

Saptics as the Sleeping Beauty of Marketing



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Haptics as the Sleeping Beauty of Marketing

The Role of Haptic Packaging Characteristics on FMCG
Products for Customers

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Abstract

Title: Haptics as the Sleeping Beauty of Marketing: The Role of Haptic Packaging Characteristics on FMCG Products for Customers

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Purpose: The purpose of this research was to understand how customers construct the relationship, prior identified in the literature, between packaging, haptic sensory and perception with regard to FMCG products. Furthermore, we aimed to explore the role of haptic packaging characteristics on FMCG products for customers.

Methodology: The philosophies of epistemology and ontology were considered by the researchers of this study. Thus, they took inspiration from an interpretivist and social constructionist stance, since the scope of the study was to understand how customers perceive haptic packaging characteristics and how they make sense of the relationship between the three concepts, based on their personal experience. Moreover, the research in this study followed an inductive approach. A qualitative method for data collection, was applied, as we aimed to gain new insights and develop further knowledge gathered from our empirical material.

Theoretical Perspective: Three main literature streams were considered valuable for the research purpose and hence, reviewed. The investigation of previous theory about packaging, haptic sensory and perception was conducted thoroughly, to discover the existing relationship in the literature, bridge them and develop the preliminary theoretical framework of the study.

Empirical Data: In accordance with the research strategy of this study, three focus group discussions were conducted, as this method was considered well suited to develop an in-depth understanding of the research topic. Five main dimensions emerged from the empirical data after a thorough analysis.

Conclusion: An adjusted theoretical framework was developed by the researchers which enabled them to demonstrate how the relationship between the concepts is constructed by customers and how they are connected to each other in consonance with the empirical findings. Further, we identified four distinctive roles haptic characteristics on FMCG packaging have for consumers (i.e., focus group participants). The existing literature was confirmed by the empirical findings in this study simultaneously as new knowledge was presented.

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1 From a Fairy Tale to Reality of Haptic Marketing

Once upon a time, a swell of interest in sensory marketing, pertaining to the role of senses in consumer behaviour occurred. Leading brands started applying sensory marketing; a strategy with a high potential of enhancing the product experience and influencing consumer perception, respectively. How a product looks, sounds, smells, tastes or feels like, is innately connected to the way the product is perceived. It is unsurprising that the sense of touch has started to play an increasingly important role, if often under-acknowledged, in the consumer environment and the field of marketing.

“We live in a tactile-deprived society, and shopping is one of our few chances to freely experience the material world first hand.” (Underhill, 2009, p.168)

As the quote above indicates, touching a product with our hands in present times of online and teleshopping is still highly valued in the purchasing process. How a product feels like is determined to influence whether or not customers will end up buying it. It becomes clearer when we assume that we perceive the products visually first, but our definite purchase decision usually comes only after we have touched the product. Since touch is the first sense we develop as infants, it transmits content and meaning which cannot easily be conveyed through a more formal language (Spence & Gallace, 2011). Consequently, people often take the touch for granted, without knowing that consciously or not, they make judgements about how a product feels or whether they like it or not (Grohmann, Spangenberg & Sprott, 2007). Nevertheless, touch is one of the hardest senses to replicate and the sense that consumers trust the most as they feel more confident about purchasing a product they have touched before (Peck & Childers, 2003a; Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). Despite the fact that touch is often under acknowledged, tactile elements of a product packaging constitute a crucial part of our perception. It is also worth noting that there is both a profound effect of touch on customer’s product evaluation and also on sales (Peck & Wiggins, 2006). As a consequence, the opportunity to use touch more effectively has become ever more appealing in regard to the marketing purpose. Therefore, more companies have started to use haptic elements on the packaging, enabling the customer to interact haptically with their products. Since packaging is determined to attract customers’ attention and affect their product perception, the packaging is of the highest importance as a marketing tool within the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry. However, an unequivocal answer as to how the product packaging feels like, and what role the tactile impressions play in the shopping process, is still lacking in this sector. Thus, we consider haptics as the ‘Sleeping Beauty of Marketing’, since its potential which we deem great, has neither been fully explored nor developed concerning FMCG packaging design for understanding consumer behaviour. We believe that it is just a matter of time until its true beauty is discovered and properly applied, while we in the meantime intend to stress the relevance of haptic sensory in our study.

Starting with the introductory chapter, we give an overview of our three key research fields directly relevant for the purpose of our study. The problematisation is presented to impart

knowledge to the reader and to highlight the relevance given to our study. Further, we proceed by outlining our research question as well as briefly describing the methodological approach applied to resolve our research problem. Building upon this, our research purpose is presented subsequently, followed by an argumentation of the intended theoretical and practical contribution of our research findings. Lastly, this chapter concludes with an outline of the structure of our thesis.

1.1 Academic Background

To begin with, necessary background information is provided by presenting our three main literature streams. We will discuss each topic shortly to enable the reader to understand the issue in question.

1.1.1 Role of Packaging

No matter if packaging is an extrinsic or intrinsic element of the product is fiercely argued in the literature, it is, respectively, of greatest significance for the customer and the company at the point of sale (POS) (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Grohmann, Spangenberg & Sprott, 2007; Peck & Childers, 2003a; Underwood & Klein, 2002; Vila & Ampuero, 2017). Besides, the POS is mostly defined as the physical location at which goods or services are sold to the customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). The packaging of a product is determined to be the “primary vehicle for communication” (Silayoi & Speece, 2004, p.608), since it is the first object, consumers see while walking along the aisles in the store. As a communication medium, customers are actively involved with the product packaging through examination to obtain the information they deem important (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Consequently, packaging seems to be a critical factor in the purchasing process, since its various functions facilitate the decision-making. Above all, packaging plays a significant role as a marketing tool within the FMCG industry, because packaged goods are the core of this sector (Singh, 2015). According to Singh (2015), product packaging has a considerably positive impact on the sales of FMCG companies. Furthermore, in times of intense competition, packaging can differentiate relatively homogenous consumer goods and serve as the “a silent salesman” (Ampuero & Vila, 2006, p.101; Rundh, 2005, p.674) in regard to the new self-service retail formats. Thus, the packaging plays an essential part in the selling process and, in turn, influences the customer’s buying decision by evoking certain perceptions. Hence, the design of the packaging is pivotal, because the consumers perceive the product in a certain way by screening its appearance or touching its material.

1.1.2 Sense of Touch

The second literature stream is taken from the broad context of sensory marketing. In prior research, sensory marketing is defined as a way marketers engage the five human senses to affect consumers' product experiences, perceptions and judgements (Commer, Sci & Iqbal, 2016; Da-Costa, Zouein, Rodrigues, Arruda & Vieira, 2012; Krishna, Cian & Sokolova, 2016; Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016). Normally, sensory marketing is used to evoke an emotional connection between the customer and the product in order to facilitate the purchase decision (Krishna, Cian & Sokolova, 2016). Additionally, using sensory marketing in connection with products serves as a competitive advantage to differentiate oneself from competitors (Krishna, 2012). Despite the fact that most of the studies focus on the visual sense in regard to packaging design, a few studies have recently stressed the increasing importance of haptics in packaging (Keif, Twomey & Stoneman, 2015; Littel & Orth, 2013; Lutsch, Scharf & Zanger, 2015; Peck & Childers, 2003b). In addition, Gibson (1966) defines the term 'haptics' as the process where the hand is involved to gather information. Throughout this paper, we use the terms 'haptics' and 'touch' referring to the tactile interaction by the hand. Also, we employ the words 'tactile' and 'haptic' interchangeably. Furthermore, touch is one of the five senses that is proven to be most trusted by consumers simultaneously as it is the most complicated sense to replicate (Spence & Gallace, 2011). Touch has a persuasive effect, meaning that consumers' attitudes and behaviours are influenced by the opportunity to touch the products (Peck & Wiggins, 2006). Moreover, the purchase intention towards products has been proven to increase, concurrently as the confidence in the evaluation of the product enhances by touching it (Peck & Wiggins, 2006). According to Grohmann, Spangenberg and Sprott (2006), touching a product packaging can be an efficient means for customers to make more accurate judgements, as touch appears to provide a more direct and intimate connection with the product.

1.1.3 Haptic Perception

The term perception includes several factors such as context, connection, meaning, past experiences and memory, which are all connected in a psychological process (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). Further, it is determined as the process of obtaining sensory information through sensory receptors, namely our five senses, in order to perceptually interpret the environment (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). In our context, however, the way the packaging feels creates a certain perception in the customer's mind. In addition, several studies have shown that haptic elements of a product packaging have a significant effect on the customer's perception of the product (Barnett-Cowan, 2010; Piqueras-Fizman and Spence, 2012; Krishna and Morrin, 2008; Biggs, Juravle & Spence, 2016). Tactile interaction with the product packaging has been found, to affect the buying behaviour positively and to increase the confidence in the evaluation of these products (Peck & Wiggins, 2006). Moreover, how customers perceive the product depends on the communication elements and product characteristics reflected by the packaging (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). "If the package communicates high quality, consumers frequently assume that the product is of high quality." (Silayoi & Speece, 2005, p.1497). Consequently, packaging has a crucial part in getting the customers' attention by generating

expectations which also have an effect on their product perception and buying intention. The literature reviewed has shown that touching a given product packaging contributes to the overall perception of it. However, little is still known about the effect of tactile interaction within FMCG product packaging.

1.2 Research Relevance

In recent years, sensory marketing has garnered significant interest, both from the world of academia and from the world of business (Krishna, Cian & Aydınoglu, 2017; Lindstrom, 2005; Meiselman, 2013). Previous research has revealed the crucial role of the senses in consumer behaviour. Therefore, more and more attention has been paid to the effects of sensory marketing, defined as “marketing that engages the consumers’ senses and affects their perception, judgement, and behaviour” (Krishna, 2010, p.333). As a result, plenty of interesting insights into the topic has been revealed as of late. However, while research on sensory marketing has grown considerably, there is one sense which has been clearly overlooked so far.

As explained by Krishna, Cian and Sokolova (2016), research has only paid little attention to how acoustic, haptic and olfactory sensory characteristics influence consumer’s decision-making and attitude formation processes. Furthermore, beyond just a lack of research related to sensory inputs, there is also a dearth of "sensory-focused work on packaging among consumer researchers" (Krishna, Cian, & Aydınoglu, 2017, p.9). Instead, prior research has primarily focused on studying the products themselves and, to a lesser degree, the effect of the environment on attitude formation (Krishna, Cian, & Aydınoglu, 2017). Those few studies that have focused on the effect of sensory elements of product packaging on the customer's purchase decision (Krishna, 2010) or brand perception (Underwood & Klein, 2002) have, thereby, only considered visual attributes. How the product feels, has mostly been left to chance, but is becoming increasingly relevant (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011). Indeed, prior research has shown that touch has a persuasive effect (Peck & Wiggins, 2006), meaning that customers’ product evaluations are positively influenced by tactile interaction. Yet, even though the haptic sense has been hailed as possessing the capability to change customers’ perceptions, there is still a lack of research in academia when it comes to haptics of product packaging (Biggs, Juravle & Spence, 2016; Krishna & Morrin, 2008; Littel & Orth, 2013; Peck & Childers, 2003a; Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008). Nevertheless, marketers are incrementally attempting to focus more on haptic elements in the hope of alluring customers to buy their products and to anchor their brands in the minds of the consumers (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). This is a recent development since haptic packaging characteristics as a customer communication tool have been scarcely used in the past. Through extant literature, this can be traced back to the fact that the sense of touch is considered to have a positive influence on sales (Keif, Twomey & Stoneman, 2015; Peck & Childers, 2003a; Peck & Wiggins, 2006).

Subsequently, the design of product packaging has become increasingly important and an effective tool in today’s saturated markets where most products are qualitatively comparable

(Underwood & Klein, 2002). It is a way to transmit early signals about the quality and to make the brand distinguishable to the customers. It is seen to be one of the most essential factors in purchase decisions at the POS (Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998; Rundh, 2016; Sara, 1990; Silayoi & Speece, 2004). Especially in present times of new self-service retail formats, the packaging's key characteristic as the 'silent salesman' becomes even more apparent (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Rundh, 2016; Silayoi & Speece, 2004). Additionally, its growing significance may also be related to the increase in a number of purchase decisions made at the POS. Marketers start realising that for comparatively homogeneous products, differentiation and identity through product packaging are enormously important (Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008). Especially within the FMCG industry, the packaging is of highest relevance since packaged goods form the core of the FMCG sector (Singh, 2015). The ongoing discussion in academia illustrates that packaging affects the customer's purchase decision process and that packaging design has to ensure that customers respond favourably (Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012; Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998; Rundh, 2009; Schifferstein, Fenko, Desmet, Labbe & Martin, 2013).

Nevertheless, as customers appear to have a low involvement with those frequently purchased products, we believe it is essential to understand the role of haptic packaging characteristics on FMCG products for customers, as neglected so far in the literature. Hence, it is crucial to consider that for low involvement products, "the packaging can effectively become the product, in the eyes of the consumer" (Simms & Trott, 2010, p.402). Previous research found that touching a product increases customers' attitudes and their confidence in the evaluation of these products (Peck & Childers, 2003a). But is this also applicable for FMCG products, since it is not yet known if this finding is transferable to a range of products that customers normally only touch for a short period of time. The studies that are available, primarily focus on those products with which customers usually interact in an extensive tactile manner, such as jeans (Rahman, 2012), perfume (Keif, Twomey & Stoneman, 2015) or pens (Grohmann, Spangenberg & Sprott, 2007). Therefore, we ascertain a lack of research considering the role of haptic characteristics on FMCG packaging for customers.

Whereas the literature repeatedly highlights the connection between either packaging and perception (Krishna, Cian & Aydınoglu, 2017; Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998; Rundh, 2005), packaging and haptic sensory (Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2012; Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008) or perception and haptic sensory (Keif, Twomey & Stoneman, 2015; Spence & Gallace, 2011; Streicher & Estes, 2015), so far no study has attempted to embrace and bridge existing knowledge and theory in order to show the prevailing relationship between the three concepts. Consequently, there is a lack of research concerning the meaning of this theoretical construct in regard to FMCG products. Apart from that, most of the studies in our field of research have been conducted in a quantitative way, meaning that through experiments or surveys, a correlation or effect is preferably measured between two of the concepts. While some studies focus more on the effect of touch on sales (Grohmann, Spangenberg & Sprott, 2007) or the product perception (Peck & Childers, 2003a), other researchers deliberately concentrate on the impact of packaging on the purchase intention of

the customer (Hussain, Ali, Ibrahim, Noreen & Ahmad, 2015). Despite the fact that quantitative studies do not explore “the underlying motivations for consumer behaviour” (Rahman, 2012, p. 4), we rarely find academic research fully exploring and understanding the attitudes and feelings of the consumers. Thus, it also remains uncertain how customers make sense of the relationship between the three concepts in regard to low involvement products (i.e., FMCG products).

Due to the gap derived from the literature, we recognise the importance of understanding customers’ attitudes towards packaging, haptic sensory and perception of FMCG products as well as generally the sense of touch in FMCG packaging design.

1.3 Research Question and Purpose

Regarding the aforementioned problematisation of our research topic, the purpose of our study is to understand the construction of the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception amongst customers and to explore the role of haptic packaging characteristics on FMCG products for customers.

In order to do so, we first identify a relationship between our three research areas, namely packaging, haptic sensory and perception throughout an extensive literature review. Extant studies ascertained that quality perceptions are mostly influenced by product characteristics reflected by the packaging (Silayoi & Speece, 2004); that touch can “increase the confidence in the evaluation of the product” (Peck & Wiggins, 2006, p.56) and that tactile surfaces on the packaging make the product more distinguishable from its competitors (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). Therefore, we construct a framework demonstrating how existing knowledge and theory of these three concepts are connected and understood. By bridging the literature findings, this preliminary framework emerges, which then serves as a basis for our further approach. However, no research so far has studied how customers are constructing this relationship in regard to FMCG products. Thus, we intend to comprehend how customers make sense of the relationship between these three concepts while adapting the conceptual framework by means of their perceptions and opinions. Consequently, this leads us to our first aim of the study:

- Discovering how the relationship construct between the concepts of packaging, haptic sensory and perception is created among customers.

Furthermore, we focus on ascertaining the importance of haptic sensory in the shopping process of the customers at the POS and their potential perception. As packaging design differs widely throughout the industries, we put emphasis on FMCG products, since the packaging is of greatest significance as a marketing communication tool within that sector (Simms & Trott, 2010). Additionally, according to Singh (2015), packaging has a substantial positive impact on sales of companies operating in the FMCG industry. Further, other studies concerning packaging design highlight the importance of touch and its contribution to the customers’

overall perception of the product (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). However, only less studies specifically elucidate if that is applicable for low involvement products on the part of customers (Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008). Indeed, it has not been clearly pointed out whether haptic elements on FMCG products play a role in the purchase decision-making process of customers at the POS. This leads to our second aim of the study:

- Exploring and identifying the importance of haptic expressions on FMCG product packaging for consumers.

Based on the above-mentioned aims and the purpose of the study, we can define a research question that will guide our research process:

RQ: How is the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception constructed amongst customers in regard to FMCG products?

Sub-question: What is the role of haptic characteristics on FMCG product packaging for the customer?

