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The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Acculturation: Challenges, Opportunities, and Agenda for Research and Practice

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The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Acculturation: Current Challenges, Opportunities, and an Agenda for Research and Practice

Abstract

The concept of acculturation has been based on the assumption of an adaptation process, whereby immigrants lose aspects of their heritage cultures in favour of aspects of a host culture (i.e. assimilation). Past research has shown that acculturation preferences result in various possibilities and influence consumption behaviour. However, the impact of social media on consumer acculturation is underexplored, although the social purpose and information sharing online is utilized for a variety of social purposes. Recent studies have shown the transformation from an offline to an online context, in which social networks play an integral part in immigrants' communications, relationships and connections. This study merges the views from a number of leading contributors to highlight significant opportunities and challenges for future consumer acculturation research influenced by social media. The research provides insights into the impact of social media on consumer acculturation.

Keywords: Consumer Acculturation; Global Consumer Culture; Information Management; Information Systems; Marketing; Social Media

1. Introduction

Substantial immigration has taken place throughout the world, leading to the development of recognisable sub-populations in leading economies (Eurostat, 2015; Van Oudenhoven, Ward and Masgoret, 2006). Such groups have made substantial contributions to politics, society and economics (Jamal et al., 2019; Sandicki, 2011). The development of visible and influential minority ethnic groups is of interest to business researchers and practitioners, particularly those with an interest in the marketing of goods and services.

Acculturation relates to the culture change that takes place as a result of contact with other cultures—their people, groups and environments (Berry 1992; Laroche and Jamal 2015), while the process of learning one's own culture is defined as enculturation (Kizgin et al., 2017; Schwartz et al., 2010). Ethnicity and other sub-populations have long been used to describe consumer behaviour (e.g. Laroche and Jamal, 2015; Peñaloza, 1994), but research on the role of social media's influence on acculturation outcomes and consumption choices has been largely absent. Given the complexity and scale of population change and the associated development of minority ethnic communities, these research issues require a more global assessment involving a greater number of case settings (Berry, 2005).

The significant growth in cultural variety has affected and shaped many practices (Laroche and Jamal, 2015) in the context of educational institutions, public policy, education and health requirements, culinary habits, and social media participation. Prior acculturation studies have shown that social networks are an integral part of the consumer acculturation process (Kizgin et al., 2017; Laroche and Jamal, 2015), impacting immigrants' product choices in the context of interaction between cultures (e.g. Dey et al., 2019; Jamal, 2003; Kizgin et al., 2017). With few exceptions, including language orientation (Kizgin et al., 2018*a*; Li and Tsai, 2015), voting intentions (Kizgin et al., 2018*b*), sustainable food consumption (Choudhury et al., 2019) and acculturation to global consumer culture (Cleveland et al., 2015), previous acculturation studies have focused primarily on the impact of acculturation in an offline context.

Social media has become a significant and powerful method by which to assist and advocate activities, relationships, and communication among peers, consumers, and organizations (Tang et al., 2015). Current research has addressed social media in a wide range of research contexts (e.g. Alalwan et al., 2017; Dwivedi et al., 2015*a*; Grover et al., 2019; Kapoor et al., 2018; Kizgin et al., 2018*b*; Kruikemeier et al., 2016). Online communication channels like interpersonal

communication (e.g. Twitter, Facebook), content communities (e.g. Wikipedia), and sharing multimedia (e.g. YouTube, Instagram) provide a new communications infrastructure with which users can share content, opinions, and suggestions, and maintain social relationships (e.g. Dwivedi et al., 2015a; Ellison and Boyd, 2013).

This study brings new insights from the workshop “*The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Acculturation: Current Challenges, Opportunities, and Agenda for Research and Practice*” held at the School of Management, Swansea University, UK on 15th July 2019. Contributions from expert collaborators from academia and industry highlighted the challenges and opportunities of the impact of social media on acculturation, and reflected the need for new perspectives and research directions that provide insights and guidance for marketers and businesses.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The next section reviews overall themes in the literature. Subsequently, the expert contributors’ perspectives on consumer acculturation are presented. Then the key topics relating to the challenges, opportunities and research agenda are discussed. Finally, a conclusion is presented.

2. Literature Review

This section synthesises the existing literature on consumer acculturation, the effect of social media, and social networking. The literature reviewed was identified using Scopus database searches. The following combination of keywords were entered: (“Consumer Acculturation”) AND (“Social Media” OR “Social Networking Sites”), combined with the keyword “Acculturation” and limited to publications from the year 2000 onwards and business- and marketing-related journals.

2.1 Consumer Acculturation

The distribution in journals and year-wise distribution of authors from 2001 until 2019 is provided in Table 1. Since the year 2000, fewer than 160 papers on the topic at hand have been published in marketing and business journals. Overall, the papers are biased towards the United States (US), Canada and Australia, with an increased interest in enhancing ethnic consumer research in the United Kingdom (UK). An aggregation of studies shows an increase in 2014 and 2015 and in 2018 and 2019, with thirty-nine journal papers published. An increase in the number of publications can also be seen from 2009 onwards, and the number of research publications in 2019 has surpassed

the peaks in 2015 and 2018 indicating a growing trend (e.g. *International Journal of Information Management*, *Special Issues of International Marketing Review* and *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*). Fewer than twenty articles that focussed on social media and/or social networking sites were published in six journals. The first journal articles that focussed on social media and acculturation were published in 2013, with an increased trend since 2018.

Table 1: Research articles published by year and by journal

Journal	2001	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<i>Association Consumer Research</i>						1			1	2		1							
<i>British Food Journal</i>					1		1				1	1			2		1	1	
<i>Computers in Human Behaviour*</i>									1					2	2		1		
<i>Consumer Culture Theory</i>										1	4				1			3	1
<i>Consumption Markets and Culture</i>																		1	1
<i>European Journal of Marketing</i>												1		1			2		
<i>Government Information Quarterly*</i>																			1
<i>Information Systems Frontiers*</i>																		2	
<i>Information Technology and People*</i>																		1	
<i>International Business Review</i>											1	1							
<i>International Journal of Consumer Studies</i>							1				2		1						
<i>International Journal of Information Management*</i>																			3
<i>International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction*</i>																			1
<i>International Journal of Tourism Research</i>																			1
<i>International Marketing Review</i>	1	1											1		1			1	1
<i>Journal of Business Research*</i>		1					2	1	3		1	1	3	4	2	3	1	3	2
<i>Journal of Advertising Research</i>	1																		
<i>Journal of Consumer Behaviour</i>										1								1	
<i>Journal of Consumer Culture</i>																			
<i>Journal of Consumer Marketing*</i>	1				1	1	1		1		1		1	2				1	
<i>Journal of Consumer Research</i>					1		1					1			1				
<i>Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising</i>										1									
<i>Journal of Global Marketing</i>													1			1	1		
<i>Journal of International Business Studies</i>															1				
<i>Journal of International Consumer Marketing</i>	1	1			1		1					1	1	2	3				
<i>Journal of Islamic Marketing</i>																	1		1
<i>Journal of Marketing</i>											1								
<i>Journal of Marketing Management</i>										3			1	2		1	1		
<i>Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice</i>																			2
<i>Journal of Product and Brand Management*</i>																1			
<i>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</i>																		2	1
<i>Journal of Services Marketing</i>								1					1	1				2	
<i>Journal of Strategic Marketing</i>												2							
<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>								1											
<i>Journal of Tourism Research</i>																			1
<i>Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing</i>																1			
<i>Journal of Travel Research</i>		1																	
<i>Marketing Theory</i>															2				
<i>Psychology and Marketing</i>				1						1									
<i>Research in Consumer Behavior</i>											1	2							
<i>Technology Forecasting and Social Change*</i>																			2
<i>Tourism Management</i>																			1
Total	4	4	0	1	4	2	8	2	6	9	12	11	10	14	15	8	11	15	18

*Journal articles focussed on social media and/or social networking sites

2.2 Current Research

Research has addressed the concept of acculturation, which refers to the extent to which an individual immigrant located in a country to which he or she is not native seeks to maintain his or her original cultural heritage or, alternatively, adapt to the new culture. Acculturation measures the level of cultural movement by individuals, groups or communities from an alternative culture to a new one (Berry, 1992; Laroche and Jamal, 2015). Enculturation, on the other hand, refers to the process of learning, adopting and developing from the culture of one's family or heritage (Schwartz et al., 2010). The complexity of consumer acculturation research and the difficulties in the operationalisation of the concept has made the application difficult (Luedicke, 2011), because of the lack of a framework with which to study consumer acculturation.

