

ASIAN-AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

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INTRODUCTION

Asian Americans are the fastest growing segment of the American population, projected to grow from 10 million in 1997 to 40 million by the year 2050. Three-fifths of these people in 1999 lived in just five states: California, Illinois, New York, Washington, and Hawaii. As marketers develop products and services specifically for the Asian American market they must deliver their messages in an effective and efficient manner. In addition, many mass market products and services are consumed by Asian Americans and marketers need to understand more about their media habits in order to build effective long-term relationships.

FOCUS FOR THE STUDY

This study focused on San Francisco Bay Area Asian Americans and their media habits. The Bay Area has a particularly attractive Asian American market. San Francisco is about 29 percent Asian Americans compared to the nation's proportion of 4.1 percent. San Francisco County had a per capita personal income of \$39,249 in 1996, 55 percent higher than the California average. It is important to understand what media should be used to communicate effectively product, price, and distribution information to an Asian American customer. The Bay Area has a strong Chinese television presence along with a large number of Asian newspapers and magazines. There are three stations running Chinese programming and 13 Chinese newspapers.

METHODOLOGY

A convenience sample survey of 307 university students in the San Francisco area was conducted in fall 1997 and spring 1998 using a paper questionnaire in English that asked questions about media consumption patterns. It had a list of 13

Chinese or Asian interest newspapers for the respondents to check. Respondents could indicate that they watched various television programs from a list of entertainment shows and news programs directed at Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Mandarin or Cantonese speaking people of Asian ancestry. The respondent's country of birth and her family's ancestry were both asked because it is common for people to be born in one country, for example, Vietnam, but consider themselves Chinese not Vietnamese. Age, sex, and the number of years the respondent had lived in the United States were also asked.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study found that country of origin, although important, was not as significant an influence on media consumption as the number of years that people had lived in the U.S. There was a rather strong negative relationship between the number of years respondents had lived in the United States and their readership of a major Chinese language daily newspaper, Sing Tao. We also found that our relatively young sample overwhelming preferred the mainstream English language television channels over a Chinese language channel. Our study suggests that advertisers could reach a variety of Asian consumers through mainstream English language media supplemented by a targeted ethnic media, mainly newspaper, purchase. Although country of origin plays an important role, it need not result in an expensive narrowcast approach when making a media buy to reach the Asian American market.

The full paper may be found at
<http://online.sfsu.edu/~perttula/asiar4.html>