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FROM CONSUMPTION FUNCTIONS TO GLOBAL VALUE :
AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Research on value has traditionally adopted the point of view of exchange value, considering global value as a ratio between consumption costs and benefits. In contrast, a more recent research stream has analyzed value from the point of view of consumption (cumulative and experiential view). The aim of this article is to develop and operationalize a typology of the consumption value components (or functions). In the first part, an integrative framework for the identification of consumption value components will be proposed, based on a literature review of previous approaches. The second part will present some empirical results; its objectives are two fold : first demonstrate the empirical validity of the proposed typology by an application studying a consumption area generally considered as typically experiential (movie consumption); secondly show how those two approaches of value can be articulated in an integrative model in which perceived global value would be a function of the consumption value components.

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INTRODUCTION

During the last twenty years, quality and satisfaction have received a lot of attention from practitioners and researchers (Oliver, 1997). But delivering product/service quality and controlling consumer satisfaction are becoming general standards in markets and may not be sufficient to take advantage of competitors (Woodruff, 1997; Gardial & al, 1994). Creating and distributing a superior value to consumers, either by proposing acceptable benefits for an inferior price or by offering unique benefits compensating largely a superior price (Day, 1990; Slater, 1997) becomes a foundation of competitive advantage. Understanding both what value a product or a service brings to a customer and how this value is elaborated and processed is thus of strategic and theoretical importance. The Marketing Science Institute has recently made this topic a priority for future research in marketing; several journals and books manifest a growing interest for this theme (Holbrook, 1999).

The concept of value has always been an area of investigation for philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, economists and marketers. Two specific questions deserve attention in consumer research : is value the result of exchange or of consumption ? how is product value linked to consumer values ? In this paper, we will try to give a theoretical and empirical response to the first of these questions, which may more specifically formulated as : how exchange (transaction) value and usage (consumption or relationship) value interact to form a global consumer value ?

We propose to consider both an exchange value (the price paid by the customer for the object) and an usage value (the multiple benefits received by the consumer). In the exchange perspective, customer value derives from the transaction in which he/she gives up something of value in return for something of greater value (Kotler, 1991); product/service value is thus defined as a ratio or a difference between what is given and what is received by the customer (Becker, 1976; Monroe & Krishnan, 1985; Zeithaml, 1988; Day, 1990); value depends therefore on the monetary and non monetary costs (price, time, psychological efforts) supported in return for product quality (anticipated benefits). In the usage perspective, consumer value stems from cumulative consumption (or possession) experiences. Holbrook and Corfman (1985) thus defined consumer value as “a relativistic preference (comparative, personal, situational) characterizing a subject’s experience of interacting with some object”. Thereby, understanding consumer value supposes a comprehensive analysis of the instrumental, affective and symbolic meanings of consumption, i.e. experienced benefits (Cohen & Areni, 1991; Batra & Athola, 1987, 1991; Crowley & al, 1992; Richins, 1994; Holbrook, 1994, 1996, 1999; Babin & al., 1994). These two approaches have been generally developed independently in marketing literature and empirical research.

In the direction suggested by Oliver (1996, 1999), our purpose is to establish links between these two approaches by showing how different kinds of consumption valuations (usage value) contribute to the constitution of a product/service global (or transactional) value. We propose to build this framework on a

psychological and motivational basis which may be rooted in the functional theory of attitudes that links directly evaluation processes to individual's motivations (Smith & al, 1956; Katz, 1960; Herek, 1986, 1987; Pratkanis & al, 1989; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Consequently, we suggest that objects are valued by consumers for the psychological functions they play, considering their motivations and the sacrifices they have to concede in order to experience them. The paper will proceed as follows : first we review preceeding research on value components and propose a functional typology of value and our global conceptual framework; secondly we expose the results of an empirical research project conducted in France on movie consumption.

