Abstract: What the customers really feel? This question is critical for formulating competitive marketing strategies. For decades, marketing researchers tried to find out an excellent answer using various methods such as focus groups, surveys and so on; sometimes asking consumers directly and sometimes applying an indirect approach, such as choice-based conjoint. But, neither method is foolproof. In the frame of this paper we will discuss some weak points of neuromarketing by demonstrating results of our research and give suggestions toward gaining more precise data.

Key-Words: Culture, Cultural genesis, Evolution, In-depth interview, Marketing research, Neuromarketing

1 Introduction

Significance of marketing is out of any doubts. Companies world wide spend trillions of dollars each year on advertising, marketing, and product R&D. For decades advertisers, marketers, and product developers are making an effort to apply social psychology to discover the tools to tap into the consumer’s brain. Some marketers believe that most of biases occur because of responses changed by the customer’s conscious mind. Development of technology gives a wide range of opportunities for the new generation marketing research. The latest technologic discovery in modern marketing research is EEG scanner. Its developer Dr. Pradeep at the 75th Advertising Research Foundation conference explains: “The skullcap-size device sports dozens of sensors that rest on a subject's head like a crown of thorns. It covers the entire area of the brain, so it can comprehensively capture synaptic waves.” Consumer-research firm NeuroFocus, managed by Dr. Pradeep, “promises something deeper, with unprecedented access into the nooks and crannies of the subconscious” [1].

New point of view most times gives an advantage in the marketing field. It helps to develop creative strategies. However, neuromarketing has a few points that contradict to results of our research. In this article we will discuss these weaknesses, present our research and make some suggestions toward future direction of modern marketing research.

2 Problem Formulation

Neuromarketing is a quite new method of marketing research. The first attempts to apply neuroscience to other fields were taken in the middle of the 20th century by the neurologist Paul MacLean. He has proposed that we have not one brain, but three. It is interesting that similar ideas can be found in many esoteric spiritual traditions like Kabbalah and Platonism, but MacLean made an effort to bond three planes of consciousness to physical parts of the brain [2]. This idea was not wide accepted in the medical field but psychologists are still using it. Since that time neuroscience and technology developed very quickly, and the appearance of neuromarketing seems to be very natural. Without any doubts, neuromarketing is a necessary application for gaining more precise data in marketing research. However, this approach is not foolproof too.

One of well-known neuromarketing companies is science based consumer-research firm NeuroFocus. According to NeuroFocus CEO Dr. Pradeep, people’s brains are similar with “some differences between male and female brains” [1]. However, our research shows that human brains are “remarkably
“alike” just within some cultural groups. Differences between groups are still very important.

The probably cause of Dr. Pradeep’s wrong assumption about the similarity of brains may be explained by Ian Addie in his article *Is neuroscience facilitating a new era of the hidden persuader?*:

“By nature of the electrodes being placed on the scalp, EEG can only effectively measure brain activity at the surface of the brain, while we know that a lot of mental processes, including some of those responsible for controlling emotion and memory formation, occur deep within the brain and outside of the reach of EEG. So the current techniques used in neuromarketing are far from ideal for their purpose. However, even if these techniques were not without their limitations, it is necessary to have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of brain function if the results are to be correctly interpreted and completely understood – and in this regard we are also currently lacking”[3].

3 Problem Solution

Cause of the differences between groups may be based on evolutionary domain. The brains started to differ in the period when according to the most widely accepted “Out of Africa” Hypothesis; Homo erectus was spreading across the world. At that time human groups moved into different geography regions with different characteristics that had huge influence over future development of culture. There are a number of evidences for impact of geography characteristics on the cultural genesis. Emergence of science in ancient Egypt was connected to the need for development of irrigation system for Agriculture, building pyramids, mummification of bodies and so on in the desert climate. Also, the most widely accepted myth about the origin of man that describes the creation of man by the gods from the most common material in the area; in different cultures man is created from clay, soil, wood, coconut, bones of animals or of fish, etc [4].

The physical differentiation of brain’s parts at that time may be explained in terms of neuroplasticity. This so deep physical differentiation was an absolutely necessary for survival process of adaptation. Now it is an inherited base of our brain that is similar just within the certain culture group members.

The idea of transmission of cultural events to later generations is not new. Darwin did believe that learned in one generation characteristics could be inherited in later generations. According to him, the process of inheritance was working by transmitting particles, called ‘gemmules’, produced throughout the body to offspring in the sex cells. Darwin claimed that gemmules hold characteristics specific to the body part that produces them [5].

According to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, cultural evolutionists agree that at the level of the population, cumulative evolution requires that fitness-enhancing cultural traits are preserved in the offspring generation [6].

The similarity of brains within the culture group was proved either by our following research.

3.1 Methodology of Research

3.1.1 Aim of Research

The main Aim of our research is extracting from all answers common for each group patterns that influence decision about buying a new housing.

3.1.2 Sample of Research

The research was conducted in Turkey, Czech Republic and Russia. Samples of research are three ethnic groups: Turkish, Czech and Russian.

3.1.3 Instrument and procedures

Instrument of our research is in-depth interview because of its flexibility and providing more detailed, unconscious and thus more trustful information.

In order to reach the Aim of research, we conducted in-depth interviews with 17 Turkish, 25 Czech and 7 Russians using simple random sampling techniques. Number of the interviews depended on ability to find out some strong common pattern.

The first set of interviews was conducted in Bursa/Turkey. Assistants were selected from Senior Psychology students in Uludag University.

The second set of interviews was conducted in Zlin/Czech Republic. Assistants were selected from Senior Management and Economics students in University of Tomas Bata in Zlin.

The third set of interviews was conducted in Moscow/Russia.

In order to increase the reliability of results, the following unified interview protocol was developed for all culture groups.

Questions for the interview:
- The ideal home (what home the participant want to live in? more details about it (plan, odors, colors))
- Childhood memories (the strongest something s/he remember first, may be positive or negative, some experience about home)
- More details about the childhood home (plan, odors, colors)
- What makes one place a home?

Guidelines:
- A voice recorder will be used during the interview
- Main points, participant’s age, sex, education level and occupation will be written after the interview in MS Word.
During the interview, the most attention must be paid to the following:
- Something necessary for survival that might be developed in past generations as a product of an adaptation;
- Early childhood memories.

3.1.4 Ethical considerations
At the first part of each interview an interviewer gave all necessary information about research aims, anonymity and security of all private data.

3.1.5 Data analysis
For the purpose of our research we have used Conceptual analysis of the data gained. The first of all, participants’ answers were reduced to phrases relative to the Home and a necessity for survival. Then the phrases were distributed by subcategories that later were combined into categories. These categories are some common patterns for each of the target groups. Than every interview was scanned for existence or absence of the pattern found. Concepts were coded even if they have appeared in different forms but meant similar enough. The coding was conducted manually writing down concept occurrences. Other irrelevant information was ignored.

3.2 Results of Research
The strongest common pattern for Turkish group is Cleanliness (Table 1). 15 of 17 participants used it or it’s synonyms in their answers.

The strongest common pattern for Czech group is Nature (Table 1). 22 of 25 participants used it or it’s synonyms in their answers.

The strongest common pattern for Russian group is Heat (Table 1). 6 of 7 participants used it or it's synonyms in their answers [7].

4 Conclusion
Even if certain problems may be solved by increasing the sensitivity of EEG, the brain complexity shouldn’t be forgotten.

In conclusion, it is clear, that neuromarketing and in-depth interviews may complete each other and draw together more accurate picture of what the customers really feel.

References: