

Strategic Scent Selection: An Application of Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique

By

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Master of Business Administration
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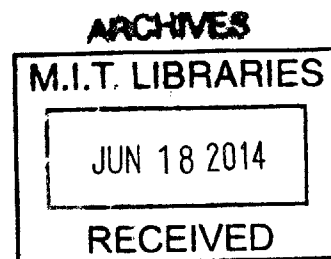
SUBMITTED TO THE MIT SLOAN SCHOOL OF
MANAGEMENT IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES
AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

JUNE 2014

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Submitted to the MIT Sloan School of Management on May 9, 2014
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science in Management Studies

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to create a better branding message for the OLIVITA Artisan by finding specific scents that are closely aligned with its marketing strategy for their future product line, to reassure the existing brand image and increase its competency in the market. In order to find the scents that are aligned with OLIVITA Artisan's existing brand image, an edited version of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), a patented market research tool that has been proven successful in eliciting the conscious and more importantly the unconscious thoughts by exploring people's non-literal or metaphoric expressions, was applied for the "Mediterranean life" concept among a convenience sample. The transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed, relevant statements were extracted and the strongest statements were selected and logically grouped to be able to identify the key themes in consumer's mind by Voice of the Customer analysis. The themes were also used to create short stories. The results shaped the scent recommendations for the OLIVITA Artisan, including four pure, three conceptual scents that are closely aligned with its brand image.

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Thesis Supervisor, Prof. John Hauser, for giving me the chance to investigate different aspects of Marketing and granting me the freedom of choice for my thesis. He has provided me an extensive academic knowledge and experience, and I could not have done this without his guidance and continuous support throughout the year.

I am extremely grateful to my family, Gulsen Ergez, Serdar Emir Ergez and Anil Ergez for supporting me no matter what I want to pursue, and filling my life with love, fun and joy.

I would like to thank my fiancé Deren Gursel for always being there for me both as a friend and also as a colleague. Throughout this year, he has been a great source of inspiration, and I thank him for the long conversations we had in relation to my thesis and my career development; and without his personal support, it would have been much harder to finish this year “safe and sound”.

Additionally, I would like to thank MSMS Program Manager Chanh Phan and Career Advisor Christine Bolzan for making this year much easier for me with their personal and professional advices during this academic year.

I would like to thank Dr. Jeffrey Lee, who provided me valuable advices in the area of Marketing Research and the usage of Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET).

I would also like the participants in the in-depth interviews for their valuable insights and time; this thesis could not be completed without their contribution.

Finally, I would like to thank Sahver Binici, the founder of OLIVITA Artisan, for her collaboration and support, which enabled me to study the role of Marketing in the scent selection.

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1. “Smell” as a sense

Smell, though one of the most vital senses in the human body, is one of the least valued senses. In a questionnaire conducted by Wrzesniewski, McCauley and Rozin (1999), the participants were asked to rank the relative desirability of permanent loss of their sense of smell, their hearing in one ear, or their left small toe. Findings supported that there is a high variability in our perceived importance of the sense of smell as only the 50% of the participants ranked the permanent loss of the sense of smell as the most undesirable. This disregard is not only confirmed by Wrzesniewski McCauley and Rozin, but also supported by The American Medical Association. In *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment*, they assigned the loss of smell and taste 1-5% of the total value of a person’s life worth, whereas it is 85% for the loss of vision (Herz, 2008).

Not only humans usually disregard the sense of smell, but they also ignore how a critical role the sense of smell plays in their lives. Apart from all the pleasure it provides with the pleasant scents, such as the scent of a freshly baked pie or the smell of a baby to the mother, the sense of smell also help humans distinguish whether a food is fresh or rotten, or even whether there is a fire or a gas leak (King, 2013).

Smell also plays a big role in interpersonal attraction. Similar to animals’ using scents to find the best mate to pass favorable genes to their offspring, humans instinctively use the sense of smell as a way to find the appropriate mate. Apart from the role the olfaction plays in increasing the conscious attraction with the usage of artificial scents such as perfumes, research has shown that a human’s certain body odors are also connected to the opposite party’s sexual attraction. In Singh and Bronstad’s research, it is pointed out that males rated the odor of t-shirts that were worn by females during their late follicular (ovulatory) phase as more pleasant and sexy than the t-shirts that were worn by females during their luteal (non-ovulatory) phase (Singh & Bronstad, 2001), showing that body scents could shape the perception of attractiveness.

Following sections would demonstrate the structure of smell reception and processing in humans, as well as the relationships between the sense of smell, emotions and memories.

1.1. Smell reception and processing in humans

A part of the human nasal cavity is covered with a sheet, called the *olfactory epithelium*, that contains around 6-10 million receptor cells, helping humans to distinguish 2000 to 4000 different scents on average (King, 2013, Strugnell & Jones, 1999). The receptor cells contact the inhaled air on its way to lungs with their millions of thin antennae. These cells transmit the information that is converted into the electric signals to the *olfactory bulb*, which contains *olfactory nerves* and helps the information to start its neural pathway as shown in the following figure.

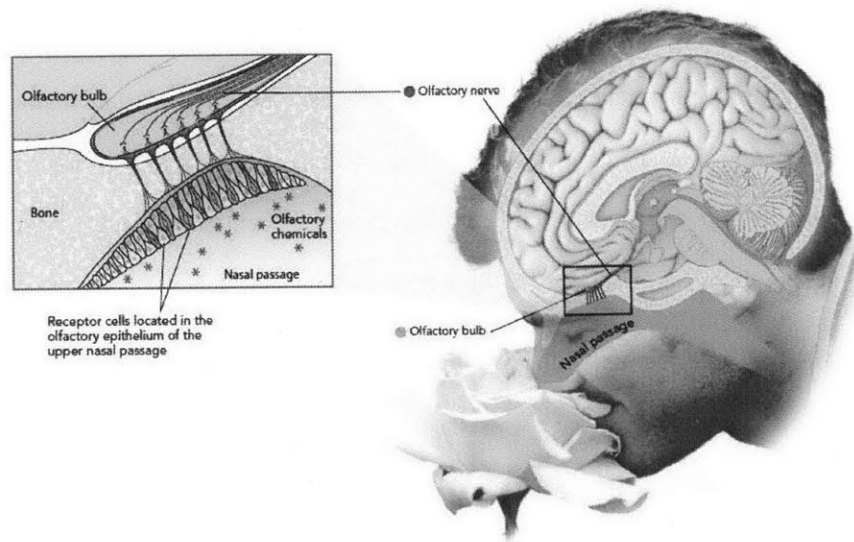


Figure 1: The location of olfactory bulb and the olfactory nerves

Sensory neurons in these olfactory nerves contain *axons*, which are carried to the dendrites of mitral cells. From the mitral cells, those axons are transmitted to the brain's different areas, including the *anterior olfactory nucleus* and *piriform cortex*. Anterior olfactory nucleus helps processing the odor information and piriform cortex is responsible from identifying the odor, completing the olfactory process in human body. The perception of a scent also activates the *medial amygdala* and the *entorhinal cortex* in the brain. These two areas lead smell to be a sense that is closely associated to emotion and memories.