It has been widely acknowledged that the adaptation towards the host culture (i.e. acculturation) is not done at the loss of the heritage culture (i.e. enculturation), as scholars have emphasised the growth of bi-cultural segments of immigrants (Chatarraman et al., 2009). This bidimensional model considers both the host and the home culture. The type of acculturation is a function of a person's identification with his or her ethnic culture and relationships or interactions with the host culture. These references to differing cultures are made more complex by the influences of various life domains, including the home, the extended family, and the wider ethnic community. Greater cultural maintenance is necessary in the various private arenas, with differences in group behaviour between private and public settings (Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver, 2006; 2007). The public domains also comprise life arenas in which immigrants have significant contact with the dominant or host community, such as educational institutions, leisure activities and workplaces (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006). Peñaloza's (1994) seminal work identified the role of acculturation agents (e.g. family, friends, media, social and religious institutions) in heritage and host cultures. Therefore, social networks are recognized as an integral part of the consumer acculturation process (Peñaloza, 1994).

Research has argued that the context or life domain in which an individual consumes a product or uses a service influences his or her consumption beliefs and behaviours (Grier, Brumbaugh and Thorton, 2006). Stayman and Deshpande (1989) argued that immigrant consumers are influenced by their situation or their perceived situations (life domain) and may have numerous individualities by which they behave differently in different circumstances and with different people (Askegaard

et al., 2005). The various channels (i.e. life domains) that help form consumer learning processes, such as places of education and work, as well as the media, give consumers from minority ethnic communities opportunities to interface with and participate in the host culture (Askegaard et al., 2005; Deshpande et al., 1986; Jamal, 2003; Peñaloza, 1994). The transformation from an offline to an online context, where social networks play an integral part of immigrants' communications, relationships, and connections, has significant implications for consumer acculturation, its contributions and its impact on individuals, businesses and society.

2.3 Challenges

The Internet connects people from across most parts of the world so they can engage and interact with each other (Kapoor, Tamilmani, Rana, Patil, Dwivedi and Nerur, 2018), and relay their beliefs across societies. Muhammad et al. (2017) reported on such social factors, paying particular attention to social interaction as a central incentive for consumers' use of social media. Social media produces prospects for sharing knowledge that can be key drivers of social learning, networking, and making relationships that are based on mutual trust, support, and altruism (Rolls, Hansen, Jackson and Elliott, 2016). Other drivers of engagement with social media, including language, lexical expression (Hilte, Vandekerckhove and Daelemans, 2016), and style (Sparks, Perkins and Buckley, 2013), have been found to impact the communal bonds, structure and relationships that can significantly influence customers' behavioural intentions (Goh, Heng and Lin, 2013; Laroche, Habibi, and Richard, 2013).

The relevance of social media to the creation of communal identities has been addressed by the acculturation scholarship. When marginal consumers regularly intermingle with other cultural groups using social media, they can build and strengthen numerous societies in the online context (Lindridge, Henderson and Ekpo, 2015). Prior research (e.g. Jamal, 2003) has argued that ethnicity in an ongoing marketplace is like bricolage, where consumers form their self-identities from components taken from various cultural illustrations and practices. Therefore, social media sites are likely to act as bicultural brokers and conciliators that enable minority consumers' self-representations and exhibitions of individuality (Jafari and Visconti, 2015).

2.3 Opportunities

Research has stated that the growth of social networking sites is due to its role in connecting people, and building social capital through social networks (Shen, Chiou, Hsiao, Wang and Li, 2016). Social networks (e.g. concrete relationships) are the foundations of social capital (Lin, Cook and Burt, 2004), which brings like-minded people together (Shen et al., 2016), bonds and bridges social relationships as a result of the social networks and social ties (Granovetter, 1973), and provides support through sharing and trust, as the benefits of social capital, to achieve personal or collective goals (Poortinga, 2006; Portes, 1998). Li (2004) proposed that social capital incorporated three elements: It is a resource for an individual that depends on the social ties in the group, and requires an individual to invest in and maintain the social ties (the network).

Based on social capital theory, daily social interactions (e.g. socializing with friends and co-workers) are seen as investments in social networks (Lin, 2001) that contribute to mutual future actions (Gaag and Webber, 2008), facilitating further interactions online through social networking sites (Valenzuela, Park and Kee, 2009). Research has indicated that individuals join social networking sites to maintain their social networks with existing friends, and to bond with new friends (Acquisti and Gross, 2006; Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007). Therefore, social networking sites allow individuals to maintain and increase their social networks. As a result of networking with those who have mutual interests, the activities of social exchange and social networks may improve relationships. In communities, personally shared information on online channels is seen as reliable, and builds trust (Dickinger, 2011).

Kizgin et al. (2017) showed that immigrants who are in frequent contact with their host cultures (social interactions and language use) are influenced by the host culture as a result of the learning process. Further support is provided by Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver (2004), who indicated that immigrants prefer the host culture in social interactions, but do not give up their identification with their native heritage. Therefore, an individual's social interactions with the mainstream culture (e.g. in school, at work, or on social networking sites) impact the individual by means of acculturation. Another key finding of the existing literature is that immigrant consumers' identities are expressed on social media and social networking sites. Studies have shown that both the native and the host language influence acculturation and enculturation orientations (Kizgin et al., 2018a; Li and Tsai, 2015). Social media enables individuals to connect and communicate with members in the preferred language. These findings suggest that immigrants

engage in their own native cultures as well as host cultures online. Social media may be used as a mechanism for immigrant ethnic minorities to generate social and cultural capital (Li et al., 2004).

3. Multiple Perspectives from Invited Expert Contributors

This section presents the consolidated perspectives of invited experts on various aspects of consumer acculturation. The structure of this section is adopted from Dwivedi et al. (2015b; 2019). Each expert was invited to submit his or her contribution in up to three pages. The contributions in this section are composed in an unedited form to represent the expression of each author. This approach creates an uneven logical flow but represents the experts' views and recommendations at this stage (Dwivedi et al., 2015b; 2019) in the advancement of consumer acculturation. The topics and invited experts are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Invited contributors and subject list

Consumer acculturation-related topic	Author(s)
Social media, acculturation, and the sharing economy	Michel Laroche
Theoretic challenges, opportunities, and research agenda	Lisa Peñaloza
The impact of social media on consumer acculturation: current challenges, opportunities, and agenda for research and practice	Ahmad Jamal
Social media, acculturation, and the digital economy	Marie-Odile Richard
Digital consumer culture and acculturation	Bidit Dey
Our white-centred world	Rene Romer
Social media, acculturation, and language	Michel Laroche, and Marie-Odile Richard

3.1.Domain Perspective

3.1.1 Social media, acculturation, and the sharing economy - Michel Laroche

(1) Challenges:

Social media gave rise to the recent trend toward the sharing economy (Habibi, Davidson, and Laroche, 2017), the most important sectors being automotive, retail and consumer goods, hospitality, entertainment, media and communications. By 2025 these five sectors may represent \$335 billion in worldwide revenue (PwC, 2015). Broadly speaking, the sharing economy encompasses almost everything, including products, knowledge and innovative ideas (Matzler, Veider and Kathan, 2015), and represents a wheel of innovation that will drive the next wave of

productivity growth in the global economy, and reshape capitalism and its relationship to society. Foremost members of the ‘born digital’ younger generation are sharing-economy activists, given their significant engagement as social media actors, co-producers, brand community members, co-innovators, and so on (Ferguson, Gutberg, Schattke, Paulin, and Jost, 2015; Habibi, Laroche, and Richard, 2014a, 2014b). What is still unknown is the impact of various forms of acculturation among ethnic groups in the adoption of these new and innovative forms of exchange.

(2) Opportunities:

The constant need for product and service innovations is widely recognized as a top business priority and a key issue in academic research (Bayus, 2013). Acknowledging the relative ease of reaching consumers via online social networks, many organizations are outsourcing their innovation efforts to online crowdsourcing or so-called insight communities. For example, Lego is engaging consumers through its Create and Share site and the Lego Ideas site. Members of such insight communities typically propose new product ideas, offer comments on others’ ideas, and interact with marketers in various ways. However, little is known about which characteristics of insight communities enhance individual members’ ideation efforts, or the factors that account for peers’ idea selection and, ultimately, co-innovation success. Given the limited knowledge in this field, we suggest research into what drives successful idea generation, how insight community activists form opinions about others’ innovation ideas, and these members’ ethnic and cultural backgrounds, especially their levels of acculturation toward the mainstream culture and the global consumer culture.