Approach Description: Starting off with existing literature on sensory marketing, perception and packaging, we attempt to explore and acquire a deeper understanding of the consumer behaviour with regard to tactile interaction with FMCG product packaging. Specifically, we analyse the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception, meaning how it is constructed by the customers and how they make sense of it. Subsequently, our findings are presented in a framework showing the relationship between each concept with regard to FMCG products. Further, we examine the role of haptic packaging characteristics in the consideration process at the POS. Hence, we are particularly interested in the customer's perception of the packaging and the sensory packaging attributes directly at the POS when making a purchase decision. In accordance with the research question and the purpose, our research methodology follows an inductive approach with a qualitative method for data collection, namely focus groups. Since our study aims to find out "what is happening; to seek new insights" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 139), our research purpose is classified as of exploratory nature. Thus, we conduct focus groups which particularly suit the flexibility inherent in exploratory research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

Given the relevance of our research question, we see our paper as advancing theory and practice. Our research extends existing knowledge and contributes to a new understanding of the research problem. The review in the field of sensory marketing has shown that the concept of haptic sensory with regard to packaging is still less researched, despite the increasing relevance (Balzarotti, Maviglia, Biassoni & Ciceri, 2015; Gallace & Spence, 2014; Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Krishna & Morrin, 2008). Yet, if this concept is approached, less is known about the relevance of haptic packaging interaction with FMCG products among customers. Therefore, our paper will explore customers' perception towards haptic packaging elements on FMCG products in depth. Thus, we will contribute to the broader concept of sensory marketing. Similarly, we will provide a more profound explanation of the customer's shopping behaviour in regard to low involvement products and their packages. Concerning the intended theoretical

contribution, we will attempt to identify the role of tactile packaging attributes of FMCG products drawn from the customer's perspective. Furthermore, in the literature reviewed, we identified a relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception. Yet, we were unable to find other studies which have attempted to merge existing theory and knowledge about these three concepts. Hence, we aim on contributing to the literature by embracing and processing former research findings in order to construct a preliminary research framework enabling other researchers to understand the prevailing relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception according to academia. This framework will be of particular interest for researchers of those three fields. Additionally, due to the purpose of our study, we will gain deeper insights into the attitude formation of customers in regard to the relationship between the three concepts. Thus, our paper aims on expanding theoretical knowledge by exploring this relationship depicted in academia and constructed among consumers. Further, it is worth mentioning that most of the studies that have been conducted used a quantitative research method (Rahman, 2012; Peck & Wiggins, 2006; Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). Thus, reinforcing our study with a qualitative research method, we aim to get a thorough understanding of customer's behaviour and perception, which might require the attention from other researchers in the field. Accordingly, we strive for extending the literature as follows:

The scarcely studied concept of haptic sensory is researched in a new context, in regard to customer interaction with and perception of FMCG product packaging. The research framework provides further knowledge as to how the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception is constructed, first, being derived from former literature findings and second, emerged from customer discussions.

Regarding the intended practical contributions of our study, we aim to uncover new insights within the field of sensory marketing, with an emphasis on haptic packaging characteristics. Specifically, as we focus on the relevance of those elements on FMCG product packaging, we aim to get knowledge which will offer marketers the chance to develop their packaging to the customer's needs. Revealing the true importance of haptic elements on the packaging of FMCG products for consumers will be of interest to marketers who are currently thinking of designing product packaging (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Hence, we will provide profound and valuable insights that assist them to weigh what to focus on in the future. Managers and marketers that are responsible for branding and packaging design will, therefore, be offered to develop and differentiate their products from the competition with uniqueness (Peck & Childers, 2003a; Streicher & Estes, 2015). Due to our focus groups with customers, we mean to generate a new and better understanding of haptic packaging elements. Knowledge about these aspects is necessary for creating effective packaging. Especially in times of increasing comparable products, our research about customer's response to packaging design will give marketers some guidance and will be a key element in the competitiveness of packaged FMCG products, such as food (Peck & Childers, 2003a; Streicher & Estes, 2015). Therefore, it is essential for companies to engage in unique and new ways of marketing (Littel & Orth, 2013; Simms & Trott, 2010). Moreover, in-depth understanding regarding how customers shop low involvement products in-store will be of major significance for managers on how to encourage

customers to excite a tactile interaction. Furthermore, our study will contribute by identifying the role of packaging of FMCG products in general and its perception of the customers, which will create value for the companies to rethink their packaging strategy. Additionally, thanks to our insights, companies will be able to understand the relationship between customer's perceptions, packaging and haptic sensory on a deeper level. Therefore, companies will have the possibility to take relevant actions towards their overall marketing strategy. Knowing how customers make sense of this relationship, will facilitate the comprehension of the personal connection between the concepts. Our study will be of enhanced practical relevance for companies operating in the FMCG industry.

1.4 Structural Thesis Outline

Our thesis is divided into six main chapters. In Chapter 1, we provide an overview of the research done in our area of study. Furthermore, we present the problem formulation of our study, the research purpose and question, along with the theoretical and practical contribution of our research. In Chapter 2, we elaborate more in-depth on the constituent literature streams. More specifically, this chapter starts off with an explanation of our theoretical framework, before we review the existing literature in our field. In a next step, we summarise the findings from prior research which leads us to our research model. The paper then goes on in Chapter 3 to present our methodological approach. In this chapter, we particularly focus on the depiction of our research philosophy and design, as well as the chosen data collection method and the analysis procedure. In addition, we present the methodological research limitations we faced during the study along with ethical and political considerations. Afterwards, in Chapter 4, deriving from our data collection, we present and analyse our results which subsequently, lead to a redesigned framework enabling us to answer our research questions. The study ends with a conclusion in which we enlarge on the contributions in theory and practice, as well as the limitations and the recommendations for further research.

In the introductory Chapter, we presented the background and problematisation in order to give the reader an idea and provide them with knowledge about our subject of study. Stating our purpose and contribution, we aimed to highlight the relevance of our topic for academia and in practice. The subsequent Chapters build on the aforementioned and complement it for a better understanding.

2 Haptic Marketing towards a theoretical framework

In this chapter, we start reviewing the literature of our three streams, namely packaging, sensory marketing, more specific haptic sensory and perception. Therefore, it gives the reader a good overview and background knowledge about the relevant concepts of our study. Derived from the literature, we construct a theoretical model and elaborate more on its elements. More precisely, this framework describes the relationship between our three existing research fields and stresses the importance for the FMCG sector.

Throughout an extensive literature review, we noticed that our chosen literature streams are connected to one another and that they influence each other as well. We also realised that in regard to FMCG products, where packaged goods and beverages are the core, all three concepts play an important role, yet only highlighted separately in the literature. Despite the fact that this relationship is not particularly carved out in the literature, we develop a theoretical model by combining existing knowledge and theory. Therefore, we take a deeper look at each of our literature streams, namely packaging, sensory marketing and perception. The concept of sensory marketing is a very broad topic, whereby we are solely interested in haptic sensory leaving behind the other four senses. The illustration below shows the chronological order of our literature review; starting with the packaging and its various components, followed by sensory marketing specialised on haptics and then perception in general as well as in regard to touch. These three steps in our framework (Figure 1) are necessary enabling us to understand and construct the relationship between the three concepts at the end of this chapter. In this y last part, we combine the aforementioned findings from the literature and present our preliminary relationship framework

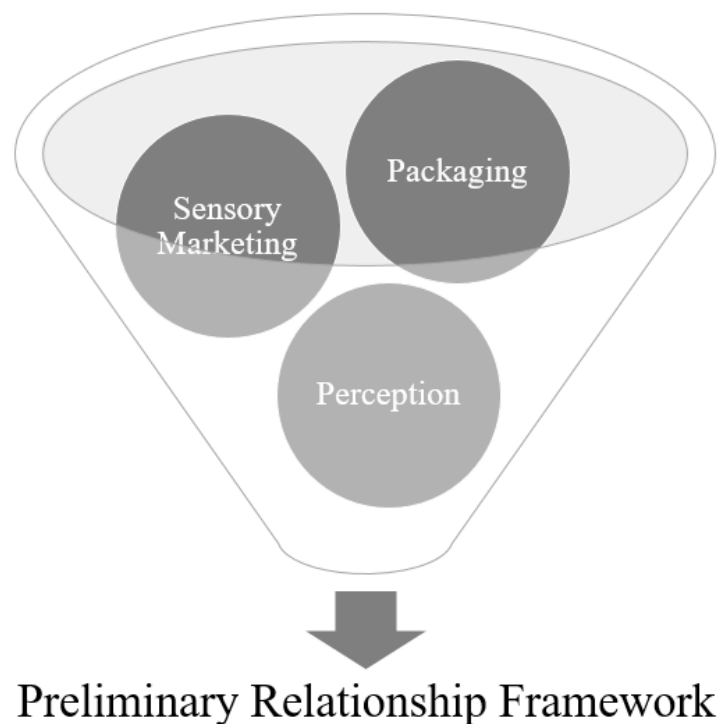


Figure 1: Structure of our literature review

2.1 Role of Packaging

In the subsequent chapter, we first outline various packaging characteristics discussed in the literature and its importance in the FMCG sector. Afterwards, we shortly explain the different packaging functions, namely protective, logistic, information, advertising, identification and image function. Finally, due to our purpose, we only focus on the structural packaging elements, such as material, shape and size and explain them more in detail.

2.1.1 Packaging Characteristics

Nowadays, a grocery product in consumer markets does not have to differ only by its content from those of its competitors, but even more by its packaging design (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013; Rundh, 2009). Especially in regard to consumer goods, the packaging is exposed to constant changes due to internationalisation and lifestyle preferences of the consumers (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012; Rundh, 2009; Silayoi & Speece, 2005).

Indeed, the packaging plays an increasingly important role for the consumers and the marketers, respectively (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Armstrong & Kotler, 2013; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012; Rundh, 2005, 2009, 2016; Silayoi & Speece, 2005; Underwood, 2003). Generally speaking, we characterise the packaging as “the container that is in direct contact with the product itself, which holds, protects, preserves and identifies the product” (Vildales Giovannetti, 1995 cited in Ampuero & Vila, 2006, p.26). As “the outfit of the product” (Krishna, Cian & Aydınoglu, 2017, p.2), the packaging also includes the physical appearance such as design, colour, shape and labelling (Ashaduzzaman & Mahbub, 2016). According to Vildales Giovannetti (1995 cited in Ampuero & Vila, 2006), there are three types of packaging divided by the degree of contact with the product, namely primary, secondary and tertiary packaging. Krishna, Cian and Aydınoglu (2017) also distinguish between the outer-intermediate-inner packaging layers and the purchase-consumption packaging layers. However, due to our purpose, this distinction is not further elaborated in our paper. In the marketing literature, packaging is seen as an “integral part of the product” (Rundh, 2005, p. 673), since the packaging can contribute to the product’s benefit. Other researchers argue that packaging is more an extrinsic element of the product namely, a “product-related attribute” (Underwood, 2003, p. 63), which is not part of the physical product (Olson and Jacoby, 1972 cited in Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Underwood, 2003). According to Zeithaml (1988), the packaging can also be classified as both an extrinsic and intrinsic attribute. In our study, we consider the packaging to be part of the product as it adds value to it and therefore, influences customers’ perceptions (Raghubir & Greenleaf, 2006; Rundh, 2009, 2016). Indeed, owing to our purpose, we focus on the perception of the product based on the appearance of the packaging in this study.

Further, packaging design plays a particularly pivotal role in the FMCG sector, due to the fact that packaged goods and beverages are the core of the FMCG industry (Singh, 2015). More

precisely, packaging matters highly in the marketing communication of these companies, particularly at the POS by influencing the consumer's purchase decision and serving as a distinguishing characteristic (Jit Singh Mann & Kaur, 2013). The POS is of particular importance for FMCG products since this is the location where these products can be purchased by the customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). This can be for example stores, supermarkets, dealers or other retail outlets. However, in regard to the purpose of our study, we define POS as a specific place in the retail store where the purchase decision is directly made regarding the product. Therefore, the POS for us refers to the aisles in the stores and their product shelves. The results of several studies in the prior literature have already indicated that packaging has a considerably positive impact on the sales of the companies in the FMCG industry (Garber, Burke & Jones, 2000; Keif, Twomey & Stoneman, 2015; Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998; Vila & Ampuero, 2017). The term FMCG refers to products which are regularly purchased and characterised by low involvement and low risk due to the low purchase transaction amount (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). We mean with low involvement that the customers do not look extensively for information about the product, neither evaluate their characteristics nor make weighty decisions on which product to buy (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). That is a consequence of low risk in the purchasing process of those products (Jit Singh Mann & Kaur, 2013; Silayoi & Speece, 2004). To mention some, these products are for instance; coffee, cereals, juices, candies, soft drinks (Silayoi & Speece, 2004), tobacco (Ford, Moodie & Hastings, 2012), soaps, cookies (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011), personal and household care products (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). Therefore, this industry is of particular interest for our study, since the packaging of those products highly matters, but simultaneously might be disregarded by the customers due to their low interaction with it.

It becomes apparent to us that the packaging is the first contact point with the brand for the customer at the POS and therefore, serves "as a brand communication vehicle" (Underwood, 2003, p.62). Other studies state that packaging has become an important tool for marketing communicating the product benefits and therefore, is related to the marketing mix (Nickels & Jolson, 1976; Silayoi & Speece, 2005). As a "tool for differentiation" (Ashaduzzaman & Mahbub, 2016, p.19), previous research has shown that packaging can be used to get the customer's attention and be the competitive advantage which sets the product apart from the competition (Rundh, 2016). This function is gaining more importance since the packaging nowadays serves as "a silent salesman" (Ampuero & Vila, 2006, p.101; Rundh, 2005, p.674) when the customers are making their final decision in a self-service sales system (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Silayoi & Speece, 2005). In regard to the self-service economy of consumer goods, packaging is an essential medium between the producer and the customer, enabling the producer to attract the attention of the customer while giving information that facilitates to make a purchase decision on the part of the customer (Vila & Ampuero, 2017). Furthermore, the packaging is directly connected to the perception of the product, meaning that if "the package communicates high quality, consumers frequently assume that the product is of high quality" (Silayoi & Speece, 2005, p. 1497) and vice versa. Thus, the packaging design allows to add value to the package and the product respectively, which has a powerful effect on the product sales (Garber, Burke & Jones, 2000; Rundh, 2009; Silayoi & Speece, 2005; Simms & Trott,

2010). According to Underwood (2003), visual elements on the package like pictures are deemed to be important and effective for differentiation purposes. Throughout the review, we recognised that the touch of the product is of importance second only to sight. Nevertheless, little attention has yet been paid to haptic packaging attributes in the consumer environment of the FMCG industry.

2.1.2 Packaging Functions

What becomes apparent from the definition aforementioned is that packaging has various functions to fulfil, both legal and technical as well as marketing related. Following the study of Rundh (2005), basic functions are defined by their role in either marketing or logistics. Due to technological changes, shifting lifestyles and market innovations, the function and the role of packaging design needs to be reassessed (Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012). This part of the chapter is central to this study, as it stresses the role of packaging in regard to the FMCG sector. In consideration of the purpose of our research, we provide theoretical insights which are useful to make sense of the issue in question.

One of the logistical functions and at the same time the historically oldest task of packaging is the *protective function* (Rundh, 2005). It must protect the packaged goods from the environment against damage during transportation, storage, presentation at the POS and later in the customer's household (Rundh, 2005). Of less relevance from a marketing perspective is the logistic function which includes the organisation, management and control of the distribution of goods from production to consumption (Rundh, 2005).

The second function of packaging is a *marketing role*. Due to the ever-increasing product diversity, the products have become more complex and now require more explanation. This development is accompanied by the enforcement of the self-service principle (Ashaduzzaman & Mahbub, 2016; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012; Rundh, 2016). Therefore, the packaging is now a bearer of notifications and tries to be self-explanatory selling on the consumer level directly.

The *information function* is an important service for the consumer and provides certain information when buying or using the corresponding product (Ashaduzzaman & Mahbub, 2016). The information function of the packaging can directly affect the customer and persuade them to make a purchase or, possibly, not to buy a product (Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012). Therefore, the main task of the information function is the elucidation of all persons involved, from the production to the final consumer, on the legally required and the voluntary data on the package (Ashaduzzaman & Mahbub, 2016; Silayoi & Speece, 2005).

Due to the extremely high contact frequency, the packaging as an advertising medium is an excellent marketing tool (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Behaeghel, 1991; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012; Rundh, 2009; Silayoi & Speece, 2005; Underwood, 2003). Thus, the packaging serves not only as a protective cover, but also it presents the product to the outside. Without packaging designs, most products would be faceless. Thus, not attractive to the consumer (Caivano & Del

Pilar Buera, 2012). A special feature of the packaging *advertising function* is the long advertising effect. The first contacts go from the POS to checkout, packing and unpacking, use until disposal or possible reuse, whereby the advertising effect can even outlast the product over time (Armstrong & Kotler, 2013; Brassington & Pettitt, 2006; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012).

Following the definition as “tool for differentiation” (Ashaduzzaman & Mahbub, 2016, p.19), the buyer must be able to identify the product according to the type and the market through the packaging. Therefore, the *identification function* has the task to assist the customer with spontaneous recognition of the brand by means of a memorable and original packaging design to be distinguished from the competitors (Rundh, 2005; Silayoi & Speece, 2005). It can be noted that the identification function helps the consumers to find themselves in a high amount of product offerings. Thus, protects consumers from deception or lack of clarity of the label.

The *image function* of the packaging is intended to make product differentiation possible by aligning the packaging design with the target group (Vila & Ampuero, 2017). The packaging is only understood and accepted by the customers in case it triggers the desired mood and meets their expectations (Underwood & Ozanne, 1998). This includes the awakening of emotions, associations and feelings of belonging to a group. Closely connected are indications of the quality of the content or the suggestion of a certain value of the goods.

2.1.3 Packaging Elements

Packaging is an important communication tool, which is present in the moment when the purchase decision is made (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Behaeghel, 1991; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012; Rundh, 2009; Silayoi & Speece, 2005; Underwood, 2003). Therefore, we see a necessity to examine the packaging elements, that favour that decision in more detail in regard to the purpose of this study. Additionally, we identified that different views concerning the elements of packages exist. According to Armstrong and Kotler (2013), there are six components which are size, material, form, colour, text and brand which have to be taken into consideration when using packaging design. However, Silayoi and Speece (2005), only define four elements to be essential and separate them into two categories; the visual and the informational elements. Whereas the visual elements include graphics and size as well as the shape of the packaging, the informational elements refer to product information like labelling. Another separation approach was undertaken by Vila and Ampuero (2006) similar to Underwood (2003) who distinguish between two parts of components:

- (1) The graphic elements (colour, typography, pictures, product information and logo)
- (2) The structural elements (form, size of the package and materials)

In regard that the purpose of the study is to explore the haptic packaging characteristics, we do not mention the ‘visual elements’ of the package. Therefore, we rather concentrate on the packaging elements which address the haptic sense of the customers, namely the structural

elements. These packaging features are relevant for our study as to learn what customers take into consideration when touching the product packaging.

Material

For the production of the packaging, different materials which reflect the nature and personality of the product (Underwood, 2003) are used and shaped accordingly. The manufacturers, as well as the customers, place a wide variety of demands on the packaging material (Heer, 2015). Thereby, the task of the material is not only to protect the product from its environment, but also to influence the customer's perception of the product (Underwood, 2003). The packaging can consist of various materials such as wood, paper or cardboard, glass, metal or plastics (Brassington & Pettitt, 2006). Often, several materials are used in packaging. Additionally, Behaeghel (1991) emphasises that each type of material has its very special properties and characteristics creating special associations. Furthermore, the choice of the packaging material has a deep impact on the sensory perception of the product. In regard to our study, especially when touching the package, the texture can create different images in the consumer's mind (Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012).

