

Effects of religiousness on Sunday shopping and outshopping behaviours: a study of shopper attitudes and behaviours in the American South

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Abstract

This research was designed to examine the effects of multiple dimensions of religiousness on two important shopping characteristics: Sunday shopping and outshopping. Results of a random telephone survey of 338 participating residents of five small towns centring around Ruston, Louisiana, indicated that each dimension of religiousness had a significant affect on one or more Sunday shopping and outshopping variables included in this study. Moreover, *all* shopping variables included in the study were significantly affected by some dimensions of religiousness.

Keywords

Shopper behaviour, outshopping, religiousness, shopping preference, Sunday shopping, USA.

Introduction

Spiritually and behaviourally, the United States is considered one of the most religious countries in the world, second only to India (Gallup 1982; LaBarbera 1987). Religious beliefs are very important to a majority of

The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research 7:1
January 1997

0959-3969

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American adults (Edmondson 1995), 60 per cent of the US population belongs to a church (US Bureau of the Census 1992) and two-thirds of the population made monetary donations to a church or synagogue during 1993 (Braus 1994). These statistics indicate that religion and religious beliefs are a salient force for a large segment of society, a force which may moderate consumer behaviour and dramatically affect marketing activities.

More specifically, religious convictions are manifested in various forms that affect shopping behaviour (McDaniel and Burnett 1990; Wilkes, Burnett and Howell 1986). Most obviously, highly religious consumers may refuse to shop on Sundays because Sunday shopping encourages working on the Sabbath, the day of rest. Highly religious consumers may also be less likely to shop out of town (outshop) because they are more traditional and home-oriented (LaBarbera 1987) than less religious consumers.

Though many factors may affect the decision to outshop and to Sunday shop, religiousness appears especially relevant as a potential factor in mediating the decision. The effects of religiousness on outshopping and on Sunday shopping have received little study despite the potentially significant impact on small town retailer revenue.

We attempt to fill this void in the shopping behaviour literature by examining the influence of religiousness on the propensity to outshop and to Sunday shop. This investigation appears warranted in that a defined association between religiousness and shopping behaviours further characterizes and explains the consumer, allows better retail strategies with respect to the trading areas' religiousness and creates a basis for selecting target markets. Further, we examine the religiousness literature and propose a revised, multidimensional measure of the construct.

The literature related to religiousness and the shopping variables is reviewed and hypotheses are developed in the next section. Results are then presented and discussed with respect to previous findings, and finally, suggestions for future research are given.

Conceptual issues

Religiousness is defined as a 'belief in God accompanied by a commitment to follow principles believed to be set forth by God' (McDaniel and Burnett 1990: 103). Religiousness serves to influence consumer behaviour through the creation of a cultural subsystem which serves to act as a determinant of 'the value and attitude structure of a people' (Delener 1990: 27). As an influencing factor, religiousness is so strong, that it serves as the cohesiveness of nations and cultures (e.g., Israel and Iran). Indeed, organized religion encourages consumers to accept religious tenets as part

of a socialization process and its dominant effects mediate the influence of other institutions (Wilkes, Burnett and Howell 1986). Such subcultural influence is stable and pervasive, and the resulting consumption behaviours facilitate 'activities that define one's culture' (Delener 1990: 27).

Given the religiousness of the US population, it is not surprising that religiousness has been identified as a consistent and primary factor affecting community involvement; political, cultural and moral beliefs; personal relationships; and organizational behaviour of Americans (LaBarbera 1987). With this evidence suggesting that religiousness influences an entire way of life through socialization and is a continuing 'key force in individual behavior' (LaBarbera 1987: 193), religiousness may be an enduring consumer value which provides marketers a basis for the selection of target markets and marketing strategies (Delener 1990; McDaniel and Burnett 1990).

A theoretical framework for examining religiousness as a segmentation variable in a shopping context is provided by Sheth (1983) in his proposed Shopping Preference Theory. The theory explains factors that influence individual consumer shopping predisposition (the evoked set of retail outlet alternatives). Sheth maintains that shopping predisposition is affected by individual choice calculus (choice decision rules) which itself is affected by shopping motives and shopping options. Shopping motives are either functional in nature – guided by time, place or possession requirements – or nonfunctional – guided by emotions and our need for socialization, novelty, image, etc. Shopping motives are influenced by demand side determinants, both personal and product characteristics, while shopping options are affected by market and company determinants such as location, retail institutions, merchandise and service.

