

# Repeated Touch Enhances Liking Towards Touched Surfaces

**Farhana Tabassum**  
IESEG School of Management  
**Klemens Knoeberle**  
BI Norwegian Business School  
**Luk Warlop**  
BI Norwegian Business School

Cite as:

Tabassum Farhana, Knoeberle Klemens, Warlop Luk (2024), Repeated Touch Enhances Liking Towards Touched Surfaces. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 53rd, (119761)

Paper from the 53rd Annual EMAC Conference, Bucharest, Romania, May 28-31, 2024



# Repeated Touch Enhances Liking Towards Touched Surfaces

## **Abstract**

On a typical shopping trip, be it to a clothing store, a car dealership, or a grocery, a commonly observed practice is that customers tend to touch the surface of the displayed products. Comprehending the specific ways in which touch may affect customers' preferences is crucial for managers to create the desired retail experience. In this paper, we demonstrate a novel tactile mere exposure effect of surfaces, i.e., when the surface of a stimulus is touched repeatedly, the preference toward that stimulus increases to a non-touched stimulus. Using upholstery fabrics as stimuli, results from 4 lab experiments suggest that the liking increased when the touch as a sensory function was present (in tactile-only and tactile-visual modalities), but not when touch was absent (in visual-only modality). Participants' need for touch score did not moderate the effect. Together, the findings confirm the robustness of the tactile mere exposure. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

**Subject Areas:** *Cognition, Consumer Behaviour, Retailing*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour