

A Model for Profound Affection and Attractive Quality Creation

Jens J. Dahlgaard
Dept. of Management and Engineering
Linköping University, Sweden
jens.jorn.dahlgaard@liu.se

Su Mi Dahlgaard-Park
Institute of Service Management
Lunds University, Sweden
sumi.park@msm.lu.se

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the paper is to present and discuss the concept of Profound Affection. The paper presents a framework (a model) for understanding why products and Services may have a profound affection on customers/ users and to discuss shortly how this framework may be applied when developing new attractive products/services or when existing products/services are assessed for their attractiveness.

Methodology/Approach: The research methodology is a combination of desk research (literature analysis), reflections and model building.

Findings: The authors suggest a structural model as a possible expanded framework for future Kansei/ Affective Engineering research studies. According to the model *profound affection* is a result of the following six enabling factors: 1. Sensing Experience, 2: Emotional Experiences (Kansei), 3. Behavioural Experiences/ action, 4. Social Experiences/ Interactions & Relations, 5. Spiritual Experiences/ Moral, Ethics, 6: Intellectual Experiences/ Cognition.

Originality/Value: The author defines “Profound Affection” as a comprehensive state, which is a result of a combination and interaction of sensing, intellectual/cognitive, emotional, social, behavioural and spiritual experiences. “Profound Affection” is not only a result of *sensing or emotional experiences*.

Keywords: Kansei, Affective Engineering Design, product development, profound affection, experiences, attractive quality creation

Category: Research paper

1 Introduction

Creating desire to get something *for example* getting a new attractive expensive product as a Louis Vuiton bag, requires *Profound Affection*, which is a very comprehensive state resulting from a combination of intellectual/ cognitive, emotional, social, behavioural and spiritual experiences.

Kansei Engineering, which is a relatively new research field, contains a promising methodology for designing and creating new attractive products and services with a *Profound Affection* on the users. The Kansei Engineering methodology, which has its roots in Japan from beginning of the 1970's, aims to design and develop products/ services that match customers' emotional, psychological feelings and needs.

It is the aim of this paper to suggest a new framework in the form of a structural model, which can be used systematically in understanding the potential enablers of Profound Affection which may be used for creating new innovative and attractive products (= *Attractive Quality Creation*).

Section 2, with the subtitle “From Human Needs to Profound Affection”, illustrates the background for this. The section starts with a discussion on the different dimensions of human needs and ends up with a discussion of products where one product did not compete well

while other products attracted customers surprisingly well even if the price levels were unbelievable high.

In section 3 the suggested framework (model) for understanding the potential enablers of Profound Affection is discussed. The application of the model will shortly be discussed in Section 4. The article terminates in section 5 with a summary and a final discussion on the future implications of the suggested model for understanding Profound Affection

2. From Human Needs to Profound Affection

From many fronts we receive clear signals that people today care more and more about whether products and services match and appeal to their feelings, emotions, personal life styles, identities, and even moral/ ethical preferences. The most attractive products/ services of tomorrow will in our view be designed to satisfy all dimensions of human needs – manifest as well as latent needs. To be successful companies have to attain a profound understanding on the complexity of human's different needs and the power of satisfying these needs.

To understand the different dimensions of human needs Dahlgaard-Park (2003) suggested a new framework model - the "*Trinity of Human Needs*" – which classifies human's needs into the following three dimensions:

1. Physical or Biological needs
2. Mental/psychological Needs (embracing emotional, intellectual, social and aesthetic needs);
3. Spiritual or Ethical needs.

By working more explicitly with the "Trinity of Human Needs" companies may be able to give clear input to understanding the weaknesses of existing products and hence to developing new products and services which match the different dimensions of human needs. Let us illustrate this core with an example.

