

DIRECT EFFECT OF “ONE FITS ALL” PRODUCT ON THE PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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Abstract

Powerful companies often create new user categories, such as homosexual, feminist, hipster, etc., to make individuals feel unique and special. However, these companies often offer the same product to all these user categories. This strategy allows them to target a wider audience, reduce costs through generic mass production, and align with the principles of the Shared Economy. As a result, there is a growing need for products that can adapt and cater to everyone's needs. Conducting more extensive research in this area is crucial to meet the evolving demands of consumers and create inclusive products for diverse user categories. Living in overstimulated and hectic world, we crave for an easy life. We like cloths that don't need ironing, easy to wash and dry fast. It's a start of a new era of a care-free lifestyle. New times require generic, easy to use and adjustable products: resizing, multi-functional, portable, unisex, color changing, gender fluid, reusable, products with sharing capabilities. The formula is using the Law of Averages, while satisfying the most unsatisfied and financially non-capable users, to provide success in all layers of purchase. The Aim of this Academic Research is to show the correlation between user's lifestyle and how they experience “One-fits-all” product. As a result, companies can design more fluid products and society can transform into sharing economy. In the initial phases of the research, assistance was sought from various entities, including Black Tech companies, New Retail Businesses, and Trend Research Agencies. Their involvement was crucial in formulating a solid environment, resources, and parameters for the planning part of the research. A total of 200 volunteers, aged between 25 and 70, actively participated in the research to gather consensus on their perception of Fluid Products and the factors that influence changes in their behavior towards product adoptability. After filtering, the number of participants was reduced to 40 during the second-round filtration process. The research period was operating in the last 6 months and their consumption status has been tracked within this period. Open Ended Questions were used to define repeating patterns of maximum likelihood. To deepen the analysis, Mixed method of empirical and qualitative analysis was used to formulate questionnaires and increase the level of accuracy. Experienced Psychologists and Product Designers were selected as a dimension to estimate the result. How to design the same product for two different personas?! This study is also the first, as known by the authors, to examine the direct effect of “one-fits-all” product on the perceived value of the products and services, as opposed to user-centered design already analyzed in the literature. At the end of the study, conclusions along with theoretical contributions and practical implications are given. Especially important are the recommendations given to companies and their Product Development departments, as well as to society in the Shared Economy, to shape their activities in a way that brings fluid products closer to the users and improves the satisfaction of using shared products, services, and public goods.

Keywords: Fluid Products, Collective Intelligence, Reduction, Dematerialization, Reusable.

Introduction

Mainstream companies diversify users in micro-categories to make them feel special, while offering the same universal product to everyone, as one single solution. This macro-economic trend lowers operational costs, simplifies know-how transfer and positioning, and increases the acceptance rate, narrowing the choice to one single solution. The gap between different age groups and life stages is reduced, with adults and children alike consuming the same entertainment, participating in the same leisure activities and buying

the same fashion items. Millennial generations are becoming leading decision makers in buying, and older baby boomers try to imitate their behavior to feel younger. Being an adult once had a standard path of growing up, getting a job, and starting a family-life's traditional ladder. Those concepts of adulthood are still occurring, but the linear steps that once existed are being influenced by turbulent social and economic conditions like competitive job market, rising house prices and high inflation. These factors make it difficult for young people to fulfill the life-goal expectations of previous generations. Newfound values are directing more and more consumers to choose careers they are passionate about or take on new challenges to create memorable experiences. The market taste in preferred “Lifestyle” is becoming more homogeneous. Genders are fluid, imperfections considered beautiful. We move toward times when all use everything and no one owns nothing. Shared economy products have one single option. In uncertain times, people crave stability and a sense of routine, and yet it seems society is getting the opposite. A desynchronized society is one where people continue to do many of the same things but no longer do them at the same time as others. (Andrea Bell 2022, p.6)

Image 1 Desynchronized society is one where people continue to do many of the same things but no longer do them at the same time as others.



