Cultural Assimilation and its Effects on Consumption Behaviors: An Examination of Shopping Behaviors and Preferences of U.S. Hispanic Immigrants

Mary Conway Dato-on*, David J. Burns**, Chris Manolis †, and Som Hanvanich † †

Although individuals of Hispanic origin represent the largest minority group in the U.S., relatively little research examines the shopping behaviors and preferences of these individuals. This study attempts such an investigation. Specifically, this research seeks to provide a better understanding of the desires and the shopping processes of Hispanic individuals, and to identify changes retailers and shopping centers can make to better reach and serve these individuals. The research accomplishes this objective by investigating variables known to influence consumer behaviors and preferences as individuals transition between cultures: acculturation and materialism. Hispanic consumers surveyed indicated they shop more frequently at Wal-Mart than local Hispanic markets and hold higher images of both Wal-Mart and local area malls than of Hispanic Markets. The differences are greater among low-acculturated Hispanic consumer than high-acculturated Hispanics. The highest motivations for shopping among Hispanics surveyed include value and role factors, thus indicating a preference for retailers with value-priced gifts for the entire family. Results regarding materialism among Hispanic consumers are not clear-cut. The paper concludes with a discussion of how to position shopping centers and malls to take advantage various shopping motivations. Of particular importance to researchers and practitioners is the segment of the Hispanic population examined in this study: relatively low-income and low-acculturation, located in a predominantly non-Hispanic marketplace, which is the fastest growing segment of the Hispanic population in the U.S., both in terms of geography and demographics.

Introduction

Immigration into the U.S. has reached levels not seen since the early 1900s. In March 2002, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the population of the U.S. included 32.5 million foreign-born individuals, representing 11.5 percent of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2002), including nearly 11 million "undocumented" individuals (Vence, 2005b). The largest segment of immigrants is from Hispanic countries. Indeed, individuals of Hispanic origin now represent the largest minority group in the United States (Gonzalez, 2003).

Despite the presence of this large consumer group with a growth rate at more than ten times that of the population on average (Vence, 2005a), relatively little research has examined the shopping behaviors and preferences of Hispanic individuals. Much of the existing "knowledge" about Hispanic shoppers consists of guesses and conjecture that are often based on stereotypes. This type of bias does little to provide retailers and managers of shopping centers with the insight necessary to satisfy this group of customers and to enjoy their continued patronage. Existing research (e.g., Gardyn and Fetto, 2003) indicates that the shopping behavior of this group of individuals differs significantly from the general population and may serve as a successful base for market

*   Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY 41099, or conwayme@nku.edu
** Xavier University, Cincinatti, OH 45207, or Burnsd@xavier.edu
†   Xavier University, Cincinatti, OH 45207
† † University of Illinois

segmentation (Donthu and Cherian, 1994). Furthermore, anecdotal evidence suggests that this group does not perceive that "conventional" retailers are able to satisfy their wants and needs and, as a result, often do not feel welcome at these outlets.

Mulhern and Williams (1994) suggest that the ethnic character of consumers is especially important to retailers. Since ethnic consumers, including Hispanic consumers, often reside in concentrated geographic areas (Frey, 1991; Massey and Denton, 1987; McHugh, 1989), retailers often find that they can target ethnic groups relatively easily by varying their offerings in ethnic markets. To effectively target ethnic markets, however, retailers must understand the differences, which may exist to be able to provide the selection of goods desired (Perkins, 2004). The objective of this study, therefore, is 1) to provide a better understanding of the desires and the shopping processes of Hispanic individuals and how they vary, and 2) to identify changes that conventional retailers and shopping centers can make to better reach and satisfy these individuals.

Literature Review

The U.S. Hispanic Population

The Hispanic population in the U.S. today is estimated at 41.3 million and is expected to reach 60 million by 2020 (Vence, 2006). Hispanics represent the fastest growing market segment (Fowler, Wesley and Vazquea, 2005), accounting for 40% of the increase in the U.S. population during the 1990s (Vence, 2006). Today, Hispanics comprise the largest ethnic minority in the U.S. (Wilson, 2005). Indeed, the U.S. possesses the fifth-largest Spanish-speaking population in the world (Travierso, 2001). However, despite the size of the Hispanic population, this market is often underserved and not well understood. "The marketing that has been done for the Hispanic market is not as sophisticated as [that done for] the general market. That's partly due to the fact that the Hispanic audience hasn't been researched to the degree that the general market has," according to Graham Hall, chief insights officer for the Bravo Group, a multicultural advertising agency (as reported in Vence (2006)).

The Hispanic population does not represent a race. Instead, the term "refers to a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuba, Central or other Spanish/Hispanic culture or origin, and is considered an ethnic category, rather than a racial group. Persons of Hispanic origin therefore may be of any race, and since their culture varies with the country of origin, the Spanish language often is the uniting factor" (Humphreys, 2004, p. 7). Culture is an important concern in marketing since it is related to the way individuals interpret their surroundings, including 1) possessions and other material items; 2) ideas, attitudes, and opinions; and 3) expected and acceptable behavior (Ferraro, 1994).

Most of the research which has examined Hispanics and the market they represent has focused on identifying differences which exist between them and non-Hispanics. Some of the areas examined include brand loyalty (e.g., Bristow and Asquith, 1999; Deshpande, Hoyer and Donhu, 1986; Livingston, 1992; Saegert, Hoover and Hilger, 1985; Webster, 1987), price sensitivity (e.g., Hoyer and Deshpande,

1982; Mulhern and Williams, 1994; Saegart and Yochum, 1986), advertising response (e.g., Hoyer and Deshpande, 1982; Kim and Kang, 2001; Petrozello, 1995; Ueltschy and Krampf, 1997), coupon usage (e.g., Donthu and Cherian, 1992), and national brand preference (e.g., Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donhu, 1986). While these studies contributed greatly to the understanding of Hispanics' market behaviors and attitudes versus the general population, the present study focuses on within-group differences by investigating the effects of different levels of acculturation.

Furthermore, family has been shown to be an important social grouping among Hispanics (Fowler, Wesley, and Vazquez, 2005; Howell, 2006). Hispanics tend to be more family centered than the general U.S. population with family structures resembling those of U.S. immigrants of the early 1900s or the nuclear family of the 1950s (Barbosa and Winebrenner, 2006). Consequently, for many Hispanics, their family exercises a significant effect on many if not most of their purchases (Barbosa and Winebrenner, 2006).