1.2. Smell, memory and emotions

Olfaction is the only sensory system that is directly connected to the human emotions. Olfactory bulbs and the amygdala are both located in the limbic system, which is sometimes called “emotional brain” (“The Human Brain – Stress”, 2004). Amygdala is the brain’s locus of memory and emotion, and helps humans to experience, process and express emotion. This short distance between olfactory bulbs and amygdala helps smell and emotion to be closely related. According to Herz (2008), whenever humans perceive a scent, amygdala is also activated. Moreover, the intensity of the amygdala activation is directly proportional with people’s emotional reactions to the scent (Herz, 2008). On the other hand, lack of the sense of smell also influences the humans’ emotions and wellbeing. Anosmia, also known as smell blindness, could lead to psychological problems including loss of interest in enjoyable activities, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, loss of motivation, depression and even suicide if not treated (Herz, 2008).

The sense of smell is also closely related to memories as olfactory bulbs have access to entorhinal cortex, which is the main interface between the *hippocampus* and *neocortex*. The entorhinal cortex and hippocampus work together to form and process declarative memories; the memories which can be consciously recalled such as knowledge of facts (semantic knowledge) and events (episodic knowledge) (Ullman, 2004). They are also effective in the formation and consolidation of spatial memories; the memories that refer to the environment and spatial orientation information.

The access between olfactory bulbs and hippocampus leads distinct scents to call up specific memories in human mind. As humans are exposed to new scents mostly in their childhood, most of the scents call up childhood memories; however scents that humans are exposed to in their adulthood are also easily called up. Since every single person collects different memories, different scents might call up different associations in different people. That explains the variety among the scent preference in humans, as there are infinite set of variables for every individual. For instance, whereas the scent of a skunk is irritating for most of the people, it is perceived as pleasant by many others, depending on their memories involving a skunk (Herz, 2008). The smell preferences are

also affected by cultural background, environment and psychological state (Strugnell and Jones, 1999) as they have a large influence on the individual memories.

2. Olfaction in Marketing

For a while, consumers have been looking for more than a product that is only functional (Dixit, 2008). This has led to the rise of sensory marketing. Marketers have started to use the visuals to increase the attractiveness of their product. As the visual marketing had its limits, marketers tried to influence consumer behavior via touch, sound and even taste. Finally, in the last decade, they have started to embrace the role of the scents to create an emotional connection with consumers, and strengthen their brand image (Dixit, 2008).

There are two major areas that use the sense of smell as a sensory marketing tool. The first one is activating the sense of smell via the scent of a product, which is, for the most of the time, a conscious, direct approach to activate olfactory system. The product scent is an essential aspect in the products including perfumes & fragrances, air fresheners & home fragrances, candles, household cleaning products and hair and body care products. This area also involves products that do not hold a dominant fragrance aspect, but still holds a distinct scent, such as a new car smell. The second one is activating the sense of smell via the scent of an environment. This has been quite popular among the brands that do not offer a product that has a direct connection to a distinct scent but would want to create an emotional connection with consumers.

2.1. Products that address the sense of smell

Products such as perfumes, air fresheners & home fragrances, candles, household cleaning products and hair and body care products usually have a dominant olfactory aspect and constitute the fragrance market. According to the International Fragrance Association of North America, the global fragrance market is worth between \$8-10 billion and the growth rates of the fragrance market have been averaging around 2% to 3% over past decade (“Americas Flavors and Fragrances Market 2013”, 2013).

One of the most commonly used scent categorizations in this industry is the Michael Edwards' "Fragrance Wheel". It is a fragrance classification chart, initially created in 1983, and is being modified occasionally by Edwards. The fragrance wheel consists of four fragrance families: Floral, Oriental, Woody and Fresh which all include several subcategories as shown in the following image:

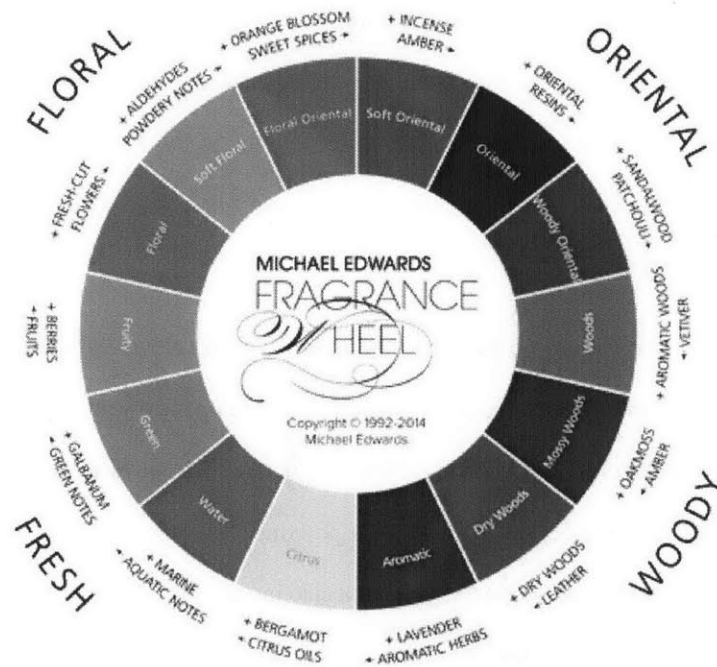


Figure 2: The Fragrance Wheel

These products may follow different brand strategies depending on their dominant scent. The dominant scents of those products are carefully selected and are aligned with the brand image of the product and the company. They are further supported with the deliberate packaging choices. According to Harper and Burns (2012), packaging and product colors could shape olfactory expectations; if the consumer sees a yellow package, she thinks about "lemon" and expects a citrus scent; furthermore, even the tones of the colors shape the consumer perceptions and expectations. The design of the packaging is also effective in shaping those expectations. According to Samalonis (2012), the entrance of bejeweled and high tech designs, helped fragrance companies to overcome the previous sales decline and experienced a modest growth in 2010 and 2011.

The fragrance trends play a big role for the companies during the selection of the scents for their products; and considering the scope of the market, it is extremely important to forecast the fragrance trends to be able to select the right fragrances for those products. Even though fragrances usually have a global trend, there might be minor cultural and demographic influences on some of the fragrance trends. For instance, the more developed a country, the more the focus would be on products with less additives and chemicals compared to the less developed countries, influencing the trend towards the usage of scents produced from natural ingredients and essential oils. And currently, the growth in the industry comes with an increase in demand for “natural” ingredients (“Fragrances in the market”, n.d.).