Source:<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1677599602396223>, 08.10.2022

Image 2 Lacoste Campaign "Go for a Lacoste Polo". Lacoste's Polo for men, women and kids, available in all colors, transcends generations



Source:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c81uh2Bw5LU>, 08.10.2022

The same technological advancements that offer record levels of convenience (24-hour food delivery, same-day shipping) and productivity (global workforces, flexible offices) have resulted in a desynchronized society. The time-space paths of individuals are more variable and spread. People still work as much (or more) but the standard nine-to-five, five-day work week has lost its dominance. People still read or watch the news, but it's no longer done at 7pm, after work, at home in front of the TV. This desynchronization plays a role in the breakdown of communities due to the lack of consistent human interaction. Commuting, going to the post office, gym time, grocery shopping – these were once reliable, scheduled community moments that are disappearing at accelerated rates. And with the loss of these daily interactions, communities are fracturing. In an ideal mass production economy, producers tend to mold people into robotic, emotionless workers, and any sign of emotions is treated as a disease. Regrouped into a single colony “the collective,” where - in a desperate bid to ensure mass consumption - all emotion must be biologically eradicated. Nobody is happy, nobody is upset, nobody falls in love, nobody gets into fights. In futuristic forecasts we can see people wearing the same clothes, driving the same cars, living in shared space. Maybe it's because the notion of luxury simply isn't about physical stuff anymore as life has become less about "me" and more about "we." Living a good life surrounded by inspiration, great people and experiences, empathy and thoughtfulness seems to have more value these days than fame, a gold-leaf baby carriage, a private jet or a real fur bedspread.

The case is often made that although a utopia is immensely desirable, it is impossible to achieve. This is because it assumes we humans can be perfected, yet nothing is further from the truth. After all, how can one create a perfect society for an imperfect species?

Literature Review

Fluid Products: WGSN calls netizens ‘The Genderless Generation’ (Jian Deleon The Genderless Generation, accessed 06/03/2019). Fashion is becoming more androgynous, mixed with street style which makes it perfect for genderless fashion brands. The androgynous, oversized look has become an agender essential. Gender fluid fashion means that ‘a suit is just a suit, and a dress is just a dress’, we shouldn't

place gender under these garments, as they are just made as a way of self-expression. This trend is about ignoring social constructs and not allowing society to limit us by pushing their stereotypes on us.

Collective Intelligence – COIN (Wolpert, Tumer, K., 1999) is a large multi-agent system where: (1) There is little to no centralized communication or control; and (2) There is a provided world utility function that rates the possible histories of the full system. It is expected that as it matures and draws upon other disciplines related to COINs, this research will greatly expand the range of tasks addressable by human engineers. Moreover, in addition to drawing on them, such a fully developed science of COIN design may provide much insight into other already established scientific fields, such as economics, game theory, and population biology.

Dematerialization: In short, human societies face unintended and often ironic consequences of their own mechanical, chemical, medical, social and financial ingenuity. (Wernick, at all, 1996). Newfound values are directing more and more consumers to choose careers they are passionate about or take on new challenges to create memorable experiences. The market taste in preferred “Lifestyle” is becoming more homogeneous. We move toward times when all use everything and no one owns nothing. Shared economy products have one single option.

