



# Food Cues in Non-Food Categories: A Sensory Marketing Study of Gen Z Responses in Beauty and Fashion

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## **Abstract**

**Title:** Food Cues in Non-Food Categories: A Sensory Marketing Study of Gen Z Responses in Beauty and Fashion

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Food-inspired visual cues, such as dessert-like colors, textures or imagery have become increasingly common in beauty and fashion marketing to evoke indulgence and sensory richness. Although widely used, little is known about how these cues shape consumer evaluations in non-food contexts, particularly among younger generations. Drawing on sensory marketing and symbolic consumption perspectives, this study examines how Gen Z evaluates products featuring food-inspired elements compared to neutral designs, focusing on emotional appeal, perceived quality, and purchase intention. Using a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative in-depth interviews and a quantitative online survey, the study provides both exploratory and causal insights. The qualitative phase consisted of 15 in-depth interviews with Gen Z consumers, and aimed to explore the meaning and emotional responses elicited by food-inspired cues in beauty and fashion contexts. Building on these insights, the quantitative phase employed a  $2 \times 2$  experimental design manipulating cue type (food-inspired vs. neutral) and product category (beauty vs. fashion), administered through an online survey to a Gen Z sample ( $N = 175$ ). The results show that food-inspired cues significantly enhance emotional appeal, perceived quality, and purchase intention. These effects are especially pronounced in beauty products, where sensorial and textural expectations render food associations more congruent. Overall, the findings highlight the transferability of food-based meanings to non-food categories and reveal the persuasive power of sensory symbolism among younger consumers. The study offers relevant implications for brands seeking differentiation through playful and sensory-driven visual strategies.

*Keywords:* Sensory Marketing, Food-Inspired Cues, Generation Z, Beauty, Fashion, Crossmodal Correspondences

## **Abstract (Versão Portuguesa)**

**Título:** Estímulos Visuais Inspirados em Alimentos: Um Estudo de Marketing Sensorial na Beleza e na Moda junto da Geração Z

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Os estímulos visuais inspirados em alimentos, como cores, texturas ou imagens, associadas a sobremesas, têm sido cada vez mais utilizados no *marketing* de produtos de beleza e moda para evocar prazer e envolvimento sensorial. No entanto, a forma como estes estímulos influenciam as avaliações dos consumidores em contextos não alimentares permanece pouco explorada, especialmente entre a Geração Z. Com base nas perspetivas do *marketing* sensorial e do consumo simbólico, este estudo analisa o impacto destes estímulos no apelo emocional, na qualidade percebida e na intenção de compra, comparativamente a *designs* neutros. O estudo recorre a uma abordagem de métodos mistos. A fase qualitativa incluiu 15 entrevistas aprofundadas com consumidores da Geração Z, explorando os significados e respostas emocionais associados a estímulos visuais inspirados em alimentos nos contextos de beleza e moda. Com base nestes *insights*, a fase quantitativa aplicou um desenho experimental 2 × 2 a uma amostra da Geração Z (N = 175), manipulando o tipo de estímulo (inspirado em alimentos vs. neutro) e a categoria de produto (beleza vs. moda). Os resultados mostram que os estímulos inspirados em alimentos aumentam significativamente o apelo emocional, a qualidade percebida e a intenção de compra, sobretudo nos produtos de beleza. De forma geral, os resultados evidenciam a transferibilidade de significados associados aos alimentos para categorias não alimentares e revelam o poder persuasivo do simbolismo sensorial nos consumidores mais jovens. O estudo apresenta sugestões relevantes para marcas que procuram diferenciar-se mediante estratégias visuais lúdicas e orientadas para experiências sensoriais.

*Palavras-chave: marketing sensorial, estímulos alimentares, geração Z, beleza, moda, correspondências crossmodais*

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## Disclaimer - Use of *A.I.*

While preparing this master's thesis, an artificial intelligence tool (ChatGPT, OpenAI) was used exclusively to support language quality, including grammar correction, spelling, and stylistic clarity. The use of AI did not extend to the generation of ideas, theoretical development, data analysis, or interpretation. All academic judgments and conclusions presented in this work are those of the author.

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## Table of Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 SENSORY MARKETING & FOOD-INSPIRED CUES	10
2.1.1 <i>Multisensory Integration and Crossmodal Correspondences</i>	10
2.1.2 <i>Embodied Cognition and Mental Simulation</i>	11
2.1.3 <i>Food Cues as Hedonic, Symbolic, and Aesthetic Triggers</i>	12
2.2 EMOTIONAL APPEAL IN CONSUMER RESPONSE	12
2.2.1 <i>Food-Inspired Visual Cues and Emotional Responses</i>	13
2.3 INTERPRETING SENSORY CUES AS SIGNALS OF PRODUCT QUALITY	14
2.3.1 <i>Relationship Between Food-Inspired Sensory Cues and Perceived Quality</i>	15
2.4 SENSORY INFLUENCES ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS	16
2.4.1 <i>Food-Inspired Sensory Cues and Purchase Intention</i>	17
2.5 INDUSTRY CONTEXT: BEAUTY AND FASHION	17
2.6 GEN Z AS A CONSUMER COHORT	18
2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	19
<b>3. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	20
3.2 QUALITATIVE METHOD	20
3.2.1 <i>Rationale for Using Qualitative Research</i>	20
3.2.2 <i>Semi-Structured Interviews</i>	21
3.2.3 <i>Participants and Recruitment</i>	21
3.2.4 <i>Ethical Considerations</i>	22
3.2.5 <i>Interview Guide and Procedure</i>	22
3.3 QUANTITATIVE METHOD	23
3.3.1 <i>Quantitative Research Design &amp; Experimental Procedure</i>	23
3.3.2 <i>Visual Stimuli Construction</i>	24
3.3.3 <i>Questionnaire Structure</i>	26
3.3.4 <i>Measures (Operationalization of Variables)</i>	27
3.3.5 <i>Data Collection Procedure</i>	28
3.3.6 <i>Sample</i>	28
<b>4. RESULTS</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1 QUALITATIVE RESULTS	30
4.1.1 <i>Data Processing &amp; Analysis</i>	30
4.1.2 <i>Emerging Themes from the Interviews</i>	30
4.2 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS	33
4.2.1 <i>Normality Check</i>	33
4.2.2 <i>Hypothesis Testing</i>	35
4.2.3 <i>Complementary Analysis</i>	37
4.2.4 <i>Correlation Analysis</i>	40
<b>5. DISCUSSION</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1 THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS	42
5.2 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	43
<b>6. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>55</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1: Interview Guide and Question Set .....	22
Table 2: Experimental Conditions for the 2×2 Factorial Design .....	24
Table 3: Overview of Measures and Questionnaire Items .....	27
Table 4: Overview of Participant Demographics .....	29
Table 5: Summary of Qualitative Themes Emerging from Interviews .....	33
Table 6: Participant Distribution Across Experimental Groups.....	35
Table 7: Two-Way ANOVA Results for Emotional Appeal .....	36
Table 8: Hypotheses by Results .....	37

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.....	19
Figure 2: Visual Stimuli Used in the Experimental Conditions.....	25
Figure 3: Normality Assessment (Histograms) .....	34
Figure 4: Boxplot for Perceived Quality .....	38
Figure 5: Boxplot for Emotional Appeal.....	39
Figure 6: Boxplot for Purchase Intention.....	40

## 1. Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive consumer markets, brands face growing challenges in differentiating themselves and creating long-lasting emotional connections with their audience (Gowda & Archana, 2024). Traditional marketing approaches that emphasize functional product benefits or rational appeals are no longer sufficient to capture consumers' attention. Instead, over the years, there has been a noticeable shift toward sensory marketing, aiming to engage multiple senses and create richer, more immersive brand experiences (Rodríguez-Ulcuango et al., 2025). Among the different sensory strategies, food-inspired cues—such as flavors, textures, or product names evoking food associations—represent a particularly intriguing tool, as food is inherently tied to indulgence, nostalgia, and comfort (Spence, 2015).

The majority of existing research has explored sensory branding cues in the food and beverage sector, where the relevance of taste, smell, and texture is naturally integrated into product experiences (Ruiz-Capillas & Herrero, 2021). Studies show that packaging color, product naming, and tactile qualities strongly shape taste expectations and evaluations (Wang & Chang, 2022). In parallel, olfactory cues have been linked to heightened appetite and increased purchase intention in food-related contexts (Li et al., 2025; Moore, 2014).

While the importance of food cues is well established in food industries, there has been a growing trend toward applying food-inspired associations in non-food industries, such as beauty and fashion (Spence, 2022). Skincare products named after desserts, makeup lines evoking flavors like “caramel” or “mocha,” and fashion campaigns referencing shades such as “cherry red” or “champagne rose” illustrate how brands are increasingly blurring category boundaries to engage consumers emotionally (Gudkova et al., 2025). This strategy suggests that food-related cues can function symbolically, transferring affective meanings to products and positively shaping consumer evaluations beyond their original consumption context (Gudkova et al., 2025; Machiels & Karnal, 2016). Understanding how such visual cues evoke multisensory meanings is therefore essential for explaining how food-inspired visuals may influence consumer responses to beauty and fashion products, even in the absence of literal taste or smell.

However, academic literature remains limited in this area. There is little research examining whether food-inspired cues in non-food contexts create the same positive associations as in food-related categories. This highlights a critical research gap: while sensory marketing literature acknowledges the role of food cues, it has not sufficiently explored their effects when detached from actual consumption contexts (Kechri et al., 2025). Specifically, little is known about how younger generations, such as Gen Z, perceive and respond to food-inspired

associations in industries unrelated to eating or drinking, or whether these cues influence outcomes such as purchase intention, brand attachment, and perceptions of indulgence and authenticity. Moreover, the strategic role of food-inspired cues in non-food branding and positioning strategies remains underexplored in the academic literature. Considering Gen Z's distinctive consumer behaviors, examining their reactions is both timely and relevant.

Addressing these gaps is essential both academically and managerially. On the one hand, this study extends sensory marketing research by examining the transferability of food cues across categories, contributing to a more detailed understanding of multisensory branding. On the other hand, from a managerial perspective, the insights generated may help professionals design strategies that leverage food associations effectively while avoiding potential pitfalls.

This research therefore aims to answer the following question:

**How do Gen Z consumers respond differently to food-inspired versus neutral cues in the beauty and fashion industries?**

By focusing on this underexplored area, the study contributes to theory on sensory branding, consumer psychology, and generational consumer behavior. It provides actionable insights for non-food brands, particularly in the beauty and fashion industries, that seek to capture Gen Z's attention and differentiate themselves through food-inspired associations. Developed in the context of the Master's in Management at Católica-Lisbon, this thesis seeks to address the identified research gap by integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical analysis. The primary objectives are to explore the role of food-inspired visual cues in non-food contexts, with a particular focus on Gen Z consumers, and to derive managerial insights for branding and positioning strategies in the beauty and fashion industries. In this way, the study aims to connect academic research with managerial practice in sensory branding.

Beginning with a review of the relevant literature on sensory marketing and food-inspired cues, this study then moves on to a description of the research methodology and study design. The subsequent section presents and examines the empirical results, which are then discussed in light of the existing literature. In this discussion, both theoretical and managerial implications are addressed, together with the study's limitations and suggestions for future research. Finally, the main conclusions of the study are drawn.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Sensory Marketing & Food-Inspired Cues

In today's increasingly saturated consumer markets, brands face the challenge of differentiating themselves not only through functional benefits but also through experiential value that resonates on an emotional and sensory level (Hultén, 2011; Krishna, 2012). Sensory marketing has therefore gained prominence as a strategic approach centered on the deliberate activation of one or more senses to shape consumer perceptions, emotions, memories, and behaviors (Pareek et al., 2024). Rather than viewing consumption as a purely rational or information-driven process, this field frames consumer experience as deeply embodied and multisensory, unfolding through sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound, each of which contributes to the interpretation and evaluation of products and brands (Lindstrom, 2005; Spence, 2022). Sensory cues thereby assume a fundamental role in shaping both the cognitive and affective dimensions of consumer decision-making, influencing product evaluations, brand attitudes, and behavioral intentions (Hultén, 2011; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014).

As consumption is increasingly mediated through digital platforms, where products are often evaluated without physical contact, visual information becomes especially important (Krishna, 2012; Spence, 2020). Images, colors, shapes, and surface cues frequently serve as the primary basis for forming sensory expectations when touch, smell, or taste are absent (Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2014; Rebollar et al., 2017).

#### 2.1.1 Multisensory Integration and Crossmodal Correspondences

Sensory marketing builds on the idea that perception is inherently holistic: the human mind merges information from sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound to produce unified interpretations of products and experiences (Calvert et al., 2004; Spence & Deroy, 2013). Consumers rarely rely on a single sensory channel to interpret products; instead, they draw on interconnected associations across modalities to generate expectations and evaluations (Krishna, 2012).

A key mechanism underlying this process is crossmodal correspondence, defined as systematic associations between attributes of different sensory modalities that influence perception even when only one modality is present (Spence & Deroy, 2013; Spence & Parise, 2012). Prior research demonstrates, for instance, that rounded shapes are often associated with sweetness, whereas angular forms tend to evoke sharper or more acidic sensations (Becker et al., 2011; Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2015), illustrating how visual features can activate non-visual expectations (Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2015).

Through these associations, vision becomes a powerful driver for activating multisensory expectations, allowing consumers to infer tactile or gustatory properties from visual appearance alone (Piqueras-Fizman & Spence, 2015). Even subtle manipulations in visual design, such as differences in luminance, curvature, or color saturation, can significantly alter perceived sensory qualities (Velasco & Spence, 2019). This mechanism is particularly relevant in digital contexts, where limited physical interaction heightens reliance on visual cues for sensory inference (Petit et al., 2019).

