Between the Petals: What Research Tells Us About Floral Consumers

Dr. Charlie Hall |Texas A&M University | charliehall@tamu.edu Download PowerPoint slides from: http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/faculty/hall/publications/Hall-SAF-2018.pptx

Introduction

- 1. The importance of knowing the factors driving consumer purchases of floral products and services is a key success factor in mature stage of the floral industry life cycle.
- 2. There is a disconnect between knowledge and action that can be bridged with the right consumer messaging.
- 3. Future profitability is dependent on getting it right.

Highlights from industry-funded research (AFE/FMRF/SAF)

- 1. The SAF Generations study (2009 & 2016)
- 2. Floral purchase tracking study (2016)
- 3. Marketing tactics to increase millennial floral purchases study (2016)
- 4. Funeral directors and flowers study (2014)
- 5. Purchasing barriers tracking study for non-flower buyers (2013)
- 6. Consumer preferences study for flowers as gifts (2011)

Highlights from university-sponsored research

- 1. Consumer response to novel indoor foliage plant attributes: evidence from a conjoint experiment and gaze analysis (Organic production methods, in-state origin, domestic origin, and high VOC removal increased participants' purchase likelihood.)
- 2. Incorporating eye tracking technology and conjoint analysis to better understand the green industry consumer (Using eye tracking technology, the study shows that subjects spent more visual attention to cues in the retail displays that were relatively more important to them.)
- 3. Tracking position premiums in discrete choice experiments (This study highlights water conservation attitudes among consumers. Obviously, flowers need water. Will water affect floral consumption patterns in the future?).
- 4. Consumer preferences for organic production methods and origin promotions on ornamental plants: evidence from eye-tracking experiments (Findings imply that retailers could successfully implement signage emphasizing sustainable production methods and origin to generate consumer interest.)
- 5. Consumer Preference for Sustainable Attributes in Plants: Evidence from Experimental Auctions (Latent class segmentation analysis identifies three distinct consumer segments: Import-Liking, Mainstream, and Eco-local.)
- 6. Recognition, awareness, purchase intentions, and visual activity on real and fictitious plant brands (Using eye tracking, the study found that visual activity varied slightly by brand, but a fictitious brand captured and held visual attention similarly to the two established national brands; thus, brand did not influence purchase intention.)
- 7. Display signs and involvement: the visual path to purchase intention (Eye tracking results demonstrate that the more time spent looking at a plant, the higher the likelihood to buy. Signage is a critical element in retail plant settings.)
- 8. Visual behavior, buying impulsiveness, and consumer behavior (Broadly, it can be argued that impulsive consumers seek out novel, self-image enhancing products.)
- 9. The effects of self-control on subsequent purchasing decisions (This study used biometric measures collected in a random assignment experiment to look at the impact of self-control on purchasing decisions.)

Notes:

Future research regarding floral consumers

- 1. Biometrics is a very broad category of measures that includes functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI, measuring blood oxygen levels), electroencephalography (EEG measuring "brain waves," brain electrical activity recorded on the scalp), galvanic skin response (GSR), and eye movement tracking.
- 2. The use of biometrics allows marketing researchers to couple traditional research methods with measures that do not depend on verbal articulation. Fore example, the use of biometrics allows researchers to "tap into the minds of consumers" as they mentally process and subconsciously respond to messaging and overall branding.
- 3. The use of eye tracking and biometrics in future marketing research may help to learn more about consumer floral purchasing behavior such as the following examples:
 - a. How shoppers navigate through or browse the florist shop?
 - b. What attracts floral shoppers' attention at the point of purchase?
 - c. Which visual elements of the arrangement or bouquet are noticed versus which ones are ignored?
 - d. What is the optimal mix of flowers in the arrangement or bouquet?
 - e. What marketing messages influence shoppers at different stages in the decision process?
 - f. How do floral shoppers interact with flowers in the display?
 - g. Which packaging or labeling options captures and holds attention most effectively?
 - h. Are key brand attributes being effectively communicated?
 - i. Does floral advertising (e.g. point-of-purchase materials, website banners, etc.) capture and hold attention?

Notes: