Cross-Cultural Consumer Socialization: An Exploratory Study of Socialization Influences across Three Ethnic Groups

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ABSTRACT

According to the recent 2000 U.S. Census, the ethnic population in America reached almost 80 million people. However, there is limited research to show how ethnic consumers seek market information and how susceptible they are to different types of personal and media influences. An attempt is made in this study to present a cross-cultural comparison of ethnic consumer socialization influences. The results of the study indicate that Asian American, Hispanic, and African American young adults significantly differ in their susceptibility to different socialization influences. © 2003 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

Fritos Sabrositas Lime, Doritos Salas Verde, Dulce de leche Sundae, and Mahogany—these are not just some fancy-sounding names. They are new products introduced by Frito-Lay Inc., McDonald's Corp., and Hallmark for their ethnic consumers. The ethnic population in America now totals almost 80 million people. This is equivalent to the combined populations of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Israel, Norway, Sweden,

and Switzerland. According to the recent 2000 census, the Hispanic population grew four times faster than general population between 1990 and 2000, reaching almost 34 million people. The number of Asian Americans increased from 6 million in 1990 to 11 million in 2000, and the African American population grew almost 22% percent, totaling about 36 million people. It is estimated that the ethnic population in the U.S. will reach 141 million people by 2020.

But it is not just the growing numbers of ethnic consumers that make them a lucrative segment to target. It is expected that the ethnic population in America commands buying power to the tune of $900 billion (Raymond, 2001). To reach and to communicate with this lucrative market segment, marketers need to understand how ethnic consumers seek market information and how susceptible they are to different types of personal and media influences (Kim & Kang, 2001a, 2001b). However, academics agree that there is paucity in the literature on research relating to sociology of ethnic consumption (Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986; Green, 1999; Hirschman, 1981; Holland & Gentry, 1999). Thus, the objective of this study is to explore how consumer socialization influences differ by major ethnic groups in America. It is expected that this study will provide insights into the role and the importance of different socialization agents among Asian Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans.

Importance of the Study

Ethnicity is being recognized increasingly as an important segmentation variable in marketing (Appiah, 2001; Cui, 1997, 2001; Donthu & Cherian, 1992, 1994; Hirschman, 1981, Kern-Foxworth, 1991). A vast body of literature exists emphasizing ethnicity as a major cultural determinant of purchase behavior, media use, shopping preferences, and attitude toward advertising (Bush, Smith, & Martin, 1999; Delener & Neelankavil, 1990; Donthu & Cherian, 1992; Kim & Kang, 2001a). However, according to Holland and Gentry (1999), ethnic consumer research has evolved through years of underrepresentation. It is only since the 1980s that ethnic consumer research has become mainstream in marketing (Holland & Gentry, 1999). Another striking trend in ethnic consumer research has been the concentration of studies using a single ethnic subculture as a unit of analysis (Cohen, 1992; Cui & Vanscoyoc, 1993; Deshpande et al., 1986; Donthu & Cherian, 1994; Green, 1999; Kim & Kang, 2001b; Penaloza & Gilly, 1986). Cui's (2001) meta-analysis of 222 ethnic consumer studies found only 32 articles using two or more ethnic groups (Bush et al., 1999; Delener & Neelankavil, 1990; Shim & Gehrt, 1996), and studies using three or more ethnic groups were even more rare (Hirschman, 1982; Kern-Foxworth, 1991; Kim & Kang, 2001a). Thus, several marketing academics (Cui, 2001; Deshpande et al., 1986; Hirschman, 1981) have called for more comparative, parallel,

and replication studies to improve theoretical understanding and generate testable propositions. Therefore, the aims of this study are to advance theoretical understanding in ethnic socialization research, and to generate hypotheses to test for variation in socialization influences among Asian Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans.

