Exploring the Impact of Culture and Acculturation on Consumer Purchase Decisions: Toward a Microcultural Perspective

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Executive Summary

This paper presents a review of the relationship between culture, specifically what has been termed ethnicity, and its impact on consumer purchase decisions. The role acculturative processes play in the adaptation of immigrants and other non-mainstream citizens to the dominant U.S. consumer environment is also presented. Consumer acculturation is a socialization process in which an immigrant, or marginalized consumer learns the behaviors, attitudes and values of a culture that are different from those of their culture of origin (Lee 1988). Ethnic groups are "…any group which is defined or set off by race, religion, or national origin, or some combination of these categories," (Gordon, 1964, p.27). Ethnic groups as defined above are not dependent on immigration status. Indeed, ethnic groups exist independent of the immigration phenomenon as in the case of Native American people whose territory was subsumed generations ago. Native Americans continue to occupy socially recognized designations as members of ethnic groups and continue to acculturate to the mainstream, dominant American culture. Similarly, African-Americans and common language microcultures occupy ethnic categories and utilize acculturation strategies despite a long, rich and complicated history within the United States. Furthermore, historically acculturation has been primarily depicted as a one-way process where the microculture adopts the dominant culture's norms without a corresponding influence. This paper seeks to explicate the impact of intra-national cultural differences within the specific context of the United States on consumption-oriented behavior. From a managerial perspective, many companies are discovering that success depends on utilizing opportunities to meet the needs of previously ignored microcultural groups. Marketers, in order to more effectively reach their target markets, must have an understanding of how intra-national cultures impact product-specific purchases by consumers. The terms subculture will be used to indicate the ethnic subgroup within the United States. The term microculture will be used to indicate smaller segments within subcultural groups. Both terms imply a theoretical relationship to a broader culture (Thompson and Troester 2002). The paper provides: 1) a historical perspective on the origins of research on ethnicity and consumer acculturation 2) a discussion of research trends and gaps in these areas 3) a suggested model for the study of microcultures and consumer acculturation and finally 4) propositions and suggestions for future research.

RESEARCH ON SUBCULTURES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

The international marketing literature contains numerous studies concerning behavioral differences in consumers across nations (e.g. Brass 1991; McCarty and Hattwick 1991; Hafstrom, Chae et al. 1992; Lynn, Zinkhan et al. 1993; Nakata and Sivakumar 1996: Chu, Spires et al. 1999; Steenkamp, Hofstede et al. 1999; Husted 2000). Although this research has made significant contributions toward understanding differences between nations, there appears to be a gap in the literature about subcultural differences within national boundaries, or intra-national differences (Andreasen 1990; Heslop, Papadopoulos et al. 1998). The purpose of this paper is to add to the understanding of the research on intra-national differences.

ETHNICITY AND ACCULTURATION IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR RESEARCH

Our review of the literature related to ethnicity and acculturation in consumer behavior research revealed several gaps:

GAP #	DESCRIPTION
1	Need for more intra-microcultural research
2	A lack of integrative research in relation to consumer acculturation studies
3	Additional research is needed on acculturation measurement scales
4	More research is needed on product category breadth in current academic research in microcultural, or ethnic, consumption

Following is a summary of the literature review and the gaps we identified.

Acculturation and Assimilation Research
Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) define acculturation as "…those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p.149).

While changes may occur in either the dominant culture, the subculture or both groups, according to Berry (1977), in practice acculturation tends to produce more substantial change in one of the groups.

Consumer Acculturation
Consumer acculturation is a subset of acculturation and socialization. While acculturation is more general, consumer acculturation is specific to the consumption process. Consumer acculturation can be seen as a socialization process in which an immigrant consumer learns the behaviors, attitudes and values of a culture that are different from their culture of origin (Lee 1988).

Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity
Although closely related, ethnicity and ethnic identity are two separate constructs. Ethnicity is an objective description and refers to a group with common national or religious backgrounds. In contrast, ethnic identity is more subjective (Cohen 1978; Hirschman 1981; Minor 1992) and is a self-designation which relays a person's commitment and strength of association to a particular group (Zaff, Blount, Phillips and Cohen 2002; Chung and Fischer 1999). The assumption of subjective ethnicity is that ethnic self-identification better reflects the internal beliefs of individuals about their perception of cultural reality. Combinations of objective and subjective measures have been used to study consumption (Deshpande et al 1986). For the purposes of this paper, we will use the terms "objective ethnicity" and "subjective ethnicity" to delineate the concepts.

The preponderance of research on ethnicity has focused on broad ethnic categorizations. These categorizations lump people across nationalities and regions into one group such as "Hispanics" or "Asians" based on similarities in language, re-

gion of origin, or visual phenotypical distinctions (skin color, hair color and consistency, etc.). Previous research ignores the fact that many national/regional origins make up a particular ethnic category. Attempts to generalize findings to all "Hispanics" or all "Asians" may be made in error as acculturative processes may impact members differently. In essence, there are likely to be significant intra-microcultural differences. As such, the authors contend that there is a gap in consumer acculturation studies:

Gap 1: Lack of intra-microcultural research

TRENDS IN CONSUMER ACCULTURATION STUDIES

Three trends have appeared in consumer acculturation studies: (1) the concepts of ethnic identity, (2) strength of ethnic affiliation and (3) situational ethnicity. The first trend is the increasing use of ethnic identity to classify ethnic groups. The second trend has been an increasing reliance on the *degree* of ethnic affiliation, often called strength of ethnic identification (Webster 1994), to operationalize, or in some instances, substitute acculturation measures. The third development in consumer acculturation research has been called situational ethnicity or felt ethnicity (Stayman and Deshpande 1989). The dominant approaches to studying consumer acculturation need to be synthesized in order to arrive at research that is emicly valid. The current trends in consumer acculturation studies lack integrative theories where, for example, the strength of ethnicity is examined as both objectively and subjectively defined categories that are contextually salient. Thus we contend that additional research is needed to create a seamless integration of approaches.

