

A Review of Everyday Aesthetics, Consumer Aesthetics, and Daily Objects

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Abstract

Everyday aesthetics emerged as an essential interdisciplinary field reframing the aesthetic experience of mundane objects, environment, and practices. Consumers' well-being, perceptions, and purchase purposes depend not only on an object's functionality but also on its aesthetic appearance in daily life. This review paper aims to critically synthesize the interdisciplinary literature on the aesthetics of everyday life in relation to consumer aesthetics and utilitarian objects, categorizing the thematic patterns, convergences, and divergences. This study brings together scholarly articles published from 1990 to 2025 to examine theoretical frameworks and key themes in the field. The current systematic review followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, incorporating empirical and theoretical studies on everyday aesthetics in relation to consumer aesthetics and daily-use objects. This study identified 158 articles, of which 44 met the inclusion criteria, retrieved from a comprehensive database search (Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar). Findings reveal recurring themes across philosophy, design, psychology, and consumer behaviour, including shape-based preferences, functional beauty, symbolic meaning, sustainability, and cultural context. Convergence was noted in the emphasis on form, usability, and emotional resonance, whereas divergence was observed in methodological approaches and in the management of cultural variation. This review highlights the scarcity of non-Western perspectives and underscores the necessity for longitudinal, multidisciplinary approaches. The study presents a consolidated framework for advancing consumer aesthetics research and supports design practice by repositioning ordinary objects as sites of both functional utility and aesthetic experience.

Keywords: Consumer Aesthetics, Daily Objects, Design Perception, Everyday Aesthetics, Functional Beauty.

Introduction

The conversation on aesthetics, which originated in philosophical traditions established by Baumgarten and Kant, has consistently highlighted the domain of fine arts and the sublime (1, 2). This perspective, valued disinterested judgment and transcendent experience, methodically excluded the aesthetic importance of daily life. Scholars of the late 20th and early 21st centuries argued about the aesthetic aspects of ordinariness (environment, activity, and artifacts) rather than the aesthetics of exclusive art. Everyday aesthetics is expressed primarily through the philosophical contributions, who argues that aesthetic experience permeates ordinary life beyond the realm of art (3); building on this, other scholar highlights how surface qualities of routine objects generate aesthetic meaning (4), and before these another study explains how familiarity and lived experience influence the aesthetic significance of daily artefacts (5). Consumer aesthetics, in contrast, draws from the experiential turn in marketing and psychology, beginning with the

foundational proposal that consumption is driven by sensory, emotional, and hedonic responses (6), expanded by scholar's framing of consumers as aesthetic subjects engaged in meaning-making (7), and further studies refined contemporary treatment of aesthetic responses in everyday consumption contexts (8). The third construct, everyday objects, is anchored in design scholarship, particularly in how usability, affordances, and emotion shape interactions with ordinary products (9, 10), and in early empirical evidence on how prototypicality influences aesthetic preferences for functional items such as furniture (11). Together, these works provide a clear conceptual demarcation and demonstrate engagement with top academics across aesthetics, consumer psychology, and design research.

A consolidated review of this literature is warranted, as it substantiates everyday aesthetics with systematic evidence and provides practical insights for design professionals and consumer researchers. In a marketplace where product

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differentiation primarily relies on aesthetic experience (9, 12), comprehending how consumer perceives daily-use objects aesthetically is of both

theoretical and practical relevance. Table 1, below, represents the comparative conceptual matrix with overlap and differences among concepts.

Table 1: Comparative Conceptual Matrix with Overlap and Differences Among Concepts

