



A comparison of online and offline consumer behaviour: An empirical study on a cinema shopping context



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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to analyse online vs. offline differences in consumer behaviour. To this end, through a proposal applied to cinemas in shopping centres, this study considers values and lifestyles as major factors that influence behaviours and intentions. The partial least squares (PLS) approach is used to evaluate the model. A multi-group analysis is conducted to compare consumers who buy tickets online with those who do so at a box office. We consider 391 valid cases. The results obtained show a link between the use of technology and its effects on behaviour. The relationships between values and behaviour as well as between behaviour and future intent are stronger among online consumers than the effects of lifestyles on behaviour. We consider relevant theoretical and empirical perspectives and offer critical recommendations of use to shopping centre managers, movie theatres, and intermediaries of this sector.

1. Introduction

In recent years, two relevant and transcendental phenomena have emerged through the study of consumer behaviour: the leisure or entertainment sectors of shopping centres have undergone considerable changes and online shopping has undergone exponential growth. Leisure is defined as what is done outside of time spent on routine activities of everyday life (Rodríguez and Agulló, 2002). The concept has been evaluated and described by several authors. Recently, leisure and distribution patterns have evolved considerably, and shopping centres have acquired great importance not only from a commercial perspective but also as they relate to entertainment (Rousseau and Venter, 2014; Panday and Verma, 2013). Leisure and shopping are interrelated with consumer behaviour in shopping centres (Millan and Howard, 2007). Activities involving sports, relaxation, and going to the movies are made available through these commercial spaces, with cinemas being especially notable. The broad variety of films offered and their short-term use render it essential to determine related consumer decision-making processes. Several authors have suggested that leisure behaviours in shopping centres are governed by values and lifestyles owing to consumers' cross-cultural characteristics (Bregman et al., 2005). Values and lifestyles are considered to be better antecedents than demographic characteristics of consumer purchasing behaviour (Ye et al., 2011; Jin and Lee, 2004).

The scope of online shopping has expanded notably, and its utility

lies in identifying factors that cause consumers to use the Internet (Wu et al., 2011; Hwang, and Jeong, 2016). The Web and social networks allow one to acquire information in real time (Norzieiriani et al., 2010; Sunil, 2015). Increasingly, the interrelationship between individuals and their commentaries through virtual settings has been central to the development of shopping platforms for leisure-related products and services (Rondán-Cataluña et al., 2015). Leisure shopping constitutes an important component of the consumer experience and it connects people, organisations, material objects, environments and technologies (Rabbiosi, 2016). However, for entertainment activities such as film viewing, a significant number of consumers acquire their tickets at a box office (Doury, 2001). In addition, online sales of movie tickets have started to be facilitated through intermediaries such as ticket sales portals for shows, and in turn movie theatres have lost control of this process. Two parallel shopping channels have thus formed, and future studies must assess differences between these channels and their impacts on consumer behaviours based on their different characteristics (Hwang and Jeong, 2016).

The main objective of this study is thus to analyse the leisure behaviours of individuals who visit shopping centres and the effects of Internet use on behaviour. A model for measuring consumer behaviour in cinemas based on values and lifestyles is applied by differentiating between customers who purchase tickets online with those who do so at a box office. A multi-group analysis based on this global model is conducted to identify main differences between online and offline

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behaviours.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Development of leisure behaviour: background and consequences

Purchasing behaviour represents the manner in which individuals choose and acquire products (Ylänne-McEwen, 2000). Behaviour in shopping centres has been studied at length. Rousseau and Venter (2014) argue that store environments and satisfaction levels are closely related to purchasing behaviours. The authors estimate that leisure and entertainment tend to extend how long individuals remain in shopping centres and to their influence their conduct. It has thus been observed that leisure causes a change in purchasing behaviour (Pandey and Verma, 2015), rendering it advisable to use measurement scales that consider both components (Lotz et al., 2010).

Leisure behaviour in shopping centres is influenced by values and lifestyles (Brunso et al., 2004; Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015). This proposal is innovative relative to those of other more traditional proposals focused on demographic or socioeconomic aspects, and it allows one to obtain extensive information on clients (Lee et al., 2009).

Values refer to ethical considerations that determine the behaviours of individuals. They relate to the specific attitudes of each person (Brunso et al., 2004; Fraj and Martínez, 2006). For their measurement, numerous studies have combined values and lifestyles (VALS) (Herrero et al., 2014). However, other authors have distinguished between the two concepts to limit the complexities of analyses and to achieve higher levels of study effectiveness (Fraj and Martínez, 2006). Green et al. (2006) present a scale with items related to values and with other items related to lifestyle. Values pertain to current life, educational, social, and home activities. One's current life refers to cultural, health-related, technological, social, and environmental elements; education refers to learning and knowledge; social activities concern collaboration in social settings; and home elements refer to activities carried out in the kitchen or garden and to child rearing.

