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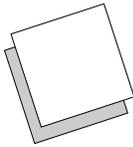
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# Choosing leisure services: the effects of consumer timestyle

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**Abstract** As the leisure industry matures, it is important for marketers to have a clear understanding of why people choose to consume specific leisure services. The paper proposes that "timestyle", or how a person customarily perceives and uses time, influences the choice of leisure goals and resultant leisure services. Individuals' timestyles can be characterized in terms of social, temporal, planning, and polychronic orientations. Data from qualitative research suggest that all four dimensions of timestyle can have systematic effects on leisure choices. Knowledge of the timestyle concept and its antecedent influences should allow leisure marketers to better understand and target the motivations that underlie consumer decisions on leisure services.

## Recreation spending

US consumers spend over \$400 billion a year on entertainment, and leisure and recreation spending are rising at double the rate of other consumer spending (Mandel and Farrell, 1993; Molitor, 2000). Further, from a segmentation and targeting perspective, it is intriguing to note that the coveted demographic group of upper-income Americans spends more of its income on recreation and leisure than other Americans (Mandel and Farrell, 1993). And because of its increasing role in creating meaning in people's lives (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995), leisure consumption has become an increasingly popular area of inquiry for marketing and consumer researchers.

Consumption-related leisure research has examined the pursuit of "extraordinary experiences" and high-risk activities such as river rafting and skydiving (Arnould and Price, 1993; Celsi *et al.*, 1993; Price *et al.*, 1995), sports spectating (Holt, 1995), and leisure activities such as historical reenactments that bring another time and place, including sacred spaces, to the fore (Belk and Costa, 1998; O'Guinn and Belk, 1989). In a related vein, researchers have examined the pursuit of leisure activities revolving more specifically around commerce and branded products (e.g. gambling, Harley Davidson riding), and the meaning of this blend of leisure time with overt consumption for consumers (Cotte, 1997; McAlexander and Schouten, 1998; Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Sherry, 1990).

## Group-consumption situations

Such prior research offers many valuable insights on the goals and motives that drive leisure choices. But rarely have researchers focused on the fact that leisure activities and related leisure services consumption are predicated on the allocation of time. For example, the pursuit of extraordinary experiences requires that time be "spent" pursuing experiential consumption. Yet it is not only time's primacy that makes its role unique in the consumption of leisure services. Time is a resource, as is money, but its attributes differ



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## Leisure service marketers

markedly, thus precluding simplistic analogies with money. Time cannot be saved for later use or accumulated, as money can; it is perishable. Time “passes” at an agreed upon rate in a society, and yet time may pass faster or slower perceptually for an individual in that society. And in explaining leisure consumption activities – whether it is watching TV alone in one’s home, visiting a museum with friends, or vacationing at Club Med – we need to investigate how people perceive, think about, and deal with time.

Indeed, what is it that orients one consumer towards spending time in group-consumption situations, such as vacation travel groups, and drives another to pursue more solitary leisure pursuits, such as taking a solo camping or hiking trip? Why do some consumers prefer that leisure service marketers provide many disparate activities simultaneously while others prefer to focus on one main thing at each point in time? This article addresses these broad questions, and others, with a study of how a person’s timestyle, that is, his or her customary manner of perceiving and using time, influences choices of leisure services. Also explored, from a more theoretical stance, are the factors that likely influence one’s timestyle.

In so doing, this research goes beyond identifying psychographic profiles of leisure consumers (e.g. Plog’s Venturers and Dependables, Plog, 2001).

While identifying these types of profiles is a valuable aid to marketers, it is also important to probe into the factors that lie behind these leisure types. Specifically, does the manner in which a person approaches time influence the type of leisure services consumer he or she becomes, and if so, how? In examining this question, we build on prior research that indicates that how people think about time is likely to continuously pervade what they do with their time (Bergadaà, 1990; Cotte, 1998; Feldman and Hornik, 1981; Hall, 1959; 1983; Hirschman, 1987; Kaufman *et al.*, 1991).

