Chapter 15

When Age, Religion, and Culture Matter: The Impact of Aging, Religiosity, and Cultural Differences on Consumers’ Emotions and Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate objective of the chapter is to provide a conceptualized model to showcase the differential effect of aging, religiosity, and cultural differences on consumers’ emotions. Further, the downstream consequences of these antecedents (aging, religiosity, and cultural differences) on consumers’ actual behavior in the market place are to be demonstrated. The mediating role of emotions in explicating the relationship between the proposed antecedents and consequences will serve as an integral part of the model to illustrate the underlying mechanism. The introduced model will provide both marketers and academicians with a clear understanding of major factors affecting consumer behavior and, importantly, the emotional mechanisms through which these factors exert differential impact on actual consumption behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Marketers dedicate an undivided focus on the emotions that consumers experience in the marketplace. Consider the substantial efforts that various organizations exert to ensure that their brands are associated with the desired emotions within their target markets. For instance, Coca-Cola has always been relying on inducing joy and happiness as part of their brand promise to the extent of building a hedonic value

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through integrated marketing communication to supplement the functional value encompassed within product development and pricing strategies. Recently, Coca-Cola capitalized on their “Taste the Feeling” campaign during the 2016 Olympics, featuring multiple Olympic athletes and associating the joy of winning Olympic medals with the joy Coca-Cola brings to every-day simple moments (Birkner, 2016). This example illustrates how major corporations invest in the elicitation of specific discrete emotions (joy in the provided Coca-Cola example) and ultimately impact consumers attitudes toward the brand and the advertising campaign along with their purchasing behavior and brand loyalty. However, a major question that seems to remain unanswered is how different consumer segments experience discrete emotions and whether these emotions create differential downstream attitudinal and behavioral consequences that are dependent on the segment characteristics.

To put it in a practical context, would the aforementioned joy-promoting Coca-Cola campaign elicit similar joy intensities among both younger and older adults? Would the impact of the campaign on joy elicitation vary between Eastern and Western cultures? Would different religious affiliations and degrees of religiosity impact the joy experience that consumers feel in response to the campaign? And, how then the experienced joy leads to different attitude formation processes and behavioral results among these various consumer segments? To find concrete answers to these questions, and similar ones, marketing academicians and experts need to investigate whether and how aging, religiosity, and culture differences, which are major segmentation variables, affect the way consumers experience discrete emotions and consequently how these emotional experiences shape the way consumers react and behave.

The rest of the chapter will showcase the role of emotions in affecting consumer behavior and determining the impact of advertising. Afterwards, the effects of aging, religiosity, and cultural difference on both emotions and consumer behavior will be emphasized. Next, a conceptual model will be proposed to direct the attention of marketing scholars and practitioners to the importance of the under-studied effects of age, religiosity, and cultural differences on discreet emotions and the mediating role of discrete emotions in explaining the impact of age, religiosity, and cultural differences on various consumers’ behavioral measures. Lastly, managerial implications and future research directions are provided. It’s our hope that this chapter highlights some crucial gaps in the understanding of the impact of age, religiosity, and cultural differences on discreet emotions in the marketing realm and propagates more research to investigate the proposed model.

Emotions and Consumer Behavior

Nyer (1997) emphasized the major impact of emotions on shaping the ways by which consumers behave in the marketplace. Similarly, Bagozzi (1999) highlighted the vital role of emotions in strategic marketing. Marketing scholars have dedicated an on-going attention to study the effect of emotions on various consumption behaviors, including consumers’ perceptions of money (Levav & McCraw, 2009), recall of advertising information (Aaker, Drolet, & Griffin, 2008), attitude towards advertisements (William & Aaker, 2002), purchasing behavior in retail stores (Sherman, Mathur, & Smith, 1997), attitude towards brands (Holbrook & Batra, 1987), game enjoyment (Holbrook et al., 1984), impulsive purchasing (Weinberg & Gottwald, 1982), word of mouth (Ladhari, 2007), service encounters (Mattila & Enz, 2002), prosocial behavior (Small & Verrochi, 2009), food consumption (Winterich & Haws, 2011), customer loyalty (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1999), repurchase behavior (Louro, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2005), service satisfaction (Liljander & Strandvik, 1997), financial decision-making (Andrade & Ariely, 2009), and online customer behavior (Mazaheri, Richard, & Laroche, 2011).