Dimension	Everyday Aesthetics	Consumer Aesthetics	Everyday Objects	Overlap / Difference
Conceptual Focus	Aesthetic experience emerging from ordinary life, routines, and environments.	Aesthetic responses arising during the consumption of products and services.	Tangible functional artefacts of daily use.	Everyday and consumer aesthetics share experiential dimensions; everyday objects differ as material entities.
Disciplinary Roots	Philosophy, aesthetics, cultural studies.	Psychology, marketing, consumer research.	Design, ergonomics, cognitive psychology.	Distinct academic lineages, minimal conceptual overlap.
Key Literatures	(3,4,5)	(6,7,8)	(9,10,11)	Separate foundational figures; no direct redundancy.
Aesthetic Mechanisms	Familiarity, contextual meaning, lived experience.	Sensory pleasure, hedonic response, symbolic meaning.	Shape, form, symmetry, prototypicality, usability.	Mechanisms differ but may interact in real aesthetic decision-making.
User Role	Individual as experiencer in daily contexts.	Consumer as an aesthetic agent in market settings.	User interacting with designed artefacts.	Overlap: all involve subjective interpretation and experience.
Objects Considered	Environments, everyday routines, ordinary settings.	Market goods, branded products, and consumption objects.	Chairs, mugs, mobiles, vehicles, and domestic items.	Consumer aesthetics and everyday objects overlap in product focus; everyday aesthetics is broader.
Source of Aesthetic Value	Meaning, familiarity, contextual embeddedness.	Emotion, sensory arousal, and symbolic associations.	Visual/formal qualities, affordances, functionality.	Every day and consumer aesthetics emphasise subjective value; everyday objects emphasise design/form.

This review contributes to the field by providing the first consolidated synthesis that connects everyday aesthetics with consumer aesthetics and daily-use utilitarian objects across philosophy, psychology, design, and consumer behaviour. It extends existing scholarship by mapping how functional, sensory, emotional, cultural, and ethical dimensions jointly shape the aesthetic experience of ordinary objects. The review further identifies significant disciplinary gaps—particularly the dominance of Western perspectives, lack of multimodal and longitudinal approaches, and limited integration of sustainability within aesthetic evaluation. By offering a unified conceptual foundation and highlighting emerging research pathways, this study advances both theoretical understanding and practical implications for designers, consumer researchers, and scholars of aesthetics.

This review paper aims to critically synthesize the interdisciplinary literature on the aesthetics of everyday life in relation to consumer aesthetics

and utilitarian objects, categorizing the thematic patterns, convergences, and divergences.

The following research questions direct the study:

- How is the concept of everyday aesthetics interpreted in relation to utilitarian objects within the domains of philosophy, psychology, design, and consumer studies?
- What pattern of themes appears throughout the literature about the aesthetic judgements of common-use objects?
- To what extent do results converge or diverge across various disciplines and methodologies?
- What are the ramifications of everyday aesthetics research for consumer behaviour and design practice?

Methodology

To deliver a standardized methodology for identification, screening, and synthesizing data, this study followed a systematic literature review (SLR) guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (13). Thereby, it has ensured

transparency, replicability, and integrity in the investigation of a wide range of literature across different domains encompassing philosophy, psychology, design, and consumer research. A comprehensive search was conducted across various academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar. The time frame was restricted to 1990–2025, encompassing both seminal and the latest studies. Key words used for searching the literature included 'aesthetics in everyday life', 'everyday aesthetics', 'aesthetics of daily life', 'utilitarian object', 'ordinary object', 'functional object', 'consumer aesthetics', 'product aesthetics', 'design aesthetics', 'functional beauty', and 'shape preference'. Search strings have been modified to meet database-specific criteria. Reference lists of relevant research were also examined to identify supplementary sources (snowball sampling).

To screen the identified literature, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed. The inclusion criteria for this systematic review are that publications must have been written in English between 1990 and 2025. Empirical, theoretical, or review articles published in peer-reviewed journals, books, or book chapters, addressing everyday aesthetics or utilitarian objects. Studies examining the connection between consumer perception, design, or functional beauty

and aesthetics. The exclusion criteria for the recent study include duplicate records and studies not related to aesthetics, such as purely ergonomic or technical studies without an aesthetic component. Articles that concentrate solely on fine art or architecture, without reference to utilitarian/consumer contexts. Articles published on blogs, newspapers, and unpublished theses (e.g., non-peer-reviewed sources) are also excluded.

Screening for the present review article consists of multiple phases (Figure 1). In the initial phase, 158 published articles were identified. Twenty-six publications were excluded from the review process due to language and duplication. The remaining 132 records were examined by title and abstract, and 56 publications were excluded for out-of-scope content. The remaining 76 articles were re-examined based on their full texts, and 32 were excluded. Finally, 44 publications met all inclusion criteria and were included.

The selected literature was analysed using qualitative (thematic analysis) methods. A standardized data extraction protocol was developed in a spreadsheet with the following sections: Literature, Object(s) or product category studied, and Key findings, based on thematic classification (e.g., functional beauty, cultural meaning, sustainability, form/shape preference).