## Future emphasis

Bergadaà (1990) has in fact proposed that some aspects of what we call timestyle could influence leisure choice. For example, she noted that future-oriented people prefer enriching vacations, while present-focused people preferred relaxing vacations. She also suggested that future emphasis may be linked to innovation, and that present emphasis may be linked to an increased reliance on service providers’ advice. The present research adopts a more comprehensive theoretical stance than Bergadaà (1990).

Additionally, it aims to provide leisure services marketers with insights that can be ultimately incorporated into a services strategy. But we begin with an overview of the concept of timestyle.

### The four dimensions of timestyle

What exactly constitutes an individual’s timestyle? Prior consumer research on this topic has been sporadic and fragmented. Feldman and Hornik (1981), who originally suggested the phrase “timestyle”, suggest that socializing with others can give meaning to the time consumed, and that interactions with others (both anticipated and experienced) should play an important role in how time is perceived. Examining another aspect of temporal behavior, Kaufman *et al.* (1991) focus on how individuals vary in their preference for working polychronically, i.e. performing multiple tasks at the same time. Hirschman (1987) hypothesizes that one’s perception of time is a function of one’s anticipation and experience, time budgeting, and social obligations. She also proposes that the prioritization of time-consuming activities is a function of intrinsic rewards as well as extrinsic obligations. Finally, Bergadaà (1990) examines temporal orientation to the past, present, or future, as well as the variables that could influence this orientation. She also

## Variety of approaches

theorizes that differing temporal orientations might influence one's leisure preferences and related product consumption.

The existing consumer research in this area is complemented by a variety of approaches on the topic of time perception and consumption in other disciplines. The economic approach (e.g. Becker, 1976) theorizes that time is a fixed resource and posits that consumers maximize use of money and minimize time expenditures. The sociological time-budget approach, on the other hand, is primarily empirical, and it concentrates on collecting and analyzing time diary data (e.g. Robinson and Godbey, 1997). Both the economic approach and the sociological time-budget approach have conceptual similarities in their reliance on a fixed, objective view of time. In contrast, other researchers view time as a mental construction having only subjective meaning (e.g. Bergadaà, 1990; Gorman and Wessman, 1977), as a social construction guided by cultural heritage (e.g. Marks, 1977; Lewis and Weigert, 1981), or as a dimension of behavior at cultural, interpersonal, and individual levels (McGrath and Kelly, 1986).

## Four dimensions

Based on the prior literature and our qualitative research, it is proposed that timestyle is a relatively enduring aspect of the self, changeable only over a fairly long period of time. Further, as discussed in the next section, leisure behaviors and consumption patterns can be explained, at least in part, by people's timestyles. Four dimensions of timestyle appear to be particularly relevant to service marketers:

- (1) *Social orientation*. This dimension refers to the categorization of discretionary time as either time for self or time with/for others (Hall, 1976; Manrai and Manrai, 1995; Rhee *et al.*, 1995). The motivation to classify a unit of time as time for others can be either voluntary or obligatory.
- (2) *Temporal orientation*. The relative significance individuals attach to the past, present or the future (Cottle, 1976; Holbrook, 1993; Holman, 1981; Jones, 1988; Philipp, 1992). It indicates whether people prefer to look back at events and accomplishments, live in the here and now, or look forward to whatever may unfold.
- (3) *Planning orientation*. The style of time management. It involves a continuum from analytic (people who plan very extensively) to spontaneous (people who prefer not to plan at all). While analytic people may plan their days in 15- or 30-minute intervals captured in a notebook, spontaneous people may simply think in terms of "things to do soon".
- (4) *Polychronic orientation*. Preference for a polychronic, multi-tasking style versus a monochronic, "one-thing-at-a-time" style (Hall, 1959; 1983; Hall and Hall, 1987; Kaufman *et al.*, 1991). Some people approach time linearly, attempting one task at a time, and are unable, or unwilling, to juggle more than one thing in a given unit of time. Other people are quite opposite, preferring to undertake multiple tasks at the same time, or at least concurrently.

