The Influence of Ethnicity on Consumer Behaviour:
A study of inter-generational and inter-group differences

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Doctor of Philosophy

This research document is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, especially my late, beloved father who has always inspired me to excel academically; I miss you so much daddy and you are never far from my mind or my heart. My awesome husband—you are my best friend and my soul mate. This journey would not have been possible without you and your support; and lastly my beautiful children—you are my heart and my soul, always and forever.
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To my supervisors, Associate Professor John Stanton and Doctor Tendai Chikweche, thank you for your feedback, guidance and generous support in helping me through the PhD journey.

Thank you to the senior members of the Lao community, in particular my uncles and aunts for your support, guidance and help in the participation and recruitment of research participants for my study. Most importantly, thank you for sharing your knowledge of the beauty and richness of the Lao culture with me, and providing me with a better understanding of my Lao heritage.

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Lastly, thank you to my family, especially my husband and children, for being the beacons of light that inspire me each and every day. Love you always and forever.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Jamealla Vilayvanh Intharacks

July 2017
Abstract

While studies of ethnic consumer behaviour examine the role an individual’s ethnicity and/or ethnic identity has on this behaviour, a lack of clarity exists on how ethnicity and ethnic identity can be used in the development of marketing strategies targeting specific ethnic groups. Therefore, within an Australian context, this research seeks to understand:

1. How individuals may be influenced by their *ethnicity* and *ethnic identity*;
2. How ethnic identity may influence *consumer behaviour*; and
3. How *individual acculturation* may affect ethnic identity and ethnic consumer behaviour.

Developing an understanding of the relationship between ethnicity, acculturation and ethnic identity is crucial because it may provide insights into why there are differences in consumer behaviour between consumers from the same ethnic background, as well as between different ethnic backgrounds.

Using self-ascribed samples from two ethnic groups (Lao and Filipino) residing in Australia with very different patterns of settlement, an exploratory mixed-method, qualitative approach was used to examine how an individual’s ethnicity and ethnic identity may be expected to influence the consumer behaviour of individuals who ascribe to their respective ethnicities. To observe acculturation tendencies and any effects on consumer behaviour, each ethnic group was further divided into three generational sub-groups. Using an emic perspective to describe the Lao and Filipino cultures, a theory building approach was employed to derive an understanding of how ethnicity and ethnic identity may influence consumer behaviour.

Primary data for this study was collected in Sydney, NSW in 2011 and included:

1. In-depth individual interviews conducted with individuals of Lao and Filipino background from different generations;
2. Focus group interviews conducted with three Lao and three Filipino focus groups; and

3. Field observations of individuals of Lao and Filipino background conducted at ethnic and non-ethnic events.

The findings contribute to existing knowledge on the connection between an individual’s ethnic heritage and the perception they have of their ethnic identity. Adding new insights into individual acculturation, the findings revealed there were different degrees of individual acculturation between three generations of consumers from the same ethnic background and between consumers from two different ethnic backgrounds. A further contribution to existing theory is determining how these inter-generational and inter-group differences affect the consumption of ethnic products, such as food, clothes, movies and music, as well as choice of service providers.

The findings of this study help clarify our understanding of how individual acculturation between consumers from the same ethnic group and between consumers from different ethnic groups may vary due to cultural distance; ethnic group size; inter-generational differences; and the political and economic environment in which the ethnic individual resides. All of these factors have an impact on the implications for understanding ethnic consumer behaviour. It is therefore critical that marketers understand the complexity in using ethnicity as a market segmentation strategy. The cost effectiveness and reach involved in using an integrated marketing strategy that reaches a broader audience need to be weighed against using a targeted ethnic marketing strategy aimed at reaching a specific ethnic group.

*Key Words*: acculturation, consumer behaviour, ethnic, ethnicity, ethnic identity, inter-generational, inter-group, social network.
# Table of Contents

Dedication ii

Acknowledgements iii

Statement of Authentication iv

Abstract v

Table of Contents vii

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA 1

1.2 RESEARCH FOCUS 2

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES 4

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 5

1.5 RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION 7

1.6 STUDY GROUP JUSTIFICATION 9

1.7 RESEARCH METHOD 10

1.8 ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION 11

1.9 OUTLINE OF THESIS 11

CHAPTER 2 AUSTRALIA, LAOS AND THE PHILIPPINES 15

2.1 MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA 15

2.2 PEOPLE OF LAO BACKGROUND 17

2.2.1 Laos, the Land of One Million Elephants 17

2.2.2 The Peoples of Laos 17

2.2.3 Population with Lao Ancestry in Australia 17

2.2.4 Population with Lao Ancestry in Sydney 18

2.3 PEOPLE OF FILIPINO BACKGROUND 18

2.3.1 The Philippines 18

2.3.2 The Peoples of the Philippines 19

2.3.3 Population with Filipino Ancestry in Australia 19

2.3.4 Population with Filipino Ancestry in Sydney 19

2.4 SUMMARY 20

CHAPTER 3 ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY 22

3.1 INTRODUCTION 22

3.2 ETHNICITY 24
6.7 DATA ANALYSIS

6.7.1 Data Analysis Process  
6.7.2 Data Analysis Protocol  
6.7.3 NVivo

6.8 DATA VALIDATION

6.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER 7 LAO STUDY GROUP FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

7.1.1 Research Question 1: How do Lao-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?

7.1.1.1 Lao Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas  
7.1.1.1.1 Lao Study Group 1 Interviews  
7.1.1.1.2 Lao Focus Group 1  
7.1.1.1.3 Lao Field Observations of Study Group 1

7.1.1.2 Lao Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia  
7.1.1.2.1 Lao Study Group 2 Interviews  
7.1.1.2.2 Lao Focus Group 2  
7.1.1.2.3 Lao Field Observations of Study Group 2

7.1.1.3 Lao Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia  
7.1.1.3.1 Lao Study Group 3 Interviews  
7.1.1.3.2 Lao Focus Group 3  
7.1.1.3.3 Lao Field Observations of Study Group 3

7.1.2 Conclusion – Perceptions of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

7.2 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

7.2.1 Research Question 2: How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?

7.2.1.1 Lao Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas  
7.2.1.1.1 Lao Study Group 1 Interviews  
7.2.1.1.2 Lao Focus Group 1  
7.2.1.1.3 Lao Study Group 1 Interviews

7.2.1.2 Lao Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia  
7.2.1.2.1 Lao Study Group 2 Interviews  
7.2.1.2.2 Lao Focus Group 2  
7.2.1.2.3 Lao Study Group 2 Interviews

7.2.1.3 Lao Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia  
7.2.1.3.1 Lao Study Group 3 Interviews  
7.2.1.3.2 Lao Focus Group 3
7.2.1.3.3 Lao Study Group 3 Interviews 152
7.2.2 Conclusion – Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour 154

7.3 UNDERSTAND HOW INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION AFFECTS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR 156

7.3.1 Research Question 3: How does individual acculturation (through behavioural shifts and socio-cultural adaptation) affect the consumer behaviour of each generation? 157
7.3.1.1 Product Purchase and Consumption 157
7.3.1.1.1 Lao Study Group Interviews 157
7.3.1.1.2 Lao Focus Groups 159
7.3.1.2 Service Providers 159
7.3.1.2.1 Lao Study Group Interviews 159
7.3.1.3 Language Preferences 160
7.3.1.3.1 Lao Study Group Interviews 160
7.3.1.4 Visits to the Homeland 163
7.3.1.4.1 Lao Study Group Interviews 163
7.3.1.5 Ethnic Background of Social Network 165
7.3.1.5.1 Lao Study Group Interviews 165
7.3.2 Conclusion – How Individual Acculturation Affects Consumer Behaviour 168

CHAPTER 8 FILIPINO STUDY GROUP FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION 170

8.1 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY 171
8.1.1 Research Question 1: How do Filipino-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context? 171
8.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas 172
8.1.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1 Interviews 172
8.1.1.1.2 Filipino Focus Group 1 175
8.1.1.1.3 Filipino Field Observations of Study Group 1 176
8.1.1.2 Filipino Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia 177
8.1.1.2.1 Filipino Study Group 2 Interviews 177
8.1.1.2.2 Filipino Focus Group 2 181
8.1.1.2.3 Filipino Field Observations of Study Group 2 183
8.1.1.3 Filipino Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia 184
8.1.1.3.1 Filipino Study Group 3 Interviews 184
8.1.1.3.2 Filipino Focus Group 3 187
8.1.1.3.3 Filipino Field Observations of Study Group 3 188
8.1.2 Conclusion – Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity 188

8.2 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR 190

xii
8.2.1 Research Question 2: How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?

8.2.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas
   8.2.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1 Interviews
   8.2.1.1.2 Filipino Focus Group 1
   8.2.1.1.3 Filipino Study Group 1 Interviews

8.2.1.2 Filipino Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia
   8.2.1.2.1 Filipino Study Group 2 Interviews
   8.2.1.2.2 Filipino Focus Group 2

8.2.1.3 Filipino Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia
   8.2.1.3.1 Filipino Study Group 3 Interviews
   8.2.1.3.2 Filipino Focus Group 3

8.2.2 Conclusion – Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour

8.3 UNDERSTAND HOW INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION AFFECTS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

8.3.1 Research Question 3: How does individual acculturation (through behavioural shifts and socio-cultural adaptation) affect the consumer behaviour of each generation?

8.3.1.1 Product Purchase and Consumption
   8.3.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews
   8.3.1.1.2 Filipino Focus Groups

8.3.1.2 Service Providers
   8.3.1.2.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

8.3.1.3 Language Preferences
   8.3.1.3.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

8.3.1.4 Visits to the Homeland
   8.3.1.4.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

8.3.1.5 Ethnic Background of Spouse/Partner and Friends
   8.3.1.5.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

8.3.2 Conclusion – How Individual Acculturation Affects Consumer Behaviour

CHAPTER 9 INTER-GROUP FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

9.1 UNDERSTAND HOW INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION AFFECTS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

9.1.1 Research Question 4: How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds?
9.1.1.1 Product Purchase and Consumption 230
9.1.1.1.1 Lao and Filipino Study Group Interviews 230
9.1.1.1.2 Lao and Filipino Focus Groups 232
9.1.1.2 Service Providers 233
9.1.1.3 Language Preferences 235
9.1.1.4 Visits to the Homeland 237
9.1.1.5 Ethnic Background of Spouse/Partner and Friends 238

9.2 Conclusion – How Individual Acculturation Affects Consumer Behaviour 239

CHAPTER 10 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 243

10.1 INTRODUCTION 243

10.2 HOW INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVE THEIR ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY 243

10.2.1 Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity 243
10.2.1.1 Previous Findings 244
10.2.1.2 New Findings 245

10.3 THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR 246

10.3.1 Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour 246
10.3.1.1 Previous Findings 246

10.4 THE EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR 249

10.4.1 How Individual Acculturation Affects Inter-Generational Differences in Ethnic Consumer Behaviour 249

10.4.1.1 Previous Findings 250
10.4.1.1.1 Lao Study Group Previous Findings 250
10.4.1.1.2 Filipino Study Group Previous Findings 251
10.4.1.2 New Findings 253

10.4.2 How Individual Acculturation Affects Inter-Group Differences in Ethnic Consumer Behaviour 253

10.4.3 Previous Findings 254
10.4.4 New Findings 255

10.5 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS 256

10.5.1 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity 256
10.5.2 Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour 257
10.5.3 Individual Acculturation and Consumer Behaviour 257

10.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY 259

10.6.1 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity 259
10.6.1.1 Contribution to Theory Building on Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity 260
10.6.2 Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour 260
10.6.2.1 Contribution to Theory Building on Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour 261
10.6.3 Individual Acculturation and Consumer Behaviour 261
  10.6.3.1 Contribution to Theory Building on Individual Acculturation and Consumer Behaviour 262

10.7 THEORY IMPLICATIONS 266
10.8 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS 266
10.9 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY 267
10.10 FURTHER RESEARCH 268

REFERENCES 270
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1.1 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS ........................................... 6
TABLE 5.1 ACCULTURATION DEFINITIONS SUMMARY ................................................................................. 54
TABLE 5.2 TYPOLOGY OF CONSUMPTION BASED ON THE TWO ETHNICITY INDICATORS ............. 73
TABLE 5.3 BERRY AND SAM’S (1997) TYPES OF ACCULTURATING GROUPS ................................. 76
TABLE 6.1 SAMPLES OF NVIVO WORD FREQUENCY – LAO STUDY GROUP ........................................... 107
TABLE 6.2 Samples of NVivo Word Frequency – Filipino Study Group .................................................. 107
TABLE 7.1 SELF-ASCRIBED ETHNIC IDENTITY (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) ............................................. 112
TABLE 7.2 SENSE OF BELONGING – COMMUNITY (LAO FOCUS GROUP 1) ............................................. 117
TABLE 7.3 SELF-ASCRIBED ETHNIC IDENTITY (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) ............................................. 118
TABLE 7.4 SENSE OF BELONGING – COMMUNITY (LAO FOCUS GROUP 2) ............................................. 123
TABLE 7.5 SELF-ASCRIBED ETHNIC IDENTITY (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) ............................................. 125
TABLE 7.6 SENSE OF BELONGING – COMMUNITY (LAO FOCUS GROUP 3) ............................................. 128
TABLE 7.7 LAO PRODUCT PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) .......... 137
TABLE 7.8 LAO PRODUCT PURCHASE (LAO FOCUS GROUP 1) .............................................................. 138
TABLE 7.9 USE OF LAO SERVICE PROVIDERS (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) .......................................... 139
TABLE 7.10 LAO PRODUCT PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) ....... 143
TABLE 7.11 LAO PRODUCT PURCHASE (LAO FOCUS GROUP 2) ............................................................ 145
TABLE 7.12 USE OF LAO SERVICE PROVIDERS (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) ........................................ 147
TABLE 7.13 LAO PRODUCT PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) ....... 150
TABLE 7.14 LAO PRODUCT PURCHASE (LAO FOCUS GROUP 3) ............................................................ 151
TABLE 7.15 USE OF LAO SERVICE PROVIDERS (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) .......................................... 153
TABLE 7.16 LANGUAGE PREFERENCES (LAO INTERVIEW GROUPS) ......................................................... 162
TABLE 7.17 VISITS TO THE ETHNIC HOMELAND (LAO INTERVIEW GROUPS) ...................................... 164
TABLE 7.18 ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL NETWORK (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) ............... 166
TABLE 7.19 ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL NETWORK (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) ............... 167
TABLE 7.20 ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL NETWORK (LAO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) .......... 168
TABLE 8.1 SELF-ASCRIBED ETHNIC IDENTITY (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) ...................... 172
TABLE 8.2 SENSE OF BELONGING – COMMUNITY (FILIPINO FOCUS GROUP 1) ...................... 176
TABLE 8.3 SELF-ASCRIBED ETHNIC IDENTITY (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) ...................... 177
TABLE 8.4 SENSE OF BELONGING – COMMUNITY (FILIPINO FOCUS GROUP 2) ...................... 182
TABLE 8.5 SELF-ASCRIBED ETHNIC IDENTITY (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) ...................... 184
TABLE 8.6 SENSE OF BELONGING – COMMUNITY (FILIPINO FOCUS GROUP 3) ...................... 187
TABLE 8.7 FILIPINO PRODUCT PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) ........................................................................................................................................... 193
TABLE 8.8 FILIPINO PRODUCT PURCHASE (FILIPINO FOCUS GROUP 1) .............................. 194
TABLE 8.9 USE OF FILIPINO SERVICE PROVIDERS (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) .............. 196
TABLE 8.10 FILIPINO PRODUCT PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) ........................................................................................................................................... 199
TABLE 8.11 FILIPINO PRODUCT PURCHASE (FILIPINO FOCUS GROUP 2) .............................. 200
TABLE 8.12 USE OF FILIPINO SERVICE PROVIDERS (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) .............. 203
TABLE 8.13 FILIPINO PRODUCT PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) ........................................................................................................................................... 206
TABLE 8.14 FILIPINO PRODUCT PURCHASE (FILIPINO FOCUS GROUP 3) .............................. 207
TABLE 8.15 USE OF FILIPINO SERVICE PROVIDERS (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) .............. 209
TABLE 8.16 LANGUAGE PREFERENCES (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUPS) ................................. 219
TABLE 8.17 FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO THE ETHNIC HOMELAND (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUPS) ........................................................................................................................................... 221
TABLE 8.18 ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL NETWORK (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 1) ..... 223
TABLE 8.19 ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL NETWORK (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 2) ..... 224
TABLE 8.20 ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL NETWORK (FILIPINO INTERVIEW GROUP 3) ..... 224
TABLE 10.1 SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY ................................................. 264

xvii
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 3.1 Concept Roadmap for Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity .......................................23

FIGURE 4.1 Concept Roadmap for Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour ..................37

FIGURE 5.1 Concept Roadmap for Individual Acculturation and Ethnic Consumer Behaviour ..................................................................................................................52

FIGURE 6.1 Research Design ..................................................................................................................82

FIGURE 6.2 Conceptual Framework .........................................................................................................85

FIGURE 6.3 Research Framework .........................................................................................................86

FIGURE 7.1 Concept Roadmap for Lao Study Group Findings ..................................................111

FIGURE 8.1 Concept Roadmap for Filipino Study Group Findings .............................................171

FIGURE 9.1 Concept Roadmap for Inter-Group Study Findings ...............................................229
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

Marketers have asserted that Australia’s growing multicultural society offers a very large and growing market that may require ‘ethnic’ consumers to be specifically targeted (Schiffman et al., 2009, p. 3). This cultural diversity provides companies with an opportunity to ‘...deliver specialized products to...ethnic groups and to introduce other groups to these offerings’ (Solomon, 1996, p. 16). Asians as a pan-ethnic group consisting of many sub-groups have often been referred to as the fastest growing ethnic minority group in Australia (Schiffman et al., 2009, Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999), although there appears to be no support for considering Asians as a pan-ethnic group for marketing purposes.

Australia’s population has increased by 21% from 19 million (19,855,287) in 2006 (ABS, 2006) to over 24 million (24,017,912) at 5 March 2016. With 27% of the 2011 population noted as overseas-born Australians (ABS, 2010-2011), this equates to six million people whose needs and requirements may not be met by existing mass marketing campaigns aimed at the host (Australian) culture (Quester et al., 2001).

Playing host to over 250 countries, Australia’s diversity is comprised of over 200 languages spoken at home, including over 60 indigenous Australian languages, and over 100 religious affiliations (ABS, 2006). Net overseas migration, defined as ‘...the net gain or loss of population through immigration’ (Department of National Immigration and Citizenship, 2012) to and from Australia, accounts for approximately 54% of Australia’s population (Department of National Immigration and Citizenship, 2012); a population which is projected to grow to 30 to 42 million people by 2056 (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009).

With an ever-increasing presence in the Australian population, ethnic communities could represent an attractive and profitable market opportunity for companies to capture if it can be demonstrated that they can be segmented and targeted because of their distinctiveness as consumer groups (Schiffman et al., 2009). The richness of Australia’s cultural diversity necessitates a need to understand the product and service requirements of consumers from culturally diverse backgrounds, which is crucial for any company wanting to successfully market to Australia’s ethnic
communities (Quester et al., 2001, Schiffman et al., 2009). This study will offer insights into the reality of these asserted "opportunities" afforded by the ethnic market segment.

1.2 RESEARCH FOCUS

The main focus of this research is to obtain a clearer understanding of how individual acculturation\(^1\) and ethnic identity influence consumer behaviour in an Australian context. Within this broad focus, inter-generational\(^2\) differences in consumer behaviour between consumers of the same ethnic background and inter-ethnic group differences in consumer behaviour between consumers of different ethnic backgrounds have been identified as specific gaps requiring investigation.

Inter-generational differences are investigated because they can reflect acculturation differences between consumers of the same ethnic background.

This research is driven by the lack of clarity in marketing literature, both in Australia and overseas, on the importance of ethnicity and ethnic identity in the development of marketing strategies in a culturally diverse country, such as Australia. However, the importance of ethnicity and ethnic identity in the development of marketing strategies within culturally diverse countries is contested in Australia and overseas (Aaker et al., 2000, Costa and Bamossy, 1995, Jamal, 2003, Kinket and Verkuyten, 1997, Jamal and Chapman, 2000). This contest appears to arise because of a lack of clarity about the individual acculturation process and how it may affect consumer behaviour. Further, because the acculturation process is at least partly conditioned by the social and political context within which the individual resides, consumers from different ethnic groups may vary in their consumer decision-making behaviour.


\(^1\) Refer to Appendix 1 for definition of individual acculturation and to Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion on acculturation.

\(^2\) Further elaboration on inter-generational differences and acculturation appear in chapter 5, section 5.2.7 and section 5.7.
Kara and Kara, 1996b, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Quester et al., 2001, Seock and Bailey, 2009, Xu et al., 2004, Kara and Kara, 1996a, Pires and Stanton, 2015), the soundness of such strategies appear to lack a strong foundation in explaining how a person's ethnicity may influence their consumer behaviour. Because the body of theory explaining this connection is deficient, especially in relation to the two issues of acculturation and inter-group differences, this research is exploratory and qualitative in approach. It seeks to understand how these two factors link with ethnic identity and consumer behaviour, thus providing insights on how acculturation affects ethnic consumer behaviour and how this may differ with group size and resources.

Whilst the implications of ethnicity, acculturation and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour have been discussed and debated by a number of authors (Costa and Bamossy, 1995, Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992b, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Quester et al., 2001, Song, 2003, Yeh and Huang, 1996, Pires and Stanton, 2015), this research will build upon previous studies by investigating the consumer behaviour of consumers drawn from two Asian-Australian groups:

1. Lao: very small population, relatively recent migration and therefore potentially lacking strong, social network links based on ethnic ties and social capital; and

2. Filipino: much larger population, longer established in Australia, potentially less communication problems due to English proficiency and also likely to have access to a larger social network.

In combination with inter-generational differences, this research will establish an understanding of and link between ethnicity, acculturation, ethnic identity, and consumer behaviour. Explaining this link is crucial in understanding how ethnic identity and consumer behaviour may be moderated and/or changed by the impact of acculturation. This knowledge is useful because it may increase an understanding of:

1. The variability of ethnic identity between and within generational groups;

2. How self-ascribed ethnic identity influences consumer decisions;
3. The ability of small ethnic groups to maintain their ethnic identity over time versus the pressures to acculturate or to blend in with similar but larger minority groups; and lastly

4. Whether group-targeting strategies are required when communicating to and/or promoting to ethnic minority groups.

The definition of **ethnicity** for this research references the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2000) and refers to minority members of the population who share similarities in any of the following: identity, history, cultural practices, family or social-based customs, religion, geography, language or literature.

**Ethnic identity** differs from ethnicity and is described as a ‘...complex, multidimensional construct...’ (Ogden et al., 2004a, p. 922); it is the self-ascribed recognition (Cohen, 1978, Eriksen, 2001, Phinney et al., 2001, Phinney, 1992) of belonging to or membership of a particular ethnic group (Leo et al., 2005).

**Consumer behaviour** for the intent of this research pertains to **consumer decision-making behaviour** leading to the consumption of products, services or experiences, for example product selection, purchase, product usage and disposal as well as post-purchase actions (Solomon, 1996). Throughout the study, the researcher has also used **consumer behaviour** to refer to product or service consumption and **consumer decision-making** behaviour to refer to the decision-making process undertaken by the consumer.

### 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The focus of this study is to examine the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour within an Australian context by addressing the following research objectives, which seek to:

1. Examine how individuals perceive their *ethnicity* and *ethnic identity*;

2. Understand how ethnic identity may influence *consumer behaviour*; and

3. Understand how *individual acculturation* may affect ethnic identity and ethnic consumer behaviour.
Whilst the broad objective is to understand how ethnicity and ethnic identity may influence consumer behaviour within an Australian context, an understanding of the process of acculturation and how it may affect an individual’s ethnic identity is needed to explain how and why differences in ethnic consumer behaviour may exist within an ethnic group and between two different ethnic groups.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research objectives outlined above in Section 1.3 are addressed by each research question listed in Table 1.1. Arising from the literature review and research gaps, these questions are designed to explore the links between ethnicity, acculturation, ethnic identity and consumer behaviour, and how the former influence the latter. Furthermore, the research questions are inter-related and crucial for addressing the research objectives and to explain the inter-linking influences between ethnicity, acculturation, ethnic identity, and consumer behaviour.
### Table 1.1 Summary of Research Objectives and Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Objective 1</th>
<th>Examine how individuals perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 1</strong></td>
<td>How do Lao-Australians and Filipino-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Objective 2</strong></td>
<td>Understand the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 2</strong></td>
<td>How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Objective 3</strong></td>
<td>Understand how individual acculturation affects ethnic consumer behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 3</strong></td>
<td>How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of each generation of consumers from the same ethnic background?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 4</strong></td>
<td>How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5 RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION

Justification for this research stems from a lack of in-depth studies on how ethnicity and ethnic identity affects consumer behaviour in Australia (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2015, Aaker et al., 2000). Research conducted in North America and in Europe on the consumer behaviour of Asians (Beirne, 2005, Doran, 1994, Omar et al., 2004, Sharma, 2007, Yeh and Huang, 1996) is broad based (across ethnicities) and context based, and heavily influenced by the North American and European environment in which the research was conducted. Therefore, findings on Asian ethnic groups and their consumer behaviour in the USA, for example, cannot be applied directly to Asian-Australians. More research is needed in Australia to gain a better understanding of how ethnicity and ethnic identity interacts with Australian culture and how that impacts on individual consumer behaviour.

Early studies on ethnic minority consumer behaviour from North America have predominantly focused on African-Americans, Jewish-Americans, and Latin-Americans; three large but not strictly “ethnic” minority groups in the United States (Chung and Fischer, 1999b, Costa and Bamossy, 1995, Green, 1999, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Stayman and Deshpande, 1989b, Pires and Stanton, 2015). It was not until the 1980s and owing to the influx of Asian migration that an increasing number of researchers began conducting studies on the ethnic identity of Asian residents in western countries and their consumer behaviour.

In comparison, in Australia there is very little research available on ethnicity and ethnic identity or its influence on the consumer behaviour of ethnic minority groups. While a few researchers have provided an Australian perspective on ethnic consumer behaviour (Chan, 1995, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Quester et al., 2001, Schiffman et al., 2009, Pires and Stanton, 2015), little in-depth research has been conducted on:

1. The consumer behaviour of Asian-Australians;
2. The inter-generational differences of Asian-Australians; and
3. Specifically, the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao or Filipino ancestry.
Moreover, research studies that have looked into the impact of acculturation on ethnic identity and consumer behaviour (Barth, 1969a, Berry and Sam, 1997, Jamal, 2003, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983) have not examined differences between three generations of consumers from the same ethnic background or between two Asian-Australian minority groups. Significantly, small ethnic groups are a neglected research area, in particular the Lao-Australian community for which there is ‘...an absence of detailed contemporary research material’ (Coughlan, n.d.), due in part to their recent arrival status and as a result of little interest shown from scholars. Lao Studies Review articles written by Phoumindr (1993) and Phoumirath (1993) provide a view into the Lao-Australian population and its social networks, however they do not delve into the consumer culture of Australians of Lao background.

Furthermore, due to the cultural diversity of Asia with its myriad of nations, languages, dialects, customs, values, and religions, research on the consumer behaviour of Asians is often studied on a specific Asian group or a few for cross-comparison purposes (Dubish, 2001). For example, the Philippines, Laos, and India are all examples of Asian consumers with different languages (Tagalog; Lao; Hindi) and religion (officially Christian; officially Buddhism; a variety of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism respectively). Any marketing directed towards the “Asian consumer” therefore needs to be specific to that group to take into consideration the diversity of Asian consumers. In fact, research by Chae and Foley (2010) has found that there are as many differences amongst different Asian ethnic groups as there are between Asian and non-Asian ethnic groups.

Ethnic identity is an important component of self-identity and for ethnic group identity—two factors that in turn impact on consumer behaviour. Previous research has shown that ethnic consumer behaviour may be distinct from that of the host culture and an understanding is needed of ethnic purchase behaviour if marketers are to successfully target ethnic communities (Nwankwo and Lindridge, 1998, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Quester et al., 2001, Schiffman et al., 2009, Pires and Stanton, 2015). Furthermore, due to an increasingly multicultural society, the ethnic consumer market in Australia has become a growing market in parts '...due to their
increasing size and purchasing power...[and] geographical concentration’ (Huang et al., 2013, p. 877).

In summary, owing to the apparent lack of in-depth research by marketers, both domestically and overseas, in the areas of ethnicity and ethnic identity, the key aim of this research is to uncover how consumer behaviour has been influenced by these two factors within an Australian setting. Although, international research into ethnic marketing strategies has increased over the years, in Australia there remains very little research available (Hirschman, 1981, Doran, 1994, Laroche et al., 1997a, Pires, 1999, Pires and Stanton, 2000, Pires, 2001, Pires et al., 2003, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires et al., 2006, Pires and Stanton, 2015). Furthermore, ethnic marketing strategies that are available lack solid theoretical groundwork to clarify how ethnicity or ethnic identity influences consumer behaviour.

1.6 STUDY GROUP JUSTIFICATION

Lao and Filipino groups have been chosen for this study primarily because:

1. Differences in their population size and religious beliefs will permit a comparison to be made between a small, Buddhist ethnic minority group (Lao) versus a larger, longer established, Christian ethnic minority group (Filipino);

2. Differences in English language fluency between individuals of Lao and Filipino background will enable a comparison to be made between an ethnic minority group where English is not a primary language (Lao) versus an ethnic minority group where English (alongside Filipino) is noted as one of the official languages of the country;

3. The size and settlement contrast between individuals of Lao and Filipino background will allow for an exploration of the importance of ethnic community networks, particularly for the long-term survival of small ethnic minority groups, such as the Lao population;

4. Many Lao settlers came to Australia as refugees whilst Filipinos chose to migrate to Australia under work visas or family visas. The migration status
between the Lao and Filipino study groups will enable a comparison to be made of their adjustment period upon settlement;

5. Further, very little is known about the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao background or how well they have acculturated to the host culture. Although the Filipino community is a larger group and one that has established itself within Australian society, little is known about their consumer behaviour or acculturation process. As a comparison, a case study will be conducted between the two groups to identify commonalities and/or differences in their consumer behaviour; and

6. Lastly, the researcher is an Asian-Australian of Lao and Filipino heritage and the study is of great interest to her professionally and academically in gaining a deeper understanding of ethnic consumer behaviour.

A case study on South East Asians, Ling (2008, pp. 2-3) notes that the Lao people are ‘...under-represented and understudied in both popular and academic literature’. The purpose of Ling’s study (2008) was to investigate the settlement issues faced by Lao refugees in the American Midwest. In comparison, larger Asian groups, such as the Filipinos, are more popularly studied in Asian-American studies. Hence, internationally and domestically, there is clearly a knowledge gap on the individuals of Lao background. Further, although Filipinos are a more studied group overseas, in Australia however there is still a knowledge gap on the consumer behaviour of individuals of Filipino background and of ethnic Australians in general (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Quester et al., 2001, Schiffman et al., 2009, Aaker et al., 2000, Pires and Stanton, 2015).

1.7 RESEARCH METHOD

An exploratory mixed-method, qualitative approach was used to examine how ethnicity and ethnic identity influenced the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao and Filipino background in an Australian context. The Researcher used an exploratory mixed-method, qualitative approach to improve the soundness of the research design; to enhance each method’s strengths and to minimise the weaknesses of the other (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).
In-depth individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations were used to examine the Lao and Filipino culture from an emic perspective and a theory building approach was employed to derive an understanding of how ethnicity can be expected to influence consumer behaviour. The purpose of the individual interviews is to draw out (1) inter-generational differences between the research participant groupings and (2) inter-group differences between individuals of Lao and Filipino background. The purpose of conducting focus group interviews is to study both individual and group behaviour on a specific topic (King & Horrocks 2010; Morgan 1997). Field observations were conducted to observe research participant behaviour and to ascertain whether they practised what they claimed to do.

1.8 ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION

The expected contribution of this research to theory is the clarification and building upon knowledge on:

1. How acculturation affects an individual's perception—of their ethnicity, their ethnic identity and their sense of belonging towards their ethnic group;

2. The influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour; and

3. The varying degrees of individual acculturation and how it affects the inter-generational and inter-group differences in consumer behaviour.

1.9 OUTLINE OF THESIS

There are 10 chapters to this thesis. An outline of each chapter is shown in Figure 1.1 and a summary of each chapter is provided below.

Chapter 1 Introduction: This chapter outlines the research questions and objectives, setting up the context upon which the research is based, including a justification for studying the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on an individual's consumer behaviour. The chapter concludes with an overview of the expected contribution of this research.

Chapter 2 Australia, Laos and the Philippines: This chapter outlines the history of the peoples of Laos and the Philippines, including statistics on the number of Australians
of Lao and Filipino heritage living in Sydney, NSW. Demographics of the diversity in the Australian population are provided to show the environmental and societal influences to which research participants may be exposed.

Chapters 3 to 5 are closely inter-related and focused on reviewing relevant literature to address the research objectives and to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity: This chapter reviews the literature on ethnicity and ethnic identity and includes the various definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity used by different researchers. The influence that a person’s ethnicity and ethnic identity may have on the individual is also discussed.

Chapter 4 Understand the Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour: Building upon the literature review on ethnicity and ethnic identity from Chapter 3, this chapter reviews the literature on the influence that ethnic identity may have on a person’s consumer behaviour. A review of the consumer decision-making process as it pertains to ethnic consumer behaviour is also discussed.

Chapter 5 Understand How Individual Acculturation Affects Ethnic Consumer Behaviour: While Chapter 4 established the influence of ethnic identity on an individual consumer’s behaviour this chapter reviews the literature on acculturation. The various definitions of acculturation proposed by various authors and the different schools of thought on acculturation are discussed. To explain how acculturation may influence the individual’s ethnic identity and subsequently their consumer behaviour, the forces of acculturation and the different acculturation strategies employed by different individuals are also discussed.

Chapter 6 Research Methodology: This chapter outlines the research design used to examine how ethnicity and ethnic identity may be expected to influence the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao and Filipino background in an Australian context. A qualitative, exploratory mixed-method approach is primarily used for the study. An analysis of the data collected from in-depth individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations is also outlined.

Chapter 7 (Lao Study Group Findings and Conclusion) and Chapter 8 (Filipino Study Group Findings and Conclusion): Both chapters examine the themes that have
emerged from the research objectives, offering possible explanations for the role that ethnicity, ethnic identity and acculturation may play on the consumer behaviour of research participants. Research questions 1, 2 and 3 are discussed in both chapters. Research question 4 deals with inter-group comparisons and is therefore discussed in Chapter 9.

Chapter 9 Inter-group Findings and Conclusion: This chapter undertakes an inter-group comparison between the Lao and Filipino study groups. Differences and/or similarities in their consumer behaviour are discussed and compared. Research question 4 is discussed in this chapter as it specifically relates to inter-group findings.

Chapter 10 Discussion and Conclusions: This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings from Chapters 7, 8 and 9. The resulting theory and practical implications are also discussed, including the implications for future research.
Figure 1.1 Outline of Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Australia, Laos and the Philippines

Chapter 3: Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Chapter 4: Understand the Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour

Chapter 5: Understand How Individual Acculturation Affects Ethnic Consumer Behaviour

Chapter 6: Research Methodology

Chapter 7: Lao Study Group Findings and Conclusion

Chapter 8: Filipino Study Group Findings and Conclusion

Chapter 9: Inter-Group Findings and Conclusion

Chapter 10: Discussion and Conclusions
CHAPTER 2 AUSTRALIA, LAOS AND THE PHILIPPINES

2.1 MULTICULTURAL AUSTRALIA

This chapter provides a background on the history of the people of Laos and the Philippines, including statistics on the number of Australians of Lao and Filipino ancestry living in Sydney, NSW.

As previously stated, Australia is a multicultural country with diversity in ethnicity and culture. This diversity includes a population originating from over 250 countries, over 100 religious beliefs and over 200 different languages spoken in the home. As a result, the Australian Government has a national multicultural policy in place to manage this diversity (Department of National Immigration and Citizenship, 2012).

The 2011 census data listed the United Kingdom, New Zealand, China, India, Italy, Vietnam, Philippines, South Africa, Malaysia, and Germany as the top ten countries of births for overseas born Australians (ABS, 2011b). Although the top two countries are English speaking, namely the United Kingdom and New Zealand, it is significant to note that there are five Asian countries that account for half of the top ten countries of birth for overseas born Australians. Furthermore, the trend shows the number of overseas born migrants from European countries of birth is on the decline whilst the number of overseas born migrants from Asian countries of birth is on the increase (Department of National Immigration and Citizenship, 2012). Whilst Australia is a multicultural society, it would still be considered an Anglo-Celtic-Saxon culture because it was colonised by the British and its institutions and dominant cultural practices reflect its British heritage; for example, public holidays and national sports.

According to the 2011 Census, over 61% of the Australian population is affiliated with Christian religious beliefs (ABS, 2011b), which is a predominantly European faith; although the Philippines, Laos and Latin American countries, those formerly colonised by Europeans, also practice this religion. This is an increase of 8% from the 2006 Census (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009), which may suggest the adoption of the Christian faith by non-believers and/or by conversion of individuals from other non-Christian faiths. Furthermore, the 2011 Census listed English, Mandarin, Italian, Arabic, Cantonese, Greek, Vietnamese, Spanish, Hindi and
Tagalog as the top ten languages spoken at home (ABS, 2011a). The census revealed Asian languages as five of the top ten languages spoken at home, which is reflective of the increasing number of Australians of Asian background (Department of National Immigration and Citizenship, 2012).

There are conflicting opinions regarding the link between ethnic identity and government policies. One view suggests that multicultural policies that support the maintenance of ethnic languages and ethnic cultures enable migrants the opportunity to be “bi-cultural” (ABS, 2011b). However, studies by Phinney et al. (Phinney et al., 2001, p. 500) has shown that ethnic identity is influenced by the individual’s social networks and the ‘dispersal versus high local concentration of a particular group’. That is, individuals who live in an area that has been settled by a large number of members from their own ethnic community may likely be influenced in their ethnic identity by members of their ethnic community.

Phinney et al. (2001) assert that ethnic minorities either embrace their ethnic identity with pride or reject it when faced with what they perceive (real or imagined) to be an unwelcoming attitude towards immigrants. In addition, the strength of ethnic identity is dependent upon whether ethnic minorities feel compelled by the mainstream population to ‘assimilate or adapt to the host culture’ (Phinney et al., 2001, p. 494). If they choose to assimilate or adapt to the host culture, Phinney et al. (2001) argues that their ethnic identity is likely to be low; however, if they have a ‘strong supportive ethnic community’, Phinney et al. (2001, p. 494) contend that their ethnic identity is likely to be high.

In Australia individuals of ethnic background have been able to maintain their ethnic identity and practice their cultural traditions because of Australia’s supportive multicultural policies. For example, in addition to the establishment of the Australian Multicultural Council, ethnic community groups also have access to government funds that have allowed them to establish ethnic language schools to teach their ethnic language(s) to non-speakers and to build churches/temples to practice their ethnic religion(s). Furthermore, availability of ethnic communication mediums (newspapers, radio and news) help to reinforce their connection to their ethnic heritage and community (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2009).
2.2 PEOPLE OF LAO BACKGROUND

2.2.1 Laos, the Land of One Million Elephants

Although the Kingdom of Laos Lane Xane (Land of One Million Elephants) is an ancient country founded in the mid-fourteenth century, it was only officially registered as an independent country in 1945 having previously been a French colony for 50 years before that. (Stuart-Fox, 1997)

Laos is known as a landlocked country because it shares its borders with five other countries, namely: Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, China and Myanmar, and has no coastline.

2.2.2 The Peoples of Laos

Laotians (or Lao people) divide their ethnic mix into four categories that are representative of the country's altitudes (Cummings, 1998, Evans, 1999, Ling, 2008):

1. *Lao Loum* or lowland valley dwellers;

2. *Lao Thai* or upland valley dwellers;

3. *Lao Theung* or lower mountain dwellers; and

4. Lao Sung or higher mountain dwellers.

Approximately 60% of the Lao population is affiliated with Theravada Buddhism, with a small percentage of the remaining population affiliated with the Christian faith. The spirit cult known by the Lao word pi (spirit) is the largest non-denominational belief system embraced by non-Buddhist Lao people (Cummings, 1998).

2.2.3 Population with Lao Ancestry in Australia

When the Pathet Lao Communist Party assumed government in 1975, it is estimated than 10% of the population left Laos, with a large number seeking refuge in Thailand’s refugee camps before resettlement to Australia, Canada or the United States (Carruthers and Meuansanith, 2010).
The Lao-Australian population is a small ethnic minority group of 10,103 people nationally or 0.0005% of Australia's then 21,507,717 million people (ABS, 2011a). The Lao-Australian population is defined as those persons who listed their ancestry as Lao in the 2006 and 2011 ABS Census. Based on ancestry, the Lao population of Australia is the smallest Indochinese population in Australia, behind the Vietnamese at 199,248 persons, Thais at 36,637 persons, Cambodians at 26,998 persons, and the Burmese at 13,963 (ABS, 2011a).

### 2.2.4 Population with Lao Ancestry in Sydney

The Lao population of NSW is 5,324 persons or 0.0007% of the state population of 7.21 million people. NSW accounts for 53% of the nation's Lao population (ABS, 2011a).

The largest number of persons of Lao ancestry in Sydney resides in the municipality of Fairfield with 2,219 persons, Liverpool with 1,566 persons, and Campbelltown with 1,105 persons (ABS, 2011a, I.D, 2013b, I.D, 2013c, I.D, 2013d). These three suburbs combined account for 4,890 persons, which is 98% of Sydney's Lao population of 5,014 persons (ABS, 2011a, I.D, 2013b, I.D, 2013c, I.D, 2013d). Fairfield and its surrounding suburbs were both affordable to settle in and in close proximity to manufacturing industries that provided employment opportunities for many Lao refugees. More importantly, Lao Buddhist temples, grocery stores and restaurants are concentrated in these municipalities, providing the ‘small and close-knit’ population with the cultural necessities of their ethnic homeland and attracting similar others (Carruthers and Meuansanith, 2010, Coughlan, n.d.).

### 2.3 PEOPLE OF FILIPINO BACKGROUND

#### 2.3.1 The Philippines

Although the Philippines is comprised of 11 large islands—Luzon, Mindanao, Samar, Negros, Palawan, Panay, Mindoro, Leyte, Cebu, Bohol, and Masbate—there are 7,107 islands in total (Kerr et al., 2000).
2.3.2 The Peoples of the Philippines

The ethnicity of Filipinos is closely related to the Malays and Indonesians with strong cultural influences from Spain, having once been a Spanish colony for over 300 years (Kerr et al., 2000). The Spanish influence accounts for approximately 90% of the population becoming affiliated with Christianity and approximately 80% of the population identifying as Roman Catholic (Kerr et al., 2000).

2.3.3 Population with Filipino Ancestry in Australia

Filipino migration largely commenced from 1976 after the Racial Discrimination Act was passed. A large number of Filipinos migrated to Australia with their numbers increasing to 103,990 persons by 2001 (ABS, 2001).

The Filipino community has approximately 182,234 people nationally, representing 0.008% of the 2011 national population of Australia (ABS, 2011a). The Filipino population of NSW is approximately 78,759 persons or 1.1% of the state population of 7.21 million people. NSW accounts for 43% of Australia's Filipino population. The Filipino population is defined as those persons who listed their ancestry as Filipino in the 2006 and 2011 ABS Census.

2.3.4 Population with Filipino Ancestry in Sydney

Sydney's Filipino community consists of 70,430 persons representing 89% of NSW's Filipino population. Moreover, 29% of the state's Filipino population at 53,338 people is concentrated in western Sydney, representing 68% of the NSW Filipino population (I.D, 2013a, I.D, 2013b, I.D, 2013d, I.D, 2013e). Blacktown has the largest Filipino community in Australia accounting for 25,899 persons which equates to 8.6% of the Blacktown population (Glenn, 2012) or 33% of the NSW Filipino population (I.D, 2011) followed by Liverpool (4,966 persons), Campbelltown (4,936 persons), Penrith (4,350 persons), and Parramatta (3,419 persons).

Being a large ethnic community the Filipino population in Sydney has access to a number of associations, such as:

1. The Philippine-Australian Community Services, which caters for the settlement needs of families;
2. Fil-Oz Liverpool and Districts, an affiliate of the Philippine Community Council for Filipinos living within the vicinity of Liverpool and its outer suburbs; and

3. The Visayan Association of Australia, which caters to Filipinos from the Visayas Islands of Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, Masbate, Negros, Panay, Samar, and smaller islands that surround the seven islands (Philippine Australian Community Resource Directory, 2010).

2.4 SUMMARY

There is no specific consumer research that investigates the consumer behaviour of consumers from the Lao or Filipino communities. This background is provided to highlight the differences in population size and religious beliefs between the two ethnic groups. As previously mentioned in Section 1.6 of Chapter 1, the Lao and Filipino groups were chosen as study groups because of the contrasting differences in their population size, settlement status, religious beliefs and English language fluency.

The Lao community is a relatively small, recently established ethnic minority group compared to the larger, longer established Filipino community. The importance of this inter-group comparison is to allow the researcher to question whether a small ethnic minority community (Lao) can maintain their ethnic identity when surrounded by the more dominant host culture and other larger ethnic minority communities. However, given their more recent arrival status, will members of the Lao community try to hold onto and/or maintain their ethnic identity for longer during their adjustment and settlement period?