As for the current fragrance trends, the U.S. prestige women’s fragrance market experiences a demand growth for woody oriental as 4%, for oriental as 2%, for woods as 11%, for citrus as 6% and for fruity as 123% (“Fragrance Preferences Shifting in U.S. Prestige Women's Market”, 2014).

2.2. Olfactory marketing in retail and service settings

The influence of the scents have reached the retail and service settings as well. Companies from many different industries have been using scents to attract customers, and convey an appropriate brand image.

First, the scents could be applied as an ambient scent that is aligned with the brand image. This Swissotel, with the help of a scent expert, Sissel Tolaas, has created a scent combination of more than 200 different scents, including mountain, ice, steel red pepper and money. This combination is used for all of its hotels worldwide, which appeals to a further sense when the guests enter the lobby and is remembered after they have left (Tenhaven, 2009). A more interesting usage of the ambient scent is from Singapore Airlines; Singapore Airlines have created a fragrance that is included in its flight attendants’ perfumes as well as the hot towels served to passengers before takeoff, to create a distinct trademark scent for its brand (Lindstrom, 2010).

The scents could also be used by the retailers to increase the purchase intention by increasing the attractiveness of their scent-free products and time spent at stores via the usage of specific scents.

An electronics company, Samsung, has been using a signature scent for its electronic stores, defined as “a unisexy, modern fragrance along the lines of Calvin Klein's cK One” by Tischler (2005), to make customers feel like staying in the store a little longer. Similarly, Bloomingdale’s, a retail store, has been pumping the smell of Johnson’s Baby Powder into their stores (Lindstrom, 2010). One of the most distinct examples of signature smells of the retailers is Abercrombie & Fitch , whose distinct scent could even exists on its products, and recognized by most of the shoppers worldwide.

The scents are also used by service providers such as restaurants or coffee shops, where they would be diffusing an attractive smell of their end product on the street to attract customers. The coffee aroma in front of the Starbucks stores has been a signature worldwide, being a very strong sensory stimulator for coffee consumers.

3. OLIVITA Artisan

3.1. Company Information

Based on Eric Ries’s Silicon Valley inspired lean startup methodology, OLIVITA Artisan Natural Personal Care line was initiated in 2011 by technologist Sahver Binici to provide pure, natural and youthful anti-aging personal care solutions based on virgin olive oil and other Mediterranean based oils and plants. The company is structured as a networked enterprise that leveraged social and cloud technologies from product development to customer relations to reach its B2B and B2C customers. As of fall of 2013, OLIVITA Artisan was available in three continents. OLIVITA Artisan’s current portfolio is based on 100% virgin olive oil and the team composed of 40+ people based in the Europe and the US (S. Binici, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

OLIVITA Artisan is a compassionate brand with strong social mission that aspires to support small olive farmers as well as single young mothers. OLIVITA Artisan personal care products are handcrafted by seasoned soap artist team and hand packed one by one by single mothers who attend evening schools to pursue better life for themselves and their children (“Why OLIVITA Artisan?”, n.d.).

OLIVITA Artisan personal care products are handcrafted in small batches in artisan production facilities located nearby the Ephesus ancient city in the Aegean. OLIVITA Artisan sources olive oil from other local small Aegean farmers to support sustainable farming in the region.

3.2. Brand Image

OLIVITA Artisan aims to convey the brand image of “Healthy Natural Mediterranean” to its consumers. The brand message is “Mediterranean diet for your personal care”, thus it would like to use the scents that embody Mediterranean and Aegean cultural heritage. OLIVITA wants to not only to bring transparency to the personal care market by seamlessly communicating ingredients but also bring a social purpose to the market by supporting women and local farmers (S. Binici, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

In terms of the packaging and branding, OLIVITA aims to present a combination that would take consumer directly to the Mediterranean. The statue that is being used in the OLIVITA Artisan’s packaging is inspired from the ancient Ephesus city as well as the house of Virgin Mary located in the Aegean, right next to OLIVITA Artisan’s production facilities. The external packaging of the OLIVITA Artisan includes elements such as ancient statues that convey the message of Mediterranean heritage and culture, underlining the strong ties with the Mediterranean life style. The packaging also includes the text “Handcrafted in the Mediterranean” to strengthen the brand message (“Why OLIVITA Artisan?”, n.d.).



Figure 3: OLIVITA Artisan, Blissful Green Apple Soap

3.3. Current Product Offerings

OLIVITA Artisan’s initial portfolio offers seven items in its product line, including five artisan soap bars, one artisan liquid soap & hand wash and one artisan bath & body gel. The scents, inspired from the Mediterranean life style, include Soothing Thyme, Invigorating Daphne, Calming Lavender, Uplifting Turkish Bath and Blissful Green Apple. The liquid soap & hand wash is scented with Aegean citrus, which consists of natural essential oils inspired from Aegean’s lemon and tangerine orchards. The bath & body gel called “Pure Aegean” consists of revitalizing natural essential oils inspired from the deep turquoise waters of the Aegean (S. Binici, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

OLIVITA Artisan grabbed the attention of leading consumer trendsetters such as Marie Claire and COSMOPOLITAN within the first nine months of its market entry. OLIVITA Artisan Bar with Blissful Green Apple essence was picked by COSMOPOLITAN magazine as one of the “TOP 8 Most Eco-Friendly products of the year” in 2013 (S. Binici, personal communication, February 4, 2014).

3.4. Preliminary scent list for OLIVITA Artisan based on the essential oils' countries of origin

Since OLIVITA Artisan aims to convey the image of Mediterranean history and culture, the essential oils that had originated in the Mediterranean area are consistent with the OLIVITA Artisan's marketing strategy. Following are the pure essential oils that had originated and are still produced in the countries that belong in the Mediterranean region (Worwood, 1991):

- Bergamot (Italy)
- Chamomile (France, Croatia)
- Coriander (Italy, Tunisia)
- Cupressus (Mediterranean)
- Dill (Mediterranean)
- Fennel (Mediterranean)
- Fig (Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia)
- Geranium (Egypt, France)
- Grapefruit (Israel)
- Jasmine (France, Egypt)
- Lavender (France)
- Lemon (Israel, Turkey)
- Lime (Italy)
- Mandarin (Italy)
- Marjoram (Egypt, France)
- Melissa (Mediterranean)
- Neroli (*Orange Blossom*) (France, Egypt, Italy, Turkey, Tunisia)
- Orange (Egypt, France, Italy, Turkey)
- Oregano (Mediterranean)
- Petitgrain (France, Italy)
- Rosemary (France)
- Rose (Turkey, Egypt)
- Sage (Mediterranean)
- Spearmint (Mediterranean)
- Thyme (Mediterranean)
- Violet (Italy, France, Greece)

Among these, OLIVITA Artisan has only been offering the "Thyme" and "Lavender" as a soap bar, and a mixture that contains "Lemon" as a liquid soap & hand wash. This initial list would be helpful in analyzing the results of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET), especially to be able to select the scents that are most associated with the Mediterranean concept.

