

Postmodernism and Consumer Psychology: Transformation or Break?

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Abstract

The research's aim is to identify the postmodern consumer characteristics. Studied through its main conditions (Hyperreality, Fragmentation, Decentered subject, Reversal of production and consumption and Paradoxical juxtaposition of opposites), postmodernism seems to affect some psychological traits of the consumer (Materialism, social desirability, locus of control and social identity). We tried to generate a number of assumptions. The check of these assumptions could answer us whether these psychological characteristics have been radically influenced by postmodernism and in this case, the consumer would have undergone a break or the effect is partial and it is only a simple transformation within the consumer.

Keywords: postmodernism-psychological traits-consumer

1. Introduction

Postmodernism is a term which was used at first in the architecture in the 70s (Jencks, 1987). The launch of this concept is widely due to Bell (1973, 1976) who asserts that postmodern era begins with the end of the bourgeois model that characterized the modernity. He places, moreover, the modern period, the era of the development of the capitalism, between the late 18th Century and the seventy decade of the 20th Century, which is over a period about 200 years. From the 80s, postmodernism was often, used in various fields of academic research to identify the subtle differences related to modernism (Featherstone, on 1991). As he touched all areas of academic research, postmodernism has gradually developed in marketing, becoming for some researchers a new paradigm (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). It has appeared in marketing mainly through North American authors like Hirschman, Holbrook, Firat and Venkatesh, and gave rise to major contributions (Saren, 2011), including a reflection on the paradigms to apprehend the complexity of postmodern consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1992), or the role of marketing in consumer society (Firat and Venkatesh, 1993; Badot and Cova 1992a, 1992b). Indeed, many researchers (Baudrillard, 1968, 1986; Cova, 1995; Featherstone, 1991; Firat, 1991, 1992; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Firat, Sherry and Venkatesh, 1994; Firat, Dholakia and Venkatesh, 1995; Holt, 1997) and contributed to the definition of the

foundations of postmodern society: the postmodern society which is synthesized in five points: hyper reality, fragmentation, Reversal of production and consumption, Decentred subject, and finally, the paradoxical juxtaposition of opposites. So in this article, we will try to analyze the effect of these conditions on consumer and more specifically on some psychological characteristics which seems deeply affected by the advent of postmodernism.

2. Postmodernism and the rise of Postmodern Marketing

Since the mid-sixties, the society derives, to a society described as post-industrial or post-capitalist and in a more universal way, towards a "postmodern" society. First, introduced in the field of architecture (Jenks, 1987), the concept of postmodernism quickly extended to all other fields of art, then in the society as a whole (Lyotard, 1979, 1988). Thus, we will discuss, first, the shift from modernity to postmodernity which led to a metamorphosis of Marketing, which will be described also as "postmodern."

2.1. From Modernism to postmodernism

Modernity usually refers to the period of time and modernism refers to the ideas, philosophical and socio-cultural conditions that characterized the modernity. Modernism is represented through the following conditions (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Piquet and Marchand, 1998). The reign of reason and the establishment of rational order, the emergence of the cognitive subject; The development of science and the emphasis on material progress through the application of scientific technologies, representation and the sole purpose of art and architecture, the emergence of industrial capitalism, the separation of the production sphere (which is institutionally controlled and public) from the consumption sphere (which is private).

However, a number of critics have been addressed to modernism and its foundation that prepared the advent of postmodernism, which not only reveals paradoxes in the construction of the modernist project, but also provides radically different perspectives for the society. So, postmodernism defended the possibility to break with the tyranny of innovation at all costs by agreeing the right to reconnect with the past. Thus, in front of the principles of modernity: the idea of progress, scientific rationality and the advent of science that led to the disenchantment of Western societies, the industrial mass production, the bureaucratic hierarchy and the state-nation, the contradictions of modern society between sacred and secular, between rural and urban, between public and private spheres, between mind and body and finally between the dualistic and the global thinking, new principles succeeded, those of a postmodern society (Firat and Vankatech, 1995). So as we have said at the beginning, we must distinguish between postmodernity and postmodernism as follow: Postmodernity: as a time period succeeding modernity with its characteristics and thus its influence on individual behavior, which will orient the researches and related methodologies. Postmodernism: as a paradigm, which arises as antipositivist? It shows into research posture, the deconstruction and the fragmentation of the hierarchy of values and knowledge when they formed a part of a paradigm or model (Balandier, 1985).

