



Hispanics and Entertainment: Insights for Culturally Relevant Marketing

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Perceptions of work, time, and the sequence of events in one's life depend on the cultural orientation of people. For some play and work are distinct and separate activities, for others these are more integrated.

Hispanics are more likely than other cultures to be polychronic¹ which means that they are more likely to integrate the different dimensions of life, such as work and play. Hispanics play while they work and work while at play. They organize their life in the ways that contradict the linear assumptions of monochronic cultures.

Part of the play life of Hispanics is media exposure and interaction. Much media exposure occurs as Hispanics conduct other activities. Because of this mix of activities in Hispanic lives, advertising and marketing messages are likely to pervade Hispanic lives to a larger extent than the lives of non-Hispanics.

The media environment of US Hispanics is of fundamental importance in that it reinforces, shapes, and interacts with Hispanic culture in dynamic ways. Understanding the entertainment and information environment of this culture has important implications for marketers in establishing a bond with Hispanic consumers.

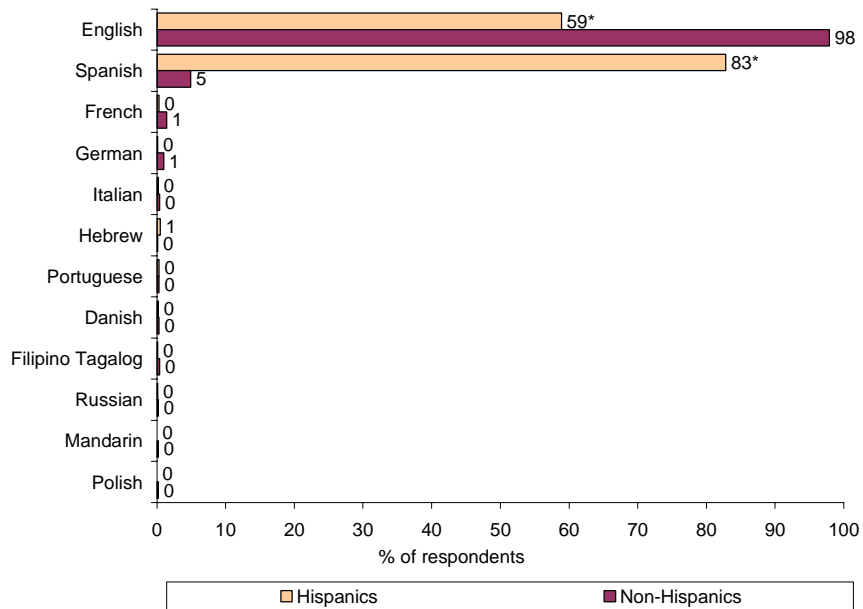
We will start with an explanation of the continued importance of Spanish language media followed by some distinctive Hispanic media preferences and conclude with implications for marketers.

¹ As opposed to monochronic. See *Beyond Culture* by Edward T. Hall for a full discussion. Anchor Books/Doubleday, New York, 1976.

