▲ Hochschule Harz

Bachelorarbeit

THE RELEVANCE OF AESTHETIC MARKETING FOR PURCHASING DECISIONS

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Abstract

Companies use the aesthetic design of products and brands to positively influence the purchase decision. Therefore, it is necessary to define what exactly aesthetic appearance is and what associations are evoked in customers.

The bachelor thesis thus focuses on the relevance of aesthetic design for product marketing for customer purchase decisions. In addition, it analyzes what exactly is understood as aesthetic design and examines its importance regarding the price and functionality of products.

To answer the research questions, a mixed-method study was conducted that included quantitative and qualitative questions. Design preferences in terms of color, shape, and font were addressed. In addition, questions about the importance were asked with the help of an interval scale, and qualitative questions were asked about the benefits of aesthetic design. At the end of the survey, the importance of aesthetics was again examined with the help of three products, headphones, toasters, and wall clocks.

The analysis of the survey shows that the aesthetic design of products is essential for the purchase decision, but only if price and performance are also appropriate for the buyer. Great attention is paid to the interaction of the three factors. Most participants are more likely to make compromises in appearance than in price or function. The aesthetic design focuses on the perception of harmonious and pleasant design characteristics, i.e. colors, shapes, and typefaces.

Further research can be done on trends of aesthetic perceptions. The focus can be on correlations between preference and life situation, gender, or even income. Historical development can also be analyzed.

Abstrakt

Unternehmen nutzen die ästhetische Gestaltung von Produkten und Marken, um die Kaufentscheidung der Menschen positiv zu beeinflussen. Daher ist es notwendig zu definieren, was genau ästhetisches Aussehen ist und welche Assoziationen beim Kunden geweckt werden.

Die Bachelorarbeit befasst sich daher mit der Relevanz der ästhetischen Gestaltung von Produkten für die Kaufentscheidung von Kunden. Darüber hinaus wird analysiert, was genau unter ästhetischem Design verstanden wird und welche Bedeutung es in Bezug auf den Preis und die Funktionalität von Produkten hat.

Zur Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen wurde eine Mixed-Methods-Studie durchgeführt, die sowohl quantitative als auch qualitative Fragen beinhaltet. Untersucht wurden Designpräferenzen in Bezug auf Farbe, Form und Schrift. Darüber hinaus wurden über die Skala auch Relevanz spezifische Fragen gestellt und qualitative Fragen zum Nutzen von ästhetischem Design gestellt. Am Ende der Umfrage wurde die Bedeutung der Ästhetik noch einmal anhand von drei Produkten - Kopfhörer, Toaster und Wanduhren - untersucht.

Die Auswertung der Umfrage zeigt, dass die ästhetische Gestaltung von Produkten für die Kaufentscheidung wesentlich ist, aber nur dann, wenn auch Preis und Leistung für den Käufer angemessen sind. Großes Augenmerk wird auf das Zusammenspiel der drei Faktoren gelegt. Die meisten Teilnehmer sind eher bereit, beim Aussehen Kompromisse einzugehen als beim Preis oder der Funktion. Das ästhetische Design konzentriert sich auf die Wahrnehmung von harmonischen und angenehmen Designmerkmalen, d.h. Farben, Formen und Schriftarten.

Weitere Forschungen können zu Trends der ästhetischen Wahrnehmung durchgeführt werden. Im Mittelpunkt können dabei Zusammenhänge zwischen Präferenzen und Lebenssituation, Geschlecht oder auch Einkommen stehen. Auch die historische Entwicklung kann analysiert werden.

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UPS ....United Parcel Service of America

US ....United States

1 Introduction

1.1   Introduction and justification of the topic

Companies, such as *Absolute Vodka*, *GAP Inc*., and even *Starbucks*, have succeeded in setting themselves apart from their competitors by using aesthetic features. Customers perceive these companies more favorably because they have optimized more than just product qualities or operations. Brands align their entire corporate identity, for example, their customer image, packaging, and advertising, to this style of strategy (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 33ff).

The author always found "the beautiful" appealing and was interested in this design phenomenon. Therefore, using marketing aesthetics as a unique selling proposition immediately attracted interest. The fact that many young people are attracted to "the beautiful" did not escape the author's attention. Many people in the immediate surroundings of the author have mentioned before, they specifically pay attention to the aesthetic appearance when buying a product. However, the case itself was not only interesting but what exactly appeared as beautiful and why aesthetic design is so important nowadays. These questions and the specific interest were then the reason for the selection of this topic for the bachelor thesis.

1.2   Objectives of the thesis and research question

It is generally known that aesthetic design has an impact on the buyer and their buying decision. But what exactly is viewed as aesthetic design for products and how important is it for the buying outcome?

The objective of the thesis is to give statements about the relevance of aesthetic design for the purchasing decision. Therefore, the product design is the center of the survey and not the packaging of the product. To give concrete answers the author used three products: Bluetooth headphones, toasters, and wall clocks. These products were selected because they are gender-neutral in their perception and do not tend to be allocated to either gender.

In addition, the work aims to clarify how aesthetic design can be defined for the buyer. Moreover, this paper examines the importance of product price on the purchase decision, and whether it is more significant than the design.

To achieve the set objectives, the following research questions were answered:

1. What is viewed as aesthetically superior design?
2. Is aesthetically superior design important for people and if so, why?
3. Would people pay more for a product with an aesthetically superior design?
   3.1. What products would people pay more for?
4. For the products: headphones, toasters, wall clocks:
   4.1. Which product design is the most popular?
   4.2. What are the important design aspects, the participants based their design on?
   4.3. Why did participants choose their product? What did they like or dislike about the design? Is the price an influencing factor?
   4.4. Which product would the participants buy after knowing the price of the product? Is there a difference between the most popular design

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The bachelor thesis is subdivided into three parts. The first part starts with the perception of advertisement and brand information, focusing on the brand control wheel according to Esch. Thereby, only the important elements of aesthetics in marketing are addressed. A small insight into the topic of sensory marketing is given to provide a foundation for receiving information from marketing data. Afterward, the second section covers the meaning of aesthetics in marketing, including a definition of the term and its important characteristics. Therefore, the chapter provides a prerequisite for the topic of the thesis. Next, style and stylistic elements are addressed. The thesis contains three examples of implementations from *Absolute Vodka*, *Starbucks*, and *Mercedes Benz*, to consider different executions. Additionally, the author addresses the advantages and the critical acknowledgment of aesthetic marketing. This will help to give a distinguished perspective on the topic. The last part addresses the methodological approach the author used to survey the thesis. It states how the questionnaire was evaluated. The next chapter includes the results which were retrieved from the survey. Detailed information and numerous diagrams are presented here, which help to illustrate the data. The sixth chapter then discusses the results and interprets the correlations. In addition, the author comments on the restriction of research as well as gives future research and further investigation topics in the field of aesthetic marketing. The thesis ends with a concise conclusion on the topic of aesthetic marketing and the conducted survey results.

2 Perception of advertisement and brand information

2.1 Brand control wheel according to Esch

Originally the model was created by the company *Icon Added Value*. Franz-Rudolf Esch, a German economist, than adapted the model of the "brand steering wheel". The model is used to capture a brand identity and is one of the most used approaches in the industry. The concept is divided into five areas, which can be differentiated into soft and hard factors. Hard factors can be checked and soft factors can be felt and touched (Figure 1) (ESCH. The Brand Consultants GmbH 2021).
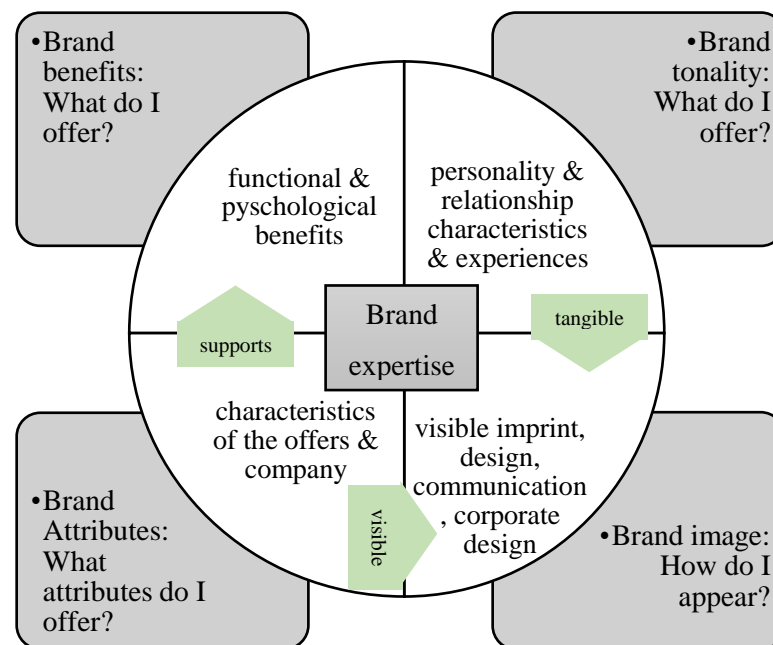
Figure 1: Brand control wheel according to Esch (Source: own illustration based on Esch 2014, S. 104 zitiert nach Esch / Langner 2019, S. 185)

Throughout the explanation, reference is made to the elements that are most significant to the subject of aesthetics. Meaning, the right half of the marketing wheel is illuminated. This addresses the emotional and visual impressions of a brand and thus deals with brand tonality and brand image (Esch / Langer 2019, S. 185).

When talking about emotions and feelings that one experiences when encountering a brand, it is called brand tonality. A tonality is characterized by personality and relationship traits to the brand. It deals with brand experiences that a person undergoes (Esch / Langner 2019, S. 185f). A brand should pursue two strategies when it comes to brand experiences. The first is to evoke pleasant feelings in the customer, and the second is to

deliver specific experiences. Triggering pleasant feelings can lead to the solidification of an emotional connection. However, only unspecific events are addressed, which are replaceable and therefore not permanently anchored. These are for example the showing of pleasant pictures, playing music, and offering of free gifts with the purchase. The second strategy differentiates the brand from the competition, intending to achieve an impactful position. This builds an emotional profile and strengthens brand loyalty. A lasting relationship with the customer can be established, as strong positive feelings are anchored. It is important to mention, that pleasant feelings and stimuli cannot create a sensory experience and are therefore called unspecific. (Kroeber-Riel / Gröppel-Klein 2013 zitiert nach Diehl / Terlutter 2019, S. 797).

The brand image is shaped by the visible, auditory-visual impressions of a brand. Perceptions are composed of auditory, visual, olfactory, haptic, tactile, and gustatory contacts. "How do I appear?" is an important question in this context. Brands represent themselves through advertising, packaging, buildings, and personal and mass communication (Esch / Langner 2019, S. 186).

2.2 Sensory marketing

Sensory marketing addresses the impact of sensory organs on marketing activities. The receptors of our sensory organs, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin, receive an infinite number of stimuli from our environment every day (Steiner 2020, S. 9f). These stimuli are processed by our brain to form an overall impression. Thus, the totality of all stimuli is decisive. However, this perception is largely unconscious and passive (Sarstedt et al. 2022, S. 2f). Visual stimuli are particularly important for aesthetic design. Therefore, it is explained in more detail in this section.

The visual stimulus is important because people perceive their environment to a large extent through their eyes (Sarstedt et al. 2022, S. 5f). Around 60 to 90 percent of impulses are perceived through the eyes. In addition, it is also the most reliable sense (Steiner 2020, S. 16). Visual stimuli are, for example, colors or light that influence our feelings and perception. Light colors, for example, are usually associated with positive qualities, and dark colors with negative qualities. Accordingly, white is often preferred to black color. As a result, light-colored products are more likely to be used in advertisements. Color is also responsible for the perception of size. Richer colors make products appear larger than pastel colors, for example (Sarstedt et al. 2022, S. 7ff). Among other things, colors cause

various associations. Blue is considered relaxing, red stimulating, and green fresh and sustainable (Sarstedt et al. 2022, S. 13f). In addition, visual stimuli influence haptic perception, because they create perspectives for the human eye. (Sarstedt et al. 2022, S. 16f). In general, visual stimuli can help shape a brand image. However, if the positioning is done through multisensory features, a brand can influence customer perception even more efficiently and significantly. Customers can be committed to the brand and in their eyes the product quality is increasingly enhanced. A company can also charge higher prices because the brand offers value in the form of experiences (Steiner 2020, S. 75f). Products that possess multisensory properties attract more attention and are easier for the customer to recognize. They are also perceived more intensively. All this strengthens the bond between the brand and the customer (Munzinger / Musiol 2008, S. 85ff zitiert nach Steiner 2020, S. 76).

3 The meaning of aesthetics in marketing

3.1 Definition of the term: Aesthetics

The word aesthetics is defined as "science, the doctrine of the beautiful", "the stylishly beautiful" or "the sense of beauty" in the Duden. The word has its origins in the Greek language. The science of the sensually perceptible was called "aisthetike" (Duden.de 2023). According to Kaspar Maase, the adjective describes the "mode of interactions between people and objects of perception" (Maase 2022, S. 53). Additionally, the term "objectively beautiful" is commonly used in the theory of aesthetics (Maase 2022, S. 61). Interpretations differ depending on the approach. Thus, art, philosophy, and sociology have different definitions and interpretations. The anthropological approach is of great importance for my thesis. Because according to the concept, the focus is on the external design of things, the environment, and productions. Subsequently, the main goal is to trigger a sensual feeling of well-being in people (Maase 2022, S. 17). This approach also refers to material objects, as well as to immaterial things, events, and situations. In this work, however, we will refer purely to material objects. According to Maase, a process of aestheticization has been taking place in Western society since the 19th century. In this development, the goal is to create constellations in which aesthetic experience occurs. In addition, the appearance is to be enhanced and an improvement of the pleasantness should be achieved (Maase 2022, S. 18). Through the pursuit of aesthetic experience, intense emotions can be generated, which people gladly accept (Maase 2022, S. 55).

Art and everyday objects differ in terms of their aesthetic function. Art, such as sculptures and paintings, has a primarily aesthetic function. This implies that they primarily serve the purpose of appearing beautiful and attractive. Utility objects, on the other hand, serve the purpose of being used. People try to stimulate a stronger sense of sensual perception through close attention. This striving for the creation of pleasure is also called aesthetic interaction (Maase 2022, S. 56).

The starting point for the aesthetics is the sensual perception of the environment. The perception is different for everyone and therefore purely individual. After the sensory impressions are received, they are compared with those already present in the brain. The already existing ones originate from earlier experiences. Through this sensory interaction, the sensing of meaningful objects is done. Therefore, it is assumed that aesthetically perceived objects depend on personal experiences, knowledge, and fears. These are thus

"historically-culturally" preconditioned (Maase 2022, S. 57). The sensual interactions and impressions relate to emotions and valuation. It therefore can be said that the aesthetics are about more than just art (Seel 2007, S. 123 zitiert nach Zacharias 2013, S. 279).

3.2 Aesthetics in marketing

In the previous section, it became clear that aesthetics is created personally by the sensory perception of individual people. In this approach, interesting, pleasant, friendly, and moving experiences are considered aesthetic. The focus of perception is on the "beautiful" (Hagtvedt 2022, S. 426).

Various elements make up the aesthetics of a product or a brand. These factors include form, content, signs, symbols, meaning, likeness, and imagination (Zacharias 2013, S. 279). Over the years, aesthetics has emerged as a key component of marketing. One reason for its rising significance is the fact that aesthetic design can serve as a unique selling proposition for brands and products. This approach is not only used by high-end brands, such as Apple or Tesla but also by wholesalers like Target, who collaborate with designers and give their collections an aesthetic style. However, design cannot only send certain signals but also strengthen loyalty to brands (Hagtvedt 2022, S. 426). As mentioned before, aesthetics is not equivalent to art, but it takes an essential role. Product design, packaging, or even advertisements depend on artistic elements. The representation of these characteristics is very important. It is composed of sensory building blocks, such as color, shape, rhythm as well as sounds, which create an aesthetic appeal. Marketing can benefit from aesthetic elements as certain customer groups are attracted to the product or the brand. Important factors include emotional states such as empathy and a sense of well-being on the part of the customer (Hagtvedt 2022, S. 427). Thus, it can be said that aesthetic design influences the product experience for the customer and is responsible for creating initial sympathy. The first impression can therefore already lead to rejection or approval (Page / Herr 2002, S. 144f.).

The term "marketing aesthetics" has been shaped by Simonson and Schmitt. The two authors want to use it to draw attention to the sensory experiences created by corporate and brand elements. However, the origins of the "aesthetic" remain unclear. Some researchers assume that aesthetics describes that objects have certain properties that appeal to people in different ways. These features are characterized as structural. Still, other researchers assume that aesthetic features of objects evoke specific memories and feelings.

These are called referential features. It can be assumed that the combination of both kinds of attributes defines the approach of marketing aesthetics (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 41f).

Aesthetics is composed of three areas: product design, communication research, and spatial design. In this paper, the preference will be purely on the product design. This area can be divided into function and form. The function describes the benefit of a product or service. The form refers to the packaging of a product or service (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 42).

3.3 Style and style elements

Style describes the characteristic features and shapes of a product. They have an important function, as recognition values are created that are particularly valuable for brands. Customers can thus distinguish the products and brands from the competition. Style beautifies the environment and can also relieve stress from society. It is perceived as relaxing and satisfying. Styles are also composed of several elements. The key components are color, shape, line, and pattern. These are all perceived as a visual style, which will also be the center of this work. Additionally, there are acoustic styles, such as volume, pitch, or even metrics. In general, it can be said that the buying experience is an interplay of many different senses. However, since only the visual aspects are discussed in the study, those will be examined alone (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 118f.).

The main style elements are designed for the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste (Figure 1). Elements of a visual nature, however, are of the greatest importance. This has already been tested by various experiments and research. Simonson and Schmitt refer to the experiment of Erdelyi and Kleinbard, which deals with visual memory. Through their research, it was proven that the recollection rate is higher up to four days, when in addition to words also pictures are added to the objects. In the basic element of vision, the most important elements are shape, color, and font. These are outlined within the following chapters (Erdelyi / Kleinbard 1978, S. 261-275 zitiert nach Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 119f.).

| Sight
Color, Shape, Font | Main style elements | Hearing
Volume, Pitch, Metrics |
| Touch
Material, Texture | | Taste & Smell |
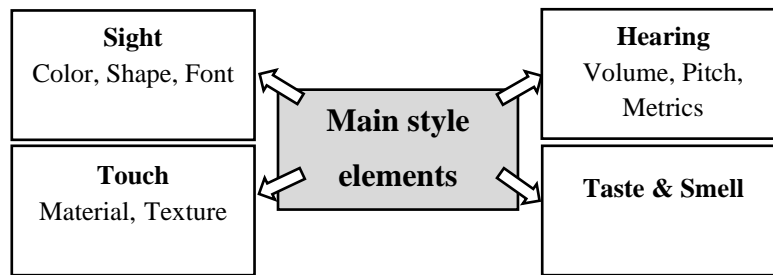
Figure 2: Main style elements (Source: own illustration based on Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 120)

3.3.1 Shape

Product shapes strongly influence the identity of a product. Examples of this are, for example, perfume from the brand Calvin Klein, CK One, or Murphy's Oil Soap. The example of the perfume bottle is a good way to see the identity which was created by the brand. It says "chic in the lower price range". The reason is the simple bottle shape with a simple screw cap. The bottle has a rectangular shape with rounded corners and the cap is reminiscent of a liquor bottle (Figure 3) (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 121).

