

Multicultural Marketing

in Contemporary U.S. Markets

By

Chang-Hoan Cho, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor

John Holcombe
Vice President
Insights Marketing Group

Daniel Murphy
Vice President
Insights Marketing Group





Proprietary Statement

© Copyright 2004 Insights Marketing Group, Inc. All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, photocopied, stored on a retrieval system, or transmitted without the express prior written consent of the publisher.

Contact Information

Chang-Hoan Cho, Ph. D.
ccho@jou.ufl.edu
Tel. (352) 392-0420
Fax (352) 846-3015
3057 Weimer Hall
PO Box 118400
Department of Advertising
College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-8400

John Holcombe
john@insights-marketing.com
Insights Marketing Group, Inc.
2512 Swanson Ave.
Miami, FL 33133
Tel. (305) 858-2787

Dan Murphy
dan@insights-marketing.com
Insights Marketing Group, Inc.
321 Stanaford Rd.
Winston-Salem, NC 27104
Tel. (336) 760-1636

www.insights-marketing.com



Executive Summary

Contemporary U.S. markets are becoming more ethnically diverse with more distinctive cultural values and customs among various ethnic groups. According to 2002 Census Briefs, ethnic consumers comprise nearly 30 percent of the U.S. population. This surge of ethnic population is creating enormous marketing opportunities with greater purchasing power among the ethnic markets. Accordingly, U.S. marketers are making every effort to entice these lucrative ethnic markets by developing effective marketing strategies. People tend to live within their cultural boundaries, and cultural diversity in the U.S. significantly affects how ethnic consumers perceive and process advertising messages. According to key cultural theories (distinctiveness theory and accommodation theory), ethnic audiences feel more affinity for culturally accommodating messages and respond more favorably to culturally targeted ads. In this vein, U.S. marketers are trying to develop the most effective marketing strategies to appeal to these emerging ethnic consumers. To prepare for the complex multicultural marketplace, U.S. marketers should build cultural adaptability and understanding and establish insights about the cultural factors they use in comparative marketing analysis for these ethnic groups. This analysis tool can be termed “diagnostic multicultural analysis,” which utilizes four key cultural marketing elements: cultural affinity, acculturation, cultural sensitivity and cultural acceptability. This paper addresses these concepts in terms of their operationalization and practical applications to multicultural marketing.



Introduction

Due to continuous immigration and growth of minority population, the U.S. bears a resemblance to a microcosm of the world, characterized by diverse ethnic subcultures (Doka 1996). Therefore, many people believe America is no longer a “melting pot,” but is a “salad bowl” with distinctive subcultures within the nation. America will continue to become more ethnically diverse, with more distinctive cultural values, norms, and behaviors. Accordingly, marketing in the U.S. is becoming more complex and requires sophisticated tools of cultural analysis. To survive in this competitive marketplace, marketers should be able to target many lucrative subcultures with effective cross-cultural or culture-specific advertising campaigns. The successful development of an effective communication campaign should begin with an in-depth understanding of cross-cultural differences in socio-cultural values and behaviors. This in-depth understanding of subcultural differences will help marketers understand how these differences affect marketing activities and communication patterns, and it will help identify important attitudinal and behavioral characteristics that constitute distinctive subcultural markets. In this sense, multicultural advertising planning is similar to global advertising planning where marketers should decide to what extent global campaigns should be adjusted to meet cultural differences in local markets.



This paper addresses the following research inquiries:

- 1) What is the status quo of ethnic markets in the U.S.?
- 2) What is the relationship between culture and advertising?
- 3) How does culture play-out in U.S. multicultural markets? How does culture influence consumer marketing responses?
- 4) Which theories can explain the cultural aspects of marketing? What are the applications of these theories to a multicultural marketing approach?
- 5) How has the industry dealt with subcultures in the U.S.?
- 6) How should U.S. marketers approach multicultural markets? How should they prepare themselves to be successful in a complex multicultural marketplace?
- 7) How can we segment multicultural markets? Is using cultural divisions as market segmentation tools good enough?
- 8) How do acculturation and cultural affinity play-out in cultural acceptability and sensitivity of marketing stimuli?
- 9) How can we measure cultural sensitivity and cultural acceptability of advertising messages?



