal of Services Marketing*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 445-449. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-04-2022-0121>
- Saldaña, J. (2021) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. 4th Edn* London: SAGE Publications.
- Sands, S., Campbell, C., Mavrommatis, A., and Kadomskaia, V. (2022) "Can a Whisper Boost Recall of Video Advertisements? Exploring the Effects of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) in Advertising", *Journal of Advertising Research*, Vol. 62 No. 3, pp. 285–296. <https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2022-016>
- Schmitt, B. (1999) "Experiential Marketing", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 15 No.1-3, pp. 53-67. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1362/026725799784870496>

- Shin, J. and Alexander, B. (2023) "Broadening the Conversation on Inclusive Retailing: An Exploratory Study on the Fashion In-Store Retail Experience of Parents with Autistic Children", in Ritch, E.L., Canning, C. and McColl, J. (Ed.s) *Pioneering new perspectives in the Fashion Industry: Disruption, diversity and sustainable innovation*. Emerald Publishing Ltd. ISBN: 978-1803823485.
- Silva, S.C., Rocha, T.V., De Cicco, R., Galhanone, F. and Ferreira Mattos, L.T.M, (2021) "Need for touch and haptic imagery: An investigation in online fashion shopping", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102378>
- Silverman, D. (2014) *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, 5th Ed., London: Sage.
- Spence, C. and Gallace, A. (2011) 'Multi-sensory design: Reaching out to touch the consumer', *Psychology & Marketing*, Vol. 28 No.3, pp. 267-308. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20392>
- Statista, 2023 UK Online Fashion Purchase Frequency, 2023, available <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1425332/united-kingdom-fashion-online-purchase-frequency/> (accessed 27 September 2025).
- Tracy, S.J. and Hinrichs (2017), Phronetic Iterative Data Analysis, in Matthes, J. (Ed), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, Wiley (online) <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0187>
- Turley, L.W. and Milliman, R.E. (2000) "Atmospheric Effects on Shopping Behavior", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 49 No.2, pp. 193-21. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(99\)00010-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00010-7)
- Van Kerrebroeck, H., Willems, K. and Brengman, M. (2017) "Touching the void: Exploring consumer perspectives on touch-enabling technologies in online retailing", *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 45 No. 7/8, pp. 892-909. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-09-2016-0156>
- Verhoef P.C., Lemon, K. N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M. and Schlesinger, L. A. (2009) "Customer Experience Creation: Determinants, Dynamics and Management Strategies", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 85 No.1, pp. 31-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2008.11.001>
- Wholey, J.S., Hatry, H.P. and Newcomer, K.E. (2015) *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation, Fourth*, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386> (accessed 5 August 2022).
- Workman, J.E. (2010) "Fashion Consumer Groups, Gender, and Need for Touch", *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, Vol. 28 No.2, pp. 126-139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0887302X09356323>