Contrary to the actions of many businesses and the focus of most research cited above, the Hispanic population does not represent a homogeneous group – Hispanics whose heritage lies in different countries (e.g., Mexico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Argentina) have been observed to differ significantly (Howell, 2006; Korgaonkar, Karson, and Lund, 2000; Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 1998; Vence, 2006). Furthermore, differences are also observed between individuals who are native-born in the U.S. and those who have immigrated (Vence, 2006). This view is consistent with the current trend employed by some retailers – demassification, where the Hispanic market is not viewed as a single monolith (Donthu and Cherian, 1994). Indeed, many retailers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to recognize and ultimately satisfy the wants and needs of each individual market segment they target.

The diversity inherent in the Hispanic market results from two types of differences: *intrinsic differences*, or differences resulting from the different countries and social circumstances which characterize one's past, and *identification differences*, or the degree to which one associates with a particular culture (Donthu and Cherian, 1994). Furthermore, studies of Hispanics in the U.S., have found two types of identification in this context: *episodic identification*, which involves feelings of identification, which arise from cultural events (Stayman and Despande, 1989), and *enduring identification*, which involves ongoing feelings toward a parent culture (Donthu and Cherian, 1994). Enduring identification is related to the degree to which one has become acculturated to the U.S. culture.

Acculturation

Acculturation has been defined as "the changes that occur when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact" (Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 1998, p. 253). Specifically, it involves the acquisition of the attitudes, values, and behaviors of the dominant culture (Ueltschy, 2002). Hirschman (1981) noted that degree of acculturation determines the degree of one's commitment to the norms and behavior associated with one's home culture: the greater the degree of acculturation, the lesser the degree of commitment to one's home culture, and vice

versa. Acculturation is viewed to be a nonlinear process (Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 1998). Peñaloza (1994) integrated and extended Barry and Kim's (1988) ideas in her consumer acculturation model that includes movement, translation, and adaptation processes.

The importance of acculturation as a marketing concept is widely accepted (Hernandez, Cohen, and Garcia, 2000). Jun, Ball, and Gentry (1993) and Gentry, Jun, and Tansuhaj (1995), for instance, observed that acculturation can be used to successfully segment immigrant markets. Furthermore, degrees of acculturation have been observed to be related to individuals' demographic characteristics. Kara (1996) observed that Hispanics exhibiting a higher level of acculturation tend to be younger, whereas those exhibiting a lesser degree of acculturation tend to be older and demonstrate different behavior patterns. Donthu and Cherian (1994) observed that Hispanics exhibiting a higher level of acculturation are less likely to see the importance in locating Hispanic vendors. They are also less likely to exhibit behaviors and hold attitudes and opinions toward shopping activities and choices that characterize Hispanic culture than those with lower levels of acculturation. Therefore, more acculturated Hispanics can be expected to be more satisfied with existing shopping opportunities than Hispanics who are less acculturated. Furthermore, Berkowitz, Bao, and Allaway (2005) observed that some differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in shopping behavior vanish when the extent of the acculturation of Hispanics is ignored (see also Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donhu, 1986).

Peñaloza (1994) notes that paradoxes exist in the assimilation of many Hispanics. Specifically she suggests that Mexican respondents consume both to assimilate to the U.S. mainstream culture and, at the same time, to maintain connections to their home culture. Barbosa and Winebrenner (2006), for instance, observe that the holidays celebrated by Hispanic individuals represent a mixture of those celebrated in their home countries and those celebrated in the U.S. Hernandez, Cohen, and Garcia (2000) suggest that the most common approach to acculturation taken by Hispanics involves the integration of U.S. customs into existing customs, representing more of a biculturalization than the replacement of a previous culture.

As mentioned above, the Spanish language is an important identifier of the Hispanic population. Moreover, language is also an important indicator of acculturation. Higher English proficiency and lower proficiency with Spanish are both indicators of increased acculturation (AC Nielson, 2002). Although most Hispanics are adept with the English language (Ueltschy, 2002), the emotional attachment to Spanish often remains (Haegele, 2000). Roslow and Nicholls (1996). For instance, note that Hispanics often prefer Spanish-language media since it often reflects the Hispanic culture. Similarly, Davis (1997) notes that a majority of Hispanics do not only believe that the use of Spanish is sufficient (e.g., merely translating advertisements into Spanish), but that a Spanish-based communication style should be employed. Use of the Spanish language, therefore, remains a distinguishing characteristic of the Hispanic population, regardless of the degree of one's acculturation. Virtually all Hispanics speak some Spanish at home, whereas over 85% speak Spanish at work or at school (Synovate Research, 2004). Furthermore, 95% of Hispanics consume some form of Hispanic media daily. These language preferences and practices of Hispanics also affect how

they prefer to interact with products, as this would suggest that they expect culturally relevant products and services (Vence 2006).

Retailing to the Hispanic Market

Although many product marketers have successfully used segmentation strategies to reach Hispanic individuals, the success of major retailers have not been as great (Peñaloza, 1994). Many of the retail stores which have been especially able to cater to the Hispanic market are independent establishments and small chains, such as the La Curacao chain in Southern California, who possess in-depth knowledge of the Hispanic market and the flexibility to cater to these individuals better than larger chain stores (Jordan, 2004; Vence, 2005b). Many national retailers, however, are generally not as appealing to Hispanic shoppers (Popovec, 2006) and are losing significant numbers of customers to their smaller competitors. This lack of success is not due to a lack of interest, as many national retailers are actively attempting to attract Hispanic consumers; this failure is more likely due to a lack of an adequate level of understanding of this market segment (Bristow and Asquith, 1999). Indeed, large retailers must rely on satisfying a wide variety of market segments to generate adequate sales volume to succeed (Burns and Warren 2003). To do so, however, the specific wants and needs of each segment, including Hispanic segments of the population, must be known and satisfied.