Figure 3: CK One parfum bottle (Source: Zalando.de o. J.)

Similarly, you can see this in the packaging of Murphy's Oil Soap. There, a small change has greatly improved the identification of the customer. Previously, the bottle had no handle and was therefore associated with annoying housekeeping. After the handle was added, the product was perceived as friendlier and more comfortable. This change has given the soap a recognition factor (Figure 4; Figure 5) (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 121f.).

Figure 4: Murphy´s Oil Soap without handle (Source: Amazon.com o. J.)

Figure 5: Murphy´s Oil Soap with handle (Source: Amazon.com o. J.)

Shapes, and specifically bottle shapes, can form entire brand identities. If you think of Coca-Cola, you immediately have the bottle design in mind. This also applies to the Chanel No. 5 perfume or the Heinz ketchup bottle. All these labels have taken advantage of their bottle's unique design and made them an important part of their brand. At the same time, the form itself can surpass the functionality of the product. This is the case with Heinz ketchup. The bottle itself is rather impractical, due to its angular shape. However,

over time, it became the company's signature item and still contributes to the high sales figures today. Forms can thus become global identity carriers (Simonson / Schmitt 1998, S. 121).

Shapes also rely on certain dimensions, which then evoke associations in customers. Simonson and Schmitt talk about four key dimensions which contribute to certain ideas. These are angularity, symmetry, proportion, and size. Those are explained in the next paragraph (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 123ff.).

Angularity, as the name suggests, refers to whether shapes have corners and angles. Angular shapes include squares, rectangles, and triangles. These shapes exude conflict, dynamism, and masculinity. Roundness, on the other hand, represents femininity, harmony, and softness. Differences can also be explained between straight and curved shapes. Straight shapes look masculine, sharp, abrupt, and changeable. Curved shapes have feminine, soft, and steady characteristics (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 123f.).

Symmetry means the mirror equality of forms and creates a balance for the human eye. For an object, this is an important visual attraction. However, there is a certain phenomenon concerning symmetry. If a little asymmetry is brought into a symmetrical appearance, it can enhance the attraction even more. Simonson and Schmitt cite the example of Cindy Crawford here. The successful model has a particularly symmetric face. However, this is only enhanced by her birthmark, which she only has on one side of her face (Figure 6). In addition, symmetry has the effect of relieving tension. Asymmetry, however, has the opposite effect. A little of it, however, prevents one from monotony and boredom. So, we make sure that symmetry is always supplemented by asymmetry to bring movement into the scene. As an example, one can use the representation of watch dials. The clock hands are usually at the ten - two o'clock setting. This represents perfect symmetry. The second hand is used to create a certain asymmetry and is therefore often set to position 25 or 35. Thereby movement is created (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 124f.).
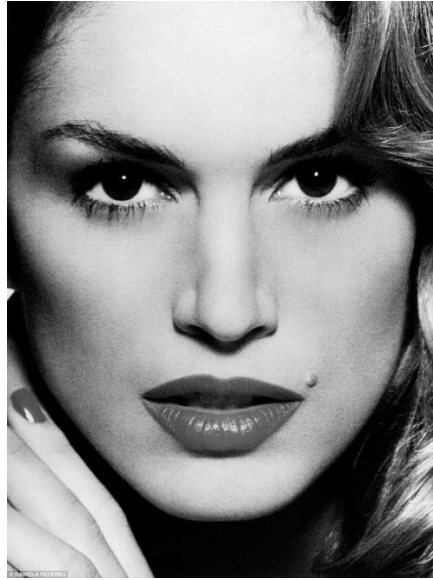
Figure 6: Cindy Crawford (Source: Tempesta 2015)

The proportions of an object can shape the perception in a multitude of ways. Long, angular, or rectangular shapes create a dominant aesthetic. They have a powerful effect on individuals. Short angular shapes, on the contrary, seem shyer and more patient. Round and curved objects create symmetry, thereby generating an image of harmony (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 125).

The last characteristic is size. Large objects suggest power and strength, whereas small shapes express tenderness and weakness. However, in different parts of the world, there is also a difference in opinion. In western countries, small shapes are perceived as incomplete and lacking in size. In the eastern world, large forms are considered awkward and bulky (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 125f.).

Shapes have a strong influence on the perception of objects and often lead to the distinctiveness of brands and products. They are therefore of great importance for an aesthetic strategy. Achieving a brand association, through a particular shape, is not easy and requires a repeated absorption of the elements to be associated. However, if this is achieved, it can be a great advantage over competitors. Therefore, it can be legally protected. Brands like Coca-Cola and Chanel have done this and still benefit from the famous design of their products (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 126f.).

3.3.2 Color

Just like shapes, colors give brands or businesses an identity. Thus, certain colors are used in logos, uniforms, buildings, interiors, advertisements, or even packaging. To create an

identity, companies must use colors across multiple elements. Coca-Cola, for example, uses striking red, for countless materials and surfaces around the world. In addition, colors have the function of arousing certain impressions in customers. Companies use this to convey messages and create unique selling points. The brown, of the parcel service company UPS, is used for the trucks, uniforms, and logo. It is supposed to convey seriousness, inconspicuousness, and reliability (Figure 7) (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 127ff.).

Figure 7: UPS Vehicle (Source: UPS.com o. J.)

Another characteristic is the creation of experiences. The important dimensions are brightness, saturation, and color tone (Simonson / Schmitt 1998, S. 130). The association through colors is evoked by different archetypes which are formed through previous experiences. There are different opinions about the concrete archetype (Küthe / Küthe 2014, S. 98). With bright colors, the more saturated it is, the more the object seems to move. Saturation is to be equated with the color strength, i.e., how pure the color is. Non-saturated colors are mixed with white. The brighter a color is, the closer it appears to the observer. Red tones, orange tones, and yellow tones look energetic and extroverted. Those are warm colors. Red is an adventurous, sociable, exciting and strong, protective color. Yellow is cheerful, warm, loving, and impulsive. Cold colors, such as greens, blues, and purples, are perceived as steady, and introverted. They have a peaceful aura and a calming effect. White, black, and also gold and silver are considered prestigious colors. Differences are very clear in white and black. White is bright and evokes a sunny, cheerful, active, pure, and innocent atmosphere. Black, on the other hand, is dark and mysterious. It is also sometimes perceived as evil and impure. Metallic colors are associated with glamour and success. The colors take on the attributes of noble metals and are luxurious, bright, and elegant. However, not only individual colors are important, but also color combinations. These can create experiences as well as evoke certain images, for example, color combinations of national flags. Red, white and blue have the American identity.

Green, red, and white often have Italian identification. Combinations of colors are often used on food packaging to enhance the experience of the products (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 129ff.).

However, aesthetic color combinations are not easy to identify. Fabian and Erich Küthe describe certain principles according to G. T. Fechner. According to them, the following seven flexible rules apply: the principles of contrast, reconciliation, clarity, aesthetic center, threshold, association, and mood (Table 1). However, there is no sufficient empirical confirmation of the concept of harmony. It is therefore still in the eye of the beholder. Rules can be summarized for certain target groups. In addition, single colors are more complicated to classify than color combinations (Küthe / Küthe 2014, S. 149f.).

Name of the Principle	Content of the principle
The principle of contrast	- Simultaneous and successive contrast are additional conditions for color design - Contrasts are the impression contrasts (light vs. dark), the sensation contrasts (warm vs. cold), and the quantity contrasts (much vs. little)
The principle of reconciliation	Complementary colors complement each other to a neutral chromatic finish
The principle of clarity	Tone-on-tone color combinations create uniformity
The principle of aesthetic center	Explains the matching of colors that have an aesthetically equal color tone
The principle of threshold	Colors are harmonious if they have the same saturation or brightness gradations concerning the color tone
The principle of association & mood	Colors transmit feelings, worlds of taste, and thematic worlds

Table 1: The principles of aesthetics (Source: own creation based on Küthe / Küthe 2014)

3.3.3 Font

The font image is composed of the elements of color and shape. However, it is very special because it has two meanings. In addition to the meaning of the words and letters,

appearance is also significant. Long, narrow letters and serifs are considered elegant and precise. Round and full letters, without serifs, have a friendly appearance. If you view the typeface of the newspaper "The New Yorker", you can recognize a "metropolitan type-face", which is designed in the Art Deco style. It is attributed to the qualities of sophisti-cation and humor, as well as style (Figure 8). The cursive font looks extravagant and solemn. Capital letters express authority and aggressiveness. Lowercase letters, on the other hand, act boldly, and as an understatement. Feelings also play an important role in the appearance of type. The feelings depend on the utility of the typeface in alternative contexts. However, these are also sometimes perceived incorrectly as the effect of the typeface is not sufficient to be recognized. (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 133f.).

THE NEW YORKER

Figure 8: The New Yorker typeface (Source: Read 2017)

3.4 Examples of brand implementing aesthetics in marketing

3.4.1 Absolute Vodka

The most famous product of *The Absolut Company* is *Absolut Vodka*. The alcoholic bev-erage is produced in Ahns in southern Sweden. The company was founded in 1917 (Ab-solut.com o. J.). Before the great success of vodka, the brand name had no distinctiveness or recognition. The product comes from Sweden and was therefore not known to have its origin in a country of good vodkas. In addition, at that time the bottle was still perceived as old-fashioned and as the bottle of an alchemist. Even a market research study warned against the launch in the US market. Contrary to all expectations, however, at the end of the 1980s, the brand became the market leader with almost 60% market share. And all this within ten years. The reasons for this success were many and varied. Firstly, at the end of the 1970s, aesthetic marketing of the brand was introduced. A carefully planned identity campaign was developed for this purpose. This took advantage of the product's weaknesses and transformed them into strengths, which were then utilized. The campaign

focused on the word "Absolut" and the design of the bottle. To make the product look cool, bold, advanced, and playful, it was associated with the modern art scene. In the process, reference was made to grounded artists. The bottle features a minimal, transparent design, with a long and broad bottleneck (Figure 9). The font of the name "Absolut Vodka" was set in consistent capital letters. The colors chosen are blue and gray, which appear rational, straightforward, and sophisticated. This further strengthens the connection to the modern art scene. In commercials, the bottle was shown with a title consisting of two words. The familiar bottle was shown in unfamiliar, changing environments. However, the terms used to show the familiar bottle change depending on the environment. At that time, the *Absolut Company* used only print ads as advertising media. Well-known magazines, but also unconventional trend-setting magazines were used for this purpose. These unconventional advertising measures strengthened the image of the brand existing in the upper segment. As part of various campaigns, artists were invited to create illustrations for the bottles that had an easily recognizable style. The name was used at lesser-known cultural events, with a title that corresponded to the two-word campaign. These were, for example, "Absolute Concerto", a series of neoclassical works. Identity-promoting measures were used in addition. They tried to highlight the image from print advertising. The familiar bottle was shown in unexpected environments. (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 24ff.).

The *Absolut Vodka* strategy was far ahead of the spirits market at the time. Because the bottle became the brand identity, limited editions of them were created. They became collectors' items, just like old advertisements. This also renewed the connection to the art scene (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 24ff.).

Figure 9: Absolut Vodka bottle (Source: Absolut o. J.)

3.4.2 Starbucks

Starbucks makes use of various artistic directions and combines them into an overall image with aesthetic style features. They embody an abstract style with a very high recognition value. Just like *Absolut Vodka, Starbucks* drew explosive sales and profit growth within a few years. In 1992, *Starbucks* reported sales of US$93 million. These climbed to US$465 million in 1995. The success is due to a combination of consumer behavior, time of entry, and marketing mix elements. The brand has met a previously unfulfilled interest (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 113). *Starbucks* opened its first coffee shop in Seattle, Washington State, in 1971. When president Howard Schultz traveled to Italy in 1983, he brought back the concept of the European cafe. Cafes in the US tended to be used as family dining establishments and had a reputation for being used by debating writers. The style had a secondary function. A special aesthetic was achieved by the uniform style in the stores. The special thing is the combination of organic and inorganic elements. In addition, the design of the stores varies in different countries and local markets. The different components, light wood tones in the counter area, brown bags, and the green logo of a woman with long hair in combination, create an environmental awareness and a natural look. Despite this, the features also radiate a certain elegance and modernity, which is enhanced by the fact that the wood has polished surfaces. This also makes them look comfortable. The countertops are polished and made of dark marble. This conveys a high-tech feeling. The glass shelves and modern bright lamps, give the store a fashionable atmosphere (Figure 10) (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 114f.).
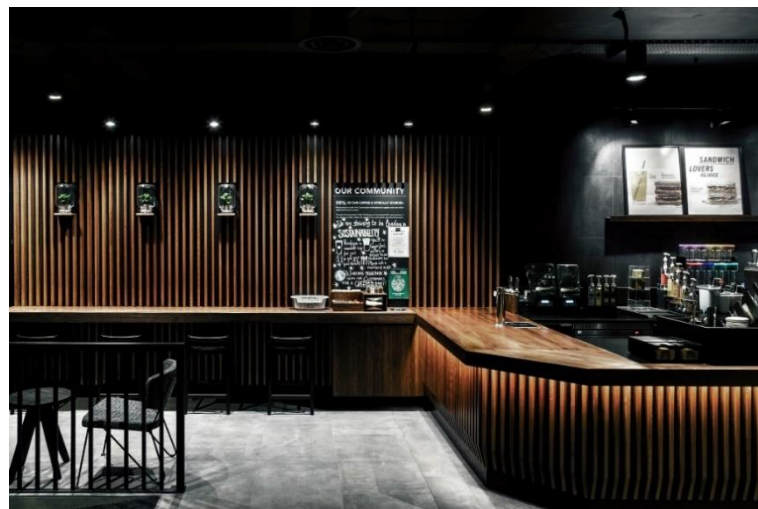
Figure 10: Starbuck interior (Source: Behance o. J.)

The logo also incorporates both natural and artificial components. Although the woman appears to be human, the image is abstract. The logo comprised a colored outer ring and

an inner circle in black and white (Figure 11). Tables, chairs, lamps, and walls all have coffee-colored furniture. These are available in green and dark brown. *Starbucks* was influenced by offices, boardrooms, libraries, and law firms (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 114f.).

Figure 11: Starbucks logo evolution (Source: Maybach 2021)

Celebrations get a special cup design and collections get special packaging. Thus, they create a deviation from the basic consistent style. Over time, variations have been used to keep the style alive. One example here is the 25th Anniversary of *Starbucks*. For the paper cups certain 70's patterns were used and also slogans like "Give Peace a Chance" were modified to "Give Coffee a Chance" (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 115f.). *Starbucks'* style is characterized by a consistent, well-planned, and trustworthy design. It looks organized, tidy, and systematic to the customer. Customers are drawn to return to Starbucks because of its always-changing offerings (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 117f.).

3.4.3 Mercedes-AMG GmbH

Mercedes-AMG GmbH is a subsidiary of Mercedes-Benz Group AG. The company is based in Affalterbach, in the southwest of Germany. The name AMG was derived from the surnames of the founders, Hans Werner **A**ufrecht, and Erhard **M**elcher, and the original company headquarters in **G**roßaspach (Mercedes-AMG GmbH o. d.). The company is a performance and sports car brand and records numerous achievements in the motorsport industry. In addition, it is known for its unique street cars. The brand follows the aesthetics of performance luxury; therefore, the goal is to create a powerful appearance. Dark colors with red accents, combine power with passion and performance. The used materials, provide a connection to the racing industry. The brand works strongly with contrasts in appearance, such as hard and soft, shiny and matte, as well as smooth and rough. A feeling of luxury is created by structures containing marble, complemented by

dynamic shapes, by the feeling of speed and athleticism. The exterior and interior design of the cars reflects the brand tributes as well. Cars of the AMG brand, possess a wide radiator grille and dominant air intakes. The specific grille is also used in motorsports and has a technical side, as well as a luxurious side. In particular, wide, powerful, and athletic traits should be applied to the cars. However, attention is also paid to the fact that design elements have a practical function, thus the rear wings create special aerodynamics. Carbon elements create a sporty atmosphere. However, they also have a real function, as carbon components are usually lighter than traditional materials. The defined interior is characterized by a high center panel, which has a performing look and functionality. The seats give the feeling of sitting in a race car. The technology is also aimed at performance. Additionally, there are various features based on motorsports, such as the "warm up" and the "race timer" (Mercedes-AMG: Design und Marke - Mercedes-Benz Group Media o. J.).

3.5   Advantages of aesthetics in marketing

As we have seen in the last chapters, a major advantage arises from aesthetic marketing. Simonson and Schmitt explain the material advantages of using this strategy (Figure 12). The first advantage is the creation of a loyal customer base. Aesthetics serve as a satisfaction factor in marketing. In the process, immaterial experiences are created through material products. Customers who like a certain aesthetic will come back again and again and buy the brand's products. Through aesthetics marketing, it is also possible to determine maximum prices for products. The reason is the high recognition value of brands through this. Companies such as Starbucks or Nike have a special brand value because they offer a special experience. This provides additional value for the customer, which they would spend more money on or which the companies can get paid for. Another important benefit is improved comprehension of the information communicated in advertisements. The heavy information overload is disrupted through aesthetic marketing. The reason for this is the usage of symbols by advertising companies. Repeating those symbols increases the chance that people will remember the company at the point of purchase. Additionally, costs can be saved because this kind of advertisement does not need a lot of repetition to be successful. The creation of a certain aesthetic provides protection against competitors, as brand logos or brand names are not allowed to be copied. As mentioned before, shapes can also be protected. The more distinctive an aesthetic is, the easier it is to protect. In the US, this right is particularly pronounced. Aesthetic marketing can

also save costs and increase productivity. Once a certain design is established, there is less need to invest time and money to create new logos or ideas. It is fixed how campaigns are built from the design. In addition, aesthetics can motivate the personnel, as it is a very interesting tool and has strong advertising power. Consequently, this can help conquer new markets (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 45f.). Aesthetics can also serve to bridge cultural differences. When certain designs from other cultures are used, consumers from other countries can feel understood. Therefore, empathic experiences are used. Moreover, aesthetics can function as an appreciation of art. Also, drawing on evolutionary sensory experiences can lead to greater success. Special attention should be paid to the archetypes of the colors (Hagtvedt 2022, S. 427f.).
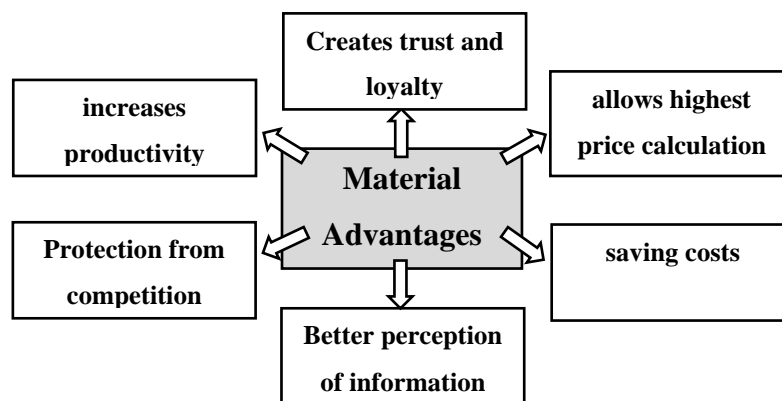
Figure 12: Material advantages (Source: own illustration based on Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 45)

3.6 Critical acknowledgment of aesthetics in marketing

Aesthetic appearances can strongly influence people's purchasing decisions. In the previous chapter we have seen the positive effects and this chapter will address the problems. One problem is that design processes rely too much on intuition. In addition to creativity, skill, practice, and experience are important in creating aesthetic images. Anecdotal evidence is frequently necessary for the design process but isn't always enough. Additionally, anecdotal evidence is a claim of fact based on firsthand knowledge. These are subjective, based on selected experiences, and rather limited, as they often reflect false images of reality. Responses about designs can be difficult to measure, which is why opinions are often tough to obtain. Customer opinions can also be harmful to the process (Schmitt / Simonson 1998, S. 243). In general, it can be said aesthetics are very subjective, and research on this topic has limitations, as the opinions of respondents only affect a small fraction of people. Thus, this can quickly mislead. The negatively listed points refer

to the design process to produce aesthetic appearances and not directly to aesthetic design (Charters 2006, S. 247).