This list excludes the conceptual scents such as "Turkish Bath" or "Salty Sea Air" as they would require a mixture of several essential oils. The conceptual scents that are consistent with OLIVITA Artisan's

brand image are aimed to be explored via the application of ZMET, Voice of the Customer and Short Stories.

4. Methodology

In this thesis, an edited version of the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) would be applied for data collection. ZMET is a qualitative marketing research technique where the participants go through in-depth interviews regarding the images they have previously prepared, enabling the researchers to extensively explore and probe participants' conscious and unconscious thoughts and feelings (Coulter, Zaltman and Coulter, 2001).

Prepared images would be the source of the image based metaphors and would reveal consumer insights; interview transcripts would be analyzed in detail with the Voice of the Customer technique, and would be used for creating short stories that would reveal more insights about Mediterranean life.

Since the objective of this thesis is to find the underlying connections of potential scents with the "Mediterranean life", the interview questions in this ZMET would mainly focus on the sensory metaphors of the participant, including smell, taste, touch, sound and emotions.

4.1. Participants

The goal in this research is to explore the applicability of the method, therefore the sampling goal is to establish an illustrative sample rather than a fully generalizable sample. To this end, ten participants are selected by convenience sampling among the people living in the Greater Boston area.

4.2. Design and Procedure

Participants were asked to prepare an average of six visual images related to "Mediterranean life" a day before the interview. The reason of the earlier preparation of the images was to lead participants to think more about the concept of Mediterranean living, which would be helpful during the "Sensory Metaphors" section of the interview. The average duration of an individual interview was 43 minutes and the average transcript word count was 1445.

The question set consisted of open ended questions and the participants were encouraged to talk and discuss on the questions as much as they wanted.

Following table describes the guideline that was followed during the interviews. The guideline is retrieved by the *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing* (Belk, 2007), reviewed and edited according to the needs of the current research question.

Steps in the ZMET interview	
Storytelling	The participant would be asked to describe how each image represents his thoughts and feelings about the Mediterranean life. Interviewer: <i>“Please tell me how this image relates to your thoughts and feelings about Mediterranean life.”</i>
Missed images	The participant would be asked if there were important ideas he wanted to express but for which he could not find relevant images. Interviewer: <i>“Were there any thoughts and feelings for which you were unable to find an image?”</i> If yes, <i>“Please describe the thought or feeling, and tell me about an image that you would use to represent the thought or feeling.”</i>
Sensory metaphors	The participant would be asked to describe how each image is connected to the senses, including smell, taste, touch, sound and emotion. Interviewer: <i>“What scent could you smell when you think about this image?”</i> <i>“What kind of flavor could you taste when you think about this image?”</i> <i>“What kind of texture and temperature could you imagine when you think about this image?”</i> <i>“What sound could you hear when you think about this image?”</i> <i>“What kind of emotion could you feel when you think about this image?”</i>

Table 1: Steps in the ZMET interview

After the interviews, the interview transcripts were prepared. Possible scents from the interview transcripts were extracted to be included in the preliminary scent list.

The transcripts were used for two different qualitative analyses. First one was the application of the Voice of the Customer, where different voices were identified and grouped into different levels and the major perceptions of Mediterranean life were analyzed in detail. Second, the interview transcripts were used to create short stories that exist in the consumers’ minds about

the Mediterranean people and Mediterranean life in general. Both of these insights would shape the selection criteria from the preliminary scent list. The short stories could also be used by OLIVITA Artisan to develop a communication strategy that would be closely aligned with the consumers' thoughts about Mediterranean life.

5. Scents extracted from the interviews

50 distinct scents were identified in the interview transcripts, and were mentioned 113 times in total (See Appendix 1). After a careful elimination of the scents that are not aligned with the OLIVITA Artisan's product line (i.e. garlic, feta cheese, steak), and the scents that already exist in the OLIVITA Artisan's product line (i.e. lavender, lemon, thyme), following scent list was created.

	Scents	Frequency
1	Sea air & sea water	18
2	Olive oil & crushed olives	10
3	Flower scent	5
4	Grass	4
5	Rosemary	4
6	Bougainvillea	3
7	Pine tree	3
8	Oregano	3
9	Mint	2
10	Jasmine	2
11	Basil	2
12	Forest	2
13	Neroli	1
14	Marjoram	1
15	Pomegranate	1
16	Mediterranean night	1

Table 2: Scent list extracted from the interviews

This list, combined with the preliminary scent list based on essential oils' country of origin, would be evaluated based on the insights gained by Voice of the Customer and Short Stories and would form the final scent recommendations for OLIVITA Artisan.

6. Voice of the Customer

The key question while preparing the Affinity Diagram for the Voice of the Customer analysis was “What do people think and feel about Mediterranean life?”. After a deep analysis of the interview transcripts, relevant statements and insights in the transcripts were identified. The statements were reviewed to eliminate duplication, and 87 “voices” were identified. The voices were reviewed in terms of their depth and diversity, and strongest 24 were selected by the use of Method for Priority Marking™, which involved sorting, unrestrained pickup, focused pick up and final check steps. This method allowed the elimination from “valuable many” to the “vital few” statements (Burchill & Brodie, 2005). After identifying the 24 strongest statements, the Level-1 groupings were created by identifying the common themes and connections. The eight Level-1 groupings that reflect a common and concrete themes were created. Level-1 grouping titles were further clustered into three Level-2 groupings to be able to identify a broader frame of reference. Following is the Affinity Diagram that is constructed by Level-1 and Level-2 groupings:¹

¹ The affinity diagram was created by the researcher. Future research might seek customer-sort methods to group customer needs directly from customer input.