Gap 2: Lack of integrative research in relation to consumer acculturation studies

MEASUREMENT OF ACCULTURATION CONSTRUCTS

Measures of acculturation typically attempt to determine the extent to which a person has adapted to a new culture (Magaña et al. 1996) and the resulting behavioral changes that occur as a result of the contact (Ward and Arzu 1999). There has been a great deal of variation in the measurement of acculturation and ethnicity in both the social sciences and the consumer behavior literature. Some factors, either individually or in combination, that have been considered in the measurement are language, reference groups, intermarriage, identity, culture (Laroche, Kim and Tomiuk 1998; Lee and Um 1992; Peñaloza 1989; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew and Vigil 1987; Valencia 1985), and religion (Hirschman 1981). Communication based measures, such as media usage, have also been used (O'Guinn and Faber 1985; Kim, Laroche et al. 1990). Empirical research is needed to identify the "best" indicators of consumer acculturation. Thus gap 3 is the lack of research testing the validity of specific self-judgment measures, behavioral indicators and psychological scales.

Gap 3: Lack of research on consumer acculturation measurement scales

PRODUCT TYPE

In the preponderance of research on acculturation, product types have been value expressive products. Value expressive products carry highly symbolic attributes. These products are subject to the social and psychological interpretation of the buyer or user of the product. In contrast, a utilitarian product is purchased for the functional aspects of the product (Midgley 1983). The concept of value expressive versus utilitarian products has been used extensively in advertising research. We contend that these concepts should be applied to acculturation research as well. There is currently an over-reliance on value expressive products (i.e. clothing and food) in acculturation research which may seriously skew our understanding of consumer acculturation, perhaps indicating that members of microcultures are more generally ego invested in consumption decisions than the dominant culture where a multitude of product categories and consumption behaviors and patterns have been studied. We feel that product type will play a large role in effecting and affecting the behaviors of microcultures. Exploring product type as a moderator allows researchers to address gap 4.

Gap 4: Lack of product category breadth in current academic research in microcultural, or ethnic, consumption

A Proposed Approach to Assessing and Studying Consumer Acculturation
Based upon the current body of knowledge and gaps in the research, a model is presented that advances the study of consumer acculturation behavior (see figure 1). The model suggests that the purchase outcome of microcultures is moderated by two variables: the degree of consumer acculturation and the type of product under consideration. Suggested steps for the study of microcultures are proposed and include the following: 1. identify microculture(s), 2. determine measurement of the degree of acculturation, 3. determine product type, and 4. determine whether differences exist in purchase outcomes.

Keywords: ethnicity, consumer acculturation, acculturation, culture, microculture, consumer purchase decisions, consumption, consumption experience

Exploring the Impact of Culture and Acculturation on Consumer Purchase Decisions: Toward a Microcultural Perspective

INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years, the body of literature that explores the complex relationship between culture and consumption has grown exponentially. One of the lessons learned from studying social psychology is that cultural variations have significant impact on the way people view the world and that these views ultimately affect behavior (Manstead 1997). Seemingly, there is agreement in the marketing literature that culture greatly influences the way consumers perceive and behave (Hall 1977; McCracken 1988; Clark 1990). The dramatic demographic shifts that are occurring in the United States serve as a catalyst to the study of how intra-country cultural differences affect consumption behavior (Wellner 2002). Although studies dealing with aggregate national cultures help to gain an understanding of subcultures (Clark 1990) or microcultures, the focus of this research is not international; rather the intent is to understand the impact of subcultures, often referred to as ethnicities, within a national boundary. This paper seeks to explicate the impact of intra-national cultural differences within the specific context of the United States on consumption-oriented behavior. From a managerial perspective, many companies are discovering that success depends on utilizing opportunities to meet the needs of previously ignored microcultural groups. Marketers, in order to more effectively reach their target markets, must have an understanding of how intra-national cultures impact product-specific purchases by consumers. The terms subculture will be used to indicate the ethnic subgroup within the United States. The term microculture will be used to indicate smaller segments within subcultural groups. Both terms imply a theoretical relationship to a broader culture (Thompson and Troester 2002).

RESEARCH ON SUBCULTURES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES

The international marketing literature contains numerous studies concerning behavioral differences in consumers across nations (e.g. Brass 1991; McCarty and Hattwick 1991; Hafstrom, Chae et al. 1992; Lynn, Zinkhan et al. 1993; Nakata and Sivakumar 1996: Chu, Spires et al. 1999; Steenkamp, Hofstede et al. 1999; Husted 2000). Although this research has made significant contributions toward understanding differences between nations, there appears to be a gap in the literature about subcultural differences within national boundaries, or intra-national differences (Andreasen 1990; Heslop, Papadopoulos et al. 1998). For example, in a review of consumer behavior-related articles in five top academic research journals from 1993 – 1996, Jacoby et al. (1998) found that research on minority groups was scarce. This dearth of activity may be attributed to what Valencia (1989) calls "ethnic marketing myopia from … academia" (p.23). Concurrently, marketing practitioners have stressed that understanding culture is very important when attempting to market to ethnic groups (Gore 1998). Despite the increased importance of cultural-related research in marketing, only a limited amount of attention has been given to ethnic subcultures and consumer acculturation (O'Guinn and Faber 1985; O'Guinn, Lee et al. 1986; Kara and Kara 1996). This research gap handicaps marketers when making tactical decisions related to ethnic, or subcultural, marketing. An understanding of subcultural differences is essential for greater success in comprehending and capitalizing on differences that exist within a nation.

Holland and Gentry (1999) used three eras to describe the research on ethnicity and marketing. The first era is pre-1960 when ethnic groups were largely ignored. The second era began about mid-1960s and continued until about 1980. During this period, research focused almost exclusively on intra-national subcultural differences between African-American and White consumers. The third era, which began in the early 1980s and continues today, is depicted by studies on a wide variety of ethnic groups, chiefly defined by country-of-origin, that examine differences in culture that drive consumption. We propose the next era will be a focus on microcultures.

