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Eliciting patterns for product personality design: a pedagogical method for industrial design students

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Abstract

The appearance of a product is a medium to interact with consumer not only in the selection and purchasing process, but also during utilization of product. The product personality as a part of interaction role of the product's appearance has influence on consumer preference. It is defined as the set of human personality characteristics used to describe a specific product and can be applied to a product appearance intentionally.

The aim of this paper is introducing pedagogical design process to equip industrial design students for eliciting personality and providing aesthetic patterns for product personality design.

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1. Introduction

The appearance of a product as a medium provides solution for consumer-product interaction problem with different responsibilities. People often think and talk about products as having a personality and relate to them accordingly (Janlert and Stolterman, 1997; Adiloğlu & Akıncı, 2011). Jordan (1997) defined product personality as "the set of human personality characteristics used to describe a specific product". In other words, that part of the symbolic meaning that refers to the physical product itself and is described with human personality characteristics is called product personality (Jordan, 1997, 2000).

Besides Govers et al. (2004) imply that Product personality is a high-level description of the product variant as a whole and is strongly influenced by product appearance. As a whole, the results of Govers and Schoormans's (2005) study indicate that people prefer products with a product personality that matches their self-image. It refers to the fact that consumers prefer products associated with an image that is similar to their self-concept (e.g., Belk 1988; Malhotra 1988; Sirgy 1982).

2. The Importance of Product Personality

Baudrillard (2006) pointed "The most wanted product today is not any raw material or machinery, but personality." Product personality has gained its place in design for at least two reasons. First, Consumers feel good

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about their choices because they fit their own self-concept rather than the group norm (Solomon, 1999). Second, when offering a range of product variants that fulfill the same functional need, yet have different product personalities, a company enables more consumers to select a product variant that expresses their own individuality. As such, they can increase their market share. This is especially relevant in mature markets where differentiation in price and functionality is difficult (Govers and Schoormans, 2005).

3. Background

In 1997, Janlert and Stolterman discussed that product personality can have consequences for the users interaction with the product. The products' human-like characteristics serve as an analogy for their behaviour and capabilities (Janlert and Stolterman, 1997; Aggarwal and McGill, 2007; Donnelly, 2009). Product personality can thus help users to anticipate how to interact with a product.

Hsu et al. (2000) implies some personality characteristics, such as relaxed and honest, may be difficult to identify in products. For those personality characteristics, a discrepancy between designers and consumers in their perception of the product is likely to occur.

Kumar indeed found evidence that visual aesthetic characteristics beside evaluations of product appearance are linked to perceptions of product personality.

In 2009, Mugge et al. developed a product personality scale that can be used for systematically assessing the way users perceive the personality of a new product during the design process. They believe it is essential that the particular product personality that designers aim for during the design process is correctly understood by users. Nevertheless, this does not imply that the creation of a specific personality characteristic in a product is straightforward and that the product personality scale may serve as a recipe for creating products with predetermined personalities. In fact, designing products with a predetermined personality is a complex and creative design task (Mugge et al., 2009). Govers et al. (2004) believe designers can translate personality characteristics into the product form in a way that consumers understand.

4. Methods

The process of Product Personality Design has been applied to a studio of industrial design and has been developed and tested during 8 semesters with participation of 178 students in the studio.

In a general view, this studio is conducted based on the common process of product design; i.e. just the needed parts are adjusted with the studio. Also some parts are done by focus on educational practices according to training-educational obligations. This course can be caught in the 7th semester in B.A. of Industrial Design field so the students have some primary skills such as perception of the generality and the logical process of a product design, visual literacy and form recognition, ability of form and function analysis, knowing the general concepts of product design like the production and launching method, and also the ability of analyzing the customer's behavior.

5. Eliciting Process

Choosing personality characteristics has some stages which are done prior to the eliciting process. In fact, these personality factors are chosen according to criteria Govers and Schoormans (2005) have indicated. So only the personality solutions of eliciting process are represented in this paper; even the process of applying these solutions according to its variation and relation with design's context is not discussed here.

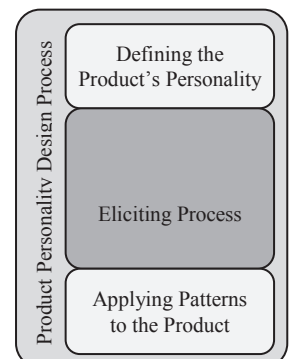


Figure1. Product personality Design Process

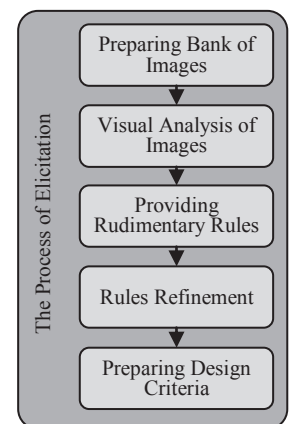


Figure2. The Process of Elicitation

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