Hedonic Versus Utilitarian Products: The Dawn of Intra-Product Category Research

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Abstract

Hedonic products have been found to be advantageous for firms over utilitarian products. However, some research conducted on this topic uses two products from two completely different categories (inter-product category research) rather than two products from the same category but different in terms of hedonic and utilitarian benefits (intra-product category research). This practice, unfortunately, poses three issues for hedonic consumption research: spurious relationships, limited types of products researched, and confusing implications for marketing practitioners. The present chapter examines these three issues in detail and underscores the dynamic nature of hedonic/utilitarian dimensions of any product category, which implies the advantages of intra-product category research over the pervasive inter-product category research. This chapter will also discuss four important strategies for firms to create competitive advantage through hedonic/utilitarian benefits.

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