The retail food area is especially illuminating and is particularly important since Hispanics spend 46% more than the typical American consumer on groceries ("Study Sheds Light on Latino Shopping Preferences", 2005). (The higher expenditures on food may result from the tendency of Hispanics to seek out specialized and higher-priced food products which have lower total demand within an area, larger family sizes, and a larger social significance on activities associated with food). Even when supermarkets are easily accessible, ethnic individuals who are not highly acculturated tend to continue to patronize traditional outlets (Goldman and Hino, 2005). Those who patronize supermarkets tend to exhibit "selective adoption," buying selected product categories at supermarkets while continuing to shop at traditional stores for others. Specific reasons for these shopping patterns are thought to include lack of a sufficient product mix in supermarkets (Goldman and Hino, 2005), differing attitudes towards food (e.g., preparation, sources of ingredients, importance/meaning of quality, and freshness), and differing attitudes toward shopping activities. Although significant differences in the shopping behavior and preferences by Hispanics exist by level of acculturation, the shopping behavior and preferences of the most highly acculturated individuals still differ significantly from non-Hispanics. Majorities of English-speaking Hispanics, for instance, prefer bilingual signage and view Hispanic products as being important ("Study Sheds Light on Latino Shopping Preferences", 2005).

Hispanics, however, are not entirely negative toward retail offerings in the U.S. For instance, the ability to touch and handle merchandise prior to purchase at most U.S. retailers is appreciated, as are longer opening hours and an emphasis on cleanliness (Fowler, Wesley, and Vazquez, 2005). Consequently, Hispanics appear to hold very favorable impressions toward selected national retailers, such as Wal-

Mart which are able to provide the accessible product assortments, longer store hours, and a cleaner environment than most smaller independent competitors (Fowler, Wesley, and Vazquez, 2005). Specific improvements and recommendations desired of conventional retailers by Hispanic shoppers include larger dressing rooms and rest rooms to accommodate larger families, Mexican restaurants and entertainment offered in shopping centers, longer hours of operation, and bilingual employees and signage (Fowler, Wesley, and Vazquez, 2005).

Materialism

The success of retailers and shopping center managers in reaching and satisfying Hispanic customers depends on their knowledge of the desires and the motivations of these shoppers, including the meanings associated with products and with consumption. The following discussion on materialism and hedonic shopping motivations emphasizes differences which may exist in these two concepts among Hispanic customers.

Materialism is the belief in the importance of the role that material possessions play in individuals' lives (Larsen, Sirgy, and Wright, 1999). Within a consumer culture where materialism is a pervasive belief, such as in the U.S., possessions assume central places in individuals' lives and are regarded as the greatest source of satisfaction (Richins, 1987). Richins and Dawson (1992) have identified three themes commonly occurring in conversations on materialism: acquisition centrality, acquisition as the pursuit of happiness, and acquisition as the measure of success. Each of these themes will be briefly explored.

Highly materialistic individuals primarily focus on physical possessions, often placing them at the center of their lives (Richins and Dawson, 1992). Indeed, for these individuals possessions are viewed as being more important than virtually anything else, including religion and interpersonal relationships (Bredemeier and Toby, 1960). Consequently, the primary pursuit of highly materialistic individuals is the acquisition of products; indeed, everything in life, from employment to leisure activities, is centered on products and their acquisition. Materialism provides meaning to the lives of individuals with high materialistic tendencies and, in essence, creates a lifestyle for them – "we live to consume" (Daun, 1983).

Furthermore, product acquisition is viewed as the primary source of happiness by highly materialistic individuals. "Possessions assume a central place in a person's life and are believed to provide the greatest sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction." (Belk, 1984, p.291). This viewpoint is illustrated through the adage that money (and the possessions they allow) is the source of all happiness, despite the fact that little empirical evidence supports this relationship (Kasser, 2002). Several (e.g, Sirgy, et. al., 1995; Kasser and Ryan, 1993, 1996) have actually observed a negative relationship between need satisfaction and income.

Finally, highly materialistic individuals view the quantity and quality of physical possessions as the ultimate measure of success in life. The idea that possessions are viewed as integral defining elements of one's self is not new (e.g., Cooley, 1902, 1908; James, 1890), but in a consumer culture they are the primary defining element

(Slater, 1997). Individuals with high materialistic tendencies "tend to judge their own and others' success by the number and quality of possessions accumulated" (Richins and Dawson, 1992, p. 304). Possessions are viewed as a means to communicate status (Veblen, 1934) and to project a desired self image (Campbell, 1987). For highly materialistic individuals, the ultimate goal in life can be summed up by the adage "The one who dies with the most toys win."

Belk recognized that materialism is multifaceted, including the constructs of possessiveness, non-generosity, and envy (Belk, 1984). He defines possessiveness as "the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one's possessions" (1985, p. 267), and reflects a desire to exercise control over one's environment. Belk defines non-generosity as "an unwillingness to give possessions to or share possessions with others" (1984, p. 291), and reflects a desire to retain one's belongings. Finally, Schoeck (1966) defines envy as "displeasure and ill-will at the superiority of (another person) in happiness, success, reputation, or the possession of anything desirable," and reflects a desire for the possessions of others.

Although materialism is commonly conceptualized as an individual trait (e.g. Belk, 1985), materialism and its manifestation are affected to a great extent by culture (McKendrick, 1982). The consumer culture characterized by contemporary Western society, for instance, is marked by high levels of materialism (Kasser and Kanner 2004). In such societies, one's possessions have achieved a level of importance in many individuals' lives, surpassing that of virtually anything else, including friends, neighbors, and even family (Miller 2004; Pooler 2003). In cultures where the importance of family reigns supreme, such as the cultures found in the home countries of Hispanic immigrants, however, individuals tend to be significantly less materialistic (Roberts, Gwin and Martíñez, 2004). The extent to which Hispanic individuals exhibit materialism, therefore, may be influenced by the extent to which they have become acculturated to the U.S. culture – it indicates the degree to which the qualities of the home cultures of Hispanic immigrants are replaced by qualities of their new home in the U.S.

Hedonic Shopping Motivations

In an examination of shopping behavior, Berkowitz, Bao, and Allaway (2005) suggest that a relationship between individuals' ethnic status (Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic) and behavior toward differing types of products (hedonic vs. utilitarianism) may exist. This calls for an examination of the hedonic shopping motivations of Hispanic individuals.