Within this framework, food-related imagery represents a particularly rich source of crossmodal associations, as it combines color, gloss, shape, and texture cues that readily map onto expectations of taste, smell, and mouthfeel (Piqueras-Fizman & Spence, 2015; Spence, 2015). Building on this perspective, the present research examines how such visually driven, crossmodal expectations operate when food-inspired cues are applied to non-food categories such as beauty and fashion.

### 2.1.2 Embodied Cognition and Mental Simulation

The influence of sensory cues on consumer perception is further explained by embodied cognition, which suggests that cognitive processes are grounded in bodily states and prior sensorimotor experiences (None & None, 2025). From this perspective, individuals interpret sensory information by internally simulating the physical experiences associated with familiar cues, allowing them to “feel” qualities such as warmth, smoothness, or creaminess without direct contact (Barsalou, 2008; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014).

Mental simulation plays a central role in shaping affective and evaluative judgments (Niedenthal et al., 2005). Elder and Krishna (2010) demonstrate that sensory imagery prompting bodily simulation enhances the vividness of the imagined experience, leading to more favorable product evaluations even in mediated contexts. When consumers imagine how a product feels or tastes, the resulting sensory simulation intensifies subjective experience and increases product attractiveness.

Within this framework, visual cues often function as triggers for embodied simulations by conveying implicit sensory properties. Visual texture cues, such as glossiness or surface finish, influence expected taste and texture, while depictions of melted textures can activate associations with indulgence or pleasure, even in the absence of physical interaction (Piqueras-Fizman & Spence, 2015). Because these simulations occur implicitly, consumers are often unaware that sensory imagery shapes their judgments of product quality or emotional appeal (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014).

These mechanisms are particularly relevant for the present study, as they provide a theoretical basis for understanding how food-inspired visual cues can elicit embodied simulations in non-food categories such as beauty and fashion.

### 2.1.3 Food Cues as Hedonic, Symbolic, and Aesthetic Triggers

Food cues occupy a unique position within sensory marketing due to their strong hedonic and symbolic associations, extending beyond biological necessity to encompass emotional and cultural meaning (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014; Macht, 2008; Rozin, 1996). Visual food attributes such as color, gloss, shape, and texture systematically influence expectations of sweetness, indulgence, or richness, making food-related cues particularly potent triggers of affective responses (Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2015).

Importantly, these associations can be transferred to non-food contexts through visual representation (Forceville, 2006). Prior research shows that pictorial food metaphors can enhance product attractiveness by activating associations of pleasure and indulgence, even when consumers recognize the symbolic nature of the cue (Boujena et al., 2021). The effectiveness of such cues depends on their congruence with the product category and brand meaning, with congruent food-inspired visuals enhancing processing fluency and evaluation, while incongruence may undermine perceived authenticity and generate confusion (Zhou et al., 2019; Grayson & Martinec, 2004).

Given the symbolic and aesthetic orientation of the beauty and fashion industries (Joy et al., 2012), understanding how food-inspired cues are interpreted in these contexts provides a foundation for examining their effects on emotional appeal, perceived quality, and purchase intention.

## 2.2 Emotional Appeal in Consumer Response

Emotion has long been recognized as a central driver of consumer behavior, shaping perceptions, judgments, and decisions beyond purely utilitarian considerations (Rajamani, 2025). Experiential consumption research emphasizes that emotions constitute an intrinsic dimension of product meaning, influencing affective reactions, memory, and preference formation (Stavraki et al., 2025).

Scholars argue that emotional responses to products are often triggered by subtle cues that evoke embodied associations and internal sensory representations (Krishna, 2012; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014). Such cues function as affective shortcuts, enabling consumers to make rapid judgments about a product's desirability, often outside conscious awareness (Pham, 2004).

Among the various sensory modalities, visual cues play a particularly influential role in shaping emotional responses, especially in digital environments where consumers rely heavily on imagery to evaluate products (Peck & Childers, 2008; Spence, 2022). Visual attributes such as color, form, and surface characteristics can elicit immediate affective impressions, including warmth, pleasure, or indulgence, based on learned associative meaning (Becker et al., 2011; Elliot & Maier, 2012; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994).

Emotional appeal is especially salient in hedonic product categories, such as beauty and fashion, where consumers value symbolic meaning, aesthetics, and self-expression as much as functional performance (Ciocodeică et al., 2025). In these contexts, visual cues embedded in advertising, packaging, and digital imagery play a critical role in shaping affective responses and product attractiveness (Zhang & Huang, 2024). Building on this perspective, the present study examines how food-inspired visual cues may enhance emotional responses even in non-food categories, making it necessary to consider the emotional mechanisms underlying food cues in more depth.

### 2.2.1 Food-Inspired Visual Cues and Emotional Responses

Food cues possess exceptional potency due to their inherent connection to reward, comfort, and sensory pleasure (Macht, 2008). Scholars have long argued that food is “fundamentally tied to emotion” (Macht, 2008, p. 1), serving not only biological needs but also social, cultural, and psychological ones (Rozin, 1996). Visual cues referencing food, whether through color, texture, form, or metaphor, can activate these emotional associations even in the absence of actual consumption, eliciting affective responses related to indulgence or comfort (Ucuk et al., 2025; Velasco & Spence, 2019).

These effects are driven by embodied mental simulation, whereby exposure to food-related cues triggers sensory imagery that allows consumers to imaginatively “taste” or “feel” a product, intensifying emotional responses and product attractiveness (Elder & Krishna, 2010). Food-inspired cues therefore function as affective amplifiers, activating embodied memories linked to pleasure and indulgence (Gayler et al., 2022).

Empirical evidence supports the transfer of these emotional associations to non-food contexts. Visual strategies that evoke dessert-like textures, glossy finishes, or sweet flavor associations have become increasingly common in these industries, suggesting that marketers implicitly recognize the emotional potency of food cues (Velasco & Spence, 2019). Boujena et al. (2021) show that pictorial food metaphors enhance product attractiveness by activating hedonic associations, even when consumers recognize the symbolic nature of the cue. Such

effects are particularly relevant in visually driven categories such as beauty and fashion, where emotional and aesthetic appeal are central to evaluation (Joy et al., 2012). Among Gen Z consumers, who demonstrate a strong preference for sensory-rich and playful branding, food-inspired visuals may further heighten emotional engagement (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

Taken together, prior research suggests that food-inspired visual cues can enhance emotional responses toward beauty and fashion products by activating embodied memories and hedonic associations linked to food, motivating the following hypothesis:

*H1: Food-inspired visual cues increase the emotional appeal of beauty and fashion products compared to neutral cues.*

### 2.3 Interpreting Sensory Cues as Signals of Product Quality

Perceived product quality is one of the most influential evaluative judgments in consumer decision making, shaping attitudes, expectations, and purchase behavior across product categories (Arsita et al., 2025). Although quality is often conceptualized as an objective attribute, research consistently shows that consumers frequently rely on extrinsic cues to infer quality, particularly when direct evaluation of intrinsic attributes is not possible prior to use (Samu et al., 2023; Steenkamp, 1990). As Zeithaml (1988) notes, consumers draw on a range of observable signals to reduce uncertainty and form expectations about product value and performance.

Within this inferential process, sensory cues—and visual ones in particular—play a central role in shaping perceived quality. Design elements such as color saturation, material texture, surface finish, gloss, and perceived weight frequently signal craftsmanship, care, or premium positioning (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). Aesthetic features thus function as symbolic indicators of quality, allowing consumers to translate visual impressions into judgments about durability, effectiveness, or refinement (Bloch, 1995). Because visual information is often the first and most salient input consumers receive, it strongly influences initial quality expectations, especially in contexts where physical interaction is absent (Schifferstein, 2015).

A central theoretical lens for understanding this process is signaling logic, which suggests that marketers use observable attributes to communicate unobservable product qualities (Connelly et al., 2024). When consumers cannot directly evaluate formulation, construction, or performance, visual and sensory cues serve as implicit promises of quality. Refined detailing, coherent design, and visually rich surfaces tend to signal higher quality, whereas inconsistent or simplistic cues may suggest lower value (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008).

These signals are interpreted rapidly and often intuitively, shaping quality judgments before any functional experience occurs.

The effectiveness of such cues, however, depends on how informative they appear within a given category. Consumers do not interpret visual elements in isolation but evaluate their relevance based on category-specific expectations and norms (Zeithaml, 1988; Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008). In some contexts, visual elements may therefore be perceived as more meaningful indicators of quality than in others. In beauty, for example, consumers frequently associate visual cues implying texture, richness, or smoothness with product efficacy and indulgence, even when evaluation is based solely on imagery (Elder & Krishna, 2012; Schifferstein, 2015). In fashion, by contrast, perceived quality is more strongly inferred from visible material characteristics such as drape, sheen, or construction details (Fiore & Kim, 2007; Joy et al., 2012). These category-specific norms shape how consumers interpret the relevance of sensory cues when forming quality judgments (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008; Park et al., 1986).

Food-inspired visual cues may introduce an additional layer of meaning into this evaluative process. Food carries strong pre-existing associations with richness, density, indulgence, warmth, softness, and smoothness, all attributes that overlap with common representations of premium quality, particularly in sensorial product categories (Macht, 2008; Rozin, 1996; Spence, 2015). When food-related imagery is applied to non-food products, these embodied associations may be transferred metaphorically, allowing consumers to infer qualities such as nourishment, softness, or refinement from visual appearance alone (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014). The following subsection builds on this logic by examining how food-inspired cues may enhance perceived quality relative to neutral cues.

### 2.3.1 Relationship Between Food-Inspired Sensory Cues and Perceived Quality

Given that consumers routinely rely on sensory cues to make inferences about intrinsic product attributes (Javeed et al., 2022), food-inspired visuals may function as especially potent quality signals due to the multisensory associations they evoke (Spence & Piqueras-Fiszman, 2014). When consumers encounter imagery suggestive of creamy, glossy, or dense textures, they may infer analogous qualities in beauty or fashion products—such as richness, smoothness, or an indulgent sensory feel—even when these qualities are only metaphorically implied (Boujena et al., 2021; Elder & Krishna, 2012).

Because food-related cues are familiar, vivid, and emotionally engaging, they may be interpreted as meaningful indicators of product quality, especially in categories where sensory expectations play an important role. This interpretation aligns with signaling logic, whereby

observable visual attributes are used to infer unobservable qualities such as formulation richness, craftsmanship, or product care (Kirmani & Rao, 2000; Krishna & Schwarz, 2014). Empirical findings reinforce this reasoning: pictorial food metaphors have been shown to enhance hedonic perceptions and overall evaluation (Boujena et al., 2021), while vivid sensory imagery increases anticipated sensory pleasure and product value (Elder & Krishna, 2012).

Taken together, these insights suggest that food-inspired cues are likely to enhance perceived product quality relative to neutral cues, supporting the second hypothesis:

*H2: Food-inspired visual cues increase perceived product quality compared to neutral cues.*

## 2.4 Sensory Influences on Purchase Intentions

Purchase intention is a central construct in consumer behavioral research (Spears & Singh, 2004), reflecting the likelihood that a consumer will engage in a future purchase based on their evaluative and affective responses to a product (Engel et al., 1995). Rather than being purely rational, purchase intentions are shaped by emotional reactions and immediate impressions that arise during product evaluations, especially in visually mediated contexts (Pham, 1998; Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999). As such, intentions function as a bridge between evaluative judgments and action, translating how a product feels into motivation to buy (Gary, 2024).

In contemporary consumer environments characterized by rapid information processing and visually driven encounters, sensory cues, particularly visual ones, play a decisive role in shaping purchase intentions (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016; Wedel & Pieters, 2015). Visual elements can trigger affective responses and mental imagery that allow consumers to imagine future product use, increasing the vividness and appeal of the anticipated experience (Jeong & Yeu, 2023). When consumers mentally simulate how a product might feel, taste, or be experienced, anticipated pleasure increases, making purchase more likely (Jeong & Yeu, 2023).

These effects are especially relevant in hedonic and aesthetic categories, where decisions are often fast, emotionally grounded, and based on visual impressions rather than detailed functional analysis (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008; Joy et al., 2012). In such contexts, sensory cues act as motivational triggers by signaling reward, indulgence, or expressive value, thereby encouraging approach-oriented responses and increasing purchase likelihood (Pham, 1998; Krishna, 2012). Even subtle variations in visual presentation can therefore meaningfully shift consumers' willingness to buy (Zhang & Huang, 2024).

### 2.4.1 Food-Inspired Sensory Cues and Purchase Intention

Food-inspired visual cues may play a distinctive role in shaping purchase intention because they readily activate motivational processes linked to anticipated consumption (Baumeister et al., 2007). While emotional appeal contributes to positive product evaluation, purchase intention reflects the extent to which such evaluations translate into willingness to act (Bagozzi et al., 2016). Prior research shows that sensory-rich imagery enhances decision certainty, choice confidence, and purchase likelihood by making imagined consumption experiences more vivid and emotionally engaging (Loewenstein et al., 2001; Townsend & Kahn, 2014).

Because food imagery elicits strong sensory and hedonic associations, it can increase anticipatory pleasure and thereby increase purchase intention, even in non-food contexts (Elder & Krishna, 2012; Meersseman et al., 2021). Visual food cues also signal reward and indulgence, which encourages approach-oriented responses and increases consumers' inclination to buy (Krishna & Schwarz, 2014). Importantly, these effects may occur independently of detailed quality assessment, as affective reactions triggered by food cues can directly motivate behavioral intention (Shiv & Fedorikhin, 1999).