In 1998 the authors of this article were involved in a transformation process in Pioneer Denmark (Dahlgaard & Dahlgaard-Park, 1999). The background of the transformation process was that Pioneer Electronics had competition problems on the world markets especially with the other two Japanese competitors – Sony and Matsushita Electronic Corporation (Panasonic etc.). To start a transformation process aiming at changing the image of Pioneer and its product branding the president of Pioneer gave a New Year speech to top managers from Pioneer companies all over the world. In this New Year speech he announced Pioneer Electronic Corporation's new corporate identity which at the same time was announced as the corporation's *Vision 2005*. The vision was presented with a tree metaphor picture as shown in figure 1 below.

"The key message from Pioneer's president was that all efforts from companies and employees all over the world must now be focused on the goal - *customer satisfaction is our ultimate goal*. But this ultimate goal can only be achieved if employees all over the world in their different jobs participate actively in understanding the different dimensions of customer needs and problems. Having understood the variation, interdependence and depth of customer needs then people can begin to design new products which may be able to "Move the Heart and Touch the Soul". People may gradually understand that attaining such a state requires that the customers will have positive experiences related to sensing, cognition, morality, action, and social relations. All these experiences will together determine if the product will "move the heart and touch the soul".

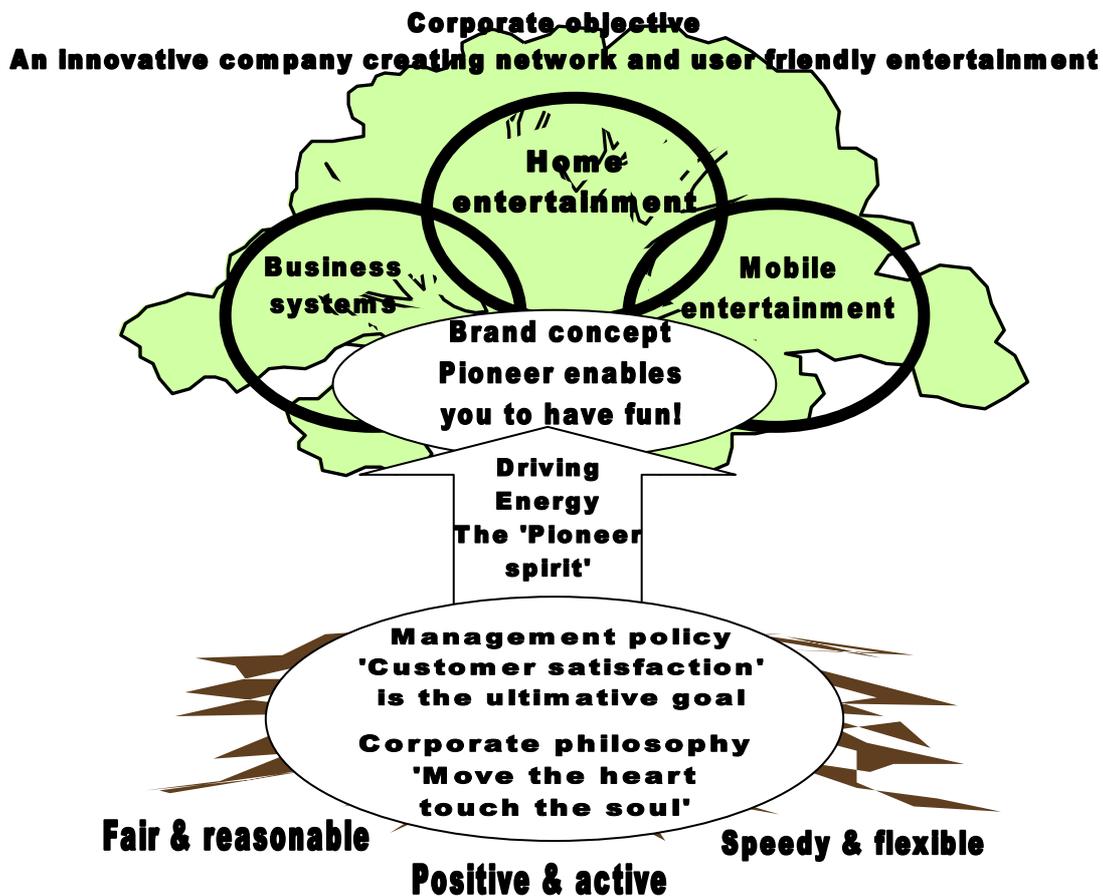


Figure 1: Pioneer Electronic Corporation's New Corporate Identity (Vision2005)

