

January 2007

## Immigrant Perceptions of Advertising amid Acculturation Levels, Stress and Motivation

Qiao Lan  
*University of Massachusetts Amherst*

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<https://doi.org/10.7275/356176>

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**IMMIGRANT PERCEPTIONS OF ADVERTISING AMID ACCULTURATION  
LEVELS, STRESS AND MOTIVATION**

A Thesis Presented

by

QIAO LAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

September 2007

Communication

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LEVELS, STRESS AND MOTIVATION**

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QIAO LAN

Approved as to style and content by:

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Michael Morgan, Chair

---

Erica Scharrer, Member

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Carolyn Anderson, Department Head  
Department of Communication

## **ABSTRACT**

### **IMMIGRANT PERCEPTIONS OF ADVERTISING AMID ACCULTURATION LEVELS, STRESS AND MOTIVATION**

SEPTEMBER 2007

QIAO LAN, B.A., SICHUAN UNIVERSITY

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Michael Morgan

A media studies survey was conducted among university graduate students to study immigrants' attitudes toward advertising under various acculturation conditions. A total of 358 valid responses were collected. The study supported our hypothesis that immigrants have more positive attitudes than Americans do and it also showed that the level of positiveness varies according to different acculturation status. The study also found a larger third-person effect for immigrants than for Americans.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In nowadays' rapid changing world and fast growing information society, it is no longer enough nor realistic for individuals to only understand and deal with their immediate community. Modern individuals need to constantly monitor what is happening economically, culturally and politically in the larger world in order to better survive and adapt to the society. Media have undoubtedly become indispensable sources for such social learning. This is even truer for the younger generation who grow up watching TV. The amount and magnitude of knowledge they get from TV is no less if not no more than from parents, school or friends. Media are no longer mere information providers but also active agents in people's socialization process.

Psychologist A. Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura 2001) explains from a scientific point of view why human can use media for social learning. According to him, two capabilities of human's brain - symbolizing capability and vicarious capability - allow us to comprehend and create symbolic environment and expand our knowledge by observing people's actions and corresponding consequences without actually experiencing them.

When it comes to acculturation, a specific form of socialization characterized by immigrants' cultural learning and adaptation, it's reasonable for us to speculate that media are also playing important roles in this process. Actually, it is already widely believed by scholars from various fields including communication, sociology, market research and psychology that mass media have become some of the most important paths of acculturation besides the traditional interpersonal communication at schools or

workplaces (Kim 1977, 1979, 1988; Chang 1974; Bandura 2001; Reece and Palmgreen 2000; O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber 1986; Lee 1993; Hwang and He 1999; Khan 1992; Johnson 1996; Moon, Kim and McLeod 2003). It is believed that mass media not only provide convenient and immediate channels for immigrants to learn the host culture, values and current issues, but more importantly, enable immigrants to learn these things without experiencing the uncertainty, anxiety and frustration that is typical of initial interpersonal interactions (Kim 1988, O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber 1986; Lee 1993).

One thing to clarify is that by arguing media as important channels for immigrants to learn American culture, we don't necessarily mean that media present a complete and true picture of American society. On the contrary, it can be rather fragmentary and distorted. However, it doesn't stop media becoming a convenient window wide open to the new comers who are curious about and eager to learn the culture.

Advertising, as an essential form of media messages, its socialization effect has also been widely acknowledged (Ward and Wackman 1971; Ward and Scott 1974; Ewen, 1976; Moschis and Gilbert 1978; Moschis and Moore 1982; Bandura 1971). Consumer socialization has become a specific field in business research. By watching commercials, individuals learn how to attach social meaning to material goods (Bandura 1971), they gather information about lifestyles and trends and learn to associate them with specific products and brands (Ward and Wackman 1971). Accordingly, for immigrants, exposure to advertisements can help them quickly learn the basic consumption-related attitudes, knowledge, and skills to function as an American consumer, an important lesson of learning to be an American (Lee 1993).

If media and advertising indeed have great influence on immigrants' acculturation, and if immigrants are actively using media and advertising as their social learning sources, then, is it possible that they would read these media messages less critically than American audiences? Would they view advertising in a more favorable way due to the acculturation necessity? If they become more acculturated, would their attitudes become less positive, meaning closer to Americans' attitudes? For immigrants with high acculturation motivation, would their attitudes differ from those with low motivation? What about acculturation stress?

So many questions about immigrants' perception of advertising can be asked when associated with acculturation. However, unfortunately, no research so far has addressed these problems all together. Countless studies illustrated how influential media and advertising are on immigrants' acculturation, but very few have tried to shift their viewpoint to immigrants' side and study their perception of media and advertising during their acculturation processes. We feel a large part of the media and acculturation research has been missing. In this study, we will carefully examine immigrants' attitudes toward advertising under various conditions. Their attitudes will be compared with Americans, and also studied when acculturation variables are controlled.

The famous "third-person effect" hypothesis will also be examined in this research. As the third-person effect is an attitude-based phenomenon, if attitudes were affected by birth background and acculturation variables, then it was supposed to be affected too. The "third-person effect" hypothesis is first introduced by Davison in 1983, which predicts that people exposed to persuasive messages, such as political campaign or advertising, tend to perceive a greater influence of these messages on other people -

"the third-person" - than on themselves. Many studies have showed that the more the media messages are considered as having negative effects and being influenced as undesirable, the more prominent the third-person effect would be (Gunther and Thorson 1992; Gunther and Mundy 1993; Brosius and Engel 1996). Following this logic, then, if immigrants think more positively of advertising than Americans as we have argued before, does that mean the third-person effect will be smaller in the former than in the latter? If different levels of acculturation status affect immigrants overall attitudes toward advertising, would it also affect the strength of the third-person effect? To answer these questions, comparisons will be drawn between immigrants and Americans and among groups with different acculturation motivation, stress and level. No research before has studied third-person effect in connection with acculturation.

This study is expected to have various implications in media and acculturation research. It is the first research so far in which immigrants' perception of advertising is examined in such great detail under the condition of acculturation. Previous studies all emphasized media and advertising's impact on immigrants' acculturation, while their perceptions of media and advertising under the acculturation circumstances was ignored. We hope this pioneer study could draw more researchers' attention to this long ignored but highly crucial part of media and acculturation research. People's perceptions of or overall attitudes toward media messages can determine their behaviors to a large extent. If they don't believe what media have told them, probably they won't behave in a certain way. That is to say, if we didn't find a positive attitude toward advertising in immigrants, then perhaps advertising's impact on acculturation should be qualified. On the other hand, the opposite finding would lend strong empirical support to advertising's

socializing effect. Therefore, sound understanding immigrants' perceptions of advertising and how their perceptions vary according to their acculturation status can help us better assess and estimate advertising's impact. This study is very important and necessary in this sense.

The other innovative contribution of our research is we introduced the "third-person effect" concept into the media and acculturation research for the first time. It would be very interesting to find out if this phenomenon would still hold in the new situation. Whatever the finding is, the study is expected to extend both the third-person effect and acculturation research to a whole new domain.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Acculturation Research

Acculturation research is nothing new and there is a bounty of literature on this topic that can be found in various disciplines, from anthropology to psychology to business and communication.

In 1880, acculturation as a phenomenon first caught the attention of scholars (Herskovits 1938; Nahavandi 1988; Afsaneh 1988) at a time when global cultural contacts became more frequent due to technological developments in communication and transportation. By 1928, acculturation's importance had already been so widely recognized that Webster's Unabridged Dictionary included the term and defined it as "the approximation of one human race or tribe to another in culture or arts by contact" (Herskovits 1938).

As is the case with culture, there is no universal definition for acculturation. One of the earliest and most influential definitions is the one introduced in the Outline for the Study of Acculturation by the Sub-Committee of Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in 1936.

"Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups." (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits 1936, p. 149)

From this definition we can see that, in early acculturation theory, direct contact between different cultural groups is specifically emphasized. The definition's authors go on to say that acculturation should be distinguished from cultural change,

assimilation or diffusion, all of which constitute only one aspect of the process of acculturation (Redfield et al. 1936). According to Redfield, et al., there are three possible outcomes of acculturation: acceptance, adaptation and reaction. Acceptance may be readily understood as the taking over of the old culture by the host culture. Adaptation suggests an integration of the two into a harmonious whole without losing the original heritage. In the case of reaction, the foreign culture is strengthened rather than diminished – exactly the opposite of acceptance. In the “Outline,” Redfield, et al. also point out the major research methods that should be employed to study acculturation. They are direct observation, interviews, use of documentary evidence and deductions from historical analyses and reconstructions.

SSRC (1954) later revised the definition of acculturation as:

"the culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems . . . it may be the consequences of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from noncultural causes . . . it may be delayed . . . Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors."  
(p.974)

Clearly, these early explications of acculturation arise from a largely anthropological point of view. This actually reflects the fact that acculturation research was initiated in the discipline of anthropology (Berry, Trimble and Olmeda 1986) and the early methods were largely qualitative.

It did not take long for acculturation to draw great interest from psychology and some related mental health and behavioral studies fields. In contrast with the anthropological view, a psychological perspective is more concerned with individuals'



psychological adaptations, with the changes individuals undergo during the acculturation of their group (Berry et al. 1986) or with the problems they may come across during the acculturating process. Correspondingly, the methodology employed in these areas is quantitative. Various scales have been developed by psychologists and behavioral scholars to measure the attitudinal and behavioral changes of acculturating individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, which have greatly developed and enriched acculturation research.

Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, and Aranalde (1978) developed two acculturation scales to measure self-reported behaviors and value dimensions of 265 Cuban-Americans and 201 Caucasian-Americans. A linear relationship was found between acculturation and length of exposure to the host culture and it was also found that younger people acculturated more rapidly than older people.

Cuellar, Harris and Jasso (1980) later published their 24-item scale for measuring acculturation levels of Mexican-American normal and clinical populations. The instrument became known as the widely used Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans or ARSMA scale. This scale was further revised as ARSMA II by Cuellar, Arnold and Maldonado in 1995 for the purpose of developing ARSMA as an instrument that assesses the acculturation process through a multidimensional approach by measuring orientation toward Mexican culture and Anglo culture independently (Cuellar et al. 1995). Because the original scale has been criticized for assuming an acculturation model that is too linear, individuals were seen as either "very Mexican" or "very American," while those bi-culturalists who score high or low in both cultures were not measured.

Following ARSMA, many other acculturation scales have been developed to address the problems suffered by ARSMA. Marin, Sabogal, VanOss Marin, Otero-Sabogal and Perez-Stable (1987) announced their development of a short (12-item) scale for Hispanics. Mendoza (1989) proposed an instrument that can be used to measure levels of acculturation in Mexican-American adolescents and adults on five relatively orthogonal dimensions. Modeled after a successful scale for Hispanics, the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation or SL-ASIA scale was created by Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew and Vigil (1987) to assess the acculturation level of Asians. A later study by Suinn, Ahuna and Khoo (1992) supported the concurrent validity and factorial validity of the SL-ASIA scale. Landrine and Klonoff (1994) developed a 74-item acculturation scale for African-Americans. In a more recent study, Unger, Gallaher, Shakib, Ritt-Olson, Palmer and Johnson (2002) published their AHIMSA scale – the Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents, a multidimensional, multicultural measure specifically designed for adolescents.

Business scholars study acculturation from a consumer behavior point of view. Given the rapid growth of immigrant populations in U.S., marketers simply can't ignore the fact that immigrants have become a significant part of the market, and that their consuming habits and attitudes differ from those of Americans in a lot of ways because of their cultural backgrounds. It's been realized that immigrants should be viewed as groups with distinct cultures (Helming 1983; O'Guinn and Meyer 1983), and that it's inappropriate to directly apply the American consumer behavior model to immigrants (Gentry, Jun, and Tansuhaj 1995). Based on previous acculturation research and consumer socialization theory, a concept of "consumer acculturation" emerged and was

defined as "the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to engaging in consumer behavior in one culture by members of another culture" (Penaloza 1989). Different models of consumer acculturation have also been proposed by business scholars (Jun, Ball and Gentry 1993; Penaloza 1989). A business approach to acculturation is more about exploring immigrant consumers' behavior and psychology for the purpose of developing more effective marketing strategies (Lee 1993; O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber 1986; Ownbey and Horridge 1997).

### **Media and Acculturation**

The previous anthropological perspective mainly focuses on the "direct contact" or interpersonal communication between different cultural groups. Schools and workplaces were considered as the major agents of acculturation while the media's role in this process was not mentioned. However, in a day when media are permeating everyone's life in almost every aspect, it's simply impossible for us to ignore media impacts. So what's the relationship between media and acculturation? What's media's role in immigrants' lives and their acculturation process? Communication scholars began to ask these questions.

It's almost unanimously agreed that media should be recognized as important paths of acculturation (Kim, 1977, 1979, 1988; Chang 1974; Bandura 2001; Reece and Palmgreen 2000; O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber 1986; Lee 1993; Hwang and He 1999; Khan 1992; Johnson 1996; Moon, Kim, and McLeod 2003). The only disagreement is over the degree to which one might assert the media's role. O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber (1986) argue for a fundamental reconceptualization of the existing acculturation model. They believe the traditional model tends to overstate the importance of direct social contact

and a workable model of acculturation must incorporate the indirect path as featured via mass mediated socialization. On the other hand, scholars like Kim and Shah hold a relatively moderate view. Kim (1979) believes that mass media work with interpersonal communication to reinforce acculturation and that media impacts are more limited than interpersonal ones.

Whichever view is closer to the truth, the shared point is that mass media are convenient and crucial information sources for immigrants. Media representation is one particular construction of culture. It is certainly not 100% objective. But media do provide easy channels for newcomers to learn about the culture of the host society. As Kim (1979) pointed out, the role of mass media is to provide cultural information beyond the immigrant's immediate environment. Kim (1988) believes that exposure to host-nation mass media provides sojourners with a broader range of cultural elements, allowing them to comprehend the culture's history, values, and current issues without experiencing the uncertainty, anxiety and frustration that is typical of initial interpersonal interactions and can therefore help them adapt to the new environment. O'Guinn, et al. (1986) argue that, given the greater difficulty and risk in learning from direct experiences, the pictorial and powerful media provide immigrants with a safer path. Immigrants needn't worry about the embarrassing mistakes when they don't interact. Therefore, mass media may play an extremely important role in their acculturation. Lee (1993) agrees that mass media offer immigrants a unique opportunity to take a quick view of the host society either before or after immigration takes place without first-hand experience. Khan (1992) and Johnson (1996) also believe that a

culture's mass media are significant sources of cultural information for newly arriving immigrants and sojourners.

There are actually sound theories behind the arguments that mass media are important learning sources for immigrants. Bandura's social cognitive theory of mass communication (2001) examines the mechanism underlying people's mass mediated social learning process. According to Bandura, four human abilities, especially the first two, account for our social learning through mass media: symbolizing capability, vicarious capability, self-regulatory capability and self-reflective capability. The capacity of symbolization provides humans with a powerful tool for comprehending and creating the symbolic environment, while the vicarious ability allows us to expand our knowledge and skills by observing people's actions and the consequences of those actions without actually experiencing either. In an information society, these models are largely from mass media: "a vast amount of information about human values, styles of thinking, and behavior patterns is gained from the extensive modeling in the symbolic environment of the mass media" (p. 271).

Regarding the mass media's role in acculturation, Bandura points out:

Because the symbolic environment occupies a major part of people's everyday lives, much of the social construction of reality and shaping of public consciousness occurs through electronic acculturation. At the societal level, the electronic modes of influence are transforming how social systems operate and serving as a major vehicle for sociopolitical change. The study of acculturation in the present electronic age must be broadened to include electronic acculturation (p. 271).