4 Methodical approach

For the empirical research, a mixed-method approach was chosen, thus using qualitative and quantitative questions to explore the relevance of aesthetic design for purchase decisions. An inductive method was chosen because the answers to the research questions were inferred from the responses of the participants and therefore to form general statements about the topic of aesthetic design. Thereby, the survey started with specific statements from the individual forms and moves to general descriptions of a phenomenon. Another reason for using this approach is the lack of information about specific statements concerning the research questions. The questionnaire was partially standardized and electronic. It was created via Google Forms, as this allows one to view the individual questionnaires and the program facilitates the evaluation. Although qualitative questions could also be considered a barrier, they were used in the study. The advantages outweighed the disadvantages for the author. In this way, the participants were encouraged to enter their expressions. Furthermore, through qualitative questions, there was no influence from the predefined inquiries. This type of question is also advantageous since the opinions of the participants were asked for and thus their subjective view was described as personal experiences, which the author had not yet considered. However, quantitative questions were created as this was a good method to ask for general information. The in-depth answers were collected through qualitative questions.

Only German-speaking subjects were interviewed, which is why the questionnaire was also prepared in German. This is for better comprehensibility and to ensure literacy. Only fully completed questionnaires were used. All genders and ages were relevant.

The creation of the questionnaire started by familiarizing oneself with the topic of the work. Extensive research was done on the subject to incorporate relevant questions and establish a foundation for the study. After that, the four research questions were set up to have a rough guide for the empirical study.

The study aims to get a general guide on what is perceived as an aesthetically superior design and why it is important for people. Moreover, the questionnaire targeted the question of whether people would pay more for a product with an aesthetically superior design, to name specific products as well as give justifications for those. Additionally, for the three specific products chosen, different questions should be answered too. Insights about the most and least popular designs were generated. Additionally, it was intended to identify the individuals' primary characteristics for an aesthetic design. Furthermore, the

difference in the percentage of the most popular design and the design which would be bought the most should be examined.

The next step was to formulate the questions of the study. These were first recorded in a Word document. When the survey was created, it was sent to three subjects for checking. Afterward, small errors were corrected, and the questions were revised again for better comprehensibility. Finally, the survey was sent to friends, acquaintances, and relatives. It was additionally teased on Instagram to reach as many participants as possible. It was also asked to be forwarded to colleagues or sports groups. The survey period was extended from February 14 to February 28, 2023. A total of 55 people participated in the survey. The youngest participants were 15 and the oldest was 59 years old. This age distribution is because younger people are not in the immediate vicinity and older people in the vicinity do not master certain technical requirements.

There was a total of 34 questions in the questionnaire. The choice of question types was limited to closed and open questions (Porst 2008, S. 52ff.). There were 23 closed and eleven open questions in the survey. The closed questions were used to collect general statements about the topic. The open questions then aimed to ask the participants' personal opinions on their choice of words. For the closed questions, there were twelve scale questions. The scale used was an interval scale that has two endpoints. For the scales, the participants could indicate their answers in points one to five. One stands for "I completely disagree" and five for "I agree completely" (Porst 2008, S. 77ff.). This means there is an odd number of scale points, and thus a middle point. This is to be understood as a neutral point of the scale so that the participants can express neither disagreement nor agreement. This representation has advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, this is viewed critically by some researchers, as this point can be seen as an escape criterion. On the other hand, this helps to avoid pressuring the participants into giving any answer. Moreover, it can be evaluated more extensively, but the participants have a relatively large room for interpretation of the scale points (Porst 2008, S. 83f.). One question was a Yes/No question. Here, the participants had to choose one answer.

The evaluation consisted of two parts. The first is the evaluation of the quantitative questions. For this purpose, an Excel document was created, which contains the evaluation data. It was referred to the statements of the books "Forschungsmethoden" by Hussy, Schreier, and Echterhoff, as well as "Forschungsmethoden und Evaluation" by Döring and Bortz. For each question, a spreadsheet was created in which the important frequency, dispersion characteristics, and qualitative measures were calculated. Quantitative and

relative frequencies were additionally calculated. Moreover, the mode, the median, the Herfindahl dispersion measure, and the arithmetic mean were calculated for interpretation. A diagram was also created for each question, reflecting the frequency distribution. For the qualitative analysis, the open questions of the survey were investigated. The evaluation was carried out through coding. This is a popular tool for evaluating data according to a specific perspective. A certain "label" is attached to a statement. In this work, this was performed closely related to the text. Inductive codes were generated from the responses of the individual subjects (Hussy et al 2013, S. 253f.). The results were collected in a Word document. The first step was to analyze the answers to each question. The answers were then written down in short fragments. After that, the statements were marked in different colors, whereas similar statements were marked with the same color. Thus, further codes for similar statements could be found. The codes were then used to develop representations for each question. In addition, four tables were created containing justifications for the statements. These tables are structured in the same way as the illustrations. For the three examples at the end of the survey, quantitative as well as qualitative data were collected. First, the number of people who chose the products was determined. This was done three times for each example, as three questions were asked in each case. Then the distributions for the first and third questions were compared. Reference was made to the percentages. After the statements were collected and sorted, codes for the individual justifications were identified. For each product, i.e., headphones, toaster, and wall clock, design aspects were collected to which the statements referred. Representations were also created here for better visibility.

5 Results

The importance of aesthetic design for the purchasing decision was investigated in a mixed-method study. In this study, a convenience sample totaling 55 respondents were asked about their preferred design aspects. First, the quantitative part of the survey is evaluated.

The age and gender of the subjects were the first data collected. The mode of gender was female, with 76 percent. The dispersion was relatively low with a Herfindahl index of $HF_A = 0.369$ (Appendix 2.1). On the other hand, the age of the subjects had a large dispersion with $HF_A = 0.75$. The mode here was the age group 21-29 years (Appendix 2.2).

After asking for general information about the target group, statements were gathered on specific design aspects. The responses were thereby collected with the help of an interval scale ranging from one ="I do not agree" to five = "I agree completely". The highest dispersion which could be achieved was one. However, the lowest dispersion was $HF_A = 0.018$. The first question can be allocated to the research question "What is viewed as aesthetically superior design?".

The color was the focus of the first three questions. Therefore, the first statement examined was "Bright colors are aesthetically pleasing". The mode of the answers here was five = "I agree completely" because 64 percent of the participants stated that they liked the aesthetic of light colors. However, the least given answer was one = „I do not agree". The arithmetic mean for these observations was expression four. The dispersion was mean to high with $HF_A = 0.634$ (Appendix 2.3).

The following statement was "Dark colors are aesthetically pleasing". The mode was again five = "I agree completely" with 29 percent saying they like dark colors and the least given number was again one. For this statement, the arithmetic mean was three. The dispersion was high with $HF_A = 0,764$ (Appendix 2.4).

The next statement given was "Bright colors are aesthetically pleasing". The mode for it was one = „I do not agree" because 46 percent gave this answer. Only one person answered, that they like bright colors. The arithmetic mean was answer number two and the dispersion was therefore mean to high with $HF_A = 0.623$ (Appendix 2.5).

After that, the subject area of fonts was discussed. Therefore, the fifth piece of information which was examined was "Large fonts are aesthetically pleasing". The mode for this statement was answer number three which corresponds to a neutral response. 46

percent of the participants gave this feedback. Numbers one and five were the least given answers, with only two people each stating this opinion. The arithmetic mean for the replies was again three. The dispersion was therefore mean to high with $HF_A = 0.668$ (Appendix 2.6).

Next, the statement "A high number of characters on products is aesthetically pleasing" was investigated. The most given response as well as arithmetic mean was number two. This means 27 people gave this answer which is 50 percent of the total survey participants. On the other hand, only one person said they like a high number of type signs on products. The dispersion of the statements was $HF_A = 0.647$ which is also mean to high (Appendix 2.7).

The seventh question is the opposite of the last one "A small number of characters on products is aesthetically pleasing". The mode and the arithmetic mean were again the same, response four. The percentage of answers for number four was 56 percent. Nobody gave the first answer. The dispersion of the statement was $HF_A = 0.587$ which is in the mean-field (Appendix 2.8).

Thirdly, three comments about forms were given. Accordingly, the first statement examined was "Angular shapes are aesthetically pleasing". The mode for the aesthetic appeal of angular shapes was number two, with 27 percent giving this answer. The arithmetic mean was number three, which is a neutral answer. The dispersion of the statement was high with $HF_A = 0.789$ (Appendix 2.9).

The next statement given was "Cornerless forms are aesthetically pleasing". For this comment, the mode was number five = "I agree completely" with 29 participants and 53 percent selecting it. The arithmetic mean was answer number four. The dispersion of the statement was mean to high with $HF_A = 0.639$ (Appendix 2.10).

The last comment about forms was "Symmetrical shapes are aesthetically pleasing". For this statement the most given number was five = "I agree completely", saying 49 percent like symmetrical forms. The arithmetic mean was again answer number four and the dispersion of the statement was mean to high with $HF_A = 0.622$ (Appendix 2.11).

After visual impressions were studied, the importance of aesthetic design was examined. Therefore, the next question can be allocated to the research question "Is aesthetic design important for people and why?". Therefore, the first general statement was "Aesthetic design is important to me when I buy products." The mode for the comment was number four as well as the arithmetic mean. Around 50 percent of the attendees, therefore, think

that aesthetic design is important when buying products. The dispersion of the statement was mean to high, with $HF_A = 0.628$ (Appendix 2.12).

With the following questions, the research question „Would people pay more for a product with an aesthetically superior design?" can be answered. The first comment studied was "Aesthetic design is more important to me than the price of the product". For this, 42 percent of the participants gave answer number two which makes it the mode of this statement. Only one person stated that aesthetic design is more important than the price of a product. The arithmetic mean is three, however. The dispersion can be defined as mean to high with $HF_A = 0.671$ (Appendix 2.13).

"Aesthetic design is more important to me than the functionality of the product." was the next statement which was analyzed. The mode of this comment was answer number two, with 40 percent saying that functionality is more important than aesthetic design. The dispersion can be defined as mean to high with $HF_A = 0.688$ (Appendix 2.14).

The last question that was queried with the help of the interval scale was "Would you pay more for a product that has an aesthetic design?". The mode for this query was "Yes", with 80 percent stating that they would pay more for a product that has an aesthetic design.

Now that the quantitative evaluation of the survey has been conducted, the qualitative questions are evaluated and the coding is presented. The first research question which is answered is "What is viewed as aesthetically superior design?".

Therefore, the first question was "Which characteristics define aesthetic design for you?". For the first question, five main categories emerged from various given answers. Those were "form", "topicality", "haptics", "color" and "impression". The answers of the participants for the category "form" were the following: "clearly visible", "straight" and "symmetry". The answers which formed the category "topicality" are "modern" and "timeless". The statement "haptic" was the only answer which belonged in an individual rubric. For "color", the statements given were "neutral", "harmonious", "muted", "calm", "warm" and "bright". The following testimonies could be assigned to the last category "impression": "harmonious", "pleasant", "quiet", "clean", "minimalistic", "pure", "perfect" and "elegant" (Appendix 3.1).

For the second question "Which colors are aesthetically superior for you and why?", two separate illustrations were formed. The first contained the colors and the second the feelings which are important for the participants of the survey. Additionally, a table was

formed to show the colors and the associated feeling. The main categories for the colors were "basic colors", "pastel colors" and "contrasts/ gradients". For the "basic colors", various answers were given. The answers were coded in the basic colors "black", "white", "yellow", "green", and "blue". For each color, multiple undertones were stated in the survey. For "black" another variation was given, which is "grey". For "yellow" the undertones were "mustard yellow", "brown", "golden brown", and "beige". For "green" the undertones were "olive", "light green", and "forest green". The basic color "blue" was divided into "petrol" and "royal blue". For the "pastel tones," there were the answers "pastel blue" and "pastel pink". In the category "contrasts/ gradients", the participants stated "blue-orange" and "blue-red" as aesthetic contrasts (Appendix 3.2). The second illustration contains the coded feelings which are important for the participants to define color as aesthetic. The main categories which were generated are "harmony," "closeness to nature", "elegance", "simplicity", "warmth", "design preferences", as well as "liveliness". Again, for each feeling, there is a variety of under-categories. The first main category "harmony" is created through specific "color combinations", "comfort" and "colors which support the product". Next, "closeness to nature" is achieved through "water, oceans" and the "sky/ evening sky". The category "simplicity" is created through the answer's "cleanliness", "sensuality", "freshness", "unobtrusiveness", "naturalness", "purity", and "tranquility" for the participants. The "warmth" can be achieved through "security", "friendliness", "love", "relaxation", and "well-being". The "design preferences" which were named are "vintage" designs and "favorite colors". The "liveness" can be created through a "Splash of color" (Appendix 3.3).

The third question was "Which shapes are aesthetically superior and why". The main categories which were coded from the answers of the participants were "round/ curved", "angular/ edged", "minimalistic", "symmetric", "soft", and "organic". Examples and the reasons for the responses can be found in the table in the appendix. Moreover, reasons for the perception of aesthetic forms were coded. The main codes were "appearance", "feeling", and "function". For "appearance" the following examples were found: "gentle", "natural", and "striking". For "feeling" codes were "pleasant", "soothing", and "sensual". Lastly, for "function" codes allocated were "uniform", "tidy", and "simple" (Appendix 3.4).

The next question was "Which fonts/ typefaces are aesthetically superior for you and why?". For this question only two main categories were defined "sans serif" and "with serifs". For the "sans serif" typefaces the statements were coded the following way: "Fine

letters", "curved letters", "angular letters, and "artistic clean letters". Again, examples that were given and the reasons why those fonts are aesthetically pleasing can be found in the appendix. The reasons for choosing specific typefaces were coded as well. Those were again "appearance", "feeling", and "function". For each main category, a variety of codes was allocated. For "appearance" those were for example "elegance", "inconspicuous", and "artistic". For "feeling" examples were "modern", "dreamy" and "unique". For "function" the specifics named were "simple", "lucid", and "high quality" (Appendix 3.5).

The next questions can be sorted into the research question "Is aesthetically superior design important for people and if yes why?". Three main categories were derived from the answers. The first was "Design is more important than price and functionality.". This category was created through the statements "Aesthetics are the main focus", "Small compromises in price and function are tolerated", "Aesthetics is the purchase reason because it brings happiness" and "Design is worth investing in". The second main category was "Design is less important than price and functionality". Mentions for this category were "The final reason for purchase is the price or the function", "Evaluation basis is price and function" and "Price and function are the most important features". The last main category was "Design is as important as price and functionality". For this the following statement was made: "Design is only the first impression". For this reason, it was stated "Design is the transmitter of considerations of the manufacturer", and "Design is the attention grabber". Moreover, it was stated that the "Interaction" of all three is important. Correspondingly, "Everything must be satisfied" and "The three things are mutually dependent". The last statement was that the importance is "depending on the product" (Appendix 3.6).

The next question was "For which products do you specifically consider aesthetic design when buying, and why?". Eight main categories could be identified. Those were: "Clothing", "furniture", "accessories", "food", "technology", "cars", "cosmetics", and "school supplies". For "furniture" there were three additional codes "décor items", "crockery", and "books". For "accessories" the codes "jewelry", and "cell phone cases" were allocated. The last coding named for "food", was "wine". The reasons for considering aesthetically superior design were coded as well. The main categories were "constant confrontation", "pleasure in the product", "self-promotion", "reason to buy", "trigger a sense of well-being", "higher appreciation", "often in use", "long-term use", and "stimulate use" (Appendix 3.7).

The next question of the survey was "Why do you think the aesthetic design might be an important decision factor for some people?". The three main categories derived were "emotional gain", "self-presentation", and "other purchase-promoting attributes". For the "emotional gain", people mentioned "satisfaction", "feelings of joy", "basic emotions", "confidence", and feelings of "well-being" which should be achieved with the purchase. For the category of "self-presentation", the participants stated, "expression of personality", and "prestige in society" were important decision factors. The "other purchase-promoting attributes" were "confidence-inspiring", "visually appealing during purchase", "differentiation factor", "sympathy factor", as well as "quality factor" (Appendix 3.8). The next issue was "What do you think could be a benefit of buying an aesthetic product?". The main benefits which were named are "increased usage", "self-expression", and "emotion creation". For "increased usage" the three expressions made were "longer use", "longer pleasure", and "appreciation" of the product. The "self-expression" is only defined through "prestige". The emotion which can be increased were "self-esteem", "happiness", "joy", "well-being", and "satisfaction" (Appendix 3.9).

The following question was "Why do you think certain brands are more successful through aesthetic design than competitors?". The main reasons named for the success of certain brands were "the importance of appearance", "arousing feelings", "differentiation factor", "purpose to present oneself", and "higher profits". Codes for the "importance of appearance" were "Media enhance the sense of sight", "foreground perception", and "people pay more attention to appearance". Feelings that were aroused were "trust", and "feeling of improved quality". The reasons for being a "differentiation factor" were "Uniqueness", "differentiation from competition", "unique selling proposition", "design", "specialization", and "recognition value". The "purpose to present oneself" is coded through "status" and "personality presentation" (Appendix 3.10).

The next questions answer the research question "Would people pay more for a product with an aesthetically superior design? What products would people pay more for?". The first one was "Which product would you spend more money on and why?". Answers were "furnishings", "objects of use", "alcohol" and "clothing". Furnishing objects named were "furniture", "decorative items", "bedding", and "pictures/sculptures". The "objects of use" were coded through "kitchen tools", "knives", "books", "smartphone (cases)", "cars", "pocket calendars", and "cosmetics". The reasons for these products were also coded. The main codes were "frequent confrontation", "eye-catcher in the room", "enhancement", "delight", and "long-term investment" (Appendix 3.11).

The last evaluation refers to the examples of headphones, toasters, and wall clocks. For each product, it was quantitatively evaluated how many participants chose which product in each case. In addition, the percentage change from the question "Which design appeals to you the most, and why?" and "Which model would you buy and why?". Moreover, a visualization of the most important design aspects mentioned by the participants was created for each product. These were constructed through qualitative coding.