Religion or religiousness has the most potential for affecting shopping predisposition through the demand side determinant – personal traits. Sheth (1983) divides the personal determinant factor into personal values, social values and epistemic values. Both the personal value and the social value systems may be related directly or indirectly to religion and religiousness. Personal values are comprised of 'such personal traits as sex, age, race, and religion' (Sheth 1983: 23), while the social values component consists of family, friends, reference groups, etc. Church affiliation can serve as a reference group and as a source of friends, allowing religion to comprise a significant portion of the social values factor as well as the personal values factor as noted by Sheth.

Following the Shopping Preference Theory then, religiousness indirectly affects shopping predisposition along a path from personal determinants to shopping motives to choice calculus then to shopping predisposition. Religiousness may also work more directly by affecting acceptable shopping options or alternatives. If a religious consumer deems a particular retail practice, such as being open on Sunday, as contrary to

tenets held, the consumer may eliminate the outlet as a shopping alternative. As Clark and Dawson note, 'religiousness may impose limitations on the consideration of alternative actions. Certain potential actions may be unacceptable to the more religious, and therefore may not become a part of an evoked set of alternative actions' (1996: 360–1). Consequently, Sheth's (1983) theory offers two potential avenues along which religiousness may work to impact on shopping behaviour: an indirect path originating from religion's impact on personal values and a direct path whereby religion influences the evoked set of retail outlet alternatives.

Previous empirical evidence provides support for religiousness effects on some shopping and other consumer behaviours (Hirschman 1983; LaBarbera 1987; McDaniel and Burnett 1990; Sheth 1983; Wilkes, Burnett and Howell 1986) and provides a basis for consumer segmentation (Delener 1990; McDaniel and Burnett 1990). In fact, McDaniel and Burnett state that 'It has long been acknowledged that people's religious beliefs have a discernible effect on attitudes and on behavior' (1990: 103), providing justification for further study of religiousness to better understand its effects on consumer attitudes and on behaviour.

Several studies have specifically examined the effects of religiousness in a retail context. For example, Hirschman (1982) found that church affiliation was a significant factor in evaluating criteria in the selection of entertainment. Wilkes, Burnett, and Howell (1986) found positive correlations between religiousness and a predilection for nationally branded goods and less use of credit. Further research by McDaniel and Burnett (1990) examined the effects of multiple measures of religiousness (labelled religious commitment and religious affiliation) on selected retail store evaluative factors. They found a positive relationship between high self-perceived religiousness (the cognitive component of religious commitment) and the desire for shopping efficiency, sales personnel friendliness/assistance and product quality in a retail store. Religious contribution, a behavioural component of religious commitment, was positively and significantly associated with sales personnel friendliness/assistance and credit availability.

Sheth's (1983) Shopping Preference Theory, coupled with previous findings about religiousness effects on consumer/shopping behaviour, provides strong support for the contention that religiousness may be an important variable in a retailing context. The empirical research indicates that religiousness affects various aspects of consumer and shopping behaviour and the theory states that religion is likely to be an important personal trait that affects shopping motives and, ultimately, shopping predisposition – where to shop and when to shop. Where and when to shop may be evidenced by outshopping and Sunday shopping, the two primary behaviours of interest in this study.

Religiousness dimensions and shopping factors

Two facets of religiousness have previously been identified in the literature as affiliation and commitment. The conceptualization and operationalization of these variables and the two shopping behaviour variables, outshopping and Sunday shopping, are discussed in the following sections.

Religious affiliation: The religious affiliation dimension is defined as the subject's current denomination or sect (McDaniel and Burnett 1990) and research substantiates the relevance of the dimension in affecting behaviour (see Hirschman 1982, 1983, for example). Though McDaniel and Burnett (1990) found no significant relationship between religious affiliation and retail store evaluative criteria, the effects of this religious dimension may well affect other marketing variables.

Religious commitment: McDaniel and Burnett (1990) operationalized religious commitment as cognitive and behavioural measures of religiousness. The cognitive dimension, defined as the 'degree to which an individual holds religious beliefs' (McDaniel and Burnett 1990: 103), was composed of three summated items designed to evaluate the importance of religion. The behavioural dimension was assessed and analysed as two separate items – church/synagogue attendance and monetary giving. The behavioural dimension can best be interpreted as overt behaviour towards a religious organization.

These two dimensions of religiousness appear theoretically sound and empirically substantiated and investigations into religiousness effects must consider both factors. For example, individuals may regard themselves as highly religious (cognitive component) and yet rarely go to church (behavioural component) or they may give generously of their time and money to organized religion (perhaps for appearances' sake) while not ascribing strongly to religious precepts. Considering the potential significance of either or both religious components, little has been done to assess reliability or validity of scale measures of either dimension.

Outshopping: Outshopping involves purchasing goods and/or services from outside the consumer's local trading area (Papadopoulos 1980). The phenomenon is important to retailers in defining trading areas and identifying intermarket leakages which may erode consumer bases, sales volumes and profitability of retailers within small trade centres. Many different variables, including satisfaction with retail stores, consumer demographics and consumer psychographics, have been investigated in order to gain a greater understanding of outshopping (Herman and Beik 1968; Lillis and Hawkins 1974; Mason and Moore 1970; Samli, Riecken and Yavas 1983). Although much of this research suggests that dissatisfaction with local shopping conditions contributes to the propensity to outshop, local retailers were found to underestimate severely the extent of

customer dissatisfaction and outshopping (Papadopoulos 1980) and to attribute any recognized outshopping solely to an increase in consumer mobility (Thompson 1971).

Sheth's Shopping Preference Theory (1983), on the other hand, suggests that individual personal, social and epistemic values for different sensory, social and emotional experiences may affect nonfunctional shopping motives to explain outlet choice or, more specifically, outshopping behaviour (Blakney and Sekely 1994). Although religiousness is incorporated into the Shopping Preference Theory (Sheth 1983) and is likely to affect outlet choice directly and indirectly, no prior studies have examined the religiousness construct as a potential determinant of outshopping behaviour empirically. An understanding of how the religiousness of the trade area impacts on intermarket leakages would assist retailers in devising marketing strategies to reduce this behaviour and control the loss of local shopping dollars to larger outside retailers.

Sunday shopping Sunday, once considered a day for family as well as a religious holiday, is increasingly becoming a day for consumer activity. The average consumer now spends approximately 40 minutes shopping on Sunday, up from 25 minutes in 1975 (Robinson 1989). As the importance of consumer time increases, Sunday shopping is expected to accelerate (Abend 1989). In response to this consumer demand, unrestricted Sunday shopping within urban areas has become commonplace; however, Sunday retail closures are prevalent in rural areas and Sunday openings continue to generate strong resistance in some areas in the United States (*New York Times* 1993a) and internationally (*New York Times* 1993b) and with closure often enforced legally by 'Blue Laws'. Although Blue Laws have been repealed in Louisiana, most retail stores in rural areas remain closed on Sundays and strongly oppose Sunday openings. Hence, Sunday shopping, especially by rural consumers, may constitute a dimension of generalized outshopping.

Intuitively, it seems that religiousness may significantly affect the decision to shop on Sunday or to postpone shopping to other days of the week. For example, some religions disdain any activities that involve 'work' on Sundays, since Sunday is 'the day of rest'. This religious precept, coupled with previous findings supporting the relationship of religiousness and retailing context factors, suggests that religiousness may also affect Sunday shopping and outshopping patterns.

