

# The Effect of Acculturation and Cultural Values on Shopping Behaviors of Asian Consumers in the United States

The Effect of  
Acculturation  
and Cultural  
Values on  
Shopping  
Behaviors  
of Asian  
Consumers  
in the  
United States

Hye-Jung Jung<sup>+</sup> · Carl L. Dyer<sup>\*</sup>

*Doctoral Student, Dept. of Clothing and Textiles, Seoul National University<sup>+</sup>*

*Hayes Distinguished Professor, Dept. of Textile Products Design & Marketing, University of North Carolina at Greensboro<sup>\*</sup>*

**Abstract** *The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of acculturation level and individualism/collectivism on shopping behaviors such as informational influences, shopping orientations, and store patronage of Asian ethnic groups residing in the United States. A total of 129 Asian adults residing in North Carolina State of the U.S. completed questionnaires. Results showed statistically significant differences in responses to an informational influence (i.e., media source) and two shopping orientation subscales (i.e., shopping confusion in the U.S. and personalized shopping) between low- and high-acculturated groups. A significant difference was found between the individualistic group and the collectivistic group on three shopping orientation subscales. Due to the potential importance of considering both acculturation and individualism/collectivism when looking at shopping behaviors, four groups were created by categorizing respondents on the basis of their acculturation level and individualism/collectivism scores. Comparison on shopping orientations and informational influences by four groups revealed statistically significant differences in response to two shopping orientation subscales and two patronage behavior subscales.*

**Key words** *acculturation, individualism/collectivism, Asian consumers in the United States, informational influences, shopping orientations*

## **Introduction**

The Asian population is the fastest growing of all ethnic groups in the United States (American Demographics, 2002). Asians in the U.S. account for 10.9 million comprising 3.8 percent of the total U.S. population, and are expected to reach 37 million (9.3 percent of the U.S. population) by the year 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The projected considerable size of Asians in the U.S. and its growth rate presents challenges and opportunities to consumer scientists in promoting a better understanding of needs and preferences for individuals from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Behavior patterns of individuals who have immigrated to a new country are traditionally viewed as a mixture or blend of the two cultures. Researches called this cultural changes *acculturation* which is the process of learning and adopting cultural traits, different from the ones with which the person was originally reared (Ownbey & Horridge, 1997). Specifically, immigrant consumption behaviors reflect a combination of the norms of the original culture and the norms of the host culture (Wallendorf & Reilly, 1983).

Once Asian consumers move to the U.S., their cultural values, attitudes and behaviors may be modified from what they were in their home cultures due to the different social and economic environments such as marketing system, products and services, lifestyle, and consumer behavior (Cheng, 2000). Asian consumers may also maintain their own cultural values such as collectivism even in a new society. After entering the United States, most Asians begin to change their relatively homogeneous consumer patterns as they encounter new consumer opportunities (Shim & Chen, 1996). Depending on their stages of cultural acceptance and modification, their different values, attitudes and beliefs may change toward a more Westernized perspective of consumer behaviors (Tan & McCullough, 1985).

Some researchers have studied Asians' acculturation characteristics or cultural values in relation to their shopping behaviors (Ownbey & Horridge, 1997; Kang & Kim, 1998), complaints or expressions about product satisfaction (Watkins & Liu, 1996), and motivations, lifestyles, and product criteria (Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989). However, little research has been considered variables of acculturation and cultural values to identify important factors affecting Asian consumer behavior. Researchers have examined acculturation and individualistic versus collectivistic cultural values separately in order to identify consumer behaviors among ethnic groups (Shim & Chen, 1996; Ownbey & Horridge, 1997; Kang & Kim, 1998; Lee, Fairhurst, & Dillard; 2002). What are missing are studies that consider the influences of both factors. The potential importance of considering these two factors jointly may suggest a practical point of divergence in this study. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate informational influences and shopping orientations of a specific product category (i.e., apparel) for Asians residing in the United States regarding their acculturation levels and cultural values such as collectivism versus individualism.

Results of this study will contribute to the area of consumer behavior from a cultural perspective and provide practical implication for fashion marketing in the globalized marketplace. Marketers and retailers will gain a better understanding of Asian consumers in relation to informational influences and shopping orientations of apparel purchases from cultural perspectives. The findings will also be useful in advertising to Asian market segments for enhancing satisfactory apparel products and services.

---

## **Literature Review**

### **Acculturation**

There has been a widely quoted definition of acculturation described by the Social Science Research Council (1954, p.974): "...acculturation may be defined as culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems." According to Ownbey and Horridge (1997, p.3), the acculturation of consumer perspective was defined as "the process of learning and adopting the consumer cultural traits, different from the ones with which individuals were originally reared".

