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UNDERSTANDING YOUTH MOTIVATIONS OF ENTERTAINMENT CONSUMPTION AT SHOPPING CENTRES: IMPLICATIONS FOR SHOPPING CENTRE MARKETING

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Track: Buyer Behaviour

Abstract

Entertainment consumption is becoming a popular activity within the shopping centre habitat. A key group of entertainment-seeking shoppers is the youth shopper, generally aged between 15 and 24 years (Sit, Merrilees and Birch 2003). Despite numerous studies on motivations of mall patronage (Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson 1994), few studies have specifically explored youth motivations relative to entertainment consumption at shopping centres. Thus, the aims of this study was to identify: (1) dimensions of youth motivations relative to entertainment consumption; (2) differences of youth motivations *between* different types of shopping centre entertainment; and (3) differences of youth motivations *within* the same type of shopping centre entertainment. Focusing on *going to the movies* (specialty entertainment) and *dining out at the food court* (food entertainment), this study identified three key motivations, namely *thrill seeking*, *escapism*, and *socialising*. Tests of difference revealed that youth 'movie-goers' place greater emphasis on *thrill seeking*, as compared to youth 'food-lovers'. However, in terms of the *escapism* and *socialising*, no significant difference were found between young 'movie-goers' and young 'food-lovers'. Focusing on the same type of entertainment, tests of difference revealed that youth 'movie-goers' place greater emphasis on *thrill seeking*, while youth 'food-lovers' place greater emphasis on the *socialising*. The managerial implications of these findings are discussed.

Introduction

Given the increasing competition within the shopping centre industry, the integration of entertainment into the shopping environment has gained popularity over the past ten years (Evans 1999; Hazel 1998). Shopping centre entertainment can be classified into three general categories: (1) special event entertainment; (2) specialty entertainment; and (3) food entertainment. *Special event entertainment* refers to events offered on an occasional and temporary basis, such as fashion shows and art exhibits. Conversely, specialty entertainment and food entertainment are a permanent component of the retailing mix of a regional shopping centre (Barreto and Konarski 1996). *Specialty entertainment* includes cinemas and video arcades, while *food entertainment* refers to the range of eateries, cafés and restaurant at the shopping centre.

Youth Mall Patrons and Entertainment Consumption. One major group of mall patrons is the youth shopper, aged between 15 and 24 years. The 2000/2001 ICSC's survey conducted in the United States of America indicated that the youth segment is the most prolific in terms of mall visits, duration of stay, and spending (Baker 2002). The survey revealed that the 15 to 17-year-old segment visited shopping mall

approximately 15 times over a three-month period, stayed 88.7 minutes per visit, and spent an average of \$45 per shopping visit. Similarly, the 18 to 24-year-old segment made 12 visits, stayed 70.8 minutes, and spent \$57.90 per shopping visit (Baker 2002). Moreover, a cinema-audience research reported that 34 percent of frequent visitors to the cinema in Australia are young and affluent, aged between 15 to 24 years (ValMorgan 2002).

Motivations of Entertainment Consumption. In this study, the motives or energising forces that trigger consumption behaviours of young entertainment-seeking shoppers were addressed (Mahatoo 1989). Very few studies have explored youth motivations relative to entertainment consumption. Indeed, a review of the retailing literature reveals that previous studies of shoppers' motivations have focussed on shopping activities *beyond* entertainment consumption, such as outshopping (Jarratt 2000), catalogue shopping (Eastlick and Feinberg 1999; Gehrt and Shim 1998), browsing (Bloch, Ridgway and Sherrell 1989; Bloch and Richins 1983), and internet shopping (Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon 2001; Barczak, Ellen and Pilling 1997). An understanding of youth motivations relative to entertainment consumption would be useful for shopping centre management wanting to provide an appealing entertainment mix within their shopping centre, and for developing effective marketing communication strategies. Hence, the aims of this study were threefold: (1) to identify the key dimensions of youth motivation relative to shopping centre entertainment consumption; (2) to identify youth motivations *between* different types of shopping centre entertainment; and (3) to identify youth motivations *within* the same type of shopping centre entertainment.