The first question for the headphones was "Which design appeals to you the most, and why?". For this, 51 percent of participants chose the first model, which is also the mode. For the second question "Which design appeals to you the least, and why?" the mode was model number three. The third question asked, "Which model would you buy and why?". Here the mode was head phone number two with 35 percent giving this answer. Therefore, a shift in the mode is presented. For the first question, it was model one and for the third question, it was model number two. On the one hand, model number one lost 31 percent compared to question three. On the other hand, model number two gained 20 percent. Model number three also gained two percent, whereas model number four lost two percent. Moreover, six people would buy none of the models, which is five people more compared to the first question (Figure 14). For the headphone, the most important design aspects were coded. Those were "color", "form", "effect", "timeliness", "overall effect", "quality impression", and "convenience" (Appendix 4.1.1).
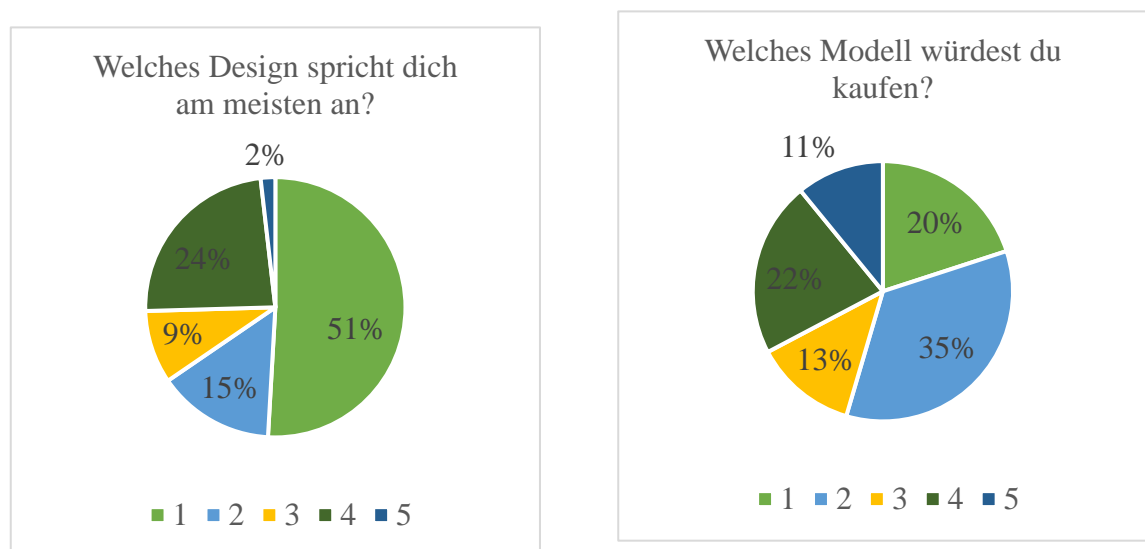
Figure 13: Percentage change headphones (Source: Survey results)

The second group of products discussed was toasters. The participants were asked to state their answer to the question "Which design appeals to you the most, and why?". They could choose between three models. Consequently, 53 percent picked model number three which is, therefore, the mode. For the question "Which design appeals to you the

least, and why?" 41 participants answered with model number one. This is equivalent to 75 percent of the answers. For the third question "Which model would you buy and why?", 62 percent picked model number two. When comparing the first and third questions, it is noticeable that the mode changed again from model three to model two. Moreover, the percentage from model one has remained the same. For model two, it increased by 15 percent from 19 percent to 34 percent. However, the proportion of responses for model three decreased by 16 percent. And the number of people who would buy none of the products increased by one (Figure 15). The important design aspects of the toaster model are "shape", "color", "effect", "topicality" and "quality effect" (Appendix 4.2.1).
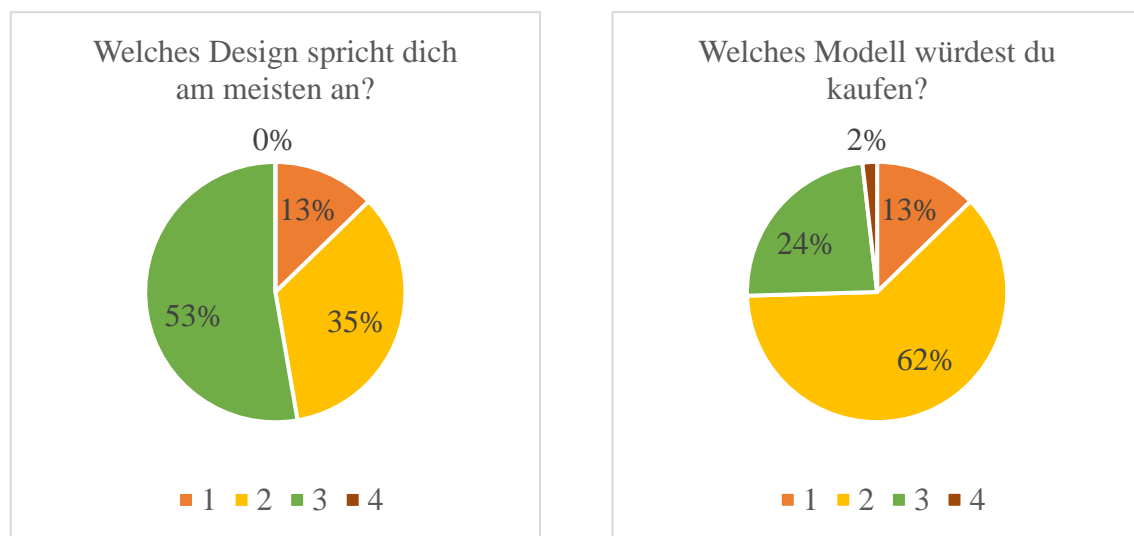
Figure 14: Percentage change of toasters (Source: Survey results)

The third group of products was five different wall clock designs. For the first question "Which design appeals to you the most, and why?", the mode was model number five with 25 people, and 45 percent gave this response. For the second question "Which design appeals to you the least, and why?", 39 participants gave model number one as an answer. This means 71 percent thought that design number one is the least appealing. The third question was "Which model would you buy and why?". Here the mode was again model number five with 42 percent choosing this response. Nevertheless, the model lost three percent of voters compared to the first question. The first wall clock gained two percent and the second, third, and fourth ones remained the same. Additionally, one person chose to buy none of the products (Appendix 4.3.4). For the wall clocks, the following design aspect were considered: "from", "color", "material", "effect", "topicality" and "quality effect".

Welches Design spricht dich am meisten an?

0% | 2%
45%
38%
15%
0%

1 2 3 4 5 6

Welches Modell würdest du kaufen?

2% | 4%
42%
38%
15%
0%

1 2 3 4 5 6
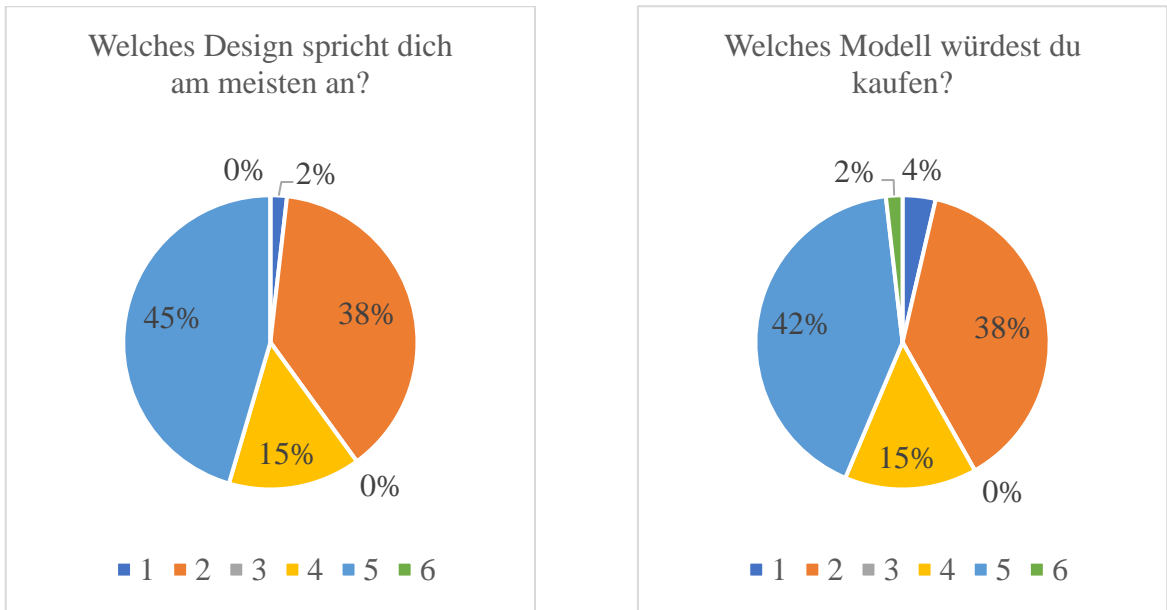
Figure 15: Percentage change wall clocks (Source: Survey Results)

6 Discussion

The following section discusses the results presented in the previous chapter. The research questions are at the forefront of the analysis. The first research question that is focused on is "What is viewed as aesthetically superior design?".

In the first survey question, the participants' associations were asked, without giving any specifications. It became apparent that many images were linked to shape and color. These are also important criteria of the researchers Simonson and Schmitt, which were already explained in the theoretical part of the work. In terms of form, it is clear that clear and uniform structures are preferred. Symmetry is also an important factor for the participants. Measured by color, a generally harmonious item that expresses tranquility is associated with the concept of aesthetics. In addition, a lot of data was provided about the effect of products. As shown by the example of Starbucks, a pleasant, minimalist, and perfected mood is generally required for the participants. The answers roughly agree that aesthetics are related to the harmony of the individual components, as well as to a modern and timeless design.

After that, the question of which colors are aesthetic for the participants was asked. It became obvious that a lot of focus was placed on the primary colors green and blue. This also supports the previous statement about the desire for harmonious and calm designs, that these colors lead exactly to these attributes. In addition, minimalist and modern colors such as white, black, gray, and beige were often mentioned. In the quantitative survey on color preferences, a tendency towards light shades became clear. A large scattering was observed for the dark colors. Therefore, it can be assumed that opinions are rather divided for these colors. In the case of bright colors, the participants agreed that they were not considered aesthetically pleasing. With the colors mentioned, this can also be seen in the preference for pastel shades. In addition, the feelings that aesthetic design should trigger were also analyzed. The focus was on simplicity, harmony, warmth, and closeness to nature. Accordingly, most participants want to feel a sense of well-being. Colors should support the product and be mostly unobtrusive.

Next, the subject area of shapes is worked on. It is striking here that in addition to the usual round, angular and symmetrical shapes, minimalist, soft, and organic shapes were also mentioned. The impression created by the shapes is therefore of great importance. As a result, the shapes were frequently given an emotion as well as a function. In summary, the participants based their statements on benevolent feelings. The main focus was

on unobtrusive, sensual, and pleasant forms. A product should be simple and uniform, as well as high quality due to the given shape. The quantitative questions resulted in a very scattered opinion regarding angular shapes, but a relatively uniform positive opinion regarding cornerless shapes. Symmetrical shapes were also very popular, as Simonson and Schmitt have declared in their book.

Regarding typefaces, the two main groups were named as expected: Sans-serif typefaces and fonts with serifs. What is striking here is that most found fonts without serifs to be aesthetically pleasing, and a variety of examples were given. Since no specifications were given, this showed that many participants had already thought about their favorite fonts and were able to name them specifically. The main feelings mentioned were confidence, reassurance, and modernity. Fonts should look simple, uncluttered, and neat. When asked about sizes, the majority of the participants had a neutral opinion. There was only a tendency towards small fonts. When asked about the number of fonts on products, it became clear that the majority would rather have fewer characters on them.

The second research question "Is aesthetically superior design important for you and why?" could be answered by the following questions. The quantitative statements provided information about the purchasing behavior of the participants. In this context, 76 percent said that aesthetically superior design was important or very important to them when making a purchase. Only 24 percent gave a neutral or negative response. For the data set, this means that for the majority of participants, the design plays an important role in the purchase. It was also important concerning two other relevant product dimensions. A tendency can be seen in the question of whether the design is more important than the price. There, the majority stated that the price was more important than the design. A high number of participants additionally indicated that both factors were equally important. This was also the case with the question of whether the function was more important. There, 73 percent said that function was more important than aesthetic design. This means that more people buy products based on price and function than purely on appearance. Only 15 percent said that design was more important to them than price and only seven percent that it was more important than function. The reason given by the participants was that they felt that design was the most important component and that aesthetics was the main reason for purchase. This would make them willing to spend more money if they particularly like the design. However, most of the respondents stated that price and function were the main reasons for purchase and also the basis for evaluation. The design mainly serves as an attention-getter. Some also said that the importance

depends on the product. The interaction of all three features was mentioned to convey that all features must be met for a purchase to be considered. In addition, the question was asked about specific products where particular attention is paid to aesthetic design. It emerged that the most frequently named products were furniture or products that shape a person's external appearance. Surprisingly, cosmetics were also named, which thus simultaneously assume the function of a decorative item. Frequent confrontation with the products serves as the main reason. Thus, people care about the appearance of the objects they frequently encounter. Participants also pay closer attention to appearance when making longer-term investments to increase the pleasure they derive from using them. In addition, the products are used for self-expression to leave as good of an image as possible with other people. Thus, it became clear through the survey that the design is important to the participants mainly, to increase feelings and self-expression and to stimulate purchases. People want to succumb to feelings of happiness and satisfaction when looking at things. For many, an aesthetic design inspires trust and sympathy. It is considered a differentiating factor between brands and a quality factor. People, therefore, perceive products with an aesthetic design as being of higher quality. According to the survey, the advantages of buying an aesthetic product lie in its longer-term use and enjoyment. In addition, it increases self-esteem and well-being. The participants see the increasing importance of appearance and the increased sensitivity of the sense of sight caused by social media as the reason for success. In addition, the design is used as a differentiating feature to remain in the memories of buyers or prospects. It thus serves as a unique selling proposition or USP. It also allows a company to generate higher profits, as more money can be demanded for the product through its aesthetic design.

The third research question, "Would people pay more for a product with an aesthetically superior design, and if so, why?" was also answered by the survey. In the quantitative analysis, it became clear that 80 percent of the participants, and thus a clear majority, would pay more for a product that has an aesthetic design. Thus, aesthetic design has a great influence on buyers. The participants in the survey would pay more for products with which they are frequently confronted, which contribute to the enhancement of their person or environment. In addition, products that represent a longer-term investment should also look particularly good and can, according to the participants, have a higher price. Accordingly, these are fixtures, like furniture, as they also contribute to the feeling of home and self-expression. In addition, the design is important to the audience for objects of use, such as clothing, kitchen appliances, cars, pocket calendars, and books.

In the last part, the questions regarding the sample products are now evaluated. The research questions are answered in the course: "Which product design is the most popular? What are the important design aspects, the participants based their design on? Why did participants choose their product? What did they like/dislike about the design? (Is the price an influencing factor?) Which product would the participants buy after knowing the price of the product? Is there a difference to the most popular design?". The first questions asked were about the product headphones. For this, the participants could choose their favorite from four models. The participants found model one, from the design most appealing. The first questions asked were about the product headphones. For this, the participants could choose their favorite from four models. Model one was chosen as the most appealing. In addition, model three was chosen as the least appealing. It became clear that the participants focused on specific design aspects in their explanations. As expected, these were form, color, impression, the modernity of the design, and also quality. Model one was rated as very appealing due to its sleek modern design, rounded shape, and matte gray color. The matte gray was perceived as modern and classy, the rounded earpieces as soft, and the smooth surface as cozy as well as unobtrusive. This also mirrors the insights of Simonson and Schmitt, which were explained earlier. The shape was additionally considered a differentiator in model one, as it was recognized by some and identified with the brand. This again shows the importance of the product shape. The most unappealing design was chosen due to the chunky shape and different colored body. The size of the earpieces was also negatively highlighted. After the price was announced, people were again asked about purchase consideration. Compared to the first query, a difference was noted. The model that most would buy was now model two. Model one, on the other hand, was only voted third. The main reason given by the participants was that the price was too high, as this was the most expensive at just under €500. Many switched to model two since this is justifiable for them in terms of price and appealing in terms of design for the most part. This shows that for the example of headphones, the design plays only a moderate role in the purchase decision. For the majority, price, and appearance have to be balanced. It should also be noted that the respondents are not sure whether the price of the cheapest model indicates good product quality. The people who would buy the first model despite the high price either already have experience with the brand or want to buy the product with the best design.

The second product studied were toasters. There, participants could choose between three different models. Model three was the most popular here. Model one was chosen as the most unappealing. The key design elements summoned in these judgments were shape,

color, impact, modernism, and quality. Model three's enticing elements included simplicity, rounded shape, modernism, and color. The dark color and metallic accents were seen as high-quality and sophisticated, as expected. The first model's numerous buttons were deemed to be distracting. Moreover, the angular design was deemed unfavorable, and the design does not appear high-quality. The second model is the one that most people would choose. Once again, a preference shift can be seen here. This model was again, seen as a good compromise between price and appearance. It was the cheapest model. Many participants said that function was the most important thing to them in toasters and that's why they chose the cheapest. The people who stayed with model three again stated that aesthetics was the most important thing to them and therefore were willing to pay the high price.

The last products were wall clocks, from which participants had five different models to choose from. Number five is the model most people favor. The bright color and minimal design were in reasons for choosing this one. Model number one was chosen as the least attractive. The main reason here was the combination of the many colors. These were perceived as too garish and unharmonious. Thus, the main design features were again color, shape, effect, and modernity. The majority would buy model five, as this combines price and appearance. Model two was also popular in the purchase decision, as the price and appearance are good.

Through the survey with the help of the examples, it became clear that aesthetic design plays an important role in the purchase decision of most participants. In the case of products one and two, about half of the people always left the most preferred design after the price was revealed. Only for product three, the highest purchase preference has remained the same. This is probably due to the price differences between the individual models, as these were significantly higher for products one and two. It can be said that an aesthetic design is important for most of the participants in the survey. However, the interaction of price and design takes on greater importance. For a purchase, the basic characteristics of the product must match the image of an aesthetic product. However, if it is too expensive for the buyer, the design will be compromised. Only for a small selection of participants, this is reversed. They prefer to compromise on the price and buy the product that has all the personal aesthetic features.

6.1 Criticism

In the course of the survey, the quality of the research must also be examined. This checks whether the data and the survey have reliability, validity, and objectivity.

First, the validity of the results is checked. This can be divided into internal and external validity. Internal validity describes whether the influence of confounding factors has been minimized. The external validity examines whether the results can be generalized and thus be representative of other persons, situations, and variables (Hussy et al. 2013, S. 278f.). Confounding variables were attempted to be minimized in the survey and by asking through an online survey, to create as independent and anonymous a situation as possible. In addition, the purpose of the survey was described at the beginning and the topic was explained by a definition. The confidentiality of the survey was assured to the subjects. No personal questions were asked of the participants, except those of gender and age, to describe the data set. In analyzing the qualitative data, all responses were examined, but the loss of data is also possible as an attempt was made to explore general data. For the data collection of the qualitative questions, it is also important that it is possible to capture the actual feelings of the participants. This was attempted without external influence so that the participants could give their personal reasons.

For the objectivity of the survey, it was taken online, so the researcher could not influence the subjects. However, other researchers may draw different conclusions from the data. The procedure was fully documented for comprehensibility.

Some criticisms can also be made regarding reliability. The results are only representative of the participant group, which is too small to draw general conclusions for mankind. In addition, the number of female participants in the study is significantly higher than the number of males. Due to the main age group of 21-29 years, the preferences are strongly influenced and also the monetary possibilities can contribute to the decision. Thus, students may make up a large portion of the survey, and older individuals may have an entirely different opinion. In addition, reliability cannot be ensured because participants may have different opinions when asked again. Also, some disadvantages of the endpoint-named scale need to be explained. With these, it is up to each respondent to define the individual scale points. As a result, the survey conditions can be different (Porst 2014, S. 82f.).

