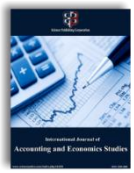
International Journal of Accounting and Economics Studies, 12 (4) (2025) 332-341

International Journal of Accounting and Economics Studies

Website: www.sciencepubco.com/index.php/IJAES
https://doi.org/10.14419/ym83jm16
Research paper



Culturally Embedded Advertising and Consumer Decision-Making: A Six-Stage Analysis with Attitude, Satisfaction, and Exposure As Predictors

Subash Limbu [1] *, Kalyan Mukherjee [2]

[1] PhD Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam, India
[2] Research Guide, Department of Commerce, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam, India
**Corresponding author E-mail: subhnabas@gmail.com*

Received: July 9, 2025, Accepted: August 8, 2025, Published: August 14, 2025

Abstract

Advertising plays a vital role in influencing consumer behaviour and shaping brand perception. In culturally diverse contexts like India, culturally embedded content has become increasingly relevant. This paper examines the influence of four cultural elements: vernacular language, cultural values, customs and rituals, and cultural symbols, on six stages of consumer decision-making. The model extends the traditional framework by treating attitude formation as a distinct stage, enabling closer analysis of emotional and trust-based responses to advertisements. Data were collected from Assam's Kamrup Metropolitan District using a structured questionnaire administered to 400 respondents. The findings showed that these elements had the strongest influence on the attitude formation stage, with age and gender differences observed mainly in the purchase and post-purchase phases. Regression findings confirmed that attitude along with exposure significantly predicted cultural advertising's impact, while satisfaction showed no meaningful effect. These results emphasise the importance of aligning advertising strategies with cultural context in demographically diverse markets. The study supports the usefulness of a modified decision-making model and provides practical direction for marketers aiming to connect with audiences through culturally meaningful content.

Keywords: *Consumer Decision-Making; Cultural Advertising; Cultural Values; Demographic Differences; Vernacular Language.*

1. Introduction

Advertising holds a central position in shaping consumer preferences and influencing buying behaviour. As a key part of the marketing mix, it not only informs potential consumers about goods and services but also builds emotional and symbolic associations with brands. The American Marketing Association (2013) defines advertising as a paid, non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, products, or services by an identified sponsor. It performs both informative and persuasive roles, especially where emotional resonance, cultural context, and brand trust play a role in decision-making.

India's linguistic and cultural diversity creates a complex environment for advertising. Studies show that culturally integrated messaging improves consumer recognition and relevance in multilingual societies (Mikhailitchenko et al., 2009). In such settings, the use of regional language, values, rituals, and symbols enhances engagement. Prior studies have linked culturally relevant advertising with improved recall, emotional connection, and persuasive impact (Srikandath, 1991; Luna & Gupta, 2001). Shan, Zhu, Song, and Chen (2023) further show that culturally aligned emotional appeals enhance consumer engagement and buying behaviour. Indian consumers often balance traditional values with modern lifestyles, particularly in regional markets. In this context, advertising rooted in cultural content has gained increasing relevance.

Recent developments point to greater emphasis on cultural resonance in Indian advertising. The IMARC Group (2024) projects the market will grow from ₹908.6 billion in 2024 to over ₹2,100 billion by 2033, driven by regional content, digital platforms, and localisation. Advertisements using local values and languages often enhance familiarity, trust, and credibility (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). Swaminathan and Zameer (2017) noted that Indian audiences respond more positively to ads featuring elements such as rituals, language, and tradition, which support brand acceptance and affinity.

Cultural influence on consumer behaviour is well documented. Kotler and Keller (2016) state that culture shapes how consumers identify needs and evaluate choices. Schiffman, Wisenblit, and Kumar (2019) emphasise that cultural norms affect the way marketing messages are understood and influence buying decisions. Advertising that reflects familiar cultural cues is more likely to meet expectations and drive action.

Copyright © Subash Limbu, Kalyan Mukherjee. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

This study focuses on Kamrup Metropolitan District in Assam, a region with cultural richness, urban development, and growing media exposure. With a blend of traditional and modern lifestyles, the district offers a relevant setting for examining the effects of culturally embedded advertising.

The study investigates the influence of four cultural elements—vernacular language, cultural values, customs and rituals, and cultural symbols—across six stages of consumer decision-making. The study applies an expanded framework that treats attitude formation as a separate stage. It also examines how three perceptual constructs—attitude, satisfaction, and exposure—predict cultural advertising's overall impact. The goal is to assess how culturally embedded content shapes consumer behaviour across all six stages of decision-making in a linguistically and culturally diverse region.

2. The six-stage consumer decision-making model

Consumer decision-making has traditionally been understood as a process involving multiple stages. The well-established framework identifies five key steps: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995; Kotler & Keller, 2016). These stages reflect a progression from the awareness of a need to the decision to make a purchase, providing a structured lens for examining the various influences shaping consumer choices.

This study introduces a sixth stage—attitude formation—positioned between evaluation and purchase. Though typically treated as an underlying psychological factor (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), its inclusion as a separate stage enables a closer analysis of emotional and trust-based responses to advertisements (Ajzen, 1991; Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). This adjustment is especially relevant in assessing culturally embedded advertisements that elicit affective rather than purely rational reactions.

Each of the six stages was operationalised using two indicators:

- Problem Recognition: Awareness of a need; motivation to address it.
- Information Search: Desire to explore the brand; trust in the information.
- Evaluation of Alternatives: Improved understanding; ease of comparison.
- Attitude Formation: Emotional resonance; brand trust.
- Purchase Decision: Help in choosing a brand; intention to buy.
- Post-Purchase Behaviour: Satisfaction assurance; encouragement of word-of-mouth.