2.2. From Modern Marketing to Postmodern Marketing

The rise of postmodernism was considered as a new conceptual framework which will allow a better understanding of current societal changes, including consumption and marketing practices (Badot and Cova, 1992b, Brown, 1993; 1994; Svanfeldt and Cova, 1993; Vankatesh and Firat, 1993; Firat, Dholakia and Vankatesh, 1995; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1992).

In modern marketing, the focus is on the rationality of the actor. It aims to identify, understand and satisfy the consumers needs, rather than simply to persuade them to buy the product. Hence, the role of modern marketing management consists in an optimal combination of decision variables identified through the "4 Ps" mechanism (McCarthy, 1960). The sales function is presented in the marketing mix as a combination of factors by analogy in the production function (Lancaster, 1971). In this perspective, modern marketing is considered as a science because it responds to the requirements of the scientific community as far as: there is a basic unit of exchange and transactions which marketing seeks to discover the uniformities and regularities between them, besides, theories, laws and explanations of marketing are testables.

With the advent of postmodernism, other visions on lifestyles, on economics (Milberg, 2007) as well as on the relationship between communities, will appear. The marketing, also, was touched by postmodernism, which has emerged in this field thanks to north American authors as Hirschman and Holbrook (1992), Firat and Venkatesh (1993) and has resulted in contributions of paradigms allowing to apprehend aspects of postmodern consumption practices (Addis and Podesta, 2005), and understanding consumer behavior (Cova and Cova, 2001; Badot, Cova, 1992a, 1992b; Hetzel, 1995, 2002).

The most recent definition of postmodernism Marketing is proposed by Gerrit Van Raaij (1998): "Postmodernism is a cultural episode, characterized by a pluralism of styles (of consumption) and ideologies, a need of hyperreality and self-expression through consumption ". But it should, however, note that also in Marketing, there is a distinction between postmodernism and postmodernity like the distinction we have already made between the different uses of the term "postmodern" in general. In Marketing, Badot and Cova (1994) called: Postmodernity: a shift or a break with modernity: a new social order that emerges and seems to adapt marketing practices to deal with the individualized and tribalized consumption. Postmodernism: a philosophical perspective rich in specific epistemological assumptions and methodological preferences to rethink the general principles of marketing theory.

All researchers do not agree on the marketing proposals applied to postmodernity. Indeed, we find in these proposals the duality individualism / tribalism. This duality in the vision of the transformation of marketing expresses itself, even, in a geographical way because north American and Anglo-Saxon propositions recover generally from the postmodern individualism while the Latin propositions deal with the postmodern tribalism. In spite of this difference between the two approaches, they have a common line, the search to be "close to

the consumer" (Brown, 1993, 1994). For this reason, that during our research, whose primary purpose is to understand the consumer, we need to get closer to consumers, which is, in fact, the purpose of both proposals, so, we will use both approaches simultaneously to better understand the postmodern consumer profile.

3. Postmodern conditions and the emergence of postmodern consumer

The most commonly used conditions which made a consensus from authors and researchers in postmodernism as suggested by Firat and Shultz (2001) and Brown (2006), are those advanced by Firat and Vankatech (1993), who put postmodern conditions into five categories, hyperreality, fragmentation, reversal of production and consumption, decentered subject and paradoxical juxtaposition of opposites. We trying to explain each condition, and present the consequences on the consumer.

3.1. Effects of Hyperreality on consumer and the postmodern consumption

According to Perry (1998), the definition of the phenomenon of hyperreality may represent only an attempt because, given the multiplicity of its manifestations, it is difficult to develop a theory and a definition of this phenomenon. However, it is possible to consider the Hyperreality, as the condition of the constitution of social reality through powerful meanings and representations of simulation or "hype" (Firat and Venkatech, 1993), which will affect the process of consumer's identity construction and his consumption experiences:

- **Identity construction:** identity construction process plays an important role in the way that, the consumer perceives itself, how he identifies his purpose and his reason for being and to form a meaningful life. (Van Raaij, 1993; Firat et al, 1995). The hyperreality which illustrates these facts is, mainly, found in communication forms. Indeed, through these communication forms, the signifiers can be detached from their original referents and their original meanings and, therefore, become "floating". They can be attached to new meanings (Firat and Vankatech, 1993). These new meanings simulated, leading to a new reality thanks to the communication power. It is a community of consumers who ascribe these new meanings of a brand . (Van Raaij, 1993).

