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## Brand Loyalty: Generational Shifts in Hispanic Consumer-Product Relationships in Florida

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND  
INFORMATION

BRAND LOYALTY: THE  
GENERATIONAL SHIFTS IN HISPANIC  
CONSUMER-PRODUCT RELATIONSHIPS  
IN FLORIDA

By

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of  
Communications and Information  
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The members of the Defense Committee approve the thesis of Isabella Timiraos defended on June 23, 2023.

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Honors in the Major

4 August 2023

**Honors in the Major Creative Research Project: Brand Loyalty: *The Generational Shifts*  
*in Hispanic Consumer-Product Relationships in Florida***

**Introduction & Background**

As a third generation Hispanic American and granddaughter to Cuban immigrants on both sides of my family, I've found myself involving my culture in my day to day more and more, always curious to learn more about where my family came from and what my heritage is about. I began this curiosity in middle school, when I interviewed my mother's father, my grandfather, Orlando Herrera, for a school project. At the time, I found out that not only had my grandfather been a Cuban immigrant who made the treacherous, but successful journey to the United States, but had also been a political prisoner under Fidel Castro's communist regime. My grandfather also had Alzheimer's Disease at the time, which takes away brain function little by little, causing someone to forget everything about themselves, those around them, and even how to function, so I knew I wanted to preserve his memories using this school project. From then on, I found myself becoming more and more fascinated by my ancestry, doing research on my own and using classes and school projects to continue fostering and showcasing my newfound interest. In high school, I took four years of Spanish, as I'd learned the language at a young age but wanted to perfect it in order to better communicate with my grandparents. In college, I took numerous

classes that again fostered my interest, including Hispanic Marketing Communications, The History of Mexico, and finally The History of U.S. Immigrants, where I had the opportunity to read through real Cuban immigrants' documents to the U.S. government pleading for help, describing their current situation, and planning their escape from their broken country. While being a student at FSU, I've realized that this curiosity also stems from feeling responsible for preserving and continuing my family's history, especially because I'm the eldest of my siblings and have only one grandparent left, my grandmother on my mother's side. With that being said, I knew I wanted this project to not only reflect what I was currently majoring in at FSU, but also dive into a bit of my Hispanic heritage, as well as that of some of the members in my community.

Upon selecting a subject for my thesis, I knew I wanted to blend my current collegiate studies and a bit of my culture and heritage, as mentioned above. Through various meetings, I bounced ideas off of my thesis director and professor, Dr. Kelly Kelly, trying to figure out a niche topic that was both interesting and different, while encompassing the topics I wanted to focus on. Dr. Kelly gave me the idea of researching the relationships between Hispanics and certain products, after looking at a previous project I'd done while interning at an advertising agency in Miami, Republica Havas. I had the idea to specifically study the generational shifts of Hispanic and their attitudes towards certain brands after making GOYA black beans at home one day, realizing I've never been told to buy these beans, nor had I purchased another brand of beans, but solely used this brand because my mother and grandmother always used it. I figured I wasn't the only one who had loyal relationships with brands due to other members of my family previously using them as well. Once I finally made the decision to work on researching brand

consumer-product relations of Hispanics, and presented the idea to Dr. Kelly, she helped me take the project one step further by introducing me to different studies which focused on consumer-product relationships and brand love. We came up with the idea of using the model of one study for my own research about the generational shifts of Hispanic consumer-product relationships. We realized it'd be the best way to see consistencies and differences throughout each generation, especially since Hispanic culture relies heavily on tradition. What better way to research this subject than focusing on the center of what being Hispanic is: tradition, family, and culture.

After looking at various different studies for reference, Dr. Kelly and I decided it'd be best to gather research groups of two to three groups of two to three generations of Hispanics living in Florida, a bit of a tongue twister. We planned that I'd interview each person in each group, asking the same questions to each research participant across the board, with the only change being Spanish translation for the participants who only spoke Spanish. In the end, I am forever grateful to my committee, as well as my thesis director, Dr. Kelly Kelly, who helped me begin, plan, and complete my thesis successfully. At times when I was frustrated or stressed out, Dr. Kelly pushed me and helped me through the entire process, for that I am forever grateful.

