Cross-cultural mall shopping values and habitats
A comparison between English- and French-speaking Canadians

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Abstract

Immigrants gaining economic security tend to reinforce—not relinquish—their ethnic identification [Halter M. Shopping for identity: the marketing of ethnicity. New York: Schoken Books, 2000. p. 256.]. Shopping is one avenue where people affirm themselves. Mall shopping has become an expression of personal values. In this research, the authors investigate shopping values [J. Consum. Res. 20 (1994) 644.] and mall activities [J. Retailing 70 (1994) 20.] in a bicultural environment. The study focuses on English- and French Canadian mall shoppers. The two constructs are first subjected to invariant factorial analyses for measurement equivalence. Subsequently, English- and French Canadian shoppers are tested for invariant latent means on the shopping value and the mall habitat scales. As hypothesized, French Canadian mall shoppers are more hedonistic than English Canadians. In this specific setting, English- and French Canadians have similar shopping mall behaviors.

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1. Globalization right in our backyard

People do not have to go to exotic countries to experiment the choc of cultures. Mall management company Macerich oversees 50 malls, anywhere from Des Moines, IA, to Los Angeles, CA. At Yule time, the Des Moines shopping mall is decorated with trees, lights, and Santa Clauses. The Los Angeles shopping center caters to Jewish and Muslim communities. Therefore, Santa Claus only makes cameo appearances (Stein Wellner, 2000). Mall managers have become sensitive to their multicultural patrons. In New York City, Miami, and Los Angeles, non-Hispanic whites represent less than 35% of the population. In Toronto and Vancouver, immigrants whose mother tongue is not English are more than 40% of the population. In Montreal, 12% mentions that English is the language they first learned and still understand. The Canadian government encourages ethnic groups to maintain their multicultural diversity, contrary to the melting pot society pursued by the US (Baker, 1997).

Originally, ethnic identification was more pronounced among first generation immigrants, and became weaker with second or third generation offspring (Laroche et al., 1993; Kara and Kara, 1996). This process of acculturation explains how newcomers adjust to the values and norms of the majority. Some marketing research practitioners have witnessed resurgence in ethnic pride. For Halter (2000), American society has evolved from a melting pot to the salad bar where goods and services providers spend close to US$2 billion a year marketing foods, clothing, objects, vacations, and events that help people express their ethnic identities. Ethnic identification is now part of value systems, and a matter of pride, rather than something to hide. Ethnic marketing agencies are flourishing, blue chip companies have multiench branch management programs, and new malls are that cater to foreign tastes and exotic niches springing up (Halter, 2000). Acculturation and ethnic identification are the two faces of the same coin. The former refers to a leveling phenomenon leading to social integration, while the latter may be a differentiation and lifestyle criterion.
2. Shopping behavior and value

Mall shopping has become an expression of personal values. In many instances, the shopping mall is a social and recreation meeting place attracting youngsters and seniors (Graham, 1988). It has also served as a catalyst in the burgeoning of suburbs (Stockil, 1972). Yet, during the 1990s, shopping centers sales have stabilized at 51% of all nonautomotive retail sales (ICSS, 2001). Mall operators are competing for traffic and against antimall sentiments (Poe and Courter, 1996). They have turned shopping centers into halls for special events, exhibitions, exercising, shows, and amusement parks. Niche shopping malls catering to ethnic groups are a reality. Greenbriar Mall in Atlanta is going almost exclusively after African–Americans (Poe and Courter, 1996). The Yaohan Plaza in Chicago’s Arlington Heights attracts Asian consumers as far away as Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky (Uehling, 1994). In Canada, Asian-owned shopping malls in Richmond, BC, try to attract non-Asian clients by adopting ethnic themes (McCullough, 1995). Mall managers cannot ignore ethnic diversity in their trading areas. First, it is good business practice. For example, African–Americans spend significantly more than other American consumers on apparel (Mogelonsky, 1998).

