Acculturation and Its Relation to Asian-Indian Immigrants’ Perceptions of Advertisements

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Abstract

This study attempts to determine whether the perceptions of Asian-Indian immigrants in the U.S. towards Indian print versus American print advertisements vary within and across stages of acculturation. Our results show that low and moderate acculturated respondents had a greater preference for Indian advertisements while high acculturated Asian-Indians had a greater preference for American advertisements. Our findings imply that an understanding of the effect of acculturation could aid in planning and executing appropriate advertising programs in order to effectively cater to specific subsegments of the immigrant market.

Introduction

The United States of America (U.S.) is experiencing a growing presence of immigrants especially coming from Latin America and Asia (Bennett 1992; Garcia and Montgomery 1991). Immigrants who come to the U.S. go through the acculturation process. In a broad sense acculturation is a social process by which social and cultural changes occur when people from different cultures come in direct contact with each other. From a consumer behavior perspective, acculturation may be thought of as a process by which an individual raised in one culture acquires through first hand experience the consumption related values, behavior, and customs of a foreign country (Schiffman, Dillon and Ngumah 1981). Several studies on relationships between acculturation and selected buying and consumption patterns and media usage of ethnic consumers have appeared in the literature (e.g., Choe 1987; Faber, O’Guinn and McCarthy 1987; Kim 1978; Lee and Tse 1994; O’Guinn and Meyer 1983/84; O’Guinn and Faber 1986; Segal and Sosa 1983; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983). Most of these studies (with the exception of the Wallendorf and Reilly’s study) have found that ethnic consumers are not a homogeneous group. Their consumption and buying patterns and media usage patterns vary (within the ethnic groups) depending upon their levels of acculturation. The research on acculturation also indicates that the U.S. is not a melting pot but rather consists of a multicultural society.

A relatively new group of immigrants -- Asian-Indian - originally coming from India was selected for this study. This group was chosen because of their rapid growth and their favorable socio-economic characteris-

tics which provide an opportunity for marketers. In the 1990s, the number of Asian-Indians is expected to grow by 30 percent or more (Sterba 1987). The U.S. census data shows the number of Asian Indians in the U.S. have more than doubled, increasing from 361,531 in the 1980 census to 815,447 in the 1990 census (The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1994). Under the U.S. Immigration Laws of 1965 only those Asian-Indians with professional degrees with their families were allowed to enter the U.S. Because of this stipulation, a large percentage of Asian-Indians are professionals -- doctors, engineers, scientists, and students seeking professional degrees (Shribman 1981; Doshi 1975) and are more highly paid than those born in the U.S. (Dasgupta 1989; Leonard-Spark, Saran and Ginsberg 1980; Saran 1977) and other groups of immigrants (Robey 1988).

The previous studies of acculturation have demonstrated the importance of acculturation on immigrants' consumption and buying behavior and media usage however, there is little research on immigrants' perceptions of advertising from an acculturative perspective. Hence, the specific objective of this study was to determine whether the perceptions of Asian-Indian immigrants towards Indian print advertisements versus American print advertisements of the same product class varied within and across stages of acculturation. Since immigrants who go through an acculturation process are faced which two or more cultures, differences and similarities in their perceptions of advertisements may be unavoidable. For this reason, a study of effect of acculturation on advertising perceptions becomes important for planning and executing successful advertis-
ing programs for immigrant markets.

Background

Culture and Advertising

Advertising is regarded as a form of social communication which reflects the cultural values of a society. A society's culture consists of its language, traditions, customs, shared meanings, and institution (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983). Cultural values, norms, and characteristics are embedded in advertisements such that the audience can find similarity between themselves and the subjects in the advertisements (Hong, Muderrissoglu and Zinkhan 1987; Hornik 1980; McCracken 1986; Mueller 1987). A consumer's feelings, thinking, values, attitudes, and perceptions are influenced by the culture in which he is raised (Hallowell 1972). Different nations have different cultural values. This diversity in culture could affect how immigrant consumers in the U.S. perceive and accept advertising messages. Since advertisements and other marketing communications must convey their message quickly, the images used in advertisements must be readily identifiable with a given culture (Fouke 1989). To illustrate, Citibanks' advertisement aimed at Asian-Americans used a dragon to portray celebration rather than corks from champagne bottles which were considered inappropriate (Miller 1991). The word "Chevy" was not recognized by first-generation Koreans in the advertisements aimed at them, so it was translated to read "Its a Chevrolet" (Marketing News 1988).

