



BREWOLGY RESEARCH PROJECT:

IDENTIFYING THE CONSUMER VALUES AND MOTIVATIONS IMPLICATED IN THE RISE OF MICROBREWERIES IN THE MIDWEST

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Abstract

This mixed-method study is a collaborative effort that draws on faculty expertise in marketing, tourism and communication. The study seeks to identify the consumer values and motivations implicated in the rise of microbreweries in the Midwest. Over the course of a few decades, craft beers have gained significant market share relative to large-scale commercial brands. The study aims to identify salient factors underlying the popularity of craft beers, taking into consideration both individual consumer preferences as well as how these intersect with socio-economic megatrends such as the “buy local” movement and agri-tourism.

The popularity of microbreweries is further evidenced in an increasing number of beer festivals and associated regional events. As these have become fixtures on annual calendars, additional questions regarding group affiliation and how it informs conceptions of self among craft beer enthusiasts’ demands exploring. Thus the proposed study further aims to shed light on social dimensions of these trends in a regional setting.

Research Questions

- What values are salient among craft beer drinkers in the Midwest?
- What values are salient among craft beer festival attendees in the Midwest?

Study Hypotheses

- H₁: Millennial Values have a significant positive relationship with Choice of Beer.
- H₂: American Values have a significant positive relationship with Immersion in Beer Culture.
- H₃: Choice of Beer has a significant positive relationship with Immersion in Beer Culture.
- H₄: Choice of Beer has a significant positive relationship with Beer Festival Attendance.
- H₅: Immersion in Beer Culture has a significant positive relationship with Beer Festival Attendance.

Methodology

FOCUS GROUPS (6-8 participants per group)

- Focus group with homebrewers
- Focus group with microbrewers, distributors, and other industry representatives

SURVEYS (total surveys collected – 408)

- The focus groups were used to inform the survey development process.
- Survey collection took place at Brews on the Bricks (Hays) – May 4, 2019 and at the KC Beer Fest (Kansas City) on September 14, 2019.

Data/Model

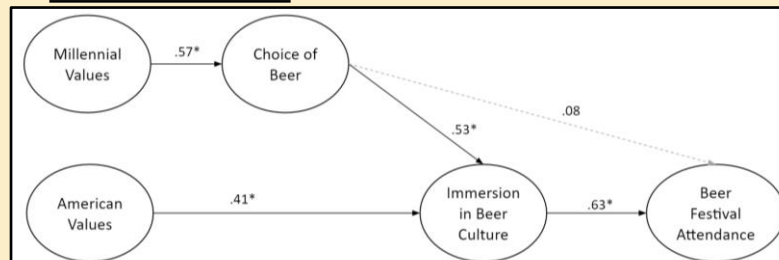


Figure 1

*Statistically significant at the $p < .01$
 $\chi^2 (164, 408) = 369.028, p < .001$

	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	RMSEA CI
Model fit	.916	.893	.952	.937	.951	.055	.048

Table 1

Results

Millennial Values (MV) was a significant predictor of Choice of Beer (COB) and American Values (AV) was a significant predictor of Immersion in Beer Culture (IMBC). COB is indicative to what choice of beer besides the largest three breweries in the North America, Anheiser Bush, Millerscoor, and Modelo. COB also fully mediated the relationship between MV and Beer Festival Attendance (BFA), while IMBC fully mediated the relationship between AV and BFA. IMBC was also a strong predictor of BFA but there was no statistically significant relationship between COB and BFA. Thus, all study hypotheses were supported, except the relationship between COB and BFA. While Chi-square was significant, other model indices suggest good model fit (see Table 1).

Analysis

Study results suggest that drinking craft beer is not sufficient motivation to attend craft beer festivals. An important motivation is the extent to which individuals feel immersed in craft beer culture which appears to relate to more traditional (American Dream) values rather than more contemporary values. Craft beer and festival marketers would want to take into account these two distinct market segments.

Future Objectives/Goals

- 1) **One to three academic papers.** Data is being analyzed from many angles with the goal for multiple peer reviewed journal articles.
- 2) **Marketing.** This research will support the marketing of local and regional microbreweries.
- 4) **Developing partnership with local or regional businesses.** This research will provide opportunities for students and faculty to support regional economic development.