Together, existing research suggests that food-inspired visual cues are likely to increase purchase intention relative to neutral cues, motivating the study's third hypothesis.

*H3: Food-inspired visual cues increase purchase intention compared to neutral cues.*

### 2.5 Industry Context: Beauty and Fashion

Consumer responses to marketing cues are shaped by the symbolic structures, evaluative norms, and cultural functions that define specific product categories (Azimi & Saleh, 2025). Although beauty and fashion are often grouped as expressive and hedonic domains (Parlingoman Hutabarat et al., 2024), they differ substantially in how consumers derive meaning from products and interpret visual cues (McCracken, 1986). These distinctions are essential for contextualizing the present study, as food-inspired imagery increasingly appears in both categories despite their contrasting logics of evaluation (Joy et al., 2012).

The beauty industry places strong emphasis on sensorial, bodily interaction and functional performance (Andrei, 2025; Krishna, 2012). Consumers commonly evaluate beauty products through expectations of texture, viscosity, nourishment, or smoothness—attributes directly tied to the physical experience of product application (Parvin & Chowdhury, 2006; Schifferstein, 2015). Because of this sensorial orientation, visual cues that evoke creaminess,

glaze, or richness can be readily interpreted as indicators of product efficiency or formulation quality (Elder & Krishna, 2012; Kilcast & Clegg, 2002). As a result, metaphorical food-inspired cues may resonate strongly in this category by aligning with how consumers already think about what makes a beauty product “good” (Elder & Krishna, 2012).

Fashion, by contrast, is more strongly anchored in symbolic communication, aesthetic expression, and socio-cultural meaning (Kaiser, 2021; McCracken, 1986). Clothing functions as a medium for self-expression, group belonging, and lifestyle signaling, with value derived primarily from style, design, and cultural relevance rather than from direct sensorial performance (Crane, 2000; Van der Westhuizen & Kuhn, 2023). Consequently, visual cues in fashion are often interpreted through stylistic or conceptual lenses rather than as indicators of functional quality (Barthes, 1983; Kawamura, 2018). In this context, food-inspired imagery is more likely to be perceived as playful, expressive, or creatively intentional rather than as a direct indicator of product performance (Kawamura, 2018).

## 2.6 Gen Z as a Consumer Cohort

Generational cohorts provide a meaningful lens for understanding consumer responses, as shared socio-cultural conditions shape the values, expectations, and interpretive frameworks individuals bring to the marketplace (Schewe & Meredith, 2004). Gen Z, defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019), represents a particularly relevant cohort for the present study due to its digital nativity, strong visual orientation, and heightened sensitivity to aesthetic cues (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Gen Z consumers primarily encounter brands and products through digital platforms (Francis & Hoefel, 2018), such as Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest, where evaluation is driven by creator-generated imagery, short-form content, and aesthetic trends rather than detailed product information processing (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). These environments privilege rapid, intuitive judgments based on visual impressions and symbolic meaning, making this cohort especially responsive to cues that convey dense sensorial information in a single image (Pentina et al., 2018; Elder & Krishna, 2012).

In addition, Gen Z demonstrates strong preferences for creativity, playfulness, and perceived authenticity in brand communication (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Studies show that younger consumers interpret metaphorical or aesthetic cues as signals of creative expression rather than deceptive tactics, particularly when such cues align with prevailing visual cultures (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Food metaphors, which blend familiarity with indulgence

and visual richness, fit well with these preferences and may therefore hold particular persuasive power for this cohort (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Finally, Gen Z’s cultural context is shaped by the widespread circulation of food-inspired aesthetics across digital media. Visual codes such as dessert-like glosses, edible color palettes, and playful food motifs are increasingly normalized within beauty and fashion communication (Johnston & Goodman, 2015; Vermeir & Roose, 2020). This cultural exposure reinforces the relevance of food-linked imagery and may further increase Gen Z’s receptivity to sensory metaphors in non-food contexts.

### 2.7 Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed suggests that food-inspired visual cues can influence consumer responses through affective, cognitive, and emotional pathways. Such cues carry symbolic and sensorial meaning that may heighten emotional engagement, shape inferences about product quality, and activate motivational processes that increase willingness to purchase. Drawing on theories of multisensory perception, embodied simulation, signaling, and affective processing, the framework proposes that food-inspired cues will exert direct effects on emotional appeal, perceived product quality, and purchase intention. These predicted relationships form the basis for the study’s three hypotheses.

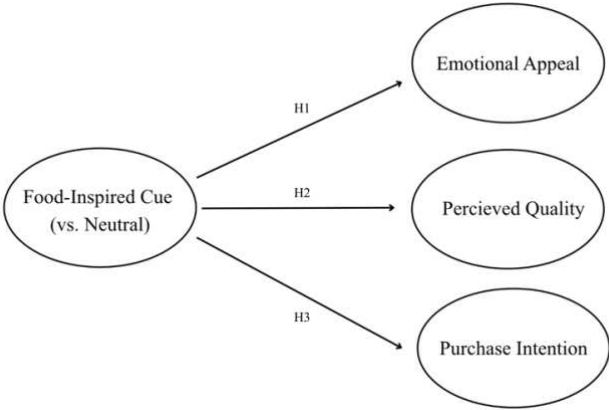


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework illustrated above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Food-inspired visual cues increase the emotional appeal of beauty and fashion products compared to neutral cues.*
- H2: Food-inspired visual cues increase perceived product quality compared to neutral cues.*
- H3: Food-inspired visual cues increase purchase intention compared to neutral cues.*

### 3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted to address the research question of how Gen Z consumers respond to food-inspired versus neutral cues in the beauty and fashion industries. The study follows a mixed-method design, beginning with a qualitative approach and followed by an experimental design method using a quantitative questionnaire. Both components are described in a logical sequence, outlining the methods employed and the procedures followed throughout the research process. The chapter concludes by summarizing how the data were collected and prepared for analysis, providing the foundation for the results presented in the next chapter.

#### 3.1 Research Design

As previously mentioned, the main goal of this research is to understand how food-inspired visual cues, compared to neutral cues, influence consumers' evaluations of products in two distinct industries: i) beauty and ii) fashion. More specifically, it aims to address the central research question: *How do Gen Z consumers respond to food-inspired versus neutral cues within the beauty and fashion industries?* In order to effectively address the research question and gather meaningful insights, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. This mixed-method approach was selected to capture both the underlying meanings consumers attach to food-inspired cues and the measurable effects these cues produce on consumer evaluations. A mixed-method design integrates qualitative and quantitative forms of data collection within a single study (Creswell, 2014), allowing each approach to complement the other. When used in combination, these approaches generate stronger and more comprehensive evidence than either method alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007). By integrating both, this study benefits from the exploratory depth of qualitative insights and the causal testing capabilities of quantitative experimentation.

#### 3.2 Qualitative Method

##### 3.2.1 Rationale for Using Qualitative Research

Building on this approach, the qualitative phase sought to provide an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and associations that consumers attribute to food-inspired cues. Qualitative research focuses on exploring and interpreting the complexities of social phenomena, emphasizing context, perspectives, meaning, and subjectivity. It seeks to understand the underlying "what," "why," "when," "where," "who," and "how" of individuals'

experiences, offering nuanced insights into how consumers construct meaning around products and marketing cues (Lim, 2024).

In the context of this study, a qualitative approach was particularly valuable for understanding the fundamental meanings and associations that consumers attach to food-inspired cues. Because this area remains underexplored in the literature (Krishna, 2012), especially within non-food categories such as beauty and fashion, it was important to capture the symbolic reactions, emotional responses, and perceptual nuances that quantitative measures might overlook. Qualitative research enables participants to articulate their perceptions in depth and without the constraints of predefined scales (Lim, 2024). The insights gathered through this approach provided a richer understanding of how Gen Z consumers initially interpret food-inspired cues and offered essential input for the development of the experimental design used in the subsequent quantitative phase.

### 3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The primary method for gathering qualitative data consisted of 15 semi-structured interviews (interview transcripts can be found in Appendix F). These interviews allowed participants to provide their raw and uncensored thoughts while simultaneously allowing for the investigation of crucial themes (Lim, 2024), thereby aligning with the study's goal of exploring how Gen Z consumers perceive and make sense of food-inspired cues in beauty and fashion contexts. This balance between structure and flexibility was essential for capturing both the cognitive and emotional reactions that arise when consumers encounter food-inspired elements in non-food categories such as beauty and fashion.

### 3.2.3 Participants and Recruitment

Participants in this phase of the study were aged between 18–28 and included 8 women and 7 men, all within Gen Z, with most being Portuguese except for one German participant (Appendix A.3). Participants showed interest in either beauty or fashion products in general. This criterion ensured that participants possessed sufficient knowledge and interest in the subject to properly evaluate and articulate their perceptions of food-inspired marketing. Most interviewees were university students or young professionals from areas related to business, communication, design, and other consumer-facing fields. Participants were recruited through a combination of methods, including the researcher's personal network, social media outreach, and recommendations from initial interviewees.

### 3.2.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were prioritized during this process. All participants received information prior to their interview about the study’s purpose, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and the intended use of their responses. Informed consent was obtained prior to each interview through the signing of an agreement (Appendix B1). Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without providing justification.

### 3.2.5 Interview Guide and Procedure

The interview guide was prepared in advance and structured around themes emerging from the literature review, such as sensory perception, symbolic associations, emotional responses to food-inspired cues, and cross-category expectations in beauty and fashion. While the interview structure ensured consistency across participants, follow-up questions were used when relevant topics emerged spontaneously. A pilot test was conducted with one participant to evaluate the clarity, coherence, and relevance of the questions, leading to minor refinements before the main interviews were carried out.

Table 1 presents the full interview guide used during the semi-structured interviews.

Table 1: Interview Guide and Question Set

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Questions</b>
Introduction	1. Can you tell me the last beauty or fashion item you purchased? 2. What influenced your choice?
Perceptions of Food-Inspired vs. Neutral Cues	3. When you see food-inspired names, descriptions, or visuals (e.g., vanilla, cherry, caramel), what comes to mind? 4. How do these differ from your reactions to neutral cues (e.g., soft beige, classic red)? 5. Do certain food cues feel natural, artificial, premium, or childish to you? Why? 6. Do you associate specific colors or textures with food cues?
Category-Specific Reactions (Beauty vs Fashion)	7. Do you react differently to food cues in beauty products compared to fashion items? 8. In which category do food cues feel more appropriate or appealing? Why? 9. Do food cues shape your expectations of scent, texture, or aesthetic differently across categories? 10. Can you recall any example where a cue worked well or felt out of place?

Subject	Questions
Purchase Intentions and Quality Expectations	11. Do food-inspired cues make you more or less likely to consider buying a product? 12. How do these cues affect your expectations of product quality or price? 13. Have you ever purchased or avoided a product specifically because of a food-related cue? 14. What type of food cue would make you trust a product more? What type would make you trust it less?
Conclusion	15. Is there anything else you would like to add about how these cues influence your perception or purchasing decisions?

Interviews lasted about 15 minutes and were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Word's Dictate tool. As some participants preferred to speak in Portuguese, transcripts were prepared in the original language and later translated verbatim when necessary. Following transcription, key insights from each interview were organized into a single table corresponding to the main topics explored (Appendix B2). This process facilitated a clearer interpretation and comparison of participants' perspectives.

### 3.3 Quantitative Method

#### 3.3.1 Quantitative Research Design & Experimental Procedure

To complement the insights obtained from the qualitative phase, the quantitative component of this study employed an experimental design through a questionnaire using a vignette-based 2×2 between-subjects factorial structure to test the effects of food-inspired cues on consumer evaluations. Whereas qualitative methodology allows for the exploration of participants' subjective experiences, quantitative research is grounded in a positivist perspective, which assumes that phenomena can be measured objectively and analyzed statistically (Quick & Hall, 2015).

Vignette methodology combines elements of traditional surveys and experimental designs by presenting respondents with brief, realistic scenarios in which key contextual factors are manipulated (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). In this particular study, the vignettes were not presented in written form but instead as carefully constructed visual stimuli, allowing the manipulation of product cues through images rather than text. By manipulating only specific features within a standardized scenario, vignette studies enable the identification of causal relationships (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014), while reducing social desirability bias and ensuring

that respondents interpret the stimulus consistently. This makes vignette-based experiments particularly suitable for investigating sensory and symbolic cues, such as food-inspired visual elements, where subtle presentation differences can meaningfully influence consumer perceptions.

Within this experimental structure, two independent variables were manipulated—cue type (food-inspired vs. neutral) and industry context (beauty vs. fashion)—resulting in a 2×2 between-subjects factorial design and four distinct experimental conditions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions, ensuring that each participant was exposed to only one stimulus. This random assignment aimed to minimize person-related effects and other potential sources of bias (Landsheer & van den Wittenboer, 2015). Table 2 provides an overview of the four experimental groups created by the manipulation of cue type and product category.

Table 2: Experimental Conditions for the 2×2 Factorial Design

	Beauty	Fashion
Food-Inspired Cue	EG 1	EG 2
Neutral Cue	EG 3	EG 4

This random assignment to the observation groups aimed at minimizing person-related effects and other possible interfering factors, such as “time influences, maturation processes, and measurement effects” (Raithel, 2008, p. 52). Participants could not recognize which group they were assigned to and were, therefore, blind to the manipulation. Furthermore, the study is cross-sectional, with data collected only once.