What does people think and feel about Mediterranean life?							
Nature and architecture			Community and outdoors		Pleasure from food and being alive		
Historical influences and aesthetics shape the Mediterranean architecture.	Sea is a prominent aspect of Mediterranean life.	There is a heavy involvement with the nature.	Visiting street markets and being outdoors is important.	Everything is done as a community.	Life is slower and more enjoyable in Mediterranean Region.	Mediterranean people love to live.	Mediterranean cuisine is rich and fresh.
You are part of the history every day.	Mediterranean life is clipped to boats in my mind.	Nature is a prominent part of Mediterranean people's life style.	All the markets opening up in the street, people coming to present their local produces to the village.	I can hear the happy family conversations that you have on the dinner table.	You switch to slower pace of life where you get to enjoy the smaller pleasures.	Mediterranean people are warmer, more helpful and require less personal space.	If you live in the Mediterranean, then you will be eating a lot of seafood.
The pink bougainvillea on a white house with blue doors, it seems like it is a snapshot of a life of a person that lives in Mediterranean.	I can smell the salty sea air.	I can hear the sound of cicadas, at night it is extremely cool, calming you down.	You are always outside, walking, part of the city.	I think about the family and community, families gathering together for wine making, have Sunday meals together.	You spend your time without being constantly stimulated, a more healthy way of enjoying things, being more sensitive.	When I think about Mediterranean people, I think about how they love to live.	You feel like you are eating something healthy, fresh, you don't feel guilty.
When somebody says Mediterranean, I automatically think about Italy and Greece.	I can hear the sound of waves and the heat on my skin.	There is a sense of preciousness, organicness, nature made.			It is really to me what we call "far niente", which is the art of not doing anything.		When you say Mediterranean, first food comes to mind is olive oil.
		It is away from the city life's hassle, just you and the nature, all natural not artificial.					Mediterranean cuisine has very vibrant colors and it energizes me.
		Olive tree is a historical symbol for Mediterranean.					

Table 3: Affinity diagram

6.1. Nature and Architecture

Nature and architecture was one of the major themes that participants indicated as part of the Mediterranean life. This level consisted of three major groupings of participant insights, including the influential Mediterranean architecture and history, involvement with the Mediterranean Sea, and the nature.

- **Historical influences and aesthetics shape the Mediterranean architecture**

Participants frequently expressed that current Mediterranean lifestyle has been influenced by the history of the region. They think that previous civilizations have influenced the region and one could still live and breathe that same historical feeling. One of the participants has indicated the following regarding the history of Mediterranean:

“When you think about it, it is probably the only place that the current lifestyle of the whole world started in. The world as we know of today actually started from down there, started from Greece etc. I am not talking about first man. Starting from the Greece, Ottomans, Italians and Renaissance... All the ideas, all the ideas of men, all the ideas of how to live comes from that region so it is not just architecture but it is also a way of life.”

In terms of the architecture, a prominent image in participants’ minds was a white house with blue windows and doors, which has walls wrapped with pink bougainvillea.



Figure 4: Historical influences and aesthetics shape the Mediterranean architecture

- **Sea is a prominent aspect of Mediterranean life**

All of the participants mentioned how sea and Mediterranean life are inseparable. This is also demonstrated by the scent frequency list, where the “sea air” and “sea water” smell has the highest number of mentions in the interview transcripts. According to the participants, sea reminded of holidays as well as the small boats and related activities. For the holiday context, participants described a natural and refreshing environment. One of the participants summarizes,

“It is different than a classic beach context, not an unrealistic light blue sea with white sands, which reminds of tropical places like Maldives or Bahamas, the thing is this reminds me of something real that is darker blue, it is still clean and clear, even transparent, but it has beautiful sands and stones underneath, raw nature. It reminds me of vacations that I took in Mediterranean area. It feels fresh, the sun is shining, invigorating. You would feel special and refreshed every day.”

This sentiment was echoed by others,

“So when I think about the Mediterranean life, I think about the sea, and also the wilderness of the landscape, so even there are lots of trees, it’s not like a properly fashioned garden, it is more like wild and natural. An untouched landscape, which I really like, the coast. You can really feel the heat and that is what I feel when I close my eyes, I can hear the sound of the waves and the heat on my skin. And the crickets singing.”

Many of the participants mentioned how boats were clipped to the Mediterranean culture, and how they have an economical importance in the area as well as the fun and pleasure they bring.

“It is not because of the sea I picked this picture but because of the boats. Basically there is sailor culture in the Mediterranean. First sea faring in human history has started here and it is home to many ancient ports, established trade routes. Every city has a port, and it is actually a hub of trade in the region, so that is a very important part of Mediterranean life for me.”

“Boats make me feel like being able to go places and there is certain energy in that. When you are sailing for example you are harnessing the energy from the wind or the motor. The energy coming out of the travel aspect.”

- **There is a heavy involvement with the nature**

The Mediterranean life style reminded participants about naturalness in every aspect of life, including food, clothing and most importantly being close to nature itself. The participants imagined heavy involvement with the forests and the wilderness in the Mediterranean region, which was also reflected in the images they have chosen. As one participant indicates,

“I can feel peace, tranquility, because it is away from city’s hassle and it is just you and nature, secluded, birds singing, it is all natural not artificial.”

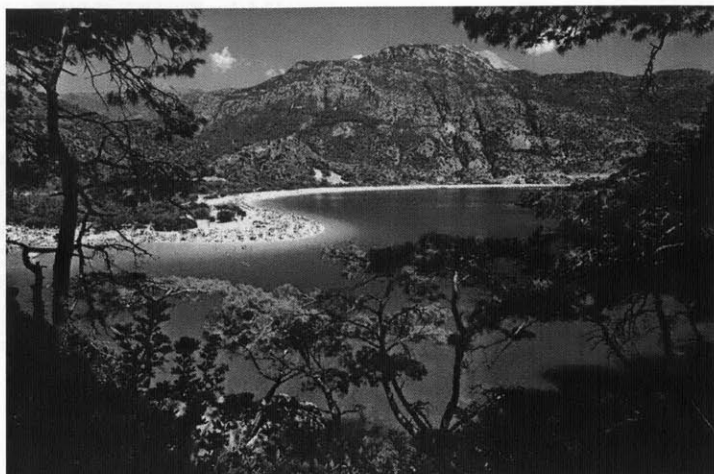


Figure 5: There is a heavy involvement with the nature

Participants also envisioned Mediterranean as a place filled with natural, precious, organic products, which is evident in the following quotes:

“I can smell olive oil, that extra virgin olive oil that is high quality, coming from family owned olive farms. A sweet man is actually taking care of each olive carefully and bringing to my kitchen, not like a factory production, there is a sense of preciousness, organicness. Nature made.”



Figure 6: High quality olives

“I imagine Mediterranean people wearing something that is made of natural fabric that is similar to white cotton with brown shoes or flip flops made of high quality natural leather.”

Dominant visual images in this level include pictures of olive trees, forests, gardens with cicadas, and patios with a forest/sea view.

6.2. Community and outdoors

Another consistent answer regarding the question of “What does people think and feel about Mediterranean life?” was the close relationships among the community. This theme has been reflected in both the emphasis on group and family activities, and also in the high expected involvement in the outdoor markets.

- **Visiting street markets and being outdoors is important**

Many of the participants indicated a lively outdoor market concept as a big part of the Mediterranean life during the interviews. Participants imagined lively conversations between the sellers and themselves, and visualized rich market content with fresh vegetables, fruits, cheeses and fish. Following are the quotes that expresses the street market emphasis on the transcripts:

“(...) it is just what I imagined when I think about what would it be like to live there, I would go and do my shopping in the local, outdoor market, which is what it is like in parts of Spain and Italy.”