3. A Model to understand Profound Affection

Inspired by a model proposed by B. H. Schmitt (1999), used in Nagasawa (2008), to create and understand customer experiences, we will in this section suggest a model to understand Profound Affection. Schmitt's model (1999) consists of the 5 factors *Sense, Feel, Think, Act* and *Relate*.

The suggested model came up as a result of critical analyses and discussions based on our own research and observations from the First European Conference on Kansei/ Affective Engineering, our previous discussions and reflections on the Pioneer metaphor above and by combining with research on human needs (especially the suggested Trinity Model for Human Needs). The resulting model is a structural model which we regard as a possible expanded framework for future Kansei/ Affective Engineering research studies (see Figure 2 below).

As can be seen in the model profound affection is a result of 6 enabler factors.

X1: Sensing Experience/ the 5 Senses

Sensing experiences are often in Kansei Engineering related with emotions, but seen from a product development viewpoint it makes sense to regard it as an independent factor which also may be related to other factors of the model in figure 2. Simple questions to ask could be: Is the product nice to see, nice to hear, nice to touch, nice to smell, or nice to taste?

X2: Emotional Experiences (Kansei)

Emotional experience is a result of sensing experiences and is more comprehensive than each individual sensing experience. A simple question to ask is: What kind of emotions will the product “bring” to the users? Happiness, joy, gloominess, sadness, loneliness, ...?

X3: Behavioural Experiences/ Action

These experiences reflect user behaviours when interacting with products and services. Questions to ask: Is the product user friendly? Is the product comfortable? Do users feel unity with the product or alienation?

X4: Social Experiences/ Interactions & Relations

Products are here regarded as instruments for building social interaction & relations. Question to ask: Is the product strengthening your social relationships and interactions? Product examples: Mobile telephone, MP3, internet, blocs, etc.

X5: Spiritual Experiences/ Moral, Ethics

Customers of today are now concerned more on spiritual experience including moral and ethics of producing, using and scrapping the products. Questions to ask: Is the product/service produced ethically correct? Is the product dangerous or polluting the environment? How are the products contributing to global warming, etc?

X6: Intellectual Experiences/ Cognition

These experiences are related to traditional quality attributes belonging to the basic/ must-be quality dimension. Questions to ask: What and how are the functions of the product? Are they functioning logically? Is the product reliable, safe, etc.?

