A Typology of Consumption Value: Teasing Out the Unique Properties of Utilitarian, Symbolic, Experiential, and Aesthetic Consumption Qualities

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In response to ambiguous and unclear conceptualization of well-known perspectives on consumption value, this research develops a typology of consumption. Based on a reading of relevant literature, essentially two dimensions give themselves - the purpose of the value and the nature of its attributes. In terms of purpose, value can be defined with respect to its ability to serve as means to some further ends versus its ability to serve as an end in itself. In terms of attribute nature, the attributes providing the value can be either immediately available for judgment through the consumers’ perceptual receptors or they may need to be construed in order to be judged properly.

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“Written Just for Me?!?” The Role of Consumer-Related Factors in the Persuasiveness of Personalized Communication
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Abstract
This study examined the effectiveness of personalized email newsletters in terms of increased attention, processing, attitude, intention, and behavior by means of an experiment (N=194). Participants randomly received either a newsletter containing one of three personalization strategies (identification, raising expectation of personalization, and contextualization) or a nonpersonalized one. Neither of the personalized messages was found to be superior to a standard message. However, a comparison of the personalization strategies showed that they were effective for different stages of the persuasion process, and the effects were moderated by consumers’ need for uniqueness, trust, and privacy concerns.

Does the Distribution-Sales Relationship Differ Between Channels and Countries? An Empirical Analysis
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Although it is intuitive that retailers should increase coverage of products that are selling well, it is somewhat less intuitive that retailers should take the risk of increasing coverage before sales increases have materialized in an effort to push these products on consumers. We use a simultaneous equation model to analyze sales and distribution coverage of two brands of an innovative new consumer durable in competing types of distribution channels in four European countries in order to examine whether retailers in different countries make their coverage decisions for a new durable product in the same ways.

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In response to ambiguous and unclear conceptualization of well-known perspectives on consumption value, this research develops a typology of consumption. Based on a reading of relevant literature, essentially two dimensions give themselves-the purpose of the value and the nature of its attributes. In terms of purpose, value can be defined with respect to its ability to serve as means to some further ends versus its ability to serve as an end in itself. In terms of attribute nature, the attributes providing the value can be either immediately available for judgment through the consumers’ perceptual receptors or they may need to be construed in order to be judged properly.

(Key words: Consumption value, typology, utilitarian, symbolic, experiential, aesthetic)

Although consumers still, and to a considerable extent, derive value from bundles of attributes in terms of their ability to provide utility in relation to a consumers’ particular goal, other sources of value have been identified. Both symbolic and experiential or hedonic consumption have emerged and are now household names in the domain of consumer research, and more recently, the aesthetic aspects of consumption are receiving increased attention among consumer researchers. Unfortunately, these concepts are understood in diverse and sometimes overlapping ways.

This proposed research therefore seeks to identify unique categories of consumption value, including aesthetic value, that are distinguishable from one another and presumably have differential effect on consumer behavior. The current research develops a typology of consumption value bottom-up. Essentially, two dimensions present themselves, the purpose of the value (quality) and the nature of its attributes. In terms of purpose, value can be defined with respect to an object’s ability to serve as means to some further ends and its ability to serve as an end in itself. In terms of attribute nature, the attributes providing the value can be either immediately available for judgment through the perceptual receptors or they may need to be construed in order to be judged properly.

UTILITARIAN VALUE
Utilitarian value refers to something’s value as determined by its use or function. In this perspective, an object has utilitarian value to the extent that consumer find it useful to accomplish a goal they might have and the consumer’s endeavors are motivated by this extrinsic goal (Bettman 1979; Ratchford 1975).
A typical example of such value is the value a consumer obtains from taking allergy medicine in order to lessen bodily reactions to pollen. In this respect, utilitarian value is assessed against the underlying object’s ability to serve as a means to accomplish the end goal for the consumer. On the purpose dimension then, utilitarian value is a means to some further end.

Along the second dimension—attribute nature, the utilitarian perspective on consumption suggests that objects provide value or utility on the basis of their relatively objective and concrete features (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982).

**SYMBOLIC VALUE**

Symbolic value refers to the ability of a consumption object to, beyond the tangible, physical characteristics of material objects, carry cultural and personal meanings (Holt 1995; Levy 1959; Sirgy 1982). For example, if you consume artefacts because such objects classify you as culturally apt or rich in social capital the value of the underlying object is symbolic. In this respect, the underlying object functions as a social tool, serving as a means of communication between the individual and his significant references (Grubb and Grathwohl 1967). Like utilitarian value, symbolic value is also defined in relation to some end or outcome. In particular, symbolic value is instrumental (means) in classifying consumers in desirable social strata and roles or providing a certain self-image (ends).

Unlike utilitarian value, however, symbolic value is not directly obtained from the physical attributes of the object, but rather built on non-product related or extrinsic entities, such as social groups or ego-identification (Keller 1993; Lefkoff-Hagius and Mason 1993), that consumers use to express who they are and who they are not. Instead of being taken at face value, product attributes are recoded into cultural meaning and or/social symbols (McCracken 1986) and the relationship between the underlying products’ physical attributes and the brands’ benefits are obscured or even vanishes (some brands of sunglasses come with aesthetic liking, characterized by an attention to the intrinsic organization of the object’s various components irrespective of any extrinsic criterion such as consumption goals, is known as “purposiveness without a purpose” and makes the aesthetic judgment a gestalt-type judgment. Gestalts concern properties that are intrinsically determined as being part of a whole or a pattern, rather than being extrinsically determined (Katz 1950; Koffka 1935; Köhler 1929; Wertheimer 1938).

An important distinction between experiential and aesthetic judgment is that the former is associated with emotions and the latter with cognition. Sense-based judgments totally bypass cognition because sensation is directly linked to perception. They can therefore not be reflective and cognitive. Conversely, the aesthetic judgments, with which Kant is concerned, do involve cognition. Although it is the process of cognition rather than the result of it that is important, the judgment of taste is based on cognition. In judgments of taste, it is the cognitive activity of comparison that produces aesthetic pleasure.
REFERENCES


Imagined Brands in Global Brand Culture: China and the Beijing Olympic Opening Ceremony

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Extended Abstract

Explorations in brand culture suggest: “If brands exist as cultural, ideological, and political objects, then brand researchers require tools developed to understand culture, politics, and ideology, in conjunction with more typical branding concepts, such as equity, strategy and value” (Schroeder & Salzer-Mörling, 2006). This paper looks at China’s paths toward the Olympics especially the opening ceremony