According to prior research (Ford, Moodie & Hastings, 2012), customers normally compare paper and plastics during the purchase process in regard to their environmental impacts, whereby paper or board packages are seen to be more environmentally friendly. The haptics and stiffness of a product packaging "are the bridge between effective artwork, attractive shape and the factual value on the shelf." (Neenah Packaging, n.d.). Furthermore, the texture of the package is often determined by the chosen material. A psychology study found out that the texture has a significant influence on the haptic perception and that human beings can distinguish objects blindly by means of their texture (Klatzky, Lederman & Matula, 1993). Associations of roughly experienced textures are, for example, perceived as 'natural', while smooth surfaces are regarded as 'industrial' (Klatzky, Lederman & Matula, 1993). Characteristics of the texture can be described by contrasting pairs such as rough/smooth or even/uneven, which are also the different design versions with the greatest importance for packaging design (Osswald, 2001). With regard to the purpose of our study, we consider the material as the most relevant packaging element concerning haptic interaction.

Shape

Underwood (2003) states that the shape among the other structural elements of packaging design reflects the nature and personality of the product. The shape serves as a communicator and influences the value perception (Danger, 1987). Furthermore, the shape makes the brand, the product or its function recognisable and is used for identification (Garber, Burke & Jones, 2000). As a visual and tactile element, the package shape triggers associations, facilitates perception, and strengthens the familiarity with the product (Rundh, 2016). For instance, the conscious maintenance of a once chosen form over long periods of time (e.g. Coca-Cola bottle) is advantageous not only for the customers, but also for the brand (Ford, Moodie & Hastings, 2012; Garber, Burke & Jones, 2000). Termed as "visual equity" (Underwood, 2003, p.66), the brands benefit from their continuity of imagery in packaging design. Thus, a certain packaging

shape evokes emotional appeal and influences the customer's purchase decision (Raghubir & Greenleaf, 2006). According to Raghubir and Greenleaf (2006), consumers prefer buying rectangular shaped packages. Despite this fact, companies are increasingly concentrating on the packaging shape to create an original package appealing to the customers and to differentiate from their competitors (Raghubir & Greenleaf, 2006; Rundh, 2016).

Size

Due to the increased competition, consumer goods are offered in various packaging sizes in regard to the different households and its use (Wansink, 1996). Moreover, the size of the packaging emerges as an essential dimension and contributes to the concept of product positioning (Silayoi & Speece, 2005; Vila & Ampuero, 2017). Like the package shape, the size has an impact on the customer purchase decision, preferring products which can be used and carried easily (Silayoi & Speece, 2005). However, the different packaging sizes attract customers differently in regard to their involvement, for example, for some low involvement food products (Silayoi & Speece, 2005). In this context, Silayoi and Speece (2005) state that generics are mostly packaged in large sizes to meet the demand of larger households and that these packaged goods are generally less expensive per unit (Wansink, 1996). Although the size is crucial for customers, we regard it as less relevant as a haptic packaging element in comparison to the above mentioned.

2.2 Haptic Sensory

The structure of the subsequent chapter takes the form as follows: firstly, we summarise the concept of sensory marketing, before we expand on the sense of touch. We will then go on to illustrate our main topic of haptic sensory in packaging design of FMCG products.

2.2.1 The Concept of Sensory Marketing

From early ages on, humans seek to identify comfort and security through the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell). Yet, despite that knowledge human senses have long been ignored by marketers, notwithstanding the awareness of their great importance in marketing (Hultén, Broweus & Van Dijk, 2009). Indeed, the five senses are essential for an individual's purchase experience and consumption, simultaneously as they are often responsible for some of our decisions in life (Da Costa et al. 2012; Hultén, Broweus & Van Dijk, 2009). Therefore, sensory marketing is relevant to put under research for various industries, including the FMCG sector. One reason for companies engaging in sensory marketing is the high need for differentiation among those 'everyday products' in order to increase sales and to add value to their products (Commer, Sci & Iqbal, 2016; Da Costa et al., 2012; Hultén, Broweus & Van Dijk, 2009).

Since the beginning of this century, sensory marketing has become increasingly notable in academia, due to the high number of publications on the subject (Da Costa et al. 2012). The

general definition of sensory marketing is the way marketers engage the five human senses to affect consumers' product experience, perceptions and judgements (Commer, Sci & Iqbal, 2016; Da Costa et al. 2012; Krishna, Cian & Sokolova, 2016; Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016). According to Da Costa et al. (2012), the purpose of sensory marketing is to stimulate consumers' senses to create an emotional connection between the product and the customer generating a desire to make a purchase. Whereas, Commer, Sci and Iqbal (2016) argue that sensory marketing enhances customer purchases and is determined to be a valuable strategy to gain a competitive advantage with regard to brand differentiation. In Sundar and Noseworthy's research (2016), the authors claim that applying a sensory strategy to products, consumers' preferences and their perception as well as their behaviour can be altered. However, at the same time, the sensory marketing strategy needs to be adapted to the product's positioning in the marketplace and to be designed purposely in order to evoke the right sensory experience (Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016). Hultén, Broweus and Van Dijk (2009) view sensory marketing as a strategic tool to clarify a company's identity, which creates the goal of generating brand awareness and maintaining a brand's image in relation to consumers' identity, lifestyle and personality. Therefore, sensory marketing gives firms an opportunity to face customers in a more intimate and personal way than with traditional marketing (Hultén, Broweus & Van Dijk, 2009). Further, several studies have been examining the effect of sensory marketing on customers' purchase decisions or brand perceptions, where one sense has been dominating the research, namely vision (Commer, Sci & Iqbal, 2016; Krishna, 2010, 2012; Krishna, Cian & Aydınoglu, 2017; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014). Other senses like touch or smell in regard to packaging design are still under-researched (Krishna, 2010). Given the purpose of the study, we solely focus on haptic sensory. Therefore, the sense of touch is put under examination in our research and is further elaborated on in the next part of this chapter.

2.2.2 Sense of Touch as Basis of Life

Notably, touch is the first sense we develop as infants where our hands are constantly used to gather information by evaluating and exploring our surroundings (Jansson-Boyd, 2011). Although touch is so heavily used and crucial during the early years, people often take it for granted. In academia, we identified several definitions for 'touch'. According to Stevens and Green (1996), touch can be described as "sensations aroused through the stimulation of receptors in the skin" (p. 1), meaning that the term 'touch' is not only limited to our hands but also to other parts of our body. Additionally, Gibson (1966) defines the term 'haptics' as the process where the hand is involved to acquire information. Further, haptics can be divided into two different terms, namely 'tactile' and 'kinesthetic' interactions. Tactile interaction is related to the sense of touch by the hands, whereas kinaesthetic is more related to the muscular feelings and body movements (Hamam, Eid & El Saddik, 2013). Thus, our central focus for understanding the consumer behaviour rests on the tactile interaction with FMCG product packaging.

2.2.3 Haptic Sensory in Packaging

A tactile interaction occurs when the consumer has physical contact with the product. By touching a product, one can distinguish if the product is, for example, sharp, hard, smooth or soft. Whereas most of the studies in sensory marketing have focused on the visual sense (Commer, Sci & Iqbal, 2016; Fenko, Schifferstein & Hekkert, 2009; Hultén, Broweus & Van Dijk, 2009), relatively little attention has been paid to tactile marketing in academia (Biggs, Juravle & Spence, 2016; Krishna & Morrin, 2008; Peck & Childers, 2003a; Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008). However, it is worth noting that haptic sensory has started to play an increasingly important part in both packaging design and marketing for FMCG companies (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011). That means those companies have begun to consider the feeling of the packaging by using haptic characteristics on their packaging. Referring back to Chapter 2.1.3, haptic packaging elements are the material, texture, shape and size of a package as well as other features, such as embossed printings on the surface. Throughout the entire paper, we refer back to this fact.

According to Peck and Childers (2003b), individuals have a different level of ‘need to touch’ a product. Hence, some individuals need several physical interactions with the product than others in their decision-making to purchase the product or not. Furthermore, the study by Peck & Childers (2003a) distinguishes between individuals that use touch to gather information to evaluate a product and individuals that use touch for pleasure. Thus, the tactile experience is either more instrumental, and individuals see the tactile experience more as hedonic, or individuals engage in tactile experiences because it is pleasant and fun. Despite the lack of product related information generated by the touch, tactile interaction with products can establish an affective reaction that influences the customer’s decision-making process (Peck & Wiggins, 2006). Therefore, the tactile interaction can increase the persuasion of customers to purchase (Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Keif, Twomey & Stoneman, 2015; Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008).

In fact, haptic elements on packaging are considered to be a key strategic marketing tool, especially for products overall success (Tu, Yang & Ma, 2015). Marlow and Jansson-Boyd (2011) stress the important role of touch in different consumer environments but argue that a significant environment is clothing stores. However, Tu, Yang and Ma (2015) point out the relevance of touch as a marketing tool in FMCG packaging, especially food products which is a large part of FMCG products. Notably, successful packaging is a determining factor for buying a product as well as it functions as a strategy to create desire and establish brand loyalty (Tu, Yang & Ma, 2015). The use of haptic elements on packaging has been discussed in academia to be a clear strategy that can influence brand and product evaluations (Krishna, 2006; Krishna & Morrin, 2008; Littel & Orth, 2013). According to Rifqiya and Nasution (2016), using haptic attributes on packaging can enhance the attractiveness of the product for customers. Also, customers’ attitudes and behaviours have shown to be influenced by the opportunity to touch products. Furthermore, the purchase intentions of products have been proven to grow,

simultaneously as the confidence in the evaluation of the product increases by touching a product (Peck & Wiggins, 2006).

Further, Littel & Orth (2013) have focused on the interplay of sensory modalities (e.g. vision and touch) when it comes to product packaging, also called semantic congruence. Semantic congruence occurs when a single sensory modality generates the first impression of the product which serves as a foundation for subsequent evaluations based on a second sensory modality (Littel & Orth, 2013). Hence, the evaluation can either be strengthened or weakened by the second sensory modality; a process that is called bimodal evaluation. Although this is not our main focus, we recognise the importance of semantic congruence, since customers in a natural setting usually perceive brands and products through multiple senses.

2.3 The Haptic Perception

The term perception includes several factors such as context, connection, meaning, past experiences, and memory, which are all connected in a psychological process (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). Perception is seen as “the process of attaining sensory information, interpreting it, sorting the interesting one and then organising it” (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016, p.354). Therefore, our five senses are required to perceptually interpret the stimuli, meaning factors from the environment, which evoke sensory impressions. Due to the purpose of our study, we are particularly interested in the skin as a sensory receptor for touch regarding product packaging. Indeed, individuals have different perceptions of products for different reasons, and the effect of haptic attributes of packaging appears to have a significant influence on consumer behaviour (Krishna & Morrin, 2008). Furthermore, several studies have shown that haptic elements of a product packaging have a significant effect on customer’s perceptions of products (Barnett-Cowan, 2010; Biggs, Juravle & Spence, 2016; Krishna & Morrin, 2008; Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2012). The sense of touch has been proven to have an important role for costumers, particularly in the first stage of buying, where the customer gets the opportunity to develop a sense for the product package and what is inside (Schifferstein et al., 2013). Hence, the haptic interaction can evoke affective reactions, which might independently moderate the effect of haptic interactions on the consumer buying decision-making process (Tu, Yang & Ma, 2015).

Several studies discuss how haptic attributes of product packaging generate different product perceptions (Biggs, Juravle & Spence, 2016; Krishna & Morrin, 2008; Littel & Orth, 2013; Peck & Childers, 2003b; Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008). However, the influence of haptic attributes on customer perceptions has not been clearly mapped out for what type of product categories it is more essential to use (Jansson-Boyd, 2011). One frequent product category found in academia with regard to FMCG products is food packaging. Moreover, different packaging designs can influence consumer perceptions, such as perceived quality of a product (Borland, Savvas, Sharkie, & Moore, 2013), perceived brand attributes (Parise & Spence, 2012), perceived novelty and perceived likeability (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016), perceived

naturalness (Labbe, Pineau & Martin, 2013), product attitude and price expectations (Becker, Van Rompay, Schifferstein, & Galetzka, 2011) as well as the perceived taste of the product based on the haptic touch (Krishna & Morrin, 2008). Consequently, the influence of touch plays a significant role on customers' perceptions.

With regard to product perception and the influence of touch, products with features that are best discovered by haptic interaction are products that most likely have a positive influence on product evaluation (Peck & Childers, 2003a; Peck & Wiggins, 2006). Thus, engaging the customers to touch the product as it generates a more positive general perception of the product is advantageous (Jansson-Boyd, 2011). There are specific product categories, such as clothes, where touch plays a more significant role than in other product categories. However, there is still a need for research to get a clear structure of product categories where touch plays an equally or even more important role. According to the purpose of our study, one product segment worth examining is within the FMCG sector. The existing literature claims that there is no real evidence as of today that touch plays a significant role in the perception of FMCG products since customers in a natural retail setting do not spend a lot of time touching these products (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011). The low involvement character of these products suggests that customers do not extensively evaluate their characteristics in order to make a decision. Nevertheless, we believe, that the product packaging as such and the touch of it, trigger certain perceptions towards the product, although customers do not interact with FMCG products comprehensively. However, the haptic interaction is predominantly found to function as a second sensory modality, where the overall perception of the product due to the vision is either increased or decreased (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011). Thus, considering consumer behaviour, haptic elements on FMCG packaging are important in the decision-making process.

2.4 Preliminary Framework of Conceptual Relationship

While reviewing the relevant literature for our study, we noticed that various studies emphasise and highlight a relationship between only two of our three literature streams mentioned above. Thus, this chapter particularly aims to synthesise the previous literature findings and discussions through a presentation of a model demonstrating the relationship of all three research fields, namely packaging, haptic sensory and perception regarding FMCG products. Further, we elaborate more on the relation between each concept before we merge it together showing our research framework. Initially, with this section, we mean to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the theories and concepts which are quite relevant to the subject of our study and which refer to the broader areas of knowledge being considered. Since this framework cannot be readily found in the literature, we aim to bridge existing knowledge and theory to purposefully extend the latter. This framework enables the reader to make sense of the knowledge gap in academia regarding the relationship between the three concepts and to comprehend the relevance of our topic at hand. It aids to provide the reader with a clear overview of how we process the literature findings to construct a preliminary research model.

The first relationship we detected exists between the concept of packaging and haptic sensory. In the last years, the recognition of packaging as a constituent element of the marketing mix has become largely accepted. Furthermore, terms like ‘the silent salesman’ are frequently used to depict the role of packaging (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Underwood, 2003; Vila & Ampuero, 2017). Owing to the growing number of products in the marketplace, the traditional mass media communication has been redirected to the POS, which thus, makes the packaging an essential marketing channel for differentiation. Hence, marketers of those products are progressively attempting to use haptic elements on the packaging in the hope of encouraging customers to buy their products (Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Silayoi & Speece, 2005). Haptic sensations from touching a product can be a differentiating factor and indeed, “consumers often touch products before they reach a purchase decision.” (Streicher & Estes, 2015, p. 350) Considering an innovative design, marketers have quite a few possibilities to enhance the haptics of the packaging by means of different materials, the texture, the shape or haptic elements. Incidentally, we must not forget to mention that once the customer pays attention to the haptic elements of a product, it is less likely that they shift their attention to another product (Jansson-Boyd, 2011). Hence, haptic sensory and packaging are directly connected to each other, since the customers have to touch the product in any case when they intend to buy it. At that moment when touching the packaging, the customers perceive the product in various ways and can be influenced in their buying decision.

In fact, the second relationship comprises the concept of packaging and perception. Several studies have already pointed out that packaging has a “powerful effect on consumers at the point of sale” (Simms & Trott, 2010, p.400) and is thus, able to enhance product sales (Peck & Wiggins, 2006; Simms & Trott, 2010; Singh, 2015). Further, recent research has pinpointed that especially at the POS, the packaging for packaged products performs an important role by influencing customers’ buying decisions (Singh, 2015). It becomes apparent that packaging which stands out on the shelf influences customer’s decision process and can increase the opportunity to be chosen by the customer. So, “packaging can influence consumers’ perception and evaluation of products” (Rundh, 2016, p.2495). How customers perceive the product depends on the communication elements and product characteristics reflected by the packaging (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). According to Underwood and Ozanne (1998), the “package is the shopper’s window to the product because it often projects the initial impression they form about a product, its quality or its value.” (p.208). Therefore, as the literature suggests, packaging generates expectations in the customer's mind, that, in turn, affect his/her product perception. Besides perceived quality, several researchers examined the influence of packaging design on consumer’s perceived naturalness (Labbe, Pineau & Martin, 2013), perceived novelty (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016) or likability (Jansson-Boyd, 2011). By means of the packaging, various perceptions are deliberately created to build trust which engenders favourable consumer behaviour. Notably, packaging elements such as shape, size, colour and material can have a considerable effect on perceived product attributes (Ford, Moodie & Hastings, 2012).

Indeed, a third relationship can be noticed, namely between perception and haptic sensory. As it has previously been highlighted, customers’ product evaluations are affirmatively affected by

tactile interaction (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Peck & Wiggins, 2006). The importance of touch and its contribution to the overall perception of the product are increasingly stressed by consumer researchers (Keif, Twomey & Stoneman, 2015). The possibility to touch a product in the store has been proven to have a persuasive impact on consumers' behaviour and attitudes. In fact, touching a product has been indicated to increase the purchase intentions vis-à-vis the product and the confidence in the assessment of these products (Peck & Childers, 2003a; Peck & Wiggins, 2006). On the other hand, not allowing customers to touch products can result in a less favourable evaluation of them (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Peck & Childers, 2003a). Additionally, throughout the literature, we note that touching a product can increase its perceived value (Streicher & Estes, 2015). "Touching does, indeed, cause liking." (Grohmann, Spangenberg & Sprott, 2007, p.237) As one of the hardest senses to be manipulated (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016), touching a product, packaging creates a certain feeling and generates a more positive general perception of the product (Jansson-Boyd, 2011). According to Peck and Childers (2003a), the perception gained with our hands is still of high significance. Especially in huge markets of commutable products, haptic perception also serves as a differentiator and should not be underestimated, since we very easily associate emotions with the object (Schifferstein et al., 2013).