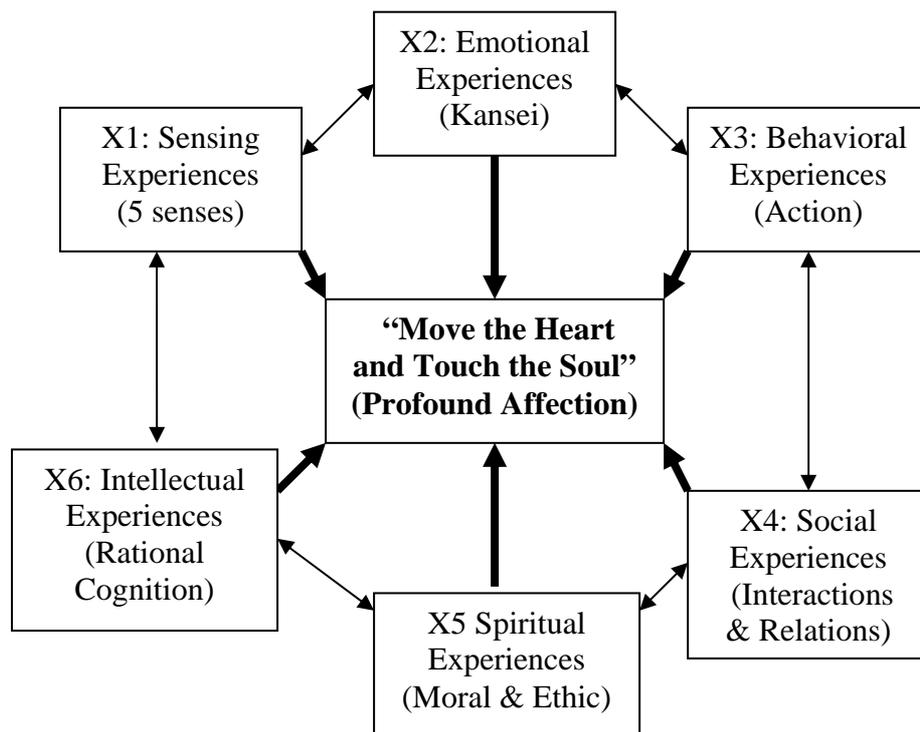


Figure 2: A Structural Model for Understanding and Building “Profound Affection”

As the model shows “Profound Affection”, where customers’ hearts are moved and their souls are touched, is a very comprehensive state, which is a result of a combination and interaction of sensing, intellectual/cognitive, emotional, social, behavioural and spiritual experiences. “Profound Affection” is not only a result of *sensing or emotional experiences*.

Building Profound Affection depends on the context. For some products or services all one-factor contributions may be important enablers as well contributions from several of the potential interaction effects, while for other products maybe only a limited number of one-factor contributions may be relevant. In the following all possible contributions to building Profound Affection are specified.

Profound Affection =

$X1+X2+X3+X4+X5+X6$	(one factor contributions)
+ $XiXj$ +	(two factor interactions)
+ $XiXjXk$ +	(three factor interactions)
+ $XiXjXkXl$ +	(four factor interactions)
+ $XiXjXkXlXm$ +	(five factor (interactions))
+ $X1X2X3X4X5X6$	six factor (interactions)

Let us discuss the model by using an example from women's bags – *Louis Vuitton* luxury bags. To understand what a Louis Vuitton bag is we searched on the internet and found the following explanation.

Are you also looking for some real louis vuitton bags for yourself? Celebritis like Britney Spears and Jennifer Lopez carry the most popular of the handbags - louis vuitton bags. The French designer has created a huge line of purses, woman's louis vuitton wallet bags that are most sought after in the world and are first on every woman's wish list every Christmas! Authentic louis vuitton bags and the louis vuitton messenger bags are really expensive but they have that elegant look to them. They have been crafted with skill and experience and are made from the finest leather. Each authentic louis vuitton bag or the louis vuitton messenger bag is unique in itself. The quality of Louis Vuitton handbags is recognized worldwide and they are so popular that the louis vuitton replica bags and the cheap louis vuitton bags are just as prized from those who can't afford the real thing. Real Louis Vuitton bags and purses can never be duplicated exactly even by the counterfeiters and therefore still carry a hefty price tag.

Just coming back from a 6 weeks stay in Japan we are still surprised of having seen how many women in all ages that are daily walking around with a *Louis Vuitton* bag. In fact, 30% of Louis Vuitton's sales are coming from Japan!

We could not understand why so many women had been affected by this brand and also how they could afford it. In our part of the world it is very rare that you see young women walking along with such a luxury bag. To understand better we interviewed one of the young owners, a young lady between 25 and 30 years old. Her explanation to the question “*why do Japanese girls want to have LV bags and other famous brands and how can they afford?*” follows here:

One big reason is that we all want to have something same with others. Japanese like to do the same thing that someone else does. We are lacking individuality, and feel safe when we do the same things as others do. And we think that it's really cool to have things that are famous brands. We have so much hanker for western culture. We, Japanese, have so many complexes within us as Asians. We like to be like western people. That's why we are buying products of western famous brands.

Why we can spend so much money in brands things?