Second, ignoring ethnic neighbors is rarely good for business. A leading mall in Dearborn, MI, which got itself in the limelight for closing down Saturday night charity events, was accused of not reaching out to ethnic communities surrounding the shopping center (Roush, 1996).

There is very little research on ethnic consumers in shopping malls. While members of cultural communities are becoming the norm rather than the exception, managers still rely on the melting pot theory and on the progressive acculturation to the dominant majority. Halter (2000) proposes an alternate view. Immigrants who gain economic security tend to reinforce rather than relinquish their ethnic identification. Shopping is an avenue where people affirm themselves.

Other researches do not support Halter’s position. Laroche et al. (1997) note that flourishing ethnic pluralism seems to be challenging the traditional assimilation processes. Their literature review underscores that some social scientists do not oppose acculturation to ethnic identification. Yet, in a study among Italian–Canadians, Laroche et al. (1997) found a strong negative correlation between acculturation dimensions and ethnic identification. It meant that acculturated Italian–Canadians were also losing some of their ethnic identity.

3. English- and French Canadians

Researchers comparing English- and French Canadian consumers could easily fall into the oversimplification trap. Such a comparison would lump together English-speaking Canadians living in four different time zones. Kahle et al. (2000) remind us that “nations” can exist within nations. Irrelevant of a common language, there are deep regional differences on the North American continent (Kahle, 1986). English and French comparisons are usually drawn from consumers living next to one another in the greater Montreal area (e.g., Hui et al., 1997) or in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario (Chéron and Muller, 1993). Intercultural influences can be observed both ways. French Canadians are permeable to the dominating North American Anglo-Saxon culture. Similarly, English Canadians living in Quebec are exposed to the French culture and language. For example, English Montrealers are more likely to take the “metro” (instead of the subway), and to buy milk at the “depanneur” (rather than the convenience store, or the 7/11). Beyond language, one also expects that the traditional “joie de vivre” would also spread to members of the Quebec Anglophone community.

Historical comparisons between English- and French Canadians reveal that francophones tend to be more conservative, introspective, humanistic, emotional, less materialistic, and less pragmatic than English Canadians (Chéron and Muller, 1993). Hui et al. (1993) listed past findings about French–English lifestyle differences. French Canadians were more oriented toward their home, family, children, and kitchen. They are said to be more brand-loyal and fashion-oriented. French Canadian women were more negative toward convenience food. No references were found in the literature about shopping habits.

This study focuses on mall shopping values and behaviors in a bicultural environment. If shopping is to be considered as a form of self-expression, then we might expect cultural traits to influence mall shopping values and activities.

4. Conceptual framework

4.1. Shopping values

Mall patronization is dependent on shoppers’ value and attitude toward such an environment, irrelevant of manipulation of store atmospherics. These values reside in shoppers’ culture and personal traits. Shopping goes way beyond functional utility and task orientation (Bloch et al., 1986), and provides other experiential benefits and gratifications (Holbrook and Corfman, 1985). Two dimensions summarize perceived shopping values—utilitarian and hedonic shopping values (Babin and Attaway, 2000; Babin et al., 1994). Utilitarian values reflect task orientation, while hedonic values indicate personal gratification and self-expression associated with the shopping experience.

4.2. Shopping activities

Bloch et al. (1994) have coined the term consumer habitat to mean places where shoppers hang around for various utilitarian and hedonic activities. Satisfaction from shopping is not necessarily derived from acquiring goods (Hirschman...
and Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). In this context, shopping location itself may be part of the shopper’s experience. In shopping centers, shoppers engage in various activities other than actual shopping, such as exercising, attending shows, having lunch, socializing with friends or even strangers, or attending a movie. Mall shoppers may be buying products, services, using the mall for other activities, or simply passing time (Bloch et al., 1994).