## **Sources and References**

Before beginning my research, I decided it best to look for previous studies, casework, and other pieces to use as inspiration for my own work. According to 'Cultural Brands from Emerging Markets: a Brand Image across Host and Home Countries,' a journal article by Francisco Guzmán and Audhesh K. Paswan, "Cultural brands embody a sum total of a group's

cultural identity, including a surrounding myth, a tie to its cultural roots, and associations of its past and inspired future” (p. 1). The journal article goes on, to use two cultural brands from Mexico, as examples of what characteristics of a brand are consistent with those in the United States. Similar to the plan I have for my research, this case study derived its findings from respondents who were immigrants from a Latin American country (Mexico) and resided in the U.S. “Respondents were asked to evaluate two television media brands using a brand personality scale” (Guzmán & Paswan, p. 1). In this study, the results indicated that the association of “brand personality dimensions” and the cultural brands from Mexico City were higher with those brands from Mexico among the respondents. This result is definitely interesting, in addition to giving us further insight as to what it is that creates loyalty between Hispanic brands and consumers in the Florida area.

Another great source from a previous study I found, with the help of Dr. Kelly, is “The Dimensions of Brand Personality,” written by renowned American behavioral scientist, Dr. Jennifer L. Aaker. In this piece, Dr. Aaker personifies brands, explaining what she calls, “the Big Five” (Aaker, 1997, p. 1). The “Big Five” includes the five sectors in which she categorizes different brands’ personalities, based on their mission, goals, audience, and overall vibe. These include sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. By personifying these brands, and giving them human-like “personalities” and characteristics, Aaker explains that this makes it just a bit easier to understand the brands themselves and why it is that they attract certain audiences successfully. Dr. Kelly introduced me to the work of both Jennifer Aaker and her father, David Aaker, both of whom have done the research and written articles that I feel would be extremely beneficial to use as sources for my own work and research. I felt that this

source would help a lot in understanding why Hispanic Americans in Florida display such loyalty to the brands they love.

The next source I decided to include is written by David Aaker, best known for his work in Brand Strategy, and father of previously mentioned, Dr. Jennifer Aaker. In his piece “A Measure of Brand Acceptance,” Aaker (1972) states that “brand acceptance involves a refinement of usual stochastic model market prediction” (p. ). He goes on to explain that when measuring brand acceptance, it’s important to remember that this is directly correlated to consumer purchasing behavior and habits. In his writing, Aaker makes an observation that I found very important, especially for the study I’m conducting; he explains that the purchase histories of those trying new or existing brands provide the measures of brand acceptance (Aaker, 1972, p.1). I found this sentence to be extremely important, as I feel this source, most of all, could help me understand why specifically it is that Hispanic consumers purchase certain brands. Although I have not yet completed the research, I predict that it starts with previous generations and their buying habits. Because Hispanics value culture and tradition as much as they do, I feel that these values touch upon every aspect of the Hispanic lifestyle, including purchasing habits.

The last source I chose to include is “Some Anecdotes and Outcomes of Brand Love,” written by Barbara A. Carroll, and Aaron C. Ahuvia. In this study, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) explain that since the dawn of advertising and marketing, brands have strived to accommodate consumers’ needs and wants, ultimately providing them with satisfaction. However, the article continues to explain that in more recent years, brands have strived to provide consumers with a greater feeling than just that of satisfaction, which they coin “Brand Love” (Carroll & Ahuvia,



2006, p. 1). Both go on to conduct a study, where they test if brand love is able to explain differences in consumers and whether brand love could be predicted by perceived characteristics of the brand and its product category. The researchers concluded that brand love is useful in evoking greater loyalty from consumers. Specifically, the study's results stated that they were able "show that brand love is a meaningful mode of consumer satisfaction that is linked to desirable post-consumption behavior" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 86). This study is an extremely valuable tool in my research, as it introduces a new concept, which I feel could answer the question as to why generations after generations of Hispanic consumers return to the same products over and over again. It will be interesting to identify which products try to create their own versions of "brand love" in their advertising and overall personality while conducting my research.

Aaker, D. A. (1972). A Measure of Brand Acceptance. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 9(2), 160–167. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3149949>

Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of Brand Personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347–356. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3151897>

Carroll, B. A., & Ahuvia, A. C. (2006). Some Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Love. *Marketing Letters*, 17(2), 79–89. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40216667>

Guzmán, F., & Paswan, A. K. (2009). Cultural Brands from Emerging Markets: Brand Image across Host and Home Countries. *Journal of International Marketing*, 17(3), 71–86.

## **Predictions and Hypothesis**

As a Hispanic American who was born and raised in Miami, Florida, a city heavily populated by Hispanics of all origins, primarily Cubans, I felt I had some background knowledge to make predictions on what the outcome of my research would be. With my own experiences, I find that many a time. I purchase certain products or brands because others in my family have bought and used them before me, so I've basically grown up using these products. One example of this goes back to the introduction of the thesis, where I described myself making GOYA black beans for dinner. Because I'm not an expert on black beans, I knew that I had to be using this brand not on my own accord, but because my mother and grandmother have always used this brand.