Demographic Shifts

An understanding of the demographic shifts within the United States underscores the need for intra-national cultural research. As subcultures, also referred to as microcultures, increase in size, marketers must develop knowledge of consumer characteristics and group-level preferences to more effectively deploy resources (both human and capital) to meet and exceed the growing needs of these markets. The *United States Census Bureau* reports that African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians make up the fastest growing groups in the United States. In 2003 Hispanics became the largest minority community in the United States. In some major cities, such as Los Angeles and New York City, the "minority" population outnumbers the "non-minority" population. The growth of ethnic subcultures in the United States is expected to continue. It is estimated that by 2010, one in three American children will be African American, Hispanic or Asian (Schwartz and Exter 1989). Thus a full one-third of the U.S. market will be made up of ethnic subcultures. It is essential to know if these subcultures have the same consumption needs as the dominant culture and respond to the same to marketing tactics. Different consumer needs and responses require different marketing tactics and in some circumstances, different marketing strategies altogether.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ORIGINS OF ACCULTURATION RESEARCH

Although acculturation can affect one or both cultures, most researchers working with ethnic groups in the United States have assumed that change primarily affects the minority ethnic group, which is expected to become more like the dominant group (Keefe 1980). Historical United States attempts to "Americanize" immigrants provide some insight into to this paradigm. In the early 1900s, fervent nationalists saw new immigrants as a threat to American culture. The U.S. Immigration Commission declared that assimilation was essential. Those who would not assimilate were not welcome. With the coming of World War I, the Americanization movement gathered momentum as ads depicting the "path to heaven" were displayed. The ads suggested that in order to reach heaven, one had to achieve economic and social success, and become American (Herrmann 1997).

Because of the Americanization efforts, in the early 1900s many of the European immigrants quickly assimilated. These early immigrants viewed the adoption of the prevailing culture as necessary for success. In contrast, recent trends indicate that the new immigrants no longer desire to be fully assimilated. Instead, many want to maintain their cultural identities (Miller 1993; Rossman 1994; Alba and Nee 1997; Dittgen 1997). These changes have prompted researchers to drop the analogy of the United States as a melting pot in which all ethnic groups eventually mix their characteristics and traits into one pattern (Hirschman 1983). Analogies such as a salad bowl, in which each group maintains significant aspects of identity (Romano 1995) and a mosaic (Rossman 1994), in which different cultures combine to form a diverse country, have been used to describe the changing attitudes toward assimilation. In addition, changes in immigration policy during the 1980s and 1990s have altered the makeup of immigrants. During this period, Europeans accounted for only ten percent of legal immigrants; Asians made up about one-third and Hispanics nearly one-half of legal immigrants (Dittgen 1997).

Acculturation and Assimilation Research

The concept of acculturation originated in the field of anthropology and has been studied extensively in anthropology as well as sociology and psychology. Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) define acculturation as "…those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (p.149). In 1954, the Social Science Research Council defined acculturation as,

> …culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications, induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustment following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors (Barnett, Siegel et al. 1954, p. 974).

While changes may occur in the dominant culture, the subculture or both groups, according to Berry (1977), in practice acculturation tends to produce more substantial change in one of the groups. Although both the immigrant and the host culture undergo changes, the impact of immigrant cultures on the mainstream host culture is relatively insignificant compared to the influence of the host culture on the individual (Kim 1985). The immigrants' need to adapt to the host culture is greater than the host cultures' need to include aspects of the immigrant culture due to the larger number of people in the host culture compared to the number of immigrants and to the dominant resources of the host society that inhibit the immigrant culture from having the greater influence.

According to Yinger (1985), assimilation within new immigrant groups includes changes in four dimensions: structural, cultural, psychological, and biological. *Structural change* refers to the degree to which the immigrant has integrated the associations and institutions of the host culture. *Cultural change* refers to the degree to which values and norms of the immigrant group come to match those of the host. *Psychological change* is a change in an individual's self-identification with one's ethnic group. The fourth change, *biological change*, involves the genetic mutation of an immigrant group so that the physical differences between the immigrant and host group are diminished.

Many researchers have used the term acculturation and assimilation interchangeably, or in some cases, the meanings have overlapped (Gordon 1964). To add to the confusion, different disciplines use the terms to mean different concepts (Berry and Annis 1974; Padilla 1980). For example, sociologists like Gordon (1964), typically use the term "assimilation" to describe encounters between ethnic groups and the cultural negotiation process to find common ground. In contrast, anthropologists prefer the term "acculturation" to describe the same cultural negotiation process (Gordon 1964). A review of the consumer acculturation literature reveals a similar inconsistency. Therefore, it is important to relay the *predominant* difference between assimilation and acculturation in terms of their usage in the consumer acculturation context and the net outcome of the cultural negotiations. While assimilation occurs when an immigrant fully adopts mainstream values and gives up his/her cultural heritage, acculturation can occur when some elements of the mainstream culture are added without abandoning the native culture (Berry 1980; Padilla 1980; Wallendorf and Reilly 1983; Jun, Ball et al. 1993; Rossman 1994)

Thus, the traditional view is that acculturation is more of a continuum, where there are varying levels of acculturation in each subculture. At one end of the continuum is the unacculturated extreme where the consumer's heritage is the strongest influencing behavior. At the other end is the acculturated extreme, where the consumer is fully assimilated to the host culture and has adopted the prevailing consumer behavior of the host population (Hair and Anderson 1972). Although Hair and Anderson (1972) use the term "acculturated extreme" in their continuum to refer to a fully assimilated consumer, we feel the term "assimilated extreme" should be used. By using assimilated extreme, there is less confusion in the understanding of assimilation versus acculturation.

Acculturation simultaneously occurs at both group and individual levels (Berry 1980). Literature in anthropology and sociology focuses on the group factors of acculturation, such as relationship to socialization, social interaction, and mobility (Olmedo 1979). The psychology literature emphasizes individual characteristics such as change in perception, attitudes, values and personality (Berry 1980; Peñaloza 1989).

Consumer Acculturation
Consumer acculturation is a subset of acculturation and socialization. While acculturation is more general, consumer acculturation is specific to the consumption process. Consumer acculturation can be seen as a socialization process in which an immigrant consumer learns the behaviors, attitudes and values of a culture that are different from their culture of origin (Lee 1988).

