

Neuro-Marketing, Neuro-Aesthetics!

In collaboration with the *Auburn University MRI Research Center*, CADS researchers employ *neuroscience* to study consumer decision making processes in response to product design and market environments.

Neuroscience Program in Decision Making under Scarcity



Scarcity increases the perceived value of an offering. This research program generates holistic knowledge of consumers' biased decision making processes under scarcity conditions artificially manipulated by marketers and provides answers to questions such as (1) How is consumers' cognitive information processing is manipulated by scarcity, (2) What is the role of emotion in human decision making under scarcity,

(3) What is the role of motivational states that may moderate the scarcity effect, and (4) What personal characteristics make consumers more or less susceptible to the scarcity effect.

Researchers

Wi-Suk Kwon, Human Sciences Associate Professor of Retailing
Sang-Eun Byun, Associate Professor
Sandra Forsythe, Wrangler Professor

Funding

AU Intramural Grant Program

Neuroscience Program in Product Design and Aesthetics

Psychometric and neural studies test the effects of contrasting design strategies of simplicity and complexity on judgments of beauty and purchase intent of hedonic and utilitarian consumer products, while examining the neuropsychological route through which perception of beauty influences purchase. In doing so, this project answers the following critical questions:

1. How does the product design influence consumers' purchase decisions?
2. How should companies design products to maximize value and sales?
3. What are overarching design guidelines for different product categories that fall on a continuum from utilitarian to hedonic?

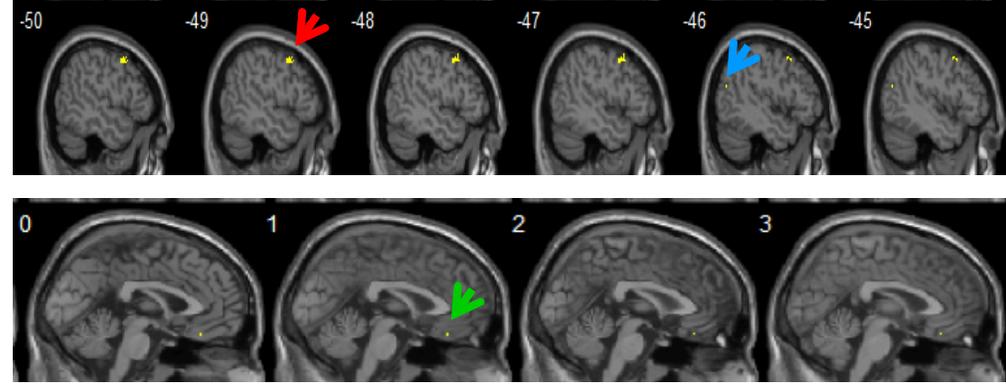
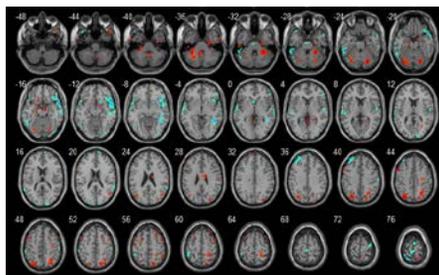
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Researchers

Veena Chattaraman, Associate Professor
Hye Jeong Kim, Assistant Professor

Funding

Marketing Science Institute



Consumer Decision Making Research

Consumer Trends
 Market Environment
 Neuro-Marketing, Neuro-Aesthetics!

Auburn University
 Department of Consumer & Design Sciences
 College of Human Sciences

Consumer Trends

CADS researchers have long-standing research programs that generate valuable insights on *ever-changing consumer trends*. These programs aim at offering actionable recommendations to help the industry better meet the consumer needs. Many programs in this topic address *underserved consumer populations* such as male consumers, Hispanic consumers, and senior consumers.

New-Men Project

This project aims to understand a shifting male consumer culture, in particular, recent changes in how men think about fashion and lifestyle issues and evaluate and purchase clothing. Employing both qualitative and quantitative methods to study shifting masculinities, this study analyzes the degree of synchronicity between consumers and industry, and provides fundamental research evidence to suggest a new strategic path forward for the U.S. menswear industry.

This research examines how the menswear industry can become more strategic and flexible in order to adapt to a changing marketplace.

Objectives:

1. Analyze the degree of synchronicity between consumer and industrial perspectives, and identify the implications of a shifting male consumer culture for the textile and apparel industrial complex.
2. Compare diverse American men's relationships with fashion as a function of gender identity and lifestyle.

Multiple Disciplines, Multiple Methodologies:

In order to address research aims, we have assembled a multidisciplinary research team. The following excerpts reveal our diverse methodological approaches, alongside our research findings.

Ethnographic Research: Documentation of shifting male consumer culture through participant observation and in-depth interviews.

Quantitative Consumer Survey: Administered to approximately 120 men, this questionnaire sought respondents' advice to clothing manufacturers regarding marketing, fit, and satisfaction, particularly for men of their generation.

Visual database and design probe: An online, interactive survey conducted with retailers and designers nationwide.

Industry Interviews: We have evaluated a series of interviews with companies that produce menswear. These interviews focus on the changing dynamic of the design, production, and marketing of menswear.

Discourse Analysis: Left: In-depth discourse analysis of both consumer and industry publications such as *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Time*, *FOR*, and *Men*, which focus on defining fashion advice to a large population of men in America.

Describe What You See: Below: This exercise, asking participants to "describe what they see," reveals the hidden interplay between visual and verbal domains.

Researcher
Wi-Suk Kwon, Human Sciences Associate Professor of Retailing

Funding
 National Textile Center – Department of Commerce

Market Environment

CADS researchers run diverse research programs to investigate changing market environments and invent innovative research methodologies to elicit market insights.

Industry-Consumer Market Cognition Gap Project

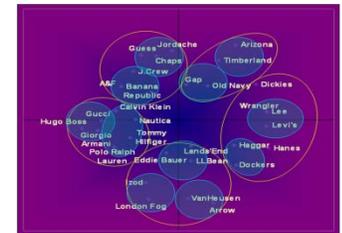


An accurate identification of competitors is of utmost importance to firms; yet, many marketers stick with a narrow definition of competitors based on supply-side factors, failing to take into account demand-side factors (i.e., consumers' perspectives). This project team invented a transformative, new web-based brand sorting tool to collect cognitive market structure data from consumers and marketers. This innovative research tool allowed the research team to produce market structure maps of consumers vs. marketers based on brand

sorting (categorization) data from large, representative consumer and industry samples. This methodological advance eliminated the existing limitation of the sorting technique that had been permitted for only a small sample due to the complexity of execution and analysis.

Researcher
Wi-Suk Kwon, Human Sciences Associate Professor

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Hispanic Consumer Project

Hispanic target marketing efforts employed by the U.S. apparel manufacturing and retail sectors suffer from an important limitation – the assumption that the sizeable U.S. Hispanic market is homogeneous. The U.S. Hispanics are characterized by multidimensional heterogeneity, and their preferences for apparel and retail products are impacted by their levels of acculturation, Hispanic origin, and generational status. Despite this, no studies have systematically identified segment-specific apparel needs, apparel attribute preferences, brand preferences and purchase behaviors of the Hispanic market. This project addresses this research gap at a crucial time when increased success within the growing Hispanic market can aid in the path to retail recovery.

Researcher
Veena Chattaraman, Associate Professor