Stages of Acculturation

Penaloza (1994) has proposed a model of consumer acculturation which consists of: (i) Antecedent Variables; (ii) Consumer Acculturation Agents; (iii) Consumer Acculturation Processes; and (iv) Consumer Acculturation Outcome Dimensions. This last phase of the model classifies immigrants falling into either of the three groups: (i) "Assimilate Culture of Origin" this group of immigrants have mingled or assimilated into the U.S. culture; (ii) "Maintain Culture of Immigration" this group of immigrants have maintained their original culture; and (iii) "Express Hybrid Culture" this group of immigrants have maintained a combination of two cultures.

Gupta's (1975) study of acculturation on the food habits of first generation Asian-Indian immigrants in the U.S. indicated that these immigrants could be grouped into three levels of acculturation. The traditional stage corresponded to least acculturated Asian-Indians whose food habits and cooking style was very much Indian. The second stage -- the transitional stage corresponded to moderate acculturated Asian-Indians whose food habits were a mixture of Indian and American. The Westernized stage corresponded to high acculturated Asian-Indians whose food habits were more Americanized.

Segal and Sosa (1983) found that Hispanic accultura
tion can be broken down into three levels. The low
culturated Hispanics who associated with Hispanic
culture and the Spanish language. The second level
consisted of bilingual and bicultural Hispanics and their
consumption and media habits were a mixture of
Spanish as well as mainstream Anglo-Americans. The
high acculturated Hispanics' buying and media habits
resembled those of mainstream Americans.

Sodowsky and Carey (1988) in their study found that
three distinct groups of Asian-Indian immigrants
emerged. The first group which was the largest (65%)
calling itself "mostly or very Asian Indian" were of
the opinion that Indians should strictly adhere to their
cultural norms, values, and customs, religion, and rituals.
A second Asian-Indian group appeared to be bicultural
(21%) and called itself "Indo-American or Asian Ameri
can." This group followed an equal mixture of Indian
and American styles of behavior. The third group (7%)
considered itself to be "mostly or very American" and
were Americanized in their behavior.

Based on the gaps identified in the consumer accul
turation research, the present study attempts to test the
following hypotheses:

H1: There are significant differences in the perceptions of Asian-Indian consumers for the Indian print magazine advertisements versus the American print magazine advertisements within the low and the high stages of the acculturation process.

H2: There are no significant differences in the perceptions of Asian-Indian consumers for the Indian print magazine advertisements versus the American print magazine advertisements in the moderate stage of the acculturation process.

H3: There are significant differences in the perceptions of Asian-Indian consumers for the Indian print magazine advertisements versus the American print magazine advertisements across the three stages of the acculturation process.

Methodology

Sample and Print Advertisements

A sample of first-generation Asian-Indians (18 years
and older) from the three largest cities of western New
York: Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse was considered.
A total of 1118 research instruments were administered
to subjects who agreed to participate and from these 929
(83%) usable responses were obtained. Of these 929
respondents 52 percent were males and 48 percent were
females. The majority of Asian-Indian males and females in this study were married (79%); had Indian spouses (95%); were under the age of fifty (89%); were well-educated (Bachelors/Graduate from India 79%; Graduate/ Other in the U.S. 86%); were professionals (63%); were well-to-do (67% - annual family income over $40,000); were Hindus (82%, 83% of India's population follow the religion of Hinduism according to Bernardi, Marrongelli and Szentgyorgyi 1984); and were from urban areas of India (91%). The demographic characteristics of Asian-Indians sampled is consistent with those of earlier reports (e.g., Dasgupta 1989; Leonard-Spark, Saran and Ginsberg 1980; Mehta and Belk 1991; Robey 1988; Saran 1985; Shribman 1981; Sadowsky and Carey 1988).