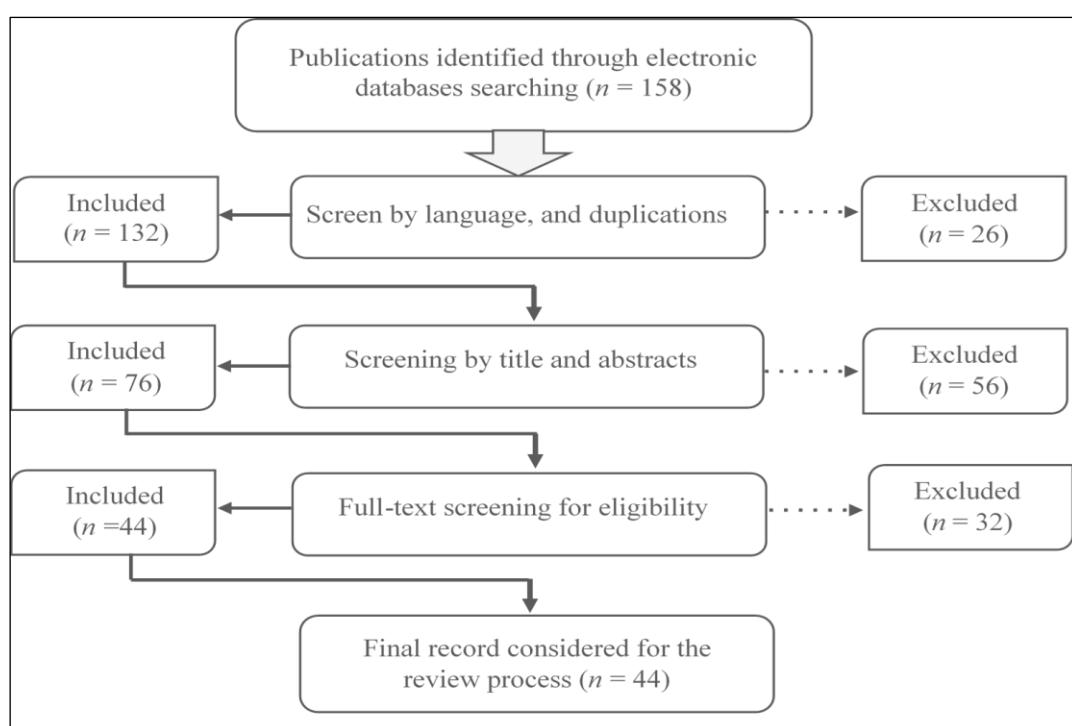


Figure 1: Steps Involved in the Systematic Literature Screening Process

Results

A total of 44 articles fulfilled the inclusion criteria and were included in this review. These papers were classified into five themes: Functional Beauty and Usability, Shape and Form Preferences, Symbolic and Cultural Meaning, Sustainability and Ethical Aesthetics, and Emotional and Experiential Engagement. Six articles were duplicated across different themes.

Theme 1: Functional Aesthetic and Usability

This theme (Table 2) highlights the inseparable association between aesthetics and usability. Theory suggests that attractive things are

perceived to "work better" (9), while others support the idea that user satisfaction arises from the combination of functional simplicity and aesthetic pleasure (14, 15). Empirical studies (16) suggest that consumers perceive the comfort of objects and appliances as increasing with their aesthetic appeal. Similarly, studies established that consumers' perceptions of pleasure and product effectiveness are influenced by visual design elements (17, 18). In design cognition research, aesthetics and usability are not viewed as separate categories, but rather as interdependent attributes that define product success (19, 20).

Table 2: The Theme Functional Aesthetic and Usability

Literature	Object/Focus	Key Finding
9	Everyday tools, appliances	Attractive products are judged as easier to use ("attractive things work better").
14	Product design principles	Aesthetic pleasure integrates with usability judgments.
15	Interactive products	Experience design must merge functional and aesthetic satisfaction.
16	Personalized mugs & appliances	Aesthetically enhanced tools are perceived as more comfortable to use.
17	Product design visual domain	Consumer response is heavily shaped by form and usability perceptions.
18	Household appliances	Pleasure in products linked to usability-aesthetics synergy.
19	Design cognition studies	Designers integrate aesthetic and functional cues in iterative problem-solving.
20	Design theory	Every-day design processes embed functional beauty as an epistemic practice.
21	Interface aesthetics	Interfaces are evaluated not only for usability but also for aesthetic experience.
22	Interactive design	Usability and beauty are treated as inseparable design values.
23	Form preferences in design	Design principles influence both usability and beauty judgments.