In this study, we draw on the existing literature to suggest that there is not only a relationship between two of our concepts but also a relationship between all three of them. Despite abundant research about packaging and perception, less research about haptic sensory in that context has been conducted. Whereas almost all of these few studies have used a quantitative approach, we, however, aim to combine their findings to illustrate the prevailing viewpoint in the literature as of today and propose a framework for reviewing that knowledge. In regard to the aforementioned, we dare to say that we identified a relationship between our three concepts. Imagining the situation where the customer is in the store and takes hold of a product, immediately the packaging and the touch of it creates a certain perception of the product in the customer's mind. Since haptic information is essential for the evaluation of products, haptic characteristics of packaging such as texture, material, shape and size play an important role at the POS and can encourage the customer to touch it (Peck & Childers, 2003). Ultimately, touching the product has further, an influence on customers' perceptions and behaviours (Peck & Wiggins, 2006). In that 'first moment of truth', the packaging has to live up to the expectations generated by the vision, as it attracts the customers' attention in the shop. Only if the packaging wins the first moment of truth, the customers buy the product (Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008). The second moment of truth according to Löfgren (2004 cited in Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008) deals with the customer experience in the consumption or usage process. Though in our study, we do not take the usage of the product into account, since we are solely interested in the perception made at the POS. Moreover, we stress that packaging in the FMCG sector is of greatest significance as a marketing tool due to the fact that it influences the customer's buying decision. Thus, packaging has a positive impact on the sales of the companies. It communicates to the customers who in turn ascertain the product quality by screening the product appearance (Silayoi & Speece, 2005). So "the packaging can effectively become the product, in the eyes of the consumer" (Simms & Trott, 2010, p. 402), which creates

certain perceptions through its design. The Figure below demonstrates the relationship between our three concepts derived from the literature in regard to the FMCG sector. Although significantly more is known about packaging and perception, we think that the relations between each of them are equally important according to previous research.

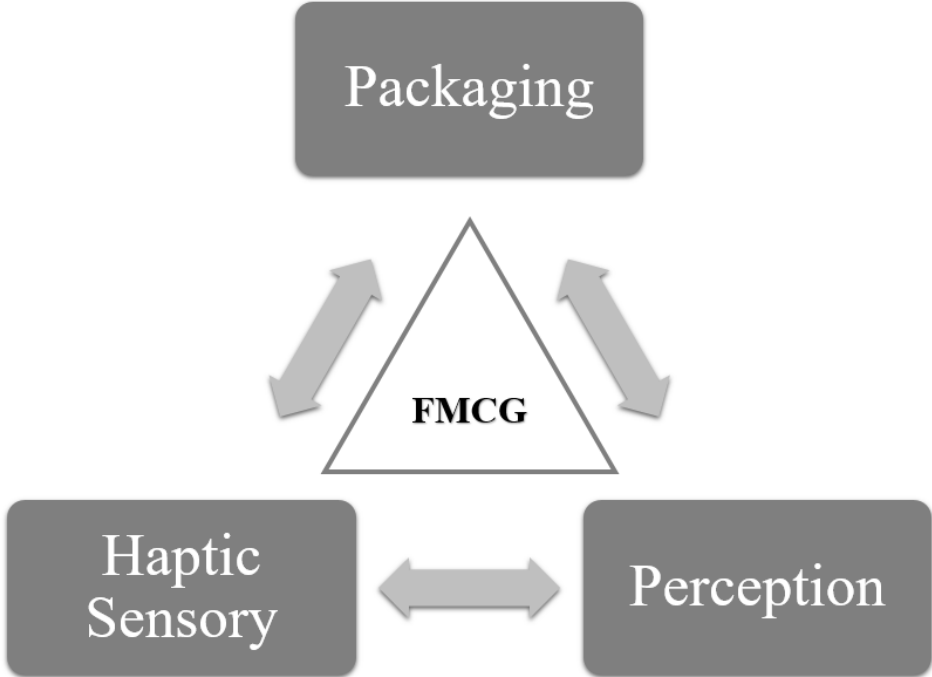


Figure 2: Preliminary theoretical relationship framework

Having said that, we now know how the relationship is constructed in the literature. Yet, we are more interested in the customer's point of view. Thus, in accordance with our research question, we examine customer's current understanding and construction of the relationship between the three concepts. With the support of focus groups, we intend to gain in-depth insights through the discussion and interaction with each other in order to potentially adapt the above-shown model according to our respondent's interpretation.

In conclusion, with this Chapter, we intended to provide interesting insights and a thorough understanding of our research topic emerging from existent literature. The concepts mentioned above enabled us to outline our preliminary framework about the relationship between them. How this relationship is constructed among the customers, is the result of our following methodological research process.

3 Methodological Research Process

In this chapter, we present the applied research philosophies from which we draw assumptions when developing our methodology for conducting the research. Subsequently, we state our research approach and strategy, as well as the methods we have chosen for the data collection and analysis. Subsequently, we outline the process of the focus groups and point out the limitations as well as the ethical and political dimensions of our study.

3.1 Philosophical Research Context

In this part of Chapter 3, we present the philosophical fundament on which the study builds, and we include important assumptions about the way in which we as researchers view the world (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Thus, these assumptions determine our research strategy and the method of our thesis. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), it is crucial for researchers to consider their philosophical standpoint in their research. Consequently, in this context, we take on an epistemological and ontological viewpoint (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

Indeed, our epistemological stance is shaped by the context of this research. The fundamental aim of the study is to understand the customers from their point of view, and how they make sense of the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception. Hence, we took inspiration from an interpretivist view. The focus of the interpretivist position can be described by Bryman and Bell (2015) as an “empathic understanding of human action, rather than with the forces that are deemed to act on it” (p.16). Meaning, that our focus of the interpretivist view is to understand the participants ‘social world’ through an investigation of their interpretation of that world (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Concerning our ontological view, the choice was between viewing haptic sensory from a subjective or objective position. Consequently, as our aim is to explore and understand the way customers construct the relationship between the three concepts depending on their own individual meaning, we chose to view haptic sensory from a subjective position which corresponds with our interpretivist standpoint. Furthermore, in line with our interpretivist philosophy, we have opted to take inspiration from a social constructionist stance. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), the task of the social researcher is “to appreciate the different constructions and meanings that people place on their experience” (p. 52). Thus, the scope of our study is to understand how customers perceive haptic packaging characteristics and how they make sense of the relationship between the three concepts (i.e., packaging, haptic sensory and perception) based on their personal experience. Therefore, the reality we are looking at is, not objective but rather subjective and socially constructed, where the meaning is given by the consumers in social interactions (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Thus, we took a departure from an interpretive, subjective and social constructionist view.

3.2 Research Approach

In this section, we present the possible research approaches one can consider and argue for our chosen one. There are three fundamental research approaches one can take a departure from, namely inductive, deductive or abductive (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The deductive approach is more related to a positivistic ontological position and to a quantitative research design, where quantification in the collection of data is emphasised (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Furthermore, the emphasis of deductive approach in line with quantitative research designs is placed on hypothesis testing simultaneously, as it represents the social reality as an objective and external reality (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In contrast to the above-mentioned approach, the inductive research approach is typically associated with qualitative research, where the emphasis on the relationship between theory and research is put on the exploration of new theory (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In our study, we were more interested in in-depth understanding of customers' views, their constructs and the influence of haptic characteristics than quantification and hypothesis testing. Simultaneously we made use of coding in our analysis, where codes and dimensions emerged from the empirical material, which, thus, resulted in an inductive research approach. Furthermore, since we identified a significant gap in the literature not only under the scope of haptic packaging characteristics but also qualitative studies, we intend to gain new insights and develop theory in our empirical material collection while adjusting our theoretical framework accordingly.

The last approach mentioned in the literature is the abductive research approach, which is an approach that is based on both a deductive and inductive research approach (Lipscomb, 2012). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), research is most likely to use elements to some extent from both inductive and deductive approaches. However, given the purpose of our study, we deem the inductive approach as the most appropriate approach, as it is used to describe and understand social life regarding social actors, motives and accounts.

3.3 Strategic Research Design

The majority of extant research on sensory marketing has been preoccupied with understanding if sensory stimuli influence consumer behaviour, and if so, which attributes are dominant (Krishna, 2010). Additionally, previous research has investigated how customers perceive products on the basis of packaging design and identify relevant design cues by using experiments, perceptual mapping or questionnaires (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Peck & Childers, 2003a; Streicher & Estes, 2015). Therefore, the traditional approach for studying sensory marketing in regard to packaging has been quantitative (Rahman, 2012). While quantitative methods can be used to advantage when one wants to study causal relationships, they are "not very effective in understanding processes or the significance that people attach to actions" (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p.56). Therefore, as argued by Rahman (2012), "the underlying motivations for consumer behaviour

may not be fully understood or explored thoroughly through quantitative study" (p.4). With the support of experiments, quantitative studies show that there is an effect of haptic packaging characteristics on customer's perception, but do not give any reasons why this effect or evaluation occur in a positive way (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011; Peck & Childers, 2003; Streicher & Estes, 2015). As our study aimed to fill this gap and to explore customer's behaviour in regard to the role of haptic characteristics on FMCG product packagings, a quantitative approach was not suitable. Instead a qualitative method was a more appropriate choice as it allowed us to study "the perceptions of local actors from the inside" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6) and how they "understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situations" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.7). As such, according to Bryman and Bell (2015), qualitative methods enable the researchers to view "events and the social world through the eyes of people that they study" (p. 402).

Furthermore, the role of theory regarding the research and the ontological and epistemological stance endorsed our chosen qualitative study design (Bryman & Bell, 2011). More explicitly, in our study, we were more interested in in-depth understanding of the customer's view and their constructs about the importance of haptic elements than quantification and hypothesis testing, which, thus, resulted in a qualitative research design.

3.4 Empirical Material Collection

In regard to the purpose of the study, we conducted focus groups to answer our research question. According to Powell and Single (1996), focus groups can be defined as "a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment upon, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research" (p.499). Thus, we argue that focus groups were an appropriate data collection method, especially in cases where it is important to "better understand how people feel or think about an issue, idea, product or service" (Krueger & Casey, 2009, n.p.) and where the group interaction is particularly part of the method (Kitzinger, 1995). This suggests that focus groups are especially suitable in exploring the participants' knowledge and experiences that drive the participants' behaviour in the group process (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). In accordance with our research strategy, this method was well suited to develop an in-depth understanding of the research topic based on the discussion among the respondents. Our idea behind the usage of the focus group method was that it enables us to encourage the participants to examine the importance of haptic expressions on FMCG products.

Gathering this type of data, is made possible by the negotiated and flexible nature of focus groups. Although focus groups are mostly quite loosely structured (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), it was essential to organise the format of the focus group by means of predetermined and sequenced questions to collect empirical material that was of interest for us (Krueger & Casey, 2009). However, the topic guide had not to be set in stone as we made use of open-ended questions, which invited the participants to talk to and discuss with one another,

generating much broader and more elaborate answers (Kitzinger, 1995). This means that, as new and interesting insights not previously considered by the researcher, surfaced during the interview, it was possible to depart from the topic guide in order to investigate them further and, possibly, uncover interesting information in the process (Alvesson, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). As such, our focus groups relied on the interaction within the group (Morgan, 1997). This provided us with particularly rich data and insights that might not be possible to obtain without the interaction found in a group. Thus, the focus group constituted a more natural environment than that of an individual interview because “participants are influencing and influenced by others – just as they are in life.” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, n.p.) Thus, the focus group sessions had two broad objectives:

- To explore the construction of the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception
- To understand respondents’ view on the role of haptic packaging characteristics

In this context, we believe that focus groups were more appropriate for us, as we wanted to reach those two objectives through the discussion solely among the participants.

As previously stressed in the problematisation, we chose to study our research question within the context of FMCG. Thereby, we have deliberately decided against focusing on one or two products solely, as we wanted to find out the role of haptic expressions on FMCG products in general. On the one hand, basing our study on specific products would make it more demonstrative but on the other not generalisable. Furthermore, a restricted number of goods would also result in a limited number of views from the focus groups participants, as they would solely rest their opinion on these products. Nevertheless, we provided the focus groups with exemplary products covering the range of FMCG products mentioned. These examples were randomly chosen but exhibited different haptic packaging characteristics, such as texture, shape or embossed elements.

3.4.1 Focus Group Sampling Approach

According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), it is essential to note that the quality of the focus group to a great extent depends on its composition, meaning that it might be challenging to moderate the discussion of the participants who do not share the same experience. Various researchers suggest selecting participants who have certain characteristics in common best related to the topic of the focus group (Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger & Casey, 2009; Morgan, 1997). Thereby, the nature of this homogeneity was determined by the purpose of the study, which facilitates the recruitment of the participants (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

The first step in preparation for our empirical material collection was the development of the right sampling type which was best suitable for our research question and purpose. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), data collection from a sample provides useful results since it represents the entire population. Due to the sampling method, the findings are set in a

specific context (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). With regard to our purpose, the chosen participants for our focus groups were essential to get the most informative and relevant findings from the discussion. Thus, we used a nonprobability sample technique. This was particularly practical in exploratory research projects, since a purposeful sample could be collected based on our subjective judgment (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) and at the same time reduced “the likelihood that the way a sample is chosen influences the outcome of [our] research” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p. 371).

To collect as informative data as possible, we selected our participants using purposive sampling. Naturally, using a purposive sampling has implications for the validity and generalisability of the study since it limits the number of perspectives that can be explored and the possibility to make inferences to other contexts (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). However, subscribing to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson’s (2015) notion that the job of the researcher is to “illuminate different truths” (p.84), we argue that the purposive sampling method still allowed us to make relevant contributions to the understanding of the research topic. Therefore, in trying to select typical cases that were particularly informative, we sampled consumers of FMCG products, as they were believed to be diligent in their evaluation of the products, which, thus, gave their attention to the product packaging. We have chosen the typical case sampling method because we aimed to look at ‘typical’ customers and their behaviours in regard to haptic sensory of packaging design. Based on the criteria mentioned above of homogeneity within the focus group, we have chosen this method “to capitalise on people’s shared experiences” (Kitzinger, 1995, p.300) within the purchase process of FMCG products. Hence, the participants were chosen according to predetermined criteria relevant to our research aim (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). Consequently, the only requirement was that the participants of our focus groups had to be regular consumers of packaged FMCG products. In regard to the sampling process, we posted a request on a notice board asking for students with no prior knowledge of the research topic to participate in one of our focus groups. These notices were present in most frequently visited places at our university. This approach proved to be really effective because we got volunteers from various age groups and backgrounds, which enabled us to collect insights from different types of consumers. However, as stated earlier, we strategically selected those who met our requirement and, thus, fit the purpose of our study. As soon as we got the number of participants we planned to invite, we scheduled a date and time for the discussion and assigned each of them to their preferred time slot.

To make sure that the participants felt comfortable expressing and sharing their views, we created “a permissive, nonthreatening environment” (Krueger & Casey, 2009, n.p.) without pressuring the participants to give their opinions. Furthermore, we rather utilised the interaction between the participants to encourage an open conversation and to illuminate the participant's perspectives through the discussion in the group. Thus, we employed a small group of five people so that everyone had the opportunity to share their insights and yet be diverse enough to provide various perceptions of the research topic. Given our group exercise approach, we think that five participants in each group were enough to explore how their opinions are constructed

(Krueger & Casey, 2009). However, we were well aware that the small size can also result in a limited number of ideas. Additionally, in order to be able to compare and contrast the opinions and results expressed (Krueger & Casey, 2009), we conducted three focus groups in total. As a general rule of thumb, three focus groups are an accepted number of research studies (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Besides that, after we have conducted the focus groups, we reached the point of saturation, since, in our last group, we got answers overlapping with the ones in the preceding groups.

The following Table (Table 1) shows the composition of our groups in regard to gender and age.

Gender /Age	24	25	26	27	28	Total
Female	3	4	1	1	0	9
Male	1	2	2	0	1	6
Total	4	6	3	1	1	15

Table 1: Composition of our focus groups

As we were primarily looking for students, we knew beforehand that the age range is from 23 to 32 years in our faculty. We considered this as a good age being familiar with buying packaged goods and being able to assess them in accordance to their packaging. Furthermore, we believe that at this age, the consumers are still willing to try new products instead of holding on to very few specific brands. Additionally, one might challenge our approach by stating the higher price sensitivity of students in comparison to young professionals which might blind them towards other attributes of more expensive products. Having said that, we argue that we did not specifically ask for their purchase intention but rather their perception of the product packaging, no matter how expensive or cheap. Due to the gender composition, we tried to get an almost equal number of both male and female participants. Looking for ‘typical’ customers, we assume that men and women still differ in their perception and behaviour in regard to product packaging of FMCG products. However, we think our focus groups had a good mixture providing us with different insights.

Additionally, apart from the quality aspect mentioned earlier, Byers and Wilcox (1991) note that there are several flaws in regard to focus groups, like the risk of subjective conformity, meaning that the respondents provide socially acceptable responses, in order to conform to the group norms. Relating to Alvesson (2003), we took a reflexive stance towards the subject matter in a way that we challenge and reconsider prior assumptions of focus groups. Since our goal of the focus group method was to capture insights into consumer behaviour of haptic packaging characteristics, the reflexive approach supported us in our interpretations to produce rich results. Overall, we believe that the size of the sample and the amount of empirical material we collected was sufficient and in accordance with our research question and qualitative approach.

3.5 Analytical Data Process

In this section, we provide a description on how the material was analysed and how we arrived at themes and patterns from the collected empirical material. The theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 was used as a foundation and guide for our data collection, where statements from the literature on packaging, haptics and perception were used. This form of conducting the data enabled us to collect data not only related to previous literature but also to generate new findings derived from customers' experiences and interpretations. As a starting point of our data analysis, all the collected material from the focus groups were transcribed to avoid loss of information, but also to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. Furthermore, the transcriptions reflect the participants' exact wordings and constructs used in the focus groups.

According to Bryman and Bell (2015) "coding is the starting point for most forms of qualitative data analysis" (p. 584). Thus, coding was the starting point of our analysis. The process of the analysis was influenced by the five fundamental 'analytical operations' presented by Spiggle (1994); categorisation, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalisation and integration. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the collected material was interpreted and understood accurately, we always took into consideration the original context in which participants were expressed (in-store). Therefore, the hermeneutic approach was established to understand participants real meaning (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the analysis process is based on the five analytical operations. The first step in the analysing process was the categorisation. According to Spiggle (1994) "categorising data is the process of classifying or labelling units of data" (p. 493). As an initial step of the categorisation, we coded the collected material, meaning that quotes and examples related to similar aspects of the same main theme, were grouped and labelled. Since "data collection is inescapably a selective process" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 55), parts of the collected data which did not contain significant information for our research were left uncategorised. Furthermore, we used an inductive approach of the categorisation, meaning that categories and codes emerged from the gathered material.