6.2   Future research

In this section, a few examples and suggestions for independent further research are given. One question that could be investigated is why it is so important for people to represent themselves through furnishings, clothing, and cars. In addition, one could develop targeted questions on specific product groups, at which price point people are willing to pay more for an aesthetic design, and the reasons for it. It would also be interesting to find out which salary groups pay more attention to aesthetic items and why. Additionally, trends regarding attitudes toward aesthetic designs would also be a subject of investigation. Therefore, the correlations between life situations and the perception of aesthetic design can be analyzed. Another interesting approach would be examining historical changes in the perception of aesthetics and therefore comparing different age groups in their opinion. Furthermore, eye-tracking, brain-imaging, or physiological measurements can be applied to investigate how people respond to various aesthetic design features.

7 Conclusion

Aesthetic design is an important part of today's marketing. Therefore, this thesis investigated how relevant aesthetic design is for the purchase decision. Through a survey that combined qualitative and quantitative elements, this question and many more were answered.

Empirical research showed that 80 percent of participants consider aesthetic appearance important when making a purchasing decision. However, it became apparent that for many respondents the price of the product was more important than the design. For some, the two factors were equally valuable and relevant. Similarly, when asked about the importance of functionality concerning the design, it became evident that for the majority of participants, functionality was more significant than aesthetic appearance in making a purchasing decision. This showed that design is the first incentive to take a closer look at a product and find out more information about it, but price and functionality are then the decision makers for the purchase.

Aesthetic design is often associated with the attributes of minimalistic, perfect, pleasant, and harmonious. Therefore, the design characteristics color, shape, and font, should precisely embody these. For many people in the survey, it means soothing colors, such as blue and green, sophisticated colors, such as black and white, or minimalistic colors, such as beige and gray. Rounded and symmetrical shapes are liked by most people, and so are smaller sans-serif typefaces. Furthermore, it was discovered that most of the participants in the study were willing to pay more for a product that had aesthetic features. This is especially applicable to product groups that are used for self-expression. In addition, products that people are often confronted with should look especially good and give the buyer a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction when looking at them.

For the sample products, headphones, toasters, and wall clocks, it became clear that appearance plays an important role, but the interplay of price, design, and functionality is of greater importance to most participants. For many people, the price-performance of an item must be suitable, and the appearance must be true only in most points. As already mentioned, for the right price, compromises in appearance are often tolerated. Therefore, the product price is relevant for the purchasing decision if it interplays with appearance and performance.

In this mixed-method study, it was shown how important and relevant aesthetic appearance is to shoppers. In many parts, it is about the design features of the products, but an

important complex exists in the generation of feelings, through the design aspects. It is significant what associations are evoked in the buyers. A harmonious, pleasant overall appearance is preferred, which invites the customer to make a purchase decision in favor of the respective product.

The study also showed that there are certain trends that customers consider aesthetically pleasing. However, it remains to be seen whether there are certain correlations between the income, gender, or life situation of the buyers. As a result, there is a need for further research in this field.

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Appendix

*Zusätzliches Material im digitalen Anhang

Appendix 1: Original questionnaire

<u>**Umfrage Bachelorarbeit**</u>

Liebe Teilnehmer*innen,

mein Name ist Lena Wachsmuth und ich studiere International Business Studies an der Hochschule Harz. Ich bin nun im 7. Semester und schreibe gerade meine Bachelorarbeit. Im Zuge dessen führe ich eine Umfrage zum Thema Ästhetik im Marketing durch. Diese Umfrage wird sich mit der Wichtigkeit von ästhetischem Design, für deine persönliche **Kaufentscheidung,** befassen.

Zeit: circa 15 Min

Anzahl der Fragen: 34

Zum Teilnehmen musst du dich mit deinem Google Konto anmelden. **Deine E-Mail wird mir nicht angezeigt.** Für den Erfolg der Studie ist es wichtig, dass du den Fragebogen vollständig ausfüllst und keine der Fragen auslässt. Alle Daten werden anonym erhoben, sie können deiner Person nicht zugeordnet werden und werden streng vertraulich behandelt. Ich bitte dich außerdem, die Umfrage wahrheitsgemäß zu beantworten.

Vielen Dank im Voraus für deine Teilnahme.

1. Welchem Geschlecht fühlst du dich zugehörig?
    a. Männlich
    b. Weiblich
    c. Divers
2. Wie alt bist du?

Teil 1: Was ist ästhetisches Design?

Eine Definition von Ästhetik

Ästhetik leitet sich aus dem altgriechischen Wort *aisthesis* ab, welches Wahrnehmung, Empfindung bedeutet. Das Substantiv entstammt aus dem Verb aisthanesthai, das fühlen, wahrnehmen, der Wahrnehmung fähig, empfinden, merken, verstehen, einsehen, Einsicht haben in sich trägt. Im Substantiv stehen die Bedeutungen Gefühl, Wahrnehmung, Empfinden, Sinneswerkzeug, Empfindungsvermögen, Erkenntnis, Begreifen und Verständnis hinter dem Begriff (Designkunst, 2020).

Heute bezeichnet die Wissenschaft die Ästhetik als jene Eigenschaften, die beeinflussen, wie der Mensch etwas unter **Schönheitskriterien** beurteilt. Allgemeiner betrachtet werden die Eigenschaften, die die Sinne des Menschen ansprechen, als ästhetisch bezeichnet. Bei der Ästhetik der heutigen Zeit geht es also darum, wie der Mensch Dinge wahrnimmt (StudySmarter, o. J.).

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1. Welche Merkmale definieren ästhetisches Design für dich?
2. Welche Farben sind ästhetisch für dich, und warum?
3. Welche Formen sind für dich ästhetisch, und warum?
4. Welche Schriftarten & -bilder sind für dich ästhetisch, und warum?
5. Inwieweit würdest du den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen?

    a. Helle Farben sind ästhetisch ansprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

    b. Dunkle Farben sind ästhetisch ansprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

    c. Grelle Farben sind ästhetisch ansprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

    d. Große Schriftarten sind ästhetisch ansprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

e. Eine hohe Anzahl an Schriftzeichen auf Produkten ist ästhetisch anspre-chend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

f. Eine geringe Anzahl an Schriftzeichen auf Produkten, ist ästhetisch an-sprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

g. Eckige Formen* sind ästhetisch ansprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

h. Eckenlose Formen* sind ästhetisch ansprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

i. Symmetrische Formen sind ästhetisch ansprechend

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

Teil 2: Relevanz

1. Ästhetisch überlegenes Design ist mir wichtig, wenn ich Produkte kaufe.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

2. Ästhetisches Design ist mir wichtiger als der Preis des Produktes.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

3. Ästhetisches Design ist mir wichtiger als die Funktionalität des Produktes.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Stimme ich gar nicht zu	○	○	○	○	○	Stimme ich vollkommen zu

4. Gib bitte eine kurze Begründung deiner Antworten der letzten Fragen.
5. Bei welchen Produkten achtest du gezielt auf das ästhetische Design beim Kauf, und **warum**?
6. Warum glaubst du, dass ästhetisches Design für manche Menschen ein wichtiger Entscheidungsfaktor sein könnte?
7. Warum glaubst du, dass bestimmte Marken durch ästhetisches Design erfolgreicher sind, als Konkurrenten?

Teil 3: Preis

1. Würdest du mehr für ein Produkt bezahlen, welches ein ästhetisches Design hat?
   a. Ja
   b. Nein
2. Wenn ja, dann nenn bitte ein Beispiel für ein Produkt, für das du mehr Geld ausgeben würdest, und warum?

Teil 4: Beispiel 1

1. Welches Design spricht dich am meisten an, und **warum?**

1 2 3 4

2. Welches Design spricht dich am meisten an, und **warum?**

1 2 3 4

3. Welches Produkt würdest du kaufen, und **warum?**

1 500 €

2 250 €

3 28 €

4 350 €

Teil 4: Beispiel 2

1. Welches Design spricht dich am meisten an, und **warum?**

1

2

3

2. Welches Design spricht dich am wenigsten an, und **warum?**

3. Welches Produkt würdest du kaufen, und **warum?**

126 €

48 €

160 €

Teil 4: Beispiel 3

1. Welches Design spricht dich am meisten an, und **warum?**
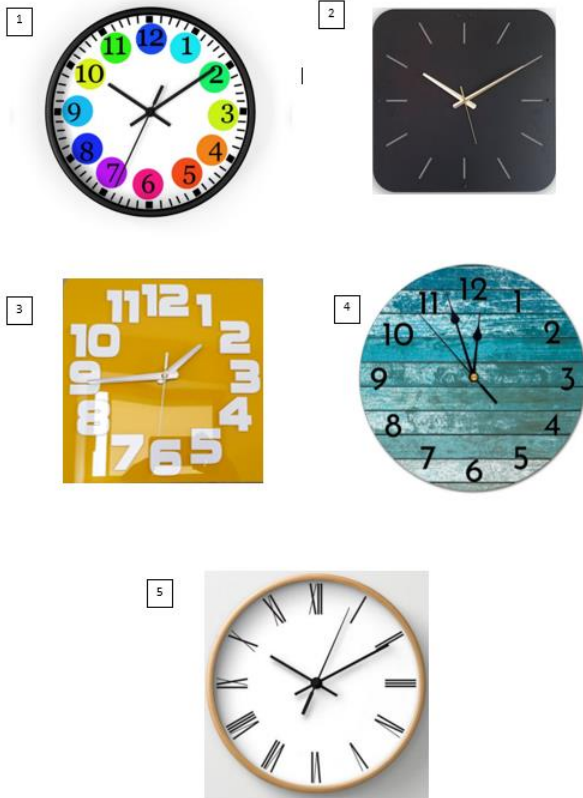
2. Welches Design spricht dich am wenigsten an, und **warum?**

3. Welches Produkt würdest du kaufen, und **warum?**

1
32 €

2
63 €

3
52 €

4
36 €

5
75 €
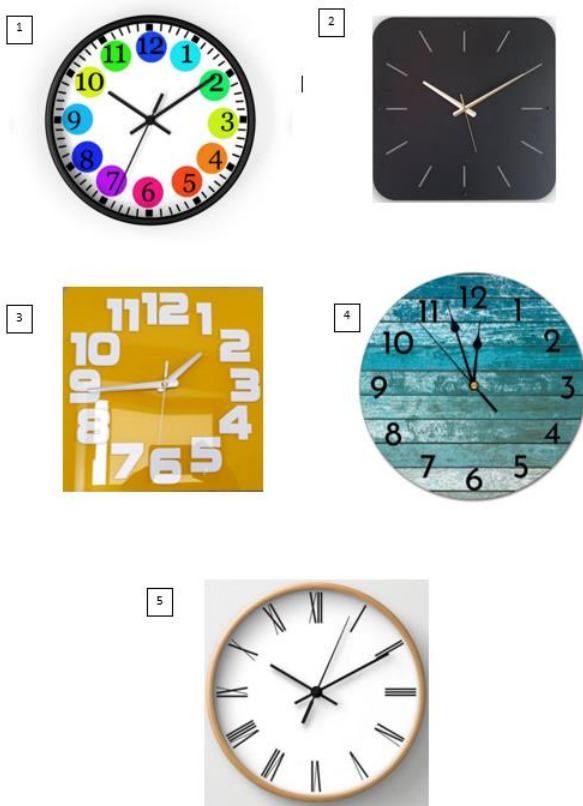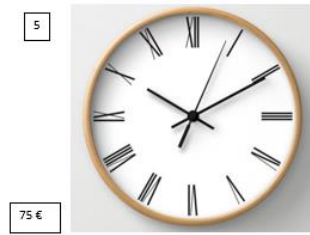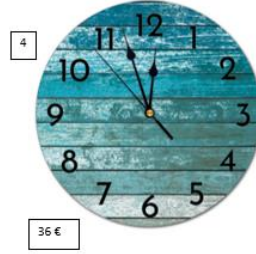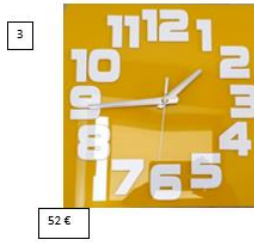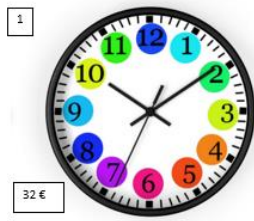
Vielen Dank für deine Teilnahme! Bei weiteren Fragen wende ich gern an mich.

Appendix 2: Quantitative illustrations of the survey

Appendix 2.1: Gender distribution

Geschlecht der Teilnehmer
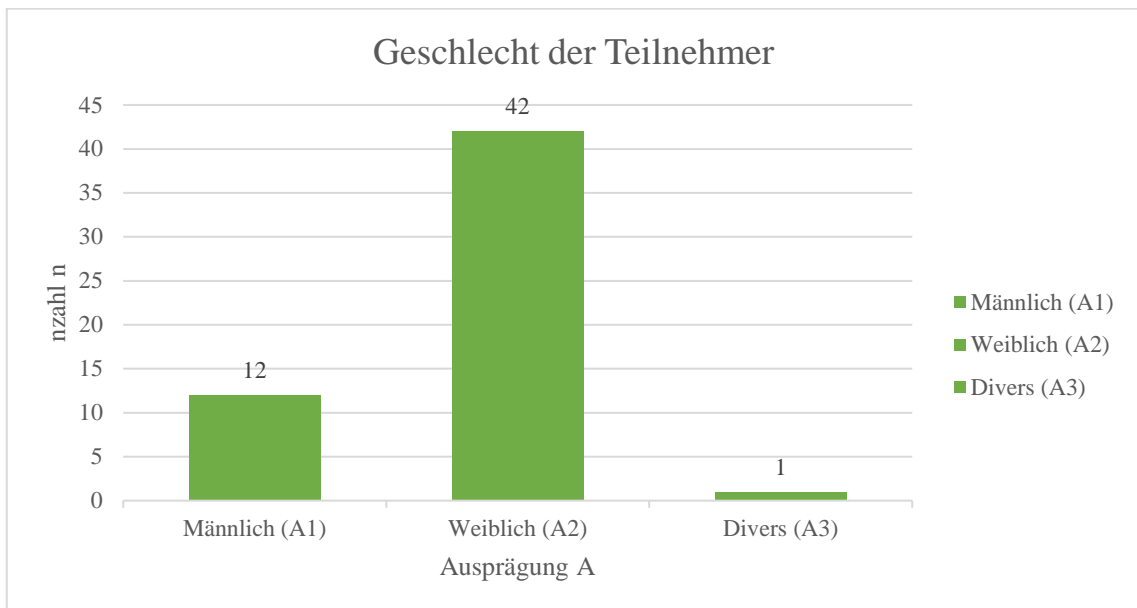
Appendix 2.2: Age distribution

Alter der Teilnehmer
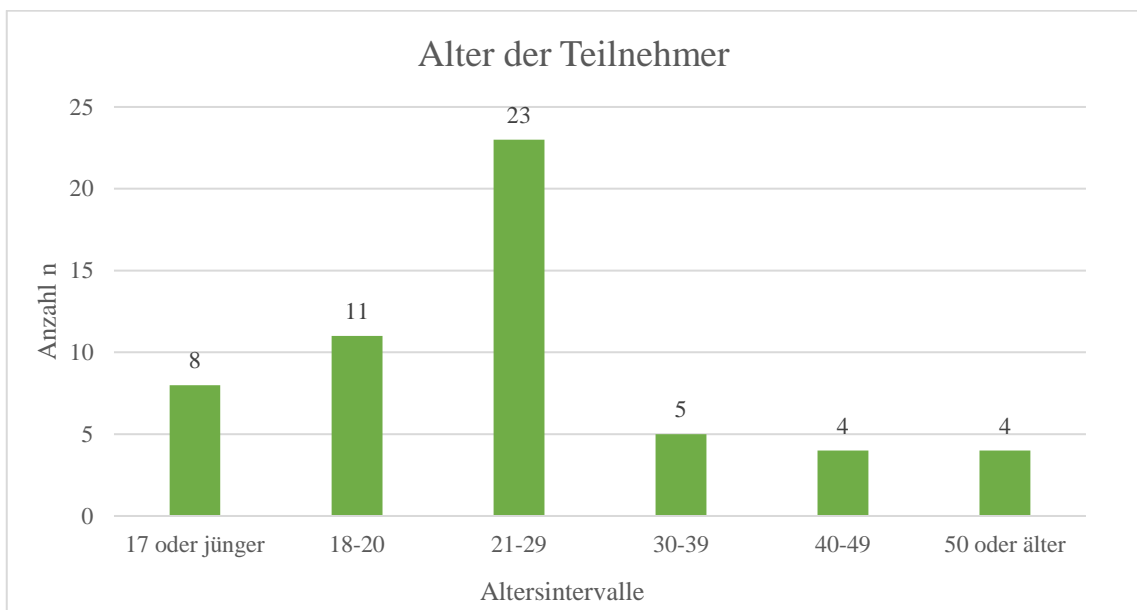
Appendix 2.3: Light colors are aesthetically pleasing

Helle Farben sind ästhetisch ansprechend

Ausprägung A	Anzahl n
1	0
2	2
3	6
4	12
5	35
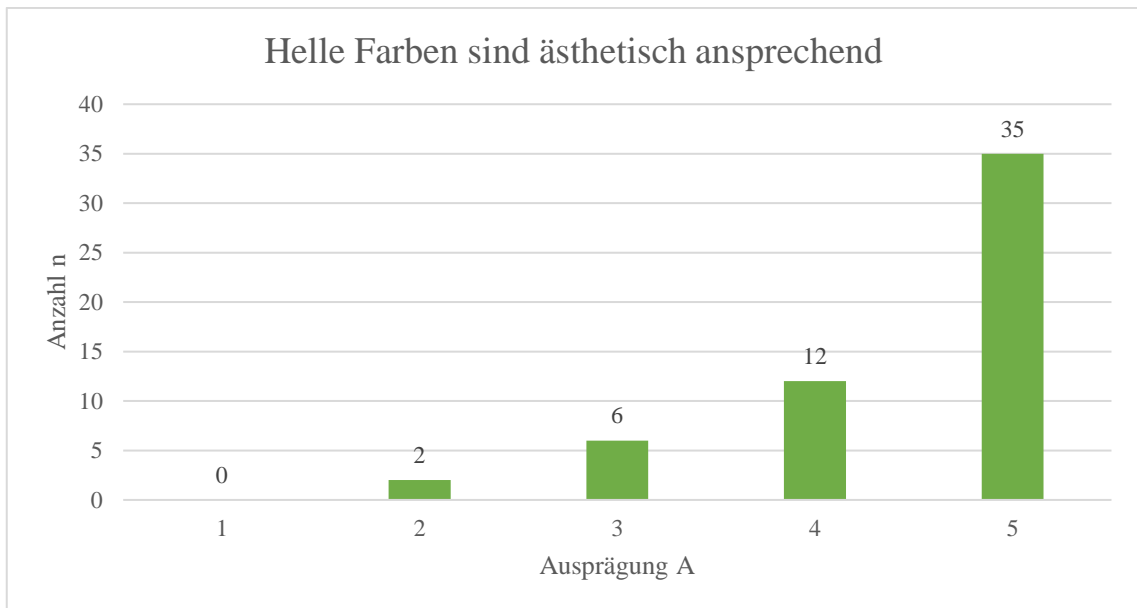
Appendix 2.4: Dark colors are aesthetically pleasing

