

# Neuromarketing: A violation of human rights

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## Introduction

Neuromarketing uses neuroscience research to find the best techniques for higher product sales (Yadava et al., 2017). In a capitalist economy, marketing is critical to product promotion and companies spend billions of dollars on market research (Lindström, 2008). There is a key difference between neuromarketing and marketing: through trial and error, marketing can discover the best set-up for consumers to purchase more products, but neuromarketing watches the consumer's brain activity in different market scenarios to manipulate the environment in a way that physically changes the brain (Vecchiato et al., 2011). Marketing is like freedom of speech. Freedom of speech has limitations to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable such as hate speech. Marketing should have limitations such as neuromarketing which invades the human autonomy. Neuroeconomics is the study of economic decision making through the use of consumer products to study general concepts like sensory processing, choice, and the evaluation of losses and rewards (Ulman, Cakar, & Yildiz, 2014). Unlike neuroeconomics, neuromarketing uses medical neurotechnology purely for the purposes of profit.

## Consumer Protection

Neuromarketing invokes many ethical considerations. In 2011, Carla Nagel founded the Neuromarketing Science and Business Association (NMBSA) for neuromarketing companies around the world to join. In order to be a member, companies must adopt the NMSBA code of ethics in practice. The code of ethics follows similar research ethical guidelines in protecting the participants of the research. However, the consumers are the most affected by the results of neuromarketing research and are not protected by the NMSBA code of ethics.

## Categorical imperative

Kant's leading moral principle, the categorical imperative, claims that a rational will must be regarded as autonomous, or free (Pojman & Fieser, 2017).

Neuromarketing undermines human rational by manipulating the decision making process for profit making.

## Utilitarian Morality

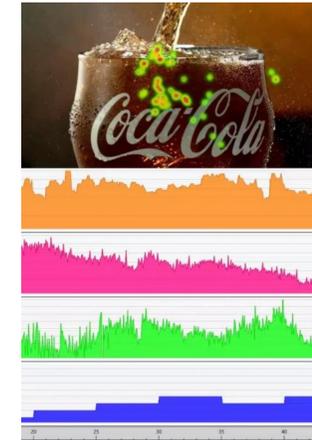
The moral principle of utilitarianism is humans should be considered an end in themselves as opposed to a mere means to an end (West, 2004).

Neuromarketing uses humans as a means to an end thereby violating the moral principle of utilitarianism.

## Academically Sound Research Practice

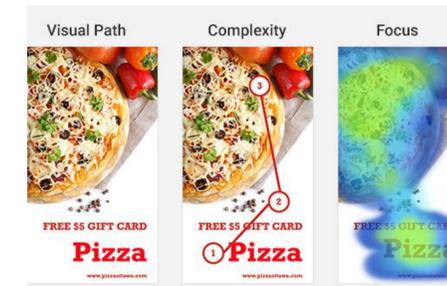
When a company hires a neuroscientist for neuromarketing research, publication is the responsibility of the researcher. If the initial contract doesn't include a stipulation to publish, the funding company can keep the results from being published to hinder their competitors progress.

## Electroencephalogram



An example of market research that measures a participant's engagement/ boredom, excitement, heart rate, and peak moments during the commercial.

## Eye Tracking



Canada Post advertising their Predictive Eye Tracking software. This software mathematically predicts the capturing information of marketing mail.

## Magnetoencephalography



Used by neuromarketers to create a full 3D image of the brain (Boto et al., 2018; Vecchiato et al., 2011) in market and decision making simulation tests.

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