Hypotheses

We posit that more religiously committed individuals are less willing to travel distances from home to shop (outshop), spend a lower proportion of their retail shopping dollars outshopping, are less likely to shop on Sunday and spend a lower proportion of their retail shopping dollars on Sunday

than are less religious individuals. Theoretical support for these proposals is provided by the Shopping Preference Theory (Sheth 1983) and by previous research (e.g., Hirschman 1982, 1983; McDaniel and Burnett 1990) which suggests that religiousness may affect shopping behaviours such as outshopping and Sunday shopping. Furthermore, religious individuals have been found to be more traditional and home-oriented (LaBarbera 1987) and, thus, less likely to travel long distances to shop. Additionally, Loback (1989) reported that religious individuals believe consumers should choose not to shop on Sundays as this is the Lord's Day, a belief which may be accentuated, in part, by religious affiliation. These beliefs, expressed in a retailing context by the following hypotheses, are investigated in this study:

- H₁ There is a significant and negative effect of religiousness on the propensity to outshop.
- H₂ There is a significant and negative effect of religiousness on the percentage of retail purchases made outside the local shopping area.
- H₃ There is a significant and positive effect of religiousness on the belief that all non-essential businesses should be closed on Sundays.
- H₄ There is a significant and negative effect of religiousness on the proportion of retail purchases made on Sunday.
- H₅ There is a significant and negative effect of religiousness on the number of Sundays on which shopping occurs.

Method

Measurement of the variables

Three concepts were operationalized for examination in this study – religiousness, outshopping and Sunday shopping. All constructs, with the exception of Sunday shopping, were measured utilizing items or scales which have previously appeared in the literature.

Religiousness Religiousness was measured using several indices as recommended by DeJong, Faulkner and Warland (1976) and Wilkes, Burnett and Howell (1986). In the manner of Wilkes, Burnett and Howell (1986) and McDaniel and Burnett (1990), religiousness was measured through separate commitment (behavioural and cognitive) and affiliation dimensions.

Religious affiliation was determined by asking respondents to name their current denomination or sect. Responses were collapsed into four broad categories: Catholic, Protestant, Fundamentalist and Other. There was no specific category for the Jewish faith because of the low numbers of Jews in the community examined (less than .07 per cent). The Protestant category was composed of respondents indicating a 'mainstream' sect (i.e., Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran), while the Fundamentalist category was comprised of other Protestant denominations (Assembly of God, Pentecostal, etc.). This classification schema for religious denominations appears warranted given that 'religious beliefs within denominational categories may differ greatly' (McDaniel and Burnett 1990: 110).

The behavioural component, as suggested by McDaniel and Burnett (1990), was measured by church attendance and by monetary donations to religious organizations. Church attendance in this study was operationalized through two questions: the number of days per week that religious services are attended and the number of hours of religious service attended on Sundays. Additionally, percentage of income given to the religious denomination or sect was included as an item on the behavioural scale. The percentage of income rather than a dollar amount was requested because most denominations ask that members regularly contribute a specific percentage of their income to the church. As observable, tangible behaviours, these behavioural measure items appear to embody devotion to a religious organization. So we refer to this behavioural dimension of religiousness as 'Devotion'. Responses on each behavioural item were standardized and averaged so that higher numbers on this measure indicate higher levels of devotion.

Cognitively, religiousness was measured by asking respondents to indicate, on a six-point scale, agreement/disagreement with the statements 'If Americans were more religious, this would be a better country' (Wilkes, Burnett and Howell 1986), 'Spiritual values are more important than material things', 'My religion is very important to me' and 'I believe in God' (McDaniel and Burnett 1990). Because this dimension appears to represent spiritual aspects of religion, we have named it 'Spiritualism'. These items were interspersed with the propensity to outshop scale (Hopper and Budden 1989) and were coded such that higher numbers indicate higher levels of religiousness.

Outshopping Outshoppers were identified through two separate measures: the seven-item propensity to outshop scale developed by Hopper and Budden (1989) and an item requesting the specific proportion of total dollar purchases made out of town, as advocated by Samli and Uhr (1974), and Darden and Perreault (1976). Respondents rated their propensity to outshop on a 1 to 6 scale, where 6 = a strong preference for local shopping and 1 = a strong propensity for outshopping. Each measure served as a separate dependent variable in the study analysis.