To reduce order effects and avoid multiple exposures that could influence perceptions (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010), each participant viewed only one of the four stimuli. Stimuli were allocated through the randomization function in Qualtrics, ensuring equal probability of assignment to each condition. This approach prevents systematic bias and supports the internal validity of the experiment (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

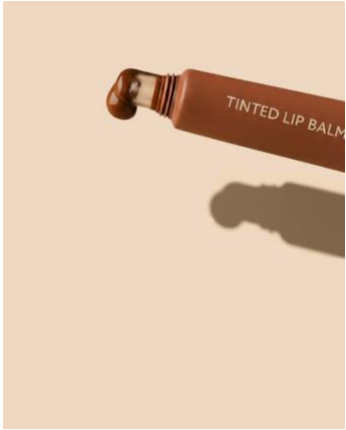
### 3.3.2 Visual Stimuli Construction

To examine the effects of food-inspired cues on consumer evaluations, a set of controlled visual stimuli was developed for use in the experimental survey. The stimuli were designed to manipulate two factors, cue type and product category, while keeping all other

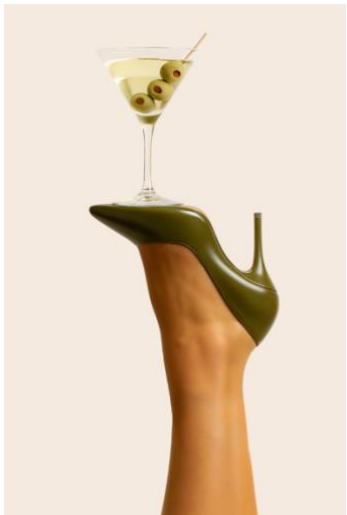
visual elements constant across conditions. This ensured that any differences in participant responses could be attributed to the manipulated cues rather than to extraneous aspects of the images. The four visual stimuli used in the experiment are presented in Figure 2.



(a) Food-Inspired Beauty Stimulus



(b) Neutral Beauty Stimulus



(c) Food-Inspired Fashion Stimulus



(d) Neutral Fashion Stimulus

Figure 2: Visual Stimuli Used in the Experimental Conditions

For each product category, two versions of the same product were created: a food-inspired version and a neutral version. The food-inspired versions incorporated a visually salient food element associated with indulgence, flavor, or taste, whereas the neutral versions presented the same product without any food associations. In both cases, the underlying product remained identical, allowing for a clear comparison between the presence and absence of the food cue.

All stimuli were created through ChatGPT’s image generator, which allowed precise control over background color, lighting, image framing, and object positioning. In order to maintain internal validity, all visual attributes unrelated to the manipulation were standardized across stimuli, including background tone, brightness, object size, angle, and composition. The only intentional variation between conditions involved the presence of food-related elements. This standardization aligns with recommendations for experimental vignette design, which emphasize the importance of controlling all irrelevant aspects of the stimulus (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

The beauty product stimuli consisted of a tinted lip balm. For the food-inspired version, the product was paired with a stack of toasted marshmallows, whereas the neutral version depicted the same product on the same background without the food element. The fashion stimuli followed the same principle. The food-inspired fashion image included an olive-green high heel with a cocktail positioned on top, containing olives, while the neutral fashion image presented the identical product without any reference to food.

### 3.3.3 Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire forms the core of the study (de Vaus, 2013) and can be found in the appendix. It was administered using the online platform Qualtrics, due to its well-established image among researchers. The survey was available exclusively in English to ensure accessibility for a diverse and international audience. The structure of the survey followed a clear and sequential logic, as described below.

1. **Introduction and information consent** - informed participants about the study purpose, confidentiality, voluntary participation, expected duration, and provided researcher contact details.
2. **Consent question** - ensured that only participants who agreed to take part and allow their data to be used for academic purposes proceeded.
3. **Exclusion criterion** - verified whether respondents belonged to Gen Z (“Are you between the ages of 18–28?”). Those who selected “No” were screened out.
4. **Experimental vignette** - eligible participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions (food-inspired vs. neutral × beauty vs. fashion) and shown a single visual stimulus, described in detail in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.
5. **Dependent variable questions** - participants evaluated the stimulus on perceived product quality, emotional appeal/indulgence, and purchase intention using 7-point Likert scales.

6. **Manipulation checks** - assessed whether the stimulus evoked food-related associations, appeared neutral, and belonged to the intended industry category.
7. **Control variables** - measured general interest in fashion products and food-inspired products through three-item scales.
8. **Demographics**
9. **Closing text**

The full questionnaire is attached in Appendix G.

### 3.3.4 Measures (Operationalization of Variables)

To empirically assess the psychological constructs examined in this study, each variable was operationalized using established measurement indicators drawn from prior research (Babbie, 2016). Because theoretical constructs cannot be observed directly, they must be translated into measurable items that accurately capture the underlying concept. In this study, the independent variables were manipulated through controlled visual stimuli, while the dependent variables were measured using multi-item scales adapted from well-established research in consumer behavior. Additionally, manipulation checks were included to ensure that participants perceived the experimental manipulations as intended, in accordance with recommendations for experimental design (Perdue & Summers, 1986). Table 3 provides an overview of all measures used in the questionnaire, including the corresponding items, scale formats, and sources.

Table 3: Overview of Measures and Questionnaire Items

Measure / Construct	Questionnaire Items	Scale Format	Source
Manipulation Check – Cue Type Perception	“To what extent does this product appear food-related?”	1–7 Likert (1 = not at all, 7 = very much)	Adapted from vignette perception methods; Perdue & Summers (1986); Aguinis & Bradley (2014)
Manipulation Check – Product Category Identification	“Based on this image, what type of product do you believe this is?” (beauty / fashion)	Forced-choice	Custom item based on stimulus design
Perceived Quality	“This product seems to be of high quality.” “This product appears to be well made.”	1–7 Likert (1 = not at all, 7 = very much)	Dodds et al. (1991); Vigneron & Johnson (1999)

	“This product seems premium.”		
Emotional Appeal / Indulgence	“This product feels comforting and pleasant.” “This product gives me a ‘feel-good’ or indulgent impression.” “This product feels emotionally appealing.”	1–7 Likert (1 = not at all, 7 = very much)	Batra & Ahtola (1991); Dhar & Wertebroch (2000)
Purchase Intention	“I would consider buying this product.” “I would like to try this product.” “I am likely to purchase this product in the near future.”	1–7 Likert (1 = not at all, 7 = very much)	Spears & Singh (2004); Dodds et al. (1991)
Demographics	Age, gender, nationality, interest in beauty/fashion products	Categorical / 1–7 Likert (interest variable)	Standard demographic items

### 3.3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The online questionnaire was conducted during the period from the 30th of October until the 21st of November, 2025. After publication, the survey link was distributed through multiple channels, including WhatsApp and Instagram. Sharing the survey intensively over a short period helped ensure a rapid completion window and reduced the likelihood that external events could influence response patterns during data collection.

Since the target group of this study was Gen Z, only participants aged 18 to 28 (Dimock, 2019) were included in the final dataset.

### 3.3.6 Sample

A total of 236 individuals initially participated in the questionnaire. In accordance with ethical research standards, participation required explicit consent and confirmation that the respondent fell within the target age range of 18 to 28 years. Only those who met these eligibility criteria and completed the full survey were retained for further analysis.

Following this initial screening, the dataset underwent a structured data-cleaning procedure. Respondents who did not provide consent, indicated being outside the target age range, or had incomplete responses in Qualtrics were removed to ensure data quality. An attention check was

included to verify that participants were reading the survey carefully; those who failed this check were excluded.

Furthermore, manipulation checks were conducted to confirm that participants correctly interpreted the experimental stimuli. Cue-type perception was evaluated using three items assessing the extent to which the image appeared food-related, sweet or edible, and neutral or non-food-related (reverse-coded). Because these items reflect subjective interpretation, they were not used as exclusion criteria. In contrast, the product-category manipulation check, which required participants to correctly identify whether the product shown belonged to the beauty or fashion category, served as an objective criterion. A total of 11 respondents (6.3%) misclassified the product and were excluded.

After all screening and exclusion steps, the final sample consisted of 175 valid and eligible participants, providing a sufficiently robust dataset for the subsequent statistical analyses.

The final sample represents a predominantly young Gen Z group, with ages ranging from 18 to 28 and a mean age of 22.6 years ( $SD = 2.1$ ). The gender distribution reflects a strong overrepresentation of women (72.0%), followed by male participants (26.9%) and a small proportion identifying as non-binary or third gender (1.1%). Compared to national population benchmarks, this gender imbalance may introduce potential bias (Bethlehem, 2010), and this limitation is acknowledged in the interpretation of the findings.

Nationality data show that most participants were Portuguese (70.9%), with the remaining 29.1% representing other nationalities, primarily European (e.g., German, Italian, Spanish), each constituting less than 15% of the sample. This composition indicates a predominantly Portuguese but culturally diverse respondent group. To provide a clear overview of the characteristics of the final sample, Table 4 summarizes the key sociodemographic variables collected in the questionnaire, including gender distribution, age, and nationality.

Table 4: Overview of Participant Demographics

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	126	72.0%
	Male	47	26.9%
	Non-binary/Third gender	2	1.1%

<b>Age</b>	Mean (SD)	22.6 (2.1)	—
	Range	18–28	—
<b>Nationality</b>	Portuguese	124	70.9%
	Other countries	51	29.1%

#### 4. Results

Following data collection and processing, the results are presented in two main sections. First, the qualitative findings derived from the thematic analysis of the interviews are outlined, providing contextual insights into participants’ perceptions of food-inspired cues. This is followed by the quantitative results, which begin with assumption checks (normality) and proceed to hypothesis testing using two-way ANOVAs, descriptive analyses by condition, and complementary analyses.

##### 4.1 Qualitative Results

###### 4.1.1 Data Processing & Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method suited for identifying recurring patterns in qualitative material (Naeem et al., 2023). Thematic analysis is particularly useful for analyzing dense, descriptive data, as it follows a structured and sequential approach to interpreting research data (Naeem et al., 2023). This approach allowed for a systematic examination of how participants described and made sense of the food-inspired cues shown to them. The analysis followed a structured coding process, beginning with initial familiarization and open coding, followed by the refinement of codes into broader thematic categories. With fifteen interviews conducted, similar interpretations and descriptions appeared repeatedly across participants, suggesting that thematic saturation was reached. This provided a solid foundation for identifying the core themes that informed the quantitative phase of the study.

###### 4.1.2 Emerging Themes from the Interviews

The interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of how participants interpret and react to food-inspired cues, offering insights that complement the survey findings. Although the overall objective remained aligned with the quantitative phase, the interviews allowed participants to express their spontaneous associations, perceptions, and reasoning in

their own words. A summary table of all interview responses is provided in Appendix B2. The thematic analysis revealed three recurring patterns in how participants described their impressions of the food-inspired cues in beauty and fashion contexts. These themes reflect the aspects of the stimuli that participants referred to most often and provide a descriptive foundation for the quantitative analyses that follow.

#### *4.1.2.1 Theme 1- Food Cues Trigger Sensory and Emotional Associations*

Across interviews, food-inspired cues were rarely described in neutral or purely visual terms. Participants tended to respond with rich sensory language, associating these cues with taste, smell, texture, and atmosphere. Several described them as “warm,” “cozy,” or “inviting,” and connected specific cues such as vanilla or caramel to “cream tones,” “sweetness,” or “comforting” experiences. In other words, the image was not only seen but mentally “tasted” and “felt,” indicating that food cues readily activate multisensory imagery.

Emotionally, food cues were often framed as more appealing and memorable than neutral cues. Participants referred to them as “cuter,” “more fun,” or “more attractive,” and a few mentioned that these cues caught their eye more quickly than simple color labels. This contrasted sharply with the language used for neutral cues, which were repeatedly described as “plain,” “standard,” “cold,” or “functional.” One participant captured this contrast by commenting that neutral versions “have no emotional tone.”

Taken together, these accounts suggest that food-inspired cues operate as emotional and sensory shortcuts. They help consumers quickly construct a more vivid impression of the product, whereas neutral cues remain largely informational and less affective.

#### *4.1.2.2 Theme 2 – Perceived Fit Varies Across Product Categories*

A second theme concerned how well participants felt the cues matched the type of product shown. There was strong agreement that food cues seemed more appropriate for beauty products than for fashion items. In the beauty context, participants often linked the cues to expected product qualities such as scent, texture, or nourishment. For instance, some associated the lip balm with “softness” or “creaminess” and felt that a flavor-like name or image “made sense” because beauty products are already experienced close to the mouth, skin, or face.

Reactions became more divided in the fashion context. While a few participants found the food-inspired shoe “creative” or “different,” many others perceived a mismatch between the cue and the product. Words such as “weird,” “childish,” “gimmicky,” or “not cohesive” appeared frequently when they discussed the food-inspired heel. Several participants remarked

that the cue looked “added on top” rather than integrated into the design, and some questioned what food had to do with the function of a shoe.

These responses indicate that perceptions of fit are central to how food cues are evaluated. When the cue reinforces existing expectations about the product category, as in beauty, it is more likely to be viewed as natural and appealing. When the cue does not clearly relate to how the product is used, as in fashion, it risks being seen as confusing or unnecessary, even if it is visually striking.

#### *4.1.2.3 Theme 3 – Food-inspired Cues Influence Perceived Quality and Purchase Interest*

Participants also reflected on how food-inspired cues shaped their expectations of product quality and their willingness to consider a purchase. In beauty, many interpreted these cues as signals of higher quality or more enjoyable use. Some mentioned that they would expect a food-inspired balm to feel “richer,” “more pleasant to use,” or “better tasting,” and several explicitly said they would be “more likely to buy” a product with a food-related name or imagery, especially when it looked “cohesive” with the overall design.