The article contributes to the literature in two significant ways. First, various studies have proposed that socialization influences will vary across ethnic groups (Bush et al., 1999; Delener & Neelankavil, 1990; Kim & Kang, 2001a, 2001b), but a comprehensive and comparative (Asian, Hispanic, and African Americans) analysis of how socialization influences vary among ethnic groups has yet to be explored in the literature. The current study fills this gap by exploring socialization influences among Asian Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans. Second, most of the studies on consumer socialization have focused on children and adolescents, but socialization among young adults (Generation X: age 22–30) has been a relatively unexplored area in the literature. It has been assumed in the literature that consumer socialization based on the cognitive development model takes place only until adolescence (age 15). But Moschis (1981, 1987), one of the pioneers in this field, challenged this view, and has emphasized that people learn different things at different times from different sources as they move through their life cycle. Now it is recognized that consumer socialization continues throughout an individual's life cycle. However, few studies have looked into socialization issues beyond adolescence (Bush et al., 1999; Smith & Moschis, 1985). Thus, this study extends consumer socialization research to young adults and also explores the impact of emerging technologies like the Internet as a socialization agent. It is expected that the results of this study will provide insights into not only how the role of consumer socialization influences differs across ethnic groups but also into how young adults use different socialization agents to seek market information.

CONSUMER SOCIALIZATION

Consumer socialization is the process by which people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes throughout their life cycle (Moschis, 1981, 1987; Moschis & Churchill, 1978; Smith & Moschis, 1985). The cognitive development and social learning models form the theoretical bases for socialization research (Bush et al., 1999; Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Moschis, 1981, 1987). According to the cognitive development model, learning occurs between infancy and adulthood through constant interaction of cognitive-psychological processes of an individual with the environment. The emphasis of this model is on developmental process of an individual through different life stages (Moschis & Moore, 1979). In contrast, the social learning model assumes that

learning takes place through individual's interactions with socialization agents (family, friends, media, and institutions). The social learning approach considers age as one of the several structural variables (age, sex, ethnicity, social class, income and others) impacting learning. The purpose of this study is to not only explore how the impact of socialization agents differs across ethnic groups, but to also study how socialization of young adults differs from that of adolescents, as reported in previous studies on adolescent socialization. Thus, the study uses both the cognitive developmental model and the social learning model as basis for this research.

In addition to using the above two theories as a basis for this study, use of the theory of interpersonal susceptibility is also proposed (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). According to the theory of interpersonal susceptibility, there are normative and informative interpersonal influences that impact how one socializes and learn from the environment. Normative influences involve a desire to conform to the expectations of the people in the group (Bearden et al., 1989; Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993), whereas informative influences involve, "a tendency to learn about products and brands by observing others and seeking information from others" (Bearden et al., 1989, p. 474). Thus, interpersonal influences are received from socialization agents either by observing or by conformation to the agents' behavior (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993).

To summarize, consumers' susceptibility to social influence can be classified into interpersonal influences (normative and informative) and the influence from socialization agents (family, peers, media). Interpersonal influences are viewed in the context of type of influence (normative or informative), and socialization-agent influences are viewed in the context of source of influence (family, peers, media, and institutions) (Kim & Kang, 2001a).

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

It has been recognized in the literature that ethnic subcultures are an important part of the social setting within which the interaction of an individual and socialization agents takes place (Bush et al., 1999; Delener & Neelankavil, 1990; Deshpande et al., 1986; Moschis, 1987). According to social systems theories (Moschis, 1987), different cultures exhibit different norms and values, so the content and sources of learning and the learning experience are expected to differ across cultures. Cultures that place emphasis on following norms and conforming to the expectations of others are more likely to display normative influence. Asian cultures have been found to be collectivist and also high on power distance (Hofstede, 1980). Thus, they encourage following of group norms, and value tradition and authority in the society. Hispanics have also been shown to be family oriented and to respect traditional values

(Deshpande et al., 1986; Hoyer & Deshpande, 1982; Kim & Kang, 2001a, 2001b). African American youth, according to Dan Coleman Advertising, display more independence, self-reliance, and less normative influence. In fact, being a part of a group or a subculture results in utilization of similar sources of information, susceptibility to similar interpersonal influences, selection of similar options to satisfy needs, and patronization of similar brands and stores (Delener & Neelankavil, 1993). Thus, it can be argued that young adults from different ethnic groups, will differ in susceptibility to different socialization influences. This section presents theoretical background and develops hypotheses to test how consumer socialization differs across ethnic groups.

In the consumer socialization literature socialization agents or influences are defined as people or institutions that are directly involved in socialization and that influence consumer learning (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). This study explores the role and importance of four socialization agents, namely, peers, parents, media, and Internet, in the socialization of Asian Americans, Hispanics and African Americans.