Furthermore, because the Lao community is such a small community concentrated primarily in Sydney’s western suburbs, can their needs be met and better serviced due to their geographic concentration? Or is the Filipino community better serviced because its community is larger? The inter-group study will also explore whether the difference in their population size equate to its members having access to more Filipino service providers to service the Filipino community when compared to the smaller Lao community.
In addition, a comparison can also be made between a non-English speaking, Buddhist ethnic minority group (Lao) versus an English-speaking, predominantly Christian ethnic minority group (Filipino) to understand how these factors may affect their acculturation process to the host culture.
CHAPTER 3 ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 3 through to 5 are a review of literature that addresses the different research objectives and questions. Whilst Chapter 3 reviews the various definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity, Chapter 4 investigates their influence on consumer behaviour. Lastly, Chapter 5 broadens the research literature review by investigating how acculturation affects ethnicity, ethnic identity and consumer behaviour.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of the literature on the various understandings of ethnicity and ethnic identity that is pertinent to establishing both the research gaps and research question 1 of this study:

1. How do Lao-Australians and Filipino-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?

As shown in Figure 3.1, the discussions of this chapter address the first research objective: examine how individuals perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity. The topics discussed in this chapter are noted below:

- The various definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity are considered to show the various points of view by different researchers;
- Ethnicity and ethnic identity and how it may influence the behaviour and perception of consumers;
- The development of ethnic identity;
- Ethnic groups are briefly discussed as they may influence an individual’s sense of belonging;
- The perception ethnic minorities may have towards their ethnicity and ethnic identity; and
- The link between ethnicity and ethnic identity.
Figure 3.1 Concept Roadmap for Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Research Objective 1
Examine how individuals perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity

Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Link between Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity
3.2 ETHNICITY

3.2.1 Definitions of Ethnicity

The term ethnicity has various definitions ranging from common ancestry, race, shared biological or genetic makeup, ethnic origin, religion, language, nationality, values, and customs to self-identification (Appiah, 2001, ABS, 2000, Barth, 1969b, Hui et al., 1998, Jamal, 2003, Laroche et al., 1997c, Macquarie, 1997, Merriam-Webster, 2009, Phinney and Rosenthal, 1992a, Pires, 1999, Tajfel, 1981). The ethnicity of a person is often ascribed by others. It is essentially a label assigning a person to a group without any connotation as to how strongly an individual thus ascribed may share and engage in these common practices. Furthermore, unlike ethnic identity, ethnicity is considered permanent—an individual’s genetic make-up and ethnic origin does not change despite migration to a new country or citizenship from the host culture (Lee and DeVos, 1981). This is supported by Pires and Stanton (2000) who also assert that although ethnic identity is dynamic and can vary within one’s ethnic group, ethnic origin being genetically determined, does not change despite one’s nationality or country of birth.

Penaloza (2006) described ethnicity as both mainstream and as subgroups of people, including their history and geography, their physical characteristics, their relationship with members from their own ethnic group and other groups and how they and their group is treated by other groups in the workforce, education system and by their government. Costa and Bamossy (1995, p. 73) defined ethnicity as ‘an involuntary group of people who share the same culture’ whilst Phinney (1992, p. 158) defined ethnicity as an ‘objective group membership as determined by parents’ ethnic heritage’.

A more elaborate definition of ethnicity is provided by Lee and DeVos (1981) to include racial uniqueness, territoriality, economic bases, religion, aesthetic cultural patterns, and language where:

1. Racial uniqueness refers to the genetic features, qualities or characteristics that are unique to a specific group, whether real or as perceived by those outside the group, such as “ebony skin” to represent individuals from Africa.
2. Territoriality refers to national boundaries or one's nationality, for example, “French”. Territoriality is not confined to physical boundaries as an individual of French background may be born elsewhere and yet still identify as “French”.

3. Economic bases refer to the economic development or economic level of an ethnic group that influences their status and/or identity.

4. Religion is considered important where ethnicity is concerned as it may reinforce or weaken one's ethnic identity.

5. Aesthetic cultural patterns refer to the food, costumes, dance styles, , jewellery and communication styles considered unique and beautiful to a specific group of people.

6. Lastly, language is considered to be influential on ethnic identity only when it is territorially unique. The impact of language on ethnic identity may be weakened when it crosses national boundaries. For example, English is spoken in Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, America, and Canada, and only an individual’s accent and pronunciation may represent her (or his) ethnic identity.

3.2.2 Justification for Definition of Ethnicity

The common elements in the myriad of definitions used for ethnicity often include descriptions, such as a minority group of people who share commonalities in ethnic origin, culture and language. This research uses the ABS (2000, p. 3) definition of ethnicity, which refers to ethnicity as the shared similarity of a group of people on the basis of one or more of the following factors: cultural tradition, including family and social customs; a common geographic origin; a common language; a common literature (written or oral); a common religion; being a minority; or being racially conspicuous.

The researcher chose to use the ABS definition because:

1. It is a more inclusive definition of ethnicity than the Penaloza (2006), Costa and Bamossy (1995), and Phinney (1992) definitions,
2. It is a more straightforward definition than Lee and DeVos’ (1981) intricate definition, and

3. This study and both study groups are Australian-based therefore an Australian definition is of more relevance.

3.2.3 The Influence of Ethnicity on Ethnic Identity

Ethnicity has considerable influence on how strongly an individual feels about their ethnic identity. Some researchers (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Chaudhari and Pizzolato, 2008, Ting-Toomey, 1981, Beji-Becheur et al., 2011) argue that ethnicity is only present in social situations and in social engagements where the individual displays conformity to group norms. Beji-Becheur et al. (2011, p. 2) argue that ethnicity extends beyond ‘the process of acculturation’, and encompasses the awareness, development and acceptance of one’s ethnic identity.

Researchers (Beji-Becheur et al., 2011, Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Laroche et al., 1998, Phinney, 1990b, Phinney et al., 1990, Vasquez, 2010) assert a link between the perceptions of one’s ethnicity with the sense of one’s ethnic identity. How ethnic minorities are perceived by the host group will influence their self-perception and their self-ascribed ethnic identity.

When evaluating the impact of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour, other socio-economic factors, such as income, level of education, occupation, and assets also need to be considered when accounting for differences in consumer behaviour between different ethnic groups (Pires and Stanton, 2015). Laroche et al., (1998) assert that the socio-economic factors that influence consumer behaviour may themselves be influenced by ethnicity.

3.3 ETHNIC IDENTITY

3.3.1 Definitions of Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity has been described as flexible, multi-dimensional and transitional (Laroche et al., 1998, Phinney, 1990) and is often linked to ethnicity and ethnic origin (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009). Ethnic identity reflects how strongly affiliated the individual feels towards her (or his)
ethnic group (Tiwsakul and Hackley, 2011, Green, 1999, Laroche et al., 1997c, Tian and Tian, 2011, Pires, 1999) including an awareness of, a sense of belonging to and identification with one’s ethnic group of origin (Laroche et al., 2009, Piaget and Weil, 1951, Tajfel, 1981). Ethnic identity is also considered enduring (Laroche et al., 2009, Stayman and Deshpande, 1989a, Phinney, 1996b, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008) because some members of ethnic minority groups do retain their cultural heritage. Laroche et al. (1998) agrees, affirming that ethnic identity is indicative of the maintenance or loss of the individual’s cultural heritage and values.

Phinney’s (1990) comprehensive review of research on ethnic identity established a multiplicity of definitions used but also paved the way for establishing a more widely used social identity definition (Phinney, 1992, Dandy et al., 2008). That is, ethnic identity is the ethnic component of social identity (Phinney, 1992, 1990b). It is defined as ‘that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’ (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). An individual’s social identity is tied to their sense of belonging to a social group and the positive self-esteem that this sense of belonging evokes for the individual (Kinket and Verkuyten, 1997, Aaker et al., 2000, Phinney, 1990b).

The definitions of ethnic identity provided in this study all share the common elements of a sense of belonging, a link or a membership to a particular ethnic group or ethnic background:

- Cohen (1978) and Eriksen (2001) define ethnic identity as the recognition (whether self-ascribed or imposed upon by others) of commonalities in language, religion, culture, cultural practices, and customs that links an individual emotionally or in essence to a particular ethnicity.

- Chaudhari and Pizzolato (2008, p. 444) define ethnic identity as the dimensions of ‘the shared beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors by a particular ethnic background [and] the extent of importance of and membership to a particular ethnic background’. 
• Morimoto and La Ferle (2008) and Parker et al. (1998) clarify the difference between ethnic identity and ethnic identification, defining ethnic identity as the cultural customs and beliefs that are passed down the generations while ethnic identification is described as ‘the degree of an individual's sense of belonging and group pride...and social behaviors’ (Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, p. 51).

3.3.2 Justification for Definition of Ethnic Identity

This research uses Phinney's (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity as a self-ascribed dynamic construct that transitions through various stages and is highly dependent upon an individual's feelings of pride and a sense of belonging towards her (or his) ethnic group (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Chaudhari and Pizzolato, 2008, Ting-Toomey, 1981, Phinney, 1996b). Phinney (1990a) argues that ethnic identity is significant only in the presence of two or more ethnic groups. That is, the existence of ethnic identity is significant in the presence of one's own ethnic group and also in the interaction with other ethnic groups. Linking ascribed ethnicity to behaviour generally and to consumer behaviour specifically is the concept of ethnic identity.

Sharing consistency with Phinney's (1992, 1990b) definition, the researcher defines ethnic identity as a self-ascribed social identity that is situational and dependent upon how the individual feels towards her (or his) ethnic group. For example, an individual who identifies with her (or his) ethnic heritage may feel more ethnic during ethnic celebrations, such as Lao New Year, and less ethnic during host culture celebrations, such as Australia Day.

3.3.3 Development of Ethnic Identity

The development of ethnic identity involves the individual determining how they feel about belonging to their ethnic group, and how they feel about the cultural beliefs, values and traditions of their ethnic groups. Finding one's ethnic identity entails an initial process of not knowing the community or family-based ethnicity given from birth. Through the process of exploration, an ethnic individual finds their social identity. The more nurturing the family environment, the stronger the ethnic identity
and sense of belonging an ethnic individual will feel towards their ethnic group (Costigan et al., 2009). Self-rejection or a challenge to their ethnic identity from the wider community will cause the individual to question their identity, membership of and sense of belonging towards their ethnic group (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Chaudhari and Pizzolato, 2008, Ting-Toomey, 1981, Phinney, 1996b).

Yeh and Huang (1996) provide another perspective and assert that the development of ethnic identity is a unique process that is influenced by external factors, such as the perceptions of the host culture towards ethnic groups, and the social interactions that are encountered. Costa and Bamossy (1995) expand on this view affirming that culture is dynamic, constantly evolving and adapting to external influences.

In summary, the ethnic identity development stages according to Phinney (1990b) are:

1. The individual does not identify with any ethnicity;
2. The individual explores their ethnicity and ethnic identity; and
3. The individual accepts their ethnicity and ethnic identity.

### 3.3.4 Situational Ethnic Identity

Seock and Bailey (2009, p. 163) view ethnic identity as ‘a distinctive and salient trait that differentiates behavior’ in particular consumer behaviour for products of a social nature (Lee et al., 2002, Steenkamp et al., 1999, Torres and Briggs, 2005, Minor-Cooley and Brice, 2007, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Usunier, 2000). Because acculturation can influence ethnic minorities towards embracing some if not all the cultural values of the host culture, ethnic identity is transitional. Individuals will self-ascribe to different identities or labels based on their situation or circumstances although how they label themselves may be challenged by how they are perceived by outsiders, in particular if their physical features are unique to their racial background (Phinney, 1996b).

Researchers argue that situational ethnic identity arises when an individual’s identity transcends beyond national boundaries; when an individual swaps their culture; when an individual moves between their various identities (Ozcaglar-
Toulouse et al., 2009) or when an individual selectively displays their ethnic identity based on whether they feel more or less ethnic depending upon the circumstances and environment (Stayman and Deshpande, 1989b, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Podoshen, 2006). In her study on ethnic groups in the United States, Oswald (Oswald, 1999, Jamal, 2003) argued that the link between consumer behaviour and ethnicity was one of continual interdependence. Ethnic minorities situationally adopted their ethnic identity depending upon how strongly they felt about their ethnicity or towards their ethnic group so the influence on their consumer behaviour is situational.

The purchase behaviour of ethnic minorities towards products that are consumed socially can reflect the strength of their ethnic identification and a sense of belonging to their ethnic group. The strength of an individual’s affiliation with their ethnic group is indicative of the individual’s ethnic intensity (Pires and Stanton, 2000). It follows that strong ethnic identification may therefore result in the consumption of ethnic products and services (Minor-Cooley and Brice, 2007). This can be explained by social consumption being dependent upon the presence of parents or peers who may impact upon the self-awareness and strength of one’s ethnicity and ethnic identity.

Some researchers liken migrants to architects and contend that migrants determine their own identities (Joy, 1989, Kiefer, 1977, Song, 2003) and may selectively display their ethnic identity during significant milestones, such as ‘coming of age, marriage and religious holidays’ and during social engagements (Cui and Choudhury, 2002, p. 57). Moreover, ethnic minorities are likely to transition between their self-ascribed identities in situations involving food, clothes, music or movies—any product that is linked to their cultural heritage or to that of the host culture (Beji-Becheur et al., 2011).

A study conducted by Hiller and Chow (2005) on 90 Calgary university students revealed students whose parents maintained close ties to their Chinese roots displayed strong ethnic identity as Chinese within the home, though the strength of their ethnic identity as “Chinese” differed when outside the home. Moreover, Kiang and Fuligni’s (2009) study supported the view that an individual’s ethnic identity is
situational where one may feel more ethnic (ethnic pride) or less ethnic (ethnic shame) when interacting with individuals from their own ethnic background. The study also found that young adults felt the highest level of ethnic pride and connection to their ethnic heritage when they were engaging with their parents. This can be attributed to the parental role as a source of knowledge about one's ethnic heritage, cultural beliefs, values and traditions (Kiang and Fuligni, 2009).

However, there are also contradictory results where ethnic identity is concerned. While some research findings suggest high involvement and engagement with the host culture is not conducive to the retention of a strong ethnic identity, other research findings suggest the opposite hold true, that is, greater participation in the host culture engenders a stronger ethnic identity (Costigan et al., 2009).

3.4 ETHNIC GROUPS

3.4.1 Definition of Ethnic Group

Hugo (1995) refers to an ethnic group as a cluster of people who are identified as a community due to commonalities in cultural heritage and customs, birthplace, and language. This definition is similar to one used by the ABS (2000). Within Australia, the term, “ethnic group”, is usually applied to identifiable immigrant groups.

3.4.2 Justification for Definition of Ethnic Group

This research references the ABS (2000) definition of an ethnic group as a group that considers itself, and in turn is considered by others, as a separate community due to the group’s discernible characteristics. These characteristics include, amongst others, having the commonalities of common origin, language, food, religion, and geographic location (Yinger, 1985b). The ABS definition is used for this study to maintain consistency in the source of definitions.

“Lao” and “Filipino” satisfy the ethnic-group criteria defined by the ABS by their geography (Laos, the Philippines), distinct language and food (Lao, Tagalog/Filipino), customs and religion (Buddhism and Christianity respectively—other religions are also practiced but the two aforementioned are the dominant religion in the respective countries).
3.4.3 The Influence of Ethnic Groups on Ethnic Individuals

The members of each ethnic group establish acceptable group norms. It is argued that these group norms, which include religion, cultural values, cultural customs and traits belonging to the ethnic group, have a significant impact on which ethnic group an individual identifies with (Frideres and Goldenberg, 1982). Researchers often look into ethnic groups when trying to understand the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour due to the ‘shared norms and beliefs...[that]...impact on their dispositions and behaviours...as consumers’ (Kwok and Uncles, 2005, p. 171).

How the host country responds to a particular migrant group, whether positive or negative, impacts on how individuals from that migrant group feel about their ethnic identity and their sense of belonging towards the migrant group (Lee and DeVos, 1981). Studies suggest that migrant children who have experienced negative reaction towards their ethnic group may feel conflicted about their ethnicity or perceive their ethnicity negatively (Lee and DeVos, 1981). However, any negativity felt by the individual may be offset by parental, family and peer influences—provided the individual’s social network has a positive attitude toward their ethnicity and ethnic identity.

The influence of the ethnic group is evident in the use of specific businesses highly recommended by influential members of the community. Some researchers agree that ethnic groups have a tendency to frequent businesses owned by members of their ethnic group, especially if word-of-mouth and personal experience have been positive (Huang et al., 2013). For example, in a study on consumers of Hispanic heritage, it was found that Hispanics like to frequent businesses owned by other Hispanics or where customer service personnel were fluent in Spanish (Berkowitz et al., 2005).

Previous studies support the view that some ethnic minorities have not assimilated¹ into the host culture but rather have adopted elements of mainstream culture whilst

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¹ Assimilation is defined and discussed in chapter 5 (p. 70).
retaining aspects of their original culture (Laroche et al., 1997b). Often it has been the result of the host culture’s multiculturalism policy that has enabled ethnic groups to maintain and/or revive their ethnic identity (Berry and Laponce, 1990, Lambert and Taylor, 1990, Laroche et al., 1998). It is these ethnic groups with a strong sense of group ethnic identity (Berry and Sam, 1997) that may provide an attractive market opportunity (Schiffman et al., 2009) because of the resources and access provided by the ethnic group to its members and the ‘collective shared values and behaviors, expressed through predictable group behavior’ (Pires et al., 2011, p. 911).

Some researchers (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Sharma, 2007, Pires and Stanton, 2015) agree that ethnicity influences consumer decision-making behaviour, particularly for new settlers. For example, ethnic migrants may specifically choose to settle in an environment where the ethnic enclave is already in existence to gain access to their ethnic group’s social network, such as providers of health care, legal, childcare and employment support services in order to lessen their settlement anxieties (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Sharma, 2007, Pires and Stanton, 2015). By associating themselves with their ethnic group instead of the host culture, the ethnic identity of these ethnic migrants are reinforced (Hume, 2008) and their consumption behaviour shaped by the ethnic group.

3.5 PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Chung and Fischer (1999a) believe that ethnic minorities negotiate their self-identity based upon how they are perceived by the host group, which in turn may influence their self-perception. This perspective is shared by Vasquez (2010) who agrees that ethnic minorities may self-identify with a particular ethnicity but may be perceived differently from their self-identity. This viewpoint highlights differences between individuals in the perception of ethnicity and ethnic identity because how an individual perceives her (or his) ethnicity and ethnic identity may either be accepted or rejected by others.

Phinney (1990b), Beji-Becheur (2011), and Laroche, Kim and Tomiuk (1998) contend that one’s ethnicity and ethnic identity is only prevalent when the individual has been exposed to other ethnic groups and to the host group. It is through this exposure that they develop an awareness of their own ethnicity and the ethnicity of
their ethnic group. This perspective of ethnicity and ethnic identity is based upon the premise that their existence is dependent upon the individual being aware they are different from other groups in terms of variables defining ethnicity in order to have a perception of their own ethnicity and ethnic identity.

3.6 LINKS BETWEEN ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

The literature review on ethnicity and ethnic identity reveal links between ethnicity and ethnic identity but from two perspectives. The first perspective does not differentiate between the concept of ethnicity and ethnic identity. A number of researchers (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009, Chestnut, 2000) treat both concepts as one and the same or use the terms interchangeably in their studies. Ethnicity is perceived to be: (1) fluid, constantly adapting and adjusting to influences from other cultural groups and from the host group, and (2) situational where an individual may feel more or less “ethnic” depending upon their circumstances and environment (Isajiw, 1980, Hui et al., 1998, Laroche et al., 2009, Stayman and Deshpande, 1989a, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Podoshen, 2006).

The second perspective asserts the influence of ethnicity on ethnic identity but researchers clarify the two as different concepts (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Chaudhari and Pizzolato, 2008, Ting-Toomey, 1981, Ogden et al., 2004a). Phinney (2001) highlighted the key difference being ethnicity is ascribed by others whilst ethnic identity is self-ascribed. Lee and DeVos (1981) and Pires and Stanton (2000) assert the dynamic nature of ethnic identity compared to the permanency of ethnicity due to the genetic origin component of ethnicity.

3.7 SUMMARY

Although there are many variations to the definitions of ethnicity, ethnic identity and ethnic group, the researcher has chosen to use:

1. The ABS definition for ethnicity and ethnic group because this is an Australian based study and the study samples are set within an Australian context.

2. Phinney's definition for ethnic identity because the researcher shares the same perception of ethnic identity; that is, ethnic identity is a self-ascribed
social identity that is situational and dependent upon how the individual feels towards her (or his) ethnic group.

3.7.1 Research Gap

The research gap that has emerged from this literature review is an understanding of how ethnic minorities perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context. Although there is a number of studies that link ethnicity to ethnic identity (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009), much of the existing literature is derived from overseas and need to be modified to suit the Australian environment because the study of ethnic consumer behaviour within an Australian context is lacking.

3.7.2 Link to Research Gap

In seeking to understand the perceptions of ethnic minorities and how they feel about their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context, research question 1 is asked: How do Lao-Australians and Filipino-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?
CHAPTER 4 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 identified the various definitions and understandings of ethnicity and ethnic identity, briefly discussing the perception of ethnicity and ethnic identity and the links between the two.

Addressing the second research objective understand the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour, Chapter 4 now explores the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on the consumer behaviour of the individual and the family unit in relation to determining the research gap and research question 2:

2. How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?

Figure 4.1 shows the key concepts that will be discussed in this chapter. Marketing preferences will be used to discuss the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour. The consumer decision-making process is also discussed in detail to develop an understanding of individual and family consumer behaviour.
Figure 4.1 Concept Roadmap for Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour

Research Objective 2

Understand the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour

Ethnicity & Ethnic Identity

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer Decision Making Process

Marketing Preferences

Inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour

Inter-group differences in consumer behaviour
4.2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

4.2.1 Definition of Consumer Behaviour

This study defines consumer behaviour as the consumer’s decision-making behaviour (Schiffman et al., 2009, Solomon, 1996) involved in the selection, purchase, use or disposal of a product, a service or an experience (Solomon, 1996, p. 7). In a research context, consumer behaviour refers to the analysis of an individual’s feelings, reasoning, and decision making behind her (or his) consumption activities (de Mooij, 2005, Schiffman et al., 2009, Solomon, 1996). Family consumer behaviour and individual consumer behaviour will now be discussed, including the links between ethnicity, ethnic identity and consumer behaviour.

4.2.2 Family Consumer Behaviour

Family plays a key role in consumer decision-making situations where decisions are made by the family unit. Various studies (Xia et al., 2006, Cox, 1975, Swinyard and Sim, 1987) on family consumer behaviour have attested to the influence of the husband, wife, children and individual during the consumer decision-making process with researchers agreeing that there is complexity in the consumer decision-making behaviour of the household and the influence that each member exerts over one another’s consumer behaviour. However, these influences vary according to product category and the financial resources of the spouse.

The overall findings of Xia et al.’s (2006) study revealed equal influence of both the husband and wife during the consumer decision-making process yet the level of influence varied by product category. For example, the husband’s influence was more significant in the purchase of electronics and automobiles, the wife’s influence was more significant in the purchase of ‘cleaning supplies, children’s wear and accessories, [and] kitchenware’ (Xia et al., 2006, p. 211), whilst joint decision making was revealed in the purchase of furniture and home. However when taking the ethnicity of the husband and wife into account, Singaporean family decision making behaviour was found to be more husband-dominated whilst American family decision-making behaviour was found to be more egalitarian (Xia et al., 2006).
Swinyard and Sim’s (1987) study on the influence of children during family consumer decision making revealed that children influenced their parents in the purchase of a variety of products in the consumer decision-making stage of problem recognition and product choice but were found to have little influence on the information search and actual purchase of the product. Other studies point to holiday activities and child-based products, such as ‘toys, sweets and cereals, and children’s clothing’ (Swinyard and Sim, 1987, p. 27), as the only evidence of the influence that children have on family decision making regardless of their ethnicity.

### 4.2.3 Individual Consumer Behaviour

Many researchers agree that ethnic identity is fluid, constantly adapting and adjusting to influences from other cultural groups and from the host group (Isajiw, 1980, Laroche et al., 2009). Phinney et al. (1981) asserts that ethnic identity is responsive, changing as a result of the social influences—both psychological and circumstantial—that shape the group norms on how the individual should behave, their belief system and value system.

Previous research studies (Jamal, 2003, Xu et al., 2004, Jamal and Chapman, 2000) have revealed how ethnic consumers feel about their ethnic identity and its impact on their consumer behaviour. Other research studies strongly support the argument that culture based consumer behaviour (Xu et al., 2004, Chattalas and Harper, 2007, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008) is heavily influenced by ethnic identity and ethnicity (Jamal and Chapman, 2000) in conjunction with product involvement levels and product risk levels (Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005b, Kara and Kara, 1996a, Valencia, 1985b, Vida et al., 2008, Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983, Deshpande and Stayman, 1994).

Preferences in food, music, movies and products are common measurements of culture-specific consumption behaviour (Xu et al., 2004). Food consumption and food preference in particular can convey a consumer’s ethnicity or at the least a consumer’s exposure to that specific culture (Tian and Tian, 2011). This finding is supported by Xu et al.’s study (2004) on ethnic identity and consumption behaviour which revealed young adults of Asian heritage were highly likely to consume ethnic food and participate in ethnic activities if they had a strong sense of their ethnic
identity. What these studies demonstrate are the links between consumer decision-making behaviour and social products, such as food or clothing, that enable the consumer to express her (or his) ethnic differences (Kim and Kang, 2001).

4.2.4 Consumer Decision-Making Process

Consumer decision making involves a process whereby the consumer makes a decision to buy a product(s) that will best satisfy their needs, wants or desires (Engel et al., 1995). Studies show that the ethnic background of immigrants may influence their views and subsequently their purchase decisions (Quester et al., 2001). This is supported by Kara and Kara (1996a) who assert that an individual’s ethnicity may impact on her (or his) product perception during the consumer decision-making process.

To further examine the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour, a five-step consumer decision-making process model adapted from Solomon (1996) and based on the Engel, Kollat and Blackwell’s (EKB) (1968) model will be used by the researcher as a framework to explain the role ethnicity and ethnic identity may play during consumer decision making. The EKB model is a widely used schematic outline of consumer decision-making stages that a consumer could be expected to follow in varying degrees when purchasing a product or service.

4.2.4.1 Problem Recognition

Problem recognition is defined as the recognition by the consumer of the ‘difference between his or her current state of affairs and some desired or ideal state’ that needs to be resolved (Solomon, 1996, p. 271). In marketing, problem recognition occurs when marketers create a demand for a specific product or service followed by a specific brand of the required product or service (Solomon, 1996, Schiffman et al., 2009).

Ethnicity is likely to affect the problem recognition stage of the consumer decision-making process when there is: awareness that the problem exists, a perceived product risk, or fear of making the wrong product purchase. Additionally, for ethnic consumers, problem recognition may occur upon settlement (Chan, 1995) where there is a lack of knowledge about access to and availability of ‘government services,
legal systems, and products and services offered in the marketplace’ (Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999, p. 110).

However, there is contention whether ethnicity and ethnic identity has any influence on problem recognition because an inexperienced consumer, regardless of ethnicity and ethnic identity, will be motivated to turn to other available sources for advice, such as her (or his) social network, when she (or he) realises she (or he) has a “problem”. Furthermore, where there is a high level of product involvement (interest and effort) in the purchase, other factors—such as product importance, product risk, the prospect of making the wrong product purchase, and the value of the product category—take precedence over ethnicity as a contributing factor in the decision-making process (McCarthy et al., 1997, Quester et al., 2001).

4.2.4.2 Information Search

Solomon (1996, p. 272) defines information search as ‘the process in which the consumer surveys his or her environment for appropriate data to make a reasonable decision’. The social network from which the ethnic consumer draws support often influences the reasonable decision. Key information sources that are utilised during the information search can be categorised as either:

1. Personal sources, such as reference groups like family, relatives, friends, co-workers, colleagues, or

2. Impersonal sources or marketing influences, such as magazines, newspapers, television and radio (Kim and Kang, 2001).

Seock and Bailey (2009) state that ethnic consumers seek information from their personal sources, such as family, relatives and peers, or externally from salespeople. Another information source used is ethnic media. Within Australia, access to ethnic media is available to minority groups in a number of formats, such as newspapers, television, Pay TV, radio, and websites/online media. Ethnic preference for print media in Australia is evident by the publication of more than 160 titles (predominantly newspapers) in more than 45 languages (NSW Government, 2012, Pires and Stanton, 2015). However there are also nine commercial radio stations, 14 community radio stations, one government radio station (SBS), and four community
television stations dedicated to ethnic news (NSW Government, 2012, Pires and Stanton, 2015). For example, for the Filipino community, there are five publications in Tagalog/Filipino, two radio stations, three online media and one Pay TV to service a population of 182,234 (ABS, 2011a, Pires and Stanton, 2005).

A study by Costa and Bamossy (1995) into the behaviour of ethnic minorities observed that inexperienced ethnic consumers and those during the early years of settlement are more likely to refer to their ethnic social network as a trusted information source during the consumer decision-making process (Costa and Bamossy, 1995, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2015). Due to a lack of market knowledge and limited knowledge of suppliers, product and service availability, coupled with language barriers and perceived purchase risk, ethnic consumers tend to seek advice from more experienced members within their ethnic social network to minimise their purchase risk (Costa and Bamossy, 1995, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2015).

Ethnic consumers may improve their knowledge base by using impersonal sources, such as sales promotions, store promotions and visual merchandise (Engel et al., 1995, Seock and Bailey, 2009). Cox and Rich (1964) and Seock and Bailey (2009, p. 165) expanded on these categories to include ‘market-dominated sources e.g., newspaper ads, television/radio commercials and salespeople…[and]…neutral sources e.g., magazines and consumer reports’.

Consumers acquire product knowledge and personal experiences through interactions with their personal and/or impersonal information source. However, any cultural influence exerted by the information source is dependent on the acculturation level of the individual (Lee and Ro Um, 1992, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a). Yet, over time all inexperienced consumers, even ethnic consumers, will gain experience through trial and error in purchase decisions and through an increase in product and service knowledge of price, brands, features and specifications (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Schiffman et al., 2009, Pires and Stanton, 2015). Thus, their reliance on the ethnic community and their social network as an information source during the consumer decision-making process is lessened the more acculturated they become.
4.2.4.3 Evaluation of Alternatives

The learning process for ethnic minorities as consumers in a new environment is a complex process. Ethnic consumers must first learn and then understand the purchase skills and behaviour employed by the host culture before they are able to successfully master the cultural knowledge required to undertake purchase transactions (Davies and Fitchett, 2004).

Smedley and Bayton’s (1978) research revealed that ethnic consumers use race, ethnicity and cultural cues to evaluate their consumer decisions (Appiah and Liu, 2009). Yet the debate amongst researchers is that with various alternatives to choose from, an inexperienced consumer regardless of their race or ethnicity relies on past experiences (their evoked set), word-of-mouth and/or recommendation from family, friends or colleagues to evaluate and make a decision to purchase a high involvement product or service (Schiffman et al., 2009, Solomon, 1996).

The influence of the ethnic social network during the consumer decision-making process is an area of interest to marketers because of the reliance of the ethnic minority group on a select few suppliers for the fulfillment of the group’s needs. Members of the ethnic minority group often use group member feedback during product evaluations. The positive experiences involved in the consumption of goods and services provided by these select suppliers frequently result in consumer loyalty to the brand and supplier. Due to “word-of-mouth” and group recommendation of preferred suppliers, alternative suppliers are often not considered during the information search and are therefore not part of the evaluation alternatives or product choices (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Schiffman et al., 2009, Pires and Stanton, 2015).

4.2.4.4 Product Choice

Ethnic consumers utilise their social network of family, relatives, peers and friends from the ethnic group to assist them in making a product (or service) choice, where interest and effort is expended during the decision-making process (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2015). Additionally, ethnic consumers are driven to choose particular products and services that allow them to express their ethnic
heritage or national customs (Nenci et al., 2008), such as ethnic food and apparel (de Mooij, 2005). Thus, a consumer’s purchase behaviour and product choice can be influenced by their ethnicity, in particular where food consumption is concerned (Tian and Tian, 2011).

Separate studies by de Mooij (2005), Omar et al. (2004), Schiffman et al. (2009) and Sharma (2007) revealed notable differences in food product selection between ethnic consumer behaviour and mainstream (host culture) consumer behaviour. For example, in a study conducted by Omar et al. (2004), it was found that mainstream [host culture] consumers favoured national brands, revealing “national pride” for home-grown, locally sourced produce, such as meat, fish, vegetables and fruits. In comparison, ethnic consumers displayed no brand preference at all. Other research into grocery items also found national brands were high on the list purchased by mainstream consumers compared to ethnic minorities who displayed price consciousness by favouring lower-priced, no-name (cheaper) brands (Kaufman, 1991, Quester et al., 2001, Omar et al., 2004).

4.3 ETHNIC IDENTITY AND MARKETING PREFERENCES

Past literature findings support notable differences between the consumption behaviour of ethnic minorities and the host culture (Jamal, 2003, de Mooij, 2005, Omar et al., 2004, Sharma, 2007). There is limited empirical evidence that consumer’s ethnicity and/or ethnic identity may be associated with different marketing preferences.¹ Findings to this effect are discussed below.

4.3.1 Ethnic Identity and Product Preference

Research studies on ethnic minority groups in consumer marketing affirm the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on the consumption of certain types of products (Lindridge and Dibb, 2002, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008, Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Forney, 1985). The view that an individual’s ethnic identity has considerable influence over their consumption of social products, such as ethnic

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¹ For the purpose of this study, marketing preferences refer to a consumer’s preferences for a particular product, promotion, media, media language, communication, shopping location, and price.
clothes, foods, drinks, movies, music and art (Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008, pp. 520-521), is supported by a number of researchers (Chung and Fischer, 1999b, Forney, 1985, Kim and Arthur, 2003, Laroche et al., 1998, Xu et al., 2004, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008).

Some researchers contend that ethnic customs drive individuals to express their identity and their roots and to practice the traditions and norms of their cultural heritage (Nenci et al., 2008) through the consumption of ethnic food (Albonetti and Dominguez, 1989, Cui and Choudhury, 2002). de Mooij (2005) argues that food can be influenced by factors such as culture, climate and the acculturation process. Ethnic food is defined as a display of one’s ethnic heritage and origins (Mora, 1998, Verbeke and Lopez, 2005) and is considered an extension of one’s ethnic identity alongside the preservation of language and ethnic social networks (Laroche et al., 2009).

However, over time some ethnic minorities do acculturate to the host culture and with other ethnic minority groups resulting in the expansion of their food palate to include consumption of local dishes as well as meals associated with other ethnic groups. Likewise, the palate of the host culture and other ethnic groups also expand to include a variety of dishes belonging to the multitude of cultures available (de Mooij, 2005, Hamlett et al., 2008, Jamal, 2003). It can be inferred from this finding that food consumption is influenced not just by one’s ethnicity but also by the ethnicity of other ethnic groups and by the host culture. Continuous interactions between ethnic groups and mainstream culture ‘leads to changes in food consumption in many households’ (Jamal, 2003, p. 161). Consumers from the host culture have been known to move between different cultures in relation to food (Jamal, 2003), from an Italian pasta meal for dinner through to Chinese or Thai takeaway.

In addition to ethnic food, an individual’s ethnic identity may be revealed by the display of ethnic dress or lack thereof; hence researchers argue that an individual’s integration into the host culture is reflected by her (or his) generic apparel (Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008, Forney, 1985, Jun et al., 1993, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a). Ethnic apparel is a reflection of the individual retaining her (or his) ethnic identity and affiliation with her (or his) ethnic group and homeland.
(Lindridge and Dibb, 2002). It is a display and communication of one’s ethnic heritage and identity (Kim and Arthur, 2003, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008) and a visual revelation of one’s ethnicity (Eicher and Sumberg, 1995, Kim and Arthur, 2003, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008). Moreover, a study on a sample group of Chinese and Japanese customers found that those who possessed a strong sense of their ethnic identity revealed a preference for ethnic dress, relying on their social network of family and friends for advice (Forney and Rabolt, 1985-1986, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a).

Other research reinforces this view with findings from Kim and Arthur (2003) and Chattaraman and Lennon (2008) on Asian-American opinion towards ethnic dress, which supports the belief that individuals who strongly identify with their ethnic background were more likely to favour ethnic dress (Kim and Arthur, 2003, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008). The study also revealed that for Asian Americans, their ethnic group affiliation was evident in their shopping behaviour for ethnic clothing items during cultural events and/or ethnic celebrations (Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008).

4.3.2 Ethnic Identity and Promotional Preference

Recent studies into ethnic consumption behaviour have noted differences between ethnic minority consumers and the host culture in how they respond to promotional strategies, advertising stimuli and media usage (Green, 1995, Hernandez and Kaufman, 1991, Cui and Choudhury, 2002). The studies point to ethnicity playing an important role on how a marketer’s advertisements is perceived by ethnic consumers including its effect on their loyalty to specific brands, defining their buyer behaviour patterns and consumer decision-making styles (Burton, 2002).

Some researchers assert that the consumer behaviour of ethnic consumers is influenced by ethnic-based promotional strategies because ‘ethnic minorities are likely to select media...and messages that relate to their ethnicity’ (Knobloch-Westerwick and Coates, 2006, p. 596). Further, ethnic consumers are more responsive to marketing promotions that represent or highlight their cultural beliefs and values (Pitts et al., 1989, Cui and Choudhury, 2002) especially targeted media that use cultural symbols, values, traits and characters associated with their ethnic
heritage than media that do not (Green, 1995, Hernandez and Kaufman, 1991, Cui and Choudhury, 2002). In contrast to ethnic minorities, members of the host culture do not take their ethnicity into account when evaluating advertising media. Their consumer behaviour is therefore said to be less influenced by their ethnicity (Knobloch-Westerwick and Coates, 2006).

4.3.3 Ethnic Identity and Media Preference

Although there is debate about the influence of ethnicity on media preferences, Xu et al.’s (2004) study found ethnic groups had a preference for watching TV channels and reading newspapers and magazines targeted towards their ethnic group. Supporting Xu et al.’s (2004) findings, studies by Omar et al. (2004) and de Mooij (2005) on the food shopping behaviour of ethnics in Britain found ethnic newspapers were viewed by ethnic consumers as a valuable means of food information.

Previous studies (Chan, 2002, Feig, 2004, Appiah and Liu, 2009) on consumer media preference confirm that ‘over two-thirds of Asians report they prefer ethnic media’ and buying products that they have seen advertised in ethnic magazines/newspapers (Appiah and Liu, 2009, p. 29). Consistent with previous studies, the findings from Moschis (1987) and Singh et al.’s (2003) studies revealed that young Asian-Americans depend on television, radio, newspapers and magazines as their consumer information source. They were also revealed to be more susceptible to advertising messages than Caucasian youths. Hispanics on the other hand were found to have a preference for television and radio. Other studies on consumer media preference similarly found Asian consumers to have a preference for ethnic media, who use ethnic publications as an information source (Chan, 2002, Feig, 2004, Appiah and Liu, 2009).

The findings from the aforementioned studies on media preferences by ethnic minority groups suggest that different ethnic minority groups prefer different types of media as their information sources. Yet, the pattern does suggest that ethnic minorities do prefer “ethnic” media e.g., newspapers, magazines, radio or television.
4.3.4 Ethnic Identity and Media Language Preference

Past market trials by Solomon (1996) revealed that Asians have a preference for the English language for radio advertisements and the Asian language for print media. However, this view is contradicted by research findings from the U.S. Commerce Department, which found that a large percentage of Asian-Americans of Chinese and Korean heritage favoured communications media in their native tongue. Yet the majority of print media in many Asian countries suggest otherwise with the prevalent use of western languages (Cutler et al., 1995, Neelankavil et al., 1995, Dublish, 2001). In addition, results from Dublish’s (2001, p. 28) analysis into media language preferences by Korean-Americans revealed no disparities in the participants response to English or Korean, ‘indicating that ethnicity by itself is not a good predictor of language preferences in advertising’.

4.3.5 Ethnic Identity and Communication Preference

To have a better appreciation of what type of communication would be most effective for reaching specific ethnic groups, an understanding is required of ‘high-context’ versus ‘low-context’ communication styles (de Mooij, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2015). A high-context communication style is intrinsic, fast, symbolically culture specific and visual, and is often associated with a collectivist society e.g., most Asian cultures (de Mooij, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Hofstede and McCrae, 2004, Pires and Stanton, 2015). Conversely, a low-context communication style is explicitly stated in the message, is expressed verbally or textually and often associated with an individualist society e.g., most western countries, such as America and Australia (de Mooij, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Hofstede and McCrae, 2004, Pires and Stanton, 2015).

In order for any communication strategy to effectively resonate with Asian consumers, Appiah and Liu (2009, p. 29) argue that cultural cues, such as ‘values, symbols, ethics, rituals [and] traditions’ reflective of the Asian sub-group in question, must be culturally embedded within the advertisements. Forehand and Deshpande (2001) refer to these cultural cues as ethnic primes that improve the advertising awareness and response of ethnic consumers.
4.3.6 Ethnic Identity and Shopping Location Preference

Research by (Deshpande et al., 1986, Jamal, 2003) has shown that some ethnic minority groups may prefer different distribution policies. A study by Jamal (2003) contradicted earlier studies by Deshpande et al. (1986) revealing a positive attitude by ethnic consumers who frequented supermarkets used by mainstream consumers. Hispanics, in a study by Deshpande et al. (1986), were found to have negative attitudes towards stores and supermarkets frequented by mainstream consumers unlike the British Pakistanis in Jamal’s study (2003) who perceived mainstream stores as being of high quality and service standards and who were therefore happy to shop at mainstream outlets.

4.3.7 Ethnic Identity and Price

Studies by Omar et al. (2004) revealed that ethnic minority groups in Britain were more likely to prefer cheaper food products, such as ‘no-name branded’ meat, rice, vegetables, and fruits, in comparison to non-ethnics (individuals from the host culture). However, many researchers (de Mooij, 2005, Quester et al., 2001, Solomon, 1996) contend that Asian-ethnics, such as those of Chinese and Japanese ancestry, displayed a preference for expensive (premium, high-quality, well-known branded) products due to the attainment and portrayal of “status” and prestige.

4.4 SUMMARY

This research uses Schiffman (2009) and Solomon’s (1996) definition of consumer behaviour as the selection, purchase, use or disposal of a product, a service or an experience (Solomon, 1996, p. 7). The five-step consumer decision-making process model used for this study was adapted from Solomon (1996) and based on the EKB or Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968) model. The researcher used the EKB consumer decision-making model to describe how ethnicity and ethnic identity may influence consumer behaviour.
4.4.1 Research Gap


The research gap that has emerged from this literature review is a better understanding of how ethnic identity may influence consumer behaviour, in particular the consumer decision-making behaviour of consumers of Lao and Filipino background. That is, a comparison of the influence of ethnic identity on the consumer behaviour of consumers from a small, recently arrived, ethnic community (Lao) versus the consumer behaviour of consumers from a larger, longer established, ethnic community (Filipino).

4.4.2 Link to Research Gap

The research gap in the understanding of the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour within an Australian context lead to research question 2: *How does an individual's ethnicity and ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?*
CHAPTER 5 UNDERSTAND HOW INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION AFFECTS ETHNIC CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

5.1 INTRODUCTION

While Chapter 4 explored the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on the consumer behaviour of the individual and family unit, Chapter 5 addresses the third research objective: Understand how individual acculturation affects ethnic consumer behaviour. The purpose of this section is to provide a literature review on how acculturation affects ethnic identity and ethnic consumer behaviour to establish the research gap and research questions 3 and 4:

3. How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of each generation of consumers from the same ethnic background?

4. How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds?

Figure 5.1 shows the key concepts that will be discussed in this chapter. A summary of the various definitions of acculturation is discussed, including the different schools of thought on acculturation and the different acculturation strategies that may be employed by an ethnic individual. Given there is an acculturation process over time when persons from different cultures interact, the impact of acculturation on an individual’s ethnic identity and consumer behaviour is examined to address inter-generational and inter-group differences that may arise.

As will be discussed later in this chapter, acculturation is an individual process and generational differences within an ethnic group can be indicative of acculturation differences. Therefore, the Researcher has focused on investigating generational groups to study acculturation differences, specifically, between individuals born overseas against those born in Australia.
Research Objective 3: Understand how individual acculturation affects ethnic consumer behaviour

Acculturation

- Definition
- Acculturation Strategies
- Indicators of Acculturation
- Forces of Acculturation

Ethnicity

Consumer Behaviour

Individual Acculturation and Inter-Generational Differences in Consumer Behaviour

Individual Acculturation and Inter-Group Differences in Consumer Behaviour
5.2 ACCULTURATION

5.2.1 Definition of Acculturation

There are many definitions of acculturation on offer. The definitions used by Penaloza (1994a), Quester and Chong (2001), Quester et al. (2001), Valencia (1985a), and Dublish (2001) refer to acculturation as an adaptation, assimilation or learning of a new culture.

The more commonly used definition refers to acculturation as a process that involves contact between two or more independent cultural groups, with the contact resulting in a change in values or behaviour in at least one or more of these cultural groups (Berry, 1997, Berry, 1980, Dublish, 2001, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Laroche et al., 1997c, Pires, 1999, Schiffman et al., 2009). Berry (1997) and Berry and Laponce (1990) argues that acculturation has a stronger influence in re-shaping or changing the values and behaviour of one cultural group than another.

Acculturation is a process involving cultural interaction, adaptation, assimilation, maintenance and resistance (Penaloza, 1994b, Quester et al., 2001), but is essentially a process of learning a new “culture” (Valencia, 1985a, Dublish, 2001). The acculturation process encompasses an individual’s self-identification with either the host culture or her (or his) ethnic origin, and the extent of conformance by the individual to the host culture (Berry, 1980, Gordon, 1964, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Kim et al., 1990, Yinger, 1985a). This includes adapting to the ‘consumer cultural environment’ of the host country (Jamal and Chapman, 2000, p. 368) where adaptation is influenced by age, education and ethnic-media usage (Hui et al., 1998). As there are a number of definitions of acculturation being offered, a summary of the similarities and differences between each definition has been provided in Table 5.1. Berry and Sam’s (1997, 1980, 1997) definition is used as the base definition.
Table 5.1 Acculturation Definitions Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key Elements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berry and Sam (1997)</td>
<td>General processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture. May be individual or group based.</td>
<td>Cultural interaction and contact</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure to another culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Migration or colonisation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual or group based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quester et al (2001)</td>
<td>A general term that encompasses inter-cultural interaction and adaptation and includes assimilation of a new culture, maintenance of the old culture and resistance to both new and old culture.</td>
<td>Cultural interaction</td>
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<td>Adaptation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assimilation to new culture</td>
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<td>Maintenance of old culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resistance to new and old culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quester and Chong (2001)</td>
<td>Affecting a minority ethnic group, whose culture is expected to become more and more like the dominant majority’s culture in a process also referred to as assimilation.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assimilation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Affecting a minority ethnic group</td>
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<td>Penaloza (1994)</td>
<td>The general process of movement and adaptation to the consumer cultural environment in one country by persons from another country.</td>
<td>Movement from one consumer cultural environment to another</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Adaptation</td>
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<td>Consumer acculturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berry and Sam (1997)</td>
<td>General processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture. May be individual or group based.</td>
<td>Cultural interaction and contact Exposure to another culture Migration or colonisation Individual or group based</td>
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<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dublish (2001)</td>
<td>The process of learning a culture that is different from the one in which a person was raised.</td>
<td>Learning new culture</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Valencia (1985)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kara and Kara (1996)</td>
<td>High acculturated: the consumer that exhibits greater progression toward the attitudes and values of the host society (Anglos). Low acculturated: the consumer whose original behavior and values are mostly maintained.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Categorise acculturation into high acculturation and low acculturation</td>
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<td>Berry (1980)</td>
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<td>Berry (1997)</td>
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<td>Dublish (2001)</td>
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<td>Laroche et al (1997)</td>
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<td>Pires (2000)</td>
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<td>Schiffman et al (2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berry and Sam (1997)</td>
<td>General processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture. May be individual or group based.</td>
<td>Cultural interaction and contact&lt;br&gt;Exposure to another culture&lt;br&gt;Migration or colonisation&lt;br&gt;Individual or group based</td>
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<td>Ogden et al (2004)</td>
<td>Consumer acculturation - a socialization process that ‘...is specific to the consumption process...in which an immigrant consumer learns the behaviors, attitudes and values of a culture that are different from their culture of origin.'</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Consumer acculturation&lt;br&gt;Learning different consumer cultural values, attitudes and behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berry (1980)&lt;br&gt;Gordon (1964)&lt;br&gt;Hui et al (1998)&lt;br&gt;Kim et al (1990)&lt;br&gt;Yinger (1985)</td>
<td>Encompasses an individual’s self-identification with either the host culture or her (or his) ethnic origin, and the extent of conformance by the individual to the host culture where adaptation is influenced by age, education and ethnic-media usage adapting to the consumer cultural environment of the host country.</td>
<td>Self-identification with the host culture or ethnic origin&lt;br&gt;Extent of conformance to the host culture</td>
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</table>
Most definitions of acculturation note the cultural interaction between an old culture and a new culture and the adaptation, assimilation and learning of a new culture. Similarities between the definitions suggest that many researchers agree that acculturation is a cultural interaction between different cultures whereby individuals from one culture learn the values and behaviours of a new culture during a process of adaptation or assimilation into the new culture. Consumer acculturation is therefore consumers learning the values and behaviours of a new consumer culture.