1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 A review of different typologies of consumption value

Five typologies have been proposed to understand consumer value derived from purchase, consumption and/or possession. Two are essentially conceptual (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985; Lai, 1995) and three were validated empirically (Richins, 1994; Holt, 1995; Evrard & Aurier, 1996). Their components are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
A COMPARISON OF TYPOLOGIES OF CONSUMPTION VALUE

		Holbrook (1994)	Holt (1995)	Lai (1995)	Richins (1994)	Evrard & Aurier (1996)
Self - oriented	Intrinsic	Play (fun) Aesthetic	Experience (emotion)	Hedonic Affective Aesthetic	Amusement Appearance	Hedonic Experiential stimulation
	Extrinsic	Efficiency Excellence	Integration: expression and self-actualization	Functional, utilitarian Epistemic	Utilitarian	Knowledge (information search, expertise)
Other - oriented	Intrinsic	Ethic Spiritual	Play: social practice and sharing		Spiritual	Social practice
	Extrinsic	Status Esteem	Classification : social affiliation and distinction	Social	Status Self-expression Interpersonal link	Self-expression (sign) Social link
Non-classified				Holistic Situational	Achievement Personal history Financial aspects	

Typology of consumer value (Holbrook & Corfman, 1985; Holbrook, 1994, 1996, 1999)

In their axiologic perspective, Holbrook and Corfman (1985) consider three binary criteria to characterize eight types of value judgements: extrinsic / intrinsic; self-oriented / other oriented; active / reactive. First a product can be valued by a subject as a mean to attain some individual ends (extrinsic value) or the consumption of the product can be an end in itself (intrinsic value). Second a consumption can have a meaning for oneself, for his/her own sake (self-oriented value), or can express something to others (colleagues, friends, family) (other-oriented value). Third the consumer must sometimes manipulate physically or mentally the product (active value) or has only to apprehend and respond to it (reactive value). By considering these criteria, Holbrook (1999) argues in favor of a close examination of eight types of value: efficiency, excellence, status, esteem, play, aesthetics, spirituality, ethics. But he admits some fuzzy

distinctions among different types of consumer value, as well as the existence of possible additional or alternative dimensions of value and the potential omission of key types of value.

Classification of consumption practices (Holt, 1995)

Holt's work (1995) converges partially with Holbrook and Corfman's proposition (1985) (for two dimensions). Based on an ethnology literature review and on a qualitative survey on base ball spectators, Holt (1995) considers two criteria to analyze the different meanings of consumption: instrumental / autotelic; object oriented / others oriented. He distinguishes then four different meanings of consumption: experience (emotions), integration (self expression and actualization), game (social practice and sharing) and classification (sign and social affiliation).

Classification of costs and benefits (Lai, 1995)

Analyzing value as perceived by the consumer, Lai (1995) proposes a general typology of costs and benefits associated with product purchase and consumption; this typology is a list of benefits, not classified on a criterion basis. It extends the list offered by Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991). These authors identify five kinds of benefits: functional benefits which depend on the concrete attributes of the product and correspond to its utilitarian performance; social benefits which permit the consumer to get a status or to belong to a social class; emotional or affective benefits which refer to the feelings; epistemic benefits given by the product which respond to curiosity, need for knowledge or novelty; conditional benefits which depend on specific situations of consumption. Lai (1995) suggests three others benefits : hedonic benefits which refer to the capacity of the product to give pleasure and fun; aesthetic benefits which are associated to beauty and personal expression; holistic benefits offered by the product which result from its complementarity, coherence and compatibility with a constellation of consumptions. In return of these "generic" benefits, costs would refer principally to perceived risk and to monetary, temporal and human resources engaged in the purchase and consumption of the product.

Public and private meanings of possessions (Richins, 1994)

Grounded on a qualitative study, Richins (1994) classifies the private and the public meanings of possessions. She identifies eleven meanings and has tested their empirical validity with a questionnaire including 23 items.

Components of the person – object relationship (Evrard & Aurier, 1996)

The authors have tested empirically seven components of the person-object relationship. Building on the functional theory of attitude (Katz, 1960), they distinguish the experiential and non experiential functions of the product. Their distinction may be considered as close, although not identical, to Holbrook's distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value (intrinsic is usually experiential; but experiential may be extrinsic, for instance in the case of transportation).