Research Design

Drawing on the retailing literature (Arnold and Reynolds 2003; Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson 1994) together with exploratory qualitative investigations, an initial pool of twelve motivational items was generated. The preliminary investigations involved focus group discussions with a youth sample aged 24 years and below. The face validity of these items was then evaluated through a screening exercise with another youth sample, and nine items were retained. Next, a questionnaire was developed to measure those items on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The survey was administered using a mall intercept interview at a sub-regional shopping centre in South East Queensland, Australia. This shopping centre houses an eight-screen cinema complex, a video arcade, and a variety of eateries, including fast-food outlets and cafés.

Young mall patrons were intercepted as they were exiting either the movie theatre or the food court. Youth patrons qualified for the survey if they were aged between 15 and 24 years, and had either attended the cinema or dined at an eatery within the centre. The age of 15 years was set as it is the minimum age that young people in Australia can be interviewed without the consent of parents, and also have the adequate literacy level to complete a questionnaire (MRSA 1995, Section B, Rule 6). Further, the age of 15 years is also the legal age at which young people in Australia can enter the paid workforce.

This study was confined to two types of shopping centre entertainment, namely 'going to the movies' (specialty entertainment) and 'dining at the food court' (food

entertainment). No special event entertainment was conducted during the research period, and thus the measurement of special event entertainment was not possible for this study. A total of 205 surveys were collected, of which 184 were complete and deemed usable.

Data Analysis and Results

The data analysis involved exploratory factor analysis and tests of differences (Student's t-test). First, the data was subjected to principal axis factor analysis with a varimax rotation. Given the discrete nature of either 'going to the movies' (specialty entertainment) or 'dining at the food court' (food entertainment), the nine motivational items were factor analysed separately (Barreto and Konarski 1996). Only factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were retained. For both entertainment activities, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was rated approximately 0.70, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was high and significant (Kaiser 1958). Second, tests of differences were conducted to identify differences of youth motivations *between* both types of entertainment activities, as well as *within* the same type of entertainment activity.

TABLE 1: Factor Loadings of Youth Motivations

<i>Motivation Factors & Items</i>	<i>Going to the movies</i> (n=111)		<i>Dining out</i> (n=73)	
	<i>Factor loadings</i>	<i>Composite reliability</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>	<i>Composite reliability</i>
<i>Thrill Seeking</i>				
• to have fun	.88	.85	.90	.87
• to have excitement	.82		.69	
• to be amused	.78		.86	
• to have a great time	.72		.80	
<i>Escapism</i>				
• to give mind a rest	.90	.77	.89	.76
• to reduce stress	.89		.89	
• to get away from daily duties	.52		.60	
<i>Socialising</i>				
• to be with people who are interested in the same things as I do	.89	.92	.93	.93
• to be with people who enjoy the same things as I am	.88		.91	
<i>Total variance explained</i>	76.89%		77.72%	
<i>Kaiser-Meyer Olkin of sampling adequacy</i>	.72		.74	
<i>Bartlett's test of sphericity</i>	574.29		397.07	
<i>Significance</i>	.001		.001	

Motivations of Entertainment Consumption. The first objective of this study was to identify the dimensions of youth motivations relative to entertainment consumption. Exploratory factor analysis revealed a three-factor solution for *both* types of entertainment (going to the movies and dining out at the food court). The three motivational factors were labelled 'thrill seeking', 'escapism', and 'socialising', as summarised in Table 1.

Thrill seeking refers to the seeking of arousal, exhilaration and fun, and is also known as ‘adventure shopping’ (Arnold and Reynolds 2003). Thrill seeking is relevant to young shoppers due to the high level of sensory and affective stimulation induced by the cinema. Moreover, aligned with the disposable incomes of youth shoppers, mall entertainment appears to be an economic avenue for seeking stimulation or fun as compared to other leisure activities, such as skydiving (Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993).