Color magazine advertisements were chosen for the study because of three reasons. First the contents of advertisements could be changed in the test advertisements. Second color advertisements are currently widely used in Asian-Indian magazines, and therefore they were easy to obtain also. Lastly they could be easily administered during the data collection of this study. After reviewing a number of Indian and American magazines six Indian magazine advertisements of consumer products and six corresponding American advertisements of the same products were identified as those having the most cultural differences between the Indian and the American culture. These advertisements were modified to make the Indian magazine and the American magazine advertisements closely match each other in terms of visual and verbal content as well as size. For example, the full page Indian advertisement highlighted the Asian-Indian female's face and the upper part of her body. The American shampoo advertisement also focused on the Anglo-American female model and the upper part of her body. The generic pink color shampoo bottle (product) appeared in both the Indian and the American advertisements at similar locations. In the Indian suit advertisement an Indian looking couple was shown watching a typical Indian dance. In the American suit advertisement an Anglo-American couple was shown drinking in a bar. In all of the four advertisements, the copy was sparse. The products were shown without any brand names so that prior brand knowledge would not influence respondents' perceptions of advertisements.

Based on pretest results, from the six pairs of advertisements, the following two pairs were selected for the final study: (i) the American and Indian shampoo advertisements and (ii) the American and Indian man's suit advertisements. A majority of the Asian-Indians who took part in the pretest selected the pairs of shampoo and suit advertisements as those that depicted the most cultural differences between India and the U.S. in terms of clothes, jewelry, the physical features of the models, background of the advertisements, and the acts and tasks performed by the models. The manner in which the four selected advertisements (i.e. a pair of each of the two products) were combined resulted in a total of twelve permutations of two advertisements each. These twelve treatment designs consisting of twelve different permutations of the four selected advertisements taken two at a time were shown to the respondents in the final study.

Measures

The Asian-Indians' perceptions of print advertisements were operationalized through attitude towards the advertisement (Aad), a commonly used affective variable indicating consumers' favorable or unfavorable feelings towards the advertisement. Several researchers have proposed that Aad is an important indicator of advertising effectiveness, on brand attitude and purchase intention (e.g., Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch 1983; MacKenzie Lutz and Belch 1986; Mitchell and Olson 1981; Shimp 1981). The scale to measure Aad consisting of seven bipolar adjectives (e.g., beautiful, ugly; good, bad; like, dislike; to mention a few) was obtained from Barban (1969) and Mitchell and Olson (1981) studies. Each of the seven items was measured on a 7-point scale anchored by "a most favorable reaction" (7) and "a most unfavorable reaction" (1). The mean of these seven items was used as the measure of the individual respondent's Aad.

The literature review on acculturation indicates that as yet no standardized measure of levels of acculturation has been developed. Acculturation in this study was measured by using the behavioral scale of acculturation developed by Szapocznik, et al. (1978). This scale was selected for several reasons: (i) it was short and simple to administer; (ii) it was particularly developed for first-generation immigrants; (iii) Szapocznik et al. found the scale to be reliable and a valid measure for testing the three hypotheses of their study; and (iv) Szapocznik, et al. have stated that the validity of the scale could be maintained while deleting up to five questions out of the twenty four questions listed in their original scale. Based on the pretest, the Szapocznik scale used in this study was modified by deleting four situation specific questions. The scale consisted of a 5-point Likert scale (Indian all the time = 1, Indian most of the time = 2, both Indian and American = 3, American most of the time = 4, and American all the time = 5) and the respondents were asked to report their preferences related to language, food, music, recreational and social activities, and gestures used. The mean of the twenty acculturation questions was considered as a measure of the individual respondent's level of acculturation. For the acculturation scale, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.96 and for the Aad scale it was 0.97. The correlation coefficients for both the scales were in the expected directions and significant at 0.001 level.
Since there does not appear any standardized method in literature to define or assign levels of acculturation, the three levels of acculturation in this study were obtained by dividing the continuous range of acculturation scores of Asian-Indian respondents into three groups: (i) low acculturation stage, (ii) moderate acculturation stage, and (iii) high acculturation stage.

Two alternative ways for determining cutoff points on the continuous range of acculturation score values to obtain three discrete stages of acculturation were considered: (i) equal division of the overall sample's observed range of acculturation scores; (ii) an arbitrary division of the theoretical range of the acculturation scores. Subsequent statistical analyses were separately conducted based on each one of the above two ways of determining the acculturation stages and there were only minor differences in the results obtained. The first method of grouping based upon equal division of the observed range of the acculturation scores was used for reporting results for this study. The reason for preferring this first manner of grouping slightly above the second was because it was felt that it provided a more natural way of dividing the sample into three stages of acculturation.