- **The simulation of reality and consumption experiences:** The hyperreal culture seems to show other aspects and one of these trends is the will of consumers to prefer simulation to "Reality". Postmodern consumer feels more playful pleasure of the simulation rather than the standing quest for moments of "reality". The urban buildings and postmodern places, in fact, favor this trend (O'Connor and Wynne, 1998): Disneyland or Las Vegas city are the most quoted examples by postmodernists (Baudrillard, 1987).

The hyperreality is a variable which can produce a consumption experience able to reenchant the consumer (Ritzer, 1999; Filser, 2002, Hetzel, 2002). In fact, simulated environments appear to be more spectacular than the real world (Ritzer, 1999), this feature is an advantage since the postmodern individuals are seeking for the spectacular and the experiences (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), this quest enrolling a more general trend : the

emotions quest (Grailot, 2005). Besides, according to Riou (1999), the show accompanying the hyperreality contributes to a greater success from postmodern individuals.

3.2. The fragmentation of individual and consumption experiences on postmodern society

In postmodernity, fragmentation is another major feature of society. Its theoretical formulation is due to Lyotard (1984) who, absolutely, refuses any form of universalism in social life. Fragmentation, actually, invades all activities, including consumption, where everything is discontinuous and disjointed.

The fragmentation of consumer experiences is mainly manifested through the fragmentation of consumption moments which are becoming increasingly fragmented (dinner, watch TV...). The consumer lives a series of independent acts of consumption (Firat and Vankatech, 1993), and each act requires a different product, which fills a specific need. These multiple moments of consumption affect the consumer himself, because the fragmentation of life experiences often requires a fragmentation of the self to fully live each situation encountered: For example, managing relationships in workplace, requires for women a different identity than the one used to manage these relationships at her home. (Firat and Shultz, 2001). Even motherhood has become a lifestyle decision in postmodern era, motherhood identity is a choice among so many others, an option that some women can choose to reject (Jagger, 2005). In each encountered situation there is the possibility of the existence of incompatible or contradictory personalities in the same individual, called the "multiphrenic selves." (Firat, sherry and vankatech, 1994). "Multiphrenic self "is a representation of the effect of postmodern conditions on consumer behavior (Firat and Shultz, 2001). This postmodern consumer trait shows that he accepts all the options and can be presented under different identities rather than to conform to a single one. Postmodern consumer is, then, a fragmented individual who lives fragmented and paradoxical consumption moments (Teschl, 2007). Postmodern individual is encouraged to change the image frequently and therefore, he trying to adapt himself to new roles and new identities (Decrop, 2008).

Another consequence of this postmodern condition is that fragmentation allows individuals to integrate into postmodern society, the integration that goes through the sharing of consumption experiences. Then, postmodern individual belongs to diverse groups gathering people who maintain a strong emotional link by opposition to the strong social links of modern society (Maffesoli, 1998, and Oettgen Oettgen, 2004). Postmodern consumer as a fragmented and multiphrenic subject (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995) can belong to several communities, and assume their contradictions and paradoxes. In marketing, the community is often used as synonymous of the postmodern term of "tribe" whether in the real world (Maffesoli, 1998) or virtually (Vignolles and Galan, 2009).

3.3. Decentered subject and postmodern consumer

The modernist narratives "subject" has moved away from the centre and confused with the object. Postmodern discourse and culture, even, take away the human subject of its privileged status; there is rather recognition of the influence of objects to guide the desire of

the individual (consumer) (Baudrillard, 1981; Foucault 1975). Postmodernists see modernity narrative as mythical or illusory. According to them, there is confusion between subject and object (product) (Hassan, 1987; Jameson, 1983). The postmodern subject is also decentered as far as he is no longer a single but a multiple subject changing according to the situation he encounters (Gergen, 1991; Solomon, 1992).

With the decentered subject condition, postmodernism highlights the confusion between subject and object in consumption and raises the question of control in their relationship. Specifically, the relationship between subject and object becomes more complicated, which makes redoubtable the assumed superiority of the subject. Often, objects have power over subjects as the example of the “desire’s objects” (Baudrillard, 1990).