The definitions below highlight the varying points of view on how acculturation is perceived by different researchers. A number of researchers discuss acculturation in terms of the migration or colonisation of an old culture to a new culture or the assimilation, adaptation, maintenance or resistance to the new culture or country. Whilst other researchers discuss acculturation in terms of the change in values and behaviours of one group or more or the sense of belonging and/or conformance to the host culture:

- Berry and Sam’s (1997, 1980, 1997) definition discusses the exposure of the individual to the new culture through migration or colonisation to another culture.

- Quester et al.’s (2001) definition refers to the acculturation strategies of assimilation, maintenance and resistance to the new and old culture.

- Quester and Chong’s (2001) acculturation definition refers to the minority ethnic group assimilating into the dominant host group.

- Penaloza (2006) views acculturation as a process of adapting to the consumer cultural environment in the host country by an individual from a different country.

- Kara and Kara (1996a) categorise their definition of acculturation to include high-acculturated and low-acculturated to describe whether an individual has progressed towards the values and attitudes of the host culture or has regressed towards the values and attitudes of their ethnic origin.

Ogden et al. (2004b) views acculturation as consumer acculturation, a socialisation process of learning new values and behaviours of a new culture that is different to the individual’s culture of origin.

The definitions of acculturation by Gordon (1964), Hui et al. (1998), Kim et al. (1990) and Yinger (1976) incorporate a sense of self-identification with either the host culture or ethnic origin including the extent of the conformance of the individual to the host culture.

5.2.2 Justification for Definition of Acculturation

For the purpose of this research and following Berry and Sam (1997, p. 294), the term acculturation refers to ‘the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture’. Berry and Sam (1997) distinguish between group and individual processes and use the term psychological acculturation to refer to an individual’s response resulting from this encounter. For most individuals, adaptation to the new cultural context is dependent upon a variety of factors and can take many different forms ranging from assimilation or integration into the dominant culture to extreme marginalisation or segregation (Berry and Sam, 1997).

5.2.3 Schools of Thought on Acculturation

Using Berry and Sam’s (1997) acculturation strategies, the first school of thought propose the assimilation strategy where the individual adopts the host culture’s identity and rejects the identity of their heritage. This school of thought follows the belief that as ethnic minorities adopt the traits, values and norms of the host culture, aspects of their culture of origin are lost or rejected by the individuals (Keefe and Padilla, 1987, Nwankwo and Lindridge, 1998, Laroche et al., 1998, Phinney, 1990b).
Further, there are research studies into acculturation that give credence to the idea that acculturation lessens an individual’s ties to her (or his) ethnic identity (Dubish, 2001, Deshpande et al., 1986, O’Guinn and Faber, 1986). For example, American research findings (Dubish, 2001, Delener and Neelankavil, 1990a, Faulkner, 1998) into ethnic minorities often depict Asian-Americans as being ‘well assimilated in the [host] culture’ from their desire to achieve success in mainstream society (Dubish, 2001, p. 26). These findings imply that for well-assimilated Asian-Americans, there may be very little disparities between their consumption behaviour and that of individuals from the host culture (Dubish, 2001).

Research by Kara and Kara (1996a) found little to no differences in consumer behaviour between the host group and an ethnic group. For example, the study on Hispanic-Americans found high-acculturated Hispanic-Americans displayed similar purchase behaviour to Anglo-Americans. Kara and Kara (1996a, p. 23) categorise acculturation into high-acculturated and low-acculturated. These definitions are provided below to clarify their meanings:

‘High-acculturated: the consumer exhibits greater progression toward the attitudes and values of the host society (Anglos).

Low-acculturated: the consumer whose original behavior and values are mostly maintained.’

The second school of thought on acculturation proposed Berry and Sam’s (1997) integration strategy where the individual keeps the identity of their heritage and embraces part of the host culture’s identity. Researchers (Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Laroche et al., 1997b) argue that ethnic identity can remain unaltered despite social interactions with and adoption of the values and norms of the dominant culture. This view is supported by Miller’s study that found an increasing number of ethnic minorities were keen to retain their cultural identities (Miller, 1993, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a). Hui et al. (1992) and Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al. (2009) assert that highly acculturated individuals may also have a strong sense of their ethnic identity. Solomon (1996, p. 479) concurs that as a result of progressive learning, ‘people gradually learn a new culture as they increasingly come in contact with it’ yet still
maintain their ethnic identity. Therefore, it can be conjectured that consumption behaviour for these individuals will remain distinct from those of the host culture.

Both schools of thought argue that the levels involved in cultural change include: (1) maintaining cultural tradition or losing cultural tradition, and (2) learning the cultural traditions and values of the host culture (Dohrenwend and Smith, 1962, Laroche et al., 1998). Past research findings point to high acculturation levels being associated with weak ethnic identity, yet current research findings indicate that high acculturation levels are also associated with strong ethnic identity (Chae and Foley, 2010). Accordingly, individuals who have high acculturation levels are said to be well assimilated having embraced the host culture whilst individuals who have low acculturation levels are said to reject assimilation by maintaining their cultural heritage (Chae and Foley, 2010).

5.2.4 Acculturation Paths

Berry and Sam (1997) proposed four paths of individual acculturation:

1. Integration: individuals maintain the cultural identity of their ethnic heritage while embracing part of the cultural identity of the host culture,
2. Assimilation: individuals adopt the cultural identity of the host culture by rejecting the cultural identity of their ethnic heritage,
3. Separation or rejection: individuals maintain the cultural identity of their ethnic heritage by rejecting the cultural identity of the host culture, and
4. Marginalisation or de-culturation: individuals reject adopting the cultural identity of the host culture and also reject the cultural identity of their cultural heritage.

Similar to the individual acculturation paths, ethnic groups are said to adopt the following acculturation methods (Berry and Sam, 1997, p. 297):

1. Integration: ethnic groups and their members maintain their cultural identity yet also seek interaction with other cultures;
2. Assimilation: ethnic groups and their members abandon their cultural identity and seek interaction with other cultures;
3. Separation: ethnic groups and their members maintain their cultural identity and shun interaction with other cultures;

4. Segregation: when the host culture or dominant group rejects the cultural identity of ethnic minority groups and their members and avoids interaction.

Studies by Berry and Sam (2006, 1997) have shown that migrants who have adapted (integrated) to the host culture whilst retaining their ethnic identity, for example, assuming a bicultural identity, such as Lao-Australian or Filipino-Australian, have had a more positive acculturation experience. This viewpoint is supported by Costigan et al. (2009, p. 267) who says that the ‘second generation [Chinese youth] from immigrant families may be able to successfully develop bicultural identities’.

Interestingly, the separation path was the next more commonly observed acculturation pattern. The separation path is primarily adopted by ethnic minorities who want to maintain a connection and a link to their ethnic heritage and identity (Berry and Sam, 1997). In a study by Berry (1989) research findings support the theory that individuals who identify with their cultural heritage display a preference for adopting the separation path. In comparison, individuals who identify with the host culture prefer adopting the assimilation path.

5.2.5 Indicators of Acculturation

Acculturation can be observed through behavioural and socio-cultural changes. Behavioral changes include:

1. Culture learning: learning the host language, trying local foods, dressing like the mainstream population and learning the social norms of the host culture,

2. Culture shedding: discarding the social norms associated with the culture of origin in favour of the social norms of the host culture, and

3. Culture conflict: the individual perceives the norms, attitudes and values of the host culture to be incompatible with the norms, attitudes and values of her (or his) culture of origin (Berry and Sam, 1997, pp. 301-302).
Many researchers point to language, food, media preferences and participation in cultural events as good indicators of individual acculturation (Laroche et al., 1998, Laroche et al., 2009).

Socio-cultural changes include adapting one’s cultural knowledge, social skills and relationships with family, friends and the community to integrate into mainstream culture (Berry and Sam, 1997, pp. 301-302). For example, the ethnic background of an individual’s spouse/partner and closest friends provides an indication of her (or his) acculturation level (Garcia, 1982a, Laroche et al., 2009, Triandis et al., 1982). A less acculturated individual is more likely to have a social and personal network from within their own ethnic community whereas a highly acculturated individual is more likely to have a social and personal network of friends from outside their ethnic community, in particular from the mainstream culture (Xu et al., 2004).

5.2.6 Acculturation Forces

Acculturation and adaptation cannot be investigated in isolation from the influential factors of the ethnic motherland (e.g., language, religion, values, political and economic situation), host culture (e.g., immigration history and policy, including societal attitudes towards immigration) or demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education) of the individual or group undergoing the acculturation process (Berry, 1997). Language and fluency in the host language plays a significant role in an individual’s settlement into the host country (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2009). Aronowitz (1992) and Berry and Sam (1997, p. 304) conclude that the objective is to understand how these different factors impact upon the migration process to affect how people adapt to their new settlement society.

5.2.7 How Acculturation Paths May Differ

The acculturation paths of assimilation, integration, separation or segregation undertaken by each individual may either be subconscious or reactive. However, there is no predetermined age or stage in life that these acculturation methods are employed, nor are they employed sequentially. Evidence suggests that members from ethnic minority groups and from the dominant group will try different strategies before deciding upon one that works best for them (Berry and Sam, 1997).
Quester and Chong’s (2001) study of Australian-Chinese consumers propose acculturation as occurring along a continuum from least-acculturated, to bicultural to most-acculturated. New migrants are said to be least-acculturated whilst migrants who have stayed at least a minimum of one generation in the host country are said to be the most-acculturated. Migrants who fall between the two categorical extremes are said to be bicultural. This continuum follows Kara and Kara’s (1996a) high-acculturated versus low-acculturated consumer study of Hispanics.

Researchers note that an individual’s acculturation path is influenced by a number of factors, such as a person’s age; the age of migration to the host country; the level of education achieved in their country of origin versus the level of education achieved in the host country; the individual’s social network; and the host country’s immigration policy. All these factors affect how individuals adapt to the host country e.g., age of arrival in the host country is important because older migrants are assumed to have a stronger sense of the cultural values of their country of origin and therefore may reject, resist or take time to adapt to or adopt the host culture. In comparison, younger migrants are assumed to be too young to have fully embraced the cultural values of their parents’ country of origin; therefore, exposure to the host culture through school and peers from outside their ethnic group may cause conflicting identity issues (Berry, 1989, Berry and Sam, 1997, Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Lee and DeVos, 1981). Costigan et al. (2009) agree saying that children adjust and settle to the host environment and therefore acculturate at a faster rate than their migrant parents.

A number of researchers (Kara and Kara, 1996b, Jun et al., 1993, Montero, 1981, Padilla, 1980, Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983, Quester et al., 2001, Kara and Kara, 1996a) further note that acculturation towards the mainstream culture has a far greater impact on migrants of a youthful age, especially when coupled with lengthy residency and citizenship of the host country. The argument follows that an individual who is far less acculturated to the dominant group would likely have settled in the host country at an older age. They are also assumed to be more likely to enjoy travels to the ethnic homeland to maintain strong ties to their ethnic heritage (O’Guinn and Faber, 1985, Quester et al., 2001).
Supporting the above findings, O’Guinn and Meyer’s (2013b) study also found older research participants had closer ties to their ethnic heritage through birth and education in their homeland. They were found to be less acculturated to the host culture than younger research participants who were either born in the host country or had been educated in the host country from a young age. Frequency of travel to the ethnic homeland and the ethnicity of an individual’s spouse or partner and their inner social circle of friends are all indicative of an individual’s acculturation levels. Those with closer ties to their country of origin will travel more frequently to the ethnic homeland and are highly likely to have an inner circle of friends and/or a spouse or partner of the same ethnic background, all indicators more likely to be evident in older research participants (Quester et al., 2001).

5.2.8 Individual Acculturation

It is important to note that acculturation levels vary between ethnic groups and within these ethnic groups its members also vary in their acculturation levels. Ogden et al. (2004a, p. 10) state that people’s acculturation level or ethnicity will differ depending on the role she (or he) plays. For example, although the ethnic group to which the individual identifies with may be considered by the host culture as well acculturated, within the ethnic group itself there may still be some individuals who choose to maintain their ethnic identity by wearing their ethnic dress, conversing in their native tongue, consuming ethnic food, and upholding their ethnic customs, traditions and beliefs (Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005b). This is because the individual’s acculturation level can be affected by other factors, and Ogden et al. (2004b) state that the place of residence and the amount of contact the individual has with the host culture significantly impacts on her (or his) acculturation level, thereby accounting for the differences within the ethnic group.

Past studies (Berry and Sam, 1997, Kang and Kim, 1993) support this view and have found the process of acculturation is individualistic in nature because the level in which people choose to engage in their community varies (Berry and Sam, 1997). Individuals who identify strongly with their ethnic group will reflect the values and social mores that are representative of their ethnic group. For example, practicing the customs and religion that are unique or associated with their ethnic group; in their use
of the ethnic language spoken by their ethnic group; in the display of ethnic dress worn by members of their ethnic group; and in the consumption of ethnic foods and products associated with their ethnic group (Appiah, 2004, p. 314). The mitigating factor of acculturation on ethnic identity is such that a number of researchers (Berry and Sam, 1997, Laroche et al., 1998, Verbeke and Lopez, 2005) use it to measure the maintenance and/or retention of the individual’s cultural origins (Verbeke and Lopez, 2005). Thus, it can be argued that differences in psychological acculturation impacts on the accuracy (Chattalas and Harper, 2007) of measuring the effects of one’s ethnicity on her (or his) consumption behaviour. This difference is likely to be especially evident in the consumer behaviour of the younger generation moving away from the conventions of their parent’s upbringing and cultural customs (Chattalas and Harper, 2007), but following Berry and Sam (1997) this is but one of several possible paths.

O’Guinn and Faber (1986) stress that language, food and media preferences; participating in cultural events; the ethnic background of the individual’s spouse/partner; and having a close circle of friends from various cultural backgrounds, in particular from the mainstream culture (Laroche et al., 1998, Laroche et al., 2009, Phinney, 1990b), are all good indicators of how acculturated the individual is to the host culture (Garcia, 1982a, Laroche et al., 1998, Triandis et al., 1982). A less acculturated individual is more likely to have a social and personal network from within their own ethnic community whereas a highly acculturated individual is more likely to have a social and personal network of friends from outside their ethnic community (Quester et al., 2001, Montero, 1981, Kara and Kara, 1996a).

5.3 ACCULTURATION AND ETHNIC HOMOPHILY

Researchers (Brown and Reingen, 1987, Centola et al., 2007, McAdam and Paulsen, 1993) propose that similarity in attributes—such as “like attracts like”, also known as “homophily”—strengthen the ties between group members thereby increasing the level of influence that the group has over the behaviour of its members. Researchers (Brown and Reingen, 1987, Centola et al., 2007, McAdam and Paulsen, 1993, Kinket and Verkuyten, 1997) argue that homophily-based groups restrict individuals in their choice as to which communities they choose to belong to and with whom they choose
to interact. As stated by Kinket and Verkuyten (1997, p. 341) an ‘individual’s social similarity or dis-similarity to those around him or her affects that individual’s experiences, and therefore the self-concept.’

Similarly, Centola et al. (2007) states that homophily increases as more like members of the group increases, resulting in the group being further differentiated from other groups (Duncan et al., 1968, Knoke, 1990). Acculturation will alter the group dynamics as members adapt to other cultural influences or assimilate to the host culture. As their attitudes and behaviours change, the landscape of the group changes because members will cut old ties from people who no longer share similar values, beliefs or attitudes or make new friendships with those who do. Shared similarities will strengthen the bond of group members whilst creating differences between the group from other dissimilar groups (Bourdieu, 1986). This is because the structure of homophily reinforces what Centola et al. (2007) refer to as group “cultural consensus”.

5.3.1 Inter-Generational Ethnic Homophily

Group homophily is based on members sharing similarities in culture, ethnic heritage, values, beliefs, age, income status or educational status. Homophily limits an individual’s scope and restricts their access to information, behaviour and attitude, and the people they socialise with thus reinforcing the shared similarities (Holzhauer et al., 2013). A number of studies agree that individuals find comfort when engaging with others from the same ethnic background (Fischer, 1977, Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1954, Marsden, 1987, Marsden, 1988, Shrum et al., 1988). This is supported in a study by Jones and Estell (2010), that found members with strong intra-group ties and social status were likely to remain in the group and keep their social capital whilst members with loose intra-group ties were likely to leave.

A few studies (Fuchs et al., 1999, Masgoret and Ward, 2006, Silbereisen and Schmitt-Rodermund, 2000, Titzmann and Silbereisen, 2009, Phinney et al., 2006) that looked at the friendship network of immigrant adolescents found they adjusted socio-culturally not long after arrival. Learning the host language can bridge the gap between migrants and non-migrants, which encourages inter-ethnic friendships between ethnic minorities and those outside their ethnic community. In a Silbereisen and
Titzmann (2000) study, new arrivals were found to have 100% ethnic homophilous friendships. This percentage decreased to 60% to 70% for migrant adolescents once they had been settled in the country for at least 10 years. Further, the ethnic friendship homophily of older migrant adolescents significantly decreased in comparison to younger migrant adolescents, who were more likely to have a mixed circle of friends outside the ethnic group, with language being a key contributor to the inter-individual differences. Whilst ethnic friendship homophily was significant in both new arrival groups and experienced groups, the reduction in ethnic homophily friendships was only significant in the new arrival groups (Titzmann and Silbereisen, 2009).

Age can also be used to explain ethnic homophilous friendships between different adolescent age groups. Past studies (Titzmann and Silbereisen, 2009, Epstein, 1989, Romero and Roberts, 1998) have revealed ethnic friendship homophily was more significant amongst the older adolescent group than the younger adolescent group. This can be explained by the maturity of friendships over the adolescent period. Owing to parental influence over their children and consequently their children’s friendship circle, a Titzmann et al. (2012) study found Russian parents were likely to encourage an ethnic homophilous (Russian) friendship network amongst their children. However, this predisposition for ethnic friendship homophily can also be explained by ethnic identification or language use. Individuals who identified strongly with their ethnic heritage were more likely to seek intra-ethnic friendships while individuals who conversed in the host language were more likely to seek friendships outside the ethnic group (Phinney et al., 2006, Caldas and Caron-Caldas, 2002). Language fluency unites ethnic minorities to native speakers by providing increased opportunities ‘for economic success and social integration’ (Remennick, 2004, Titzmann et al., 2012, p. 413).

5.3.2 Inter-Group Ethnic Homophily

Researchers consider race and ethnicity a major division of ethnic groups, particularly in the United States, with some citing race and ethnicity as strengthening the bonds of marriage, friendship and work relationships (Marsden, 1988, McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1987, McPherson et al., 2001). In a Marsden (1987) study using a national probability sample, only 8% of the national sample reported having a person within
their social network of a different race. The findings also revealed Anglo-Americans were most likely to have racial homophily in their social networks (McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1987, McPherson et al., 2001). Mollica et al.'s (2003) study on racial homophily found racial minority groups had more homophilous friendships in their social networks than whites with African-Americans more predisposed to seek homophilous friendships for their social networks than other minority groups.

Researchers assert that ethnic homophily in the friendship social network occurs in the early years and steadily increases until middle school, levelling out at the end of high school. Boys are said to have less ethnic homophily in their friendship social network as a result of their access to larger groups (McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1987, Shrum et al., 1988, Maccoby, 1998, McPherson et al., 2001). A 2001 study (Ooka and Wellman, 2001, McPherson et al., 2001) of five ethnic groups not surprisingly found ethnic groups that had recently arrived had a job search social network that was high in ethnic homophily, in particular amongst the first generation.

It has been suggested that individuals who identify strongly with their ethnic groups seek friendships or relationships with others from within their ethnic community. Although these same race relationships and friendships are not as widely available in comparison to the dominant host group, ethnic minorities still display more homophily within their social networks (Mollica et al., 2003). Inter-group studies on ethnic social networks by Titzman et al. (2010, 2009, 2012) found the Israeli sample group had a high 70% intra-ethnic friendship network compared to 60% from the German sample group. However, other inter-group studies on the ethnic friendship network found African-Americans had a high 71% to 77% intra-ethnic friendship network compared to just 51% to 56% for Hispanics and only 38% to 42% for Asians. White Americans however had a higher 85% to 86% intra-ethnic friendship network (Harris and Cavanagh, 2008, Titzmann et al., 2012).

5.4 ACCULTURATION, ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Because this research looks at how ethnicity and ethnic identity influence consumer behaviour, it is important to understand how acculturation influences an individual's ethnic identity. Phinney (1992. p. 160) argues that ethnic identity varies ‘with development and experience, and with changes in the social and historical context’. 
Due to the dynamic nature of ethnic identity, the process and impact of acculturation may influence decision making and therefore consumer behaviour. Studies of Asian-Americans revealed a circular link between an individual’s cultural adjustment and the strength of their ethnic identity (Chae and Foley, 2010). Moreover, Ogden et al. (2004a) state that the strength of an individual’s feelings towards their ethnic identity may influence their acculturation level thereby shaping their ethnic identity.

Using Berry (1997) and Berry and Sam’s (1997) model of acculturation to explain variations in ethnic identity, Phinney (2001, 1990b) states that the link between ethnic identity and acculturation is evident by the individual’s sense of belonging, in particular to their ethnic group. Studies show children and young adults of less acculturated parents have a stronger sense of their ethnic identity than children and young adults of highly acculturated parents who are more inclined to adopt the culture of the host country and less likely to inform their children of their ethnic heritage. The strength of a child’s and young adult’s ethnic identity is developed and strengthened through parental influence from parents who have maintained close ties to their ethnic roots. Moreover, children and young adults who have friendships with peers from their own ethnic background have also been shown to have positive feelings towards their ethnic identity (Hui et al., 1998, Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Xu et al., 2004).

Hui et al. (1998, p. 872) claim that individuals are more likely to perceive their ethnic identity differently once they ‘adopt the cultural traits of the host culture during the acculturation process’. Furthermore, by understanding how acculturation may change the way individuals perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity, marketers can make an informed decision to aggregate ethnic groups where there are significant similarities in consumption patterns or segment ethnic groups where there are significant differences in consumption patterns (Pires and Stanton, 2000).

5.5 ACCULTURATION AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Researchers (Quester et al., 2001, Kara and Kara, 1996a, Ogden et al., 2004a, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a) argue that a consumer’s acculturation level to the host culture is significant and may be indicative of their purchase behaviour pattern. ‘In the 1980s and 1990s in the light of the cultural and social interactions experienced by consumers’ within a multicultural environment (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2009, p.
Researchers began investigating the links between acculturation and consumer behaviour. Leo et al. (2005) found that the host culture may influence the consumer behaviour of individuals via acculturation. This view is reinforced by Kwok and Uncles (2005) who maintain that consumer behaviour is influenced by the differences between the cultural groups on both a macro level (national) and a micro level (ethnic group). As shown in some studies, individuals who did not identify with their ethnic heritage often displayed similar consumer behaviour patterns to those from the host culture (Kara and Kara, 1996a) whilst other studies revealed there were marked differences in the consumption behaviour of ethnic minorities (e.g., Hispanics) and individuals from the host culture (e.g., Anglo-Saxon-Celtics) towards product attributes (O’Guinn and Faber, 1986).

It has been argued that the acculturation level of a consumer impacts on the accuracy (Chattalas and Harper, 2007) of measuring the effects of ethnicity on their consumption behaviour given the exposure to the host culture. Xu et al.’s (2004) findings indicated the perception young Asian-American adults have of their parents’ acculturation levels, i.e., the strength of their ties to the ethnic homeland, will influence their consumer behaviour towards ethnic food or services. Young Asian-American adults whose parents had a strong sense of their ethnic identity produced ethnic-specific consumption behaviour for ethnic food and ethnic entertainment. In this example, Xu et al. (2004) refers to acculturation level as the strength of ties to the ethnic homeland. The definition of acculturation level used by the researcher for this study references Kara and Kara’s (1996a) definition of acculturation levels as the level of adoption of the host culture’s values, beliefs and behaviour. Reconciling Xu et al.’s (2004) definition with Kara and Kara (1996a), a low acculturation level would indicate strong ties to the ethnic homeland and weak ties to the host country meaning the individual has adopted the cultural values, beliefs and behaviour of their ethnic origin. Conversely, a high acculturation level would indicate weak ties to the ethnic homeland and strong ties to the host country meaning the individual has adopted the host culture’s values, beliefs and behaviour.

Studies by Hofstede (1991) and Phinney (2003) has shown that although an individual (or a group) maintains aspects of their ethnic origin, with time and increased exposure to a different culture, the individual (or group) undergoes some alteration of their

Acculturation is a convincing factor to consider when researching how ethnicity can influence consumption behaviour in a culturally diverse country because it ‘affects a variety of marketing behaviors including consumption and buying patterns’ (Dubish, 2001, p. 24). A study on the consumption behaviour of Chinese-Australians found that acculturation affected their consumer decision-making processes (Quester et al., 2001) with different levels of acculturation resulting in different purchase behaviour patterns. Ogden et al. (2004b, p. 4) describes this process of acculturation as consumer acculturation, a socialisation process that ‘is specific to the consumption process...in which an immigrant consumer learns the behaviors, attitudes and values of a culture that are different from their culture of origin.’ Through the process of socialisation between immigrants and the host culture, the mutual influence between both will likely cause changes in consumption behaviour for both immigrants and the host (Luna and Gupta, 2001), thus highlighting the importance of the role played by acculturation on an individual’s consumption behaviour.

By understanding how the process of psychological and sociocultural acculturation affects an individual, we learn how consumer acculturation may influence an individual’s consumer behaviour (Berry, 1997). A number of researchers (Ogden et al., 2004a, Penaloza, 1994c, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a) link ethnic identity, acculturation and consumer behaviour by segmenting consumers into the following three consumer acculturation groups (Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a, p. 88):

1. Consumers who assimilate into the mainstream culture (Berry and Sam’s Assimilation) by adopting the norms of the host society. This is also known as culture shedding (Berry, 1997),
2. Consumers who maintain their heritage culture yet do not adopt the mainstream culture (Berry and Sam’s *Separation*). These consumers may develop culture conflict (Berry, 1997), and

3. Consumers who adopt elements of mainstream culture but also retain their heritage culture (Berry and Sam's *Integration*). This involves culture learning (Berry, 1997).

Hui et al. (1998) explained the relationship between acculturation and consumer behaviour in their Typology of Consumption Based on the Two Ethnicity Indicators. Table 5.2, which has been adapted from Mendoza (Mendoza, 1989, Hui et al., 1998, p. 874), details:

1. Cultural incorporation involves ethnic minorities adopting the ‘consumption or lifestyle patterns…of the host group’ while retaining their cultural customs (Mendoza, 1989, Hui et al., 1998, p. 874). This is akin to Berry and Sam’s *integration* strategy.

2. Cultural transmutation involves ethnic minorities avowing their cultural heritage but also adopting mainstream culture, resulting in ‘a unique subcultural entity’ (Mendoza, 1989, Hui et al., 1998, p. 875).

3. Cultural shift is the process of assimilation whereby ethnic minorities modify their ‘consumption behavior and lifestyle’ to mirror the behaviour and lifestyle of the host culture (Mendoza, 1989, Hui et al., 1998, p. 874).

4. Cultural resistance is the process whereby ethnic minorities maintain their ethnic customs while refusing to acquire the customs of the host group. Consumer behaviour in this instance is ‘a function of ethnic origin’ as there are no changes to consumer behaviour regardless of increased contact with mainstream culture (Mendoza, 1989, Hui et al., 1998, p. 874). This is akin to Berry and Sam’s *separation* strategy.

5. Consumer behaviour is considered non-ethnic when there are no discernible differences between the consumption pattern of ethnic groups and the host group (Mendoza, 1989, Hui et al., 1998, p. 875).
Table 5.2 Typology of Consumption Based on the Two Ethnicity Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the consumption of the product or lifestyle a function of:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic origin (a reflective ethnicity indicator)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Cultural incorporation</td>
<td>Cultural shift or cultural transmutation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media usage (a formative ethnicity indicator)?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural resistance</td>
<td>Non-cultural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noted however that some aspects of consumer behaviour exhibited by ethnic minorities are so ‘ingrained in the minority culture’ (Hui et al., 1998, p. 873) that they are not as easily changed during the acculturation process. Culture specific activities, such as attending ethnic festivals, are unlikely to be as amenable to acculturation as cultural-irrelevant activities, such as waxing the car (Lee and Tse, 1994b).

Research findings by Hue et al. (1998) support the above assertion that there are certain:

1. **Cultural-specific** consumption behaviours where there is very little difference between acculturated ethnic groups versus un-acculturated ethnic groups, and

2. **Non-cultural** consumption behaviours where there is little to no difference between ethnic minority groups and the host group.

### 5.5.1 Acculturation and the Consumer Decision-Making Process

A study into the differences in acculturation levels of Chinese-Australians and its influence on their decision-making processes was conducted by Quester et al. (2001). The study sample was categorised into high-acculturated, medium-acculturated and low-acculturated Chinese-Australian consumers. Using Kara and Kara’s classification (1996a), **high-acculturated** consumers were defined as those consumers who demonstrated greater adoption of the attitudes and values of the Australian culture (Quester et al., 2001, p. 8). Conversely, **low-acculturated** consumers were defined as consumers who maintained the values, beliefs and behaviour of their ethnic origin (Quester et al., 2001).

The authors (Quester et al., 2001) argued that the ethnic group an individual self-identifies with determines the degree of commitment and influence exerted by that
ethnic group, resulting in differences in consumer patterns and decision making between individuals from the same ethnic group. This argument is supported by a study conducted by Ownbey and Horridge (1997, Quester et al., 2001, p. 10) on Chinese-Americans and Filipino-Americans that found ‘significant differences between high and low acculturation groups’ and the influence that acculturation has on ethnic consumer behaviour (Herche and Balasubramanian, 1994, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Ownbey and Horridge, 1997).

5.5.2 Acculturation and Media Preference

There are various studies on media preferences of ethnic minority groups, however there are only a few studies that take the influence of acculturation into account. These studies have shown that new migrants and ethnic minorities who are low-acculturated, have high ethnic identification and/or do not have fluency in the host language are more inclined to favour ethnic media—newspapers, magazines and radio—in their ethnic language (Lee and Tse, 1994, Lisansky, 1981, O’Guinn et al., 1986, Weinstock, 1964). This view is supported in Ueltschy and Krampf’s (1997) study on the influence of acculturation on advertising effectiveness to the Hispanic market, which found low-acculturated Hispanics preferred to listen to Latin music and watch Spanish television programs. In comparison, high-acculturated Hispanics preferred to watch English television programs and listen to non-Latin music, whilst bicultural or medium-acculturated Hispanics were inclined to favour English television and radio programs and occasionally listen to Latin music.

However, the influence of acculturation is not always as clear cut as evident by Lee and Tse’s (1994) study on the media consumption behaviour of Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, which found that those who have lived in Canada for at least seven years slowly changed their television viewing habits yet their radio consumption hardly changed. Furthermore, their consumption of ethnic media accounted for 41% of their media usage and the authors suggested that their use of ethnic media was for personal preferences whilst the host media was used for news and community events, yet this was not validated in their study.
5.5.3 Acculturation and Media Language Preference

It has been argued by some researchers that an interdependent relationship exists between a consumer's acculturation level and media language preference. Language is seen as the gauge to a person's acculturation level. High-acculturated individuals are more likely to communicate (spoken and written) in the host language whilst low-acculturated individuals are more likely to communicate in the language of their ethnic origin (Firoz, 1995, Quester et al., 2001).

Studies by Deshpande et al. (1986) show that different ethnic groups display different media language preferences. For example, it was found that 'Hispanics low in acculturation prefer Spanish language media and advertising' (Dublisch, 2001, p. 24) although those high in acculturation did not display any strong consistency in media language preference. However a study by Ueltschy and Krampfsfound (1997) found that low-acculturated Hispanics preferred Spanish language advertisements but Anglo personalities in their advertisements whilst high-acculturated Hispanics preferred English language advertisements. Other studies on Hispanics affirm that Spanish language media provide an affirmation of their ethnic heritage and ethnic identity (Penaloza, 1994a, O'Guinn and Meyer, 1984) but also confirmed that high-acculturated Hispanics—referred to as assimilated Hispanics in the studies by O'Guinn and Meyer (1984) and O'Guinn and Faber (1986)—were less disposed to use Spanish language media in comparison to low acculturated Hispanics.

5.6 Lao-Australian vs. Filipino-Australian Acculturation Differences

Berry and Sam (1997) clarified the role of acculturation as either:

1. Voluntary migration i.e., permanent immigrants, temporary travelers or students or

2. Involuntary migration i.e., refugees or asylum seekers forced to seek a home outside their birth country (refer to Figure 5.3).
Table 5.3 Berry and Sam’s (1997) Types of Acculturating Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobility</th>
<th>Voluntariness of Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sedentary</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethno-cultural Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involuntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous Peoples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Sojourners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asylum Seekers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Berry’s (1997) acculturation groups, the peoples of Laos were classified by the United Nations convention as refugees during the Vietnam War. As no such classification exists for the peoples of the Philippines, their migration to Australia would be classified under permanent immigration or temporary travelers or sojourners.

There have been various studies that suggest acculturation to the host culture is affected by immigration status and the host culture’s acceptance of the cultural diversity within the wider community (ABS, 2011b). Differences in language (Lao versus Filipino), religious beliefs (Buddhist Laos versus Christian Philippines) and more significantly settlement status differentiate the Lao sample group from the Filipino sample group.

As a result of the civil war in Laos during the 1970s, many Lao citizens fled the country to settle into Australia under the refugee program (Carruthers and Meuansanith, 2010). Filipinos on the other hand settled into Australia under the Migration Act (ABS, 2006). Given the self-choice made to migrate it is assumed therefore that individuals of Filipino background are likely to be more accepting of the Australian culture and also more open to embrace the beliefs and values of the host culture. Alternatively, the assumption follows that individuals of Lao background are more likely to be cautious or perhaps even a little hesitant to adopt the beliefs and values of the host culture. For a number of individuals of Lao background there may likely be an adjustment period adapting to the Australian culture given their flight from the home country (Berry and Sam, 1997).

The 2011 Census revealed the majority of Filipino migrants settled in Australia under business visas followed by family re-union visas. In comparison, the majority of Lao
migrants settled in Australia under family re-union visas (Carruthers and Meuansanith, 2010).

5.7 ACCULTURATION AND INTER-GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

As a result of the individual nature of the rate of acculturation to the host culture, a number of researchers attest to inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour between members within the ethnic groups (Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Burton, 2002, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a). Conversely, Kim and Kang (2001) found inter-generational similarities in consumer behaviour amongst consumers from the same ethnic background. That is, similarities in the use of information source, product selection and in the frequenting of particular stores were found amongst consumers of the same ethnic background.

However, a review of inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour cannot be looked at in isolation of acculturation because these differences are influenced by the forces of acculturation (Berry, 1997, Berry, 1980, Chae and Foley, 2010, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Kang and Kim, 1998, Kara and Kara, 1996a, Ogden et al., 2004a, Ownbey and Horridge, 1997, Pires and Stanton, 2000, Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001). As previously stated, the level of acculturation within an ethnic group is heterogeneous as each individual within the ethnic group may have a different acculturation path or may have undertaken different acculturation strategies (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2009) which may influence their consumer behaviour accordingly. Quester and Chong (2001) note that differences in inter-generational consumer behaviour may be attributed to:

- an individual’s country of birth,
- language,
- amount of time spent overseas versus in the host country,
- ethnic identity,
- the frequency of travels to the homeland,
- the ethnicity or ethnic background of the individual’s spouse and three closest friends, and
- the individual’s residential status in the host country—all forces of acculturation that indicate the acculturation level of an individual.

A number of researchers (Berry et al., 2006, Kwak and Berry, 2001, Sabatier and Berry, 2008) studying the influence of acculturation on consumer behaviour have used Berry’s 1980 acculturation model in their studies to uncover inter-generational differences in media preferences and brand preferences. Other studies on the link between acculturation and consumer behaviour have also found inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour between members within an ethnic group (Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Burton, 2002, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a).

A number of research studies have noted differences in acculturation behaviour between the age groups with second and third generations appearing to be well assimilated into the values, beliefs and norms of the host culture compared to first generations (Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999). In fact, O’Guinn and Meyer’s (1984) study found the older generation to be more traditional as they were more likely to have been born in their country of origin and subsequently less acculturated. Conversely, high-acculturated individuals were more likely to have integrated into mainstream society, having adopted the traditions, customs and values of the host culture than less-acculturated individuals. Furthermore, individual acculturation forces, such as the individual’s duration of residence in Australia, her (or his) age, education in the host country, the support of family and friends and the racial background of the people within the individual’s social network all affect the individual’s acculturation level. It is therefore of interest to understand the influence of individual acculturation and how it may impact on an individual’s ethnic identity and ultimately on their consumer behaviour.

Myers and Lumbers’ (2008, p. 297) study of older shoppers found ‘inherent differences across [and within] generations’ that impact upon the generation’s consumer behaviour. Other supporting literature from various researchers (Lumpkin, 1985, Lumpkin and Greenberg, 1982, Martin, 1976, Pingol and Miyazaki, 2005, Seock
and Bailey, 2009) highlights notable differences between age groups in terms of their preferred information source. The younger generation displayed a preference for friends as their main information source for service and product choices in comparison to the older generation who relied on family, relatives and respected members of their community as their main information source (Lumpkin, 1985, Lumpkin and Greenberg, 1982, Martin, 1976, Pingol and Miyazaki, 2005, Seock and Bailey, 2009). The value of investigating individuals from the same ethnic group enables the researcher the ability to draw out the inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour that may exist between individuals from different generations.

5.8 ACCULTURATION AND INTER-GROUP DIFFERENCES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Webster’s (1992) inter-group study on Hispanics and Anglo-Americans found acculturation influenced consumer behaviour and contributed to the inter-group differences in consumer behaviour in their information search. Hispanics who strongly identified with their ethnic heritage—known as low-acculturated—differed in their consumer behaviour from Anglo-Americans in the use of ‘reference groups, advertising, [and] in-store search’ (Webster, 1992, p. 6). O’Guinn and Faber’s (1986) study also found the influence of acculturation on the inter-group differences between Anglo-Americans and Hispanics in how they rated the importance of consumer goods. Further, inter-group differences in consumer behaviour were found between Chinese and Filipino-American consumers in a study by Ownbey and Horridge (1997) that explored the effect of acculturation on shopping orientation and between Chinese, Japanese and Korean ethnic groups in a study by Kang and Kim (1998) which investigated the impact of acculturation on their purchase decisions for social clothes.

Although, Kara and Kara’s (1996a) study found differences in advertising and media preferences between Hispanics that were low-acculturated versus those who were high-acculturated, they also found similarities between the consumer behaviour of high-acculturated Hispanics and Anglo-Americans. In this regard, it is important to note that acculturation may not only account for differences between generations and between ethnic groups but acculturation can also account for similarities between
members of an ethnic group and between members of the host group (O’Guinn and Faber, 1986, Kara and Kara, 1996a).

5.9 SUMMARY

Although there are various definitions of acculturation offered by various researchers, this research uses Berry and Sam’s (1997, p. 298) definition of acculturation as the general processes and outcomes of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture.

5.9.1 Research Gap

A number of researchers (Chung and Fischer, 1999b, de Mooij, 2005, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a, Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999, Chan, 1995, Jamal, 2003, Jamal and Chapman, 2000) assert the influence of individual acculturation on inter-generational and inter-group differences on consumer behaviour. Whilst there is ample study of the influence of acculturation on inter-group differences in consumer behaviour between ethnic groups and/or the host group (Kara and Kara, 1996a, O’Guinn and Faber, 1985) studies on the influence of acculturation on inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour of three generations is lacking here and overseas.

The research gap that has emerged from this literature review is a better understanding of how individual acculturation has influenced the differences in consumer behaviour of:

1. three generations of consumers from the same ethnic background and

2. between two different ethnic minority groups, in particular Asian minority groups, within an Australian context.

5.9.2 Link to Research Gap

There is very limited research concerning the influence of individual acculturation on consumer behaviour across different generations of consumers from the same ethnic group leading to research question 3: How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of each generation?
In seeking to understand the influence of individual acculturation on inter-group differences in consumer behaviour—specifically individuals of Lao and Filipino background—within an Australian context research question 4 is posed: How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds?
CH 6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research methodology for this study, including the research and sampling strategy and data collection methods that were used to address the research questions. Figure 6.1 provides a map of the research design's elements and the order of consideration.

**Figure 6.1 Research Design**

- **RESEARCH DESIGN**
- **RESEARCH STRATEGY**
  - Individual consumer, group of consumers
- **QUALITATIVE MIXED METHOD**
  - Individual interviews, focus groups, field observations
- **SAMPLING STRATEGY**
  - Snowball, gatekeepers, social media/online, movie vouchers
- **DATA COLLECTION METHODS & INSTRUMENTS**
- **DATA ANALYSIS**
- **VALIDATION**
  - Data triangulation
As Beazley (2007) notes, qualitative analysis is used where the phenomena being studied requires a detailed understanding of the experiences, insights and opinions of the research participants. To investigate the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour, an exploratory qualitative, mixed-methods approach was used to obtain an in-depth understanding of:

1. How individuals perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity;

2. How ethnic identity may influence consumer behaviour; and

3. How individual acculturation may influence ethnic identity and ethnic consumer behaviour.

A qualitative, mixed-methods approach can offer rich, insightful findings because of the different sources of data collected. There is balance and confidence in these findings due to the various evidence provided (Kim, 2017).

For each research question, individual interviews and focus group interviews were employed to:

1. Understand how research participants felt about their ethnicity and ethnic identity;

2. Provide an explanation of how ethnic identity may influence consumer behaviour;

3. Explore the influence of individual acculturation on consumer behaviour; and

4. Draw out any inter-generational and inter-group differences in consumer behaviour.

Key research questions addressed by this study are noted in Section 1.4 and below:

- Research question 1 dealt with the perceptions that research participants have of their ethnicity and ethnic identity.

- Research question 2 dealt with ethnicity and ethnic identity and its influence on their consumer behaviour.
Research questions 3 and 4 dealt with how individual acculturation affects the inter-generational and inter-group differences in consumer behaviour within and between the two study groups.

6.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As previously discussed in Chapter 5 ethnic identity is shaped by acculturation, resulting broadly from interaction with one's ethnic group, other ethnic groups and the host group. These interactions will either strengthen or weaken a person's ethnic identity (Costa and Bamossy, 1995). This concept is supported by Barth (1969), Isajiw (1980) and Laroche et al. (2009) who assert that ethnicity is improved holistically through the social engagements and interactions that members have with their ethnic group, other ethnic groups and with the dominant/host culture. Changes in values and behaviours as a result of acculturation may occur for any or all groups, including the host group, due to the reciprocal social interactions between all groups (Jamal, 2003).

As shown in Figure 6.2, the social interactions between the host culture, the individual's ethnic group, and other ethnic groups reveal the links between ethnicity, ethnic identity and acculturation. Ethnic identity is influenced by ethnicity and acculturation but consumer behaviour is in turn influenced by ethnic identity and acculturation (Xu et al., 2004, Chattalas and Harper, 2007, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Kara and Kara, 1996a, Ogden et al., 2004a).
6.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research framework shown in Figure 6.3 was developed to gain a better understanding of the links, shown in Figure 6.2, between ethnicity, acculturation, ethnic identity and consumer behaviour. It outlines how the key research objectives will be addressed using a qualitative mixed methods combination of in-depth individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations. These qualitative mixed methods allow research participants to describe their experiences from an emic perspective and for the researcher to build theory derived from an understanding of how ethnicity and ethnic identity can be expected to influence consumer behaviour.
6.3.1 Theory Building

For this research, theory on the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao and Filipino background was constructed from the ground up using information uncovered from field observations, in-depth individual interviews and focus group interviews to ‘...ground [the] theoretical concepts with reality (Stuart et al., 2002, p. 420). The use of data triangulation in theory building involves proposing “a set of dimensions” that are used as the basis for...
evaluation (Stuart et al., 2002). The set of dimensions—a set of criteria established by the researcher—allows the researcher to refine possible explanations and insights that emerge as the theory is being developed to ensure the validity of the observations made and the data analysis undertaken (Stuart et al., 2002).

Given the need to construct theory from the ground up because of a lack of previous research to draw knowledge from (Goulding, 1998) the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao and Filipino background, theory building is therefore the most appropriate method to use for this study.

### 6.3.2 Emic Approach

The researcher used the linked emic approach to gain an understanding of the research participant’s ethnic identity. The linked emic perspective is based on the individual’s self-perception and is considered a measurement of an individual’s ethnic identity because it ‘reflects the salience and reality of the ethnic affiliation he/she experiences’ (Hirschman, 1981, p. 105). It is often used by researchers to understand why the individual self-ascribes with a particular identity, how the individual feels about her (or his) ethnicity and the likely circumstances when the individual will either strongly identify with her (or his) ethnic identity or reject her (or his) ethnic identity (Cohen, 1978, Ogden et al., 2004a, Hirschman, 1981, Laroche et al., 1998, Deshpande et al., 1986, Chung and Fischer, 1999b, Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2009).

