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## NEGOTIATING ACROSS CULTURES: CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF HAND-PRODUCED APPAREL PRODUCTS

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MarketPlace: Handwork of India is an example of an Alternative Trade Organization that, in an effort to provide employment for textiles artisans, has attempted to integrate modern, western-styled garment design elements with traditional designs and fabrics of India to form an innovative line of hand-produced apparel intended for the U.S. market. Research focused on acceptance of India-inspired skirts and pants among 175 female college students in five geographic regions of the U.S.

Two characteristics from Roger's (1995) Diffusion of Innovations theory provided the framework for hypothesis testing. "Complexity," the level of difficulty the innovation is perceived to possess, and "familiarity" were considered in relation to apparel acceptance. Six slides as stimuli were developed for three skirt and three pant designs featured on the same model wearing identical accessories. While viewing the slides, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the familiarity and complexity of the featured garment's design characteristics and their level of acceptance.

Garment acceptance varied by region with consumers in the southeast part of the U.S. rating the garments significantly higher than those in the northeast, central, northwest and southwest areas. Findings support innovation theory in that those garment characteristics perceived as more familiar were more acceptable to consumers.

Rogers, D. (1995). Diffusion of innovations (4th ed.). New York: The Free Press.