However, this positive effect was not universal. A few participants expressed skepticism toward food cues that felt too artificial or overly sweet, explaining that these could make the product seem “childish” or “less serious.” This tension was even more pronounced in the fashion category. While some respondents said the food-inspired shoe might stand out in a shop, many felt that the cue did not add any relevant information about comfort, durability, or style. In these cases, the cue did little to increase perceived quality or purchase interest, and for some, it even reduced credibility.

Overall, the interviews suggest that food-inspired cues can enhance perceived quality and purchase intention, but mainly when they are perceived as authentic and category-congruent. Where the cue seems forced or irrelevant, its persuasive power weakens and may even have a negative effect.

Together, these themes highlight the main patterns in participants’ interpretations of the food-inspired cues and clarify the elements that shaped their initial evaluations. These qualitative insights guided the selection of the dependent variables in the quantitative phase and supported the decision to analyze potential differences across beauty and fashion contexts.

To facilitate synthesis and readability, Table 5 summarizes the main themes and patterns identified in the qualitative analysis.

Table 5: Summary of Qualitative Themes Emerging from Interviews

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Core Insight</b>	<b>Category Differences</b>
Sensory Indulgence	Food-inspired cues evoked associations of sweetness, pleasure, and treat-like qualities	More salient for beauty than fashion
Emotional Warmth	Visual cues were perceived as warmer and more emotionally engaging	Stronger emotional fit in beauty products
Perceived Quality	Participants inferred richness and craftsmanship from food-like visuals	Beauty cues enhanced perceived quality; fashion cues were more ambivalent
Category Fit	Appropriateness of food cues depended on product category	Higher perceived fit in beauty than fashion

## 4.2 Quantitative Results

### 4.2.1 Normality Check

To evaluate whether the dependent variables meet the assumptions required for parametric tests, both visual and analytical normality tests were conducted on three composite measures. Each measure represents the average score (mean) of the items measuring that construct, namely Emotional Appeal, Perceived Quality, and Purchase Intention. Histograms with normal curves (Figure 3) showed approximately symmetric and unimodal distributions for all three variables. Likewise, the Q–Q plots (Appendix D3) demonstrated that the observed values aligned closely with the diagonal reference line, indicating approximate normality despite slight deviations at the tails.

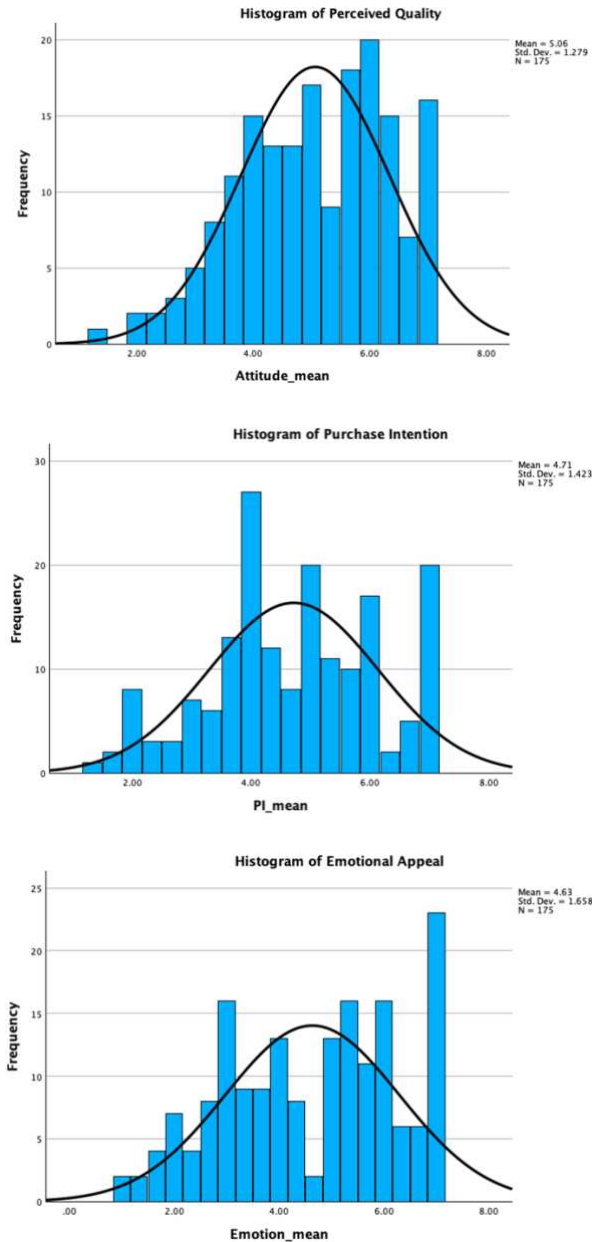


Figure 3: Normality Assessment (Histograms)

Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests (Appendix D2) were significant for all three dependent variables ( $p < .001$ ). However, for the purpose of conducting ANOVA, normality was assessed within each experimental sub-group corresponding to the four stimulus conditions. Visual inspection of histograms and Q–Q plots indicated approximately normal distributions across sub-groups. In addition, each sub-group included more than 30 observations. Given these conditions and considering the robustness of ANOVA to moderate deviations from normality, the assumption of normality was considered sufficiently met to proceed with parametric analyses.

#### 4.2.2 Hypothesis Testing

Following the assumption checks presented above, the analytical strategy for hypothesis testing involved two-way between-subjects ANOVAs. Before testing the hypotheses, the balance of the experimental groups was verified. Table 6 presents the distribution of participants across the  $2 \times 2$  factorial design, showing the cross-tabulation of cue type and product category. Group sizes were well balanced across conditions, ensuring that observed differences are not attributable to uneven group sizes but rather to the manipulated experimental conditions. This balanced distribution ensures that differences observed in the dependent variables are not attributable to uneven group sizes, but rather to the manipulated experimental conditions.

Table 6: Participant Distribution Across Experimental Groups

Cue Type	Beauty (n)	Fashion (n)	Total
Food-Inspired Cue	46	43	89
Neutral Cue	47	39	86
Total	93	82	175

*H1: Products featuring food-inspired cues elicit higher emotional appeal compared to products with neutral cues.*

To test whether cue type led to significant differences in Emotional Appeal, a two-way ANOVA was conducted with cue type (food vs. neutral) and product category (beauty vs. fashion) as factors. The descriptive group statistics showed that participants exposed to food-inspired cues reported higher emotional appeal ( $M = 5.72$ ) compared to those who viewed neutral cues ( $M = 3.41$ ). The ANOVA results indicate a significant main effect of cue type,  $F(1,171) = 151.47$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .470$ , demonstrating that mean emotional appeal differs significantly between food and neutral conditions. A significant main effect of product category was also found,  $F(1,171) = 28.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .141$ , with beauty products receiving higher emotional appeal than fashion products. The interaction effect was not significant,  $F(1,171) = 0.21$ ,  $p = .644$ , indicating that the influence of cue type on emotional appeal does not differ across product categories. Overall, given the significant main effect of cue type, Hypothesis 1 is supported

within the scope of this study. All statistical tables leading to this conclusion are presented in Appendix C.

Table 7: Two-Way ANOVA Results for Emotional Appeal

<b>Effect</b>	<b>F(1,171)</b>	<b>p</b>	<b><math>\eta^2</math></b>
Cue Type	151.47	< .001	.470
Product Category	28.06	< .001	.141
Cue Type $\times$ Product Category	0.21	.644	.001

*H2: Products featuring food-inspired cues are perceived as higher quality compared to products with neutral cues.*

To evaluate whether cue type affected perceived quality, a two-way ANOVA was performed. Group means show that food-inspired stimuli yielded higher perceived quality ( $M = 5.92$ ) than neutral stimuli ( $M = 4.50$ ). The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of cue type,  $F(1,171) = 135.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .442$ , indicating that the difference in perceived quality between food and neutral cues is statistically significant. A significant main effect of product category was also observed,  $F(1,171) = 6.61$ ,  $p = .011$ ,  $\eta^2 = .037$ , with beauty products being evaluated more favorably. Additionally, the interaction effect between cue type and product category was significant,  $F(1,171) = 6.56$ ,  $p = .011$ ,  $\eta^2 = .037$ . Therefore, the effect of food cues on perceived quality was stronger in the beauty category than in the fashion category (Appendix C, Table C10). Based on these results, Hypothesis 2 is supported, with the interaction effect providing further insight into category-specific differences.

*H3: Products featuring food-inspired cues generate higher purchase intention than products with neutral cues.*

To test whether cue type influenced Purchase Intention, a two-way ANOVA was conducted. The descriptive means show that participants exposed to food-inspired cues reported higher purchase intention ( $M = 5.47$ ) than those in the neutral-cue conditions ( $M = 3.88$ ). The ANOVA results show a significant main effect of cue type,  $F(1,171) = 13.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 =$

.072, with beauty products generating higher intention to purchase than fashion products. The interaction effect between cue type and category was not significant,  $F(1,171) = 0.31, p = .576$ , suggesting that the effect of the food cue on purchase intention does not depend on whether the product is beauty- or fashion-related. Given the significant main effect of cue type, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 8: Hypotheses by Results

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Result</b>
H1	Effect of cue type (food-inspired vs. neutral) on emotional appeal	Accepted
H2	Effect of cue type (food-inspired vs. neutral) on perceived product quality	Accepted
H3	Effect of cue type (food-inspired vs. neutral) on purchase intention	Accepted

#### 4.2.3 Complementary Analysis

The complementary analyses provide a descriptive overview of how participants evaluated the stimuli across the four experimental conditions. These analyses offer additional insights into response patterns across conditions, complementing the inferential results presented above.

##### 4.2.3.1 Univariate Analysis

To visually assess how each dependent variable varied across conditions, univariate diagrams in the form of boxplots were generated for Perceived Quality, Emotional Appeal, and Purchase Intention. The following subsections present the distributional characteristics of each variable.

##### ***Perceived Quality***

As shown in Appendix D1, participants' evaluations of perceived quality were distributed toward the higher end of the seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Across the full sample, attitudes were generally positive, with a total mean of

$M = 5.06$  and a standard deviation of  $SD = 1.28$ , indicating that participants tended to perceive the presented products favorably.

When comparing the four experimental groups, clear differences become evident. The highest attitude scores were observed in the Food  $\times$  Beauty condition ( $M = 5.87$ ;  $SD = 1.00$ ) and the Food  $\times$  Fashion condition ( $M = 5.87$ ;  $SD = 0.82$ ). These two groups show nearly identical means and relatively narrow interquartile ranges in the boxplot, signaling strong and consistent positive evaluations whenever a food-inspired cue was present.

In contrast, participants exposed to the neutral stimuli reported noticeably lower evaluations. Attitudes in the Neutral  $\times$  Beauty condition were moderate ( $M = 4.56$ ;  $SD = 0.93$ ), whereas the Neutral  $\times$  Fashion group yielded the lowest evaluations ( $M = 3.82$ ;  $SD = 1.03$ ). The boxplot in Figure 4 clearly illustrates that the median score for Neutral  $\times$  Fashion lies substantially below those of the other three groups, and the wider dispersion suggests greater disagreement among participants regarding the appeal of the neutral fashion product.

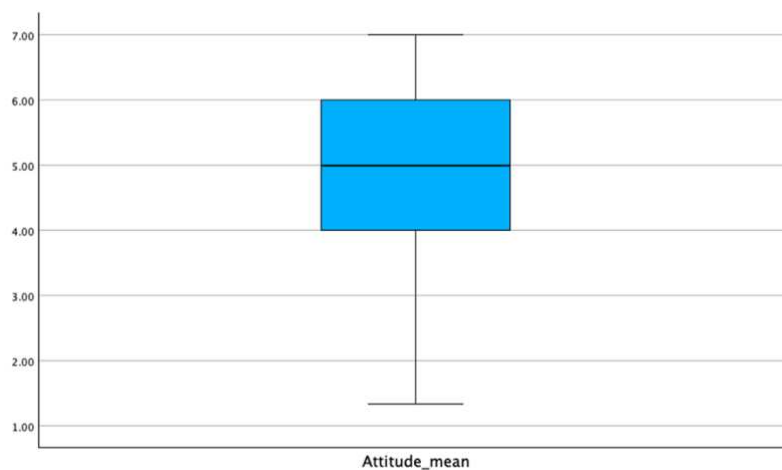


Figure 4: Boxplot for Perceived Quality

### ***Emotional Appeal***

As shown in Appendix D1, participants' emotional reactions to the stimuli varied across conditions. Emotional appeal was measured on the same seven-point scale. Across the full sample, the mean level of emotional appeal was  $M = 4.63$ , with a standard deviation of  $SD = 1.66$ , indicating a broader response range compared to the attitude evaluations.

The boxplot representation reveals clear distinctions between the four experimental groups. The Food  $\times$  Beauty condition exhibited the highest emotional appeal, with a mean of  $M = 6.11$  ( $SD = 1.12$ ). The Food  $\times$  Fashion group also displayed elevated emotional responses

( $M = 5.25$ ;  $SD = 1.05$ ). In both food-cue conditions, the interquartile ranges are relatively narrow, and the medians are positioned toward the upper end of the scale, signaling consistent evaluations among participants.

As for the neutral-cue conditions, emotional appeal scores were notably lower. The Neutral  $\times$  Beauty group recorded a mean of  $M = 4.00$  ( $SD = 1.26$ ), whereas the Neutral  $\times$  Fashion condition yielded the lowest emotional appeal score ( $M = 2.97$ ;  $SD = 1.26$ ). The corresponding boxplots in Figure 6 reflect these differences, showing lower medians and wider distributions in the neutral-cue groups, particularly in the fashion category.