Status quo information on ethnic markets

The U.S. is experiencing a growing number of ethnic consumers who express their unique cultural identities. This trend is reinforced by changing demographics, technological, social, cultural and media environments. Ethnic consumers comprise nearly 30 percent of the U.S. population (Briefs on 2002 Census), and are estimated to reach 47.2 percent by 2050 (Patterson, 2001). Eventually, they could become the majority. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2002), Non-Hispanic Whites comprise 70.6% of the U.S. population, followed by 12.4% for Hispanic Americans, 12.2% for African Americans, and 4.1% for Asian Americans. The population growth rates of ethnic groups in the U.S. from 2000 and 2002 were significantly higher than those of the general U.S. population; e.g., 9.8% for Hispanic Americans, 9% for Asian Americans, 3.1% for African Americans, and 2.5% for the general population. This surge of ethnic population is creating enormous marketing opportunities with greater purchasing power among the ethnic markets. The purchasing power of three emerging subcultures in the U.S. (African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans) has already hit \$1 trillion (*Adweek*, 2001). Hispanic Americans have especially become a significant ethnic minority group in terms of marketing. According to USA Today's most recent report, the largest minority group has changed from African Americans to Hispanic Americans for the first time in 200 years. The Economy Research Center at the University of Georgia, estimates that the purchasing power of Hispanic Americans reached \$500 billion in 2002, and will reach \$900 billion by 2010. Eight percent of new car buyers in 2002 were Hispanic Americans, 15% of movie tickets sales came from this group, and 7 to 8% of U.S. radio programs target Latinos.



Recognizing this explosive growth of ethnic markets in the U.S., marketers are making every effort to entice these lucrative ethnic markets and to develop the most effective marketing strategies to appeal to ethnic consumers.

Relationship between Culture and Advertising

Advertising is believed to act as a mirror reflecting culture by transferring current cultural meanings (McCracken 1986). In other words, advertisements are considered a form of social communication that resonate the cultural values of a society (Khairullah 1995). At the same time, advertising creates and produces new cultural values and meanings by influencing group identities and reinforcing stereotypes. So advertising is not only influenced by cultural values but also acts as an agent influencing cultural values. From a marketing perspective, advertisers have been more interested in the effects of culture on consumers' response to advertising.

People tend to live within their cultural boundaries; i.e., people have their own cultural values and norms, which influence the way they think, feel and act. People in the same ethnic groups tend to share the language, customs, values, and social views. These shared values (i.e., culture) influence people's cognitive (beliefs and motives), affective (emotion and attitude) and behavioral (purchase and consumption) processes. Based on this notion of "advertising as a mirror," cultural values and standards are implanted in ads in such a way that consumers can "see themselves" and identify with the characters in the ads and feel affinity with the brands (Hong, Muderrissoglu and Zinkhan 1987). Thus, cultural diversity in the U.S. affects how ethnic consumers perceive and accept advertising messages.



Then, **how does culture play-out in U.S. multicultural markets? How does culture influence consumer marketing responses?** Ethnic consumers have different cultural values than those of the majority group and tend to be more responsive to messages that are reflective of their cultural assets such as personal pride, convenience-oriented, self-fulfillment, self-respect, and accomplishment (Pitts et al. 1989; Green 1995; Hernandez 1988). They have also been known to exhibit different marketing responses such as product use, shopping orientation, response to promotion, brand loyalty, media usage, attitude toward advertising, purchase decision, etc. (Hernandez and Kaufman 1991).

For example, consumers with stronger racial attitudes are more likely to respond positively to ads featuring models of their races (Whittler 1991). More specifically, previous studies show that African Americans respond more favorably to ads featuring a black spokesperson than they do to ads featuring white models (e.g., Choudhury and Schmid 1974; Kerin 1979; Schlinger and Plummer 1972; Williams, Qualls, and Grier 1995).

Then, **why do people from different cultures respond differently to advertising/marketing stimuli?** The common assumption is that more accommodation results in more favorable responses; i.e., the greater the ethnic accommodation by advertisers, the more favorable the evaluations of ads among ethnic groups. In other words, since ethnic audiences feel more affinity for culturally congruent messages, they tend to appreciate culturally accommodating ad messages (e.g., featuring ethnic spokespersons, culturally sensitive messages, placed in culturally congruent media, etc.) and respond more favorably to the ads (Hernandez and Kaufman 1991).



Then, **which theories can explain these cultural aspects of marketing? How can we apply these theories to multicultural marketing approach?** One of the underlying theories of multicultural marketing is “distinctiveness theory.” The theory postulates that “a person’s distinctive traits in relation to other people in the environment will be more salient to the person than more common traits” (McGuire 1984; Grier and Deshpande 2001). For instance, a person will especially demonstrate a strong ethnic identity when the occurrence of people with similar ethnicity is limited in the general population (e.g., minorities living in the U.S.). This theory has been used to conceptualize the effects of ethnic identity on marketing responses; i.e., marketing programs reflecting distinctive cultural characteristics become more salient to ethnic minorities in the U.S. and thus, ethnic audiences are more likely to attend and respond to cultural marketing appeals.