The media's role has been clearly asserted by emphasizing "electronic acculturation." Bandura's cognitive theory provides theoretical support for the

arguments that propose mass media as acculturation agents. Based on Bandura's theory, researchers Moon, Kim and McLeod (2003) conducted a survey in a Korean town in Los Angeles to study how mass media affect Korean immigrants' acculturation. Not surprisingly, they found American media use was a significant predictor for the acceptance of American culture while it was negatively related to the affinity of Korean culture. The more Korean immigrants used the American media, the more acceptable and positive their attitude was toward American culture.

A uses and gratifications approach is another widely adopted way of studying media and acculturation. Such an approach employs the uses and gratifications theory developed by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) to analyze immigrants' media consumption patterns. It treats immigrants as active audiences who use media to gratify their various acculturation needs such as language improvement, social and cultural learning, etc.

In a 1977 study, Kim identified three causal factors as major determinants of immigrants' communication patterns: language competence, acculturation motivation, and accessibility to host communication channels. She proposed that the greater the immigrant's acculturation motivation, the greater will be his or her use of mass media. This was supported by her analysis of 285 questionnaires collected from the Korean population in the Chicago area. Kim's use of multiple regression analysis showed that the three factors, when combined together, determined 58% of the variation in mass media consumption. A major deficiency of this study is that Kim inappropriately concluded a one-way causal relationship between the three determinants and immigrants' media consumption - as the media usage might also affect the language

efficiency and acculturation motivation. However, the findings still lent some support to the posited relationship between immigrants' acculturation needs and their media use.

Hwang and He (1999) conducted research in the Chinese community in Silicon Valley and found that media use patterns varied according to acculturation needs. The study showed that the sample group was only moderately acculturated and their motivation for acculturation was fairly low. This phenomenon was actually accompanied by a media use pattern of heavy consumption of Chinese-language media for both information and entertainment and a supplemental use of English-language media. However, the generalizability of this study was subject to question due to its limited sample size - only 10 families or 39 subjects in all. Moreover, the research methods were limited mostly to observation and interview. Therefore, the results of the study were largely descriptive.

Using the same approach, a recent study by Reece and Palmgreen (2000) on Indian sojourners' acculturation needs and media use motives is worth mentioning. The study was carried out among 99 Indian graduate students at a university in the south-central U.S. A survey was followed with in-depth interviews. Despite the sample's limited representativeness, the results were impressive. The study found a strong and significant relationship between the need for acculturation (another term for acculturation motivation) and television viewing motivations - 45% shared variance, to be precise. Moreover, the acculturation factor alone accounted for 22% of the total variance of TV viewing motives, more than could be attributed to any other factor, including companionship and surveillance. The findings supported Kim's study from 1977.

Yang, Wu, Zhu and Southwell (2004) also found a significant and positive relationship between need for acculturation and degree of reported acculturative motives for TV watching ( $r = 0.36, p < 0.01$ ) when they examined Chinese students attending a Midwestern university in the U.S. in 2004. They also reported a significant relationship between the frequency of watching local news and reported acculturation motives ( $r = 0.21, p < 0.05$ ), which indicated, as Kim (1977) argued, that media use patterns was related to acculturation motives.

From the above discussion, we can see that there is plenty of research addressing the importance of media in the acculturation process. A media socialization and social learning theory demonstrated that media can be a crucial source for immigrants to learn cultural norms and conventions of the new society with limited or without direct social contact and therefore help them bypass the possible frustrations that frequently occur in the interpersonal communication and thus better adapt to the new environment at the early acculturation stage. The uses and gratifications approach showed that immigrants are actively using these media sources to fulfill their acculturation needs.

Even though it's not our goal to examine the role of media in immigrants' lives in this research, knowing how mass media are related to the acculturation process and the fact that immigrants are actively searching for information from media to gratify their needs could certainly make it more logical for us to move one step further and ask: What are these audiences' perceptions of media under such circumstances? Are they still critical media viewers, especially when it comes to advertised messages? Unfortunately, as we can see, none of the studies above has addressed the media perception issue after successfully finding an association between media use and acculturation motives, and



very few other studies have discussed this problem either, which made our study absolutely necessary.

### **Advertising and Acculturation**

The focus of this study is not just immigrants' perceptions of media in general but more specifically their perceptions of persuasive messages or advertisements. If immigrants are actually using advertising as a social learning source, is it possible that they would be less likely to critically read these messages than American audiences? Would immigrants make a more critical reading of American ads if they lived in their home countries? To answer these questions, it would be helpful for us to first take a look at advertising's socialization effect and related research on advertising and acculturation.

Given mass media's essential role in people's lives, advertising, as an important media form, and its influence can't be ignored. There is a great deal of literature discussing advertising's effects, especially in the area of consumer psychology and communication.

It's generally agreed that advertising is also an agent for an individual's socialization, more specifically, consumer socialization. Consumer socialization is defined as the process by which young people develop consumer-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Besides mass media and advertising, family, peers and school are considered agents of this process (Moschis et al. 1978).

Bandura (1971) views television commercials as dispensers of product information and argues that people learn how to attach social meaning to material goods, i.e., the "expressive" or "affective" elements of consumption through observation

and imitation of television advertising. Moschis, et al.'s study (1978) supported Bandura's argument that young people learn from mass media and advertising by finding a positive and significant relationship between the amount of television and advertisement viewing and adolescents' social motivations for consumption ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moschis and Moore (1982) also reported a strong and positive relationship between advertising viewing and consumer role perception. Consumer role perception was defined as the accuracy of the individual's cognitions and perceptions of the consumer role in terms of functions, obligations, position, and rights - simply put, the awareness of the socially desirable properties of the consumer. It was measured by asking respondents to indicate how much they would or would not perform 11 behaviors associated with (un)wise purchases (e.g. "check warranties and guaranties before buying").

One important concept that is worth mentioning here is "social utility" reasons for watching commercials. It was operationally defined by Ward and Wackman (1971) as a motivation to watch commercials as a means of gathering information about lifestyles and behaviors associated with uses of specific consumer products. Put simply, people may attend to advertisements for social reasons. They may form impressions of what kinds of people buy what kinds of products or brands and thus associate different products with various lifestyles by watching commercials (Ogilvy 1963). Viewers, therefore, might feel that if they buy certain products or brands, they can manipulate the impressions others have about them (Ward et al. 1971). This could be especially true for immigrants who are trying hard to adapt to the new culture and minimize differences between themselves and others. Ward and Wackman also mentioned two other

commercial viewing motivations: "Communication utility" - attending to commercials in order to provide a basis for later interpersonal communication; and "vicarious consumption" - watching commercials as a means of identifying with desired lifestyles.

Ward and Wackman (1971) also examined attitudes toward advertising in relation to consumer socialization. They considered attitudes toward advertising as a measure of a more complex kind of consumer learning and defined it as "cognitive and effective orientations concerning liking of and belief in TV advertising" (pp. 426). The study found the learning of more cognitive orientations (e.g., attitudes toward television advertising) was a function of the adolescent's reasons for viewing commercials. In other words, if young people have more reasons or are more motivated to watch commercials, they would develop more positive attitudes toward advertising. This finding can lend direct support to our hypotheses which will be discussed later.

A Bush, Smith, and Martin study (1999) also found that some consumer socialization variables are significant predictors of attitudes toward advertising. Among the strongest of these predictors were social utility reasons of watching advertising, gender, TV viewing, and race. The authors also argued that African Americans hold more positive attitudes toward advertising than Caucasians because the former often use television as a source of guidance. This is supported by their finding of a significant association between attitude toward advertising and race ( $r = .278, p < .01$ ).

All these studies supported the notion that advertising provides information and guidance for audiences and serves as an agent for consumer socialization. Then, what is advertising's influence on another kind of socialization - acculturation? Do immigrants have more "social utility" reasons to watch commercials than Americans? If they do,

would their attitudes toward advertising be more positive? Unfortunately, very few studies have specifically addressed these issues.

Some marketing researchers have noticed the importance of advertising in the acculturation process. O'Guinn, Lee and Faber (1986) commented in their proposal to reconceptualize consumer acculturation theory:

Certainly there is no doubt that what it means to become acculturated as an American includes learning the culturally accepted attitudes toward material goods and possessions. Much of who and what an American is is determined by what he or she possesses, and the values those possessions express and convey to others. Immigrants who want to become acculturated must learn what things they should desire, and to a lesser extent, why" (p. 579).

Clearly, for O'Guinn, et al., advertising is a source of such information for immigrant consumers, and therefore should be included as a path of consumer acculturation in the new model. However, as they said, their proposal was largely developmental and no empirical study had actually been done.

Lee's 1993 cross cultural research on Chinese/Taiwanese immigrants' acculturation level and their attitudes toward advertising is perhaps the study most relevant study to the inquiry proposed here. Lee believes that learning to consume as an American is an important part of learning to be an American. Therefore:

Immigrants in the U.S., while adopting or adjusting to varying aspects of the American culture, quickly learn the basic consumption-related attitudes, knowledge, and skills in order to function as consumers in the American marketplace. Among many different things, they are likely to learn first the socially expressive aspects of being an American consumer (p. 382).

According to Lee, mass media, and advertising in particular, constitute the primary agent for this type of consumer learning. She argues that "acculturating individuals, in

their eagerness to adjust to the culture of residence, are most susceptible to messages from mass media and especially that from advertising" (p. 382). This argument resonates with the "social utility" reasons of commercial viewing idea proposed by Ward, et al.

Lee's sample (N=641) consisted of three groups of people: Taiwanese in Taiwan, Taiwanese residents of the U.S., and Americans, and all of the respondents were university students. She expected to find non-acculturating groups' attitudes toward advertising on two extremes (Taiwanese in Taiwan - positive, Americans - negative) with the acculturating group's attitudes in the middle. Attitude toward advertising was measured by agreement with various statements describing advertising communication-related activities on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Example statements included "Advertised products are generally better than nonadvertised products", "advertising insults my intelligence", "A well-known brand name is a guarantee of high quality", etc.

The results of the study partially supported her hypothesis. Acculturating Taiwanese as a whole had a more positive attitudes toward advertising than Americans, but their attitudes score did not necessarily differ from other Taiwanese, regardless of whether acculturation levels are low or high.

However, there are several problems in her study I would point. First of all, there seemed to be no sound reason for her to assume that Taiwanese attitudes would be opposite to Americans'. Also, though the study is intended to examine the relationship between acculturation level and attitude toward advertising, the attitude of people from different acculturation levels was not adequately analyzed or explained. More attention

was given to the difference between Taiwanese and Americans, which made the research more cross-cultural than intra-cultural, and, hence, a poor approach to acculturation. The other important issue of the research was the measure. The attitude items (e.g. "A well-known brand name is a guarantee of high quality") were worded in the way that could easily elicit negative answers - as an answer "Yes" doesn't look "smart". A more sophisticated measure is needed to address the social desirability problem of the original scale. Besides, I would also suggest that acculturation variables such as acculturation motivation be included in the research in order to better understand immigrants' perceptions of advertising in the acculturation process.

In light of the literature discussed, it can be seen that there are more than enough studies that have addressed media and advertising's substantial contribution to individuals' socialization and immigrants' acculturation. It has been well supported that immigrants actively seek media information to gratify their acculturation needs. Research also shows that people would watch commercials for social utility reasons which actually could predict their attitude toward advertising. However, do all these findings apply to acculturating people as a group? If immigrants actively seek information from advertising as their acculturation guidance and if they watch commercials for acculturation needs, does that mean they would hold a more positive attitude toward advertising than Americans? Would this attitude vary according to their acculturation level, needs/motivation and stress? None of the studies so far has addressed all these questions. Lee has tried to tap the relationship between immigrants' perceptions of advertising and their acculturation level, but as we have discussed above, that approach is plagued by some problems. Also, acculturation level alone is not

enough to explain all the variation in people's attitude. It is therefore proposed that other variables such as acculturation motivation and stress should be examined as well to better understand acculturating individuals' perceptions of advertising.

### **Third Person Effect and Acculturation**

As an important finding in research on people's perceptions of persuasive media messages, the "third-person effect" phenomenon will also be investigated in this study, which will extend our understanding of this phenomenon to the new area of acculturation.

The third-person effect hypothesis predicts that people exposed to persuasive messages, such as political campaign or advertising, tend to perceive a greater influence of these messages on other people - "the third-person" - than on themselves. It is also hypothesized that this perception of the "first-person" may lead them to take some action, such as the censorship. Therefore, the actual effect of the persuasive communication may not be due to the "third-person" but the "first-person".

Davison first introduced this notion in 1983. Since then, a number of studies have been developed to test the hypothesis and the results generally show support to it. Cohen, Mutz, Price and Gunther (1988) studied defamatory news reports' impact on libel juries, and found that their subjects estimated others would be more affected by these messages than themselves. They therefore argue that the juries might make a decision more in favor of the plaintiff based on the overestimated harmful effect. Perloff (1989) explored partisans' perceptions of political news coverage and reported that, as predicted, both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian partisans believed the news coverage of the 1982 war in Lebanon would cause neutral viewers to become more favorable toward

their antagonists' side while the result showed that this was not true. Gunther and Thorson (1992) extended the research of third-person effect from public opinion to the new domain of advertising and found the same self-other pattern in audiences viewing product commercials.

Issues studied in other research include political attitudes (Rucinski and Salmon 1990; Willnat 1996), media's general influences and immorality effects (Salwen and Dupagne 1999), cigarette ads (Borzekowski, Flora, Feighery and Schooler 1999; Henriksen and Flora 1999), gambling advertising (Youn, Faber and Shah 2000), and Direct-to-Consumer advertising (Huh, Delorme and Reid 2004; Huh et al. 2006).

There are fewer studies on the behavioral component of the third-person effect as compared to the perceptual one. Cohen et al.'s study (1988) addressed some of the behavioral impact by raising the interesting question of juries' possible more favorable judgment toward the plaintiff based on overestimated harmful effects of defamatory messages. Rojas, Shah and Faber (1996) found a significant positive relationship between the magnitude of the perceptual third-person effect and people's pro-censorship attitude toward TV violence, pornography and media messages in general; and this relationship remained even when a variety of confounding variables such as demographic variables or media use were controlled. Other findings also confirmed the behavioral component by showing people's support for censorship of violent and misogynic rap lyrics (McLeod, Eveland and Nathanson 1997), campaign messages (Salwen 1998), and gambling advertising (Youn et al. 2000), though they didn't think they themselves would be affected by those messages.



Though the third-person effect hypothesis is well-supported by plenty of empirical evidence, questions still remain. In most of the experimental studies, questionnaires are designed in a way that respondents are asked to compare media messages' impacts on themselves and others directly. Questions are usually asked back-to-back and in a self-other order. Researchers are concerned that this might lead people to respond in a self-serving manner so that they appear smarter and less susceptible to harmful media effects than other people (Lasora 1989; Price and Tewksbury 1996; Dupagne and Salwen 1999). They began to ask: Does this phenomenon really exist or is it just a methodological artifact?

Price and Tewksbury (1996) created four experimental conditions, Self-only, Others-only, Self-then-Others and Others-then-Self, to identify the effect that back-to-back contrast and question order might have on the third-person effect. In the Self-only condition, subjects were asked to estimate the impact of news messages on themselves, while in the Others-only condition, they were only asked about the impact on other people, and so forth. Two hundred and eighty-seven undergraduate students were randomly assigned to these four conditions, and media coverage of President Clinton's "Whitewater Affair", the O. J. Simpson's murder trial, and child molestation charges against Michael Jackson were used as stimuli. However, the results of the study showed that the mean scores for single-question conditions (no contrast) did not differ significantly from comparable means in two-question conditions (contrast), and there were no significant main effects of question order either. Price and Tewksbury's study again confirmed the robustness of third-person effect.