Sunday shopping Sunday shopping was determined by two behavioural measures and one cognitive measure. The number of Sundays shopped over the last 12 months and the percentage of retail shopping done on Sundays, in terms of dollars, were used as measures of Sunday shopping behaviour. Though 12 months is a long time period over which to recall shopping trips and expenditures, the data for this study were collected in the winter months from late November to early February and so a 12-month time frame was required to eliminate the effect of the Christmas season and to provide a better representation of typical shopping expenditures. Most respondents had little difficulty recalling a response to these questions during the interviews. Thus, while some measurement error in the absolute frequencies may exist, the relative frequency across all respondents is valid for comparison purposes. Additionally, 12-month time periods have been used previously in similar types of studies (see Lumpkin, Hawes and Darden 1986, for example).

Finally, 'You think that all non-essential businesses should be closed on Sunday' provided a cognitive measure of perceptions of Sunday shopping. This latter item was measured on a 6-point scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree.

Data collection

A north central Louisiana area located in the 'Bible Belt' of the South was used for this study. This area, comprised of Ruston, Louisiana and four nearby, smaller communities, representing a total of 8,566 households, is well suited for outshopping and for Sunday shopping studies because local shopping is limited to traditional 'drug stores' and small general merchandise retailers in downtown areas and two stand-alone discount stores located in the largest of the five small towns. The local retailers offer most common types of products that consumers may need although product variety is limited. These stores, except for the two discount stores, are not open on Sundays. Additionally, more sophisticated regional retail shopping areas are available in substantially larger cities approximately 40 miles away.

A random telephone survey, using a constant integer additive, was utilized to collect self-reported data about religious and shopping beliefs. This method was the most practical means of reaching a wide variety of local residents. A total of 923 completed calls resulted in 338 usable responses: a 36.6 percent response rate. While this response rate is low for a telephone survey, it was not unexpected given the sensitive nature of the study and the length of the questionnaire.

Respondent ages ranged from 17 to 88 years with a mean age of 41.5 years. The sample comprised mostly females (76.2 per cent), not a

surprisingly large proportion given that interviewers asked to speak to the person who does most of the shopping for the household. A total of 77.9 per cent of the respondents were European-Americans, while 20.2 per cent were African-Americans. The mean years of formal education for the sample was 12.92 years and the mean income was \$38,352. Respondent religious affiliation responses indicated that 7.1 per cent were Fundamentalists, 74.7 per cent were Protestants, 12.8 per cent were Catholics and the remaining 5.4 per cent were classified as 'Other' religions.

These sample statistics differ from the population only in that the sample consisted of more females and more European-Americans with higher incomes than the population of the area. The differences should not be considered a significant error as European-American women with higher income levels, as in this study sample, remain largely responsible for most household shopping and should be of utmost concern to retailers. Additionally, the purpose of this study is to test theory and examine relationships among variables rather than to measure absolute occurrences (Calder, Phillips and Tybout 1981).

Data analysis

Respondents were asked ten questions designed to assess two dimensions of religiousness and the results were subjected to principal components analysis with Varimax rotation to determine dimensionality. Six items clearly loaded on the two factors, spiritualism (cognitive) and devotion (behavioural) as predicted, suggesting that the items are appropriate scale measures. Table 1 presents the final factor analysis results after cross-loading items were omitted from further analysis. Coefficient alphas for the multi-item scale measures, spiritualism and devotion dimensions, are also shown in Table 1 and provide evidence of internal reliability of the measures since the coefficient alphas are above the level recommended for basic research (Nunnally 1978). The coefficient alpha of .78 for the propensity to outshop scale borrowed from previous research was also well above acceptable levels to indicate scale internal reliability.

Results

A correlation matrix of religiousness and demographic measures (age, marital status, sex, race, education level and income) was examined for significance prior to further analysis because previous research has indicated a link between some demographic variables and religiousness (McDaniel and Burnett 1990; Fealy and Polka 1991, for example). The correlation matrix indicated that only age was significantly related to the religiousness measures at the .05 alpha level or less. Consequently, the

Table 1 Factor loadings for religiousness dimension measures

<i>Factor/items</i>	<i>Spiritualism</i>	<i>Devotion</i>
Your religion is very important to you.	.82925	.06522
Spiritual values are more important than material things	.83190	-.05501
You believe in God	.77528	-.11001
If Americans were more religious, this would be a better country	.57881	.23920
On average, how many days per week do you attend religious services?	-.11014	.82786
On average, how many hours of religious activities are you involved in on Sundays?	.01153	.82800
What is the percentage of your after-tax income you give to your religious denomination or sect?	.12230	.57983
Eigenvalues	2.784	1.372
Percentage of variance	39.8	19.6
Cumulative percentage of variance	39.8	59.4
Cronbach's Alpha	.77	.63

effects of age were controlled for in the subsequent multivariate analysis.