### **Timestyle and leisure activity choices: illustrative examples from an exploratory study**

The first author conducted in-depth interviews with a convenience sample of eight women in the New England area. Informants were initially contacted by telephone and were then interviewed in their homes, for approximately 1-1½ hours. The interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim. These interviews began broadly by asking the informants to recollect a

recent vacation; informants quickly moved into a “story-telling” mode about something fairly vivid in memory. From these initial vacation stories, the interviewer was able to probe for a more general account of leisure goals, activities, and services used. In addition, informants often began to discuss (in an unprompted way) several aspects of the timestyle construct described previously. When they did not explicitly mention issues related to timestyle, the interviewer might probe to discover, for example, an informant’s planning orientation. Thus, the interviews began with discussions of leisure consumption and when the subject of leisure had been exhausted, the interviewer moved on to uncover informants’ timestyles. Brief excerpts from these data are used to illustrate below the influence of timestyle on leisure consumption decisions. Examples of the relationships between the various timestyle dimensions and leisure services are shown in Table I.

#### *Social orientation*

Violet (V) is a 23-year-old MBA student who professes to prefer spending her leisure time with others, rather than treating it as a chance to be alone.

We illustrate here with the examples of two individuals, Lisa and Linda, how differences in timestyles can affect consumer choices of leisure services

Social orientation (self vs. others)	Temporal orientation (past, present, or future)	Planning orientation (analytic vs. spontaneous)	Polychronic orientation (polychronic vs. monochronic)
Lisa prefers to spend her free time alone rather than with others	Lisa thinks a lot about the future and the kind of person she might become	Lisa is an analytic planner, frequently making to-do lists and writing all activities in a planner	Lisa is monochronic, preferring to handle one thing at a time
Lisa chooses leisure services that involve solitary activities	Lisa chooses leisure services that provide instrumental benefits such as self-improvement	Lisa chooses leisure services that are highly structured and time-bound	Lisa chooses leisure services that focus on only one specific activity

Thus, a leisure services marketer could target Lisa for a vacation package that is planned well in advance and tightly scheduled; organized around one main activity (e.g. archeology or art) that affords knowledge and/or a new skill; and structured around individual, rather than group, learning

Linda prefers to spend her free time with others	Linda is rooted in the “here and now” present	Linda avoids making rigid plans and prefers spontaneity	Linda is polychronic, adept at multi-tasking
Linda chooses leisure services that involve group and team activities	Linda chooses leisure services that provide hedonic benefits	Linda chooses leisure services that are not tightly structured and do not require significant advance planning	Linda chooses leisure services that involve multiple activities

Thus, a leisure services marketer could target Linda for a last-minute, multiple-destination vacation that affords a multitude of pleasurable group and social activities

*Table I. Timestyle and its influence on choice of leisure services*

## Recurring theme

V: I would rather have more variety . . . I mean I'm usually like sure, the more the merrier. I mean granted every once and a while you want to be alone but on the average I would rather have people around.

*Interviewer:* How do you feel when you're alone?

V: Well usually I like it for about two hours and after that I'm like, looking around, looking for the phone, calling people I haven't talked to in like six months, you know. I get bored with myself very easily . . . when there's more people, where people love you, like to hang out with you, you feel good about yourself.

Violet's social orientation was a recurring theme during her interview. She repeatedly discussed her love of interacting with her friends, shopping with several people, and preferring the company of others to being alone. This aspect of her timestyle affects her choice of leisure activities such as fitness regimes – she prefers aerobics classes because she likes to work out in a group. Similarly, her social orientation affects most of her weekend plans, which typically revolve around others, and finding ways to fit others into her leisure time.

V: Saturday I am either going to a party or I'm having a BBQ here. My boyfriend's friends are coming up and I've left it up to him as far as what he wants to do . . . Sunday I'll see if we go down to [city] going out with some friends that I have down there, just for a light meal or something. I never want to spend the weekend without seeing a lot of friends.