Peer Influences

Previous studies on consumer socialization have found peers to be a significant source of influence in choices concerning products and services (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Moschis, 1987; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Cross-cultural studies by Childers and Rao (1992), and Kim and Kang (2001a, 2001b) have found that peer influence differs across cultures. But there is no evidence as to how peer influences actually differ across Asian Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans.

In general, Asian Americans exhibit strong collectivist tendencies and, according to Wanla Chang of Asia Link Consultancy, they rely heavily on referrals and word-of-mouth communication. A recent study by Kim and Kang (2001b) found that ethnic friends were an important reference source for Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese. The collectivist orientation and close-knit relationships among Asian Americans encourage more information sharing (Ownbey & Horridge, 1997), leading to more importance placed on normative and informative peer influences. Peer influence is also significant in the case of Hispanics (Hoyer & Deshpande, 1982), especially among Hispanics living in high-density ethnic neighborhoods. According to Valdes (2000), Hispanic youth in Hispanic neighborhoods have a greater chance to interact with their peers at schools, clubs, and social events. Peer influence has also been proposed to have some influence on African Americans (Moschis, 1987) but there is not enough evidence to show the importance of peer communication among them. Thus, based on the limited theoretical background, it is proposed that among the three ethnic groups Asian Americans will show the highest degree of peer influence, followed by Hispanics and African Americans.

H1: (a) Among the ethnic groups Asian Americans will show the highest normative peer influences, followed by Hispanics and African Americans, in that order.
(b) Among the ethnic groups Asian Americans will show the highest informative peer influences, followed by Hispanics and African Americans, in that order.

Parental Influences

Parents play an important role in the development of child's consumer skills. There is sufficient evidence in the literature to support the impact of parent–child communication on consumption and economic motivations of adolescents (Bush et al., 1999; Mangleburg & Bristol, 1998; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Studies have found Asian Americans to be very family-oriented, and inclined to value tradition and parental authority (Childers & Rao, 1992; Kim & Kang, 2001b; Ownbey & Horridge, 1997; Yau, 1988). According to Wanla Chang of Asia Link Consultancy, to Asian parents children are the centerpiece and key reason for many of their personal goals; thus parental influence is more prominent among Asian Americans. Among Hispanics, *familismo,* or strong family orientation, is an important cultural value. Familismo plays an important role in a youth's life, impacting how they interact and relate to their friends, relatives, and the community at large (Valdes, 2000). Previous literature shows that in collectivist societies (e.g., Asians and Hispanics) the influence of family and parental roles on consumption behavior is likely to be strong (Childers & Rao, 1992). The role of parental influence on socialization of African American youth is relatively unexplored, but a recent study by Bush et al. (1999) found that parents had no significant impact on the formation of attitudes toward advertising by African American youth. Furthermore, according to Moschis (1987), African American youth are less likely to interact with a parent about consumption matters than white youth. Thus, it is proposed that Asian American and Hispanic youth will be more influenced by parental influences than African American youth.

H2: (a) Among the ethnic groups Asian Americans and Hispanics will show the highest normative parental influence, followed by African Americans.
(b) Among the ethnic groups Asian Americans and Hispanics will show the highest informative parental influence, followed by African Americans.

Media Influences

Media has always been considered as a main source of product and service information. Several studies provide evidence that media strongly influences consumer skills and consumption among young people (De-

lener & Neelenkavil, 1990; Mangleburg & Bristol, 1998; Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Previous studies have found mass media to be an important socialization agent influencing Asian American youth (Lee, 1993; Moschis, 1987; Kim & Kang, 2001b). According to Moschis (1987), Asian American youth tend to rely more on mass media for consumer information and are more likely to believe advertising claims than White youth. Young Asians have been shown to prefer television and upscale media to seek market information (Delener & Neelenkavil, 1990). Thus, it may be expected that Asian Americans will show higher normative and informative media influence. Hispanics also tend to be heavy users of television and radio, due to Spanish programming, but rely less on print media (Peneloza & Gilly, 1986). In general, media usage pattern of Hispanics and Asian Americans have been shown to be similar (Delener & Neelenkavil, 1990; Kim & Kang, 2001b; Ramirez, 1983) Among African Americans, television has been found to be the most preferred source of consumer information. African Americans watch 48% more television than Whites (Kim & Kang, 2001a, 2001b). According to Berry and Sheikh (1977), African Americans actually used television as an informational source and as a learning device. Thus, it is expected that Asians, Hispanics, and African Americans will use media as an important socialization agent, but there is limited theoretical basis to propose the degree of importance different ethnic groups will attach to media influences.