This framework allows assessment of not just whether culture influences consumer decisions, but when and how strongly at each step.

3. Cultural elements in advertising

Culturally embedded advertising reflects the values, language, traditions, and symbols of the target audience, enhancing relevance and emotional impact in cross-cultural contexts (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Taylor, 2005). In culturally rich regions like Assam, such alignment may significantly influence consumer responses.

This study focuses on four key cultural elements:

Vernacular advertisements refer to the use of regional languages in promotional content, which enhances relatability and message processing (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008; Luna & Peracchio, 2001). In multilingual contexts, vernacular usage conveys respect for cultural identity and improves comprehension.

Cultural values reflect collective beliefs and norms, such as family orientation, tradition, and spirituality. When such values are expressed in advertising, they contribute to perceived authenticity and emotional appeal (Pollay, 1983; Zhang & Gelb, 1996).

Customs and rituals include elements such as festivals, ceremonies, and traditional practices. Their inclusion in advertisements helps create familiarity and psychological closeness with the audience (Gupta & De, 2007; Banerjee, 2008).

Cultural symbols are visual and symbolic representations like traditional dress, folk motifs, and regional music. These trigger cultural associations and deepen emotional engagement (Srikandath, 1991).

By examining the effect of these elements across the decision-making stages, the study aims to clarify their functional role in shaping consumer behaviour.

4. Literature review

4.1. Culture and consumer decision-making

Culture strongly influences consumer behaviour. It encompasses commonly held beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, and values that guide preferences, perceptions, and purchase actions (Kotler & Keller, 2016). As a foundational influence, culture plays a role in how people interpret advertisements, make buying decisions, and evaluate products (Schiffman, Wisenblit, & Kumar, 2019).

Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) proposed a five-stage decision-making model: recognising a need, searching for information, assessing options, making a purchase, and evaluating it afterwards. However, the influence of cultural factors may vary across these stages.

Hofstede (1980) highlighted how national culture shapes behaviour and decision-making through dimensions like individualism versus collectivism. McCort and Malhotra (1993) noted that consumer interpretation is guided by cultural values and affects how consumers respond to symbolic content.

Culturally aligned messages tend to be more persuasive and credible in cross-cultural marketing (Zhang & Gelb, 1996). According to Luna and Gupta (2001), messages that match cultural expectations lead to better comprehension and stronger emotional reactions. Han and Shavitt (1994) found that appeal types tend to perform better when matched with cultural orientation, and Taylor (2005) emphasised that cultural adaptation enhances message effectiveness.

Recent studies continue to support these observations. For instance, D'Agostino (2024) found that substantial modifications are often necessary for advertising messages to resonate with audiences in culturally distinct markets like Asia, which differ significantly from Western norms. In a related context, Okonkwo et al. (2023) stressed the importance of localising digital marketing efforts by aligning content with local values, engaging with ongoing cultural conversations, and collaborating with local influencers to boost engagement and authenticity.

Extending this discussion beyond traditional advertising, cultural differences and varied shopping purposes have also been found to influence the effectiveness of voice assistants in hospitality, underscoring the need for culturally tailored messages to enhance user engagement and support environmentally sustainable practices (Jiang et al., 2025). Similarly, in cross-cultural retail contexts, cultural motivation has been shown to enhance perceptions of both fair source authenticity and atmosphere authenticity, which significantly shape consumers' purchase intentions for heritage products, as evidenced in a study on Mexican cultural crafts resold in the U.S. (Oyedele et al., 2025).
Culturally adapted value appeals in advertising have also been found to be more persuasive and better liked, though the effects appear to be small and gradually declining over time (Hornikx et al., 2023). In a related development, a content analysis of YouTube advertisements from Germany and Israel showed that gender stereotyping remains common in online advertising. These stereotypes are more often based on physical traits than occupational roles and vary across cultures, challenging the idea of a uniform global advertising platform (Roth-Cohen et al., 2022). These global patterns underline the importance of adapting advertising strategies to specific cultural contexts, which becomes especially relevant in a culturally complex market like India.
In India's multilingual and culturally diverse context, recognising cultural influences on consumer decision-making is essential. Banerjee (2008) and De (2010) found that culturally resonant advertising in India improves brand associations and consumer response. Further evidence is provided by Trombley (2024), who observed that advertisements in countries such as India and Japan often show stronger alignment between cultural identity and music used in advertising, which may positively influence advertising effectiveness. Incorporating elements like regional language, rituals, and values can make messages both emotionally compelling and cognitively persuasive.