### *Temporal orientation*

Jill (J) is a 27-year-old legal secretary who has recently moved back to her parents' home after a six-year relationship ended. After this painful break-up, and bolstered by the support of her family, Jill is focusing on rediscovering herself and who she is outside of her relationship with a man. Her temporal orientation is to the present, and on making things the best they can be without looking too far into the future.

J: Well right now, where I am in my life I try to just not worry about it. I try to like, have fun and not worry about where I'm going to be in three years, if I'm going to have kids or not . . . I'm just letting it all just kind of happen, which feels good too . . . Like I say it feels good just to, just to go day by day.

## Temporal orientation

There is strong evidence in the interview data that Jill's temporal orientation influences her leisure behaviors. Leisure consumption for her is an opportunity to live most fully in the present, to seize and enjoy life. Jill's leisure activities includes casino gambling, shopping, playing on the Internet, and going out with friends or family for dinner. Her leisure choices are made based on what feels best to her at the moment, what can maximize her pleasure in the "here and now". Because of this, she tends not to incorporate nostalgia for the past, or a foresight for the future, in how she chooses to spend her leisure time. Jill recently booked a trip to casinos in Vegas because it "felt right":

J: . . . go on a trip, have some fun so . . . I booked a trip to Vegas . . . now was as good a time as any . . . so I figured let me see what he [cousin] was doing and he wanted to go so we booked the trip. I just want to go and have a good time, just a fun time, just something fun to do. Not worrying about should I save the vacation time or the money for later on . . . just get up and go.

Jill's live-for-the-moment, present orientation thus influences how she chooses to examine life, and how she spends her discretionary time. Her temporal orientation appears to influence not only her day-to-day activities

## Multiple demands

but also her more major leisure consumption decisions (e.g. vacation travel choices).

### *Planning orientation*

Evelyn (E) is the 34-year-old director of a counseling program for college students. She must meet multiple demands (therapy for her patients as well as administrative duties as head of a department). To cope with these demands, she organizes her workday quite rigidly. The following excerpt illustrates her very analytical planning orientation:

*E:* I get in here at 6:00 to do a workout and so I work out from 6:00 to 7:30 everyday and then I come in here and 7:30 to 8:00 is really my time to go through my calendar . . . So I'll just come in and see what kinds of meetings I have, get prepped for the day. Make sure I'm clear on the schedule.

Leisure is incredibly important to Evelyn because it can provide a much-needed release to her job pressures. She describes her life as too busy for relationships and friends, and she saves all of her leisure time for "recharging". Interestingly, however, her leisure time is almost as carefully planned as her work time, and her choices of leisure activities follow a set routine, reflecting her strong analytical planning orientation. For example, her primary leisure activity is golf, and she plans her golf outings quite meticulously.

*E:* If I'm golfing it's all over my schedule. It's blocked out. I schedule it in only because then nobody is getting there, it's not like I'm going to be doing anything else. No, I'm golfing.

However, once she is actually "at leisure" on the golf course, Evelyn must abandon her preferred analytical planning orientation in order to enjoy her leisure.

*E:* So when you hit the golf course, I take my watch off. And that is the *only* time I take my watch off and I will put my watch away and leave it behind. Because I don't want to know what time it is or I would go crazy, saying, I can't believe I wasted eight hours, no . . . I just go out then and time is gone, schedules are gone . . . But if I have to know that I have someplace else to go then when I'm playing golf it gets incorporated into the game and I started missing.

## Leisure consumption patterns

Evelyn's planning orientation thus impacts on her leisure consumption patterns. Her preference for order and efficiency influence how she consumes leisure time, in what she chooses to do, as well as in how her leisure activities are routinized and continually reinforced.

### *Polychronic orientation*

Stacy (S) is a 23-year-old human resources analyst. She is now in a job that allows her to work in the polychronic manner that she prefers. Polychronicity is one of the important elements of Stacy's timestyle; in both work and leisure she often finds herself "juggling" activities.

*S:* I've actually found that I can juggle things better than I thought I could . . . I found though, in my job, it's really forced me to be able to juggle things much better . . . And I might have six piles of things going on and I might be answering the phone at the same time and having someone else come in. And to get through that I would probably . . . let's move on to this, and maybe work on this a little bit and . . . Let's start this and see if we can get some of this done and then I'll get frustrated or something like that and I'll move on to the next thing.