Theme 2: Shape Preferences

This theme (Table 3) highlights perceptual biases toward specific shapes and contours, particularly a general preference for curved shapes. The study suggested that curved shapes are associated with the evocation of positive affect, whereas angularity is associated with avoidance (24). Neuroimaging research suggested that curvilinearity stimulates active reward pathways, hence providing a biological explanation for these preferences (25-28). However, divergences, such as angularity, may be appreciated in contexts that signal modernity, strength, or expertise (29, 30). Research defines shape perception as the initial cognitive phase of aesthetic judgment (31). Another study confirms that even utilitarian objects, such as cups, and

architectural contour can modify sensory experience through their shape (32, 33).

Theme 3: Cultural and Symbolic Meaning

Common-use objects are carriers of cultural identity, symbolism, and ethical meaning that have been underlined in this theme (Table 4). Scholars claim that aesthetics is ingrained in daily life, where objects obtain moral and symbolic significance (3, 34). A study showed that household décor artifacts facilitate identity, memory, and cultural belonging (35). A study emphasized that consumer products convey reflective meanings (12), whereas another theory highlighted the transformation of everyday objects

into extraordinary cultural symbols (4). Scholars have extended this by demonstrating that the

aesthetics of mundane practices reflect extensive ethical and cultural frameworks (36-38).

Table 3: The Theme Shape Preference

Literature	Object/Focus	Key Finding
24	Curved vs angular objects	Curvature evokes positive affect; angularity is linked to vigilance/avoidance.
25	Paintings	Neural correlates of aesthetic preferences for form and contour.
26	Neural correlates	Symmetry and curvature preferences are grounded in neural processing.
27	Vision and art	Biological plausibility of curvature preference established.
28	Neuroaesthetic theory	Shape-based preferences rooted in evolutionary brain processes.
29	Consumer products	Angularity is associated with modernity, strength, and technological appeal.
30	Expert vs non-expert groups	Experts tolerate angularity more; laypersons consistently prefer curvature.
31	Aesthetic model	Form perception is the first stage in aesthetic evaluation.
32	Cups & drinking experience	The shape of drinking vessels influences perceived taste and enjoyment.
33	Architectural contours	Curvature activates neural reward centres; angularity is linked to alertness.

Table 4: The Theme of Cultural and Symbolic Meaning

Literature	Object/Focus	Key Findings
3	Household objects	Everyday objects embody symbolic and moral value.
4	The extraordinary in the ordinary	Ordinary items attain extraordinary meaning via cultural codes.
12	Consumer products	Products evoke reflective meanings beyond usability.
34	Familiar objects	Aesthetic judgments are deeply embedded in cultural practices.
35	Household décor	Objects mediate identity, memory, and cultural belonging.
36	Design ethics	Objects communicate values and ethical orientations.
37	Everyday experiences	Aesthetic appreciation of ordinary life is shaped by meaning-making.
38	World-making	Aesthetics constructs shared cultural realities.

Theme 4: Ethical Aesthetics and Sustainability

An increasing body of studies (Table 5) highlights the ethical aspects of mundane aesthetics, particularly in relation to sustainability. Theorist contended that ecological care, such as simplicity, reuse, and responsible consumption, processes both aesthetic and moral significance (10, 34, 39). Another theory addressed the aesthetic reinterpretation of waste and recycling (40). Empirical research has indicated that consumers' perceptions of aesthetics and responsibility are enhanced by eco-textures and recycled packaging (41). Design researchers emphasise that innovation should encompass aesthetic responsibility (42-45).

Theme 5: Emotional and Experiential Involvement

Here, the theme emphasizes the emotional connection consumers build with quotidian objects (Table 6), which convert functional tools into meaningful belongings. Studies have found that everyday object designs can evoke emotions such as joy, pride, and nostalgia (46, 47). Studies suggested that consumers' attachment to the product is linked to personalization and memory attachment, which extend product lifespans (45, 48). The researchers found that playful engagement with the product enhances its aesthetic value (49-52). Study results indicate a strong connection between pleasure and product longevity (12, 18).