(3) Agenda for Research and Practice:

Efforts have focused on trust-building on social media (Habibi et al., 2014b), types of online communities (Habibi et al., 2014a), characteristics of market mavens and opinion leaders (in particular in relation to individual culture) (Cleveland and Bartikowski, 2018; Kiani et al., 2015), how differences in opinion-formation processes depend on passive versus active social media users (Bartikowski and Walsh, 2014), how emotions expressed by others affect individual decision-making (Ahmad and Laroche, 2015), and how millennials interact with social media to engage in charitable causes (Ferguson et al., 2015; Paulin et al., 2014).

However, how insight platform activists form opinions about the others’ innovation ideas and what motivates them to build on these ideas or develop new ones remains unclear. Moreover, while it is undeniable that insight communities can generate insightful and valuable innovation ideas for

marketers, the extent to which community activists can effectively help marketers select the ‘right’ ideas for implementation and the role of other activists’ ratings of ideas in reaching consensus in idea selection through the crowd remain unclear (Bayus, 2013). Usability theories (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis, 2003) and theories on the extended self in the digital world (Belk, 2016) suggest that insight communities’ characteristics, such as their atmospheric designs, network accessibility, and the characteristics of other community members, may play a role therein. Intuition and common wisdom suggest that a small number of individuals (e.g. opinion leaders, or market mavens) strongly affect what other community members think (the ‘influentials hypothesis’); however, it is also possible that community opinions depend on a critical mass of easily influenced individuals (Watts and Dodds, 2007). As Watts and Dodds (2007) suggested, the details of who influences whom and how require more careful articulation for the validity of the ‘influentials hypothesis’ to be meaningfully assessed. Accordingly, factors like individual personality and cultural proximity among insight community members may play significant roles in explaining some individuals’ disproportionate influence on others.

How the observable characteristics of social media platforms and online communities, such as the size of the community (e.g. number of participants), members’ posting activity (e.g. frequency and length of posts), and mavenism (e.g. number of followers), affect social media behaviour, has attracted significant research attention for more than ten years (Naylor, Lamberton and West, 2012). However, comparatively little is known about how such characteristics affect ideation and opinion-formation processes in insight communities or about how they vary based on ethnic belongingness and acculturation. Compared to commonly studied social media communities like brand communities (Algesheimer et al., 2005) and product review platforms (Bartikowski and Walsh, 2014), insight communities are explicitly designed to support ideation and consumer-firm interactions in a cross-cultural perspective.

3.1.2 Theoretic challenges, opportunities and a research agenda – Lisa Peñaloza

Research on consumer acculturation has expanded over the years, contributing to knowledge about the learning and adaptation of members of one cultural group in relation to another group (Lindridge, Worlu and Peñaloza, 2016; Peñaloza, 1994), and in addressing multicultural intersectionalities in multicultural families (Cross and Gilly, 2013) and nations (Luedicke, 2011). Studied at the level of the individual and group, such contact may occur virtually but also

physically, during migration within a cultural domain and in immigration across one or more cultural domains, such as nations. Social media poses a number of challenges to consumer acculturation because of its scope, accessibility, and intensity. Regarding scope, Google (<https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/online-consumption-infographic/>) estimates 1.9 billion persons are online daily, although the number of online contacts that are relevant to cultural contact are likely a subset of this total. Access tends to vary by age and socio-economic status (Quintanilla et al., forthcoming), although the technologies of sharing enable transfers of resources even in the least developed geographical domains (Widlock, 2017).

(1) Challenges of Consumer Acculturation on Social Media

Social media provides users inexpensive, immediate access to a host of social networks that feature wide distribution. Assemblage theories (Canniford and Badje, 2016) are useful in identifying and making sense of the array of human/non-human elements that comprise these networks, including people, info-technology, and devices. Social media in social systems have numerous intended and unintended effects (Widlock, 2017) that are rendered even more complex by the intersectionalities of gender, race/ethnicity, and class, to name a few of the interlocking social categories that comprise social systems (May, 2015). For example, technology enables social contact, yet its diffusion continues to be marked by digital divides.

A first challenge is to determine how consumer acculturation processes take place in social media at the personal and collective units of analysis. At the individual level, social media is at once a tool of identity, to include ethnicity or nationality, and a source of information regarding mobility. However, identity and nationality are not always evident and may be masked and altered over time, so one must sift through how identity operates on social media and how cultures are represented, and recognize that such identities have a tenuous relationship to identity and cultural presence in the physical world. Notably, some formats give users the freedom to take on an altered identity, but because social media provides information on culture, it remains a vital source and means of consumer acculturation in adapting to a new place and a means of sharing one's experiences to keep current with friends and family.

Of particular interest regarding consumer acculturation are online representations of subcultures and subcultural experiences across a range of formats, including the text-based exchanges; visual, image-enhanced, multi-channel meeting sites; and immersive, experiential virtual realities (Salmons, 2018) used to build community. That such cultural content is produced

by consumers (versus firms) is another consideration. Consumer-to-consumer contact among family and friends, either as a source of information about cultural conditions and adapting to a new culture or in a new place, or as a means of sharing one's experience, offers both challenges and opportunities.

The properties of social media are just as complex at the group level. These technologically mediated networks bridge distant locations and enable the strengthening and weakening of friends, family, and community cultural groups. As such, social media enables multicultural contact and relationships. Social media can also reinforce stereotypes and strain intercultural relationships, resulting in retrenchment, isolation, conflict, and even violence. Socially mediated communication often relies on a verbal shorthand and an economy of visuals that can at once magnify and diminish cultural presence and interaction, with implications for the cultural contact, interactions and adaptation that constitute consumer acculturation. Beyond text and image are the algorithms that compile online personas into social networks and corporate databases (Zwick and Dholakia, 2012).

The multicultural nature of many families and friendship groups may result in members' harbouring multicultural identities and experiences and relating to them in different ways. In addition, generational issues that have been documented as part of consumer cultural phenomena, merit attention for their manifestations online, as does gender.

(2) Opportunities in How Social Media Impacts Consumer Acculturation

There are many opportunities to explore in how social media strengthens and weakens consumers' cultural processes. Social media offers promise for advancing positive intercultural relationships between minority and majority cultural groups and among minorities. As such, social media's public policy implications for consumer acculturation are compelling and include positive international relationships and immigration patterns.

(3) Agenda for research that examines consumer acculturation on social media. Specific issues for conducting research, accompanied with a brief justification for their relevance, timeliness and originality

A first question concerns the role of social media in consumer acculturation. In addressing this question, it will be helpful to explore this role as a means of social and commercial discourse for personal authorship, family cohesion, friendship and community-building. The research agenda for the study of consumer acculturation in social media should also include both the individual and the group level of analysis. At the individual level, attention should be directed to

the dynamics of identity, cultural knowledge and affiliation, and understandings of and experiences with other cultures. When the unit is the social system, studies of consumer acculturation can at once examine online presence, representations of cultures and their relationships.

In addition, mapping the intersectional characteristics of individuals' friendships and family networks will provide a sense of the extent of intercultural contact. Relationships between cultures and firms and brands are landmines and are also opportunities for further study. Firms supply important means of identity-making for cultural members and communities, and as allies in their social legitimization, firms can get embroiled in social conflict (Peñaloza, 2018).

A final issue that is worthy of attention is the interlocking networks of cultural consuming communities in market systems. As Salmons (2016) noted, online research should decipher who said what, why, and how, and what is not said, although finding out this information may be fraught with difficulties. For consumer acculturation studies, vigilance is necessary in working to achieve some correspondence among social media platforms, flesh-and-blood persons, and geographic coordinates.

(4) Recommendations for improved information management practices regarding social media related to consumer acculturation processes.

IT offers a number of successes. Such issues as usage, implementation, and integrating business value have been associated with its success (Dwivedi et al., 2015b). Social media is a special case of IT in its configuration of consumers. In this sense, then, the characteristics of consumer users' resistance may differ from those of firms (Laumer and Ekhard, 2012), as may be the case in comparing consumers to firms in terms of dimensions of power (Jasperson, 2002).