The linked emic approach was also used to examine the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao and Filipino background as a comparative case study and to identify inter-group commonalities and differences by observing their behaviour from within (Berry, 1989, Fletcher and Fang, 2006). A detailed description of their behaviours as consumers was documented, evaluated and compared to ascertain how ethnicity and ethnic identity can be expected to influence their consumer behaviour. The Researcher documented and evaluated the findings of their (1) product purchase and consumption, (2) the ethnic background of the service providers they used, their spouse and social network; and (3) the frequency of their visits to the ethnic homeland.

For this study, Berry’s (1989) linked emic approach was employed because it is the most suitable approach to use when building theory from the ground up and when
6.4 QUALITATIVE MIXED METHODS

A qualitative, mixed methods approach was used for this research employing individual interviews, focus groups and field observations to facilitate a more insightful, descriptive and exploratory question and answer session to get at the heart of how the participants feel about their ethnicity and ethnic identity, and how they feel their ethnicity has influenced their consumption behaviour (Neumann, 2003, Patton, 2002, Yates, 2004). Qualitative mixed methods are suitable for detailing ‘the complexity of ethnicity’ (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2009, p. 67).

6.4.1 Justification for Qualitative Mixed Method Approach

The reasons for conducting a mixed method qualitative study is: (1) to enhance methodological soundness of the research design, and (2) to achieve complementarities (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). In fact, the soundness of the research design may be achieved by using complementary mixed methods i.e., ensuring research results can be elaborated upon, explained, improved or clarified between the different methods. Using a mixed method qualitative approach allows for each method’s strengths to be enhanced whilst minimising the weaknesses of the other (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

Research that requires an understanding of feelings, opinions, thoughts, perceptions and experiences are best handled using qualitative methods that allow for participants to explain, reflect or represent their feedback using descriptive information (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). The use of a qualitative approach will enable
members of the two ethnic study groups (individuals of Lao and Filipino background) to explore in greater detail, their feelings, their opinions and the meanings they attach to their ethnic identity. Moreover, qualitative research permits a more holistic and exploratory approach to get at the heart of what Lao-Australians and Filipino-Australians feel is their ethnic identity and the influence they believe their ethnic identity has on their consumption behaviour.

6.4.2 Interviews

It is important in a qualitative study to interview participants to be able to gain further insight into their thoughts, feelings and opinions and to ascertain specific attitudes. Interviews allow researchers to ask participants to clarify their answers so their meaning and intention is made clear and to correctly capture the essence of the participant's feedback (Creswell, 2009, McMurray et al., 2004, Morgan, 1997, Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). Furthermore, interviews permit in-depth replies as a result of being able to probe beyond “yes”, “no” and “do not know” responses, and often generate higher participation rates (Creswell, 2009, McMurray et al., 2004).

Interview questions for this study were a combination of formal, structured and informal, unstructured questions. Formal, structured questions enables the researcher to obtain quick replies to specific topics, such as country of birth, year of birth and residential status (Creswell, 2009, McMurray et al., 2004). Informal, unstructured questions allows the researcher to probe the interviewee further to gain a deeper insight beyond their initial answers (Creswell, 2009, McMurray et al., 2004) such as why they identify with one ethnic identity over another and to guide the interviewees in discussing themes pertaining to the research (Jamal, 2003), such as the most important reasons why they really use a particular service provider.

6.4.2.1 Individual Interview versus Group Interview

Individual interviews and group interviews were used for this study:

1. **Individual consumers**, both gatekeepers and non-gatekeepers, to understand the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behavior, and
2. *Group(s) of consumers* via focus group interview sessions to understand the influence of the group on an individual’s ethnic identity and consumer behaviour.

### 6.4.2.2 Individual Interviews with Community Gatekeepers

Individual interviews were conducted with key individuals recognised and acknowledged by the local population as gatekeepers to the Lao and Filipino communities. The gatekeepers were identified by their role within the community and their status amongst the local (Australian) Lao and Filipino population as community leaders, business leaders and religious leaders.

Seven Filipino community gatekeepers were interviewed for this research compared to nine Lao community gatekeepers. The researcher does not feel that interviewing two less community gatekeepers from the Filipino community makes any difference, as the data captured from the seven Filipino community gatekeepers was in-depth and very insightful. The interviews were conducted in different locations for the convenience of the research participants.

#### 6.4.2.2.1 Why Interview Community Gatekeepers?

Community gatekeepers may provide a well-rounded insight into their community’s view on ethnic identity and their group’s assimilation and acculturation to the Australian culture. Moreover ‘probing of experts can facilitate the gathering of useful information’ (Pires et al., 2003, p.227), such as identifying other key contacts in the local population.

With the help of community leaders from both the Lao and Filipino communities, individuals who identified as having Lao ancestry were recruited for focus group interviews during Buddhist celebrations held at the local Lao temple, whilst individuals who identified as having Filipino ancestry were recruited for focus group interviews during church services and during a local, council-run multicultural festival.
Because community gatekeepers may exert some influence in the community and amongst community members, the risk of using community gatekeepers to act as moderators for focus group interviews pose the following risks: some focus group participants may feel guarded in their answers or provide answers to research questions that they feel they should say rather than what they really think. However, the researcher, through several one-on-one meetings and discussions with the community gatekeepers, mitigated this risk. The objectives of the study and the need for all focus group participants to speak up and express their own opinions were discussed between the researcher and the community gatekeepers. The researcher also took on the more prominent role during the focus group sessions—asking the questions and speaking with each focus group participant directly—to downplay the community gatekeeper's influence.

### 6.4.2.3 Individual Interviews with Non-Gatekeepers

Individual interviews were conducted in different locations for the convenience of the research participants from Sydney's Lao and Filipino communities. These participants were non-gatekeepers of varying age, occupation and marital status.

There were 45 Filipino non-gatekeepers compared to 37 Lao non-gatekeepers interviewed for this research, which meets the recommended interview sample size of 30 to 50 interviews for grounded theory studies (Creswell, 2009, Tsai, 2006). The difference in sample size is due to the researcher having more success recruiting Filipino research participants for the study. This success is largely due to having access to more willing participants from the Filipino community.

#### 6.4.2.3.1 Why Conduct Individual Interviews?

The objectives for conducting individual interviews were to draw out: (1) inter-generational differences between the research participant groupings, (2) inter-group differences between individuals of Lao and Filipino background, and (3) to ascertain where the influences on consumer decision-making behaviour arise.

Because children and young adults of ethnic backgrounds are more likely to experience a conflict of identity between the values of their cultural heritage and the
values of the host culture, an inter-generational comparison was conducted to draw out differences in their consumer behaviour, including any conflicts between the different generations as a result of the influence of acculturation on each generation (Corenblum and Annis, 1993).

6.4.2.4 Sample Size

Some researchers differ on the number of interviews required, ranging from 15 for general qualitative research, six for phenomenology, and 30 to 50 for ethnography, grounded theory and ethno-science studies (Creswell, 2009, Tsai, 2006). To capture rich data, the researcher recruited:

- 37 research participants of Lao background, including nine community gatekeepers for the individual interviews, and
- 45 research participants of Filipino background, including seven community gatekeepers for the individual interviews.

6.4.2.5 Data Saturation

Researchers vary on which factors determine data saturation. Ryan and Bernard (2003, p. 77) note ‘(1) the number and complexity of data, (2) investigator experience and fatigue, and (3) the number of analyst reviewing the data’ whilst Mason (2010) states that data saturation is affected by the heterogeneity of the sample, the sample recruitment criteria, the number of samples required for the study and what methods are used to collect the data. Generally, data saturation occurs when there are ‘no new themes, findings, concepts or problems...evident in the data’ and is said to occur by the seventh or eighth interview from the study sample (Stuart et al., 2002, p. 4). As more people are interviewed, the likelihood of a common theme or majority view emerging increases, making it less likely for any unique information to remain “unique” or to remain a minority view (Lu et al., 2011).

Based on the researcher’s experience for this study, data saturation occurred at the eighth interview with no new data (no new theme) found. However, the researcher continued to conduct a minimum of nine to 10 individual interviews per group to validate that data saturation was occurring by about the eighth interview.
6.4.3 Focus Groups

This study employed the use of focus group discussion. A focus group comprises approximately seven to 10 people that are representative of the target market who are selected by the researcher to participate in a group discussion on a particular subject (Creswell, 2009, King and Horrocks, 2010, McMurray et al., 2004, Morgan, 1997).

Representative of the participant grouping criteria outlined in Section 6.4.2.3, six focus groups, consisting of three Lao focus groups and three Filipino focus groups, were recruited for the study. In line with the recommended number of members required to run a focus group (Creswell, 2009, King and Horrocks, 2010, McMurray et al., 2004, Morgan, 1997):

- Eight research participants were recruited for Lao focus group 1 and seven research participants were recruited for Lao focus groups 2 and 3. A total of 22 research participants were recruited for the three Lao focus groups.

- Eight research participants were recruited for Filipino focus groups 1, 2 and 3. A total of 24 research participants were recruited for the three Filipino focus groups.

Appropriate data was captured for the study by focusing the topics of discussion on:

- Sense of belonging, i.e., minority group versus host country
- Ethnic pride
- Social networks and their influence
- Buyer behaviour, and
- Buyer experience with service providers.

The researcher, in the role of principal facilitator, conducted all focus group sessions with assistance from a co-facilitator whose primary role was to take note of answers and observe individual versus group behaviour and dynamics at play.
6.4.3.1 Why Conduct Focus Group Interviews?

Focus group interviews were employed for this study because the method provides an opportunity for the researcher to comparatively study both individual and group behaviour on a specific topic (King and Horrocks, 2010, Morgan, 1997). Focus groups allow the researcher to collect qualitative data through careful selection of a group of research participants who can best meet the research objectives, providing data that serves as either the follow-up or as the groundwork for further study, such as by individual interviews. More importantly, focus groups provide a view of: (a) how individuals within the group feel about their ethnicity and ethnic identity, and (b) their perception of how their ethnicity and ethnic identity has influenced their consumption behaviour.

6.4.4 Field Observations

Field observations were used to observe the behaviour of research participants and observe for visual clues of their ethnic identity being reflected in their consumer behaviour, e.g., consumption of ethnic food or ethnic dress. Field observations permit the study of subjects “in the field”, on-site or in-house in their natural settings, allowing the researcher to document or diarise occurrences of significance, such as the research participant’s consumption behaviour, attitude, social customs or cultural practices as it happens. The researcher is provided with first-hand knowledge of the experience by observing the research participant in the home, at events organised by the ethnic community or at the grocery store (Creswell, 2009, McMurray et al., 2004).

The researcher attended a number of Lao and Filipino social events with research participants identified during individual interviews and focus group sessions. Field observations were carried out at: (1) local festivals run by the Lao and Filipino communities and/or by the local councils, (2) weddings, (3) cultural festivals, and (4) private parties, e.g., lunch/dinner.

6.4.4.1 Why Conduct Field Observations?

The main objectives for conducting field observations was to: (1) observe if research participants participated in cultural practices associated with the Lao and Filipino
culture, (2) observe any display of ethnic behaviour, such as speaking in their native tongue and wearing traditional ethnic costumes, and (3) ascertain whether they practised what they claimed to do.

6.5 SAMPLING STRATEGY

This study used purposeful, convenience sampling as a primary sampling method; snowball sampling was then used for the study population for in-depth individual interviews, and convenience sampling of the study population was used for focus group interviews. Recruitment of research participants was made through introductions organised by community gatekeepers, snowball sampling and through the offer of movie vouchers.

6.5.1 Study Population

For the purpose of this study, the Lao community refers to a group of people residing in the suburbs of Sydney who listed their ancestry as Lao in the 2006 and 2011 ABS Census (ABS, 2006, ABS, 2011a, ABS, 2011b). The Filipino community refers to a group of people residing in the suburbs of Sydney who listed their ancestry as Filipino in the 2006 and 2011 ABS Census (ABS, 2006, ABS, 2011a, ABS, 2011b).

There are 5,324 individuals of Lao background and 78,759 individuals of Filipino background in the state of NSW, with 5,014 individuals of Lao background and 70,430 individuals of Filipino background concentrated in the city of Sydney (ABS, 2011a). The Sydney population for both groups account for approximately half of the nation's Lao and Filipino population total. Hence, the decision was made to focus the study population on Sydney. From a logistics point of view, the researcher could personally conduct individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations given this concentration.

Following the concentrations of people of Lao heritage in Sydney, participants interviewed for the Lao study group were primarily drawn from the surrounding suburbs of Campbelltown, Fairfield and Liverpool. Conversely, the concentrations of people of Filipino heritage in Sydney were drawn across a wider stretch. Participants interviewed for the Filipino group were drawn from the surrounding suburbs of Ashfield, Auburn, Blacktown, Kingswood, North Sydney, and Quakers Hill.
6.5.2 Recruitment Criteria

6.5.2.1 Recruitment of Individual Interview Participants

Individuals selected to participate in the study met the following criteria:

- Fluency in the English language to answer questions without the aid of an interpreter. A notable exception was made for those participants who were not confident with using certain English phrases/words and family members were used as needed. To minimise “loss in translation”, the researcher double-checked the research participant’s replies either directly with the research participant or with the family member to correctly document what the research participant said.

- To minimise “ethnic identity” conflicts, Lao participants ascribed maternal and paternal ancestry as Laos. Similarly, Filipino participants also had to ascribe maternal and paternal ancestry as Filipino.

- Participants had to have Australian citizenship or be permanent residents living in Australia. No recent arrivals (within the last six to 12 months) or expatriates from Laos or the Philippines were included in the sample. Further, participants must have lived in Australia for a “reasonable” period of time.

- For the purpose of this research and based on the researcher’s interviews with individual participants and community gatekeepers, a “reasonable amount of time” is defined as those having lived in Australia for a minimum of five (5) years or more.

6.5.2.2 Recruitment of Focus Group Participants

Focus group participants were grouped into three Lao focus groups and three Filipino focus groups based on the grouping criteria defined in Section 7.5.2.3.

6.5.2.2.1 Lao Focus Group

After struggling to recruit enough research participants to form three focus groups, it was suggested by a Lao community gatekeeper that the most effective way to recruit
focus group members would be during a Lao festival held at the temple due to access to a higher number of people of Lao ancestry. Given the immediate access to potential research participants, convenience sampling was thus the most appropriate sampling strategy to use.

- All three Lao focus groups were recruited with the assistance of community gatekeepers during a Lao festival held at the local Lao Buddhist temple.

- Community gatekeepers were recruited to act as co-facilitators. They provided introductions to focus group participants and to their circle of friends, some of who were successfully recruited by the researcher to partake in individual interviews.

- With the assistance of the co-facilitators, the researcher made the decision to run back-to-back focus group sessions on the same day.

- The focus group sessions were conducted in the temple hall and each session was video-recorded and audio recorded and notes transcribed by both the principal facilitator (researcher) and co-facilitator.

6.5.2.2.2 Filipino Focus Group

To recruit research participants for the formation of the Filipino focus groups, the researcher contacted: (1) the president of the local Filipino community for assistance in forming focus group 1, and (2) the reverend of the local Baptist church for assistance in forming focus groups 2 and 3.

The president of the local Filipino community, APCO, assisted the researcher in recruiting community members to form focus group 1 during a council organised multicultural event. With immediate exposure to potential research participants of Filipino ancestry, convenience sampling was the most appropriate sampling method to use.

- The researcher made the decision to run the focus group session during the multicultural event in order to maintain their participation and interest. This
strategy proved effective given the data collected during the focus group session.

- The president of the local Filipino community, APCO, assisted the researcher in the role of co-facilitator.
- The focus group session was conducted at the local park with notes transcribed by the principal facilitator (researcher) and co-facilitator.

To form Filipino focus groups 2 and 3, the researcher sought the assistance of the reverend of the local Baptist church. At his request, the researcher attended a Baptist church service and personally presented the research objectives of the study to the congregation members, who were all of Filipino ancestry, seeking their interest and participation. With the encouragement of the reverend and with the offer of movie vouchers as an added incentive to participate, the researcher was able to recruit enough research participants to form focus groups 2 and 3, including additional research participants for individual interviews. Similar to focus group 1, convenience sampling was the most appropriate sampling method to use given the instant access to potential research participants.

- Similar to the Lao focus group sessions, the researcher made the decision to run back-to-back focus group sessions on the same day.
- The researcher led the focus group discussions as principal facilitator and the researcher’s friend, who is of Filipino ancestry and fluent in spoken and written Filipino, acted as co-facilitator.
- The focus group sessions were conducted in the church hall with notes transcribed by both the principal facilitator and co-facilitator.

The limitation posed by using convenience sampling for the Lao and Filipino focus groups is potentially the homogeneity in religious and cultural values of focus group participants. Therefore, any findings arising from these focus groups may not be representative of the wider Lao or Filipino community. However, although these focus group participants were chosen from a smaller sampling pool, they were required to
meet the recruitment criteria in order to be accepted into the relevant focus group, thus ensuring data reliability.

6.5.2.3 Grouping Criteria

To investigate inter-generational differences in consumption behaviour and to understand the influence of ethnicity, ethnic identity and acculturation on consumer behaviour, Lao and Filipino participants were divided into the sub-groups below, further moderated by age (where applicable):

1. Group 1: Individuals born, raised and educated overseas;
2. Group 2: Individuals born overseas but raised and educated in Australia; and
3. Group 3: Individuals born, raised and educated in Australia.

Inter-generational gaps are defined by birth, the country in which the individual was raised, and the country in which the individual was primarily educated; factors which all indicate how acculturation paths may differ. The ‘first-generation’ is often defined as foreign-born migrants who migrated to the host country as an adult (I.D, 2013e, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2013, Stuart-Fox, 1997). The ‘second-generation’ is often defined as: (1) foreign-born migrants who migrated to the host country as children, or (2) children born in the host country to migrant parents (I.D, 2013e, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2013, Stuart-Fox, 1997). For the purpose of the research, participants categorised into group 1 are ‘first-generation’ participants. Participants categorised into ‘second-generation’ have been further segmented into group 2 and group 3 with the differentiator between the two being overseas born (group 2) versus Australian-born (group 3). The researcher’s reason for further segmenting the second-generation group by country of birth is to ascertain differences, if any, in consumer behaviour between participants born in Australia versus participants who migrated to Australia as children.

6.5.2.3.1 Justification for Grouping Criteria

Inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour is an understudied area in marketing (Burton, 2002). Previous studies have noted that there are differences in
acculturation behaviour between different generational age groups (Kara and Kara, 1996b, Quester et al., 2001, Kara and Kara, 1996a), therefore it is important to identify how acculturation affects each age group during the consumer decision-making process. Furthermore, individuals from the second generation are more likely to consider themselves as "bicultural" (Stroink and Lalonde, 2009) and to feel a connection to both their ethnic heritage and to the host culture. This may result in a level of conflict as they navigate between following the cultural values, beliefs and customs of their parents and ethnic community members versus accepting the values, beliefs and ideals of the host culture from their interaction with friends, teachers, the traditional media, such advertisements and commercials and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (Stroink and Lalonde, 2009).

6.5.3 Recruitment Approaches

The primary sampling method used for this study is purposeful, convenience sampling where research participants were only chosen if they met the research criteria as set out in Section 6.4.2 of this chapter.

6.5.3.1 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling was employed to recruit more research participants as needed for the research. Snowball sampling is a sampling method where current research participants in a survey are used to recruit ‘similar or like-minded’ people amongst their group of friends, family, colleagues or acquaintances into participating in the same survey (Morgan, 1997, Somekh and Lewin, 2005).

All research participants for the individual interviews, except one, were successfully recruited via snowball sampling or community gatekeepers.

6.5.3.2 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling was employed to recruit research participants for the formation of the focus groups required for this research. Convenience sampling is a sampling method of recruitment that is employed due to accessibility, availability and proximity of the potential research participants to the researcher (Morgan, 1997, Morgan, 1998).
6.5.3.3 Community Gatekeepers

The researcher contacted community gatekeepers from the local Lao and Filipino communities for their assistance in identifying, nominating and encouraging individuals to participate in individual interviews and focus group sessions. Community leaders, business leaders and religious leaders act as gatekeepers to the local Lao and Filipino population and are therefore in positions of influence through their connections (Pires et al., 2003). By involving community leaders early on in the research, I found that their assistance provided guidance on the ‘feasibility of the proposed sample, [and] administration method’ required to carry out the data collection (Pires et al., 2003, p.227).

For this study, community gatekeepers provided the following assistance to the researcher: invitations to the community’s social events, contact details of suitable participants (with their consent) to partake in individual interviews, focus group sessions and field observations and building community acceptance for the research study (Pires et al., 2003).

Interviews with community gatekeepers were held at locations of convenience for the research participants.

6.5.3.4 Social Media/Online

As a result of the popularity of social media, in particular amongst the younger demographics, the researcher used Facebook and online advertising on a Filipino newspaper website and on a Lao temple website page as a “call for volunteers”. Unfortunately, this did not prove to be as successful as only one research participant—who met the criteria for study group 1—was recruited via Facebook.

No research participants were recruited from the online advertisement.

Social media/online recruitment methods used to recruit research participants include Facebook and a free advertisement section in Filipino online newspaper.
6.5.3.5 Movie Vouchers

A large number of research participants who met the criteria for study groups 2 and 3 were recruited using movie vouchers due to lower participation rates during initial recruitment.

6.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

The data collection methods used for this research were individual interviews, focus group interviews, e-mail interviews, telephone interviews and field observations. In addition, data collection instruments, such as interview guides and focus group guides, were also used.

6.6.1 Interview Data Collection Procedure

The researcher contacted gatekeepers and non-gatekeeper participants requesting approximately one hour of their time to conduct a face-to-face interview. One hour ensures that there is sufficient time to allow for clarification, explanation or further probing of interviewees (Jamal, 2003). Data from interviews were collected using:

1. Audio-recording (where applicable and permissible) of face-to-face interviews to enable verbatim transcription (Jamal, 2003);

2. Transcripts from note-taking or data entry using the laptop (where audio-recording was not permissible) was used to capture answers during face-to-face interviews (Jamal, 2003);

3. Transcripts from notes taken during telephone interviews;

- Telephone interviews allow research participants who are less mobile—due to their age or health—to participate in the research study without having to accommodate a stranger in their home to conduct an interview.

- Telephone interviews also allow research participants who are restricted by (lack of) transportation to be able to participate in the interview without the need to travel.
Other added benefits are the immediate responses between researcher and research participant and being able to clarify questions over the phone immediately (King and Horrocks, 2010).

4. Electronic mail (or e-mail);

- E-mail was offered as a last resort to research participants during the recruitment process after exhausting requests for a commitment for a face-to-face interview or a telephone interview. This had the effect of increasing the participation rate for the research study.

- E-mail is a fast and efficient means of collecting data and one of the main forms of communicating today. The flexibility that it affords people made it an attractive interview option, allowing research participants to answer questions in their own time and in their own words. It also enabled research participants to ask the researcher for clarification and vice versa (King and Horrocks, 2010).

- The limitation to using e-mails as a data collection method was the need to trust the research participant to answer the research questions free from the influence of others. In addition, although the researcher is speaking to the research participant, the researcher is unable to read their body language and trusts the research participant to say what they mean.

- However, to negate the limitations, an e-mail interview is more likely to encourage research participants to be honest and express their true opinions because they do not have a stranger in front of them asking them a question that may make them feel uncomfortable. Sitting behind their computer, they may not feel as awkward or as uncomfortable answering the same questions.

- E-mails allow research participants to answer questions in their own words, using their own linguistic expressions and tone, preserving the authenticity of the research participant’s voice.
Furthermore, e-mails also allow for dialogue to occur between research participant and researcher if need be (King and Horrocks, 2010).

6.6.2 Focus Group Data Collection Procedure

Ideally, the best methods for recording focus group sessions are video-recordings for observing research participant body language and audio-recordings to capture the gist of the group discussions and to observe the synergy between the two (Elliott and Jankel-Elliott, 2003). However, given the poor quality of the video-and-audio recordings of the Lao focus group sessions due to poor film quality and noise pollution, the researcher had to rely on the notes transcribed by both the researcher and the co-facilitator taken during the focus group sessions. The researcher and co-facilitators were also primarily focused on capturing the key discussion points though observation of research participant body language received some mention. To enhance the reliability and accuracy of the data collected the researcher and the co-facilitator recapped key discussion points at the conclusion of each focus group session to ensure they had been correctly documented.

In comparison, the Filipino focus group sessions were not video-recorded due to the objections of some focus group participants. Instead, the researcher and a co-facilitator transcribed notes covering focus group participant replies, their observed behaviour and the group dynamics. Similar to the Lao focus groups, reliability and accuracy of the data collected was enhanced by the researcher and the co-facilitator reviewing key discussion points at the end of each focus group session to ensure focus group participant replies were correctly captured.

The advantage of having the researcher and a co-facilitator transcribe notes of discussion points and observed behaviour is being able to ascertain what was said and when including noting the group dynamics at work (Morgan, 1997).

6.6.3 Field Observation Data Collection Procedure

Field observations of research participants identified during individual interviews and focus group sessions coincided with ethnic-based celebrations and social events to enable the researcher to witness the display of ethnic behaviour, customs, cultural
traits and traditions being practiced. These observations were noted in a journal entry as the behaviours were witnessed to ensure the moments were captured immediately, and then electronically recorded via data entry into a word document (Creswell, 2009, McMurray et al., 2004).

The researcher conducted:

1. Four field observations of Filipino research participants at the Flavours of Auburn Festival 2011, Multicultural Food Festival 2011, Filipino Kultura Festival 2011, and Filipino Baptist church mass service.

2. Five field observations of Lao research participants at a wedding, Pha Khao Sammakkhee Festival (Buddhist festival), Baci ceremony (Lao cultural festival), private party and Lao New Year 2012.

As resources and time limited the researcher, the field observations were primarily focused on the individual’s behaviour and immediate surroundings. As a result, the mood, atmosphere and energy of the environment in which the individuals were present and which may have a bearing on their behaviour or attitude were not captured.

6.7 DATA ANALYSIS

After the data collection process was completed, the researcher reviewed and conducted an in-depth analysis of documented conversations and discussions from in-depth individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations.

6.7.1 Data Analysis Process

The data analysis process for this research involved sorting and grouping raw data collected, organising and preparing transcripts from individual interviews, focus group interviews and field notes for analysis and coding the data into themes for later interpretation using in-depth analysis and NVivo version 10. Data analysis for this research study involved cross comparisons:

1. within the study group to gauge the level of inter-generational differences and
2. between the study groups to gauge the inter-group differences.

6.7.2 Data Analysis Protocol

Following the data analysis protocol (refer to Appendix 3.3), the researcher conducted a review of the data collected, followed by an in-depth analysis of the transcripts and notes. The researcher performed an in-depth data analysis through a process of categorisation in order to generate concepts for each data group. Each data group or category was then re-evaluated and re-analysed into like categories. Categorisation for each data group was achieved by separating the data into groups based on their similarities in order to minimise category duplication. These groups were then manually coded and each data group was reviewed for any emerging themes, patterns or trends. Lastly, the codes were sorted in terms of relevance to the research objectives and research questions in order to link the key themes, patterns or trends back to each research objective and research question (Goulding, 1998).

For example, and as shown in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 examples of NVivo word frequency, after accounting for and removing “general” words—words that are commonly used and are not specific to the study—from the data analysis, the remaining key words were then categorised to identify themes, patterns or trends that emerged during the analysis. The researcher categorised and re-categorised the themes to merge duplicate or like categories until no new category emerged, which for this study was at the third categorisation.
### Table 6.1 Samples of NVivo Word Frequency – Lao Study Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Category 1</th>
<th>Category 2</th>
<th>Category 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
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<td>Ethnic Group</td>
<td>Ethnic Group</td>
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<td>culture</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
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<td>support</td>
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<td>Support</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
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<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>help</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
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<td>traditions</td>
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<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providers</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Service Providers</td>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Host Culture</td>
<td>Host Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Social Network</td>
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<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
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<td>Acculturation</td>
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<td>137</td>
<td>Purchase</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.2 Samples of NVivo Word Frequency – Filipino Study Group

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<th>Category 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
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<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
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<td>Social Network</td>
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<td>Australian</td>
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<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>values</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support</td>
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<td>Support</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
</tr>
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<td>help</td>
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<td>Support</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sense of Belonging</td>
<td>Ethnic Group</td>
<td>Ethnic Group</td>
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<td>Service Providers</td>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Social Network</td>
</tr>
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<td>Product</td>
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<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>118</td>
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<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
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<td>customer</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
<td>Consumer Behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.7.3 NVivo

The researcher used NVivo version 10 to conduct data analysis. NVivo is a software tool that enables researchers to manage raw data collection, manage and organise research ideas and concepts, query and interrogate data, and use graphics, diagrams and models to present research concepts and create research reports (Beazley, 2007, pp. 2-3).

For this research, NVivo was used to enhance ‘...validity of the results by ensuring that all instances of a particular usage are found’ (Mueller, 1980, p. 3). NVivo assisted the researcher to determine a pattern or trend amongst the key themes that emerged during data analysis. NVivo’s comprehensive query feature and auto-coding assisted the researcher in coding all the data into key themes identified during the data collection stage. These themes were validated using NVivo’s word frequency and word association feature to identify words most commonly used by all participants. Particular word frequencies and word associations used during interviews and focus group discussions allowed for the key themes, patterns or trends to be categorised. These themes, patterns or trends were compared against those manually assigned by the researcher for validation purposes.

6.8 DATA VALIDATION

Valid, reliable and trustworthy data are of paramount concern to the researcher. All participants were advised of purpose of the study, the research aims and its relevance, including the importance of participant feedback.

To validate the data collected, the researcher employed data triangulation that allowed for multiple sources of information to be used to uncover the key facts from individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations that may have been overlooked if the researcher had relied solely on a single source of information (Huettman, 1993).

To validate the reliability of the data, the researcher recapped the discussion points of the individual interviews with the research participants and with each focus group to validate that the researcher’s notes were correctly transcribed. In addition, the researcher and the co-facilitator of each focus group interview also compared notes.
and recapped discussion points to validate that both correctly transcribed notes. Where available, recordings of the individual interviews were replayed and compared to transcribed notes for validation.

6.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An ethics approval process was undertaken to ensure consent was received from all research participants to participate in the research study. Confidentiality and privacy of research participants were respected at all times.

The Researcher created trust with the research participants by discussing in detail the purpose and intent of the study including the reassurance that their names would not be published and that they may withdraw from the interview or focus groups at any time. Furthermore, their comments and feedback were read back to them to ensure that what had been documented during the individual interview and/or focus group interviews were correctly captured. The interview and/or focus group interviews only proceeded when research participants advised the Researcher that they were comfortable to do so.
CHAPTER 7 LAO STUDY GROUP FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of Chapters 7, 8 and 9 is to present the research findings and conclusion from the individual interviews, focus groups and field observations conducted across the two study groups. The data collected were analysed, reviewed and used to explain:

1. The links between an individual’s ethnicity and their ethnic identity and its influence on the individual; and

2. Individual acculturation and how it may affect the individual’s ethnic identity and consumer behaviour.

Chapter 7 presents the research findings for the Lao study groups and the inter-generational differences or similarities in consumer behaviour between consumers from the same ethnic background. Research question 4 is not covered in Chapter 7 because it is addressed by the inter-group findings between the Lao and Filipino study groups presented in Chapter 9.

A summary of the research questions addressed in Chapter 7 are noted below:

1. How do Lao-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?

2. How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?

3. How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of each generation of consumers from the same ethnic background?

As summarised in Figure 7.1, the research findings for this study have been separated into three sections, with one section for each research objective. Findings for each study group are also presented to show inter-generational differences or similarities between the three study sub-groups:

- Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas
- Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia
- Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia.
7.1 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

7.1.1 Research Question 1: How do Lao-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?

To answer the above question and to understand how they perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context, research participants were asked to:

- Self-ascribe their ethnic identity to ascertain the ethnicity and/or community they felt a sense of belonging to,

- Define in their own words what ethnic identity meant to them, and

Their feedback was then reviewed against the definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity used for this study. To recap, this study uses the ABS (2000, p. 3) definition of ethnicity and Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity.

Ethnicity: ‘the shared similarity of a group of people on the basis of one or more of the following factors: cultural tradition, including family and social customs; a common geographic origin; a common language; a common literature (written or oral); a common religion; being a minority; or being racially conspicuous’ (ABS, 2000, p. 3).

Ethnic Identity: ‘a self-ascribed dynamic construct that transitions through various stages and is highly dependent upon an individual’s feelings of pride and a sense of belonging towards her (or his) ethnic group’ (Phinney’s 1992, 1990b).

7.1.1.1 Lao Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas

7.1.1.1.1 Lao Study Group 1 Interviews

There were 10 male research participants aged between 50 and 70 years old and six female research participants aged between 40 and 60 years old. All research participants are parents and all are practicing Buddhists. When questioned about their ethnic identity and what it meant to them, most research participants were happy to speak at length and with pride about their Lao heritage. A summary of their self-ascribed ethnic identity is provided in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Self-Ascribed Ethnic Identity (Lao Interview Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Lao-Australian</th>
<th>Australian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao Interview Group 1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ethnic Identity – Lao

All research participants who identified as Lao perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity as linked and within the boundaries of their ethnic origin and culture referring to their ethnic background, Lao blood, birth and identity:

- *Because I came from Laos and my ethnic background is Laotian.*
- *I am an Australian citizen but my blood is Lao.*
- *Most of my life has been in Laos and when I came here I was an adult already so my Lao [identity] is still very strong.*

Most research participants perceived that their ethnic identity had contributed to the pride they have in their Lao heritage and cultural values:

- *...my ethnic identity has contributed to how I see myself—a proud Lao man. Proud of my heritage, my culture and my origin.*
- *I still have the values I had growing up in Laos even though I live in Australia, my feelings and opinions have not changed too much. Older and wiser yes but I am still a girl from Laos in my heart.*

However, one research participant perceived that his ethnic identity had not contributed to his self-perception. He felt that he had become more mainstream, like the host culture, because of his active participation in multicultural events. He says:

- *I see myself, my ethnic identity [and it] has become in many ways more like the mainstream communities [local "Anglo" community and larger ethnic communities]. It is in the way that I do participate in multicultural events, I enjoy Australian shows and other performances in various places outside my local area.*

When asked to define *ethnic identity* many descriptions provided by research participants were *geographic*, such as country of origin, being from another country or background, where you come from, where you were born, where your parents came from, ethnic background, identity, your roots and upbringing. These definitions are similar to the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity:
Ethnic identity to me is about identification, who am I? Where do I come from?

It’s unique, it’s your ethnic background, your country of origin. It is part of you, your identity, the identity of your background.

Someone from another country, from a different background.

Ethnic Identity – Lao-Australian

In comparison, all research participants who identified as Lao-Australian had a bicultural perception of their ethnicity and ethnic identity. They described their ethnic identity as a combination of their Lao culture, heritage, country of birth and origin plus their Australian residency and citizenship:

- Lao is my country of birth and my origins. I cannot forget my origins...Australia is my adoptive country, which comes second but I am still proud of living in a welfare state.

- I think of myself as a Lao-Australian because I am Lao, I came from Laos, but I live in Australia and I have lived here for a very long time.

- Lao born and Australian citizenship.

They also felt their ethnic identity had contributed to their self-perception in the way they talk and think, in the practice of their religious and cultural traditions, values and customs, and in how they behave and act:

- I still have my Lao values and my Lao customs so it contributes to my way of thinking.

- The things I do, the time I donate to the local temple and to the community, I do this because I like to help the community [Lao]. We look after our elderly and we look after our family.

When asked to define what ethnic identity meant to them, various definitions were provided, similar to both the definitions used by the ABS (2000) of ethnicity and Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity:
1. *Ethnicity*: ethnic background, origin, your culture and the culture of your parents and grandparents, cultural values, heritage, traditions, what shapes behaviour and appearance, and your homeland,

2. *Ethnic identity*: identity,

3. *Ethnic group*: a member of a minority group, minority, a part of a multicultural society.

Similarly, other definitions used to describe ethnic identity were geographic e.g., country of origin, where you come from, where you were born and where your parents came from. These descriptions also follow the ABS (2000) definition used for ethnicity:

- It means someone who is a member of the minority group and a part of a multicultural society...The Lao population is part of Australia’s ethnic community and we are considered as minorities in this country.

- It means our culture, our heritage and the traditions and culture of our parents and grandparents.

Yet, despite their self-ascribed ethnic identity, only a number of research participants perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity:

- I can lose the country but I can’t lose my ethnic background. It doesn’t matter where you move to, you take your ethnic background with you. I am Lao even if I live in Australia.

- I was born in Laos and Laos is where I came from, so I think of myself as Lao, not Lao-Australian. Australia is my home but it is not my culture.

The majority however perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity as a fusion of their Lao heritage and the host culture. Although they perceived their ethnicity as having a link to their sense of ethnic identity, their perception was also influenced by their citizenship status as an Australian and Australia as their home:

- I am now an Australian on my passport, but I am from Laos.
I am a Lao person living in Australia. Australia has become my home, my daughter was born here, but our culture, our heritage, is Lao even though we are also Australian.

Ethnic Identity – Australian

Only one research participant identified as an Australian—a teacher who has lived in Australia for 24 years. She perceives herself as an Australian saying, “Sometimes I think I am the citizen of the world. Really, I am me! Happy in my own skin.” Following Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity as a self-ascribed construct, her perception of her ethnicity is separated from her sense of ethnic identity, which she describes as “a feeling in my heart”. Furthermore, she adds that, “my heart and my feelings are happy for me to be a true blue Aussie.”

7.1.1.1.2 Lao Focus Group 1

The focus group was made up of three females and five males aged between 40 and 60 years old. Although smaller in numbers, the female focus group participants were more verbal than their male counterparts. The men were more attentive and quiet than the women and would nod in agreement to a comment being made or shake their head if they did not agree or if they wanted to add to the comments made. The general conversation amongst themselves when not answering the focus group questions was a mixture of Lao (primary) and English (minor) being spoken.

Of all the focus group sessions conducted, the focus group participants from this group were by far the most talkative. Focus group members interviewed for this research were very open, cheerful, candid, friendly and conversational, in particular the women. With so much knowledge of the Lao culture, focus group participants were happy to share their opinions about how they felt about their ethnicity and ethnic identity and their pride in their Lao heritage.

Focus group participants were questioned on the community they felt a sense of belonging to. A summary of the communities they identified with is shown in Table 7.2.
All focus group participants unanimously identified with the Lao community. Their perception of their ethnicity is closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity. Using similar descriptions to the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity, they described their ethnic identity in terms of their ethnic background, heritage, birthplace and physical features:

- The community that we feel we belong to is most definitely the Lao community. We are born in Laos and that is our heritage.
- Because our background is Lao and not Australian, people would see us as part of the Lao community.
- Lao community because I was born in Laos and I look like a Lao person.

Table 7.2 Sense of Belonging – Community (Lao Focus Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Australian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.1.1.1.3 Lao Field Observations of Study Group 1

The researcher observed community gatekeepers and senior members of the Lao community in attendance at the *Pha Khao Sammakkke* festival (Buddhist Lent) at the local Lao temple. Regardless of their ethnic identity, all female field participants visually displayed their ethnic heritage by wearing the traditional Lao sarong. Some of the male field participants wore the traditional Lao bamboo shirt and Lao “sash” over their shirts. In a further display of their ethnic heritage, participation in the traditional Lao lamvong (dancing) was observed by all female field participants, though not of the male field participants. Lao was the language of choice used amongst field participants—none used English conversationally.

The above example suggests field participants perceived their ethnic identity in terms of their ethnic heritage as reflected by their ethnic dress and ethnic language (Penaloza, 1994a).
7.1.1.2 Lao Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia

7.1.1.2.1 Lao Study Group 2 Interviews

There were eight male research participants aged between 30 and 40 years old and three female research participants aged between 30 and 45 years old. Eleven research participants were affiliated with the Buddhist faith and only one male research participant was affiliated with the Catholic faith.

A summary of the research participants’ self-ascribed ethnic identity, as shown in Table 7.3, revealed eight research participants identified as Lao-Australian and three research participants identified as Lao, highlighting their closeness to their Lao heritage. Due to their fluency in English and similarity in age and status to the researcher (i.e., born overseas, raised and educated in Australia), research participants from this group were very open and conversational about their views on ethnic identity and what it meant to them.

Table 7.3 Self-Ascribed Ethnic Identity (Lao Interview Group 2)

<table>
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<tbody>
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<td>Lao Interview Group 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ethnic Identity – Lao*

Whilst all research participants identified as Lao, only two perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity, describing their identity in terms of their cultural background, Lao identity and country of birth. These terms are similar to the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity:

- *I was born in Laos so my identity, the ethnic identity I identify with, is Lao. I live in Australia but I am not "Australian".*

- *Because that is my birth place.*

Further, these two research participants also perceived their ethnic identity had contributed to their self-perception through their generosity and beliefs on life:
I am influenced by my culture, which reflects how I see myself. My beliefs are what contribute to my perceptions of the world, of life and of myself.

I believe that it makes me more kind and caring than the local Australians.

However, “ethnic identity” to one research participant was more complex because he felt conflicted between his self-perception of his ethnic identity and how he felt others perceived him:

- I am only Australian because of my citizenship but I grew up here and don’t know much about Laos except for what my mum taught me...I am more Australian and I like being Australian but I can’t forget that I am Lao because I look Asian so people know that I am not really "Australian" by the way that I look... But, I feel like an "Aussie" and my parents are "Lao" and I will say that I am an Aussie Lao no matter what anyone else says or thinks.

When asked what his ethnic background was, he initially identified as Lao. Yet when he was asked to explain why he identified as Lao, his answers revealed that although he felt “Australian” he really identified as an “Aussie-Lao” rather than just “Lao”. Furthermore, he did not perceive that his ethnic identity had any influence on his self-perception:

- I see myself as an “Aussie Lao” but sometimes other people see me as an "Asian"...I travel as an Australian so I see myself as an Aussie and other people see me as an Aussie because of my passport. If it weren’t for how I look I would just say I am Australian because I know more about Australian culture and history than about Lao history. But, I am more than just "Lao" or just "Aussie" so it is not just my ethnic background that makes me who I am.

Moreover, whilst he perceived his ethnicity as having a link to his sense of ethnic identity he recognised the influence of the Australian culture through his Australian upbringing:

- I grew up here and don’t know much about Laos except for what my mum taught me. I can’t read Lao...So I am more Australian and I like being Australian but I can’t forget that I am Lao because I look Asian so people know that I am not really...
"Australian" by the way that I look. I think of myself as an Australian of Lao background, which is what I am.

As stated by Phinney (1996b), outsiders may debate the individual's ethnic identity if her/his physical features, such as skin colour, a prominent nose or specific eye colour, are unique to a particular ethnic group. O’Guinn and Faber (1986) note that ethnic minorities may at times feel torn between both cultures.

The descriptions of ethnic identity used by research participants were akin to the definition used for ethnicity by the ABS (2000), such as unique culture, beliefs, traditions, religion, race, ethnic background, original nationality and way of life. These definitions also include a geographic description, such as born in a different country, where you came from and where your parents and grandparents came from:

- To me, ethnic identity refers to my unique culture, my beliefs and religion, the traditions that I uphold, my race and my way of life.

- Your ethnic background, what your original nationality is, someone who is not born "here" in Australia, someone who was born in a different country. It's where you came from, where your parents and grandparents came from. We are all originally from somewhere but it just depends on how "recent" you are [in arrival] that can make someone seem more "ethnic" than others.

**Ethnic Identity – Lao-Australian**

All research participants who identified as Lao-Australian perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as an integration of their Lao language, culture and customs with the adoption of the Australian culture. Their ethnic identity is a reflection of both their Lao heritage and Australian upbringing and values:

- I was brought up with the Australian culture and with the Lao culture so I've embraced the Australian culture on top of my Lao culture... I am Lao but I am also Australian. I can't forget my roots or my heritage but I am also Australian in other ways, having grown up here.
▪ I've grown up in Australia and have been naturalised into the Australian way of life. But, I have not forgotten my Lao culture and customs largely due to my parents and family.

▪ I speak Lao and I believe in the Lao culture but I have also taken on Australian values and beliefs.

A few research participants perceived their ethnic identity had contributed to their self-perception in the things they do and have, in the influence it has had on their creativity, in their ownership and sense of belonging to the Lao culture, and in the sense of pride and honour they have towards their Lao culture:

▪ I feel love and a sense of belonging and ownership of a culture that precedes me beyond years and centuries. Being Laotian-Australian, I feel a sense of pride, especially being Lao, a sense of pride and community.

▪ ...it is in all the things I do and have...So as a Lao-Australian, my identity has influenced my creativity, combining both the "Lao" and "Australian" aspect of my culture into my art.

▪ Sure, it's something that affects your views, the culture that you were brought up with and how your parents have raised you. When your parents migrated here to Australia, they also brought along their culture and they have raised me under their culture as well so it's a part of me.

In contrast, the majority of research participants perceived their ethnic identity had not contributed to their self-perception as they did not perceive themselves by their ethnic identity and saw themselves beyond their ethnicity, expressing feelings such as:

▪ I don’t tend to think of my ethnic background when it comes to my description of myself. I think of my personality traits, which are ethnicity-free.

▪ I don’t see myself by my ethnic identity. When I describe myself, I describe what I have done, what I have accomplished and being Lao doesn’t come into the equation.
All research participants who identified as Lao-Australian perceived their ethnicity as having a link to their sense of ethnic identity whilst also recognising the influence of the Australian culture. Research participants perceived their ethnic identity in terms of their country of birth and Lao culture with an appreciation of the Australian culture and values:

- For me, both my parents are Laotian but…I grew up in Australia for the majority of my life. I came here when I was one year old. So I’ve taken on a lot of the Australian culture. I do feel like an Australian no matter what I look like on the outside. But also, I uphold, you know, where my true ethnic background is. So I feel like, I’m a, what do they call it? A bit of both. Not just one or the other.

In response to what they thought ethnic identity meant, research participants described ethnic identity as their background and the background of their parents, the culture they grew up with and belong to and their bloodlines. Common descriptions such as who your parents are, who your ancestors are, where your ancestors come from and where you come from were also noted. Other descriptions fit those used for ethnicity by the ABS (2000), such as origins, roots, heritage, nationality, religion, customs, values and belief system:

- Ethnic identity, to me, means, where you come from. Your bloodlines. That’s what it means to me. Your true bloodlines. Where you really come from. Who your parents are. Who your ancestors are.