Recently, young people tended not to spend money on cars and other similar expensive products. Because we spent money in those brands like LV bags, we can't afford to buy cars and owning homes.

This is only one interview which alone cannot be a good example for illustrating all factors of the model in figure 2. We can only guess about what are the most important factors behind the deep desires of Japanese women buying Louis Vuitton luxury bags and other famous luxury bags. More interviews are needed for explaining the importance of the model. From our own observations and discussions with other Japanese users of Louis Vuitton luxury bags we came up with our understanding as seen in the following.

X1: Sensing Experience/ the 5 Senses

Louis Vuitton bags are leading the avant-garde of fashion without compromising traditional craftsmanship of luxury leather goods. The Louis Vuitton handbags were not the first line of products manufactured by Vuitton when he opened his luggage store in France during the mid-1800s. In fact, it wasn't until about 1900 that his company began selling purses. However, all of the company's products, at least for the past 100 years, have displayed the same type of "signature" or "monogram" on their fabric, which makes Louis Vuitton items very recognizable. Japanese Women like others feel good and attracted by the nice design and quality of the bags. The design is attractive to look at and touching the bags support the first impression. The inner design of the bag is also smart and attractive. Some of the bags – the Louis Vuitton multicolour bags – have been designed by a Japanese designer – Takashi Murakami.

X2: Emotional Experiences (Kansei)

Japanese women feel proud when walking around with these very recognizable and smart bags. We think that the special design by Takashi Murakami also brings joy to the user.

X3: Behavioural Experiences/ Action

As said above the design of the bags are user friendly, and combined with the other feelings described above the users experience a form of unity with the bag while using it.

X4: Social Experiences/ Interactions & Relations

The interview with the Japanese woman tells us that the LV bags are regarded as strong instruments for building social interaction & relations. The Japanese do not want to be "outside" the club – meaning that "*Japanese like to do the same thing that someone else does. We are lacking individuality, and feel safe when we do the same things as others do*". It seems clear for us that to own a Louis Vuitton bag is a tool for strengthening social relationships and interactions?

X5: Spiritual Experiences/ Moral, Ethics

We don't know what kind of spiritual experiences are related to Louis Vuitton Bags by the Japanese women, but it seems quite clear that this may be an important issue for the future.

X6: Intellectual Experiences/ Cognition

As said above the Louis Vuitton bags are well designed for practical use, and the bags are reliable. This is one reason why there is a huge second hand market in Japan with Louis Vuitton bags as well as other famous luxury brands. So this may be one logical reason for buying a Louis Vuitton bag. The experience in Japan is that it is easy to sell it at a relatively high price after having used the bag for some years and then you may be interested in buying a new model. The same as selling the used car when you wish to buy the new model.

We have no data from interviews or else to support hypotheses about potential interaction effects of the different forms of experiences. A research project is now in the process to be

started up to estimate such kind of effects from different kind of luxury or high prized products.

4. Application of the Model

It is our belief, that the structural model in figure 2 can be used systematically in building new innovative products or services with a Profound Affection, which will attract the customers (= Attractive Quality Creation). For that purpose we believe that the model could be used as a check in every *phase* and *gate* of major product development processes from *ideation* to *market launch* and *post implementation review*.