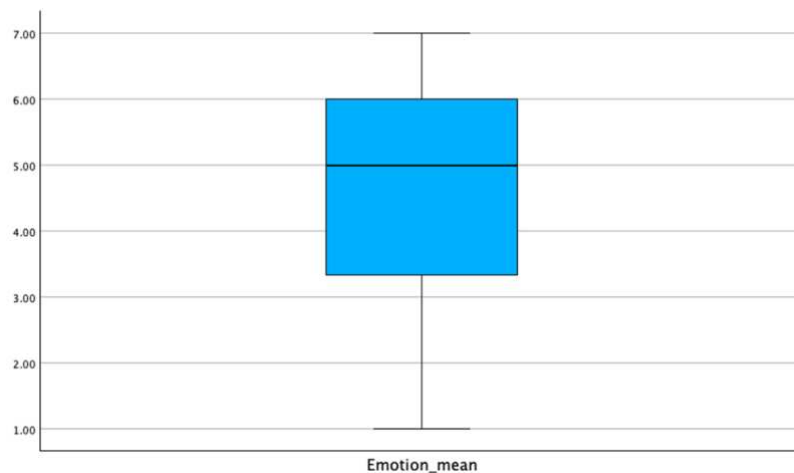


Figure 5: Boxplot for Emotional Appeal

### ***Purchase Intention***

As depicted in Appendix D1, purchase intention scores also differed across the four experimental groups. This measure, again measured on a seven-point Likert scale, showed an overall sample mean of  $M = 4.71$ , with a standard deviation of  $SD = 1.42$ , indicating moderate average willingness to consider purchasing the products shown.

The boxplot shows that the highest purchase intention values were observed in the Food  $\times$  Beauty condition ( $M = 5.74$ ;  $SD = 1.39$ ), followed by the Food  $\times$  Fashion condition ( $M = 5.20$ ;  $SD = 1.13$ ). In both cases, the interquartile ranges are compact, and the medians are positioned above the midpoint of the scale.

Lower purchase intention values were recorded in the neutral conditions. The Neutral  $\times$  Beauty group reported a mean of  $M = 4.26$  ( $SD = 0.91$ ), while the Neutral  $\times$  Fashion condition showed the lowest purchase intention ( $M = 3.52$ ;  $SD = 1.44$ ). As illustrated in Figure 7, the

boxplots for the neutral cue groups display lower central tendencies and wider variability, which indicate more diverse response patterns.

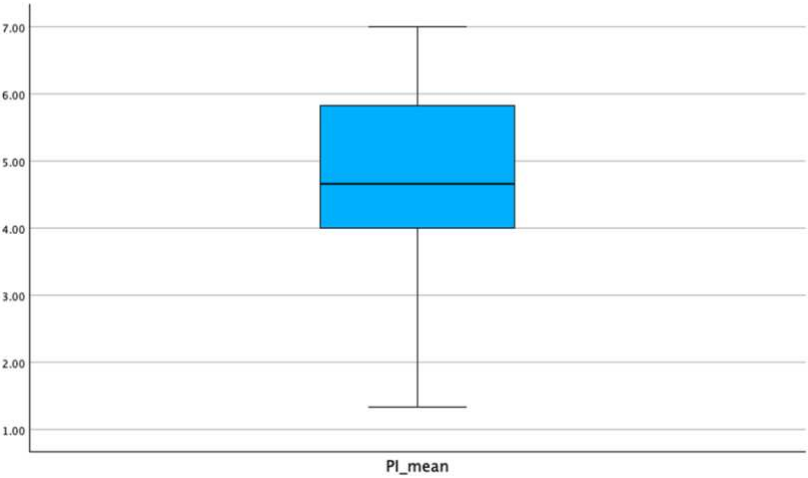


Figure 6: Boxplot for Purchase Intention

***Summary of Distribution Patterns***

Across all three dependent variables, the boxplots and descriptive statistics reveal clear distributional characteristics within the sample. For each variable, the median values lie above the scale midpoint, indicating generally favorable evaluations of the presented products. The interquartile ranges across conditions remain relatively compact in the food-cue groups, suggesting more consistent evaluations when a food-inspired element was presented. In contrast, the neutral-cue groups display wider dispersion and lower median values, especially in the Neutral × Fashion condition.

Across variables, no extreme outliers were detected, and the minimum and maximum values fall within the expected range for a seven-point Likert scale. Attitude shows the least variability overall, whereas Emotional Appeal and Purchase Intention show somewhat broader interquartile ranges, reflecting more diverse affective and behavioral evaluations. Mild negative skewness across variables suggests a concentration of responses toward higher values, but the distributions remain smooth and continuous for subsequent parametric analysis.

4.2.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients (Appendix E1) were computed to examine the relationship between the three dependent variables: Emotional Appeal, Perceived Quality, and Purchase Intention. The results revealed strong, positive, and statistically significant correlations among

all constructs. Emotional Appeal showed a strong positive correlation with Perceived Quality ( $r = .83, p < .001$ ), indicating that products eliciting stronger emotional responses tended to be perceived as higher in quality. Emotional Appeal was also strongly correlated to Purchase Intention ( $r = .79, p < .001$ ). In addition, Perceived Quality was positively correlated with Purchase Intention ( $r = .74, p < .001$ ). Taken together, these results indicate a consistent pattern of association across the three dependent variables.

## **5. Discussion**

This study examined how food-inspired visual cues influence Gen Z's evaluations of beauty and fashion products. A clear pattern emerged already at the descriptive level: across conditions, food-inspired cues consistently produced higher evaluations than neutral cues, particularly within the beauty category. These initial differences anticipated the results of the inferential tests and provided early evidence that the presence of a food element meaningfully shaped participants' impressions.

The experimental findings supported all three hypotheses, showing that food-related cues significantly increased emotional appeal, perceived quality, and purchase intention compared to neutral cues. The results also revealed meaningful differences between beauty and fashion products, suggesting that the effectiveness of food-inspired visuals depends partly on the evaluative norms of the category.

From a theoretical perspective, these results contribute to the sensory marketing and symbolic consumption literature by providing empirical evidence that visually evoked food associations can “spill over” onto non-food products. In line with research on crossmodal correspondences and embodied simulation (Krishna, 2012; Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2015), the findings suggest that visual food cues activate imagined sensations related to taste, texture, and indulgence, even in the absence of direct sensory contact. Participants were not only seeing a product; they were also implicitly “feeling” and “tasting” the idea of food, and this enriched the way they judged the item. This supports the idea that sensory cues can function as affective shortcuts, shaping downstream judgments of quality and desirability through emotionally grounded processes.

The results further show that food-inspired cues positively influence product evaluations across both beauty and fashion categories, thereby addressing the first research question. In both contexts, Gen Z consumers responded more favorably to products featuring food elements, suggesting that such cues activate broadly shared associations with comfort, pleasure, and indulgence. These associations appear transferable even when the product category itself is

unrelated to food, reinforcing prior work showing that sensory symbolism can transcend categorical boundaries.

However, the effects of food-inspired cues were not uniform across categories. Beauty products were evaluated more positively overall than fashion items, regardless of cue type, and the interaction effect for perceived quality revealed that food cues exerted a stronger influence in the beauty category. This finding addresses the second research question and highlights the role of category-specific evaluative norms. Beauty products are closely tied to bodily experience and sensorial expectations such as texture, smoothness, and nourishment (Schifferstein, 2015). As a result, visual cues that resemble creaminess, glaze, or dessert-like richness fit naturally with existing beliefs about what constitutes a high-quality beauty product. In contrast, fashion items are more often evaluated through symbolic and stylistic dimensions such as trendiness, identity expression, and status (Joy et al., 2012). Here, food cues may be noticed and appreciated but are less diagnostic for judgments of quality. From a cue-diagnosticity perspective, the same visual element thus carries different value depending on the category in which it appears, a pattern that is also consistent with a signaling-based interpretation of sensory cues. In the present study, food-inspired visuals appear to have operated as more meaningful quality signals in the beauty category by implying sensorial richness such as smoothness or nourishment, whereas in fashion they were less informative for inferring craftsmanship or construction quality, resulting in weaker effects on perceived quality.

The findings also speak to the third research question concerning purchase intention. Food-inspired cues significantly increased consumers' willingness to buy across both categories. Importantly, emotional appeal, perceived quality, and purchase intention moved consistently in the same direction, suggesting a reinforcing evaluative process. When a product elicited a stronger emotional response, it was also evaluated more favorably, which is consistent with experiential consumption models that position affective reactions as a key driver of subsequent cognitive evaluations and behavioral intentions (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Krishna, 2012). Although mediation was not formally tested, the results suggest that food-inspired cues may influence purchase intention indirectly by enhancing emotional engagement and perceived value.

### 5.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Taken together, these findings contribute to the growing body of research on sensory and symbolic cues in non-food contexts. They demonstrate that food-inspired visuals are not merely a passing aesthetic trend but can systematically shape how young consumers evaluate

products. At the same time, the results nuance existing theory by showing that the effectiveness of such cues depends on category-specific meanings and expectations, being particularly potent in domains already grounded in sensorial experience, such as beauty.

From a managerial perspective, the results offer several practical implications for brands targeting Gen Z in visually saturated digital environments. As a digitally native cohort, Gen Z tends to form rapid, image-based judgments and shows strong receptivity to playful, sensory-rich aesthetics commonly encountered on social platforms. Food-inspired cues may therefore be particularly effective for this audience, as they convey emotionally legible meaning quickly and align with the visual culture through which Gen Z typically encounters brands. For beauty brands, food-inspired imagery can serve as an effective tool to communicate indulgence, care, and perceived quality prior to product trial, especially in categories where consumers already expect sensory richness and bodily engagement. Fashion brands, by contrast, may benefit from using food cues more selectively, positioning them as signals of creativity, playfulness, or brand personality rather than as indicators of quality. In both cases, the literature on congruence and authenticity suggests that such cues are most effective when they fit the brand's positioning and the evaluative logic of the category, rather than appearing as arbitrary visual gimmicks.

## 5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the clarity and consistency of the findings, several limitations should be taken into account. First, the final sample was predominantly female and largely Portuguese, which may limit the generalizability of the results. While random assignment ensured balanced experimental conditions and strong internal validity (Field, 2024), the demographic skew means that the findings may not fully capture how more diverse populations respond to food-inspired cues.

Second, the study relied exclusively on static, digitally generated images as stimuli. Although this approach allowed for tight experimental control, real-world product experiences involve richer multisensory inputs, including smell, texture, and sometimes sound. Additionally, each category was represented by a single food-inspired cue (toasted marshmallows for beauty and a cocktail for fashion). Different types of food cues may evoke different associations, and limiting the manipulation to one cue per category restricts the breadth of conclusions that can be drawn.

A further limitation concerns the nature of the dependent measures. Participants evaluated hypothetical scenarios and reported purchase intentions rather than making actual purchase decisions. As with most survey-based experiments, behavioral outcomes were

inferred from self-reports, which may be influenced by demand characteristics, limited attention, or individual interpretation of the task. Moreover, although the cue-type perception measure captured participants' subjective interpretation of the stimuli, individuals may differ in how strongly they associate certain visual elements with food, introducing unavoidable variability.

Building on these limitations, several avenues for future research emerge. Future studies could explore crossmodal correspondences in greater depth by systematically varying the type of food cue used (e.g., fruity, fresh, indulgent, or spicy) and examining how these different sensory meanings interact with product category. Research by Spence (2015) and Spence and Deroy (2013) suggests that such associations may activate distinct expectations, which could differentially shape evaluations.

Future work could also examine the role of cue-product congruence more explicitly. While this study relied on a single cue per category, prior research indicates that conceptual and sensory fit may be critical in determining whether a cue enhances or detracts from product evaluations (Elder & Krishna, 2010; Labrecque et al., 2013). Systematically manipulating congruence could clarify when food-inspired cues feel authentic versus forced.

Additionally, expanding the investigation to other product categories, such as fragrances, home care, or wellness, would help determine whether the observed effects extend beyond beauty and fashion or are particularly pronounced in hedonic domains. Incorporating behavioral or physiological measures, such as willingness to pay, eye tracking, or response times (Pozharliev et al., 2015; Reimann et al., 2010), could further strengthen causal inferences and provide richer insight into the underlying mechanisms.

Finally, future research could examine individual differences that shape responses to food-inspired imagery. Variables such as product involvement, dietary restrictions, cultural familiarity with specific foods, or sensitivity to sensory cues may moderate how consumers interpret and react to such visuals. Accounting for these factors would help explain variability in responses and refine the understanding of when and for whom food-inspired cues are most effective.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study set out to examine how food-inspired visual cues influence Gen Z's evaluations of non-food products, focusing on emotional appeal, perceived quality, and purchase intention within the beauty and fashion categories. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study integrated

experimental data with qualitative insights to offer a nuanced understanding of how these cues operate in practice. Overall, the findings demonstrate that, when compared to neutral designs, food-inspired visuals consistently enhance consumer responses, especially by increasing emotional engagement and shaping positive product perceptions. These effects were particularly pronounced for beauty products, indicating that categories associated with self-care, indulgence, and sensory pleasure may more naturally align with the symbolic and sensorial meanings associated with food cues.

Beyond its empirical contributions, this study adds to the existing literature on sensory marketing by providing evidence of how food-related sensory associations, such as taste or smell, can be experienced vicariously through visual cues. At the same time, it offers insights into how food-inspired design elements can function as a branding strategy tool, enabling companies to differentiate themselves within a competitive marketplace. The study also acknowledges the limitations of its scope and sample, pointing to opportunities for future research to explore additional product categories, sensory cues, and cultural contexts. Taken together, this research underscores the growing relevance of multisensory symbolism in contemporary branding and contributes to a deeper understanding of how visual cues shape consumer meaning-making in non-food domains.

