

# PRODUCT AT THE CROSSROADS OF SPACE, LANGUAGE AND MEANING

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## ABSTRACT

### Purpose

Product is a site for the unfolding of extended space and language that defines the space. In the process, product receives an identity that locates it in consumer's mind and in the ever-evolving dynamics of society and culture. Product managers can decide and define the meanings that come to be associated to them. This article attempts to combine theories of space, language and meaning to evolve a richer theoretical conception of product.

### Design/Methodology/Approach

To achieve the above said purpose, marketing mix is taken as the foundation and on it are superimposed the theories of physical, mental, and social spaces presented by Lefebvre. The article goes further and relates the newly constructed theoretical proposition to form, language and technology, and argues that this marriage gives birth to a discourse on products that is rooted in aesthetics and language. The propositions are formulated by tabulating factors that are relevant to the discussion and conducting a rigorous conceptual examination to interrogate the relations between them.

### Findings

The findings enrich the discourse of the product theory by introducing a duplex structure of meaning-making and meaning-giving activity to visual experiences of the product. The enrichment opens the possibility of poetic treatment of products. The article elucidates the issue with fashion as an example where language has failed to play a significant part. It finally presents a hypothesis of the product that is rooted in human perception of physical space, conditioned by collective experience of social space, and meaningfully realized in the caves of human mind.

### Research and Practical Implications

The hypotheses presented in this paper can be examined empirically through further research work. They can also lead to situating future research on product conceptualization in the field of sociology and philosophy. The practical implications will be realized by product and brand managers as they deepen their day-to-day concern of creating a sticky and differentiated position of their brand in the minds of their customers.

### Originality/Value

The product literature in the past has engaged with sociology and philosophy in a limited way and this article will pioneer such an effort.

**Keywords:** *Fashion, Meaning, Poetics of fashion, Product, Space.*