Proposition of a common typology of consumer value

A comparison of these five typologies leads us to retain two main criteria (which are present in at least three classifications) : extrinsic or intrinsic and self-oriented or other-oriented. First a product can be valued as a mean to attain extrinsic ends (extrinsic value) or/and the consumption experience can be an end in itself (intrinsic value). For example, a consumer can buy a convertible car to get quickly to his home during the

week and can feel a great pleasure when driving his hair streaming in the wind during his holidays. Second a product can have a private meaning and involve the individual only (self-oriented value) or/and can take a social meaning and have effects on his relationships with others (other-oriented value). For example, a convertible car can clearly be a mean for a consumer to valorize himself in front of his friends.

By considering these two criterions, we distinguish four great families of consumer value components (table 2). In this interactive perspective, usage value results from the interaction between a subject which is self-oriented and/or other-oriented and an object which value is extrinsic and/or intrinsic to the consumption experience.

TABLE 2
A TYPOLOGY OF THE COMPONENTS OF VALUE

	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Self-oriented	1 Instrumental value	2 Hedonic value
Other-oriented	3 Social value (social link and social sign)	4 Spiritual value and social practice

1.2 A functional framework of consumer value

When analyzing consumer value, researchers are implicitly led to explore the motivations which guide consumer's purchase, consumption or possession. But the marketing literature generally neglects how consumer's motivations affect directly products evaluations. In this paper, we propose to give a motivational basis to the typology of consumer value.

From the functional theory of attitude to a functional typology of consumer value

We refer to the functional theory of attitude that was first developed by Smith, Bruner and White (1956) and by Katz (1960). This theory suggests that attitude can be changed if we know its motivational basis. In social psychology, this theory has recently received a growing attention from researchers (Herek, 1986, 1987; Pratkanis & al, 1989; Tesser & Schaffer, 1990). Four great functions of attitude have been examined by these authors (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). We think that these functions can be somewhat linked to the types of value:

- an object-appraisal or knowledge function: with this function, a person is able to understand the reality, evaluate the objects and structure his environment. Knowledge and evaluation are considered as means for the consumer to make better decisions. These two instrumental functions refer respectively to a knowledge value and an utilitarian value (Evrard & Aurier, 1996).

- an experience specific or hedonic function: along with Batra and Athola (1987, 1991), Herek (1986, 1987) considers that experience plays a specific function and is independent from an evaluative or anticipative function. As Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982) suggest, experience can convey specific feelings, fantasies and fun. The concept of experiential stimulation permits to partially apprehend this hedonic aspect (Morin, 1978; Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1992; Evrard & Aurier, 1996). In this paper, this concept is conceptualized as characterizing the person – object relationship (experiential interaction) and not as an individual personality trait (optimal level of stimulation).

- a value-expressive or social-adjustment function: this function integrates the impact of socialization. A person communicates her/his attitudes and her/his values to colleagues and family in order to identify herself/himself to a social class and has to adjust his behavior to societal expectations. In marketing, we generally speak about social sign and social link. Consumption is a form of social communication: when a person buys and consumes a product, he/she expresses him/herself and communicates on his/her personality to others. Social sign is generally a central dimension of conspicuous and cultural consumption where it is viewed as a support for symbols of social status. Consumption can also be seen as a mean to further social