Research generally supports this theory by showing a positive relationship between cultural identity and various ethnic marketing responses, such as high sensitivity to marketer’s targeting efforts, more trust of, and identification with, an ethnically similar source/model, and more favorable responses to culturally sensitive ads and brands (Forehand and Deshpande 2001). Similarly, “speech accommodation theory” postulates that communicators can improve communication by making themselves more similar to message receivers (Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991). Applying this theory to marketing, we can postulate that marketers can improve marketing communications by making themselves more similar to message receivers (consumers) or by accommodating themselves to consumer cultures.



This accommodation effort can be manifested in marketing communications in various ways: using ethnic spokespersons in ads, hiring ethnic salespeople, employing ethnic language, art, music, national flags, or other cultural symbols, placing a retail outlet in an ethnic community, supporting ethnic community events, etc. (Holland and Gentry 1999).

Multicultural Marketing in the U.S.

Then, **how has the industry dealt with subcultures in the U.S.?** Owing to increasing population size and purchasing power of multicultural audiences in the U.S., marketers have already recognized the importance of multicultural marketing, and many marketers are using multicultural segmentation and customized marketing strategies and tactics to appeal to ethnic consumers. Over half of Fortune 500 companies were using some form of multicultural marketing strategies, such as customized advertising, tailored promotional activities, new product lines, customized product packaging, etc. (McDermott 1994). However, another statistic tells a different story: less than 1% of all money spent on consumer advertising targets ethnic minority groups, even though ethnic markets comprise nearly one third of the U.S. population (Jones 2002).

This inconsistency reflects a controversy over ethnic marketing as “narrowcasting” — two different perspectives with regard to using cultural divisions as market segmentation tools. This controversy stems from a double-edged-sword characteristic of multicultural marketing: brand loyalty and organizational efficiency. That is, it is a question of whether ethnically customized strategies are more effective in forming greater brand loyalty or if any advantages may be outweighed by costs of identification and operation (research costs and decrementing efficiency of



operational management of the organization) (Clegg 1996). Some marketers used to be myopic regarding multicultural marketing opportunities in favor of standardized, simplified marketing approach, and ignored lucrative and growing markets such as Latinos, African Americans, Generation Y, Asian Americans, the mature market, the gay market, etc.

For example, in the 1990s, several global companies (e.g., Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola, and Miller Brewing Co.) de-emphasized ethnic marketing practices and developed an integrated marketing approach to appeal to all customers, regardless of their cultural identities (Prince 1993; Rousch 1997; Melcher 1997). Some marketers took a middle-of-the-road approach, called “transcultural” marketing programs that attempted to appeal to all ethnic groups at once (Faura 1999). However, the majority of multicultural researchers still criticize the standardized approach and advocate ethnically differentiated marketing strategies to appeal to various audiences (e.g., Donthu and Cherian 1994; Valencia 1989; Cui 1997; Williams and Qualls 1989; Grier and Deshpande 2001; Jones 2002; Gibson 2001; Tharp 2001).

Moreover, we are continuously hearing the success stories of multicultural marketing campaigns. For example, a recent campaign by McDonald’s targeting Spanish-speaking audiences resulted in a 32 percent sales increase (*TelevisionWeek*, 2003). General Motors doubled their advertising expenditures for multicultural marketing in 2002, and plans to double them again in 2003, to more than \$100 million (*Adweek* 2003).



Therefore, as multicultural marketing researchers, we believe that U.S. marketers should try to take advantage of emerging multicultural markets by targeting untapped multicultural marketing opportunities. To do this, they should first investigate the multiple facets of identity in a multicultural market, understand how consumers' cultural identities are related to market and media choices, investigate attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of specific subcultural groups who are likely to constitute distinctive markets in the future, and examine the effectiveness of various communication tools in building relationships with consumers in a multicultural society.

Then, **how should U.S. marketers approach multicultural markets? How should they prepare themselves to be successful in the complicated multicultural marketplace?** U.S. marketers in multicultural settings should establish *cultural adaptability and understanding*, so that they can embrace increasing multicultural marketing demands and opportunities. According to Tharp (2001), decision-makers in organizations in multicultural markets should have the skill of “border mentality” — identifying multiple situational-cultural meanings, or should perform the role of “transmigrants” — bridging or overlapping agents among two or more subcultures. She argues that this cultural personality and tool provides marketers with insights to buyers' marketing-related activities in multicultural settings so that they can successfully develop marketing strategy. To be successful in a culturally diverse marketplace, marketers should recognize marketing changes or “marketing paradigm shifts” in multicultural settings and should effectively adapt to the shifts by refining different functional areas of marketing and advertising.