Shopping values and mall activities are related constructs currently in use in shopping center research. Shopping values can either be used to measure patronizing motivations (expectations) or to assess benefits derived from shopping (satisfaction). Shopping activities are the manifestations of shopping values. Both constructs are expected to be convergent.

4.3. Cross-cultural values

Culture and ethnicity influence values (Phiney, 1992; Rokeach, 1973). There are several studies on cross-cultural consumer value systems, beliefs, and attitudes (Sojka and Tansuhaj, 1995; Kahle et al., 2000). It is hypothesized that value and belief systems are central to cross-cultural marketing. There are very few mentions of cross-cultural shopping mall behavior outside the popular press. Yet, shopping is an activity that goes beyond buying products to include social relationships (Miller, 1998). Shopping centers help minority groups maintain their identity (Miller et al., 1998). Soyeon and Eastlick (1998) found that ethnic identification, more than ethnic origin, mediated attitudes toward shopping attributes of a regional mall.

5. Research objectives

This study looks at shopping values and mall activities of English- and French Canadians. Mall shoppers responded to two measurement constructs used in shopping mall research: shopping values (Babin and Attaway, 2000; Babin et al., 1994) and shopping mall habitat (Bloch et al., 1994). The instruments were administered in a greater Montreal area community shopping center, a Canadian bicultural setting, where English and French groups are 17% and 83% of the population. Despite cultural differences, the two populations are highly representative of North American postindustrial society. Apart from minor regional and cultural adjustments, mall managers are hoping for universal marketing tools. If researchers are unable to develop invariant scales across cultural groups living in the same society, then cross-national measurement equivalence should be impossible to achieve.

5.1. Scale invariance

Hypothesis 1: The shopping value and shopping habitat scales are invariant across English and French mall shoppers.

If scale invariance is confirmed, the next question is: Do English and French consumers score differently on the shopping value and the shopping habitat scales? There are traditional clichés about the French Canadians’ “joie de vivre.” Even American marketing scholars regularly meet in Montreal or Quebec City for a touch of New France. A Maclean’s magazine/CBC News Poll (Branswell, 1997) concluded that the true measure of Quebecers’ distinctiveness is their dedication to the pursuit of happiness.

5.2. Hedonic value

Hypothesis 2: French shoppers are expected to score higher than English shoppers on the hedonic scale.

If French shoppers score higher on the hedonic component, then should English shoppers take the lead on the utilitarian dimension? Babin and Attaway (2000) found a correlation coefficient of +.32 between the two dimensions of the shopping value construct. One can imagine a task-oriented shopper who would be at the bottom of the hedonic dimension. The reverse is less likely. Hedonic shoppers must also be motivated by perceived shopping goals.

5.3. Utilitarian value

Hypothesis 3: French shoppers are expected to have higher scores on the utilitarian dimension.

Shoppers who socialize and pass time in shopping malls cannot be defined as being task-oriented. One would associate those shoppers with the hedonic dimension. Bloch et al. (1994) performed a cluster analysis on various mall and consumption activities. “Mall enthusiasts” (24%) use the shopping mall for other things than shopping, and for passing time. “Grazers” (20%) engage in impulse shopping and passing time in malls, but will not socialize with other shoppers. “Minimalists” (28%) are reluctant to the shopping mall environment. “Traditionalists” (28%) do not use the mall for passing time or for browsing, although they may use the mall for specific activities. At first sight, “mall enthusiasts” and “grazers” have hedonic shopping behaviors. “Traditionalists” and the “minimalists” appear to be task-oriented.

5.4. Shopping mall habitat

Hypothesis 4: Because of their propensity for hedonism, French shoppers are more likely than English shoppers to engage in mall activities other than buying products or services.