The acculturation scale at the individual level has been developed as a multidimensional measure that includes two settings of change within the subculture: (a) to maintain or drop the original culture and (b) to adopt new culture styles. Most developed measures comprise variables that indicate cultural identification (e.g., self-designated ethnic group or ethnic identity) and acculturation behaviors (language use and preference, food preference, religion, media exposure, and social interaction) (Cheng, 2000). To date the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn et al., 1987) has been the most extensively used instrument to assess acculturation of Asian ethnic groups. Suinn et al. (1987) designed the SL-ASIA scale to evaluate cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral content specifically of Asians. The SL-ASIA dichotomized Asian and American identification along a continuum between highly identified Asian and highly identified American, with the bicultural self-identity represented as average.

Understanding and being able to assess acculturation is critical to researchers and marketers who serve the growing number of Asians in the U.S. because Asian acculturation has been discussed substantially in the area of consumption behaviors. Ownbey and Horridge (1997) examined the relationships between acculturation levels and shopping orientation of Chinese- and Filipino-American consumers using the SL-ASIA scale to measure acculturation levels for Asians. They found significant differences of shopping orientation between high- and low-acculturated groups. Results from this study illustrated that the low-acculturated group had more shopping-orientation traits related to two distinct factors (i.e., shopping sex roles and shopping opinion leadership) than members of the high-acculturated group.

### **Individualism versus Collectivism**

The most central dimension of cultural values that has been used to compare and characterize American culture and Asian culture is individualism versus collectivism. Individualism is associated with emphases on independence, achievement, freedom, high levels of competition, and pleasure (Hofstede, 1980). Individuals raised in individualistic societies seek to

differentiate themselves from others and emphasize personal goals over relationships with others (Triandis, 1995). On the other hand, Collectivism is associated with emphases on interdependence, harmony, family security, social hierarchies, low levels of competition, and cooperation (Hofstede, 1980). Individuals raised in collectivistic societies are more likely to have interdependent relationships to their in-groups and to subordinate their personal needs and interests to their in-group needs and interests (Triandis, 1995).

A specific dimension of cultural values and consumption behaviors may be retained even when individuals move to a different cultural environment (e.g., an individualistic society versus a collectivistic society). Several researchers have begun to examine how consumers from a collective society behave in a marketplace within an individualistic society (Tse, 1996; Watkins & Liu, 1996). These investigators are examining the social-cultural influences on consumption and buying patterns. Additionally, they are demonstrating how collectivistic consumers perceive consumption activities, evaluate their purchase, and use consumption patterns as a means to develop social relationships.

Lee (2000) investigated effects of individualism versus collectivism on consumer purchasing behavior by examining the psychological processes that intervene. Using camera category choice intentions, Lee(2000) found strong support for the model with respondents from three collectivistic nations (Singapore, Korea, and Hong Kong), and two individualistic nations (Australia and the United States). At the individual level, it was found that both referent influences and affordability had a stronger influence for the collectivistic sample than for the individualistic sample.

### **Shopping Behaviors**

#### *Information sources*

Consumers gather information to reduce uncertainty and risk before making purchase decisions (Cox & Rich, 1964). Information sources appear to be influenced by personal characteristics such as social class, life style, and family life cycle, and related to shopping orientations (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1992). Understanding consumer information-seeking activities has been considered essential in the design of efficient communications between consumers and marketers.

Researchers have used several different methods to categorize information sources. Blackwell et al. (2001) classified information sources as personal such as friends, family, and salespeople and impersonal such as mass media, retailers' sales promotions. Cox (1967) categorized information sources as market-dominated sources (e.g., newspaper advertisements, television/radio commercials, salespeople), neutral sources (e.g., magazines and consumer reports), and personal sources (e.g., family and friends).

Kang and Kim (1998) classified two types of informational influences: personal influen-

---

ces such as reference groups (e.g., family, friends, and coworkers) and marketer-generated influences such as media (e.g., television, radio, and newspaper). They investigated the decision-making styles for purchasing social clothes by three major Asian ethnic groups (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean). Results indicated that three groups exhibited different informational influences and store attribute importance and that these patterns differed depending on the ethnicity. Findings concerning informational influences showed that both Chinese and Koreans tended to rely on their ethnic friends and American friends more than the Japanese relied on those reference groups.

The Effect of  
Acculturation  
and Cultural  
Values on  
Shopping  
Behaviors  
of Asian  
Consumers  
in the  
United States

#### *Shopping orientation*

Shopping orientations are shoppers' styles that place emphasis on certain activities in particular (Hawkins et al., 1989). Several researchers (e.g., Moye & Kincade, 2003; Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993; Visser, Preez, & Toit, 1996) proposed that shopping orientation could serve as a practical basis for segmentation of apparel shoppers. Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993) generated shopping typologies of apparel shoppers based on nine identified shopping orientations. They identified highly involved apparel shoppers, apathetic apparel shoppers, and convenience-oriented catalog shoppers. Furthermore, they suggested that profiles of apparel shopping orientation clusters could provide extensive information on patronage behavior, information usage, demographics, lifestyle and store attributes.