Dupagne, Salwen and Paul (1999) conducted a study to examine the impact of question order on not only the perceptual but also the behavioral hypothesis of the third-person effect. They proposed that perceiving others as more vulnerable would predict more support for message restriction. The four question-order conditions they used were restrictions-others-self, restrictions-self-others, others-self-restrictions, self-others-restrictions. Again, they find the perceptual hypothesis wasn't affected by question order. However, the behavioral hypothesis did in some conditions. The results showed that respondents were more willing to support media restrictions when self and other questions were asked before the restriction questions.

As it is such a robust and consistent phenomenon, the third-person effect intrigues many researchers to explore the causes behind it. Gunther (1991) explained the third-person effect through attribution theory. Attribution theory argues that observers separate judgments about themselves and others by means of internal (dispositional) versus external (situational) attributions. They tend to assume their own actions as a response to the circumstances and situations at hand, whereas others as personal dispositions. Then, the third-person effect can be explained by attribution bias: when judging themselves, "observers will estimate modest, if any, opinion change, attributing it to their greater awareness of, and discounting of, situational factors like persuasive intent" (pp. 357-358, Gunther 1991; see also Rucinski and Salmon 1990).

Essentially, this attribution bias is for people's "self-serving" purposes. According to Gunther and Mundy (1993), people have a "biased optimism" tendency, which leads them to consider themselves smarter and more resistant to influence than others, especially when the influence is considered as harmful and negative. Seeing

themselves as smarter or better than peers, sometimes even to the point of maintaining unrealistically positive images of themselves, is a way for people to reinforce their self-esteem, which is also known as "ego enhancement" (Gunther and Thorson 1992; Gunther and Mundy 1993; Brosius and Engel 1996; Perloff 1999). Besides "unrealistic optimism", Brosius and Engel (1996) identified "impersonal impact" (the extent of the third-person effect varies with the psychological distance between the first and third person) and "generalized negative attitudes towards media effects" as another two psychological mechanisms that might cause the third-person phenomenon.

The self-serving bias seems to be a simple yet persuasive explanation for the third-person effect. The desirability of a media effect appears to be a crucial contingent variable for the strength of the third-person effect (Brosius and Engel 1996). Many studies show that the more the media influence is considered as negative, the greater the third-person effect would be. On the other hand, if the outcome is positive and being affected is socially desirable, a minimum third-person effect will occur. Gunther and Thorson (1992) studied the third-person effects of product commercials and public service announcements (PSAs). They expected to find greater perceived effect on self than others as a result of PSAs - a reversed third-person effect, as the social desirability of PSAs could motivate people to acknowledge more personal-level effect. Their results didn't support the reverse pattern but did show that the classic third-person effect disappeared in this case - there was no significant difference between the people's perceived impact of PSAs on themselves and others. Gunther and Mundy (1993) reported that when the media topics were beneficial and informative such as a news article about tips on safe sun tanning, advice on using seat belts or an alert to the

dangers of high blood pressure, no significant third-person effect was found; presenting such topics as advertisements with the persuasive intent of selling products produced greater perceived effects on others. Brosius and Engel's study (1996) also showed that in the case that the perceived effect of TV news is desirable, the third-person effect vanishes and even turns around. For genres such as news and radio music that have a high credibility and low persuasive intent, the third-person effect is smaller than for genres with low credibility (TV commercials and campaign ads).

Besides social desirability, many studies have shown that the strength of the third-person effect is mediated by a number of other factors. Lasora (1989) found that the self-reported level of political knowledge is positively correlated with the strength of the third-person effect. Perloff (1989) pointed out the role of ego-involvement. His study shows that people strongly involved in an issue (pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian partisans) overestimate the effects on others more than those less involved (neutral viewers). Gunther and Thorson (1992) reported that third-person effect was less salient for emotional ads than for neutral ads and they also found an association between the quality of commercials and the strength of the effect. Other factors include education, age (Tiedge, Silverblatt, Havice and Rosenfeld 1991), social structural factors and media use patterns (Rucinski and Salmon 1990). It can be seen that the third-person effect is not uniform and straightforward, and it varies according to all sorts of situational and conditional factors.

In our study, the third-person effect will be examined under a new circumstance - among acculturating individuals. Does the third-person phenomenon still hold for this group of people? If it does, is the magnitude of the third-person effect for immigrants

the same as it is for Americans? Do acculturation variables such as acculturation motivation, level and stress actually work as situational factors that can mediate the strength of the third-person effect? So far, no existing research has combined the study of the third-person effect and acculturation and people's perception of advertising.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on our previous literature review, it is reasonable to assume immigrants have more "social utility" reasons than Americans to watch commercials, because commercials provide them information about American lifestyles and consumer behaviors that are essential to their acculturation needs. According to Ward and Wackman (1971), having more reasons to watch advertising actually suggests a positive attitude toward advertising; therefore it is reasonable for us to argue that

H1: Immigrants have more social utility reasons than Americans to watch commercials.

H2: Immigrants in general have a more positive attitude toward advertising than Americans do.

Acculturation motivation is held as a key variable for predicting attitudes in this study, through which variables like acculturation level and acculturation stress take effect. Kim (1977) defined acculturation motivation as "the degree of eagerness for an immigrant to learn and participate in the host society." Intuitively, it's reasonable for us to believe that the more eager one is to learn, the more reasons he/she would have to watch commercials, and therefore it follows that:

H3: The more acculturation motivation one has, the more likely he/she would be positive toward advertising.

Stress is generally positively related to motivation, but not always in a linear way. An appropriate amount of stress can generate motivation, but it can also affect motivation when stress is too low or high. Therefore, it is proposed that:

H4: Immigrants with medium acculturation stress are more likely to hold positive attitudes toward advertising than those who are extremely stressed out or who are not stressed at all.

Lee (1993) believes that acculturation level is negatively correlated with attitudes toward advertising; however, it was not supported by her study. In this study, this hypothesis will again be examined with a revised scale that is believed to be more sophisticated. Since higher acculturation level tends to be associated with less acculturation need felt by immigrants, and, therefore, with lower acculturation motivation, we should expect:

H5a: In general, immigrants of high acculturation level are less positive toward advertising than those of low acculturation level.

However, since what is really at work here is acculturation motivation, we believe:

H5b: When acculturation motivation is controlled, immigrants of high and low acculturation level won't show much difference in their attitude.

As we have mentioned above, the third-person effect hypothesis will again be tested in this research with the acculturation variables as conditional factors. It is predicted the classic perception pattern of third-person effect will occur:

H6a: The perceived influence of advertising on others is always greater than that perceived on oneself -- for immigrants and Americans.

However, as we've been assuming that immigrants may have a more positive perception of advertising's influence than Americans due to the fact that advertising serves as way of their cultural learning, and as many aforementioned researches have suggested that a perception of positive media influence would generally lead to a smaller third-person effect, it should be logical for us to argue that:

H6b: The discrepancy between the perceived influence on others and self (third-person effect) is smaller for immigrants than for Americans.

H6c: The discrepancy between the perceived influence on others and self (third-person effect) is smaller for people with high acculturation motivation than it is for those with low acculturation motivation.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODS**

#### **Procedure**

A within- and between-group survey research design was employed and questionnaires were administered to university graduate students. A student sample is feasible, convenient, and an appropriate practice, based on many previous studies (Lee 1993; Yang et al. 2004; Sandage and Leckenby 1980; Muehling 1987). Only graduate students were chosen because it was more likely for us to get a balanced international vs. American students in this way - the number of international students was much smaller in undergraduate than in graduate students. An all-graduate-student-sample seemed questionable, but it would actually work perfectly fine. Given the fact that graduate students are a privileged group who receive higher education than undergraduate students or average immigrants, they are supposed to be the "smarter" people who judge media messages more critically. If the results show that even they hold a more positive attitude than Americans, it would be more so for other people.

Questionnaires were distributed via two channels - researcher's personal networks and online. The researcher's friends, colleagues, classmates etc. were asked to pass the surveys on to their friends and colleagues. The reason why a snowball sampling was used instead of random sampling was again to ensure the equal sample size of American and international students - random sampling would likely result in a much larger American group than international group while the personal networks allowed the survey to reach more international students due to the researcher's international background.



The questionnaire was also circulated online. A link to an electronic version of the survey was created through SurveyMonkey.com. The link along with an online survey request was sent through email to graduate secretaries of various academic departments, who were asked to forward the survey request to the graduate mailing list of their individual departments.

### **Measures**

The questionnaire included a measure of students' general attitudes toward advertising, acculturation variables (acculturation level, acculturation motivation and acculturation stress) as well as their media usage and demographic backgrounds. The actual questionnaire (Q1-Q55) was included in the Appendix for reference.

Attitudes toward advertising (Q1-Q10). This variable was defined here as predispositions to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to advertising in general. It was measured in two dimensions, the rational evaluations (attitude-belief) and emotional and behavioral reactions (attitude-emotional). Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with two sets of statements about advertising on a 5-point Likert scale, with "strongly disagree" the lowest score and "strongly agree" the highest. The first set of statements were people's beliefs and evaluations of advertising, such as "Advertising is essential to our society;" "Most advertising insults the intelligence of the average consumer;" "Advertising is a useful information source;" and "In general, advertisements present a fair picture of the product being advertised.", etc. These items were adapted from the scale developed by Bauer and Greyser (1968) in their widely cited study of attitudes toward advertising and were confirmed to be valid and reliable measures by Muehling (1987). The second set of statements included

behavioral and emotional items, such as "I would switch the channel immediately if commercials come up;" "Commercials are fun to watch;" "Advertising is annoying;" "I wish there were fewer commercials on TV." This second dimension can also be understood as a measure of people's tolerance of advertising. Reliability test yielded high Cronbach's Alpha scores for both the 6 items measuring attitude-belief and the 4 items measuring attitude-emotional, 0.769 and 0.704 respectively.

Social utility reasons (Q11-Q14). The scale to measure social utility reasons to watch commercials was adapted from Moschis and Churchill (1978) and Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1989). Items included "I sometimes watch commercials to find out the latest fashion;" "I often gather information from ads about products before I buy;" "To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often look at ads to see what others are buying." Reliability test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.777 for these items.

Third-person effect (Q15-Q16). To measure the third-person effect, respondents were asked to evaluate the influence of advertising on others and themselves on a 7-point Likert scale, with the answer "not effective/influential at all" scored 1 and "very effective/influential" 7. The two items were worded like this: "If you were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising as a marketing tool, you would say it is;" "If you were asked to evaluate advertising's influence on you, you would say advertising is." As can be seen, the effect of advertising on others was asked in an indirect way to avoid the direct contrast of others and self.

Acculturation motivation (Q28-Q32). Kim's (1977) definition of acculturation motivation was used here: The degree of eagerness for an immigrant to learn and participate in the host society. A 3-item, 5-point Likert scale developed by Kim was

used in this study. The three items are: "I'm interested in learning about the current political, economic, and social situations and issues within the United States;" " I'm interested in learning and understanding the ways American people behave and think;" "I'm interested in making friends with Americans." This scale has been used by many researchers, such as Rizk (1986), Reece and Palmgreen (2000) and Hwang and He (1999). Besides, two additional items were added to the scale by the researcher to inquire subjects' desire of staying in U.S. after graduation and being more American-like.

Acculturation stress (Q33-Q38). According to Mena, Padilla and Maldonado (1987), conflict often arises for immigrants in their efforts to resolve or minimize their cultural differences and this conflict is termed acculturation stress. There were 24 items in the original scale developed by Mena, et al., but only 6 of them were adopted in this study considering the length and focus of the survey. Sample questions are: "It bothers me that I can't get close to Americans," "It bothers me that I have an accent," etc. It is believed that these items would arouse the least negative feelings in respondents as compared with some other statements like: "People look down upon me if I practice customs of my culture," and "Because of my ethnic background, I feel that others often exclude me from participating in their activities." A 5-point Likert scale was used measure these items.

Acculturation level (Q26-Q27, Q39-Q42). Six items were adapted from Marin, Sabogal, VanOss Marin, Otero-Sabogal and Perez-Stable's short acculturation scale for Hispanics (1987). Respondents were asked to indicate their language/media use choices (ranging from native language/media only to English only) and preferred background of

friends, roommates, co-workers (ranging from all from their own country of origin to all from America).

Students who were born in United States or not born in U. S. but came here before college and for whom the acculturation questions are not applicable were directed to the page where another set of questions was asked. The 19 questions asked them about their media usage (e. g. "How much time do you spend watching TV on an average day"), online shopping activity (e. g. "Do you shop online?", "Why?"), and their attitudes toward online advertising (e. g. "Online advertising is less annoying than TV commercials;" "TV commercials are more influential on me than online advertising."), etc. Responses to these questions were not the real interest of this study. The purpose was to even the time the two groups took to complete the survey and to disguise the purpose of the study.

### **Analysis**

Multiple statistical techniques were used to analyze the data. Two-sample t-tests were used to determine if there's any significant difference of the mean attitudes between international students and U.S. students. One-way ANOVA was used to identify the main effect of acculturation variables on people's attitudes. The researcher also used Univariate-ANOVA and partial correlation to test the relationship with the third variable controlled.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

A total of 381 responses were collected, 204 of which were gathered online and 177 through traditional paper questionnaires. 358 responses were relatively complete. They were identified as valid and included in the later analysis. All of our participants were graduate students at UMass-Amherst. Their majors ranged widely from education, fine arts, linguistics, comparative literature, business management, public health, public policy, sociology, and psychology to natural science and engineering such as physics, biology, mathematics, computer science and electrical engineering etc., spreading across 9 colleges and schools on campus. A detailed breakdown of the number of the participants by colleges and schools can be found in Table 1.

As also shown in Table 1, among the 357 respondents who indicated their gender, 46.8% (N=167) are male and 53.2% (N=190) are female. Their average length of graduate study was 3 years (N=334, SD=2.22) and mean age was 29 (N=344, SD=5.54). Our youngest participant was aged 22 and the oldest was 55. 28.5% of the participants fell in the 22-25 age group. A bigger chunk of people, 44.4%, were found in the 26-30 group. 27.1% were over 30. U.S.-born participants (Americans) accounted for 48.6% (N=174) of the sample, and the non-U.S.-born (immigrant participants) constituted 51.4% (N=184). Within the latter group, ten participants who came to U.S. under the age 14 were excluded from the later analysis as their ages are significantly younger than the average of 24 and were considered as out liers. As this research was mainly interested in immigrants' attitudes toward advertising, their demographic backgrounds were examined in a greater detail.

**Table 1. Frequencies of demographic variables**

**Gender:**

	%
Male	46.8
Female	53.2
	<hr/> 100.0
	(N=357)

**Age:**

	%
22-25	28.5
26-30	44.4
>30	27.1
	<hr/> 100.0
	(N=354)

**U.S.-born and Non-U.S.-born:**

	%
U.S. -born	48.6
Non-U.S.-born	53.2
	<hr/> 100.0
	(N=358)

**Birth Place of Immigrants:**

	%
Asia	56.6
South Asia	15.6
Europe/Canada/ Australia	11.0
Arab/Middle East	8.1
Africa	5.8
South America	2.9
	<hr/> 100.0
	(N=173)

**Immigrants' Age at which they came to U.S.**

	%
17-24	52.8
25-30	36.4
31-39	10.8
	<hr/> 100.0
	(N=176)

**School and college (Major)**

	%
Education	5.7
Engineering	10.9
Humanities and Fine Arts	16.6
Management	9.2
Natural resources and environment	12.3
Natural sciences and mathematics	20.3
Nursing	0.6
Public Health and health sciences	5.7
Social and behavioral sciences	18.6
	<hr/> 100.0
	(N=339)

Frequency analysis shows that 52.8% of the immigrant participants came to U.S. before the age of 24, and 36.4% came here between the ages of 25 and 30. Only 10.8% came to U.S. after their thirties and the maximum age was 39. For majority of the immigrants (70.3%), their length of stay in U.S. was less than 4 years. 20.4% had been here a little longer, for 5-7 years. Immigrants who had been in the U.S. for more than 7

years only accounted for 10.3%. Immigrant participants' average length of stay here was 3.7 years. 82% of the immigrant participants spoke their own languages, and only 7.6% used English as their first language. Another 10.5% grew up bilingual, having another mother tongue besides English.