“In the market, I feel like I smell the olives being marinated in the olive oil, you have these stands where they have like twenty or thirty different kinds of olives, marinated in different kinds of preparations.”

“You have all the markets opening up in the street and people coming to present their local produces to the village, I really like the atmosphere.”

“I could hear bargaining, and “Come here, this fish is better!” kind of noises, a lively market environment.”

The concept of being outdoors has also been mentioned by several participants as a differentiation point for the Mediterranean, reporting:

“When I think about Mediterranean life, dining with family or friends in an outdoor place with a white tablecloth is a prominent image that comes to mind, especially when you compare it with United States or other countries, that differentiates Mediterranean from others.”

“The Mediterranean life is like you are always outside, walking, you are part of the city.”

- **Everything is done as a community**

An important aspect of the Mediterranean life according to the participants was the feeling of being a part of a community. Numerous participants mentioned the community involvement as a big part of the Mediterranean culture, where the activities such as dinners as a large groups or family activities are common. Dominant visual images include pictures of small groups having dinner in a restaurant, or a family having dinner in their patio.

One of the participants quoted:

“I think about the family and community. I think in places like Sicily, there might be wine making, families gathering together all the time, at least once a week, to have a Sunday meals together. They would have long lunches, it would be warm, and everything would be done as a community, a family.”



Figure 7: Everything is done as a community

Another participant, referring to a picture of group of people having dinner together, commented:

“I can hear the nice cooking sound, the chatters, the happy family conversations that you have on the dinner table after you have your dinner.”

6.3. Pleasure from food and being alive

All of the participants anticipated the Mediterranean life as a pleasurable experience, where they enjoy food and have less concern of time and responsibilities. They reported that they feel “alive” when they visit, or even plan to visit, Mediterranean region. They indicated how the sense of time changes, and small pleasures becomes the most important things in the Mediterranean. Participants also commented on Mediterranean people, about how they love to live, and actually know how to live.

- **Life is slower and more enjoyable in the Mediterranean**

A common theme in all the interviews was the concept of time. Participants indicated that the time passes much slower in the Mediterranean, which was close to the concept of pleasure from the moment. As Mediterranean was closely associated with the holiday context in the

participants' mind, many of the participants argued that people forget about all the world's problems, and just enjoy the moment and the quietness. According to them, they would be in less hurry, less rush compared to the other regions of the world where they would expect a life full of deadlines, concerns and competitions. A participant summarizes,

“This image brings me holiday emotions, and makes me relaxed, peaceful. The time is slower, here you are always in a rush, in a constant stimulation, constantly checking your mail, and here you spend your time without being constantly stimulated, a more healthy way of enjoying things, being more sensitive.”



Figure 8: Life is slower and more enjoyable in the Mediterranean

Figure 8 is also illustrative for this concept. Dominant images for this level consisted of a half-outdoors place such as terrace or patio with a sea view, with several plants and sunshine. Other images also include sea landscapes from different angles, with sands or trees.

- **Mediterranean people love to live**

Mediterranean people and their key traits have also been a lively discussion throughout the interviews. Participants envisioned Mediterranean people as people who have time for themselves, do not overvalue money, appreciate life, and appreciate friendship and family.

They also imagined a person in Mediterranean would have a healthy diet, healthy lifestyle, have time for a “siesta”; he would enjoy the moment and he does not have to work all the time and loves living, being alive, which is evident in the following quotes and image (Figure 9):

“When I think about Mediterranean people, I think about how they love to live. When you think about Americans, you think about people working all day, trying to fulfill the American dream, earning a lot of money. In Mediterranean countries, yes you work, but you also have to have time for yourself, not everything is money, you appreciate life, your friends. You don’t have to work all the time, you just enjoy the moment.”

“I looked for an image for lively Mediterranean people on the streets where people shout, they are excited about everything, and have kind of warmer personalities. It’s better than seriousness, Mediterranean people, they are perceived as warmer, more outgoing and more helpful.”

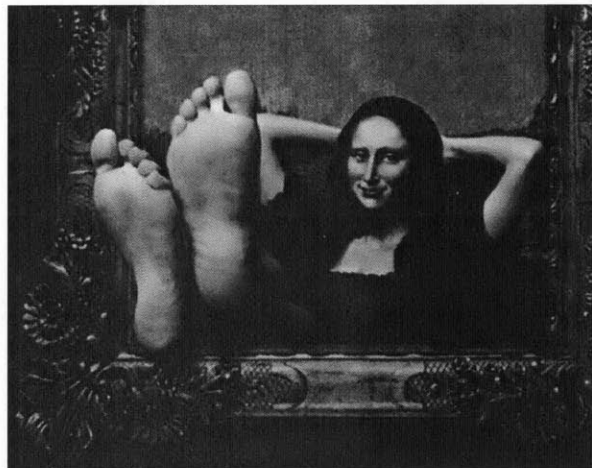


Figure 9: Mediterranean people love to live

- **Mediterranean cuisine is rich and fresh**

The last but one of the most consistent theme during the interviews was the local cuisine of the Mediterranean. All of the participants had included at least one image in their collage, where the images dominantly included olive oil, vegetables, and grilled fish. Following image is representative in this context:



Figure 10: Mediterranean cuisine is rich and fresh

The naturalness aspect of the cuisine was mentioned in many instances. Furthermore, participants also commented on the richness of the cuisine, which, according to them, plays a big role in the higher life satisfaction of the Mediterranean people. The Mediterranean food is always perceived as fresh, healthy and also tasty. Two of the participants enthusiastically reported:

“I can feel joy when I think about this image, it is fun to eat these foods. I am thankful to god that I have all this richness in food in terms of taste, color. Mediterranean cuisine has very vibrant colors and it energizes me. I feel healthy and fit.”

“When I think about Mediterranean life, Mediterranean diet comes to my mind, it is usually recommended by doctors; it has like healthier food options with lots of vegetables and fruit, no meat. And when it is meat, it is mostly fish.”

7. Short stories

Following four short stories were created based on the memories and details mentioned in the interviews. The main concepts in the transcripts were identified and short stories revolving around those concepts were generated, with the help of the sensory metaphors provided by the participants during the interviews. The stories would assist the scent selection as they would provide a background for the Mediterranean life and habits. The stories could also be used by OLIVITA Artisan in the future, to better align their communication strategies with the Mediterranean life.

- **Dinner on the seaside**

It is a classic Saturday evening, where Paolo gets ready for a dinner with his friends. This has been a ritual among his group of friends from college. He feels his white shirt from natural fabric touching his skin. After wearing his brown leather moccasins, he feels ready.