Both the spiritualism and devotion dimensions of religiousness were split at the median into high and low religious groups for further analysis. MANCOVA was then employed to test the hypotheses that subjects with high religiousness scores have different outshopping and Sunday shopping behaviours than subjects with low religiousness scores. Multivariate analysis was used because of the high intercorrelation of dependent variables (Bartlett's test for sphericity = 777.845, $p < .000$) as recommended by Hair *et al.* (1992).

Initial MANCOVA analysis results revealed a significant three-way interaction effect of the three religiousness measures ($F = 2.114$, $df = 15$, significance = .008). Expectedly, each dimension of religiousness, church affiliation, behavioural components of religion (percentage of income tithed, amount of time spent at church, etc.) and importance of religion (spiritualism), affects the other. No other significant interaction effects were found. The MANCOVA model was then re-specified to include main effects of each religiousness measure, the interaction of church, devotion and spiritualism and age as a covariate. Results are presented in Table 2. The table indicated that the multivariate effects of all three religiousness measures are statistically significant.

The univariate results provide broad support for most of the hypothesized relationships. Table 3 presents the means of the shopping measures examined by religiousness dimensions. As indicated, subjects transacted an average of 38.97 per cent of their total retail purchases outside the local

Table 2 MANCOVA results

	<i>Affiliation</i>			<i>Devotion</i>			<i>Spiritualism</i>		
	<i>f</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sign.</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sign</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sign</i>
<i>Multivariate effects</i>	2.252	15	.004	2.786	5	.018	3.329	5	.006
<i>Univariate effects</i>									
Propensity to outshop	2.220	3,217	.087	3.211	1,217	.075	9.407	1,217	.002
% of dollars spent on outshopping	1.651		.179	4.649		.032	3.033		.008
No. of Sundays spent shopping	.882		.451	4.682		.032	2.423		.007
Close non-essential businesses	3.551		.015	4.247		.041	9.601		.002
% of dollars spent on Sunday shopping	.762		.517	9.103		.003	.465		.123

shopping area. One-half of the respondents reported that they did 30 per cent or more of their shopping outside the local area. A mean total of 18.70 per cent of the retail purchases were made on Sundays. The frequency distribution indicated that a large number of respondents, 24.3 per cent, reported no shopping on Sundays while 50 per cent of respondents indicated that they made between 1 and 24 per cent of their retail purchases on Sundays. Most importantly, means shown in Table 3 indicate that, for all dimensions, more religious individuals are less predisposed to exhibit outshopping and Sunday shopping behaviours, though not all differences between the groups are significant as shown in the MANCOVA analysis.

Table 2 indicates that the only significant main effect of religious affiliation is on the belief that non-essential businesses be closed on Sundays measure. Table 3 reveals that Protestants are the religious group most likely to hold this conviction while Catholics are the group next likely to agree with the belief (overall mean score = 3.37) followed by Fundamentalists (overall mean score = 3.08).

Significant differences on the devotion dimension indicate that individuals with high levels of giving to their church (monetarily and of their time) are more likely to spend fewer Sundays shopping per year (9.99 days vs. 14.81 days) and to spend significantly fewer of their total retail purchasing dollars on Sundays (12.26 vs. 21.60 per cent) than are respondents with low devotion scores. Moreover, highly devoted respondents are more likely to spend a significantly smaller percentage of dollars outshopping (31.45 vs. 47.40 per cent) and to believe that non-essential businesses should be closed on Sundays (mean scores = 3.83 vs. 3.21).