Shopping orientations, which are frequently referred to as shopping specific psychographics, reflect a multidimensional concept of social, recreational, and economic phenomena. Thus, shopping orientations of a new generation or of a different culture must reflect constant social, cultural, and economic changes in a society (Shim & Kotsiopoulos, 1993). Some investigators (e.g., Ho, 1991; Ownbey & Horridge, 1997) have indicated that people of different cultural backgrounds were different in terms of their shopping orientations.

Ho (1991) compared Asians and Caucasians in the U.S. with regard to apparel shopping orientations. In his study, seven shopping orientations were selected: economic shopping, personalizing shopping, recreational shopping, social shopping, brand loyal shopping, impulse shopping, and fashion orientations. He found that Asian consumers were shown to be significantly more brand loyal and liked to shop with friends or family members more than the Caucasian consumers. Ownbey and Horridge (1997) explored relationships between shopping orientations and acculturation levels of Asian ethnic consumers (i.e., Chinese and Filipino) living in the U.S. Regarding acculturation levels, Asian ethnic consumers were found to be different in responses to two shopping orientations (i.e., shopping sex role and shopping opinion leadership).

The fact that the Asian population in an American society has been growing routinely and rapidly highlights the need for research on shopping behaviors related to cultural per-

spectives for this ethnic group. Asian consumers who move to the U.S. may maintain their own cultural values such as collectivism, experience conflict between the host culture value (e.g., individualism) and their original cultures (e.g., collectivism), or undergo the cultural transformation process by acculturating in the U.S. Along with this, shopping patterns of Asian ethnic groups can be viewed as an outcome of changes in a new cultural setting. The literature reviewed above indicates that acculturation level and cultural values are vital variables in Asian consumer behaviors and especially both two factors may have an effect on shopping behaviors such as consumers' information source and shopping orientation. So, this study will identify an impact of acculturation and cultural values such as individualism and collectivism on information source and shopping orientation of Asian consumers residing in the United States.

### ***Methods***

#### **Data Collection**

A total of 180 questionnaires were given to Asian students and residents of Asian descent living in North Carolina from April 1<sup>st</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The sample was recruited from two sources: university students and a young Asian ethnic Christian's group. A total of 129 respondents completed questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 71.7%. The surveys were completed by 68 females (52.7%) and 61 males (47.3%). A majority of the respondents were South Korean (43.4%). Chinese (14%), Asian Indian (7.8%), Vietnamese (5.4%), Japanese (3.9%), and Taiwanese (3.9%) were responded in this study. Approximately, 20% of respondents identified themselves as representing other Asian ethnic groups such as Hmong, Cambodian and Thai. The age range of the sample was between 18 and 22 (36.4%), between 23 and 28 (44.2%), and older than 28 (19.4%). Concerning their current education levels, the majority of respondents were either undergraduate students (45.0%), or graduate students (36.4%), or English program students (8.5%). A majority of respondents (70.5%) were non-U.S. citizens; 29.5% were U.S. citizens.

#### **Measures**

A questionnaire consisting of five different sections (acculturation, individualism/collectivism, informational influences, shopping orientation, and demographics) written in English was developed for this study. Twenty-one items of the SL-ASIA (Suinn et al., 1987) were included to investigate acculturation levels. Multiple-choice items covered six domains such as language preference (4 items), cultural identity (4 items), friendship choice (4 items), behaviors (5 items), generation/geographic history (3 items), and attitudes (1 item). These items were scored on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = low acculturated or very Asian to 5 =

---

high acculturated or very Westernized). This study used 32 belief and behavioral items differentiating between individualism and collectivism from the study of Singelis et al. (1995). A five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5), was used to collect respondents’ level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

To measure informational influences, seven items were adapted from earlier studies (Kang & Kim, 1998) and developed by the researcher and measured on a five-point scale ranging from “not important” (1) to “very important” (5). Based on previous studies of shopping orientation (Ownbey & Horridge, 1997; Kang & Kim, 1998), 29 items are measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Respondents answered the questions for informational influences and shopping orientations considering situation when they select apparel products.

### **Data Analysis**

Several statistical techniques were used to analyze the data collected in this survey. Descriptive statistics with frequencies were run for providing detailed information of respondents and for grouping responses of acculturation and individualism/collectivism. Principal components factor analysis was conducted to factorize the 7 informational influence items and the 29 shopping orientation items. Additionally, Cronbach’s alpha analysis was performed to assess reliability of each factor. A Pearson’s correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between acculturation level and individualism/collectivism. Independent-samples t-test analyses were used to test influences of acculturation level and individualism/collectivism on shopping behaviors. With regard to examining the interaction effect of acculturation level and individualism/collectivism, the one-way ANOVA were performed.