He meets his friends in an Italian restaurant on the seaside. The restaurant has tables with white tablecloths. After they settle, they order a bottle of well-aged Sangiovese, and some bruschettas. They receive extra virgin olive oil, freshly baked bread with a complimentary olive caponata plate. As they are hungry, they start to taste the plates they received. The wine tastes perfect, and he feels the pleasure from drinking a tasty wine in a beautiful summer night, being with friends. He can smell the crusty bread under the bruschettas. He feels he is eating something healthy, fresh; so he does not feel guilty about it, he does not even think about it. He can eat how much he wants. He hears many boats, the sea waves and the warm breeze. It makes him feel peaceful.

For the main course, they all have pastas with different sauces. His order is a pasta with tomato and eggplant sauce, with a hint of basil. He enjoys the texture of fresh parmigiano the waiter is grating for him. While having lively conversations with friends, he feels a nice cold wind, a fresh air, comes to his face that he enjoys. He can hear the animated restaurants, people eating. He hears the bell of the church, the sound of the sea and the boats, and also the seagulls. Enjoying the simple pleasure of the spending time with friends, he feels free of the responsibilities of life. He enjoys the vibrant community, and he feels good.

- **A day in marketplace**

Marine decides to visit the marketplace to shop for the dinner. She first arrives to the fish market. She smells a different kind of saltiness, a watery fresh fish smell. It makes her like touching cold fish, looking at their eyes and seeing how fresh they are. She likes touching crabs, they are cold and kind of wet. She can hear the men, talking loud, not polite, talking to each other, trying to sell her fish but ignoring her. She hears lots of bargaining, there are no fixed prices in the fish market. Fish expertise is common in both shoppers and sellers. Sellers and shoppers are middle aged or older,

she can imagine her grandfather there. Nobody is in a hurry, they are just bargaining. They move slowly and carefully, they value the shopping part. She can feel the artificial cold as it is a fish market to keep fishes cold. After a short bargaining, she buys the three large fishes to grill later, and puts them into her basket. She carries a basket to put the things that she buys from the market, it is made of straw. It is pretty rough, so she can feel the pressure under her arm.

Her next stop is the area where they sell fruits, vegetables and charcuterie. It is an outdoor market, and the temperature is around 80° F. She can hear people having casual and random conversations, taking the time to listen to each other, even it is just talking about the weather. She can also hear sellers are inquiring about each other's sales and knowing what is happening in the community. She can smell the food being prepared. She smells the olives being marinated in the olive oil, and put on stands where they have more than twenty different kinds of olives, marinated in different kinds of preparations. She can smell lots of spices in those preparations. She likes the food stands. She can smell the strong scents of different kinds of melons. She smells cherries. She passes to the ham stand, purchases some Parma ham for tomorrow's lunch. She sees cheeses that smell pretty strong; her favorite is goat cheese which is presented with honey and thyme. She hears sellers shouting their offers, and they claim how good their products are. Everyone is in a good mood, so it makes things nicer, people make her taste their product because they are very proud of what they produce. She touches an eggplant, and feeling how smooth it is. She does the same thing with the tomatoes. She can hear people talking; the sellers are telling people how much it is, and telling people not to squeeze anything. There is always a stand that sells bathing suits or skirts, traditional Provence skirts. She doesn't know who still buys them but she would be sad not to see it.

After a short walk, she enters a shop that sells flavored Marseille soaps. They are very colorful and they smell quite strong. It reminds her of a ritual when she was a little girl, where she would go to the same soap shop with her mother a couple of times a year, just to see all the soaps with all the colors and the smells, and getting one soap; she was so happy when she could buy one soap of a certain color. She buys a lavender soap, and leaves the store smiling.

- **City life**

It is an early summer day. Stephane leaves the work an hour early. His workplace is relaxed in terms of working hours. He arranges a meeting with his close friends for coffee. The weather is nice, he feels the warm, fresh breeze in the air. He passes a beautiful street with historical houses with flowers and small gardens. He loves the white houses with blue windows, wrapped with pink bougainvillea; a classic Mediterranean view he thinks. There are no unnecessary sounds, there is peace. There is a feeling of summer, the smell of fresh flowers. He realizes there is a hint of jasmine smell, some orange and smell of green like when he goes in to a forest. He feels the texture of roads and steps, made of stone. He thinks that the city itself has been there for ages. He starts to feel like he is part of a history every day. The roads are narrow, he sees parked small cars that are common in the city.

After entering the main road, he can hear the conversations from a coffee shop outdoors, lots of people are talking, laughing. People are walking along the street, dressed tastefully and wearing a lot of bright colors; he thinks they have a sense of fashion in Mediterranean. He smells the coffee, also smells gelato from an ice cream shop. He starts to smell the street as he continues to walk. There is a combination of smell of the stone, dirt, a mixture of smells coming from coffee shops, and flowers. Maybe a little bit of cigarette smoke as people are smoking outside. He realizes people are walking with a lot of perfume. It is like summery, fresh perfume, not disturbing. It has a lot of flower notes in it. He can hear cars; car horns. People talking on the phone, walking and talking to each other.

After meeting his friends, he enters an outdoor café. It has a slight sea view. The weather is good, it is hot but a little bit windy. He has his thin coat over him. They order espressos, and start to chat. He feels the enjoyment, a feeling of belonging. He does not think about daily problems. He feels like he worked hard enough that day, so he just enjoys himself, feels good about himself. There is a feeling of vacation in his everyday life. He feels the metal on the chair he is sitting; it has a distinct design, yet comfortable. He observes the texture of the stone walls of the café, and touches it

secretly, it feels hot. Must probably they became hot during the day because of the direct sunlight. He enjoys the company of his friends, while drinking his espresso that has a strong smell, delicious.

- **A weekend day in the life of a Mediterranean person**

Around 10 am, Flor packs up her bag to go to the beach with her family. Putting their natural fiber hats on, they have a short walk on their way to beach. Temperature is low 80s. After they put their towels on the sunbed, she closes her eyes and inhales the salty sea air, she enjoys it. She can feel the heat on her skin. It is not a very secluded beach so she hears people, not very loudly, but the voices are there. She looks back wilderness of the landscape of the mountains; so even there are lots of trees it's not like a properly fashioned forest, it's more wild and natural. She enjoys the untouched landscape. She sunbathes for a while, then decides to go for a swim.

She feels the transition of the texture under her feet, from hot sand to chilled sea water. She enjoys the salty sea scent, and the ideal temperature of the water. The sea is clear, pure. There are some pebbles touching her feet, and she feels the pure sand after a while. What she could hear is the seagulls and a nice sound of waves in the mid tempo. It is refreshing; she feels like she is living in the moment.