## Polychronicity

The data suggest Stacy's polychronicity influences her leisure consumption patterns. For example, even when entertaining a friend at home, the two of them often end up doing different activities at the same time:

S: . . . and there was a whole bunch of stuff on my kitchen table, and I was doing stuff for my trip and I'm looking at stuff, and he's looking at all different things, but we could still maintain a very good conversation, we laughed, we giggled I shared some things with him. But we were really doing totally different things at the same time.

On the weekends, Stacy's polychronicity influences her leisure choices. When planning activities with friends, she likes to have a variety of activities, and not just focus on one thing at a time.

S: I like doing different things as much as possible. I find, maybe in this period of my life I really enjoy . . . just to do different things as much as possible.

Stacy ideally would like leisure time to be filled with several enjoyable activities. Thus, a vacation destination, where, for example, there was one activity and not much else to do, would not appeal to her. Her polychronic orientation drives her to seek vacations that afford several concurrent leisure activities. For example, Stacy likes to hike, but would want her hiking destination to also have night-time activities (bars, restaurants, etc.) so that she can combine an outdoor activity with more urban activities.

## Interview findings

### Summary

For brevity, we provided above select examples that indicate the nature of our interview findings. But the whole of our qualitative data suggest that all four dimensions of timestyle can have a systematic effect on leisure choices. Although we presented only some illustrative examples, the major findings from this exploratory study can be summarized as follows:

- *Social orientation.* Other-oriented women were more likely to engage in activities such as vacationing in a group or shopping with friends. Self-oriented informants however were more likely to be involved in solitary activities such as playing computer games or going fishing alone.
- *Temporal orientation.* Past-oriented women enjoyed activities such as visiting the neighborhoods where they grew up and frequently made lengthy phone calls to old childhood friends. Present-oriented women were more prone to hedonic leisure pursuits where there were prospects of immediate gratification. Future-oriented women in contrast often pursued forward-looking, personal development activities such as cooking schools, golf classes, and poetry discussion groups.
- *Planning orientation.* Analytic planners were more likely to participate in leisure activities that require significant advance planning (e.g. foreign vacations with complicated itineraries). Women who had a spontaneous planning style on the other hand preferred impulsive leisure activities that could be undertaken without significant advance planning (e.g. a day trip to the beach).
- *Polychronic orientation.* Polychronic informants often engaged in multiple leisure activities simultaneously such as watching TV, talking on the phone, and surfing the Web. In comparison, monochronic informants were more likely to undertake one activity at a time such as reading or listening to classical music.

#### Four factors

Individual differences in how we deal with time often go unnoticed, perhaps because of a taken-for-granted assumption that everyone perceives time in a similar way. This is clearly not the case, and our data suggest a strong link between consumers' timestyles and why they make the leisure choices they do. We now turn to an examination of the possible antecedent influences on timestyle.

#### Potential influences on timestyle

We examine here four factors that are likely to shape an individual's timestyle: culture, age, gender, and family socialization. Identification of such influencing factors should help services marketers design and implement programs that target individuals with a particular timestyle.

#### *Cultural influences*

An individual's culture permeates and influences the meaning of time for that person (Hall, 1976; see also Graham, 1981; Jones, 1988; Levine, 1988). We do not believe that all people within a culture will think about time in an identical, culturally determined way, a notion that can degenerate to stereotypical ideas (Hall, 1976). However, prior research does indicate that culture likely influences one's timestyle.

#### Social orientation dimension

Cultures may vary in their perception of "time for me" versus "time for others", i.e. along the social orientation dimension of timestyle. Building on the research by Levine (1988) and Hall (1976), Manrai and Manrai (1995) identified cultural contexts in terms of the importance accorded to time spent with others. This research tradition outlines that high context cultures (e.g. Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East) strongly emphasize social interactions, and value social time over time spent alone. Low context cultures (e.g. the USA, Canada, and Western Europe) are presumed to accord prominence to self-time. Also, individualistic (vs. collectivist) cultures typically place less emphasis on the role of others in one's life (see Rhee *et al.*, 1995).