The study of ethnicity in consumption is relatively new in marketing literature, and there is debate on whether the constructs of ethnic identity and acculturation are identical because they both rely on similar measures such as language, reference group influence, adherence to cultural customs, and food preferences to operationalize them (Hui, Joy et al. 1992; Webster 1994). Although some researchers support the idea that these constructs are independent, the prevailing practice in consumer research has been to use the same set of indicators to operationalize both the ethnicity and acculturation constructs (Hui, Joy et al. 1992). Peñaloza (1994, 1995) suggests that ethnic affiliation is negatively related to consumer acculturation such that the more a person affiliates with his or her ethnic community, the less are his or her chances to adapt to and adopt mainstream values and behaviors. Hui et al. (1992) disagree that ethnicity is opposite to acculturation, arguing that ethnicity and acculturation may be related phenomena, but can evolve separately. They contend that some immigrants can be somewhat acculturated to the dominant culture but still maintain strong ethnic identification. In a study of Korean sojourners in the United States, Jun et al. (1993) found support that acculturation is different from cultural identification and that both dimensions are influenced by different factors. Although exploratory in nature, their research found that cultural identification is influenced by preferences for permanent or temporary residency. Those who want to remain in the host society tend to identify more with the host culture. Those who viewed their stay as temporary identified more with their culture of origin. Acculturation level was affected by the place (urban/rural) in which a person was raised and the amount of direct contact with the new culture. People from rural areas were more hesitant to abandon their traditional culture. Those from urban areas had more direct contact with the host culture and more readily adopted the host culture. Webster (1994) views ethnic identity as a subset of acculturation and assimilation as a mode of acculturation. In Webster's study, ethnic identification is operationalized by determining which language is used in the home (Spanish/English/Both Equally). Webster believes the combination of ethnic identification and self-identification captures assimilation dimensions. Laroche, Kim and Tomiuk (1998) state that the primary difference between the two constructs is that ethnic identity measures focus on maintenance/retention of the culture of origin and acculturation measures focus on acquisition of the host culture.
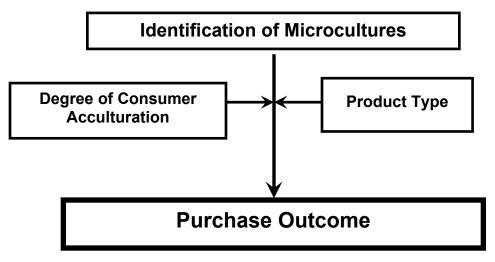
ETHNICITY AND ACCULTURATION IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR RESEARCH

Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Although closely related, ethnicity and ethnic identity are two separate constructs. Ethnicity is an objective description and refers to a group with common national or religious backgrounds. In contrast, ethnic identity is more subjective (Cohen 1978; Hirschman 1981; Minor 1992) and is a self-designation which relays a person's commitment and strength of association to a particular group (Zaff, Blount, Phillips and Cohen 2002; Chung and Fischer 1999). Individuals are frequently "assigned" to an ethnic group based on indicators such as surname (Hoyer and Deshpande 1982; Zmud and Arce 1992) area of residence (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983) or city (Saegert et al 1985). This is an example of objective classification of ethnicity. Although objective, these methods often lead to misclassification. The assumption of subjective ethnicity is that ethnic self-identification better reflects the internal beliefs of individuals about their perception of cultural reality. Combinations of objective and subjective measures have been used to study consumption (Deshpande et al 1986). For the purposes of this paper, we will use the terms "objective ethnicity" and "subjective ethnicity" to delineate the concepts.

As stated earlier, the study of ethnicity in consumption is a recent trend. What needs to be made clear is that the concept of acculturation refers to a process or change. Ethnic identity, on the other hand, refers to a status, which may or may not be static. Thus the strength of ethnic identity may influence the level of acculturation as suggested by Peñaloza and Gilly (1999) and others. Conversely, ethnic identity can also be shaped by acculturation as is the case with assimilation. Assimilation, as discussed earlier, occurs when immigrants completely lose their original ethnic identity and take on the identity of the host culture. The constructs of ethnic identity and acculturation are neither parallel nor opposites of each other; rather they influence and shape each other.

The paper is based on the general model shown in Figure 1. The model suggests that the purchase outcome of microcultures is moderated by two variables: the degree of consumer acculturation and the type of product under consideration. Predicated upon the identified gaps in the literature related to ethnicity and acculturation in consumer behavior research, the model was developed to facilitate a systems approach to the study of culture and acculturation on consumer purchase decisions. The proposed model is intended as an initial working model to help explain purchase outcomes of microcultures. A suggested method for approaching studies of microcultures is presented which is based on the model. The review of literature, model development and discussion of suggested research steps follows.

Figure 1: Microcultural Purchase Outcome Model

Our review of the literature related to ethnicity and acculturation in consumer behavior research revealed several gaps:

TABLE 1
Gaps in Research Related to Ethnicity and Acculturation

GAP #	DESCRIPTION
1	Need for more intra-microcultural research
2	A lack of integrative research in relation to consumer acculturation studies
3	Additional research is needed on acculturation measurement scales
4	More research is needed on product category breadth in current academic research in microcultural, or ethnic, consumption

Following is a summary of the literature review and the gaps we identified.

One of the first studies in marketing that combined ethnicity and consumer behavior was carried out by Hirschman (1981). This research identified relationships between Jewish ethnicity and levels of consumer innovativeness. Hirschman concluded that ethnicity may be a useful determinant of consumption patterns. Her research suggests that ethnic norms may influence competency in making purchase decisions. Based on this study, researchers extended Hirschman's work and began to concentrate more on specific microcultural groups. Research that focused on ethnicity was undertaken, especially for the Hispanic and Asian U.S. cultures.

Hispanics- Webster (1990-91) found differences in attitudes toward marketing practices between Anglos and Hispanics who possessed varying degrees of subcultural identification. These differences were present even after social class and income effects were removed from the analysis. In another study, Webster (1992) found significant differences between Hispanics who strongly identified with their subculture versus those who did not in terms of information search patterns associated with reference groups, advertising, in-store search and miscellaneous readership. The research concludes that different strategies are required to reach language-based segments within the Hispanic subculture.

Kara and Kara (1996) found that Hispanics high in acculturation were more similar to Anglos in terms of the utilities placed on product attributes of selected products. In addition, differences in advertising effectiveness and media preferences between Hispanics low in acculturation and Hispanics high in acculturation have been found. For example, Ueltschy (1997), when researching preference for language and ethnicity of the models in advertisements, found that Hispanics low in acculturation preferred advertisements in Spanish compared to high-acculturated Hispanics who preferred English language advertisements. A surprising finding in this research was that Hispanics low in acculturation preferred advertising personalities that were Anglo instead of Hispanic, despite their preference for advertising messages in Spanish.

