



How second-generation consumers choose where to shop: A cross-cultural semiotic analysis



Virginie Silhouette-Dercourt^{a,*}, Christel de Lassus^b, Denis Darpy^c

^a Paris XIII University, CEPN, Sorbonne Paris Cité, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin, Germany

^b Paris-Est University, Institut de Recherche en Gestion (IRG), Paris, France

^c Paris Dauphine University, DRM-UMR-CNRS 7088, Paris, France

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 March 2014

Received in revised form

23 May 2014

Accepted 28 June 2014

Available online 30 July 2014

Keywords:

Ethnicity

Retail store

Greimasian semiotics

Second-generation

Cultural identity

Consumer behavior

ABSTRACT

Using ethnographic interviews and Greimasian semiotics, this study explores second-generation ethnic consumers' perceptions of physical shopping environments from a cultural identity perspective. It reveals how second-generation ethnic consumers make decisions about where to shop for cosmetics. The key results reveal the identity dimensions of shopping behaviour that retail stores wanting to target second-generation ethnic consumers must take into consideration.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

While European retailers such as Tesco, Metro, Carrefour and Casino are increasingly targeting second-generation ethnic consumers, academic research focusing specifically on this segment in a retail context is lagging behind. Ethnic consumption in Europe is growing strongly and large retailers are developing private labels and shelf space, as currently 70 to 80% of “ethnic” markets sales take place in small traditional shops¹. Their objective is to tap into the increasing buying power of direct descendants of immigrants^{2,3}, sometimes referred to as “second generations”. In France for example, they represent 11% of the population – half of them in the 18–50 age bracket (Breuil-Genier et al., 2011) – and are “over-consumers” in many categories. In the areas of hair care, make-up,

face care and body care, Afro-Caribbean women spend on average 5 to 8 times more than their Caucasian counterparts⁴. Differences in skin and hair are the usual explanations given for this over-consumption. But, as this research aims to show, there are other dimensions that must be taken into account, such as identity issues, the search for roots and connection to the country of origin.

The study of ethnicity and its implications among consumers is a new and semantically rich field of research (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2009; Peñaloza, 1994), but it has not been fully addressed in the context of second generations and their shopping behaviours. The objective of this contribution is to better understand how these second-generation consumers choose and experience retail outlets. Our research examines the cultural identity dimensions of stores and shopping areas using a cross-cultural semiotic interpretation of ethnic consumers' discourse. Through a literature review, the first part of the paper emphasizes the importance of cultural identity and shows that there are few contributions exploring the consequences of these identity issues for second generations in a physical shopping context. The second part presents the methodology of the research: a combination of ethnographic interviews and semiotic interpretation help to provide a comprehensive understanding of second-generation

* Corresponding author. Tel. +33 781 67 36 67/+49 157 84 77 20 19.

E-mail addresses: vdercourt@gmail.com, virginie.dercourt@univ-paris13.fr (V. Silhouette-Dercourt).

¹ LSA no. 2120, 21 January 2010.

² Or children of people who decided to emigrate and who arrived in the destination country before the child was 5 years old. The case of adopted children of foreign origin is not included in this study.

³ In the United States, Hispanic Americans also represent a promising market segment as there are currently 50 million Hispanic-American consumers, making this market segment the second largest, behind Caucasian Americans. Not only is this market large, but it also had a buying power of \$1 trillion in 2010, which is expected to reach to \$1.5 trillion in 2015. Source: Pew Hispanic Center 2012.

⁴ Annual expenditure on beauty products by Afro-Caribbean women in France compared to their Caucasian counterparts in 2010: hair care: €320 against €41; make-up: €180 against €26; face care: €240 against €45. Source: A-Ka.

shopping behaviours. Finally, the paper discusses the theoretical and managerial implications.

2. Literature review

This literature review has two objectives. The first is to show that there is an emerging literature on second-generation consumers. Second, we identify a gap in this literature: second-generation cultural identities can be a driving force with regard to consumers' shopping behaviours.

2.1. Ethnicity: A determinant of consumer shopping behaviour

Ethnicity, or the feeling of belonging to a culture of origin, and its impact on consumer shopping behaviours, has been approached in various ways in the marketing literature. The first model, or '*assimilationist model*', was based on the premise that consumers of foreign descent would forget their culture of origin and acquire the culture of the host country, or in other words would assimilate to the national culture (Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983; O'Guinn and Faber, 1985; Valencia, 1985). Situational variables (Stayman and Deshpandé, 1989), individual variables (such as motivation) and structural variables (such as the public policies of the host country) determine the pace of assimilation, which may take place over several generations (Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983). This uni-directional view of acculturation has implications in terms of shopping behaviours. For example, Ownbey and Horridge (1997) show that the shopping orientation of Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans is related to their low or high acculturation levels.