H3: (a) Normative media influences will differ across the three ethnic groups.
(b) Informative media influences will differ across the three ethnic groups.

Internet

The Internet is becoming a popular source of market information among young Americans. A survey by Opinion Research Corporation found that 67% of young adults in America use the Internet to gather key market information, compared to the national average of 46% (Pastore, 2002a). In a recent study, Peterson and Merino (2003) propose that some consumers may consciously modify their information-search behavior to take advantage of the Internet's benefits, others may unconsciously modify their information-search behavior in response to the Internet, and some may not modify or change their information search behavior at all. Thus, Internet use will differ across consumer segments depending on access, motivation, ability, and opportunity (Peterson & Merino, 2003). However, the importance of Internet as a socialization agent and source of consumer learning has not been well researched in the literature. But there is some evidence of a digital divide in the use of the Internet across ethnic groups. Horowitz Associates (2002) estimate that

Internet access via home is greatest among Asian Americans (50%) and Whites (44%), as compared to Hispanics (31%) and African Americans (21%). Thus, it can be proposed that the Internet will play an important role as a socialization agent among Asian Americans, followed by Hispanics and African Americans.

> **H4:** The impact of the Internet as a socialization agent will be higher among Asian Americans, followed by Hispanics and African Americans.

SAMPLE

For the study ethnic students from a Midwestern university were recruited. The sample for this study includes young adults (age: 22−30 years). Young adults who span ages 22−34 years have been defined as Generation X (Mitchell, 1999). According to the U.S. census report (2000), young adults represent a significant portion of the ethnic population. More than 30% of Hispanics, 25% of African Americans, and 26% of Asian Americans are a part of this segment. A random sample from a list of ethnic students was selected, and 1,000 questionnaires were mailed. The response rate was 21 percent. The majority of Asian Americans and Hispanics surveyed belonged to first- or second-generation immigrants, and African Americans belonged to the third generation. The data in the study revealed no significant differences in responses based on the generation level or length of stay. The final sample included a total of 210 young adults (69 Asian Americans; 52 Hispanics; and 89 African-Americans).

MEASURES

The scales to measure the constructs in this study are valid and reliable scales from previous socialization studies. A Likert-type 5-point scale was used to record the responses. For normative (three item) and informative peer (four item) influences the scale developed by Bearden et al. (1989) and later tested by Mangleburg and Bristol (1998) was used. The coefficient alphas were at 0.80 for normative and 0.66 for informative peer. Some of the representative items in the normative peer scale included, "it is important that my peers approve of the store where I buy," "I achieve a sense of belonging by buying the same brands my peers buy," and some items in the informative peer scale included, "I always talk to my friends about prices and quality before I buy," "to make sure I buy the right product, I often watch what my friends buy." The parental normative (five item) and informative (three item) scales were adapted from Mascarenhas and Higby (1993). Both scales had re-

liabilities at 0.81 and 0.71, respectively. Some items in the parental normative scale included, "I always shop with my parents," and "my parents decide all my shopping needs." Items in the parental informative scale included questions like, "I often discuss my purchase plans with my parents," and "when I don't understand prices and quality I consult my parents." The media normative (three item) and informative (two item) scales were also from Mascarenhas and Higby (1993). These scales showed a reliability of 0.57 and 0.51, respectively. Some items in media normative and informative scales included, "I buy only those products/brands that are advertised on TV, radio, and magazines," and "I always look at the ads before I buy." The scale to measure the role of Internet as a socialization agent was developed and tested by the researchers. The five-item scale was found reliable at 0.78. Some of the items included in this scale were, "I consider the Internet as a good source of product information," and "I feel comfortable buying products on the Internet."

