Cultural Values and Leisure Activities Preferences Among Latin American Young Consumers. an Exploratory Study.

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Preferred leisure activities as well as money spent during leisure time have begun to increasingly draw managers’ attention. In fact how Latin American youth prefer to spend their free time and how relevant the variable culture is for this decision is not nowadays well understood. This paper reports some of the findings from a cross-national survey designed to explore these related areas of youth consumer behavior. Using Schwartz Value Inventory (2006) we approach the cross-national differences in cultural orientations of young from four LA countries. The relevance of these cultural orientations to understand young consumer’s leisure preferences was also addressed.

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research has suggested that there is a relationship between the childhood socialization process and the adult ability to control impulses (Decker et al. 2006).

Moreover, compulsive buyers analyzed here had similarities with those presented in previous studies (d’Astous, Maltais and Roberge 1990; Faber and O’Guinn 1989, 1992), regarding lack of social interaction, incapacity to deal with negative states and crises, and sentiment of guiltiness after compulsive buying behavior.

There has been a demand for consumer research ‘for’ consumers. This has indeed been a neglected aspect of consumer research. It seems fair that consumers also benefit from ‘marketing knowledge’. This is the case of those consumers who have a consumption disorder. As this individual lives around other people (e.g., parents, spouse and/or sons), this disorder can be triggered by a number of variables in this system. Also the compulsive behavior might be a stimulus for a series of other responses, like divorce, conflicts between spouses and family members, and financial collapse. Thus, a consumption disorder like compulsive buying can have serious harmful effects on our society. This is why consumer researchers might be interested in investigating the main aspects of the disorder and help the consumers to overcome the problems. We show in the case studies that a compulsive consumption disorder is not an isolated symptom, but it is part of a system that produced this problem. When consumers are able to go back and look at the forces of this system, together with a professional (e.g. a therapist), he/she could be in better condition to (i) understand how a symptom is a reflection of the system that was built over the years, and (ii) learn a new model of relating with his/her system and with consumption.

References


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Leisure is defined as any pleasant activity willingly chosen for non-workable time. It is a period of time characterized by activities and practices willingly chosen in accordance with the preferences of each individual, activities which fulfill personal needs and whose goal at last may be rest, fun, creativity, self-indulgence or self-development (Cotte & Ratneshwar, 2003).

Unger and Kernan (1983) identified three general characteristics of enjoyment of leisure time: intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom of action, and involvement or absorption in an activity. For this, some claims that is on leisure time when people settle their identities, both, personal and as a collective (Rodríguez & Aguilló, 1999).

How leisure time is managed and which activities are preferred, is a socially conditioned process, in which culture performs a key role (Kim et al, 2005; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). De Mooij (2004) showed that in Europe, money spent in different leisure activities were related to varying cultural dimensions, using Hofstede (1980) framework. Expenditures on paid organized leisure activities were higher in individualistic cultures (Sweden, UK), than in collectivist cultures (Spain, Portugal), where people’s free time it’s spent mainly
with family and relatives. Relevant individualistic values are pleasure, stimulation, variety and adventure, so the sale of pleasure products and services such as travel, theme parks and cultural events (e.g. theater, concerts, opera) tend to be higher in individualistic than in collectivists cultures (De Mooij, 2004).

Although youth tend to perform similar activities in their free time, typical of their age, each nation’s inherent conditions—specifically the predominant culture—play an important role in the manifested degree of preference of certain leisure activities (Mosses, 2000). Hence, the preferences associated with leisure activities practiced by youngsters should reflect dominant cultural priorities. Our aim is to find some evidence about this, thus, the main purposes of this research were to: 1) learn about the preferences of leisure activities in a sample of young residents from selected LA countries; and 2) the role played in these preferences by national cultural elements, such as values, which we suspect have an important role on how leisure time is used.

Literature shows values are the most important factors that form the foundation of the national culture (Hofstede, 1980; Rockeach, 1973; Smith and Schwartz, 1997). Values are considered a standard of socially accepted rules giving the residents of a country a framework on what behavior is appropriate, to guide self presentation and to justify their choices to others. Affecting the formation of attitudes of individuals and theirs behaviors (Lee, 1993: Unger, 1995; Watson et al, 2002). The Schwartz’s value theory (1994,1999, 2006), served us as a conceptual framework for analyzing national cultures. This relatively new approach is based on a list of ‘universal’ values that characterize and help to distinguish various aspects of national cultures.

915 young residents of several main cities from Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela and Mexico, university attendees (managerial careers), between the ages of 18 and 29, both sexes, were interviewed. Research was conducted between June 2004 and October 2005. A self-applied questionnaire divided in two main sections was posted on a web site. The first section contained a list of 46 values (Schwartz Value Inventory, SVI), each one were rated according to how important is as a “life guideline”. Second section contained a list of 34 leisure activities that were evaluated according as “the most you like to practice”.

Factorial and reliability analysis applied on SVI, gave us 7 cultural values indexes by country: Hierarchy, Conservation, Mastery, Harmony, Egalitarian Commitment, Affective Individualism and Intellectual Individualism. Based on this 7 value types, a Cultural Value Profile for each nation was obtained. The media ratings of each type of value were used to compare each country’s cultural values priorities.

From the list of 34 leisure activities only 30 of them were useful for comparisons, according to reliability test. A national leisure rank was constructed with preferences expressed by these activities. Cross-country comparisons were conducted, making it possible to understand the relative importance give of each leisure activities by country.

Significant differences or similarities across nations were studied by descriptive analyses with SPAD. DEMOD procedure and Fischer Test (ANOVA) were applied on the national scores attributed to the 7 cultural values index and the list of 30 leisure activities, this gave us evidence on the relevance of certain cultural values types and some kinds of leisure activities that are revealed as the most typical in each national sample.

Countries showed characteristic cultural and leisure profiles when compared among them. In Argentina, Egalitarian Commitment was the most characteristics value type; in Colombia, Affective Individualism and Hierarchy; Affective Individualism and Mastery in Mexico and Conservation and Mastery in Venezuela. “Read”, “spend time with my family”, “go to the theatre / opera / ballet / museums”, “drink beer / wine / spirits” and “go out with friends” were among the activities that characterized more the preferences use of leisure time of young Argentines. Among Colombians, activities such as “Go to exclusive clubs”, “go to shopping malls”, “playing video games”, “going to parties”, “watch music videos” were the most distinctive. In Mexico, “See a play / opera / ballet / museums”, “sports”, “go out with friends”, “shoo”, “listen to music charts”. In Venezuela: “watching reality shows”, “watching music videos”, “listen to music charts”, “talking on the phone”.

Cultural value priorities helped to explain those differences on leisure characteristics profiles by country. In each nation, strong links between characteristic cultural value types and distinctive leisure activities were found using correlation matrix.

Those results suggest the theoretical framework proposed by Schwartz can help marketers to explain how similarities or differences are, at cultural level, the LA nations. Most importantly, this approach also can be used for understanding how important cultural value priorities are when marketing leisure products, services and activities among LA youth. Research on values can illuminate critical marketing dimensions related to advertising and product positioning in leisure markets in LA region.

References