- Basically it means your culture, the culture you grew up with, your parents’ background, the culture you belong to. You may talk like an Australian but people can guess your ethnic background is from somewhere else.

7.1.1.2.2 Lao Focus Group 2

The focus group was made up of four females and three males aged between 33 and 45 years of age. The general conversation comprised of English. The Lao language was not spoken during group answers but rather as side comments to name the Lao dish or the Lao tradition in mind. The male and female focus group participants equally contributed to the group discussions. Focus group participants appeared very
considered in their responses, bouncing ideas, comments and opinions off one another when asked about the community they felt they belong to and pride in their Lao heritage.

A summary of their sense of belonging is shown in Table 7.4, which revealed three focus group participants identified with the Lao-Australian community and four focus group participants identified with the Australian community.

**Table 7.4 Sense of Belonging – Community (Lao Focus Group 2)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Lao-Australian</th>
<th>Australian</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lao Focus Group 2</td>
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</table>

Focus group participants who identified with the Lao-Australian community perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity as an integration of their Lao and Australian culture. Following Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity as a self-ascribed construct that is dependent upon how an individual feels towards their ethnic community, focus participants felt a sense of belonging to the Lao community, yet acknowledged it as a Lao-Australian community saying, “We feel we belong to the Lao community but that we are a Lao-Australian community, not just Lao.”

Conversely, focus group participants who identified with the Australian community perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as fully assimilated with the Australian culture. Linking back to Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity, focus group participants felt a greater sense of belonging to the Australian community because of their knowledge of Australian history and culture and fluency in the English language. In fact, they felt they had more knowledge of Australian history and culture than they did of Lao history and culture. Living in Australia, being an Australian citizen and feeling part of the wider Australian community only served to strengthen their sense of belonging to the Australian community:

- *We grew up here and some of us feel more comfortable with the Australian community because we understand the language, the history and the culture a lot better than Lao history for example.*
Because we live here, we are citizens of Australia and we are part of something bigger, the wider Australian community.

7.1.1.2.3 Lao Field Observations of Study Group 2

Field observations revealed some participants were proud to display their ethnic heritage as evident at Pha Khao Sammakkhee festival (Buddhist Lent) at the local Lao temple. Some of the female field participants were observed wearing the traditional Lao sarong and a few male field participants were observed wearing the traditional Lao bamboo shirt and Lao “sash” over their shirts. However, a number of female and male field participants wore western clothing rather than the traditional Lao costumes. No field participants were observed participating in the traditional Lao lamvong (dancing). English was the dominant language of choice used amongst field participants although a few words or phrases were spoken in the Lao language.

The above examples suggest some field participants perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity in terms of their ethnic heritage as reflected by their ethnic dress. However, the western clothing worn by other field participants and the dominant use of the English language and the non-participation in ethnic dance does suggest that for some field participants, their ethnic identity reflected their acculturation to the host culture.

7.1.1.3 Lao Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia

7.1.1.3.1 Lao Study Group 3 Interviews

As summarised in Table 7.5, there were six female research participants aged 19 through to their early 30s and four male research participants aged in their 20s. With regards to religious affiliations, eight research participants were affiliated with the Buddhist faith although one female research participant noted that she was not a practicing Buddhist.

One male research participant identified as a Christian. Eight research participants identified as Lao-Australian and two research participants identified as Lao, similarly highlighting their closeness to their Lao heritage. Half of the study group was very conversational and happy to discuss their thoughts on their ethnic identity and what
it meant to them. However, the other half of the group were very straight to the point but considered the questions carefully before responding.

Table 7.5 Self-Ascribed Ethnic Identity (Lao Interview Group 3)

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<th>Lao-Australian</th>
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<td>Lao Interview Group 3</td>
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<td>8</td>
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</table>

*Ethnic Identity – Lao*

Research participants who identified as Lao perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity; describing their ethnic identity within the boundaries of their ethnic background and origin in an emotional and physical sense. They may have been born in Australia but felt more connection with their Lao ethnic background and their Lao upbringing because they think they are Lao:

- *I say I am Lao because I look Asian and I am Asian. I don’t say I am Australian as I think that Australians are the Caucasians. I do say I’m from Australia or that I’m born in Australia but I don’t call myself "Australian"...the first thing that comes to mind when someone asks me what I am or what my ethnic background or ethnic identity...is "Lao".*

- *When people ask me, I say Lao, that’s how I’ve been brought up—to think of myself as Lao. Both of my parents are Lao, that’s how I see it. So, I look at myself and I think, I am Lao.*

Furthermore, they also perceived their ethnic identity had contributed to their family values and helped to shape their thoughts, morals and behaviour:

- *It has...influenced and shaped my thoughts, morals and behaviour in regards to ethnicity and culture. I identify myself with my ethnic group through a common heritage, language and culture, which I believe is the foundation of how I see myself as an individual.*

- *I believe it has contributed to how I see myself...giving and generous and...very family orientated.*
The descriptions of *ethnic identity* used by both research participants are similar to the definition of ethnicity used by the ABS (2000) and Phinney's (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity:

1. *Ethnicity*: a reflection of how you look, race, ethnicity, skin colour, and

2. *Ethnic identity*: identifies your background and your sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group.

Research participants replied that the significance of belonging to a particular ethnic group and in the identity itself influences their behaviour, emotionally and psychologically:

- *Ethnic identity to me is where an individual identifies with a particular ethnic group or groups. It allows you to feel a sense of belonging, which influences you emotionally, psychologically and your behaviour. It is an important aspect of an individual's life as it's their identity and significance of belonging.*

- *Ethnic identity means an identity that includes your race, your ethnicity and your skin colour. It's what identifies your background. If you have dark skin and look a certain way, then your ethnic identity is the identity that reflects that.*

*Ethnic Identity – Lao-Australian*

All research participants who identified as Lao-Australian perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity biculturally. That is, as a combination of their Lao ethnic background and heritage, and their Australian birthplace and Australian culture. They saw themselves as Lao as a result of their and their parents’ Lao heritage and background and as Australian because they were born and raised in Australia. Their perception of their ethnic identity is similar to the definition used by Phinney (1992, 1990b), in its description of feeling a sense of belonging to both the Lao and Australian communities:

- *I am an ABL—an Aussie-born Lao. My parents are Lao and so am I but I am Australian too because I'm born here.*
I am both an Australian in terms of my birth and also Lao because of my background.

My parents come from Laos and they have raised me and also I grew up in Australia.

Only a few research participants perceived their ethnic identity had influenced their behaviour and beliefs, serving as a reference and reminder of their Lao heritage.

Well, I may be born here but I know that I am originally from Laos even though my passport says Australian and in some ways I guess I am Australian but I am also Lao because of my parents.

It has given me a reference for the type of person I should be.

Whilst the majority acknowledged ethnic identity had some influence on their food preferences they refuted its influence on their dress sense and on their self-perception. Furthermore, whilst research participants acknowledged they were somewhat influenced by their parental heritage and faith, they noted that the location where they grew up had more influence on their behaviour than their ethnic identity:

I don’t think it has contributed a lot but it reflects more on my upbringing by my parents.

I see myself more than just my ethnic identity. More than just a Lao-Australian. It contributes to my food tastes because I really love Lao foods.

When asked what ethnic identity meant, research participants used words such as race and racial background, heritage, roots, cultural background, culture of origin, ethnic history, faith, values, behaviour and how you behave, being Asian, and being “Laosy” to describe ethnic identity. Geographic terms were also used to define ethnic identity, such as where you and your parents come from and where your ancestors are from. All of these definitions are closer to the definition of ethnicity as used by the ABS (2000):

To me, it means my race, being Asian, being “Laosy” - my cultural background and origins.
- *It means where you come from, where your family come from, your culture of origin, your ethnic history.*

7.1.1.3.2 Lao Focus Group 3

The focus group was made up of four females and three males aged between 18 and 23 years of age. Similar to Lao focus group 2, there were equal contributions to the discussion between male and female focus group participants in spite of the dominant number of females. Because there were only three males, the females were very keen to hear their opinions—which served as a very encouraging sign to the male focus group participants. The male focus group participants were very confident, offering their opinions very freely without hesitation.

Focus group participants from this group worked very well as a “team” and conferred with one another on each question, exchanging opinions very freely. Given the number of students in this group, the researcher felt that the focus group participants approached each question in the same manner that a student would approach “a group assignment”, dissecting the questions to ensure that they left “no gaps”. Although the researcher made it clear that there were no “wrong” answers, the researcher felt at times that some of the focus group participants wanted to “answer the questions correctly”. They were very precise and took the least amount of time to answer each question. All the focus group participants wore western clothing.

When asked to explain their pride in their Lao heritage and what community they felt a sense of belonging to, focus group participants from Lao focus group 3 were split in their sense of belonging; three focus group participants identified with the Lao-Australian community and four focus group participants identified with the Australian community, as shown in Table 7.6.

**Table 7.6 Sense of Belonging – Community (Lao Focus Group 3)**

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Lao-Australian</th>
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<td>Lao Focus Group 3</td>
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Focus group participants who identified with the Lao-Australian community perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as an integration of their Lao heritage and Australian culture. Being born in Australia to parents of Lao heritage has given them a sense of belonging to the Lao community but their birthplace has given them a sense of belonging to the Australian community:

- *We can easily adapt to both. Lao—there is a sense of belonging because our heritage, from our parents and family, is Lao. But, we also belong to the Australian community.*

- *We all believe we belong to the Lao and Australian community because we are all born here of Lao heritage due to our parents.*

Conversely, focus group participants who identified with the Australian community perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as fully assimilated with the Australian culture. Being born in Australia and having a group of friends who are also born here has given them a sense of belonging to the Australian community by birth. In addition, growing up and being educated here has made them feel a strong part of Australian society:

- *We are born here and belong [here] by birth, growing up here and being educated here makes us part of the Australian society.*

- *Australia - because our friends are all born here so we have the sense of belonging.*

Both the above descriptions used by focus group participants to describe their sense of belonging is similar to the definition of ethnic identity as used by Phinney (1992, 1990b). That is, their perception of their ethnic identity is self-ascribed and dependent on the sense of belonging they feel towards their ethnic community. Those who felt a closer tie to their heritage identified as a bicultural Australian and those who felt a closer tie to the host culture identified as an Australian.

7.1.1.3.3 Lao Field Observations of Study Group 3

Field observations of field participants in attendance at the *Pha Khao Sammakkhee* festival (Buddhist Lent) at the local Lao temple revealed weak ties to their ethnic
heritage. No field participants, female or male, wore any traditional Lao costumes, preferring instead to wear western clothing. Furthermore, English was the only language used amongst field participants. Apart from their physical appearance [Asian], their behaviour, such as wearing western clothing and revealing a preference for using the English language, was not culturally Lao to differentiate them from non-Lao individuals. Hence, based on the preference for western wear and English language, it is likely that field participants perceived their ethnicity as separated from their sense of ethnic identity, and as more aligned with the Australian culture.

7.1.2 Conclusion – Perceptions of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Whilst a few research participants from the interview groups and focus groups perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity, the majority of research participants perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as a fusion of their Lao and Australian culture. Sharing inter-generational similarities across the Lao interview and focus groups, research participants perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as a synthesis of their Lao ethnic background and heritage, and their Australian citizenship, residency and upbringing. Although, there were some links between their ethnicity and ethnic identity, the influence of the host culture was also evident in the references made to Australia being their home or birth country. This bicultural perception of their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity is consistent with prior research findings (Kara and Kara, 1996a, Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001) on the bicultural perception some ethnic minorities have of their ethnic identity.

For those research participants whose ethnicity was closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity, the connection to their Lao heritage, culture and values formed a strong part of their identity. They described their ethnic identity in terms of their culture and origins, similar to the definition of ethnicity used by the ABS (2000). Though most of these research participants were from Lao interview group 1 and focus group 1, there were a couple of research participants from Lao interview groups

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1 Group 1 – Born, raised and educated overseas; Group 2 – Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia; Group 3 – Born, raised and educated in Australia

130
Research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2 did not perceive their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as “Australian” because they strongly identified with their Lao ethnic background and origin. Similarly, research participants from Lao interview group 3 did not perceive their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as “Australian” because their family and parents were “Lao”, which thus made them perceive themselves also as “Lao”. This close link between their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity are consistent with existing research findings (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009, Chestnut, 2000) on the strong connection that some ethnic minorities feel towards their ethnicity and ethnic identity.

Reinforcing the individual nature of ethnic identity, only one research participant from the Lao interview groups perceived her ethnicity as separated from her sense of ethnic identity. Not only was she the only research participant from the Lao interview groups to identify as “Australian”, she was also the only research participant to perceive herself as (in her own words), “a true blue Aussie”. All other research participants from the interview groups still perceived a link to their Lao ethnic background, even as they recognised the influence of the Australian culture on their behaviour and/or values. Her sense of belonging to the host culture epitomises the self-ascribed component of Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity.

What is surprising about this finding is that this research participant is from Lao interview group 1, which is the group of participants who were born, raised and educated overseas. Studies conducted on ethnic minority groups often cite “first-generation” (born, raised and educated overseas) ethnic minorities as closely tied to their ethnic heritage. This is because “first-generation” ethnic minorities are more likely to have been born, raised and educated overseas and likely to have migrated to the host country at a more mature age. Consequently, it is believed that their identity was formed in their country of origin (O’Guinn and Meyer, 1984, Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999, Phinney et al., 2001, Phinney, 1990b, Phinney, 1989).

In comparison, “second” or “third-generation” ethnic minorities are said to better assimilate into the host culture as they are more likely to have migrated as children or to have been born, raised and educated in the host country thereby exposing them to the host culture from a young age (O’Guinn and Meyer, 1984, Wilkinson and Cheng,
The separation of her ethnicity from her sense of ethnic identity and her perception of herself as “Australian” without any reference to her ethnic heritage is not consistent with some prior research findings (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009, Chestnut, 2000) on how most ethnic minorities perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity. Most ethnic studies often reveal a link between an ethnic minority’s ethnicity and ethnic identity (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009, Chestnut, 2000). However, due to the individual nature of the acculturation process, it is expected that there will be exceptions to the rule.

In contrast to the interview group findings, half of the focus group participants from Lao focus groups 2 and 3 perceived themselves as bicultural and belonging to both communities (Lao and Australian) whilst the other half perceived themselves as belonging to the Australian culture. Because self-ascribed ethnic identity is an individual process, it is not surprising to find these variations amongst the focus group participants. The findings of a study by O’Guinn and Faber (1986) attest to the conflict some ethnic minorities felt: torn between their identification with their ethnic community versus the host community.

The focus group findings are consistent with prior research studies (Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Burton, 2002, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a) on individual acculturation between different age groups. Revealing inter-generational differences across the three Lao focus groups, focus group participants were split between:

1. Those who identified with the Lao community and perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity. These focus group participants were only from Lao focus group 1 and all described their ethnic identity in terms of their ethnic background, country of birth and Lao heritage;

2. Those who identified with the Lao-Australian community and perceived their ethnicity as having a link to their sense of ethnic identity whilst recognising influences from the host culture. They viewed their ethnic identity as an integration of their links to both the Lao and Australian communities through
their Lao heritage, fluency in English, and knowledge of the Australian culture; and

3. Those who fully identified with the Australian community and perceived their ethnicity as separated from their sense of ethnic identity due to their Australian citizenship or Australian birthplace (Lao study group 3 only). Only focus group participants from Lao focus groups 2 and 3 identified with the Lao-Australian and the Australian communities.

In summary, the variations in the findings highlight two important points. Firstly, there are variations to how people conceptualise their ethnic identity and secondly, ethnic identity is shaped by a variety of factors and experiences that influence how people perceive their ethnic identity. The perception that research participants have of their ethnic identity is closely aligned with Phinney's (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity as a self-ascribed dynamic construct that is dependent upon the sense of pride and belonging the individual feels towards their ethnic group:

- Research participants who felt a sense of pride and belonging towards their ethnic group perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as closely linked, identified by their ethnic heritage;
- Research participants who felt a sense of pride and belonging towards both their ethnic group and the Australian culture identified as bicultural; and
- Research participants who did not feel a sense of belonging towards their ethnic group and perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity as separated, identified with the host culture.

7.2 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

7.2.1 Research Question 2: How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?

As previously noted, Tajfel (1981) defines ethnic identity as a social identity. The consumption of products of a social nature, such as ethnic food or ethnic dress is likely to be consumed when an ethnic individual interacts with their ethnic social

For the purpose of this study, consumer behaviour refers to the consumer decision-making behaviour (Schiffman et al., 2009, Solomon, 1996) involved in the ‘selection, purchase, use or disposal of a product, a service or an experience’ (Solomon, 1996, p. 7). The product(s) or service(s) that research participants from the Lao study groups consumed and purchased is discussed below to identify the influence of ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour.

7.2.1.1 Lao Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas

Product Purchase and Consumption

Research participants were asked to list the types of movies they liked to watch, the types of music they liked to listen to, the types of foods they liked to eat, and the products or services they purchased. Their replies are shown in Table 7.7, which provides a summary of their purchase and consumption of Lao food,¹ Lao clothes²/cosmetics,³ Lao media,⁴ Lao arts, crafts and jewellery,⁵ Lao movies,⁶ and Lao music⁷ by research participants from Lao study group 1. Non-Lao product consumption is not shown as this research is focused on ethnic consumer behaviour.

7.2.1.1.1 Lao Study Group 1 Interviews

The interview findings revealed a similarity in consumer behaviour between those who identified as Lao and those who identified as Lao-Australian in the consumption

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¹ Lao food refers to traditional Lao dishes, snacks and desserts.
² Lao clothes refer to Lao costumes and traditional dress wear.
³ Lao cosmetics refer to creams, lotions and perfumes made in Laos.
⁴ Lao media refers to music, movies, newspapers and magazines written, composed, sung or spoken in Lao.
⁵ Lao arts, crafts and jewellery refer to artworks, craft works and jewellery made in Laos.
⁶ Lao movies refer to movies written and spoken in the Lao language.
⁷ Lao music refers to music composed and sung in the Lao language.
of Lao movies, Lao music and Lao food. Any differences in consumption pattern between research participants who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian were very marginal:

- All research participants who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian consumed Lao music and Lao food.
- Lao movies were equally likely to be consumed by research participants who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian.

Supporting the consumption findings, similarities in the purchase pattern of Lao food were made by research participants who identified as Lao and those who identified as Lao-Australian. Lao food was purchased by all research participants who identified as Lao-Australian and by all but one research participant who identified as Lao. Although marginal in number, research participants who identified as Lao-Australian were only slightly more likely to purchase Lao food and Lao media (e.g., Lao music and Lao movies) than research participants who identified as Lao. Further, research participants who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian were equally likely to purchase Lao clothes/cosmetics. Only one research participant, who identified as Australian, replied that she did not purchase any Lao products.

Examples of the products that research participants purchased are noted below:

- *The main product items that I buy to reflect my Lao heritage is food ingredients from the supermarket or Asian grocery store to make some Lao dishes.*
- *My wife buys most of the ingredients for the Lao dishes, she also buys sinh (sarong) which she wears around the house and at festivals and functions.*
- *Ingredients to make Lao dishes, Lao foods from the local restaurant, sinh [Lao sarong], Buddhist icons and relics which reflect my religious beliefs, statues of elephants which are the national animal of Laos and was on our original flag.*

In view of the research participants’ self-ascribed ethnic identity as “Lao” or as “Lao-Australian” and the link they feel towards their Lao heritage, this suggests that their ethnic identity has had some influence on their consumer behaviour; for example, in
their consumption preference for Lao music, Lao movies and Lao food, and in their purchase preference for Lao food, Lao clothes/cosmetics and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery. Furthermore, because these research participants were born, raised and educated overseas, it can be assumed that they had developed a familiarity and a preference for foods, movies and music from their ethnic homeland. Studies (Albonetti and Dominguez, 1989, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008, Cui and Choudhury, 2002, de Mooij, 2005, Kim and Arthur, 2003, Moschis and Jr, 1978, Singh et al., 2003) on ethnic minority groups often comment on ethnic minorities reaching out for familiarity, such as eating foods from their ethnic homeland and watching movies or listening to music from their ethnic homeland during the settlement period.
Table 7.7 Lao Product Purchase and Consumption (Lao Interview Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Lao Product or Service Consumption</th>
<th>Lao Product Purchase</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Music</td>
<td>Movies</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some research participants consumed/purchased more than one “Lao product”.
7.2.1.1.2 Lao Focus Group 1

Similar to the interview participants, focus group participants were asked about their product purchase. Their replies are noted in Table 7.8, which provides a summary of the Lao food, Lao clothes/cosmetics, Lao media and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery purchased by focus group participants from Lao focus group 1.

The key difference between the interview findings and the focus group findings is the sense of belonging felt by all eight focus group participants—all identified with the Lao community. Revealing a similarity to the interview findings, focus group participants purchased Lao food or Lao clothes/cosmetics. As focus group members all identified with the Lao community, it may be inferred that their ethnic identification with the Lao community and their Lao heritage has had some influence on their consumer behaviour in their purchase preference for Lao food and Lao clothes/cosmetics.

Table 7.8 Lao Product Purchase (Lao Focus Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Focus Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothes, Cosmetics</th>
<th>Media (Music, Movies, Newspapers, Magazines)</th>
<th>Arts, Crafts, Jewellery</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Service Providers**

Because some studies (Costa and Bamossy, 1995, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2015) have shown that ethnic minorities, in particular those who are influenced by their ethnic social network, depend on a select few suppliers to service their ethnic community, research participants were questioned on their use of ethnic service providers to gain an understanding of the influence of their ethnic identity on their use of service providers of the same ethnic background. Table 7.9 provides a summary of the Lao doctors, dentists, solicitors/lawyers and real estate agents used by research participants from Lao interview group 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2.1.1.3 Lao Study Group 1 Interviews

Although the study found that eight research participants were very supportive of using Lao service providers, only three actually used Lao service providers. These three research participants identified as Lao; two used the services of a Lao doctor and dentist, and all three used the services of a Lao lawyer/solicitor. While this could suggest that their identity as Lao has influenced their consumer behavior in a preference for using Lao service providers, given that it is only three research participants from a sample group size of 16 using a Lao service provider it is difficult to confidently state that their ethnic identity has influenced their consumer behaviour. Taking their feedback into further consideration, a few research participants asserted that local access to service providers and the quality of customer service provided was more important than the ethnic background of the service providers they used. Moreover, some research participants replied that they did not use any Lao service providers due to feeling a sense of distrust and fear over privacy and confidentiality concerns. It must be noted that there is no evidence to support these assertions.

The sentiments expressed by research participants on the use of Lao service providers are noted below:

- *It depends on the nature of the doctors and the moral of the doctors - that is of more interest and important [to me] not the ethnic backgrounds of the service providers. I would use a Lao service provider if s/he is practicing ethically, socially just and environmentally just.*

- *Lao people don’t like to use lawyers or solicitors or doctors who is Lao because they are very private and don’t want people to know what is going on. They don’t want the lawyer or doctor to "talk" [gossip] so they go to western [service providers] or non-Lao instead. No one really knows whether it [the gossiping] is true but it is how [Lao] people think.*

---

1 The researcher chose to use doctor, dentist, lawyer/solicitor and real estate agent because these service providers are more likely to be commonly used by the research participants across the different age groups.
7.2.1.2 Lao Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia

Product Purchase and Consumption

7.2.1.2.1 Lao Study Group 2 Interviews

Similar to the results of Lao interview group 1, similarities between research participants who identified as Lao and those who identified as Lao-Australian were evident in the consumption of Lao music and Lao food. Table 7.10 provides a summary of the Lao movies, Lao music and Lao food consumed by research participants from Lao interview group 2:

- All research participants who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian consumed Lao food.
- Lao music was consumed by only two research participants: one who identified as Lao and one who identified as Lao-Australian.
- Only one research participant who identified as Lao-Australian consumed Lao movies.

Supporting the consumption findings and sharing similarity with Lao interview group 1, all research participants who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian purchased Lao food. Lao arts, crafts and jewellery were purchased by just two research participants; one who identified as Lao and one who identified as Lao-Australian. Only one research participant who identified as Lao purchased Lao clothes/cosmetics.

Examples of their feedback are noted below:

- I buy a lot of arts and crafts that have been hand-made in Laos. The kinds of arts and crafts that relate to the traditions of Laos...The other products I buy that reflect my Lao heritage is Lao foods. I love Lao foods.

- I only buy food...from the local Lao restaurant, unless mum is making a Lao dish...That is the closest to a Lao product that I will get to having a product reflect my Lao-ness.
Considering their self-ascribed ethnic identity as “Lao” or as “Lao-Australian” and the ties they feel towards their Lao background, it can be suggested that their ethnic identity has had some influence on their consumer behaviour in a purchase and consumption preference for Lao food. Studies by Jamal (2003), Jamal and Chapman (2000), and de Mooij (2005) have cited ethnic food as a reflection of one’s ethnic identity. However, where Lao media (movies, music, magazines or newspapers), Lao arts, crafts and jewellery, and Lao clothes/cosmetics are concerned, we cannot assume that their ethnic identity has influenced their consumer behaviour due to the low purchase and consumption rate. Whilst research participants from Lao interview group 2 may have been born overseas, they have been raised and educated in Australia. Although some may have an understanding of the Lao language, the majority prefers to communicate in English, primarily due to a lack of fluency in the Lao language. In addition, their Australian upbringing and education, and their exposure to western music, movies and publications may also explain their low consumption level for Lao media—products that require fluency in the Lao language.

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1 Lao media refers to music, movies, newspapers and magazines written, composed, sung or spoken in Lao.
Table 7.10 Lao Product Purchase and Consumption (Lao Interview Group 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 2</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Movies</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Lao Product Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some research participants consumed/purchased more than one “Lao product”. 

143
7.2.1.2.2 Lao Focus Group 2

Table 7.11 is a summary of the Lao food, clothes/cosmetics, media and arts, crafts and jewellery purchased by focus group participants from Lao focus group 2. Three focus group participants identified with the Lao-Australian community and four focus group participants identified with the Australian community. Their purchase pattern is noted below:

- Whether they identified with the Lao-Australian community or with the Australian community, focus group participants were equally likely to purchase Lao food.

- Focus group participants who identified with the Australian community were slightly more likely than those who identified with the Lao-Australian community to purchase Lao clothes/cosmetics.

- One focus group participant who identified with the Lao-Australian community purchased Lao media (music and movies) and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery compared to none who identified with the Australian community.

Given that the number of focus group participants that identify with the Australian community or with the Lao-Australian community equally purchased Lao food, it is not clear whether the community they identified with has had any influence on their consumer behaviour. Whilst we can see a link between the focus group participants’ identification with the Lao-Australian community and the purchase of Lao media and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery, it is not clear how the purchase of Lao clothes/cosmetics can be linked to the identification of those who identified with the Australian community.
Table 7.11 Lao Product Purchase (Lao Focus Group 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Focus Group 2</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothes, Cosmetics</th>
<th>Media (Music, Movies, Newspapers, Magazines)</th>
<th>Arts, Crafts, Jewellery</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some focus group participants purchased more than one “Lao product”.

**Service Providers**

7.2.1.2.3 Lao Study Group 2 Interviews

The number of Lao service providers used by research participants from Lao interview group 2 are shown in Table 7.12, with just three research participants using Lao service providers: Lao doctor, dentist and lawyer/solicitor. Similar to Lao interview group 1, the majority of research participants did not use any Lao service providers with some research participants expressing their distrust of Lao service providers:

- *...the Lao mentality and perception is that they can’t be trusted not to spread rumours and gossip. You wouldn’t want anyone in the [Lao] community to know what was going on and what was happening in your life so I wouldn’t use them. I’d probably stay away from them! I certainly would not use them [service providers] because they are Lao.*

- *No, too many connections to my parents. The Lao community is very small and it seems as though everyone knows each other. I prefer to keep my business to myself.*

Because the majority of research participants do not use Lao service providers, this may suggest that the individual’s ethnic identity was unlikely to have influenced their consumer behaviour. However, the low use of Lao service providers may also be explained by the following points, which were considered more important qualities than the ethnic background of the service providers:
• The distrust felt towards Lao service providers amongst some interview participants,

• The expressed preference for only using locally available service providers,

• The value of quality customer service, and

• A preference for English fluency.
Table 7.12 Use of Lao Service Providers (Lao Interview Group 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 2</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dentist</th>
<th>Lawyer / Solicitor</th>
<th>Real Estate Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lao Identity</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Do Not Use / N/A</td>
<td>Lao Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 2</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dentist</th>
<th>Lawyer / Solicitor</th>
<th>Real Estate Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lao Identity</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Do Not Use / N/A</td>
<td>Lao Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2.1.3 Lao Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia

Product Purchase and Consumption

7.2.1.3.1 Lao Study Group 3 Interviews

In stark contrast to Lao interview groups 1 and 2, the majority of research participants from Lao interview group 3 did not consume any Lao products. Only three research participants consumed Lao foods; two who identified as Lao-Australian and one who identified as Lao. Whilst, the findings revealed the majority of research participants did not consume Lao food, they did purchase Lao food, either ingredients to make Lao dishes or the purchase of Lao dishes from Lao restaurants. The majority of these research participants identified as Lao-Australian and only two identified as Lao. Moreover, there were four research participants who purchased Lao arts, crafts and jewellery: three identified as Lao-Australian and one who identified as Lao. Only one research participant, who identified as Lao-Australian, purchased Lao clothes/cosmetics.

Table 7.13 provides a summary of the purchase and consumption of Lao music, movies, food, clothes/cosmetics, media and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery by research participants from Lao interview group 3.

Examples of their feedback are noted below:

- *Just Lao foods and a few arts and crafts from Laos or from Asian stores.*

- *Lao elephant statues, Lao and Thai foods. These are the only products that I do buy that reflect my Lao heritage.*

- *I've got a tourist shirt with the Laos flag on it.*

Whilst the low consumption level of Lao products amongst the research participants may suggest their ethnic identity has had little influence on their consumer behaviour, it was evidenced in their purchase of Lao food and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery. As previously noted, the purchase and consumption of ethnic food and products is often
Table 7.13 Lao Product Purchase and Consumption (Lao Interview Group 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 3</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Music</th>
<th>Movies</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothes, Cosmetics</th>
<th>Media (Music, Movies, Newspapers, Magazines)</th>
<th>Arts, Crafts, Jewellery</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Australian</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some research participants consumed/purchased more than one “Lao product”.

150
7.2.1.3.2 Lao Focus Group 3

Table 7.14 provides a summary of the products purchased by focus group participants:

- A majority of focus group participants purchased Lao food; four identified with the Australian community and one identified with the Lao-Australian community.

- Two focus group participants who identified with the Lao-Australian community purchased Lao clothes/cosmetics.

- Two focus group participants purchased Lao arts, crafts and jewellery; one identified with the Australian community and one identified with the Lao-Australian community.

The influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour is evident for focus group participants who identified with the Lao-Australian community because a connection can be suggested between their ethnic identification and their purchase of Lao clothes/cosmetics, food and arts, crafts and jewellery. Yet, the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour is unclear for focus group participants who identified with the Australian community. Whilst ethnic (Lao) food and ethnic (Lao) arts, crafts and jewellery is a reflection of an individual’s ethnic identity, these focus group participants identified with the Australian community. They feel a sense of belonging to the Australian culture due to their Australian birth and upbringing and not to the Lao culture. It is therefore difficult to make a connection between their identification with the host culture and their purchase behaviour.

**Table 7.14 Lao Product Purchase (Lao Focus Group 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Focus Group 3</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothes, Cosmetics</th>
<th>Media (Music, Movies, Newspapers, Magazines)</th>
<th>Arts, Crafts, Jewellery</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some focus group participants purchased more than one “Lao product”.

151
Service Providers

7.2.1.3.3 Lao Study Group 3 Interviews

The Lao service providers used by research participants from Lao interview group 3 are summarised in Table 7.15, and as shown, no research participants used the services of a Lao service provider. However, unlike Lao interview groups 1 and 2 none expressed any distrust of using Lao service providers. In fact, research participants would consider using Lao service providers if they were locally based and/or provided quality customer service and value for money:

- ...if they provided good customer service and was not too far away but I don’t think I’d drive out of my way to see one as it would not be convenient for me.
- ...if I knew of one who was good at what they were doing but it wouldn’t be because they are Lao.
- Yes, I feel that they may be more trustworthy. I would, for myself and for my parents so they understand what someone says to them and I don’t have to explain to them what’s being asked and they can answer for themselves. I think they would also feel more confident going by themselves without always relying on me or my sister to go with them.

The low use of Lao service providers extends beyond ethnic identity and its influence on consumer behaviour. Research participants do not have local access to Lao service providers and most are not willing to travel outside their local area to find one. Further, quality customer service was more highly valued than the ethnic background of the service providers being used.
Table 7.15 Use of Lao Service Providers (Lao Interview Group 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 3</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dentist</th>
<th>Lawyer / Solicitor</th>
<th>Real Estate Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Do Not Use / N/A</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2.2 Conclusion – Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour

The findings suggest that the ethnic identity of individuals who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian influenced their consumer behaviour in a social sense—as a social identity. The products that they purchased or consumed are considered to be “social products”—food, music and movies—products that are often enjoyed in a social setting amongst family and friends. However, higher purchase and consumption of Lao products\(^1\) was more evident amongst research participants from Lao interview group 1, those who were born, raised and educated overseas. These findings are consistent with prior research studies on ethnic identity as a social identity and its influence on the consumer behaviour of ethnic minorities (Tian and Tian, 2011, Xu et al., 2004, Chattalas and Harper, 2007, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Hirschman, 1981, Podoshen, 2006, Podoshen, 2008).

In product purchase and consumption, the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour was more evident in the behaviour of research participants from Lao interview group 1\(^2\) who self-ascribed as “Lao” or as “Lao-Australian”. The connection they feel towards their Lao heritage is reflected:

- In their consumption of Lao music and Lao foods, and for some research participants, Lao movies;
- In the purchase of Lao food by the majority of research participants across the three interview groups who identified as “Lao” or as “Lao-Australian”;
- In the purchase of Lao arts, crafts and jewellery and Lao clothes/cosmetics by a few research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3.

For research participants from Lao interview group 2\(^3\) who self-ascribed as “Lao” or as “Lao-Australian”, the influence of their ethnic identity on their consumer behaviour was only evident in their consumption of Lao foods. In contrast, whilst a majority of

\(^1\) Lao food, music, movies, clothes/cosmetics, newspapers, magazines, arts, crafts, and jewellery.  
\(^2\) Born, raised and educated overseas.  
\(^3\) Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia.
research participants from Lao interview group 3\(^1\) felt some connection to their Lao heritage, this connection did not extend to their consumer behaviour, with the majority not consuming any Lao products (music, movies or foods) at all.

Across the three Lao focus groups, the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour was more evident in the purchase behaviour of focus group participants who identified with the Lao or Lao-Australian community. Their purchase of Lao food or Lao clothes/cosmetics is indicative of their connection to their Lao ethnic background. Conversely, for focus group participants that identified with the Australian community, it is not clear whether ethnic identity has had any influence on their consumer behaviour. The link between the sense of belonging they feel towards the Australian community and their purchase of Lao food and arts, crafts and jewellery is unclear.

Lastly, although a low number of research participants using Lao service providers may suggest that their ethnic identity has had little influence on their consumer behaviour, there were other conflicting reasons that may explain the low use of Lao service providers. Based on participant feedback, the majority of research participants do not use Lao service providers due to a feeling of distrust in using Lao service providers, particularly amongst research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2; a lack of local access to Lao service providers given the small community size; and because quality customer service was considered a more important attribute than the ethnic background of the service providers.

In summary, the influence of ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour was primarily evidenced amongst research participants from Lao interview group 1 and amongst focus group participants who identified with their Lao heritage. This influence was primarily evident in the purchase and consumption of Lao food; and in the purchase and consumption of Lao music and Lao movies by research participants from Lao interview group 1. In the ‘selection, purchase, use or disposal of a product, a service or experience’ (Solomon, 1996, p. 7), the link between the individual’s self-

\(^{1}\) Born, raised and educated in Australia.
ascribed ethnic identity and their consumer behaviour could be established for Lao interview group 1 participants who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian and for Lao focus group participants who identified with the Lao or with the Lao-Australian community.

7.3 UNDERSTAND HOW INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION AFFECTS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

As previously mentioned in Chapter 6, evidence of how acculturation affects consumer behaviour was found in previous studies from Berry and Sam (1997), Ogden (2004a), Kang and Kim (1993), Laroche (1998) and O’Guinn and Faber (1986), which showed individual acculturation affected an individual’s language, food and media preferences, and participation in cultural events. Similarly, Quester’s (2001) study found that acculturation affected the individual’s consumer behaviour during the consumer decision-making process. In seeking to answer Research Question 3 and to investigate how individual acculturation may alter the consumer behaviour of each generation, research participants were asked a range of questions during individual interviews and in focus group sessions:

1. The products they chose to purchase and consume;

2. The ethnic background of the service providers they used;

3. Their language preferences;

4. The frequency of their visits to their ethnic homeland;

5. The ethnic background of their spouse/partner; and

6. The ethnic background of their five closest friends.

These questions were asked and used to explain individual acculturation levels because less-acculturated individuals are said to be more likely to:

- Purchase and consume products from their ethnic homeland;

- Utilise service providers of their ethnic background;
▪ Frequently visit their ethnic homeland;

▪ Converse in their ethnic language at home or amongst friends; and

▪ Have a spouse/partner and a close circle of friends from their ethnic background.

7.3.1 Research Question 3: How does individual acculturation (through behavioural shifts and socio-cultural adaptation) affect the consumer behaviour of each generation?


For the purpose of this study, acculturation, as defined by Berry and Sam (1997, p. 294), is ‘the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture’. Its effect on the consumer behaviour of individuals of Lao background was explored below.

7.3.1.1 Product Purchase and Consumption

7.3.1.1.1 Lao Study Group Interviews

Research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2 primarily consumed Lao food, suggesting individual acculturation has had little influence on their product consumption of Lao food. As stated by Penaloza (1994a), food is an expression of the individual’s culture, and as previously mentioned in the literature review, acculturated individuals are less likely to consume products from their ethnic homeland.
Conversely, it can be assumed that individual acculturation has influenced the consumer behaviour of:

- Research participants from Lao study group 3 based on the lack of Lao food consumption in favour of western food, and
- Research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 based on the lack of Lao music and Lao movie consumption in favour of western music and western movies.

There were inter-generational differences in product consumption between the three Lao interview groups where Lao music and movies were concerned. Whilst Lao food was consumed by all research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2, only a few research participants from Lao interview group 3 consumed Lao food. Furthermore, although the majority of research participants from Lao interview group 1 consumed Lao music and Lao movies, a few research participants from Lao interview group 2 and none from Lao interview group 3 consumed Lao music and Lao movies.

Inter-generational similarities between research participants in the purchase of Lao food suggest that individual acculturation has had little effect on their purchase behaviour where Lao food is concerned. However, this pattern does not extend to the purchase of other products. The low purchase of Lao clothes/cosmetics, Lao media and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery suggests individual acculturation has affected the consumer behaviour of research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3. This is because acculturated individuals are less likely to purchase products from their ethnic homeland, such as ethnic clothes/cosmetics, ethnic media and ethnic arts, crafts and jewellery. Like food, clothing is also an expression of the individual's ethnic heritage and individuals reveal their level of acculturation through the adoption of the standard dress wear of the host culture or through the maintenance of ethnic wear (Penaloza, 1994a).

Inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour were revealed between Lao interview group 1 versus Lao interview groups 2 and 3 in their purchase of Lao clothes/cosmetics and media. Whilst a majority of research participants from Lao interview group 1 purchased Lao clothes/cosmetics, only one research participant
from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 did so. Further, no research participants from Lao interview groups 2 or 3 purchased Lao media compared to four interview participants from Lao interview group 1. However, there were two research participants from Lao interview group 1 who did not purchase any Lao products, indicating high acculturation levels.

7.3.1.1.2 Lao Focus Groups

It was unclear whether individual acculturation had influenced the consumer behaviour of each generation based on inter-generational similarities amongst the Lao focus groups:

- In the purchase pattern of Lao food and Lao clothes/cosmetics by the majority of focus group participants from each focus group, and

- In the low purchase pattern of Lao media and Lao arts, crafts and jewellery by focus groups 2 and 3 participants.

7.3.1.2 Service Providers

7.3.1.2.1 Lao Study Group Interviews

Researchers (Pires and Stanton, 2005, Schiffman et al., 2009, Huang et al., 2013, Pires and Stanton, 2015) claim ethnic minorities prefer to use service providers from their ethnic background if the service experience and word-of-mouth recommendations are positive. To gauge the effect of individual acculturation on consumer behaviour and to uncover if there are inter-generational differences in the use of service providers between consumers from the same ethnic background, research participants across all three Lao interview groups were asked the ethnic background of the service providers they used, such as doctors, dentists, lawyers/solicitors and real estate agents. No other service providers were included and the aforementioned were chosen because they were likely to be commonly used by various research participants across the three Lao interview groups.

The findings do suggest that individual acculturation has affected the consumer behaviour of each generation as evidenced by the low use of Lao service providers by
the majority of research participants across the three Lao interview groups. Furthermore, research participants stated their preference for service providers who were locally based and could provide quality service and professionalism rather than for their ethnic background, reflecting how individual acculturation has shaped their consumer behaviour. But, acculturation is not the only reason for the low number of Lao service providers used. Feedback revealed a number of research participants, primarily from Lao interview groups 1 and 2, also expressed a distrust of using Lao service providers due to privacy concerns.

There were inter-generational similarities in consumer behaviour between the three Lao interview groups based on the low use of Lao service providers by the majority of research participants across the three Lao interview groups. Just three research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2 used Lao service providers: doctor, dentist and solicitor/lawyer. Lao interview group 3 did not use any Lao service providers. Moreover, a number of research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2 expressed some skepticism in using Lao service providers. However, research participants from Lao interview group 3 did not share the same distrust of using Lao service providers.

7.3.1.3 Language Preferences

7.3.1.3.1 Lao Study Group Interviews

Because acculturation is an individual process, it is said to affect each individual differently. Pires and Stanton (2015) states that within each ethnic minority group, language preferences vary. To investigate how individual acculturation may affect consumer behaviour and to uncover if there were inter-generational differences in language preferences between consumers from the same ethnic background, research participants across the three Lao interview groups were asked what language they used at home, at work or school, amongst their friends, and when shopping. The answers to these questions may uncover whether individuals who prefer to converse in their ethnic language also use service providers of their ethnic background.

A preference for using the English language at home and amongst friends suggests individual acculturation has affected their behaviour. Across the three interview
groups some form of English was used at home and amongst friends, in particular for Lao interview groups 2 and 3. In fact, a majority of research participants from Lao interview group 3 exclusively spoke only English at home and amongst friends, indicating their high acculturation levels as acculturated individuals are more likely to converse in the host language. Even some research participants from Lao interview group 1 conversed in English interspersed with the Lao language at home—this could be a result of having to converse with their children or grandchildren who may have been born or raised in the host country from a young age and therefore lack fluency in the Lao language. However, for some research participants from Lao interview group 1, Lao was their only language used at home, suggesting low acculturation and strong ties to the ethnic homeland. A summary of the language(s) used by research participants at home and amongst friends is provided in Table 7.16.

Although, the Lao language was spoken at home or amongst friends by half of the research participants who used Lao service providers, the other half spoke a combination of the Lao and English language. As previously mentioned in the Service Providers section, the majority of research participants across the Lao interview groups do not use Lao service providers. Therefore, it is hard to establish a clear link between an individual’s language preference and her (or his) use of service providers.

There were inter-generational differences in language preferences between the three Lao interview groups with research participants from Lao interview group 1 split in their language preference for Lao or a combination of Lao and English at home and conversing in a combination of Lao and English amongst friends. In comparison, research participants from Lao interview group 2 were split in their language preferences for English or a combination of Lao and English at home. Although some research participants from Lao interview group 2 exclusively conversed in English only, a majority preferred to converse in a combination of Lao and English amongst friends. Conversely, a majority of research participants from Lao interview group 3 preferred to converse in English at home and amongst their friends.
### Table 7.16 Language Preferences (Lao Interview Groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Lao-English</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Lao-Australian</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Lao-English</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Australian</th>
<th>Lao</th>
<th>Lao-English</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lao Interview Group 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Interview Group 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+Thai</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Interview Group 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+Thai</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Interview Group 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+Thai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Interview Group 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Interview Group 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+Thai</td>
<td>x2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some research participants noted more than one language(s).
7.3.1.4 Visits to the Homeland

7.3.1.4.1 Lao Study Group Interviews

Researchers (Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001, Jamal and Chapman, 2000) agree that the frequency of travels to the ethnic homeland can indicate the individual’s acculturation level and ties to the homeland. To investigate the effect of individual acculturation on consumer behaviour, and to uncover if there are inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour between consumers from the same ethnic background, research participants were questioned on the frequency of their visits to their ethnic homeland.

The findings suggest that individual acculturation has affected the consumer behaviour of Lao interview groups 2 and 3 based on the infrequency\(^1\) of their visits to the ethnic homeland. The majority of research participants revealed they have never been to Laos, have never been back to visit Laos since settlement or only visit Laos every four years or more, as shown in Table 7.1, which provides a summary of how often research participants have travelled or visited Laos since settlement in Australia. These infrequent trips to the ethnic homeland, in particular for research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3, suggest individuals have acculturated to the host country and have weakened their ties to the ethnic homeland.

*Inter-generational differences* in consumer behaviour were uncovered between Lao interview group 1 versus Lao interview groups 2 and 3 in their visits to the ethnic homeland. A number of research participants from Lao interview group 1 travelled every few years to the ethnic homeland. In comparison, the majority of research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 replied they had never been to visit Laos, had never travelled back to Laos since settlement or had only travelled back to Laos once since settlement in Australia.

\(^{1}\) For the purpose of this study, frequent trips to the ethnic homeland are defined as visiting the ethnic homeland every year to three years.
Table 7.17 Visits to the Ethnic Homeland (Lao Interview Groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Visits to Laos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never Been / Never Been Back</td>
<td>Only Once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 2</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Visits to Laos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never Been / Never Been Back</td>
<td>Only Once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lao Interview Group 3</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Visits to Laos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never Been / Never Been Back</td>
<td>Only Once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.1.5 Ethnic Background of Social Network

7.3.1.5.1 Lao Study Group Interviews

Previous studies on ethnic identity and acculturation often cite that individuals who are least acculturated to the host culture are also more likely to have a spouse/partner and/or a circle of friends from the same ethnic background (Barth, 1969a, Costigan et al., 2009, Hiller and Chow, 2005, Kiang and Fuligni, 2009, McPherson et al., 2001, Mollica et al., 2003, Song, 2003, Garcia, 1982b, Laroche et al., 2009, Triandis et al., 1982). To investigate the effect of individual acculturation and to uncover if there are inter-generational differences in the ethnic homophily of the social networks of consumers from the same ethnic background, research participants were questioned on the ethnic background of their spouse/partner and friends.