Before conducting my research, I was completely certain that culture and tradition would play a huge role in where each group member shopped, what they bought, why they still purchase and use this product, and whether or not they'd recommend this product to others. Because of my prior knowledge, experiences, and research, I concluded with this hypothesis: "I believe that if an ancestor (great-grandparent, grandparent, parent, etc.) has purchased and use a brand in the lifetime of a younger generation (great-grandchild, grandchild, child, etc.), than that member of the family will continue to use that brand or product because of the familiar memories and experiences they associate with that brand or product."

## **Research Steps & Choosing My Research Group**

**Step 1** - Figure who the target demographic is for the group I want to select as my research group. This process took a bit of time, as I wasn't sure if to include families who had two or three living generations, in the end I chose both. When searching for which type of people I

wanted to ask to volunteer in my research, I wanted to ensure these people were old enough to purchase their own groceries and would be able to articulate and understand what my project was about - whether it be in English or Spanish. In addition to this, I was looking for individuals who are Hispanic, but weren't all from the same country, as I wanted to represent different Hispanic cultures in this project. I felt it would be best to represent different Hispanic countries, as Hispanic culture is one big umbrella, but each country has its own specific practices, food, and traditions, which is extremely important to recognize.

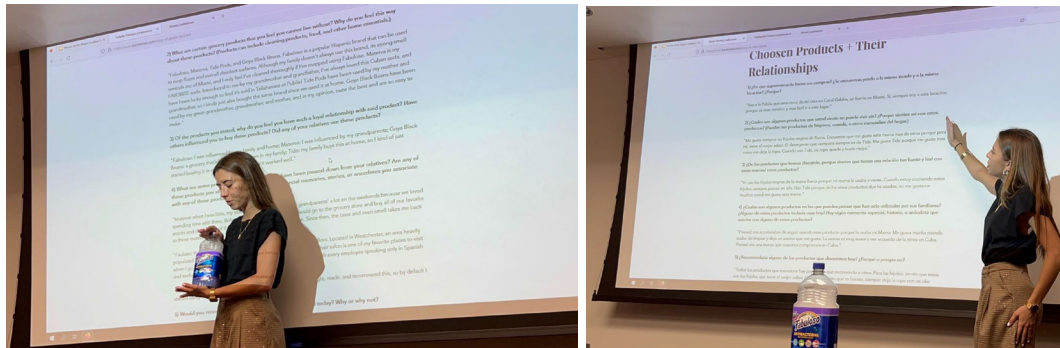
**Step 2** - Create a series of interview questions to ask the members of my research group. It's important to keep in mind that these questions must be posed in order to extract those fond memories that each member had tied to a specific product, while not making the questions too long or too short. In addition to this, I made sure to present the questions in both English and Spanish to all participants, allowing them to respond in the language they felt most comfortable speaking.

**Step 3** - Interview each member. During this process, questions must be asked in Spanish or in English, depending on the interviewee's preference. It's important that each interviewee be comfortable when answering questions as that helps both parties share and receive the information most efficiently and ethically. As stated before, regardless of what language questions were asked and answered in, all research participants received the same questions.

**Step 4** - Crunch the numbers. Go over the data from the questions answered and figure out if my hypothesis was right? Do Hispanic-Americans have certain relationships with products solely

based off memories with family, or are there other aspects that go into this relationship? What are other things that could affect where a person shops, what they shop for, and whether or not they will continue shopping for this product at the same location?

## Defense & Presentation



Defense Presentation Deck - below is the deck I used to present and defend my thesis!

# Brand Loyalty: Generational Shifts in Hispanic Consumer-Product Relationships in Florida

Florida State University - Honors in the Major Creative Thesis Project  
Isabella Timiraos

## Table of Contents

- The Crew (My HITM Committee) - Pg. 3
- The Why? - Pg. 4
- Background of My Project
  - Predictions & Hypothesis - Pg. 5
  - The Sources - Pg. 6
  - The Steps Pg. 7
  - My Research Group Pg. 8
  - The Project! - Pg. 9
- Results - Pg. 10
- Thank You / Questions Pg. 11

## The Crew (My Committee)



**Dr. Andrew "Drew" Durdin**  
Committee Member  
World Religions



**Dr. Kelly Kelly**  
Thesis Director  
Communications



**Dr. Rachel Bailey**  
Committee Member  
Communications

## The Why?

Upon selecting a subject for my thesis, I knew I somehow wanted to include some aspect of my culture into my work. Through various meetings, I bounced ideas off of Dr. Kelly, trying to figure out a niche topic that not only was interesting and different, but represented my Hispanic culture in a new and exciting way. After going through numerous different subjects, I had an idea one day after making GOYA Black Beans, a product that I've recently found through this product has been in my family for generations. After making dinner, I thought to myself, why is it that I buy this brand, and not another one? Before moving to college, I had never even cooked black beans, so why is it that I subconsciously choose this brand again and again?