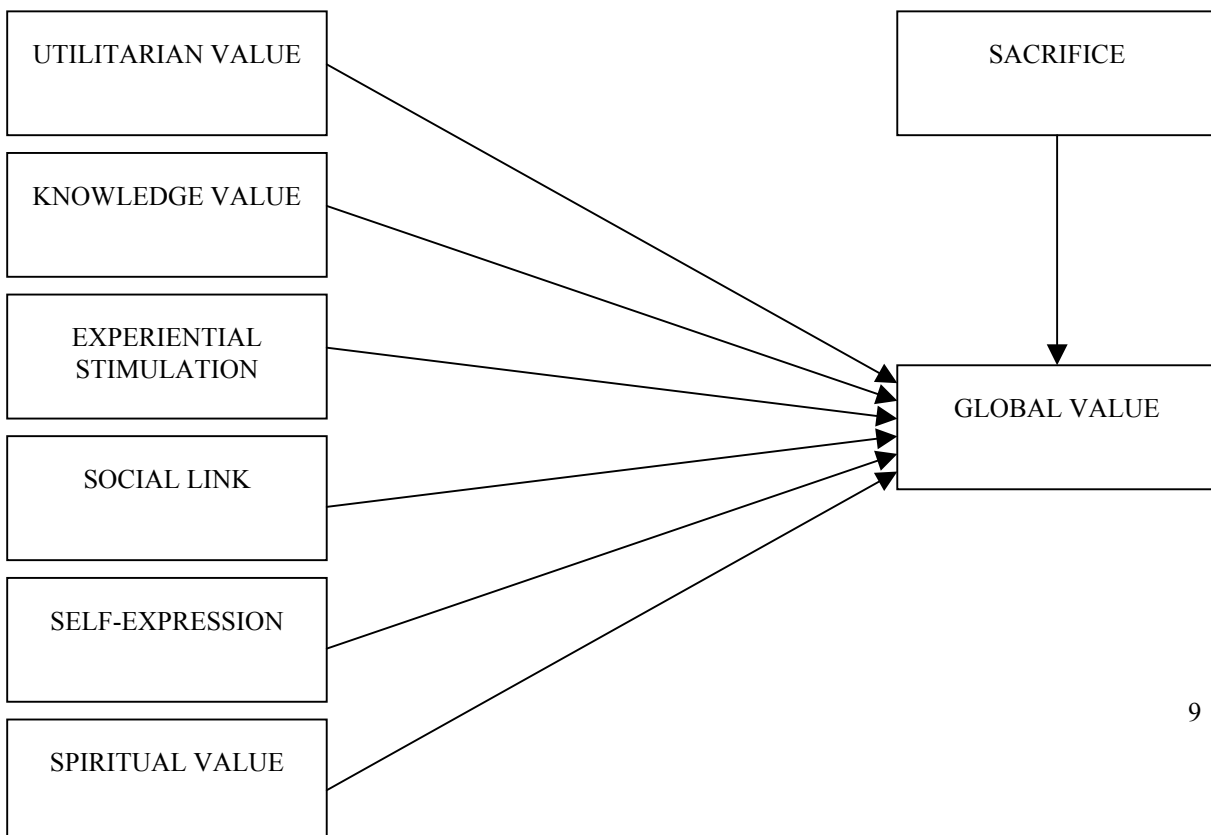
interactions, exchanges and conversations. Social link refers to a bi-directional communication whereas social sign is a unidirectional social communication (Evrard & Aurier, 1996).

- an ego-defensive or self-esteem maintenance function: for a person, the environment can produce a destabilization of his/her ego-concept. Thereby he/she can develop psychic mechanisms of protection against these aggressions and to maintain self-esteem (Smith & al, 1956; Katz, 1960). Consumption can force a person to challenge his/her self-concept and to think about his/her role in society and reasons of existence. Holbrook (1999) suggests the importance of spirituality and refers globally to faith, ecstasy, sacredness and magic experience (for instance seeing a movie can produce a philosophical/ethical experience).

An integrative model of usage value and exchange value

In a functional perspective, a consumer attributes value to a product if it responds effectively to one or several different functions (Evrard & Aurier, 1996; N'Goala, 2000). In the previous section, we have defined four groups of consumer value categories and selected several components that are particularly relevant for our empirical analysis of movie consumption. From the consumer point of view, these components would be integrated in a global calculus where the different types of usage value (anticipated for the first consumption experience, or evaluated on the basis of previous experiences in the other cases) are counterbalanced by individual sacrifices (costs/benefits approach). Like Zeithaml (1988), Corfman, al. (1991), Lai (1995) and Oliver (1996, 1999) suggest that this operation forms a global and specific evaluation: customer value, which may serve as a basis for transaction decisions (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
A FUNCTIONAL MODEL OF CONSUMER VALUE