She suggests that marketers in multicultural settings can be successful by 1) sharing interests with customers, 2) developing specific marketing strategies for different cultures, 3) identifying important cultural values and situational identities for distinctive cultural groups, 4) targeting “contact points” between consumers and brands, and 5) facilitating consumer dialogue by acquiring intensive (vs. extensive) information about their target customers (vs. all potential buyers).

Based on her assertion, we can postulate that the most important job for a multicultural marketer is to develop an essential tool in interpreting cultural differences and similarities in diverse market environments. In other words, marketers should establish insights into the cultural factors they use in the comparative analysis and how to make marketing sense of it. We believe this essential tool is *diagnostic multicultural analysis*, through which marketers diagnose cultural patterns among diverse ethnic groups and make meaningful market segments for the development of effective culture-sensitive marketing strategies. In other words, multicultural marketers should establish the tool

- 1) to spot patterns that allow subcultures to be grouped together, so that a common marketing strategy may be extended to several subcultures in a group (“transcultural” marketing);
- 2) to develop a distinct marketing strategy for each subculture, if there is a significantly distinct cultural dimension that is important to the specific culture (multicultural marketing);
- 3) to further segment audiences in a subculture, if needed, in terms of cultural affinity, cultural identity or acculturation level (tactical adaptation within a subculture);
- 4) to develop parameters of culturally acceptable marketing stimuli; and
- 5) to establish a protocol for measuring cultural effectiveness of the stimuli.



Multicultural Marketing Strategies and Tactics

Then, **how can we segment multicultural markets? Is using cultural divisions as market segmentation tools good enough?** One of the problems associated with market segmentation by ethnic origin is that we may overlook diversity within the ethnic group. Each ethnic group is diverse in itself. Therefore, it is important to recognize that people in the same ethnic group might be different, especially in terms of acculturation and cultural affinity. Acculturation has been defined as “the process of cultural change and adaptation that occurs when individuals with different cultures come into contact” (Gibson 2001). This concept has been widely used to understand the process whereby U.S. immigrants change their behavior and attitudes toward U.S. society through customs, language, and interpersonal contacts (Khairullah 1995). One study shows that degree of acculturation varies between ethnic groups; i.e., acculturation by Asians was significantly lower than any other ethnic group (Seitz 1998). Moreover, degree of acculturation varies within the same ethnic group. That is, acculturation level serves as a variable influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors within the same ethnic group, such as shopping orientation, use of language and media, perceptions of product attributes, attitude toward advertising, and gender roles (Wallendorf and Reilly 1983).

However, caution must be taken when using the acculturation concept to understand the consumer behaviors of ethnic groups. The conceptualization of acculturation – its definition, study and measurement – has been largely restricted to academia; sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists have dominated the field of study.



Marketers have been applying these constructs over the past two decades to consumer research; however, they were not created for consumer research. For marketing, “although empirical research has found that the acculturation process does have an influence on consumer behavior (D’Rozario and Douglas, 1999; Khairulla 1999; Lee 1993), no systemic account exists that explains why and how acculturation influences consumer behavior.” (Liue 2000).

The use of acculturation measures in marketing research has been critiqued. First, extant acculturation measures tend to be oversimplified or bipolarized - even though acculturation should be viewed as occurring along a continuum (Ueltschy and Krampf 1997). Second, there exists no single measure or indicator of acculturation universally agreed by researchers (Mainous 1989). Different researchers use different operational definitions of acculturation; e.g., strength of ethnic identification (Deshpande, Hoyer, and Donthu 1986), socioeconomic status (Olmedo and Padilla 1978), place of birth (Valencia 1985), and language preference/competence (Burnam et al. 1987) as an indicator of acculturation. Third, most marketing research uses several variables to measure level of acculturation expressed as a single “acculturation score,” but acculturation should be viewed and measured as a multi-dimensional construct (Kim 1979). Moreover, the reliability of acculturation measures is difficult to determine unless studies are replicated over various ethnicities and marketing conditions (O’Guinn and Faber 1985).



When applying measures of acculturation, marketers should distinguish between the *consumer* in a new marketplace and the *individual* in a new civil society. O'Guin, Lee and Faber (1986) coined the term "consumer acculturation." Consumer acculturation has been defined as "the movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country" (Peñaloza 1994). Liu (2000) has furthered in the definition of consumer acculturation as a socialization process or cognitive learning process; one needs to learn how to consume in a new culture. "Some of the consumption-related knowledge or skills the individual has acquired in their original country is no longer applicable" in the U.S.; for example, there exists the need to learn a new currency, new pricing, a large and often perplexing array of brands, the banking system, insurance and financial regulations, and the U.S. system of consumer credit.