Implementation for IT networks has been characterized as a dynamic process (Bunker et al., 2007). Complexities of its dynamic process are well suited to interpretive methods (Klein and Meyers, 1999). In addition, because of the complexities associated with dealing with multiple cultures, training in IT networks (Hendricks et al., 2007) is vital. Finally, as with other IT systems, integrating business value into is vital to their success (Melville et al., 2004). As such, investigations of relationships between firms and their stakeholders (Wailgum, 2009) and between service providers and consumers are also recommended.

3.1.3 The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Acculturation: Current Challenges, Opportunities, and an Agenda for Research and Practice – Ahmad Jamal

Acculturation is the process of learning and adopting all or parts of a new culture (Jamal, Kizgin, Rana, Laroche, and Dwivedi, 2019), while consumer acculturation describes the acquisition of skills and knowledge that are relevant to engaging in consumer behaviour in one culture by members of another culture (Peñaloza, 1994).

Consumer research largely treats acculturation as a form of cultural adoption, especially by immigrants, a paradigm of adaptation that dominates current thinking and practice (Jamal, Peñaloza, and Laroche, 2015), such that highly acculturated individuals show significant tendencies to learn and adapt to a new cultural environment (Kizgin et al., 2018a; 2018b). Various agents of culture change, such as family and media (Askegaard et al., 2005; Kizgin et al., 2017; Peñaloza, 1994), impact consumer acculturation processes and outcomes.

Moving the research agenda forward, Jamal et al. (2019) pointed to the role of space in identity creation in the context of consumer acculturation and argued that prior research has largely used spatial metaphors that have undermined the role of space in identity creation. For example, Dey, Balmer, Panditt, and Saren (2017) examined how young British South Asian adults' dual cultural identity is exhibited and reaffirmed through the appropriation of 'selfies'. Their findings revealed that the appropriation of the 'selfie' phenomenon by young British South Asian adults reifies, endorses, and reinforces their dual cultural identity, which is aligned with both their ancestral and host cultures. Park, Song, and Lee (2014) investigated the effects of ethnic social networking sites (SNS) and Facebook use (i.e. minutes per week), interpersonal and mass media use, and individual differences on Korean and Chinese college students' acculturative stress and psychological well-being in the US. Their findings showed that Facebook use helps Korean and Chinese students adjust to the US culture and feel psychological comfort. Their study also found that students who used only Facebook demonstrated a lower degree of acculturative stress and a higher degree of psychological well-being than did other groups in the study. In addition, the use of ethnic SNSs was positively associated with acculturative stress. Similarly, Li and Tsai (2015) examined how English and Spanish social media use affected Hispanic users' acculturation into the US culture. Their findings revealed that English social media use helped these users develop a strong orientation toward the mainstream American culture, while Spanish social media consumption reinforced their ethnic Hispanic cultural identification.

However, a focus on understanding immigrants' consumer identities as an expression of contrast between ancestral and host cultures offers us limited insights into how migrant consumers really experience and negotiate their cultural identities, given the recent trends towards globalization, global consumer culture, and use of new technologies like the internet and social media platforms. In such a context, immigrant consumers are likely to experience identities in relation to a physical space (as reflected in the contrast between home and host countries) but also cultural, social, geopolitical, ideological (Jafari and Visconti, 2015) and cyber spaces (Kellerman, 2016). Accordingly, there is a need for future research that investigates consumer identities in the context of multiple spaces, going beyond the traditional contrast between heritage and host cultures.

Citing the Neilson Market Report (2015), Jamal et al. (2019) reported that immigrant consumers are media-savvy, socially empowered, and culturally driven individuals who are younger than most of the population, and who seek an expressive but inclusive multicultural identity that allows them to maintain multiple identities simultaneously. Immigrant consumers also tend to use smartphone applications (e.g. email, social networking, or listening to music) more frequently than other consumers do (Bartikowski, Laroche, Jamal, and Yang, 2018; Nielsen, 2012; Zickuhr and Smith, 2012).

However, research has largely ignored the impact of social media as an agent of culture change, undermining its role in consumer acculturation (Kizgin, Jamal, Dey, and Rana, 2018). Individuals typically learn to use mechanisms like modelling, reinforcement and social interaction (Moschis, 1987), and social media has the potential to facilitate immigrant consumers' learning of new cultural codes and acquisition of skills, knowledge and behaviours that they need to function as consumers in a new cultural environment. On social media, immigrant consumers can connect with people from most parts of the world and engage and interact with one another (Kapoor et al., 2018), helping them learn (Dessart et al., 2015) and diffuse ideas across societies.

3.1.4 Social media, acculturation, and the digital economy - Marie-Odile Richard

(1) Challenges:

People are increasingly connected virtually, not only in the workplace and at home, but wherever they are. Soon, more people will access the internet using their mobile devices than their computers. Already, 30 percent of internet users worldwide are active on social media, and nearly

90 percent of those use mobile devices to access social media platforms (www.socialmediatoday.com). Social media has given rise to a large number of applications, including the sharing economy (Habibi, Davidson, and Laroche, 2018), the Internet of Things and many others. Therefore, research must gain insights into how changing (mobile) cyberspace affects consumption behaviours and citizens' behaviour as co-producers and collaborators in the sharing economy, as well as the influence of acculturation in facilitating these applications.

The rapid development of the mobile internet does not mean that other devices will soon be obsolete, but there is a qualitative difference in how types of interface devices (e.g. tablets compared to laptop computers) affect how people form attitudes and make decisions. While touch-screen enabled mobile devices are better suited for simple reading and entertainment, little is known about how mobile vs. other devices affect consumers' attitude formation and decision-making (Grewal, Bart, Spann, and Zubcsek, 2016) and the types of consumers who are most likely to adopt new forms of technology. Researchers have called for more theory with which to study global consumer behaviour in mobile settings (e.g. Andrews, Goehring, Hui, Pancras, and Thornswood, 2016).

(2) Opportunities:

The type of interface device may shape consumers' disposition toward websites and applications just as much as website design and content do (Brasel and Gips, 2014). Touchscreen-enabled devices (smartphones, tablets) afford closer or more direct behavioural interactions with the device and the website than other kinds of devices do, in part because touchscreen devices require single- or multiple-finger gestures that may make browsing more intuitive and behaviourally more experiential. Such haptic interactions may improve perceptions of control and actual or perceptual information-processing. For example, Wang, Malthouse, and Krishnamurth (2015) reported that consumers tend to use mobile devices mainly to shop for habitual products that they already have a history of purchasing; however, mobile devices are less appropriate for launching new products or promoting products that require more consideration during the buying process. Hence, even if the type of device used to access the internet is objectively non-diagnostic for evaluating website content, it may still affect levels of (actual or perceptual) elaboration, feelings of control, and ultimately attitudes and decisions. Touchscreen devices also have a more direct association with the consumer's self (Brasel and Gips, 2014). More direct behavioural experience and greater association with the self may generate stronger and more salient thoughts

about website atmospherics and website design in general. What is missing from the literature is understanding about what types of ethnic groups are more likely to use touchdown devices and the role of acculturation in their adoption.

(3) Agenda for Research and Practice:

One promising avenue of research is centred on Laroche and Richard's (2014) model of online consumer behaviour, which is based on Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm. After site visitors are exposed to website interfaces, they develop emotional responses (pleasure, arousal, and dominance), leading to perceptions of website entertainment (affective atmospherics), flow (skills, challenge and interactivity), and cognitive atmospherics (effectiveness, informativeness, structure, and organization). All these dimensions lead to processing variables (exploratory behaviour, website involvement, product involvement, website attitudes and product attitudes) that explain purchase intentions and ultimately online purchases. Individual factors like gender, personality variables, and ethnicity or culture may shape the relationships between these variables.

In addition, researchers have yet to examine the effects of mobile vs non-mobile devices on consumers' attitude formation and behaviour in relation to culture, ethnic marketing, and globalization in particular (Bartikowski et al., 2017). As such, website atmospherics, service intangibility, and interactivity (Leiner and Quiring, 2008) should be perceived and evaluated in terms of usability, uncertainty, risk, quality, and trust in mobile as compared to non-mobile settings. Cultural markers on the web (e.g. colours, national symbols, language, and cultural heroes) should be appreciated on mobile devices differently than they are on non-mobile devices, given the greater association of mobile devices with the self. Moreover, members of the mainstream culture, as compared to members of ethnic minority cultures, may react differently to website atmospherics with cultural meaning in mobile as compared to non-mobile settings, given (a) their differing levels of cultural knowledge (Brumbaugh, 2002), and (b) their differing use patterns of mobile compared to non-mobile devices (Bartikowski et al., 2017).

