Success Factors of a Nightclub from the Clubbers' View

Roediger Voss

Distance Learning University Switzerland

Abstract: *Nightlife in Switzerland, especially Zurich is well developed. On the other side nightlife research in Europa in particular in Switzerland is very rare. Nightlife is a fundamental part of life: It is an echo of what occurs during the day and a core activity in the lives of lots of young people. Thus studying nightlife is a central theme. The study targets to evaluate a widespread understanding of clubber's needs in urban nightlife environment by examining the significance of various aspects in party crowds' expectations. The main objective of the present paper is to reveal the constructs that inspire these prospects in order to expose the primary benefits that clubbers seek. A qualitative technique named laddering was applied. This technique permits researchers to stretch deeper levels of reality, and involves progression from attributes to benefits to abstract values. Researchers can leverage main attributes and consequences of a desired club, and draw connections between them. The study results show that clubbers want reachable nightclubs with like-minded people, good music, balance between male and female, favourable price, vast range of drinks, and fine accommodation. These attributes generate to lots of benefits: good mood, having fun, financial independence, flexibility, no trouble, socializing, relaxation, and dancing. The consequences lead to the three subjective values: well-being, hedonism, and safety. Clubbers' desire to be comfortable appears to be the central signification. The empirical study gave a valuable first into the desired factors of a nightclub from clubbers view in urban area Zurich (Switzerland). The data derived from the clubber's hierarchical value map provides useful information for club owner to design their marketing activities and training of staff. The study was explorative in nature as this was the first laddering study in the context of clubbing.*

Keywords: *Laddering, Nightclub, Nightlife, Expectations, Qualitative Research.*

I. Introduction

Nightlife in Switzerland, especially Zurich is well developed. On the other side nightlife research in Europe in particular in Switzerland is very rare. Due to the huge numbers of night clubs in Zurich, there is keen rivalry for guests. Clubbers` expectations are a key element to the success or failure of a nightclub. With economic studies and consumer behaviour specify that products and services will be successful if they meet consumer needs [1]. However, the nightlife is a fundamental part of life: It is an echo of what occurs during the day and a core activity in the lives of lots of young people. Thus studying nightlife is a central theme. Urban nightlife is contained of several clubs and discos. The offer of the nightclubs varies from hard rock or metalcore parties, acid house or acid jazz to RnB or hip-hop events. It can be assumed that the fans of these music styles have different expectations of a desired nightclub. That is the reason why this study analyses mainstream clubs with RnB or hip-hop music offer. A qualitative technique called laddering was applied to discover the clubbers` expectations. This method helps scientists to stretch profounder levels of reality, and entails progression from attributes to benefits to abstract values.

II. Materials And Methods

Laddering-technique

The Laddering-technique (see e.g., [2] [3]) tries to discover the main connotations that clubbers associate with their favourite club. The method emphases mainly on the links in the clubbers' mind between the desired attributes of a club, the consequences of these attributes for the clubber, and the personal beliefs, which are reinforced by the consequences. Attributes are the tangible and intangible features of a club. Consequences are the motives why an attribute is important to the clubber. Values may be seen as the clubbers' general life goals (see e.g., [4]). The connections between attributes, consequences and values are the ladder-chains (Figure 1). Consequences (mid level of abstraction) are more significant to the self than attributes (low level of abstraction) and values (high level of abstraction) are more significant to the self than consequences. In order to find out the ladders of associations between attributes, consequences and values, the laddering technique is using in-depth interviews. For this, the questioner frequently queries why an attribute, consequence or value is essential to the clubber. The response to this question assists as the initial point for added questioning.
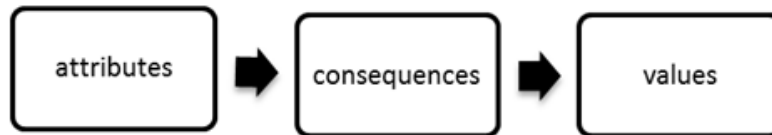
Figure 1 – Ladder-Chain

After the questioning process the content of the interviews has to be analysed. The target is to code all the sequences of attributes, consequences, and values (the ladders) took from the laddering interview so that comparisons of ladders from several respondents can be made. With the aim of reveal the separate links between the attributes, consequences and values, the software MECanalyst+ was used. The originate relations have to be represented on a "hierarchical value map" (HVM) - a graphical picture of a set of laddering- chains. A value map normally consists of three different levels, which relate to the three concepts of meaning: values are at the top of the diagram, consequences are close the middle and attributes are at the bottom of the HVM.