4.2. Theoretical framework and model foundation

The present research draws upon the five-stage consumer decision-making model developed by Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995), which includes: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. This model provides a structured way to examine how consumers respond to marketing stimuli. However, the traditional linear model does not directly incorporate the role of attitude, which significantly influences consumer decisions, particularly in culturally rich contexts.
Drawing from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and Fishbein and Ajzen's earlier work (1975), this study extends the five-stage model by introducing attitude formation as a distinct sixth stage. While attitude is often treated as a background variable, its explicit inclusion allows for better analysis of emotional and trust-based responses triggered by culturally embedded advertising. Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) also noted that culturally shaped attitudes directly affect consumer evaluation and action.
The proposed conceptual model (Fig. 1) integrates four key cultural elements—vernacular language, cultural values, customs and rituals, and cultural symbols—across the six stages of consumer decision-making process. These cultural factors are hypothesised to influence consumer responses at each stage of the process.
In addition to the six stages, the model incorporates three perceptual constructs: attitude towards advertisements, satisfaction, and exposure. Attitude towards advertisements refers to consumers' emotional and evaluative orientation toward culturally embedded messages. Satisfaction reflects the degree of fulfilment experienced after engaging with such advertisements. Exposure captures the perceived frequency or visibility of culturally relevant advertisements in the consumer's environment.
Fig. 1 presents the integration of these variables to analyse the cumulative and stage-specific influence of cultural elements on decision-making. This model provides insight into both the stage-wise influence of cultural advertising and consumer perception of its effects.
In the conceptual model, the cultural elements are positioned on the left, linking horizontally to the six stages of the consumer decision-making process placed at the centre. The variable Overall Impact is positioned below these stages and represents the cumulative influence of culturally embedded advertisements on the overall decision journey, rather than on individual stages. The three perceptual constructs appear separately and are connected to the Overall Impact variable on the right. Arrows in the model illustrate both hypothesised directional influences and conceptual linkages among the components. Specifically, arrows from the cultural elements to the decision-making process reflect the expected influence of these elements across the consumer journey; the arrows connecting the six stages indicate the sequential nature of the process; the arrow from the decision-making stages to Overall Impact suggests that these stages, taken together, contribute to the overall perceived influence; and the arrows from the perceptual constructs to Overall Impact indicate their predictive roles in shaping integrated consumer evaluations. These directional flows are based on the conceptual assumptions of the study.

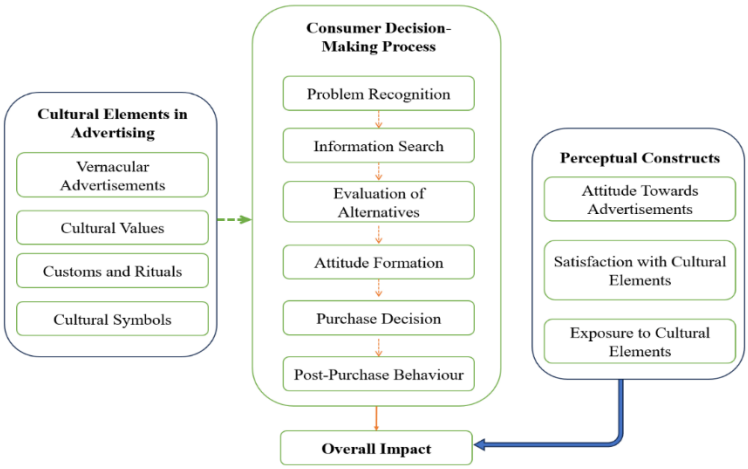


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework Showing How Four Cultural Elements Influence Six Consumer Decision-Making Stages, with Attitude Towards Advertisements, Satisfaction, And Exposure Acting as Predictors of Overall Advertising Impact.

Note: To avoid confusion, attitude formation refers to a decision-making stage, while attitude towards advertisements is a separate perceptual variable.
Source: Developed by the authors for this study.

4.3. Hypothesis development

Grounded in the theoretical framework and previous research, the study formulated the following null hypotheses thematically:

a) Gender-Based Differences in Cultural Advertising Influence
- $H_{o}1$: No significant gender-based variation exists in the influence of cultural elements on each stage of consumer decision-making.
- $H_{o}2$: No significant gender-based variation exists in the influence of vernacular advertisements on decision-making.
- $H_{o}3$: No significant gender-based variation exists in the influence of cultural values in advertisements.
- $H_{o}4$: No significant gender-based variation exists in the influence of customs and rituals in advertisements.
- $H_{o}5$: No significant gender-based variation exists in the influence of cultural symbols in advertisements.

b) Age-Based Differences in Cultural Advertising Influence
- $H_{o}6$: No significant age-based variation exists in the influence of cultural elements across consumer decision-making stages.
- $H_{o}7$: No significant age-based variation exists in the influence of each of the four cultural elements on decision-making.

c) Predictive Influence of Perceptual Constructs
- $H_{o}8$: Attitude, satisfaction, and exposure do not significantly predict the overall impact of cultural elements in advertising on consumer decision-making.

d) Correlational Relationships Among Perceptual Variables
- $H_{o}9$: There is no meaningful statistical association between attitude towards advertisements and the perceived influence of culturally embedded advertising on consumer decision-making.
- $H_{o}10$: There is no measurable relationship between satisfaction with cultural elements in advertisements and their perceived influence on consumer decision-making.
- $H_{o}11$: There is no meaningful correlation between exposure to cultural elements in advertisements and their perceived influence on consumer decision-making.

These hypotheses form the basis for the empirical analysis, enabling the study to examine both group differences and the predictive and associative functions of the perceptual constructs.

5. Research methodology

5.1. Study area

This research was carried out in Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam, a region characterised by cultural diversity, linguistic variation, and strong media reach. Its mix of tradition and urbanisation makes it well-suited for analysing culturally embedded advertising effects.

5.2. Participants and sampling

The sampling frame comprised 1,040,708 registered voters listed in the electoral roll dated 8 December 2023. A proportionate stratified random sampling approach was used across five assembly constituencies—Dispur, Dimoria, New Guwahati, Guwahati Central, and Jalukbari—a sample of 400 respondents was selected. Taro Yamane's formula guided the sample size determination. Random selection employed Excel's RAND() function, and data were collected via in-person household visits.

5.3. Instrument design

A structured questionnaire with 48 items measured the influence of four cultural elements across six consumer decision-making stages, using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Additional items assessed attitude towards advertisements, satisfaction with cultural elements, and exposure to culturally embedded content using validated subscales.

5.4. Demographic variables

While multiple demographic details were gathered, the analysis focused on gender and age, as these variables aligned with the research objectives and supported reliable statistical comparisons using t-tests and ANOVA.