The spiritualism dimension of religiousness significantly affects all of the shopping behaviour and belief measures investigated in this study,

Table 3 Means of shopping measures by religiousness dimensions*

Question	Overall	Affiliation				Devotion		Spiritualism	
		F	P	C	O	Low	High	Low	High
Propensity to outshop**	3.84 (.95)	3.47 (1.04)	3.93 (.93)	3.51 (1.00)	3.76 (.86)	3.62 (.92)	4.06 (.91)	3.58 (.90)	4.08 (.93)
% of dollars spent on outshopping	38.97 (32.51)	38.45 (33.28)	36.35 (31.94)	56.79 (29.85)	43.35 (35.04)	47.40 (33.76)	31.45 (29.03)	45.49 (32.98)	33.93 (31.45)
Number of Sundays	12.69 (13.98)	11.43 (13.00)	12.08 (14.00)	18.62 (15.07)	11.59 (10.03)	14.81 (14.39)	9.99 (13.03)	14.82 (15.27)	10.67 (12.35)
Close non-essential businesses on Sundays***	3.52 (1.57)	3.08 (1.72)	3.62 (1.57)	3.37 (1.47)	3.00 (1.33)	3.21 (1.50)	3.83 (1.56)	3.19 (1.44)	3.82 (1.62)
% of dollars spent on Sunday shopping	18.70 (24.92)	14.50 (15.43)	19.10 (26.48)	18.28 (19.56)	22.19 (26.27)	21.60 (26.34)	12.26 (19.14)	20.71 (16.97)	16.96 (24.49)

Notes

*Standard deviations are shown in parentheses below the means.

**Low numbers indicate propensity to outshop, high numbers indicate propensity to inshop.

***High numbers indicate agreement with the statement.

F = Fundamentalist

P = Protestant

C = Catholic

O = Other

except one. Individuals with a high degree of spiritualism are less likely to spend their retail dollars on outshopping (33.93 vs. 45.49 per cent) and to shop on Sundays (10.67 days vs. 14.82 days) than their less spiritual counterparts. Further, persons reporting a high level of spiritualism are more likely to inshop (mean scores = 4.08 vs. 3.58) and believe that non-essential businesses should be closed on Sunday (mean scores = 3.82 vs. 3.19). There is no significant effect of spiritualism on percentage of dollars spent on Sunday shopping.

These findings provide at least partial support for all hypothesized effects. Taken together, all religiousness dimensions affect all shopping behaviour and belief measures examined, though no one single dimension affects all measures.

Discussion

The major purpose of this study was twofold: to explore measures and dimensions of religiousness and to examine the relationships among religiousness, Sunday shopping and outshopping. The study provides important information to researchers examining the effects of religiousness on various marketing variables such as outshopping and to retailers considering the decision to open on Sundays.

Previous research suggests two dimensions of religiousness – religious affiliation and religious commitment – both behavioural and cognitive (McDaniel and Burnett 1990). Analyses in this study suggest a three distinct dimension solution to the religiousness construct: religious affiliation, devotion and spiritualism. Each dimension has significant and different effects on the shopping variables examined in this study.

The MANCOVA analysis reveals that each dimension of religiousness affects at least one outshopping or Sunday shopping variable. Just as important, every outshopping and Sunday shopping variable investigated in this study was affected by some religiousness dimension as hypothesized. These findings emphasize the importance of i) religiousness as a segmentation variable in understanding selected individual shopping behaviours, as suggested by Sheth (1983), and ii) assessing all religiousness dimensions in any study examining effects of religiousness, though church affiliation appears to have the smallest impact on the shopping behaviour measures examined here. However, effects of affiliation may be confounded by the grouping of, perhaps diverse, religious sects into one category (i.e., Baptist, Methodists and Lutherans, etc., into the Protestant category). For example, Ellison and George (1994) note that differences in socialization exist between Conservative Protestant denominations, such as Southern Baptists and Pentecostal, and other Protestant faiths.

Study results verify that religiousness has a significant effect on outshopping behaviour and attitudes and on Sunday shopping behaviour

and beliefs. Consequently, retailers may wish to assess the religiousness of their local community before making the Sunday closure decision. For example, the higher the spiritualism of the local trade area, the less likely the community residents are to outshop or Sunday shop. If these residents are unlikely to outshop on Sundays or even to shop at all on Sundays, then retailers may be advised to close on Sundays.