Studies have also examined the effects of values on behaviour (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003). While some authors have focused more on individuals and on their educational and family dynamics, others have focused more on issues of socialization. Studies of such relationships have been applied to distribution products and services offered through shopping and leisure centres (Cai and Shannon, 2012).

A lifestyle refers to a set of patterns that determine the specific perceptions of each individual (Rodríguez and Agulló, 2002; Brunso et al., 2004). In regards to shopping activities, Millan and Howard (2007) argue that consumers are becoming increasingly demanding, less loyal, and more interested in expressing their lifestyle choices through belongings and entertainment activities. Following a measurement of values, et al., 2006 proposal is presented as a valid explanation. Identified components include sports, vacations, hobbies, and nature. Sports are related to health and self-esteem, vacations are related to travelling and resting, hobbies are related to activities undertaken for pleasure purposes, and nature is related to leisure activities involving natural settings and animals. Studies that link lifestyles to behaviours have been conducted (Norziesiriani et al., 2010; Wahlen and Laamanen, 2015). This relationship has been analysed in reference to bowling alley distribution and leisure and in regards to restaurants in shopping centres (Doury, 2001; Brunso et al., 2004).

Some authors have focused on the indirect effects of values on behaviours through lifestyle patterns (Grunert and Grunert, 1995). Values predict lifestyles (Brunso et al., 2004), and factors such as cultural traits, time spent caring for children or the elderly, and leisure activities carried out in the home have a direct impact on lifestyles.

Finally, the effects of behaviour on intentions have been highlighted. Chang and Liu (2009) defined purchase intent as a customer's plan to repurchase a specific brand or request a service used before. For Suman et al. (2012), individuals visit shopping centres for two reasons:

hedonism and utility. The former involves activities related to leisure occurring in the present or future.

2.2. Effects of the Internet on leisure purchasing behaviours

Studies have shown that values, lifestyles, and behaviours have changed over the years. Such changes are referred to as the generational evolution of values (González, 2000). One principal factor that has induced this change is the Internet (Alonso and Bartolomé, 2014; Sunil, 2015). Herrero et al., 2014 study is one of the most important works focused on the relationship between the use of technology and its effects on values and lifestyles. In addition, the incremental development of the Internet has caused changes in purchasing behaviours and in intentions to repeat purchases (Lee et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2011). Several authors have studied online purchasing behaviours (Jayawardhena, 2004) and have shown that higher levels of user satisfaction incentivize repeated purchasing behaviours and future purchases (Hernández et al., 2011). Hwang and Jeong's (2016) research presents two theoretical perspectives that have been applied to the study of online purchasing behaviours and that are focused on cultural factors and consumer lifestyles.

Through leisure activities, behavioural patterns are repeated throughout history both offline and online (Genoe et al., 2016). Leisure has taken new forms; Facebook and Twitter are "the new gathering spots" that now act like physical locations. In regards to films, businesses born from the digital world such as Filmothec occupy spaces on the Internet that should be controlled by large film distributors. In addition, the consumption of movies has involved new agents that participate in ticket sales (Doury, 2001) or that contribute to the digitalization of traditional leisure activities through streaming (iTunes). A study by Alonso and Bartolomé (2014) refers to groups related to "communication and cultural media", which include cinema and which influence a reduced number of webpage followers.

2.3. Online versus offline consumer behaviour

Considerable progress has been made in the field of information technology in recent years, and particularly with regards to how such technologies relate to the Internet as purchasing channels. Some studies have analysed differences in sociocultural attributes and their effects on behaviours by focusing on differences between online and offline channels (Hwang, and Jeong, 2016). Most research has employed differences in demographic and socioeconomic factors as a basis from which to analyse levels of knowledge and Internet use (Hirunyawipada and Paswan, 2006). In fact, few studies, in considering values and lifestyles, have found differences in uses of these technologies during times of purchasing and their effects on behaviours (Lee et al., 2009) despite the advantages of businesses understanding personal characteristics valued through an individual's family and leisure time activities (Herrero et al., 2014). To further knowledge on the leisure-seeking community, it would be helpful to expand this dimension to explicitly identify values and lifestyles. The Internet has changed values and lifestyles, i.e., the ways in which individuals relate socially, read the news, listen to music, and reserve movie tickets through online channels rather than through a box office (Doury, 2001). However, one study shows that those who make purchases online and offline maintain different values and lifestyles that influence their behaviours and intentions (Swinyard and Smith, 2003). It is therefore necessary to explore this trend in greater depth.

Regarding the theory analysed, various studies have highlighted the importance of new channels for establishing relationships with customers and have analysed differences in behaviour in online and offline spheres (Wu et al., 2011). Distributors now consider the Internet is a new opportunity owing to its potential for growth and expansion. However, the management of online channels does not necessarily need to be reproduced in the form of an offline channel, as the process

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