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### A.1 Sample Demographics

**What is your gender?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	126	72.0	72.0	72.0
	Male	47	26.9	26.9	98.9
	Non-binary / Third gender	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total		175	100.0	100.0	

Table A1. Gender Distribution of the Sample

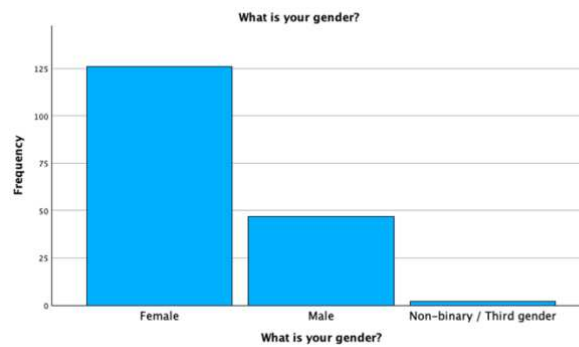


Figure A1. Bar Chart of Gender Distribution

**How old are you?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	19	4	2.3	2.3	3.4
	20	9	5.1	5.1	8.6
	21	9	5.1	5.1	13.7
	22	43	24.6	24.6	38.3
	23	45	25.7	25.7	64.0
	24	18	10.3	10.3	74.3
	25	14	8.0	8.0	82.3
	26	16	9.1	9.1	91.4
	27	8	4.6	4.6	96.0
	28	7	4.0	4.0	100.0
Total		175	100.0	100.0	

Table A2. Age Distribution of the Sample

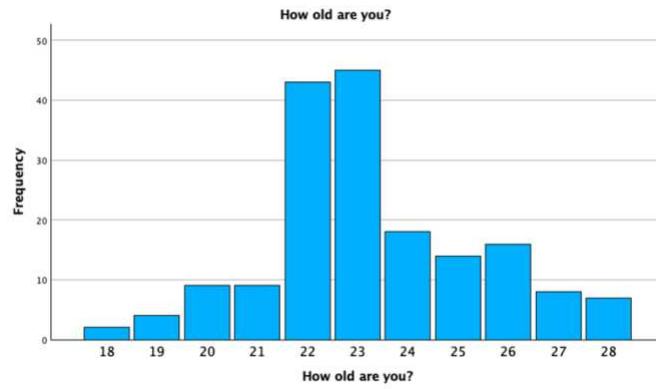


Figure A2. Histogram of Age Distribution

**Where are you from?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Brazil	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	Canada	1	.6	.6	1.7
	France	2	1.1	1.1	2.9
	Germany	25	14.3	14.3	17.1
	Italy	8	4.6	4.6	21.7
	Morocco	2	1.1	1.1	22.9
	Mozambique	3	1.7	1.7	24.6
	Norway	1	.6	.6	25.1
	Portugal	124	70.9	70.9	96.0
	Spain	5	2.9	2.9	98.9
	United Arab Emirates	1	.6	.6	99.4
	Uzbekistan	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total		175	100.0	100.0

Table A3. Country of Residence Distribution of the Sample

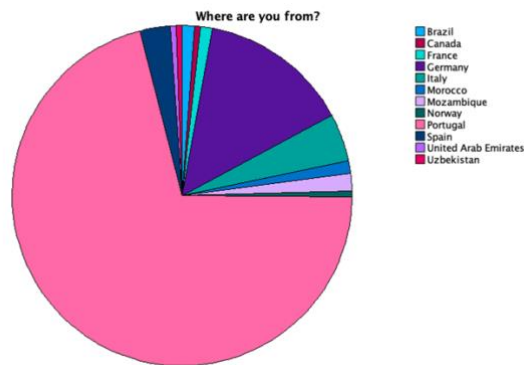


Figure A3. Pie Chart of Country of Residence

## A.2 Randomization Verification

**Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral) \* Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion) Crosstabulation**

Count	Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)		Total
	1.00	2.00	
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	1.00	46	43
	2.00	47	39
Total		93	82
			175

Table A4. Crosstabulation of Cue Type × Product Category

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.154 <sup>a</sup>	1	.694		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.058	1	.809		
Likelihood Ratio	.155	1	.694		
Fisher's Exact Test				.762	.405
Linear-by-Linear Association	.154	1	.695		
N of Valid Cases	175				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 40.30.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table A5. Chi-Square Test for Cue Type × Product Category

## A.3 Qualitative Sample Characteristics (Interviews)

Characteristic	Category	n
<b>Gender</b>	Women	8
	Men	7
<b>Age</b>	Mean (years)	23.9
	Range	19–28
<b>Nationality</b>	Portuguese	13
	German	2

Table A6. Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants (N = 15)

## Appendix B — Interview Materials (Qualitative Study)

### B1. Interview Consent Form

**Master’s Thesis Topic:**

*How Gen Z consumers respond differently to food-inspired vs. neutral cues in the beauty and fashion industries*

**Researcher:** Catarina Teixeira – Master’s student, Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics

**Supervisor:** Prof. Luísa Martinez

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**Purpose of the Study**

This interview is part of a Master’s thesis in Marketing and aims to understand how consumers react to product cues inspired by food in the beauty and fashion industries.

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**Participation**

- Your participation is **voluntary**.
  - The interview will last about **20–25 minutes**.
  - You may skip any question or stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason.
- 

**Confidentiality**

- All information you share will be kept **strictly confidential** and used only for **academic purposes**.
  - Your name and any identifying details will **not appear** in the final report.
  - The interview will be **audio-recorded** only to ensure accuracy in transcription.
  - All recordings will be stored securely and **deleted after the thesis is completed**.
- 

**Consent**

By signing below, I confirm that:

I understand the purpose of this study and what participation involves.

I voluntarily agree to take part in this interview.

I give my consent for the interview to be audio-recorded.

I understand that my answers will remain anonymous and used only for academic research.

---

**Participant’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Participant	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
André	“Sneakers.”	“Comfort + brand.”	“Warm, cozy, like ingredients.”	“Neutral is cold.”	“Can seem childish or premium.”	“Vanilla = cream tones.”	“Yes—stronger in beauty.”	“Beauty fits better.”	“Expect scent in beauty.”	“‘Cherry heel’ felt weird.”	“More likely in beauty.”	“Higher if natural.”	“Never avoided, sometimes bought.”	“Natural cues = trust.”	“Cues shape vibe.”
Constança	“Lip gloss.”	“Color + packaging.”	“Cute, appealing.”	“Neutral = boring.”	“Food cues can be childish.”	“Red/cherry tones.”	“Yes.”	“Beauty feels more natural.”	“Expect certain textures.”	“Good in makeup.”	“More likely.”	“Higher quality if natural.”	“Avoid childish scents.”	“Natural = trust.”	“No further comments.”
Daniel	“Skincare.”	“Routine needs.”	“Evocative, atmospheric.”	“Neutral = functional.”	“Food can feel premium or artificial.”	“Clear color imagery.”	“React differently.”	“Both categories but differently.”	“Expect scent differences.”	“‘Vanilla’ worked well.”	“Yes, if aesthetic strong.”	“Higher if cohesive.”	“Has bought due to cue.”	“Simple ingredients = trust.”	“Names create stories.”
Joana	“Perfume.”	“Scent + bottle.”	“Warm, inviting.”	“Neutral less emotional.”	“Food = sweet/childish.”	“Warm tones.”	“Yes—beauty stronger.”	“Beauty more logical.”	“Expect scent.”	“Cherry makeup worked.”	“Yes.”	“Premium if elegant cue.”	“Avoid childish food cues.”	“Natural scents = trust.”	“Cues influence impressions.”
João	“Shirt.”	“Fit + color.”	“Sometimes tasty, sometimes weird.”	“Neutral has no emotion.”	“Food can feel childish.”	“Brown/cream tones.”	“Yes—beauty better.”	“Beauty appropriate.”	“Expect texture in beauty.”	“Saw weird ‘caramel shoe’.”	“Less likely in fashion.”	“Higher quality in beauty.”	“Avoid artificial scents.”	“Natural = trust.”	“Nothing else.”
Lúis	“T-shirt.”	“Comfort.”	“Healthy vs junk cues.”	“Neutral = plain.”	“Food can be premium (matcha).”	“Matcha/coffee tones.”	“Yes.”	“Beauty more serious.”	“Expect scent.”	“Matcha creams worked.”	“More likely if healthy cue.”	“Higher quality for ‘superfoods’.”	“Avoid sugary cues.”	“Healthy = trust.”	“No comments.”
Melina	“Blush.”	“Color payoff.”	“Helps imagine product.”	“Neutral = simple.”	“Food can feel gimmicky.”	“Matcha green/cherry red.”	“Yes.”	“Beauty more appropriate.”	“Expect scent in beauty.”	“Cherry lip products good.”	“More likely in beauty.”	“Mid-premium expectations.”	“Avoid childish.”	“Natural = trust.”	“Nothing to add.”
Miguel	“Sneakers.”	“Aesthetic + brand.”	“Memorable.”	“Neutral = standard.”	“Can be childish.”	“Strong color-flavor links.”	“Yes but likes in fashion.”	“Fashion more appealing.”	“Expect aesthetics, not scent.”	“Food sneaker worked.”	“Not much difference.”	“No big effect.”	“Never bought/avoided.”	“Doesn’t matter.”	“No comments.”
Raquel	“Lipstick.”	“Shade + brand.”	“Informative, sensory.”	“Neutral = flat.”	“Natural = premium.”	“Chocolate tones.”	“Beauty positive, fashion.”	“Beauty more fitting.”	“Expect scent change.”	“Some fashion cues.”	“More likely in beauty.”	“Higher price expectations.”	“Has avoided childish cues.”	“Natural = trust.”	“Nothing else.”

							negative.”			looked off.”					
Beatriz	“Shoes.”	“Material + design.”	“Depends ; sometime s childish.”	“Neutral = classic.”	“Food can be playful or premium.”	“Clear color imagery.”	“React differently.”	“Fashion more fun.”	“Expect aesthetics.”	“Some food heels worked.”	“Depends on execution.”	“Higher when cohesive.”	“Avoid exaggerated cues.”	“Natural = trust.”	“Cues shape brand identity.”
Helena	“Foundation.”	“Shade match.”	“Natural, authentic.”	“Neutral = plain.”	“Food = premium if natural.”	“Warm tones.”	“Yes—prefer beauty.”	“Beauty more appropriate.”	“Expect scent.”	“Vanilla scents worked.”	“More likely in beauty.”	“Higher quality expectations.”	“Avoid artificial cues.”	“Natural = trust.”	“No final remark.”
Inês	“Cream.”	“Scent + feel.”	“Positive but suspicious.”	“Neutral = simple.”	“Food = can be artificial.”	“Brown/red.”	“Yes.”	“Beauty stronger.”	“Expect scent/texture.”	“Good with subtle cues.”	“More likely.”	“Higher for natural.”	“Avoid childish cues.”	“Natural ingredients = trust.”	“No more to add.”
Rita	“Mascara.”	“Performance.”	“Fun, dimensional.”	“Neutral = standard.”	“Food = childish or premium.”	“Olive/cherry /butter tones.”	“Beauty > fashion.”	“Beauty appropriate.”	“Expect scent difference s.”	“Saw out-of-place fashion cue.”	“More likely beauty.”	“Higher price expectations.”	“Avoid artificial scents.”	“Natural = trust.”	“Nothing else.”
Pedro	“T-shirt.”	“Price + comfort.”	“Fun, personal.”	“Neutral = boring.”	“Food = playful.”	“Warm tones.”	“Yes.”	“Both but beauty more coherent.”	“Expect scent in beauty.”	“Food sneakers worked.”	“More likely both.”	“Higher if aesthetic strong.”	“Has bought due to cue.”	“Simple = trust.”	“Cue must match product.”