Reduction: The term “dematerialization” refers to a reduction (Cleveland, and Ruth, M., 1998) in the quantity of materials used to serve the production and consumption needs of our planet. Reductionism is the idea that all the complex and apparently disparate things we observe in the world can be explained in terms of universal principles governing their common. With the advent of the Human Genome Project (Sarkar, 1998) there have been many claims for the genetic origins of complex human behavior including insanity, criminality, and intelligence, thus the core of our behavior can be predicted, categorized, and classified, for developing a product that fits the needs of majority of the population. Minimalism is an increasingly popular low-consumption lifestyle whereby people deliberately live with fewer possessions, as an example of anti-consumer-oriented social practice, making it a sustainable and idealistic way of cohabiting (Lloyd and Pennington 2020). Minimalism is not a full retreat from consumerism or an anti-consumption behavior, but rather a form of a conscious choice, which helps the individual to achieve balance and better quality in everyday life. Let’s summon here another notion by one of the spokesmen of minimalism: “To live is to consume. We all need food and shelter and clothing. We also have passions and purposes that we desire to fulfill. These needs and these purposes require material goods. Reduction does not reject all material purchases, but it provides the opportunity (and the desire) to own higher-quality items. In this case, money is still spent, but it is allocated for other types of goods than strictly material ones: travel, tourism, art, which in principle is aimed at providing equally high quality and valuable experiences from the perspective of self-realization of the individual. (Skowrońska 2013, p. 91)

Reusable: Reusable products have lower environmental impacts only if they are reused enough times to compensate for their greater materials intensity. With increased media coverage, consumers are becoming more aware of the impact of waste pollution (Miller, 2020). This rise of conscious consumers has pushed brands to address various environmental issues. From earning a positive brand image to improving sustainability, brands can definitely benefit from going green. The number of recycling schemes that will reward consumers for their contributions will increase. These schemes need to be convenient to participate in, like using a pick-up service, or consumers may not buy into them. In addition, rewards should fit people’s lifestyles to make such schemes more appealing. We can often read “Future is waste”. It’s all about going “circular” these days, in its purest form as turning a waste into an energy, based on the notion that “access is better than ownership.”

Lessons learned from minimalism include: (1) donating the unnecessary items to individuals or institutions in need; selling them (e.g. via the Internet); (2) exchanging with others (for example mutual borrowing of rarely used devices that are not needed at home); (3) replacing old things with new things (in the sense of eliminating, for example, two older things by one new item); (4) evaluating their usefulness (do we really need this device? Can we replace it?); (5) utilizing used items; (6) fixing things (individually or using local services); (7) not wasting things (especially food); (7) and not attaching oneself to things. Examined from this perspective, minimalism fits into the cooperative economy, which changes the processes of organization and distribution of products towards the creation of networks of individuals and communities which provide mutual services and co-create and share goods.

Fluid products if controlled from society and responsibly produced by businesses, should respect good working practices (destructive online practices banned by Chinese law 2022) by not: using deepfake technology; money worship; content that weakens the nation; food waste behavior; excessively focus on

viewership (not deliberately “hype up” sensitive topics to attract public attention); not discussing professional topics without qualification (law, finance, medicine); not using minors for commercial promotion to lead them to negative values; dangerous behavior (self-harm, violent, tempting to drugs and alcohol); avoiding religious extremism; no excessive strong emotions (horror, hysterical) and anything that may cause massive hazards.

Human creativity develops within the limits of those representations of the world which are dominant today. Thus, sustainable, and inclusive production, should be framed by the standard of making the products **fluid**. To develop deeper notions in Product`s Fluidity as fundamental topic for the future of humanity and the user`s new needs, we propose these hypotheses:

H1: There is a mega trend in demand and supply of fluid products.

H2: Fluid products can play a corrective role in society (boost shared economy, saving resources and promote inclusiveness).

Methodology

Sample and measures

In the initial phases of the research, it was taken assistance from: Black Tech companies, New Retail Businesses and Trend Research Agencies to participate in formulating a solid environment, resources and parameters for the research planning part. 80 volunteers at the age between 25 and 70 who actively participated in getting consensus on their perception of Fluid Product, and what triggers changes on their behavior, regarding the product adaptability. The research period was operating in the last 6 months and their consumption status was tracked within this period. Experienced Psychologists and Product Designers were selected as a dimension to estimate the result. Sample of two extreme society representatives were taken: **(1) Hassel Persona** tech fanatics, thriving in life (Kim, 1996) and **(2) Stabilizer Persona** in the older stage of their life. Stabilizer persona was selected from communities in the city central areas. Hassel persona was interviewed through a platform for technology influencers.