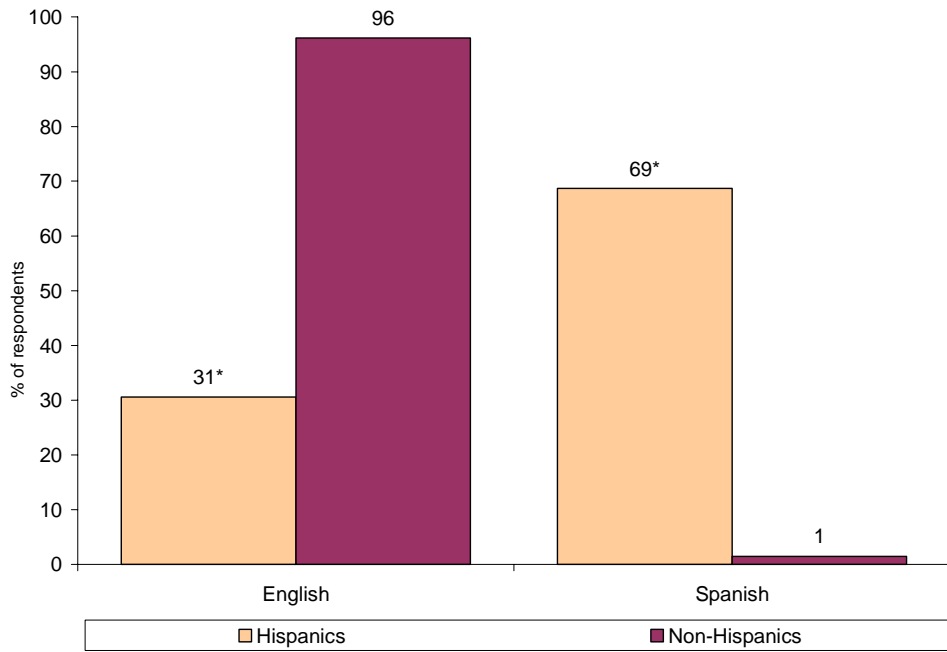
People en Español has conducted its Hispanic Opinion Tracker (HOT) three times. The last effort was in 2002. This last study is one of the largest studies addressing a wide variety of Hispanic behaviors and attitudes. Key segments of this study addressed entertainment and media. A national random sample of four thousand Hispanics and two thousand non-Hispanics were interviewed by phone. All respondents answered a core questionnaire, and subsets of 400 Hispanics and 200 non-Hispanics were queried about specific aspects of their consumer behavior and general attitudes.

The pervading importance of the Spanish language

The Spanish language continues to play an important role in most Hispanics' lives. When asked "What languages do you and your family speak at home" a prevalent majority of Hispanics pointed to the Spanish language (83%), still 59% also indicated speaking at least some English. And that is not surprising because children and others in the environment do communicate in English at least part of the time.



And the majority of Hispanics (69%) speak Spanish at home most often.



Thus it is not surprising that media preferences, particularly for broadcast media are in Spanish.

Media Consumption by Language – Average Hours Per Week				
Media Channel	Hispanic Origin	Hours English	Hours Spanish/Other	Total Hours
Television	Hispanics	4.54*	7.14*	11.68*
	Non-Hispanics	12.07	0.25	12.32
Radio	Hispanics	4.16*	5.88*	10.04*
	Non-Hispanics	11.55	0.11	11.66
Newspapers	Hispanics	1.11*	0.72*	1.82*
	Non-Hispanics	3.43	0.02	3.45
Magazines	Hispanics	0.80*	0.72*	1.52*
	Non-Hispanics	2.27	0.03	2.30
Books	Hispanics	1.39*	1.16*	2.54*
	Non-Hispanics	4.86	0.07	4.93
Internet	Hispanics	1.71*	0.46*	2.17*
	Non-Hispanics	5.27	0.04	5.31

Respondent base (all respondents): Hispanics = 4001; Non-Hispanics = 2341.
 *Difference between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics is statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence.
 Note: To control for outliers, a cap value of 60 hours was placed on each channel by language.
 Q20A-F. In a typical week, approximately how many hours do you spend watching TV? listening to the radio? reading magazines? reading newspapers? reading books? using the Internet?
 Q21A-F. Of the total hours per week, approximately how many hours do you spend watching TV, listening to the radio, reading newspapers, reading magazines, reading books, using the Internet in <OLANG>??

However, when it comes to print media and the Internet, the use of English is dominant. A key reason for the preeminence of English in these media outlets is that Spanish language print and Internet content and distribution still lag dramatically behind Spanish language broadcast.

When Hispanic consumers become more aware of their choices of Spanish language print and Internet these will become more prevalent. This will be particularly true when more relevant content is available and when the distribution of that content increases. Examples of how print can succeed in the Hispanic market are daily publications like Los Angeles’ “La Opinion,” New York’s “El diario la prensa”, and Miami’s “El Nuevo Herald.” In the realm of periodicals those who have understood the Hispanic consumer have done increasingly well. *People en Español*, by far the market leader, *Selecciones*, and *Vanidades* have all shown strong circulation growth in recent years, according to ABC data.