O'Guinn and Faber (1986) conducted a study to determine if Hispanics and Anglos differed in their importance ratings of different product attributes. When the product was a nondurable (detergent), few significant differences were found between the groups. In contrast, when the product was a consumer durable (television sets),

significant differences were found between Anglos and Hispanics in their ratings of attribute importance. Additionally, there were also differences between low and high-acculturated Hispanics.

Asians- Research on the acculturation in the Asian ethnic group provides similar findings. Tan and McCullough (1985) found that a high level of acculturation to Chinese values was associated with a high reliance on price and quality, whereas a low orientation was associated with a high preference for image. McCullough, Tan and Wong (1986) found that Chinese values were slowly disappearing because of Western influences. Lee and Um (1992) found that mixed acculturation patterns contributed to differences between Korean immigrants and Anglo-Americans in consumer product evaluations. Specifically, highly acculturated Koreans, as compared to less acculturated Koreans and Americans, were more likely to adopt American cultural styles by observing what their friends buy, taking friends' advice on purchase recommendations and listening to advertising.

The preponderance of research on ethnicity has focused on broad ethnic categorizations. These categorizations lump people across nationalities and regions into one group such as "Hispanics" or "Asians" based on similarities in language, region of origin, or visual phenotypical distinctions (skin color, hair color and consistency, etc.). Previous research ignores the fact that many national/regional origins make up a particular ethnic category. For example, in the 2002 Census, there were over 38 million Hispanics in the Unites States, however, the percentages breakdown of Hispanics showed approximately 66% are of Mexican decent, 14% of Central or South American origin, 9% of Cuban origin and 6.4 percent of other nationalities. Individuals from these various countries of origin, under the category of Hispanics, are assumed to be similar, e.g., behave in the same manner, despite significantly different cultural referents and experiences. Demographic, psychographic, behavioristic and/or geographic differences are likely to exist within broad categories, such as Hispanic, as they do in the Anglo-American microculture. Attempts to generalize findings to all "Hispanics" or all "Asians" may be made in error as acculturative processes may impact members differently. As an example, Kang and Kim (1998) found significant differences between three Asian-American groups further supporting the argument that the acculturative processes impact people differently. In essence, there are likely to be significant intra-microcultural differences. As such, the authors contend that there is a gap in consumer acculturation studies:

Gap 1: Lack of intra-microcultural research

We propose that there are intracultural differences which directly effect purchase decisions. To effectively understand and sell to microcultures marketers must know who those consumers are.

We propose that there are differences in the consumer behavior of microcultures:

P1: There is a difference in consumer purchase behaviors based on the consumer's microculture.

Anthropological Studies in Consumer Research
Studies in the area of consumer research that employ anthropological techniques are rare, although more recent research exhibits an increase in such interest (e.g. Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Belk Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Hill 1991; Maso-Fleischmen 1996; Mehta and Belk 1991; Peñaloza 2000; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Sherry 1990). The time-consuming nature and high costs associated with this type of research may explain the reluctance to conduct anthropological studies (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994).

In the area of consumer acculturation, Reilly and Wallendorf (1984) unobtrusively sampled collections of garbage from Mexican-American and Anglo households in a U.S. Southwestern urban area to determine whether a

pattern of acculturation emerged. Seven years of garbage from various census tracts were analyzed. They found that the subjects in their sample were not following the traditional assimilation paradigm and that food consumption patterns of Mexican Americans differed behind those of Anglos. More recently, Peñaloza (1994) and Peñaloza and Gilly (1999) have employed anthropological methodologies in several studies. In one study, Peñaloza (1994) took the role of participant-observer to study Mexican immigrants' consumer acculturation in the United States. In another study, Peñaloza and Gilly (1999) used ethnographic methods to examine marketers' processes of multicultural learning and adaptation to immigrants. We believe these anthropological inquiries offer deep insights into not only what these acculturating consumers do, but also why.

Sociological Studies in Consumer Research
The sociological perspective favors theories of linear assimilation first outlined by Park (1950), who posits a process that is "progressive and irreversible" (p.150) based on stages of contact and culminates in the complete adjustment of the new entrant to the dominant culture. This theoretical strand is now most closely associated with the work of Gordon (1964). Based on his seminal studies of immigration to America, Gordon argues that all of the categories of identity create, through historical circumstances, a sense of group identity--of peoplehood. He believed the dominant culture in the U.S. was of Anglo-Saxon origin. This cultural standard, "…the middle-class cultural patterns of, largely, white Protestant, Anglo-Saxon origins…" (Gordon 1964, p. 72) represented the direction and eventual outcome of immigrant entry to the United States. All immigrant populations regardless of their origins and initial differences *melt* toward this U.S. cultural standard (Jiobu 1988).

Several researchers have adopted a sociological perspective in consumer acculturation literature. Jun, Ball and Gentry, (1993) in a study of Korean acculturation, developed a model of acculturation based upon the delineation of cultural identification from the level of acculturation. They found that there are various types of adaptation processes, and they also found these two constructs (cultural identification and level of acculturation) are distinct, which contrasts with the view that considers cultural identification is subordinate to acculturation. Kang and Kim (1998) found that the level of acculturation experienced by three Asian-American consumer groups (Chinese, Japanese and Korean) had an effect on purchase decisions for social clothes (i.e. clothes worn in public places). Specifically, the three groups displayed differences in reference group influence, media influence and store attribute importance and the patterns depended on the level of acculturation.

In a more recent study related to assimilation, and applying Gordon's (1964) framework, D'Rozario and Douglas (1999) found that Asians used different sources of information depending on the type of assimilation (cultural, identificational or structural). The product under consideration was formal clothing. According to the findings, cultural assimilation related positively to the individual searching a wide variety of sources for product information; identification assimilation related positively to one's tendency to look to advertisements for information and structural assimilation related negatively to the individual's tendency to use friends and family as product information sources. We believe these sociological inquiries help to identify broad patterns of behavior and cultural adaptation across members of microcultures.

Psychological Studies in Consumer Research
The psychological view of acculturation gained prominence in the social sciences in the mid-to-late 1960s (Olmedo 1979). Foremost theorist Berry (1997 p. 8), defines acculturation as "the general process and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of intercultural contact." Berry (1980) suggests that there are three-phases to acculturation: contact, conflict and adaptation.