5.5. Data collection

Questionnaire-based surveys were administered through household visits. All participants provided informed consent, and their identities were kept confidential. Responses with missing or incomplete data were removed from the final dataset.

5.6. Scale reliability

To assess internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was applied. As presented in Table 1, all subscales exceeded the acceptable threshold of $\alpha \geq .70$, confirming reliable measurement across the decision-making stages, cultural elements, and the perceptual constructs of attitude, satisfaction, and exposure.

5.7. Statistical tools used

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The study employed the following techniques:
- Descriptive Statistics: To summarise responses
- Independent Samples t-test: For gender-based comparisons
- One-Way ANOVA / Welch's ANOVA: For age-based comparisons
- Pearson's Correlation: To explore associations among perceptual constructs and outcome variables
- Multiple Linear Regression: To assess predictors of overall impact

Mean scores were evaluated based on a three-tier scale:

- 1.00–2.33: Low
- 2.34–3.66: Moderate
- 3.67–5.00: High

6. Result

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Values for Consumer Decision-Making Stages, Cultural Elements, Attitude, Satisfaction, and Exposure

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Consumer decision-making stages		
Problem Recognition	8	0.801
Information Search	8	0.796
Evaluation of Alternatives	8	0.834
Attitude Formation	8	0.923
Purchase Decision	8	0.844
Post-Purchase Behaviour	8	0.833
Cultural elements		
Vernacular Advertisements	12	0.873
Cultural Values	12	0.812
Customs and Rituals	12	0.779
Cultural Symbols	12	0.825
Attitude, satisfaction and exposure		
Attitude towards Advertisements	6	0.807
Satisfaction with Cultural Elements in Advertisements	4	0.726
Exposure to Cultural Elements in Advertisements	4	0.733

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

As shown in Table 1, all constructs reported satisfactory reliability scores, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics: Consumer Decision-Making Stages

Stage	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Problem Recognition	3.24	0.55	Moderate
Information Search	3.33	0.57	Moderate
Evaluation of Alternatives	3.29	0.61	Moderate
Attitude Formation	3.55	0.82	Moderate
Purchase Decision	3.18	0.63	Moderate
Post-Purchase Behaviour	3.21	0.60	Moderate

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics: Cultural Elements

Cultural Element	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Vernacular Advertisements	3.40	0.59	Moderate
Cultural Values	3.29	0.52	Moderate
Customs and Rituals	3.25	0.48	Moderate
Cultural Symbols	3.25	0.55	Moderate

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, all six consumer decision-making stages and four cultural elements recorded moderate mean scores. Attitude formation (M = 3.55) showed the highest influence among stages, while vernacular advertisements (M = 3.40) ranked highest among the cultural elements. These patterns suggest that emotional and linguistic familiarity may drive consumer responsiveness.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics: Attitude, Satisfaction, and Exposure

Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Attitude towards Advertisements	3.68	0.68	Positive
Satisfaction with Cultural Elements	3.26	0.75	Moderate
Exposure to Cultural Elements	3.28	0.75	Moderate

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 4 indicates that participants held a generally positive attitude toward advertisements (M = 3.68), while satisfaction (M = 3.26) and exposure to cultural content (M = 3.28) were rated moderately, pointing to opportunities for enhancing message reach and resonance.

Table 5: T-Test Outcomes: Gender Differences Across Decision-Making Stages

Stage	Levene's p	Equal Variances?	t(df)	p-value	Mean Diff.	Interpretation
Problem Recognition	0.351	Yes	-2.712 (398)	0.007	-0.15	Significant (female < male)
Information Search	0.169	Yes	-0.487 (398)	0.626	-0.03	Not significant
Evaluation of Alternatives	0.698	Yes	-1.777 (398)	0.076	-0.11	Not significant
Attitude Formation	0.842	Yes	-1.813 (398)	0.071	-0.15	Not significant
Purchase Decision	0.046	No	-2.041 (364)	0.042	-0.13	Significant (female < male)
Post-Purchase Behaviour	0.051	No	-2.277 (370)	0.023	-0.14	Significant (female < male)

Note: $p < .05$ is considered statistically significant.
Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Gender-based comparisons using independent-samples t-tests (Table 5) revealed significant differences in three decision-making stages: problem recognition, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour. In these phases, male respondents reported higher influence from

cultural elements. No statistically significant gender variation was observed in information seeking, alternative evaluation, or attitude formation.

Table 6: Independent Samples T-Test for Gender-Based Differences in Cultural Elements

Cultural Element	Levene's p	Equal Variances?	t(df)	p-value	Mean Diff.	Outcome
Vernacular Advertisements	0.503	Yes	-1.723 (398)	0.086	-0.1	Not significant
Cultural Values	0.822	Yes	-2.376 (398)	0.018	-0.12	Significant (female < male)
Customs and Rituals	0.314	Yes	-2.881 (398)	0.004	-0.14	Significant (female < male)
Cultural Symbols	0.647	Yes	-1.947 (398)	0.052	-0.11	Borderline (p > .05)

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 6 shows that males perceived a significantly stronger influence of cultural values (p = .018) and customs and rituals (p = .004) than females. The influence of vernacular advertisements and cultural symbols was statistically non-significant, though cultural symbols approached the conventional threshold (p = .052).