Data showed that immigrant participants came from countries all over the world, including China, India, South Korea, Japan, UK, Germany, Ireland, Russia, Israel, Turkey, Iran, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico, etc. According to the cultural and/or geographic proximity of their mother countries, participants were assigned to six categories: Asia (China, Korea, Japan, etc.), India/South Asia (India, Nepal, the Philippines, etc.), Europe/Canada/Australia, Arab/Middle East, Africa, and South America. Due to the large number of Chinese students, who alone constituted 45.7% (N=84) of the immigrant participants, Asians were the largest among the six groups with a percentage of 56.6% (N=98). Accounting for 15.6% (N=27) of the immigrant group, India/South Asia was the second largest group (15.6%, N=27), followed by Europe (11%, N=19), Arab (8.1%, N=14), Africa (5.8%, N=10). South America (2.9%, N=5) came in as the last.

Both American and immigrant participants' media usage patterns were examined, and the data showed that their self-reported amount of time spent on media ranges widely from individual to individual (see Table 2). The maximum amount of time spent on daily TV watching, as reported, was 22 hours, while the minimum was zero. However, a great majority of people (85.6%) indicated that their daily TV watching was less than 2.5 hours and 21.5% didn't even watch TV at all. Only 5% revealed that they watch TV 4 or more hours a day. The average TV watching time was



1.39 hours per day. Similar patterns were found in newspaper and radio consumption. But the amount of time participants spent on these media was much less than TV, with an average of 0.45 (hour/day) for newspapers and 1.03 (hours/day) for radio. 40.4% and 38.3% of the participants indicated that their daily usage of newspapers and the radio was zero. The internet was the most used media for the participants. The average time they spent on surfing the internet was 2.84 hours per day and 69.2% reported that their daily use of internet was 2 hours or more.

**Table 2. Means and Medians of Media Usage by Type of Media and Birth Place**

Media Type	Means			Medians		
	All	U.S. born	Non-U.S. born	All	U.S. born	Non-U.S. born
TV**	1.39	1.62	1.13	1.00	1.00	1.00
Newspaper	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.30	0.50	0.20
Radio**	1.03	1.52	0.53	0.50	1.00	0.00
Internet*	2.84	2.35	3.35	2.00	2.00	3.00
<b>Total:</b>	5.75	5.96	5.53	4.50	5.00	4.50

Note:

\*\* The mean difference between U.S. born and Non-U.S. born is significant at the 0.01 level.

\* The mean difference between U.S. born and Non-U.S. born is significant at the 0.05 level.

Immigrant participants' overall media consumption was slightly less than American participants, with an average of 5.53 vs. 5.96 hours. But the t-test showed the difference was not significant. However, American participants did spend significantly more time with TV and radio than immigrant participants. As can be found in Table 2, the average time consumed on TV and radio for Americans were 1.62 and 1.52 hours per day, while the numbers for immigrants were 1.13 and 0.53. T-tests also showed the

differences were significant at 0.01 level ( $p < 0.001$ ). Immigrant participants used internet more than Americans. The daily averages were 3.35 and 2.35 hours respectively, and the difference was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### **Social Utility Reasons (H1)**

Data showed, on a 4-20 range, the mean score for social utility reasons was 9.34 ( $SD = 3.47$ ,  $N = 346$ ), below the mean for a neutral attitude ( $M = 12$ ), indicating participants' generally low tendency to use ads for social utility reasons. 51.4% of the participants scored between 4-9 (lower level) and 49.6% above 10 (higher level). However, a comparison between American and immigrant participants did show that the latter were more likely than the former to use commercials for social utility reasons, as predicted in Hypothesis 1.

A crosstabulation of social utility reasons and birth background in Table 3 revealed that 59.8% of the immigrant participants were of the higher level for the social utility reasons they had, while only 37.2% of the Americans were at the same level ( $\Gamma = 0.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $N = 168$ ). A t-test (see Table 4) further confirmed this result by showing that immigrant participants' mean social utility reasons score of 10.33 ( $SD = 3.61$ ,  $N = 174$ ) was significantly higher than American participants' 8.34 ( $SD = 3.02$ ,  $N = 172$ ) ( $t[344] = -5.57$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The t-test also showed immigrant participants scored higher on average than American participants for all 4 items measuring social utility reasons, and all the differences between the two groups were significant whether the equal variances were assumed or not (t- and p-values when equal variances were not assumed are not shown in Table 4).

**Table 3. Relationship between Social Utility Reasons and Birth Background.**

Column percent of who has more social utility reasons for watching ads	Birth background		N	Gamma
	Americans	Immigrants		
<b>Overall</b>	37.2	59.8	168	0.43***
<b><u>Controlling for:</u></b>				
<b>Gender:</b>				
<b>Male</b>	31.3	56.3	160	0.478***
<b>Female</b>	40.2	64.1	185	0.453***
<b>Age Group:</b>				
<b>22-27</b>	34.8	67.0	180	0.585***
<b>28-55</b>	40.0	52.4	162	0.246
<b>Major:</b>				
<b>Social Science</b>	38.7	56.4	189	0.344*
<b>Natural Science</b>	34.4	62.5	157	0.521***

**Note:**

\* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001

**Table 4.****Mean Values and t-statistics of Social Utility Reasons for American and Immigrant Participants**

	Means			t-value	P
	All	American	Immigrant		
<b>Social utility reasons</b>	<b>9.34</b> (SD=3.47) (N=346)	<b>8.34</b> (SD=3.02) (N=172)	<b>10.33</b> (SD=3.61) (N=174)	<b>-5.57</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>I often learn things by watching commercials</i>	<b>2.46</b> (SD=1.02) (N=347)	<b>2.34</b> (SD=.98) (N=173)	<b>2.59</b> (SD=1.05) (N=174)	<b>-2.244</b>	<b>0.025</b>
<i>I sometimes watch commercials to find out the latest trends</i>	<b>2.40</b> (SD=1.24) (N=347)	<b>2.05</b> (SD=1.13) (N=173)	<b>2.75</b> (SD=1.25) (N=174)	<b>-5.497</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>I often gather information from ads about products before I buy</i>	<b>2.42</b> (SD=1.14) (N=348)	<b>2.27</b> (SD=1.11) (N=174)	<b>2.57</b> (SD=1.16) (N=174)	<b>-2.464</b>	<b>0.014</b>
<i>To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often look at ads to see what others are buying</i>	<b>2.05</b> (SD=1.07) (N=348)	<b>1.67</b> (SD=.81) (N=174)	<b>2.43</b> (SD=1.16) (N=174)	<b>-6.994</b>	<b>0.000</b>

**Note:**

1. The four items in italic measuring social utility reason were based on 5-point scale, coded in the way that the higher the score, the more positive attitude toward the statement, and therefore more social utility reason for watching advertisements. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

2. All the t- and p- values were obtained when equal variances were assumed.

Gender, age and major were used as control variables to further studying the relationship pattern of birth background and social utility reasons for watching commercials under these controlled conditions. All participants were divided into two age groups, 22-27 (52.6%, N=181) and 28-55 (47.4%, N=163), and two major groups, arts and social science major (54.3%, N=189) and natural science major (45.7%, N=159). In Table 5, we can find that the mean scores of social utility reasons were higher for female (M=9.44, SD=3.46), younger group (M=9.60, SD=3.61) and natural science major (M=9.63, SD=3.59) than for male (M=9.16, SD=3.49), older group (M=8.99, SD=3.29) and social science major (M=9.10, SD=3.36). However, only the mean difference in age group was significant at the 0.1 level, according to the t-test ( $t[340]=1.688, p=0.092$ ).

[Insert Table 5 about here]

Table 3 also shows that the same overall pattern, with more immigrant participants watching commercials for social utility reasons, clearly carried through all control groups except for the older age group, in which the same pattern still existed but not as significant as in that others. It seemed that the age might be another variable that can affect social utility reasons score besides the birth background. Therefore, age was added to the ANOVA model together with birth background. The result confirmed our speculation: while birth background remained a highly significant factor ( $F[1,338]=30.111, p<0.001$ ), age did exert somewhat significant influence on the social utility reasons score ( $F[1, 338]=3.496, p=0.062$ ) and so did the interaction between the two ( $F[1, 338]=3.263, df=1, p=0.072$ ) which can be easily identified from Figure 1 below.

**Table 5. Means of Social Utility Reason by Gender, Age Group and Major**

	<b>Means</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	9.16	3.49	158
Female	9.44	3.46	183
<b>Age Group*</b>			
22-27	9.60	3.61	179
28-55	8.99	3.29	162
<b>Major</b>			
Social Science	9.10	3.36	189
Natural Science	9.63	3.59	157

**Note:**

\*. The mean difference between the subgroups is significant at the 0.1 level. ( $p=0.092$ )

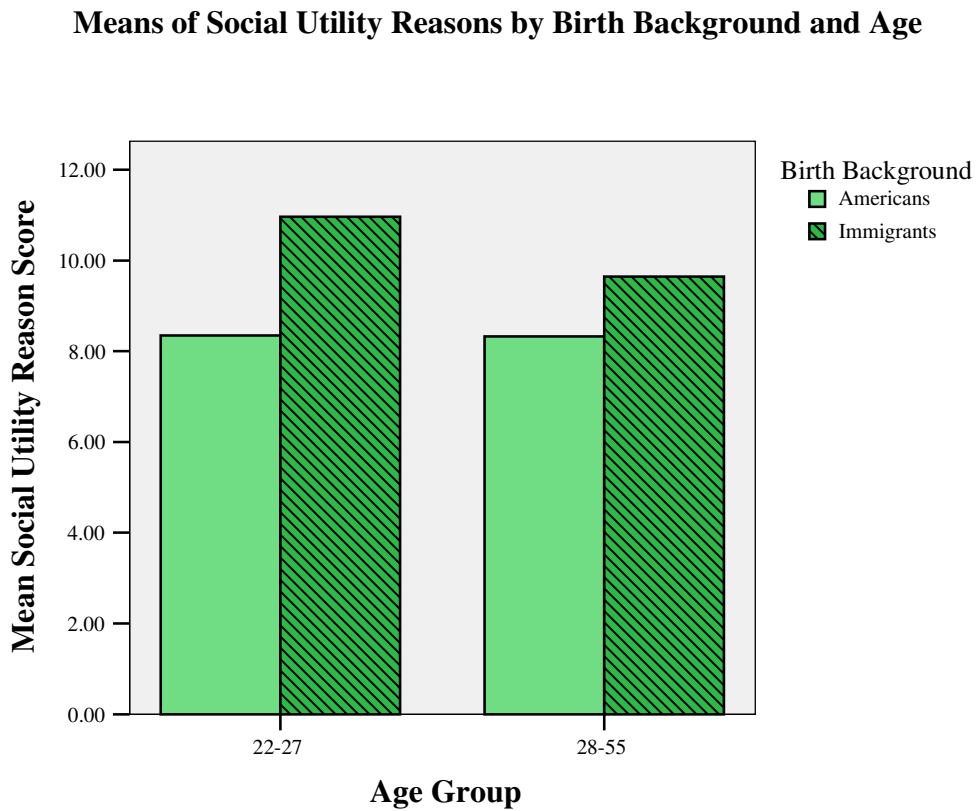
[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Figure 1 clearly indicated that, in the younger group (22-27), the mean social utility reasons score for immigrants ( $M=10.97$ ,  $SD=3.62$ ,  $N=88$ ) was much higher than that for Americans ( $M=8.35$ ,  $SD=3.14$ ,  $N=92$ ), while this difference dropped dramatically in the older group (22-27) even though immigrants still scored higher than Americans. However, t-tests suggested the mean score difference between American and immigrant participants was very significant in both the younger group ( $t[178] = -5.192$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and the older group ( $t[160]=-2.598$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) (see Table 6). It means

that, when age was controlled, even though the difference between immigrants and Americans was much sharper in younger people, the original relationship between social utility reasons and birth background still persisted.

[Insert Table 6 about here]

**Figure 1: Means of Social Utility Reasons by Birth Background and Age**



However, it's still interesting for us to notice that the younger immigrants indicated more social utility reasons than the older ones. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that older ones have been in U.S. for a longer time than younger people, and therefore were more American-like in their way of thinking and behaving. This speculation was supported by a strong and negative correlation between social utility

reasons score and immigrants' length of stay in U.S. ( $r = -0.264$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (see Table 7). Also, partial correlation indicated that the significant correlation ( $r = -0.230$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between age and social utility reasons score disappeared while length of stay was controlled ( $r = 0.102$ ,  $p = 0.185$ ). It suggested that length of stay in the U.S. was the real factor that affected social utility reasons score.

[Insert Table 7 about here]

**Table 6. Marginal Means of Social Utility Reasons by Age and Birth Background**

Age Group	Means		t-value	p
	American	Immigrant		
22-27	8.35 (SD=3.14) (N=92)	10.97 (SD=3.62) (N=88)	-5.192	0.000
28-55	8.33 (SD=2.89) (N=80)	9.65 (SD=3.55) (N=82)	-2.598	0.010

### Attitudes toward Advertising

Two dimensions of the attitude variable, belief dimension (attitude-belief) and emotional dimension (attitude-emotional), were measured and tested separately. The mean score for attitude-belief was 15.61 (SD=4.22, N=346), and 9.54 (SD=3.10, N=345) for attitude-emotional, both of which shifted toward the lower ends of the scales (6-30 and 4-20), indicating a general negative-to-neutral attitude toward advertising.