Why Spanish?

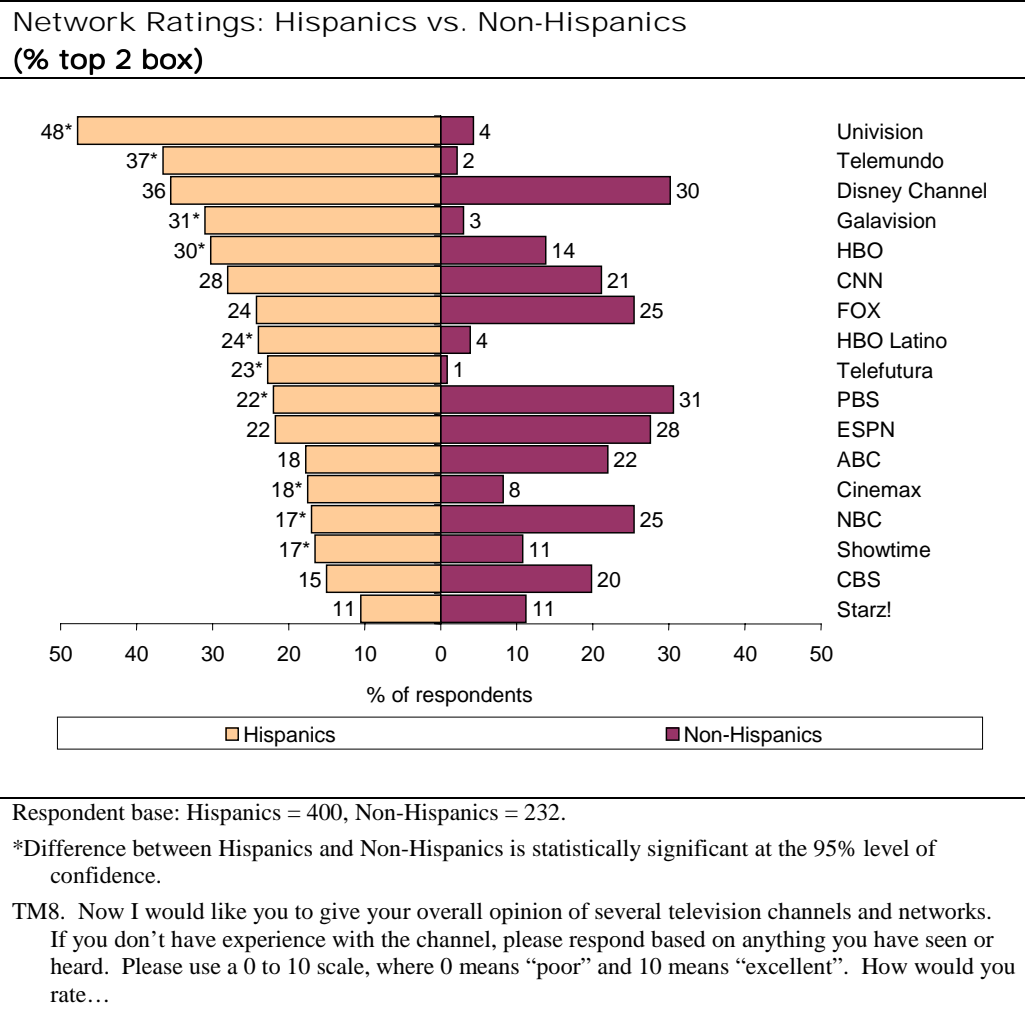
The reasons why the Spanish language is and will continue to be ubiquitous in everyday life and in Hispanic entertainment has to do with several key reasons:

- Hispanics are becoming increasingly salient in communities all across the US. They are influencing tastes and changing the ways in which society overall enjoys and consumes products, services, and media. The sheer number of Spanish speakers in communities reinforces the use of the language and its value for communication.
- The Spanish language represents an emotional attachment to the culture. Language and culture are not independent entities but they are intrinsically related in that language is a subset of culture. Communication in Spanish, for native Spanish speakers, is more than a functional behavior, it is a manifestation of emotion. That is because one's native language carries along connotations of the experience one acquires when growing up. The emotional component of language is a fundamental aspect of meaning. Meaning is the interpretation of sensory information. It is also the emotional component of the content that words carry.
- The US has become increasingly interested in Hispanic culture. In addition it has become increasingly tolerant and interested in cultural diversity. Thus Hispanics are being celebrated for being culturally different and that reinforces the use of the Spanish language. This is a most important transformation in American society. Non-Hispanics are now avidly consuming film, music, food, architecture, products, and other Hispanic cultural manifestations. This not only reinforces Hispanic pride but facilitates the preservation of the culture, which includes the language. This is one of the trends that marketers should pay careful attention to. The "Hispanization" of the US has implications for marketing to Hispanics and non-Hispanics.
- Spanish language media has experienced a revolution in the US and this phenomenon is reinforcing the Spanish language. Spanish language broadcast and print are growing at a healthy pace. Some of these media outlets are outpacing their English language counterparts. The Spanish language media is legitimizing and reaffirming Hispanic identity in the US, a phenomenon never seen with other immigrant groups. Just as an example, a large number of US metropolitan areas now identify a Spanish language radio station as the most popular radio station for the entire population.

Entertainment choices reflect cultural choices

As cultural relevance is central to US Hispanics, it is interesting to focus on how Hispanic consumers look at available content.

Television networks/channels reflect the culture



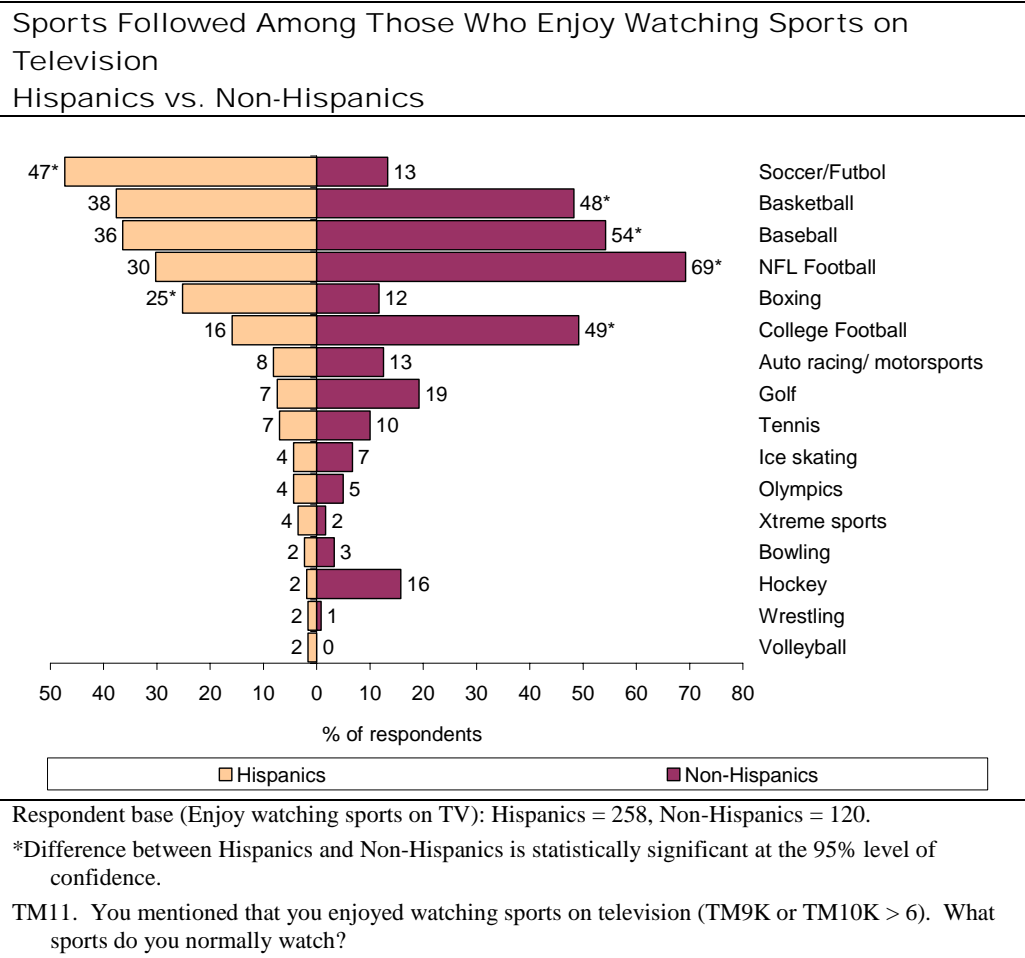
This distribution of network quality evaluations by Hispanic consumers is not totally intuitive considering the dominance of English language networks. Rather, it reflects Hispanics' desire for relevant content. That The Disney Channel and HBO figure prominently in the evaluations speak to the content preferences of the Hispanic family.