6. Research methodology

The research was conducted on location in a community shopping mall. The mall intercept sample included
1935 French- and 391 English-speaking shoppers. Sampled individuals were invited to fill-in a self-administered questionnaire on their shopping trip. Measurement items selected from validated scales in the literature were translated into French, and translated back into English. Data collection covered all weekdays and day parts for adequate representation. The distribution of participants is similar to that of the Province of Quebec. Table 1 summarizes sociodemographic differences between the two linguistic groups. English participants are slightly older, better educated, better off financially, with more children at home. It is apparent that differences are explained by family status. French shoppers are less likely to be married and have families. Maclean’s magazine/CBC News Polls (Branswell, 1997) noted that French were less likely than the rest of Canada to accept conforming family values.

6.1. Ethnicity

Sojka and Tansuhaj (1995) believe that language is a poor indicator of ethnicity. Several studies conclude that language alone cannot accurately predict differences found in English and French subcultures (Kim et al., 1990), with Hispanics in the US (Deshpande et al., 1986). However, in a recent study, Hui et al. (1997) found that in the case of French and English Canadians, in greater Montreal, elaborate ethnicity scales were not necessary. They noted that language and self-identification were the most valid indicators. The correlation between ethnic self-identification and language is .93. Survey participants were asked for their language preference. The latter was found to be a
surrogate of the two cultural poles in the province of Quebec.

6.2. Shopping value

Hedonic and utilitarian scale items were selected and adapted for the shopping mall situation from Babin et al. (1994) and Babin and Attaway (2000). Item selection was based on the highest factor loadings on each dimension of the scales. The hedonic dimension is captured with the following four statements, measured on a five-point disagreement/agreement scale:

- “This shopping trip truly felt like an escape.”
- “Compared to other things I could have done, the time was well spent.”
- “I enjoyed being immersed in exciting new products.”
- “While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure.”

The utilitarian dimension was measured with three disagreement/agreement statements:

- “I accomplished just what I wanted to do in this shopping trip.”
- “I couldn’t buy what I really needed.”
- “While shopping, I found just the item(s) I was looking for.”

6.3. Mall activities

Items measuring shopping mall habitat were from Bloch et al. (1994). The original scale included four dimensions: consumption of the mall, of services, of products, and passing time. In this mall survey, the measurement items were limited to mall consumption, passing time, and consumption of services. The Bloch et al. scale is made up exclusively of binary items (yes or no). With sufficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Hedonistic</th>
<th></th>
<th>Utilitarian</th>
<th></th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Latent means (t test)</td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td>Latent means (t test)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This shopping trip truly felt like an escape.</td>
<td>1.00 (0.000)</td>
<td>3.03 (45.83)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Set to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compared with other things I could have done, the time spent shopping was truly enjoyable.</td>
<td>0.90 (18.72)</td>
<td>2.89 (47.27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Constrained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed being immersed in exciting new products.</td>
<td>0.86 (9.14)</td>
<td>English 2.92 (40.37)</td>
<td>0.88 (9.60)</td>
<td>English 2.48 (49.44)</td>
<td>Unconstrained coefficients and intercepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.56 (13.16)</td>
<td>French 0.36 (73.28)</td>
<td></td>
<td>French 3.63 (47.17)</td>
<td>Unconstrained intercepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure.</td>
<td>0.84 (17.19)</td>
<td>English 2.47 (34.90)</td>
<td></td>
<td>English 0.90 (2.05)</td>
<td>English set to 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.05 (31.51)</td>
<td></td>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I accomplished just what I wanted to do on this shopping trip.</td>
<td>1.00 (0.000)</td>
<td>3.92 (84.58)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Set to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t buy what I really needed.</td>
<td>– 0.88 (– 9.60)</td>
<td>2.27 (27.99)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unconstrained intercepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While shopping, I found just the item(s) I was looking for.</td>
<td>2.02 (8.19)</td>
<td>3.63 (47.17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unconstrained intercepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance and comparative latent means</td>
<td>0.13 (6.16)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0.13 (6.16)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English 0.45 (6.34)</td>
<td></td>
<td>English 0.09 (2.05)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fit statistics
- Chi-square: 148.13
- df: 31
- N: 1669
- CFI: 0.937
- GFI: 0.975
- Standardized RMR: 0.053
- RMSEA: 0.049
binary items, researchers can obtain adequate variation in scale scores by aggregating information (DeVellis, 1991). Some items were adapted to match available services in the shopping mall.