Questionnaire: (1) Empirical (Quantitative) and Focus Group (Qualitative). (Breakwell, at all., 2020, p.366)

Methodology: Open-Ended Questions (haven`t directed the receiver in any direction, but instead allowed them to answer solely from their own opinion) in order to generate pain points and new ideas on “How to Manage Expectations” in the pursuit of Fluid Product. When you employ open-ended questions, it is vital to listen to the response. Nothing ruins validation more than if someone is giving you their opinion, and you look as if you are bored or are not paying attention. This means you can`t be thinking about your next line while they are talking. The motto “just keep them talking” is not relevant to social engineering. We don`t want our targets to just talk-we want them to talk about information that`s relevant to our needs.” (Christopher, 2018, p. 129)

Novel **mixed-method** (Labrecquea at all., 2011) approach of carefully generated individuals and HR professionals to judge their anonymous profiles, both qualitatively and quantitatively. After comparing these evaluations with participants' own judgments of their online profiles, long interviews have been extended to understand how people perceive fluid products, what standards they use to measure, how they feel about judgements of other people, by which criteria they find common sense and what features they consider as sufficient. Also, personal challenges they find, when using multi-functional products.

Tools: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) and principal components analysis (PCA), were used to access the Factors structure of x dimensional Common Sense scale.

In Step 1: Gathered information was visualized and distributed in charts and forms for further data analysis.

In Step 2: Repeating patterns were deepened into second level Questionnaires, which were to be tested on smaller samples and spreading the topic deeper to catch more details. Later, Input and Output of the data model will be defined, in a way that businesses and society can take advantage of it.

Main Purpose: The main purpose of the focus group was to reach a consensus of common sense across different users and scenarios, which will help the development of Fluid Products. The results of the focus group were used to develop the survey which was then sent out to a large representative sample group of businesses and social institutions, who will find knowledge of how to make one-fits-all product capabilities.

Personal Data Protection: Participation in this focus group presented no potential risks to the participants. Participants and their organizations were not named in subsequent write ups and material submitted for publication.

RESULTS

The results in this research are useful to understand how people choose products, what standards they use to measure, how they feel about other people's tastes, by which criteria they group in tribes and what features they consider as sufficient. Also, fluid product challenges managing multiple audiences, with one single solution.

In Step 1: Research started with keywords to guide the participants in a certain direction on “Which fluid product features are linked with the purchase decision”. Here is a list of the keywords chosen by the majority of the participants: (1) **Society** (Finance, Recognition, Clients, Partners, Family); (2) **Labor** (Career, Profession, Value Creation, Business, Innovations); (3) **Development** (Intelligence, Skills, Knowledge, Science, Politics); (4) **Health** (Nutrition, Sport, Stress, Environment, Rest). Gathered information was visualized and distributed in charts and forms for further data analysis.

Image 3 MUJI Japanese lifestyle brand avoids gender and age classification of customers, communicating the product as a unique solution to all individuals



In Step 2: Repeating patterns were deepened into second level Questionnaires, tested on smaller filtered samples (20 participants Hassel Persona and 20 participants Stabilizer Persona) and spreading the topic deeper to catch more details. Questionnaires were deepened with details by criteria: lifestyle, hobbies, consumption values and purchasing power. Later the participants were observed on their daily purchases. Both groups of participants confirmed a strong need of a fluid product (adoptive, easy to use and multi-functional) demonstrated in different manners and different criteria of values. Hence, product adaptability is important for the customer, but the learning process for use needs to be adopted to each profile accordingly, to fit their judgement and feel more native.

So, the advertising will be different, the target groups will be different, but the product can be universal and same for all!