Having categorised all the collected data, we ended up with numerous categories. The subsequent step was abstraction of the material with the primary objective to assembly identified categories into more general theoretical groups (Spiggle, 1994). In accordance with Spiggle (1994), we structured the initially identified categories that shared certain common features into new concrete ones. The abstraction phase of the analysis allowed us to get a better understanding of the data and resulted in general theoretical categories.

The third step of Spiggle's five operations was the comparison of the data. This phase identifies differences and similarities across the data, simultaneously, as it works as a guideline if additional material is required (Spiggle, 1994). Since we categorised the collected data in the first steps of the analysing process, the comparison phase came naturally, because we identified the differences and similarities throughout the categorisation. However, it was important to take

particularly care to conduct comparisons in a systematic and methodical way as the analysis proceeded, even though this process take place rather implicitly and unsystematically throughout the analysis of the material (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Spiggle, 1994).

Dimensionalisation aims to explore variations and interrelations between the different identified categories. Thus, it enabled us to explore properties and dimensions across constructs and categories and enhances the theoretical meaning (Spiggle, 1994). Taking this phase into consideration during the whole analysis process, we were able to reveal different relationships between and within the categories identified from the collected material. Thus, it simplified the next phase of the analytical operations, namely the integration part. According to Spiggle (1994), the aim of the integration phase can be explained in the following way; “the construction of theory takes the analyst beyond the identification of themes, or even of propositions” (p. 494). This phase enabled us to connect the empirical findings with theory and to compare to what extent the findings were consistent, disrepute or build upon existing literature.

This approach allowed us to stay close to our research question simultaneously as we were open to new insights, thus, strengthening the validity of our study in the process. The results were then compiled into a table (Table 2) to make the them more comprehensible.

3.6 Focus Group Preparation & Procedure

Given that the purpose of our study was to explore the role of haptic packaging characteristics on FMCG products and consumers sense-making of the relationship, self-contained focus groups were deemed the most appropriate alternative and were chosen as our data collection method. With the support of focus groups, we gained in-depth insights into the customer shopping behaviour for packaged FMCG products. Learning about the participants’ conceptualisation of haptic sensory in relation to packaging and perception, was another important issue we strived to reveal within the sessions.

These sessions were directed by a moderator (one of us) whose role was to encourage the exploration of the topic. We took particularly care that we were not previously known to any participant so that they had no preconceived ideas or prior knowledge about our research topic and purpose. In accordance with the aforementioned chapter, we tried to create a pleasant atmosphere where the participants felt comfortable expressing honest and open answers (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). To accomplish this goal, we prepared a small breakfast which was meant to get to know each other before starting the discussion. In the beginning, we introduced ourselves briefly and gave a short presentation with useful explanations of focus groups and FMCG products including low involvement products, as we expected not all of the participants to know as well as the research principles such as confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. Afterwards, we handed out our informed consent forms (Appendix A) and asked all the participants to sign if they still wanted to participate. At this point, we made repeatedly clear that all the participants had the right to withdraw partially or completely at any time from the

discussion. Besides that, we promised the participants that their identities would not be revealed in any case while reporting the material. Furthermore, instead of solely asking questions, we used a group exercise to generate a discussion. We presented the participants a number of statements from our three literature streams on large cards (Appendix B) and asked them to collectively sort these statements into different piles depending on their importance they assign to that aspect.

The result from this sorting was then further analysed. Additionally, they were asked to comment on each statement and to discuss its relevance, its correctness or its importance. Through the discussion around the cards, we aimed to explore the perceived relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception, namely answering our first research question. Furthermore, we asked follow-up questions which gave the participants some guidance on what to talk about but also allowed some flexibility to pursue a response in more detail. In case someone seemed to feel embarrassed or uneasy, we slightly changed the direction of the discussion by asking additional questions. We mentioned at the beginning of each session that the interviews were going to be tape-recorded throughout the entire process simultaneously as we took notes of all the interactions. Right after the three sessions, all the interviews were transcribed for the analysis. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), “transcription is a relatively unproblematic translation of the spoken into the written word” (p.484), but as qualitative researchers, we were not just interested in what people had said but also in the way they said it (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). This was particularly useful in order to answer our first research question about the personal construction of the relationship.

3.7 Rigour of Research Study

At this point, we want to exhibit the potential weaknesses of our study, as we are aware that our perspective is affected by the chosen methodological approach. We intend to be open in the description of the limitations of our perspective presented in order to prove the rigour of our study. In doing so, we take a look at the criteria for quality (i.e., *trustworthiness and authenticity*) along with the general limitations of qualitative research.

The trustworthiness of qualitative studies is generally often questioned by positivists, as their concept of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work. To ensure the trustworthiness of our research findings, we need to employ different criteria. Whereas quantitative researchers take into consideration the *objectivity, reliability and validity* (i.e. external and internal) of their inquiry findings, the qualitative counterparts focus more on *dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability* instead (Anney, 2014; Houghton, Casey, Shaw & Murphy, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Shenton, 2004). It became clear to us that the positivist criteria are not relevant to our inquiry as it makes different ontological and epistemological assumptions.

First of all, we want to mention the *credibility* criteria which “refers to the value and believability of the findings” (Houghton et al., 2013, p.13). In fact, it is defined as the confidence in the truth of our research findings (Anney, 2014). Since our study is solely based on focus groups with customers of FMCG products, we must admit that our research findings cannot be easily generalised. Furthermore, we argue that our results might only be credible in this specific context. Additionally, as “the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 1990, p.472), we strive to understand our effects and to take our responsibility seriously to study what those effects are. In a focus group, the moderator’s task is to encourage the participants to interact with each other as well as to make them talk by asking follow-up questions. Having said that, we are quite sure that the presence of the moderator and researcher certainly made a difference in how the participants answered to our questions. We tried to employ a more natural setting and atmosphere as in interviews, yet, the presence may have affected the data collection. Although we neither have distinct experiences nor training in moderating focus groups, we still claim that the credibility of our inquiry is given, as we structured the entire process along a topic guide. More precisely, this gave us some sort of a framework for discussions and questions among the participants. Besides the researcher’s credibility, another inquiry element is crucial in evaluating the credibility issue for our qualitative research (Patton, 1990). According to several studies, triangulation referred to as the use of different methods to study one phenomenon, can also enhance the quality (Anney, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Shenton, 2004). Triangulation enables us to reduce bias and to interrogate the integrity of participants’ responses (Anney, 2014).

However, due to our research purpose, we do not use several methods within our study to gather data, as the individual viewpoints can be verified against others in the group or among the three groups, which ultimately leads to a “rich picture of attitudes, needs or behaviour of those under scrutiny” (Shenton, 2004, p. 66). Nevertheless, we employ investigator triangulation to explore the same problem by making use of us, the two authors of this research report (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach renders different perspectives of the inquiry and enables us to strengthen the integrity of our findings (Anney, 2014). Another strategy for reducing systematic bias in the data is the examination of previous research findings (Anney, 2014; Patton, 1990). However, assessing the degree of congruence between our results and those of past studies, only was feasible to a small extent, since the majority of those studies have been conducted in a quantitative way. Consequently, this makes it hard for us to relate our findings to the “existing body of knowledge” (Shenton, 2004, p. 69). Furthermore, the approach of peer debriefing was used, as we got feedback on a regular basis from our supervisor which enabled us to improve the quality of the research findings. Incidentally, there was the opportunity for other researchers to scrutinise our project throughout the entire process. This ‘fresh’ perspective was particularly helpful as the closeness to the research study inhibits our ability to treat it with real detachment. This means that getting scholarly guidance from peers provided us with the possibility to strengthen our arguments in the light of the comments made, which, thus, makes the interpretation of the material more credible (Houghton et al., 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Another strategy for ensuring the trustworthiness in our qualitative research is *transferability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Academia refers to it as “the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents” (Anney, 2014, p. 277). To put it differently, transferability assesses the extent to which the study findings can be generalised (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Regarding this definition, we cannot completely ensure the transferability of our findings since our research is limited to a certain degree. Additionally, as we take inspiration from a more social constructionist perspective, we are aware that the knowledge we produce may not be generalised to other people or settings. We know that our findings are rather unique due to the relatively few people and their interaction within the focus group. However, due to the fact that we are not focusing on one specific product but a range of products within a specific industry, we argue that our findings are particularly applicable to the FMCG sector. Following the suggestion of academia (Anney, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Houghton et al., 2013; Shenton, 2004), we provide ‘thick’ descriptions of the enquiry to facilitate the transferability judgement of the reader. The aim is to enable judgements about how far the readers are confident in transferring the results to other milieus, meaning how well the research fits other contexts (Anney, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013; Shenton, 2004). Indeed, we included a detailed description elucidating our study process, from the context of our research, data collection to the analysis and conclusion in order to enhance transferability because it allows the reader to have a true understanding of it. In the end, it is up to the reader to “decide whether or not the findings are transferable to another context.” (Houghton et al., 2013, p.16) Moreover, we further improve the possible transferability of our inquiry by using the purposive sampling method. As we focus on key individuals who are particularly knowledgeable to answer our research question, we purposively selected the participants to get greater in-depth findings.

Further, the *confirmability* concept which is the “qualitative investigator’s concern to objectivity” (Shenton, 2004, p. 72) is outlined. Considering our research study, we find it quite difficult to demonstrate that we did not allow our personal values or theoretical inclinations to “sway the conduct of the research and findings deriving from it.” (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 398). Nevertheless, and despite the fact that we take inspiration from a social constructionist viewpoint, we intend to ensure that our findings are clearly derived from the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than from the figments of our imagination or preferences (Anney, 2014). However, our chosen data collection method requires our understanding of the socially constructed world, which makes us automatically part of the knowledge generated. Thus, we have kept all the transcriptions of each focus group, as we believe that while some readers might not share our interpretation of the comments, they should still be able to view our means by which it has been reached (Houghton et al., 2013). Furthermore, we want to point out that all three focus groups were held in English and that, thus, linguistic difficulties could have occurred during those interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2015). As English is neither our nor most of the participants’ first language and besides the prerequisite of high English proficiency, we still think that we might have gotten more accurate results by addressing them in their mother tongue. Nonetheless, we believe that looking at the transcripts, native English speakers would not have interpreted our findings differently, as we always tried to be clear on our instructions

and questions not demanding any prior knowledge of our field of study. Notably in qualitative research where “the researcher is considered part of the research instrument” (Houghton et al., 2013, p. 15), the credibility of the study is particularly based on the self-awareness of the researcher during the entire process. Hence, we always pursued to reduce the effect of researcher bias and to inhibit personal values as well as theoretical tendency to have an influence on our decisions and our conduct of the study. More precisely, we have been aware of the subjectivity of our study and took further steps to ensure and maintain objectivity. Thus, increased the confirmability of our study. However, due to the fact that we conducted a qualitative study, “subjectivity is inevitable” (Peshkin, 1988 cited in Patton, 1990, p.482). Nonetheless, we thoroughly documented all our procedures so that the readers can review our method for bias and further constraints. That being the case, we also reflected separately on the different concepts to form our opinion independently, before we exchanged our ideas which make us even more receptive regarding our reflexivity approach.

Lastly, with regard to *dependability*, our study is assessed depending on “the stability of findings over time” (Anney, 2014, p. 278), meaning it is related to the issue of reliability in quantitative research. In contrast to the positivistic techniques, the changing nature of the qualitative research makes it problematic to be replicated. Precisely because our focus groups were quite unstructured, let alone the unique composition of the participants and the researchers’ ingenuity, it is hardly possible to conduct a true replication. Notwithstanding the difficulties, we think that our study can be evaluated to be fairly dependable. As discussed earlier in this chapter, we had quite a few ‘audits’ with our supervisor and other students doing qualitative research. The peer examination is in principle not different to the peer debriefing strategy employed to improve the credibility of our study. Additionally, given the inexperience of moderating focus groups, we tried to offset this lack by using an interview guide. Likewise, we increased the dependability of our study due to the framework consisting of statements and questions for the participants. Furthermore, we purposively selected our respondents according to predetermined criteria relevant to our research topic, which may further enhance the reliability for other researchers. Regarding the nature of focus groups, we do not neglect to consider that even though we tried to select a homogenous group of participants, each individual is unique not to mention has different feelings and experiences towards the topic at hand. Thus, the reliability of our study could be questioned since other studies may not get the same results using different people. However, due to the fact that after three focus groups the point of data saturation was reached, our chosen participants were to some extent quite similar in their answers to each other. This proves that although focus groups are flexible in nature, the results are still reliable under the same circumstances. Therefore, and as we already mentioned earlier in the paper, we tried to create a comfortable atmosphere for the participants by getting to know each other and offering food and beverages. Further, to address the dependability issue more directly, we report our research process very detailed thereby facilitating another potential researcher to repeat the study, if not necessarily to achieve the same outcome (Shenton, 2004).

In addition to these four trustworthiness criteria, Bryman and Bell (2011) mention another criterion essential for the quality of qualitative research. In accordance to authenticity, we have

to deal with the question whether our research “fairly represent[s] different viewpoints among members of the social setting” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 398). Admittedly, we concede that we only interviewed a limited number of customers of a specific product category, namely FMCG products which might result in a possible limitation. Nonetheless, we argue that due to our research purpose, the perception of other stakeholders, such as managers or suppliers, was deemed to be negligible as long as they are not seen from the customer’s perspective. So, although we excluded them in our focus groups, we think that our approach is fairly comprehensible due to the purpose of the study and the sampling method chosen. This is supposed to counter the issue of lack of transparency increasingly being addressed by researchers.

So all in all, despite the weaknesses and limitations outlined above, we are confident about the performance of our study. Although we noticed that most of the shortcomings derive from its qualitative origin, we argue that this methodological strategy is best appropriate given our research question and purpose. The design flexibility allowed us to understand the meaning of human behaviour based on personal experiences, feelings, perceptions and sights as part of the material (Patton, 1990; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, by examining the trustworthiness criteria, we ensure the rigour of the findings of our study.

3.8 Ethical & Political Considerations

Besides the consideration of potential weaknesses of our study, we additionally bear in mind the political and ethical aspects. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015), it is quite important to reflect on these two factors which can have an influence on our study. Therefore, the following excerpt is twofold, dealing first with the ethical principles of business research and second with the political power present in our enquiry process. Due to the “growing acceptance among social scientists of the need to be reflexive about their own work” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p.109), we intended to respect these issues when designing the research while now giving evidence for our consideration.

There are two crucial reasons to devote particular attention to the ethics of our qualitative research study. Firstly, the intimate and private nature of customer behaviour imposes definite constraints and raises pronounced ethical issues; and secondly, the atmosphere among the focus group members has an effect on the quality of the discussion and interaction, both important for our study. The ethical dilemmas inherent in the data collection strategy is viewed in light of four basic ethical issues broken down by Diener and Crandall (1978, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011); namely *harm to participants*, *lack of informed consent*, *invasion of privacy* and *deception*.

The *avoidance of harm* to our participants was the issue of greatest concern for us while conducting the focus groups. Since harm implies a number of aspects such as physical harm, stress, harm to participants’ development (Korn, 1984), we follow the definition of Diener and

Crandall (1978, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011) in which harm is seen as “inducing subjects to perform reprehensible acts” (p.128). Transferred to our study, this would mean forcing the participants to talk and interact, which was most certainly not the case in our data collection method. Through creating a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, we tried to make the participants feel comfortable with their situation and thereby increasing their well-being in terms of group discussions. At the beginning of each session, we made particularly clear that each participant had the right to hold back in the conversation or withdraw from the interviews when he/she did not seem ready or willing to talk. Repeatedly, we reassured all our attendees, that they are not forced to talk by us nor by any other group member. Despite the extensive duration of the interview (approximately 45 minutes per group session), we were not concerned about the potential stress, as we have told all the participants beforehand, that they should plan an hour for the discussion including a break. However, in case of any indication of stress, surprise or uneasiness on the part of the respondents, we acted respectfully by not asking any additional questions. Throughout the entire process, we gave our best to make the whole situation as trustworthy as possible aiming to avoid unpleasant feelings.

To some extent linked to the issue of harm to participants is the *principle of informed consent*. The principle involved requires that potential research participants should be given enough information “to make an informed decision about whether or not they wish to participate in a study.”(Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 133). In the process of collecting potential participants, we have already mentioned slightly on our flyers what type of study we wanted to conduct and which type of consumers we needed. Hence, we argue that most of the students expressing their willingness were sufficiently informed to decide. However, despite the prevailing opinion in the literature about revealing the purpose of our study to seek informed consent (Bryman & Bell, 2011), we did not give full information about the nature of our research. We argue that having told the participants the purpose of our study would have removed “their naivete and spontaneity” (Adair, Dushenko & Lindsay, 1985, p. 59), and that they would have behaved differently when they knew what was being studied (Adair, Dushenko & Lindsay, 1985). Thus, we are confident that we did not harm anyone and that our purpose justifies these actions. Nevertheless, we gained written consent from our participants by asking them to fill out and sign a form handed out at the beginning of each session. Even then, they were free to choose whether or not to become involved in our study. In line with the aforementioned, we asked the attendees for their informed consent concerning the audio recording. In total, we had genuinely good intentions with our research ensuring that our respondents are in no way harmed owing to their participation. Therefore, we want to stress firmly that our results generate considerably more good than harm to the participants (Clark, 1995).

Concerning the audio records, we reassured all our participants that their anonymity and *privacy* is respected. The interviews were transcribed in a way that no names are mentioned, and the findings are disclosed to ensure that the respondents are not identifiable. This is particularly difficult in a focus group, where all the group members might still recall the answers of other participants while reading the final report. In order not to endanger the ethical standard of our research study, we included a confidentiality agreement on the informed consent form, which

everybody had to sign, even the researchers. That obliged us to keep all personal information concerning our participants confidential. Merely, age and gender were used to show insights into the composition of our groups. Within the group, only forenames were addressed. There is no doubt that we put a strong emphasis on maintaining confidentiality and anonymity in order to minimise or even prevent any prospect of harm to our participants. Furthermore, according to Bryman and Bell (2011), the goals of a study do not give researchers the right “to intrude on a respondent’s privacy nor to abandon normal respect for an individual’s values” (p.136). Reflecting on that statement, we believe that neither our topic nor our questions delved into private realms or were of particularly sensitive nature. Nonetheless, it is fairly impossible to previously know which subjects might be sensitive to particular respondents.