2 AN EMPIRICAL APPLICATION TO MOVIE CONSUMPTION

2.1 Operationalization of the concepts

Research design

Our conceptual framework is applied to the cinema. From the consumer's point of view, this "experiential" consumption responds to hedonic, social and spiritual motivations. Our study was conducted in France in November 1998. The sample was composed of 200 students of a Paris University. They are members of this University and regular movie goers but not students of the authors. The questionnaire was administered face to face by interviewers. Quotas samples were selected by controlling for gender, area of residence, year and type of study (law, economy, management and arts). Questions focus on tastes, practice, value of the cinema and on the last consumption experience (last movie seen).

Development of the constructs

We apply the classic procedure of construct validation : items generation, exploratory factor analysis, purification of the items, confirmatory factor analysis. Value components are measured with five points Likert scales. From four to seven items are used to measure each construct: utilitarian, knowledge, experiential stimulation, self-expression, social link, spiritual and global value. These thirty-three items are mixed in the questionnaire: we do not try to improve artificially the internal coherence and the discriminant validity of the measures. Several scales had already been validated empirically for movie, arts exhibitions and wine consumption (Evrard & Aurier, 1996); other items come from an initial phase of qualitative interviews.

Three other scales are constructed for this research (utilitarian value, spiritual value and global value (sacrifices / benefits)). Two problems appeared during the operationalization of the utilitarian value : first, a direct measure of the perceived utility of the cinema is not particularly pertinent with items as "in my life, cinema is something very useful"; secondly, considering this object orientation, it seems difficult to distinguish utilitarian value from the product itself. In the qualitative study, a technical dimension appeared as a form of utilitarian value (sound and image quality compared to other audio-visual products). Spiritual value is seen as a form of confrontation of a person with the "Other" (society, universe, cosmos, or even God). This constitutes a "generalized" vision of the social dimension described by Holbrook (1994). Global value is operationalized through items formulated as a trade-off between the sacrifices and the benefits perceived by consumers (figure 1).

Psychometric properties

The examination of the Cronbach's alpha coefficients and of the results of the principal component analysis led us to purify the measures and to obtain a good discriminant and convergent validity (table 5). In particular, in the factor analysis, seven factors have an eigen value superior to 1 and are representing 70% of total variance. Additionally the loadings structure corresponds to our theoretical framework. However we can retain only two items to measure the utilitarian value (instead of four).

TABLE 3
EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (VARIMAX ROTATION)

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
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Util1	0	6	1	- 6	14	10	84*
Util2	- 4	16	1	3	20	2	81*
Know1	18	78*	14	-1	2	5	13
Know 2	- 4	73*	19	-7	13	-2	4
Know 3	4	86*	14	11	5	9	3
Know 4	26	72*	11	14	2	7	0
Know 5	-3	84*	4	14	14	4	8
Stimul2	-1	6	9	11	0	78*	23
Stimul3	16	5	15	6	19	62*	-5
Stimul4	18	7	10	-1	12	78*	-1
Selfex1	11	1	12	80*	-1	-5	-9
Selfex2	5	4	14	76*	1	18	6
Selfex3	21	11	-1	77*	9	-6	-17
Selfex4	17	11	8	77*	5	10	16
Solin1	11	20	78*	12	3	-2	5
Solin2	11	5	82*	10	10	14	8
Solin3	17	23	73*	9	19	24	-8
Solin4	18	18	81*	7	14	11	-2
Spirit1	76*	11	15	29	8	12	1
Spirit2	84*	11	11	21	2	8	-12
Spirit3	86*	11	12	17	-1	-1	-6
Spirit4	85*	1	9	4	14	8	2
Spirit5	80*	5	12	-2	10	17	12
Value1	17	12	15	0	78*	7	7
Value3	9	2	17	-1	85*	3	13
Value4	0	10	2	13	83*	10	0
Value5	3	10	6	1	55*	16	28

In the confirmatory factor analysis with seven factors, the constructs present good psychometric properties, as shown in tables 4 and 5. Considering the model complexity (7 constructs, 27 items), the fit may be considered as satisfying and confirms the unidimensionality and the discriminant validity of the operationalized constructs. The utilitarian value (2 items) and the experiential stimulation (3 items) present poor indicators of reliability and shared variance. In this empirical analysis, we argue in favor of the constructs richness instead of optimizing the model fit by eliminating several items.