Normal Q-Q plots (Figure 2) showed that the distributions of both attitude-belief and attitude-emotional were approximately normal.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

**Table 7.**

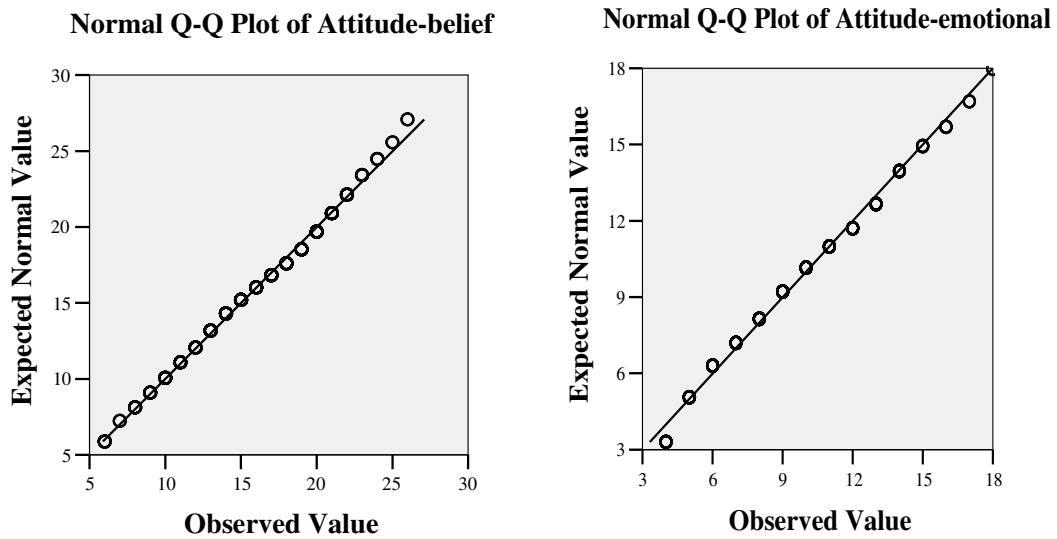
	Age	Length of stay in U.S.
<b>Correlations of Social Utility Reasons, Age and Length of Stay in U.S.</b>		
Simple relationship	-0.230**	-0.264**
<u>Controlling for</u>		
Length of stay	-0.102	-
Age	-	-0.167*

**Note:**

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Figure 2: Normal Q-Q Plot of Attitude-belief and Attitude-emotional**



Further statistical analysis provided substantial support for the second hypothesis. As we can see in Table 8, the mean score of attitude-belief of immigrant participants' (M=17.34, SD=4.04, N=174) was much higher than that of Americans' (M=13.87, SD=3.65, N=172), and this difference was found to be highly significant by t-test ( $t[344]=-8.396$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). It's also amazing to notice how immigrant participants scored significantly higher than Americans in every single item measuring attitude-belief. The item rated least negatively was "Advertising is essential to modern society" (M=3.05, SD=1.14, N=174). Interestingly, participants seemed also agree a lot that "Advertising often persuades people to buy things they shouldn't buy" - the mean attitude score for this item was the lowest (M=1.47, SD=0.69, N=174).

[Insert Table 8 about here]

The same situation also happened to attitude-emotional. Immigrant participants got higher scores than Americans in almost all the items except for the last one - "I usually switch the channel right away when a commercial comes on". Immigrant participants' mean attitude-emotional score was 10.20 (SD=3.16, N=172), which was significantly higher than Americans' mean score of 8.89 (SD=2.90, N=172) ( $t[343]=-4.003$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Even though U.S. participants found "commercials are" kind of "fun to watch" (M=2.74, SD=1.10, N=173), they still "wish there were fewer commercials on TV" (M=1.59, SD=0.78, N=174).

In Table 9, an examination of mean attitude scores by gender, age, major and TV viewing time indicated that age and major variables might have some influence on attitude-belief score, while amount of TV viewing might affect attitude-emotional score.

**Table. 8****Mean Values and t-statistics of American and Immigrant Participants' Attitude toward Advertising**

	<b>American</b>	<b>Immigrant</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Attitude toward advertising (belief dimension)</b>	<b>13.87</b> (SD=3.65)	<b>17.34</b> (SD=4.04)	<b>-8.396</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>Advertising is essential to modern society</i>	<b>3.05</b> (SD=1.14)	<b>3.79</b> (SD=1.14)	<b>-6.109</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>Advertising helps raise our standard of living</i>	<b>2.29</b> (SD=0.98)	<b>2.94</b> (SD=1.12)	<b>-5.696</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>* Advertising often persuades people to buy things they shouldn't buy</i>	<b>1.47</b> (SD=0.69)	<b>2.01</b> (SD=0.96)	<b>-6.033</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>* Most advertising insults the intelligence of the average consumer</i>	<b>2.48</b> (SD=1.03)	<b>2.88</b> (SD=1.00)	<b>-3.63</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>In general, advertisements present a fair picture of the product being advertised</i>	<b>2.00</b> (SD=0.71)	<b>2.30</b> (SD=0.86)	<b>-3.622</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>Advertising is a useful information source</i>	<b>2.53</b> (SD=1.04)	<b>3.41</b> (SD=1.05)	<b>-7.852</b>	<b>0.000</b>

**Note:**

1. The 6 items in italic were based on 5-point scale, coded in the way that the higher the score, the more positive the attitude. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.
2. All the t- and p- values were obtained when equal variances were assumed.
3. Items with "\*" were reversely coded.

**Table. 8 (continued)****Mean Values and t-statistics of American and Immigrant Participants' Attitude toward Advertising**

	<b>American</b>	<b>Immigrant</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Attitude toward advertising (emotional dimension)</b>	<b>8.89</b> (SD=2.90)	<b>10.20</b> (SD=3.16)	<b>-4.003</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>Commercials are fun to watch.</i>	<b>2.74</b> (SD=1.10)	<b>3.22</b> (SD=1.19)	<b>-3.934</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>* Advertising is annoying</i>	<b>2.14</b> (SD=1.00)	<b>2.66</b> (SD=1.02)	<b>-4.804</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<i>* I wish there were fewer commercials on TV</i>	<b>1.59</b> (SD=0.78)	<b>1.90</b> (SD=0.98)	<b>-3.328</b>	<b>0.001</b>
<i>* I usually switch the channel right away when a commercial comes on</i>	<b>2.42</b> (SD=1.19)	<b>2.4</b> (SD=1.07)	<b>0.142</b>	<b>0.887</b>

**Note:**

1. The 6 items in italic were based on 5-point scale, coded in the way that the higher the score, the more positive the attitude. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.
2. All the t- and p- values were obtained when equal variances were assumed.
3. Items with "\*" were reversely coded.

Younger participants seemed to have a more positive attitude toward advertising than older ones in the belief dimension – their mean attitude-belief score of 16.15 (SD=4.10, N=180) was significantly higher than the older group's score of 15.05 (SD=4.26, N=162) ( $t[340]=2.434$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Social science majors appeared to be more critical (M=15.05, SD=4.08, N=189) than natural science majors (M=16.29, SD=4.29, N=157) in terms of belief dimension. T-test also showed the mean difference between the two

was significant ( $t[344]=2.761, p<0.01$ ). Table 9 also indicated that the amount of TV viewing was related to the attitude-emotional score. The heavy viewers scored highest ( $M=10.17, SD=2.99, N=103$ ) and the light viewers scored the lowest ( $M=9.14, SD=3.1, N=128$ ). The mean score differences between the light and heavy viewers and between the medium and heavy viewers were tested to be significant ( $t[229]=-2.533, p<0.05$ ;  $t[207]=-2.249, p<0.05$ ). Pearson correlations also suggested that the amount of time participants spend on watching TV was positively and significantly correlated with their attitude-emotional ( $r=0.134, p<0.05$ ), which is to say that the participants who watched more TV were more likely to act positively toward advertising in the emotional dimension (i.e. finding commercials more fun to watch or less annoying).

[Insert Table 9 about here]

An ANOVA model was built to examine the effects of all above variables and the possible interactions among them. The result showed that participants' birth background (whether American or immigrant) had a significant main effect on both attitude-belief ( $F[1, 287]=51.192, p<0.001$ ) and attitude-emotional ( $F[1, 286]=10.133, p<0.001$ ), even when gender, age, TV viewing and major variables were controlled. In another word, the test again supported the hypothesis that immigrants have more positive attitudes toward advertising than Americans in both the belief and emotional dimensions. From the result we also found that, besides birth background, age also had a significant main effect on attitude-belief ( $F[1, 287]=5.889, p<0.05$ ) and so did TV viewing time on attitude-emotional ( $F[2, 286]=3.886, p<0.05$ ), which confirmed our finding in Table 9. However, major's influence on attitude-belief seemed to have disappeared when other variables were controlled ( $F[1, 287]=0.131, p=0.718$ ). It's

**Table 9. Mean Attitude Scores by Gender, Age, Major and TV Viewing Time**

	Belief Dimension			Emotional Dimension		
	Means	SD	N	Means	SD	N
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	16.00	4.47	159	9.69	3.14	158
Female	15.27	3.97	186	9.42	3.08	186
<b>Age Group</b>						
22-27	16.15 (a)	4.10	180	9.68	3.17	180
28-55	15.05 (a)	4.26	162	9.40	3.02	161
<b>Major</b>						
Social Science	15.05 (b)	4.08	189	9.43	3.32	189
Natural Science	16.29 (b)	4.29	157	9.67	2.82	156
<b>TV Viewing</b>						
Light	15.32	4.37	129	9.14 (c)	3.1	128
Medium	15.54	4.04	107	9.22 (c)	3.1	106
Heavy	15.8	4.12	102	10.17 (c)	2.99	103

**Note:**

(a).  $t=2.434$ ,  $p=0.015$

(b).  $t = -2.761$ ,  $p=0.006$

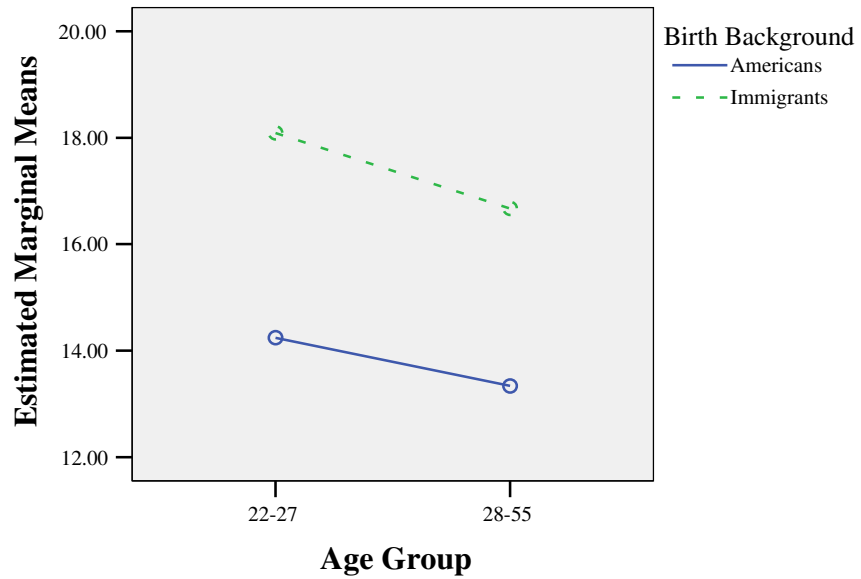
(c).  $t=-2.533$ ,  $p=0.012$ ;  $t=-2.249$ ,  $p=0.026$

possible that the previous found relationship between major and attitude-belief was spurious, and the reason why that it happened was that there were more immigrant participants majored in natural science than in social science. According to ANOVA output, there were no significant interactions between birth background and variables such as age, major or TV viewing amount. From the 3 interaction plots in Figure 3, we can easily find that immigrant participants indicated a more positive attitude (higher

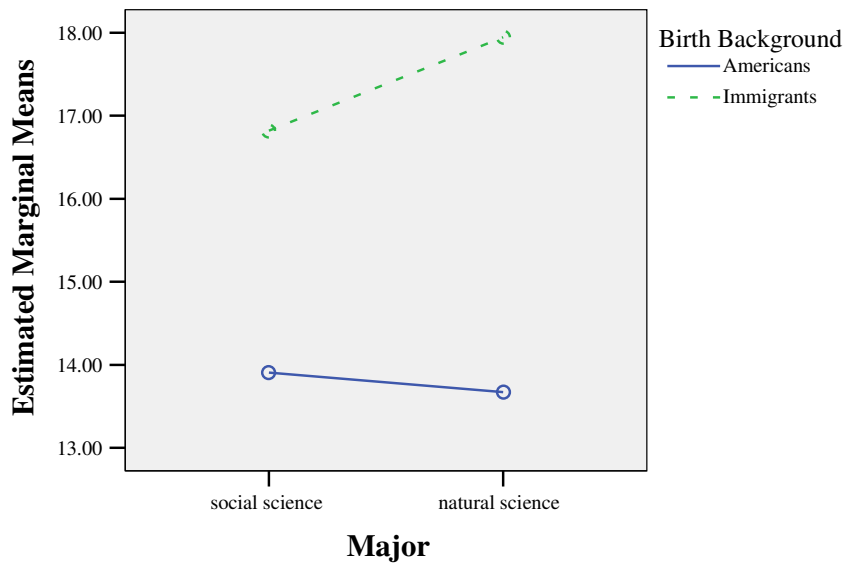
attitude score) than Americans in all the control groups, which means that the control didn't affect the original relationship we found between participants' attitude score and birth background. We feel more confident to argue that Hypothesis 2 was supported.

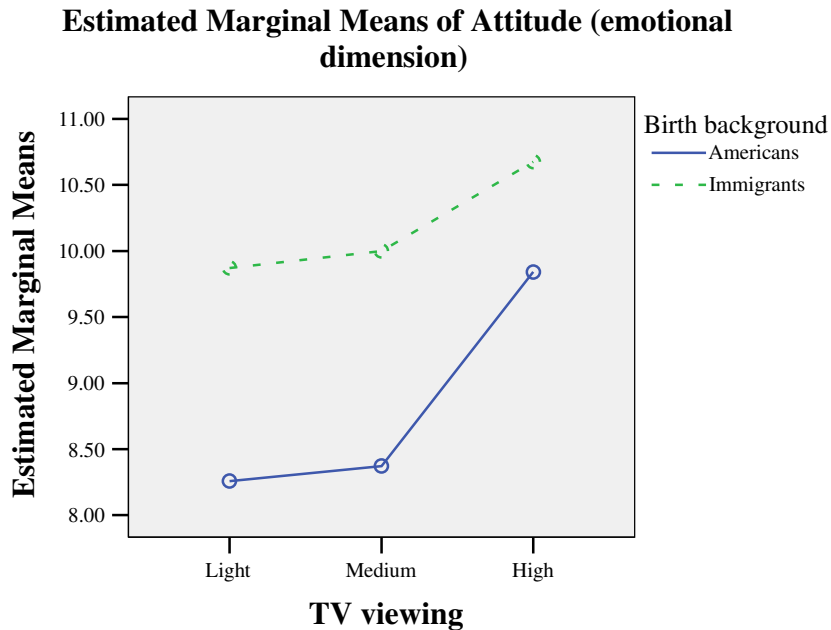
**Figure 3: Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude**

**Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude (belief dimension)**



**Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude (belief dimension)**





**Acculturation Motivation (H3)**

Acculturation motivation was measured by 5 questions (see Table 10) asking immigrant participants how interested they are in learning about current political, economic and social issues in U.S. and the ways Americans behave and think, making American friends, staying in U.S. after graduation or being more “American-like”. As we can see in Table 10, on a 5-point scale, participants indicated that they were most interested in learning the ways American people behave and think ( $M=3.95$ ,  $SD=0.98$ ,  $N=169$ ) and making American friends ( $M=3.93$ ,  $SD=0.88$ ,  $N=169$ ), and then in the current political, economic and social issues in America ( $M=3.60$ ,  $SD=1.41$ ,  $N=169$ ). Participants indicated some interest in staying in U.S. after graduation ( $M=3.43$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ,  $N=168$ ) and the thing they were least interested in was being more “American-like” ( $M=2.63$ ,  $SD=1.27$ ,  $N=168$ ). Only 9.5% of the participants expressed that they are “very interested” in being more “American-like” and 26.2% claimed that they were “not interested at all”.



**Table 10. Means of Acculturation Motivation Items**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>N</b>
How interested are you in learning about current political, economic, and social issues in the United States?	3.60	1.41	169
How interested are you in learning the ways American people behave and think?	3.95	0.98	169
How interested are you in making American friends?	3.93	0.88	169
How interested are you in staying in United States after you graduate?	3.43	1.06	168
How interested are you in being more “American-like” in the way you speak and behave?	2.63	1.27	168

**Note:**

The five items were based on 5-point scale, coded in the way that the higher the score, the more interested in being acculturated. 1 = not interested at all, 5 = very interested.