Lastly, with regard to the *deception issue*, we can genuinely admit that we have never deceived our participants in the process of the study. We did not “represent [our] research as something other than what it is.” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 136) Although we did not tell the attendees the purpose or more specifically our research question and aim, we consider this proceeding as necessary as to get more natural responses. Yet, we are well aware that giving them all information might probably result in more focused answers, but might also bias the responses. Dealing with this trade-off, we argue that limiting their understanding of what the research is about is justified by our purpose. More specifically, as we want to explore how customers construct the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception through their discussion in the focus group, we cannot allow them to know that the interaction plays a role in our evaluation process. Furthermore, we claim that we did not deceive in our data collection, transcribing the records correctly and sincerely, as well as analysing the material accordingly. Besides the ethical issues affecting our research, there are also some sources of political influences apparent, which we do not want to disregard. The politics of a study pertains “the power relationship between the individuals and institutions involved” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p.111). In our case and as we are dealing with an entire industry, rather than one specific company, this relationship exists solely between our supervisor and us. Therefore, we are just reflecting on three out of four political dimensions identified by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) namely, the experience of the researcher, the subject of study and the academic stakeholder. The fourth dimension ‘corporate stakeholder’ has been omitted due to our research design.

Considering the *experience of the researcher*, we claim that we have a particularly high personal interest in our research topic as we are both interested in using our findings for our future jobs in the FMCG industry. Nevertheless, or precisely because of our high motivation, we are very well aware that our personal backgrounds have an effect on what we are able to see. Our “experience acts both as a sensitiser and as a filter” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p. 110) and thus, may bias our objective approach. As we are two Master students working on this study, we consequently take advantage of our different experiences regarding the interpretation of the study and its findings. Additionally, we have a pretty good team dynamic balancing our skills and completing each other in our strengths. Repeatedly, we

want to stress that we were fairly cautious by not letting our experiences or prior knowledge influence our research.

Given the *subject of the study*, we were particularly driven by our own interest in the field of Retail Management and more specifically of the packaging design of FMCG products. In other words, we did not follow any “fads and fashions” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015, p. 115) in regard to our focus. However, we chose a topic which is not only under-researched in academia but also increasingly relevant for marketing manager in order to make a contribution with our findings to theory and practice, respectively.

Ultimately, the *academic stakeholder* in our case is represented by the Lund University and more precisely by our Supervisor Jens Hultman. Admittedly, we had a quite good relationship with our Supervisor, as he was helpful and willing to support us. However, he did not exert his influence in order to direct our research in a certain direction which would have been against our notion. The power dynamic between us was fairly balanced since we highly valued his opinion and suggestions.

Ultimately, as it becomes apparent from the aforementioned, we tried to assess what effect certain ethical and political factors might have had on our study. It is the researcher’s responsibility to guard the dignity, privacy, well-being, and freedom of the research participants, as well as to limit harm to a minimum. Finally, we believe that we gave a full and accurate explanation of our approach justified by the purpose of our study.

Conclusively, we believe that despite the stated limitations of our study, we are quite confident that we have chosen the right method and strategy in order to answer our research question and thus, gathered interesting findings to make a contribution to both, the literature and practice.

4 Five Dimensions in Haptic Marketing

This chapter presents the empirical material that were gathered throughout the data collection. The findings represent the outcome resulting from our three focus group discussions. Subsequently, the focus group discussions were further analysed according to the method of analysis presented in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3). When the term consumer or customer is used in this chapter, we refer to our respondents' view in this study.

4.1 Dimensional Research Findings

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the process of analysis is influenced by the five fundamental basic 'analytical operations' presented by Spiggle (1994), namely, *categorisation, abstraction, comparison, dimensionalisation and integration*. Furthermore, pursuant to the research question and the purpose, our analysis process follows an inductive approach, meaning that the categories and codes shown in Table. 2 have emerged from the empirical material itself. The focus groups were carefully scrutinised, and similar statements and expressions derived from the transcriptions were categorised into smaller groups. These groups were then coded based on their expression and meaning. Subsequently, these codes were classified into five bigger dimensions, namely *judgmental, distance customers, decision-making tool, intention to touch and touch as an influencing factor*. Collectively, these five dimensions are used as fundamental components for the following analysis.

The *judgemental* dimension consists of four different codes, namely biased, alteration of quality, change of expression and expectations. This dimension is connected to our respondents' prior expectations and experiences of products, which means that they have prior associations with different packaging elements, such as 'plastic is cheap and reflects bad quality' simultaneously as cardboard reflects high quality. Furthermore, the packaging expectations can either be a positive or negative experience which in turn can influence the respondent's behaviour towards the product. Based on the judgmental dimension, our focus group participants can either be distanced or attracted, which gives us the second dimension, *distance customers*. This dimension is connected to the expression, reflection and price sensitivity towards the product based on the packaging. Furthermore, our respondents tend to use packaging as a *decision-making tool*, which means that since they do not see the product but only the packaging, packaging is the only thing they base their decision on. The fourth dimension is named *intention to touch*. This dimension represents the essential elements according to our focus group that need to be on the packaging in order to enhance the desire to touch the product which in turn alters emotions connected to different associations, previous experiences and feelings. At the point when customers are attracted to touch the product, touch can function as an *influencing factor* according to our empirical material. This dimension refers to willingness to buy, first time purchases and change of perception. In Table 2 below, a summary of the codes and categories is presented supported by quotes from the respondents. This table functions later as a basis for our analysis and discussion

Dimensions	Codes & Expressions
Judgemental Evaluations	<p>(1) Biased, (2) Alteration of quality, (3) Change of impression, (4) Expectations</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “Put a lot of effort in the packaging, so the product must be good as well”</p> <p>“When you look at it, you kind of already have some kind of expectations”</p>
Distance Customers	<p>(1) Expression, (2) Reflection, (3) Price sensitivity</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “Probably not even look at the price because of the packaging because I would expect it has a high price”</p> <p>“Packaging indicates a certain quality, you assume that it is the same for the product itself”</p>
Decision-making Tool	<p>(1) Material & Texture as a final decision, (2) Packaging as a path to trust, (3) Targeting instrument</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “Packaging can help you to gain trust and helps you to make the decision”</p> <p>“Use the feeling of the material and texture to do my decision between similar products”</p>
Intention to Touch	<p>(1) Uniqueness, (2) Emotional connection, (3) Attraction</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “If it has a unique feeling, for example the embossed elements heighten the value of the product and increase my desire to grab the product”</p> <p>“It was very different and unique, though. This is something basic but with unique packaging. In that way, the touch can also be emotional”</p>
Touch as an Influencing Factor	<p>(1) Change of perception, (2) Willingness to buy, (3) First time purchases</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> “If it is a product that you often buy, then the touch plays a minor role, but if it is a new product, the touch has definitely a role”</p> <p>“The touch of the packaging can definitely decide if you buy it or not”</p> <p>“It can also change the attitude, increase and decrease the value towards the product when you touch it depending on how it feels”</p>

Table 2: Summary of Codes and Categories

4.1.1 Judgemental Evaluation

Prior studies have mentioned the importance of packaging, notably how packaging adds value to the product and as a result can influence customers' perceptions (Raghubir & Greenleaf, 2006; Rundh, 2009, 2016). Furthermore, the perception of the packaging is directly connected to the perception of the product as such (Silayoi & Speece, 2005). Our empirical data further supports the associations between packaging and perception, which is reflected by the following statements from our respondents.

“When the packaging indicates a certain quality, you assume that it is the same for the product itself.”

“Of course, when you see a nice packaging, you can see they (companies) put a lot of effort and money in this (packaging), consumers usually or I automatically relate this (the product) to high quality and a higher price.”

However, putting much effort on the packaging can also evoke negative associations with the product.

“I get a bit suspicious when I see companies putting so much effort in packaging, probably they do not put so much effort on the product”

The statements above explain how our focus group participants judged products in general due to the packaging. Corresponding to our respondents, the perception of product quality based on the packaging is the most dominant perception customers have. However, how the packaging is perceived can change with regard to the product packaging. Additionally, our empirical material also reveals that the perception of the product packaging is most likely to play a significant role when it comes to new products that customers are not aware of, according to our respondents. Pursuant to our attendees' responses, the packaging also becomes more important for first-time purchases. The situation in the statements below becomes particularly important considering that packaging is the first contact point with the product for customers. Thus, it serves “as a brand communication vehicle” (Underwood, 2003, p.62).

“Packaging is very relevant especially when you are not familiar with the brand or product from before...”

Additionally, specific packaging elements, such as material and texture can influence customers' perceptions, according to our respondents. Behaeghel (1991) stresses that each type of material has its very special properties and characteristics creating special associations with the product. Similarly, statements from our participants can be found:

“...carton packaging is of higher quality; I think that the chocolate itself is better in comparison to the chocolate in the plastic wrapping.”

“...I would definitely agree that the material does play a role, for example when the material feels and looks cheap then, of course, it would influence my perception of the product”

According to our focus group discussion, respondents tend to connect different materials, to different personal associations and conclusions about the materials (e.g., plastic-cheap, carton-higher quality). Thus, the value of the product immediately increases or decreases in respondents' minds, according to our respondents. The statement below also proves that our participants not only tend to rest their evaluation upon previous experiences but also that they have 'pre' perceptions of products, such as how the packaging should look and feel like, what material, colour, graphics, etc. Meaning that customers can be biased in their evaluation, due to the inconsistency with their view on what a packaging should have.

“I think that my perception of the product is influenced by my expectations of it when I see it. Or based on my past experiences I had with that product.”

Furthermore, our empirical material shows that expectations of product packaging are of great importance, especially since they can evoke different feelings at the POS which can influence the decision-making. Therefore, customers' perceptions can be negatively influenced when the expectations are not fulfilled according to our respondents. One focus group member clarified:

“...when you look at it (product), you already have some kind of expectations, how it feels due to how it looks and if you then touch it, and it does not feel like how you expected it to feel, then I am disappointed and do not buy it (product)...”

The statement above is consistent with those of Klimchuk and Krasovec (2012) who claim that the choice of the packaging material has a deep impact on the sensory perception of the product. The authors further state that haptic characteristics can create different images in the consumer's mind. According to our empirical material, customers tend to have expectations on how different products should feel like and therefore, associate the various packaging materials with the prevailing feelings.

Several studies have focused on the interplay of sensory modalities (e.g. vision and touch) when it comes to product packaging, also referred to as semantic congruence in the literature (Littel & Orth, 2013; Krishna, 2006; Krishna & Morrin, 2008). Similarly, the occurrence of semantic congruence can clearly be seen in our empirical material, where customers get the first impression of the product by a single sensory modality - the vision - and in the second step are influenced by the second sensory modality - the touch - where the evaluation of the product is either heightened or declined.

“You can get disappointed sometimes because you get an impression from seeing it (the product packaging) and then when you touch it, it gives you another impression which can be bad. But it can also be the other way around, that you get surprised when you touch a product because

it is not what you had expected by only seeing it. I think that would increase my intention to buy the product.”

The example above can be classified as a bimodal evaluation (Littel & Orth, 2013). It is stated in the literature that customers use bimodal evaluation in a natural setting when evaluating products (Littel & Orth, 2013). Our empirical findings show that in order for customers to consider touching a product, thus, use a second sensory modality in the evaluation, the first sensory modality, that is visual appearance needs to be in place. In conclusion, if the first sensory modality is not satisfactory, the second sensory modality will not take place, according to our findings.

Overall, packaging plays an important role in the evaluation of products and for ‘first-time purchases’ where customers do not have any prior knowledge of the product. Furthermore, our respondents tend to be judgemental when they evaluate products through the packaging. These judgemental evaluations are based on previous expectations and experiences of the same product, but also of the packaging.

4.1.2 Distance Customers

In previous literature, packaging is portrayed as an important communication tool, which is present in the moment when the purchase decision is made (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Behaeghel, 1991; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2012; Rundh, 2009; Silayoi & Speece, 2005; Underwood, 2003). Consistently, our empirical findings illustrate that packaging can either distance or attract our focus group participants due to different perceptions and expectations of the product packaging. Consequently, our respondents considered the quality of the packaging as a direct reflection of the product’ quality as such. One respondent mentioned:

“I mean when the packaging communicates high quality, but the inside is not, then I am disappointed.”

The statement above portrays how powerful the packaging can be in the communication with the consumer, and how important it is that the packaging reflects the product inside. In accordance with our respondents, the packaging can also mislead the customers. Thus, distance them from the product. The reasons for this detachment can be unfulfilled expectations and qualitative inconsistency between the packaging and the product as such. Thus, it is important to consider packaging which reflects the nature and personality of the product (Underwood, 2003). One respondent agreed and expressed:

“...the colour, graphics, texture and so on, on the packaging should reflect the product and the brand.”

The conducted empirical material in this research shows that there is a relationship between the packaging and the product, meaning that the packaging expresses the product. According to

Caivano and Del Pilar Buera (2012), packaging serves, not only as a protective cover, but it also presents the product to the outside. The findings from our focus group discussions support the literature, by saying that without a packaging, the products would be impersonal and thus, not attractive to the consumer.

“I cannot imagine having these products (FMCG products) without any packaging at all. For me, it is definitely important because it has different functions as well. And sometimes, I do not want to see the product directly, I rather have a nice container or wrapping around it which looks nicer than the product itself.”

Another finding from our focus group discussion is price sensitivity. With price sensitivity, we mean that customers might perceive a product as particularly expensive or cheap based on the packaging. According to Silayoi and Speece (2004), customers perceive the product depending on the communication elements and product characteristics reflected by the packaging. Thus, this can result in either attracting or distancing customers. For example, if a product packaging signals a higher price, customers might totally ignore the product in the first place, according to our focus group participants. Hence, one respondent told us:

“For me, a fancy and good package always indicates a high price. I would probably not even consider the product because of the packaging since I automatically expect a high price.”

The statement above proves that putting a lot of effort in packaging might also result in product ‘blindness’ on the part of the customers, since the perceived price outweighs the quality. Therefore, according to our respondents the price is perceived too high in consideration to customers’ satisfactory quality and value of the product. One of the respondents gave an example:

“For example, I have always bought the same peanut butter in the store because I automatically drew conclusions that another peanut butter product which had a really nice and green (ecological) packaging was more expensive. But a couple of days ago, I realised that it has the same price than the one I usually buy. I was surprised, because I have never even considered the better packaged peanut butter before.”

Based on the above-mentioned statements and examples customers tend to either be distanced or attracted by packaging, according to our focus group discussions. In conclusion, it is important for customers that packaging reflects and expresses the product inside. Thus, it creates positive associations with the product, because they do not feel deceived. However, on the other hand, putting too much effort on the packaging can result in negative perceptions as well.

4.1.3 Decision-making Tool

As mentioned in the literature review, packaging highly matters for marketing communication of companies, particularly at the POS, by influencing customers' purchase decision and serving as a distinguishing tool (Jit Singh Mann & Kaur, 2013). Correspondingly, our empirical findings demonstrate that packaging is used as a way to differentiate between FMCG products. Thus, serves as a basis for the final purchase decision. Similarly, statements from our participants can be found:

"I also think that packaging is the only way to distinguish between the many products in the supermarket."

"I can be very influenced by the packaging, and then my decision is made in the store."

In fact, in the theoretical review earlier, we mention that according to Ashaduzzaman and Mahbub (2016) packaging is referred to as a 'tool for differentiation', which can be used to get customers' attention and serve as a competitive advantage. In the literature, Rundh (2016) claims that packaging which stands out on the shelf has an influence on the customer's decision process. Thus, the package can increase the opportunity of products to be chosen by the customer. Likewise, this is reflected in our empirical material:

"...There are so many brands and products you can choose from in the grocery store that packaging is somehow the only way to distinguish between them."

However, when our participants discussed about comparing two similar products where the (visual) packaging elements are equally attractive, they tend to base their purchase decision on the sense of touch, they use touch as a final decision making step. Two respondent explained:

"...If I had to choose between two products which have the same attractive colours, then I would also consider the material. But I would say that touching it comes definitely after seeing the product first."

"I use the material and texture to make my decision if they are similar in anything else."

When it comes to visual and haptic packaging elements, our empirical findings specify that for example, colour and graphics are considered to be equally important as the material and texture of the packaging. According to our respondents, it is further desired that the visual attributes of the packaging reflect the texture and material, according to our respondents. One respondent explained:

"I would say texture also goes hand in hand with colour and graphics because for example for this package (picks up a chocolate bar), the colour and the graphics reflect the nice texture on it. I would say they are in the same category when it comes to relevance."

According to our empirical material, packaging can also be a path to trust for customers, since they evaluate and base their decision on the product packaging. Moreover, our respondents confirmed that they expect the packaging to reflect the product, and thus, trust the packaging, since they do not see the actual product but only the packaging. Ford, Moodie and Hastings (2012) claim that by means of packaging, different perceptions are purposely created to build trust which engenders favourable consumer behaviour, for instance, buying the product. Similarly, one respondent agreed:

“Packaging can help you to gain trust and helps you to make the decision.”

“For me, packaging is something that you base your decision on because you don’t see the real product inside, only the package. And if the packaging is attractive and appealing to me I would most likely choose that product.”

Furthermore, previous literature has claimed that the purpose of packaging is to make product differentiation possible by aligning the packaging design with the target group (Vila & Ampuero, 2017). Similarly, a desire from the respondents to consider and pay attention to products, which fit their personalities can be seen. Hence, according to Underwood and Ozanne (1998), packaging is only understood and accepted by the customers in case it triggers the desired feeling and meets the consumer’s expectations. Likewise, due to our empirical material there is a demand from customers to be targeted, by aligning packaging with different consumer personalities and expectations.

“...sometimes I’m not happy with the product because I do not feel the packaging fits me...”

Additionally, prior studies have noted that applying a sensory strategy to products, customers’ preferences can be altered (Sundar & Noseworthy’s, 2016). In order to evoke the right sensory experience on the part of the consumer, packaging must be designed purposely. Thus, it should not be uniform across several product segments (Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016). Likewise, our empirical findings show that different sensory characteristics matter depending on the product. Moreover, the sensory experience can either be positively or negatively associated based on the product. Pursuant to our respondents, some product segments are considered to be less relevant with regard to sensory characteristics. Two respondents confirmed:

“I would prefer to have more touch elements on the product packaging. However, it depends on the product category. It would maybe suit luxury products more.”

“I do not for example consider the texture when I buy a package of spaghetti. They hardly vary in the context of packaging to my knowledge. I would also say, that generally it (importance of haptic characteristics) depends on the product.”

From the statements above, we can conclude that customers value haptic characteristics differently based on the product. In order for haptics on packaging to increase the value of the product for customers, haptic elements need to be designed accordingly and fit the product.