Table 5: The Theme of Ethical Aesthetics and Sustainability

Literature	Object/Focus	Key Findings
10	Everyday design	Simple, repairable objects are aesthetically valued for sustainability.
20	Design theory	Sustainability is embedded in the epistemology of design.
34	Eco-friendly objects	Ecological care redefined as aesthetic practice.
39	Moral everyday aesthetics	Aesthetic judgments are tied to ethical responsibility.
40	Waste aesthetics	Reuse and recycling are perceived as aesthetically valuable.
41	Packaging	Eco-textures and claims enhance consumer acceptance.
42	Innovation design	Sustainable innovation integrates the aesthetics of responsibility.
43	Incremental vs radical innovation	Sustainability reframes aesthetic-innovation dialogue.
44	Design research	Ethical-aesthetic responsibility is central to design critique.
45	Consumer attachment	Sustainable design prolongs object use through aesthetic bonding.

Table 6: The Theme of Emotional and Experiential Involvement

Literature	Object/Focus	Key Finding
12	Framework of product experience	Experiential aesthetics spans visceral, behavioural, and reflective levels.
18	Pleasure in products	Products designed for emotional pleasure last longer.
32	Sensory engagement	Taste and feel of cups shaped by vessel aesthetics.
45	Keepsakes	Memory associations deepen attachment.
46	Product emotions	Everyday objects elicit joy, pride, and nostalgia.
47	Positive design	Products contribute to subjective well-being.
48	Longitudinal product use	Emotional bonds sustain aesthetic value over time.
49	Fun and beauty	Playful engagement amplifies aesthetic experience.
50	Interactive systems	Aesthetic experiences evolve through interaction.
51	Design research knowledge	Design generates knowledge through experiential engagement and reflection.
52	Emotional design	Research-based design approach enhances experience.

Discussion

The SLR results suggest that everyday aesthetics in association with everyday objects is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon containing functional, perceptual, ethical, symbolic, and emotional dimensions. Analysis of 44 studies reveals consistent characteristics that demonstrate both convergence (common findings across disciplines) and divergence (contextual or methodological differences). This discussion critically integrates these patterns, connects them to established theoretical frameworks, and delineates their implications for consumer aesthetics and design practice.

As said, here we have discussed the convergences across the literature. Arguments on aesthetics and usability reveal that they are inseparable; the review found a strong convergence. Studies indicated that usability is enhanced by the perceived beauty of the object (9, 14). In support of this, empirical studies have shown that aesthetically pleasing tools are judged as easier to

handle (16). This reinforces the overarching assertion in design research that aesthetics serves as a cognitive heuristic; users anticipate that aesthetically pleasing objects will perform better (the “halo effect”). Convergence here implies that utilitarian design must emphasize functional beauty, where performance and perception support each other.

Preference for curvature in another area of argument. Empirical studies have established that the curvilinearity is associated with positive emotions and neural reward responses (24, 33). Design and consumer studies corroborate this tendency, even when participants are clueless about the fundamental perceptual dynamics. This convergence suggests a possible biological foundation for everyday aesthetics, in which visual systems have evolved to associate curved shapes with safety and angular shapes with threat.

Research in design psychology and consumer behaviour suggests that personalization and

attachment to memory transform everyday objects into aesthetically meaningful possessions (45, 46). Convergence suggests that everyday aesthetics are dynamic and cumulative, developed through personal narratives and lived experiences over time.

This review found some divergence across the literature. Although the liking for the curvature seems to be universal, divergence emerges in the assessment of angularity. In psychology, angularity is primarily associated with vigilance or threat detection. Consumer aesthetic studies indicated that angular shapes are associated with modernity, sophistication, and strength (29, 30). This disparity suggests that cultural and contextual framing influences biological predispositions; angularity may be appreciated in specific market contexts, such as male branding and high-tech products.

Additionally, differences emerge between the philosophical concepts of everyday aesthetics and empirical consumer studies. Theoretical discussions often highlight the ecological, moral, and cultural aspects of everyday aesthetics. It also advocates the aesthetic attitudes toward sustainability or mundane activities. Whereas empirical studies, in contrast, focus on consumer behaviour and measurable preferences of ordinary aesthetics. This divergence emphasises the separate agendas of disciplines; philosophy seeks normative depth, while empirical sciences strive for accuracy. There is a need for comprehensive frameworks to address this gap.