Supporting previous studies on acculturation and the social networks of first generation migrants (Garcia, 1982a, Laroche et al., 2009, Triandis et al., 1982), the majority of research participants from Lao interview group 1—those born, raised and educated overseas—who identified as Lao or as Lao-Australian have a spouse/partner who are also of Lao background. However, in their friendships, the group was split between those who have an ethnic homophilic circle of friends (Lao background only) versus those who have a mixed circle of friends. Given their age at the time of migration, these relationship attachments were likely formed overseas prior to migration or during early settlement within Australia where new arrivals are more likely to interact with members of their ethnic group (Kara and Kara, 1996a, Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001). In a Silbereisen and Titzmann (2000) study, new arrivals were found to have 100% ethnic homophilous friendships. The findings for Lao research group 1 also indicate that they are the least acculturated group in comparison to Lao interview groups 2 and 3.

Table 7.18 provides a summary of the ethnic background of the spouse/partner and circle of friends of research participants from Lao interview group 1. All research
participants, even those who have a mixed\(^1\) circle of friends also had friends of Lao background included in the mix.

**Table 7.18 Ethnic Background of Social Network (Lao Interview Group 1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparison to Lao interview group 1, although a few research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 identified as Lao, the majority identified as Lao-Australian, reflecting their bicultural identity and upbringing in Australia. Only one research participant, from Lao interview group 2 who identified as Lao-Australian, has a spouse/partner of Lao background. The majority of research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 have a spouse/partner of non-Lao background. This finding is to be expected and supports previous studies (Fuchs et al., 1999, Masgoret and Ward, 2006, Silbereisen and Schmitt-Rodermund, 2000, Titzmann and Silbereisen, 2009, Phinney et al., 2006) on acculturation and social networks that found the younger generation was more likely to have a spouse/partner and friends from outside their ethnic background. These studies looked at the friendship network of immigrant adolescents and found they adjusted socio-culturally not long after arrival. Learning the host language can bridge the gap between migrants and non-migrants, which encourages inter-ethnic friendships between ethnic minorities and those outside their ethnic community. Children, teenagers and young adults are therefore more likely to have friends from outside their ethnic background through their attendance at schools, colleges or universities.

\(^1\) Mixed circle of friends refers to friends of various racial/ethnic backgrounds.
As shown in Tables 7.19 and 7.20, a summary of the ethnic background of the spouse/partner and friends of research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 respectively revealed all research participants had a mixed circle of friends. *Inter-generational differences* between Lao interview group 1 versus Lao interview groups 2 and 3 was evidenced by the absence of ethnic homophilic friendships amongst members of Lao interview groups 2 and 3. Revealing high acculturation levels, half of the research participants from Lao interview group 2 and just under half of the research participants from Lao interview group 3 have a mixed circle of friends of non-Lao background. These findings support existing studies on ethnic friendship networks (Fuchs et al., 1999, Masgoret and Ward, 2006, Silbereisen and Schmitt-Rodermund, 2000, Titzmann and Silbereisen, 2009, Phinney et al., 2006) that found the younger generational groups—Lao interview groups 2 and 3 for the purpose of this study—were more likely to have inter-ethnic friendships.

**Table 7.19 Ethnic Background of Social Network (Lao Interview Group 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 2: Born Overseas, Raised &amp; Educated in Australia</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Mixed + (No Lao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Mixed + (No Lao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

167
Table 7.20 Ethnic Background of Social Network (Lao Interview Group 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Mixed + Lao</td>
<td>Mixed (No Lao)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao-Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3.2 Conclusion – How Individual Acculturation Affects Consumer Behaviour

Research findings revealed that the effects of individual acculturation were more evident in the consumer behaviour of research participants from Lao interview group 3\(^1\) and to some extent, research participants from Lao interview group 2.\(^2\) Research participants from Lao interview group 3 appear to have been more affected by acculturation than research participants from Lao interview group 1\(^3\) in the consumption of Lao products,\(^4\) use of service providers, visits to the ethnic homeland, and language preferences. This is not surprising given their exposure to the host culture from birth and their Australian education and upbringing. Similarly, although research participants from Lao interview group 2 were born overseas, all migrated to Australia at an age where they were young enough to have been exposed to and altered by the Australian culture and raised and educated with an Australian upbringing.

Whilst research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 may purchase and/or consume Lao food, they were unlikely to purchase or consume Lao movies, music or Lao clothes/cosmetics. This result is consistent with a Verbeke and Lopez (2005)

\(^1\) Born, raised and educated in Australia.
\(^2\) Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia.
\(^3\) Born, raised and educated in overseas.
\(^4\) Lao foods, movies and music.
study that found individual acculturation had a slow effect on the consumption of ethnic food from one’s country of origin. Moreover, research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 were more likely to choose their service providers based on convenience and local access, professionalism, quality of service and fluency in English—reflective of their own fluency in the host language—as opposed to the ethnic background of the service providers. The impact of acculturation on their consumer behaviour is further confirmed by their infrequent travels to the ethnic homeland and in their pre-dominant use of the host language (English) at home and amongst friends. These findings are consistent with existing literature (Berry and Sam, 1997, Kang and Kim, 1993) on individual acculturation and how it affects the consumer behaviour of different individuals, particularly those who were born, raised and educated in the host culture.

The inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour between research participants was revealed by the low purchase of Lao music, movies and Lao clothes/cosmetics by focus participants from Lao focus groups 2 and 3 versus focus group participants from Lao focus group 1. Further, inter-generational differences were found in the frequency of visits to the ethnic homeland by research participants from Lao interview group 1 versus research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3; in the bilingual use of the Lao and English language at home and amongst friends by research participants from Lao interview group 1 compared to the pre-dominant use of the English language by research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3; and by the ethnic homophilic social networks of Lao interview group 1 compared to the more ethnic heterogeneous social networks of Lao interview groups 2 and 3.

Only in the purchase of Lao food was there found to be inter-generational similarities in consumer behaviour amongst the three Lao focus groups. This was evidenced by the purchase of Lao food by the majority of focus group participants from each Lao focus group.
CHAPTER 8 FILIPINO STUDY GROUP FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

As summarised in Figure 8.1, the research findings for this study have been separated into three sections, with one section for each research objective. Findings for each study group are also presented to show inter-generational differences or similarities between the sub-groups:

- Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas
- Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia
- Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia

Chapter 8 presents the research findings for the Filipino study group, including inter-generational differences or similarities in consumer behaviour between consumers from the same ethnic background. A summary of the research questions addressed in Chapter 8 are noted below:

1. *How do Filipino-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?*

2. *How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?*

3. *How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of each generation of consumers from the same ethnic background?*

Research question 4 is not covered in Chapter 8 because it is addressed by the inter-group findings between the Lao and Filipino study groups presented in Chapter 9.
8.1 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

8.1.1 Research Question 1: How do Filipino-Australians perceive their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context?

To explore how Filipino-Australians perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context, research participants were asked to:

1. Self-ascribe their ethnic identity to ascertain the ethnicity and/or community they felt a sense of belonging to,

2. Define in their own words what ethnic identity meant to them, and

Their feedback was then reviewed against the definitions of ethnicity and ethnic identity used for this study. To recap, this study uses the ABS (2000, p. 3) definition of ethnicity as ‘the shared similarity of a group of people on the basis of one or more of the following factors: cultural tradition, including family and social customs; a common geographic origin; a common language; a common literature (written or oral); a common religion; being a minority; or being racially conspicuous’.

Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity is used: a self-ascribed dynamic construct that transitions through various stages and is highly dependent upon an individual’s feelings of pride and a sense of belonging towards her (or his) ethnic group.

8.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas

8.1.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1 Interviews

There were eleven female research participants aged between 50 and 60 years old and two female research participants aged in their mid-20s compared to six male research participants aged between 30 and 60 years old. All research participants were affiliated with the Christian faith. Research participants from Filipino interview group 1 were very conversational and engaging about how they felt about their Filipino heritage and background. They had a wealth of knowledge about their heritage that they were eager to share with the researcher over the course of the interview.

A summary of their self-ascribed ethnic identity is provided in Table 8.1.

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
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<tr>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 1</td>
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Ethnic Identity – Filipino

For all research participants who identified as Filipino, their ethnicity was closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity. They perceived their ethnic identity in terms of their Filipino heritage, culture, cultural identity, and country of birth:

- I am still a Filipino by heart and in all other aspects.
- I was born in the Philippines and that is my cultural identity.
- I see myself as a Filipina because I was born and raised in the Philippines.

However, one research participant perceived his ethnicity as linked to his sense of ethnic identity but also admitted some influences from the host culture:

- I identify as a Filipino by blood but my life has changed for me so much since I’m here. I need to behave as an Australian as we live here now and we have to adopt the system even though we are born in the Philippines.

Research participants felt their ethnic identity reflected their beliefs, values, behaviour and perspective on life:

- ...the way I talk and the way I behave; people can still identify that I’m Filipino. I can tell the way people behave, that they’re Filipino. The way they walk, the way they talk and people can still see that in me. My accent, my Illongo dialect accent. You can’t hide it and you can’t take it away.

- Ethnic identity affects and influences my very self. The decisions I’m making and the plans I’m taking are based on the values instilled in me.

Ethnic identity was defined by research participants in terms of their ethnicity using similar descriptions to the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity, e.g., their ancestral heritage, their ethnic and cultural background, their origin and nationality and where their parents and grandparents come from. Research participants also defined ethnic identity as having an affinity to a particular group as per Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity. Other definitions include how people behave and their set of values and behaviours:
• ... how you behave, how you interact with people, your mind set, how you think... your perceptions. I can tell, usually tell if someone is a Filipino by the way they talk, their accent, the way they carry themselves.

• Ethnic identity for me is a set of values and behaviours that is rooted in someone’s personality and it does affect the way a person responds, acts and makes decisions.

*Ethnic Identity – Filipino-Australian*

For all research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian, their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity were perceived as an integration of their Filipino heritage, background and where they originally came from with their Australian citizenship, values and culture and the longevity of their residence in Australia. Whilst their ethnicity had some links to their sense of ethnic identity, they also acknowledged the influences of the host culture, and the dual sense of belonging they felt towards both the Filipino culture and Australian culture:

• I identify myself as a Filipino-Australian because I’m Filipino by blood and birth and Australian by papers.

• I am Filipino but I have lived here 32 years now, half my life so I am very much both in many ways.

Research participants claimed that their ethnic identity had contributed to their self-perception and to the pride, identity and sense of belonging they feel towards their heritage:

• ...my Filipino identity very much contributes to how I see myself. Most of the things I have done, the way I have been brought up, where I came from, it is still the most to me [Filipino identity].

• It helps me, I believe, to maintain a sense of my Filipino identity; although we live in Australia I still know that I am at heart, a Filipino.
However, highlighting the individual nature of and variances in ethnic identity amongst individuals from the same ethnic background, two interview participants both questioned whether their ethnic identity had contributed to how they saw themselves:

- Yes, and no. Yes, because it is a part of me, being my origins, and no because I have become so acculturated to the Australian lifestyle that being Filipino does not represent all of me anymore.

- I am a Filipino but since I am living here for so long, I identify myself as Australian, as long as someone will ask me where I really originated.

Following both the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity and Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity, they described ethnic identity as their family background, their cultural values, and history, their country of origin and where they come from, and belonging to a particular cultural background:

- It's very important for me because it identifies my country, where I came from and it manifests our customs, values and traditions from where I was brought up.

- ... your background, your family background and it is where you came from.

8.1.1.1.2 Filipino Focus Group 1

The focus group was made up of eight members; six females and two males aged between 57 and 65 years old. Given the ages of the focus group participants, there was a wealth of knowledge of the Filipino culture and customs amongst this group that they were all only too happy to share. All focus group participants were active members of the Filipino community and were very open and chatty, happily sharing their opinions equally amongst one another. Although they were fluent in English, there were occasional side comments made in Filipino between focus group participants. Both the male and female focus group participants spoke equally during the discussion.

In contrast to the interview findings, all eight focus group participants identified with the Filipino-Australian community, perceiving their ethnicity and sense of ethnic
identity as an integration of their Filipino and Australian culture—they are Filipino by culture and they are Australian by community and citizenship. Their perception of their ethnic identity follows that of Phinney (1992, 1990b): a self-ascribed construct based on their sense of belonging.

A summary of the community they felt a sense of belonging to is shown in Table 8.2:

- *We are Filipino in culture but we are a part of the Australian community. So we belong to both communities.*
- *By culture, Filipino [community] but in practice, Australian community.*
- *We belong to both communities because we assimilate well with the Australian culture and with the Australian people because we are bilingual and came here already understanding the English language.*

**Table 8.2 Sense of Belonging – Community (Filipino Focus Group 1)**

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<td>Filipino Focus Group 1</td>
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8.1.1.1.3 Filipino Field Observations of Study Group 1

Field participants, such as community gatekeepers and senior members of the Filipino community, were observed in attendance at the *Filipino Kultura Fiesta* (Filipino culture festival). Whilst their ethnicity and ethnic identity was not visually on display, based on their lack of ethnic attire, their ethnicity and ethnic identity was observed by their use of the Filipino language. No field participants were observed in traditional Filipino costumes preferring instead to wear western clothing. Although they did converse in English, Filipino was also used alongside other Filipino dialects. Furthermore, field participants were observed highly engaged in singing along to Filipino music and enjoying Filipino dancing, yet none were involved in the dance or music as performers.

The above example suggests field participants perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as an integration of their Filipino heritage and the Australian culture.
This was evidenced in their use of the Filipino language and their participation and engagement in ethnic music and ethnic dance and through the wearing of western attire.

8.1.1.2 Filipino Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia

8.1.1.2.1 Filipino Study Group 2 Interviews

There were eight female research participants aged in their 20s and one female research participant aged 30, compared to eight male research participants aged between 18 and mid-30s. All research participants are affiliated with the Christian faith. Unlike Filipino interview group 1, research participants from Filipino interview group 2 were a little more guarded in their responses to the research questions, including how they felt about their ethnic identity and what it meant to them.

The majority of research participants identified as Filipino-Australian whilst a couple of research participants identified as Filipino or as Australian. A summary of their ethnic identification is shown in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3 Self-Ascribed Ethnic Identity (Filipino Interview Group 2)

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<td>Filipino Interview Group 2</td>
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Ethnic Identity – Filipino

Research participants who identified as Filipino perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity. They described their ethnic identity within the boundaries of their ethnic and cultural background and where they were originally from. For example:

- Here, in Australia, people ask for my background when I say I am Australian, they ask, "but, yeah, what is your background? Where are you originally from?". They are always referring to my background. So, I have learned over the years that when someone asks me where I am from, what they really want to know and what they are really asking about is my ethnic background.
One interview participant perceived her ethnic identity had contributed to the way her household smells from the aroma of cooking Filipino dishes. However, another interview participant argues that his ethnic identity doesn’t contribute to how he sees himself. He laments that he does not feel Australian in some parts of Australia because he feels that he is not considered an “Australian” by Caucasians:

- Living in Australia, I see myself as ethnic not as an [Caucasian] Australian...I do feel Australian in Sydney but in other areas of Australia, I feel I am not Australian. It's mainly through discussions with others [Caucasians] and the questions that they ask that hint that they don’t see or consider that I am “Aussie”. You notice it. You can feel it even if they don’t say anything obvious...Sometimes I think that I am more "Aussie" than the [Caucasian] Aussies who like to think that they are the only ones who can be called "Australian". I mean, I would love an opportunity to see who is more Australian because I reckon I would shame them on history, geography, politics, and on a lot of the information about Australia that these so-called "Aussies" don't even know about. Yet, how can they call themselves "Aussies" when they don’t know much about what they would like to think is their own country?

The conflict between how individuals perceived their ethnic identity versus how they are perceived by others was addressed in a study by Phinney (1996b). The study found that an individual may self-ascribe as, for example, “Australian” but may be perceived by others as “Asian” because their “ethnicity” was judged based on the colour of their skin or by their prominent physical features, such as eye colour/shape/size etc.,

When asked to describe what ethnic identity meant to them, both research participants defined ethnic identity as embracing the culture and cultural values you were born into. This is similar to how ethnic identity is defined by Phinney (1992, 1990b), that is, individuals ascribe to the identity based on the sense of belonging they feel towards their ethnic group:

- It means what culture I believe in, what cultural values I have, my physical appearance. You can tell that I am ethnic and not the stereotypical “white Aussie” that people believe to be "Aussie". But, I think beliefs is the biggest part of ethnic
identity and also food, the foods and dishes that are linked to your homeland like pasta for the Italians, Yum Cha for Chinese. For Filipinos, it's "adobo". Ethnic identity is also the way that I have been brought up.

Ethnic Identity – Filipino-Australian

All but one research participant, who identified as Filipino-Australian, perceived their ethnicity as linked to their sense of ethnic identity with influences from the Australian culture. They described their ethnic identity as an integration of their Filipino heritage, culture, traditions and morals with the Australian culture, values and way of life. Being Philippine born and having grown up in Australia, they felt a sense of belonging to both cultures:

- I have the Filipino heritage, which has been infused with Australian culture.

- I identify as both a Filipino and an Australian because I grew up in both cultures; Filipino because of my background and Australian resulting from the wider environment and community I live in.

Interestingly, one interview participant who identified as Filipino-Australian perceived himself as an Australian when travelling outside of Australia based on his Australian passport and citizenship but within Australia he perceived himself by his ethnicity:

- I have embraced the Australian culture although I still have my Filipino culture. My ethnic identity is a mix and it will always be a mix. Outside Australia, I am Australian, I call myself Australian and I think of myself as an Australian. Within Australia, I am a Filipino. It can get confusing when people don't know what you mean or what you are talking about.

Furthermore, one research participant who identified as Filipino-Australian perceived her ethnicity not as a fusion of the Filipino and Australian culture but rather as closely linked to her sense of ethnic identity due to parental influence. She says, “My parents are still very traditional and have brought us up with the same morals. The culture is still very strong in our household and I’m always around other Filipinos”.

179
Research participants perceived their ethnic identity had contributed to their appreciation of the opportunities they have and to the values, customs and family culture they uphold.

- *I have the Filipino values and customs that my parents taught me.*

- *I inherited values that are apparent in the culture like being hard working and respectful of others.*

Yet, three research participants perceived their ethnic identity had not contributed to their self-perception as they did not feel it had contributed to how they saw themselves:

- *I see myself as an individual rather than identifying myself with a certain ethnic identity.*

- *I see myself as Filipino only as the ethnicity of my parents but my culture, background is Australian. Apart from my blood, I am Australian.*

When questioned about the definition of ethnic identity, research participants used descriptions that followed the ABS (2000) definition of *ethnicity*, such as cultural background, set of values, your Filipino heritage and traditions, the demographic you and your parents are from and the nationality of your parents. Other definitions followed Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of *ethnic identity*, such as the ethnic group you identify with and the respect for your cultural heritage:

- *It is the culture you grew up with, the food you eat, the people you hang around with, the language you speak, your beliefs—it can be religious...That is part of what makes up our ethnic identity, I think.*

- *For me it’s the way you live (culture and values) and where you are from.*

- *The term “ethnic identify” to me means how someone identifies themselves based on their heritage.*
Ethnic Identity – Australian

Research participants who identified as Australian perceived their ethnicity as separated from their sense of ethnic identity because they do not practice the Filipino culture and consider themselves as Australian. Reflective of their assimilation into the host society, they have spent most of their life in Australia and they primarily know and practice the Australian culture rather than the Filipino culture:

- *I've grown up here and know and practice more of the Australian culture than Filipino.*

Evident of her transitional—situational—ethnic identity, one interview participant perceived herself as an Australian when living outside of Australia. It is primarily within Australia that she perceived herself by her ethnicity, "Now that I have moved to the US, when people ask me where I'm from I say Australia and I do consider myself more Australian now than Filipino because I don't practice the Filipino culture at all. I have also spent 2/3 [two-thirds] of my life in Australia."

Both research participants perceived their ethnic identity had contributed to their physical traits and Filipino culture. They defined their ethnic identity as what you see yourself as, what you identify with, including your physical traits, which follows the self-ascribed aspect of Phinney's (1992, 1990b) definition. However, the description of "physical traits" is closer to the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity.

8.1.1.2.2 Filipino Focus Group 2

The focus group was made up of four females and four males aged between 25 and 33 years old who all identified of Christian faith. There was a stark contrast in how the focus group questions were approached by focus group participants based on gender. The female focus group participants got on with answering the questions. The male focus group participants were vocal about how to answer each question, requiring guidance and confirmation that they were answering the questions correctly without asking directly for help. Female focus group participants were very confident in answering the research questions and did not hesitate to ask for clarification of the questions being asked. However, the male focus group participants appeared to
struggle how best to answer the question “correctly”. The potential implication of this is that these male focus group participants may not answer as to how they may really think or feel due to not wanting to answer the research questions “incorrectly”. However, the researcher mitigated this potential problem advising the group that there were no right or wrong answers to the research questions. This had the desired effect on the male focus group participants as it encouraged them to answer the research questions without fear of “answering the questions wrong”. The discussions amongst the focus group members were very lively and engaging as all were very familiar with one another.

In contrast to the interview findings, a majority of five focus group participants identified with the Filipino community; two identified with the Filipino-Australian community and only one identified with the Australian community. A summary of the community focus group participants identified with is shown in Table 8.4.

**Table 8.4 Sense of Belonging – Community (Filipino Focus Group 2)**

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<td>Filipino Focus Group 2</td>
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Focus group participants who identified with the Filipino community perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity. Following the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity and Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity, they described their identity in terms of their Filipino culture and heritage and their sense of belonging to a church group of parishioners of Filipino background. Some examples of their replies are noted below:

- *Filipino because I’ve joined, purposely, a Filipino church congregation.*

- *Filipino because that’s my heritage.*

- *Filipino because of the connection of friends and family, you can relate to each other, sharing your culture with each other.*
In comparison, two focus group participants who identified with the Filipino-Australian community perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as an integration of both the Filipino and Australian communities:

- *I feel included in both the Australian and Filipino communities, giving my time and talents to both and I receive the same appreciation and respect from both.*

- *I belong to a Filipino church congregation but I am part of the Australian community and feel welcome in both groups.*

One focus group participant who identified with the Australian community perceived her ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as fully assimilated into the Australian culture. She says, *'[I was] raised here and feel like I belong more to my Australian culture'.* Her sense of ethnic identity follows Phinney's (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity as a self-ascribed construct that depends upon the individual's feelings towards their ethnic community. In this example, the focus group participant does not feel any sense of belonging towards the Filipino community.

**8.1.1.2.3 Filipino Field Observations of Study Group 2**

Field observations conducted by the researcher revealed some ties to their ethnic heritage were observed, such as research participants' attendance at the *Filipino Kultura Fiesta* (Filipino culture festival). Their ethnicity and ethnic identity were partly on display visually and aurally—although most field participants wore western clothing a few of the male field participants wore t-shirts that proudly displayed the Filipino flag or a map of the Philippine Islands. All field participants were bilingual, fluently conversing in both English and Filipino amongst their friends.

The above example suggests that field participants perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as an integration of their Filipino heritage with the Australian culture. This was evidenced by their use of both the Filipino and English language and the Filipino themed western shirts.
8.1.1.3 Filipino Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia

8.1.1.3.1 Filipino Study Group 3 Interviews

There were five female research participants aged 18, 19 and 20 years of age and one female research participant who was aged 30 compared to three male research participants aged 18, 20 and 25 years of age. All research participants were affiliated with the Christian faith. Half the study group was very conversational and happy to discuss their thoughts on their ethnic identity and what it meant to them. However, the other half of the group was very straight to the point but very considered in their replies.

As shown in Table 8.5, which provides a summary of the research participants’ ethnic identity, four research participants identified as Filipino and five identified as Filipino-Australian, underlining the links to their Filipino culture but also their integration into Australia respectively.

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<td>Filipino Interview Group 3</td>
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Ethnic Identity – Filipino

All research participants who identified as Filipino perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity. They defined their ethnic identity in terms of the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity, such as their ethnic background, their parents’ heritage, country of origin, and their upbringing. They also described their ethnic identity using Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition as a sense of belonging to the Philippines:

- I identify as a Filipino because it's how I grew up; e.g., at school, if my friends would ask what nationality I was, I would always respond "Filo" instead of "Aussie".

- I see myself more Filipino; I feel more of a sense of belonging when I visit the Philippines than I do here.
Research participants felt their ethnic identity had shaped and influenced their self-perception and sense of belonging:

- *My Filipino identity gives me a sense of belonging and community because the areas I associate with are full of Filipinos.*
- *Being exposed to the Filipino culture everyday enabled me to understand that I act more Filipino even though I've lived in Australia all my life.*

When asked what ethnic identity meant, research participants described their ethnic identity as their ethnic background, ancestry and origin, country of birth, culture, traditions and beliefs:

- *To me, ethnic identity is the culture you grew up with, the nationality your parents or family originated from, the food, music and language you're surrounded by.*
- *Ethnic identity to me is understanding your ethnic background and where you came from, your ancestry.*

**Ethnic Identity – Filipino-Australian**

Conversely, all research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian perceived their ethnicity as having a link to their sense of ethnic identity; but they also recognised the influence of Australian culture. Their ethnic identity was perceived as an integration of both their Filipino race and culture with Australian culture and beliefs:

- *When people ask me where I am from, I say I’m Australian but my parents are Filipino. The Australian part is because I was born here and I follow all the culture and beliefs of Australia, and the way of life. The Filipino part is because my parents are Filipino and so I identify myself as that also. My parents have taught me and my sister their Filipino culture, so it’s something I know and understand also.*
- *Because I’m good and comfortable with both Filipino culture and Australian culture.*
When people ask me where I am from, I say I’m Australian but my parents are Filipino. The Australian part is because I was born here and I follow all the culture and beliefs of Australia, and the way of life. The Filipino part is because my parents are Filipino and so I identify myself as that also.

An example of situational ethnic identity was revealed by an interview participant who identifies as Filipino-Australian but says, “at some instances I identify myself only to be Australian. Technically, I was born in Australia but if asked my background, I say Filipino-Australian.”

Research participants also perceived their ethnic identity was ingrained, contributing to their self-respect and respect for others:

- Yes, it has made me industrious and a good citizen.
- It is a part of me that if gone, I would not be the same.

However, two research participants perceived their ethnic identity had not contributed to how they saw themselves:

- I don’t really bring my ethnic identity into play except when people say I’m Asian. I consider myself more of an Australian but with an appreciation of where my parents came from, their Filipino background. But, apart from other people seeing that I look Filipino or that I look Asian, or call me Asian, my ethnic identity and my Filipino heritage doesn’t come into play in how I see myself. I don’t really know how to answer that question though as I don’t carry my ethnic identity with me.
- It doesn’t – I don’t think it has.

Research participants described their ethnic identity as their race, background, culture, beliefs and traditions, similar to the definition used by the ABS (2000) to define ethnicity. Other descriptions include knowing who you are and the influences you need to adapt to:
ethnic identity is what culture, what beliefs and what traditions I have. It's different to what being Australian is. Because I'm more Australian, the thing I identify with being Filipino is distinctly food and certain traits, such as karaoke. Filipinos love and enjoy their karaoke. So ethnic identity to me are the things that are more, for example, Filipino you know because that's my background, the things that are distinctly different to the things that are Australian.

8.1.1.3.2 Filipino Focus Group 3

The focus group was made up of five females and three males aged between 18 and 30 years old and all identified as Baptist. English was the only language used in conversation amongst the group because the majority of focus group participants could not speak the Filipino language and were fluent only in the English language. As this was the last group to be interviewed for the day, it may explain the shorter, straight-to-the-point answers that were given by focus group participants. However, it must be noted that although interview participants provided shorter answers, they were happy to elaborate where requested. Similar to interview findings, focus group participants were equally split in their sense of belonging, as shown in Table 8.6, which shows a summary of the community that focus group participants felt a sense of belonging to.

Table 8.6 Sense of Belonging – Community (Filipino Focus Group 3)

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Focus group participants who identified with the Filipino community perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as closely linked to their sense of belonging to their ethnic community:

- Filipino because I tend to associate and hang out with the Filipino community.

- Filipino because although I was born in Australia, I was brought up in the Filipino community.
Focus group participants who identified with the Filipino-Australian community perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as belonging to both communities:

- I feel like I belong to both because of my acceptance in the wider Australian community and also Filipino because of my membership in a Filipino church congregation.

- Both—Filipino because of my background and church congregation and Australia by birth.

8.1.1.3.3 Filipino Field Observations of Study Group 3

Field participants were observed in attendance at the Filipino Kultura Fiesta (Filipino culture festival) wearing western clothing and conversing exclusively in English. The lack of ethnic dress and exclusive use of English suggests field participants may perceive their ethnicity as separated from their sense of ethnic identity.

8.1.2 Conclusion – Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Sharing similarities between the interview findings and focus group findings, the majority of research participants perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as an integration of their Filipino and Australian culture. Further, there were more research participants from the interview groups who identified as Filipino-Australian compared to those who identified as Filipino. Only a small majority of focus group participants identified with the Filipino-Australian community compared to those who identified with the Filipino community. Although their ethnicity was linked to their sense of ethnic identity, they also acknowledged the influences from the host culture, describing their ethnic identity as a fusion of their Filipino heritage, origin and cultural traditions with their Australian values, upbringing, citizenship and residency. These findings are consistent with existing literature (Kara and Kara, 1996a, Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001) on ethnic minorities with a bicultural ethnic identity and the dual connection they feel towards their ethnic heritage and the host culture.
The second largest group of research participants identified as Filipino. They perceived their ethnicity as closely linked to their sense of ethnic identity, describing their ethnic identity in terms of their Filipino heritage, cultural identity and country of origin. The link of their ethnic identity to their ethnic origin similarly follows the definition of ethnicity used by the ABS (2000). This close link between their ethnicity and ethnic identity is consistent with prior research studies (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009, Chestnut, 2000) on the close connection some ethnic minorities feel towards their ethnicity and ethnic identity.

In comparison, only two research participants from Filipino interview group 2 and one focus group participant from Filipino focus group 2 identified as Australian and perceived their ethnicity as separated from their sense of ethnic identity. They felt a sense of belonging to Australia because they have been raised and educated here, and do not practice or follow any Filipino traditions or customs, having fully immersed themselves into the Australian culture.

Another interesting finding is that two research participants also from Filipino interview group 2 identified as Filipino-Australian within Australia yet identified strongly as Australian when outside of Australia. This is known as situational ethnic identity. It arises because within Australia, they do not consider themselves as Australian because of their physical features i.e., non-Caucasian features. However, outside of Australia they are known by the Australian passport they carry and the Australian citizenship that they hold rather than by their ethnic heritage.

The varying ethnic identity amongst the Filipino study groups reinforced the individual nature of ethnic identity. These variations highlight how ethnic identity is influenced by one’s individual experiences and feelings towards their ethnic group. Following Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity, the influence of the

1 Interview participants from interview group 2 were born overseas, raised and educated in Australia.
2 Focus group participants from focus group 2 were born overseas, raised and educated in Australia.
individual’s pride and the sense of belonging they felt towards their ethnic group was revealed by their self-identification. For example:

- Research participants who felt a sense of belonging towards their ethnic group perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity as closely linked. These research participants identified with their ethnic heritage (Filipino).

- Research participants who felt a sense of belonging to both their ethnic community and to the Australian community perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity as an integration of both cultures. These research participants identified themselves as bicultural (Filipino-Australian).

- Research participants who do not feel a sense of belonging towards their ethnic group perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity as separated. These research participants identified with the host culture (Australian).

8.2 UNDERSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

8.2.1 Research Question 2: How does an individual’s ethnic identity influence their consumer behaviour?

As previously noted the purchase and consumption of products, such as ethnic food and ethnic clothes, can reflect an individual’s ethnic identity as a function of their social identity (Tian and Tian, 2011, Xu et al., 2004, Chattalas and Harper, 2007, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Hirschman, 1981, Podoshen, 2006, Podoshen, 2008). To understand whether the individual’s ethnic identity has influenced the individual’s consumer behaviour, research participants were asked about their product purchase and product consumption.

As previously mentioned, consumer behaviour is defined as the ‘selection, purchase, use or disposal of a product, a service or an experience’ (Solomon, 1996, p. 7). The product(s) or service(s) that research participants from the Filipino study groups consumed and purchased is discussed below to identify the influence of ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour.
8.2.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas

Product Purchase and Consumption

8.2.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group 1 Interviews

Research participants across the three Filipino interview groups were asked to list the types of music, movies and foods they like to consume and the products they like to purchase. Their replies are shown in Table 8.7, which provides a summary of the consumption of Filipino music, movies and foods, including the products they purchased.

The similarities in the consumer behaviour pattern between research participants who identified as Filipino and those who identified as Filipino-Australian are noted below:

- Regardless of whether they identified as Filipino or as Filipino-Australian, a majority of research participants purchased and consumed Filipino food.

- Research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian or as Filipino were equally likely to consume Filipino music and Filipino movies. Yet, they were also equally likely to not consume any such products.

- Only a small number of research participants, two who identified as Filipino and one who identified as Filipino-Australian, purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics\(^1\) and Filipino media\(^2\) (newspapers and magazines). There were just three research participants who did not purchase any products; two who identified as Filipino and one who identified as Filipino-Australian.

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1. Filipino clothes refer to Filipino costumes and traditional dress wear. Filipino cosmetics include creams, lotions and perfumes made in the Philippines. Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery refer to artworks, craft works and jewellery made in the Philippines.

2. Filipino media refers to music, movies, newspapers and magazines written, composed, sung or spoken in Filipino.
Examples of their responses are provided below:

- *Newspapers, magazines and jasmine rice, anchovies from the Philippines. I try to buy food and snacks that are made in the Philippines.*

- *Snacks and Filipino costume for Filipino functions.*

- *Asian shops with Filipino foods. They are made here or imported by enterprising Filipinos.*

Similarities in the consumer behaviour pattern between research participants who identified as Filipino and those who identified as Filipino-Australian suggest the individual’s ethnic identity as Filipino or as Filipino-Australian and their link to their Filipino heritage has influenced the individual’s consumer behaviour in a preference for the consumption of Filipino food,¹ music² and Filipino movies,³ and in the purchase of Filipino food. Because these research participants were born, raised and educated overseas, the assumption can be made that they developed a familiarity and a taste for foods, movies and music from their ethnic homeland. Ethnic consumer behaviour studies assert that ethnic minorities often seek familiar foods, movies or music from their ethnic homeland, in particular during the settlement period.

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¹ Filipino food refers to traditional Filipino dishes, snacks and desserts.
² Filipino music refers to music composed and sung in the Filipino language.
³ Filipino movies refer to movies written and spoken in the Filipino language.
Table 8.7 Filipino Product Purchase and Consumption (Filipino Interview Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Filipino Product Consumption</th>
<th>Filipino Product Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some research participants consumed/purchased more than one “Filipino product”.

193
8.2.1.1.2 Filipino Focus Group 1

Table 8.8 provides a summary of the focus group participants’ product purchases. Similar to the interview findings, the majority of six focus group participants purchased Filipino food whilst a minority of two focus group participants purchased Filipino newspapers, magazines and news. Examples of their feedback are provided below:

- *We are quite flexible in our adaptation to our new environment but still have emotional attachments to things that come from the Philippines—Filipino brands are still favoured for rice, anchovies and snacks.*

- *Same food as what others buy but I will buy Filipino brands or "made in Philippines" products out of loyalty and pride.*

Because all focus group participants unanimously identified as Filipino-Australian, revealing a connection to their Filipino heritage and to the host culture, it may be inferred that their ethnic identification with the Filipino-Australian community has had some influence on their consumer behaviour in a preference for the purchase of Filipino food and to a lesser extent Filipino media.

**Table 8.8 Filipino Product Purchase (Filipino Focus Group 1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Focus Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Filipino Product Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Clothes, Cosmetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Service Providers**

8.2.1.1.3 Filipino Study Group 1 Interviews

In their use of Filipino service providers, there were minor differences in the consumer behaviour of research participants from the interview groups who identified as Filipino and those who identified as Filipino-Australian. For example, research participants who identified as Filipino were more likely than those who identified as
Filipino-Australian to use the services of a Filipino doctor. But, they were only slightly more likely to use the services of a Filipino lawyer/solicitor and dentist than those who identified as Filipino-Australian. A summary of the Filipino service providers used by research participants from Filipino interview group 1 is shown in Table 8.9 and examples of their replies are noted below:

- *...they would have to provide excellent customer service and my money’s worth.*
- *I have no experiences dealing with a Filipino service provider but it would be good to deal with one as we can communicate in Filipino.*
- *Not because they are Filipino as it would depend on the situation and on the quality of the work provided, and on your budget of course.*
- *Tax accountant/agent is the only Filipino service provider I use. He’s available locally. I don’t use service providers based on ethnic background.*

Because the majority of research participants did not use Filipino service providers, it may be suggested that ethnic identity was not a strong influence on their consumer behaviour where service providers are concerned. However, there are also other reasons for the low number of service providers used. Most research participants, even those who currently did not use Filipino service providers, stated that they would consider using Filipino service providers if they were locally available due to the ease of conversing in the Filipino language because of the shared Filipino heritage. Further, a few research participants stated they would only use service providers based on their professionalism and quality of customer service not based on their ethnic background—negating the influence of ethnic identity on their choice of service providers.
### Table 8.9 Use of Filipino Service Providers (Filipino Interview Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dentist</th>
<th>Lawyer / Solicitor</th>
<th>Real Estate Agent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Do Not Use / N/A</td>
<td>Filipino</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dentist</th>
<th>Lawyer / Solicitor</th>
<th>Real Estate Agent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2.1.2 Filipino Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia

Product Purchase and Consumption

8.2.1.2.1 Filipino Study Group 2 Interviews

Research participants from Filipino interview group 2 were split in their product consumption; nine research participants consumed Filipino products versus eight research participants who did not consume any Filipino products. Across the three Filipino interview groups, this group had the highest number of research participants who did not consume any Filipino products. Table 8.10 provides a summary of the Filipino music, movies and foods consumed by research participants from Filipino interview group 2, including the products they purchased:

- The majority of research participants who consumed Filipino food identified as Filipino-Australian. Only one research participant who identified as Filipino and one who identified as Australian also consumed Filipino food.

- Of the eight research participants who did not consume any Filipino products, the majority identified as Filipino-Australian.

- No other Filipino products—movies or music—was consumed other than Filipino food.

- Of the four research participants who purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics, three identified as Filipino-Australian and one identified as Filipino.

- Only one research participant, who identified as Filipino-Australian, purchased Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery.

- Of the five research participants who did not purchase any Filipino products, three identified as Filipino-Australian, one identified as Filipino and one identified as Australian.

However, it must be noted that the majority of research participants interviewed for this interview group—13 out of 17 interview participants—identified as Filipino-
Australian. This in itself revealed that most research participants perceived their identity as linked to both their ethnicity and to the host culture. However, there was very little difference between those who consumed Filipino food versus those who did not consume any Filipino products, so it was unclear whether their ethnic identity has influenced their consumer behaviour.

Whilst only half of the research participants may have consumed Filipino food, a majority of research participants, most of whom identified as Filipino-Australian, did in fact purchase Filipino food. Given their connection to both their Filipino heritage and to the host culture, it can be suggested that their ethnic identity as Filipino-Australian has had some influence on their consumer behaviour in their purchase of Filipino food. One research participant who identified as Australian and one who identified as Filipino also purchased Filipino food. Yet it is unclear whether the research participant who identified as Australian was influenced by her “ethnic” identity in her purchase of Filipino food given that she identified with the host culture.

Examples of the products purchased by research participants are noted below:

- *The only Filipino thing I buy is food like sauces, cooking mix, rice and just food in general.*

- *Filipino food, products particular to Filipino culture such as straw-woven clothes.*

- *Filipino snacks and junk food, cosmetic products sometimes.*
Table 8.10 Filipino Product Purchase and Consumption (Filipino Interview Group 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 2</th>
<th>Filipino Product Consumption</th>
<th>Filipino Product Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some research participants consumed/purchased more than one “Filipino product”.

199
8.2.1.2.2 Filipino Focus Group 2

Similar to interview findings, the majority of focus group participants purchased Filipino food. A summary of the products purchased by focus group participants is provided in Table 8.11:

- The majority of focus group participants purchased Filipino food; most identified with the Filipino community and only one identified with the Filipino-Australian community.

- Of the three focus group participants who purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics, two identified with the Filipino community and one identified with the Filipino-Australian community.

- Only one focus group participant identified with the Australian community and did not consume any Filipino products.

This example suggests that the focus group participants’ connection to their Filipino heritage via their identification with the Filipino community and with the Filipino-Australian community has influenced their consumer behaviour in their purchase of Filipino food and Filipino clothes/cosmetics.

**Table 8.11 Filipino Product Purchase (Filipino Focus Group 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Focus Group 2</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothes, Cosmetics</th>
<th>Media (Music, Movies, Newspapers, Magazines)</th>
<th>Arts, Crafts, Jewellery</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Filipino</td>
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<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some research participants purchased more than one “Filipino product”.

200
Service Providers

Study Group 2 Interviews

As shown in Table 8.12, which provides a summary of the service providers used by research participants from Filipino interview group 2, only three research participants used the services of a Filipino service provider:

- Two research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian used the services of a Filipino doctor and dentist.

- One research participant who identified as Filipino used the services of a Filipino doctor.

Whilst insignificant in number, this example suggests the ethnic identity of research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian had a slight influence on their consumer behaviour in a preference for Filipino service providers. Although a majority of research participants indicated that they would use the services of a local Filipino service provider this was not reflected in their actual usage. This may be due to Filipino service providers not being locally available or research participants preferring to choose service providers based on their professionalism, skills set and experience and not for their ethnic background. In addition, the low number of Filipino service providers used also suggests that the individual’s ethnic identity was not a major determinant in choosing service providers and therefore unlikely to have been a huge influence on their consumer behaviour.

Examples of their feedback are provided below:

- *I would not go out of my way to find a Filipino service provider but will use one if they were locally based near my home. My optometrist is Filipino but she was recommended to me by friends and family, and is not that far away from where I live.*

- *I would not choose a Filipino service provider over another nationality, I would base it on their skills, experience etc.*
• If a Filipino doctor were available, I would go to them because I think they could “understand” me and my issues better (although this is completely unproven!). Also, I would prefer an “Asian” hairdresser because they understand “Asian hair”.

• Yes, through language and being comfortable to negotiate, e.g., with real estate.
Table 8.12 Use of Filipino Service Providers (Filipino Interview Group 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 2</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dentist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Do Not Use / N/A</td>
</tr>
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<td>Filipino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lawyer / Solicitor</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real Estate Agent</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Do Not Use / N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Filipino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Australian</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2.1.3 Filipino Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia

Product Purchase and Consumption

8.2.1.3.1 Filipino Study Group 3 Interviews

Similar to the findings for Filipino interview group 2, research participants from Filipino interview group 3 were split between research participants who consumed Filipino foods versus research participants who did not consume any Filipino products. Table 8.13 provides a summary of the Filipino music, movies and food consumed by research participants from Filipino study group 3, including their product purchases. The findings revealed:

- Three of the five research participants who consumed Filipino food identified as Filipino and two identified as Filipino-Australian, suggesting that research participants who identified as Filipino or as Filipino-Australian were almost equally likely to consume Filipino food. However, research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian were more likely than those who identified as Filipino to purchase Filipino food.

- Research participants who identified as Filipino were more likely than those who identified as Filipino-Australian to purchase Filipino clothes/cosmetics.

- Three of the four research participants who did not consume any Filipino products identified as Filipino-Australian and one identified as Filipino suggesting research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian were more likely than those who identified as Filipino to not consume any Filipino products.

Because research participants from this group were just as likely to consume Filipino food or not consume any Filipino product, it is unclear whether their ethnic identity as Filipino-Australian has influenced their consumer behaviour. However, for research participants who identified as Filipino, it can be assumed that their ethnic identity has influenced their consumer behaviour in the consumption of Filipino food. Further, all research participants who identified as Filipino purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics.
and all research participants who identified as Filipino-Australian purchased Filipino food. Their identification as Filipino or Filipino-Australian revealed a connection to their Filipino heritage, suggesting that their ethnic identity has had some influence on their consumer behaviour in their purchase of Filipino food or Filipino clothes/cosmetics.

Examples of the products that research participants purchased are noted below:

- *Filipino clothing and snacks from the Filipino store [Blacktown].*

- *The only product I buy that is made in the Philippines is Baby Bench creams for sensitive skin.*

- *Rice, biscuits, milk, drinks and shampoo from the Philippines.*

- *Filipino products that I do buy are Havaianas and Baby Bench [dermatological creams for sensitive skin].*
### Table 8.13 Filipino Product Purchase and Consumption (Filipino Interview Group 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 3</th>
<th>Filipino Product Consumption</th>
<th>Filipino Product Purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2.1.3.2 Filipino Focus Group 3

The products purchased by focus group 3 participants are summarised in Table 8.14, which revealed:

- All eight focus group participants equally purchased Filipino food regardless of the community they identified with.
- Two of the three focus group participants who identified with the Filipino community purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics; one identified with the Filipino-Australian community.
- Only one focus group participant who identified with the Filipino-Australian community purchased Filipino music.

The evidence suggests that the focus group participants’ connection to their Filipino heritage and their ethnic identification with the Filipino community or with the Filipino-Australian community has likely influenced their consumer behaviour in their purchase of Filipino food, clothes/cosmetics and Filipino media.

**Table 8.14 Filipino Product Purchase (Filipino Focus Group 3)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Focus Group 3</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Clothes, Cosmetics</th>
<th>Media (Music, Movies, Newspapers, Magazines)</th>
<th>Arts, Crafts, Jewellery</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Some focus group participants purchased more than one product(s)

**Service Providers**

8.2.1.3.3 Filipino Study Group 3 Interviews

In the use of Filipino service providers, half of the research participants from Filipino interview group 3 used the services of a Filipino doctor and dentist. As shown in Table 8.15:
Five research participants used the services of a Filipino doctor; two identified as Filipino, three identified as Filipino-Australian.

Four research participants used the services of a Filipino dentist; one identified as Filipino, three identified as Filipino-Australian.

Only one research participant who identified as Filipino-Australian used the services of a Filipino lawyer/solicitor.