Conclusions and Implications

The “Fluid Product” have great significance for the future of Humanity and should be further explored because of several main reasons: (Kleiman E, Beaver J, 2013)

(1) **Society Corrective: Dematerialisation** (Virtual and Real) is already deeply interfered in Humans Lives and extensive research are needed, for a creation of a high-quality Actual Reality, acting in best interest of modern human needs: (Jaynes C, at all., 2003)

- a) Promoting experiences over possessions
- b) Protecting the environment and promoting inclusiveness
- c) Promoting sharing economy

“The intentional promotion of the things we most value and the removal of everything that distracts us from them”. Fluid products are a tool to rid yourself of life’s excess in favor of focusing on what is important – so you can find happiness, fulfillment, and freedom”. Duan Elgin and Arnold Mitchell, the promoters of the Voluntary Simplicity Movement in the United States, embrace a simple life as “materially modest, but emotionally, intellectually and spiritually rich” [Elgin, Mitchell 1977: 5]. They created a set of values that form the core of existence marked by simplicity. These include: a human scale, self-determination, personal growth, ecological awareness, and material simplicity (a key aspect of the minimalist lifestyle) [Elgin,

Mitchell 1977: 4]. Often just called “the simple life” or “downshifting”. Material values are replaced by post-materialist values, associated with the culture of self-expression (such as individualism, autonomy) [Inglehart 1990, 1997]. The studies to date have given rise to the common assumption that fluidity is multidimensional, internally inconsistent, and ephemeral. There is no one canonical version or existing definition of fluidity – everyone creates his/her unique set of beliefs and actions, which differ in their scope and intensity of change.

(2) **Collective intelligence:** Companies need extensive knowledge of how the “New Species” behave and what motivates them. Based on this modern knowledge and common sense they can find in all people, they can build homogeneous Value Systems to offer fitting Products and Services for the modern customer. Fluidity can be seen from several points of view (they do not have to be disjointed), illustrating the complexity of the phenomenon: (Dopierala, R., 2017)

- As an example of an advisory and the therapeutic culture.
- As a marketing trend, the elements of which are used in different aspects of life.
- As an illustration of a new anti-consumerist spirituality (Kasperek 2016).
- As a style of consumption in which the quantity of possessions is limited, but they are still consumed by choosing products of higher value and quality or by
- Focusing on non-material determinants of existence (experiences, emotions etc.).
- As an alternative form of satisfying one’s needs, which develops practices standing in opposition to excessive consumption.

(3) **Usage of Human Best Potential:** One may ask: Why does the excess of things have negative aspects for individual identity and life? First, a person wastes time on activities connected with items like cleaning, ordering, securing, looking after and taking care of them, and wastes money on buying things owing to social coercion and cultural expectations. Spending most of one’s time on earning money can lead to stress and burnout and interfere with the balance between work and family life. Researchers describing and analyzing minimalism define it as an example of an “anti-consumerist protest” (Kasperek 2016) or a reaction to the “overabundance of excessive consumption” (Kramarczyk 2015). What matters here is a search for moderation and balance (reasonable measure) to be found by each of us individually.

Fluid Products can drive people on the right path.

Limitations and Future Research

Results from the research are based on subjective answers by the examined people. Their answer could be under the influence of the momentum: environment, interactions, mood, stage of life, distractions. People don’t behave in the same way as they say they do, and it’s best practice for the user to be observed when interacting with the product/service, instead of asking their opinion. (Ivy Ross, Google Research center). This study proves a positive relation between the product’s fluidity features and user’s satisfaction. The more the product/service is adoptive to individual needs, the more the user feels motivated in making a decision for purchase. In future, this research can be further deepened by (1) Identifying Key Human Drivers in pursuing higher level of product’s fluidity, priorities and barriers for achieving certain level of product` adaptiveness and by (2) Gaining consensus of Key Tools for improving Design Performances based on Fluidity factor, to help companies better understand the new needs of the customer (netizens of Metaverse), thus offer products and services that better fit into their lifestyle, in order to increase customer satisfaction and improve the usability, while simplifying operations and lowering down costs in a spite of mass production of generic easy-to-adopt product. These new notions will help companies have a better perspective in “What is common in all users” and “How to shorten the product range”, while keeping the user happy, satisfied, and excited.

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