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA and Welch's ANOVA Results for Consumer Decision-Making Stages (by Age Group)

Stage	Test Used	F (df1, df2)	p-value	Significant?
Problem Recognition	One-Way ANOVA	F(5, 394) = 1.200	0.308	No
Purchase Decision	One-Way ANOVA	F(5, 394) = 4.231	0.001	Yes
Information Search	Welch's ANOVA	F(5, 98.96) = 1.129	0.35	No
Evaluation of Alternatives	Welch's ANOVA	F(5, 99.11) = 0.560	0.731	No
Attitude Formation	Welch's ANOVA	F(5, 99.71) = 2.068	0.076	No (marginal)
Post-Purchase Behaviour	Welch's ANOVA	F(5, 100.52) = 12.001	0	Yes

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 7: A) Tukey HSD Comparisons: Age Groups in Purchase Decision

Age Group Comparison	Mean Difference (I–J)	p-value	Significant?
20–30 yrs vs 50–60 yrs	0.436	0.019	Yes
20–30 yrs vs 60+ yrs	0.378	0.019	Yes
All other comparisons	—	> 0.05	No

Note: Only pairs with p < 0.05 are considered significant.
Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 7: B) Games–Howell Post Hoc Results for Post-Purchase Behaviour Stage (Age-Based Differences)

Age Group Comparison	Mean Difference (I–J)	p-value	Significant?
18–20 yrs vs 30–40 yrs	0.371	0.02	Yes
18–20 yrs vs 50–60 yrs	0.871	0	Yes
18–20 yrs vs 60+ yrs	0.743	0	Yes
20–30 yrs vs 50–60 yrs	0.551	0	Yes
20–30 yrs vs 60+ yrs	0.424	0.019	Yes
30–40 yrs vs 50–60 yrs	0.5	0	Yes
30–40 yrs vs 60+ yrs	0.373	0.046	Yes
40–50 yrs vs 50–60 yrs	0.493	0.001	Yes

Note: Games–Howell test used due to unequal variances; only significant results are displayed.
Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 7 shows that significant age-related differences appeared only in the purchase and post-purchase stages. Tukey's HSD post hoc results (Table 7a) reveal that consumers aged 20–30 perceived greater cultural influence during the purchase stage compared to those aged 50 and above. The Games–Howell test (Table 7b) further indicates that respondents under 40 experienced higher cultural influence in the post-purchase phase than older groups. The findings suggest that culturally embedded advertising exerts a stronger influence on younger consumers during the later stages of decision-making.

Table 8: Summary of ANOVA and Welch's ANOVA Results for Cultural Elements (by Age Group)

Cultural Element	Test Used	F (df1, df2)	p-value	Significant?
Vernacular Advertisements	Welch's ANOVA	F(5, 98.13) = 1.979	0.088	No
Cultural Values	Welch's ANOVA	F(5, 99.29) = 0.899	0.485	No
Customs and Rituals	Welch's ANOVA	F(5, 98.17) = 1.088	0.372	No
Cultural Symbols	One-Way ANOVA	F(5, 394) = 1.742	0.124	No

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 8 shows that no significant differences were observed among age groups in their perception of individual cultural elements, including vernacular advertisements, cultural values, customs and rituals, and cultural symbols. This suggests that cultural content in advertising is broadly perceived similarly across generations in the study area.

Table 9: Multiple Regression Results Predicting the Overall Impact of Cultural Elements

Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β (Beta)	t	p-value	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.65	0.142	—	11.607	0	—	—
Attitude towards Advertisements	0.253	0.034	0.356	7.442	0	0.763	1.31
Satisfaction with Cultural Elements	0.046	0.028	0.072	1.63	0.104	0.902	1.109
Exposure to Cultural Elements	0.173	0.032	0.271	5.444	0	0.705	1.419

Note. Model Summary: R =.554, R^2 =.307, Adjusted R^2 =.302; F (3, 396) = 58.421, p <.001.

Dependent Variable: Overall Impact of Cultural Elements in Advertising.
Attitude and exposure are significant predictors ($p < .05$); satisfaction is not statistically significant.
Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025)

Table 9 presents results from a multiple linear regression used to assess how attitude, satisfaction, and exposure predict the overall impact of cultural advertising. The model was statistically significant ($R^2 = .307$, $p < .001$), with attitude ($\beta = .356$) and exposure ($\beta = .271$) identified as significant predictors. Satisfaction ($\beta = .072$, $p = .104$) showed no significant effect. The results suggest that emotional and cognitive engagement play a greater role in shaping consumer responses than retrospective satisfaction.

Table 10: Pearson's Correlation Matrix Among Attitude, Satisfaction, Exposure, and Impact of Cultural Elements

Variables	1. Attitude	2. Satisfaction	3. Exposure	4. Impact
1. Attitude	1	-0.002	.467**	.483**
2. Satisfaction	-0.002	1	.276**	.146**
3. Exposure	.467**	.276**	1	.458**
4. Impact	.483**	.146**	.458**	1

Note: $p < .01$ (2-tailed).
Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 10 confirms these results. Attitude ($r = .483$) and exposure ($r = .458$) demonstrated moderate associations with overall impact. Satisfaction displayed a weak but statistically significant relationship ($r = .146$), reinforcing its lesser predictive strength.