Dunkle Farben sind ästhetisch ansprechend

Ausprägung A	Anzahl n
1	4
2	14
3	7
4	14
5	16
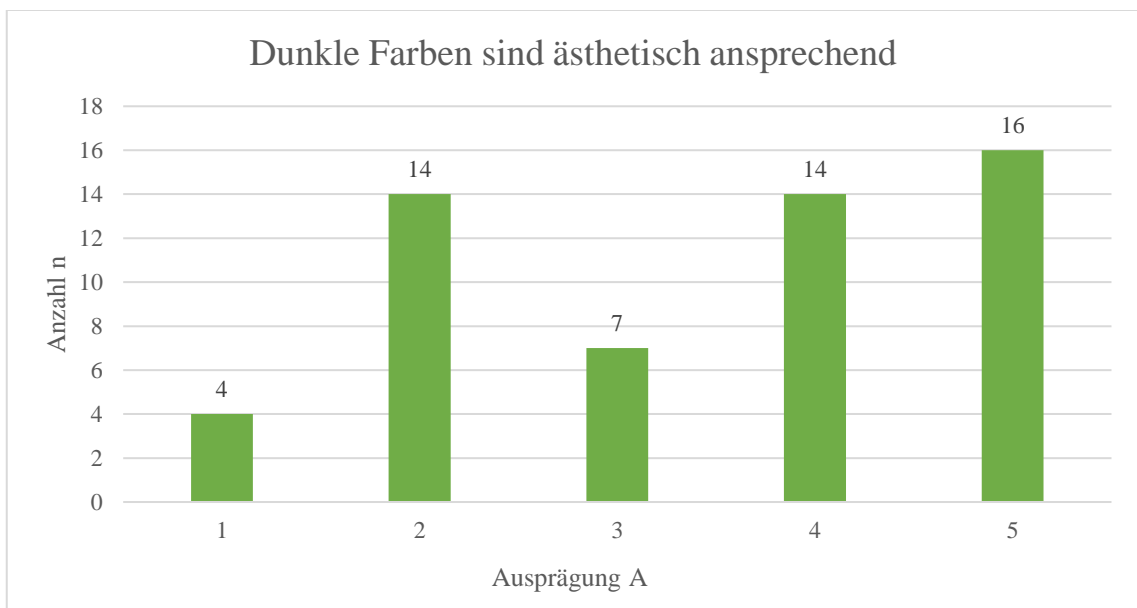
Appendix 2.5: Bright colors are aesthetically pleasing

Grelle Farben sind ästhetisch ansprechend

Anzahl n

Ausprägung A	1	2	3	4	5
	25	22	5	2	1
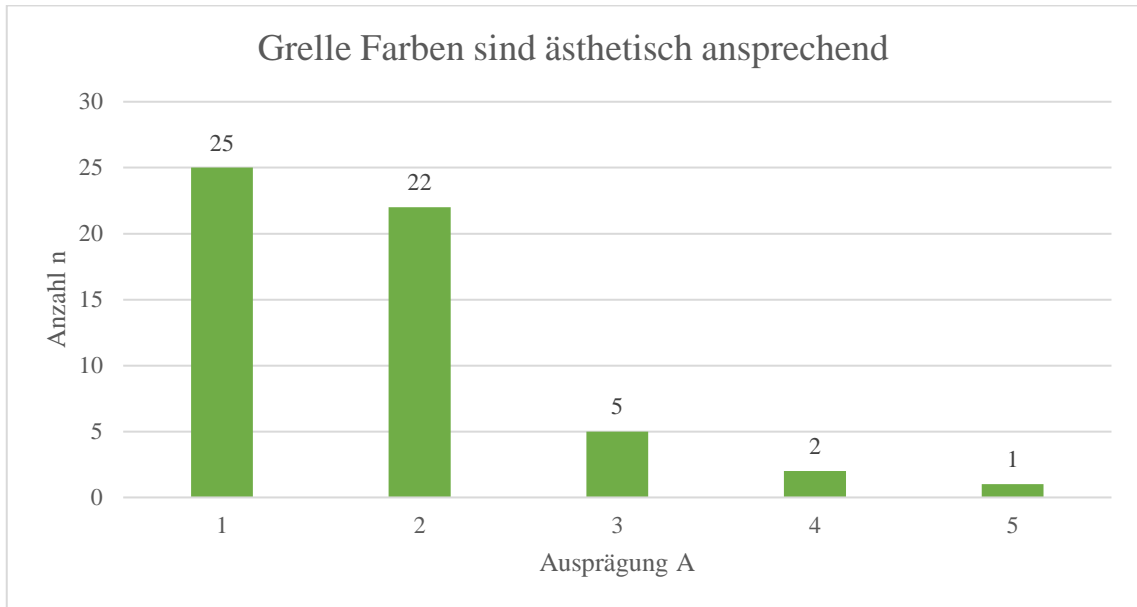
Appendix 2.6: Large fonts are aesthetically pleasing

Große Schriftarten sind ästhetisch ansprechend

Anzahl n

Ausprägung A	1	2	3	4	5
	2	17	25	9	2
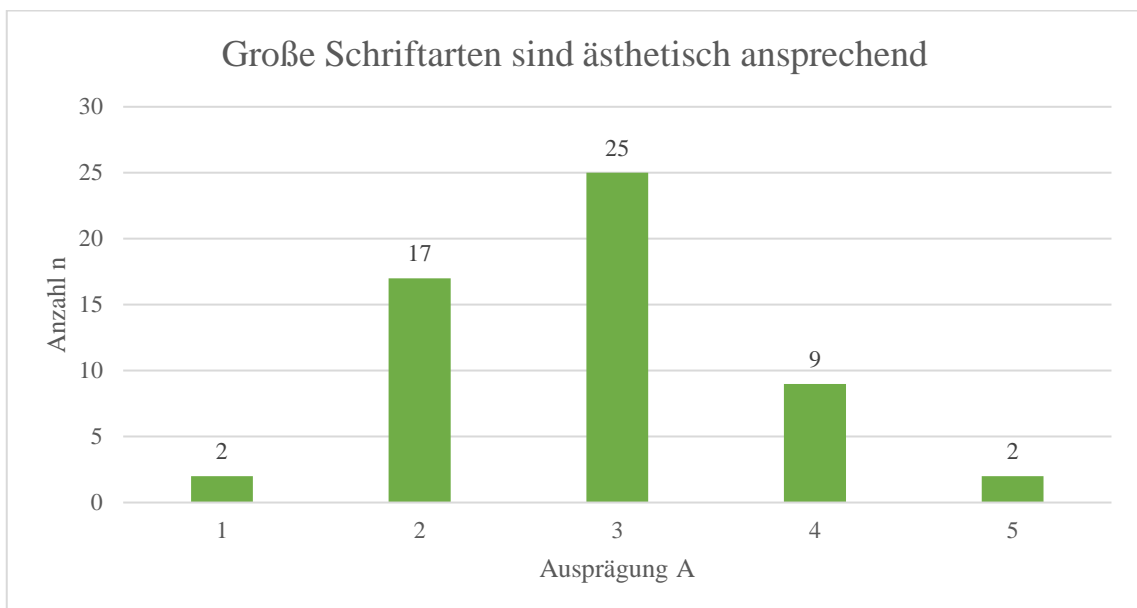
Appendix 2.7: A high number of characters on products is aesthetically pleasing

Eine hohe Anzahl an Schriftzeichen auf Produkten ist
ästhetisch ansprechend

Ausprägung A	Anzahl n
1	17
2	27
3	5
4	5
5	1
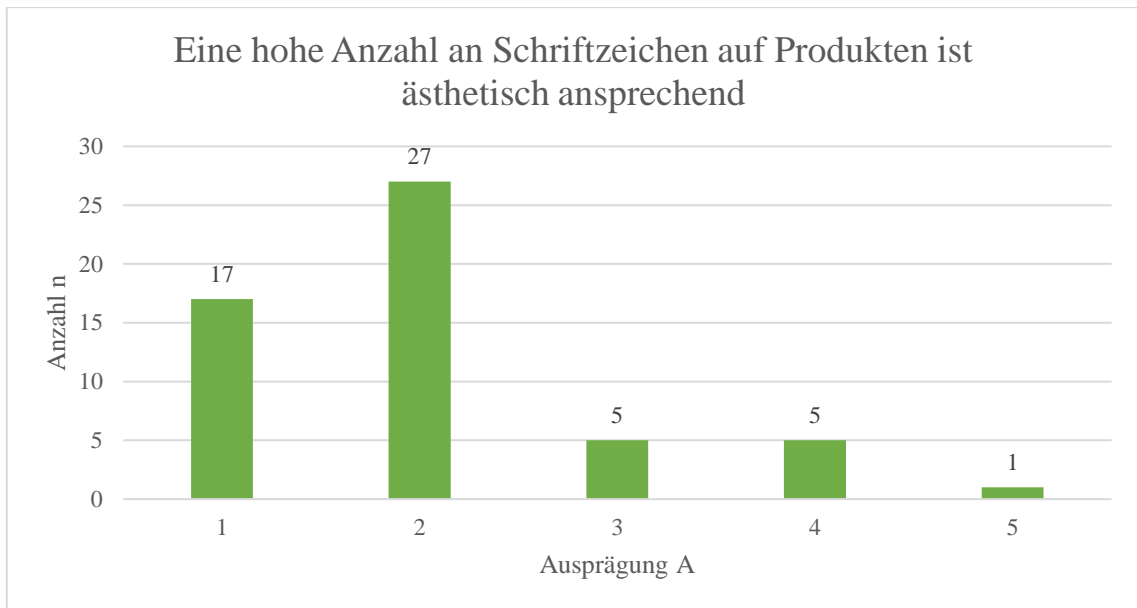
Appendix 2.8: A small number of characters on products is aesthetically pleasing

Eine geringe Anzahl an Schriftzeichen auf Produkten ist
ästhetisch ansprechend

Ausprägung A	Anzahl n
1	0
2	4
3	4
4	31
5	16
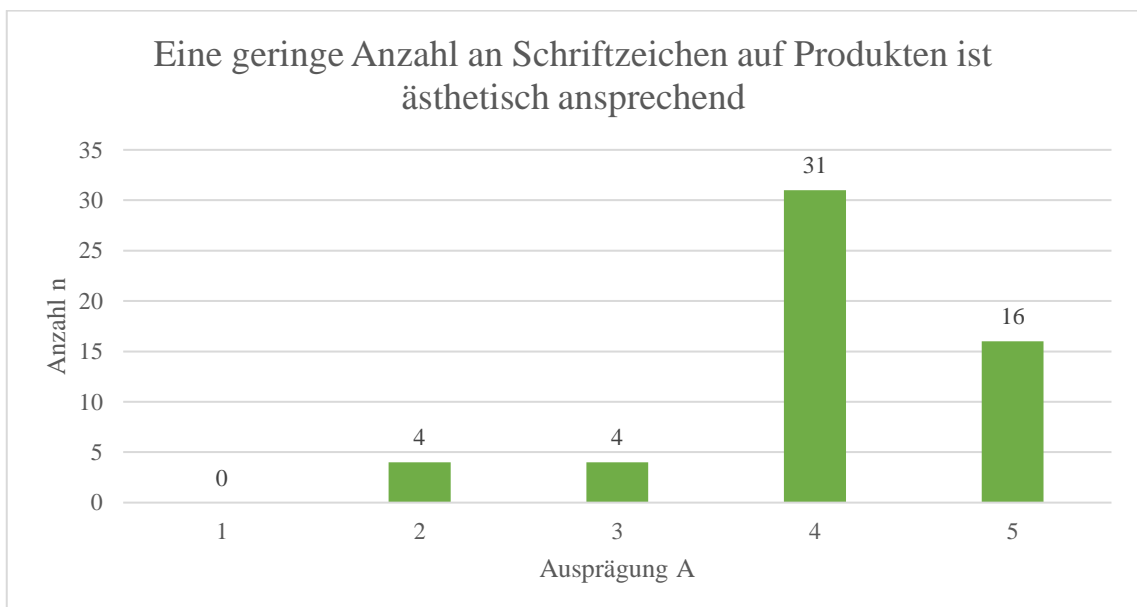
Appendix 2.9: Angular shapes are aesthetically pleasing

Eckige Formen sind ästhetisch ansprechend
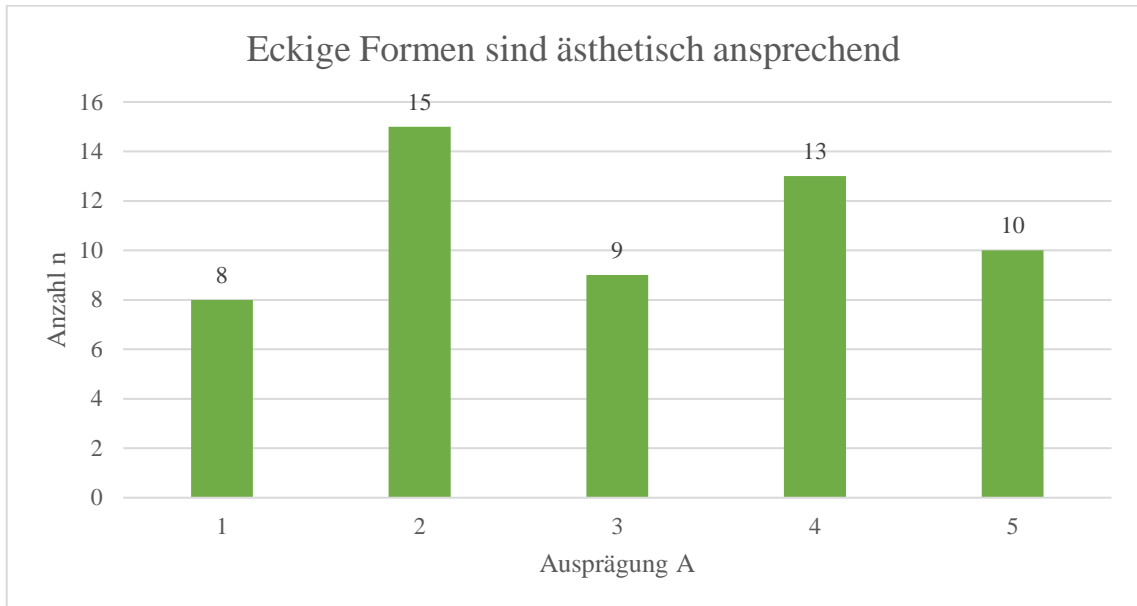
Appendix 2.10: Cornerless shapes are aesthetically pleasing

Eckenlose Formen sind ästhetisch ansprechend
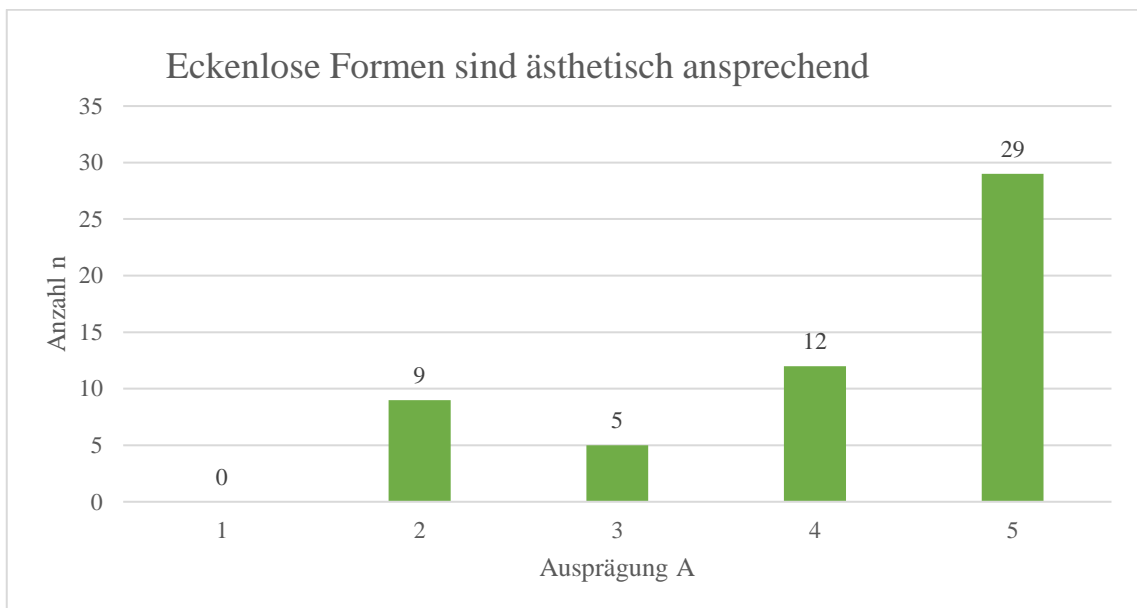
Appendix 2.11: Symmetrical shapes are aesthetically pleasing

Symetrische Formen sind ästhetisch ansprechend

[Bar chart: Anzahl n vs Ausprägung A]
- 1: 0
- 2: 2
- 3: 7
- 4: 19
- 5: 27
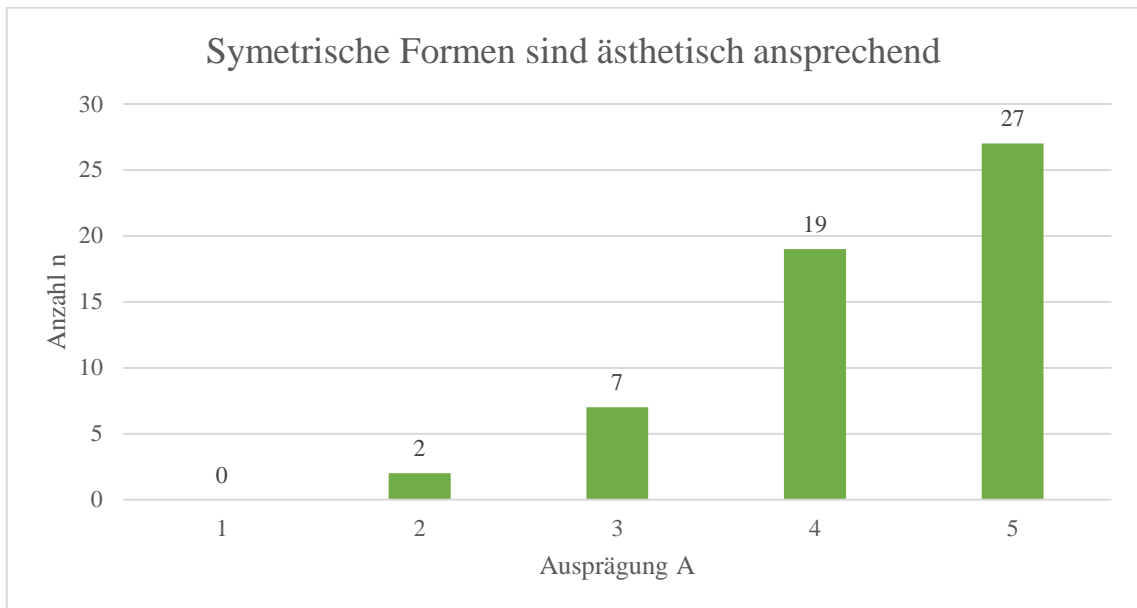
Appendix 2.12: Aesthetic design is important to me when I buy products.
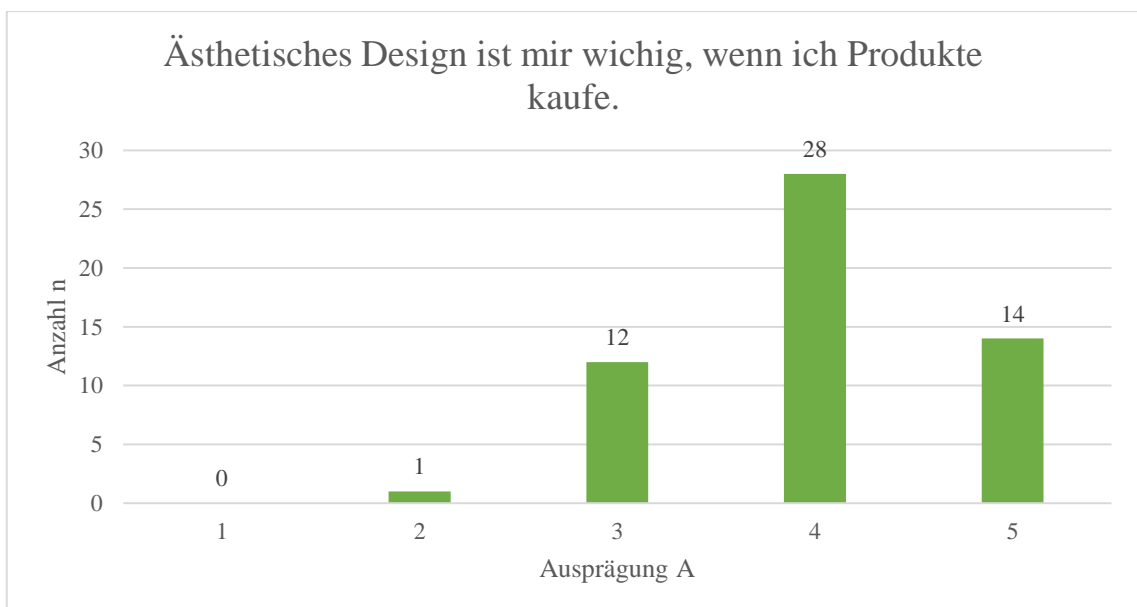
Ästhetisches Design ist mir wichig, wenn ich Produkte kaufe.