As the factor analysis showed that the 5 items can't be added up and used as one component, their relationships with attitudes toward advertising were tested separately. Hypothesis 3 proposes that a higher acculturation motivation predicts more positive attitudes toward advertising. Therefore, it was expected to find in the correlation test that each acculturation motivation item was positively correlated with the attitude score. However, the result showed that this was only the case for the last item - “how interested are you in being more ‘American-like’ in the way you speak and behave”. As shown in Table 11, only this one item was positively and highly significantly correlated with participants’ attitudes toward advertising. The *r* for the belief dimension was strong

-  $r=0.390$  ( $p<0.001$ ). It was weaker for the emotional dimension but still of medium strength ( $r=0.246$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Interestingly, being more "American-like" was also the item that was rated as their least interest among all items by immigrant participants. It seems reasonable for us to believe that participants might be less willing to rate their real thoughts on this item than on others as it's not socially desirable. Surprisingly, contrary to our prediction, a strong, negative and significant relationship was found between participants' interest in learning about social issues in U.S. and their attitude-belief score ( $r = -0.361$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). It looks as if our hypothesis was proved to be "false", but after a second thought, we believe this item might not necessarily be a valid measure for acculturation motivation. Those who indicated keen interest in political social issues in U.S. might actually have an interest in those issues in general and it doesn't necessarily mean that they hoped to be acculturated. They probably also had a more critical mindset which might lead to a more negative attitude toward advertising. No significant relationship was found between attitudes and other items.

[Insert Table 11 about here]

Compared to other items, "interest in being more 'American-like'" seems to be a more valid measure of our target variable - as it's almost an explicit way of asking people's willingness of being acculturated. Therefore, it was used as a single item that measures acculturation motivation and its relationship with attitude score was further analyzed. In Table 12, we found that this positive and significant relationship between participants' acculturation motivation and their attitudes toward advertising was quite consistent when variables such as gender, age, length of stay in U.S. and amount of TV viewing were controlled - for both belief and emotional dimensions. The strength of the

**Table 11.**

<b>Correlation between Acculturation Motivation Items and Attitudes toward Advertising</b>		
<b>Items</b>	<b>Attitude-belief</b>	<b>Attitude-emotional</b>
How interested are you in learning about current political, economic, and social issues in the United States?	-0.361**	-0.089
How interested are you in learning the ways American people behave and think?	-0.114	0.091
How interested are you in making American friends?	-0.088	-0.048
How interested are you in staying in United States after you graduate?	0.082	0.054
How interested are you in being more “American-like” in the way you speak and behave?	0.390***	0.246**

**Note:**

\*p&lt;.05    \*\*p&lt;.01    \*\*\*p&lt;.001

partial correlations between acculturation motivation and attitude-belief were especially strong. The smallest  $r$  was 0.353, when participants' length of stay was controlled. And all the partials were significant at the .001 level. The partials for emotional dimension were slightly weaker, but were still of considerable size. The smallest was again the one when the length-of-stay variable was controlled ( $r=0.191$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Partial correlation results supported our hypothesis that the higher the acculturation motivation one has, the more likely that one would view advertising more positively.

[Insert Table 12 about here]

**Table 12.**

**Partial Correlations between Acculturation Motivation and Attitudes toward Advertising, Controlling for Gender, Age, Length of Stay in U.S. and TV Viewing**

<b>Correlation of Acculturation Motivation and Attitudes toward Advertising</b>		
	<b>Attitude-belief</b>	<b>Attitude-emotional</b>
Simple r	0.390***	0.246**
<u>Controlling for:</u>		
Gender	0.400***	0.252***
Age	0.381***	0.223**
Length of stay in U.S.	0.353***	0.191*
TV viewing	0.397***	0.223**
All Controls	0.342***	0.160*

**Note:**

\*p<.05    \*\*p<.01    \*\*\*p<.001

Two ANOVA models were constructed to test the influence of acculturation motivation on attitude-belief and attitude-emotional. All control variables used in correlation test were also added in the ANOVA models. Test results confirmed our findings from the correlation test. SPSS output showed that acculturation motivation had a significant main effect on both the belief and emotional dimension of attitude ( $F[1, 135]=10.240, p<0.005$ ;  $F[1, 133]=3.924, p<0.05$ ). Age also had somewhat

significant influence on attitude-belief. Besides that, no other variables were found to affect attitudes significantly. No significant interaction was found either.

Hypothesis 3 seemed to be well supported by the test. However, it has to be kept in mind that the hypothesis was only supported by using one item as the measure of acculturation motivation. We would feel much more confident about the result if there were more valid measures.

#### **Acculturation Stress (H4)**

Acculturation stress was measured by the six items shown in Table 13.

Descriptive statistics showed that the items that immigrant participants identified with most were "I don't feel at home in the US" (M=3.14, SD=1.16, N=171) and "I have more barriers to overcome because I'm different here" (M=3.04, SD=1.09, N=169). It also indicated that participants agreed least with "People think I am unsociable when in fact I have trouble communicating in English" (M=2.46, SD=1.07, N=170) and "It bothers me that I can't get close to Americans" (M=2.46, SD=1.07, N=170).

[Insert Table 13 about here]

As factor analysis suggested that the two items, "It bothers me that I can't get close to Americans" and "It bothers me that I have an accent", were not measuring the same dimension of acculturation stress as other four items, they were dropped out from the analysis to keep the internal consistency of the variable. The remaining four items were added up together to form the acculturation stress index and the reliability test revealed a considerably high inter-correlation among the four (Cronbach's Alpha=0.766).

**Table 13. Means of Acculturation Stress Items**

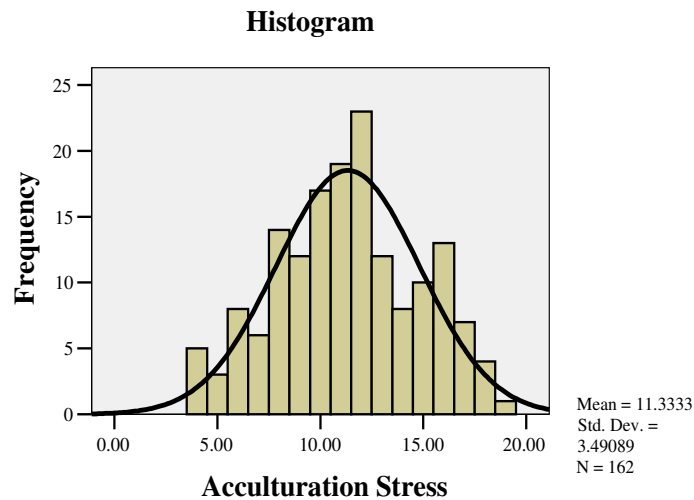
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>N</b>
It bothers me that I can't get close to Americans.	2.46	1.07	170
It bothers me that I have an accent.	2.57	1.21	171
I don't feel at home in the US.	3.14	1.16	171
I have more barriers to overcome because I'm different here.	3.04	1.09	169
People think I am unsociable when in fact I have trouble communicating in English.	2.36	1.17	165
Many people have stereotypes about my culture or ethnic group and treat me as if they are true.	2.72	1.13	168

**Note:**

The six items were based on 5-point scale, coded in the way that the higher the score, the higher the acculturation stress. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.

Frequency statistics showed that, overall, immigrant participants had a low-to-medium level stress. On a 4-20 scale, the mean acculturation stress score was 11.33 (SD=3.49, N=162), slightly smaller than the "neutral" mean score of 12. The distribution of the acculturation score was approximately normal as we can see from the histogram in Figure 4. Participants whose acculturation score were between 4-9 were considered of low stress (29.6%). Medium stress was 10-12 (36.4%) and the high was 13-20 (37%).

**Figure 4: Histogram**



According to Hypothesis 4, it is expected to find that the mean attitude score of medium acculturation stress group is higher than both low and high acculturation stress group. However, this hypothesis was not supported by the test result. For the belief dimension, we found that the medium-stress people did score higher in their attitude (M=17.68, SD=4.38, N=59) than the low-stress (M=16.98, SD=3.61, N=48) and high-stress group (M=17.51, SD=4.15, N=55), as shown in Table 14 and Figure 5. However, the difference was not significant, according to One-way ANOVA ( $F[2, 159]=0.410$ ,  $p=0.664$ ). We didn't find that acculturation stress had a significant influence on attitude-emotional either ( $F[2, 158]=0.468$ ,  $p=0.627$ ).

[Insert Table 14 and Figure 5 about here]

### **Acculturation Level (H5)**

Acculturation level was measured by two indexes: language and media use and preferred social contact. The former consisted of four language items and one media item. Language items inquired respondents' language use under four circumstances - at

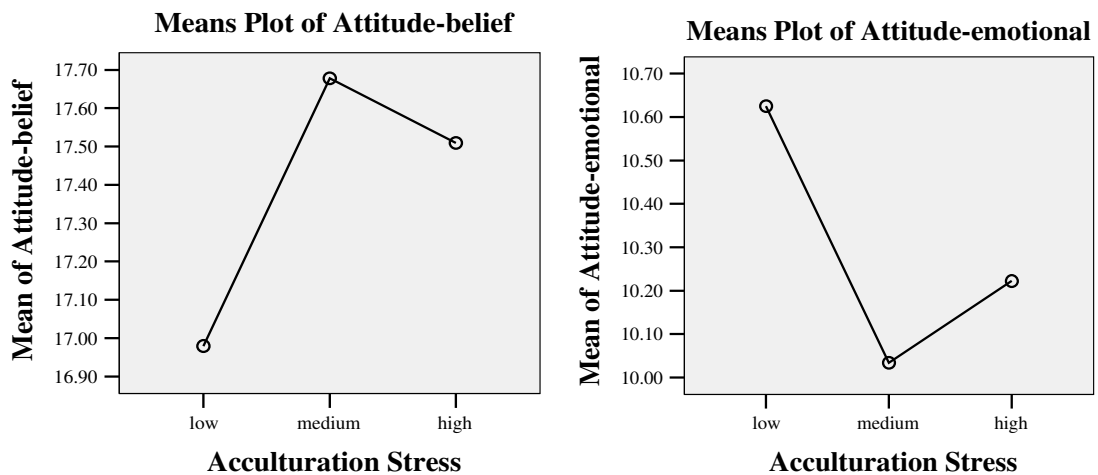
home, in school, with friends and in general. Media item asked respondents to identify whether they use native media more or English media more. The items were based on a

**Table 14. Means of Attitude-belief and Attitude-emotional by Acculturation Stress**

Acculturation Stress	Attitude-belief		
	Mean	SD	N
Low	16.98	3.61	48
Medium	17.68	4.38	59
High	17.51	4.15	55

Acculturation Stress	Attitude-emotional		
	Mean	SD	N
Low	10.63	3.18	48
Medium	10.03	3.15	59
High	10.22	3.22	54

**Figure 5: Means Plot of Attitude by Acculturation Stress**





5-point scale: 1- native language/media only, 2- native language/media more than English language/media, 3- both equal, 4- English media more than native language/media, and 5- English media only. The social contact index contained 4 items inquiring what backgrounds respondents would prefer their friends, roommates, co-workers etc. to be (1- all of respondent's origin, 2- mostly of respondent's origin, 3- mixed background, 4 -mostly Americans, 5- All Americans). The higher the score, the higher the acculturation level respondents were considered to have.

Frequency data showed that immigrant participants often used their native languages in their daily lives. Especially when they were at home, 88.5% (N=116) indicated that they spoke native language more than English or native language only. Even when they were at school, 61.7% (N=79) would still use their mother tongue, and only 38.3% (N=49) used English only. 79.2% (N=95) reported that at least half of the time they communicated with their friends in native language and only 5.8% (N=7) used English only. Compared to language use, immigrant participants used more English media than native media. 50.7% (N=72) indicated that they used more English than native media or only English media, while only 17% (N=24) reported more usage of native media. The reliability test also showed a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.762 for these items.

As to social contact, the data suggested that the great majority of immigrant respondents preferred to have co-workers (92.9%, N=145) from or to socialize with people from different backgrounds (75.9%, N=126). Over half (56.2%, N=95) indicated that they had no preference for roommates' background, though 56.5% (N=96) admitted that most or all of their close friends were from their own country. This suggested that

even though a predominant number of respondents were willing to interact with people from different cultures, their established contacts were still mostly of their own culture. Very few people indicated that they wanted to build social contact with only or mostly Americans - which seemed to suggest an overall low acculturation level according to the original coding system. It seemed that social contact index as a measure for acculturation level was a little problematic. As reliability test also failed to provide a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0.574$ ) for the four items, social contact index was dropped from the analysis. Language and media use index was used as the single measure for acculturation level.

In Part "a" of Hypothesis 5, we expected to find a more positive attitude in immigrants with low acculturation level. This was partially supported by the correlation test. As shown in Table 15, the simple correlation between the acculturation level and attitude-belief was  $-0.241$  ( $p<0.05$ ), which suggested immigrant respondents' attitudes toward advertising (belief dimension) was negatively, significantly and somewhat strongly correlated with their acculturation level. However, there seemed to be no significant relationship between acculturation level and attitude-emotional. Partial correlations suggested the previously-found relationship remained strong and significant when gender and TV viewing time were controlled ( $r = -0.232, -0.263, p<0.05$ ). When age and length of stay in U.S. were controlled, the original relationship was found slightly weaker but still marginally significant ( $r=-0.187, p=0.075; r=-0.192, p=0.067$ ).

[Insert Table 15 about here]

Above findings were also confirmed by ANOVA. One-way ANOVA showed that acculturation level had a significant main effect on the belief dimension of attitudes

( $F[1,95]=5.03$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), but not on emotional dimension ( $F[1, 93]=0.785$ ,  $p=0.378$ ). A means plot by ANOVA (see Figure 6 below) clearly illustrated this negative correlation between acculturation level and attitude-belief. After control variables such as gender, age, length of stay and TV viewing time and acculturation motivation were added to the ANOVA model, acculturation level's influence on attitude remains somewhat significant ( $F[1, 84]=3.777$ ,  $p=0.055$ ) - but not as significant as before.

**Table 15.**

**Partial Correlations between Acculturation Level and Attitudes toward Advertising, Controlling for Gender, Age, Length of Stay in U.S., TV Viewing Time and Acculturation Motivation**

<b>Correlation of Acculturation Level and Attitudes toward Advertising</b>		
	<b>Attitude-belief</b>	<b>Attitude-emotional</b>
Simple r	-0.241*	-0.066
<u>Controlling for:</u>		
Gender	-0.232*	-0.063
Age	-0.187a	-0.029
Length of stay in U.S.	-0.192b	-0.023
TV viewing time	-0.263*	-0.079
Acculturation motivation	-0.186c	-0.028
All control	-0.163	-0.004

**Note:**

\* $p<.05$     \*\* $p<.01$     \*\*\* $p<.001$

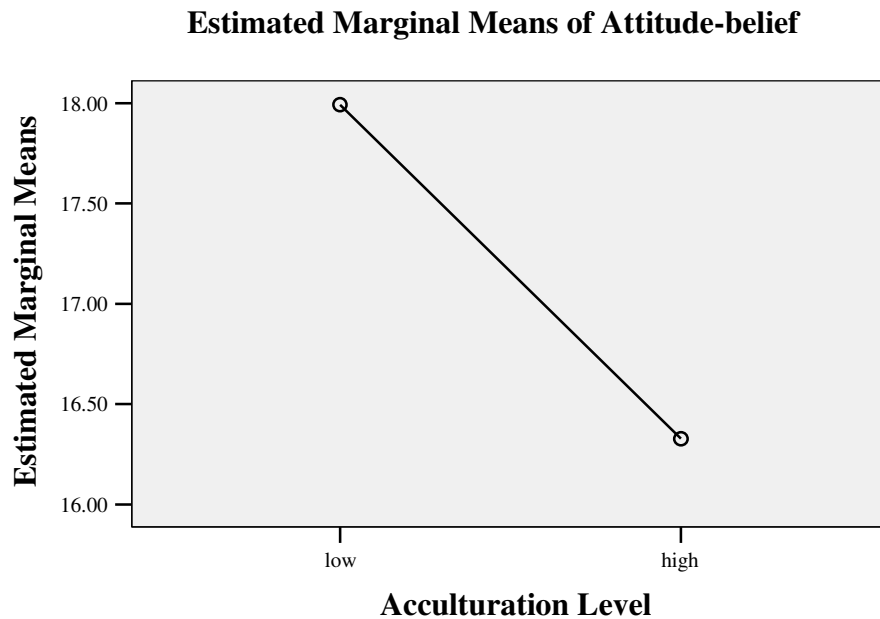
a:  $p=0.075$

b:  $p=0.067$

c:  $p=0.071$

So far, both correlation and ANOVA test supported our hypothesis that the higher acculturation level the immigrants have, the more negative their attitudes toward advertising. However, the support was partial, because such relationship only seemed to apply to the belief dimension of attitudes and not the emotional dimension.