Table 11: Overview of Hypothesis Testing Outcomes

Hypothesis Code	Null Hypothesis Statement	Test Used	p-value	Decision
$H_0 1$	No gender difference in influence across decision stages	t-test	$p < .05$ (3 stages)	Partially rejected – Differences in Problem Recognition, Purchase, Post-Purchase
$H_0 2$	No gender difference in the influence of vernacular advertisements	t-test	0.086	Not rejected
$H_0 3$	No gender difference in the influence of cultural values	t-test	0.018	Rejected – Males reported higher influence
$H_0 4$	No gender difference in the influence of customs/rituals	t-test	0.004	Rejected – Males reported higher influence
$H_0 5$	No gender difference in the influence of cultural symbols	t-test	0.052	Not rejected (borderline)
$H_0 6$	No age-based difference across stages	ANOVA / Welch	.001 (Purchase), .000 (Post-purchase)	Partially rejected
$H_0 7$	No age-based difference in the cultural elements	ANOVA / Welch	All > .05	Not rejected
$H_0 8$	Attitude, satisfaction, and exposure don't predict impact	Regression	$R^2 = .307$, $p < .001$	Partially rejected – Attitude and Exposure were predictors
$H_0 9$	No correlation: Attitude & Impact	Pearson	$r = .483$, $p < .001$	Rejected – Moderate correlation
$H_0 10$	No correlation: Satisfaction & Impact	Pearson	$r = .146$, $p = .003$	Rejected – Weak correlation
$H_0 11$	No correlation: Exposure & Impact	Pearson	$r = .458$, $p < .001$	Rejected – Moderate correlation

Source: Authors' computation using primary data collected for this study (2025).

Table 11 summarises the outcomes of the hypothesis testing. Several null hypotheses were rejected, especially those concerning gender and age-related differences across decision-making stages and associations between perceptual constructs and cultural advertising impact. Attitude and exposure emerged as strong predictors, whereas satisfaction, despite its correlation, was not statistically significant in the regression model.

7. Discussion

This study examined how cultural elements embedded in advertisements affect consumer decision-making across six stages, with particular focus on age and gender differences in Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam. The analysis yielded several key insights.

Attitude formation registered the highest average influence among the six decision-making stages. This result aligns with earlier research indicating that emotional and cultural relevance significantly shape advertising responses (Pollay, 1983). Sengupta (1996) also highlighted the rising use of symbolic and status-linked appeals in Indian advertising. Lee (1993) demonstrated that culturally tailored messaging strengthens emotional engagement and trust—two key factors in consumer decision-making.

Age-related differences appeared only at the purchase and post-purchase stages. Respondents aged 20–30 reported greater sensitivity to cultural elements at these points, compared to older groups. These findings are in line with Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008) and Gupta and De (2007), who found that younger consumers respond more actively to culturally tailored advertisements. Similarly, Yadav and Kishor (2024) reported that culturally grounded messaging resonates more with young Indian consumers who identify closely with their cultural background.

In contrast, the earlier stages—problem identification, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and attitude formation—did not reveal significant age-based variation. This suggests that cultural cues have a more uniform effect in the early phases of decision-making. The stronger differences observed in the later stages may reflect the emotional and experiential aspects that come into play as consumers move toward a decision or reflect on their purchase.

Male respondents consistently reported stronger influence from cultural values, customs and rituals, and cultural symbols compared to females. This departs from traditional expectations and may indicate changing gender norms and cultural identity patterns in urban Assam. However, no significant gender differences were found across the six stages of decision-making. This suggests that gender-based variation is more likely linked to specific cultural elements rather than the overall structure of consumer decision-making.

None of the four cultural elements—vernacular advertisements, cultural values, customs and rituals, and cultural symbols—showed statistically significant variation across age groups. This consistency indicates that cultural messaging is perceived similarly across generations in the study area. Previous studies have shown that such elements enhance message relevance and emotional impact (Srikandath, 1991;

Banerjee, 2008). The present findings suggest that when these elements are used consistently in advertising, their influence remains steady across different age categories.

The six-stage decision-making model was effective in capturing how cultural cues shape consumer behaviour in regional markets. The findings support its applicability in settings such as Kamrup Metropolitan, where linguistic diversity and media exposure play a prominent role. Although cultural advertising demonstrated clear influence, its effect remained relatively consistent across demographic groups.

To assess the overall impact, multiple regression was performed using attitude, satisfaction, and exposure as predictors. The model was statistically significant ($R^2 = .307$, $F(3, 396) = 58.421$, $p < .001$), with attitude towards advertisements ($\beta = .356$, $p < .001$) and exposure ($\beta = .271$, $p < .001$) emerging as significant predictors. Satisfaction, though positively associated, was not statistically significant ($\beta = .072$, $p = .104$). These results highlight that consumers' evaluative responses and cultural exposure shape advertising impact more than their level of satisfaction, aligning with Ducoffe (1996) and Taylor (2005), who stressed the primacy of cognitive and experiential engagement in advertising effectiveness.

One possible explanation for the non-significant role of satisfaction is that it is more prominently associated with post-purchase evaluations, even though it can also occur in earlier stages of decision-making. Since overall consumer decision-making involves multiple pre-purchase stages, satisfaction with advertisements may have limited influence during those earlier stages. Culturally embedded advertisements may be appreciated by consumers, but such appreciation does not necessarily translate into behavioural outcomes. Culturally, familiar elements can evoke positive feelings or recognition without triggering an intention to act. Methodologically, the focus on satisfaction with advertisement content, rather than the product or service itself, may have further limited its predictive ability.

While the interpretive reasoning is conceptual, the correlation analysis aligns with the regression findings by showing stronger associations for attitude and exposure compared to satisfaction. Pearson's correlation analysis supported these results. Both attitude and exposure showed moderate positive associations with the overall impact of cultural advertising, while satisfaction exhibited only a weak but statistically significant relationship. The correlation between attitude and exposure was also moderate, indicating a degree of interdependence between these two key predictors.

From a practical standpoint, these findings carry several actionable implications for advertisers:

- Emphasise culturally resonant content, particularly in messaging for the purchase and post-purchase stages.
- Target younger audiences, who respond more positively to culturally embedded advertisements.
- Tailor content by gender when using symbolic or ritual elements, with attention to cultural identity sensitivities.

Together, these observations provide strategic direction for marketers aiming to enhance the cultural relevance of their campaigns, especially in regional and demographically segmented markets.