Participants

The study was conducted from January to March 2014 amongst clubbers via online-chat with 43 clubbers aged between 19 and 26 years (X=22.2). Participants were enrolled in facebook and took part on an unpaid basis. Grunert and Grunert [5] recommend that analysts should gather ladders that are from a group of equal respondents. The clubbers all have similar experiences (4-8 club visits per month) and are located in the region of Zurich.

III. Results And Discussion

Hierarchical value map

A hierarchical value map represents the found associations, which characterizes the most important attributes, consequences, and values (conceptual meanings) and the linkages between them. The map only displays associations beyond the cutoff level of 5, which means that links have to be quantified by at least 5 clubbers in order to be graphically represented. Figure 2 shows the significance and relationships between attributes, consequences and values. White circles characterize attributes, grey circles represent consequences, and black circles embody values.
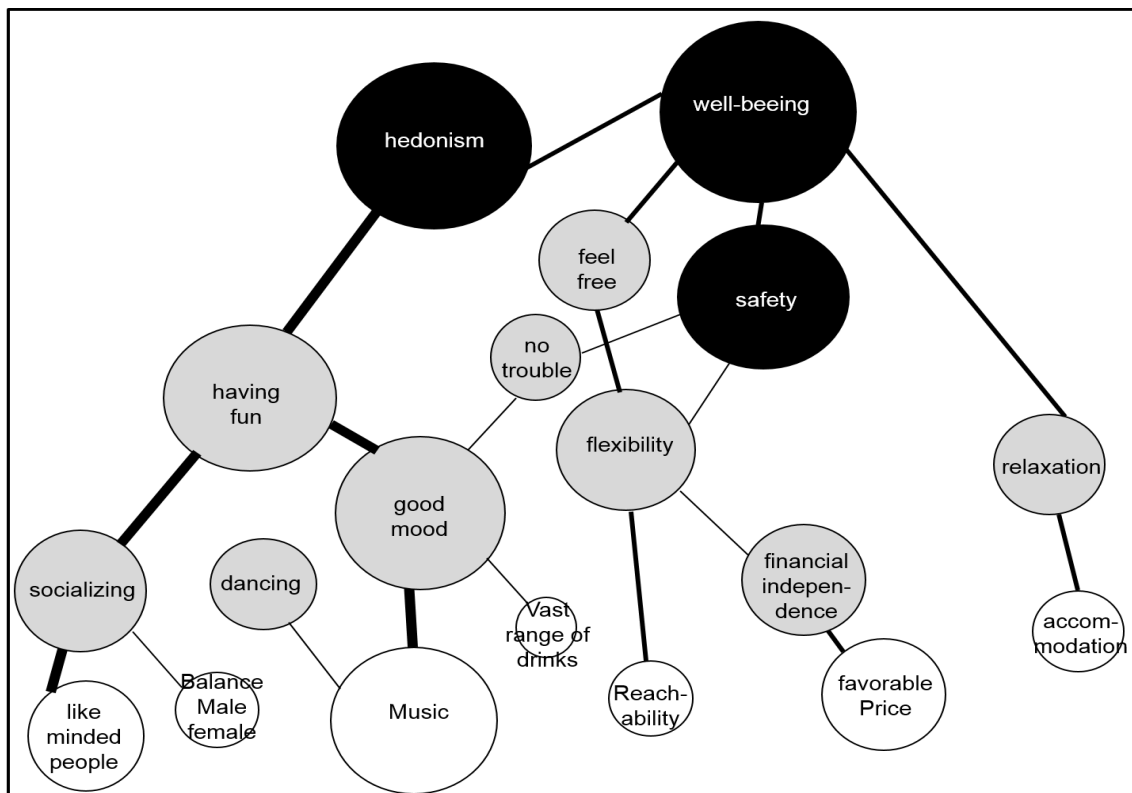