[Bar chart: Anzahl n vs Ausprägung A]
- 1: 0
- 2: 1
- 3: 12
- 4: 28
- 5: 14

Appendix 2.13: Aesthetic design is more important than the price of the product

Ästhetisches Design ist mir wichtiger als der Preis des Produktes

- Anzahl n (y-axis): 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25
- Ausprägung A (x-axis): 1 = 4, 2 = 23, 3 = 20, 4 = 7, 5 = 1
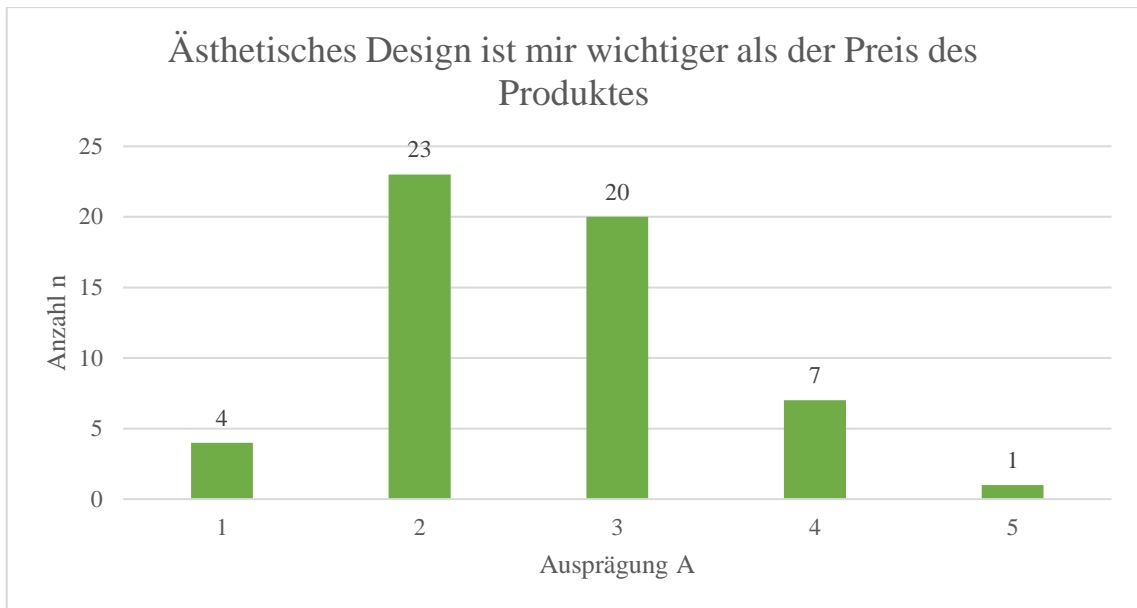
Appendix 2.14: Aesthetical design is more important to me than the functionality of the product
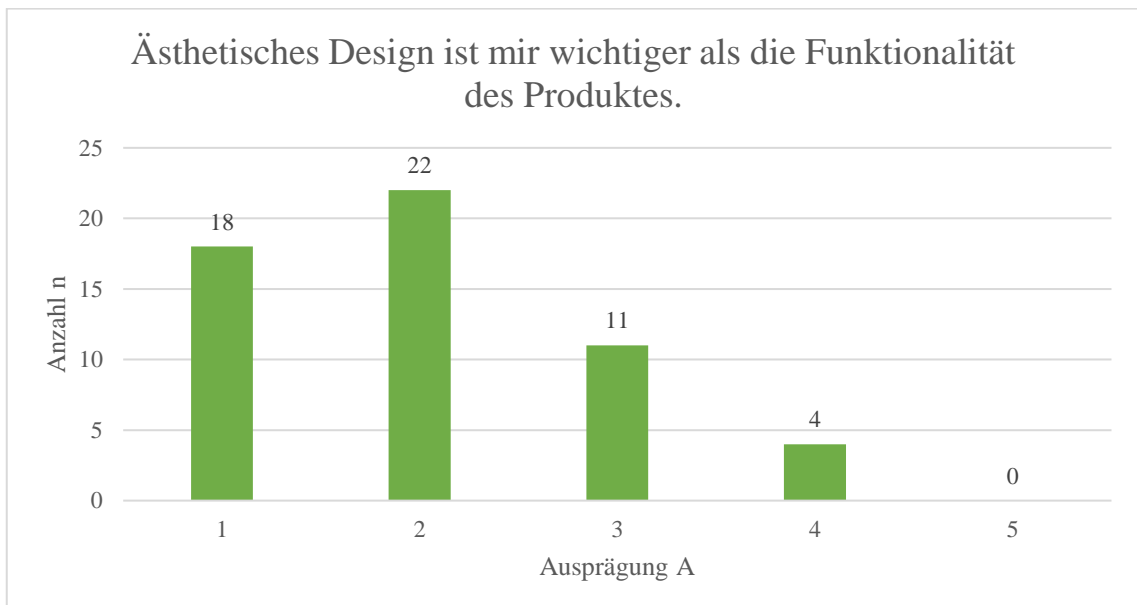
Ästhetisches Design ist mir wichtiger als die Funktionalität des Produktes.

- Anzahl n (y-axis): 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25
- Ausprägung A (x-axis): 1 = 18, 2 = 22, 3 = 11, 4 = 4, 5 = 0

Appendix 2.15: Would you pay more for a product, which has an aesthetically superior design?

Würdest du mehr für ein Produkt bezahlen, welches ein ästhetisches Design hat?

Appendix 3: Qualitative illustration of the survey

Appendix 3.1: What characteristics define aesthetic design for you?

```
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │ Ästhetikmerkmale │
                        └──────────────────┘
    ┌────────┬──────────────┬──────────┬──────────────┬──────────┐
┌───────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌──────────┐
│ Form  │ │ Aktualität│ │ Haptik │ │ Farbe  │ │ Wirkung  │
└───────┘ └───────────┘ └────────┘ └────────┘ └──────────┘
```

- **Form**
  - Klar erkennbar
  - Symetrie
  - Geradlinig
- **Aktualität**
  - Modern
  - Zeitlos
- **Haptik**
- **Farbe**
  - Neutral
  - Harmonisch
  - Gedeckt
  - Ruhig
  - Warm
  - Hell
- **Wirkung**
  - Harmonisch
  - Angenehm
  - Ruhig
  - Sauber
  - Minimalistisch
  - Rein
  - Vollkommen
  - Elegant
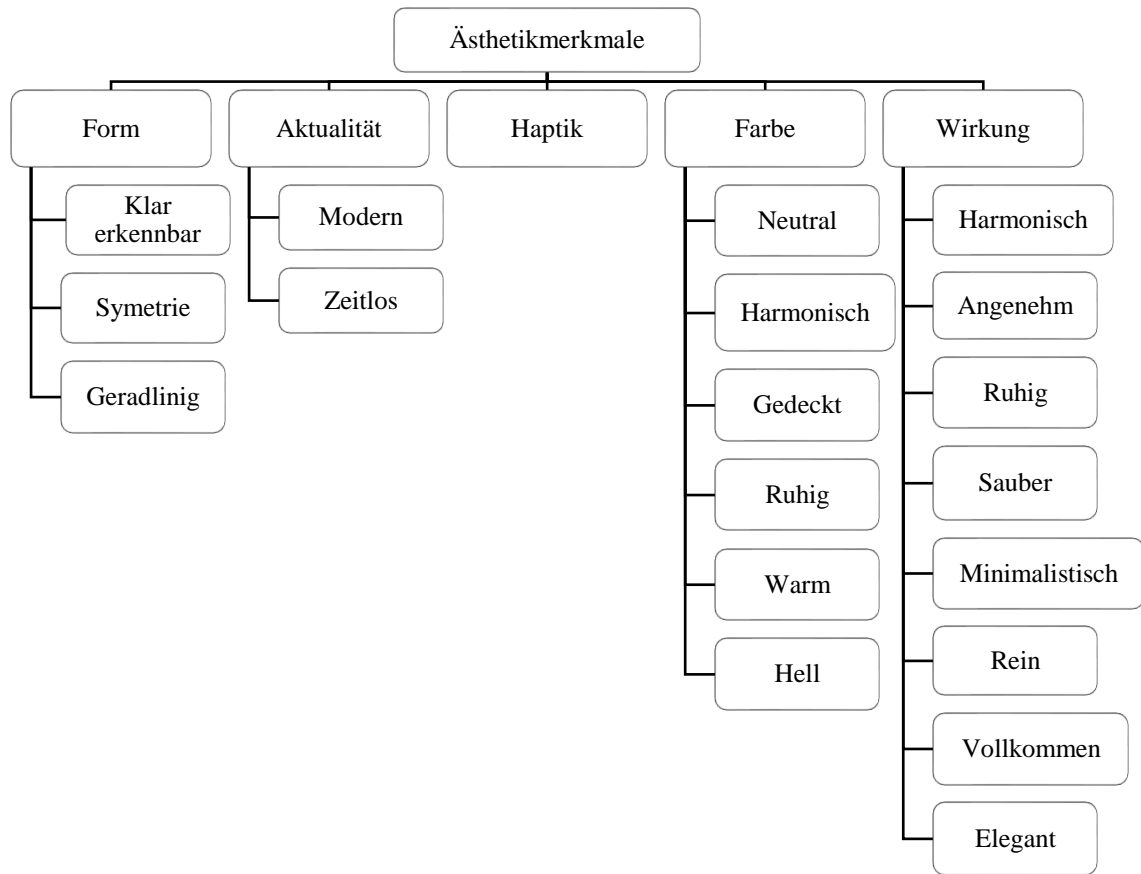
Appendix 3.2: What colors are aesthetic for you?

Ästhetische Farben

- Grundfarben
  - Schwarz
    - Grau
  - Weiß
  - Gelb
    - Braun
      - Goldbraun
    - Beige
      - Senfgelb
  - Grün
    - Olive
      - Waldgrün
    - Hellgrün
  - Blau
    - Petrol
    - Königsblau
  - Kontrast Farben / Verläufe
    - Blau - Orange
    - Blau - Rot
- Pastell Farben
  - Pastellrosa
  - Pastellblau
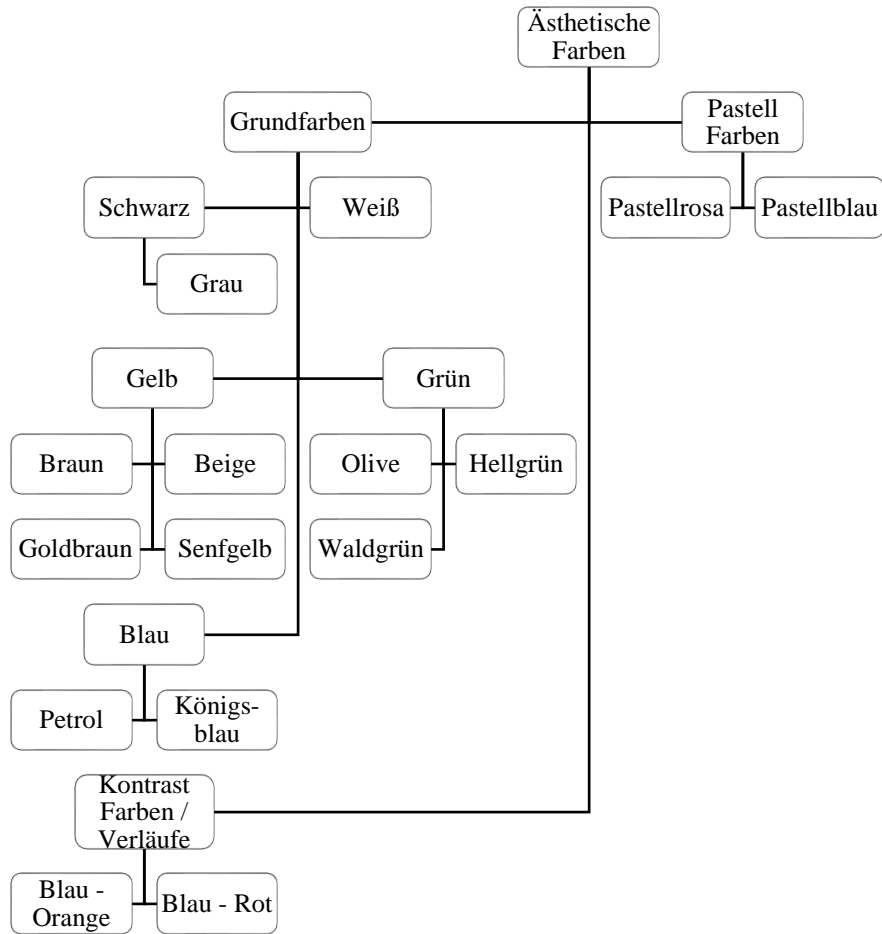
Appendix 3.3: What feelings are the colors supposed to create?

Gefühle

- Harmonie
  - Farbkombinationen
  - Gemütlichkeit
  - Farbe unterstützt Produkt
- Naturverbundenheit
  - Wasser, Meer
  - (Abend)himmel
- Eleganz
- Schlichtheit
  - Sauberkeit
  - Sinnlichkeit / Sanftheit
  - Frische
  - Unaufdringlich
  - Natrürlich
  - Reinheit
  - Ruhe
- Wärme
  - Geborgenheit
  - Freundlichkeit
  - Liebe
  - Entspannung
  - Wohlfühlend
- Designpräfferenz
  - Vintage
  - Lieblingsfarbe
- Lebendigkeit
  - Farbtupfer

Appendix 3.4: What shapes are aesthetic for you, and why? *

```
                              ┌──────────┐
                              │  Formen  │
                              └────┬─────┘
     ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────┼──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
┌─────────┐┌─────────┐┌──────────┐┌─────────┐┌─────────┐┌──────────┐
│  Rund/  ││ Eckig/  ││Minimalis-││Symetrisch││  Weich  ││ Organisch│
│Geschwun-││ kantig  ││  tisch   ││         ││         ││          │
│  gen    ││         ││          ││         ││         ││          │
└─────────┘└─────────┘└──────────┘└─────────┘└─────────┘└──────────┘
```

```
                    ┌──────────┐
                    │  Gründe  │
                    └────┬─────┘
         ┌───────────────┼───────────────┐
   ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐
   │ Aussehen │    │  Gefühl  │    │ Funktion │
   └────┬─────┘    └────┬─────┘    └────┬─────┘
        │               │               │
    ┤ Sanft          ┤ Weich         ┤ Anpassend
    ┤ Zart           ┤ Warm          ┤ Einheitlich
    ┤ Elegant        ┤ Angenehm      ┤ In sich geschlossen
    ┤ Geradlinig     ┤ Beruhigend    ┤ Ordentlich
    ┤ Präzise        ┤ Unaufdringlich┤ Technisch
    ┤ Clean          ┤ Harmonisch    ┤ Hochwertig
    ┤ Markant        ┤ Sinnlich      ┤ Einfach
    ┤ Strukturell    ┤ Energiereich
    ┤ Natürlich      ┤ Tiefe
```

Appendix 3.5: What fonts & typefaces are aesthetically pleasing to you, and why? *

```
                         ┌──────────────┐
                         │  Schriftarten │
                         └──────┬───────┘
                    ┌───────────┴───────────┐
            ┌───────┴──────┐         ┌──────┴──────┐
            │  Serifenlos  │         │  Mit serifen │
            └───────┬──────┘         └──────┬──────┘
                    │                       │
             ┌──────┴───────┐        ┌──────┴───────┐
             │    Feine     │        │  Klassische  │
             │  Buchstaben  │        │  Schriftarten │
             └──────────────┘        └──────────────┘
             ┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐
             │ Geschwungene │        │ Druckschrift/│
             │  Buchstaben  │        │  Handschrift │
             └──────────────┘        └──────────────┘
             ┌──────────────┐
             │   Kantige    │
             │  Buchstaben  │
             └──────────────┘
             ┌──────────────┐
             │ Künstlerisch +│
             │    clean     │
             └──────────────┘
```

```
                         ┌──────────┐
                         │  Gründe  │
                         └────┬─────┘
          ┌───────────────────┼───────────────────┐
   ┌──────┴──────┐     ┌──────┴──────┐     ┌──────┴──────┐
   │  Aussehen   │     │   Gefühl    │     │  Funktion   │
   └──────┬──────┘     └──────┬──────┘     └──────┬──────┘
          │                   │                   │
    ┌─────┴────┐        ┌─────┴────┐        ┌─────┴────┐
    │   Schön  │        │ Beruhigend│        │  Einfach  │
    └──────────┘        └──────────┘        └──────────┘
    ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐
    │  Elegant │        │  Modern  │        │Übersichtlich│
    └──────────┘        └──────────┘        └──────────┘
    ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐
    │Minimalistisch│    │ Vertraut │        │ ordentlich│
    └──────────┘        └──────────┘        └──────────┘
    ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐
    │Unauffällig│       │Romantisch│        │Professionell│
    └──────────┘        └──────────┘        └──────────┘
    ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐        ┌──────────┐
    │Richige Dicke│     │Assoziations-│     │   Klar   │
    └──────────┘        │   reich   │       └──────────┘
    ┌──────────┐        └──────────┘        ┌──────────┐
    │Gleichmäßig│       ┌──────────┐        │Hochwertig│
    └──────────┘        │ Verträumt│        └──────────┘
    ┌──────────┐        └──────────┘
    │künstlersich│      ┌──────────┐
    └──────────┘        │Einzigartig│
                        └──────────┘
                        ┌──────────┐
                        │ Persönlich│
                        └──────────┘
```

Appendix 3.6: Is aesthetically superior design important for people and if yes why?

