

Navigating a hybrid cultural identity: Hispanic teenagers' fashion consumption influences

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to report research which explores the effects of a hybrid cultural identity on the fashion clothing behavior of Hispanic – particularly, later aged – teenage girls. The study examines differences in need for uniqueness and family referent influence among Hispanic and non-Hispanic teenagers. In addition, the relevant impact of acculturation processes is examined.

Design/methodology/approach

A survey of 76 Hispanic and 52 non-Hispanic later aged teenagers was administered in March 2006 to a sample of girls at a Catholic (all girls) high school in a large, ethnically diverse US metropolitan area (New York) with a high Hispanic population.

Findings

The empirical results show a significantly higher need for uniqueness for Hispanic teenagers. Furthermore, Hispanic teenagers exhibited a lower family influence than non-Hispanics. Finally, high-acculturated Hispanics exhibited a relatively lower family referent influence than low-acculturated Hispanics.

Research limitations/implications

Future cross-cultural studies should examine the robustness of this finding among various other Hispanic and ethnic (i.e. Chinese-American) markets in the USA and other nations.

Practical implications

The advanced model and empirical findings hold important managerial implications for marketers that target teenagers. The higher need for uniqueness observed for Hispanic teenage girls could lead to successful advertising appeals to non-conformity and independence from both family and non-Hispanic peers.

Originality/value

The higher need for uniqueness exhibited by the Hispanic teenagers is a novel and counter-intuitive finding that holds important theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords

Hispanics Youth Family Acculturation Fashion industry Cross-cultural studies

Citation

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Navigating a hybrid cultural identity: Hispanic teenagers' fashion consumption influences. M Chattalas, H Harper. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 2007, 49. 2007. Impact of value perceptions on luxury purchase intentions: a developed market comparison. M Chattalas, P Shukla. *Luxury Research Journal* 1 (1), 40-57, 2015. 2016. Competent versus warm countries of origin: The influence of national stereotypes on product perceptions. T Kramer, M Chattalas, H Takada, Y Kuwashima. *ACR Latin American Advances*, 2008. Cultural Influences On Trend Forecasting. For everyone who works in the fashion business it is important to be able to recognize and to foresee social and cultural movements, in order to understand the fashion environment and to be able to operate in the direction in which the fashion industry will move. Being able to anticipate what will happen in the next future is what puts a fashion designer, a retailer or a fashion buyer in the position to make better decisions in their work. Popular culture, or pop culture, is a cultural section, which is followed, understood and appreciated by a larger audience. This culture is seen as a commercial culture, mass-produced for mass consumption. Ethnic identity: Level of association with an ethnic group which preserves a cultural legacy, (Chattaraman & Lennon, 2008). Fashion-conscious shopper: A consumer who likes fashion trends and is an innovator (Lumpkin, 1985; Segev, 2014; Seock & Sauls, 2008; Shephard et al., 2014; Shim & Bickel, 3. Immigrant individuals tend to be influenced by both culture of origin (immigrant culture) and new culture (host culture) (Berry, 1997). As immigrants face a new market place with unknown products and brands, bicultural preferences emerge that affect their consumption practices (Cleveland, Laroche, Pons, & Kastoun, 2009; Padilla, 2006; Segev, et al., 2014). Cultural factors exert a broad and deep influence on consumer behavior. The marketer needs to understand the role played by the buyer's culture, subculture, and social class. Compare the roles of culture, subculture, and social class. For Hispanics living in the United States, Hispanic identity is multidimensional and multifaceted. For some, it is defined most by their family's country of origin, such as Mexican, Cuban or Dominican.⁴⁸ For others, it is defined by pan-ethnic terms like Hispanic or Latino, emphasizing the commonalities of a diverse community. Multiracial identity is not only a reflection of the racial background on one's family tree, but also a reflection of the social and cultural factors shaping how you were raised, how you see yourself and how the world sees you. For many mixed-race Hispanics, these factors may be as important as racial background in shaping their racial identity.