## ***Results and Discussion***

### **Factor Analyses of Informational Influences and Shopping Orientation**

Principal component factor analyses with both Varimax rotation for the 7 information source items and Equamax rotation for the 29 shopping orientation items were performed to identify the underlying factorial structure and the pattern of association of individual variables with the resulting factors. The criterion of Eigenvalue greater than 1 was used to determine the number of factors to extract. Factor loadings of .50 and greater were used to label the resulting factors. Results of the factor analysis for the information source items yielded two informational influence factors: (a) reference group and (b) mass media. Factor loading of informational influences ranged from 0.80 to 0.89 and the two factors were accounted for 74.1 of total variance (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
Factor Analysis Results of Informational Influences Scale

Factors and Items	Factor loading	Eigen value	% of variance	Cronbach's alpha
Factor 1: mass media		3.77	53.90	0.87
Television advertisements	0.80			
Newspaper advertisements	0.87			
Radio advertisements	0.83			
Internet advertisements	0.81			
Factor 2: reference group		1.41	20.19	0.83
Family/relatives	0.83			
Ethnic friends	0.89			
American friends	0.81			

Factor analysis of the shopping orientation items revealed nine factors: (a) follower shopping, (b) brand conscious, (c) shopping confusion in the U.S. (d) shopping sex role, (e) value conscious, (f) personalized shopping, (g) innovativeness, (h) price conscious, and (i) socializing shopping. Factor loading ranged from .52 to .87 and the total percent of variance accounted for was 67.4 (see Table 2).

**Table 2**  
Factor Analysis Results of Shopping Orientations Scale

Factors and Items	Factor loading	Eigen value	% of variance	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Factor 1: follower shopping		5.01	17.3	0.73
I try to find clothing like others in my group.	0.71			
I check what my friends or other people are wearing before I shop for clothing.	0.83			
When I shop for clothing, I try to find something similar to what my friends wear.	0.82			
I usually observe Americans when I shop because I find and buy clothing like their clothing.	0.66			
Factor 2: brand conscious		3.06	10.6	0.75
I never buy unknown brands.	0.72			
Brand name is the best indicator of quality.	0.69			
I have favorite brands to buy over and over.	0.67			
Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it.	0.65			



Factor 3: shopping confusion in the U.S.		2.33	8.0	0.79
Clothing size in the U.S. is very confusing.	0.82			
I'm confused about choosing the right clothes for me in the U.S.	0.86			
There are so many apparel brands to choose from that often I feel confused.	0.76			
Factor 4: shopping sex role		2.17	7.5	0.83
Shopping is always a woman's job.	0.87			
Shopping is one of the wife's major responsibilities for her family.	0.87			
Factor 5: value conscious		1.81	6.3	0.67
Getting very good quality is important to me.	0.74			
I make a special effort to choose the very best quality products.	0.81			
Factor 6: personalized shopping		1.55	5.4	0.51
I feel uncomfortable when salespeople approach me.	0.72			
I like it when salespeople leave me alone while I am shopping.	0.70			
Factor 7: innovativeness		1.33	4.6	0.68
Buying new clothing every season is a waste of money.	0.73			
I enjoy shopping for new products or brands in clothing.	0.52			
Factor 8: price conscious		1.26	4.3	0.58
A person can save a lot of money by shopping for bargains.	0.68			
The lower price products are usually my choice.	0.53			
I pay much more attention to clothing prices now than I ever did before.	0.69			
Factor 9: socializing shopping		1.03	3.6	0.61
I like going shopping by myself more than going with other people.	0.83			
It is fun to go shopping with friends or family.	0.79			

### Reliability Analyses

Cronbach's alpha calculated for scores on the SL-ASIA was .94, a reliable level for the type of research conducted in this study (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Other researchers (Ownbey & Horridge, 1997; Suinn et al., 1987; Suinn et al., 1992) have reported SL-ASIA  $\alpha$  coefficients of 0.89, 0.88, and 0.91, respectively. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for individualism/collectivism was 0.82. Subscales of informational influences, (a) reference group (0.83) and (b) mass media (0.87), were found to be at acceptable levels of Cronbach's alpha (Table 1). As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha for the shopping orientation subscales ranged from 0.51 to 0.83 and all individual subscales were in the acceptable range

of reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

**Effects of Acculturation on Shopping Behaviors among Asian consumers**

Low-(*n*=68) and high-(*n*=61) acculturation groups were formulated by performing a median split on a single score distribution for acculturation level scores. The acculturation score was ranged from 1 (low acculturated or very Asian) to 5 (high acculturated or very Westernized). The median split value was 2.05.