Prior literature also suggests that the degree of polychronic orientation is likely to be influenced by culture. The traditional North American cultural perception of time tends toward a monochronic orientation – the perception of time as separable, and composed of small intervals like minutes or hours (Graham, 1981). Doing one thing at a time is often encouraged and reinforced as a social norm in such cultures. In contrast, the representation of time tends to be polychronic in cultures (e.g. Latin American) that think about time as a recurring system with natural cycles of repeating events (Graham, 1981).

#### Perception of time

Cultures may also differ in their temporal orientation (Jones, 1988; Cottle, 1976). Graham (1981) also argues that the perception of time is an integral part of an individual's culture and it affects how much influence one attributes to the past, the present, or the future. Finally, regarding the dimension of planning orientation, Cole and Scribner (1974) found cultural differences in when and how people engage in categorization. Medin and Wattenmaker (1987) also propose that cultures share cognitive models and cognitive categories vary cross-culturally. Thus there are some indications that the fine-grained temporal categories that are typical of an analytical planning orientation are likely to be different across diverse cultures.

## Gender differences

### *The role of age*

Age also appears to play a role in shaping a person's timestyle. For example, age likely influences one's social orientation; Havighurst (1973) showed that as people age, they tend towards solitary rather than social activities. Temporal orientation is also likely to be influenced by age; older people are more likely to be past-oriented than are younger individuals (Bergadaà, 1990; Holbrook, 1993). However, we are not aware of any research that has explicitly examined the influence of age on either polychronic behavior or one's planning orientation.

### *The role of gender*

Though not explicitly examining the issue of social orientation, there is research that suggests that gender differences likely exist on this timestyle dimension, in that women on average are more socially oriented than men (Manrai and Manrai, 1995; Feldman and Hornik, 1981). In terms of a focus on the past, present, or future, the findings of both Cottle (1976) and Juster (1985) indicate that men are more future-oriented while women tended to be more present-oriented. Manrai and Manrai (1995) also suggest women may be more polychronic. We are not aware of any research that examines a possible link between gender and the planning orientation dimension.

### *Family socialization influences*

It has been established that children often model their consumption behaviors after their parents (Moschis, 1987). Even more nebulous concepts like values can also be modeled, as demonstrated by Moore-Shay and Berchmans' (1996) research showing evidence that values such as materialism can be transmitted within a family from one generation to another. Their research also shows that children often react to a parent's perceived incompetence at some important task by behaving just the opposite of their parents. However, when children perceive parents to be good at a task, they are quite likely to behave in a similar way to their parents. This socialization theory would suggest that how parents deal with time is something that can be observed and modeled (learned) by children.

## Time consumption

In the specific domain of time consumption, Bergadaà (1990) speculates that an individual's preference for time alone versus time with others may be learned either through imitation of his/her parents or via direct communications with them. Children also may be socialized into approaching time as a valuable resource that is worthy of careful planning or, at the other extreme, into valuing spontaneity. In a like manner, if children watch their parents always juggle several tasks simultaneously instead of methodically proceeding through each task, then they may be more inclined to adopt a polychronic stance (see Timmer *et al.*, 1985). More direct evidence of family influences on timestyle is available in the recent work of Cotte (1998). She assessed dyads of sisters and found significant commonality in siblings on the polychronic dimension even after controlling for variables such as age and income. Cotte (1998) also found some evidence that the family factor significantly influences the temporal orientation dimension.

The above antecedents to timestyle are important for two main reasons. First, they offer a deeper theoretical understanding of how timestyle is formed, and how, over a long time, it may change. Second, from a pragmatic standpoint, these antecedents suggest some actionable opportunities for services marketers who wish to exploit the relationship between timestyle and services choice. This is the topic we explore further in our final section.

