

## 8.5: Marketing to Hispanic, Black, and Asian Consumers

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to

- Describe the Hispanic, Black, and Asian identities.
- Define acculturation.
- Explain how identity-related characteristics and factors connect Hispanic, Black, and Asian consumers.
- Describe how to market to Hispanic, Black, and Asian consumers.

### Hispanic, Black, and Asian Consumer Identities

The United States is a mixture of nationalities, backgrounds, cultures, and identities. This mixture has been shaped through many decades of immigration from people across many lands and by their interactions with their new environments. The U.S. population is often referred to as consisting of majority and minority groups. The majority consists of non-Hispanic White people. The minority consists of other races, ethnicities, and communities. From a marketing standpoint, companies have historically treated the majority segment as the mainstream market. Conversely, the minority segment has been treated as a subgroup of consumers or the multicultural market.

As you read earlier in the chapter, the demographics of the United States continue to change, and the majority segment will cease to exist in the future. The country is expected to become a “plurality nation” by 2050. This means that no group will have a *sizeable* majority. The non-Hispanic White population is projected to remain the largest single group (United States Census Bureau, 2012). However, the majority position will be lost in terms of population percentage. Check out Figure 8.6 again to compare the overarching segments.

### Hispanic Identity

Let’s examine the data from the 2020 U.S. Census to better understand Hispanic consumers. The Hispanic population reached over 63 million people in 2020. Is this number significant? Yes, because it means that one out of every five people in the United States is Hispanic or of Hispanic descent. This is a 23% growth since the previous census! In fact, the Hispanic population has grown significantly in the last four decades. The Hispanic population is projected to reach almost 100 million individuals by 2050.

Hispanic people are not a uniform group or single ethnicity. On the contrary, the Hispanic population in the United States is very diverse. Hispanic people originate from 20 different countries, as shown in Figure 8.12, and can belong to any race. An overwhelming 83% of the Hispanic population belongs to just five subethnicities. These subgroups are Mexican (62.2 percent), Puerto Rican (9.5 percent), Cuban (3.9 percent), Salvadoran (3.9 percent), and Dominican (3.5 percent) (Noe-Bustamante, 2019). The rest of the population is made up of the other 15 Hispanic subethnicities.

You are probably familiar with the terms *Hispanic*, *Latino/Latina*, and *Latinx*. They are often used interchangeably but can have different meanings. *Hispanic* is a language-based term that describes individuals from a Spanish-speaking country. *Latino/Latina* is a location-based term that identifies gendered individuals whose families originate in Latin America regardless of the language they speak. For example, a person from Spain is considered Hispanic because of language but not Latino because of location. A person from Brazil is considered Latino/Latina because of location but not Hispanic because of language (Brazilians speak Portuguese). Unlike *Latino/Latina*, the term *Latinx* is gender neutral. While *Latinx* has picked up momentum among some groups, many Hispanic people dislike the word or find it offensive.

Hispanic	Hispanic/Latino	Latino
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spain</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Argentina</li><li>• Bolivia</li><li>• Chile</li><li>• Colombia</li><li>• Costa Rica</li><li>• Cuba</li><li>• Dominican Republic</li><li>• Ecuador</li><li>• El Salvador</li><li>• Guatemala</li><li>• Honduras</li><li>• Mexico</li><li>• Nicaragua</li><li>• Panama</li><li>• Paraguay</li><li>• Peru</li><li>• Puerto Rico</li><li>• Uruguay</li><li>• Venezuela</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Belize</li><li>• Brazil</li><li>• French Guiana</li><li>• Guyana</li><li>• Haiti</li><li>• Suriname</li></ul>

Figure 8.12 Hispanic People and Latinos in the United States by Country of Origin (CC BY 4.0; Rice University & OpenStax)

Many cultures integrate traditions in their lives as the generations progress. Hispanic people demonstrate this same movement of traditions, from their countries and cultures of origin into their family practices in the United States. Why is that? It has to do with identity. Identity is a person's self-image. Cultural identity, in particular, is how a person identifies with a given culture, ethnicity, or social group. It is a sense of belonging that influences personal thinking and actions.

For the majority of Hispanic people, identity is strongly linked to heritage or to their family's country of origin (Taylor et al., 2012). Customs and social practices are strong components as well. To increase its connection with these consumers, Target (see Figure 8.13) appealed to the Hispanic identity with its *sobremesa* commercial. The *sobremesa* is the additional time spent at the dinner table with friends and family after a big meal for relaxing or having meaningful conversations. This Hispanic tradition does not have a direct translation in terms of American culture. Target created the hashtag #SinTraducción for the campaign, which means "without translation" to further emphasize this. Target also used "There will always be a part of you that simply doesn't translate" as the slogan for social media outreach. The commercial is part of the retailer's first campaign ever aimed directly at Hispanic millennials.