*Informational influences differences between low- and high acculturation*

This study predicted that Asian consumers' levels of acculturation would affect their informational influences for apparel shopping. With regard to the seven individual information source items, significant differences were found for both American friends' advice and radio advertisements between the low-acculturated and high-acculturated groups (see Table 3). Results showed that the high-acculturated group had higher mean scores on American friends than did the low-acculturated group indicating that the high-acculturated group tended to put greater importance on American friends than did low-acculturated group. In terms of radio advertisements, the high-acculturated group had higher mean scores than did the low-acculturated group indicating the high-acculturated group tended to put greater importance on the radio advertising than did low-acculturated group.

**Table 3**  
Informational Influences Differences of Low- and High-Acculturated Groups

Information Sources	Low-acculturated group( <i>n</i> =68)	High-acculturated group( <i>n</i> =61)	<i>t</i> value
Reference group <sup>a</sup>	2.83	3.07	-1.32
Family/relatives advice	2.99	3.21	-1.04
Ethnic friends advice	3.09	3.02	0.35
American friends advice	2.44	2.98	-2.74**
Mass media <sup>b</sup>	2.23	2.56	-2.00*
TV advertisements	2.43	2.79	-1.82
Newspaper advertisements	2.25	2.43	-0.93
Radio advertisements	1.88	2.28	-2.16*
Internet advertisements	2.37	2.75	-1.87

Note: <sup>a</sup>Represents a composite mean of family/relatives, ethnic friends, and American friends.

<sup>b</sup>Represents a composite mean of television, newspaper, radio, and the Internet.

\**p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01

A glance at the means shows that the degree of importance on items of reference group sources is high in both low- and high-acculturated groups. This finding corresponds to findings of Quester, Karunaratna, and Chong (2001) that all high-, medium-, and low-acculturated Asian respondents (i.e., Chinese) reported relying on reference group influences than on media sources. The possible explanation is that reliance on reference group is one aspect of culture that remains continuously even in high-acculturated individuals.

*Shopping orientation differences between low- and high acculturation*

Significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) were found for the two shopping orientation variables: shopping confusion in the U.S. and personalized shopping between the low- and high-acculturated groups (Table 4). Responses of the low-acculturated group for the shopping confusion in the U.S. variable were expected to be higher than responses of the high-acculturated group indicating greater levels of shopping confusion among low-acculturated respondents. Mean scores of the high-acculturated group for the personalized shopping variable were higher than mean scores of the lower-acculturated group indicating greater levels of personalized shopping among high-acculturated respondents.

**Table 4**  
Shopping Orientations Differences of Low- and High-Acculturated Groups

Shopping Orientations	Low-acculturated group(n=68)	High-acculturated group(n=61)	t value
Shopping confusion in the U.S.	3.19	2.50	4.21***
Value conscious	3.76	3.80	-0.26
Shopping sex role	2.35	2.39	-0.21
Price conscious	3.31	3.43	-0.86
Follower shopping	2.44	2.65	-1.56
Innovative shopping	2.90	2.94	-0.25
Brand conscious	3.18	3.08	0.65
Personalized shopping	2.45	2.89	-4.12***
Socializing shopping	3.30	3.19	0.69

\*\*\* $p < .001$

In terms of the personalized shopping category, high-acculturated individuals tended to be more positive to the relationship with salespeople than did low-acculturated individuals. The possible explanation is that low-acculturated shoppers may be less personalized with salespeople because they may want to talk with salespeople in their own language or be unwilling to speak in English with salespeople. According to Ownbey (1991), the Asian ethnic group preferring an Asian language is less acculturated than those who have adopted

the practice, including the language, of American culture. Thus, the result of this study was supported by Ownbey's (1991) findings.

Both the low-aculturated group and the high-aculturated group provided the highest mean scores on the value conscious. These findings indicate that both low-aculturated individuals and high-aculturated individuals tend to put greater orientation toward the value conscious than other shopping orientations.

### Effects of Individualism vs. Collectivism on Shopping Behaviors among Asian Consumers

The individualism group ( $n=62$ ) and the collectivism group ( $n=67$ ) were formulated by performing a median split on a single score distribution for individualism and collectivism scores. Where appropriate, items were reversed score to allow for lower scores to represent greater individualism. The individualism and collectivism score range was from 1 (individualistic) to 5 (collectivistic). The median split value was 3.09.

#### *Informational influence differences between Individualism and Collectivism*

This study assumed that Asian consumers' individualism/collectivism would affect their informational influences for apparel shopping. However, there was no significant difference between the individualistic group and the collectivistic group in two informational influence factors. With regard to the seven individual informational influence items, a significant difference was found for using the advice of American friends between the individualistic and collectivistic groups ( $t=2.96$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Results revealed that the individualistic group had higher mean scores (mean=3.00) on American friends' advice than did the collectivistic group (mean=2.42).

