

Grünhagen, Marko, Grove, Stephen J. and Gentry, James W. (2003)

“The Dynamics of Store Hour Changes and Consumption Behavior: Results of a Longitudinal Study of Consumer Attitudes toward Saturday Shopping in Germany”

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Abstract

Americans who travel internationally are often shocked to discover retail outlets closed during weekends and evening hours in cities such as Paris, Rome and Berlin. Based on the implicit assumption that demand clearly exists, retailers at various locations throughout the globe have increased their hours of operation. While political debate regarding a variety of issues (costs, the rights of labor, religion, etc.) often rages, there has been an implicit assumption that latent demand for longer hours of operations exists. This study investigates through a longitudinal examination consumer perceptions of Saturday shopping in a country where such an activity was previously restricted. Specifically, we study perceptions of Saturday shopping among a sample of German college students who were raised with limited Saturday shopping hours. Data were gathered in 1996 – the year German legislation allowed expanded hours for retailers – and again in 1999, and comparisons are made. Strong differences are found between consumer attitudes towards Saturday shopping at the time of expansion and three years later, indicating the need for differentiating retail strategies in Germany and in other parts of the world that may soon be providing similar expanded retail access.