Mall and passing time activities are measured with five statements:

- “I walked in the mall for the exercise.”
- “I talked with other shoppers I met today in the mall.”
- “I browsed in a mall store without planning to buy.”
- “I bought a snack in the mall.”
- “I made unplanned purchases.”

Service consumption is measured with three more statements (adapted for this mall):

- “I visited a medical or vision care clinic.”
- “I did some banking.”
- “I went to a photo finishing center.”

6.4. Cross-cultural construct measurements

The issue of accuracy, reliability, and validity is present in multicultural research (Mullen, 1995; Myers et al., 2000). Mullen suggests that measurement equivalence should be diagnosed through optimal scaling or multigroup structural equations. In multicultural studies, a researcher must make sure that models are validated across populations (Mullen, 1995). Many measurement scales have not been tested for invariance among cross-cultural groups. Measurement equivalence is achieved when the scale factor structure and respondents scores are the same (Myers et al., 2000).

Each scale (shopping value and mall habitat) was subjected to an invariant structure confirmatory analysis across the two linguistic groups, using EQS for Windows 5.7b (Bentler and Wu, 1998). This process follows Bollen’s (1989, pp. 360–368) hierarchical approach. Invariance is assessed by constraining observed indicators (Vs), error correlations, if any, between indicators (Es), and correlation between latent constructs (Fs). If the model still holds, the

![Fig. 2. Shopping mall habitat, invariant factorial structure (CFA), and standardized coefficients.](image-url)
two groups are tested for invariant latent means. The latent variable intercepts and the measurement equation intercepts are constrained. The latent variables for the reference group (here, English shoppers) are set to zero.

The shopping mall habitat scale needs clarification. The invariant CFA is performed on binary variables. As in Bloch et al. (1994), the correlation matrix between nominal variables is obtained through the Phi coefficient \( \left( \frac{X^2}{N} \right)^{1/2} \). In the case of two-by-two contingency tables, as found with the Bloch et al. scale, the Phi coefficient is identical to that of Pearson's correlation. The structural equations are built from the Phi correlation matrix.

7. Research findings

7.1. Shopping values (invariant factor structure)

The shopping value scale is quasi-invariant. One indicator of the hedonic construct had to be freed. Fig. 1 illustrates the invariant factor structure for shopping values. The invariant factor structure for English and French shoppers offers a good fit despite a significant Chi-square (154.5 with 31 df). While the Chi-square statistic is highly sensitive to the sample size, the AGFI (0.953) and the GFI (0.973) are not (Bollen, 1989, p. 277). There is a weak but significant covariance between the hedonic and the utilitarian dimensions (Cov = 0.30, \( t = 5.84 \)). The tested model is form-invariant but not fully invariant on factor loadings. The offending indicator (“I enjoy being immersed in exciting new products.”) has a higher factor loading for English (0.67) than for French (0.45). The factor loading for French shoppers is somewhat marginal.

7.2. Shopping value (invariant latent means)

Table 2 describes the invariant latent mean structure for English and French shoppers. The model has been built from the earlier invariant factor structure by adding intercepts for the indicators and the latent variables. Bollen (1989, p. 366) recommends that form invariance and factor loadings invariance should hold before testing constraints on means and intercepts. The invariant latent mean model indicates that French shoppers score significantly higher on the hedonic dimension. The latent mean for English shoppers has been set to zero, while that for French shoppers are set free. Under the invariance hypothesis, the latent means for French shoppers should also be equal to zero. This is not the case. The latter scored 0.453 (\( t = 6.339 \)) on the hedonic dimension and 0.087 (\( t = 2.048 \)) on the utilitarian component. The Lagrange multiplier test recommends dropping the equality constraint on three intercepts (“I enjoy being immersed in exciting new products”; “While shopping I felt a sense of adventure”; and “I couldn’t buy what I really