RESULTS

To analyze the differences in the role of consumer socialization agents across ethnic groups, a one-way ANOVA[1] test was conducted, followed by Tukey-HSD post hoc analysis. Table 1 shows that there were significant differences in the susceptibility of socialization influences across ethnic groups. Except for media informative influence all other socialization agents were found to differ significantly across the ethnic groups. Normative peer and informative peer influence among Asian Americans was significantly higher than Hispanics and African Americans; thus Hypotheses 1(a) and 1(b) are supported. On parental normative and informative influence Asian Americans and Hispanics showed higher mean values than African Americans, and the groups differed significantly. Thus, Hypotheses 2(a) and 2(b) are supported. The ethnic groups also differed significantly on normative media influence, supporting Hypothesis 3(a). However, Hypothesis 3(b) concerning differences in informative media influences is unsupported. The impact of Internet as a socialization agent seems to be the highest among Asian Americans, followed by Hispanics and African Americans; thus Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Post hoc analysis (Table 1) revealed that influence of socialization agents among Asian Americans was significantly different from Hispanics and African Americans, whereas Hispanics and African Americans showed a similar pattern of socialization influences. It is interesting to see that the highest- and the lowest-ranked scores in Table 2 are

[1]ANOVA assumes treatment groups as random; in the exploratory stages of any research stream this type of analysis is typical.

Table 1. Socialization Agents' Influences by Ethnicity.

Variables	Asians ($n = 69$)	Hispanics ($n = 52$)	African Americans ($n = 89$)	F
Normative peer	2.57[a]	2.09[b]	1.87[b]	26.8*
Informative peer	3.23[a]	2.77[b]	2.65[b]	18.6*
Normative parent	2.04[a]	1.82[a,b]	1.62[b]	7.80*
Informative parent	2.53[a]	2.27[a,b]	1.98[b]	8.02*
Normative media	1.80[a]	1.51[b]	1.58[b]	4.47*
Informative media	2.51[a]	2.36[a]	2.34[a]	ns
Internet	3.69[a]	3.40[a]	3.03[b]	16.9*

Note: Means with different superscripts are statistically different from each other at the .05 level. (five point scale: 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree" was used).
  *$p < .01$.

similar across the three groups; Internet and informative peer influences were found to be the most prominent across the ethnic groups, and parental normative and media normative scored the lowest (Table 2). Thus, among young adults susceptibility to informative influences was more pronounced than normative influences. In the following section the results are discussed in more detail.

DISCUSSION

The subjects for this study were Asian American, Hispanic, and African American young adults. In general, the results show that all these young adults in the sample used Internet and informative peer influences as major socialization agents (Table 2). Susceptibility to parental normative and media normative seems to be the least important among them. These findings are in direct contrast to the consumer socialization influences in teens or adolescents. Previous studies on teens or adolescents found that parental normative and parental informative influences are most pronounced among them (Mascarenhas & Higby, 1993; Moschis & Moore, 1979; Shim, 1996). However, as children grow, their

Table 2. Importance of Socialization Agents by Ethnicity.

Asians	Hispanics	African Americans
1. Internet ($\mu = 3.69$)	Internet ($\mu = 3.40$)	Internet ($\mu = 3.03$)
2. Informative peer ($\mu = 3.23$)	Informative peer ($\mu = 2.77$)	Informative peer ($\mu = 2.65$)
3. Normative peer ($\mu = 2.57$)	Media informative ($\mu = 2.36$)	Media informative ($\mu = 2.34$)
4. Parental informative ($\mu = 2.53$)	Parental informative ($\mu = 2.27$)	Parental informative ($\mu = 1.97$)
5. Media informative ($\mu = 2.51$)	Normative peer ($\mu = 2.09$)	Normative peer ($\mu = 1.86$)
6. Parental normative ($\mu = 2.04$)	Parental normative ($\mu = 1.82$)	Parental normative ($\mu = 1.62$)
7. Media normative ($\mu = 1.80$)	Media normative ($\mu = 1.51$)	Media normative ($\mu = 1.58$)

Note: μ = mean values. (Five-point scale: 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree" was used).

relationship with socialization agents also changes; media and peer influences tend to dominate more than parental influences. According to Moschis (1987), with increasing age, individuals use more informative sources of influence and learn consumption skill more by observation rather than compliance to others. Thus, as adolescents mature toward young adulthood they are less dependent on normative family influences and interact more with peers and informative media to seek market information (Moschis, 1987). This study provides evidence that young adults, in contrast to children and adolescents, are less susceptible to normative influences and rely more on the Internet, informative peers, and media than on parents to seek market information.