The actions of each individual are determined by the design and structure of his products. We can so, conclude that the role of the individual is to enable products to perform their functions and not products that enable the achievement of the individual goals. We are thus, reached the inverse of the vision supporting that products are designed to enable human being to achieve his goals. We observe this trend also in commercials as for Pepsi-Cola or Energizer batteries which have sometimes described the brand object as the hero while consumer, the human subject is at the margin, decentered, enjoying the show. Some authors even speak about “interpassivity” which is defined as the delegating of consumer’s enjoyment to an object (Carù and Cova, 2008).

Decentered subject condition suggests a potential link with the locus of control in the postmodern consumer’s life. Indeed, the modern subject was the peculiarity of having a presumption of control over the objects and their destiny. On the other hand, postmodern decentered individual seems to have a paradoxical orientation in terms of locus of control. Is he in control of his destiny because he is a participant in the construction of reality, or does he see that the conditions will be determined by forces outside his control, because he recognizes that power of things outside the human subject? (Firat and Shultz, 2001).

Finally, “self objectification” is another effect of the decentered subject condition. The confusion between subject and object is reinforced in part by the fact that consumers tend to view themselves as marketable items: Examples of the objectification of human beings become more and more frequent (Guilbert, 2002; Levine, 1998; Sacks, 1982). Indeed, multiplicity of images and personalities is not adopted by consumers in a deliberate way, it is rather imposed by cultural expectations that are already interiorized on society. People are always in quest to having the image that enable them to succeed. In this sense, fashion becomes metaphor of culture (Faurschou, 1990; Sawchuk, 1987). The role in the self-construction as an object is related to some products (such as luxury goods or cars) or practices (Gomez and Fosse-Ozcaglar, 2007) for example, many consumers (male and female) use more plastic surgery and implants to improve a part or all their body.

3.4. The impact of reversal of production and consumption on postmodern consumption

The primacy given to the production in the modern metanarratives was challenged with postmodern thought. The idea which states that value is created in production and destroyed in the act of consumption is considered as one of the myths and the rhetoric of modern project.

Many act of consumption may generate various forms of meaning and value to individual, but also can signal groups membership and different lifestyles. Consumption not only helps to differentiate between individuals, it also acts as an "integrator" or "link" in several social groups (Cooper et al, 2005):

- **Individual Consumption:** In postmodernity, there was confusion or a reversal of consumption and production and its destructive role recognized by modern economic theory, consumer is already considered as an actor and creator of meaning. Thanks to marketing system, consumption became the process by which people define themselves, their statutes or images in contemporary society (Bourdieu, 1984; Ewen, 1988). As indicated by the postmodernists, consumption is not only a personal act of destruction, but also, a social act of symbolic meanings, social codes and relationships. Indeed, the consumer produces and reproduces his identity (Poster, 1975) during consumption. In other words, each individual is different from another by a set of consumption choices and experiences. During consumption, the image belonging to a product or brand reflects an advantage for consumer. Product meaning is determined by the consumer, because the meaning is generated and interpreted by consumers themselves (Lee, 2009).

- **Groups consumption:** As individual consumption, studies on postmodern groups show different symbolic functions of consumption, not to be an act of destruction, but as an act of image production (Firat and Venkatesh , 1995). Thus, to become "object of consumption", it is necessary that the object becomes a sign" (Baudrillard, 1968). Consumption plays, then, the following functions:

- A Value system revealing: postmodern consumption activities reflect the group micro-cultural value system (Thompson and Troester, 2002).
- A Membership revealing: Some of consumption practices, brands and products reflect the" group membership, and distinguish members from non-members (Holt 1995, 1997, Kates 2000, Schouten and Alexander Mc 1995, Thompson and Holt 1996).
- A Mean of "social action: postmodern groups, with their own values micro-system, use consumption activities as a means of social action. Thus, possession and specific use of some brands and objects mark the group membership, just as hostility or even boycott of some others brand and object (Kates 2000, Schouten and Alexander Mc 1995, Thomson and Troester 2002).

3.5. Effects of paradoxical juxtapositions on consumer and consumption experiences

Since the confusion between subject and object was established (Firat and Venkatech, 1995), they can be mutually represented and juxtaposed resulting in a major feature of

postmodern culture which the paradoxical juxtaposition of opposites (Firat and Vankatech, 1993) . Everything can be combined and juxtaposed.