Figure 8.13 Target created the *sobremesa* commercial as a way to appeal to the Hispanic identity. (credit: “Target” by Mike Mozart, JeepersMedia/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

#### Link to Learning: Target “Sobremesa” Commercial

Target’s “Sobremesa” commercial shows an entire Hispanic family sitting at the table clearly *after* the meal has ended to share desserts and enjoy fun conversation as a group.



#### Black Identity

Black people are the second largest multicultural group in the United States after Hispanic people. Let’s consider the statistics from the 2020 U.S. Census again. The Black population shows growth at 46.8 million people in 2020 versus 38.9 million people a decade earlier. Black consumers make up 14.2% of the country’s total inhabitants. Another key point is that individuals who identify as Black in combination with another race have increased 88.7% since the last census. This “in combination” trend is not unique to the Black community; the “in combination” identification accounted for the majority of the changes in all the racial categories (Jones et al., 2021).

This multicultural segment shows a couple of other interesting changes that impact consumer and consumption behaviors. For example, Black consumers are forecasted to account for 15–17% of the total population growth in the nation over the next decade. Black people have also had the largest change in education level in recent years. Since the 2010 census, the percentage of Black people with an undergraduate degree has increased by more than 55% (Tamir, 2021).

Although Black people account for 14.2% of the population, this segment makes up just under 10% of spending on goods and services. This is because Black workers earn a lower median income than other demographics. However, this inequity in spending and wealth is showing signs of moving toward a better balance. Management consulting firm McKinsey estimates the growing Black population to represent over \$300 billion annually in unmet demand (Chui et al., 2021).

A 2019 survey by the Pew Research Center shows that nearly 75% of Black people believe that race is at the center of their identity (Barroso, 2020). Race is deeply tied to how people perceive themselves. When it comes to defining the Black identity further, the community is also facing a unique

challenge. There is a growing argument in the United States over differences between Black people who emigrated from Africa and those who did not. The debate is caused by the ancestral link to slavery that many American-born Black people have but immigrants do not. Moreover, Black people can also have other subethnicities such as Black Hispanic and multiracial (White, Asian, or Native American). While the subethnicities may not be physically visible, marketers need to be aware that identity differences can be significant among the Black population.

These multicultural consumers also feel relatively well connected to the broader Black community and prioritize social activities that offer support to the group as a whole. To show solidarity with the BLM movement, popular ice cream brand Ben & Jerry's (see Figure 8.14) named one of its flavors "Justice ReMix'd" to raise awareness of racism and criminal justice reform. The company worked with the Advancement Project national office to advocate for social change and civil rights. Ben & Jerry's also enacted a multipoint corporate plan challenging other companies to champion the cause and join the conversation about racial inequalities.



Figure 8.14 Ben & Jerry's created a new flavor of ice cream as a way to connect with the Black Lives Matter movement and raise awareness around racism and criminal justice reform. (credit: "Peace, Love & Ice Cream" by Rob Olivera/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

### Asian Identity

The Asian population in the United States has also increased since the last census. This growth has been fueled largely by foreign-born individuals. There were 19.9 million people in 2020 who identified as single-race Asians. This number is up from 14.7 million a decade earlier. There were also 4.1 million people in 2020 who identified primarily as Asian "in combination" with another race. In fact, this combination of single race and mixed race increased a whopping 55.5% from 2010 to 2020, making it one of the fastest-growing demographic segments (Jones et al., 2021). Overall, the Asian population in the United States is 24 million individuals, which is 7.2% of the total country's inhabitants. The U.S. Census Bureau projects this multicultural community to more than double by 2060.

Like the Hispanic population, the Asian population is very diverse too. Figure 8.15 shows the 22 different subethnicities that make up these multicultural consumers. Did you know six of these origin groups account for 85% of the Asian American community? These groups derive from the Asian continent and the Indian subcontinent. These origin groups are Chinese (24 percent), Indian (21 percent), Filipino (19 percent), Vietnamese (10 percent), Korean (9 percent), and Japanese (7 percent) (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021). The remainder of the Asian people come from Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and other subgroups.