#### *Shopping orientation Differences between Individualism and Collectivism*

Comparing on shopping orientations for the individualism/collectivism groups are presented in Table 5. Significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) were found for three shopping orientation variables: value conscious, shopping sex role, and socializing shopping between two groups.

**Table 5**  
Shopping Orientations Differences between Individualistic and Collectivistic groups

Shopping Orientations	Individualistic group( $n=62$ )	Collectivistic group( $n=67$ )	<i>t</i> value
Shopping confusion in the U.S.	2.72	3.00	-1.60
Value conscious	3.94	3.63	2.15*
Shopping sex role	2.63	2.13	2.58*

Price conscious	3.45	3.29	1.15
Follower shopping	2.62	2.46	1.24
Innovativeness	2.99	2.84	1.14
Brand conscious	3.23	3.04	1.24
Personalized shopping	2.70	2.61	0.81
Socializing shopping	3.06	3.43	-2.28*

\* $p < .05$ .

The collectivistic group had higher means on the orientation toward socializing shopping than did the individualistic group indicating that collectivistic individuals are more inclined to be socializing shopping than are individualistic individuals. For both the value conscious and shopping sex role variables, responses of the individualistic group were higher than responses of the collectivistic group indicating greater levels of both the value conscious and the shopping sex role among individualistic respondents. In comparison between individualistic and collectivistic groups, significant differences were found in three shopping orientation categories (high-quality consciousness, shopping sex role, and socializing shoppers). The individualistic group had a greater orientation toward the high-quality consciousness than did the collectivistic group. According to Sproles and Kendall (1986), the high-quality consciousness orientation is characterized by a consumer's search for the highest or very best quality in products. In this study, individualistic shoppers may be more careful, systematic or comparison shoppers than collectivistic shoppers may.

Sex role-oriented shopping is likely to reinforce or inhibit shopping activity and enjoyment as a result of perceptions of the appropriateness of specific tasks being done by men or women (Valencia, 1982). A more traditional family structure tends to regard shopping as a female sex role more so than Anglos (Valencia, 1982). Hierarchical family structures (Sue & Sue, 1999) and collectivism (Kim et al., 1999) are central to the Asian ethnic groups. Previous studies suggested that it could be assumed that collectivistic individuals might have more tendencies to adopt shopping sex role than might individualistic individuals. In this study, individualistic shoppers tended to have a greater orientation toward shopping sex role than did collectivistic shoppers. Thus, the finding of this study revealed inconsistent with previous studies.

The collectivistic group had a higher mean on the orientation toward socializing shoppers than did the individualistic group. This result points out that collectivistic individuals tend to be more socializing shoppers rather than do individualistic individuals. Socializing shoppers are likely to shop with family or friends, and discuss shopping matters with them (Shim & Chen, 1996). In collectivistic cultures, the self is defined as an aspect of in-group (e.g., family, peers) and norms, duties, and obligations regulate most social behavior (Singelis

et al., 1995). The results of this study correspond with this literature.

### **Effects of Acculturation and Individualism/Collectivism on Shopping Behaviors**

Results revealed that the correlation between acculturation and individualism/collectivism was moderately significant,  $r(127) = -.32, p < .01$ . The result of correlation analysis indicated that the lower-acculturated individuals were, the more collectivistic they were, while the higher-acculturated individuals were, the more individualistic they were.

To investigate the effect of acculturation and individualism/collectivism on each dependent variable, four groups were created using the median split procedure producing the low-acculturated/collectivistic group (LAC,  $n=44$ ), the high-acculturated/collectivistic group (HAC,  $n=23$ ), the low-acculturated/individualistic group (LAI,  $n=24$ ), and the high-acculturated/individualistic group (HAI,  $n=38$ ).

#### *Informational influence differences among LAC, HAC, LAI, and HAI groups*

There was no significant difference in the two composite informational influence items (i.e., reference group and mass media) among four groups created by interacting between acculturation level and individualism/collectivism. With regard to possible differences for the seven individual information sources, one-way ANOVA results indicated that the LAC group and the HAI group significantly differed in advice of American friends ( $F=4.40, p < .01$ ). The high-acculturated/individualistic group had the highest mean score (mean=3.18) on the advice of American friends among four groups indicating that HAI tended to put more importance on American friends' advice than did the other three groups.