3.1.5 Digital Consumer Culture and Acculturation – Bidit Dey

This commentary reflects on 'digital consumer culture,' one of the emerging phenomena that underpin social media's influence on consumer identity and consumer acculturation and explains how digital consumer culture facilitates digital acculturation. As such, this section pioneers this

concept, identifies and analyses its challenges and offers direction for future research. In so doing, it sheds light on the reciprocal, iterative and dynamic inter-relationships between digital consumer culture and digital acculturation and spells out the three inherent characteristics of digital consumer culture, which also characterise its challenges and opportunities: consumer empowerment, reciprocity between online and offline worlds and decompartmentalization of identities. Together, these three characteristics make digital consumer culture a unique domain for research. Finally, by identifying and discussing three outcomes of digital acculturation—digital integration, digital separation, and digital deprivation—the paper contributes to theory with a view to generating debate in studying acculturation in the digital age.

Introduction

The world's peoples live in heterogeneous societies and multicultural markets for myriad reasons, including globalisation (Akaka, Schau, and Vargo., 2013; Neal, Bennett, Cochrane, and Mohan, 2013), environmental disasters (Reuveny, 2007) and wars (Ruiz and Vergas-Silva, 2012), as migration of the human race continues to change the demography and socio-cultural dynamics of nations and societies. The emergence of multi-ethnic and multicultural societies has called for changes in the management of organisations (Janssen and Zanoni, 2014; Rossiter and Chan, 1998; Sarpong and MacLean, 2015) and in how customers are approached (Jamal, 2003; Riefler, Diamantopoulos, and Sigauw 2012). As such, research into consumer acculturation towards Western multicultural societies (Askegaard, Arnould, and Kjeldgaard, 2005; Peñaloza, 1994) and global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007) has gained currency in management scholarship. Despite the emergence of digital technologies and borderless boundaries, the role of social media and other digital applications in consumer acculturation has been understudied, leaving inadequate conceptual scaffolding and empirical application of acculturation in the digital world. This research addresses this dearth in scholarship by introducing the digital consumer culture concept and discussing digital acculturation's implications.

Digital consumer culture:

In a neo-liberal and post-modern world, consumption practices and their symbolic presence in human lives are central to consumer culture. As such, consumer culture goes far beyond the consumption of material products to encapsulate the practices, identities and symbolic meanings

embedded in people's daily lives, constituted by individual and collective perceptions and lived experiences of consumption. While the consumer culture literature over the last decade has examined consumers' interactions with brands, companies, market institutions and market dynamics, it has fallen short of capturing the evolution of the digital world and the consequential implications on consumers' daily lives. To address this knowledge gap, it is necessary to introduce the notion of digital consumer culture, through which it refers to the shared sets of consumption behaviour that directly or indirectly emanate from people's interactions with digital technologies like the Internet, social media, mobile devices, and applications. In doing so, this paper takes the consumer culture literature beyond its current remit (of marketing literature) by integrating it with technology and information systems scholarship.

Challenges and opportunities:

Consumers' interactions with the material world have changed in the digital age, as consumers' online and offline lives have become inextricably interwoven, and they have more complex relationships with and assessment of their social and business environments and institutions. The tripartite characteristics of digital consumer culture define its challenges and opportunities:

- 1) *Digital consumer empowerment:* Consumers are more empowered than ever before through their engagement with digital technology, particularly the Internet and social media (Cappellini and Yen, 2013). Consumers' interactions within and beyond their national, ethnic and geographic boundaries offer them the freedom to approach, support, oppose, and criticise social, cultural and business institutions on social media, empowering consumers with a proactive voice. Celebrities and politicians are openly criticised for their wrongdoings on social media. Blog posts and YouTube videos make it possible for individuals to become micro-celebrities, with large follower groups and the potential to influence public opinion (Kozinets and Cereno, 2014). Bloggers and micro-celebrities have even taken to the streets to lead socio-political movements, as can be seen in the case of Tahrir Square in Egypt and the Shahbag movement in Bangladesh (Sorour and Dey, 2014).
- 2) *Promoting reciprocity between the online and offline world:* Earlier works, such as that by Boellstorff (2008), have shown that people tend to adopt a 'second life' in the online world that may not always reflect real life. However, because of the advancement of digital technology, statuses, check-ins, posts, 'selfies', and the availability of virtual augmented reality increasingly reflect, keep track of, and connect an individual consumer's offline self to his or her online presence. Reciprocity

can also happen in a reverse way as online fads and fashions influence people's offline lives and consumption practices. For example, the 'ice bucket challenge' was taken up by many around the world to show their support of a charity both online and offline.

3) *Decomartmentalization of consumer identities*: Digital consumer culture, particularly social media, often leads to blurring of the boundaries between our private, social and occupational lives because social media posts and interactions are often public and shared amongst friends, family members, work colleagues and even acquaintances, which increases the difficulty of expressing one's identity differently to each group. Although the opportunity for closed group discussions in social media and one's privacy setting can help individuals maintain their compartmentalised identities, it is difficult for consumers to juggle several conflicting or competing identities at the same time. Consumers can be subject to tension, friction, and ambivalent emotional states because of their constant negotiation with social-media-led interactions and their navigation between various privacy and security settings. Whilst the identity-compartmentalisation strategy might have worked a few years ago, today's powerful search engines can track and record one's digital footprints and link them to one's future reputation (O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Therefore, many consumers have readjusted their social media participation, taking on the decompartmentalised strategy.

Future research on digital acculturation

Digital consumer culture facilitates the emergence of social groups based on, for example, common interests, shared habits, choice of celebrities, support of political stances, and consumption practices. Whilst the traditional acculturation literature has focused on how consumers acculturate to others of different ethnic cultures or nationalities, it is time to revisit the notion of acculturation in digital consumer culture, as a debate on how consumers acculturate to 'others' beyond ethnicity or nationality may advance and enrich our current understanding of acculturation. Digital acculturation can be defined as the process of expressing and managing individuals' identities and practices within the social and cultural boundaries created and characterised by the dynamic interrelationships between the online and offline worlds. Therefore, the concept captures the interactions, perceptions, paradoxes, and intricacies that pertain to consumers' exposure to digital consumer culture.

Digital consumer culture leads to digital acculturation, as it creates and recreates consumers' interactions and identity formation in the digital age. Digital acculturation has three major outcomes:

digital integration, digital separation and digital deprivation. Unlike in the traditional acculturation literature (e.g. Berry, 2008), the concept of assimilation is ignored in the digital acculturation literature, as scholars have argued that individuals cannot completely immerse themselves in a different culture or culture group by disassociating themselves entirely from their original culture groups (Dey *et al.*, 2017).

Digital integration refers to the state of acculturation when individuals and communities adopt certain cultural attributes of a different cultural group through their dynamic interaction with the online and offline worlds, without completely discarding their original cultural attributes. For instance, people interact and engage with various groups in social media to exchange ideas and practices, but they have neither become completely immersed into the new cultures, nor given up their original cultures or previous practices. Instead, they adopt a comfortable pick-and-choose attitude and negotiate amongst communities.

However, the convenience and connectedness provided by social media do not always promote integration or acculturation beyond the users' own digital community, so digital separation refers to the state in which digital platforms are used only for interacting and strengthening the bonds amongst those in the in-group. Unlike in the offline world, where people are often forced to interact with members of other nationalities, ethnicities, faith groups and ideologies because of their physical presence (Dey *et al.*, 2017), in the online world consumers can choose whom to follow and with whom to interact, thanks to the opportunity offered by digital consumer culture to separate themselves from the wider world and isolate their views and voices.

Digital deprivation refers to the state in which consumers are unable to access online communities and cultures because of resource constraints, lack of skills or expertise, political or government censorship or other reasons. Thus, farmers in remote African villages are digitally deprived because of the absence of resources and skills. On the other hand, whilst Chinese government restricts its citizens' access to search engines like Google, websites like Wikipedia, and social media like Facebook for political reasons, Chinese consumers are digitally deprived despite being well educated and having the skills and resources to navigate freely in the digital consumer culture. Therefore, digital deprivation is different from digital separation, as digitally deprived consumers might have the willingness to connect, but their access to the digital consumer culture is limited. Although digital acculturation is derived from digital consumer culture, it also has a recursive influence on it. Through digital acculturation, consumers' interactions with online and

offline worlds and digital platforms are defined, changed and/or reinforced in a dynamic and spiralling process that is constantly changing to reflect and shape current and future innovations and social changes.