The observed acculturation scores for the entire sample ranged from a minimum value of 1.1 to a maximum value of 5.0. This range of (3.9 units) was divided into three equal divisions of 1.3 units to correspond to the three stages of acculturation. The three acculturation groupings obtained in this manner were classified as follows: (i) respondents with acculturation scores of less than or equal to 2.400 were scores ranging from 2.401 to 3.700 were considered to be in the moderate acculturation stage; and (iii) those with acculturation scores greater than 3.700 were considered to be in the high acculturation stage. In the present study, based on Penaloza's (1994) model and Sodowsky and Carey's (1988) study, the assumption is that the Asian-Indians in the low acculturation stage have retained their cultural values. The Asian-Indians in the moderate stage of the acculturation have a mixture of Indian plus the American values and the Asian-Indians in the high acculturated stage have adopted the American cultural values.

Data Collection

The data was collected by attending social gatherings of Asian-Indian Associations in three metropolitan cities of western New York -- Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse. The author and her assistants requested the Asian-Indians present at these get-togethers to participate in a research project. Those who agreed were told to fill out the questionnaires on an individual basis and not to discuss the research with others. The research instrument was given to the respondents in a closed manila package. To make sure that the respondents would not find out the real purpose of this study, they were instructed to answer the questionnaires in a controlled fashion. Three smaller envelopes numbered 1, 2, 3 were enclosed inside the big manila package with instructions to open them in order specified in the questionnaires. The respondents were first instructed to answer the questions pertaining to acculturation. Then they were asked to see the first advertisement that appeared in the research design. After seeing the advertisement, they were requested to fill out the questionnaire measuring the Aad for the first advertisement. Next they were told to see the second advertisement appearing in that research design and were then instructed to answer the questionnaire measuring the Aad for the second advertisement. Lastly, they were asked to provide their demographic information such as their sex, marital status, level of education (in India, U.S.), their annual family income.

In all of the social events chairs were set and in some cases there were tables set also for the respondents. The completed research instrument was collected either by the researcher or her assistants. Initial data analysis indicated that there were no distinct differences in the responses to the research instrument of Asian-Indians from the three different metropolitan areas. Therefore, data collected from three cities were combined to analyze the research questions.

Questionnaires given to the Asian-Indian respondents were in English and the test advertisements selected were also in English. Because India was under the British rule for nearly 200 years, English is still one of the official languages used in India to conduct official business and commercial transactions (Allchin 1982). Asian-Indian immigrants coming to the U.S. are proficient in both spoken and written English language (Dasgupta 1989; Mehta and Belk 1991; Robey 1988). The North American editions of Indian magazines and newspapers (e.g., India Today, Stardust, India Abroad and India News) are in English and the advertisements appear in them in English. Also, the brochures and newsletters announcing various social, cultural, and religious events of the Indian associations are in English.

Analyses

Data Set Tests

Before testing the hypotheses of this study, T-test was undertaken to examine the effect of the order of presentation of advertisements, and the respondents' gender effect. ANOVA was used to examine the presence of advertisement ethnicity effect, and product effect. The T-test results indicated that there was no significant differences at p<.05 between the mean Aad of male and female respondents across the three stages of accultura-
Table 1
ANOVA Results Testing the Ethnicity & Product Effects for Each One of the Three Stages of Acculturation Considering All Pairs of Advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F Statistic</th>
<th>Significance of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>141.028</td>
<td>113.239</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>273.383</td>
<td>219.239</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>5.534</td>
<td>4.443</td>
<td>.036*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Way Interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity, Product</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>15.149</td>
<td>10.487</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>20.598</td>
<td>14.258</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>10.024</td>
<td>6.939</td>
<td>.009*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Way Interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity, Product</td>
<td>3.311</td>
<td>2.292</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Effects</td>
<td>231.136</td>
<td>162.826</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>441.991</td>
<td>311.366</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>19.350</td>
<td>13.631</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Way Interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product, Ethnicity</td>
<td>2.473</td>
<td>1.742</td>
<td>.188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates Significance of F at p<.05

Low Acculturation = Acculturation score < 2.400
Moderate Acculturation = Acculturation score 2.401 to 3.700
High Acculturation = Acculturation score > 3.700

The T-test results also indicate that there were no significant differences in the Aad of males and females relative to the order of presentation effect i.e., when they saw the same advertisement in a different order of appearance but paired with a given second advertisement and when they saw a given advertisement paired with a different second advertisement. Therefore the data from males and females was pooled together for testing the hypotheses of this study.