## Asian Origin Group

- Bangladeshi
- Bhutanese
- Burmese
- Cambodian
- Chinese (with Taiwanese)
- Chinese (w/o Taiwanese)
- Filipino
- Hmong
- Indian
- Indonesian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Laotian
- Malaysian
- Mongolian
- Okinawan
- Nepalese
- Pakistani
- Sri Lankan
- Taiwanese
- Thai
- Vietnamese

Figure 8.15 Groups of Origin for the Asian Population in the United States (CC BY 4.0; Rice University & OpenStax)

The geographic distribution of this population is worth noting. There are over 9.8 million Asian people living in the western region of the country. This is nearly half the entire Asian population! Moreover, almost one-third of Asian consumers live in California alone, making Asians one of the state's largest population segments. The southern states have the second largest Asian population with 5.3 million individuals. Overall, Asian people are projected to be the largest source of immigrants by 2055, accounting for 36% of all immigration, followed by Hispanic people at 34% (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021).

As an immigrant group, Asian people have the fastest adoption rate of the English language. Almost 75% of Asian households speak English, and nearly two-thirds of American-born Asians speak English only. Asian people are also more likely than the average American household to live in a multigenerational setting (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021). Because of their diversity and unique characteristics, it is difficult to narrow it down to a uniform Asian identity. This poses a challenge for marketers. Creating generalized messages for Asian people or having a “one size fits all” marketing approach is unwise. Plus, making assumptions about consumers’ purchasing behaviors as a singular market can be very tricky, if not inadvisable, because there is not a sole Asian cultural identity.

A 2019 survey about race found that 56% of Asian people said race was a key part of their identity (Barroso, 2020). Using this insight, Nike created two different—but very effective—commercials targeting different subsegments of Asian consumers. Nike’s “The Great Chase” is inspired by the longtime Chinese tradition of gifting money in little red envelopes.

### Link to Learning: Nike

Check out the “Great Chase” commercial and compare it to the upbeat “Da Da Ding” commercial featuring Indian women practicing many types of sports.





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Nike 'Da Da Ding' - Director: Francois Rousselet from Tom Lindsay on Vimeo.

### The Acculturation Spectrum

People who immigrate to the United States from another country will probably experience some personal level of acculturation. Even American-born multicultural individuals whose families speak another language at home besides English may also experience acculturation. Acculturation is the process by which a person's family cultural patterns change because of direct and constant contact with a different culture (Wan-Hsiu Sunny & Cong, 2012). Acculturation can happen in various degrees. The spectrum ranges from complete adoption to total rejection of the new culture. Individuals that simultaneously merge both cultures in daily life are considered bicultural.

Hispanic and Asian consumers can experience various degrees of acculturation. This depends on birthplace, immigration status, community connections, and personal comfort level. For instance, a person born in the United States to immigrant parents is more likely to be acculturated than unacculturated. For marketers, being aware of acculturation levels is important because they play a significant role in how these multicultural consumers respond to marketing messages. Here is another example. Hispanic people in general think of language as a tool to preserve the culture. As a result, unacculturated Hispanic consumers are more likely than acculturated consumers to support a brand that advertises to them in the Spanish language. This effort is seen as a sign of respect and appreciation (Wan-Hsiu Sunny & Cong, 2012).

## Identity-Connecting Characteristics and Factors

The Hispanic, Black, and Asian populations each have a general set of cultural characteristics based on their multicultural identities. Being aware of each segment's personal characteristics helps marketers create effective marketing promotions and advertisements. In addition to internal characteristics, these consumers are also influenced by external factors such as social circumstances and market behaviors. Let's explore characteristics and factors in more detail.

### Hispanic Consumers

Hispanic consumers in general are optimistic, family-oriented, warmhearted, and hospitable (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). The culture's energy and liveliness are visible through elements such as music, food, decor, and language. Hispanic people place a high value on relationships and social interactions. Have you noticed that some commercials aimed at Hispanic consumers show people in close proximity, touching, or hugging? Physical contact is important to this multicultural segment. It is seen as a way to build trust and group harmony. Did you notice it in Target's *sobremesa* commercial?

Hispanic consumers support brands that demonstrate cultural authenticity, transparency, and honesty. After all, openness and having meaningful connections are at the heart of these consumers' values. In terms of factors, the concept of product quality and service quality is deeply desirable to Hispanic consumers. Have you heard of Hispanic actress Jessica Alba? Alba, who is of Mexican descent, founded The Honest Company (see Figure 8.16) in 2012 with the mission of formulating safe, high-quality personal and beauty products for the family. Other factors that influence Hispanic consumers include companies' pledges to sustainability and social responsibility. Indeed, these are growing concerns that shape this community's purchasing behaviors.