Devoted individuals were found to spend fewer of their purchasing dollars on Sunday. While this Sunday thriftiness may well be a function of religiousness (as exemplified by the belief that non-essential businesses should be closed on Sundays), this behaviour may simply result from temporal constraints. Sunday shopping hours tend to be limited, especially in smaller communities, and those individuals who are dedicating more time to their church may simply lack adequate time for other activities, like shopping, on any given Sunday. Nevertheless, this finding still has a bearing on local retail strategies.

Religiousness also has a significant effect on outshopping. Individuals scoring high on the spiritual and devotional dimensions spent significantly fewer of their retail dollars outshopping than their less religious counterparts. Perhaps this finding is a result of the greater home-oriented trait found in more religious individuals (LaBarbera 1987) or perhaps the shopping motives of more religious individuals are more functional (i.e., time, place or possession requirements), rather than nonfunctional (i.e., emotional, socialization, experiential or image requirements) in nature. In response to this finding, local retailers operating in a highly religious community may have less perceived competition from regional shopping centres and as a result may be able to minimize selection, operating hours or other services to reduce expenses which might be necessitated by a less religious community who are more apt to outshop regardless of local shopping service offerings.

Finally, the findings in this study indicate that overall religiousness of the area will impact shopping behaviour. Results indicate that persons with lower religiousness appear to account for a high percentage of lost sales for the community retailer and that persons with high levels of religiousness most benefit the small town retailer because of their tendency to shop locally and avoid Sunday shopping. Consequently, small town retailers may consider implementing special programmes targeting less religious individuals, especially when they comprise a significant portion of the community and may be justified in Sunday closing when the community is dominated by highly religious individuals.

Limitations and directions for future research

In interpreting the findings of this investigation, the following limitations should be considered. This research is limited to one small geographic area

in the Southern 'Bible Belt' of the United States; hence, these findings may not be generalizable to other regions. The Bible Belt constitutes a region of the United States ranging from Texas and Oklahoma eastward to North Carolina and north to Kentucky and West Virginia, an area which is distinguished from other areas of the country by the predominance of Baptists (Edmondson 1993) and its large percentage of residents who are members of a church/synagogue (US Census Bureau 1992). There are, however, two other regions of the US where religious devotion is as predominant as it is in the 'Bible Belt' of the South. One, termed the 'Bible Sash', encompasses the Great Plains region and the other centres around 'Utah's Mormon Empire' (Edmondson 1995). Consequently, the church-going fervour of the sample studied here may not be unrepresentative of other significant regions of the US. Nevertheless, future research efforts should investigate the effects of religiousness on consumer behaviour in other geographic areas in the United States, and in international markets, as this variable provides additional insight into retail patronage behaviour, based on the present findings.

The current investigation verified the significance of a multidimensional religiousness scale measure, but did not examine relationships of the dimensions. For example, religious affiliation may directly affect behaviour and cognitions. We suggest that future studies use the multidimensional religiousness construct proposed here and examine associations of the three components – affiliation, devotion and spiritualism – employing confirmatory factor analysis via LISREL.

In this study, religious affiliation is only moderately useful as a segmentation variable (substantiating the findings of McDaniel and Burnett 1990) in explaining consumer intermarket patronage and Sunday shopping behaviour. However, the effectiveness of this religious component in predicting consumer behaviour is most likely a function of the researcher's classification schema. We attempted to adjust our categorization to account for significant differences which may exist within the Protestant denomination by the admittedly arbitrary division of mainstream versus fundamentalist sects. Consequently, we did find religious affiliation played a significant role in predicting outshopping behaviour; whereas McDaniel and Burnett, who used only the traditional categories of Protestant, Catholic, and Jew found no support for any of their hypothesized relationships involving religious affiliation. We propose that future studies employing a religious affiliation variable attempt to classify the affiliation data in a more circumscribed manner.

Finally, the effects of the religiousness measure should be subjected to closer scrutiny and examined in other marketing contexts, such as advertising. Intuitively, religiousness would appear to affect consumer perceptions of advertisements utilizing certain themes (e.g., erotica) or featuring certain products (e.g., tobacco, alcoholic beverages, condoms),

and should be considered for inclusion in future advertising response studies.

Acknowledgement

The authors wish to thank colleagues at their universities for their encouragement and insightful comments.

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