Only recently has the role of hedonic motivations in shopping behavior been acknowledged to any great extent (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982). Traditionally, shopping behavior has been viewed merely as an utilitarian exercise to fulfill mostly physical needs (Babin, Darden, and Griffin, 1994; Batra and Aholta, 1991) as suggested by the prototypical "consumer decision-making process" included in most marketing and retailing textbooks. In reality, however, a significant percentage of individuals' shopping trips and product purchases are not made to fulfill utilitarian physical needs, but instead to fulfill hedonically related non-physical needs, such as

love, companionship, or self-esteem (e.g., Cooper, McLoughlin, and Keating, 2005: Ferguson, 1992; Holt, 2002). Indeed, some suggest that nearly all of the purchases in a consumer culture are hedonically based (Ferguson, 1992; Langman, 1992).

Many attempts have been made to develop taxonomies of shopping motivations. This appears to be a profitable line of inquiry since research suggests that such motivations represent a basic part of personality affecting much of an individual's consumption-related behavior (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). Shopping motivations have been examined from a number of perspectives. The three most commonly employed perspectives include the consumer-typology perspective (e.g., Darden and Ashton, 1978; Moschis, 1976), the psychological/lifestyles perspective (e.g., Lastovicka, 1982; Wells, 1974), and the consumer characteristics perspective (e.g., Sproles and Kendall, 1986; Sproles and Sproles, 1990). Each of these approaches, however, treats shopping activity primarily from a utilitarian perspective. As discussed above, however, much of consumers' shopping activity arises from hedonic motivations. In response, Arnold and Reynolds (2003) examined individuals' hedonic shopping motivations and developed a scale to measure hedonic shopping motivation profiles based on adventure (shopping for stimulation and adventure), social (enjoyment from shopping and interacting with others), gratification (shopping to overcome a negative mood or as a special treat), idea (shopping to keep informed about trends), role (enjoyment for shopping for others), and value (shopping for sales and bargains). No known studies have examined the hedonic shopping motivations of Hispanic individuals.

Hypotheses

Given the previous research on the Hispanic population in the U.S. and theories outlined above, we examine the following hypotheses.

H1:   Hispanic consumers' needs are not being fulfilled by present "conventional" retailers.

   H1a: Shopping behaviors among Hispanic consumers differ between local Hispanic markets, Wal-Mart, and a local mall.

   H1b: Hispanic consumers with differing levels of acculturation perceive Hispanic markets, Wal-Mart, and a local mall differently.

H2:   Shopping preferences of Hispanic consumers are affected by their level of acculturation, materialism, and select demographic variables.

H3:   Shopping behaviors of Hispanic consumers at Hispanic markets, Wal-Mart, and a local mall are affected by their level of acculturation, materialism, and select demographic variables.

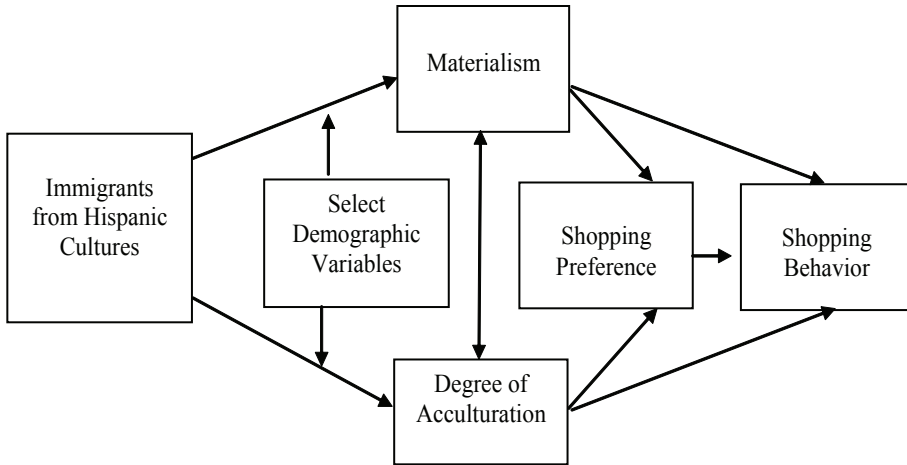Figure 1 depicts the proposed relationships among the variables studied.

Figure 1
Model of Various Influences on Shopping Preferences/Behaviors among Hispanic Immigrants in the U.S.

Methodology

Of the many studies that examine the shopping activities and attitudes of Hispanic individuals, a majority have been of an exploratory nature, primarily using focus group interviews (e.g., Fowler, Wesley, and Vazquez, 2005). Although the results of these focus group interviews have been insightful, a more structured approach would permit a more in-depth examination of the critical variables and an assessment of the validity of the conclusions drawn from focus groups. Therefore, the data for this study was gathered via written questionnaires. The original English version of the questionnaires was translated into Spanish by a professional translator, and checked using a back translation by a different translator. It was important that the translation process concentrated on the cultural meanings of the questions, consistent with McGorry (2000). The majority of respondents ($n = 156$ or 98%) elected to complete the Spanish language version of the survey. The questionnaires were distributed at a Hispanic festival (Centro de Amistad's Kermesse Latino Festival). Vence (2006) suggests that Hispanic events represent one of the most effective methods of targeting Hispanic individuals for marketing research (e.g., Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 1998).

All data was collected in the Cincinnati metro area, including Northern Kentucky where the Hispanic population is growing, but remains a small portion of the total population. Local census data for the area indicates that in 2004, 1.6 % of the local population was of Hispanic origin, with a growth rate between 30 and 43% since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). A 2005 Greater Cincinnati Hispanic/Latino Health Survey (which included seven counties in northern Kentucky), funded by The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, found 18 different countries of origin in the Hispanic population of the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky region. Of the 500 survey respondents surveyed in the Health Foundation survey, the largest portion were from Mexico (40%)

followed by Guatemala (16%), Peru (13.4%), and Columbia (5.9%). The same study indicated most Hispanic residents are recent arrivals to the U.S.; as of 2004, 90% had lived in the country for less than 10 years and in the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region for less than 5 years. The researchers reported that nearly 80% of population can be considered to have low levels of acculturation.

Although the reported Hispanic population in the region surveyed is substantially lower than what is reported in states such as California, Texas, and New Mexico, the Hispanic population has grown significantly in Middle America. Additionally, unlike states with large Hispanic populations, Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky have few (if any) existing Spanish-language resources for recent immigrants. Predictions estimate that the Hispanic population will continue to grow at a rapid pace due to the young population and high fertility rates, which will increase the need for services targeting Hispanic residents and shoppers (Blewett, Fuentes, Smaida, and Zuehlke, 2003). The lack of services and gathering points for Hispanic residents in the region surveyed suggests that our approach to collecting data amongst the attendees at a Spanish-language festival would result in a representative sample of the region's Hispanic population.