8. Implications

8.1. Theoretical implications

This research offers a contribution to consumer behaviour theory by applying an extended six-stage decision-making model to culturally embedded advertising. It demonstrates how vernacular language, cultural values, customs and rituals, and symbols influence each stage of decision-making in a structured, context-specific way. Although previous studies have acknowledged culture's role in advertising, few have assessed its impact across all stages of the decision process. The current research addresses this limitation and affirms the value of a stagewise model, especially in culturally distinct regions like Kamrup Metropolitan.

Findings show that cultural influence varies by stage, with attitude formation receiving the strongest impact. The limited variation across age groups—mainly during purchase and post-purchase stages—suggests a largely shared cultural orientation among respondents. These insights refine theoretical models that explore the relationship between cultural cues, cognition, and consumer behaviour in regional markets.

8.2. Practical implications

For advertisers and marketers, the findings offer actionable guidance. Cultural elements—especially regional language and visual symbolism—should be used purposefully during the purchase and post-purchase stages, where they most strongly affect consumer response. Younger consumers were especially responsive to such cues, highlighting the need for age-targeted cultural messaging.

Gender-specific contrasts were also observed, with male consumers reporting a stronger influence from values, rituals, and symbols. These contrasts may guide message customisation, but such strategies must remain culturally respectful and inclusive.

As cultural elements consistently influence all six stages, maintaining cultural relevance throughout the consumer journey—from need recognition to post-purchase—is essential. This sustained alignment helps build trust, emotional connection, and long-term brand loyalty.

Moreover, marketers should avoid cultural stereotyping and ensure that cultural representations are accurate, respectful, and appropriate to the context. Oversimplifying or misusing cultural elements may damage brand credibility and alienate audiences. Ethical advertising should also recognise the diversity within cultural groups, promoting inclusivity and reinforcing positive cultural identities.

9. Limitations and future research

Although this study contributes meaningful insights, it has certain limitations. First, the research was limited to Kamrup Metropolitan District in Assam. Despite the district's cultural and linguistic diversity, the findings may not fully apply to other parts of India or international settings. Since cultural interpretation varies by region, broader comparative studies are encouraged.

Second, data were gathered using structured questionnaires. While suitable for large-scale collection, such instruments may invite response bias or inconsistent interpretation of abstract cultural items. Qualitative methods like interviews or focus groups could provide richer contextual insights.

Third, although several demographic details were collected, the analysis focused only on gender and age due to their statistical relevance. Future studies might include factors such as education, income, profession, marital status, or place of origin to gain a deeper understanding (Jimenez et al., 2013; de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011).

Lastly, this study adopted a cross-sectional design, capturing perceptions at a single point in time. As cultural preferences and media use patterns shift, longitudinal studies could better track changes in consumer engagement with culturally adapted advertising.

Further research could also compare findings across regions, apply different sampling approaches, or explore psychographic segmentation. Investigating how digital platforms shape cultural engagement would also offer timely insights.

10. Conclusion

This study examined the role of cultural elements in advertising and their influence on consumer decision-making using an extended six-stage model in Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam. By evaluating the impact of vernacular language, cultural values, customs and rituals, and cultural symbols across each stage, the research provides a comprehensive view of how culture shapes consumer behaviour.

Findings show that cultural elements exert a moderate yet consistent influence across all six stages, with the attitude formation stage showing the strongest effect. Age-related differences were significant in the purchase and post-purchase stages, especially among younger consumers. Gender-based variation was more evident in how respondents perceived specific cultural cues, with males indicating stronger influence from values, rituals, and symbols.

These results reinforce the theoretical value of the extended decision-making model and reaffirm the continued significance of cultural influence in advertising. From an applied perspective, the insights highlight that culturally aligned content may be particularly effective when aimed at younger or male segments within regional markets.

Overall, the study contributes to a more localised and stage-specific understanding of advertising effectiveness in culturally diverse contexts. It also lays the groundwork for future research to expand this model to other regions and explore evolving consumer responses to cultural content.

Acknowledgement

The author gratefully acknowledges the voluntary participation of respondents from Kamrup Metropolitan District, Assam, whose input made this study possible. No external funding was received for this research.