#### *Shopping orientation differences among LAC, HAC, LAI, and HAI groups*

As shown in Table 7, significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) were revealed for two shopping orientation variables: shopping confusion in the U.S. and personalized shopping among four groups. For the shopping confusion in the U.S. variable, the HAI group was significantly different from both the LAC group and the LAI group. The LAC group had the highest mean and the HAI group had the lowest mean among four groups for the shopping confusion in the U.S. This result indicates that LAC individuals were more likely to be confused about apparel size and/or brand names when shopping in the U.S. and HAI group members were less likely to be confused about size and/or brand names when shopping for apparel in the U.S.

**Table 7**  
Differences of Shopping Orientations among LAC, HAC, LAI, and HAI Groups

Shopping Orientations	LAC (n=44)	HAC (n=23)	LAI (n=24)	HAI (n=38)	F
Shopping confusion in the U.S.	3.19 A <sup>a</sup>	2.62 BC	3.18 A	2.43 C	6.05**
Value conscious	3.66	3.57	3.94	3.93	1.58
Shopping sex role	2.11	2.17	2.79	2.53	2.50
Price conscious	3.24	3.39	3.44	3.46	0.62
Follower shopping	2.44	2.50	2.44	2.74	1.29
Innovativeness	2.83	2.86	3.02	2.97	0.45
Brand conscious	3.10	2.95	3.32	3.16	0.86
Personalized shopping	2.47 BC	2.87 A	2.42 C	2.88 A	5.61**
Socializing shopping	3.40	3.48	3.13	3.01	1.82

<sup>a</sup> Results of Duncan test. Same letter indicates no significant statistical difference at  $p < .05$   
\*\* $p < .01$ .

With regard to the personalizing shopping variable, the LAC group was significantly different from the HAC group. Additionally, the HAI group and the LAC group differed from both the HAC group and the HAI group. Responses of the HAI group provided the highest mean for personalized shopping. The HAI group tended to be more personalized shopping than did other three groups. However, the LAI group had the lowest mean score on personalized shopping indicating that LAI respondents tended to be less personalized shopping than the other groups.

### **Conclusion and Implication**

The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of acculturation level and individualism/collectivism on shopping behaviors such as informational influences and shopping orientations of Asian ethnic groups residing in the United States. Based on the data collected and the results of statistical analyses, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Definite factorial structures for informational influences and shopping orientations for apparel shopping can be identified among Asian ethnic groups residing the United States.
2. Results indicate that the low- and high-acculturated groups differed significantly in their use of mass media. High-acculturated individuals were inclined to put more importance on mass media than were the low-acculturated group when shopping for clothing. So, promotion strategies through mass media such as radio, TV, newspaper and the Internet should be established differently according to levels of acculturation.

3. There were significant differences between the low- and high acculturation levels in two shopping orientation variables: shopping confusion in the U.S. and personalized shopping. The results suggest that these two shopping orientation variables may be more closely associated with acculturation level of Asian consumer in the U.S. than with the other shopping orientation variables. Low-acculturated individuals tended to be more confused about size and/or brand name when shopping for apparel in the U.S. than did high-acculturated individuals. Low-acculturated shoppers tended to be less personalized with salespeople than did high-acculturated shoppers.

4. The individualistic and collectivistic groups differed significantly on three shopping orientation variables: value conscious, shopping sex role, and socializing shopping. The results suggest that these three shopping orientation variables may be more closely associated with Asian consumers' individualism/collectivism than with the other shopping orientation variables. Individualistic shoppers tended to have greater orientations toward the value conscious and the shopping sex role than did collectivistic shoppers. On the other hand, collectivistic shoppers were more inclined to be socializing shopping than were individualistic individuals.

5. The four groups (LAC, HAC, LAI, and HAI) were created by both acculturation level and individualism/collectivism. The four groups significantly differ in two shopping orientation variables: shopping confusion in the U.S. and personalized shopping. For the shopping confusion in the U.S. variable, the LAC group tended to have greater orientation toward shopping confusion in the U.S. compared with the other three groups. In terms of the personalizing shopper orientation, the HAI group tended to be more personalized shopping than did the other three groups. Overall, the four groups tended to have greater orientations toward the value conscious and price conscious.

Little empirical research has been conducted on Asian ethnic groups in the U.S., as a whole, in relation to their shopping behaviors, and specifically their informational influences and shopping orientations in terms of apparel shopping. In this study, the results do not show fully that acculturation level and individualism/collectivism are good predictors of information influences and shopping behaviors. However, findings of this study can provide insights in to how Asian consumers differ in apparel shopping behaviors with regard to their acculturation levels and individualism/collectivism.

Before discussing recommendations for future research, it is important to recognize the limitations of this study. Sample data obtained in this study represented basically Asians residing in North Carolina. The results may not be generalized to the whole Asian ethnic population. In addition, the study focused on apparel to identify shopping behaviors. Thus, the results may not be applicable to shopping behaviors in regard to other product categories.