The resulting sample for the present study consists of surveys of 160 Hispanic individuals. Table 1 reports the sample demographics. Of the 148 respondents who shared information about their country of birth, 90% were born outside the U.S., with the largest percentage (67%, or 108) being from Mexico. Fifty-three percent of respondents were male and 47% were female. The average age of the respondents was 31.6 years, with an average of 10.3 years of education. The majority of respondents reported being employed (101, or 63%) and many (114, or 71.3%) reported multiple people employed in the household. Most respondents have access to reliable private transportation (122, or 76.3%) and very few use public transportation to access shopping centers (32, or 20%).

Statistically, respondents have lived in the U.S. for an average of 10.2 years, but this figure is deceiving; the high standard deviation (9.27) indicates substantial variability with the data. The median years living in the U.S. is 6.79 years with a minimum of 8 months and a maximum of 63 years. Similarly, the personal and household monthly incomes reported show great variability (personal income mean $1,219, S.D. = $996, household income mean $2,425, S.D. = $1,936). The average household size is 4 people. The demographics of this study mirror statistics found in other recent studies of the Hispanic population in the region, including proportion of Mexicans, years of residence, and average age and income (The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, 2006).

Instruments

Several instruments were used to collect data in this study:

Degree of Acculturation. Multiple instruments have been utilized to measure the degree of acculturation in published studies (Dato-on, 2000). For this study, the Ethnic Identification Scale (Donthu and Cherian, 1994) was used to measure ethnic

Table 1
Sample Population Demographics

Variable		Mean	Std. dev.
Years in US		10.23	9.27
Age		31.6	12.6
Household Size		4.0	1.6
Education		10.3	4.04
Personal Income ($/mo)		1,219	966
HH Income ($/mo)		2,425	1,936

Variable		n	% of responses
Gender	Male	73	45.6
	Female	82	51.3
Access to Car	Yes	122	76.3
	No	30	18.8
Public Transit to Shop?	Yes	32	20.0
	No	119	74.4
Currently Employed	Yes	101	63.0
	No	52	32.5
HH Employ	Yes	114	71.3
	No	39	24.4
Mother has lived in US	Yes	56	35.0
	No	97	60.5
Father has lived in US	Yes	57	35.5
	No	96	60.0

identification of Hispanic individuals. The original scale contains four items designed to measure degree of identification with one's ethnic group. The more strongly one identifies with their ethnic group (i.e., Hispanic), the less acculturated one is perceived to be. Both the original and the present versions of the scale use a 5-item Likert-type response with a higher number indicating low acculturation. Although the scale showed good reliability in its original use ($\alpha = 0.79$), the reliability in the current study was disappointing ($\alpha = 0.61$). The low reliability could be due, in part, to the biculturalization of the Hispanic population referred to by Hernandez, Cohen, and Garcia (2000). To overcome the low reliability we used the two significantly correlated items ("I identify strongly with being a Hispanic-Latino," and "My family speaks Spanish at home," $r = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$) to develop an abbreviated scale. The mean split (mean 4.04) method was used to divide the sample population into highly acculturated ($n = 77$) and low acculturated ($n = 75$) Hispanics.

Materialism. Materialism was measured using the new abbreviated form of the Materials Values Scale developed by Richins (2004), which is a shorter, but valid version of the original developed by Richins and Dawson (1992). Although the original scale has proven to be a suitable instrument over a decade of use, the shortened scale

provides for more efficient administration and addresses concerns relating to social desirability (the tendency to answer questions which support one's self-concept as to conveying objective reality) and dimensional purity. The scale demonstrates acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.786$) in the current study. The low mean (mean 2.89) in the present study supports the suggestion of low general levels of materialism in the Hispanic population.

Shopping Preferences. The Hedonic Shopping Motivation (HSM) Scale of Arnold and Reynolds (2003) was used to assess subjects' shopping preferences. The HSM was developed to assess the sensory-based shopping motivations used by individuals in the marketplace. These motivations indicate the nature of the shopping environment preferred and thus, the types of shopping experiences sought. These preferences, in turn, affect one's choice of shopping outlet. The original HSM scale consists of 18 items with six distinct factors (*Adventure*, *Gratification*, *Role*, *Value*, *Social*, and *Idea or Novelty*). To our knowledge this is the first study to use the scale with all respondents from a single ethnic group, and primarily in a language other than English. During the translation process, one item was deleted from the scale ("I go shopping to keep up with new trends") because no clear translation could distinguish it from the item, "I go shopping to keep up with new fashions". The remaining 17 items used in the present study show strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.874$). Given the use of the scale in a sample different from that used in the construction and refinement of the scale, the scale was factor analyzed. The factor analysis supported five of the six factors originally identified by Arnold and Reynolds (2003) with robust reliabilities: *Adventure* (0.797), *Role* (0.761), *Value* (0.780), *Social* (0.831), and *Idea or Novelty* (0.737). The *Gratification* factor, however, did not clearly load on any one factor and was thus eliminated from further analysis. The modification to the existing hedonic shopping motivation scale supports the assertion of Berkowitz, Bao, and Allay (2005) that relationships between individuals' ethnic status and shopping preferences may exist.

Past research (Peñaloza, 1994, 1995; Peñaloza and Gilly, 1999) suggests that Hispanics may desire different shopping services than non-Hispanics. The qualitative research conducted by Peñaloza and colleagues served as a guide to compile a Hispanic Shopping Services scale for use in the current study. Although the scale includes several items, which reflect the relative economic level of many Hispanics, it represents the items that Hispanics, as a group, appear to desire. Hence, when targeting Hispanics, these services appear to be those which retailers may need to consider offering to specifically target the needs of Hispanic communities. The scale asks respondents to rate their preference for seven shopping services on a 5-point Likert-type scale. This list of services included: pawnbrokers (mean 2.79), money transfer services (e.g., Western Union, mean 3.34), check-cashing (mean 3.47), international telephone services (mean 3.54), international telephone cards (mean 3.75), on-site credit and payments (mean 3.64), and repair and use instructions, such as for electronics (mean 3.60). The scale was reliable based on an α of 0.814.