Berry (1990: 1997) views the process of acculturation within a coping framework. He emphasizes the negative psychological consequences brought on by cross-cultural contact, which may cause personal problems when

adapting to the new environment. As a result, personality and cognitive factors such as self-esteem and attitudes toward acculturation are seen as predictors of acculturative stress. Berry and colleagues found that *marginalization* and *separation* are associated with high levels of acculturative stress. Berry suggests that marginalization occurs when there is neither interest in maintaining one's cultural identity nor maintaining relationships with others in the larger society. Thus marginalization often occurs under forced cultural loss or when discrimination is present. Separation occurs when it is of value to maintain cultural identity and of no value to participate in the larger society (1997). In contrast, when it is not considered of value to maintain one's cultural characteristics and is desirable to move into the larger society, assimilation results. Integration involves both the maintenance of cultural identity and the maintenance of relationships in the larger society (Berry 1980). *Integration* is associated with a low level of stress, while *assimilation* is connected with an intermediate stress level (Berry, Kim et al. 1987).

An approach that combines sociology and psychology is Kim's communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation (1998, 2001). Through a process of progressive learning called "communicative interaction" between an immigrant and the host society, individual cultural adaptation takes place (1998, 2001). It is through communicative interaction that individuals experience a transformation in their psyche and cultural identity. In this theory people experience a continuous cycle of adaptation from a monocultural to an intercultural identity.   The more acculturated an individual becomes; the more similar are his/her attitudes and values to the host society.

In the area of Psychology, many consumer behavior researchers have examined the ethnicity construct as opposed to the acculturation construct. For example, Ellis, McCullough, Wallendorf and Tan (1985) found that Chinese ethnic values were exhibited by an American (Anglo) sample, suggesting that a reciprocal relationship exists, that is that both the host and immigrant group can affect the other's ethnicity. Shim and Eastlick (1998) found that ethnic identification can serve as an important factor that influences personal values as well as attitudes and patronage behavior for shopping at malls.

Ethnicity and Psychographics- Concerning ethnicity and psychographics, Eckman, Kotsiopulos and Bickle (1997) found differences between higher income Hispanic and non-Hispanic consumers in terms of demographics, psychographics and perceived importance of store attributes, use of information sources and store choice. Findings suggest that Hispanic consumers were less likely to participate in cultural activities and to seek advice but were more likely to be "experimentalists" and "proeducators". Items such as services, language, resource management, pricing and comfort were more important to Hispanics. This suggests that there are real, discernable differences within microcultures, based on social class.

In a study that investigated shopping orientations of adult Chinese and Filipino-American consumers, Ownbey and Horridge (1997) found differences in orientations depending on acculturation level. Fan (1998) investigated household expenditure patterns for three ethnic subgroups: Asian-Americans, Black Americans and Hispanic-Americans. Using data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey, the Consumer Price Index, and the Commerce Cost of Living Index, five household expenditure patterns were identified: shelter-dominated, food-and-utilities-dominated, health-care-dominated, transportation-dominated, and service-dominated. Fan found that all three ethnic groups were significantly different from non-Hispanic white households in terms of these household expenditure patterns.

TRENDS IN CONSUMER ACCULTURATION STUDIES

Three trends have appeared in consumer acculturation studies: (1) the concepts of ethnic identity, (2) strength of ethnic affiliation and (3) situational ethnicity. The first trend is the increasing use of ethnic identity to classify

ethnic groups. The objective perspective in defining ethnic identity uses sociocultural categories, while the subjective perspective derives ethnicity from the labels that people give to identify their own ethnic background (Deshpande, Hoyer et al. 1986). The self-identification of ethnicity evolved from the problems that researchers faced when attempting to classify people into various ethnic groups. Frequently, assignment to an ethnic group is based on indicators such as surname (Hoyer and Deshpande 1982; Zmud and Arce 1992), area of residence (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983) or city (Saegert, Hoover et al. 1985). This can lead to misclassifications: 1) objective interpretation errors where indicators are misread and 2) inaccurate weighting of indicators (e.g., assuming that surname is less relevant than language.). Because of the potential for misclassifications, many researchers have adopted the self-identification method to measure ethnicity or ethnic identification (Cohen 1978; Hirschman 1981; Valencia 1982; Minor 1992). The assumption of this latter method is that ethnic self-identification reflects the internal beliefs of individuals about their perceptions of cultural reality. Combinations of subjective and objective measures have also been used to study Hispanic consumption (Deshpande, Hoyer et al. 1986).

The second trend has been an increasing reliance on the *degree* of ethnic affiliation, often called strength of ethnic identification (Webster 1994), to operationalize, or in some instances, substitute acculturation measures. This concept was inspired by Padilla's (1980) "ethnic loyalty" which is defined as "…the individual's <u>preference</u> of one cultural orientation over the other" (underline in original, p.48). The degree of ethnic identification has been used in lieu of traditional acculturation scales as an indicator of the degree of acculturation (Kim, Laroche et al. 1990). Using this approach, Hirschman (1981) found that the strength of Jewish ethnicity was positively related to, among other things, consumption innovativeness, and transfer of consumption innovation to others. Deshpande, Hoyer and Donthu (1986) found differences in Spanish media use, attitudes toward advertising and brand purchasing behavior within the Hispanic subculture, all based on the intensity of ethnic affiliation. Donthu and Cherian (1992) found that strong Hispanic identifiers had a higher degree of ethnic pride and were less responsive to coupons than low Hispanic identifiers. Some researchers have used multidimensional measures of the strength of ethnic identification (Padilla 1980) and others have relied on one measure, such as language usage (e.g. Webster 1992) to operationalize the construct. In addition, some researchers prefer to use a dichotomous measure of ethnicity (i.e., high vs. low ethnic identifiers), while others have utilized multichotomous or continuous measures (Hui, Joy et al. 1992).

The third development in consumer acculturation research has been called situational ethnicity or felt ethnicity (Stayman and Deshpande 1989). Situational ethnicity is based on the notion that the acculturation process may vary depending on the context in which behavior occurs. The underlying premise is that people take different roles in their daily lives and these roles may bring into play different levels of acculturation or ethnicity (O'Guinn and Faber 1985). Consequently, a consumer's consumption behavior can exhibit a considerable degree of situational variability depending on which personal meanings are salient in a given consumption context (Stayman and Deshpande 1989; Zmud and Arce 1992).