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Mall activities</th>
<th>Consumption of services</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient ( (t \text{ test}) )</td>
<td>Intercept ( (t \text{ test}) )</td>
<td>Coefficient ( (t \text{ test}) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking in the mall for the exercise</td>
<td>1.00 (0.000)</td>
<td>0.30 (17.39)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked with other shoppers I met today in the mall</td>
<td>1.46 (9.32)</td>
<td>0.41 (18.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browsed in a mall store without planning to buy</td>
<td>0.94 (7.79)</td>
<td>0.52 (29.86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bought a snack in the mall</td>
<td>1.17 (9.00)</td>
<td>0.37 (18.86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made an unplanned purchase</td>
<td>0.93 (7.92)</td>
<td>0.42 (24.26)</td>
<td>1.00 (0.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited a medical/vision care clinic</td>
<td>2.38 (14.17)</td>
<td>0.37 (13.02)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Did some banking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went to a photo finishing center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance and comparative latent means</td>
<td>0.003 (4.482)</td>
<td>0 (0) French</td>
<td>2.64 (4.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– 0.07 (– 4.40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>French</td>
<td>0.003 (4.482)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fit statistics</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>93.920</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>( df )</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>( N )</td>
<td>1669</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>0.918</td>
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<tr>
<td>GFI</td>
<td>0.988</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard RMR</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>0.022</td>
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</table>
Data collection and questionnaire administration may affect the validity of cross-cultural research. Often, data gathering takes place in different time frames and locations. The questionnaire and the administration technique may not be identical from one country to another. Different cultural groups may not interpret question statements in the same manner. In this current research, English and French questionnaires were designed simultaneously and pretested. Questionnaire administration for both groups was performed simultaneously in the same location. Many research caveats were eliminated at once.

8.2. Form invariance

Administered in a specific bicultural setting, the shopping value and (partial) mall habitat scales are form invariant. The theoretical constructs underneath those two scales are considered valid across English and French shoppers. Despite significant cultural and lifestyle differences, one should not be surprised. Both communities live side by side in the same socioeconomic environment, and share common European ancestries. Results would be quite different if the two cultures had been drawn from far apart universes.

8.3. Measurement invariance

In addition to form invariance, tested dimensions from the mall habitat scale have an invariant factor structure. Measurement indicators are equal across French and English shoppers. On the other hand, the shopping value scale is noninvariant on factor loadings. One lambda equality constraint had to be released. In scale development, the “offending” item (“I enjoyed being immersed in exciting new products.”) could probably be replaced with another one without affecting overall fit. Shorter scales have more chances of being invariant because there are fewer items to constrain (Myers et al., 2000; Mullen, 1995). Yet, there must be a compromise between parsimony and robustness. In cross-cultural marketing, it might not be realistic to expect complete factor loading invariance from a measurement scale. Partial measurement invariance is a common reality in structural equation modeling (Byrne et al., 1989).

The first research hypothesis can only be partially supported. Both scales are from invariant across groups. This is the minimum level of invariance if one wants to compare two groups. Unlike the mall shopping habitat construct, the shopping value scale is quasi-invariant.

8.4. Latent means

Often, cross-cultural constructs are measured from observable variables without measurement errors. Abstract concepts such as shopping values should be assessed with latent variables emerging from observable indicators. Latent means are measured with the introduction of regression intercepts in the SEM. In multigroup analysis, one group factor intercept, here English shoppers, is arbitrarily fixed to zero, thus becoming the reference group for relative comparisons (Bentler, 1992; Byrne, 1994). Findings indicate that French shoppers’ latent means on the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions are significantly different from zero.