In this context, it is likely that the individual’s ethnic identity may have influenced their consumer behaviour in a preference for choosing Filipino service providers. However, there is also parental influence to account for their choice. This is supported by feedback from research participants that many of the Filipino service providers they use have come recommended by their parents and were used because their parents were comforted by the knowledge that they could communicate in the Filipino language with their service providers:

- *...my parents’ English isn’t as developed as mine so it’s easier to explain our needs and what services we expect with a Filipino service provider. My parents also feel more at ease and find it easier to get along with them.*

- *...if my relatives recommend the service provider. If locally available but not if they are too far away—not more than half an hour’s drive.*

- *...they would be of the same race so my parents can get along with them and they can understand each other.*
### Table 8.15 Use of Filipino Service Providers (Filipino Interview Group 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 3</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Doctor</th>
<th>Dentist</th>
</tr>
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<td>Filipino</td>
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<td>Filipino</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
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<th>Real Estate Agent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2.2 Conclusion – Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour

The findings across the Filipino study groups found some evidence of the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour. The study also found that Filipino food was the more likely “Filipino product”\textsuperscript{1} to either be purchased or consumed by research participants. This finding is consistent with existing research (Albonetti and Dominguez, 1989, Cui and Choudhury, 2002) on ethnic identity as a social identity and its influence on the consumer behaviour of ethnic minorities, in particular where ethnic food is concerned.

The product consumption findings revealed inter-generational differences between Filipino interview group 1 versus Filipino interview groups 2 and 3. The influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour was evidenced by the consumption of Filipino food by the majority of research participants from Filipino interview group 1,\textsuperscript{2} all of whom identified as Filipino or as Filipino-Australian. However, it was unclear whether ethnic identity had any influence on the consumer behaviour of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2\textsuperscript{3} and 3.\textsuperscript{4} All but two identified as Filipino or as Filipino-Australian and were split between consumption and non-consumption of Filipino food. In fact, Filipino interview group 2 had the highest number of non-consumption of “Filipino products” of the three Filipino interview groups. Further, for research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 3, there was very little difference in the consumer behaviour of those who identified as Filipino versus those who identified as Filipino-Australian.

It must be noted that research participants from Filipino interview group 3, those born, raised and educated in Australia, revealed a higher purchase rate for Filipino clothes/cosmetics than research participants from Filipino interview group 1. This

\textsuperscript{1} Filipino music, movies, newspapers, magazines, food, clothes/cosmetics, arts, crafts and jewellery.
\textsuperscript{2} Born, raised and educated overseas.
\textsuperscript{3} Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia.
\textsuperscript{4} Born, raised and educated in Australia.
purchase implies a sense of connection felt towards their ethnic heritage, as it is a visual display of their ethnic heritage.

The findings also revealed *inter-generational similarities* across the Filipino study groups with the majority of interview and focus group participants purchasing Filipino food. In this instance, the influence of their ethnic identity as Filipino or as Filipino-Australian and the connection they feel towards their Filipino heritage has likely influenced their consumer behaviour in the purchase of Filipino food.

*Inter-generational differences* in consumer behaviour between the three Filipino interview groups were found in their choice of service providers with Filipino service providers more likely to be used by research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 3 than those from interview group 2. In fact, half of the research participants from Filipino interview group 3 used a Filipino doctor or dentist. Indicative of the influence of their ethnic identity on their consumer behaviour, many research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 3 specifically chose to use Filipino service providers because they preferred to communicate in the Filipino language or because the service providers were recommended to them by their parents respectively. It is important to note that the majority of research participants from interview group 3 prefer to communicate in the English language.

In comparison, the majority of research participants from interview group 2 did not use any Filipino service providers. This suggests that their ethnic identity did not appear to be a strong influence on their consumer behaviour, nor was it a major determinant on their choice of service providers. Local access to service providers and the quality of customer service and professionalism provided were noted as having more influence than the ethnic background of the service providers they used.

In summary, the influence of ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour was primarily established amongst research participants from Filipino interview group 1 in the consumption of Filipino food and in their choice of Filipino service providers. Whilst research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 also purchased Filipino food or used Filipino service providers, a clear link could not be established
between their ethnic identity and consumer behaviour due to the inconsistency in their consumption and purchase pattern.

**8.3 UNDERSTAND HOW INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION AFFECTS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR**

In seeking to answer Research Question 3, research participants were asked a range of questions during individual interviews and in focus group sessions. A summary of these questions and their corresponding category are provided below for clarification.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 5, previous studies from Berry and Sam (1997), Ogden (2004a), Kang and Kim (1993), Laroche (1998), and O’Guinn and Faber (1986) found individual acculturation affected an individual’s language, food and media preferences, and their participation in cultural events. Similarly, Quester’s (2001) study found that acculturation affected the individual’s consumer behaviour during the consumer decision-making process.

To investigate how individual acculturation may alter the consumer behaviour of each generation, research participants were asked:

1. The products they chose to purchase and consume;
2. The ethnic background of the service providers they used;
3. Their language preferences;
4. The frequency of their visits to their ethnic homeland;
5. The ethnic background of their spouse/partner; and
6. The ethnic background of their five closest friends.

These questions were asked and used to explain individual acculturation levels because less-acculturated individuals are said to be more likely to:

- Purchase and consume ethnic products;
- Utilise service providers of their ethnic background;
- Frequently visit their ethnic homeland;
- Converse in their ethnic language at home or amongst friends; and
- Have a spouse/partner and a close circle of friends from their ethnic background.

8.3.1 Research Question 3: How does individual acculturation (through behavioural shifts and socio-cultural adaptation) affect the consumer behaviour of each generation?


The definition of acculturation is ‘the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture’ as defined by Berry and Sam (1997, p. 294). Its effect on the consumer behaviour of individuals of Filipino background was explored below.

8.3.1.1 Product Purchase and Consumption

8.3.1.1.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

The findings suggest that individual acculturation has affected the product consumption of each Filipino interview group as evidenced by the low consumption pattern of Filipino food, Filipino music and Filipino movies, in particular for research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3. The non-consumption of Filipino products by research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 suggest a high level of acculturation, as acculturated individuals are less likely to consume Filipino products.
There were *inter-generational differences* in product consumption between the three Filipino interview groups, as revealed by the consumption of Filipino food, music and movies and by the non-consumption of Filipino products:

- A majority of research participants from Filipino interview group 1 consumed Filipino food compared to half of the research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3.

- From Filipino interview group 1, five research participants consumed Filipino music and three consumed Filipino movies compared to none from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3.

- Four research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 3 did not consume any Filipino products compared to half from Filipino interview group 2.

Revealing varying levels of individual acculturation, a majority of research participants purchased Filipino food and Filipino clothes/cosmetics yet only a small minority purchased Filipino media (Filipino music, movies, newspapers and magazines) and Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery. The findings on the low purchase of Filipino media and Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery suggest the effects of acculturation because acculturated individuals are less likely to purchase media in their ethnic language or to visually display their ethnic heritage.

The non-purchase of Filipino products by three research participants from Filipino interview group 1 and five research participants from Filipino interview group 2 revealed *inter-generational differences* in consumer behaviour between the three Filipino interview groups. Surprisingly, all research participants from Filipino interview group 3, those who were born, raised and educated in Australia, purchased Filipino product(s). Further, more research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics than research participants from Filipino interview group 1. For example, only two research participants from Filipino interview group 1 purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics compared to four research participants from Filipino interview group 2 and five research participants from Filipino interview group 3.
However, it is not unusual for ethnic minorities from the younger generation—specifically those born or raised in Australia from a young age—to want to display their ethnic background. Research has found young adults whose family have a strong sense of their ethnic heritage are likely to have a strong sense of their own ethnic identity (Costigan et al., 2009). Whilst, they may be acculturated to the host culture, their situational ethnic identity was likely to be revealed by their purchase of ethnic clothes, in particular when celebrating cultural events (Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008).

*Inter-generational similarities* in consumer behaviour between the three Filipino interview groups were evidenced by the purchase of Filipino food, clothes/cosmetics, media and Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery:

- A majority of research participants purchased Filipino food.
- No research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 or 3 purchased Filipino media compared to just one research participant from Filipino interview group 1.
- No research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 or 3 purchased Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery compared to just one research participant from Filipino interview group 2.

8.3.1.1.2 Filipino Focus Groups

The findings revealed varying levels of individual acculturation in the purchase of Filipino food, clothes/cosmetics, media and arts, crafts and jewellery. In fact, more focus group participants from Filipino focus groups 2 and 3 purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics than those from Filipino focus group 1. Because members from focus groups 2 and 3 were either born or raised and educated in Australia, they are assumed to be more acculturated to the host culture. Past studies (Lindridge and Dibb, 2002, Penaloza, 1994a, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a) have asserted that individuals who are low-acculturated and have a close connection to their ethnic community are also more likely to adopt ethnic wear. Though this may suggest low acculturation, it also reflects the individual’s sense of pride in their Filipino heritage.
and ethnic wear allows them to visually display their “ethnic pride”. This is supported by their feedback on how they feel about their Filipino heritage. Most focus group participants from focus groups 2 and 3 expressed pride in their Filipino culture and values. Only two focus group participants had mixed feelings about their pride due to feeling disconnected from his heritage and shame towards the Filipino government respectively.

*Inter-generational differences* in consumer behaviour were revealed between Filipino focus group 1 versus Filipino focus groups 2 and 3. This was evidenced by the purchase of Filipino clothes/cosmetics by three focus group participants from Filipino focus groups 2 and 3 compared to none from Filipino focus group 1.

*Inter-generational similarities* in consumer behaviour were revealed amongst the focus groups with the majority of focus participants purchasing Filipino food. Further, all focus group participants less one from Filipino focus group 2, purchased Filipino products.

**8.3.1.2 Service Providers**

8.3.1.2.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

Findings suggest that individual acculturation has affected the consumer behaviour of the majority of research participants from Filipino interview group 2 based on the low use of Filipino service providers. In contrast, a large number of research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 3 used the services of a Filipino doctor or dentist, suggesting that individual acculturation has had little effect on their choice of service providers. This is supported by feedback from research participants confirming that they used Filipino service providers because:

1. They or their parents can communicate in the Filipino language with their service providers,
2. They came recommended by their family and/or parents, and
3. They had access to locally available Filipino service providers.
**Inter-generational differences** in consumer behaviour were revealed between Filipino interview groups 1 and 3 versus Filipino interview group 2 based on their use of Filipino service providers. This was evidenced by the use of:

- Filipino lawyers/solicitors by five research participants from Filipino interview groups 1, one from interview group 3 and none from Filipino interview group 2.
- Filipino real estate agents by two research participants from Filipino interview group 1 compared to none from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3.

**Inter-generational similarities** in consumer behaviour between the three interview groups were revealed by the use of Filipino doctors and dentists by research participants from each group. However, interview groups 1 and 3 had a higher use of Filipino doctors and dentists than those from interview group 2.

### 8.3.1.3 Language Preferences

#### 8.3.1.3.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

Findings suggest that individual acculturation has affected the language preferences of each generation as evidenced by the increasing use of the English language at home and amongst friends. For some research participants, English was the only language used at home and amongst friends. Past studies (Garcia, 1982a, Laroche et al., 1998, Triandis et al., 1982) have stressed that language preferences are a good indicator of an individual’s acculturation level. For further information, refer to Table 8.16, which provides a summary of the languages spoken at home and amongst friends by research participants from each Filipino interview group.

Although, the Filipino language was spoken at home or amongst friends by some of the research participants who used Filipino service providers, most spoke English amongst friends and a combination of the Filipino and English language at home. As previously mentioned in the **Service Providers** section, a number of research participants across the Filipino interview groups used Filipino service providers. For the five research participants who would consider using a Filipino service provider in order to be able to communicate in the Filipino language, only three actually did. But,
this could be due to not having access to local Filipino service providers. However, because English, Filipino or a combination of both the English and Filipino languages were used amongst the research participants, it is hard to gauge whether the individual’s language preference had any influence on her (or his) use of service providers.

There were inter-generational differences in language preference and use between the three Filipino interview groups. This was evidenced by the higher number of research participants from Filipino interview group 1 conversing exclusively in the Filipino language at home and amongst friends in comparison to research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3.

There were inter-generational similarities in language preference and use between the three Filipino interview groups. This was revealed by the higher number of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 conversing exclusively in English at home and amongst friends compared to research participants from Filipino interview group 1.
Table 8.16 Language Preferences (Filipino Interview Groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>+Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3.1.4 Visits to the Homeland

8.3.1.4.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

The findings suggest that individual acculturation has affected the consumer behaviour of each generation in their travels to the homeland. This is based on the infrequency\(^1\) of visits to the Philippines made by a majority of research participants across the three interview groups. In addition, a few research participants had never visited, had never been back to visit or had only been back to visit the Philippines once since settlement in Australia. Table 8.17 provides a summary of visits to the Philippines by research participants from each Filipino interview group.

There were *inter-generational similarities* in consumer behaviour between the three interview groups. This was evidenced by the infrequent travel patterns to the Philippines across the three Filipino interview groups with the majority of research participants visiting the Philippines every four to five years.

\(^{1}\) For the purpose of this study, frequent trips to the ethnic homeland are defined as visiting the ethnic homeland every year to three years.
Table 8.17 Frequency of Visits to the Ethnic Homeland (Filipino Interview Groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filipino Interview Group 1</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Visits to Philippines</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Filipino-Australian</th>
<th>Australian</th>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Filipino</th>
<th>Filipino-Australian</th>
<th>Australian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Never Been / Never Been Back</td>
<td>Never Been / Never Been Back</td>
<td>Only Once</td>
<td>Every Year</td>
<td>Every 2-3 Years</td>
<td>4-5 Years+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 1</td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 2</td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Filipino Interview Group 3</td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3.1.5 Ethnic Background of Spouse/Partner and Friends

8.3.1.5.1 Filipino Study Group Interviews

As previously mentioned, previous studies on acculturation assert low-acculturated individuals are more likely to have a spouse/partner and a circle of friends of the same ethnic background (Barth, 1969a, Costigan et al., 2009, Hiller and Chow, 2005, Kiang and Fuligni, 2009, McPherson et al., 2001, Mollica et al., 2003, Song, 2003, Garcia, 1982b, Laroche et al., 2009, Triandis et al., 1982). To investigate the effect of individual acculturation and to uncover if there are inter-generational differences between consumers from the same ethnic background, research participants across all of the Filipino study groups were questioned on the ethnic background of their spouse/partner and friends.

Table 8.18 provides a summary of the ethnic background of the research participants' spouse/partner and circle of friends. As shown, the majority of research participants from Filipino interview group 1 have a spouse/partner of Filipino background—regardless of their ethnic identity. Whilst half the group has an ethnic homophilic friendship network, half have a more ethnic heterogeneous network of friends. However, this mixed circle of friends also includes friends of Filipino background. Given their age and status (born, raised and educated overseas), these attachments and friendships were likely formed in the ethnic homeland or during early settlement in Australia (Barth, 1969a, Costigan et al., 2009, Hiller and Chow, 2005, Kiang and Fuligni, 2009, McPherson et al., 2001, Mollica et al., 2003, Song, 2003, Garcia, 1982b, Laroche et al., 2009, Triandis et al., 1982).

Highlighting the variances in individual acculturation, two research participants whose spouse/partners are of Filipino background revealed a network of friends outside of their ethnic community. Further, of the three research participants who have a spouse/partner outside of their ethnic background, two have an ethnic homophilic friendship network; one has a friendship network of both Filipino and Greek, her partner's ethnic background. What this finding also suggests is that individuals who find comfort in engaging with others from the same ethnic background will also have strong intra-group ties and are therefore likely to remain in
the ethnic group (Fischer, 1977, Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1954, Marsden, 1987, Marsden, 1988, Shrum et al., 1988) despite being married to someone outside of their ethnic group.

Table 8.18 Ethnic Background of Social Network (Filipino Interview Group 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to interview group 1 and revealing inter-generational differences, half of the research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 were single—which is also reflective of their young age—whilst the remaining half were split between those who have a spouse/partner of Filipino background versus those who have a spouse/partner outside their ethnic background (as shown in Table 8.19 and Table 8.20). Further, a majority of research participants from both interview groups 2 and 3 have an ethnic heterogeneous network of friends, which includes friends of Filipino background also.

Only two research participants from interview group 2, identifying as Filipino and Filipino-Australian with a spouse/partner of Chinese and Anglo-Australian background respectively, have a heterogeneous network of friends exclusive of Filipino. In addition, three research participants from interview group 3 who all identified as Filipino-Australian have a heterogeneous network of friends exclusive of Filipino. Of these three research participants, one was single and two have partners of Filipino background. The low number of individuals with a friendship circle of non-Filipino friends reveals inter-generational similarities between interview groups 1, 2 and 3. Whilst some studies (Fuchs et al., 1999, Masgoret and Ward, 2006, Silbereisen and Schmitt-Rodermund, 2000, Titzmann and Silbereisen, 2009, Phinney et al., 2006) assert the younger generation being more likely to have a more inter-ethnic/mixed friendship network due to their age and schooling, these findings may perhaps be symptomatic of research participants belonging to a Filipino church congregation. For
example, six research participants from interview group 2 and two research participants from interview group 3 have ethnic homophilic friendship networks.

Table 8.19 Ethnic Background of Social Network (Filipino Interview Group 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 2: Born Overseas, Raised &amp; Educated in Australia</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.20 Ethnic Background of Social Network (Filipino Interview Group 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Identity</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 3: Born, Raised &amp; Educated in Australia</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.3.2 Conclusion – How Individual Acculturation Affects Consumer Behaviour

There were mixed findings across the three Filipino study groups, with some evidence confirming that individual acculturation did affect consumer behaviour in some instances but not in other instances. Further, the effects of individual acculturation can be seen in the variations in consumer behaviour between different generations of consumers from the same ethnic background.

*Inter-generational similarities* in consumer behaviour were revealed by:
The majority of interview and focus group participants from the Filipino study groups purchasing Filipino food, suggesting individual acculturation had little effect on their purchase of Filipino food.

- The low purchase and consumption of Filipino media (music, movies, newspapers, magazines) and Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery in particular by the younger generation\(^1\) suggests individual acculturation has affected their consumer behaviour. This is reinforced by the lack of fluency in the Filipino language by research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3.

- The infrequency\(^2\) of visits to the Philippines made by a majority of research participants, suggesting the effect of individual acculturation on their consumer behaviour.

- A majority of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 conversing exclusively in English at home and amongst friends, suggesting the effects of individual acculturation.

The study also found *inter-generational differences* in consumer behaviour as evidenced by the:

- Non-consumption of Filipino music and Filipino movies by research participants from Filipino interview groups 2\(^3\) and 3\(^4\) in comparison to the higher consumption of Filipino food, music and movies by research participants from Filipino interview group 1.\(^5\)

- Non-purchase of Filipino products by a few research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 2 compared to the purchase of Filipino products by all research participants from Filipino interview group 3.

\(^1\) Research participants from Filipino study groups 2 and 3.
\(^2\) For the purpose of this study, frequent trips to the ethnic homeland are defined as visiting the ethnic homeland every year to three years.
\(^3\) Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia.
\(^4\) Born, raised and educated in Australia.
\(^5\) Born, raised and educated overseas.
Although the number is not significant, the study also found more interview participants and focus participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 and focus groups 2 and 3 purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics than those from Filipino interview group 1 and focus group 1.

Further inter-generational differences were found in the choice of service providers and in the use of the English language:

- Because acculturated individuals are less likely to use Filipino service providers, the low number of Filipino service providers used by the majority of research participants from Filipino interview group 2 suggests that individual acculturation has likely affected their consumer behaviour. In comparison, for research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 3, their use of Filipino service providers (doctor and/or dentist) suggests that individual acculturation has not greatly affected their consumer behaviour where Filipino service providers are concerned.

- Reinforcing this finding is their feedback that confirmed they used Filipino service providers due to a preference for communicating in the Filipino language and/or due to parental recommendation respectively. A higher number of research participants from Filipino interview group 1 conversed exclusively in the Filipino language or used a combination of both the Filipino and English languages at home and amongst friends. In comparison, the English language was predominantly used at home and amongst friends by a majority of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3.

The findings above revealed the effects of individual acculturation were predominantly evidenced in the consumer behaviour of research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 but only in some instances. For example, although research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 did not purchase Filipino media or Filipino arts, crafts and jewellery, a majority did purchase Filipino food. This behaviour can be explained by a Verbeke and Lopez (2005) study that found dietary consumption was a slow process of change. However, the effects on acculturation on their consumer behaviour were evidenced in the low consumption of ethnic media. Past studies on
acculturation and ethnic consumer behaviour (Lee and Tse, 1994, Lisansky, 1981, O’Guinn et al., 1986, Weinstock, 1964) have shown high-acculturated individuals have a preference for non-ethnic media.

However, given the individual nature of acculturation, it is not surprising to find variations to consumer behaviour amongst individuals from the same generation and background. Whilst research participants from study groups 2 and 3 were raised and educated in Australia, the assumption that early exposure would make them more likely to acculturate to the Australian culture (Kara and Kara, 1996b, Jun et al., 1993, Montero, 1981, Padilla, 1980, Wallendorf and Reilly, 1983, Quester et al., 2001, Kara and Kara, 1996a) and thus more likely to purchase non-ethnic products was not supported in this instance. Research participants from this group purchased more Filipino clothes/cosmetics than from study group 1.

Further, examples of the effects of acculturation on consumer behaviour were evidenced by the infrequent trips to the ethnic homeland by the majority of research participants. Past studies (Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001, Jamal and Chapman, 2000) have shown that high-acculturated individuals have fewer ties to their ethnic homeland and are therefore less likely to travel as frequently to their ethnic homeland. In addition, the preference for using the English language at home and amongst friends by research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 suggests the effect of individual acculturation because highly acculturated individuals are more inclined to converse in the host language (Firoz, 1995, Quester et al., 2001).

In summary, the above findings reflect the diverse views in existing studies (Berry, 1997, Berry, 1980, Chae and Foley, 2010, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Kang and Kim, 1998, Kara and Kara, 1996a, Ogden et al., 2004a, Ownbey and Horridge, 1997, Pires and Stanton, 2000, Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001) on acculturation and its varying effects on ethnic consumer behaviour. Because acculturation—like self-ascribed ethnic identity—is an individual process, variations in ethnic identity and consumer behaviour amongst individuals of the same ethnic background and from the same generational group will always exist.
CHAPTER 9 INTER-GROUP FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

As summarised in Figure 9.1, the research findings for this study have been separated into three chapters: one chapter for each study group and one chapter for the inter-group study. This chapter presents the inter-group findings for both the Lao and Filipino study groups to show whether there are inter-group differences or similarities in consumer behaviour between groups from two different ethnic backgrounds. The findings for this chapter concern the differences and similarities between the two study groups on two levels—Lao versus Filipino and Lao generational groups versus Filipino generational groups.

For the purpose of this study, inter-group study refers to a study comparison of two different ethnic groups, such as the Lao study group versus the Filipino study group.

The research question addressed in Chapter 9 is noted below:

*How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds?*
9.1 UNDERSTAND HOW INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION AFFECTS CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

9.1.1 Research Question 4: How does individual acculturation affect the consumer behaviour of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds?

Past studies have revealed there are inter-group differences in consumer behaviour between ethnic groups and the host group; in particular, to how they respond to advertising and promotion and in their shopping behaviour towards clothing (Green, 1995, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Laroche et al., 2002, Kwok and Uncles, 2005, Saegert et al., 1985, Jung and Kau, 2004, Laroche et al., 2004, Seock and Bailey, 2009, Deshpande et al., 1986, Delener and Neelankavil, 1990b, Kim and Kang, 2001, O’Guinn
and Faber, 1985). Individual acculturation is said to affect the behaviour of consumers from different ethnic backgrounds. The level of influence however is dependent on how acculturated the ethnic group and its members are to the host culture. Acculturation factors, such as language preferences, length of stay in the host culture, age at migration and whether the individual was born, raised and educated in the host culture, all impact on the individual undergoing the acculturation process (Webster, 1992, O’Guinn and Faber, 1986, Kang and Kim, 1998, Ownbey and Horridge, 1997, Berry, 1997, Berry, 1980, Berry and Sam, 1997).

To answer question 4, the researcher conducted a comparison analysis of the consumer behaviour of both the Lao and Filipino study groups. Their product purchase and consumption, the ethnic background of the service providers they used, how frequently they travelled to the ethnic homeland, their language preferences, and the ethnic background of their spouse/partner and inner circle of friends were analysed. The findings are discussed below.

**9.1.1.1 Product Purchase and Consumption**

**9.1.1.1 Lao and Filipino Study Group Interviews**

To gauge their level of individual acculturation, research participants were questioned on their product purchase and consumption choices to identify whether they purchased and/or consumed ethnic products (Lao or Filipino). Studies on acculturation and ethnic consumer behaviour (Palumbo and Teich, 2004, Chattalas and Harper, 2007, Khairullah and Khairullah, 1999, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a) assert that an individual’s acculturation levels will—over time—alter their consumer behaviour.

The findings suggest that individual acculturation has had little effect on the consumer behaviour of research participants from both the Lao and Filipino study groups in their purchase and consumption of Lao/Filipino food respectively. This finding supports a Verbeke and Lopez (2005) study that found ethnic food consumption took time to change.
In comparison, it is likely that individual acculturation has affected the consumer behaviour of research participants who did not purchase or consume any music or movies from their ethnic homeland. This is supported by a Ueltschy and Krampf’s (1997) study that found high-acculturated individuals prefer English language movies, programs and music. The purchase and consumption of ethnic music and ethnic movies requires a level of fluency in the said ethnic language for the audience to fully appreciate and understand. Most of the research participants who did not purchase or consume music or movies from their ethnic homeland are primarily from study groups 2 and 3—those born or raised and educated in Australia—most of whom are not fluent in their parents’ native tongue (Lao or Filipino respectively). It was therefore not surprising that they also revealed a preference for western music and movies.

*Inter-group differences* in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino study groups revealed:

- There were more research participants from the Lao interview groups that consumed music from their ethnic homeland compared to research participants from the Filipino interview groups. No research participants from Lao interview group 3 or from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 consumed any music from their ethnic homeland.

- There were more research participants from the Lao interview groups that consumed movies from their ethnic homeland than that from the Filipino interview groups—that is, eight research participants from the Lao interview groups compared to just three research participants from the Filipino interview groups.

- More research participants from the Lao interview groups purchased ethnic media than research participants from the Filipino interview groups, e.g., four research participants from Lao interview group 1 and just one research participant from Filipino interview group 1.

- There were more research participants from the Filipino interview groups that did not consume any products from their ethnic homeland than that of the Lao
interview groups—16 research participants from the Filipino interview groups compared to just eight research participants from the Lao interview groups.

- Research participants from the Filipino interview groups were significantly more likely than research participants from the Lao interview groups to not purchase any products from their ethnic homeland, e.g., two research participants from Lao interview group 1 compared to eight research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 2.

*Inter-group similarities* in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino study groups revealed:

- A majority of 29 research participants from the Lao interview groups and similarly a majority of 28 research participants from the Filipino interview groups consumed foods from their ethnic homeland.

- Only a small number of research participants from both the Lao and Filipino interview groups purchased clothes/cosmetics from their ethnic homeland.

### 9.1.1.1.2 Lao and Filipino Focus Groups

Participants from groups 2 and 3\(^1\) are often cited to be more acculturated to the host culture than “first generation” ethnic minorities—those from focus group 1, who were born, raised and educated overseas (Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999). However, the findings of this study revealed a purchase of ethnic clothes/cosmetics and arts, crafts and jewellery by focus participants from both the Lao and Filipino focus groups 2 and 3. Because it is such a visual display of their ethnic heritage, this may suggest that individual acculturation has not affected their purchase behaviour for clothes/cosmetics from their ethnic homeland. However, delving further into their feedback, another explanation may be a feeling of wanting to re-connect with their

\(^1\) Focus group 2 participants were born overseas but raised and educated in Australia. Focus group 3 participants were born, raised and educated in Australia.
roots and embrace their ethnic heritage as all focus group participants expressed having pride in their ethnic background.

**Inter-group differences** in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino focus groups were revealed by the purchase of ethnic arts, crafts and jewellery and ethnic media. As summarised:

- Three focus group participants from the Lao focus groups purchased ethnic arts, crafts and jewellery compared to none from the Filipino focus groups.

- Three focus group participants from the Filipino focus groups purchased ethnic media compared to just one focus group participant from the Lao focus groups.

- Focus group participants from Lao focus groups 2 and 3 revealed a purchase of Lao arts, crafts and jewellery whilst focus group participants from Filipino focus group 2 and 3 revealed a purchase of ethnic clothes/cosmetics.

**Inter-group similarities** in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino study groups were revealed amongst the focus groups in the purchase of Lao/Filipino food and Lao/Filipino ethnic clothes/cosmetics:

- All the Lao and all the Filipino focus groups (with the exception of one focus group participant from Filipino focus group 2) purchased Lao/Filipino products.

- 13 focus group participants from the Lao focus groups and 20 focus group participants from the Filipino focus groups purchased Lao/Filipino food.

- Eight focus group participants from the Lao focus groups and six focus group participants from the Filipino focus groups purchased Lao/Filipino clothes/cosmetics.

### 9.1.1.2 Service Providers

Research participants were questioned on their choice of service providers to identify whether they used ethnic—Lao or Filipino—service providers. As previously noted, previous research studies on the consumer behaviour of ethnic minorities have
asserted that those who use service providers of their ethnic origin are said to be less acculturated than those who use service providers outside of their ethnic background (Herche and Balasubramanian, 1994, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Ownbey and Horridge, 1997).

The findings of this study revealed a low use of Lao service providers amongst research participants from the Lao interview groups. Their general preference for using locally available service providers and for choosing quality service regardless of the service providers’ ethnic background does suggest a level of individual acculturation amongst the research participants. However, feedback from research participants also revealed there was a feeling of distrust towards using Lao service providers amongst some research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2.

In contrast, there was a higher number of Filipino service providers used by research participants from the Filipino interview groups. Given that a number of research participants used Filipino service providers specifically because of their ethnic background or to communicate in the Filipino language this may suggest that individual acculturation has not greatly affected their choice of service providers.

Inter-group differences in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino interview groups revealed a higher number of research participants from the Filipino interview groups used service providers from their ethnic background in comparison to research participants from the Lao interview groups:

- Only three research participants from the Lao interview groups used the services of a doctor from their ethnic background compared to 12 research participants from the Filipino interview groups.

- Only three research participants from the Lao interview groups used the services of a dentist from their ethnic background compared to 13 research participants from the Filipino interview groups.

- Four research participants from the Lao interview groups used the services of a lawyer/solicitor from their ethnic background compared to six research
participants from the Filipino interviews groups though none were from Filipino interview group 2.

- No research participants from the Lao interview groups used the services of a real estate agent from their ethnic background compared to just two research participants from the Filipino interview groups.

9.1.1.3 Language Preferences

Research participants were questioned on their language use at home and amongst friends to gain an understanding of how acculturated they are to the host culture and whether their language preferences had any influence on their consumer behaviour. As previously mentioned, high-acculturated individuals are likely to converse in the host language and likely to use service providers from outside their ethnic background. In comparison, less acculturated individuals are likely to converse in their native tongue and likely to use service providers from their ethnic background (Costa and Bamossy, 1995, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Pires and Stanton, 2015, Firoz, 1995, Quester and Chong, 2001, Quester et al., 2001).

The findings of the study revealed individual acculturation has affected the language preferences of research participants from the Lao and Filipino interview groups as evidenced by the exclusive use of the English language:

- **At home** by 13 research participants from the Lao interview groups and by 18 research participants from the Filipino interview groups; and
- **Amongst friends** by 12 research participants from the Lao interview groups and 29 research participants from the Filipino interview groups.

*Inter-group differences* in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino study groups were revealed by the use of the ethnic (Lao or Filipino) language amongst friends:

- Only one research participant from the Lao interview groups—specifically Lao interview group 1—conversed exclusively in the ethnic language amongst
friends compared to seven research participants from the Filipino interview groups.

- Only seven research participants from the Filipino interview groups spoke a combination of English and Filipino amongst friends compared to 23 research participants from the Lao interview groups who spoke a combination of English and Lao amongst friends.

- Half of the research participants from Lao interview group 2 conversed exclusively in English at home and amongst friends compared to a majority of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3.

**Inter-group similarities** in language use between the Lao and Filipino interview groups were evidenced by:

- A majority of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 and from Lao interview group 3 conversed exclusively in English at home and amongst friends.

- Eight research participants from the Lao interview groups and seven research participants from the Filipino interview groups conversed exclusively in their ethnic language at home.

- 15 research participants from the Lao interview groups and 18 research participants from the Filipino interview groups spoke a combination of their ethnic language and the English language at home.

However, the link between their language preferences and their use of Lao/Filipino service providers respectively could not be clearly established except for Filipino research participants who specifically chose to use Filipino service providers to be able to communicate in the Filipino language.
9.1.1.4 Visits to the Homeland

Research participants were questioned on the frequency\(^1\) of their visits to their ethnic homeland to identify whether they still felt "close ties" to their ethnic homeland and therefore their ethnic heritage.

The frequency of their visits to the ethnic homeland suggests individual acculturation has had little effect on the consumer behaviour of research participants from Lao interview group 1 and from some research participants from the three Filipino interview groups. This frequency of travel to the ethnic homeland suggests a bond and close ties to their ethnic homeland. Only a few research participants across the three Filipino interview groups had never visited, had never been back to visit or had only been back to visit the Philippines once since settlement in Australia. In comparison, the high number of research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 who have never visited, have never been back to visit or have only visited Laos once since settlement in Australia suggests individual acculturation has affected their consumer behaviour. These infrequent trips to the ethnic homeland suggest weakened ties to the ethnic homeland.

*Inter-group differences* in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino interview groups revealed infrequent trips to the ethnic homeland by a number of research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 who had never been to visit Laos, had never travelled back to Laos since settlement or had only travelled back to Laos once since settlement. Only a few research participants across the three Filipino interview groups had never visited, had never been back to visit or had only been back to visit the Philippines once since settlement in Australia.

\(^1\) For the purpose of this study, frequent trips to the ethnic homeland are defined as visiting the ethnic homeland every year to three years.
9.1.1.5 Ethnic Background of Spouse/Partner and Friends

The findings on the ethnic background of the individual participants’ spouse/partner and friends revealed *inter-group differences* between research participants from the Lao interview groups versus the Filipino interview groups:

- No research participants from Lao interview group 3 has a spouse/partner of their ethnic background compared to two research participants from Filipino interview group 3 who have a spouse/partner of their ethnic background.

- Two research participants from Lao interview group 2 and five research participants from Filipino interview group 2 have a spouse/partner of their ethnic background.

- Research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 were more likely to be single whilst research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 were more likely to have a spouse/partner outside of their ethnic background.

- No research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 have an ethnic homophilic network of friends. In comparison, there were six research participants from Filipino interview group 2 and two research participants from Filipino interview group 3 who have a social network of friends who were all of Filipino background.

However, there were also *inter-group similarities* between the Lao and Filipino study groups, such as:

- A majority of research participants from Lao and Filipino interview groups 1 have a spouse/partner of their ethnic background.

- Half of Lao interview group 1 and all research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 have a heterogeneous social network of friends of various ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, half of Filipino interview group 1 and a number of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 have a social network of friends of various ethnic backgrounds.
These findings are not surprising given that research participants from Lao and Filipino interview group 1 were born, raised and educated overseas and are therefore more likely to have formed friendships, relationships or attachments in their country of origin, thus increasing their likelihood of having a spouse/partner or friends from their ethnic background. It follows that research participants from Lao and Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 who are raised and educated in Australia are more likely to form friendships, relationships or attachments with people from outside their ethnic background.

9.2 Conclusion – How Individual Acculturation Affects Consumer Behaviour

Sydney’s Lao community is a small population of non-English speaking background, most of whom practice the Buddhist faith. Early settlers were refugees seeking sanctuary from the civil war in Laos. In contrast, Sydney’s Filipino community is a larger population of English fluent background, most of whom practice the Christian faith. Many have migrated to Australia under business or spouse visas. Although the differences in their population size, language, religion and settlement status differentiate the two groups there were similarities in their consumption of foods from their ethnic homeland.

The inter-group findings for this research revealed that individual acculturation has affected the consumer behaviour of some research participants from both the Lao and Filipino study groups. This was evidenced by the number of research participants primarily from interview groups 2 and 3 who:

- Did not purchase or consume ethnic (Lao or Filipino) media, clothes/cosmetics and arts, crafts and jewellery;

- Infrequently travelled to their ethnic (Lao or Filipino) homeland;

- Did not use ethnic (Lao or Filipino) service providers; and

1 Media refers to Lao or Filipino music, movies, newspapers or magazines.
Preferred to converse in the host language at home and amongst their friends.

The study also found that the majority of research participants from both the Lao and Filipino study groups purchased and consumed ethnic (Lao or Filipino) food. Whilst this may suggest low acculturation, this was not necessarily the only reason for the high purchase and consumption rate. Though existing studies by Penaloza (1994a) found that ethnic food was a reflection of one’s connection to their ethnic homeland, a study by Verbeke and Lopez (2005) agreed but also found that dietary habits, such as the purchase and consumption of ethnic food, even for medium-to-high-acculturated individuals, took time to change.

The findings of the study also revealed there was a higher purchase rate of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) clothes/cosmetics and ethnic (Lao or Filipino) arts, crafts and jewellery by research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 than research participants from interview group 1. Because research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 were born and/or raised and educated in Australia, they are assumed to be more acculturated to the host culture than research participants from interview group 1, those born, raised and educated overseas (O’Guinn and Meyer, 1984). However, when taking their feedback into consideration about how they feel about their heritage this may not necessarily indicate low acculturation but perhaps ethnic pride.

Generally, the findings of the study do suggest that some research participants from the Filipino study groups are more acculturated to the host culture than some research participants from the Lao study groups. More research participants from the Lao study groups purchasing and consuming music and movies from their ethnic homeland are evidence of this. However, the individual nature of acculturation will account for variances in acculturation levels not only between generations but also between different ethnic groups.

A key inter-group difference in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino interview groups is evidenced by their use of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) service providers. Only a few research participants from the Lao interview groups used service providers from their ethnic background. Research participants who valued professionalism and quality of customer service over the ethnic background of the service providers they
used revealed evidence of the effect of individual acculturation on their consumer behaviour.

In comparison, just under half of the research participants from the Filipino interview groups used Filipino service providers, with some specifically choosing Filipino service providers to be able to communicate in the Filipino language and/or because of their ethnic background. For these research participants, they were unlikely to have been affected by acculturation in their choice of service providers. Furthermore, whilst some research participants from Lao interview groups 1 and 2 felt a level of distrust in using service providers of the same background due to concerns over confidentiality and privacy, there were no such sentiments expressed by research participants from the Filipino interview groups.

However, it is important to note the erratic pattern in the choice of Lao service providers by research participants from the Lao interview groups may be due to the small size of the Lao community not just in Australia but also in the state of NSW. Furthermore, the small community size may also limit the availability of and access to service providers of Lao background locally and in general. This limited choice may also account for the feeling of distrust felt by some research participants in matters of privacy and confidentiality. Conversely, the higher use of service providers of Filipino background by interview participants from the Filipino interview groups can also be explained by the fact that the Filipino population is significantly larger and better established than the Lao population. Hence, access to a network of service providers of Filipino background is greater for the Filipino study groups than it is for the Lao study groups.

Whilst the more heterogeneous social networks of the Lao interview groups may suggest a higher level of individual acculturation than the Filipino interview groups, it is important to note that research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 were primarily recruited from a local Filipino Baptist congregation. This may likely skew their “ethnic homophilic social network” of friends in comparison to the Lao interview groups. Furthermore, the much larger Filipino population provides more opportunity and access for individuals of Filipino background to forge friendships with one another. There are over 70,000 persons in the state of NSW of Filipino
background compared to over 5,000 persons of Lao background. This in itself limits access to other individuals of Lao background, especially if the individual does not live in close proximity to the suburbs of Fairfield and Liverpool, areas with a high population of people of Lao background.¹

¹ High in terms of the overall Lao population in Sydney, NSW.
CHAPTER 10 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study was to explore the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on the consumer behaviour of Lao-Australians and Filipino-Australians within an Australian context. Their product purchase and consumption patterns; the frequency of their visits to the ethnic homeland; their language preferences; the ethnic backgrounds of the service providers they used and the ethnic backgrounds of their spouse/partner and their inner circle of friends were analysed to understand the effects of individual acculturation and whether there was a link between their ethnic identity and their consumer behaviour.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 reported the results, findings and conclusions of the qualitative data analysis. The data collected from individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations were reviewed against the research questions, exploring the links and influence between ethnicity, ethnic identity, acculturation, and consumer behaviour. The main objectives of this chapter are to discuss the contributions of the study, including the practical and theoretical implications.

10.2 HOW INDIVIDUALS PERCEIVE THEIR ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Section 10.2 reviews individual interviews, focus group interviews and field observations to explore how research participants perceived their ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context. As mentioned in Chapter 3, previous studies from Phinney (1992, 1990b, 1996b), Chaudhari and Pizzolato (2008) and Ting-Toomey (1981) assert the influence of ethnicity on an individual's ethnic identity. This influence was evident in some of the data findings for both the Lao and the Filipino study groups, which are discussed below.

10.2.1 Perception of Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Research question 1 explored how research participants felt about their ethnicity and ethnic identity. Research participants were asked to self-ascribe their ethnic identity and to define in their own words what ethnic identity meant to them in order to gain
an understanding of whether their perceptions of their ethnicity was separated from or linked to their ethnic identity.

For the purpose of this study:

- *Ethnicity* is defined as 'the shared similarity of a group of people on the basis of one or more of the following factors: cultural tradition, including family and social customs; a common geographic origin; a common language; a common literature (written or oral); a common religion; being a minority; or being racially conspicuous' (ABS, 2000, p. 3).

- *Ethnic identity* is defined as a self-ascribed dynamic construct that transitions through various stages and is highly dependent upon an individual’s feelings of pride and a sense of belonging towards her (or his) ethnic group (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b).

### 10.2.1.1 Previous Findings

The findings of this research support previous ethnic studies that assert a link between an individual’s ethnicity and their sense of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Chaudhari and Pizzolato, 2008, Ting-Toomey, 1981, Ogden et al., 2004a). Ethnicity was found to have influenced the ethnic identity of research participants who identified by their ethnic heritage or with their ethnic community.¹ Using similar terms to the ABS (2000) definition of ethnicity, their ethnic identity was perceived within the boundaries of their country of birth, ethnic origin, cultural heritage, cultural upbringing and ancestral bloodlines. They also had a strong sense of belonging towards their ethnic community/group (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b).

This research also revealed a majority of research participants from both the Lao and the Filipino study groups perceived their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity biculturally—as a hyphenated² Australian. Following Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity, research participants felt a sense of belonging to both

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¹ Research participants who identified as Lao or as Filipino.
² Lao-Australian or Filipino-Australian.
their ethnic community and the Australian community. Their ethnic identity was described as an integration of their ethnicity (e.g., their ethnic background, origin and cultural heritage) and the host culture (e.g., their Australian passport, citizenship and length of residency in Australia).

10.2.1.2 New Findings

Adding new insights to existing ethnic studies, this research found evidence of a separation between the individual’s ethnicity and their sense of ethnic identity. That is, ethnicity was found to have had no influence on the ethnic identity of research participants who identified with the host culture or with the host community. This was evidenced by interview participants and focus group participants who perceived themselves as “Australian” and fully assimilated into the Australian culture.

What is interesting about the above results is that one of these research participants is from Lao interview group 1, someone assumed to be more closely tied to her ethnic heritage because she was born, raised and educated overseas (Berry, 1989, Berry and Sam, 1997, Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Lee and DeVos, 1981), and is a practicing Buddhist, which is the dominant religion of Laos. Not only did she identify as Australian but she also perceived herself as a “true blue Aussie”. In addition, having a spouse/partner of Anglo-Australian background may perhaps reinforce her identity as “Australian”. In comparison, no research participants from Lao interview group 3, those born, raised and educated in Australia identified as Australian. Furthermore, the majority of research participants from both the Lao and Filipino study groups self-ascribed by their ethnic heritage (Lao or Filipino) or biculturally as a hyphenated Australian (Lao-Australian or as Filipino-Australian).

In summary, the variations in ethnic identity and in the perceptions of one’s ethnic identity highlight its individual nature, in particular when referencing Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity as a self-ascribed dynamic construct. The

1 One research participant from Lao interview group 1 and two research participants from Filipino interview group 2.
2 Four focus group participants from Lao focus group 1, four focus group participants from Lao focus group 2 and one focus group participant from Filipino focus group 2.

245
findings also highlight that there is not one defined conceptualisation of ethnic identity because ethnic identity is shaped by a variety of factors and experiences that influence how people then perceive their ethnic identity.

10.3 THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNIC IDENTITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Section 10.3 reviewed individual interviews and focus group interviews to explore how the research participants' ethnic identity may influence their consumer behaviour. As mentioned in Chapter 4, previous studies from Cui and Choudhury (2002), de Mooij (2005), Mora (1998), and Verbeke and Lopez (2005) found evidence of the influence of ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour, in particular for ethnic food. Further, studies by Kim and Arthur (2003) and Chattaraman and Lennon (2008) found evidence of the influence of ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour for ethnic dress. What is important to highlight is that both products can also be consumed in a social sense—ethnic food and ethnic dress are both visible consumption products that display or reveal the individual’s ethnic heritage.

10.3.1 Influence of Ethnic Identity on Consumer Behaviour

Research question 2 explored how ethnic identity may be expected to influence consumer behaviour. Research participants were questioned about the products they purchased and consumed, including the service providers they used, to understand the influence that their ethnic identity may have on their consumer behaviour.

This study defines consumer behaviour as the consumer decision-making behaviour (Schiffman et al., 2009, Solomon, 1996) involved in the selection, purchase, use or disposal of a product, a service or an experience (Solomon, 1996, p. 7).

10.3.1.1 Previous Findings

Some of the findings of this research support previous studies on ethnic consumer behaviour (Chung and Fischer, 1999b, Forney, 1985, Kim and Arthur, 2003, Laroche et al., 1998, Xu et al., 2004, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008) that stress the influence of ethnic identity on an individual’s consumer behaviour. Ethnic identity was found to
have influenced the consumer behaviour of research participants who self-identified by their ethnic heritage (Lao or Filipino) or who self-identified biculturally as a hyphenated Australian (Lao-Australian or Filipino-Australian). The findings revealed they were more likely to purchase or consume ethnic (Lao or Filipino) products than research participants who self-identified with the host culture.