Appendix 3.7: For which products do you specifically consider the aesthetic design when buying, and why? *

```
                              ┌──────────┐
                              │ Produkte │
                              └────┬─────┘
  ┌──────────┬──────┬────────────┬┴────────┬─────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
┌──────┐  ┌──────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌───────┐ ┌───────┐ ┌──────┐ ┌─────────┐ ┌──────┐
│Kleidung│ │Möbel │ │Accessoires│ │Lebens-│ │Technik│ │Autos │ │Kosmetik │ │Schul-│
└──────┘  └──┬───┘ └────┬─────┘ │mittel │ └───────┘ └──────┘ └─────────┘ │artikel│
             │          │       └───┬───┘                                └──────┘
         ┌───┴────┐  ┌───┴────┐  ┌───┴──┐
         │ Deko-  │  │Schmuck │  │ Wein │
         │ artikel│  └────────┘  └──────┘
         └────────┘
         ┌────────┐  ┌────────┐
         │Geschirr│  │ Handy- │
         └────────┘  │ hüllen │
                     └────────┘
         ┌────────┐
         │ Bücher │
         └────────┘
```

```
                              ┌──────────┐
                              │  Gründe  │
                              └────┬─────┘
  ┌────────┬────────┬──────────┬──┴─────┬──────────┬──────────┬─────────┬─────────┐
┌────────┐┌───────┐┌────────┐┌──────┐┌────────┐┌─────────┐┌────────┐┌────────┐┌────────┐
│Ständige││Erfreuen││Selbst- ││Kauf- ││Wohl-   ││Werts-   ││Oft in  ││Lang-   ││An-     │
│Konfron ││am     ││dar-    ││grund ││gefühl  ││chätzun  ││Benutz- ││fristige││regung  │
│-tation ││Produkt││stellung/││      ││auslösen││g höher  ││ung     ││Nutzung ││zur     │
└────────┘└───────┘│Repräse ││      ││        ││         ││        ││        ││Nutzung │
                   │ntation ││      ││        ││         ││        ││        ││        │
                   └────────┘└──────┘└────────┘└─────────┘└────────┘└────────┘└────────┘
```
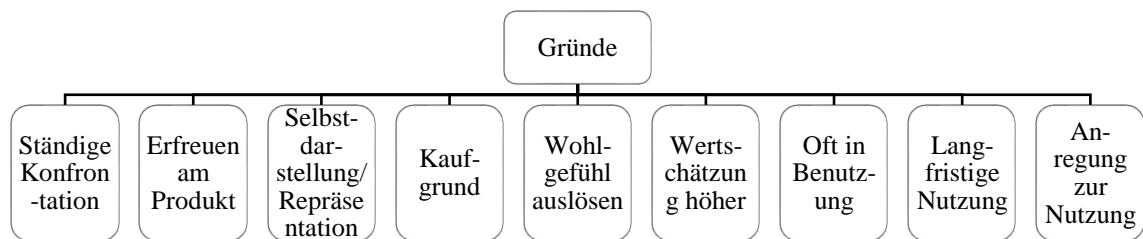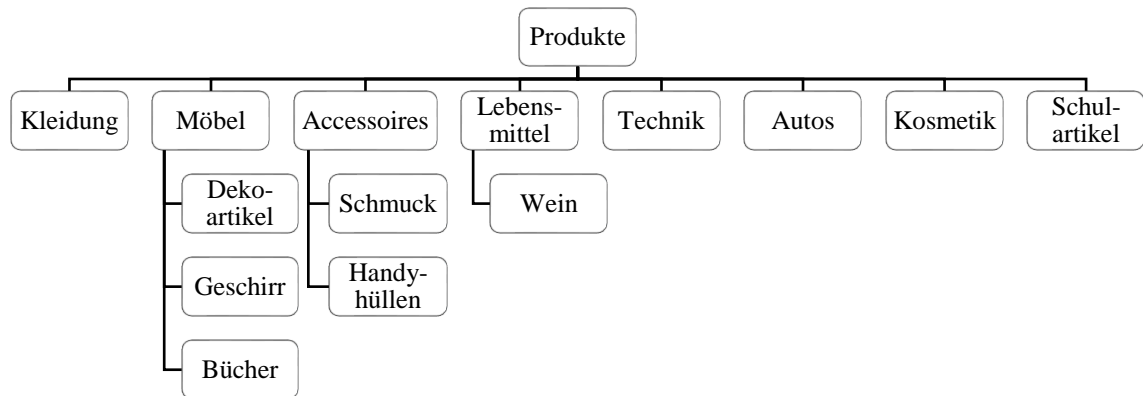
Appendix 3.8: Why do you think the aesthetic design might be an important decision factor for some people?

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Gründe für Design als │
                    │  Entscheidungsfaktor  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
         ┌───────────────────┼───────────────────┐
┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
│Gefühlssteigerung│  │Selbstdarstellung│  │ Kauffördernde │
│               │   │               │   │ Eigenschaften │
└──────────────┘    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
```

- **Gefühlssteigerung**
  - Zufrieden-heit
  - Grund-stimmungen
  - Glücks-gefühle
  - Selbst-vertrauen
  - Wohl-befinden

- **Selbstdarstellung**
  - Ausdruck der Persönlichkeit / Charakters
  - Ansehen in der Gesellschaft

- **Kauffördernde Eigenschaften**
  - Vertrauens-erweckend
  - Optisch anprechend bei Kauf
  - Differenzier-ungsfaktor
  - Sympathie-träger
  - Qualitäts-faktor

Appendix 3.9: What do you think could be a benefit of buying an aesthetic product?

- **Vorteile**
  - **Gesteigerte Nutzung**
    - Längerer Nutzen
    - Längere Freude
    - Wertschätz-ung
  - **Selbstdar-stellung**
    - Prestige
  - **Gefühls-erzeugung**
    - Selbstwert-gefühl
    - Glück
    - Freude
    - Wohlbefinden
    - Zufriedenheit
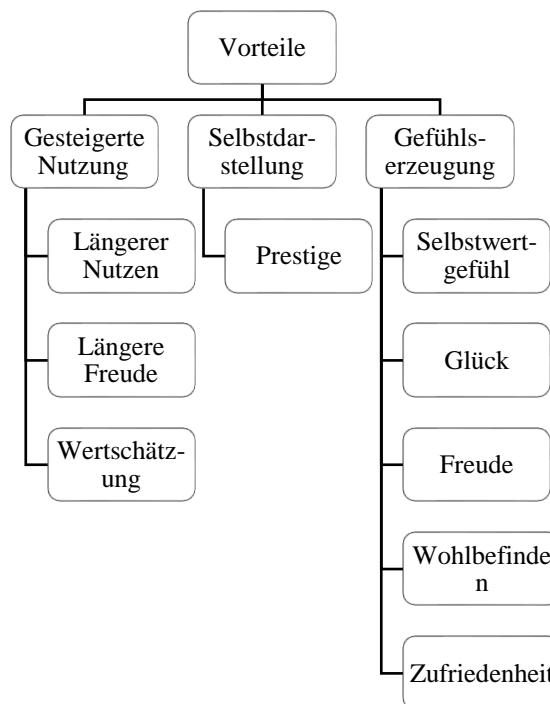
Appendix 3.10: Why do you think certain brands are more successful through aesthetic design than competitors?

```
                          ┌─────────────┐
                          │ Gründe für den │
                          │    Erfolg    │
                          └─────────────┘
```

Wichtigkeit vom Aussehen	Erwecken von Gefühlen	Differenzierungs-merkmal	Selbst-darstellung von Menschen	Höhere Gewinne
Medien fördern Sehsinn	Vertrauen	Einzigartigkeit	Status	
Vordergrund der Wahrnehmung	Qualitäts-verbesserung	Abheben von konkurrenz	Persönlichkeits-darstellung	
Achten mehr auf Ausshen		Alleinstell-ungsmerkmal		
		Design-spezialitsierung		
		Wieder-erkennungswert		
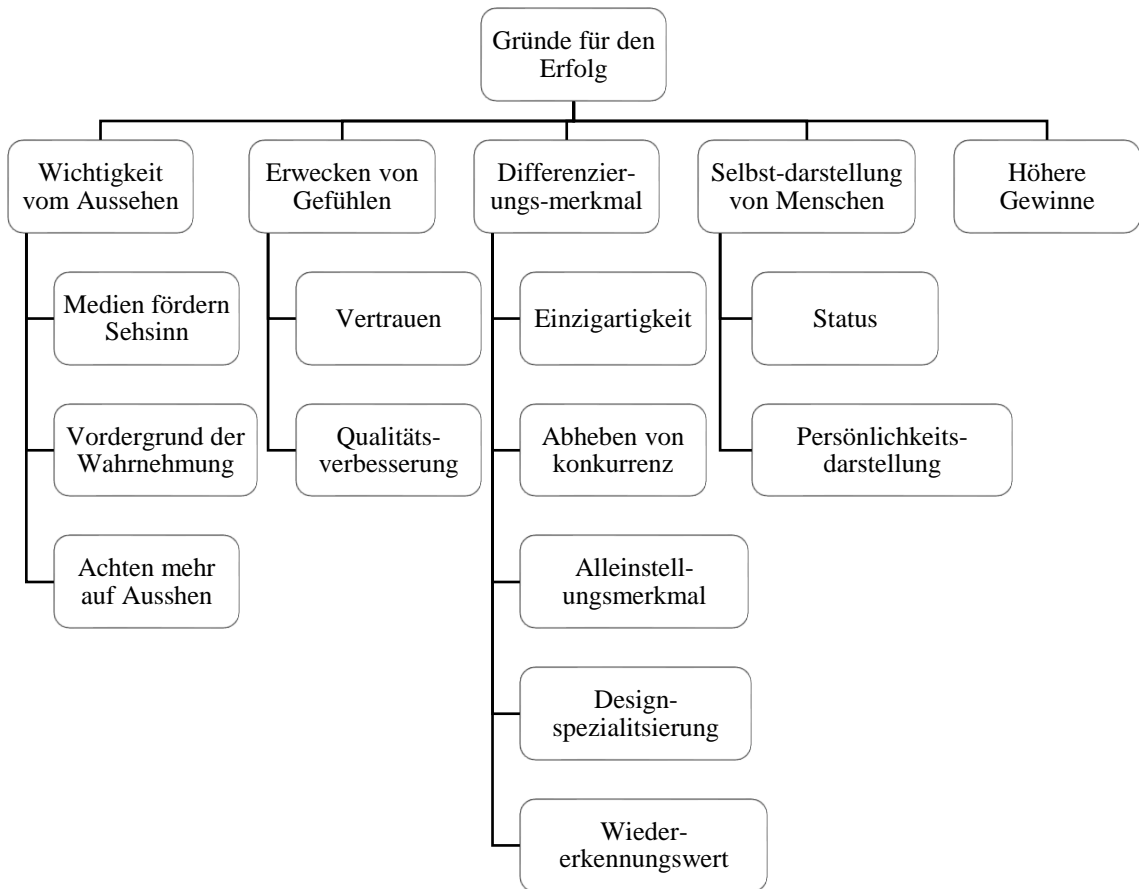
Appendix 3.11: If so, please give an example of a product you would spend more money on. *

```
                    ┌──────────┐
                    │ Produkte │
                    └──────────┘
```

- Einrichtungsgegenstände
  - Möbel
  - Dekoartikel
  - Bettwäsche
  - Bilder / Skulpturen
- Küchengeräte
- Messer
- Bücher
- Smartphone
  - Hüllen
- Nutzungsgegenstände
- Alkohol
- Bekleidung
- Auto
- Taschenkalender
- Kosmetik

```
                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │   Gründe     │
                        └──────┬───────┘
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┌───────────┐ ┌───────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌────────────┐
│  Häufige  │ │Blickfang im│ │Aufwertung│ │ Erfreuen │ │Langfristige│
│Konfrontation│ │   Raum    │ │          │ │          │ │ Investiton │
└───────────┘ └───────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘ └────────────┘
```
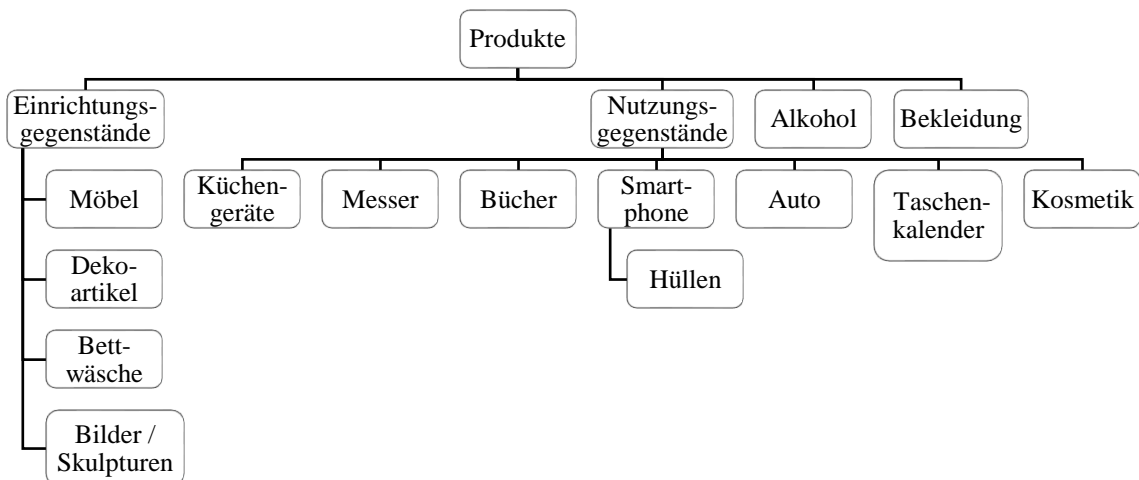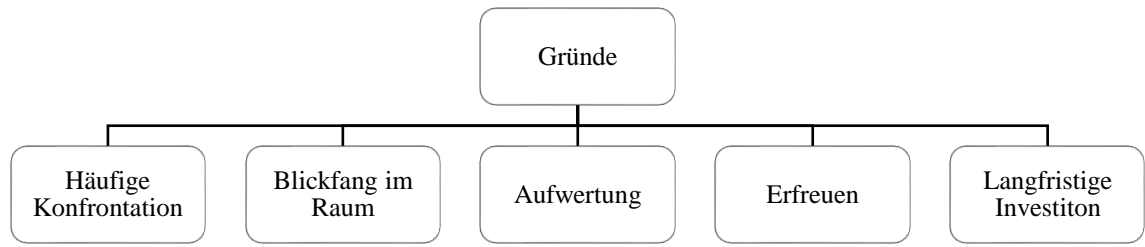
Appendix 4: Illustrations for the examples

Appendix 4.1: Headphones

Appendix 4.1.1: Important design characteristics for headphones

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                           ┌──────────────┐
                           │ Designaspekte │
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│ Form ││ Farbe││Wirkung││Aktualität││Gesamtwirkung ││ Wirkende ││Bequemlichkeit│
│      ││      ││      ││          ││              ││ Qualität ││              │
└──────┘└──────┘└──────┘└──────────┘└──────────────┘└──────────┘└──────────────┘
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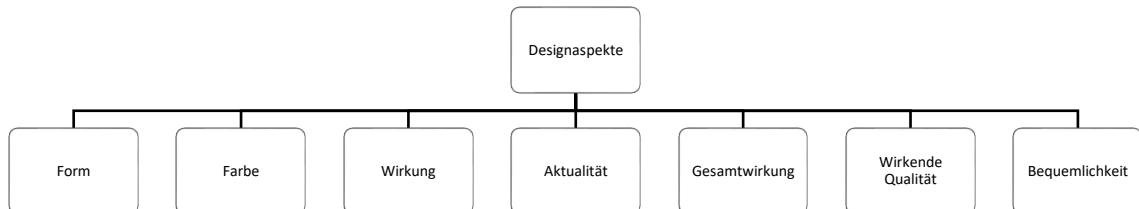
Appendix 4.1.2: Which design appeals to you the most, and why? *

Appendix 4.1.3: Which design appeals to you the least, and why? *

Appendix 4.1.4: Which model would you buy and why? *

Appendix 4.2: Toaster

Appendix 4.2.1: Important design characteristics for toasters

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                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │ Designaspekte │
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│ Form ││ Farbe││ Wirkung  ││Aktualität││  Wirkende    │
│      ││      ││          ││          ││  Qualität    │
└──────┘└──────┘└──────────┘└──────────┘└──────────────┘
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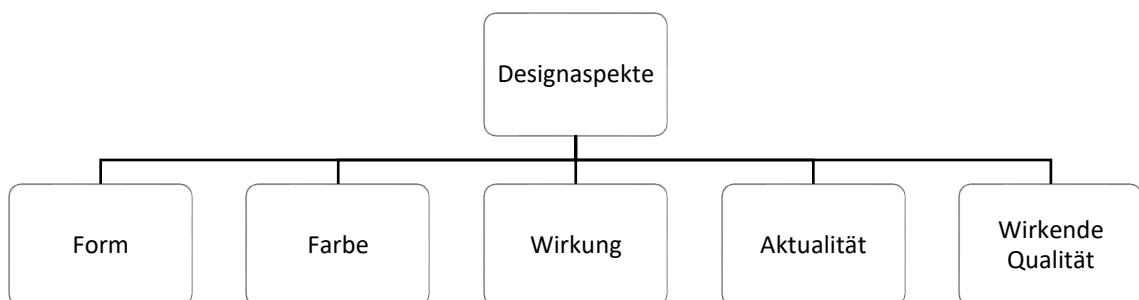
Appendix 4.2.2: Which design appeals to you the most, and why? *

Appendix 4.2.3: Which design appeals to you the least, and why? *

Appendix 4.2.4: Which model would you buy and why? *

Appendix 4.3: Wall Clocks

Appendix 4.3.1: Important design characteristics for wall clocks

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                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │ Designaspekte │
                        └──────┬───────┘
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┌─────┐ ┌─────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐
│ Form│ │Farbe│ │Material│ │Wirkung │ │Aktualität│ │ Wirkende │
│     │ │     │ │        │ │        │ │          │ │ Qualität │
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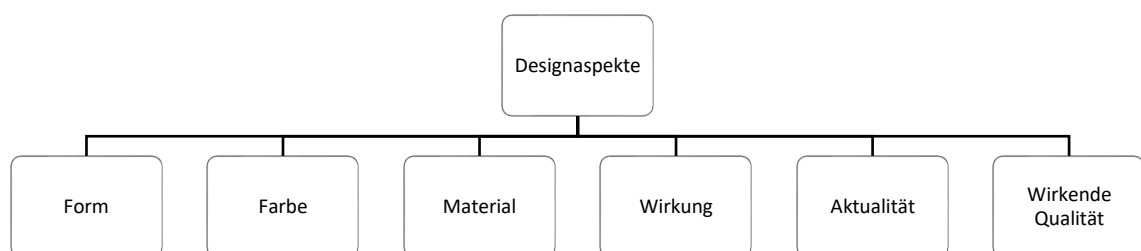
Appendix 4.3.2: Which design appeals to you the most, and why? *

Appendix 4.3.3: Which design appeals to you the least, and why? *

Appendix 4.3.4: Which model would you buy and why? *

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit bisher bei keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde eingereicht, sie selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt sowie Zitate kenntlich gemacht habe.

Zörbig, 22.04.2023

_____   _____
Ort, Zeit   Unterschrift

Wörteranzahl: 13.751

Zeichenanzahl (ohne Lehrzeichen): 74.589