

DESIGNERS: EMBRACE THE POWER OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS MIND IN UX DESIGN: A call to action

KEY MESSAGE

Delightful experiences must be consciously perceived by the user, as stated by Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman [10]. However, research reveals that 95% of our brain's activity occurs unconsciously, impacting our decisions, actions, and emotions. Therefore, creating truly delightful experiences requires a design that not only caters to conscious needs, but also taps into unconscious desires [5].

02. SIGMUND FREUD

According to Sigmund Freud, a renowned psychoanalyst, behavior, and personality are shaped by psychological forces operating at three distinct levels of consciousness: the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious [2]. He argued that while each of these parts of the mind plays a crucial role in personality development, the unconscious mind serves as **the primary repository for human behavior, emotions, and motivations**, making it the hidden part of the iceberg that constitutes the bulk of our mental activity [3][1].

03. SUBCONSCIOUS MIND IN PRODUCT DESIGN

The concept of unconscious human behavior in product design is still underexplored [6]. Since identifying the user's implicit needs through the observation of their unconscious behavior, a big and golden opportunity for a design researcher to fill in the gap and contribute towards future product inventions is now.

04. DEFAULTS

All humans possess different unique **mental models** based on their assumptions, prior experiences, definitions, and opinions [9]. Consequently, mental models greatly impact the user experience of a concept. As this is a very subconscious process, users themselves might not even realize their mental models are shaping their experience [10].

05. FRAMEWORK

Vladas Griskevicius and Douglas Kenrick's framework of the 'seven fundamental motives' can facilitate a stronger connection between products and users [4]. The framework identifies seven fundamental evolutionary motives, that drive human behavior, offering a valuable tool for understanding and evaluating implicit human needs.

MENTAL MODEL

Results in various default behaviors of the user. These are actions that happen subconsciously, they do not require active decision-making [9][7][11].

THE FUNDAMENTAL MOTIVES

These motives are inherent needs of humans, we do not always consciously realise the presence of these needs.

Self-Protection
Disease Avoidance
Affiliation
Status
Mate acquisition
Mate retention
Kin care

01. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Currently, the focus in user experience design is on the conscious mind primarily. Most designers do not have in-depth knowledge of including the subconscious mind in the design process, resulting in the user-fit possibly being insufficient [8]. In this area of UX design, there is a large area of opportunity for improvement. To illustrate the importance of addressing this issue and provide guidance to fulfill this realization, this manifesto has been created.



- 1 Make sure the designer has a thorough understanding of the target user and the mental models they have.
- 2 Use the seven fundamental motives to make the connection between the user and the concept stronger.
- 3 Smartly use the existing defaults of a user, or create new ones to stimulate a desired behavior.

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