3.1.6 Our White-centred World – Rene Romer

There is a long way to go before Europe is not only multicultural in a physical sense but mentally as well, says René Romer, owner of the Dutch multicultural marketing agency TransCity. Since the end of the Second World War, Europe has rapidly become multicultural. Reconstruction in Western Europe resulted in spectacular economic growth to which workers from Mediterranean countries and the former colonies made a considerable contribution. Decolonisation, too, brought people from Africa, Asia and South America to Europe. Since the 1970s, refugees from countries struck by human rights violations or poverty have also migrated to Europe. Finally, European unification led to a system of free travel and employment in the European Union.

As a consequence, the majority population of the three largest cities in my country, the Netherlands, has a first- or second-generation immigration background; in the most populous province, South Holland, this percentage is already one-third, while nationwide it is more than 30 percent of all 20-to-40-year olds. On top of these already high figures comes the fast-growing third generation. Looking at the long-term forecasts, the number of people with foreign roots living in the Netherlands can easily reach well over 8 million by the year 2060, almost half of the population, including those with a third-generation immigration background.

White Dutch in charge

In three city districts of Rotterdam that south of the river Maas, located in the outer ring, 62 percent of the more than 200,000 inhabitants have a first- or second-generation immigration background. Still, a video of the so-called Youth Protection Table in these southern city districts shows only seven native Dutch making decisions about individual cases of domestic violence and child abuse. These seven white Dutch men and women have the right to decide about custodial placement of children from families whose roots might be in one or several of the approximately 200 countries that are represented by the residents of Rotterdam South. Therefore, while the Netherlands is a multicultural society on paper, such is not the case effectively, as most decisions that matter to

society are made from a predominantly white perspective. In many other European countries, the case is more or less the same.

Imaging is harmful to society

Although intentions may be good, this white perspective often results in imaging that may be harmful to society. In much Dutch governmental communication, we see a strong emphasis on the **problems** of bicultural citizens who are largely **helped** by their white compatriots. These white men and women are nearly always **in the lead**, with the exception of athletes, rappers, dancers, comedians, or other artists. When bicultural citizens *are* presented as successful in government communication, the emphasis is often on the policies developed by their white compatriots and the personal guidance that is said to be the basis of this success.

Mental decolonisation has not yet taken place

In 2014 the English-language film *Rotterdam. Make It Happen* was part of one of Rotterdam's promotional campaigns. It was a great promotional film, with one exception: the black people in the film were carnival celebrators or marathon runners, whereas white people appeared 'in the lead'. The impression, then, was that all leaders are white, the intelligentsia in the city is white, and black people are only for dancing and running.

Belgian author David van Reybrouck concluded in an interview on Dutch television that "the mental decolonisation of the Netherlands has not yet taken place." To put it another way, we look at the black Dutch in a way that is similar to how the former colonial rulers looked at the local Indonesian or, in the case of Belgium, African populations. Needless to say, when bicultural citizens in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe hold their white compatriots to account for what *they* could do better in *their* discipline, their recommendations are often not appreciated.

"I can't even open my mouth here because I'm a white male"

A couple of years ago I organised a group discussion for the journalists of one of the large news organisations in the Netherlands. I invited eight bicultural media and communication professionals to discuss news provision and unconscious bias. While the discussion, which lasted a few hours, appeared to have a considerable impact on the participants, a couple of days later I was informed that they had been annoyed by one person in particular: the one person who, in my

opinion and that of my colleagues, had made the best contribution in a nuanced and clear way. Our analysis of the reason for this negative feedback revealed only one possible cause: she was the only participant who wore a hijab.

In other words, as long as a Moroccan-Dutch woman is cleaning our offices, many native Dutch find her a great colleague, for hers matches the position in society that many attribute to women with her background. However, as soon as the same woman performs well in the professional field of native Dutch men and women and holds them to account for *their* discipline, she is more difficult to accept. She is mentally too difficult to cope with.

A fine example of how difficult it is for some white people to accept the authority of highly educated citizens with, as in this case, African backgrounds is the well-known BBC Newsnight interview with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and journalist R. Emmet Tyrell on the evening of the US election of Donald Trump: “I can’t even open my mouth here because I’m a white male,” the editor in chief of *The American Spectator* exclaimed desperately.

Real diversity is more than just counting faces

We see increasing attempts at inclusivity from various social actors, but because of the white perspective from which the attempts at inclusivity are made, these attempts often turn out wrong. In January 2018, British beauty and fashion and lifestyle Youtuber Amena Khan appeared in a hijab in a new commercial for l’Oréal’s Elvive shampoo, which was widely seen as a breakthrough. The breakthrough proved short-lived, as her sharp comments on the Israeli bombing of Gaza, tweeted in 2014, forced Amena to withdraw with apologies for her sharp words.

Six months earlier, British transgender model Munroe Bergdorf had a similar experience. She had been selected as one of the faces of the l’Oréal #allworthit campaign, but because she had once called “all white people racists,” she was forced out by the cosmetics brand, even though she carefully substantiated her opinion later with an impressive plea: “White people are unconsciously socialised from an early age with the idea of white superiority; no-one is born a racist.”

These examples show how citizens with bicultural backgrounds are cast for advertisements, media, politics and work in other social fields. The *faces* must give the impression of inclusivity, but most of the time *the stories behind the faces* must stay hidden.

An Afro-Surinamese anchorwoman of one of the major Dutch television newscasts presents news that is largely compiled by white editors, so her presence is largely cosmetic. Many

discussions about representativity in media, advertising, politics and other sectors of society hardly get beyond counting faces. How many non-white faces are at the table in a television talk show? In the editorial boards that invite these guests? How many members of Parliament have bicultural backgrounds? How many bicultural actors are seen in commercials, television series and movies?

Why are bicultural Dutch asked by advertisers, directors, leaders of political parties and media editors to participate? What *role* are they supposed to play? How much *space* do they get to give substance from their *own* experiences, their *own* perspectives, their *own* authenticity?

“Do only white people know what good black music is?”

Representativity stands for more than just skin colour, name or religion. It also stands for how one looks at one’s surroundings, at society, at the world and from what personal experiences and what perspective.

What added value does a politician with a Turkish background have if he or she carries out the orders of the white political party leader? What does a Surinamese-Dutch man add to a television commercial when his role is conceived by the advertising agency’s white creative team? What is the role of a Moroccan-Dutch table guest in a talk show when she is asked based only from the perspective of the white editors?

”Do only white people know what good black music is?” is a quotation I use regularly in presentations and op-eds. The question was first posed by a participant in one of our market studies. He thought the annual music chart with the *best black music of all time* presented by the Dutch public broadcasting service NPO had nothing to do with diversity and inclusion, as the list was largely compiled by white editors and white listeners.

Since diversity and inclusion policies are often conducted from a white perspective, fashion and lifestyle Youtuber Amena Khan was punished by l’Oréal for her views on the Gaza war, while *Wonder Woman* actress Gal Gadot served as the face of a Revlon advertising campaign in spite of her unconditional support for the Israeli intervention during the same Gaza war.

Of course, Amena Khan and Gal Gadot are both entitled to their own opinions and the freedom to express their views. In the age of Twitter, we also find that nuance is often lacking. Still, the combination of personal views and one’s ethnic-cultural or religious background is decisive in the opportunities one gets in Western European societies.

Amena Khan is more than just a face that may be useful to a brand. Her face represents a life experience and social vision that is different from most faces of l'Oréal. Real diversity would Amena Khan and Gal Gadot together in a l'Oréal campaign, knowing that they hold different views. After all, personal recognition is not a face, but the world behind that face.

Today's assimilation fundamentalism

Since citizens with different ethnic-cultural and religious backgrounds may look to certain issues from different perspectives, the future foundations of our Western European societies must include those various perspectives. Unfortunately, many European politicians don't see it that way. Most represent white-centred European societies where many prefer to erase the 'foreign' identities of their bicultural citizens. For them, 'integration' usually means assimilation such that, if you wave a Turkish flag, "you have no place in the Netherlands or Europe."

In 2007, the Dutch national youth football team won the European championship. Many of the players on that team had roots in the former Dutch colony of Suriname, and they celebrated the championship by waving the Surinamese flag while still wearing their orange shirts. Many did not appreciate this expression of their bicultural identity.