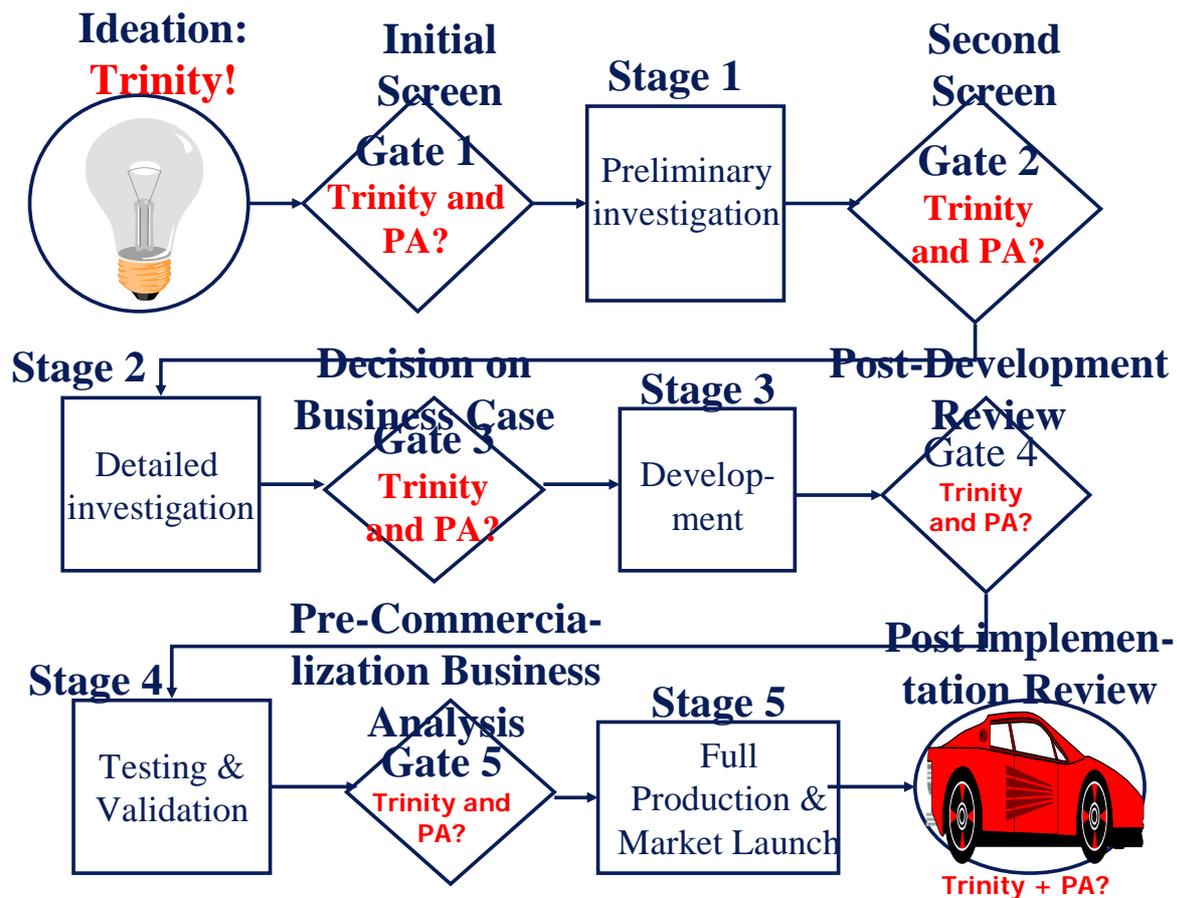


Figure 3: A Stage-Gate Process for New Product Development

By working systematically integrated into the process for new product development we are convinced that companies will improve their chances for coming up with new attractive products – products which will have a profound affection on customers’ experiences. We are also convinced that this is the best and most effective ways gradually to build new effective brands.

5. Conclusion

Because the Japanese terminology Kansei gives associations of sensing and emotional aspects only and does not embrace other essential aspects such as spiritual, intellectual, social aspect etc., as shown in figure 2, we suggest adopting the terminology of *Affective Engineering Design* in stead of Kansei Engineering when the research aims at understanding the broader scope of “Profound Affection”.

An observation from the QMOD2007 conference is that Kansei Engineering is widening its application areas from traditional product design to service design and other areas. When doing that it is a necessity to broaden the traditional scope of Kansei Engineering to the new scope of “Profound Affection”. We therefore suggest that Kansei Engineering researchers in the future should not be too narrow in their research. Think “*New Kansei Engineering*” which we call “*Affective Engineering Design*”. Go back to basics, understand human needs, and then try to understand the enablers (figure 2) for moving people’s hearts and touching their souls.

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