The dominant approaches to studying consumer acculturation need to be synthesized in order to arrive at research that is emicly valid. The current trends in consumer acculturation studies lack integrative theories where, for example, the strength of ethnicity is examined as both objectively and subjectively defined categories that are contextually salient. Thus we contend that additional research is needed to create a seamless integration of approaches.

Gap 2: Lack of integrative research in relation to consumer acculturation studies.

Based on the model, the degree of consumer acculturation will moderate the relationship between microcultures and purchase decisions, we propose:

P2: The degree of acculturation moderates the purchase outcome: the higher the degree of acculturation the less similar the purchase result with other members of the microculture.

P3: The extent to which a microculture reacts to marketing is moderated by the degree of acculturation: the higher the degree of acculturation, the less likely the reliance on marketing tactics for product information.

MEASUREMENT OF ACCULTURATION CONSTRUCTS

Measures of acculturation typically attempt to determine the extent to which a person has adapted to a new culture (Magaña et al. 1996) and the resulting behavioral changes that occur as a result of the contact (Ward and Arzu 1999). There has been a great deal of variation in the measurement of acculturation and ethnicity in both the social sciences and the consumer behavior literature. Some factors, either individually or in combination, that have been considered in the measurement are language, reference groups, intermarriage, identity, culture (Laroche, Kim and Tomiuk 1998; Lee and Um 1992; Peñaloza 1989; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew and Vigil 1987; Valencia 1985), and religion (Hirschman 1981). Communication based measures, such as media usage, have also been used (O'Guinn and Faber 1985; Kim, Laroche et al. 1990). Because language is the primary medium for the flow of cultural elements (Barnett, Siegel et al. 1954), it is viewed as one of the most important indicators of acculturation, and has been the most widely used factor in measuring acculturation (Olmedo 1979). Language-based scales contain questions about to what extent, and where (social and physical contexts), one's native language versus English is spoken.

In Padilla's (1980) study of 381 respondents, two factors were found to measure the degree of acculturation. The first factor, *cultural awareness*, consisted of the respondent's cultural heritage, the cultural heritage of the respondent's spouse and parents, language preference and use, cultural identification and preference and social behavior orientation. The second factor, *ethnic loyalty*, consisted of cultural pride and affiliation, perceived discrimination, and social behavior orientation.

Olmedo (1980) suggests a multivariate approach when measuring acculturation. Berry (1980) advocates independent measurement at the group level in terms of history and purpose of contact and at the individual level in terms of the interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences. Although researchers agree that multidimensional measures are necessary, several researchers have circumvented the use of these scales and opted for a self-judgement with regard to strong or weak identification to the original culture (Dana 1996). This trend also has appeared in the consumer acculturation research. Dana (1996) argues that self-judgments are too simplistic and are insufficient for the accurate measure of acculturation. The majority of acculturation scales used in consumer acculturation studies have focused on behavioral indicators. There are indications that psychological scales are being developed in the social sciences (Tropp, Erkut et al. 1999), which may lend themselves to consumer studies exploring the psychological aspects of consumption and acculturation.

Empirical research is needed to identify the "best" indicators of consumer acculturation. Thus gap 3 is the lack of research testing the validity of specific self-judgment measures, behavioral indicators and psychological scales.

Gap 3: Lack of research on consumer acculturation measurement scales.

As identified, there needs to be more empirical research on acculturation measurement scales that are specific to the consumer acculturation process. Thus after the identification of the consumer microculture, researchers need to utilize a measurement tool that determines the degree of consumer acculturation of each individual in the microculture(s) under study. We believe there needs to be more research that related to the measurement of consumer acculturation. An integrative measure of consumer acculturation will provide more accurate and realistic measures. As integrated acculturation measurement scales are developed and tested, the accuracy of the data on the degree of consumer acculturation will increase and the importance and value of acculturation as a moderating variable will become increasingly apparent. The research indicates that the degree of acculturation impact subcultural purchase decisions. We believe this premise can be extended to the microcultural level. Future tools that measure acculturation level should take into account microcultural factors. Although there are many suggested determinants of consumer acculturation level (i.e. language, length of time in the host country, miscegenation, religion, media sources, etc), there needs to be more agreement in variables that should be used in measurement.

P4: Integrative, microcultural consumer acculturation tools (scales) will produce more reliable and valid results for predicting microcultural purchase decisions or outcomes.

A Proposed Approach to Assessing and Studying Consumer Acculturation

Based on the model depicted in figure 1, we propose the following steps in research involving microcultures:

TABLE 2
Suggested Research Steps – Microcultures

Step	DESCRIPTION
1	Identify microculture(s)
2	Determine measurement of the degree of acculturation
3	Determine product type
4	Determine whether differences exist in purchase outcomes

In the first step, it is necessary to not only define the microculture, but also the subgroups within the microculture, that is the more specific breakdowns of ethnic groups within the bigger microcultural group. This will allow the market researcher to understand nuances between the microcultures that impact the purchase preferences and decisions. This will also add to the knowledge about the consumer acculturation process. This can be accomplished using many of the same techniques used in market segmentation studies. Segments that are homogenous within but heterogeneous between groups should be identified.

In step two, the level of acculturation, depicted as a moderator in the model, is determined. As mentioned earlier, several different methods may be utilized. These authors advocate the multidimensional approach to the measurement of acculturation as suggested by Olmedo (1980) and others (O'Guinn and Faber, 1985; Valencia, 1985). After the variables to measure the level of acculturation are selected, categories into which individual respondents will be placed must be chosen. The most used categories in the consumer acculturation literature are high versus low levels of acculturation. Although over simplistic, these categories provide a convenient

method of comparison. Some researchers have added a middle category to capture some of the depth missing in this dichotomous variable. More effective methods of categorization should be explored.

Step three is to identify the product type. The product type, also depicted as a moderator, has an affect on how the consumer responds. In the preponderance of research on acculturation, product types have been value expressive products. Value expressive products carry highly symbolic attributes. These products are subject to the social and psychological interpretation of the buyer or user of the product. In contrast, a utilitarian product is purchased for the functional aspects of the product (Midgley 1983). The concept of value expressive versus utilitarian products has been used extensively in advertising research. We contend that these concepts should be applied to acculturation research as well.   There is currently an over-reliance on value expressive products (i.e. clothing and food) in acculturation research which may seriously skew our understanding of consumer acculturation, perhaps indicating that members of microcultures are more generally ego invested in consumption decisions than the dominant culture where a multitude of product categories and consumption behaviors and patterns have been studied. We feel that product type will play a large role in effecting and affecting the behaviors of microcultures. Exploring product type as a moderator allows researchers to address gap 4.