In 2018, the French Ambassador in the US was equally angry, as *The Daily Show* host Trevor Noah had dared to call some of the French team who won the 2018 FIFA World Cup "African." According to the French Ambassador, the African background of fourteen of the twenty-three players had to be erased: the French national football team was French and only French. With the masterful way in which Trevor Noah countered the French Ambassador's criticism on *The Daily Show*, he touched the heart of the debate in all of Europe. After all, assimilation fundamentalism, as I define it ironically, has many followers in many European countries, consciously or unconsciously.

Assimilation fundamentalism is not new

A couple of years ago, Dutch researcher Hilde Pach wrote about the history of the Jewish population in the Netherlands:

In the 18th century Jews started speaking Dutch to an increasing extent, and in the 19th century Yiddish had virtually disappeared. [Yiddish is a Germanic language that strongly resembles German and is interspersed with Slavic and Hebrew words, depending on the

local variant] The Dutch King William I thought that all his subjects should speak Dutch, including the Jews. The Jewish elite itself did not think much of Yiddish either and therefore cooperated with the transition to Dutch.

Unfortunately, these active assimilation politics did not help the Dutch Jews in the Second World War. The small number of Dutch Jews who survived WWII is largely secular, possibly as a consequence of the active assimilation politics pursued in the century prior to the war.

Assimilation fundamentalism was not limited to people living in the Netherlands. Citizens in the then-Dutch colonies were also confronted with it, and people growing up in Suriname before independence learned more about the Netherlands than they did about Suriname. As Jeanette Donk-Schmelz recalled,

As a child in the city of Paramaribo I knew a lot of songs, such as the Dutch traditional ‘Waar de blanke top der duinen, ‘k heb u lief, mijn Nederland’. In those times you needed to know everything about the Netherlands, but not about Suriname. At home, I was not allowed to speak the Surinam language. You wouldn’t dream of it. They called it ‘Negro English’. It was proof of a lack of respect. Later, in the Netherlands, I learned it from my husband. He thought that otherwise people would find me arrogant. (NRC Handelsblad, 2018)

Counterproductive

So far, the result of this assimilation fundamentalism has been the opposite of what many politicians have intended, as the more people are urged to integrate and even assimilate into the Dutch or Western European culture and adapt to Western European values, the more they are ordered to distance themselves from the Turkish, Moroccan, Islamic, African or other cultures, the more strongly they identify themselves with exactly these cultures. No one likes to be patronised. With the song ‘Barbarian’, Syrian-American rapper Mona Haydar powerfully explains this phenomenon: “We take back terms like barbarian, savage and uncivilised and wear them proudly as we honour our ancestors.”

Recent research in the Netherlands by Motivaction and my agency, TransCity, has shown that the Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Curaçao, Aruban or Muslim identity is felt more strongly than ever before.

Marketeers understand multiple identity but...

Fortunately, marketers of major brands are increasingly aware of the multiple identities of their customers. For example, Unilever describes its Andrélon Oil&Shine line on its Dutch website as “perfectly suited for the care for **covered hair**. The shampoo, enriched with rose oil, cleans the hair and the scalp mildly.” In its social media campaign Andrélon emphatically addresses hijabis with Andrélon Oil&Shine.

Other brands are starting to target bicultural communities in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe, but because nearly all marketeers are white, errors seem to occur more often than not. DOVE, also a Unilever brand, once released a skin lotion for people with “normal skin to dark skin,” a clear example of well-meant product development that takes a wrong turn in the introductory phase through communication developed from a white perspective.

Dutch retailer HEMA once put the dish ‘roti with rice’ on the menus of its in-store restaurants. A popular dish, roti is a curry with meat (or fish), vegetables and potatoes accompanied by a roti bread (similar to Indian chapati), but what HEMA actually served was a chicken curry with rice but without the roti or chapati. In essence, it was roti without roti, and HEMA became a laughingstock in the Surinamese community in the Netherlands.

Ramadan Kareem

Dutch grocery chains like Albert Heijn, Jumbo and Plus address the month of Ramadan with seasonal products and in-store promotions in major cities, but some of the local store managers show a lack of understanding. In one case, that lack of understanding resulted in a hilarious Ramadan Kareem store shelf full of cans of Heineken beer because the green Heineken cans matched the colour of the Ramadan Kareem shelf. In England a local shop manager made a similar mistake with the Ramadan Kareem shelf, as the Bordeaux-red Ramadan shelf was in line with the colour of the bacon-flavoured Pringles package.

Things do not go wrong only with marketing communications targeted at bicultural Europeans, as we also see other advertisements developed from a white perspective that sometimes have unintended effects when cultural sensitivities are not understood. For instance, Heineken withdrew a television commercial in which a bartender slid a bottle of light beer across the bar, passing three black Americans and ending up in front of a light-skinned woman, followed by the

text, “Sometimes light is better.” DOVE had to withdraw a social media ad that seemed to suggest that a black model became white after using DOVE soap.

Commercials developed from a white male perspective

Still, the damage suffered by Dolce&Gabbana probably far exceeded that of Heineken and DOVE. Promotional films distributed via social media in which a Chinese woman tries to eat typically Italian dishes like pizza and spaghetti with Chinese chopsticks was considered so offensive by many Chinese that the D&G brand was immediately removed from large Chinese webshops and physical retail chains. The founders and owners of D&G apologised profoundly: “We offer our apologies to all Chinese in the world, for there are many and we take this message very seriously,” said co-founder Stefano Gabbana in a video message. “From the bottom of our hearts we offer our apologies,” Domenico Dolce added.

So far, the German DIY chain Hornbach has not apologised for what some consider the most racist and sexist commercial in recent history. In a television ad intended to be tongue-in-cheek, women in an Asian city struck by air pollution buy the dirty, sweaty shirts and (under)pants of white men from a vending machine, subsequently smelling them ecstatically, supposedly because these sweaty clothes are from a clean, rural environment without air pollution. The ad, made by a German creative team that develops communication from a limited white male perspective for increasingly ethnically diverse German and European consumer markets, was a low point in the history of advertising.

Clearly, there is still a long way to go before Europe is multicultural not only in a physical sense but in a mental sense as well.

René Romer, owner of the multicultural marketing agency, TransCity, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands

3.1.7 Social Media, Acculturation and Language – Michel Laroche and Marie-Odile Richard

(1) Challenges:

There is a growing level of bilingualism in many societies because of the increasing use of English as the ‘lingua franca’ of globalization, the development of global and social media, the rapid growth of economic development in emerging markets and a rise in educational standards.

A key issue in globalization and social media is furthering the understanding of the construct of the acculturation as it relates to the global consumer culture (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). In addition, when market segments are bilingual, marketers are often uncertain which language to use for their communications, advertisements, and social media strategies. They must also understand how bilingual respondents who are exposed to a stimulus (e.g. social media post) in a source language (e.g. English) perceive it compared to how they would perceive the same stimulus in their native language. The Revised Hierarchical Model may provide explanations (Kroll et al., 2010). Research on how differences in the languages of bilingual respondents affect consumers' reactions in social media can shed new light on issues related to cross-cultural communication.

(2) Opportunities:

The issue of the role of language in social media can take several forms, depending on the level of acculturation and the strength of ethnic identity.

Recent developments in social media encourage marketers to use various strategies to target markets. With the aim of communicating effectively, a company must choose the appropriate languages for the groups they target. Although studies have revealed that language influences individual perceptions in terms of acculturation and social identity (Briley, Morris, and Simonson, 2005), few studies have looked at the physical representation of language. One example is the font style of the characters and letters and the different types of characters that are used in different situations, so it is worth studying the effects of symbolic forms in influencing consumer behaviour like the objective attributes of letters and differences between Chinese characters and English letters in terms of fonts.

Chinese characters originated from pictography, which then developed into modern Chinese characters, called *Fang Kuai Zi* (i.e. squared characters). Meanwhile, letters from the English language are less angular and more curved. A series of shape studies showed that curved forms represent warmth, friendliness, tolerance, and harmony, while angular forms relate to cold, isolation, and aggressiveness (Liu, 1997). To be specific, bilinguals who are exposed to logos and ads that contain *Fang Kuai Zi* often interpret them as representing the angular-associated attributes. Similarly, bilinguals who are exposed to the English characters often process them according to the curve-associated attributes.

