

Spiritual marketing, what future in the consumption?

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Abstract

Marketing researchers are increasingly interested in the development of their managerial theories in order to acquire more readers and clients and to develop the sciences which can further improve marketing. Spirituality has become an important factor in new consumer trends, consumers look for sacred products in sacred places. To analyze this phenomenon we address the theme of Spiritual Marketing and its influence on consumer.

Keywords: spirituality, Sacred, spiritual sphere, spiritual experience

Introduction

With the advancement of marketing techniques, spirituality has become at the heart of contemporary corporate managerial policies. The research work that we are preparing in this reading of Sandra Camus' article is an analysis of the links that exist between the different consumer trends and spirituality.

Spirituality is about believing in effects, items, people, and links that can direct consumers' decision.

In his article "Spirituality: Emerging Trend in Consumption" the author emphasizes the importance of spirituality in the science of management is precisely in marketing. New entrepreneurs seek to integrate the notion of spirituality into their business and managerial policies.

The author affirms that individuals always seek to nourish themselves through customs and spiritual traditions: cults of care, infatuation with oriental cultures. The main question posed by the author is to what extent can spirituality become a strong trend in consumption?

Indeed with the beginning of the 70's Sociologists declared the decline of instituted religion and the emergence of a new spiritual movement which considers spirituality to be a fundamental element of modern marketing. Before approaching the subject of our presentation, it is necessary to define some Concepts which are related to our research subject.

Definition of concepts

The concepts "religion, sacredness, spirituality" sometimes generating more confusion than precision According to Sandra Camus these concepts can be defined as follows.

-Sacred: "it has empowered itself from the religious to characterize what is considered absolute, untouchable and timeless".

- **Religion:** a system of beliefs and practices relating to realities in relation to man by symbolic mean.
- **Religiosity:** religious attitude as approached by psychologists and sociologists on the basis of objective

criteria.

The author characterizes spiritual experience by five main Dimensions:

- The search for interiority
- The search for self-knowledge
- The quest to surpass oneself
- The search for transcendence
- The search for wisdom

A. Research problematic

With the transition from an industrial society to a post-industrial society, religious and spiritual cults have become more and more present in the political, economic and social fields. Spirituality has become an important factor in the consumption pattern, as consumers seek products that have spiritual and religious value. The purpose of our research is to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent can spirituality be a factor of consumption?
2. What are the contributions of spiritual marketing?

B. Research methodology

First, we will present a literature review on the various contemporary theories which has enabled us to better position spirituality in the fields of consumption and marketing theories.

In the second part we will analyze the results of a quantitative study carried out on visitors to holy places to determine the characteristics of a spiritual experience. The analysis of these results makes it possible to build a segmentation and to propose managerial recommendations for the market of tomorrow.

C. Theoretical contribution

To fully understand the existing links between spirituality and marketing, we will present the subject according to three main dimensions: field of contemporary theories of consumption,

field of marketing, field of value theories.

1. Field of contemporary theories of consumption

Since the 1970s researchers have started to develop research on the concept of spirituality and its relation to contemporary theories of consumption following the transition from a modern society to a modern post office society.

Authors like "Firat and Venkatesh" identify modern postal society by three main elements:

- The fragmentation of experiences
- The decentralization of actions in companies
- The juxtaposition

According to Welliam the effects of spiritual changes characterized this period of transition from a modern society linked to a trend of traditional Marketing to a modern society where the consumer seeks to consume products that make him more and more happy and stable in his personal and professional life.

He characterizes these effects by three phenomes:

- Individualization
- Differentiation
- Globalization

However, other researchers like "Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry" view Consumption as a psychological experience and a phrenological process. For other authors "McCraken Rook and Belk" describe consumption as a classification of products according to their economic, social and cultural importance. Spirituality is an essential element in the product classification process for contemporary consumers.

Sherry and Arnould and Price consider consumption as a game between multiple players and spirituality can be a sucker factor for entrepreneurs looking to stimulate the hearts of their clients. It can be concluded that the set of places of products and objects that are related to the spiritual commercial sphere represent the essential elements of an experience of spiritual consumption

2. Spirituality in the field of marketing

1. The theories of values represent the theoretical fundamentals of all scientific research which aims to delimit the links between marketing and spirituality.
2. C-2-1- spirituality and theory of individual values

"Value is an enduring belief, that a specific mode of conduct or terminal state of existence is personally or socially preferable, to a reverse mode of conduct or terminal state of existence." Rokeach (2014) This theory emphasizes the four dimensions which summarize the links that exist between spirituality and the theory of individual values. These elements are: "spiritual life, piety, interior harmony and detachment".

A. Spirituality and consumer value

Spirituality is defined by one of the principal authors of this theory "as being a way of *in vitro* communing with the other whatever its origin or its culture" Hoolbrook (1982)

Other researchers like Evrard and Katz define spirituality in

the context of consumption as an element of ego defense.

The work of these authors has emphasized the notion of a spiritual consumer and presented the spirituality of a typology of consumer needs, Cova focuses this research on the concept of "value provided by meaning".

Cova (2005) affirms that the meaning is very subjective, we see that the value is as much linked to the person as to the thing and is therefore only appreciable at the personal level and in the interaction of the moment, the moment of the experience of consumption

We note according to the work of these authors that spirituality is an essential element in the pyramids of consumer needs.

B. Spirituality and experiential marketing

Experiential marketing is a main element of traditional Marketing, it generally concerns recent areas of marketing such as: tourism.

For Baudrillard consumers do not consume the products but the meaning of these products, it is in the same perspective that Badot and Coca spoke of the concept of "revenge of the sacred" by evoking the "need for sacralization of Western society, a need also spotted in the field of consumption".

For the authors of Experiential Marketing the place can provoke additional needs for the consumer by stimulating his inner state. What will influence his decision vis-à-vis the products.

In conclusion we can see that any spiritual and personal approach aims to seek wisdom in the products. This is explained in the thoughts of Meslin (2003) who states that "In the search for wisdom, the modalities of spiritual experience are diverse, and the paths that lead to it are manifold"

Man is naturally in search of wisdom and inner peace in all dimensions of his personal and professional life. The object of this modest work is to have the influence of a spiritual experience on the behavior of consumers.

Conclusion

Spiritual marketing is a new concept that is rarely discussed by French-speaking economists. This is the reason I chose this subject as the subject of my doctoral thesis. Consumers have become interested in "sacred" products that allow consumers to live stable, happy, and joyful and successful lives.

Religion has become a key element in the purchasing decision-making process for all contemporary consumers.

Some Media and Marketing specialists use religion and spirituality as an instrument of convection for their consumers. The practical implications of these theories can be found in many areas such as haj and Ummrah. We also note that large companies have started to integrate the concept of spirituality into their product policies to increase their turnover and achieve their business goals.

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