

Aesthetic Identifiability: The Effect of Brand Identification Through Product Aesthetics on Sales

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Abstract

The identifiability of a brand is a core concern for several areas of marketing research. Interestingly, a product's suitability for identifying its parent brand has not been researched yet. Therefore, we introduce the construct of aesthetic identifiability, which assesses how well a product can be assigned to its parent brand based on its visual appearance. Building on associative network models of memory we conceptualize aesthetic identifiability as including three mutually exclusive components, namely true identification, false identification and non-identification. Our sales predictions are tested with an econometric model in the domain of cars. The results confirm the effectiveness of high shares of true identification and the detrimental effect of high shares of false identification. High shares of non-identification are found to be detrimental for expensive products only. Finally, we show that distributional shifts between the three components have substantial economic impact.

Keywords: *brand identification; aesthetic identifiability; product aesthetics*

Track: Product and Brand Management