The role of advertising, in the context of consumer acculturation (as well as individual acculturation to the extent that it transmits new social values and norms), is immediately apparent. Media is one of the four socialization agents along with family, peers and institutions. In multicultural copytesting, higher normative response scores for Hispanic immigrant populations are in part due to reliance upon advertising for needed information about new products, services and brands. Normative data indicates a stronger response on impact/brand name registration, comprehension, evaluation and intended response among Hispanics because advertising is more relevant; it is playing a critical role in the re-socialization of the consumer. In other words, the information transmitted in advertising to immigrant populations may be welcomed, as opposed to dismissed by consumers socialized in the U.S.



In the case of adult immigrants, this consumer re-socialization process can be easier or more difficult depending upon many factors including; 1) the degree to which the acculturation process began in the country of origin, 2) the environment from which they emigrated (urban vs. rural, for example), 3) their economic status and educational attainment, 4) the ethnic composition of their residential and work environments, 5) availability of, and access to media and institutions, and importantly 6) their desire to integrate into the host consumer culture.

For children born in the U.S. or for those who move to the U.S. at a young age, consumer acculturation is largely a non-issue. Children born in the U.S. to immigrant parents may deal with cultural affinity and ethnic identity; the struggles between their parents desire to maintain the culture of their country of origin, and the child's desire to fully integrate into U.S. popular culture. As acculturated consumers, however, children are often called upon to act as their parent's marketplace guides; fulfilling the role of brand guide, translator, researcher, interpreter and chief negotiator simultaneously.

The implication is that it is not sufficient to measure a consumer's length of time in the U.S., language capabilities, and media usage to arrive at a single score measure of acculturation. Marketers should consider and include behavioral, environmental and attitudinal measures to assess acculturation as multidimensional and dynamic; individuals can choose to acculturate at different rates at different times and in different situations. They can also choose to be bicultural, maintaining both their ethnic identity and ties with their country of origin, and adopting many traits of popular U.S. consumer culture.



A concept that helps to measure the attitudinal dimensions of acculturation is **cultural affinity**, which denotes that people tend to have higher affinities with those from a similar cultural background. Cultural affinity level also varies within and between ethnic groups. Even after controlling income and social class variables, consumers with high vs. low cultural affinity or identification showed significantly different marketing behaviors, such as advertising responses, media usage patterns, family-decision making and information search behavior (Deshpande et al. 1986; Donthu and Cherian 1994; Hernandez and Kaufman 1991). For example, a person who has a high affinity with his/her ethnic culture responds more favorably to ethnic appeals than those who have lower affinities with their cultures.

Similarly, Webster (1994) showed that Hispanic husbands with a higher degree of ethnic identity within the Hispanic culture exerted more influence on family decision making than those with a lower degree of ethnic identity. Green (1999) found that strong black ethnic identifiers responded more positively to ads that were placed in targeted media and featured African Americans in dominant positions, while weak black ethnic identifiers responded more positively to ads that were placed in the general media and featured whites in dominant positions. Due to their impacts on marketing responses, acculturation and cultural affinity concepts can be utilized in multicultural marketing practices in the contemporary U.S. marketplace.



Then, **how can we make marketing sense out of acculturation and cultural affinity? How do acculturation and cultural affinity play-out in cultural acceptability and sensitivity of marketing stimuli?** Levels of acculturation and cultural affinity tend to exert a direct impact on consumer acceptance of, and attitude toward, advertisements with or without cultural sensitivity. More specifically, applying acculturation and cultural affinity to cultural acceptability and sensitivity, we can expect that people with high cultural affinity and low acculturation level will respond more favorably to culturally acceptable and sensitive advertising stimuli. Therefore, it is crucial for U.S. marketers in multicultural environments to assess acculturation and cultural affinity levels among ethnic audiences and the importance of their cultural values within their lives, segment audiences based on the levels of acculturation or cultural affinity, and measure the effectiveness of advertising messages with different levels of cultural acceptability and sensitivity among different acculturation or cultural affinity groups. If advertising messages are insensitive, unacceptable or even offensive to significant portions of the target audience (e.g., high cultural affinity consumers), the advertising could prove to be ineffective or even detrimental. This is how cultural sensitivity and acceptability of marketing stimuli play important roles for multicultural marketing in the U.S. With this in mind, U.S. marketers should understand what drives advertising acceptability and cultural sensitivity among ethnic audiences and should develop a barometer and protocol for assessing cultural sensitivity and acceptability.



