

PGDM (IB), 2019-21
Consumer Behaviour
IB - 432

Trimester – IV, End-Term Examination: September, 2020

Time allowed: 2 Hrs and 30 Min

Max Marks: 50

Roll No: _____

Instruction: Students are required to write Roll No. on every page of the question paper, writing anything except the Roll No will be treated as Unfair Means. In case of rough work please use answer sheet.

Sections	No. of Questions to attempt	Marks	Marks
A	3 (Long Questions)	10 Marks each	3*10 = 30
B	Compulsory Case Study	20 Marks	20
		Total Marks	50

Section A (answer one question from each set)

Q1. Discuss the relevance of consumer psychographics and lifestyles to marketers? What is AIO model and relevance to marketers? (CILO-1)

OR

Q1. Discuss different types of 'noise' and its effects in the marketing communication process. What are the strategies available to a marketer to overcome the effects of noise? (CILO-1)

Q2. When would extensive problem solving, limited problem solving and routinized response behavior occurs in consumer decision making? Explain in detail the differences between these purchasing situations on different parameters? (CILO-2)

OR

Q2. Explain the concept of 'involvement' in consumer behavior? What are the different levels and types of involvement? How can marketers increase consumer involvement? (CILO-2)

Q3. You are hired as a marketing manager in a multinational company. How can you use Hofstede's model of national culture in planning branding and advertising strategy in different markets with different cultures (CILO-3)

OR

Q3. How can marketers use the principles of 'sensory adaptation', 'differential threshold', 'figure and ground' and 'halo effect'? Explain with suitable examples? (CILO-3)

Section B (answer all questions)

Read the case "From space to place Creating Utopian meanings in a festival market place" and answer the following questions

Q1. Compare and contrast "The Powerscourt Townhouse Centre" with a regular large shopping mall you generally visit in terms of how consumers experience each of these retail environments? What made "Powerscourt Townhouse Centre" successful in the first place? (CILO-2) (12M)

Q2. Critically evaluate the changes made by "Powerscourt Townhouse Centre" in 1990s. what changes /alternate strategies you would suggest to "Powerscourt Townhouse" management so that they could retain the lost glory? (CILO-3) (8M)

From Space to Place: Creating Utopian Meanings in a Festival Marketplace

Places, such as retail centres, are much more than spatial coordinates or dots on a map. As places become intimately associated with life's events, they come to represent symbols of the experiences concerned. In other words, a space becomes a place when it becomes invested with meanings by those who use it.

Developed out of a beautiful eighteenth-century building, the Powerscourt Townhouse Centre opened as a festival marketplace in 1981, a short walk away from one of Dublin's busiest shopping areas, Grafton Street. The centre comprised three levels of retail outlets grouped around an enclosed courtyard. The majority of shops sold specialist merchandise, with jewellery, ladies' fashions, antiques and eating places predominating. Like its American and European counterparts (i.e. Harborplace, Baltimore and Covent Garden, London), Powerscourt offered an allegedly unique shopping environment, the 'Powerscourt Experience', as it was described on promotional material. Festival marketplaces provide an alternative to the uniformity of shopping centres which offer mass-produced goods via high street chains such as Next, Miss Selfridge, New Look and Zara. They typically occupy a refurbished building of acknowledged architectural merit, retail an eclectic mix of speciality goods and services, are tenanted by independent retailers rather than national chain stores, encourage recreational as opposed to utilitarian shopping activities, and adopt an essentially aesthetic ethos involving artworks, craft activities and designer goods.

On the ground floor in Powerscourt there was a central café where shoppers could pass the time chatting or people-watching. Surrounding this were small market stalls, selling an eclectic mix of products, from ice cream to bonsai trees. Rising up from the courtyard was a stage for cultural events with a grand piano to provide special recitals and enhance the centre's ambience. More exclusive shops, on the higher levels, proffered a range of designer jewellery, clothing, antiques and paintings. Its quirky mix of shops and entertainment gave Powerscourt a special ambience that consumers loved. Its combination of arts and crafts, and the sense that there was something for everyone, made it very different from other high street shopping. Many people came just to sit with friends over coffee or food in the many restaurants that were interspersed throughout the centre. Visually, a plethora of colourful signs, restaurant canopies and plant greenery greeted shoppers as they entered the courtyard. Powerscourt's somewhat haphazard layout encouraged exploration and gave shoppers a sense of discovery. It was not unusual for some actually to lose their way as they wandered around the different floors.