However, since the 1990s a new approach has emerged, initially inspired by Berry (1974,1980). Researchers suggest that ethnic identity and national identity are independent dimensions and not the two extremes of a continuum. Inspired by the work of social psychologists (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Liebkind, 1992; Phinney, 1990), the concept of cultural identity refers to the sense of attachment a person has to a particular group, including the beliefs and feelings linking him or her to that group (Berry et al., 2006, p. 3). Immigrants must manage and develop national and ethnic identities as part of the larger developmental task of identity formation (ibid). Sometimes the ethnic culture is experienced directly, as for the first generation of immigrants, but for the second generation, it is transmitted through the family and the collective memory of the group (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 11). This collective memory is linked to a particular place and time (Halbwachs, 1950) and consuming objects can be used to help maintain this collective memory (p. 15). Doing so gives the people concerned the social skills and competencies to be involved in different "homes" as and when they so choose (Levitt, 2009). This approach, or the '*acculturation model*', has influenced many studies in marketing (Mendoza, 1989; Jun et al., 1993; Peñaloza, 1994). In a large-scale ethnographic study of Mexican-American consumers, Peñaloza (1994) describes informants' reaction to US store environments. An inability to speak English may, for example, influence their choice of stores (Peñaloza, 1994). Retail businesses are acculturating agents, but in the case of Mexican Americans, they are primarily aligned with Mexican culture (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 49). In Australia, Quester et al. (2001) explore first- and second-generation Chinese-Australian decision-making and show that the choice of store differs significantly according to acculturation groups. Saegert et al. (1985) reported that Mexican Americans prefer family-run stores to a greater extent than Anglo-Americans.

Finally, the '*post-assimilationist model*' uses a cultural approach to these issues. Market globalization triggers a feeling of cultural loss (Bouchet, 1995). In a Danish context, Askegaard et al. (2005)

show that different acculturation forces influence these identity projects: one of these concerns the consumption culture of the host country, another concerns the consumption culture of the country of origin, and a third, termed "international", transmits transnational values and cultural practices. This international acculturation force influences consumption by young adults, particularly in areas where style is important, such as fashion, cosmetics and beauty products, music, and communication technologies (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006). Identity projects are also strongly influenced by historical and socio-cultural contexts (Ozcaglar-Toulouse and Üstüner, 2009). In a dialogical model of acculturation, Bhatia (2002) emphasizes the constant back and forth between incompatible cultural positions experienced by ethnic minorities. In addition, globalization is accompanied by a world resurgence of cultural identities, nationalism and multiculturalism (Sabanadze, 2010). Anxieties about the future generate a return to the past (Lowenthal, 1985, p. 11).

This brief literature overview shows that ethnicity is a key dimension of consumer behaviours, even though its impact on shopping behaviours has not been extensively explored. An emerging research current is starting to look at ethnicity from the standpoint of second-generation consumers, who have specific identity issues. Nevertheless, few studies have considered the implications of these identity projects with regard to the perception and choice of shopping environments.

2.2. Second-generation ethnicity and shopping behaviours

The cultural dimensions of shopping environments have been studied from a direct cross-cultural perspective between different countries (see, for example, Sood and Nasu, 1995; Pons et al., 2006). Additionally, analyses related to cultural aspects of shopping, restricted to a single country, have also been implemented (see for example, Ackerman and Tellis, 2001; Michon and Chebat, 2004). In studies conducted in different countries (USA and Mexico; Malaysia and Iran), Rubio-Sanchez (2008) and Khosraviani (2012) have shown that cultural dimensions as defined by Hofstede (1980) are antecedents of shopping value.

However, second-generation ethnic consumers present specificities that require a deeper analysis of their shopping behaviours. As the historian Marcus Lee Hansen pointed out in Hansen (1938), each generation may experience its feeling of belonging to a culture of origin in different ways: "what the son wants to forget, the grandson wishes to remember". Thompson (1974) explores the particular position of second generations in the context of Punjabis in the United Kingdom, while Van Niekerk (2007) focuses on second-generation people of Caribbean origin in the Netherlands. Attias-Donfut and Wolff (2009, p. 222) point out the particular role played by the children of immigrants in the succession of the family generations. They are situated at the interface between the family world, which is still very much influenced by the culture of origin, and public space, the world of the national culture: they are, to some extent, "catalysts of acculturation" (Richard, 2004, p. 55). They will sometimes emphasize certain aspects of their difference that are socially judged negatively (Moscovici, 1979; Camilleri et al., 1990) or will engage in some sort of stigma management (Sandikci and Ger, 2010). In Italy, African-Italians are identified with the wider black diaspora as a result of everyday racism (Andall, 2002). Sayad (1991) questions the terminology of "second generation of immigration" as it tends to perpetuate a stigma: "They are still considered as 'second-generation immigrants'. They are perpetually assigned to this original status that defines immigration – which is not theirs *per se* – and consequently to its precariousness and revocability" (p. 22). Nevertheless, there is a growing interest in Europe for second generations (Thomson and Crul, 2007) and, in the field of

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1028969>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1028969>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)