References

[1] Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T.
[2] American Marketing Association. (2013). Dictionary. https://www.ama.org/resources/Pages/Dictionary.aspx.
[3] Banerjee, S. (2008). Dimensions of Indian culture, core cultural values and marketing implications. Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal, 15(4), 367–378. https://doi.org/10.1108/13527600810914157.
[4] Brettel, M., & Spilker-Attig, A. (2010). Online advertising effectiveness: A cross-cultural comparison. Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, 4(3), 176–196. https://doi.org/10.1108/17505931011070569.
[5] Connell, C., Marciniak, R., & Carey, L. D. (2023). The effect of cross-cultural dimensions on the manifestation of customer engagement behaviors. Journal of International Marketing, 31(1), 32–48. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X221130690.
[6] D'Agostino, S. (2024). Culture in advertising: A cross-cultural analysis between Western US and Asian markets (Master's thesis). University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. https://morethesis.unimore.it/theses/available/etd-03222024-200749/.
[7] de Mooij, M., & Hofstede, G. (2011). Cross-cultural consumer behavior: A review of research findings. Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 23(3–4), 181–192.
[8] Ducoffe, R.H. (1996). Advertising value and advertising on the web. Journal of Advertising Research, 36(5), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/00218499.1996.12466626.
[9] Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, P. W. (1995). Consumer behavior (8th ed.). Dryden Press.
[10] Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research. Addison-Wesley.
[11] Gupta, A. S., & De, S. (2007). Changing Trends of Cultural Values in Advertising. Psychology and Developing Societies. Psychology and Developing Societies, 19(1), 113–123. https://doi.org/10.1177/097133360701900105.
[12] Hawkins, D. I., Mothersbaugh, D. L., & Best, R. J. (2010). Consumer behavior: Building marketing strategy (11th ed.). McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
[13] Hornikx, J., Janssen, A., & O'Keefe, D. J. (2023). Cultural value adaptation in advertising is effective, but not dependable: A meta-analysis of 25 years of experimental research. International Journal of Business Communication, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884231199088.
[14] IMARC Group. (2024). India advertising market: Industry trends, share, size, growth, opportunity and forecast 2024–2033. Retrieved from https://www.imarcgroup.com/advertising-industry-india.
[15] Jiang, H. L., Lu, L. H., Yuen, T. W., & Liu, Y. L. (2025). Promoting sustainable hospitality: examining the impact of voice assistant recommendations on customer engagement in pre-travel decision-making: moderating effects of use purpose and cultural orientation. Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 34(6), 767–805. https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2025.2484282.
[16] Jimenez, F. R., Hadjimarcou, J., Barua, M. E., & Michie, D. A. (2013). A cross-national and cross-generational study of consumer acculturation to advertising appeals. International Marketing Review, 30(5), 418–439. https://doi.org/10.1108/IMR-02-2012-0020.
[17] Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). Marketing management (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
[18] Krishna, A., & Ahluwalia, R. (2008). Language choice in advertising to bilinguals: Asymmetric effects for multinationals versus local firms. Journal of Consumer Research, 35(4), 692–705. https://doi.org/10.1086/592129.
[19] Lee, W.-N. (1993). Acculturation and advertising communication strategies: A cross-cultural study of Chinese and Americans. Psychology & Marketing, 10(5), 381–397. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220100503.
[20] Limbu, S., & Mukherjee, K. (2025). Indian cultural values in advertising: A comprehensive review. Bhutan Journal of Business and Management, 7(1), 38. https://doi.org/10.17102/bjbm.v7.5.
[21] Luna, D., & Gupta, S. F. (2001). An integrative framework for cross-cultural consumer behavior. International Marketing Review, 18(1), 45–69. https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330110381998.
[22] Luna, D., & Peracchio, L. A. (2001). Moderators of Language Effects in Advertising to Bilinguals: A Psycholinguistic Approach. Journal of Consumer Research, 28(2), 284–295. https://doi.org/10.1086/322903.
[23] MacKenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J. (1989). An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context. Journal of Marketing, 53(2), 48–65. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224298905300204.
[24] Mikhailitchenko, A., Javalgi, R. G., Mikhailitchenko, G., & Laroche, M. (2009). Cross-cultural advertising communication: Visual imagery, brand familiarity, and brand recall. Journal of Business Research, 62(10), 931–938. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2007.11.016.
[25] Mitchell, A. A., & Olson, J. C. (1981). Are Product Attribute Beliefs the Only Mediator of Advertising Effects on Brand Attitude? Journal of Marketing Research, 18(3), 318-332. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800306.
[26] Nunnally, J. C. (1978). Psychometric theory (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

[27] Okonkwo, I., Mujinga, J., Namkoisse, E., & Francisco, A. (2023). Localization and global marketing: Adapting digital strategies for diverse audiences. Journal of Digital Marketing and Communication, 3(2), 66–80. https://tecnoscientifica.com/journal/jdmc/article/download/311/173. https://doi.org/10.53623/jdmc.v3i2.311.
[28] Oyedele, A., Saldivar, R., & Goenner-Munson, E. (2025). Consumers purchase decision for cultural products outside their countries of origin: A craft retailing context. Tourism and Hospitality Research, 0(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/14673584241313352.
[29] Pollay, R. W. (1983). Measuring the cultural values manifest in advertising. Current Issues and Research in Advertising, 6(1), 71–92.
[30] Roth-Cohen, O., Kanevska, H. S., & Eisend, M. (2022). Gender roles in online advertising. Journal of Gender Studies, 32(2), 186–200. https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2022.2102970.
[31] Schiffman, L. G., Wisenblit, J., & Kumar, S. R. (2019). Consumer behaviour (12th ed.). Pearson Education India.
[32] Sengupta, S. (1996). Understanding consumption-related values from advertising: A content analysis of television commercials from India and the United States. Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies, 57(2), 81–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/001654929605700201.
[33] Shan, M., Zhu, Z., Song, C., & Chen, H. A. (2023). The effectiveness of advertising appeals: A culturally-derived power perspective. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 75, 103522. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103522.
[34] Srikandath, S. (1991). Cultural values depicted in Indian television advertising. Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 3(3), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1300/J046v03n03_04.
[35] Swaminathan, F., & Zameer, A. (2017). A study on the dimensions of cultural values in contemporary Indian advertising: A consumer perspective. Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective, 21(4), 395–405. https://doi.org/10.1177/0970238520170403.
[36] Taylor, C.R. (2005). Moving international advertising research forward: A new research agenda. Journal of Advertising, 34(1), 7–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2005.10639187.
[37] Trombley, J. (2024). Correlation Between Culture and Music Used in Advertising. Journal of Artificial Intelligence General Science, 6(1), 166-209. https://doi.org/10.60087/jaigs.v6i1.241.
[38] Yadav, S., & Kishor, N. (2024). Global vs local: A choice influenced by consumer ethnocentrism level. NMIMS Management Review, 31(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/09711023241230371.
[39] Zhang, Y., & Gelb, B. D. (1996). Matching Advertising Appeals to Culture: The Influence of Products' Use. Journal of Advertising, 25 (3), 29-46. https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1996.10673505.