Chapter 8
Marketing Meets Neuroscience:
Useful Insights for Gender Subgroups During the Observation of TV Ads

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, findings of an experiment aimed to investigate cognitive changes of cerebral activity during the observation of TV commercials will be presented. In particular, it has been recorded Electroencephalographic data (EEG) from a group of 24 healthy subjects during the observation of a series of TV advertisements. The

group was divided by gender (male, female). Comparisons of cerebral index previously defined have been performed to highlight gender differences between scenes of interest of a specific TV commercials and the influence of the speaker's gender on the subgroups perception. Findings show how EEG methodologies could be used to obtain information not obtainable otherwise with verbal interviews. These cerebral index could help to analyze the perception of TV advertisements according to the target consumer's gender.

INTRODUCTION

Goal of any advertising campaign is to convey a specific message and reach a specific audience. Optimize advertising investments getting a good effectiveness of their communication is one of the main objectives of a company. It is known how the big companies invest a significant portion of their budget to promote their products or to improve their image and one of the most used channels is the television, the most effective communication medium to reach the greatest number possible of potential customers.

Recently, a rapidly growing approach within consumer research has developed under the label of "consumer neuroscience." Its goal is to use insights and methods from neuroscience to enhance the understanding of consumer behavior. The application of neuroscience to consumer psychology has gained popularity over the past decade in academic research and business practice. In fact, the goal of consumer neuroscience is to adapt methods and theories from neuroscience combined with behavioral theories to develop a neuropsychologically sound theory to understand the consumer behavior.

The birth of the field of consumer neuroscience has generated wide-ranging, ongoing debates of whether this hybrid field benefits its parent disciplines (consumer psychology and neuroscience) and, within them, what forms these benefits might take (Ariely & Berns, 2010; Kenning & Plassmann, 2005; Lee et al., 2007; Plassmann et al., 2007).

In these last years, findings from the consumer neuroscience experiments deconstruct the picture of perfectly rational humans, which are deliberating their choices by weighting costs and benefits until a deliberative equilibrium is reached. Although humans are definitely capable of conscious deliberation, many, if not most economically relevant decision processes are characterized by certain other features: first, they rely on automatic, fast and effective cognitive processes, which are not under direct volitional control (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Second, they are under the influence of unrecognized and finely tuned affective mechanisms, which often play a decisive role in action (Damasio et al., 1996; Davidson et al., 1999; Panksepp

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