Figure 8.16 Hispanic consumers support products that demonstrate the qualities that are important to them—optimistic, family-oriented, warmhearted, and hospitable—which is why the Honest Company's message of safe products for the family resonates. (credit: "A Few of My Favorite Things: Honest Company" by Abi Porter/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

### Black Consumers

Two noteworthy characteristics of Black consumers in general are determination and self-expression. As you read earlier in the chapter, race is a key component of the Black identity. The social, educational, and economic struggles that Black people have faced because of racial discrimination and injustice have made these consumers highly determined to pursue their dreams regardless of the obstacles encountered. Self-expression is also a significant cultural trait. It is a way to show personal pride in one's identity. Among Black consumers, self-expression is typically conveyed through fashion, music, sports, and the arts.

Like Hispanic consumers, Black people are optimistic and resilient. Strong community bonds, observance of religious practices, and deep commitments to social activism are factors closely linked to Black consumers' identities. The opportunity to raise a collective voice about key issues is a fueling factor too. In 2020, Beats by Dre launched the "You Love Me" campaign (see Figure 8.17).



Figure 8.17 Beats Electronics, founded by Black rapper Dr. Dre, launched its “You Love Me” campaign in 2020. (credit: “Beats by Dr Dre” by Mike Mozart, JeepersMedia/flickr, CC BY 2.0)

#### Link to Learning: Beats by Dr. Dre

Beats is a leading manufacturer of audio products co-founded by Black rapper Dr. Dre. The two-minute commercial plays on the audio pun and challenges viewers to emotionally listen by asking the question “You love Black culture, but do you love me?”



#### Asian Consumers

Asian cultures are steeped in rich traditions and customs. Asian consumers are very proud of their heritage, and at the same time, they identify well with the American culture. Asian people share this cultural duality characteristic with Hispanic people. Cultural duality is not the same thing as acculturation. Cultural duality happens when an individual’s cultures overlap with each other, and the person feels a sense of belonging to both simultaneously. Did you know that almost 50% of Asian consumers in the United States watch TV in both English and in an Asian language (Nielsen, 2016)? This helps them stay current with American culture while keeping connected with their native culture.

Shared societal values are a trait that influence people’s behaviors. One of these is collectivism. Think about Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, individualism versus collectivism in particular. Collectivism places more emphasis on group activities than on individual ones. Overall, Asian societies are collectivistic, though the degree of collectivism varies among the populations’ countries of origin (Kawamura, 2012). Cultural celebrations are also a factor linked to identity. Instacart, Target, Wells Fargo, and Toyota are just a few companies marketing to Asian consumers in the United States using traditional festivities like Diwali and Lunar New Year to appeal to the group’s collectivism.

#### Link to Learning: Asian Celebrations

Two examples posted on social media platforms are [Wells Fargo’s Happy Lunar New Year on Instagram](#) and [Toyota’s Diwali tweet on X \(Twitter\)](#).



### Marketing to Hispanic, Black, and Asian Consumers

As you have seen, marketing to each of these multicultural segments is unique. Marketers must do the research and understand the demographics, cultures, identities, and group characteristics of these targeted consumers. It is equally important to recognize that none of these elements are static. They are dynamic and interact with one another.

Being successful with multicultural marketing, and ultimately with diversity marketing, includes many factors. Success also requires connecting with each consumer segment on a personal and intimate level. This inevitably means that marketers must recognize the similarities and differences between the cultural identities that shape daily life experiences in the United States.

In the upcoming decades, the meaning of the terms *minority* and *majority* segments are going to wane in significance. Groups that have been historically classified as the minority market will grow, while the group historically classified as the majority will shrink in size. This sets the stage for a future of a “plurality nation,” further emphasizing the importance of multicultural trends and diversity marketing.

### Knowledge Check

It's time to check your knowledge on the concepts presented in this section. Refer to the Answer Key at the end of the book for feedback.

1.

Which of the following is the largest segment of multicultural consumers in the United States?

- a. Asian population
- b. Black population
- c. Hispanic population
- d. Native American and Alaskan Native population

2.

Which ethnic term can be used for a person from Puerto Rico or of Puerto Rican descent?

- a. Only Hispanic
- b. Both Hispanic and Latino/Latina
- c. Only Latino/Latina
- d. None of these terms are correct.

3.

Acculturation is the process by which a person's family cultural patterns change because of direct and constant contact with \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. their home culture
- b. a different culture
- c. many cultures simultaneously
- d. a high degree of global travel

4.

Regarding cultural identity, which of the following do the overwhelming majority of Black people believe is a major contributor and attribute?

- a. Cultural duality and relationships
- b. Education and income level
- c. Immigration status and conventionality
- d. Race and community

5.

Effectively marketing to Hispanic, Black, and Asian consumers requires \_\_\_\_\_ with each multicultural demographic and understanding \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. connecting; segmentation
- b. surveying; advertising
- c. using influencers; social media
- d. using culturally relevant idioms; fun advertising

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