Once I finally made the decision to work on researching brand consumer-product relations of Hispanics, and presented this idea to Dr. Kelly, she helped me take my project one step further. We came up with the idea of studying generation shifts of Hispanic-American consumer-product relationships, because Hispanic culture relies heavily on tradition. What better way to research Hispanic-American consumer-product relationships than focusing on the center of what being a Hispanic is?: tradition, family and culture.

## ✦✦ The Background - Hypothesis/Predictions

### Predictions:

As a Hispanic-American who is familiar with various Hispanic brands, I definitely had some predictions as to what the consumer-behavior of each generation would look like during this project. I was completely certain that culture and tradition would play a huge role in where each group member shopped, what they bought, and why they started buying it: because an older relative probably did the same before they did. In my own family, there are products that I know for a fact are bought to this day by myself and my mother because my grandmother and great grandmother used these products, which you'll see in my research. Remember how I had that idea when I made black beans? Well, you'll see now why it is that while roaming the isles at Publix, I subconsciously chose the brand I did, and continue to use it today.

### Hypothesis:

I believe that if an ancestor ( great-grandparent, grandparent, parent, etc.) has purchased and used a brand throughout the life time of their child, grandchild, or great-grandchild, than that member of the family will continue purchasing the exact same product to be able to relive the memories they associate with said product.

## ✦✦ Sources

When putting together this project, and figuring out how exactly to prove or disprove my hypothesis, I relied on various studies previously conducted to see what steps had been taken, and what results were found. Below, I've included the main sources I used to as blueprints for my own project. While my project is original, and I've yet to find someone else who studied this, I did find multiple projects that were similar in their formatting and what questions they were trying to answer:

1. *Cultural Brands from Emerging Markets: a Brand Image across Host and Home Countries* by: Francisco Guzmán and Audhesh K. Paswan
  - a. Used two cultural brands from Mexico, as examples of what characteristics of a brand are consistent with those in the United States. Similar to the plan I have for my research, this case study derived its findings from respondents who were immigrants from a Latin American country (Mexico) and resided in the U.S. "Respondents were asked to evaluate two television media brands using a brand personality scale" ( Guzmán & Paswan, p. 1). Results indicated that the association of "brand personality dimensions" and the cultural brands from Mexico City were higher with those brands from Mexico among the respondents.
2. *The Dimensions of Brand Personality* by: Dr. Jennifer L. Aaker
  - a. Dr. Aaker personifies brands, explaining what she calls, "the Big Five" (Aaker, 1997, p. 1). The "Big Five" includes the five sectors in which she categorizes different brands' personalities, based on their mission, goals, audience, and overall vibe. These include sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. By personifying these brands, and giving them human-like "personalities" and characteristics, Aaker explains that this makes it just a bit easier to understand the brands themselves and why it is that they attract certain audiences successfully.
3. *Some Anecdotes and Outcomes of Brand Love* by: Barbara A. Carroll and Aaron C. Ahuvia
  - a. This study explains that since the dawn of advertising and marketing, brands have strived to accommodate consumers' needs and wants, ultimately providing them with satisfaction. However, the article continues to explain that in more recent years, brands have strived to provide consumers with a greater feeling than just that of satisfaction, which they coin "Brand Love" (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p. 1).

## ✦✦ The Background - The Steps

- Step 1 -** Figure out who the target audience is for the group I want to select as my "research group." It's important to keep in mind that each member MUST be of Hispanic descent, must be old enough to purchase items on their own, and must at least have one generation older than themselves to participate
- Step 2 -** Create a series of interview questions to ask the members of my research group. It's important to keep in mind that these questions must be posed in order to extract those fond memories that each member had tied to a specific product, while not making the questions too long or too short.
- Step 3 -** Interview each member. During this process, questions must be asked in Spanish or in English, depending on the interviewee's preference. It's important that each interviewee be comfortable when answering questions as that helps both parties share and receive the information most efficiently and ethically.
- Step 4 -** Crunch the numbers. Go over the data from the questions answered and figure out if my hypothesis was right? Do Hispanic-Americans have certain relationships with products solely based off memories with family, or are there other aspects that go into this relationship?