It is even surprising that Univision and Telemundo would appear as the top two networks when being evaluated. Consumers were not asked about their exposure to these channels but about their evaluations of their performance. That these networks are highly evaluated is a manifestation of the importance that cultural relevance plays in reaching the Hispanic consumer. Typically Univision and Telemundo have been criticized for offering relatively low quality programming but since there is little else to watch in Spanish, the argument goes,

people watch them. That they are being highly evaluated contradicts conventional wisdom and reaffirms that these networks fill an important cultural void.

Sports preferences go beyond taste and have social implications

You're likely to assume that Hispanics would prefer sports like soccer. Still, when looking at Hispanic sports preferences their contrast with non-Hispanics is revealing.

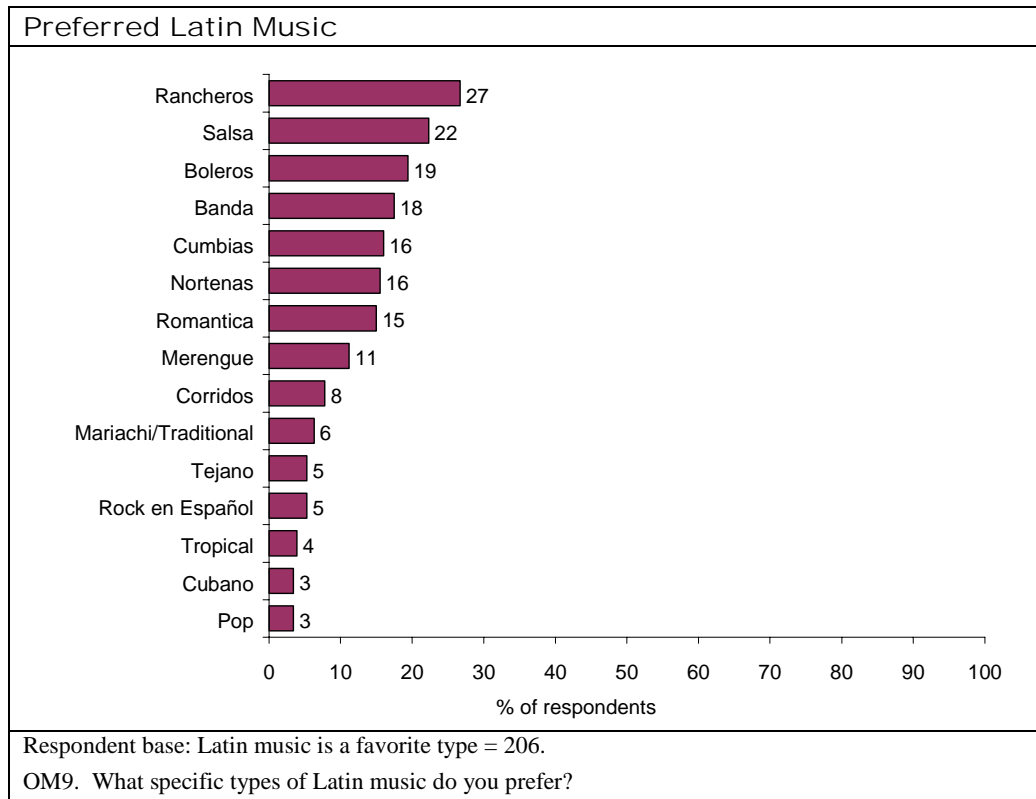


Soccer and boxing define Hispanic preferences in this profile in terms of significantly higher reported viewership. Beyond those marked contrasts is the divergence of Hispanic consumers in terms of their exposure to sports such as baseball and NFL football. This divergence speaks of values and orientations present in Hispanic culture and talk about how family life and time is spent. Also, these differences talk about the topics of conversation that are prevalent among Hispanics. When sports are not a shared cultural experience, conversations are harder to sustain.

The differences in entertainment approaches by Hispanics go beyond being simple preferences but talk about the elements that can be used to communicate effectively to the consumer. Advertisers and marketers need to know the mental map that the consumer uses in relating to his/her world. These entertainment preferences highlight that map.

Music is at the core of the spirit of Hispanic culture

The HOT study found that Latin music in general is preferred by Hispanics (77%), while non-Hispanics are more likely to have as their top preference Rock (40%) and Country Western (34%). When looking at Hispanic Latin music preferences, the distribution not only reflects the relative dominance of Hispanic subgroups in the U.S., but also shows the increased popularity of specific genres.



