



Exploring Acculturation and Shopping Orientations Among Hispanic Immigrants in the U.S.

Laura Toloza and Eunjoo Cho, University of Arkansas, USA

Keywords: Acculturation, shopping orientation, Hispanic immigrant, fashion products

Introduction

In the U.S., Hispanic immigrants are the largest minority ethnic group with a population of 58 million in 2016 (Flores, 2017). Hispanics spent \$1.4 trillion in the retail and consumer packaged goods market in 2016, accounting for almost 10% of the total U.S. buying power (Weeks, 2017). According to a Business Wire report (2015), 55% of Hispanic immigrants in the U.S. are bicultural, preserving Hispanic cultural values while adapting to US cultural values. The process of acculturating to the U.S. involves integrating some beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the mainstream culture, while preserving other beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors from the cultural of origin (Berry, 1997; Johnson, 2007). Acculturation is a crucial component of studying ethnic consumers' consumption behaviors (Owenbey & Horridge, 1997; Segev, 2014). Unexplored, however, are the ways in which acculturation interplays with Hispanic immigrants' shopping orientations in the apparel shopping context. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore how cultural dynamics interplay with shopping orientations of Hispanic immigrants.

Literature Review

Acculturation refers to the process of adopting cultural traits (e.g., values, beliefs, attitudes, and identities) when immigrant individuals interact with others in the host society (Berry, 1997). Four acculturation modes (i.e., assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization) emerge based on the degree to which individuals maintain and/or adopt cultural traits (Berry, 1997; Sam & Berry, 2010). Assimilation occurs when individuals adopt the host culture's traits and abandon their original cultural identity. Separation occurs when individuals avoid interactions with the host culture and maintain their original culture. Integration occurs when individuals develop a bicultural orientation, maintaining their original culture while accepting the host culture. Marginalization occurs when individuals have little interest in either culture. Prior studies found ethnic identity and acculturation associated with consumer behaviors (Kizgin, Jamal & Richard, 2018). Yet, little is known about the complex dynamics of cultural factors in the decision making processes among immigrants (Seveg, 2014; Shephard, Kinley, & Josiam, 2014; Seock & Sauls, 2008). For that reason, it would be meaningful to explore how acculturation modes relate to shopping orientations among Hispanic immigrants.

Methods

Snowball sampling was used to recruit 15 Hispanic immigrant married couples who were born and raised in South and Central America and immigrated to the U.S. after the age of 18. With an IRB approval and informed consent, each couple completed a semi-structured interview.

Interview questions were drawn from previous literature as well as developed to meet the goals of this study. Established measures of acculturation (Marin & Sabogal, 1987) and shopping orientations (Seock & Sauls, 2008; Shephard et al., 2014; Workman & Cho, 2012) were adapted for the interview questions. During the interview, participants compared their shopping experiences in their home countries vs. those in the U.S. The interviews were conducted in Spanish and later transcribed and translated into English by the interviewer and a research assistant who are fluent in both languages. Another bilingual (English/Spanish) researcher reviewed the back-translated interview data to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Interview data was thematically analyzed (Braun & Clarke, 2006) using NVivo and themes are cross-tabulated with acculturation and shopping orientation survey responses from each partner. Two students (one undergraduate and one graduate) assisted in coding the 30 interview transcripts. The coders independently coded the 30 transcripts. Using percentage agreement of coding, intercoder reliability was calculated at 90-92%.

Results and Discussion

The sample was comprised of 15 Hispanic immigrant males and 15 Hispanic immigrant females between the ages of 25 to 54 years old with a median age range from 35 to 39 years old. Nearly 70% of the participants reported more than \$50,000 for annual household income with a median household income of \$75,000-\$99,999. Most of the participants (70%) were highly educated Hispanics holding bachelor's or graduate degrees. The participants were from 10 different countries; almost 27% of the participants were from Mexico. The majority of the participants are currently residents in the Southern U.S. (Alabama, Arkansas, and Florida). Interview findings revealed that Hispanic immigrants maintain their original culture while adopting the host culture (i.e., integration). The majority of the participants indicated that they prefer buying fashion products in the U.S. due to superior product quality (93%), affordable price (77%), convenient shopping (66%), national brands (63%), and customer service (43%). However, almost 70% of female participants indicated that they struggle with appropriate size and fit when shopping for clothing in the U.S. The results found that Hispanic immigrants tend to shop for fashion products in their home countries when they want ethnic designs and leather goods. Additionally, interview findings revealed that most participants abandoned the rigid dress code from their home countries while adopting the dress code in the U.S. In terms of shopping orientations, quality-consciousness was the most frequently mentioned dimension which was not found in previous studies. The results revealed that both Hispanic male and female immigrants are quality-conscious and brand-conscious shoppers. Although a previous study (Seock & Sauls, 2008) found no gender differences in time-consciousness, this study definitively showed that Hispanic males are more time-conscious. Additionally, Hispanic female shoppers are more price- and recreational-conscious (Seock & Sauls, 2008). These findings suggest that, in order to attract Hispanic shoppers, marketers should underscore product quality, brand names, convenience shopping, sales promotions, and enjoyable in-store activities. These findings expand existing cultural research by discovering a potential linkage between integrated cultural values and

particular shopping orientations. This study also contributes to gender studies by providing similarities and differences in shopping orientations among Hispanic immigrant couples.

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