The self-reported response of the informational influence measure and the shopping orientation measure in the study indicated general shopper tendencies but may not be fully reflective of actual shopping behaviors. Thus, when applying the findings of this study, the results should be interpreted with caution. Taking these limitations into consideration, this study still reveals interesting findings with may have important implications for marketers or researchers and serve as a guide for future research.

Future research should include a larger, randomized sample across the United States to identify relationships between factors affecting shopping orientation and specific shopping behaviors. Additionally, future research should include specific Asian ethnic subgroups (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean) or non-students. This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of acculturation and individualism/collectivism on Asian ethnic consumers' informational influences and shopping orientations. Asian ethnic groups may experience the interaction of both original and host cultures while residing in the U.S, so it would be interesting to investigate whether their perceptions would change after further contact with American culture. Longitudinal research with Asian immigrants would help us to improve understanding of the acculturation process as it influences shopping behaviors

### Reference

- American Demographics (2002, November). *Diversity in America: Asians*. Retrieved January 8, 2003, from <http://libproxy.uncg.edu:2070/pqdweb>.
- Cheng, C. Y. (2000). Acculturation and cultural value orientation of immigrant Chinese Americans: Effects on body image, aesthetics for appearance, and involvement in dress. (Doctoral dissertation, Iowa State University, 2000). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61, 2781.
- Cox, D. F., & Rich, S. U. (1964). Perceived risk and consumer decision-making: The case of telephone shopping. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 1, 32-39.
- Echman, M., Kotsiopoulos, A., & Bickle, M. C. (1997). Store patronage behavior of Hispanic versus non-Hispanic consumers: comparative analyses of demographics, psychographics, store attributes, and information sources. *Hispanic journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 19, 69-23.
- Ho, A. S. (1991). *A comparative study of apparel shopping orientations between Asian Americans and Caucasian Americans*. Unpublished master's thesis, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Kang, J., & Kim, Y. K. (1998). Ethnicity and acculturation: influences on Asian American consumers' purchase decision making for social clothes. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 27(1), 91-118.
- Lee, E-J, Fairhurst, A., & Dillard, S. (2002). Usefulness of ethnicity in international consumer marketing. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 14(4), 25-48.
- Lee, J. A. (2000). Adapting Triandis's model of subjective culture and social behavior relations to consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 9(2), 176-126.
- Moye, L. N., & Kincade, D. H. (2003). Shopping orientation segments: exploring differences in store patronage and attitudes toward retail store environments among female apparel consumers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 27, 58-71.

- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory* (3rd ed.), *McGraw Hill Series in Psychology* (pp. 264-265). NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Ownbey, S. F., & Horridge, P. E. (1997). Acculturation levels and shopping orientations of Asian-American consumers. *Psychology and Marketing, 14*, 1-18.
- Shim, S., & Chen, Y. Q. (1996). Acculturation characteristics and apparel shopping orientations: Chinese students and spouses from the People's Republic of China residing in the southwest. *Clothing and Textile Research Journal, 14*(3), 204-215.
- Shim, S., & Kotsiopoulos, A. (1992). Patronage behavior of apparel shopping: Part II. Testing a patronage model of consumer behavior. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 10*, 58-64.
- Shim, S., & Kotsiopoulos, A. (1993). A typology of apparel shopping orientation segments among female consumers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 12*(1), 73-85.
- Social Science Research Council (1954). Acculturation: An exploratory formulation. *American Anthropologist, 56*, 973-1002.
- Suinn, R. M., Ahuna, C., & Khoo, G. (1992). The Suinn-Lew Asian self-identity acculturation scale: Concurrent and factorial validation. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 52*(4), 1041-1046.
- Suinn, R. M., Rickard-Figueroa, K., Lew, S., & Vigil, P. (1987). The Suinn-Lew Asian self-identity acculturation scale: An initial report. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 47*, 401-407.
- Tan, C., & McCullough, J. (1985). Relating ethnic attitudes and consumption values in an Asian context. In Hirschman, E.C., Holbrook, M.B. (Eds), *Advances in Consumer Research*, Association for Consumer Research, Provo, UT, 12, 122-5
- Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Tse, D. K. (1996). Understanding Chinese people as consumers: Past findings and future propositions. In M. H. Bond (Ed.), *The handbook of Chinese psychology*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2000) *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. Washington, DC, 2000.
- Wallendorf, M., & Reilly, M. (1983). Ethnic migration, assimilation, and consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research, 10*(December), 292-302
- Watkins, H. S., & Liu, R. (1996). Collectivism, individualism and in-group membership: Implications for consumer complaining behaviors in multicultural contexts. In L. A. Manrai & A. K. Manrai (Eds.), *Global perspectives in cross-cultural and cross-national consumer research* (pp. 69-96). NY: International Business Press.