Consumer Neuroscience: Bridging the gap between what a consumer says and what a consumer does



Neuroscience is the study of the nervous system including the brain and the spinal cord. Neuroscience is interdisciplinary and works closely with other disciplines of study like mathematics, computer science, chemistry, philosophy, psychology, and medicine.

Consumer neuroscience is the application of neuro-scientific approach to consumer behavior studies. Consumer neuroscience is an emerging field of study that integrates **psychology, neuroscience, economics and marketing. Consumer neuroscience attempts to understand how a consumer makes choice leading to final purchase.**

Neuroscience is gaining fast momentum in consumer behavior studies because researchers have expressed dissatisfaction over the outcome of conventional survey methods. By implementing neuro-scientific methods the marketers intends to obtain information that cannot be known through conventional market research methods.

The general belief is to trust what a customer does than what a customer says. The ultimate aim of consumer neuroscientists is to decipher why consumers behave the way they behave and know their probable future behavior. Likewise the motive of every marketer is to understand consumer behavior towards marketing strategies and design marketing plan to suit customer preferences.

**Neuroscience Toolkit**

Most popular and widely available toolkit to study consumer neuroscience are mentioned below:

* **EEG (electroencephalogram):** This is used to detect brain-based signals that can relay information about consumers purchase intentions when exposed to external stimuli.
* **Eye tracking:** Eye tracking is used to examine consumer attention when presented with various brand/product alternatives in the environment.
* **GSR (Galvanic skin response):** GSR measures and registers slight changes in the responses of skin conductance of the consumer after his/her exposure to a marketing stimulus.
* **fMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance):** It is employed to map brain activity of consumer through detecting changes associated with blood flow in the body.
* **Facial Coding:** measures and registers the voluntary and involuntary movements of facial muscles, participants are exposed to investigation stimuli.

The list of tools/apparatus used for consumer neuroscience is long, attempted to mention only the popular ones. Depending on the financial viability and outcome required consumer neuroscientists may employ relevant tool or combination of tools.

The fascinating outcomes of neuro-marketing is yet to be realized, however it is emerging as a reliable tool to global marketing companies to know their customers in various cultures. Such consumer research will help bridge the gap in consumer understanding for companies operating in cross-cultural environment.

In India neuroscience research is still in nascent stage and its potential is yet to be realized here, barring few start-ups and some multi-national companies, consumer neuroscience research is yet to find some takers among the corporate houses. High cost involved in setting-up labs or outsourcing such services may be the reason for not using neuroscience as popular market research method.

<https://imotions.com/blog/consumer-neuroscience/>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/retail/how-neuroscience-can-help-global-companies-bridge-the-gap-with-indian-customers/articleshow/57818955.cms>