Escapism is driven by recuperative needs, involving the relief of boredom and recovery from tensions (Manfredo, Driver and Tarrant 1996). In a retailing context, escapism is also known as ‘gratification shopping’ (Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993). This motivation may be common among young shoppers because shopping mall entertainment provides a diversity of amusements that may allow them to temporarily forget their problems or stress. Moreover, shopping centres are an easily accessible and lower cost venue for escapism, as compared to other alternatives, such as going away for a holiday (Bloch, Ridgway and Dawson 1994).

Socialising, also known as ‘social shopping’ (Arnold and Reynolds 2003), refers to interacting with people who share similar interests, such as friends or family (Hills, Argyle and Reeves 2000). Thus, this motivation is triggered by the relational needs, such as ‘hanging out’ with friends and association with a gang. Indeed, (McGrath and Otnes 1995) found that socialising emerged as the highest reported dimension of the entertainment shopping experience. In a regional shopping, the food court provides a suitable venue to for socialising with friends or family (Evans 1999).

Motivation Differences Between Types of Entertainment Consumption. The second goal of this study was to identify whether the motivations differed between going to the movies (specialty entertainment) and dining at the food court (food entertainment). As presented in Table 2, tests of difference revealed a significant difference on the *thrill seeking* motivation between ‘movie-goers’ and ‘food-lovers’ ($\bar{x} = 5.68$, $\bar{x} = 5.18$, $df = 243$, $t = 3.83$, $p < 0.001$). The finding indicates that movie-goers place greater emphasis on *thrill seeking*, as compared to food-lovers. This could be due to the more visually and aurally exciting nature of the cinema experience. In terms of the *escapism*, and *socialising* motives, no significant differences were found between movie-goers and food-lovers.

Table 2: Motivational Differences *between* Going to the Movies and Dining Out

Motivational Dimension	Going to a movies, \bar{x}	Dining out, \bar{x}	t-value
Thrill seeking	5.68	5.18	3.83**
Escapism	5.02	5.11	-.53
Socialising	5.29	5.43	-.74

****significant at $p < 0.001$**

Motivation Differences within Going to the Movies and Dining Out. The third goal of this study was to identify the differences between the three motivations for both entertainment types. As presented in Table 3, a test of difference (one-sample t-test) significant revealed that movie-goers place the greatest emphasis on *thrill-*

seeking, and less emphasis on escapism or socialising. On the other hand, food-lovers place the highest importance on *socialising*.

Table 3: Motivation Differences *within* Going to the Movie and Dining at the Food Court

Motivational Dimension	Going to the movies	t-value	Dining out	t-value
Thrill seeking	5.68	1.06	5.18	-1.97
Escapism	5.02	-5.25**	5.11	-2.20
Socialising	5.29	-2.62	5.43	.21*

* significant at $p < 0.05$; **significant at $p < 0.001$

Limitations

The findings of this study were confined to ‘*going to the movies*’ (specialty entertainment) and ‘*dining out at a food court*’ (food entertainment). Further study is required to examine the motivational dimensions which apply to *special event entertainment*, such as intermittent fashion shows and mini-concerts, and how these differ from the types of entertainment included in this study. Also, further study should evaluate the validity of those motivations *within* specialty entertainment, That is, young shoppers seeking the video arcade may not be motivated in the same way as moviegoers. Moreover, the nature and weightings of motivations for entertainment consumption may differ across other key age groups, such as the large and affluent baby boomer segment. Also, further research using a larger youth sample is required to validate the findings of this study.

Conclusion and Implications

This study identifies three key motivational factors driving youth entertainment consumption behaviour, namely thrill seeking, escapism, and socialising. An understanding of these motivations will provide a valuable input for management when developing the entertainment mix for shopping centres. For example, in targeting *thrill seekers*, shopping centre management could offer an innovative cinema complex with state of the art equipment and facilities to create an exciting entertaining experience. Conversely, in targeting *socialisers* or *escapists*, the centre management could promote both the cinema (specialty entertainment) and the food court (food entertainment) experience. Management should also consider the differences between the three motivations within each type of entertainment consumption. For example, thrill seeking appears to be the primary motive for going to the movies (specialty entertainment), whereas socialising appears to be the primary motive for dining at the food court (food court).

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