Consensus between postmodern theorists that a key feature of postmodern culture is that its paradoxical trait that allows the juxtaposition of all. These contradictions may arise in the individual, as opposed emotions (love and hatred, contempt and admiration), opposed cognitions (beliefs and doubt) that occur in individuals simultaneously (Foster, 1985; Gitlin, 1989; Hutcheon, 1988; Wilson, 1989).

Paradoxical juxtaposition can also refer to the existence of incompatible or contradictory personalities in the same individual, called the "multiphrenic selves." Firat, sherry and vankatech (1994) (as we have seen in the fragmentation). Indeed, in the same individual we can identify contradictory and paradoxical behaviors (Elliot, 1997; Christopher, 1989).

As a result of paradoxical juxtaposition condition, postmodern consumption experiences, also, seem to be opposite and contradictory. To illustrates the contradictory trend of postmodern consumption, consumer try to discover and experience different ritual religions completely opposite to his own (Sandikci and Omeraki, 2007). As well as, consumption experiences offered by "ethnic" restaurants (Jang et al, 2011) transformed into "new" kitchen, generally aimed to high class consumers (Venkatech and Firat, 1993). Consumers of this restaurants type know that the kitchen was "modified" according to their tastes, but it does not bother them because they are there to experience and live another different ethnic culture: it is not just a delicious meal that consumers taste, but they are different lifestyles they live whose food is just a manifestation.

4. Psychological profile of postmodern consumer

According to literature, postmodern conditions have a significant impact on the consumer, especially at the level of his psychological characteristics: postmodern consumer seems to be interested in senses, symbols and experiences (Firat andVankatech, 1993; Van Raaij , 1993; Lee, 2009) rather than physical aspects offered by the procession of objects , hence a first psychological trait is questioned: the Materialism.

The construction of identities as diverse as contradictory (Van Raaij, 1993; Firat et al, 1995; Firat and Shultz, 2001; Davis, 2007; Decorps, 2008) to meet the different situation of postmodern individual is referred to another important consumer's psychological characteristic which is the social desirability.

The consumer's locus of control, may also be influenced by the postmodern context (Baudrillard, 1990; Caru and Cova, 2008), postmodern consumer loses his control to objects (Sherry, 1993, 1995) and he is no longer in control of his destiny (Firat and Shultz, 2001).

Finally, postmodern consumer tends to have a social identity through its group membership (Maffesoli, 1998; Vignolles and Galan, 2009) which identifies him (Cova, 1997; Badot and Cova, 1992a). So, the concepts of materialism, social desirability, locus of control and of social identity will be considered in the study of postmodern consumer.

4.1. Postmodern consumer and Materialism

Materialism is usually opposed to essentialism or spiritualism (Bloch, 1995). It refers to the propensity of individuals to value the properties or possessions. Individuals qualified as materialists, are very invested in what offers them the consumption society which they see a way to the self-achieve. In some cases, materialism was considered as a unidimensionnel concept (Mosch, 1981), in other cases, authors tend to consider it as a multidimensional one. In the multidimensional conception, two definitions of materialism coexist: Belk's definition and Richins and Dawson's definition. The first deals with materialism as a personality feature, while the second define materialism as a value (Richins and Dawson, 1992). In our research, we will try to develop a consumer profile resulting from the postmodern era, so the approach of Belk (1983) which deals with materialism as a personality feature seems more appropriate for our study. Thus we will adopt the vision according to which, the materialism is considered as personality's trait.

Materialism is a concept closely linked to the characteristics of postmodern consumer, Firat and Dholakia (2006), argue that modern consumers have always tried to surround themselves with material goods. In this modern perspective, the consumer may consider whether these products were necessary if they improve his well being, his comfort and his living conditions.

Materialistic individuals have a "general attachment to possessions" (Belk, 1983, 1985). Acquisition and possession of objects are a mean to achieve success and happiness in these individuals life (Richins and Dawson, 1992; Richins, 1994b), which perfectly describes the trend of materialistic modern consumer (Firat and Dholakia, 2006). Materialistic consumers give importance to objects and, especially objects through which they can be exposed in the public sphere thanks to their price, brand or other socially valued attributes. Materialistic individuals often keep objects only to show their social status (Belk, 1985).