### Spontaneous planning orientation

### Timestyle construct

#### Discussion and implications

As the leisure services market matures, it is ever more important for service providers to have a clear understanding of leisure motives and desires (Dibb, 1995). The theme of this paper has been to highlight the concept of timestyle and its explanatory role in consumer choices of leisure activities.

Specifically, based on prior literature and our own qualitative research, we outlined a four-dimensional framework for timestyle that captures how individuals customarily perceive and use time. We showed how the data from our qualitative research supported a strong relationship between all four dimensions of timestyle and leisure services choices, and we discussed several key antecedent influences on timestyle.

It should be noted that although the four dimensions of timestyle are theoretically distinct, it is likely that some of these dimensions are associated with each other. For example, there is some evidence that a polychronic orientation is associated with a spontaneous planning orientation (Cotte, 1998). Hence, not surprisingly, people who prefer to handle several activities concurrently (like watching TV and reading) or in rapid succession (i.e. going back and forth between activities) are less likely to plan their time methodically. But more research needs to be done to examine in detail the relationships among timestyle dimensions, and how they combine to influence leisure choices.

As illustrated by the examples in Table I, services marketers (e.g. in the travel industry) may find it advantageous to tailor their offerings to suit the timestyles of target consumers. Timestyle may also influence the value placed by individual consumers on time-saving services (e.g. home cleaning), or even information services (e.g. while browsing on the Internet). Similarly, to the extent that timestyle affects people's decisions on time-consuming leisure activities, service establishments ranging from movie theatres to public museums may want to factor this concept into their marketing tactics. For example, discounts could be given for advance ticket purchases for specific shows or for group ticket purchases to stimulate business from consumers with specific timestyles. Advertising activities (e.g. TV commercials) could target consumer segments such as those who are polychronic and planning oriented by, for example, depicting "supercharged" models who find satisfaction in getting a lot accomplished in a time-bound manner.

Still, in order for leisure services marketers to exploit fully the timestyle construct (e.g. via survey research of consumers), it is likely that they would need quantitative measurement scales for the four timestyle dimensions. Future researchers may study with quantitative measurements how people vary on the timestyle dimensions, and how these dimensions may be related to other variables of interest. While some psychometric work has been done on how to measure some aspects of time, many of the dimensions we outlined currently lack reliable scales of measurement. Kaufman and others have created a scale for the polychronic dimension, which should most easily lend itself to further quantitative research (see, e.g. Bluedorn *et al.*, 1999; Kaufman *et al.*, 1991). There are several ways to measure temporal orientation, including direct measurement methods (Cottle, 1976; Bluedorn *et al.*, 1999; Schriber and Gutek, 1987) and a more indirect method, involving the temporal placement of the major events in a respondent's life (Cottle, 1976; also used in Philipp, 1992). The differing approaches tend to produce differing results, and work needs to continue in this area. One very interesting question that remains empirically unanswered is whether an

## Behavioral variable

emphasis on the past is the opposite of an emphasis on the future (that is, whether temporal orientation is truly a unidimensional construct). Some work has been accomplished concerning the measurement of planning orientation (Bond and Feather, 1988; Calabresi and Cohen, 1968) but often research in the area of time overlooks planning orientation. Our work has demonstrated that planning orientation can have quite an impact on time consumption, hence we encourage researchers to consider the measurement and assessment of this dimension of timestyle in future work. Finally, we note that virtually no quantitative measurement attempts have been made concerning social orientation.

It is also worth noting that timestyle is in essence a behavioral segmentation variable. Marketers will be able to realize its full value in targeting consumers only if the descriptive correlates of timestyle can be determined. Such descriptive or identifying variables would be needed for estimating the number of consumers in a particular timestyle segment or for selecting appropriate channels for marketing communications based on known audience characteristics. But as discussed earlier, it is quite likely that identifying variables such as culture, age, and gender are indeed correlated significantly with specific dimensions of timestyle. Assuming that future research can verify the nature and extent of these correlations, theoretically it should be possible to build descriptive profiles of segments of individuals who have specific timestyles. Marketers should also then be able to weigh the merits of segmentation schemes based on consumer timestyle against traditional segmentation based purely on demographics or leisure psychographics (e.g. Plog, 2001).