After a long swim and relaxing, she heads back to the sunbeds with a taste of salt in her mouth. She feels the stickiness on her body caused by the sea salt. She sits on the bed under the umbrella, dries herself with a towel, and lies down. She prefers to be in the shade between 12 and 4 pm, and she enjoys that free time on the beach as she has time to read all the books that she had not have the time to read, or just to play board games with her brothers and parents. She enjoys the slow pace of life. She sips her cold soda and tastes the fresh melons. She could hear the children playing on the beach. She feels the texture of hot sands under her feet and enjoys it. She feels a warm breeze and watches a small boat that is approaching. She feels the peace, tranquility, because it is away from city's hassle and it is just her and nature, secluded, birds singing. It is all natural, not artificial. After 4 pm, she goes to swim one more time with her family; she feels a sense of belonging while swimming and playing with them.

They leave the beach around 6 pm as the sun starts to go down. After a shower, she feels refreshed. She smells the food being prepared, realizes that her parents have started cooking dinner, and goes to kitchen to help them. They are doing everything as a family. After the preparation, they carry cutlery to the patio to have dinner. It is a warm summer night with a slight breeze. She can hear the cicadas singing. There is extra virgin olive oil with thyme on the table that she bought from the marketplace. She opens a bottle of rose wine to accompany the fish they have grilled. They start with a salad that has tomatoes, mozzarella and basil. They continue with the grilled fish cooked with tomatoes and peppers, has a little bit of extra virgin olive oil on top. She enjoys the food which is colorful and rich in flavor; there are lots of spices and herbs and it is very healthy. She feels the pleasure of being seated with everyone around the table and sitting for 3-4 hours, just eating and discussing.

8. Recommendations for OLIVITA Artisan

After taking the relevant scent list from the transcript analysis, the Voice of the Customer analysis and short stories into consideration, comparing them with the global fragrance trends and the preliminary scent list for OLIVITA Artisan based on the essential oils' countries of origin, and doing an extensive research on the applicability and the origins of the remaining scents on the list, following are the scent recommendations for OLIVITA Artisan.

- **Salty sea air:** As the sea air has been constantly mentioned as a scent they would smell in Mediterranean by participants, a product scent depicting the feeling of being close to a sea would be strongly aligned with OLIVITA Artisan's brand image. Even though OLIVITA Artisan offers "Pure Aegean" as a bath and body gel, considering the scent of salty Mediterranean air as a potential scent for its products would be plausible.
- **Bougainvillea:** Even though most of the bougainvillea species do not carry a scent, "Bougainvillea Arborea" is the only variety that is fragrant, holding a nice smell that is similar to the flower of "honeysuckle". As the bougainvillea on the white houses has been a prominent Mediterranean image in the participants' minds, a product with a bougainvillea scent could be offered by OLIVITA Artisan.

- **Mediterranean night:** This conceptual scent would consist of a combination of flower, garden and fresh cut grass scents; the scents that has been mentioned frequently during the interviews. It is a concept that participants visualize in their minds, where they can smell all these scents while sitting outdoors, hearing cicadas, feeling a slight breeze in the air, enjoying the fresh air, and looking at the clear sky. A product with a combination of these scents would meet the needs of the consumers who would like to experience such a concept in their homes.
- **Rosemary:** As an essential oil originated in the Mediterranean region, rosemary was a popular scent as well as a flavor during the interviews; thus it could be considered as one of the new scents for the product line of OLIVITA Artisan.
- **Oregano:** As an essential oil originated in the Mediterranean region, Oregano was also a popular scent during the interviews. Mentioned together with the rosemary frequently, oregano could be used as part of a blend where the concept of Mediterranean herbs could be depicted. Depending on the OLIVITA Artisan's product offering strategy, these two herbs could be offered together as a combination, or as individual scents for different products.
- **Mediterranean wilderness:** This conceptual scent would consist of the combination of pine and greenery scents to carry consumer to the Mediterranean forests. The forests behind the sea, its naturalness and fresh air, the existence of the pine trees have been concepts that are frequently mentioned in the interviews. A scent depicting the feeling of forests of the Mediterranean would meet the needs of such consumers.
- **Neroli & Jasmine:** Neroli and Jasmine have been the scents that are moderately mentioned during the interviews. The main reason for the recommendation comes from the popularity of a scent in the interviews, defined as "floral". As Jasmine and Neroli have also been a preference in the participants, a combination of Jasmine and Neroli could be used to meet the needs of the consumers who are looking for a floral scent in the OLIVITA Artisan product offerings.

9. Conclusion

To be able to recommend new scents to OLIVITA Artisan's product line, both primary and secondary research were conducted. In terms of primary research, ten in-depth interviews using the Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET) have been administrated, transcribed and analyzed via the "Voice of the Customer" process; and the insights from participants were created to use short stories. Furthermore, the fragrance trends in United States and the Mediterranean region based essential oils were investigated as part of the secondary research. As a result of the studies, "Bougainvillea", "Rosemary", "Oregano" and "Neroli & Jasmine" have been recommended as the pure scents, and "Salty sea air", "Mediterranean night" and "Mediterranean wilderness" have been recommended as the conceptual scents.

9.1. Limitations and further research

Three conceptual and four pure scents are recommended to OLIVITA Artisan in this thesis based on the methods and the sample. The methods are proof of concept based on convenience sample, but if the concepts generalize and are proven with further testing and, perhaps, in vivo experimentation, they could be valuable for OLIVITA Artisan. At minimum, this thesis suggests that the ZMET methods are a valuable tool to provide insight on the selection of scents. The stories provide a rich context that might be used in communications strategies to further enhance the brand.

To verify the demand for these scents, further research using a more-representative and larger sample is appropriate. Further qualitative research, scent tests with the final products, and Implicit Association Test (IAT) for testing the associations with these scents could be conducted. Once example scents are finalized, the testing could proceed through the standard product-development funnel as the product moves from concept, to realization, to test markets, to full scale launch.

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11. Appendix

	Scents	Frequency
1	Sea air & water	18
2	Olive oil & crushed olives	10
3	Flower scent	5
4	Grass	4
5	Bread	4
6	Lemon	4
7	Rosemary	4
8	Bougainvillea	3
9	Thyme	3
10	Garlic	3
11	Wine	3
12	Pine tree	3
13	Oregano	3
14	Melon	2
15	Mint	2
16	Tomatoes	2
17	Coffee	2
18	Jasmine	2
19	Basil	2
20	Parsley	2
21	Sunscreen	2
22	Lavender	2
23	Mediterranean night	1
24	Neroli	1
25	Steak	1
26	Cotton	1
27	Leather	1
28	Tropical cocktails	1
29	Forest	1
30	Ice cream	1
31	Feta	1
32	Fresh plant smell	1
33	Wood	1
34	Fishnet	1
35	City smell	1
36	Dusty archive	1
37	Popcorns at the airport	1
38	Watermelon	1
39	Vegetables	1
40	Onion	1
41	Sunbaked seaweed	1
42	Linden tree	1
43	Marjoram	1

44	Cherry	1
45	Cheese	1
46	Parma ham	1
47	Fish soup	1
48	Cumin	1
49	Vanilla	1
50	Pomegranate	1
		113