Shopping Behavior. Given the difficulty of objectively evaluating actual shopping behavior via questionnaires, shopping behavior was instead assessed by evaluating images of primary shopping alternatives held by subjects. Positive store

image originates in part from past positive shopping experiences with the store, and contributes to loyal patronage behavior (Ozman, 1993). Several researchers (e.g., Zimmer and Golden, 1988) have argued that an unstructured method is the only appropriate approach to measure store image. Chowdhury, Reardon, and Srivastava (1998) empirically demonstrate the superiority of measuring store image via a structured technique.

Consequently, in this research store image was measured using the scale developed by Manolis, Keep, Joyce, and Lambert (1994). Shopping images were assessed for Wal-Mart, a local shopping mall, and a Hispanic market well known to the subject. Given the neighborhood nature of most Hispanic-oriented stores, as discussed earlier, a single store cannot be used to represent the Hispanic market shopping alternative. Higher scores on the measure indicate that individuals possess a more favorable image of the shopping alternative. Cronbach's α's for the scale used to assess the image held of the Hispanic market, Wal-Mart, and mall were 0.90, 0.93, and 0.93, respectively. A factor analysis revealed that each store image consists of only one factor.

Demographics. Finally, demographics, including information on sex, age, country of birth, size of household, length of stay in the U.S., and others were gathered.

Results

Hypothesis 1a proposes that Hispanic consumers perceive differences across the store images of local Hispanic markets, Wal-Mart, and a local mall. This assertion was tested via one-sample t-tests. Results, reported in Table 2, indicate a significant difference in respondent's image perception of a local Hispanic market versus Wal-Mart (mean 3.53 versus 3.84, $p < 0.000$); and local Hispanic markets versus a local mall (mean 3.53 versus 3.78, $p < 0.000$). Respondents, therefore, appear to hold a higher image of Wal-Mart and the local mall than their local Hispanic market. Interestingly, Wal-Mart received the highest percent of agreement (76%) with the statement "I frequently shop at the store." The local Hispanic Market received 70% agreement and only 67% of respondents agreed that they shop at the local mall frequently. To investigate possible underlying reasons for the difference in image perception, mean scores of the three shopping alternatives were compared for low versus high acculturated Hispanics (*H1b*).

ANOVAs were used to test Hypothesis 1b, and the results are reported in Table 3. These indicate that level of acculturation has a significant effect on the perceived image of Wal-Mart, but no significant effect for a local Hispanic market or for a local mall. Low-acculturated Hispanics appear to view Wal-Mart more favorably than high-acculturated Hispanics (mean 3.96 versus 3.73, $p < 0.05$). Low-acculturated Hispanics also agree with the statement "I frequently shop at Wal-Mart" significantly more than high-acculturated Hispanics (mean 4.19 versus 3.76, $p < 0.05$). No significant relationship can be found in shopping frequency between high and low acculturated Hispanics for a local mall (mean 3.73 versus 3.77). Interestingly, this indicates low-acculturated Hispanics hold more positive perceived images of all three stores, even

Table 2
Store Image (H1a)

	t	*df*	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Wal-Mart	5.176	139	0.000
Local Mall	4.497	123	0.000

Table 3
Store Image for Low vs. High Acculturated Hispanics (H1b)

		df	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Hispanic market	Between Groups	1	1.432	3.280	0.072
	Within Groups	134	.437		
	Total	135			
Wal-Mart	Between Groups	1	1.757	3.672	0.057
	Within Groups	136	.478		
	Total	137			
Local Mall	Between Groups	1	.161	0.426	0.515
	Within Groups	120	.377		
	Total	121			

though only two differences between means are significant. Therefore, the evidence supports both Hypothesis 1a and 1b.

Hypothesis 2 states that shopping preferences among Hispanics are affected by level of acculturation, materialism, and select demographic variables (education, income, and household size). Shopping preferences were operationalized by using the five factors in the Arnold and Reynolds (2003) Hedonic Shopping Motivation scale. To test Hypothesis 2, a correlation analysis was used to identify the existence of significant relationships, which are displayed in Table 4. Furthermore, a series of regression models were employed, one for each of the five hedonic shopping motivations, to explore which items could best explain the variation observed in hedonic shopping motivations. The results are displayed in Table 5.

Acculturation is significantly and positively correlated with only one of the hedonic shopping motivations (*Value*) at the 0.05 level. This indicates that less-acculturated Hispanic consumers may be more value-oriented than more acculturated Hispanics. (Note that a high number on the acculturation scale indicates *low* acculturation.) Materialism is significantly and positively correlated with each of the hedonic shopping motivations. When demographics are examined, household size is significantly and positively correlated with value orientation (individuals in larger households are more value-oriented than those in smaller households). Finally, income is significantly and positively correlated with materialism, as well as the *Adventure* hedonic shopping motivation; individuals with higher incomes appear to be more

Table 4
H2 Correlations

	Household Size	Income	Education	Acculturation	Materialism	HSM Adventure	HSM Role	HSM Value	HSM Social	HSM Idea
Income	-0.211 *									
Education	-0.148	0.148								
Acculturation	0.060	0.061	-0.121							
Materialism	0.063	0.237 *	-0.161	0.147						
HSM Adventure	-0.045	0.216 *	-0.032	0.005	0.638 **					
HSM Role	0.082	-0.064	-0.030	0.104	0.268 **	0.174 *				
HSM Value	0.189 *	0.115	-0.067	0.185 *	0.275 **	0.186 *	0.448 **			
HSM Social	0.095	-0.083	-0.073	0.064	0.405 **	0.244 **	0.455 **	0.328 **		
HSM Idea	-0.012	0.033	-0.168	0.086	0.555 **	0.421 **	0.295 **	0.293 **	0.404 **	
Hispanic Services	0.144	-0.077	0.000	0.139	0.010	-0.075	0.192*	0.035	0.208 **	0.112

