Effects of Temperature and Social Density on Consumer Behavior (2 groups, 3 students each)
Martina Schöniger, Susanne Adler

Language: German/English

Cold/warm temperature influence people`s social proximity perception (Ijzerman & Semin, 2009), and there exists also some evidence for a reverse understanding: I.e. social proximity perception leads to the perception of warm temperature (Ijzerman & Semin, 2010) and that feelings of social distance induce feelings of coldness (Zhong & Leonardelli, 2008).

Further, Madzharov et al. (2015) showed, that warm/cool scents lead warm/cool perceptions and transitively to a high/low perceived social density. Moreover, they connected social density with power restoration: People perceiving a high/low social density experience a greater/lesser power restoration motivation, resulting in an increased premium product purchasing behavior (Madzharov et al., 2015).

In the seminar papers the students will extend this reasoning to other concepts and purchase decisions. Students will derive their hypotheses based on recent literature and conduct an empirical study.

Introductory Literature:


Effects of crowd composition on consumer choice (2-3 students)
Susanne Adler

Language: German/English

Recent research suggests a link between social density and preference for premium products. In short, while Madzharov, Block and Morrin (2015) suggest that crowded contexts increase premium product choice due to power restoration motivations, O’Guinn et al. (2015) draw on the semantic relationship of premium products to less crowded contexts.

The seminar project will examine the effect of crowd composition (e.g., in-group, out-group, see also Maeng & Tanner, 2013) on consumer’s decisions.

Introductory Literature:


Color Combinations in Brand Logo Design – The Color Yellow (3 students)
Martina Schöniger

Language: German/English

Customers associate brands with certain colors, e.g. purple for Milka chocolate, magenta for Deutsche Telekom, red for Marlboro, etc. A company´s brand logo can represent the company’s identity; it is important to recall the brand and it can serve as visual cue to get distinguished from the company’s competitors. Current research on brand logo design deals with several topics from finding the right brand name to finding right font type, logo shape, logo dynamic, logo complexity, and logo color. Thus far, logo color design has only been researched for a logo in a single color. However, brand logos often do not only consist of a single color, but of at least two different colors.

The seminar paper will focus on color schemes—in specific the color “yellow”, in combination with the colors green, blue, purple, red and brown. The students will derive hypotheses based on current literature. Based on those finding, an empirical study on the mentioned color combination is required. The findings shall help to find relevant new insights for color combinations of two colors in brand logo design.

Introductory Literature:
An empirical examination of the effect of sustainable products’ positioning on consumers’ attitudes and choices (3 students)

Benjamin Maas

Language: German/English

Sustainability is becoming more and more important. This holds true for companies as well as for consumers. Previous literature has proven that consumers have a higher likelihood of choosing sustainable products when they feel increased public accountability or when they are influenced by activating status motives (Green and Peloza 2014; Griskevicius et al. 2010). However, scientific literature lacks research on the effect of sustainable products’ positioning on consumers’ attitudes and choices, while including traditional products (White et al. 2019). Products can be positioned by symbolic attributes or functional attributes. Functional products “satisfy immediate and practical needs” (Bhat and Reddy 1998, p. 32). Symbolic products “satisfy symbolic needs such as those for self-expression and prestige, and their practical usage is only incidental” (Bhat and Reddy 1998, p. 32).

The students should examine if sustainable products are more likely to be chosen and cause more positive attitudes when they are positioned based on symbolic attributes (versus functional attributes).

Introductory literature:


An empirical research of consumers’ positive associations with sustainable products (3 students)
Benjamin Maas

Language: Deutsch/English

Sustainability is becoming more and more important. This holds true for companies as well as for consumers. Some negative associations with sustainability have been proven by previous literature. One example, from a male perspective, is the cognitive link between sustainability and femininity which leads men to avoid buying sustainable products (Brough et al. 2016). Although previous literature shows that organic products are perceived healthier (Schifferstein and Oude Ophuis 1998) and lower in calories than their conventional counterparts (Schuldt and Schwarz 2010), scientific literature lacks empirical research on consumers’ positive associations with sustainable products when they are compared to traditional products (White et al. 2019).

The students may examine if sustainable products are perceived healthier, more innovative or linked to nature than traditional products (White et al. 2019).

Introductory literature:


