



Neuromarketing: A New Approach for Fashion Marketing?

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The predominant focus of marketing research is done on the conscious mind but future marketing research needs to simultaneously focus on understanding both the conscious and nonconscious mind (Zaltman, 2000). Six underlying principles of the human brain suggest: 1) the nonconscious mind governs thought processes; 2) the majority of human communication is non-verbal (especially in an emotional context); 3) the majority of the human brain is dedicated to deciphering visual information; 4) humans think in visual representations, not words; 5) feeling or emotions precede thoughts; and the human brain disregards 60% of the information it is presented with during half a day (Ebbinghaus, 1992). These basic principles of the human brain help build the foundation in understanding the importance and relevance of using neuroscientific techniques in consumer marketing research. Neuromarketing or consumer neuroscience is a sub-area of neuroeconomics that addresses marketing relevant problems with methods and insights from brain research (Fugate, 2007; Lee et al., 2007). The goal of this emerging discipline is the transfer of insights from neurology to research in consumer behavior by applying neuroscientific methods (Stoll et al., 2008). The direct observation of the reactions within the brain is available through the use of imaging techniques, such as functional magnetic imaging (fMRI), which is providing a completely different perspective of the consumer's experience (Plassmann, Kenning, and Ahlert, 2007).

Neuromarketing is still in its infancy and there is no such research in the field of fashion marketing. Considering that the fashion industry is directed by trends, fads, and visual stimulus, consumer neuroscience may have the potential to significantly influence a wide array of fashion concepts, thereby impacting numerous sectors in the industry. Furthermore, there is a paucity of

consumer neuroscientific research related explicitly to fashion. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is twofold: 1) to review neuromarketing research that may be applicable to the fashion industry-at-large and 2) to address potential implications for future research in fashion marketing. The studies examined in this paper highlight the current stream of research using brain-based measures in consumer-related disciplines. To our knowledge, following a thorough review of the literature, there has been only one neuroscientific study, which explicitly investigated fashion stimulus (e.g., Plassmann et al., 2007). Although current neuromarketing research may be generalizable to fashion marketing constructs and theories, future study is needed to examine the validity from a fashion-centric point of view. Future fashion-related neuroscientific studies may find the neural mechanisms involved in processing fashion-related information or stimuli different from other consumer-related processes and therefore not directly generalizable. The use of neuroscientific methods in fashion marketing research may help clarify and validate behavioral constructs and measures while facilitating theory development and testing.

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