**Figure 6: Estimated Marginal Means of Attitude-belief**



Part "b" of Hypothesis 5 predicts that the relationship between acculturation level and attitudes will disappear when acculturation motivation is controlled. Our tests yielded mixed results for this hypothesis. As can be seen in Table 15, the correlation between acculturation level and attitude-belief dropped from  $r=-0.241$  ( $p<0.05$ ) to  $r=-0.186$  ( $p=0.071$ ) when motivation was controlled. The original relationship didn't disappear, but the variance explained by the acculturation level (R-square) was cut from 0.058 to 0.035 after motivation variable was added. However, the reversed situation didn't happen when we tried to do it the other way around. The partial correlation between attitude-belief and acculturation motivation remained strong ( $r=0.339$ ,

$p < 0.001$ ) while acculturation level was controlled, as compared to the  $r = 0.390$  ( $P < 0.001$ ) in the original relationship. The results offered some support to our speculation that the relationship between acculturation motivation and attitudes is more robust. Part of the variances in attitudes explained by acculturation level should be attributed to motivation.

### **The Third-Person Effect**

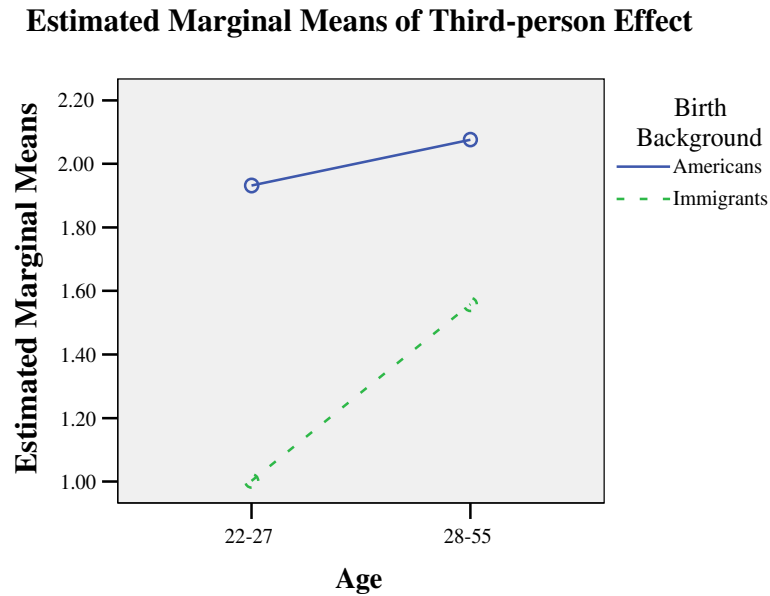
Hypothesis 6 was well supported by the statistical analysis. When participants were asked to assess the overall effectiveness of advertising as a marketing tool (an implicit way of asking advertising's effect on others) on a 7-point scale (1=not effective at all, 7=very effective), 16.5% (N=346) believed that advertising is "very effective" (7), 67.3% rated effective (5-6), and only 16.2% thought advertising was not so effective (1-4). The mean effectiveness score was 5.45 (SD=1.121, N=346). However, when it comes to assessing the influence of advertising on oneself, participants were rather conservative. Only 0.6% (N=346) indicated that advertising was "very effective" (7) on themselves, 34.5% believed it was effective (5-6), while 64.7% thought it's not so effective on themselves. The mean effectiveness score on self was 3.82 (SD=1.386, N=346). Frequency data showed a clear tendency that the majority of the people believed advertising as a marketing tool was very effective on people except for themselves.

This tendency was proven to be statistically significant by a further t-test. According to the paired-samples t-test, the perceived overall influence of advertising (influence on others) was significantly larger than the perceived influence on oneself ( $t[345] = 20.933$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The mean difference between the two was 1.633 (SD=1.451,

N=346), and the 95% confidence interval for the mean difference was (1.480, 1.786). This difference is actually a measure of the third-person effect - a positive score suggests the existence of the third-person effect and the larger the score, the greater the effect. Clearly, a statistically significant and positive difference provided substantial support to our third-person effect hypothesis. Additionally, the data showed that only 3.5% (N=346) of the participants had negative third-person effect score, while 79.6% believed they themselves were less likely to be affected than other people.

Hypothesis 6b predicts a larger third-person effect for American participants than for immigrant participants, which was also supported by the analysis. T-test showed the mean third-person effect score for Americans was 1.948 (SD=1.484, N=173), which was significantly higher than immigrant participants' mean score 1.318 (SD=1.35, N=173) ( $t[344]=4.131, p<0.001$ ). One-way ANOVA procedure also confirmed the result by showing a very significant main effect of participants' birth background ( $F[1,344]=17.069, p<0.001$ ). Birth background's influence remained strong and significant when gender, age, TV viewing and major variables were added to the ANOVA model ( $F[1, 327]=20.995, p<0.001$ ). Age seemed to have a significant influence on third-person effect also ( $F[1, 327]=4.623, p<0.05$ ), but there was no interaction between birth background and age ( $F[1, 326]=1.681, p=0.196$ ). Birth background and age's influences on third-person effect can be easily observed in Figure 7. The older age (28-55) group always displayed a larger third-person effect than the younger group, for both Americans and Immigrant participants. Also, despite the age, Americans were always found to have a larger third-person effect than immigrants, which was exactly what we had proposed in the hypothesis.

**Figure 7: Estimated Marginal Means of Third-person Effect**



Correlation results in Table 16 showed that acculturation motivation was very significantly and positively related with the assessed advertising's effect on oneself ( $r=0.211$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). It indicated that the more acculturation motivation one had, the more likely one would perceive advertising's influence on oneself, and therefore produce a smaller third-person effect ( $r=-0.146$ ,  $p=0.06$ ). Even though the relationship is not significant at  $p=0.05$  level, we still consider it as marginally significant. The negative correlation between acculturation motivation and the third-person effect persisted when gender ( $r=-0.155$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and TV viewing ( $r=-0.174$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) were controlled, but not when age ( $r=-0.119$ ,  $p=0.130$ ) and length of stay in U.S. ( $r=-0.098$ ,  $p=0.213$ ) were used as control variables. This result is actually in consistency with our previous finding of the immigrants' length of stay in U.S.'s influence on their attitudes. As they staying in U.S. longer, becoming more acculturated and Americanized, their attitudes would then become less positive, and therefore the size of third-person effect would be bigger.

**Table 16.**

**Simple Correlations between Third-person Effect and Gender, Age, Length of Stay in U.S., TV Viewing Time and Acculturation Variables**

<b>Correlation of Third-person Effect and Demographic and Acculturation Variables</b>	<b>Effect on others</b>	<b>Effect on oneself</b>	<b>Third-person effect</b>
Gender	0.061	0.099	-0.047
Age	0.071	-0.090	0.141**
Length of stay in U.S.	0.035	-0.161*	0.196*
TV viewing time	0.056	0.049	-0.003
Acculturation motivation	0.090	0.211**	-0.146b
Acculturation stress	-0.003	0.135	-0.140c
Acculturation level	-0.091	-0.170a	0.106

**Note:**

\*p<.05    \*\*p<.01    \*\*\*p<.001

a: p=0.098

b: p=0.060

c: p=0.077

Besides birth background, third-person effect's relationships with other variables such as gender, age, etc. were also investigated. As we can see in Table 16, there is a significant and positive relationship between age and the third-person effect ( $r=0.141$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), which confirmed our previous finding in ANOVA. We also found that immigrant participants' length of stay in U.S was significantly and positively correlated with the size of third-person effect ( $r=0.196$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). It suggested that the longer the



immigrant participants stay in America, the smaller advertising effect they will assume on themselves ( $r=0.161$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

These findings actually fit together very well with the results found in previous sections. A bigger third-person effect was found for Americans, which is in accord with Americans' overall more negative attitudes toward advertising. The positive correlation between immigrants' acculturation motivation and perceived effect of advertising on themselves also accorded with the finding of more positive attitudes for immigrants with higher acculturation motivation. Similarly, as immigrants staying longer in U.S. and becoming more acculturated, their attitudes toward advertising went more negative and therefore the smaller effect they would perceived on themselves.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

As we have discussed in the previous chapters, existing research on media and acculturation puts a lot of emphasis on media's influence on immigrants' process of acculturation, while their perceptions of media under such acculturation conditions are largely under-explored. How do those acculturating individuals perceive the media and advertising messages in the host society? Positively or negatively? Would their perceptions counteract media's influences on them? Without understanding these questions, we can't be really sure if media indeed plays as powerful a role in immigrants' acculturation as many scholars have argued. If one's attitude toward media messages is critical and doubtful, it is likely that media's influence on this person would also be limited. Therefore, it is our goal in this study to examine immigrants' perceptions of advertising under various acculturation situations. A finding of positive attitudes of immigrants would provide some empirical evidence for the common belief that media are important paths of acculturation. Negative attitudes, however, would put this belief to question.

Fortunately, our research results showed that, exactly as we had expected, immigrant participants had more positive overall attitudes toward advertising than American participants. The level of the positiveness also varied according to immigrants' levels of acculturation motivation and acculturation level, which seemed to suggest that media's influence might be different in different acculturation stages. We'll discuss the results and their implications in more detail below.

### Attitudes toward Advertising

One of the assumptions underlying our hypothesis that immigrants are more positive toward advertising than Americans is that immigrants have more social utility reasons to watch commercials. According to Bush et al. (1999), having social utility reasons for watching commercials is positively related to attitudes toward advertising. The t-test did show that immigrants' average social utility reason score is higher than Americans' at a significant level ( $t[344]=-5.57, p<0.001$ ). ANOVA further showed that being an immigrant or American has a significant main effect on social utility reasons even when variables such as gender, age and major were controlled ( $F[1, 338]=30.111, p<0.001$ ). Even though age seemed to be negatively correlated with social utility scores ( $r = -0.230, p<0.01$ ) for immigrants, this relationship disappeared when the length of stay in the U.S. was controlled. Our explanation is that older immigrants have stayed longer in the U.S. and therefore became more Americanized and are less in need of social cultural learning. This hypothesis is confirmed by the significant and negative correlation between the length of stay and scores on the social utility reasons scale ( $r = -0.264, p<0.01$ ).

Finding support for the social utility reasons hypothesis is a very positive sign that our hypothesis on attitude toward advertising will also be supported. Bush et al. (1999) found that social utility reasons are a strong predictor of attitudes. As immigrants are found to be more motivated than Americans to watch commercials to gather information about lifestyles and trends of the society, it's very likely that their attitudes toward advertising messages are less critical or more positive.

The test results didn't surprise us. ANOVA showed that birth background (being immigrant or American) had a significant main effect on individuals' attitudes toward advertising in both the belief ( $F[1, 287]=51.192, p<0.001$ ) and emotional dimensions ( $F[1, 286]=10.133, p<0.001$ ) with gender, age, major and TV viewing controlled. Both immigrants' mean attitude-belief ( $M=17.34, SD=4.04, N=174$ ) and attitude-emotional scores ( $M=10.20, SD=3.16, N=172$ ) were significantly higher than those of Americans' ( $M=13.87, SD=3.65, N=172; M=8.89, SD=2.90, N=172$ ). These findings provided substantial evidence for the hypothesis that immigrants have more positive attitudes than Americans. More specifically, in the belief dimension, immigrants were more willing than Americans to acknowledge advertising's positive social influences such as providing information and stimulating the economy; while on the personal emotional level, they also appeared to be more tolerant of ads than Americans - they found commercials were more fun to watch, less annoying and they were less likely to change the channel when commercials came on.

Age was also found to have a significant influence on the attitude-belief ( $F[1,287]=5.889, p<0.05$ ), which means that the older individuals were more likely to think critically of advertising's social influence than were the younger ones. No interaction between age and birth background was found.

The finding of a positive and significant correlation between TV viewing and attitude-emotional ( $r=0.134, p<0.05$ ) is also interesting. It suggests that the heavy viewers were more tolerant of ads than light viewers. Of course, it might be another way around - people who were more tolerant of ads tended to watch more TV.

Our prediction of more favorable attitudes toward advertising in immigrants than in Americans got substantial support from the data. This result is in accord with Lee's (1993) finding of more positive attitudes in acculturating Taiwanese than in Americans and Bush et al.'s (1999) discovery of more favorable advertising perceptions in African Americans than in Caucasians. What's more important is the implication of the finding. A positive attitude means that immigrants accepted advertising as a source of influence on them and a high social utility reasons score indicates that they're using advertising for social reasons such as gathering fashionable lifestyle information. Such facts certainly provide evidence for those scholars' (O'Guinn, Lee, and Faber 1986; Lee 1993; Bush et al. 1999) arguments that advertising is an agent in immigrants' acculturation.

Of course, what made our study stand out is that we didn't just stop here. We explored further if immigrants' attitudes would be affected by their acculturation status. If advertising has an influence on acculturation, then, as immigrants' acculturation progresses and their acculturation status changes, the size of the influence must be changing too. Their attitude is a sign.

### **Attitudes and Acculturation**

A very strong, positive and significant relationship was found between immigrants' acculturation motivation and their attitudes, for both belief ( $r=0.390$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and emotional dimensions ( $r=0.246$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). ANOVA also showed that acculturation motivation's influence remained significant for both attitude-belief and attitude-emotional while variables such as gender, age, length of stay in the U.S. and TV viewing time were controlled ( $F[1, 135]=10.240$ ,  $p<0.005$ ;  $F[1, 133]=3.924$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The test results strongly supported our hypothesis that the higher the

immigrants' acculturation motivation, the more positive their attitudes. In another word, the more immigrants wanted to be "American-like", the more favorable their attitudes were.

Acculturation motivation was often studied in relation to media usage in previous research (Kim 1977, Hwang and He 1999, Reece and Palmgreen 2000). This is the first time that it was found significantly correlated with immigrants' perception of advertising and the strength of the relationship is very striking. This result has very important implications. The fact that high motivation immigrants viewed advertising more favorably than low motivation people suggests that advertising's socializing effects can't be the same for everyone. Even though our tests and other studies showed that advertising plays an important role in immigrants' acculturation, its actual effects could be limited by other variables such as acculturation motivation. Advertising's influence on immigrants is definitely not one-way. Therefore, if one wants to determine the size of advertising's socializing effect, acculturation motivation variable must be considered.