## Evidence

In conclusion, there is good evidence that consumer timestyle influences the choice of leisure services. Future research may be able to develop further our framework for timestyle and refine the scale measurement of its four dimensions. Such research could also further clarify the role of the timestyle construct in the domain of leisure products and services consumption and perhaps other services domains as well. Our hope is that such work will further stimulate managerially useful thoughts on the role of time and timestyle in services marketing. After all, the perception of time is a fundamental aspect of our daily lives and activities, so fundamental that we often neglect and overlook its importance to life and what we as consumers choose to do.

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***This summary has been provided to allow managers and executives a rapid appreciation of the content of this article. Those with a particular interest in the topic covered may then read the article in toto to take advantage of the more comprehensive description of the research undertaken and its results to get the full benefit of the material present***

## **Executive summary and implications for managers and executives**

### ***Timestyle influences people's choice of leisure activities***

*US consumers spend more than \$400 billion a year on entertainment, and leisure and recreation spending are rising at double the rate of other consumer spending. Upper-income Americans spend more of their income on recreation and leisure than their less affluent compatriots. People who "consume" leisure services must set aside time in order to do it. Cotte and Ratneshwar argue that a person's timestyle – that is, his or her customary manner of perceiving and using time – influences his or her choices of leisure activities.*

*Timestyle is a relatively enduring aspect of the self, changeable only over a fairly long period of time. Four dimensions of timestyle appear to be particularly relevant to service marketers.*

### ***Social orientation***

*A social orientation refers to the categorization of discretionary time as either time for self or time with and for others. The motivation to classify a unit of time as time for others can be either voluntary or obligatory. Other-orientated people are more likely to engage in such leisure activities as vacationing in a group or shopping with friends. Self-orientated people, in contrast, are more likely to be involved in such solitary activities as playing computer games or going fishing alone.*

### ***Temporal orientation***

*A temporal orientation refers to the relative significance individuals attach to the past, present or future. It indicates whether people prefer to look back at events and accomplishments, live in the here and now or look forward to whatever may unfold. Past-orientated people are likely to enjoy such activities as visiting the neighbourhoods where they grew up and making lengthy telephone calls to childhood friends. Present-orientated people are more prone to leisure pursuits such as bingo, which offer the prospects of immediate gratification. Future-orientated people often pursue personal-development activities such as cooking schools, golf classes and poetry discussion groups.*

### ***Planning orientation***

*A planning orientation refers to the style of time management. It involves a continuum from analytic (people who plan extensively) to spontaneous (people who prefer not to plan at all). Analytic planners are more likely to take part in leisure activities that require significant advance planning, such as foreign holidays with complicated itineraries. Spontaneous people, in contrast, tend to prefer such impulsive leisure activities as a visit to the beach.*

### ***Polychronic orientation***

*A polychronic orientation refers to a preference for a multi-tasking style, rather than doing one thing at a time. People who adopt a polychronic approach may, for example, simultaneously watch television, talk on the telephone and surf the Web. Monochronic people, in contrast, tend to devote themselves to a single activity at a time – such as reading or listening to music.*

***The four dimensions are linked***

*Although the four dimensions of timestyle are theoretically distinct, it is likely that links exist. For example, there is evidence that a polychronic orientation is associated with a spontaneous planning orientation. People who prefer to handle several activities concurrently or in rapid succession are less likely to plan their time methodically.*

***Some implications for marketers***

*Service establishments ranging from movie theatres to museums may wish to factor timestyle into their marketing tactics. For example, discounts could be given for advance ticket purchases for specific shows or for group ticket purchases to stimulate business from specific timestyles. Advertising could target customer segments such as those who are polychronic and planning orientated by, for example, depicting “supercharged” models who find satisfaction in getting a lot accomplished in a short time.*

*Cotte and Ratneshwar believe that it is quite likely that variables such as culture, age and gender are correlated significantly with specific dimensions of timestyle, but more research is needed to verify the nature and extent of these correlations.*

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