During the 1990s, as many other retail innovations appeared in Dublin, Powerscourt lost some of its special appeal. Its retail mix became a little jaded as small shops came and went and parts of the centre had a rather run-down appearance. The management of the centre decided to carry out a major refurbishment that lasted well over a year and brought about radical changes to the ambience of the centre, which moved towards mainstream retailing. Smaller units were replaced with larger chain stores, such as FCUK and Karen Millen, the market-type stalls disappeared completely, and a minimalist design approach was applied throughout. The immediate hedonic impact that assailed consumers on entering the centre, the blaze of colours and smells from fruit and vegetables, largely evaporated. High wooden surrounds that demarked the new central restaurant area on the ground floor countermanded the soaring effect of superabundant space that used to strike consumers as they entered the centre.

There were strong emotional responses from consumers and retailers, many of whom were very disappointed with, and distressed by, this modernization. To understand how changes to a shopping centre could provoke such deep reactions it helps if we explore the meanings that consumers had created within such an environment. In the case of Powerscourt, these meanings had a very utopian content.

The concept of utopia comes from Sir Thomas More's renowned classic of 1516, about an imaginary land called Utopia. More's detailed description of this idyllic environment gave birth to a distinctive literary genre, one that describes diverse types of ideal communities where social harmony and perfection prevails. Spanning over 500 years and including well over 3,000 writings, utopian thinking has produced many varied, often conflicting visions of perfection. As time and space vary, so too does the conception of what constitutes the ideal life. Many now argue that the value of this body of work lies in the mental processes that it inspires, as a means to question existing reality. In drawing attention to the gap between what is and what could be, such literature continually inspires a critical but creative view of the world.

Accordingly, the utopian impulse has been identified in the web of contemporary social life, in computer games, cults, communities and lifestyle magazines. In keeping with a postmodern world, the utopian imagination has itself become fragmented, dispersed throughout our daily lives and, most often, dispensed by the marketing system.

Commentators have increasingly alluded to the utopian qualities of shopping centres, both in terms of their physical layouts and the social activities that they contain. In Powerscourt there were three key utopian processes that underpinned the consumer experience therein:

- Sensing displace: The discovery of a utopia always involves some type of dislocation, a travelling between worlds, whether physical or temporal, in order to provide a setting in which to contrast and compare the present. There are several factors that contributed to Powerscourt being a displace. Many visitors came across the centre by chance because signage to the centre was minimal. This meant that often the centre was a serendipitous find that surprised and delighted. Consumers often 'stumbled' across it and this gave them a sense of exploration, and discovery that activated the utopian imagination. Regarded as a world apart, the centre evoked feelings of elsewhere, a displacement from the present, and a distancing that was both spatial and temporal.
- Creating playspace: As a retail space, pre-refit Powerscourt was full of contradictions and underlying tensions that remained unresolved. Like More's Island of Utopia, it was neither the old world nor the new, neither eighteenth-century Georgian times, nor modern-day Ireland. Within the centre itself, furthermore, these tensions remained unresolved, playing against each other and underpinning the overall spatial arrangement. Retailers mixed styles unashamedly in Powerscourt to achieve the effect of a giant collage that greeted consumers as they entered the main courtyard. With no uniformity to shop front design or signage, an array of different codes and references intermingled in an intriguingly idiosyncratic manner. This meant that consumers could weave their own personalized fantasies into their experiences there.
- Performing artscape: Powerscourt was at once a commercial space and a special place that evoked other, more elevated values, both in terms of its preservation of a historic building and the copious arts, crafts and antiques contained within. Above and beyond its intrinsic cultural capital, Powerscourt functioned as a form of stage-set for marketplace theatre and retail dramaturgy. With its grand piano on central stage, it evoked the feeling of drama about to unfold, a story about to be told. In highlighting the contrast with other, more utilitarian forms of shopping, this entertainment added to Powerscourt's exalted, extra-special nature, thereby enhancing its aspirational appeal, its utopian promise of perfectibility.

As the refurbishment took place, and the centre moved towards mainstream retailing, consumers complained that it could now be anywhere and that it had lost its special ambience that so strongly differentiated it from other high street shopping venues. After the refurbishment the environment no longer evoked the feelings encapsulated in the themes above. Many consumers were very angry at the changes, believing that a unique place had been sacrificed to the encroaching forces of globalization and, indeed, that a part of their heritage had been taken away. They blamed the management of the centre and dissatisfaction with the new minimalist look only served to increase their nostalgia for the 'old' Powerscourt which had once symbolized for them the antithesis of high street shopping.

This example highlights how marketers and consumers are involved in joint cultural production of spaces and how marketers need to be aware of the important social role they play in the organization of such spaces. Their relationships with consumers are enhanced by judicious use of marketing activities within the spaces concerned. As this Powerscourt study demonstrates, when marketers overlook this social role their marketing activities may actually subvert, rather than support, consumers' interest in a particular space. In particular, it highlights the importance for management of understanding the meaning systems that consumers create around marketing phenomena and how these may be very powerful and enduring.