Examining the Relationship Between Consumer Values and Positive and Negative Affect

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

The importance of affect in marketing is a topic that has long been of interest to marketers, especially with regard to consumer behavior, yet little research in marketing has examined affect as a stable personality trait. This paper examines positive and negative trait affect in relation to consumer values, using data from Canada and Norway.

Research Design

As part of a larger cross-cultural study, a ten-page questionnaire was administered to university students during class sessions in Canada and Norway. In Canada, the questionnaire was administered in English. In Norway, the questionnaire was translated into Norwegian, and back-translated into English to ensure that the meanings were correct. Completion of the entire questionnaire took approximately 15 to 20 minutes. In total, 498 usable questionnaires were obtained (212 from Canada and 186 from Norway).

Measures

Values (LOV). The List of Values (LOV; Kahle 1983) was used to measure the individual values of the respondents. Respondents rated nine value statements, identifying how important each value was in their lives, using nine-point scales (1=“important to me” to 9=“most important to me”). The nine values in LOV were grouped into three underlying dimensions: internal values, external values, and interpersonal values, to conform with previous theory and research (Homer and Kahle 1988; Kahle 1983, 1991). The Cronbach alpha for each of the three scale dimensions exceeded .70.

PANAS. The PANAS scale was used to measure the positive trait affect and negative trait affect of participants in the study. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which 20 affect items described how they usually feel (where 1=“very slightly or not at all” and 5=“extremely”). A factor analysis was performed on the 20-item PANAS scale for each country alone, as well as pooling data from the two countries together. In all cases, the factor analysis resulted in a 2-factor solution, grouping 10 items under the Positive Affect factor and 10 items under the Negative Affect factor, confirming previous validation of this scale. The Cronbach alpha for these two indices exceeded .70.

Results

Male/Female Differences in Positive and Negative Affect. A 2x2 MANOVA (sex: male vs. female and country: Canada vs. Norway) was conducted on the Positive Affect scale and the Negative Affect scale. No gender differences were found for Positive Affect, but females exhibited higher levels of Negative Affect.

Country Differences in Positive and Negative Affect. Norwegians exhibited higher levels of Positive Affect than Canadians, but levels of Negative Affect scale did not differ significantly. There were no interaction effects between sex and country.

List of Values. Median splits were performed on Positive Affect and Negative Affect. The resulting dichotomous variables were used as independent variables in two sets of ANCOVA analyses in which sex and country were used as covariates. The 3 subscales from the LOV were used as dependent variables in these analyses. These analyses revealed that Positive Affect was positively and significantly related to both internal and external values. Negative Affect was positively and significantly related to external values.

Managerial Implications

To the extent that trait affect influences consumer judgments and behavior in a manner similar to the influence of mood, trait affect could be an inherently more useful concept for marketing managers, because of its stability over time and across situations.

References