## B2. Summary of Interview Responses Across All Questions

## Appendix C — Full ANOVA Output (Quantitative Analysis)

### C.1 Hypothesis 1 Output

Between-Subjects Factors		
		N
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	1.00	89
	2.00	86
Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	1.00	93
	2.00	82

Table C1. Between-Subjects Factors for H1

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Emotion_mean				
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	1.00	6.1087	1.12008	46
	2.00	5.2481	1.04930	43
	Total	5.6929	1.16366	89
2.00	1.00	4.0000	1.25879	47
	2.00	2.9744	1.25978	39
	Total	3.5349	1.35307	86
Total	1.00	5.0430	1.59045	93
	2.00	4.1667	1.61886	82
	Total	4.6324	1.65824	175

Table C2. Descriptive Statistics for H1 (Emotion\_mean)

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances <sup>a,b</sup>					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Emotion_mean	Based on Mean	.897	3	171	.444
	Based on Median	.971	3	171	.408
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.971	3	167.133	.408
	Based on trimmed mean	.993	3	171	.397

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Dependent variable: Emotion\_mean  
b. Design: Intercept + CueType\_num + Category\_num + CueType\_num \* Category\_num

Table C3. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for H1

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Emotion_mean						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	242.565 <sup>a</sup>	3	80.855	58.611	<.001	.507
Intercept	3655.973	1	3655.973	2650.199	<.001	.939
CueType_num	208.953	1	208.953	151.469	<.001	.470
Category_num	38.711	1	38.711	28.061	<.001	.141
CueType_num * Category_num	.296	1	.296	.215	.644	.001
Error	235.896	171	1.380			
Total	4233.778	175				
Corrected Total	478.461	174				

a. R Squared = .507 (Adjusted R Squared = .498)

Table C4. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for H1

**Estimated Marginal Means**

1. Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)					
Dependent Variable: Emotion_mean					
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1.00	5.678	.125	5.432	5.924	
2.00	3.487	.127	3.236	3.738	

2. Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)					
Dependent Variable: Emotion_mean					
Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1.00	5.054	.122	4.814	5.295	
2.00	4.111	.130	3.855	4.368	

3. Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral) * Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)						
Dependent Variable: Emotion_mean						
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1.00	1.00	6.109	.173	5.767	6.451	
	2.00	5.248	.179	4.895	5.602	
2.00	1.00	4.000	.171	3.662	4.338	
	2.00	2.974	.188	2.603	3.346	

Table C5. Estimated Marginal Means for H1

**C.2 Hypothesis 2 Output**

**Between-Subjects Factors**

	N	
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	1.00	89
	2.00	86
Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	1.00	93
	2.00	82

Table C6. Between-Subjects Factors for H2

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: Attitude_mean				
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	1.00	5.8696	1.00978	46
	2.00	5.8682	.81695	43
	Total	5.8689	.91648	89
2.00	1.00	4.5603	.93278	47
	2.00	3.8205	1.03406	39
	Total	4.2248	1.04217	86
Total	1.00	5.2079	1.16916	93
	2.00	4.8943	1.38072	82
	Total	5.0610	1.27861	175

Table C7. Descriptive Statistics for H2 (Attitude\_mean)

**Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a,b</sup>**

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Attitude_mean	Based on Mean	.281	3	171	.839
	Based on Median	.310	3	171	.818
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.310	3	153.279	.818
	Based on trimmed mean	.328	3	171	.805

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Dependent variable: Attitude\_mean

b. Design: Intercept + CueType\_num + Category\_num + CueType\_num \* Category\_num

Table C8. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for H2

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Attitude\_mean

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	129.890 <sup>a</sup>	3	43.297	47.898	<.001	.457
Intercept	4403.720	1	4403.720	4871.776	<.001	.966
CueType_num	122.609	1	122.609	135.641	<.001	.442
Category_num	5.976	1	5.976	6.611	.011	.037
CueType_num * Category_num	5.932	1	5.932	6.563	.011	.037
Error	154.571	171	.904			
Total	4766.778	175				
Corrected Total	284.461	174				

a. R Squared = .457 (Adjusted R Squared = .447)

Table C9. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for H2

**Estimated Marginal Means**

**1. Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)**

Dependent Variable: Attitude\_mean

Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	5.869	.101	5.670	6.068
2.00	4.190	.103	3.987	4.394

**2. Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)**

Dependent Variable: Attitude\_mean

Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	5.215	.099	5.020	5.410
2.00	4.844	.105	4.637	5.052

**3. Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral) \* Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)**

Dependent Variable: Attitude\_mean

Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	1.00	5.870	.140	5.593	6.146
	2.00	5.868	.145	5.582	6.154
2.00	1.00	4.560	.139	4.287	4.834
	2.00	3.821	.152	3.520	4.121

Table C10. Estimated Marginal Means for H2

**C.3 Hypothesis 3 Output**

**Between-Subjects Factors**

	N	
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	1.00	89
	2.00	86
Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	1.00	93
	2.00	82

Table C11. Between-Subjects Factors for H3

Descriptive Statistics				
Dependent Variable: PL_mean				
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1.00	1.00	5.7391	1.38940	46
	2.00	5.2016	1.12720	43
	Total	5.4794	1.29095	89
2.00	1.00	4.2553	.91211	47
	2.00	3.5214	1.14400	39
	Total	3.9225	1.08185	86
Total	1.00	4.9892	1.38440	93
	2.00	4.4024	1.40910	82
	Total	4.7143	1.42264	175

Table C12. Descriptive Statistics for H3 (PL\_mean)

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances <sup>a,b</sup>					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
PI_mean	Based on Mean	2.471	3	171	.064
	Based on Median	1.994	3	171	.117
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.994	3	161.512	.117
	Based on trimmed mean	2.273	3	171	.082

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Dependent variable: PL\_mean

b. Design: Intercept + CueType\_num + Category\_num + CueType\_num \* Category\_num

Table C13. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances for H3

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: PL_mean						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	123.923 <sup>a</sup>	3	41.308	30.949	<.001	.352
Intercept	3811.664	1	3811.664	2855.797	<.001	.944
CueType_num	108.917	1	108.917	81.604	<.001	.323
Category_num	17.591	1	17.591	13.179	<.001	.072
CueType_num * Category_num	.420	1	.420	.314	.576	.002
Error	228.236	171	1.335			
Total	4241.444	175				
Corrected Total	352.159	174				

a. R Squared = .352 (Adjusted R Squared = .341)

Table C14. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for H3

Estimated Marginal Means					
1. Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)					
Dependent Variable: PL_mean					
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1.00	5.470	.123	5.228	5.712	
2.00	3.888	.125	3.641	4.135	

2. Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)					
Dependent Variable: PL_mean					
Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval		
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1.00	4.997	.120	4.761	5.234	
2.00	4.361	.128	4.109	4.614	

3. Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral) * Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)					
Dependent Variable: PL_mean					
Cue type (1 = food, 2 = neutral)	Product category (1 = beauty, 2 = fashion)	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1.00	1.00	5.739	.170	5.403	6.075
	2.00	5.202	.176	4.854	5.549
2.00	1.00	4.255	.169	3.923	4.588
	2.00	3.521	.185	3.156	3.887

Table C15. Estimated Marginal Means for H3

## Appendix D — Assumption Checks

### D. 1 Descriptive Statistics for Dependent Variables

Descriptives				Statistic	Std. Error
Attitude_mean	Mean			5.0610	.09665
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		4.8702	
		Upper Bound		5.2517	
	5% Trimmed Mean			5.1058	
	Median			5.0000	
	Variance			1.635	
	Std. Deviation			1.27861	
	Minimum			1.33	
	Maximum			7.00	
	Range			5.67	
	Interquartile Range			2.00	
	Skewness			-.368	.184
	Kurtosis			-.528	.365
Emotion_mean	Mean			4.6324	.12535
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		4.3850	
		Upper Bound		4.8798	
	5% Trimmed Mean			4.6767	
	Median			5.0000	
	Variance			2.750	
	Std. Deviation			1.65824	
	Minimum			1.00	
	Maximum			7.00	
	Range			6.00	
	Interquartile Range			2.67	
	Skewness			-.211	.184
	Kurtosis			-1.039	.365
PI_mean	Mean			4.7143	.10754
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		4.5020	
		Upper Bound		4.9265	
	5% Trimmed Mean			4.7466	
	Median			4.6667	
	Variance			2.024	
	Std. Deviation			1.42264	
	Minimum			1.33	
	Maximum			7.00	
	Range			5.67	
	Interquartile Range			2.00	
	Skewness			-.133	.184
	Kurtosis			-.612	.365

Table D1. Descriptive Statistics for Attitude, Emotional Appeal, and Purchase Intention

### D.2 Tests of Normality

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Attitude_mean	.116	175	<.001	.965	175	<.001
Emotion_mean	.109	175	<.001	.949	175	<.001
PI_mean	.092	175	<.001	.964	175	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table D2. Tests of Normality for Dependent Variables

### D.3 Q-Q Plots for Dependent Variables

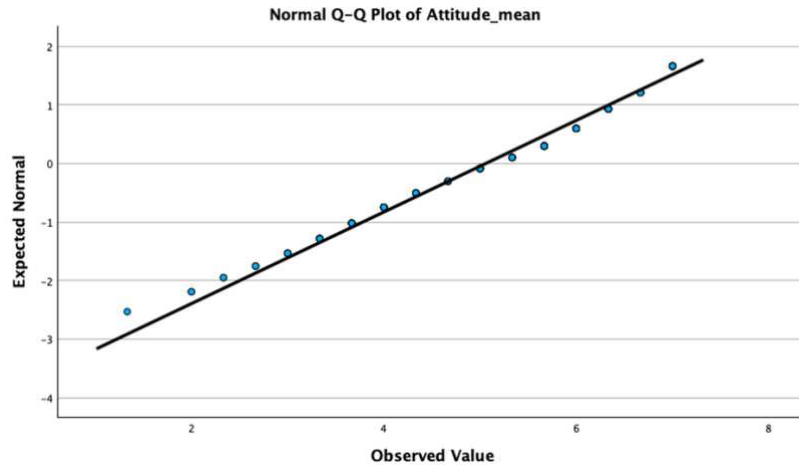


Figure D1. Q-Q Plot for Perceived Quality

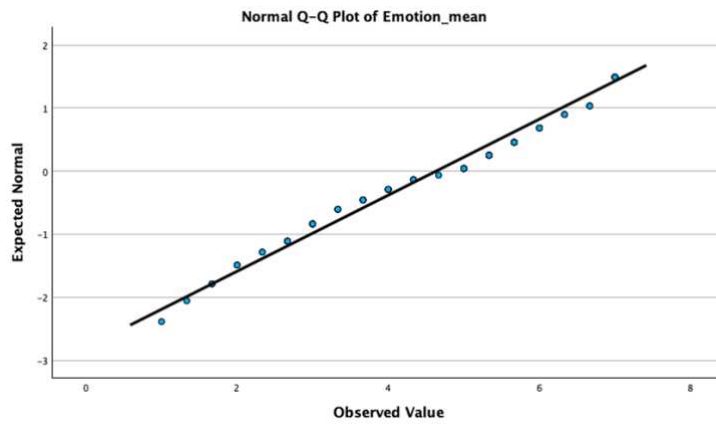


Figure D2. Q-Q Plot for Emotional Appeal

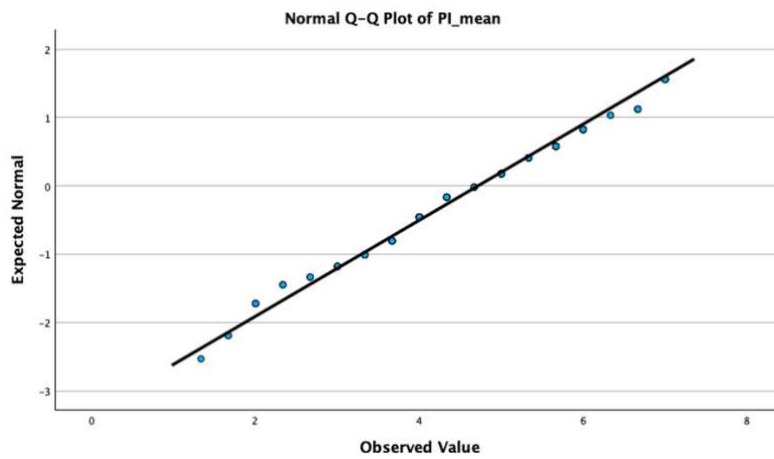


Figure D3. Q-Q Plot for Purchase Intention

## Appendix E — Correlation Analysis

### E.1 Pearson Correlation Matrix for the Dependent Variables

		Attitude_mean	Emotion_mean	PI_mean
Attitude_mean	Pearson Correlation	1	.829**	.737**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	175	175	175
Emotion_mean	Pearson Correlation	.829**	1	.791**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	175	175	175
PI_mean	Pearson Correlation	.737**	.791**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	175	175	175

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Appendix F — Full Interview Transcripts

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This appendix provides access to the full interview transcripts collected during the qualitative phase of the study.

Due to their length, the transcripts are stored in an online folder and can be accessed via the link provided below.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1E9e3a6kgPFx-UukNWI4kKOZ6StlO6Ocl?usp=sharing>

## Appendix G — Questionnaire Design

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### Introduction Text

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking your time to answer this survey!

The purpose of this study is to understand how **Gen Z consumers evaluate different products and designs.**

This survey takes approximately **3-5 minutes** to complete.

Your participation is **completely voluntary**, and all responses are **anonymous and confidential.**

Data will be analysed only in aggregate form for **academic purposes.** You may withdraw from this survey at any moment by closing your browser window.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact *Catarina Teixeira* at *ciamteixeira@ucp.pt*.

Thank you for your time and participation!

### Screening Questions

Do you consent to participate in this research and allow your responses to be used for academic purposes?

- Yes, I agree to participate
- No, I do not agree to participate

Are you between the ages of 18-28?

- Yes
- No

The following images are randomly presented to participants:

#### 2a- Food x Beauty

Please take a few seconds to observe the product below. Then answer the following questions.



#### 2b Neutral x Beauty

Please take a few seconds to observe the product below. Then answer the following questions.



### 2c Food x Fashion

Please take a few seconds to observe the product below. Then answer the following questions.



### 2d Neutral x Fashion

Please take a few seconds to observe the product below. Then answer the following questions.



### Main Dependent Variables

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This product seems to be of high quality. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This product appears to be well made. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This product seems premium. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This product feels comforting and pleasant. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This product gives me a “feel-good” or indulgent impression (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This product feels emotionally appealing. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I would consider buying this product. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to try this product. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am likely to purchase this product in the near future. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Manipulation Check

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This product evokes food-related associations. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The name/design reminded me of food. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The product looked neutral (unrelated to food). (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The product you just saw belongs to which industry?

- Beauty (skincare, makeup, etc.)
- Fashion (clothing, shoes, accessories etc.)
- Other

### Category Involvement

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am interested in beauty products. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often read or watch content about beauty trends. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently purchase beauty products. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am interested in fashion products. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often read or watch content about fashion trends. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I frequently purchase fashion products. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I enjoy products that use food-inspired designs or scents. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find food-themed product concepts appealing. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I usually pay attention to products that remind me of food or flavors. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Demographics

How old are you?

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25
- 26
- 27
- 28

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary / Third gender
- Prefer not to say

Where are you from?

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (194)