As expected from survey findings, Hypothesis 2 is supported. Hypothesis 3 is also accepted. However, the covariance between the hedonic and the utilitarian dimensions is not as strong as what was found in Babin and Attaway (2000).

8.5. Shopping mall habitat

Hypothesis 4 is not supported. Moreover, French are less likely than English shoppers to use the mall for other activities than buying goods and services. The survey was administered in a community or small regional mall. This is not the type of mall where “mall enthusiasts” and “grazers” would indulge in. These shoppers would be more likely to patronize superregional malls. No significant differences between English and French shoppers have been noted on the consumption of services in the mall. Looking at the intercepts, it seems that English shoppers were more likely to engage in banking activities than the French. Both groups...
have their own financial institutions. The banking establishment located in the shopping center is a branch of a Toronto-based institution. French-speaking consumers are more likely to patronize banks or credit unions with head offices in the province of Quebec.

9. Conclusion

9.1. Managerial implications

Commercial real estate corporations operate shopping malls all over the continent, and own properties overseas in partnership. The malls cater to consumers with different ethnic backgrounds, cultures, lifestyles, and values. Using whatever research tools, mall operators will decide to either standardize or adjust commercial practices such as mall layouts, tenants selection, and promotional activities. Managers usually posit that their research scales are universal.

The two scales used happen to be invariant across English- and French Canadians. However, this might not be always the case. Measurement models must be diagnosed and validated before applying them across ethnic and cultural groups. Multigroup CFA is a technique for testing measurement equivalence. Furthermore, invariant latent means analysis may be a better alternative to more traditional techniques of comparing groups on directly observable variables.

In the long run, members of cultural communities might be expected to acculturate to the host culture. Shopping mall operators cannot wait that long for shareholder returns. Adjusting commercial practices to local trading areas is simply good business, irrelevant of managers’ personal beliefs about acculturation. As shown by census information in the US and in Canada, the dominant cultural poles are not as homogeneous as they may appear. English-speaking communities are becoming cultural smorgasbords. It might be advisable to include short ethnicity or ethnic identification scales in all market research questionnaires, e.g., in the demographic section.

9.2. Limitations

Formal ethnicity and ethnic identification scales were not used. Researchers seldom administer ethnicity scales to members of the dominant community. Such questionnaires are usually kept for minority groups (e.g., Hispanics, Asians). In Quebec, the dominant community is French-speaking and this community is not about to be acculturated. English Canadians living in Quebec are not about to be assimilated by the French-speaking community. Both communities form what Canadian novelist MacLennan (1945) called the “two solitudes.” In this case, self-identification and language (Hui et al., 1997) are adequate predictors.

Our research findings cannot be easily generalized. Cultural differences between English and French communities in Quebec may not be the same in Manitoba or British Columbia. Comparisons between English- and French Canadians are not likely to be extended to African–American, Hispanic, or Asian populations living in the US. However, the general methodological approach should be the same across different cultures.

Another limitation is found in the type of shopping mall under study. Findings about community shopping centers cannot be extrapolated to regional or superregional malls. Shoppers’ goals of patronizing Mall of America or the West Edmonton Mall are different from those shopping in a community shopping center. Larger malls should be expected to attract a larger proportion of hedonist shoppers. Task-oriented shoppers may not appreciate the larger malls becoming crowded amusement parks and entertainment centers.

9.3. Future research

Most scales currently used have never been tested for their equivalence in cross-cultural setting, have been taken for granted, and assumed to be valid. Systematical scale invariance testing should be a major research agenda. Scale equivalence validation does not need to be performed in remote places. Researchers can start looking at their own multicultural groups.

Shopping mall research is still in its early days. Marketing practitioners and researchers have been extending retail store atmospheric concepts to the shopping mall environment because primary data are not available. Similar to retail stores, the shopping mall is part of the metawrapping of products and services. Marketing scholars should give more attention to the mall environment.

References

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