The frequency distributions and the percentages of responses for the twelve advertisement treatment designs seen by the overall sample and the two subgroups in the sample -- males and females -- indicate that there was a fairly even distribution of the advertisement treatment designs for the overall sample and for the subgroups of males and females across the three stages of the acculturation process. The fairly even distribution of responses over the designs and over the four advertisements was obtained by controlling the treatment designs distributed during the administration of the research instrument to respondents.

ANOVA was used to test simultaneously the impact of product effect (shampoo and suit) and ethnicity effect (Indian or American) on the Aad of low, moderate, and high acculturated respondents. The results (see Table 1) indicate the presence of main effects of ethnicity and of product, both significant at p<.05 for all the three stages of acculturation. However, the effect of the ethnicity of the advertisement is stronger than the product effect in each case. The two-way interaction effect between ethnicity and product was not significant at p<.05 for any of the three stages of acculturation.

Hypotheses Testing and Findings

The results of ANOVA shown in Table 2 allow us to test hypothesis #1 which considers the differences in the Aad of Asian-Indian immigrants toward the Indian magazine versus the American magazine advertisements within the low and the high stages of acculturation. The results from Table 2 indicate that significant differences at p<.05 exist between the Aad of low acculturated
Table 2
ANNOVA Results of Aad for Asian-Indian Respondents
Within Each One of the Three Stages of the Acculturation Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F Statistic</th>
<th>Significance of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad. Ethnicity Main Effect For Shampoo Ad.</td>
<td>139.072</td>
<td>117.108</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad. Ethnicity Main Effect For Suit Ad.</td>
<td>134.507</td>
<td>103.519</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad. Ethnicity Main Effect For Shampoo Ad.</td>
<td>20.393</td>
<td>14.139</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad. Ethnicity Main Effect For Suit Ad.</td>
<td>3.515</td>
<td>2.430</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad. Ethnicity Main Effect For Shampoo Ad.</td>
<td>183.277</td>
<td>126.240</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ad. Ethnicity Main Effect For Suit Ad.</td>
<td>261.187</td>
<td>188.046</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates F Statistic Significant at p<.05.
  Low Acculturation = Acculturation score < 2.400
  Moderate Acculturation = Acculturation score 2.401 to 3.700
  High Acculturation = Acculturation score > 3.700

Asian-Indians with regard to the Indian and the American shampoo and suit advertisements. The main effect of ethnicity of the advertisement was significant at p<.05 both for the shampoo advertisements and for the suit advertisements. From Table 2 we also find significant differences at p<.05 for the Aad of high acculturated Asian-Indians with respect to the Indian and the American advertisements. The main effect of ethnicity on Aad for high acculturated Asian-Indians was significant at p<.05 both for the shampoo and the suit advertisements.

The result of hypothesis #2 which assumes that the Asian-Indian immigrants in the moderate stage of the acculturation process have an equally favorable Aad for both Indian magazine as well as American magazine advertisements are presented in Table 2. From the table it can be observed that the moderate acculturated Asian-Indian respondents did not have an equally favorable Aad towards Indian and American advertisements as hypothesized. The main effect of ethnicity on Aad for moderate acculturated Asian-Indians was significant at p<.05 for the shampoo advertisement but not for the suit advertisement.

In order to test the direction of the preference, Table 3 presents the results of the ONEWAY option for the analysis of variance. As seen in Table 3 low acculturated Asian-Indian respondents preferred both the Indian shampoo and suit advertisements (mean Aad for shampoo = 5.736 and suit = 5.476) more than the American shampoo and suit advertisements (mean Aad for shampoo = 4.153 and for suit = 3.976). The same table also indicates that the moderate acculturated respondents preferred the Indian shampoo advertisement more (mean Aad = 5.064) than the American shampoo advertisement (mean Aad = 4.670). Although the mean Aad (4.751) for the Indian suit advertisement was greater than the mean Aad (4.584) for the American suit advertisement, the difference was not statistically significant at p<.05. The results of Table 3 show that the high acculturated Asian-Indians preferred the American shampoo (mean Aad = 5.632) as well as the American suit advertisement (mean Aad = 5.341) more than the Indian shampoo (mean Aad = 3.614) and the Indian suit (mean Aad = 2.997) advertisements.