Referencing Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity, research participants felt a connection with their ethnic heritage and its influence on their consumer behaviour was evidenced in the examples below:

- In the purchase and consumption of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) food by the majority of interview and focus group participants from both the Lao and Filipino study groups.
- In the consumption of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) music and movies by research participants¹ born, raised and educated overseas in their ethnic homeland.
- By research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 3 specifically choosing to use Filipino service providers so they can communicate in the Filipino language.

Highlighting the individual nature of ethnic identity and its varying influences on consumer behaviour (Beji-Becheur et al., 2011), the findings of this study also revealed little evidence of the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour in some instances. For example, low purchase and consumption of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) music and movies was revealed by research participants from Lao and Filipino interview groups 2 and 3 and research participants from Lao and Filipino focus groups 2 and 3—regardless of their ethnic identity. Moreover, only a small number of research participants from the Lao interview groups and from Filipino interview group 2 used service providers from their ethnic background. However, because these research participants were born and/or raised and educated in Australia, the influence

¹With the exception of two interview participants from Lao study group 2 who were born overseas but raised and educated in Australia and one interview participant from Filipino study group 3 who was born, raised and educated in Australia.
of their ethnic identity on their consumer behaviour cannot be looked at in isolation from acculturation. Their exposure to the influences of the host culture from a young age and their fluency in the host language implies that they are unlikely to have a preference for ethnic (Lao or Filipino) music or movies or to choose service providers purely based on their ethnic background. This view is reinforced by their feedback that revealed that the convenience of locally available service providers who were able to offer professional, quality customer service was valued above the ethnic background of the service providers they chose to use.

An interesting finding of this study is the purchase of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) clothes/cosmetics by focus group participants from Lao and Filipino focus groups 2 and 3 and by research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3. Due to the products being visible displays of one's ethnic heritage (Lindridge and Dibb, 2002), a link may be suggested between the purchase of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) clothes/cosmetics and research participants who self-identified by their ethnic heritage or self-identified biculturally as a hyphenated Australian. However, the connection between the purchase of ethnic clothes/cosmetics and research participants who self-identified with the host culture is not clearly evident. Identifying with the host culture suggests the individual has assimilated into the host culture. According to Berry and Sam (1997), assimilation into the host culture suggests that the individual has rejected the cultural identity of their ethnic heritage. Thus, the individual is likely to prefer western clothes/cosmetics rather than ethnic clothes/cosmetics from their country of origin. As research participants from interview groups 2 and 3 and from focus groups 2 and 3 were born or raised and educated in Australia, wearing ethnic clothes/cosmetics from their country of origin suggests either a pride in their ethnic heritage or a desire to reconnect with their roots.

\[\text{Research participants from study group 2 born overseas but raised and educated in Australia; research participants from study group 3 were born, raised and educated in Australia.}\]
10.4 THE EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL ACCULTURATION ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Section 10.4 reviewed individual and focus group transcripts to explore how acculturation may affect each individual and subsequently their consumer behaviour. As mentioned in Chapter 5, past studies on individual acculturation and ethnic consumer behaviour (Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a, Ogden et al., 2004a, Kim and Kang, 2001, Berry et al., 2006, Berry, 1997, Berry, 1980, Berry and Sam, 1997) assert the effects of individual acculturation on ethnic consumer behaviour, particularly amongst the younger generation\(^1\) of consumers in the consumption of ethnic food, clothes, music and movies.

10.4.1 How Individual Acculturation Affects Inter-Generational Differences in Ethnic Consumer Behaviour

Research question 3 examined whether there were inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour between consumers of the same ethnic background. For the purpose of this study, acculturation refers to ‘the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture’ as defined by Berry and Sam (1997, p. 294).

This research has conducted a comparison on three generations of consumers from the same ethnic background, finding inter-generational differences and similarities in consumer behaviour. The overall acculturation pattern reinforced existing studies (O’Guinn and Meyer, 1984, Wilkinson and Cheng, 1999) that found those born, raised and educated overseas were the least acculturated (study group 1) and those born, raised and educated in the host country (study group 3) were the most acculturated. In between the two extremes are those born overseas but raised and educated in the host country from a young age (study group 2). These differences in acculturation levels between the generational groups are also reflected in their consumption pattern. For example, the majority of research participants from Filipino interview

\(^1\) Those born and/or raised and educated in the host culture.
group 1 purchased and consumed Filipino food in comparison to research participants from Filipino interview group 3.

10.4.1.1 Previous Findings

10.4.1.1.1 Lao Study Group Previous Findings

The findings of this study revealed the varying effects of individual acculturation on consumer behaviour, accounting for both low-acculturated and high-acculturated individuals from the same ethnic background and within the same generational group. Supporting existing studies (Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Burton, 2002, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a) that attest to the effects of individual acculturation on an individual’s consumer behaviour, the study also found inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour.

The findings also suggest that individuals who were born and raised in their ethnic homeland are likely to have maintained an emotional attachment to and connection with their ethnic homeland, which supports a similar finding by Quester et al. (2001). Other past research on acculturation and ethnic consumer behaviour also revealed low-acculturated individuals feel a stronger connection to their ethnic heritage; generally prefer food, movies and music from their ethnic homeland; conversing in their native language (Lee and Tse, 1994, Lisansky, 1981, O’Guinn et al., 1986, Weinstock, 1964); and travelling frequently to the ethnic homeland (O’Guinn and Faber, 1985, Quester et al., 2001).

Conversely, individuals who were born and/or raised and educated in Australia were likely exposed to the host culture and the effects of acculturation from a young age and therefore are likely to favour western music and movies, and conversing in the host language. These individuals are also assumed to be high-acculturated (Lee and Tse, 1994, Lisansky, 1981, O’Guinn et al., 1986, Weinstock, 1964). The findings of this research revealed a majority of research participants from Lao interview groups 2 and 3 had never been to visit Laos or had only travelled back to Laos once. Further, they also revealed a preference for conversing in the English language. This consumption behaviour can be described by Hui et al.’s (1998) Typology of Consumption Based on the Two Ethnicity Indicators as cultural transmutation. Cultural transmutation
describes ethnic minorities who affirm their ethnic heritage but also adopt the host culture's consumption patterns.

*Inter-generational similarities* in consumer behaviour were also evidenced in this study, in particular by the low use of Lao service providers by the majority of research participants across the three Lao interview groups. However, as previously noted, the small Lao population size in Sydney and in Australia does limit the availability of access, especially local access to Lao service providers. Furthermore, privacy concerns expressed by some research participants also account for the non-use of Lao service providers. However, what was more telling of the individual's high acculturation levels was the decision to choose professionalism and quality customer service over the ethnic background of the service providers.

10.4.1.1.2 Filipino Study Group Previous Findings

Because the effects of acculturation are individual in nature, this research revealed variations in its findings on the effects of acculturation on the consumer behaviour of research participants from the Filipino study groups. Both inter-generational differences and similarities in consumer behaviour between consumers from the same ethnic background and within the same generational groups were found.

*Inter-generational differences* in consumer behaviour were evidenced in the findings below:

- In the consumption of Filipino food, music and movies, primarily by research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 2.

- In the use of Filipino lawyers/solicitors by research participants from Filipino interviews groups 1 and 3; and in the use of Filipino real estate agents by research participants from Filipino interview group 1. Given the majority of interview participants from Filipino study group 3 were aged between 18 years to 20 years of age, it is likely that their parents recommended the choice of Filipino lawyer/solicitors.
In the exclusive use of the Filipino language amongst friends by research participants from Filipino interview group 1; and in the exclusive use of the Filipino language at home by a number of research participants from Filipino interview groups 1 and 2.

The findings above are consistent with the findings for the Lao study group and also support previous studies (Lee and Tse, 1994, Lisansky, 1981, O’Guinn et al., 1986, Weinstock, 1964) that assert individuals born overseas in their ethnic homeland are likely to favour foods, music and movies from their ethnic homeland and to converse in their native tongue. Moreover, a number of research participants revealed they have a spouse/partner of Filipino background or an ethnic homophilic circle of friends of Filipino background, which may account for their preference for conversing in the Filipino language. Further indications of low acculturation was evidenced by a number of research participants from interview group 1 specifically choosing to use Filipino service providers to be able to communicate in the Filipino language.

This research also found inter-generational similarities in consumer behaviour between the generational groups. This was evidenced by a majority of research participants from each Filipino study group travelling to the Philippines every two to five years. For individuals from Filipino study group 1 who were born, raised and educated overseas, past studies have often asserted their close ties to their ethnic heritage and to their ethnic homeland (O’Guinn and Faber, 1985, Quester et al., 2001).

Suggesting the effects of individual acculturation, there were variations in the consumption patterns of research participants from Filipino interview groups 2 and 3. Some research participants revealed they consumed Filipino food and others revealed they did not consume any Filipino products. Whilst, the consumption of Filipino food may suggest low individual acculturation and a strong connection to their ethnic heritage, past research by Verbeke and Lopez (2005) found dietary habits was a slow process of change. However, the non-consumption of Filipino products suggests high acculturation as high-acculturated individuals are inclined to favour western products over products from their country of origin (Lee and Tse, 1994, Lisansky, 1981, O’Guinn et al., 1986, Weinstock, 1964).
An interesting finding of this research is there were more focus group participants from Filipino focus groups 2 and 3 who purchased Filipino clothes/cosmetics than focus group participants from focus group 1. Because these focus group participants were born and/or raised and educated in Australia, this purchase behaviour suggests a connection to their ethnic heritage and perhaps a re-discovery of their Filipino roots. This visible display of their ethnic heritage was also confirmed during field observations, with some male participants from Filipino study group 2 observed wearing a T-shirt, with either the Filipino flag or a map of the Philippine islands on it. Though this visual display of their heritage (Kim and Arthur, 2003, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008) may suggest low individual acculturation (Appiah, 2004), their feedback expressed a pride in their Filipino heritage and/or a desire to connect with their ethnic background.

10.4.1.2 New Findings

The size of an ethnic community may influence the perception its members may have regarding privacy concerns. In this instance, the small population of persons of Lao background in Sydney and in Australia provides limited access and a smaller pool of resources, such as Lao service providers, to service the local Lao community. Members of Sydney’s Lao community have expressed concerns over using local Lao service providers because “everyone knows everyone’s business”—although this perception may be unsubstantiated. In comparison, there were no such sentiments expressed by any research participants from the Filipino study groups.

10.4.2 How Individual Acculturation Affects Inter-Group Differences in Ethnic Consumer Behaviour

Research question 4 involved making inter-group comparisons between the Lao and Filipino study groups to identify if differences in consumer behaviour exist between consumers of different ethnic backgrounds. This research study found evidence of individual acculturation on an individual’s consumer behaviour, including inter-group differences in consumer behaviour, between consumers of Lao and Filipino background.
10.4.3 Previous Findings

*Inter-group differences* in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino study groups were evidenced in the consumption of music, movies, media, clothes/cosmetics, and arts, crafts and jewellery from the country of origin; in the frequency of travels to the ethnic homeland; and in the use of service providers from the same ethnic background. More research participants from the Lao interview groups consumed products from their country of origin than research participants from the Filipino interview groups. In comparison, more research participants from the Filipino interview groups purchased ethnic clothes/cosmetics from their country of origin; used service providers of their ethnic background and travelled more frequently to their ethnic homeland than research participants from the Lao interview groups.

The above findings are not surprising given the differences between the two study groups: Laos, a non-English speaking country versus the Philippines, a bi-lingual country where English is the second official language. These findings support past studies (Lee and Tse, 1994, Lisansky, 1981, O’Guinn et al., 1986, Weinstock, 1964, Ueltschy and Krampf, 1997) that assert low-acculturated ethnic minorities were more likely to consume music, movies and media from their country of origin than high-acculturated ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the link between an individual’s consumer behaviour and their language preferences may be suggested by their consumption of music and movies from their country of origin. These two products require a level of fluency in the native tongue to understand and/or connect with. Given the lack of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) language fluency by research participants from Lao and Filipino study groups 2 and 3, it is therefore not unexpected that the findings revealed low consumption rates of Lao/Filipino music and movies amongst study groups 2 and 3 compared to Lao and Filipino study groups 1.

As previously noted, the small Lao population provides limited access for research participants from the Lao study groups to use local service providers of Lao background. Additionally, concerns over confidentiality and privacy, and a general preference for using quality service providers regardless of their ethnic background may explain the low use of Lao service providers by research participants from the Lao
study groups. In comparison, the larger Filipino population provides the opportunity for research participants from the Filipino study groups’ greater access to service providers of Filipino background. This access, in addition to the preference for communicating in the Filipino language, suggests that individual acculturation has not significantly altered their choice of service providers and may also explain the higher use of service providers of Filipino background.

Past studies (O’Guinn and Faber, 1985, Quester et al., 2001) on acculturation claim low-acculturated individuals are likely to travel more frequently to their ethnic homeland. This study found research participants from the Filipino interview groups make more frequent trips to their ethnic homeland than research participants from the Lao interview groups. However, this research also found there were *inter-group similarities* in consumer behaviour between the Lao and Filipino study groups. This was evidenced in their purchase of food (dishes) from their country of origin and in the use of the English language at home and amongst friends, particularly by research participants from Lao and Filipino interview groups 2 and 3. Past studies (Lindridge and Dibb, 2002, Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008, Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Forney, 1985) claim that ethnic food is a social product that is consumed both alone and in the presence of others from the same ethnic background. Ethnic food consumption is also reflective of the individual’s ties to the ethnic homeland (de Mooij, 2005, Jamal, 2003, Jamal and Chapman, 2000).

Consistent with existing research on acculturation (Firoz, 1995, Quester et al., 2001), highly-acculturated individuals are more likely to converse in the host language. This study found the majority of research participants who conversed exclusively in English at home and amongst friends were primarily from Lao and Filipino interview groups 2 and 3, those born or raised in the host culture.

**10.4.4 New Findings**

What is of interest is that there were more interview and focus group participants from Filipino study groups 2 and 3 who purchased ethnic clothes/cosmetics than from Filipino study group 1 or from the Lao study groups. These research participants were
either born or raised and educated in Australia so the likely assumption is that they would be more acculturated to the host culture as found in a study by Costigan et al. (2009). Furthermore, ethnic clothes are a visual display of one’s ethnicity and ethnic identity. It implies low acculturation and a strong connection to one’s ethnic heritage (Chattaraman and Lennon, 2008, Forney, 1985, Jun et al., 1993, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a). However, delving into their feedback revealed research participants were proud of their Filipino heritage and these purchases were a reflection of their ethnic pride, not necessarily because they are low-acculturated.

10.5 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings discussed in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 found some evidence of the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on the consumer behaviour of research participants from both the Lao and Filipino study groups. Yet, in some instances the links between ethnicity, ethnic identity and consumer behaviour were too inconsistent to be able to draw a definitive conclusion.

10.5.1 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Following Phinney’s (1992, 1990b) definition of ethnic identity, the majority of research participants from both the Lao and Filipino study groups self-ascribed as bicultural. They perceived their ethnic identity as an integration of their ethnic heritage and the host culture, e.g., as a Lao-Australian or Filipino-Australian. This finding supports past studies by Berry and Sam (2006, 1997) and Costigan et al. (2009) that attest to an integration or bicultural path whereby migrants integrate into the host culture whilst still retaining their ethnic identity.

The findings of this study also reinforce past research (Phinney, 1996b) on the transient nature of ethnic identity, which was revealed to be situational or transitional by some research participants. For example, when celebrating Lao New Year or Filipino Independence Day, individuals felt a closer bond with their ethnic heritage. But, when celebrating Australia Day, individuals felt a closer bond with the host culture (Stayman and Deshpande, 1989b, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Podoshen, 2006). Additionally, situational ethnic identity was also revealed by the self-identification of a few research participants who identified with their ethnic heritage.
only within Australia. This was primarily because of how they felt they might be perceived by others due to their physical appearance, e.g., “I look like an Asian”. Yet, when travelling outside of Australia, they transitioned from identifying with their ethnic heritage to identifying with the host culture. A view that was reinforced from travelling on an Australian passport.

10.5.2 Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour

Generally, the consumer behaviour pattern between the Lao study group and the Filipino group did not reveal notable differences in their purchase or consumption behaviour. The key notable difference in their consumer behaviour was in their use of service providers from their ethnic background. As previously discussed, being able to use service providers from your ethnic background may also depend on the size and coverage of your ethnic community. For smaller ethnic communities, such as the Lao community, access—specifically local access—to service providers of the same ethnic background may be limited due to the smaller pool of resources. Larger communities equate to a larger pool of resources and therefore greater access to service providers from the same ethnic background.

The findings of this research revealed a higher number of research participants from the Filipino study groups used service providers from their ethnic background in comparison to research participants from the Lao study groups. Another notable difference between the two study groups in relation to their choice of service providers concern the issues of trust and confidentiality. Whilst a number of research participants from the Lao study groups expressed a sense of distrust of Lao service providers, research participants from the Filipino study groups expressed no such sentiments towards using Filipino service providers. However, given that the Lao community is so small, these sentiments may have arisen due to the perception by its members that “everyone knows everyone and everyone’s business by three degrees of separation”.

10.5.3 Individual Acculturation and Consumer Behaviour

Existing research on acculturation offers various definitions and perspectives. Some researchers agree on acculturation as a process of cultural interaction between two or
more cultures that involve an individual from one culture adapting to and learning a new culture (Berry, 1997, Berry, 1980, Dublish, 2001, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Laroche et al., 1997c, Pires, 1999, Schiffman et al., 2009). Other definitions discuss whether individuals are high- or low-acculturated by focusing on changes in the individual’s values and behaviours (Kara and Kara, 1996a). Further still, other researchers view acculturation as a process of the individual self-identifying with either the host culture or their ethnic origin or both (bicultural) and the level of their conformance to the values and behaviours of the host culture (Berry, 1980, Gordon, 1964, Jamal and Chapman, 2000, Kim et al., 1990, Yinger, 1985a).

To draw out inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour between consumers of the same ethnic background, the following generational groupings were used:

1. Study Group 1: Born, raised and educated overseas.

2. Study Group 2: Born overseas, raised and educated in Australia.

3. Study Group 3: Born, raised and educated in Australia.

Of the generational groups noted above, the varying influences of individual acculturation was more evident between study groups 1 and 3, which suggests that these two groups are suitable for capturing inter-generational differences and acculturation shifts in behaviour. Study group 2 appears to be a transitional mid-point—moderately acculturated or medium-acculturated (Kara and Kara, 1996a)—between the least acculturated or low-acculturated group (study group 1) versus the more acculturated or high-acculturated group (study group 3). This was evidenced in their sharing similar consumer behaviour patterns to both study group 1 and study group 3. For example, they shared a similar consumer behaviour pattern to study group 1 in their purchase and consumption of ethnic food (Lao or Filipino). Yet they also shared a similar consumer behaviour pattern to study group 3 in the low purchase and consumption of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) music and movies.
10.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The primary contribution of this thesis to theory building is in explaining the influences of ethnicity and ethnic identity on inter-generational and inter-group differences in consumer behaviour. Two sample study groups: Lao, a small, tight knit, predominantly Buddhist community and Filipino, a larger, well established, predominantly Christian community, were used to draw out inter-group differences in consumer behaviour. Within these two sample study groups, three generational sub-groups were used to draw out inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour.

10.6.1 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

Existing literature attests to a link between ethnicity and ethnic identity from different perspectives. The first perspective does not differentiate between ethnicity nor ethnic identity and the terms are used interchangeably (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009, Chestnut, 2000). This perspective defines ethnicity/ethnic identity as situational and fluid, and moderated by influences from other cultural groups and from the host group (Isajiw, 1980, Hui et al., 1998, Laroche et al., 2009, Stayman and Deshpande, 1989a, Morimoto and La Ferle, 2008, Podoshen, 2006).


The individual's perception of their ethnicity and sense of ethnic identity, including how they feel towards their ethnic heritage, their ethnic community and the host culture, determine which community they feel a sense of belonging to. This study
found a majority of research participants of Lao and Filipino background self-ascribed as bicultural. They perceived their ethnic identity as an integration of their ethnic heritage and the host culture and felt a sense of belonging to both their ethnic community and the host community. Whilst they link their ethnic identity back to their ethnicity, the acculturating influence of the Australian culture on their self-perception is also revealed. A number of research participants self-ascribed by their ethnic heritage. They perceived their ethnic identity within the parameters of their ethnic background and origins, directly linking their ethnic identity back to their ethnicity. Only a few research participants self-ascribed with the host culture. They perceived their ethnic identity as fully assimilated with the host culture, separated from their ethnicity.

10.6.1.1 Contribution to Theory Building on Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

This study adds to theory building on ethnic studies by asserting the separation of an individual’s ethnicity from their sense of ethnic identity for ethnic minorities who fully identified with the host culture/community. It also contributes to theory building on ethnic studies by reinforcing previous findings that established a link between an individual’s ethnicity and their sense of ethnic identity (Lambert and Klineberg, 1967, Laroche et al., 2002, Laroche et al., 2009). This was particularly true for ethnic minorities who identified with their ethnic heritage.

10.6.2 Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour


Despite differences in their population size (small versus large), religious beliefs (predominantly Buddhist versus Christian), and in their settlement status (refugee
versus migrant), there were similarities in the influence of their ethnic identity on their consumer behaviour. For both study groups, research participants that had a strong sense of their ethnic identity were revealed to have been influenced in their consumption of food, music and movies from their ethnic homeland.

The findings of this study revealed the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour was primarily evidenced in the purchase and consumption of ethnic food by research participants who identified with their ethnic heritage (Lao or Filipino) or as a hyphenated Australian (Lao-Australian or Filipino-Australian). The influence was also evidenced in the purchase of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) music and movies by research participants from study group 1.

10.6.2.1 Contribution to Theory Building on Ethnic Identity and Consumer Behaviour

This study contributes to theory building on ethnic consumer behaviour by supporting past research (Albonetti and Dominguez, 1989, Cui and Choudhury, 2002) that attest to the influence of ethnic identity on consumer behaviour. Supporting past research findings, this study revealed ethnic minorities who identify closely with their ethnic heritage—such as those who identified as Lao/Filipino or Lao-Australian/Filipino-Australian—exhibited ethnic consumer behaviour (Jamal, 2003, Xu et al., 2004, Jamal and Chapman, 2000).

10.6.3 Individual Acculturation and Consumer Behaviour

Existing research on acculturation found the individual’s acculturation levels affected their ethnic consumer behaviour (Quester et al., 2001, O’Guinn and Faber, 1986, O’Guinn et al., 1986, O’Guinn and Meyer, 1984). High-acculturated individuals were found to have similar consumer behaviour to individuals from the host culture whilst low-acculturated individuals had markedly different consumer behaviour to individuals from the host culture (Kara and Kara, 1996a, Aaker et al., 2000, Kwok and

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1 Research participants from the Lao and Filipino study groups who were born, raised and educated overseas.
This study found inter-generational differences and similarities in the consumer behaviour of three generations of consumers from the same ethnic background. As expected, *inter-generational differences* in consumer behaviour were more noticeable between research participants from study group 1, those who were born, raised and educated overseas, and research participants from study group 3, those who were born, raised and educated in the host country. These differences were evidenced in the consumption of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) movies and music by research participants from study group 1 compared to the non-consumption of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) movies and music by research participants from study group 3.

This research also found there were inter-group differences and similarities in consumer behaviour between consumers of different ethnic backgrounds:

- A primary *inter-group difference* in their consumer behaviour is reflected in the higher use of service providers of the same ethnic background by research participants from the Filipino study groups.

- A primary *inter-group similarity* in their consumer behaviour is reflected by the higher consumption and purchase of ethnic (Lao or Filipino) food, music, and movies by research participants from Lao and Filipino study group 1, those born, raised and educated overseas.

10.6.3.1 Contribution to Theory Building on Individual Acculturation and Consumer Behaviour

This study contributes to theory building on acculturation and ethnic consumer behaviour, adding new insights into:

1. The inter-generational differences between three generations of consumers from the same ethnic background, and

2. The inter-group differences between two Asian-Australian ethnic minority groups.
This study also adds new insights to theory building on the ability of small ethnic communities to service the needs of their community due to the limited pool of resources available to them. With a population of just over 5,300 persons in the state of NSW, access to local service providers of Lao background is thus restricted. In comparison, larger ethnic communities, like the Filipino community who have a population of over 70,000 persons in the state of NSW, have a larger pool of resources to service the needs of their community.

This study also reinforces the findings of previous studies that found the degree of acculturation to the host culture varied between different generations of migrants (Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Burton, 2002, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a) and between different ethnic groups (O’Guinn and Faber, 1986, Kara and Kara, 1996a). Individual acculturation was also found to be more prevalent and to have more effects on the consumer behaviour of research participants from study group 3, those who were born, raised and educated in the host country. Research participants from study group 3 were also found to be more acculturated, due to their early exposure to the host culture, than research participants from study group 1 who were found to be least acculturated.

A full summary of the contributions of this study to theory building are summarised in Table 10.1.
Table 10.1 Summary of Contributions of this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Addressed by Existing Literature</th>
<th>Contribution to Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Perception of ethnicity and ethnic identity within an Australian context. Link or separation of ethnicity and ethnic identity.</td>
<td>To some extent by a few researchers in Australia (Chan, 1995, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Quester et al., 2001, Schiffman et al., 2009, Pires and Stanton, 2015).</td>
<td>Support a bicultural perception of ethnic identity. Reinforce the link between ethnicity and ethnic identity for individuals who self-ascribed by their ethnic heritage. Assert the separation of ethnicity and ethnic identity for individuals who self-ascribed with the host culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>Addressed by Existing Literature</td>
<td>Contribution to Theory</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Effects of acculturation on inter-generational differences in consumer behaviour.</td>
<td>Lack of research on inter-generational consumer behaviour of consumers from the same ethnic background. Existing studies mainly US, British and European. (Chung and Fischer, 1999a, Burton, 2002, Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005a, Kim and Kang, 2001).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.7 THEORY IMPLICATIONS

Consumer behaviour is a multi-faceted field. Theory building for this research does not include a discussion on why the consumer was motivated to purchase or consume a particular product or brand, nor does it discuss the consumer’s disposable income levels or what their social class or educational level is. Consumer behaviour for this research is about reaching and providing the value propositions sought by consumers with a strong ethnic identity.

This research revealed context was important in highlighting the transient nature of ethnic identity. For example, research participants identified by their ethnic heritage within Australia but identified as Australian when travelling outside of Australia. Additionally, inter-generational differences were revealed to be important for identifying the varying degrees of acculturation amongst research participants from the same ethnic background. Therefore, to understand the nuances of ethnic consumer behaviour, existing theories must take into account the interlinking influences between ethnicity, acculturation and ethnic identity because these factors all have a moderating influence on each other and on the individual’s consumer behaviour. Thus, there will be always be differences in consumer behaviour between consumers from the same ethnic group.

10.8 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Marketing strategies targeting specific ethnic consumer groups may be fraught with error if marketers treat a “specific” ethnic consumer group as one consumer behaviour without making allowances for intra-group or inter-generational differences. However, if marketers do consider using ethnic marketing strategies, it is crucial that the target ethnic group has a sizable population to justify the cost of using a targeted marketing strategy. An integrated marketing strategy may be more effective in reaching a multitude of consumers that include specific ethnic groups being targeted than using a tailored strategy aimed at a specific ethnic group (Cui and Choudhury, 2002) when:

- The targeted ethnic group population does not have critical mass, and intra-group or inter-general differences amongst the targeted ethnic group is large, or
Inter-group differences between the targeted ethnic group and the host group are minimal.

The study found differences in language preferences and in self-ascribed ethnic identity not only between different generations of research participants of the same ethnic background but also between research participants from the same generation and ethnic background. Due to these differences, consumers therefore cannot simply be segmented and targeted on the basis of their ethnic background alone.

Because only some evidence was found on the influence of ethnicity and ethnic identity on consumer behaviour, it is difficult to use ethnicity or ethnic identity as a sole market segmentation tool to reach ethnic minority consumers. Furthermore, due to the varying effects of individual acculturation on consumer behaviour, differences will exist between consumers of the same ethnic background and from the same generational group. This is because acculturation may alter an individual’s consumer behaviour to a level where the consumer behaviour of high-acculturated ethnic minority consumers may be indistinguishable from the consumer behaviour of individuals from the host culture. Therefore, marketers need to proceed with caution because half of the intended group may not be reached when using ethnicity or ethnic identity as a segmentation tool.

10.9 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The broad objective of this research is to understand how ethnicity and ethnic identity may influence consumer behaviour within an Australian context. However, an understanding of the process of acculturation and how it affects an individual’s ethnicity and ethnic identity is needed to explain how and why differences in consumer behaviour may exist within an ethnic group and between two different ethnic groups. Obtaining this understanding is beset by three particular complications that this study also seeks to address. Because ethnic identity incorporates cultural differences, it is not possible to presume that the links between ethnic identity and consumer behaviour are either the same or different for persons from differing ethnicities (Phinney et al., 2001, Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b, Phinney, 1989, Pires et al., 2006, Pires and Stanton, 2005, Jung and Kau, 2004, Kim and Kang, 2001). The role of acculturation in either modifying or accentuating differences between persons of different ethnicity is a second impediment to explaining how ethnicity

There are limitations to this study and in conjunction to the limitations previously discussed in Chapter 7, the findings of this study—that ethnicity and ethnic identity influenced consumer behaviour in some instances—may not necessarily be transferable to other Asian-Australian groups because of the diversity in language, culture, beliefs and customs amongst Asian-Australian groups. Although this is a limitation, the findings of this study still offer insight into the consumer behaviour of two Asian ethnic groups: the Lao and Filipino communities.

For the purpose of this research, the focus of the individual’s consumer behaviour was restricted to their product consumption and to their consumer decision-making process in order to ascertain how it may be influenced by their ethnicity and ethnic identity. Other areas of consumer behaviour, such as customer motivation, brand loyalty, brand recall, brand recognition, disposable income, social class, and educational levels may have arisen during the exploratory process to understand consumer behaviour (Cui and Choudhury, 2002) but were not considered.

10.10 FURTHER RESEARCH

If marketers wish to extend these findings to like groups—for example, Lao and Thai share a similarity in religion, language and culture—further research would need to be conducted to ascertain whether the findings can be transferred to other south-eastern Asian communities within Australia. In addition, further research would be needed to validate that these findings strictly pertain to consumers of Lao or Filipino background only.

Another recommendation for further research is to explore the link between language fluency and consumer behavior, specifically for ethnic movies, ethnic music and ethnic
media (e.g., magazines, newspapers, radio). This will verify whether the low consumption rates of ethnic movies, ethnic music and ethnic media amongst the younger generations (study groups 2 and 3) of consumers of Lao and Filipino background is attributable to their lack of proficiency in their parent’s native tongue (Lao or Filipino respectively).
REFERENCES


275


MARSDEN, P. V. 1988 Homogeneity in confiding relations. *Social Networks*, vol. 10, pp. 57-76.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. KEY DEFINITIONS

Acculturation

‘The general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of cultural contact; when individuals who have developed in one cultural context are exposed through migration or colonisation to another culture’ (Berry, 1997, p. 294).

High-acculturated consumers:

Consumers who demonstrate greater adoption of the attitudes and values of the Australian culture (Quester et al., 2001, p. 8).

Low-acculturated consumers:

Consumers who maintain the values, beliefs and behaviour of their ethnic origin (Quester et al., 2001).

Bicultural

‘...acculturation that involves the individual simultaneously in the two cultures that are in contact’ (Berry, 1997, p. 11). The term “bicultural” is used by the researcher to describe interview participants who self-identify as a hyphenated Australian, for example, Lao-Australian or Filipino-Australian—those who identify as belonging to “two cultures”.

Consumer Behaviour

‘The processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires’ (Solomon, 1996, p. 7).

For the purpose of this research, consumer behaviour, consumption behaviour and consumer decision making are used interchangeably.
Consumer Acculturation

A socialisation process in which an immigrant consumer learns the behaviors, attitudes and values of a culture that are different from their culture of origin (Lee, 1988, Ogden et al., 2004a).

Country of Origin

‘...the country where the headquarters of the company that manufactures and markets the product or brand is located’ (Johansson et al., 1985, Leonidou et al., 2007, p. 795).

Culture

‘...various aspects of social life—from religion to everyday practices, from mundane to profound, from institutions to ideologies, from ideas to activities, and from social formations to meaning systems’ (Costa and Bamossy, 1995, p. 29).

Ethnic Group

An ethnic group is a group that ‘...regards itself, and is regarded by others, as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics...’ (ABS, 2000, p. 3)

Ethnicity

‘The shared similarity of a group of people on the basis of one or more of the following factors: cultural tradition, including family and social customs; a common geographic origin; a common language; a common literature (written or oral); a common religion; being a minority; or being racially conspicuous. The ethnicity of a person in terms of such factors can be self-ascribed and/or ascribed by others. It is essentially a label assigning a person to a group without any connotation as to how strongly an individual thus ascribed may share and engage in these common practices’ (ABS, 2000).

Ethnic Identity

‘...a self-ascribed dynamic construct that transitions through various stages and is highly dependent upon an individual’s feelings of pride and a sense of belonging towards her (or his) ethnic group (Phinney, 1992, Phinney, 1990b).
**Ethnic Homophily**

‘...the tendency of people with similar traits to interact with one another more than with people with dissimilar traits’ (Centola et al. 2007, p. 905).

**Social Network**

A social network (or reference group) is a support structure (Sharma, 2007), a complex system whereby individuals known as nodes (or actors) are connected to one or more interdependencies (ties) through friendship, relationship, beliefs, or kinship (Freeman, 2006).
### 1.1 GENERAL DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collectivist Culture</td>
<td>A culture where the goals of the group take precedence over the goals of the individual (Triandis et al., 1990); whereby individuals are expected—perhaps even pressured—to oblige by the customs and sense of duty that has been defined by the group (Suzuki and Greenfield, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Decision-Making Process</td>
<td>The consumer decision-making process occurs when the consumer recognises he or she has a need or want that must be fulfilled (problem recognition); the consumer undertakes some research (information search) to evaluate the options available to satisfy that need or want (evaluation of alternatives); the consumer then uses a set criteria to evaluate the competing options (product choice); and selects the product or service that best meets that need or want (outcome) (Solomon, 1996, p. 271).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Assimilation</td>
<td>‘...perceived to involve changes in the behavioural patterns of individuals with respect to language, food consumption and dress’ (Pires and Stanton, 2005, p. 43).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>An ethnic is ‘...a member of an ethnic group; a member of a minority group who retains the customs, language, or social views of his or her group’ (Merriam-Webster, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘...of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background’ (Merriam-Webster, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic Culture</td>
<td>‘...are less willing to subordinate their personal goals for a collective, less willing to confront members of their in-groups, and feel a greater degree of separation from their in-group members’ (Suzuki and Greenfield, 2002, p. 202).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product involvement</td>
<td>The level of interest and effort a consumer makes in the transaction process (Solomon, 1996).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>‘Socially defined but on the basis of physical criteria’ and ‘...predicated...on biological membership of a particular group...’ (Song, 2003, p. 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Identification</td>
<td>‘...refers to the ethnic label that one uses for oneself’ (Phinney, 1992, p. 158).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital</td>
<td>Social capital is defined as ‘the set of people’s connections that can help them get a job, establish a firm and attain other specific goals’ (Bourdieu, 1986).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-culture</td>
<td>‘Consumers’ lifestyles are affected by group memberships within the society at large. These groups are known as subcultures, whose members share beliefs and common experiences that set them apart from others’ (Solomon, 1996, p. 463).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2. RESEARCH FORMS

2.1 Consent Form

I, the below undersigned, have received a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and have read the information provided by the Principal Researcher, Jamealla Intharacks, regarding being a participant in the research project, titled "The Influence of Ethnicity on Consumer Behaviour". Any questions or concerns I have raised have been answered by the Principal Researcher, Jamealla Intharacks, to my satisfaction.

Participation Guidelines

▪ I give my full consent to participate in interviews, focus group sessions and/or field observations for this research project.

▪ I give my full consent for any research data gathered during the interviews, focus group sessions and/or field observations to be published.

▪ I understand that any feedback or opinions I provide in the interviews, focus group sessions and/or field observations will be recorded in writing and on video/audio tape.

▪ I understand that my name and my identity will not be revealed, without my written consent, to anyone other than the researchers conducting the project.

▪ I may withdraw my consent at any time during the research study and may choose not to participate in discussions of any particular topic.

▪ I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet for which I have signed below.
2.2a Participant Information Sheet (Lao or Filipino)

Dear prospective research participant,

Below please find background information on the research case study, “The Influence of Ethnicity on Consumer Behaviour”, including the research aims and methods, and an explanation on the levels of participant involvement required of you:

**Background**

**Research Aims**

The primary aim of this research is to obtain a better understanding of how and in what way(s) (Lao or Filipino) ethnic identity influences consumer behaviour.

**Methods**

Research participants will be asked to participate in interviews, focus group sessions and/or field observations at an agreed time between the researcher and the participant(s).

**Potential Outcomes**

Clarity on how and in what way(s) (Lao or Filipino) ethnic identity influences consumer behaviour can assist both public and private providers of services and products to develop communication and service delivery programs that can better meet the preferences of Australia’s ethnic communities.

**Participant Selection**

Upon receiving your signed consent form to participate in this case study, including confirmation that you have read and understand the details provided to you on this information sheet, notification via an e-mail or letter confirming your suitability to participate in this case study will be sent to you. This notification will provide details of the time and place in which the interview and/or focus group will take place.
Participant Criteria

- Over 18 years of age;
- The nationality of both parents is (Lao or Filipino);
- Able to provide consent to participate in interviews, focus group sessions and/or field observations without the need for parental permission; and
- Permanent resident or citizen of Australia.

Participant Involvement

Topics of Discussion

- Labels of ethnicity and ethnic identity
- Belonging to an ethnic minority group
- Experience as a member of an ethnic minority
- Social networks and their influence
- Shopping behaviour

Field Observations

Individuals from the interviews or focus group sessions may be asked to further partake in field observations.

Data Collection

All interviews and focus group sessions will be audio- and/or digitally-recorded. Field observations will be recorded onto journal entries or diaries. All notes collected during interviews, focus groups and field observations will then be transcribed and stored electronically for data keeping.
Important Notice

Participants may decide not to contribute to any topics that they feel uncomfortable discussing. Participants may also discontinue participating in the research study by notifying the Principal Researcher at any stage during the interview or focus group session. Any details, feedback or input provided by the Participant will be deleted as per requested.

Below are the contact details for the researchers involved in the study. Please feel free to contact them if you have any questions about the study or your involvement in the study.

Jamealla Intharacks, Doctor of Philosophy Student (Principal Researcher)

Mobile: 0416 227 599       E-mail: 91148100@student.uws.edu.au

Academic supervisors of Jamealla Intharacks

Primary Supervisor: Associate Professor, John Stanton

E-mail: j.stanton@uws.edu.au

Secondary Supervisor: Doctor Neeru Sharma

E-mail: n.sharma@uws.edu.au
2.3 Data Analysis Protocol

This protocol is designed as a guide for the Researcher to ensure that research questions are being addressed by collecting the relevant data from interviews, focus groups and field observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Provide an in-depth analysis of research data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>This protocol is a guide for analysing data and can be applied to various data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step-by-Step Guide**

1. Print out question template being analysed for individual interviews OR focus groups OR field observations.
2. Review the data collected from individual interviews OR focus groups OR field observations and make notes and observations.
3. Keep notes and observations factual and based on evidence that is easily revealed in the data without a need for interpretation.
4. Conduct in-depth analysis:
   a. Separate the data and corresponding notes and observations into like groups/sets.
   b. List the similarities and differences between the groups/sets.
   c. List any data gaps in the groups/sets.
   d. Are there any questions that emerge from these groups/sets? Note any questions on a separate sheet.
5. Interpret the data:
   a. Code each groups/sets into categories.
   b. Define assumptions where applicable for each groups/sets.
   c. Provide explanations where applicable for each groups/sets.
   d. Review the groups/sets and note any emerging patterns, themes or trends.
e. Note relevance of each groups/sets to research questions.

f. Summarise the findings.

g. Are there any questions that emerge from this interpretation? Note any questions on a separate sheet for further analysis if required.
2.4 Interview Questions

Respondent:

Birth Year:

Age:

Group:

Gender:

Country of Birth:

If you were not born in Australia, what year did you arrive in Australia:

Years in Australia:

Country of Birth – Mother:

Country of Birth – Father:

Occupation:

What is your Residential Status in Australia e.g., Citizen, Permanent Resident, Visitor?

Country of Primary Education:

Country of Secondary Education:

Country of Tertiary Education:

What languages can you speak?

What is your religion or faith?

What is your ethnic background e.g., Australian, (Lao/Filipino)-Australian, (Lao/Filipino)?

Why do you identify yourself as the above?

What does ethnic identity mean to you?
How has your ethnic identity contributed to how you see yourself?

What events do you and your family celebrate e.g., Independence Day, Christmas, Easter, Australia Day, religious calendar events e.g., Christian celebrations etc.?

What do these celebrations mean to you and to your family?

What (Lao/Filipino) customs, values, traditions or beliefs have you learned from your parents or grandparents?

What Australian customs, values, traditions or beliefs have you learned from living in Australia?

What customs, values, traditions or beliefs will you, or have you, passed onto your children?

What is it about your (Lao/Filipino) heritage that you are most proud of?

What makes you feel proud to be “Australian”?

Why did your family choose to settle in Australia?

What were your experiences like during the early settlement period?

What adjustments, if any, have you made as a result of growing up or living in Australia?

Has living in Australia changed your views on how you see yourself?

When did you last visit (Laos/the Philippines)?

How often do you travel to the (Laos/Philippines)?

Language at home:

Language at work or school:

Language among friends:

Language at shopping:

What kinds of music do you like to listen to?
What kinds of movies do you like to watch?

What kinds of foods do you like to eat?

What products or services do you buy that reflects your ethnic identity?

What information media (e.g., radio, TV, internet, magazine, newspaper) do you use before you make a decision to buy an expensive product (e.g., car, holiday, home)?

Are you comfortable using the internet to shop online? Why or why not?

Can you describe your experiences dealing with service providers such as doctors, dentists, lawyers, solicitors, real estate agents, banks, insurance companies (car, home, life), telecommunications companies, government departments?

What do you expect from these service providers e.g., doctors, dentists, lawyers, solicitors, real estate agents, banks, insurance companies (car, home, life), telecommunications companies, government departments?

Ethnic Background of Doctors:

Ethnic Background of Dentists:

Ethnic Background of Lawyers / Solicitors:

Ethnic Background of Real Estate Agents:

Would you use the services of a (Lao/Filipino) service provider if one was locally available?

Do you always use the same service providers?

Are there any service providers that you do not feel comfortable dealing with?

What shopping behaviour or habits have you learned from your parents?

How do you manage a situation where the products you have purchased are faulty?

How do you manage a situation where you did not receive the services in which you paid for?
What is the ethnic background of your spouse or partner?

What is the ethnic background of your five closest friends?

What support or advice do you, your family and close friends provide each other?

Who do you turn to for advice before making a decision to buy a large expensive product (car, a holiday or a home)?

What community activities do you participate in?
Dear Sir/Madam,

By way of introduction my name is Jamealla Intharacks and I am a PhD student researching (Filipino/Lao) consumer behaviour.

In order to obtain a better understanding of how (Filipino/Lao) ethnic identity influence consumer behaviour, my research will involve interviewing research participants; conducting inter-group and inter-generational focus groups; and undertaking field observations of the research participants.

I would like to meet with you to discuss if you could provide assistance and advice in the recruitment of volunteers to partake in my research. Additionally, I am happy to provide you with a brief of my research via e-mail or over the phone.

I thank you in advance for your support and look forward to your reply at your earliest convenience.

Kind Regards

Ms. Jamealla Intharacks
2.5b Script for Advertisement

PhD Study

The Influence of Ethnicity on Consumer Behaviour

Call for Volunteers

You are invited to participate in a doctoral research study conducted by Ms Jamealla Intharacks on behalf of the University of Western Sydney.

What is the Study About?

The primary aim of this research is to obtain a better understanding of how and in what way(s) (Lao/Filipino) ethnic identity influences consumer behaviour.

What does the study involve?

The study involves the Researcher and Participant discussing the role of ethnic identity as a Lao/Filipino-Australian and how and in what way(s) it influences their consumption behaviour. These discussions will take place via interviews, focus groups and/or field observations.

How much time will the study take and where?

- Interviews will run for approximately 30 minutes to an hour and will take place at the Participant’s home.
- Focus group sessions will run for approximately 1 hour and will take place at a community hall.
- Field observations will involve the Researcher observing the Participant at cultural events e.g., temples, churches, halls and function centres.
**Important Note**

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time, no questions asked.

**For Further Information**

If you wish to participate in this research or would like to find out more information, please contact:

Ms. Jamealla Intharacks, PhD Candidate at the School of Marketing, University of Western Sydney on 91148100@uws.student.edu.au.

You are also welcome to contact the Primary Student Supervisor of this research study, Associate Professor, John Stanton on j.stanton@uws.edu.au or 02 9852 4140.
2.6 Focus Group Questions – (Lao or Filipino)

1. Please explain what community [Lao, Lao-Australian, Filipino, Filipino-Australian or Australian] you feel you belong to?

2. Please explain if and why you are proud of your (Lao or Filipino) heritage?

3. Please explain if and why you are proud to be Australian?

4. As a (Lao-Australian or Filipino-Australian), please describe your experiences with service providers (doctor, dentist, lawyer, telephone companies, banks, real estate agents etc.,) ? Good? Negative? Why?

5. Please describe who the people are that you ask for advice before buying expensive products or services [e.g., husband, wife, siblings, children, grandchildren or friends]?

6. Please explain if you shop alone or with others [e.g., husband, wife, siblings, children, grandchildren or friends]? Why?

7. Please describe where you get your product/service information from [e.g., television, magazines, newspaper, radio or internet]?

8. Please describe the products or services you buy that reflect your Lao heritage?

9. Please describe what you expect from service providers?

10. Please explain the reasons that would make you remain loyal to service providers?
2.7 NVivo Samples

Samples of the NVivo word frequency query function is shown on Figure 2.7.1 and Figure 2.7.2 and Table 2.7.1 and Table 2.7.2. The word cloud is a diagram of the word frequency query results (refer to Figure 7.3 and 7.4) whilst the table is a detailed summary of the word frequency query results (refer to Table 7.1 and 7.2) including a word count for each word used in the research.

Figure 2.7.1 Samples of NVivo Word Cloud Used During Data Analysis – Lao Study Group
Figure 2.7.2 Samples of NVivo Word Cloud Used During Data Analysis - Filipino Study Group