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Camille Eslan, Sandrine Costa, Céline Vial, Vu Hoang Ha Pham

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VALUE COMPONENTS IN EQUESTRIAN SELF-ORGANIZATION

Esland, Camille^{1,2,3}; Costa, Sandrine¹; Vial, Céline^{1,2}; Pham, Ha¹

¹MoISA, Univ Montpellier, CIHEAM-IAMM, CIRAD, INRAE, Institut Agro, IRD, Montpellier, France; ²IFCE, Pôle recherche, innovation et Développement, Exmes, France;

³Fédération Française d'Équitation (FFE), Lamotte-Beuvron, France

eslandcamille@gmail.com

Aim

Autonomy is recently increasing in sport and recreative activities and a mismatch between the service offer and the consumer demand is often observed. Consequently, understanding the values that is experienced when practicing an activity would allow a better services' design. In this context, this study aims to analyse which value components influence the choices of self-organization of equestrian consumers.

Theoretical Background

Using consumer behaviour approach, this paper studies on the organizational principle of self-organization and the motivations to be autonomous. The main idea of self-organization is to not delegate to someone else what you can do yourself. In the *self* literature, self-efficacy is fundamental as it increases people's ability to choose more challenging tasks. Self-efficacy measures perceived competence but also includes awareness of the possible error's risk. However, self-organization and more generally consumers' participation to the production process depends on the experiential value created. The value created by the consumer experience differs according to the situation and it includes several components (Aurier et al., 2004). In their netnography, Medberg and Heinonen (2014) add the heritage value that also influences the customers' relationship with the services and is defined as "the history of bank relationships initiated by parents or relatives of the customer". However, this paper introduces a new value, which is the transmission value defined as the transmission of a know-how subject to transformation.

In sport, creativity and innovation lead to autonomous practices as professional structures have too constraining frame to offer diversified experiences (Galewicz, 2017; Riffaud, 2018). Self-organized equestrian users may be motivated by increased satisfaction or experiential stimuli. They are passionate about their activity, wish to exchange with others who share the same goals and values, have a wider social network, or pass on their passion to their relatives. Despite the many similarities between the different recreational practices, equestrian self-organization activities have the specificities to represent a way of life and to be expensive (practice and caring for the horse). Thus, the influence of purchasing power and economic value could be important. Moreover, this research considers the ethical value component related to the animal's welfare that depends on how equines are housed.

Methodology

First, we conducted a qualitative exploratory study based on semi-structured interviews with 30 self-organized equestrians in various areas in France. Based on these results and the literature review, we realized an online quantitative survey in France among 660 respondents via social networks. The survey uses literature scales to measure constructs of general self-efficacy, purchasing power concern, overall value (Aurier et al., 2004), economic value

(Mathwick et al., 2001) and discovery of new experiences (Rousseau et al., 2002). New value components (transmission value, error risks and ethical value) are measured using items adapted from the literature or created from the interviews. All these scales were confirmed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis using R software. Lavaan package is used for the SEM.

Results

The respondents are between 15 and 78 years old, with various socio-economic status, and the average self-organization time is 8 years.

The overall model verifies goodness of fit robust indices ((CFI=0.964; RMSEA=0.029; GFI=0.957) and explains better the overall value ($R^2 = 42\%$). The discriminant validity for construct of self-efficacy, transmission value, purchasing power and error risks are also validated. However, the convergent validity and reliability for the other constructs are slightly below the standard ($AVE < 0,5$ and $\alpha < 0,7$). The results highlight that preoccupation for purchasing power, self-efficacy and discovery influence significantly different dimensions of the value and the overall value. Concerning the effect of value components, only ethical value influences positively and significantly the overall value, whereas the effect of other value dimensions on overall value is not significant, even if close to significance.

This research brings an original focus on the transmission value. The literature showed the influence of a heritage value considered as inherited from entourage (Medberg & Heinonen, 2014), whereas in this study it reflects the idea of a transmission to relatives.

Conclusion

Even if this model seems promising, some limitations persist in this study, as the low reliability of some constructs. The number of individuals in the sample, although sufficient for this type of modelling, could be increased. Reworking the scales and increasing the number of individuals in the sample are perspective avenues.

To conclude, this paper adds transmission value to the literature on autonomy in sport and shows the determining influence of ethical value for self-organised equestrians. This shows the need to keep an open mind about new practices and research on animal welfare. In the equestrian field, the search for autonomy learning instead of dependence should be reinforced in the apprenticeship, as well as learning about the care of horses. The equestrian services offered in the professional structures would then serve as a support or relay by offering a network and adapted advice for self-organized people.

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