

Exploring the Link and Relevance of Playfulness to Identity: An Abstract

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ABSTRACT

People may regard playfulness as unproductive with related negative effects, although it is enjoyable and frequently occurs in their life. On the other side, identity is an important topic that exists in psychosocial wellbeing, consumer research and consumer marketing. Building on the notion that what people enjoy consuming may express their identity and responding to the myth over the less-attended playfulness concept, the present study explores playfulness and how it relates to identity.

Review on related literature suggest that past research has studied playfulness and identity independently. Conceptually, flow theory portrays playfulness as a harmonious equilibrium experience that signifies performing one's skills in respond to challenges in an activity. Literature also indicates playfulness as cognitively favourable in terms of imaginative and creative processes in transforming corresponding stimuli into personally meaningful configuration. All the above notions suggest the theoretical links and relevance of playfulness to one's identity.

To explore whether and how playfulness is related to identity, the study used a two-step qualitative method of one-to-one in-depth interview. The findings bring back into consumer and marketing theoretical domains the genuine substance of playfulness as a deemed, frequent but overlooked behaviour. Broadly speaking, all respondents affirm that playfulness is important and influential in their life. Specifically, the themes emerged from the data analysis demonstrate the characteristics of playfulness and reveal how playfulness is relevant and related to identity. Overall the themes suggest that playfulness denotes an expression of one's personal identity that occurs in harmony and within personal and social domains. In practice, playful approaches and stimuli can play significant role in identity marketing campaign. The essence of playfulness of expression-of-me and harmony paves practical ways for incorporating playfulness in identity marketing such as new product / innovations through playful, cognitive activities or events, and identity-theme interactive advert.

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