TABLE 4
FIT INDICATORS OF THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

degrees of freedom	303
chi 2 (prob)	531 (0.0)
chi 2 of the independent model at 351 ddl	2829
RMSEA (prob)	0.062 (0.016)
RMR standardized	0.061
CFI	0.91
RFI	0.78

TABLE 5
PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE CONSTRUCTS (CFA)

Value	Number of items	Reliability Coefficient	Shared variance
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Utilitarian	2	.70	.53
Knowledge	5	.87	.58
Experiential stimulation	3	.67	.40
Social link	4	.86	.60
Self-expression (sign)	4	.81	.52
Spiritual	5	.91	.64
Perceived global value	4	.81	.52

2.2 Results analysis

Internal structure of the consumption value components

In a confirmatory factor analysis, we examine the correlation structure between the six components of consumption value and of these components with global value (table 6).

TABLE 6
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CONSTRUCTS (CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS)

	Utilitarian	Knowledge	Experiential stimulation	Social link	Self-expression	Spiritual
Utilitarian	1					
Knowledge	0.26 (2.99)	1				
Experiential stimulation	0.24 (2.40)	0.24 (2.73)	1			
Social link	0.10 (1.09)	0.42 (6.12)	0.43 (5.36)	1		
Self-expression	0.01 (0.08)	0.25 (3.14)	0.21 (2.23)	0.30 (3.90)	1	
Spiritual	-0.04 (-0.45)	0.24 (3.21)	0.34 (4.15)	0.40 (5.85)	0.42 (6.09)	1
Global value	0.41 (5.07)	0.24 (3.09)	0.34 (3.95)	0.37 (5.14)	0.13 (1.59)	0.21 (2.70)

First, the components of value are rather intercorrelated (12 coefficients out of 15 are significant, ranging from 0.21 to 0.43). However the utilitarian value is associated only to knowledge (0.26) and experiential stimulation (0.24), which may be linked to its definitional and measurements problems.

Second, knowledge value is correlated to all the other components of value: experiential value (0.24), social link (0.42), self-expression (0.25) and spiritual value (0.24). Experiential stimulation is also correlated with all the different functions.

Third, spiritual value is correlated to all the dimensions and particularly to the social components as social link (0.40) and self expressiveness (0.42), which both belong to the extrinsic/others oriented cell of our taxonomy.

Fourth, social link function has a central role in movie consumption and exhibits the largest correlations with the other components (except with the utilitarian function).

Integration of the functions and links with global value

Examination of the theoretical correlations shows a strong relationship between global value, defined as a costs/benefits ratio, and the utilitarian function (0.41), the experiential stimulation (0.34) and social link (0.37). We observe significant correlations with knowledge (0.24) and spiritual (0.21) functions and, to a lesser extent, with self-expression function (0.13). A regression permits us to examine the explanatory power of the six consumption value components on perceived global value. This model is quite equivalent to a confirmatory factor analysis and presents the same fit indicators (table 6). The functions explain 30% (R^2) of variance global perceived value, a result which may be considered as rather encouraging for future research.

CONCLUSION

This research had two objectives. First, we proposed, based on an integration of several approaches previously developed in consumer research, a typology of consumption value components and showed how its theoretical foundations may be anchored in a functional theory of value. On this motivational basis, six components of consumption value were identified (without being exhaustive). An empirical application to movie consumption led us to operationalize these components and to show their construct validity. The second objective was to reconcile two main approaches of value in marketing: we linked empirically the components of consumer usage value with a global (transactional) value. In this first attempt to examine these empirical relationships, we showed how different types of consumption value integrate into a costs / benefits ratio called global value. In the future, it would be necessary to improve the measurement of some constructs (in particular utilitarian), to extend the classification to include other components of consumption value and to analyze other categories of goods and services.

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