In conclusion, the sense of touch can be a determining factor and thus, influence the perception. Furthermore, in order for customers to value the touch, it needs to fit the products, however despite this, touch still becomes a definitive factor in customer's decision making process

4.1.4 Intention to Touch

It has repeatedly been suggested in the literature that the product evaluations and perceptions of customers are positively affected by haptic interaction (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011). Consequently, the importance and contribution of touch for the overall perception is considerably stressed. But what actually makes the consumer touch the product and why do they touch it? The answers to these questions were found in our empirical material. According to our focus group participants, the reason that triggers the intention to touch is the following:

"... if you have some kind of haptic elements on the packaging like embossed elements; then you might have more the need to touch or the desire to touch because it is something special..."

The statement above clarifies that uniqueness of the packaging design plays an important role when it comes to tactile interaction. The packaging needs to be somehow special to evoke a *"... higher intention to grab it."* In the literature, this distinctiveness has also been highlighted but more in terms of the 'sight' of these unique features (Gallace & Spence, 2014). It became clear to us that according to our participants, the packaging needs to have haptic elements in order to be unique and *"not just a normal packaging."* Only then, it was said, that the respondents would touch the product more deliberately. However, one respondent stated:

"So, first you stand in front of the shelf and look at all the packaging, then eventually you grab one of them which caught your attention, most due to the colour, shape or so. After that, you first touch it. That is what I think of the process."

This, on the other hand, proves that visual elements are important since the customer is first facing the product from a distance and needs to be attracted in order to touch the product following our focus groups participants (Schifferstein et al., 2013). The uniqueness of the packaging in terms of haptic elements such as texture, material, shape or embossed printings has, consequently, to be recognised visually to draw attention which increases the intention to touch. Furthermore, these elements are associated with a certain value. Similarly, one of the respondents expressed:

"... these embossed elements heighten the value of the product because I think that more effort has been put on the packaging."

The statement above supports the literature, which claims that the package features emphasise “the uniqueness and originality of the product” (Silayoi & Speece, 2005, p.1497). More precisely, the perceived value is largely influenced by the product characteristics mirrored by the packaging.

Additionally, another important issue raised throughout the focus group discussion was the emotional connection towards FMCG products. According to the literature, FMCG products are low involvement products, in which “customers do not search extensively for information about the brands, evaluate their characteristics, and make a weighty decision on which brand to buy” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010, p. 177). Thus, the customers do not form intense attitudes towards a product because they are not greatly involved (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Silayoi & Speece, 2004). In a similar way, one respondent illustrated:

“I say that for the low involvement products, it is not emotional. For me, shopping a FMCG product is clearly rational and not connected to any feelings or emotions. I do buy them but just because I have to.”

One reason is the fact of low risk in regard to low involvement products and the short time customers normally spend handling FMCG products. On the other hand, we identified disagreement concerning the lack of emotions attached to low involvement products in our empirical material. One respondent clearly highlighted that there can be an emotional connection to low involvement products:

“For me it is sometimes emotional, when you have a really nice packaging and it feels really good. This is not really often the case. But it can get emotional at some point even for low involvement products.”

The emotions connected with the product depend on the packaging design, which needs to be favourable and on the feeling of the packaging. During the various focus group discussions, we gained the impression that our female participants were more emotionally attached to some FMCG products. Examples were given from two of the respondents:

“It (shampoo) was very different and unique, though. This is something basic but with unique packaging. In that way, the touch can also be emotional.”

“I tried it (smoothie) first, and I did not like it, but I still remember the feeling of the packaging which is really unique. In that way, it was an emotional experience.”

In contrast to the suggestion in the literature, our respondents do partly connect touching a FMCG product packaging with feelings despite the low involvement character. Therefore, it was repeatedly highlighted that the packaging needs to be unique, meaning somehow different which evokes a pleasant feeling while touching the packaging. We would even go so far as to say that these emotions emerged from the touch can facilitate the purchase decision. In addition,

Rifqiya & Nasution state that a consciously integrated “good feeling” (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016, p.354) of the product can sufficiently trigger the final buying intention. Similarly, one respondent claimed:

“So, you touch it, when this feeling is right and nothing speaks against it like the price, then you buy it.”

Further, the empirical material collected in our study support the academic opinion that “touch is one of the hardest senses to be manipulated or counterfeited” (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016, p.354). Among our respondents, we found out that the perception regarding the texture of the packaging can be manipulated depending on the consumer’s associations with that specific material (e.g. rough texture is perceived as natural). However, the feeling of that particular texture is considered to be real, whereas the perception can be biased due to prior associations with the feeling of the texture. Likewise, one respondent portrayed:

“You cannot manipulate the feeling, but you can still manipulate the perception.”

Therefore, touching a product evokes a certain feeling on the part of our respondents which is genuine and not seen as a manipulation. As one respondent put it: “...either you like it or do not like it when you feel it.” It is more the perception of the product which can be deceived by using different materials in order to transmit a certain message while touching the product. Consequently, the focus group participants were quite sceptical about the authenticity of their product perception.

However, equally important than the manipulation of the product packaging itself was the attraction proceeding from the touch. As already stated earlier, the unique appearance of the packaging attracts the respondent’s attention which ultimately results in touching the product that in turn creates a certain feeling. Yet, our empirical material shows that respondents deliberately opt for the modality to touch to also gather information about the product.

Additionally, we identified following our respondents that the intention to touch in regard to online vs. physical grocery stores is crucial. For example, one of the respondents valued:

“Maybe also with FMCG products; that is not something that I would buy online for some reason, so maybe there is this need to go to the store and actually see and touch the things (products).”

This statement indicates that although FMCGs are not products with which the customer usually engages in a prolonged tactile interaction, the possibility to touch even those low risk products in the store is still stressed and valued.

Altogether, the intention to touch a product is basically provoked by the uniqueness of the packaging, the emotions connected to it and its attraction. Throughout the focus group

discussion, we found out that FMCG products are normally not attached to any feelings on the part of the respondents unless they have a unique packaging which attracts the respondents. These unique packaging elements are mostly described as something that makes the product feel good, such as the material or texture

4.1.5 Touch as an Influencing Factor

In the existing literature, it is repeatedly highlighted, that touching a product has the capacity to change the customer's perception of this product (Jansson-Boyd, 2011). Most of the time, feeling it with the hands directly has an influence on the interaction with the product (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). Further, the sense of touch is determined to have a persuasive influence towards consumer's impulse, meaning their attitudes and behaviour (Peck & Wiggins, 2006; Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016). Likewise, one respondent stated:

"I think, that touching the packaging, my perception of the product increases because of the feeling of that packaging."

As we have already mentioned earlier, former researches have examined the change of perception regarding packaging and sense of touch, and, yet, only a few have dealt with the alteration of perception when it comes to touching a product packaging (Abdalkrim & Hrezat, 2013; Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Hussain et al., 2015; Underwood & Ozanne, 1998). Even less studies have been conducted looking at the role of touch in terms of FMCG product packaging. Since we are particularly interested in the latter, we gained some new insights in this field of research through the discussions in our focus groups.

Our research findings support the literature saying that touch can "increase the confidence in the evaluation of the product" (Peck & Wiggins, 2006, p. 56). Two respondents agreed on the fact that touching a product is important for their evaluation.

"Generally, I think that touch definitely increases the value."

"I think it can also change the perception. If the product does not look good or of high quality, but then you touch it and you feel that the material is very good, this might change the first impression you got before from just seeing it."

Hence, we can say that touch is used by our participants as a means to alter their perception of the products. How it is changed, like in a more or less positive manner, depends on how the product feels. One respondent explained to us:

"It can also change the attitude, increase and decrease the value towards the product when you touch it depending on how it feels."

This can also be related to the ‘moment of truth’ in the purchasing process. Our respondents made clear that for FMCG packaging, the material surfaces are mainly perceived through vision in the first moment of truth, but that the touch is crucial to confirm or dissent the perception already acquired. Therefore, respondents stated that *“Touch is a determining factor.”* Especially, in times of more and more comparable products in the supermarkets, packaging is determined to be the ‘silent salesman’ (Ford, Moodie & Hastings, 2012; Rundh, 2005; Sara, 1990; Vila & Ampuero, 2017), with haptic elements as differentiator (Streicher & Estes, 2015). Indeed, one participant put emphasis on the fact that how a product feels when touching it can be a distinguishing feature:

“So, if there are for example five strawberry yoghurts, then the one with the good packaging, the one that feels best, wins for me.”

However, albeit this statement confirms the literature, we found contradictory opinions in our empirical material concerning the importance of touch in the buying process. An example was given from one of our respondents:

“And I also think that normally when you are in the store, you do not think about such things like touch. In my experience, I do not spend more than a few seconds on each product evaluating the product due to its graphics, information and price. Often, I just neglect the feeling, because it is a basic yoghurt, which I will eat immediately without thinking about the material or texture of the packaging again.”

Consequently, the focus group discussions revealed that some participants are not highly influenced by haptic packaging elements, since they use only a few seconds to make a decision what to buy in the shop. Furthermore, it became clear that there is a difference between frequently bought products and new ones. One respondent explained:

“If it is a product that you often buy, then the touch plays a minor role but if it is a new product, then it has definitely a specific role.”

The statement above partly express that tactile influences are less important on FMCG products, which respondents buy more frequently than on new FMCG products. This implies that *“Touch is important for the first purchase.”* That being the case, we realised that this fact is a new insight into the importance of haptics. So far, no research has ever pointed out the influence of touch affected by the number of purchases in the store. More precisely, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, several participants highlighted the first purchase process in which they want to get to know the product by touching it and spending more time with it for their evaluation. Since packaging has an informative function, the touch is used to evaluate the product based on its packaging for the first time. After the first purchase, the respondents claimed that they do not inspect it in the same thorough way.

Due to our focus group discussions, touch is perceived as an influencing factor triggering the willingness to buy the product. Two of our respondents clarified:

“The touch of the packaging can for sure decide if you buy it or not.”

“But I think you tend to be more willing to buy if you have it in your hand, if you already made the step picking it out of the shelf...”

Hence, the empirical material collected in our study further support the opinion of Rifquiya and Nasution, saying that “when [a] customer is attracted towards the product packaging, it will increase the opportunity for the product to be chosen by [the] customer.” (Rifquiya & Nasution, 2016, p. 352)

After carefully weighing up the arguments, touch as an influencing factor either in terms of perception or purchase intention cannot explicitly be defined. Throughout, the focus group discussions, we noted that touching a product has an effect on the customer’s perception, but what kind of effect has largely been left to how the packaging actually feels like. Yet, it definitely increases the confidence in its evaluation, meaning either to pick it up or not. However, it was stressed several times that the packaging needs to ‘feel good’. Ultimately, we got contradictory findings, saying that on the one hand, haptics of FMCG products are clearly not relevant as these products are just seen as basics, whereas on the other hand, more emphasis is put on how the packaging feels either in the very first purchase or as an inherent part in the buying process.

In this chapter, we analysed our empirical material deriving from our three conducted focus groups. According to our methodological analysis approach, we coded and categorized the statements resulting in five dimensions. Subsequently, these dimensions were further examined and compared to the literature. Our identified findings are now used to contribute to the purpose of this research study.

5 Personal Components in Haptic Marketing

In the following excerpt, we predominantly focus on answering our first research question: *How is the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception constructed amongst consumers in regard to FMCG products?* By means of our above stated findings from our focus groups, we now try to reconstruct the relationship between perception, packaging and haptics perceived by the participants. Our preliminary framework derived from the literature serves as a starting point, which we adapt according to the respondents' perception and opinion. Subsequently, we proceed by discussing the second research question which our study poses: *What is the role of haptic packaging characteristics of FMCG packaging?*

5.1 Sense-making of Conceptual Relationship

To begin with, we deliberately highlight the first aim of our study, which we by answering the research question intend to achieve: *Discovering how this relationship construct is created among the consumers.* Initially we go one step back and reflect on what we have said earlier about the relationship of our three concepts (Chapter 2.4).

The literature reviewed has shown that a relationship between haptics, perception and packaging exists, even though it has not been clearly stated in the literature yet. In the respective chapter, we combined the three concepts, which has never been done before. Regarding FMCG products, we bridge our findings derived from the literature to create a research framework which convincingly shows the relationship between our three streams. However, this framework is conceptual and preliminary as we are particularly more interested in how the participants of our focus groups construct this relationship, than what the literature says so far. Notably, we highlighted the fact that touching a product packaging has an influence on consumers' perceptions (Peck & Wiggins, 2006) and that the packaging as such, especially in the FMCG sector, influences the buying decision. Further, haptic elements make the packaging unique and differentiate it from the competitors (Streicher & Estes, 2015). Although most of the previous studies have been of quantitative nature, combining our streams into one model, provided us and the reader with a good overview of how the literature reviews this relationship. Yet, does that hold true for the perception of the consumers? Throughout our focus groups, we immediately realised that the respondents also constructed a certain relationship between the three concepts. However, in the following, we elaborate more on how these connections are built before editing the preliminary framework.

Packaging of FMCG products is quite important for most of our respondents, as they use it to get information about the product and the brand. The design of the packaging is thereby relevant to attract attention in the aisle and differentiate it from the competitors by means of mostly colour, graphics and material. In this context, the perception of the packaging plays a crucial role for the participants, as the packaging indicates for example a certain quality, which is in turn associated with the product itself. Our participants ascertained the product's quality by

screening packaging appearance. Indeed, the quality judgments of our respondents are persuaded by the product characteristics mirrored by packaging. Thus, the packaging of FMCG products ultimately becomes the product in the eyes of the respondents. More precisely, the product as such is directly connected to the packaging design and the customer's perception of it. Further, the respondents admit that they are influenced by the packaging appearance, enabling them to make a purchase decision in-store. Therefore, the relationship between packaging and perception is considered to be quite immediate and personal among our participants, as they use packaging to gain trust for making a purchase decision. The design of the packaging characteristics is highly critical, as the packaging characteristics suggest a certain identity which can enhance or interfere with its evaluation and identification for our focus group participants. Further, the first impression of the product is believed to influence the participants' perception of the product. Additionally, according to our participants, even though FMCG products are characterised as low involvement, consumers deem the packaging of those as quite necessary and significant in their decision-making process.

The same holds true for the relationship between haptic sensory and perception. In this context, perception is more associated with expectations according to our respondents. It was repeatedly stated that if the material feels cheap, the perception of the very same product can be influenced in the same way. Consequently, touching a product packaging alters the perception of the product in an either more or less positive way. How the packaging feels like was stated to be a determining factor, especially when it comes to comparable or new products. However, the empirical material also pointed out that while shopping FMCG products, the respondents do not think of the haptic feeling of the product packaging in the first place. Seeing the packaging first, the participants tend to already have expectations on how the different packages feel like; they either like it or not. Nevertheless, when finally touching the packaging, the participants agreed on the fact that their haptic feeling of the material or texture cannot be manipulated, but rather their perception of it. Additionally, haptic elements and the possibility to touch, both influence our respondents' behaviour and attitudes. Further, feeling the packaging with their own hands was also determined to evoke certain emotions, when the texture or other haptic elements are unique or feel good. Touch appears to establish a more intimate and direct connection with the perception of the product, as the consumers need to actively explore the package with their hands according to our respondents. Indeed, based on former experiences, our participants have different expectations when touching the packaging, which influences their perception of it subjectively.

When it comes to the relationship between packaging and haptics regarding FMCG products, the respondents were quite ambivalent in their opinion. As already mentioned earlier, in some cases depending on the product, the feeling is not taken into consideration when assessing the product, whereas in other cases the touch is used in order to make a judgement, even though it is a low involvement product. On the one hand, it is shown in our empirical material that in order to be special, packaging design needs to have haptic elements. However, on the other hand, it is the visual appearance of the packaging which attracts the attention at first, before the customer intends to touch the product according to our respondents. Further, it has been

emphasised by them that when the haptic elements are not seen (e.g. embossed printings), which the product is less likely to be touched. Throughout the focus group discussions, we realised that a part of the respondents was not familiar with haptic product characteristics, which might be an indication that despite its relevance, tactile characteristics are not comprehensively used on product packaging in the FMCG sector, yet. The relationship between the concepts of haptic sensory and packaging is considered to quite detached, since our empirical material indicates that our respondents do not expect haptic elements on a package or do not really take them into initial consideration, as respondents use only a few seconds to decide what to buy. Tactile characteristics differentiate the product packaging from competitors, but are hardly preconceived. Only when comparing two similar products, our respondents use the touch to make a decision.

In accordance with the above stated findings from our focus groups, we need to improve, or rather adjust our preliminary relationship framework regarding the connection between each concept. The relationship between packaging and customer's perception is characterised as close and personal (i.e. solid and short arrow in Figure 3 below), since the packaging is the product in the eyes of the consumers, the perception has an influence on the decision-making. The packaging is used to gain trust in the product and the first impression counts. Further, the participants have personal expectations of the product reflected by the packaging, which in turn influence their perception accordingly. This finding from the focus groups supports the literature concerning the relationship. Yet, we extend this knowledge by uncovering how the respondents view their perception in regard to FMCG packaging.

Touching a FMCG product packaging can also persuade consumers, but is mostly not used as the initial determining feature since consumers first evaluate on the basis of the vision and do not handle FMCG products extensively, according to our respondents. Consequently, the relationship between haptic sensory and perception is determined by a rather subjective but also direct connection (i.e. longer solid arrow in Figure 3). Touch causes liking and evokes emotions, which are different between our participants. Hence, how touch is perceived, depends directly on the person's need for touch, according to our empirical findings. Also, touching a packaging surface directly triggers certain associations with the product, which can alter the perception and therefore the intention to buy.

Lastly, the relationship between haptic sensory and packaging is constructed in a reserved manner by the participants (i.e. intermittent long arrow in Figure 3). Accordingly, our empirical material shows that respondents take the haptic elements as special features, but do not initially base their decision on the haptic feeling of the packaging. The respondents do not expect tactile characteristics on the product packaging, and therefore, show indifference, as they do not spend much time in the store, touching the packages in the first place. Especially, when those tactile attributes are not visually recognisable, the respondents tend to overlook them in their product evaluation. Taken together, the findings in the literature concerning the relationship between our three concepts is partly confirmed within the focus group discussions. The relationship between packaging and haptic sensory is considered to be not as equally prevalent as the other

two according to our respondents. In prior literature, we did not find any form of distinction whether some relations are closer connected or not. Deriving from former theory, we just identified similarly immediate relationships between packaging, haptic sensory and perception. Above that, we gained knowledge of how the relationships are constructed and what kind of personal connections or emotions are attached to each other due to the respondents.