Then, **how can marketers optimize the cultural sensitivity of their advertising?** As indicated above, ethnic consumers respond more favorably to communication that accommodates the specific subculture. Presumably the greater the accommodation, the more effective the advertising will be. In other words, culturally accommodating advertising messages tailored to ethnic audiences yield a more favorable attitude toward the ad, which is known to mediate advertising effectiveness, such as attitude toward the brand and purchase intention (MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch 1986).

Therefore, positive attitude toward culturally accommodating ads leads to a more favorable attitude toward the brands in culturally targeted ads, which in turn leads to higher purchase intention for the featured brands. In this vein, it is critical to classify advertising cues/messages/appeals in terms of their cultural accommodation and establish a corresponding spectrum of cultural acceptability/sensitivity. Perhaps a useful theoretical construct to help marketers come to grips with the issue of accommodation is to envision multicultural advertising within a two dimensional matrix. The first dimension delineates the degree of accommodation while the second dimension delineates the quality of the accommodation.

The degree of accommodation dimension ranges from low to high based upon the degree to which the target audience's distinctive identity/culture is evident. For example, in targeting African Americans, the low end of the spectrum would include ads that merely integrate African Americans into the cast of an existing general market ad. Higher on this spectrum would be advertising that integrates African Americans in a prominent position in the cast. Higher still would be the conversion of a general market ad to an all African American cast.

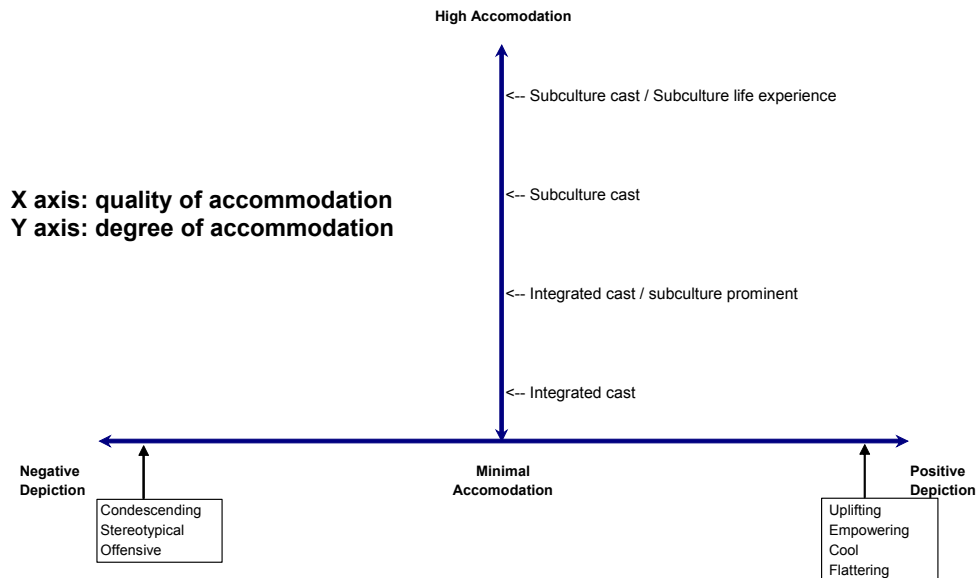


Highest on this dimension would be advertising that not only utilizes an African American cast but also depicts unique aspects of the African American culture relevant to the specific African American target. This dimension reflects the degree to which the advertising authentically captures the subculture's life experiences. Recognize that movement from low to high on this dimension involves greater expense based on the development of more customized advertising and separate media plans, by separate agencies. Thus, marketers must assess the benefits relative to the cost associated with greater accommodation.

The quality of accommodation dimension ranges from positive to negative, based on the degree to which the subculture is perceived to be depicted in a positive or negative light. Positive depiction might be described as uplifting, cool or flattering while negative depiction might be described as stereotypical, condescending or even offensive. We should note that the effectiveness of advertising that is positioned high on the degree of accommodation dimension can be undermined by poor performance on the quality of accommodation dimension.



Effectiveness of Culturally Accommodating Messages



Hypothetically, the most effective targeted advertising is that which is positioned high on both the degree and quality of accommodation dimensions. As noted above, however, the leveragability of movement along the degree and quality of accommodation dimensions in effectiveness of the advertising will most likely be affected by the level of acculturation and/or cultural affinity of the target.

There is presumably less to gain with high degree and quality of accommodation advertising among subculture targets that are highly acculturated and have low cultural affinity than among targets that have lower acculturation and/or have strong cultural affinity. While the above hypotheses seem to have face validity, structured research is needed to validate this theoretical construct.



