

“I believe but I do not follow!”: Experience of deviant consumption in
context of religion

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Abstract

While deviant consumption is a well-studied subject in consumer research, what happens when consumers deviate from the prescriptions of their religion's doctrines is not understood despite religion playing a significant role in lives of believers. We use edgework as an enabling lens to understand deviant consumption in the context of religion. Using in-depth long interviews, we find that while consumers are engaging in edgework by navigating on the boundaries of religious dogmas, they also attempt to expand the boundaries of religious prescriptions themselves. Navigating at the edge, consumers engage in de-norming of the institution, i.e., separating the value of the religion from the dogma, and rationalization of choices, i.e., using facts and logical explanation to explain the rationale behind their choices. Consumers also simultaneously engage in expanding the boundaries of acceptable behavior according to their religious prescriptions for them. For this they borrow beliefs and learnings from other religions and cultures.

Keywords: *Deviant consumption; Religion; Edgework*

Track: Consumer Behaviour