Table 4 presents the results of the ONEWAY analysis of variance used for testing hypothesis #3 which assumes that the preferences of Asian-Indians for Indian magazine and American magazine advertisements vary across the three stages of acculturation. The results of the analysis in Table 4 were all significant at the p<.05 level. The results indicate that the low acculturated Asian-Indian subjects had a more favorable Aad for both the Indian advertisements (mean Aad for shampoo
Table 3
ONEWAY Analysis of Variance Results of Aad for Asian-Indian Respondents Within Each One of the Three Stages of the Acculturation Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Aad Shampoo</th>
<th>Std. Dev. Shampoo</th>
<th>Mean Aad Suit</th>
<th>Std. Dev. Shampoo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>5.736*</td>
<td>.967</td>
<td>5.476*</td>
<td>1.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>4.153</td>
<td>1.215</td>
<td>3.976</td>
<td>1.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>5.064*</td>
<td>1.218</td>
<td>4.751</td>
<td>1.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>4.670</td>
<td>1.185</td>
<td>4.584</td>
<td>1.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Acculturation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>3.632*</td>
<td>1.246</td>
<td>2.996*</td>
<td>1.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>5.324</td>
<td>1.160</td>
<td>5.341</td>
<td>1.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates results significant at p<.05.

Low Acculturation = Acculturation score < 2.400
Moderate Acculturation = Acculturation score 2.401 to 3.700
High Acculturation = Acculturation score > 3.701

= 5.736 and suit = 5.476) than did moderate acculturated Asian-Indians (mean Aad for shampoo = 5.064 and suit = 4.751). The low acculturated Asian-Indians had a less favorable Aad for both the American advertisements (mean Aad for shampoo = 4.153 and suit = 3.976) than did Asian-Indian respondents in the moderate stage of the acculturation process (mean Aad for shampoo = 4.699 and suit = 4.584).

The respondents in the moderate stage of the acculturation process had a more favorable Aad for both the Indian advertisements (mean Aad for shampoo = 5.064 and suit = 4.751) than did Asian-Indians in the high acculturation stage (mean Aad for shampoo = 3.614 and suit = 2.996). Asian-Indians in the moderate stage of the acculturation process had a less favorable Aad for both the American advertisements (mean Aad for shampoo = 4.669 and suit = 4.584) than did the Asian-Indians in the high acculturation stage who instead had a more favorable Aad for both the American advertisements (mean Aad for shampoo = 5.6324 and suit = 5.341). Schefe’s test for the Indian versus the American advertisements (for both the shampoo and the suit advertisements) show statistically significant differences at p<.05 in the group mean Aad across the three acculturation levels.

Discussion

This study makes an initial attempt to investigate the relationship between acculturation and Asian-Indians immigrants’ perceptions of advertisements. The results of this study should be considered as exploratory and caution must be exercised while interpreting the results of the study. The consumer goods (shampoo and man’s suit) advertisements chosen were such that they reflected the most cultural differences and brand names were not included for the products shown. Since there is no standardized method of assigning levels of acculturation available in literature, the respondents were grouped into three stages of acculturation based on a method which seemed to be appropriate in the author’s judgement.

A non-probability sample was taken since the data was collected during the social gatherings of several Indian associations and thus it is possible that the data collected in such an atmosphere could introduce bias. However, we believe the respondents who did choose to participate were straightforward and honest in their answers. Past researchers have collected data by attending the social and cultural events organized by India association (e.g., Fisher 1980) and have used Indian association’s membership list to locate the Asian-Indians in their studies (e.g., Dasgupta 1989; Mehta and
Table 4
ONeway Analysis of Variance for Aad of Asian-Indian Respondents Across the Three Stages of Acculturation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Accul.</th>
<th>Mean Aad Indian Shampoo</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Mean Aad American Shampoo</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Mean Aad Indian Suit</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Mean Aad American Suit</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5.736</td>
<td>0.967</td>
<td>4.153</td>
<td>1.215</td>
<td>5.476</td>
<td>1.096</td>
<td>3.976</td>
<td>1.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>5.064</td>
<td>1.218</td>
<td>4.470</td>
<td>1.185</td>
<td>4.751</td>
<td>1.245</td>
<td>4.584</td>
<td>1.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.614</td>
<td>1.248</td>
<td>5.633</td>
<td>1.160</td>
<td>2.996</td>
<td>1.299</td>
<td>5.341</td>
<td>1.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Low Acculturation = Acculturation score < 2.400
Moderate Acculturation = Acculturation score 2.401 to 3.700
High Acculturation = Acculturation score > 3.701
S.D. = Standard Deviation
All Group Means for Shampoo and Suit Advertisements Across Three Stages of Acculturation Significant at p<.05

Belk (1991; Sodowsky and Carey 1988). Thus the data collected for this study appears to be consistent with previous research on Asian-Indian immigrants.