Nevertheless, given the face validity of the notion that effective multicultural advertising is based on the interaction of the perceived degree and quality of subculture accommodation within the advertising as well as the level of acculturation and cultural affinity of the target audience, it is advisable for marketers to assess these dimensions in the development and evaluation of their multicultural advertising programs.

In conclusion, U.S. marketers in multicultural environments should realize the importance of multicultural marketing and must be “culturally sensitive” enough to be successful in complex, diverse multicultural markets. The definition of subcultures and its marketing usage may vary across different cultures and marketing situations. However, the bottom line is that culturally sensitive marketers should know themselves, understand their customers, and create a marketing atmosphere where every market segment receives attention, respect, and appropriate messages. In short, multicultural market planning must begin with

- 1) understanding cross-cultural differences in communication patterns, values, and behavior, followed by
- 2) evaluating the need for adjustments in strategy and tactics,
- 3) assessing cultural affinity among ethnic audiences,
- 4) segmenting the ethnic audiences based on the level of cultural affinity,
- 5) exploring culturally acceptable/unacceptable, sensitive/insensitive advertising messages among the identified segments,
- 6) developing the most effective and efficient advertising tactics targeted to the identified segments, and finally
- 7) evaluating the effectiveness of advertising campaigns among different target segments.



References

- Adweek (2001), "Media Matters," 42 (9), p44-50.
- Adweek (2003), "Diversity Moves to the Forefront," 40 (2), p5.
- Burnam, Audrey M., Hough, Richard, Telles, Cynthia, Escobar, Javier (1987), "Measurement of Acculturation in a Community Population of Mexican Americans," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 9 (2), 105-130.
- Choudhury, Pravat and Schmid, Lawrence (1974), "Black Models in Advertising to Blacks," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 14 (June), 19-22.
- Clegg, A. (1996), "Color Blind," *Marketing Week*, 19 (13), 38-40.
- Cui, Geng (1997), "Marketing Strategies in a Multi-ethnic Environment," *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 5 (1), 120-132.
- Deshpande, R. Hoyer, W. and Donthu, N. (1986), "The Intensity of Ethnic Affiliation: A Study of the Sociology of Hispanic Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (September), 214-220.
- Doka, K.J. (1996), "Dealing with Diversity: the Coming Challenge to American Business," *Business Horizons*, 39 (May/June), 67-71.
- Donthu, N. and Cherian, J. (1994), "Impact of Strength of Ethnic Identification on Hispanic Shopping Behavior," *Journal of Retailing*, 70 (4), 383-393.
- Faura, J. (1999), "Transcultural Marketing No Long An Afterthought," *Marketing News*, January 4, 16-22.
- Forehand, Mark R. and Rohit Deshpande (2001), "What We See Makes Us Who We Are: Priming Ethnic Self-Awareness and Advertising Response," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38 (August).
- Gibson, M.A. (2001), "Immigrant Adaptation and Patterns of Acculturation," *Human Development*, 44, 19-23.
- Giles, Howard, Coupland, Nikolas, Coupland Justine (1991), "Accommodation Theory: Communication, Context, and Consequences," in *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics*, Howard Giles, Justine Copland, and Nikolas Coupland, eds., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-68.
- Green, C. L. (1995), "Media Exposure's Impact on Perceived Availability and Redemption of Coupons by Ethnic Consumers," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 35 (2), 56-64.
- Green, Corliss L. (1999), "Ethnic Evaluations of Advertising: Interaction Effects of Strength of Ethnic Identification, Media Placement, and Degree of Racial Composition," *Journal of Advertising*, 28 (1), 49-64.
- Grier, Sonya and Deshpande, Rohit (2001), "Social Dimensions of Consumer Distinctiveness: The Influence of Social Status on Group Identity and Advertising Persuasion," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38 (May), 216-224.



Hernandez, S.A. (1988), "An Exploratory Study of Coupon Use in Puerto Rico: Cultural vs. Institutional Barriers," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 28 (October-November), 44-60.

Hernandez, Sigfredo A. and Kaufman, C. J. (1991), "Measuring Consumer Acculturation: Coupon Usage Among "Barrio" Hispanics," *Research in Consumer Behavior*, 5, 61-82.

Holland, Jonna and Gentry, James W. (1999), "Ethnic Consumer Reaction to Targeted Marketing: A Theory of Intercultural Accommodation," *Journal of Advertising*, 28 (1), 65-77.

Hong, J., Muderrisoglu, A. and Zinkhan, G. M. (1987), "Cultural Differences and Advertising Expression: A Comparative Content Analysis of Japanese and U.S. Magazine Advertising," *Journal of Advertising*, 16 (1), 55-62.