Disparity also emerges in a cultural context. Studies emphasise that cultural practices convey the symbolic meaning of objects (34, 35); yet, most empirical studies examined are predominantly Western-centric. Insights into aesthetic preferences, particularly regarding colour, symbolism, or sustainability, may not be applicable in non-Western contexts. This divergence highlights a critical difference: the cross-cultural validity of everyday aesthetics theories remains restricted.

Cultural Specificity in Everyday Aesthetics is a key dimension that emerges from the broader literature but remains underrepresented in empirical studies and concerns the cultural specificity of everyday aesthetic judgments. Aesthetic preferences for colour, material, shape, and symbolic meaning vary substantially across nations, reflecting cultural histories, climate-based

associations, craftsmanship traditions, and social norms. For example, colours such as white, red, or gold carry divergent symbolic values across Asian, Western, and Middle Eastern contexts, shaping consumer preferences in meaningful ways. Similarly, perceptions of minimalism, ornamentation, sustainability, or technological aesthetics are filtered through cultural expectations. The dominance of Western-centric studies in the reviewed literature limits the generalisability of findings. Recognising cross-cultural variation is therefore crucial for understanding how everyday aesthetics operates globally and highlights the need for future studies incorporating non-Western frameworks, cross-national comparisons, and culturally embedded methodologies.

Building on the review's findings, an integrated model is proposed to clarify how the aesthetic experience of everyday objects emerges from the interaction among four key dimensions: sensory, functional, emotional, and symbolic. This model synthesizes contributions from design research, everyday aesthetics theory, and consumer behaviour studies to provide a unified structure for understanding how people evaluate and relate to the objects of daily life.

First, the sensory component includes perceptual features such as shape, colour, material, symmetry, curvature, and overall visual fluency. Sensory qualities serve as the first point of contact in aesthetic judgment and activate perceptual and affective responses that shape initial liking. The second dimension of functional properties includes features such as usability, ergonomics, comfort, and performance expectations that shape aesthetic judgments. The literature consistently shows that objects perceived as more functional or efficient are often considered more aesthetically appealing, reinforcing the principle that "attractive things work better" (9). Everyday objects evoke emotions (in the third dimension) such as joy, nostalgia, pride, attachment, and pleasure. Emotional resonance can deepen over time as people repeatedly use or personalize an object, leading to long-lasting aesthetic appreciation and attachment. In the fourth symbolic dimension, objects also communicate cultural meanings, identity cues, social values, and moral associations. Symbolic elements influence how individuals

interpret the significance of objects beyond their immediate sensory or functional qualities.

The aesthetic experience of everyday objects (Figure 2) is not the result of a single factor but emerges from the dynamic interplay of these four dimensions. Sensory perception triggers initial attraction; functional performance sustains appreciation; emotional engagement develops through experience; and symbolic meaning situates the object in broader cultural and personal contexts. The model highlights everyday aesthetics as a holistic, multidimensional process in which perception, use, emotion, and artistic value continually interact.

In summary, the discussion proposes that the aesthetic of everyday life is beyond the decorative aspects of ordinary objects. Instead, the perception of everyday aesthetics arises from the interaction of perceptual assumptions, including sensory, symbolic, functional, and emotional attachments. Interdisciplinary convergence reinforces the claim that aesthetics is fundamental to consumer-object interaction, whereas divergences highlight the necessity of contextual sensitivity and theoretical synthesis. This combination establishes everyday aesthetics as a domain of both conceptual significance and practical applicability, capable of administering design innovation and sustainable consumer behaviour.

