

## Chapter 76

# Neuromarketing from the Perspective of Advertising Professionals: A Battle between Creatives and Strategic Planners

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the senior level advertising agency employees that work in the creative and strategic planning departments to learn about their opinions on neuromarketing and the various issues related to neuromarketing. Interpretative phenomenology analysis (IPA) was used to examine the research data. The study reveals three interpretive themes: 1) Neuromarketing and advertising research (the role of research in advertising – applying neuromarketing to advertising); 2) perspectives on neuromarketing and related topics (concerns about creativity in advertising – ethical issues); and 3) the future of neuromarketing. The results from this study indicate that advertising professionals are aware of neuroscience, but opinions on the use of neuroscience in marketing and advertising differ mostly based on the department they work in at the agency.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Consumer and market research has always been important for the advertising industry in order to understand consumers. Especially, in the beginning of the 20th century this research began to gain importance for advertising professionals using prominent researchers George Gallup, Claude C. Hopkins, Raymond Rubicam and Rosser Reeves and under the influence of the dominant modernist philosophy. Advertising agencies of the time quickly began to establish dedicated research departments. However, with regard to creativity in the advertisement industry, a vicious cycle is caused by this research as it focuses on consumer understanding and thereby making advertisement a scientific activity rather than an artistic one. This focus began to be questioned under the developing “creative revolution,” which was promoted by Bill Bernbach in the 1950s.

Even today, questions with regards to research are still an issue in advertising. Although advertising professionals working in creative departments at agencies strongly criticize this method, neither clients nor agency management can give up conducting research during all stages of advertising activities. Despite their effectiveness being often debated by advertising professionals, advertising research still maintains prominence, even with the most modern advertising approaches.

Undoubtedly, one of the most debated and discussed research approaches today is neuromarketing. For some, neuromarketing represents the “golden age” of marketing and advertising since it attempts to use scientific data to crack the code of consumers’ decision-making processes. However, some believe it is a waste of money and time. Although it is under heavy criticism because of the techniques it employs and ethical concerns, neuromarketing continues to gain popularity in marketing and advertising research.

The aim of this study is to present how the concept of neuromarketing, which in recent years has become more popular in the advertising sector in Turkey, is perceived by managers in this area and the viewpoints of managers in the sector with regards to various issues related to neuromarketing.

## **Background**

As a new marketing approach, neuromarketing challenges the traditional research methods (Ariely & Berns, 2010). In traditional research based on participants’ statements, there are serious doubts the real reason for their attitude or behaviour is provided, participants tend to give answers based on the requests of the interviewer (Venkatraman et al., 2012). Therefore, there are serious concerns that accurate assessments related to the purchasing habits of consumers and their decision-making processes cannot be derived from these types of research. According to Zara and Tuta (2013), neuromarketing methods are being implemented due to this reason. It delves deeply into the minds of individuals and enables the collection and analysis of the most objective and most transparent reactions.

As an interdisciplinary research technique, neuromarketing is based primarily on neuroscience, brain sciences, cognitive psychology, marketing and sociology, endocrinology, chemistry and computer sciences (Zara & Tuta, 2013, p.96). With the use of neurovisualization techniques used in economic research, it has been discovered that the same techniques can be used in marketing and consumer research. Neuromarketing can be defined as marketing or marketing research activity using cognitive science or implementing the techniques and methods of cognitive science (Genco et al., 2013: 28). Neuromarketing is also defined as a new marketing approach in which the subconscious reactions of consumers to marketing material, brand, product or product group are measured (Suomala et al., 2012, p.12).

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