

**Sensory Words at Work:
Illuminating the Role of Sensory Language in Shaping
Consumer Behavior Across Selected Marketing Contexts**

Inauguraldissertation
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
eines Doktors der Wirtschaftswissenschaften
durch die Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Fakultät der
Universität Münster

vorgelegt von
Nadine Eckel, M.Sc.
Münster, 2026

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
LIST OF FIGURES	IV
LIST OF TABLES	V
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	VI
LIST OF SYMBOLS.....	VIII
1 SYNOPSIS	1
1.1 A <i>Crisp</i> Introduction to This Dissertation.....	1
1.2 A <i>Taste</i> of the Research Context.....	3
1.2.1 <i>Touching</i> Upon Sensory Marketing	3
1.2.2 <i>Tuning In</i> to Sensory Language	5
1.3 A <i>Glimpse</i> Into the Integrative Framework and Overview of This Dissertation.....	9
1.4 A <i>Fragrant</i> Overview of Publication Status, Contributions, and Acknowledgments.....	13
1.5 <i>Warm Words</i>	16
2 SENSE OF WE: IN-GROUP SOCIAL IDENTITIES SHAPE SENSORY LANGUAGE'S EFFECTIVENESS IN ADVERTISING.....	17
2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Literature Review and Hypotheses Development	21
2.2.1 Sensory Language	21
2.2.2 Social Identities.....	23
2.2.3 Speech Communities and Language Expectancy Theory	23
2.3 Study Overview.....	27
2.4 Study 1A.....	27
2.5 Study 1B.....	31
2.6 Study 2.....	35
2.7 Study 3.....	39
2.8 General Discussion.....	42
2.8.1 Academic Contribution.....	45
2.8.2 Managerial Contribution.....	46
2.8.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research	47
3 BEYOND SENS(E)ATION: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF FORM REALISM IN SENSORY LANGUAGE EFFECTIVENESS FOR VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS' ENDORSEMENTS	49
3.1 Introduction	50
3.2 Literature Review and Hypotheses Development	52
3.2.1 Sensory Language.....	53

3.2.2	Virtual Influencers' Form Realism	54
3.2.3	Sensory Language and Virtual Influencers' Form Realism	57
3.2.4	Perceived Expertise as Penalty Mechanism	59
3.3	Overview of Studies	60
3.4	Evidence from Unstructured Instagram Data (Study 1)	61
3.4.1	Data	61
3.4.2	Measures	62
3.4.3	Results	63
3.4.4	Discussion	66
3.5	Moderating Role of Low, Medium, and High Form Realism for Experiential Products (Study 2)	67
3.5.1	Method	67
3.5.2	Results	69
3.5.3	Discussion	70
3.6	Moderating Role of Low and Medium Form Realism for Experiential Products (Study 3)	71
3.6.1	Method	71
3.6.2	Results	73
3.6.3	Discussion	74
3.7	Moderating Role of Low, Medium, and High Form Realism for Outcome-Oriented Products (Study 4)	74
3.7.1	Method	74
3.7.2	Results	76
3.7.3	Discussion	77
3.8	General discussion	78
3.8.1	Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications	80
3.8.2	Managerial Implications	81
3.8.3	Limitations and further research	82
4	ENGAGING THE FIVE SENSES IN PRODUCT REVIEWS: WHEN DOES SENSORY LANGUAGE AFFECT REVIEW HELPFULNESS?	84
4.1	Introduction	85
4.2	Related Literature	88
4.2.1	Sensory Language in Online Reviews	88
4.2.2	Information Diagnosticity as an Organizing Lens	89
4.2.3	Reviewer-Attached Images	91
4.2.4	Seller-Authored Sensory Language	92
4.2.5	Research Framework	93

4.3	Empirical Analysis of Amazon Reviews.....	94
4.3.1	Data	94
4.3.2	Measures	95
4.4	Aggregated Sensory Language Model	101
4.4.1	Model for Aggregate Analysis.....	101
4.4.2	Results for Aggregate Analysis.....	102
4.5	Disaggregated Sensory Language Model.....	106
4.5.1	Model for Disaggregate Analysis	106
4.5.2	Results for Disaggregate Analysis	109
4.6	General Discussion.....	116
4.6.1	Academic Contributions	119
4.6.2	Managerial Implications	120
4.6.3	Limitations and Future Research	122
APPENDIX		124
TABLE OF CONTENTS		124
Appendix A. Appendix to “Sense of We” (Paper 1)		126
Appendix A.1. Paper Appendix		126
Appendix A.2. Statement on Authors’ Contributions		137
Appendix B. Appendix to “Beyond SENS(E)ation” (Paper 2)		138
Appendix B.1. Paper Appendix		138
Appendix B.2. Statement on Authors’ Contributions		164
Appendix C. Appendix to “Engaging the Five Senses in Product Reviews” (Paper 3).....		165
Appendix C.1. Paper Appendix		165
Appendix C.2. Statement on Authors’ Contributions		186
Appendix D. Hitting the Bullseye: Accurately Measuring Willingness to Pay for Innovations with Open and Closed Direct Questions.....		187
Appendix D.1. Complete Journal Article.....		188
Appendix D.2. Appendix to Journal Article		216
Appendix D.3. Statement on Authors’ Contributions		226
REFERENCES.....		227
CURRICULUM VITAE		250