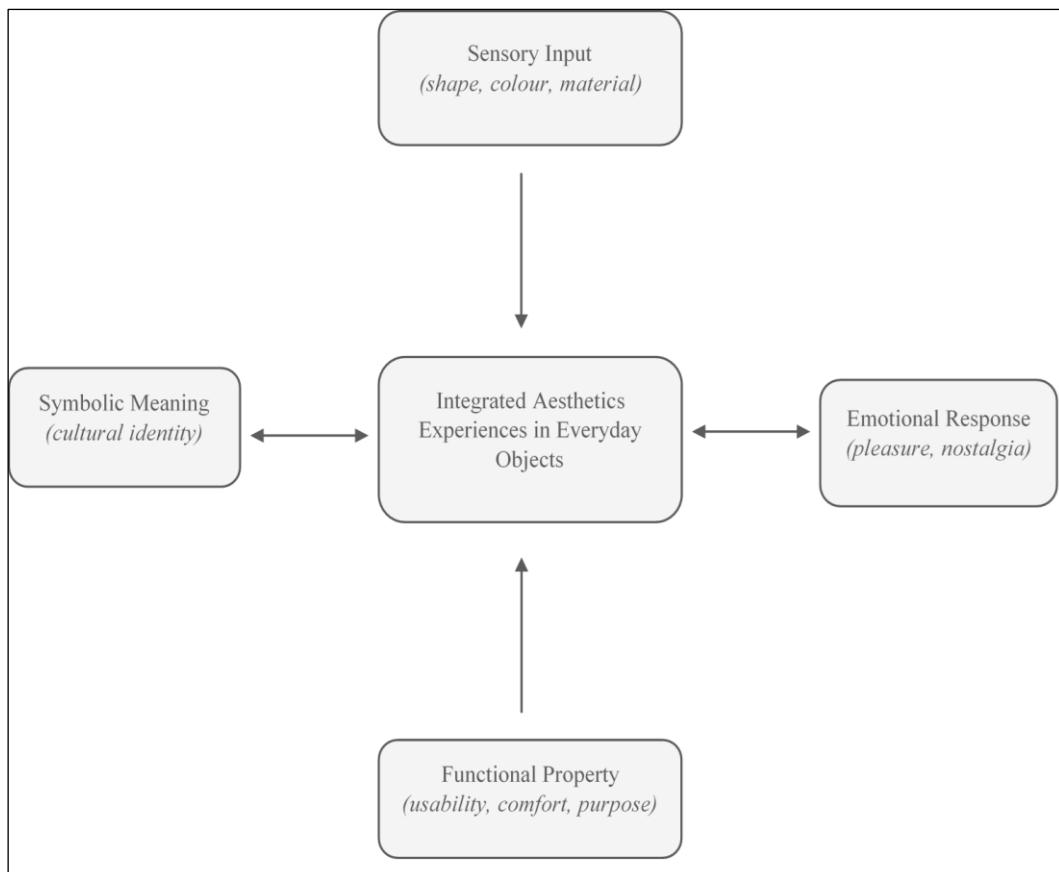


Figure 2: Integrated Model of Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Objects

Conclusion

This SLR, adhering to the PRISMA 2020 methodology, synthesized 44 articles spanning philosophy, psychology, design, and consumer research to examine the connections among

everyday aesthetics, consumer aesthetics, and everyday objects.

The review demonstrates that everyday aesthetics is multidimensional; it encompasses perceptual inclinations (curvature preference), functional

assessments (aesthetics as usability), symbolic and cultural significances, ethical perspectives (sustainable aesthetics), and emotional connections (enduring attachments with objects). However, convergences across studies' findings support the universality of certain aesthetic principles, such as a preference for curvature, functional aesthetics, and emotional attachments. On the other hand, divergences emerge regarding cultural diversity, the contextual evaluation of angularity, and disciplinary focus.

The present review is limited by its dependency on English-language publications, its overemphasis on Western contexts, and its lack of longitudinal evidence. This review lays the groundwork for advancing research in consumer aesthetics.

Further studies in this area can aim to explore the judgment of everyday aesthetics in association with cross-cultural studies, multimodal methodologies, longitudinal studies, and sustainability. Moreover, to better understand the field in the age of technology, studies could expand on the influence of artificial intelligence-driven personalisation and on digital consumers' aesthetic experiences.

In conclusion, functionality is not the only aspect of ordinary objects. Instead, these objects enhance the aesthetic perception of mundane life, cultural significance, and consumer behaviour. Finally, an emphasis on the aesthetic importance of ordinary objects can extend the realm of aesthetics beyond exclusive art practice into real-world practice, as design practitioners and scholars can explore.

Abbreviations

PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, SLR: Systematic Literature Review, WoS: Web of Science.

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Author Contributions

The author confirms sole responsibility for the manuscript preparation.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest associated with this study. This research is original and independent, not a part of any other studies.

Declaration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Assistance

The authors declare that they did not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) during the writing process.

Ethics Approval

The study does not require any ethics approval.

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