## ✦✦ The Background - My Research Group

As stated in the previous slide, this process of the project took a bit of time to ensure I selected the best research group for the best results. When searching for members to take part in my research, I wanted to find people who were old enough to buy their own products, thus having their own relationships with these products, as well as be old enough to have childhood memories with said products. In addition to this, I was looking for individuals of Hispanic descent from various Hispanic countries. I felt it would be best to represent different Hispanic countries, as Hispanic culture is one big umbrella, but each country has its own specific culture, food, and traditions, which is extremely important to recognize.

In the end, I chose three groups of generations, representing the countries of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Argentina. While one group only had two generations, I felt this was important to note whether such loyal brand relations come from second or third generations. Each group member was asked their age, where they were born, where they live currently, their occupation, how many children or grandchildren they have, what products they couldn't live without, why they felt this way about these products, and whether or not these products had familiar stories tied to them.

## ✦✦ The Background - The Project!

### ✦ HITM Thesis - "Brand Loyalty: Generational Shifts in Hispanic Consumer Product Relationships in Florida"

Below, are the research groups I used in my Honor in the Major Thesis Project, where I dive into why it is Hispanics in Florida have such strong relationships with brands. What is it that brands do to create such a bond with their audience? Why is it we find ourselves going back to the same store to buy the same products time and time again? Whether it may be because of the influence of people's mothers or fathers, grandmothers or grandfathers, or other relatives, we'll find that many of the people in my research group choose the products they did because they have some sort of sentimental story behind the product of their choice including a familiar memory.

Using a short questionnaire, I asked three different groups of generations a couple of questions about their background, family, and to describe various household items, cleaning products, or grocery products they could think of. I then dove a little deeper, asking them why these were the products they chose and whether or not these products had any story behind them. Below, you'll see their answers and the results of my findings.

#### Group #1 - Herrera/Timiraos (Cuban/American)



## Results!

In the end, my hypothesis was **Correct!**, but I also learned more information... I realized that the amount of generations previous to the last generation affect their relationships with brands. In the group of generations from Nicaragua, Chis and Fransisca, we see that although Chris, the youngest generation, was influenced to buy certain PRODUCTS by his family, he didn't name any brands or have any childhood stories connected to them, except that his mother raised him to prioritize self-care! In the other two groups, each generation mentioned products that not only were repeated from grandmother down to granddaughter, but stories were attached to these products, creating the previous mentioned "Brand Love."

**Let's head back to the data to see where these consistencies and differences lie...**

[My Website!](#)

# Thank You!

Any Questions?



## Results & Reflection

This project was the first ever research project I've ever conducted. Having to come up with a subject for my thesis, plan an entire experiment, choose the type of people I wanted in my research group, interview the people in my group, put together my findings, and present the project as a whole was definitely a first and a huge challenge, but one I was proudly able to overcome. When I received the email inviting me to participate in Honors in the Major, I recall asking my advisor about it, asking if it'd be something interesting or an addition to my resume. He looked at me and said, "Isa, you should never do anything just to add it your resume..." So, I chose to take on this project, but instead of researching just anything, I decided to conduct a project that highlighted my Hispanic culture, as well as my interest in advertising of all kinds.

As you can see in this project, I did just that. I was able to include my own family as part of the research group, and some of my other friends who represented their parents' countries in my project. It was definitely difficult to interview so many people, especially because some of the interviews needed to be conducted in Spanish, but I was extremely interesting to see the results at the end. In the end, I found that my primary hypothesis, that if a younger generation has had time in their lives with their mother and other passed generations, such as grandmothers and great grandmothers, they are post likely to have a specific brand that they associate with memories of those people in their lives, and will continue to remain loyal to that brand. I also found that the senses are a big part of "Brand Love," as multiple generations consistently mentioned the taste of a specific food "tasting like their childhood" or a certain scent that reminded them of coming home from school.

As you can see, I did this project in a creative format, using a powerpoint to present my findings to my committee and a mini-site/blog to present the information I gained from interviewing the various groups of my research. This was definitely an interesting project, and one I loved completing. I loved being able to make it my own, and present it to my thesis committee, who approved of my thesis!

**Creative Project: Mini Site / Blog**

The Mini Site can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.isatimiraos.com/copy-of-in-my-own-words>