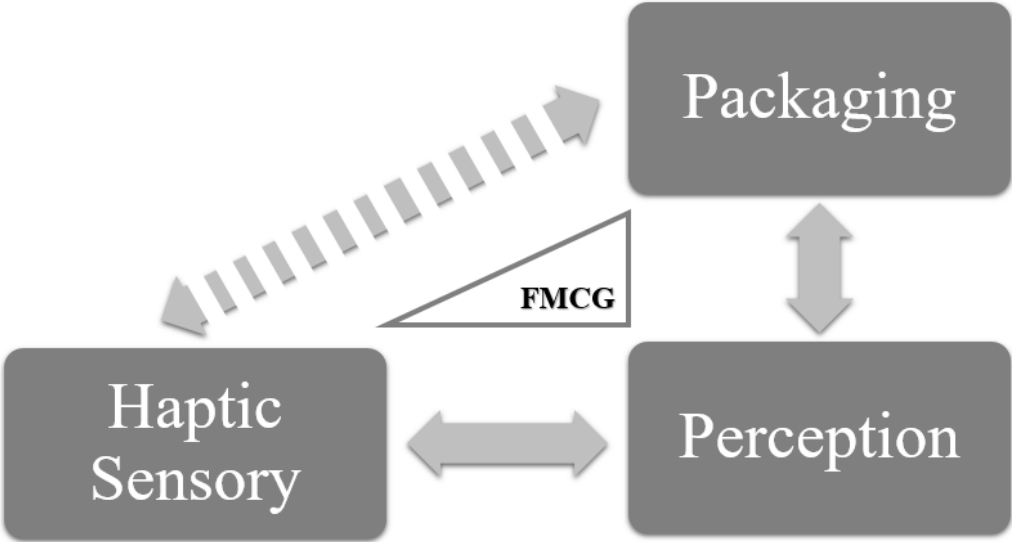


Figure 3: New relationship framework according to focus group findings

5.2 Role of Haptic Packaging Characteristics

In this part of the chapter, we refer back to the second aim of our study and discuss it in regard to the findings mentioned in the analysis chapter (Chapter 4) above. The second aim of our study has been: *Exploring and identifying the importance of haptic expressions on FMCG product packaging for consumers*. To start, throughout the focus groups, various roles of haptic characteristics extracted during the discussions, which enable us to answer our research question accordingly.

Indeed, tactile expressions on the product packaging are considered to attract the customer at the POS, according to our respondents. This *attraction* is substantially triggered by a unique packaging which is defined as ‘special’ and ‘not normal’. Further, in order to be characterised as unique, the packaging needs to have haptic elements. That means that in conformity with our respondents, a packaging with tactile characteristics is deemed to be unique, which in turn attracts the customer. The uniqueness of the packaging pursuant to our empirical material, plays a crucial role as it catches the customer’s attention in the store and enhances the intention to touch the product. Our respondents named special packaging features such as, embossed printings, texture, material or shape of the product. However, our focus group participants clearly pointed out that these haptic elements need to be visually recognisable and visible in order to impel them to touch the product packaging. This seems perfectly logical to us, since

we see the packaging first in the shelf, before we take hold of it. Therefore, the attraction of haptic characteristics is coupled with the visual attraction of the product packaging.

Nevertheless, in case of visually comparable products, tactile attributes on the packaging are considered as a *differentiating factor* by our respondents. These may, for example, be the material or texture of the packaging. It can be highlighted that products which look similar but feel different are more likely to be considered when in the decision-making process, according to our empirical material. In addition, it was repeatedly stated, that the ‘good feeling’ of the packaging makes the difference in the end. Whereas the sight selects the products due to their visual attractiveness, the touch differentiates among the packaging according to the personal preferences and feelings of the respondents attached to the touch. How a product feels can clearly be a distinguishing feature.

Additionally, the structural elements and simultaneously rather haptic elements of the packaging design are yet again stressed to have an *influence* on the respondents. According to our focus group participants, the different materials and textures create special associations with the product. Whereas cardboard packaging is associated with naturalness and higher quality, plastic wrapping is perceived as artificial and cheap. These associations derive from former experiences of the respondents with these types of materials and textures. How the package is perceived or associated due to its packaging, has an influence on the perception of the product as such. Furthermore, pursuant to our empirical material, haptic elements can evoke expectations of how the packaging with different materials should feel like. Just by looking at the product in the store, the respondents automatically expect a certain feeling of it because they know from their experience how this specific material or texture feels like. This implies that negatively perceived haptic elements have an unfavourable influence on the product. The same holds true for packaging which does not fulfil the respondents’ prior expectations of it. Indeed, the respondents develop these expectations due to how the product looks and what they associate with this kind of wrapping. Thus, tactile characteristics do play an important role in influencing consumer’s perception of the product.

Ultimately, haptic elements are perceived to facilitate the *decision-making* of the respondents. More specifically, touching these elements can provoke the willingness to buy the product, depending on how the packaging feels for the respondents. According to them, feeling those tactile characteristics increases the confidence in their evaluation of the product, no matter whether positively or negatively. As mentioned earlier, prior expectations due to the vision of a packaging can prevent customers from considering or touching a product at all. However, touch is also used by our respondents as a means to alter their first impression of the product, when the material actually feels better, than it looks like. Though, it is questionable whether the customers take products out of the shelf they are not attracted to.

To sum up the findings from our focus group discussions, we identified four distinctive roles, haptic characteristics on FMCG packaging have for the participants. Making the packaging attractive, haptic elements are unique and enhance the intention to touch; as a differentiating

feature, haptic characteristics help to distinguish between visually comparable products; being an influencing factor, haptic packaging attributes evoke certain associations and expectations which strengthen or weaken the product's perception; and ultimately as a decision-making tool, touching those attributes triggers the willingness to buy the product.

Conclusively in this chapter, we used the findings stated in the analysis and referred them to our research problem. Simultaneously, by answering our two superordinate questions, we managed to accomplish our two previously set aims for this research. In the following, we conclude these answers and finalize the study.

6 Time to Wake up the Beauty

In this closing chapter, we present our final conclusions and answers to our research questions. Subsequently, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our research and outline the limitations as well as provide recommendations for future research that could further contribute to this field.

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of our study was to uncover the role of haptic packaging characteristics on FMCG products for customers and simultaneously understand how customers bridge packaging, haptic sensory and perception.

The examination of the existing literature on sensory marketing and packaging revealed, that little is known about haptic sensory and more particularly, it is not clear what role it plays in regard to FMCG packaging design for customers (Krishna, Cian & Aydınoğlu, 2017; Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011). Whilst some research has been carried out stressing the growing relevance of haptic marketing, the concept has yet been barely established, but is starting to receive attention in marketing practice (Littel & Orth, 2013; Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016; Tangeland, Schulte & Boks, 2008). Apart from that, mostly all studies report a connection between or effect of one of our literature streams on another of our chosen concepts. However, much uncertainty still exists about the relationship between all of them in terms of FMCG products from a customer's perspective. The dominance of quantitative studies in existing literature caused a lack of in-depth understanding concerning customer behaviour towards tactile interaction. However, with our exploratory study, we shed light on the issue in question by providing insights of haptics on packaging from a customer's point of view and how they bridge the relation of packaging, haptic sensory and perception.

Consequently, the latter provides answers to our first research question (*i.e., How is the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception constructed amongst consumers?*). The study has shown that the way consumers make sense of the relationship varies between the three concepts. According to our respondents, the packaging of FMCG products is closely connected to their perception, which implies that packaging is an effective tool influencing the customer at the POS. The evidence from this study suggests that according to our respondents, consumers highly value the packaging due to its various functions and its support in the decision-making. It was also shown that there is a personal component involved. The packaging is used to gain trust, which is quite important for the shopping behaviour of FMCG products, since the packaging becomes the product. Meaning that the perception of the product is mirrored by the perception of the packaging due to our respondents. Supporting the literature, the relationship between perception and haptic sensory was of equal importance according to the participants. Here as well, touch was considered to alter the perception of the product, either positively or negatively. Further, even though the respondents claimed that they

have expectations of how the product should feel like due to the vision, the touch of it can evoke associations, which can either confirm or disconfirm the expectations. Thus, the connection between these two concepts is intimate or rather subjective, as the feelings evoked through the touch, vary among the respondents. Nevertheless, the relationship is determined by a direct connection, as well.

Another finding that emerged from this study is that while, the respondents highly value the packaging of FMCG products which assist in their evaluation as well as they use the touch to alter their perception of it, they do not initially consider haptic packaging elements when making the buying decision. Although it was proven that touching these tactile attributes is a determining factor, the respondents stated that they are not deliberately looking for haptic interaction with FMCG products, probably because they do not expect them on the packaging. Thus, it became quite obvious in our focus groups, that the participants are more visually attracted to the packaging, since the haptic elements are mostly not clearly seen, which makes the relationship between those two rather reserved and indirect.

The previous section covered the sense-making of the relationship among customers, but one issue that has only been sparsely covered is the meaning of haptic elements on FMCG packaging for customers at the POS. However, understanding the role of these tactile attributes might be key in understanding how customers perceive them when making a purchase decision. The findings for our sub-research question (i.e., *What is the role of haptic packaging characteristics of FMCG products?*) are of great interest for both researchers and practitioners. The part haptic characteristics play in consumer's perception, depends on their shopping behaviour, background and preferences. Taken together, we identified 4 main roles of haptic elements (*attraction, differentiating factor, influencing feature and decision-making tool*), which were deemed significant for the respondents, but also vary depending on the individual.

In conclusion, our findings show convincingly not only touch matters but also haptic sensory has relevance among the customers at the POS according to our respondents. However, the product packaging in the aisles of the stores are still perceived visually first, which means that the customer needs to be visually attracted to the product in order to take it into closer consideration. Hence, in order to heighten the customer's intention to touch, the packaging must be appealing in the eyes of the consumers. Thus, haptic characteristics become significant only after the visual appearance and must also be recognisable for the consumers to touch them. In fact, haptic characteristics on packaging become more relevant to the consumer perception when they appear on products that are comparable or that consumers are not familiar with and not used to buy. Therefore, haptic characteristics can increase the attractiveness of products and serves as a way to acquire new customers. When finally touching, and feeling those tactile elements, the packaging can become unique in the eyes of the customers and alter their perception of the product. It evokes associations, expectations and emotions on the part of the customer, which creates a close bond between them and the product, according to our focus group discussions. As a final step, haptic characteristics do influence the purchase decision-making process, irrespective of whether or not the expectations are fulfilled or positive feelings

towards the products are evoked. The findings from this study indicates that it is time to wake up the beauty, as we believe that its high potential is still unjustly ignored. Haptic sensory, if applied right, can be beneficial for FMCG companies differentiating themselves and simultaneously serving as a determining factor in the final decision-making for customers. Nevertheless, its beauty lies in the dependency on the customer's individual need for touch.

6.2 Theoretical Contribution

The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to the existing literature on sensory marketing, particularly haptic sensory. Moreover, our findings enhance the comprehension of the three concepts in question through a qualitative approach given a more in-depth understanding of the customer behaviour. In accordance, our study contributes by bridging existing theory and new insights from our findings about packaging, haptic sensory and perception conceptualising a new 'relationship' framework. How consumers make sense and perceive that relationship is part of the contribution to the theory of our literature streams. The new framework extends our knowledge about consumers buying behaviour of FMCG products by means of tactile interaction.

Further, considering that most of the research done in this field has been conducted in a quantitative way, our study gives a unique opportunity to look beyond the quantitative virtues and discover the beauty of qualitative benefits through examining the consumer's mind. The identification of the personal components is clearly the most important finding, which is only made possible by using semi-structured focus groups.

To conclude, given the qualitative method and inductive approach implemented in this study, we managed to find five new dimensions (*i.e. judgmental, distance consumers, decision-making tool, intention to touch and touch as an influencing factor*) which emerged from the gathered empirical material. Instead of relying on existing theory throughout our analysis, our study is exploratory. Thus, the five dimensions aim to give deeper insights into the perception of FMCG products based on haptic characteristics on packaging, expressed by customers in our focus group discussions.

6.3 Practical Contribution

The empirical findings in this study have several practical contributions. Firstly, the relationship between packaging, haptic sensory and perception can be used by marketing managers and packaging designers to understand how consumers make sense of haptic attributes on packaging and its influence on product perception. Furthermore, our research findings are useful as a guide for marketing managers planning their marketing strategy, where product packaging is essential for differentiation. Especially now with the new self-service retail formats, the design needs to stand out from the competitors and be unique in order to enhance the customer's loyalty. Also,

particularly, managers responsible for the marketing mix can benefit from the five dimensions in our findings to better understand the consumer buying behaviour based on the packaging.

Moreover, since holding a product increases the buying intention, it is essential to make the customer pick up and touch the product packaging. Therefore, managers need to create attention and a desire for the consumer to feel the product packaging. Additionally, our findings have a practical application as to ensure that the haptic elements on the packaging are visually recognisable and attractive in order to impel the customer to touch. Our study provides those practitioners with new knowledge about how tactile attributes are perceived and what influence they have on the product's overall perception. Further, our findings assist them being aware of customer's deception by evoking certain associations and emotions with the product, which are clearly not fulfilled. Consequently, this will have negative implications.

Taken together, practitioners can be orientated towards our research findings in terms of their strategic actions and decisions when designing and planning product packaging with haptic characteristics. Conclusively, our study attempted to highlight the relevance of haptic sensory in FMCG packaging design which should now trigger those FMCG companies to consider tactile interaction in their packaging communication.

6.4 Study Limitations & Prospective Research

In this part of the final chapter, we outline the limitations of our study and provide recommendations for future research. We acknowledge that this study has several limitations, which can be taken into consideration for further studies. Nevertheless, we were able to provide answers to both our research questions through our gathered empirical material.

Although the study has successfully demonstrated that haptic packaging characteristics do play a role in purchasing FMCG products at the POS, it has certain limitations in terms of its generalisability. Despite the fact that we used a qualitative approach, which naturally prohibits us to draw generalisable conclusions based on our findings, we are only allowed to provide answers concerning packaged FMCG products. What role haptic elements play in other industries or retail sectors would be interesting to find out. Therefore, it is recommended that further research might explore the importance of haptic sensory in industries where packaging is equally relevant while having the same qualitative setting as in this study. Also, since most of the studies concerning haptics and packaging are conducted in a quantitative way, further work needs to be done to establish whether the given results are still valid from a more exploratory customer perspective. Furthermore, another limitation worth mentioning is the number of participants in this study, comparing to a higher number in quantitative studies. Therefore, more research is required to examine whether both, our findings and 'relationship framework' are relevant in other industry settings where packaging is important through a quantitative approach. Additionally, since our collected findings are based on consumers' expressions and interaction with each other, the analysis process is influenced by us as

researchers, due to the approaches adopted and stances taken in this study. Thus, despite our efforts to be objective towards the empirical material, we are still to a certain extent subjective through our abilities as researchers to interpret and understand our respondents' sense-making. This research is limited by the lack of consumer's initial awareness of haptic characteristics on FMCG packaging. As already mentioned, the concept of haptic sensory is still under-researched in academia and scarcely established in practice, which is probably one of the reasons why consumers did not take notice of them, even though they bought FMCG products on a daily basis. Although we did not tell the respondents about the purpose of our study, our guidance in the focus group discussion limited the possibility to achieve a setting as close as to the customers' natural environment in the store. Future research should therefore concentrate on the using observations in the store in order to discover the real interaction between the customer and the product packaging in its natural setting. In doing that, it would also be interesting to explore for which product segments within the FMCG sector extensive tactile interaction is used by the consumers.

Another possible area of future research would be to examine the role of sensory marketing in regard to online grocery stores, since the customers can only see, but neither touch, taste, hear nor smell the product. How does that influence the customer's perception? Future research in this field would be of great interest as both the emphasis on sensory marketing, more specifically haptic sensory is increasing simultaneously as the online grocery market is continuously growing.

7 References

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Appendix A

Consent form

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick the appropriate box):

1.	I understand the information about the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Select only one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised. • I do not want my name used in this project. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant:

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Researcher:

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix B

Topic Guide Focus Group (6th of April 2017)

Reception and introduction of the Moderators

Grounded rules for this focus group e.g.:

- There are no right or wrong answers
- What is said in this room stays here
- We will tape record the group discussion
- We want you to interact with each other, ask questions, comment on each other's experiences

Handout and explanation of consent form and research process (Appendix A)

Explanation of the terms FMCG and low-involvement products

Description of the procedure

- Show the statements on cards and the ppt presentation
- Discuss with each other whether
 - o You think it is right/wrong
 - o It plays a role for you
 - o It is important for you
 - o It corresponds with your perception
- Additional questions will be asked if necessary

Statements from the literature

1. Hand out 5 cards with the different senses on it (vision, touch, smell, taste, sound)
 - a. Discuss the role of senses in packaging design
2. Hand out 6 cards with the different packaging elements (colour, graphics, texture, material, size, shape)
 - a. Discuss the role of the packaging elements
3. "Purchase decisions are made at the point of sale" (Silayoi & Speece, 2005)
4. "Graphics and colour become more important in choice of a low involvement product" (Silayoi & Speece, 2005)
5. "Packaging is both pervasive and essential" (Simms & Trott, 2010)
6. "The packaging can effectively become the product" (Simms & Trott, 2010)
7. "Packaging can influence consumers' perceptions and evaluation of products and can be used to get their attention" (Rundh, 2016)
8. "If the package communicates high quality, consumers frequently assume that the product is of high quality" (Silayoi & Speece, 2005)
9. "Touching a product increases its perceived value" (Streicher & Estes, 2015)

10. “The effects of touch are stronger for some people than for others” (Peck & Childers, 2003)
11. “Touching a product increases attitudes and purchase intentions towards the product and increases the confidence in the evaluation of these products” (Peck & Wiggins, 2006)
12. “When the material does not have a satisfactory feeling, the shopper normally continues to shop elsewhere”
13. “Touch is one of the hardest senses to be manipulated and the sense that customers trust the most” (Rifqiya & Nasution, 2016)
14. “The consumer’s perception of the packaging of FMCGs is affected more by vision than by touch” (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011)
15. “Tactile influences play a minor role in how FMCGs are perceived by the consumer” (Marlow & Jansson-Boyd, 2011)

Additional questions:

- Does haptic packaging characteristics play a role for you on FMCG products? Why?
- Why do you think that there are sometimes haptic elements on the packaging, if it is not so relevant?
- Do you perceive/recognize haptic elements on packaging? Does it have an effect on you?
- When do haptic elements on packaging play a role for you?
- Why do you touch things?
- What are your perceptions when you touch a product in the store? Why do you do it?