“Música ranchera” occupies the first place and indicates the prevalence of Mexicans among US Hispanics. The popularity of “Salsa” and “Cumbia”, however, is disproportionate to the actual number of Caribbean Hispanics which highlights the “pan-Americanization” of Latin music. Increasingly Mexicans listen to Caribbean rhythms and Caribbeans listen to Mexican music. This crossing of national boundaries points to a trend of a growing Latin taste as opposed to a Mexican or Cuban or Puerto Rican taste. U.S.-based Hispanic media have facilitated this musical migration.

Marketing Trends and Implications

Trends

- The Spanish language is a pervasive force in the US Hispanic market and it has its own momentum
- The predominance of Spanish language media choices despite greater availability of English language content highlights how the Spanish language is meaningful beyond words and conveys cultural emotion which consumers appreciate
- Television channel evaluations reflect a profound cultural appreciation for communications that are culturally compatible
- Sports entertainment selection trends reflect not only taste differences but point to values and the extent to which social groups become reinforced
- Music preferences reveal a tendency towards pan-Hispanic tastes that go beyond borders and countries of origin

Implications

- The use of the Spanish language in marketing and advertising is unlikely to be a passing fad. As the Hispanic market grows it reinforces its identity and emotional connection with the language and culture. Also, continued immigration is likely to reinforce the importance of the Spanish language in the United States. Marketers are advised to consider the Spanish language as an important cultural bonding mechanism with Hispanic consumers.
- Entertainment tastes differ between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. Cultural values reflected in the media that Hispanics choose for entertainment seem to be the key to the appeal of those media. Marketers ought to carefully listen to those values to establish the long lasting relationships that are required for building brands and loyal consumers. Hispanics are not evolving into non-Hispanics. Hispanics are increasingly “here to stay” with a unique cultural identity.
- People who are exposed to the same entertainment have more to talk about and consequently have more influence on each other. Brands can increase their appeal by utilizing marketing strategies that support word-of-mouth.
- Entertainment trends in the US Hispanic market point to a Hispanic universalism, or pan-Latin tastes and appeals. Music represents an example of how media consumption that used to be “country of origin” specific, now has wider appeal. Increasingly marketers will be able to direct their messages and products to a population that shares more common orientations, tastes, and preferences.