Jones, Gwen (2002), "Advertising to Multicultural Populations," *Best's Review*, February, 28-31.

Kerin, Roger (1979), "Black Model Appearance and Production Evaluation," *Journal of Communication*, (winter), 123-128.

Khairullah, Durriya (1995), "Acculturation and Its Relation to Asian-Indian Immigrants' Perceptions of Advertisements," *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 11 (2), 55-64.

Kim, Young Y. (1979), "Toward an Interactive Theory of Communication Acculturation," In *Communication Yearbook*, Ed. D. Nimmo, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books.

MacKenzie, Scott B., Lutz, Richard and Belch, George E. (1986), "The Role of Attitude toward the Ad as a Mediator of Advertising Effectiveness: A Test of Competing Explanations," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 23 (May), 130-143.

Mainous, Arch G. III (1989), "Self-Concept as an Indicator of Acculturation in Mexican Americans," *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 11 (2).

McCracken, Grant (1986), "Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods," *Journal of Consumer Research*, (June), 71-84.

McDermott, M. J. (1994), "Marketers Pay Attention! Ethnics Comprise 25 percent of the U.S.," *Brandweek*, 35 (29), 26.

McGuire, William (1984), "Search for the Self: Going Beyond Self-Esteem and the Reactive Self," In *Personality and the Prediction of Behavior*, R.A. Zucker, J. Aronoff, and A.I. Rabin, eds. New York: Academic Press, 73-120.

Melcher, R. (1997), "United Colors of Miller: It's Ditching Ethnic Marketing for Cross-Cultural Ads," *Business Week*, May 19, 96.

O'Guinn, Thomas and Faber, Ron (1986), "Advertising and Subculture: The Role of Ethnicity and Acculturation in Market Segmentation," *Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 9, Ann Arbor, Michigan: Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan, 133-147.



Olmedo, Estaban L. and Padilla, A. (1978), "Empirical and Construct Validation of a Measure of Acculturation for Mexican Americans," *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 105, 179-187.

Patterson, O. (2001), "Race by the numbers," *New York Times*, May 8, 27.

Pitts, R. E., Whalen, D. J., O'Keefe, R. and Murray, V. (1989), "Black and White Response to Culturally Targeted Television Commercials: A Value-Based Approach," *Psychology and Marketing*, 6 (winter), 311-328. Prince, G. W. (1993), "Coke and Pepsi: A Year in the Life," *Beverage World*, 112 (1556), 32.

Rousch, C. (1997), "Marketing Shift: Coca-Cola Mainstreams Ethnic Group Sales Strategy," *Atlantic Journal of Constitution*, 19 (January), D1.

Schlinger, Mary and Plummer, Joseph (1972), "Advertising in Black and White," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 9 (May), 149-153.

Seitz, Victoria (1998), "Acculturation and Direct Purchasing Behavior among Ethnic Groups in the U.S.: Implications for Business Practitioners," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 15 (1), 23-31.

TelevisionWeek (2003), "Multicultural Focus for McDonald's," 8 September, 22 (36), p30.

Tharp, M.C. (2001), *Marketing and Consumer Identity in Multicultural America*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ueltschy, Linda and Krampf, Robert (1997), "The Influence of Acculturation on Advertising Effectiveness to the Hispanic Market," *Journal of Applied Business Research*, 13 (2), 87-101.

Valencia, Humberto (1985), "Developing an Index to Hispanicness," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 12, 118-121.

Valencia, Humberto (1989), "Hispanic Values and Subcultural Research," *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 17 (1), 23-28.

Wallendof, M. and Reilly, M.D. (1983), "Ethnic Migration, Assimilation and Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10 (December), 292-302.

Webster, Cynthia (1994), "Effects of Hispanic Ethnic Identification on Marital Roles in the Purchase Decision Model," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (September), 319-331.

Webster, Cynthia (1999), "The Effects of Hispanic Subcultural Identification on Information Search Behavior," *Journal of Advertising Research*, 32 (5), 54-62.

Whittler, Tommy (1991), "The Effects of Actors' Race in Commercial Advertising: Review and Extension," *Journal of Advertising*, 20 (1), 54-60.

Williams, J.D. and Qualls, W.J. (1989), "Middle-class Black Consumers and Intensity of Ethnic Identification," *Psychology and Marketing*, 6 (4), 263-286.

Williams, Jerome, Qualls, William, and Grier, Sonya (1995), "Racially Exclusive Real Estate Advertising: Public Policy Implication for Fair Housing Practices," *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 14 (Fall), 225-244.