Figure 2 – Hierarchical value map of clubbers

Ladder-Chains

The study signposts seven attributes, nine consequences, and three values. For clubbers, the most critical features of a club are like-minded people, balance between male and female, good music and favorable price, vast range of drinks, and fine accommodation. As the size of the circles in the hierarchical value map stands for the frequency clubbers prefer the three central attributes "music", "like-minded" people and a "favorable price". The Hierarchical Value Map illustrates that participants in urban nightlife wish mainly an acoustic environment that meets their tastes, and wish to talk to people having similar background and needs like themselves. The clubbers are looking for a social space to come together. They wish a balance between male and female partygoers. These findings support the results stated by Skinner, Moss & Parfitt [6] and Schmidt & Sapsford [7]. For this reasons well instructed bouncers are necessary about the target audiences. Those who do not fit this profile must find another club. The differentiations in the door policies emphasize the awareness of competition and the need for clubs to differentiate themselves from their rivals. This strategy is a specific form of branding.

The central attribute "music" is mainly associated with the benefit "good mood" and "having fun". For clubbers, good musical programming is an appropriate mixture of new and old hits. A well-known DJ can ensure a virtuous mix of music. The attribute "vast rage of drinks" has also a positive impact on the consequence "good mood". In the same way, Grayson und McNeill [8] contend that "good mood" is a result of good music and vast rage of drinks. People in a good mood have fun and enjoy their life's. If they enjoy life, they feel comfortable. "Good mood" has also a positive impact on clubbers' fun and awareness of problems. Likewise, clubbers feel flexible if the nightclub is reachable, and offers a favourable price for drinks and adequate entrance fees. Previous research by Boogaarts-de Bruin [9] shows similar study results in the Netherlands: "According to the creative director of a club in Rotterdam, the clubber today has less to spend and, therefore, saves up his or her money and selects the party of choice much more carefully."

Clubbers regard fine "accommodation" as a necessary criterion to relax. This consequence is perceived by clubbers as an important circumstance to maintain "well-being". As the width of the line in the hierarchical value map exposes, socializing is strongly linked with "having fun" and "having fun" with „hedonism". The clubbers strives to maximize their pleasure. Flexible clubbers feel free and have certainty ("safety"). This study exposed that the clubbers are principally driven by values to maximize their own lives. The value map also illustrates that a raising perception of safety make them feel good. The interview extracts and the HVM show that the clubbers also feel good ("well-being") if they can relax, feel free, and enjoy their lives. Conferring to the HVM, clubbers mainly want to fulfil the individualistic values: "well-being", "safety", and "hedonism".

IV. Conclusions And Limitations

The empirical study gave a valuable first into the desired factors of a nightclub from clubbers view in urban area Zurich (Switzerland) and revealed the linkages between desired attributes, consequences and values. Explicitly, the study results show that clubbers mainly want to have fun, to socialize, be flexible and financial independent. To ensure this consequences a club has to offer like-minded people, balance between male and female, good music and favorable price, vast range of drinks, and fine accommodation. The data derived from the clubber's HVM provides useful information for club owner. The data of clubber expectations may help nightclubs to design their marketing activities and training of staff.

The study was explorative in nature as this was the first laddering study in the context of clubbing. The aim of the study was to give a first valuable in-depth insight into what matters for mainstream clubber who prefer RnB or hip-hop music by revealing several important constructs. Visitors to dissimilar clubbing scenes do not share the same 'clubbing culture'. Supplementary investigation, however, should improve our knowledge of other clubbing scenes like heavy metal music.

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