(3) Agenda for Research and Practice:

The bilingual literature should investigate the objective attributes of language, multilanguage communications, and their links with self-construal in a social media context (Zhang, Feick, and Price, 2006). Members of immigrant ethnic groups undergo acculturation as they adopt their host countries' values, languages, social media, and so on. Since language is a major dimension of ethnic identity and acculturation, it should be captured as a variable in subcultural studies of social media. Multilingual communications, defined as "the appearance of a number of different languages or voices in a market-discourse situation" (Kelly-Holmes, 2005, p. 25), are employed worldwide, so consumers are frequently exposed to foreign-produced messages featuring people who speak foreign languages or local languages with foreign accents. Some researchers (e.g. Morales et al., 2012) have suggested that the study of accents in advertising should consider the role of country-of-origin (COO), since accents can trigger stereotypes about the speakers' COOs and ethnic groups. Although research has argued that foreign languages function as implicit COO cues, few studies have tested this argument (Hornikx and Meurs, 2017). More importantly, most studies have been conducted in English-speaking countries or among bilinguals with the main focus on the English language or English/American accent. As a result, few studies have addressed Chinese accents in the context of marketing and advertising, although Liu et al.'s (2013) study that focuses the differences between Mandarin and Cantonese is an exception.

4. Discussion and recommendations for future research

The previous section offered several experts' contributions, stressing the various challenges and probable opportunities to develop an informed discourse on the subject of consumer acculturation and the impact of social media.

4.1 Challenges and Opportunities

Immigration scholars have emphasized the growing ethnic consumer segments that offer potential to marketers. The implications for understanding the needs of ethnic groups and the product and marketing target strategies to meet these needs can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of advertising, marketing and social media.

Peñaloza highlighted the challenges poses by social media and emphasises digital divides, while *Dey* pointed out how digital consumer culture promotes digital acculturation. Social

interactions exert varying influences on behaviour (e.g. Chung and Fischer, 1999; Laroche, Pons, and Richard, 2009). For example, Xu et al. (2004) showed that ethnic friends influence consumption behaviour, regardless of perceived self-identity at the individual level. Belk (1988) who suggested that social interactions (i.e. relationships) should be considered at the collective level (e.g. groups), also suggested doing so in the digital world (Belk, 2013). An individual is influenced through engagement and connection with social networks (Laroche et al., 2009) and in the virtual domain (*Peñaloza*).

Social media researchers have incorporated social interactions into their analyses, with social networking sites considered important agents of such interactions (e.g. Shen et al., 2016; Wang, Yu, and Wei, 2012), and have reported links between social networking sites based on social capital theory (Ellison et al., 2007; Park et al., 2009). Social capital is a multidimensional construct that is based on a persons' social networks (Valenzuela et al., 2009). Online activities have also been found to increase social capital. Support comes from information-seeking behaviour (Park and Cho, 2012), language use (Kizgin, Jamal, Lal, and Rana, 2018a) and identification (Brown, Broderick, and Lee, 2007). As such, social networks can address online acculturation through social interactions and close relationships pursued using online media (Chang and Chuang, 2011). Valenzuela et al. (2009) argued that an individual's reasons for using technology affect his or her social capital, and not the technology itself, while Ellison et al. (2007) found that social networking site like Facebook are strong predictors for maintaining offline relationships. The reason for social interactions on social networking sites is based on individuals' need to belong, to have social interactions and to connect with communities. Putnam (2000) determined that bonding social capital occurs between individuals who have strong ties with each other and develop close relationships.

Consumers located in minority ethnic communities are often influenced by two cultures (Sandikci and Ger, 2010), which is made more complex by the influences of social networks, including the wider ethnic and the mainstream communities. These communities comprise areas of life in which immigrants have significant contact with the dominant or host community through, for example, educational institutions, leisure activities and workplaces (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006). The networks that help to form the consumer learning process, such as places of education and work and the media, give consumers from minority ethnic communities opportunities to interface with and participate in the host culture (Askegaard et al., 2005;

Deshpande et al., 1986; Jamal, 2003; Peñaloza, 1994). Jamal (2003) stated that, as a consequence, these ethnic consumers may demonstrate a greater propensity through social interactions to exhibit consumption patterns that reflect both the host and the ethnic communities (Kizgin, Jamal, and Richard, 2017). Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect any assessment of cultural impact on consumption to capture the role of online acculturation (i.e. online social networks). Social capital theory suggests that the relationships in networks influence the extent to which interpersonal knowledge is shared (Chiu, Hsu, and Wang, 2006). Individuals from minority ethnic communities develop friendships and associations with both their native and mainstream groups. Social networks and social interactions derived from both of these arenas represent “dual sets of acculturation agents” (Peñaloza, 1994, p. 49) and afford the individual with culture-specific influences on their behaviours as consumers (Keefe and Padilla, 1987; Xu et al., 2004).

Research in a Turkish-Dutch setting (Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver, 2006; Van de Vijver and Phalet, 2004) has highlighted the primary role of adaptation to the host country by individuals from the Turkish-Dutch community when they are positioned in social interactions with the mainstream culture, but also that they prefer that their cultural heritage be the dominant characteristics they exhibit when they are with ethnic family and friends.

The nature of any first-hand contact between individuals may produce changes in behaviours. That is, an individual who favours enculturation into his or her heritage culture by maintaining his or her identity and conducting most social interactions in his or her ethnic social network will be influenced by this heritage more readily than someone who values acculturation to the host culture and has a propensity to operate and socialize in the mainstream culture. Additional research that identifies cultural relationships and multicultural dynamics in this area is needed (Peñaloza). For example, research could model information diffusion and how it influences acculturation (Choudhary et al., 2019), particularly the facilitation of a global consumer culture (Cleveland et al., 2009) in social media.

The lack of cultural awareness in marketing communications (Romer) has shown the pitfalls to which social media is prone. In the cultural context, researchers could focus on identifying the various usage forms for consumers versus firms (Peñaloza). The opportunities outlined by *Laroche and Richard* suggest the need to develop a more detailed and informed perspective on the physical role of language. As Holland and Gentry (1999, p. 5) stated, “companies targeting an ethnic market do not limit themselves merely to the use of the group’s native language in their advertisements,

but draw on a full range of communication tools and cultural symbols.” Devising appropriate marketing campaigns that are aimed at particular ethnic groupings is not simply a matter of translation into the target audience’s native language. Choudhary et al. (2019) suggested social media as an acculturation agent, as it decreases language barriers and promotes integration. *Dey* argued that consumer culture includes identity and symbolic value that is rooted in individuals’ lives, which is created in part through collective consumption experiences.

4.2 Future research agenda

The expert views outlined in the previous sections identified a number of opportunities of the impact of social media on Consumer Acculturation; sharing economy, scope, accessibility and intensity of social media, global consumer culture in mobile settings, digital consumer culture, multiculturalism and language are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Key themes and significant factors

Title	Opportunities	Contributor
Sharing Economy	Opportunities exist in conceptualising the impact of various forms of acculturation in the adoption of exchange.	Michel Laroche
Scope, Accessibility, and Intensity of Social Media	A number of opportunities exist for the development of the understanding of the impact at the individual and group level. The role of social media in the context of social and commercial discourse for personal authorship, family cohesion, friendship and community-building.	Lisa Peñaloza
Identity Creation	Although, various agents of culture change, such as family and media impact consumer acculturation processes and outcomes, opportunities exist to explore and understand the impact of social media as an agent of culture change.	Ahmad Jamal
Global Consumer Behaviour in Mobile Settings	The type of interface device is likely to shape consumers' disposition toward websites and applications. The exploration of opportunities as to how and which ethnic groups use touchscreen devices and the role of acculturation in their adoption.	Marie-Odile Richard
Digital Consumer Culture	Opportunities exist in the focus on digital consumer culture leading to digital acculturation. While there is a focus on how consumers acculturate to others of different ethnic cultures or nationalities, consumers' exposure to digital consumer culture creates and recreates consumers' interactions and identity formation in the digital age.	Bidit Dey
Multiculturalism	Given the evidence of the current negative effects of advertising, the opportunity exists to learn from the experience to increase awareness of multiculturalism in a mental sense in the future.	Rene Romer
Language	Opportunities exist in the focus on the physical representation of language. Learning about the importance of this dimension, can help marketers to use various strategies to target markets.	Michel Laroche & Marie-Odile Richard

5. Conclusions

This study adopted Dwivedi et al.'s (2015b; 2019) approach in offering a consolidated view of several aspects of the impact of social media on consumer acculturation from invited expert contributors from academia and industry. The study brings the collective insights from the workshop titled “*The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Acculturation: Current Challenges, Opportunities, and Agenda for Research and Practice*,” held at the School of Management, Swansea University, UK, on 15th July 2019. The individual views highlight the opportunities, challenges and potential research agenda related to acculturation research posed by the importance and increased use of social media.

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