

Chapter 49

A Neuroaesthetic Approach to the Search of Beauty From the Consumer's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Consumers pursue hedonism and beauty throughout the decision-making processes regarding purchases and consumption. The five senses (sensory marketing) will be essential in the aesthetic perception that consumers have in these processes. Therefore, consumers will go to points of purchase that they consider attractive. Consumers want the packaging of the products to satisfy their needs of making a gift to other people or to themselves. The product needs to be visually appealing – we can even think of something as simple as a piece of fruit, or something much more sophisticated, such as a cellular phone. Advertising strategies (billboards, commercials) need to stimulate this quest for beauty. Marketing strategists have been aware of this reality for a long time. However, the new neuromarketing and neuroaesthetic techniques can be useful complements to understand the consumers quest for beauty.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers pursue hedonism and beauty throughout the decision-making processes regarding purchases and consumption. Even though rationality and functionality are part of these processes, the role of emotions is also evident. The five senses (sensory marketing) will be essential in the aesthetic perception that consumers have in these processes.

Therefore, consumers will go to points of purchase which they consider attractive, such as emblematic shopping streets, shopping malls with magnificent architecture, well-decorated and well-furbished designer brand stores, window displays which show the most important features of a store without being necessary to go inside it, well-lit and tidy supermarkets and so on.

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Consumers want the packaging of the products to satisfy their needs of making a gift to other people or to themselves. They also want the color combination to be attractive and to boost their mood or the mood of the person who they would like to please.

The product needs to be visually appealing –we can even think of something as simple as a piece of fruit, or something much more sophisticated, such as a cellular phone.

Advertising strategies (billboards, commercials...) need to stimulate this quest for beauty.

Marketing strategists have been aware of this reality for a long time. However, the new neuromarketing and neuroaesthetic techniques can be useful complements to understand the consumers' quest for beauty.

The objectives of this article are to analyze the aforementioned consumers' quest for beauty, by specifying neuromarketing's possibilities and techniques, and to define the concept of neuroaesthetics and its usefulness.

BACKGROUND

A good starting point is the research carried out by Wang, Cruthirds, Axxin & Guo, C. (2013) about the essential value of aesthetics in consumer marketing. According to these authors, there has been disagreement among scholars regarding this aspect throughout the years. Nevertheless, this concept is completely accepted nowadays.

Strategic marketing and specific actions on marketing variables are heading in this direction.

As a useful tool to obtain information throughout the marketing process (Ferrer G.G., 2012), market research uses conventional or non-conventional (more innovative) techniques to increase the aesthetic value of the items to be offered to the consumer.

Consumers will appreciate beauty and aesthetics from the moment when the purchasing process begins. Everything will be sensorial stimuli which consumers perceive in a unique and different way. The five senses will become essential and a company's success will depend, to a great extent, on the fact that the individual's sensory sensations are satisfactory.

The product and everything that surrounds it should be aesthetic and beautiful in the eyes of the consumers. Throughout the chapter, the value of aesthetics in the point of purchase, packaging, advertising strategy and in the product itself will be analyzed.

As we will see throughout the chapter, non-conventional market research about neuromarketing and neuroaesthetics will obtain physiological and biological measurements as a sign of the individuals' feelings: how they perceive advertising, billboards, promotions, packaging, brands, the place of purchase or the product itself.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE ARTICLE

Aesthetics in the Points of Purchase

Concerning the purchase of convenience products, it is usual that consumers look for a good price. However, this is not the only factor that has an influence on the products' purchase. In fact, we can list several aspects which are directly related to a delightful aesthetic combination, such as lighting, well-organized corridors and shelves and a rich combination of smells (Aldana, Serpa, Ortega & Ochoa,

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