Since the instrument was in English, the elderly, low acculturated Asian-Indians did not participate in the study. Given the demographic characteristics of Asian-Indians immigrants and the fact that most of them coming to the U.S. are proficient in English language, marketers would be more interested in this group of affluent younger Asian-Indian immigrants who can understand English. Insipde of the limitations of the study, the results provide useful information to marketers.

Our principal findings indicate: (i) that Asian-Indian immigrants sampled are not a monolithic group and (ii) the Aad of Asian-Indian immigrants for the Indian versus the American advertisement vary within and across the stages of acculturation. This variation may be explained by the fact that Asian-Indian immigrants in the U.S. go through an acculturation process.

Our findings that low acculturated Asian-Indian immigrants preferred Indian advertisements more than the American advertisements while the high acculturated respondents preferred American advertisement more than the Indian advertisements seem to indicate that the low acculturated Asian-Indian respondents have retained their Indian cultural values and their commitment to their cultural values are reflected in their Aad. On the other hand, the high acculturated Asian-Indians who have adapted to the cultural values of the U.S. perceived the stimuli in the American advertisements more favorably than those in the Indian advertisements. These findings support the contention of Penaloza's (1994) model where the Consumer Acculturation Outcome Dimensions are either "Assimilate Culture of Origin" or "Maintain Culture of Immigration." These results are also consistent with the earlier studies which report that the low acculturated ethnic consumers display the consumption and buying habits which are similar to their countries' values and the high acculturated individuals exhibit consumption and buying patterns which reflect the dominant cultural values (e.g., Choe 1987; Gupta 1975; Segal and Sosa 1983). Sodowsky and Carey (1988) in their study found a large percentage of Asian-Indians who identified with "mostly or very Asian Indian" consistently saying that Indians should strictly follow their cultural values, customs, religion, and rituals. Perhaps the low acculturated respondents in this study could be of the same opinion as Asian-Indian sampled in the Sodowsky and Carey's study and therefore they saw the Indian advertisements as reinforcement of their cultural values. According to Dasgupta (1989) and Mehta and Belk (1991) the two socioeconomic charac-
teristics of Asian-Indians -- higher educational level and income -- make them both better able to adapt to the U.S. and freer to retain distinct Indian identities which could have been the case for our respondents also.

In our study the high acculturated Asian-Indians preferred American advertisements more than Indian advertisements. It is possible that these individuals may be very flexible and may feel that it is in their own interest to adjust to the American cultural values. It is also likely that these individuals were to some extent westernized in their upbringing in India before migrating to the U.S. (since British influence is still prevalent in India). In Sodowsky and Carey's (1988) study a small percentage of Asian-Indians who considered themselves to be "mostly or very American" consistently chose not to maintain their national identity. This could be true in case of high acculturated Asian-Indians in our study and hence they preferred the American advertisements more than the Indian advertisements.

In our study we found that the moderate acculturated Asian-Indians' preferences lean towards Indian advertisements. This observation is not consistent with "Express Hybrid Culture" as proposed by Penalozza (1994) in her model of Consumer Acculturation Outcome Dimensions. Earlier researchers also found that moderately acculturated ethnic groups in their studies exhibit equal mixture of ethnic and American types of consumption behavior (e.g., Gupta 1975; Segal and Sosa 1983) and behavioral values (e.g., Sodowsky and Carey 1988). At this exploratory stage of our research study it is difficult to say why the moderate acculturated Asian-Indians of our study preferred Indian advertisements more than the American advertisements. However, we can offer some possible explanation based on the past research (e.g., Gupta 1975; Mehta and Belk 1991; Sodowsky and Carey 1988). These studies found that the bicultural Asian-Indians wore American dress especially women at work and ate American food when they socialized with Americans. Like other immigrant groups they celebrated traditional American holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas due to social pressure. It is possible that the moderate acculturated Asian-Indians in our sample may not have felt necessary to comply with American ways as far as their perceptions toward advertisements were concerned. Hence they were more receptive to Indian advertisements than to American advertisements.