Gap 4: Lack of product category breadth in current academic research in microcultural, or ethnic, consumption.

Although there is a preponderance of research on product type, very few studies explore product type, consumer acculturation and microcultural consumption behavior. As stated earlier, the majority of product research on subcultures use value-expressive products. We believe the type of product is a moderator in the relationship between microcultures and purchase decisions. Thus we suggest the following:

P5: Purchase decisions made by microcultural consumers will differ based upon the product type (i.e. value-expressive vs. utilitarian).

P6: Purchase decisions for microcultures will be different than those of the host culture based upon the product type (value expressive versus utilitarian).

Purchase outcomes, whether the consumer purchases or doesn't purchase, will provide a wealth of information in regard to specific consumer behaviors. The outcomes can assessed in order to grasp the effectiveness of the proposed model. Additionally, we support more studies that drill down into motivational factors behind the raw purchase data (e.g., post-purchase surveys, in situ observation, and in-depth interviews).

In the proposed model, the outcome sought is the purchase of a product. As researchers we are also interested in the decision-processes consumers went through to arrive at the purchase decision. It is not within the scope of this paper to present empirical research that provides an answer to this question. Rather we propose a model that is a step toward understanding microcultural consumption behavior and the impact of culture and acculturation upon this behavior. The validity and reliability of the model must be tested with many research undertakings. Purchase outcomes must be studied in order to place weights on the moderating variables. We suggest the following:

P7: Purchase outcomes of microcultural consumers will vary significantly depending on the consumer's level of acculturation and on the product type.

Our research propositions are further explored in the next section.

FUTURE RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the current research base on microcultural consumer behavior is sparse and because an understanding of microcultures is increasingly important to marketers, we offer the following research propositions that will address the gaps in the consumer acculturation and microcultural research.

P1: There is a difference in consumer purchase behaviors based on the consumer's microculture.

In order to test this proposition, national research studies should be undertaken utilizing identified microcultures. Each large ethnic group (i.e. Hispanic, Asian) should be subdivided into identifiable microcultures. Data would then be gathered and each microcultural subset would be statistically tested to show the relationship between the groups and strength of these relationships. Additional post hoc tests could be utilized to assess differences in these consumers' behavior. These data would be used to help fill gap 1 (lack of intra-microcultural research). Further these data would strengthen the proposed model.

P2: The degree of acculturation moderates the purchase outcome: the higher the degree of acculturation the less similar the purchase result with other members of the microculture.

This proposition is related to gap 2 which is a lack of integrative research in relation to consumer acculturation studies. This proposition is predicated on the development of an integrative research instrument. Additionally this research stream would utilize the output data from P1 for microcultural identification. Data from these studies would support the model which depicts the "degree of acculturation" as a moderating variable (figure 1).

P3: The extent to which a microculture reacts to marketing is moderated by the degree of acculturation: the higher the degree of acculturation, the less likely the reliance on marketing tactics for product information.

This proposition allows the integration of microculturalism into consumer acculturation studies. By subdividing ethnic groups, the true decision processes of intra-ethnic groups or microcultures can be better assessed. We feel that the best testable marketing tactics would be those variables associated with integrated marketing communication (IMC) (i.e. advertising, sales promotion, public relations/publicity, personal selling, direct marketing, cybermarketing). Differences in the utilization of product information would help guide the marketers as to where they should invest marketing funds. Additional data should be generated that identify product type, giving the proposed model additional strength.

P4: Integrative, microcultural consumer acculturation tools (scales) will produce more reliable and valid results for predicting microcultural purchase decisions or outcomes.

The fourth research proposition (P4) addresses gap 3 (lack of research on consumer acculturation measurement scales). The current scales and instruments should go through additional tests and replication in order to confirm the effectiveness, reliability and validity of the scales. Ideally a consensus would be developed on the best methods of measuring consumer acculturation.

P5: Purchase decisions made by microcultural consumers will differ based upon the product type (i.e. value-expressive vs. utilitarian).

We posit that product type is a moderator of microcultural purchase outcomes. Since there is a preponderance of studies involving value-expressive products in relation to consumer behavior, we suggest studies that focus on utilitarian products and/or both types of products. These studies would address gap 4 (lack of product category breadth in current academic studies on ethnic/microcultural consumption). The data would help verify that product type moderates the relationship between microcultures and purchase outcomes as shown in the model (figure 1).

P6: Purchase decisions for microcultures will be different than those of the host culture based upon the product type (value expressive versus utilitarian).

Proposition six provides an integration of the model. It allows for the assessment of purchase decision outcomes comparison of the host culture and the ethnic group as a whole. This type of research will help fill gap four and will add to research on microcultural consumption.

P7: Purchase outcomes of microcultural consumers will vary significantly depending on the consumer's level of acculturation and on the product type.

Proposition seven can be utilized to test the effectiveness of the proposed model as a whole. Additionally it helps to fill the void of research identified by gap 4.

In is our contention that there are differences in purchase decisions of microcultures. We feel that the division of subcultures will provide academicians and practitioners with better, more accurate data from which to understand acculturating consumers. Research in this area will allow greater and more accurate intracultural comparisons.

Because culture is an adaptive process, people undergoing acculturation are in a constant state of flux. The behaviors exhibited by people adapting to a consumer environment are not always easy to explain. It is for this reason that consumer acculturation processes must be more clearly understood.

While cross-cultural research, including country-of-origin studies, has provided many valuable insights into consumer behavior, we find the existing cultural comparison studies and paradigms of cultural contact are limiting and leave serious gaps in our understanding of group preferences and patterned behavior.

We also posit that the currently identified social categories are far too broad (international vs. intranational, language family vs. regional dialect) to evidence meaningful consumption patterns or be predictive of future consumption behavior. With the changing ethnic demographic in the United States, it becomes increasingly important to understand the differences and similarities between and within subcultures and the acculturation processes that contribute to those differences. Through a review of related literature, we hope this paper demonstrates the importance of a stronger theoretical framework, develops a more inclusive and realistic model for understanding intra-national, microcultural consumption patterns, and highlights the managerial relevance of understanding microcultural consumer behavior.

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