A much closer look at the data reveals that ethnic consumers vary in the degree of importance they attach to different sources of information (Table 1). Asians, in general, seem to differ significantly from Hispanics and African Americans on normative and informative peer influences, and are more susceptible to these influences. This could be attributed to dependence of Asian Americans on their network of ethnic friends to seek market information (Kim & Kang, 2001b) and due to high levels of group involvement and collectivist tendencies. Moreover, extensive use of Internet among Asian Americans can be attributed to importance of education among Asian families, and higher income levels (Delener & Neelankavil, 1990; Mitchell, 1999) coupled with greater Internet access, which results in using the Internet as an important source of market information. The study also reveals that Hispanics and African Americans are most susceptible to Internet, peer informative, and media informative influences (Table 2). It could be because greater independence from parents translates into greater dependence on peers and media as a source for market information. Moreover, several studies have shown that Hispanics and African Americans, in general, have more favorable attitudes toward media influences and rely more on peers for consumption information compared to Whites (Bush et al., 1999; Hoyer & Deshpande, 1982; Moschis, 1987).

This study shows that Internet is by far the most used socialization agent across the ethnic groups. A national survey of more than 6700 teens by AOL found that the Internet has become a primary tool of communication for teens, surpassing even telephone among some groups (Pastore, 2002b). The survey also found that teens use the Internet both as an entertainment service and as an educational resource. For example, a survey by Kaiser Family foundation found that 68% of young adults used the Internet for health information.

To summarize, even though there are significant differences in the impact of various socialization agents across ethnic groups, there seems to be an emerging general pattern of influences common to all the three ethnic groups. Asian, Hispanic, and African American youth seem to be less susceptible to normative influences and rely more on informative

peer influences and the Internet. The study also provides evidence that socialization influences among young adults differ from those of children and adolescents (Bush et al., 1999; Shim, 1996).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings from this study suggest that young adults from all the three ethnic groups are highly susceptible to Internet and informative peer influences. Currently, there seems to be a digital divide with regard to ethnic populations on-line, and also a lack of targeted ethnic advertising and marketing on the Web. There are few search portals dedicated specifically to Asian Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans. But the study shows that the Internet is an important socialization agent among ethnic youth; thus it will be beneficial for marketers to develop ethnically targeted Web advertising and company Web pages specifically designed for a particular ethnic group. Second, when targeting ethnic young adults more emphasis needs to be paid on modes of advertising and marketing that rely on networks of ethnic friends, and on activities like referral programs, ethnic consumer education, and word-of-mouth advertising.

The present study only examines peers, parents, media, and the Internet as major socialization agents. It will be interesting to see how other socialization agents like schools, colleges, and retailers might impact consumer socialization among ethnic youth. One limitation of this study is that the sample of ethnic young adults was from just one university; a wider cross-sectional sample would provide more generalizable results. A larger, heterogeneous, and nonstudent sample from different regions of the United States will provide adequate data and variability to explore how social structural variables like gender, income, class, strength of ethnic identification, and age might impact susceptibility toward socialization influences. For example, previous research has shown that strength of ethnic identification impacts consumption patterns, brand loyalty, use of media, and attitude toward advertising (Deshpande et al., 1986; Green, 1999; Kim & Kang, 2001b), but no studies, to the knowledge of the authors, have explored its impact on susceptibility to interpersonal influences across ethnic groups. The focus of this study was on consumer socialization agents, and it did not explore how socialization influences will vary by consumption-related variables like product class and purchase situations (high-involvement and low-involvement product situations). Future research can explore how consumer susceptibility to socialization agents will vary by product class and purchase situations. The study also did not explore how socialization agents impact an individual's attitude toward advertising, shopping, consumer activism, and other learning properties. Future re-

search is needed to gain insights into how socialization agents impact consumer-learning properties across ethnic groups. Finally, due to the limited sample size in this study, the effects of acculturation and generational levels were not explored. Future research can investigate how acculturation levels and intergenerational influences among ethnic groups mediate the impact of socialization agents in the development of consumer-related attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

In conclusion, an attempt was made in this study to provide insights into how the importance of consumer socialization agents differ across ethnic groups, and the impact of normative and informative influences on socialization process of young ethnic adults.

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