On the other side, the emerging postmodern consumer, tends to be less concerned with material values but rather by the experience (Fitzmaurice and Comegys, 2006) and the value of consumption activities (Firat and Dholakia, 1998; Kniazeva and Venkatesh, 2007). Postmodern consumer sensibility seems to create interest in the consistency and the meaning of these experiences, rather than material wealth offered by acquisitions (Kozinets, 2002). The postmodern consumer is no longer materialistic.

Belk (1985) conducted an empirical validation of materialism concept through three personality traits: envy, possessiveness and non-generosity. Possessiveness is defined as 'the inclination and tendency to retain control or ownership of one's possessions, Non generosity is defined as "an unwillingness to give possessions to or to share possessions with others", and envy is considered as "the displeasure and ill at the superiority of another person in happiness, success, reputation, or the possessions of anything desirable".

So we can assume that:

H1. Postmodern conditions have an influence consumer's materialism

H1.1: Postmodern conditions have an influence consumer's possessiveness

H1.2: Postmodern conditions have an influence consumer's envy to others

H1.3: Postmodern conditions have an influence consumer's generosity

4.2. Postmodern consumer and Social desirability

The purpose of postmodern consumer is not to attached to one culture or one way of life, but to navigate and explore several meaningful way of being, enriching the process of his life. What will define and express the level of social desirability (Firat and Shultz, 2001). In other words, when people deliberately change their behavior and identity to match a given situation, this is called social desirability: a process by which people try to control the image which others have of them.

Individuals could seek to want to bring their personal values with the acceptable social cultural factors (Fisher and Katz, 2000; King and Bruner, 2000). Many authors have also shown that the values are socially desirable constructs (Fallding, 1965, Meglino and Ravlin, 1998; Meglino, Ravlin, and Adkins, 1989, Schwartz et al, 1997).

Social desirability is considered as a personality feature that characterizes orientations and positions of the individual toward social values. (Edwards, 1957).

Paulhus (1984, 1986) revealed the existence of two different factors to describe social desirability concept: the self-deception and Impression management. Impression management refers to conscious strategies tailored to make a positive impression on others, whereas self-deception refers to unconscious, narcissistic self-promotion. In the latter case, an individual really believes his or her own exaggerations.

Hence, individuals orient their answers to give itself (self deception) and / or to give to others (impression management) an image consistent with social norms (Paulhus, 1984). For Tournois and al. (1997, 2000), impression management is a deliberate dupe to others, while the self-deception is unconscious dupe of itself, conceptualized by authors as a self defense mechanism or a self cognitive bias.

Thus, we can formulate the following hypothesis:

H2. Postmodern conditions have an influence on the social desirability of consumer

H 2.1: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer's self-deception

H 2.2: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer's impression management

4.3. Postmodern consumer and Locus of control

Postmodern conditions especially, through the decentered subject suggest a possible link to the locus of control in postmodern consumer life. Indeed, the modern subject was the peculiarity of having a presumption of control over the objects (Sherry, 1993, 1995) as well as his destiny (Firat and Shultz, 2001).

Locus of control is "the widespread belief that a person has or not the control of the results of his own actions" (Tavris and Wade, 1999). It corresponds to the explanation given by individuals to the events which happen to them. It represents the judgment of the person about the positive or negative reinforcements (what is happening in his life) which he receives

and the attributions given to these reinforcements (due to factors internal or external) (Bruchon Schweitzer, 2002).

The locus of control is frequently considered as a personality trait (Bouvard, 1999). Rotter (1966) distinguish between internal control and external control, to emphasize the "degree of causal relationship that individuals make between their behavior and / or personal characteristics (traits, skills, attitudes) and positive or negative reinforcement they perceive (Dubois, 1994). According to Rotter (1966), a person generally tends to present a coherent control rather internal or external and it is stable over the time (Bruchon-Schweitzer, 2002):

- Individuals with an internal locus of control are characterized by a sense of responsibility toward their actions and its consequences. They think they can control their destiny and they have the best educational and professional life. Therefore, when we talk about internal locus of control, we talk about decided actions. The locus of control is internal; when an individual considers that he is influencing his life events. People with internal locus of control think that they have a determining influence on their existence.

- People with external locus of control believe that environmental and situational factors are more influent than internal factors. They consider chance as the key of their success or failure, not their personal effort. The external locus of control, consider that the events came from causes beyond the self. People generally consider the locus of control as extern attribute the success or the failure in their life to external reasons or persons (Wade and Tavis, 1999).