The foregoing discussion as well as the results of this study imply to marketers and advertisers that because immigrants go through the process of acculturation, an understanding of the effect of acculturation could aid in planning and executing appropriate advertising programs to reach the specific subsegments of the immigrant market and that acculturation is a useful market segmentation variable to communicate effectively with an immigrant group. The U.S. marketers use different variables to segment consumer markets: for example, geographic, demographic, psychographic characteristics, or consumer responses. Then they examine whether these customer segments depict different needs or product responses. Based on the differences they develop separate marketing strategies to cater effectively to each of these subsegments (Kotler 1994). Similarly, considering an immigrant market from an acculturative strategy would enable marketers and advertisers to break the immigrant market into various subsegments depending upon the extent of acculturation. Such a strategy creates an opportunity for marketers and advertisers to assess the dynamics of differences in immigrants' attitudes and value systems. This responsiveness in turn would help them develop appropriate culturally attuned advertising strategies to cater effectively to the needs of specific subsegments of the immigrant market. Of course, marketers will have to assess objectively the costs and benefits and usefulness of such an approach.

The findings of this study indicate that marketers can reach low acculturated and moderate acculturated Asian-Indian immigrants more effectively with Indian advertisements depicting Indian cultural values than with American advertisements. Although, we may consider the Asian-Indian market too small to contend with, nevertheless, this market is growing very rapidly and has very favorable socio-economic characteristics. In this study there was a greater proportion of low (25%) and moderate (55%) acculturated Asian-Indians compared to the high (20%) acculturated Asian-Indians. The major inflow of Asian-Indians into the U.S. has occurred in the last thirty years or so. Indian culture is constantly being reinforced in this ethnic group by new immigrants coming from India. The majority of Asian-Indians do not appear to have severed ties with their home country. As per the literature (e.g., Fouke 1989; Hong, Muderrisoglu and Zinkhan 1987; McCracken 1986) since advertising reinforces the cultural values of a society it appears that the low as well as the moderate acculturated Asian-Indians saw their country's cultural values being depicted in the Indian advertisements. As one of the successful requirements for segmentation strategy, marketers and advertisers could reach the low and the moderate acculturated Asian-Indians through Indian print media already available and used by Asian-Indians in the U.S. (e.g., India Abroad, India News, India Today, Stardust, the newsletters of several Indian Associations).

Conclusion

At this exploratory stage of our study we have offered possible justification for marketers and advertisers for using acculturation as an important variable while developing an advertising strategy to communicate
effectively with the Asian-Indian immigrants. Based on our findings we suggest that low and moderate acculturated Asian-Indian consumers can be reached more effectively by advertisements that are reflective of Indian culture. Robey (1988) has pointed out that Asian-Indians despite their favorable growth rate and demographics have been virtually ignored by marketers. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide marketers some useful information regarding this new immigrant group.

We believe that acculturation is a useful segmentation variable for an immigrant market because of its ability to help marketers and advertisers understand the dynamics of cultural differences within that immigrant group. Such an understanding would lead to improved ethnic advertising strategy. Finally, the results of this study together with the previous research tells us that the U.S. is not a melting pot of different cultures but rather a multicultural society where immigrants become Americans but at the same time retain a strong sense of cultural identity also. This growing trend of multiculturalism should be recognized in order to plan and execute appropriate culturally attuned advertisements to effectively reach the various subsegments of immigrant populations.

Suggestions For Future Research

The interpretation of the study's results is limited to the Asian-Indian population sampled in the three cities of western New York. A similar study can be conducted for Asian-Indian immigrants residing in other parts of the U.S. Such future research endeavors would provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between acculturation and Aad of Asian-Indian immigrants. Being an initial attempt, this study considered one group of immigrants -- Asian-Indians. It would be of interest to consider other ethnic groups in the U.S. such as, Mexican-Americans, Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese, etc. and study their responses to advertisements from an acculturation perspective. Two common consumer goods namely shampoo and a man's suit were used in the study. Future research should investigate the impact of acculturation on both ethnicity and product on a wide variety of products appearing in advertisements. Other media besides print should also be investigated. In this study the brand names were not shown. In a real situation, the brand names of the products being advertised will be included. Showing the real brand names in future studies would allow marketers to investigate and understand the effectiveness of Aad on brand attitudes and purchase intention.

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###References###