*   Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5

Regression Results: Shopping Preferences and Hedonic Shopping Motives

Independent Variables	Coefficient
Adventure: $F(5, 68) = 14.025$, $p < 0.001$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.471$	
Intercept	0.252
Household Size	-0.999
Education	0.073
Income	0.121
Materialism	0.685**
Acculturation	-0.044
Role: $F(5, 67) = 1.76$, $p > 0.10$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.050$	
Intercept	2.107*
Household Size	-0.056
Education	0.082
Income	-0.143
Materialism	0.339*
Acculturation	0.076
Value: $F(5, 67) = 4.49$, $p < 0.01$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.195$	
Intercept	1.487*
Household Size	0.104
Education	-0.047
Income	0.150
Materialism	0.299*
Acculturation	0.232*
Social: $F(5, 68) = 4.45$, $p < 0.001$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.189$	
Intercept	1.340
Household Size	-0.052
Education	0.110
Income	-0.256*
Materialism	0.499**
Acculturation	0.042
Idea: $F(5, 69) = 6.587$, $p < 0.001$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.274$	
Intercept	1.005
Household Size	-0.058
Education	-0.130
Income	-0.068
Materialism	0.556**
Acculturation	-0.082

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

adventurous in their shopping activities than individuals with lesser incomes. Education is not significantly correlated to any other variables in the present study. When the results across the regression analyses are viewed, the importance of materialism in the variation observed in the hedonic shopping motivations becomes more apparent. For three of the hedonic shopping motivations (*Adventure*, *Role*, and *Idea or Novelty*), materialism is the only significant independent variable in the model, at the 0.05 level. For the *Value* hedonic shopping motivation, the significant independent variables include materialism and acculturation, and for the *Social* hedonic shopping motivation, materialism and income are significant.

With Hispanic shopping services, no significant correlations exist at the 0.05 level between acculturation, materialism, and select demographic variables (education, income, and household size). Hispanic shopping services, however, are positively and significantly correlated to the *Role* and *Social* factors of hedonic shopping motivations. A regression analysis shows that the significant independent variables include acculturation and income (see Table 6).

In summary, the results support Hypothesis 2. For the hedonic shopping motivations, materialism is the primary source of the differences observed: individuals with higher levels of materialism have stronger hedonic shopping motivations than individuals with lower levels of materialism. For shopping services, however, it is those individuals with higher incomes and those with lower levels of acculturation that appear to possess more desire for the examined services.

Hypothesis 3 states that shopping behaviors among Hispanics are affected by level of acculturation, materialism, and select demographic variables (education, income, and household size). Shopping behaviors were operationalized as the images held of three primary shopping alternatives: Hispanic markets, Wal-Mart, and a local shopping mall. To test Hypothesis 3, a correlation analysis was used to identify the existence of significant relationships, and the results are displayed in Table 7. A series of regression models were developed, one for each of the three shopping alternatives, to explore which items could best explain the variation observed. The results are given in Table 8.

Table 6
Regression Results Shopping Preferences

Hispanic Shopping Services $F(5, 61) = 3.008$, $p < 0.05$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.132$	
Independent Variables	*Coefficient*
Intercept	1.690*
Household Size	0.002
Education	0.153
Income	0.246*
Materialism	0.051
Acculturation	0.406**

Table 7
Correlations of Hypothesis Three

	Household Size	Income	Education	Acculturation	Materialism	Wal-Mart	Local Mall
Income	-0.211*						
Education	-0.148	0.148					
Acculturation	0.060	0.061	-0.121				
Materialism	0.063	0.237*	-0.161	0.147			
Wal-Mart	0.230**	0.059	-0.088	0.162	0.124		
Local Mall	0.074	0.309**	0.031	0.060	0.224*	0.578**	
Hispanic Market	0.253**	0.143	-0.128	0.155	0.206*	0.486**	0.387**

*   Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 8
Store Images

Independent Variables	Coefficient
Hispanic Market: $F(5, 68) = 2.47$, $p < 0.041$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.092$	
Intercept	2.680**
Household Size	0.126
Education	-0.204
Income	0.120
Materialism	0.063
Acculturation	0.206
Wal-Mart: $F(5, 65) = 2.58$, $p < 0.035$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.104$	
Intercept	2.895**
Household Size	-0.061
Education	-0.103
Income	-0.160
Materialism	0.054
Acculturation	0.353*
Local Mall: $F(5, 60) = 3.21$, $p < 0.012$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.145$	
Intercept	2.698**
Household Size	-0.082
Education	-0.111
Income	0.240
Materialism	0.156
Acculturation	0.248*

*   Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**   Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The image held of the Hispanic markets by respondents is significantly and positively correlated with household size and materialism at the 0.05 level. The image held of Wal-Mart is only significantly and positively correlated to household size. Finally, the image held of the local shopping mall by respondents is significantly and positively related to income and materialism. It appears that only three of the items examined relate to the images held of the different shopping alternatives and may indicate that different stores may fulfill different roles. The regression analyses show that acculturation is the only source for the variation observed, and only for Wal-Mart and the local mall. In both instances, less acculturated individuals hold higher images of the shopping alternative than highly acculturated individuals. These results are consistent with Hypothesis 3.

Discussion

The overriding purpose of this study is to assess current opinions of shopping alternatives from the perspective of the Hispanic consumer and to provide retailers and managers of shopping centers with the insight necessary to satisfy Hispanic customers and to enjoy their continued patronage. Specifically, this study seeks to provide a better understanding of the desires and the shopping processes of Hispanic individuals, and to identify changes retailers and shopping centers can make to better reach and serve these individuals. The research accomplishes this objective by investigating variables known to influence consumer behaviors and preferences as individual's transition between cultures: acculturation and materialism.

Many interesting findings are directly and tangentially related to the proposed hypotheses in the current study of the Cincinnati metro area. On the whole, results indicate Hispanic shoppers may be more satisfied with shopping alternatives than previously suggested (Popovec, 2006). Hispanic consumers surveyed indicate they shop more frequently at Wal-Mart than local Hispanic markets and hold higher store images of both Wal-Mart and local area malls than of Hispanic markets. These differences are even stronger when the degree of acculturation is taken into consideration. That is, low-acculturated Hispanic consumers shop more frequently and have higher perceptions of Wal-Mart and the local mall than do high-acculturated Hispanics.