A curvilinear relationship was expected to be found between acculturation stress and attitude, with medium stress correlated with higher attitude scores while low and high stress would go with lower attitude scores. However, we didn't find any significant relationship between the two through statistical procedures. Though descriptive statistics revealed that the mean attitude score for the medium stress group was higher than the other two groups, the difference was not statistically significant. One reason for lacking statistical support might be that the sample size was too small. It usually takes a very large sample for a curvilinear relationship to be evident. Although we've got a decent number of participants in total (N=358), there were only 184 left when it comes

to acculturating individuals. Another reason may be related to immigrants' social desirability concern. As it may create negative feelings about themselves if they agree too much with statements such as "It bothers me that I can't get close to Americans", they might refrain from revealing their true opinions. We need a larger sample and better survey design to study acculturation stress's effect.

Contrary to Lee's 1993 study, in which she didn't find a significant attitude difference between acculturating individuals of high and low acculturation levels, we found acculturation level to be negatively and significantly correlated with attitude ( $r = -0.241$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), though only for the belief dimension. Our study shows that when individuals are more acculturated (e.g. using more English media and language), they are more likely to think negatively about advertising's social influence, exactly as what we had hypothesized.

We had expected that acculturation level's main effect would disappear when acculturation motivation was controlled, but the p-value of 0.056 produced by ANOVA after age, gender, length of stay, TV viewing and acculturation motivation variable were controlled left us hesitant to claim that our hypothesis was supported. However, we did notice a sizable drop of R-square - the variance in attitudes explained by acculturation level. The R-square dropped from 0.058 to 0.035 after acculturation motivation was controlled. On the contrary, the reverse situation didn't happen when acculturation level was controlled. This means that a lot of the variance in attitudes explained by acculturation level should be actually attributed to acculturation motivation. This is in fact very close to our speculation that acculturation motivation is the actual variable that matters.

As with acculturation motivation, the test results showed that immigrants' individual acculturation level is another variable that could qualify advertising's socializing effect on them, which should be taken into account when researchers are trying to assess advertising's influence. It also points out again the importance of acculturation motivation.

### **The Third-Person Effect**

The third-person effect hypothesis has been tested and found to be robust by many studies (Perloff 1989; Gunther and Thorson 1992; Price and Tewksbury 1996; Brosius and Engel 1996; Dupagne and Salwen 1999; etc.), but none of them have studied the third-person effect under the acculturation condition. Our study introduced this concept into the media and acculturation research for the first time.

A classic third-person effect was found among immigrant and American participants. Paired-samples t-test showed a significant difference between participants' perceived influence of advertising on others and oneself ( $t[345]=20.933$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This result again reveals the robustness of the third-person effect as the previous studies.

More importantly, we did find that the third-person effect for Americans was significantly larger than that for immigrants ( $t[344]=4.131$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). ANOVA indicated that the main effect of being an immigrant or an American on perceptions of advertising was significant at the 0.001 level ( $F[1, 327]=20.995$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) when gender, age, TV viewing and major variables were controlled. In other words, the discrepancy between the perceived effect on others and self was significantly smaller for immigrants than for Americans. This result is expected and it is consistent with and even a reinforcement of our previous finding that immigrants have a more positive attitude



toward advertising. When people are thinking more negatively of advertising, like Americans, they are more likely to dismiss its effect on themselves and therefore manifest a larger third-person effect.

Correlational analysis showed a negative and marginally significant relationship between acculturation motivation and the third-person effect ( $r=-0.146$ ,  $p=0.06$ ), and it persisted when gender ( $r=-0.155$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and TV viewing ( $r=-0.174$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) were controlled. But the relationship disappeared when age ( $r=-0.119$ ,  $p=0.130$ ) and length of stay in U.S. ( $r=-0.098$ ,  $p=0.213$ ) were controlled. This result is consistent with our previous finding of how length of stay in the U.S. influences immigrants' attitudes. As immigrants have stayed longer and become more Americanized, their attitudes would then become less positive, and therefore result in a bigger third-person effect.

Our findings on the third-person effect again confirmed the robustness of this phenomenon. The size of the effect varied in consistency with the variance in attitudes under different acculturation conditions. As the third-person effect was measured separately from attitudes, its resonance with attitudes actually revealed in another way that our previous findings on attitudes were robust and repeatable. It is more evidence of advertising's acculturating influence on immigrants.

### **Implications and Limitations**

This research is expected to have multiple implications in the field of media and acculturation. Existing research has predominantly focused on media and advertising's socializing effects on immigrants' acculturation and very little attention has been given to immigrants' perception of media messages in their acculturation process, not to mention their perception of advertising under such circumstances. We feel a large part

of the media and acculturation research has been missing. In our study, we examined immigrant participants' perception of advertising very carefully. We compared their attitudes with Americans', and we studied their different attitudes under various acculturation conditions. Our study found a more positive attitude in immigrants than in Americans as was expected and, more intriguingly, we found acculturation variables did have significant influences on immigrant participants' attitude - high motivation predicted positive attitudes while high acculturation level was an indicator of the negative.

This is the first time in media and acculturation studies that immigrants' attitudes toward advertising and acculturation variables were closely examined together and a significant relationship among them had been found. What also made our study important is that, in certain way, it provided some empirical evidence for the common belief that media and advertising have become important paths for immigrants' acculturation. If negative attitudes were found in immigrants instead positive attitudes, we probably wouldn't be able to claim such a powerful influence on immigrants from media. What's more, our study further showed that advertising's socializing effect on immigrants was not homogeneous. As immigrants' attitudes toward advertising could vary according to their acculturation motivation and level, this means that these acculturation variables can affect immigrants' acceptance level of advertising and therefore advertising's actual impact on them. It shows that the relationship between advertising and immigrants is by no means a one-way influence. It also implies that acculturation variables need to be considered if we need to determine advertising's influence on immigrants in future research.

Another innovative contribution of this study is the introduction of the third-person effect concept into the field of media, advertising and acculturation for the first time. This phenomenon was again found to be robust under the new situation. Our findings on the third-person effect fit together very well with the results found on attitudes. They were almost the replication of the attitudes pattern in another way. As the third-person effect was measured in a different way from attitudes, the resonance between the two is an indication of the robustness of our findings. These findings again supported the idea that advertising is a possible acculturation path for immigrants. But its actual influence would be limited by immigrants' own acculturation status. Our study has extended both the third-person effect and acculturation research to a new domain.

However, just like any other research, our study is constrained by its limitations. First and foremost, a convenient graduate student sample on campus was used instead of random sampling. Almost half of our immigrant participants were from China (45.7%). The number could be a fair representation of Chinese students' proportion in the international student population, but it might over-represent Chinese immigrants' portion in the overall population. On the contrary, the Latin-American group might be under-represented in our sample (2.9%). Therefore, even though our findings revealed many significant relationship patterns, they can't be generalized to the larger population.

Secondly, we have to say that it's problematic that immigrants were studied as one whole group and their own cultural backgrounds' influences were not examined. One important reason for that is the lack of samples. We had a decent number of immigrant participants (N=184), but when we have to break it down to individual cultural/ethnic groups, the number was fairly small for some groups, such as African

(N=10), or South American (N=5). Sample sizes varied largely from group to group, which prevented us from conducting valid comparisons between these groups. To better understand how immigrants from different cultural backgrounds perceived advertising differently, we need a much larger sample and a better sampling design.

Thirdly, our survey questions for measuring acculturation variables could be improved. Only one out of five initial question items was used as a valid measure for acculturation motivation. Similarly, the "preferred social contact" index measuring acculturation level was dropped because of a small Cronbach's alpha. Almost all the acculturation related questions were facing social desirability problems.

However, all these limitations didn't stop our research from becoming one of the pioneer studies in the realm of audience perception, advertising and acculturation. We believe that our exploration opened up a new perspective for the future media and acculturation research. The limitations of this study are actually also the questions researchers could work on in the future.

**APPENDIX**

**A MEDIA STUDIES SURVEY**

## A MEDIA STUDIES SURVEY

Dear Student,

This is a survey about advertising and other media related issues. We are interested in your true opinions on these issues. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The survey is completely anonymous and your participation is voluntary. If you would like to share your thoughts with us, please mark your answers carefully with a pen or pencil on the questionnaire. Thank you very much!!

**Please tell us whether you disagree or agree with following statements by circling the number that applies to you best.**

Item	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
1. Advertising is essential to modern society.	1	2	3	4	5		
2. Advertising helps raise our standard of living.	1	2	3	4	5		
3. Advertising often persuades people to buy things they shouldn't buy.	1	2	3	4	5		
4. Most advertising insults the intelligence of the average consumer.	1	2	3	4	5		
5. In general, advertisements present a fair picture of the product being advertised.	1	2	3	4	5		
6. Advertising is a useful information source.	1	2	3	4	5		
7. Commercials are fun to watch.	1	2	3	4	5		
8. Advertising is annoying.	1	2	3	4	5		
9. I wish there were fewer commercials on TV.	1	2	3	4	5		
10. I usually switch the channel right away when a commercial comes on.	1	2	3	4	5		
11. I often learn things by watching commercials.	1	2	3	4	5		
12. I sometimes watch commercials to find out the latest trends.	1	2	3	4	5		
13. I often gather information from ads about products before I buy.	1	2	3	4	5		
14. To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often look at ads to see what others are buying.	1	2	3	4	5		

Please circle the number that applies to you best on the following 7-point scales.

Item	Not Effective at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Effective
15. In general, how effective do you think advertising is as a marketing tool?		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
16. If you were asked to evaluate advertising's influence on you, you would say advertising is:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Please write down your answer or check the box that applies.

17. How much time do you spend on following activities on an average day?

- a. Watching TV: \_\_\_\_\_ hours
- b. Reading a newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_ hours
- c. Listening to the radio: \_\_\_\_\_ hours
- d. Surfing the internet: \_\_\_\_\_ hours

18. Your gender:  Male  Female

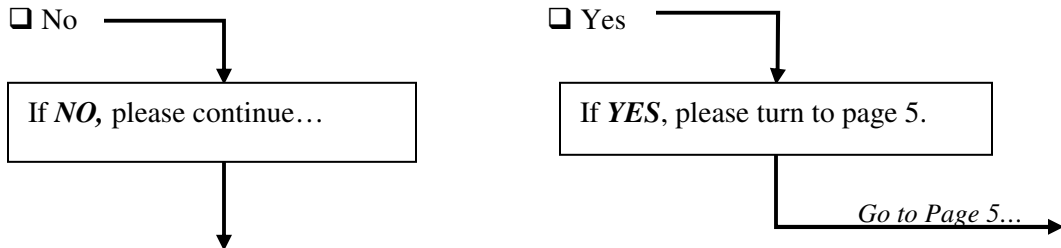
19. Please write in your age: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Your year in school:

- Freshman  Sophomore  Junior  Senior
- Graduate student (In what year did you begin your graduate studies at UMass: \_\_\_\_\_)

21. Please write in your major: \_\_\_\_\_

22. Were you born in U.S.?



23. Where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_.

24. At what age did you come to U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_.

25. Is English your first language?

- Yes \_\_\_\_\_
- No. My first language is: \_\_\_\_\_
- I grew up bilingual and my other native language is: \_\_\_\_\_



If **YES**:

If **OTHER THAN YES**:

If **YES**:

26. Answer the questions (a) – (d) using following 5-point scale.

<b>1</b>	-----	<b>2</b>	-----	<b>3</b>	-----	<b>4</b>	-----	<b>5</b>
<i>Native Language Only</i>		<i>Native Language more than English</i>		<i>Both Equal</i>		<i>English more than Native Language</i>		<i>English Only</i>

Please tell us what language(s) do you use when you are:

a) At home?	1	2	3	4	5
b) In school?	1	2	3	4	5
c) With friends?	1	2	3	4	5
d) In general?	1	2	3	4	5

27. What type of media do you usually use? Please circle the number that applies.

<b>1</b>	-----	<b>2</b>	-----	<b>3</b>	-----	<b>4</b>	-----	<b>5</b>
<i>Native Media Only</i>		<i>Native Media more than English one</i>		<i>Both Equal</i>		<i>English Media more than Native one</i>		<i>English Media Only</i>

Please circle the number that applies to you best.

Item	Not Interested at all	.....	Very Interested		
28. How interested are you in learning about current political, economic, and social issues in the United States?	1	2	3	4	5
29. How interested are you in learning the ways American people behave and think?	1	2	3	4	5
30. How interested are you in making American friends?	1	2	3	4	5
31. How interested are you in staying in United States after you graduate?	1	2	3	4	5
32. How interested are you in being more “American-like” in the way you speak and behave?	1	2	3	4	5



**How do you feel about these statements?**

Item	Strongly Disagree	.....			Strongly Agree
33. It bothers me that I can't get close to Americans.	1	2	3	4	5
34. It bothers me that I have an accent.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I don't feel at home in the US.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I have more barriers to overcome because I'm different here.	1	2	3	4	5
37. People think I am unsociable when in fact I have trouble communicating in English.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Many people have stereotypes about my culture or ethnic group and treat me as if they are true.	1	2	3	4	5

**Questions 39 - 42: Please check the box that applies.**

39. You prefer going to social gatherings or parties at which the people are:

- All of your country of origin
- Mostly of your country of origin
- From everywhere
- Mostly Americans
- All Americans

40. Your close friends are:

- All from your country of origin
- Mostly from your country of origin
- From mixed background
- Mostly Americans
- All Americans

41. You prefer to live with roommates who are:

- All from your country of origin
- Mostly from your country of origin
- No preference
- Mostly Americans
- All Americans

42. If you could choose your co-workers, you would want them to be:

- All of my country of origin
- Mostly of my country of origin
- From different background
- Mostly Americans
- All Americans



**PLEASE STOP HERE. THAT'S ALL.  
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!**

**ONLY answer the following questions if you were BORN IN U. S.**

43. Do you shop online?

No

Yes

**If NO:**

44. Why (check the most important two reasons)?

- Shopping in traditional stores is more fun.
- I don't feel comfortable using the technology.
- I don't want to buy things if I can't see or feel them first.
- I don't want to take risks with my privacy and financial security.
- Delivery is expensive and slow.
- Others - Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

45. How likely are you to buy something online in the near future?

*Very—Somewhat— Not Sure— Somewhat—Very*  
*Unlikely Unlikely                      Likely      Likely*

**If YES:**

46. Why (check the most important two reasons)?

- Shopping online is more convenient.
- Sometimes there are more discounts or rebates online.
- It's hot.
- Some product is only available online.
- Others - Please specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

47. How important are the following issues to you?

	Not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very important
- Being healthy. -----							1 2 3 4 5
- Being popular. -----							1 2 3 4 5
- Being creative. -----							1 2 3 4 5
- Being different. -----							1 2 3 4 5
- Being in fashion. -----							1 2 3 4 5
- Being knowledgeable. -----							1 2 3 4 5
- Being the leader. -----							1 2 3 4 5
- Having frequent changes in life. -----							1 2 3 4 5

**Please circle the number that applies to you best.**

Item	Strongly Disagree	.....			Strongly Agree
48. Online advertising is less annoying than TV commercials.	1	2	3	4	5
49. TV commercials are more fun than online ads.	1	2	3	4	5
50. TV commercials are of higher quality than online ads.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I generally don't click on the online advertising link.	1	2	3	4	5
52. I generally feel disappointed after I checked out the online advertising link.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I think TV commercials are more effective than online advertising in general.	1	2	3	4	5
54. The online ad will attract my attention when:					
- The advertised product is something completely new to me.	1	2	3	4	5
- The advertised product is something I've been longing for.	1	2	3	4	5
- It indicates a significant price cut.	1	2	3	4	5
- It seems to be funny.	1	2	3	4	5
- I think I can learn something by looking at it.	1	2	3	4	5
55. My online shopping decision is more influenced by online advertising than traditional ads.	1	2	3	4	5

**THAT'S ALL – THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!**

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