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# Invited to Touch: How Tactile Expertise and Personality traits influence the Aesthetic appraisal of visually presented tactile materials

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## Abstract

The haptic modality plays a crucial role in humans' existence, promoting social bonding, favouring information gathering, providing high levels of arousal. So far, tactile aesthetics' field, has revealed some underlying preferences in the haptic exploration related to intrinsic stimulus properties, the principle of unity and variety and the Gestalt laws of grouping (Gallace & Spence, 2011; Klatzky & Peck, 2012). However, attractiveness to human touch has emerged to be also influenced by individual's characteristics, e.g., the innate proclivity to touch objects for hedonic purposes, and degree of familiarity, according to a mere exposure effect, further highlighting the impact of top-down processes on haptic hedonic reactions (Etzi et al., 2014; Nagano et al., 2013).

This study aims to investigate how individuals' differences (e.g., tactile expertise, need for touch, familiarity, personality traits) impact the aesthetic appraisal of eighteen videos, depicting a manipulation of usual (e.g., sandpaper) and unusual (e.g., crinoline) materials, by means of a 7-point Semantic differential scale.

Judgments of liking, interest, pleasantness, perceived haptic invitation will be derived and correlated with surfaces physical properties and individuals' characteristics.

Pleasantness ratings are expected to be influenced by participants degree of familiarity, tactile expertise and surface's conveyed comfort, whereas materials touch-ability is assumed to be affected by subjective need for touch, Openness to experience, expertise.

The present study will contribute to gain knowledge in a field still partially known, while also pointing to individual differences as potential crucial factors that might be incorporated into product design, to better target, fulfil consumers' tactile needs.

**Keywords:** Haptic aesthetics, personality traits, touch perception, textures perception, need for touch, haptic expertise

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