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# Consumer Value Systems in the Age of Postmodern Fragmentation: The Case of the Natural Health Microculture

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# Abstract

This article extends postmodern theories of consumption-oriented microcultures by analyzing the natural health value system and the microcultural meanings through which it is constructed. We first compare our theoretical approach to the conventional, Rokeachian view of the consumer value system. Drawing from a range of cultural and postmodern theories, we argue that the Rokeachian view is not sufficiently attuned to the meaning-based aspects of consumer value systems. Furthermore, it largely ignores the intracultural diversity among consumer value systems that arises from the fragmentation of postmodern consumer culture into diverse consumption microcultures. Our analysis focuses on the narratives that natural health consumers use to articulate the values manifest in their wellness-oriented consumption outlooks and practices. These narratives reveal the meaning-based linkages between these articulated values and the consumption goals being pursued through natural health practices. We further contextualize the natural health value system by highlighting four higher-order postmodern orientations that are inflected in this microculture. We discuss the implications of our analysis for conceptualizations of the fragmented postmodern marketplace, means-end analyses of consumer values, and generative theories of consumer goal formation.

**Keywords:** [Cultural Theories and Analysis](#), [Lifestyle and Psychographics](#), [Postmodernism/Poststructuralism](#), [Situation/Context Issues](#), [Values](#), [Depth/Long Interviews](#), [Text Interpretation](#)

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