The opportunity for retailers to convert these positive images and frequent visits to profitable customer relationships seems to rest on the perception of the value orientation of the store. *Value* was clearly found to be the most influential shopping motivation among Hispanic consumers surveyed. The mean score for the *Value* factor in the hedonic shopping motivation scale (mean 3.73) is the highest of all factors, indicating Hispanic consumers are truly motivated by value. Respondents clearly see Wal-Mart as the value store among the three alternatives and low-acculturated Hispanics hold this view most strongly. Interestingly, the second highest mean score is for the *Role* factor (mean 3.65), indicating the importance of shopping for others among Hispanics. This clearly offers an opportunity for retailers to position themselves as "gift destinations" where Hispanic consumers can shop for all of the important people in their lives. Combining this message with value would surely be a successful marketing strategy. Hispanic consumers also rank socialization as an important motive

for shopping (mean 3.21). This finding supports previous research and should serve as a strong suggestion to managers and planners that there is a need for social gathering spaces in shopping centers, such as large food courts and sitting areas with room for children to play. The two remaining shopping motivation factors, *Adventure* (mean 2.53) and *Idea or Novelty* (mean 1.96) average below the neutral point on the scale, indicating that escapism and fashion-following are not as important.

Reviewing individual items of the store image scale reveals the preference for merchandise selection, reputation, and service offered by Wal-Mart over Hispanic markets. However, despite lower perceptions of selection, service, reputation, and appearance of Hispanic markets, a significant majority (70%) of respondents continue to shop there frequently. This finding seems to support previous research that suggests such markets offer culturally relevant products not offered at mainstream retail outlets (Goldman and Hino, 2005). This finding further suggests that national retailers should consider increasing such product offerings, subject to the needs of the local community, to increase the purchase volume per visit. The importance of merchandise variety and customer service is echoed elsewhere in the results, as respondents ranked these two items as highest among a selection of preferences. That is, respondents have a definite preference for stores with a large variety of items (e.g., Wal-Mart, Biggs) over shops with a deep assortment in one category (e.g., Toys R Us, PayLess Shoes). This finding is particularly interesting when considering the strong desire for value among Hispanic shoppers. Traditionally, category killers such as Toys R Us are perceived to offer the best value yet consumers surveyed want value and selection across multiple categories. Future research should investigate this connection further especially considering the social value derived from the shopping experience. If Hispanic consumers are shopping in multi-generation family units, as suggested by Peñaloza (1994) and others, having one location that can serve the needs of several family members may be paramount in household store selection.

Local mall operators may be consoled that Hispanic consumers clearly find malls to be the most "high class" of the three shopping alternatives in our study. Unfortunately, this high image does not convert to more frequent store visits or higher overall impressions of malls when compared to discounters such as Wal-Mart. Thus, Hispanic consumers clearly understand the role of the mall as a more elegant place to shop, but the value proposition of alternatives keeps them shopping elsewhere. Mall operators who wish to attract more Hispanic shoppers may want to increase marketing messages related to value and merchandise selection in a more pleasant and relaxing atmosphere. This recommendation mirrors findings of a recent Wall Street Journal study which suggests that catering to Hispanics can help revive the traditional mall (Chittum, 2006). Changes made to traditional malls that have successfully attracted more Hispanic shoppers include adding movies with Spanish sub-titles and hosting *Fiesta de la Familia* (Family Festival). The popularity of these efforts support our finding that social motivations drive many Hispanic shoppers. Malls may even consider adding convenience-oriented big boxes to attract customers interested in value, selection, and image (Spector, 2004). Fortunately, making these changes to better appeal to Hispanic shoppers does not appear to conflict with the wants and needs of non-Hispanic shoppers. Therefore, it appears to be possible for many retail

stores and shopping malls to make themselves more attractive to Hispanic shoppers and increase their customer base without alienating customers from other population segments.

Previous research suggests that materialism varies among cultural groups (McKendrick, 1982) and may change with transition between cultures (Dato-on, 2000). As anticipated, the present sample of Hispanic consumers exhibits low average levels of materialism. Contrary to expectations, however, low-acculturated Hispanics demonstrated higher materialism (mean 3.00) than high-acculturated Hispanics (mean 2.77), though not to a significant degree. At first, this result appears surprising, given that the culture in the U.S. tends to be more materialistic when compared to the cultures of the home countries of the respondents. Yet some research suggests that stress associated with movement between cultures could increase materialism and that desire to assimilate can cause over compensation in materialism (Ger and Belk, 1990, 1996).

Materialism is also highly correlated with all dimensions of the hedonic shopping motivations measures, and explains most of the variance observed in these constructs. High materialism also correlates with higher image perceptions of local malls. Thus, materialism may be an important variable to understand when considering the motivations of Hispanics to shop. Consequently, this understanding may provide retailers in local malls insight if they consider positioning their shopping alternative as a place to satisfy motivations related to *Social*, *Adventure*, and *Idea or Novelty* motivations. This could ultimately position shopping malls as a unique destination where Hispanics can shop with their families or social groups while having fun and investigating new trends.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study serves as a solid base from which to build future empirical research on the general shopping preferences and behaviors of Hispanic shoppers in the U.S. The study is not, however, without limitations. The most apparent limitation may be the limited sample size and the resulting constraints on empirical methodologies. Future studies may consider utilizing structural equation modeling and confirmatory factor analysis. This study provides the foundation for such research by providing insight into the pertinent issues to include in future endeavors. Furthermore, the narrow geographic nature of the sample may limit the ability to generalize the present findings to other Hispanic populations. As was mentioned previously, regions of the U.S. that have larger, more entrenched, and acculturated Hispanic populations may exhibit different preferences and behaviors. Sampling across two different regions in future studies could prove enlightening. It is worth noting, however, that the segment of the Hispanic population examined in this study, with relatively low income and relatively low acculturation, is the fastest growing segment of the Hispanic population in the U.S., both in terms of geography and demographics. However, it is often the most difficult to access because of concerns surrounding immigration status (Blewett, Fuentes, Smaida & Zuehlke, 2003). Furthermore, the lower-income, less-acculturated segments of the Hispanic population are those which are the most likely to possess shopping

preferences and behaviors which differ from that of the general population. Finally, the high percent of Mexican respondents (67%) prevents a meaningful examination of the differences between Hispanics originating from different countries.

Future research should investigate shopping behaviors and preferences relative to other elements said to be unique to Hispanic consumers, namely shopping groups, bargaining, and atmospherics. Peñaloza and colleagues suggest that Hispanics prefer leisurely shopping in spaces with much activity and high energy, which non-Hispanics may find noisy or over-crowded. More detailed questioning may be necessary to examine such preferences and direct comparison to shopping preferences and behaviors in the general population may highlight both differences and similarities where shopping center managers should focus their marketing efforts.

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