



A Cultural Icon

The Importance Of Radio For Hispanics

Radio is part of everyday life in Latin America, and it is part of the daily routine of Latinos in the United States. Visit almost any public park in most metro areas in the U.S., and you will find families barbecuing, dancing, and enjoying their day, with a radio as the center of attention. And this tradition of radio enjoyment is not new.

In most Latin American countries, and particularly in rural areas, radio is the most local of all media and has served traditionally as an interactive town crier (and as a precursor of what the Internet has become). In smaller localities, the radio announcer publicizes jobs, tells of lost animals and children, and spreads the word about local events. The local radio station also hosts community members in discussion forums. And, of course, stations also devote many hours to music, humor, and news. Hispanic radio in the U.S. has replicated many of those features and continues to be the most relevant medium for mass reach.

The traditions we brought from Latin America are still alive and well here in the United States. At the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication at Florida State University, in collaboration with DMS Insights, we have collected data on media exposure and media attitudes over the past four years. I will share some statistics regarding radio use and attitudes toward radio among U.S. Hispanics, as well as others who responded to our online surveys. (We collected approximately 500 interviews nationally with each of the following: Hispanics who prefer English, Hispanics who prefer Spanish, Asians, African Americans, and non-Hispanic whites, for a total of approximately 2,500 completed questionnaires.)

The data reported here — self-reported by people who are online — has not been published before. Attention should be paid to the relative importance of radio attitudes and exposure across cultural groups, not the absolute values in themselves.

When asked to agree or disagree on a 0-5 point scale with the statement “My radio (AM/FM) is always on while I drive,” online Hispanics who prefer to communicate in English and non-Hispanic whites are the most likely to agree (rating it 4 or 5, see Figure 1).

Figure 1

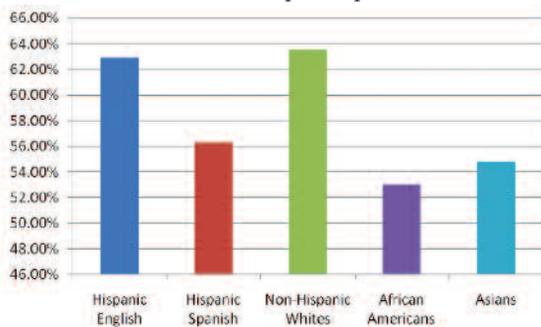


Figure 2

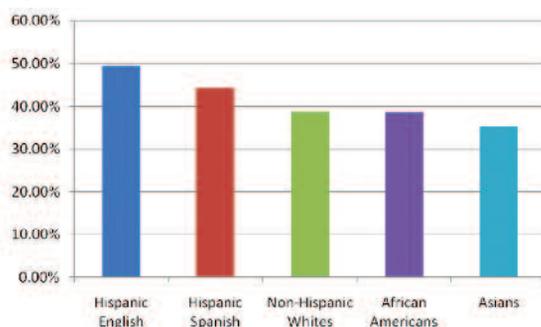


Figure 3

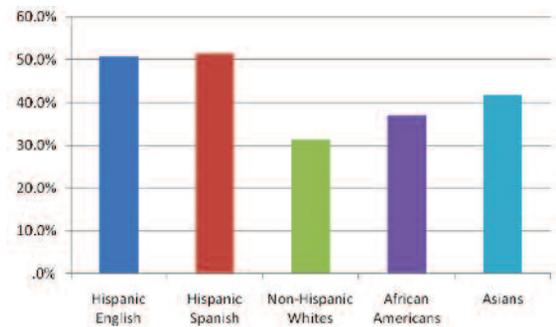
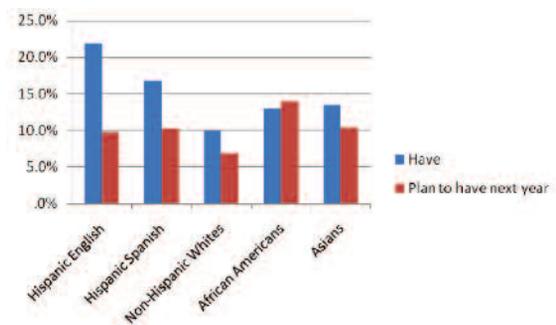


Figure 4



Asked to agree or disagree on the same scale with the statement “Radio listening is an important part of my daily routine,” both Hispanics who prefer to communicate in English and those who prefer Spanish are most likely to agree (4 or 5) that radio is important in their lives (see Figure 2).

Almost 50 percent of online Hispanics indicated they listen to the radio online at least twice a week, the most among any of the groups (see Figure 3).

Hispanic respondents were also the most likely to have satellite radio (see Figure 4).

These findings confirm that radio is an important medium across ethnic lines, but that Hispanics consider it most central to their lifestyle. Further, Hispanics are innovators in leading others in the online and satellite radio spheres.

While Hispanics are listening to both Spanish- and English-language radio, radio listening is a core activity and an important complement to the daily routine. Radio stations should increasingly explore ways to offer their programming online to keep its loyal audience over time.

Additionally, advertisers should pay attention to the relational importance radio has for Latinos in the U.S. Radio advertising should not be television or print adapted to radio, but should be crafted for the medium. **INK**

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Source: Multicultural Marketing Study 2007 of the Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication at FSU and DMS Insights