

Chapter 2

Online Ethnic Media Consumption, Acculturation, and Enculturation Among Asian Americans

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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses a study that examines the extent to which Asian American individuals' acculturation, enculturation, and demographic background contribute to their use of online ethnic media, as well as the extent to which Asian American individuals with different ethnic self-identities may differ in their online ethnic media consumption. Data for this study is drawn from a survey questionnaire (N = 574) conducted 2015, with respondents representing different immigrant generational status from multiple Asian ethnic groups in the United States. Results broadly highlight the influence role of acculturation and enculturation behind online ethnic media consumption and contribute to a greater understanding of the Asian American experience in the digital and globalized media environment. Implications and recommendations for future studies are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The term "Asian American" generally refers to any individual of Asian descent who resides in the United States on a permanent or long-term basis, regardless of citizenship or other legal status (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2004). At 17 million strong, the Asian American population consists of 23 distinct ethnic groups identified by the

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U.S. Census in 2010, with the six largest ethnic groups being Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese (Hoeffel, Rastogi, Kim, & Hasan, 2012). In the United States, nearly three-quarters (74%) of Asian-American adults were born abroad (Pew Research Center, 2012). Many first- and second-generation Asian Americans continue to be actively involved with the social and political life in their country of heritage/cultural origin (e.g., Lien et al., 2004), particularly through the consumption of ethnic media products on the Internet. As the nation's "highest-income, best-educated, and fastest-growing racial group" (Pew Research Center, 2012, para. 2), Asian Americans and their media consumption experience are research areas with rising significance.

Attempts to understand media consumption among Asian Americans and other ethnic groups have traditionally emerged out of disciplines such as culture studies, media studies, and ethnic studies, with considerable attention paid to important issues such as identity formation, spatialities, hybridity, and transnationalism. With the advent of information communication technologies (ICTs) in recent years, scholars have turned their attention to the ways in which digital technologies (e.g., websites, social media, mobile devices) could influence the manifestation of these concepts (e.g., Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010; Brinkerhoff, 2009). As ICTs continue to expand into every facet of contemporary life, calls for interdisciplinary research to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between culture and new media have also steadily appeared (e.g., Chen, 2012; Smith Pfister & Soliz, 2011).

Heeding the need for new scholarship, this chapter draws on the literature from communication, ethnic studies, and psychology to explore the relationships among acculturation, enculturation, online ethnic media consumption, and ethnic identity in Asian Americans. Specifically, the study applies the Asian American acculturation and enculturation measures by Zhang and Moradi (2013) to analyze online ethnic media consumption through a national survey (N = 574) conducted in 2015, with respondents representing different generational statuses from multiple Asian ethnic groups in the United States. By examining this topic through an interdisciplinary lens, the author hopes to contribute to the ongoing conversations about this evolving field of research.

BACKGROUND

Constructing Ethnic Identities

The notion that self-identity is a fluid, mutable, and evolving concept embedded in multiple layers of social, cultural, and political processes has long been argued by

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