Levenson (1974) suggests a three-dimensional structure to describe the locus of control: an internal dimension which measures the belief in an internal control and two external dimensions the first, support the belief in control by powerful others, and the second propose the belief in a control by the chance.

The relative hypothesis would be:

H3. Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer's locus of control

H3.1: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer's internal control

H3.2: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumers powerful others control

H3.3: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer's chance control

4.4. Postmodern consumer and Social Identity

Postmodern consumer tends to be identified with groups (Maffesoli, 1998) gathering people who maintain a strong emotional link (Cova, 1997; Badot and Cova, 1992a) as opposed to strong social links of modern society. Postmodern consumers are active participants and producer looking for a community, whether in the real world or virtually (Firat and Dholakia, 1998; Kozinets, 2002). The identification means in a concrete way the transfer of group's attributes to the individual characteristics. In this sense, the identification can be considered as a means of "depersonalization" because it decreases, the image that the individual has of itself, (the personal identity) for the benefit of what is shared with the group: social identity (Hogg and Terry, 2000).

Tajfel (1978) considers that a personal identity consists of two distinct elements: personal identity (which includes the characteristics, abilities and personal preferences) and

social identity related to the membership of individuals in social groups. The social identity theory considers that any person is motivated by the search for a positive self-image which depends, partly, on his membership in various groups

The concept of social identity was developed, first, by Tajfel (1978) and extended by Turner (1985). But the most often used definition of social identity is that of Tajfel, who define social identity as “that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981).

Social identity is a multidimensional concept (Ellemers et al. 1999), three dimensions can be distinguished:

- Cognitive centrality: the amount of time spent thinking about being a group member(Gurin and Markus, 1989); It refers to the importance of identity in self-conception (Cameron, 2004; Rowley and al, , 1998; Sellers and Shelton, 2003).
- Ingroup affect : also called emotional identification, is the positivity of feelings associated with membership in the group(Cameron, 2004); and refers also to specific emotions (eg, happiness,..) that result from being a group member (Brown and al, 1986, Ellemers and al, 1999, Hinkle and al, 1989).
- Ingroup ties: deal with perceptions of similarity, bond, and belongingness with other group members. Ingroup ties are presented as the extent to which “group members feel “stuck to”, or part of, particular social groups” (Bollen and Hoyle, 1990).

What distinguishes this three-factor conceptualization is the concept of ingroup ties. While labeled as “commitment to the group” by Ellemers and al.(1999) or “affective ties” by Jackson (2000), ingroups ties were operationalized here explicitly in terms of subjective connection with the other group members. So, an evaluation of ingroups ties could be particularly useful for researches who are interested to study the relational aspects of group membership. This classification allows a more efficient and reliable identification with social groups that leave a lasting impression on the concept of self and interpersonal relationships which could have a psychological importance (Cameron, 2004).

Then, we can assume that:

H4. Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer’s social identity

H4.1: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer’s intergroup ties

H4.2: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer’s cognitive centrality

H4.3: Postmodern conditions have an influence on consumer’s emotional identification

5. Conclusion

After a critical theoretical work (Firat et al, 1987; Murray and Ozanne, 1991; Arnould and Thompson, 2005) and analytical researches of postmodern trends (Cova, 1999; Firat and Dholakia, 1998; Firat and Venkatesh, 1995; Holbrook, 1993), and postmodern perspectives (Brown, 1995), marketing academic literature, is more and more interested in the study of postmodernism effects on the marketing discipline and consumer behavior.

Our research joins this optic, and aims to study the consumer emerging from the postmodern conditions which prevailed on society. After, having defined and delineated the

theoretical field of research on postmodernism and postmodern consumer, we have tried to conceptualize the postmodern consumer's psychological profile by offering a number of assumptions. Indeed the effects of postmodern conditions on consumer are quite numerous and diverse, hence the need to an empirical study in order to confirm these supposed effects and suggested theoretical changes in the nature of the consumer.

Assumptions checking, could inform us whether the consumer has sustain a complete break in his psychology or it is just a change. On managerial side, recommendations can be provided to companies wishing to move closer to the reality of postmodern consumers and managers can better know their postmodern customers. It is even possible to adopt the results to determine new consumer segmentation criteria in the postmodern market.

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