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Selfie appropriation by young British South Asian adults

Reifying, endorsing and reinforcing dual cultural identity in social media

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine how young British South Asian adults' dual cultural identity is exhibited and reaffirmed through the appropriation of selfies.

Design/methodology/approach – The research adopts a qualitative perspective and utilises a combination of in-depth interviews and netnographic data.

Findings – The appropriation of the selfie phenomenon by young British South Asian adults reifies, endorses and reinforces their dual cultural identity. As such, their dual cultural identity is influenced by four factors: consonance between host and ancestral cultures, situational constraints, contextual requirements and convenience.

Research limitations/implications – In terms of the selfie phenomenon, the study makes two major contributions: first, it analyses young British South Asian adults' cultural dualism. Second, it explicates how their acculturation and their dual cultural identity are expressed through the appropriation of the selfie phenomenon.

Practical implications – Since young British South Asians represent a significant, and distinct, market, organisations serving this market can marshal insights from this research. As such, managers who apprise themselves of the selfie phenomenon of this group are better placed to meet their consumer needs. Account, therefore, should be taken of their twofold cultural identity and dual British/Asian identification. In particular, consideration should be given to their distinct and demonstrable traits apropos religiosity and social, communal, and familial bonding. The characteristics were clearly evident via their interactions within social media. Consequently, senior marketing managers can utilise the aforementioned in positioning their organisations, their brands and their products and services.

Originality/value – The study details a new quadripartite framework for analysing young British South Asian adults' acculturation that leads to the formation of their dual cultural identity and presents a dynamic model that explicates how cultural identity is expressed through the use and appropriation of technology.

Keywords Virtual community, Community, Social media, Selfie, E-marketing, Appropriation, Acculturation, Interpretivist research, Appropriation management, British South Asian

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

As defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, a selfie is a self-portrait photograph of one's own self (which may or may not be taken with others) captured using a camera or a camera phone. Although the selfie phenomenon was evident in an era where Polaroid cameras and,

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more recently, digital cameras were in vogue, in more recent times selfies have become ubiquitous as a consequence of the phenomenal uptake of the smartphone and, more generally, the widespread adoption and use of social media (Kedzior *et al.*, 2015; Mascheroni *et al.*, 2015). Self-presentation or a “selfie” is part of a social ritual of “impression management” which involves learning to deal with others’ responses and maintaining emotional control by putting on a face (Mascheroni *et al.*, 2015). As such, the supposition that the “selfie” is not just a social media-based fad, but rather has multifarious expressions due to situational and contextual interpretations, is evidenced in prominent news stories. For example, a British Labour Party leader was suspended for posing for a “selfie” photograph at the scene of the Tunisian beach slaughter (Awford, 2015). Another example is the Lebanese Miss Universe’s “selfie” pose with her Israeli counterpart, which created controversy and criticism (<https://storify.com/cmgnationalnews/miss-universe-selfie-sparks-uproar>).

Selfies have increasingly become a significant facet of social life. They permeate many aspects of contemporary lives and cause marketing managers to reappraise and recalibrate marketing activities (Ma *et al.*, 2017; Lim, 2016). Recent research on selfies has examined the influence of demography (Dhir *et al.*, 2016; Williams and Marquez, 2015), creation and maintenance of meaningful relationships between individuals and communities (Tiidenberg, 2015), individuals’ personality and psychology (Qiu *et al.*, 2015) apropos consumers’ intentions along with the selfies’ role in self-presentation. While selfies are often regarded as a reflection of an individual’s desire for attention, validation and recognition (Chua and Chang, 2016) on social media, the selfie phenomenon, nonetheless, should also be understood in wider socio-cultural contexts (Cruz and Thornham, 2015; Nemer and Freeman, 2015). Marketing strategists have not been slow in realising the potential of selfies and have utilised the phenomenon as part of a product placement strategy for large multinationals such as Samsung (Vranica, 2014). Marketing managers have exploited selfies as a prominent dimension of a branding strategy for so-called “micro-celebrities” (Kozinets and Cereno, 2014).

The popularity of the selfie phenomenon and its myriad interpretations and uses reinforces the notion that human beings are not malleable to a technological application (Williams and Edge, 1996; MacKay and Gillespie, 1992), as they can choose to reject and redefine technologies during their use (Dey *et al.*, 2013). As such, technology design, use, interpretation and impact can be deemed to be socially constructed (Avgerou, 2013; Walsham, 2010) and technology use goes through recursive and iterative interaction between a technology and its users within a given social context (Orlikowski, 1992; Jones *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, the iterative interaction between users’ situated capabilities and technological application leads to the appropriation of technology, which also denotes how technology becomes integrated into users’ day-to-day lives (Ylipulli *et al.*, 2014; Dey *et al.*, 2011; Carroll *et al.*, 2003; DeSanctis and Poole, 1994).

The current literature provides empirical and theoretical scaffolding for the appropriation of mobile telephones (Carroll *et al.*, 2003; Bar *et al.*, 2007). The Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST: DeSanctis and Poole, 1994), developed following Giddens’ structuration theory, for instance, is a widely cited framework for assessing the appropriation process and helps to investigate the influence of organisational systems and structures on individuals’ technology use. However, the inter-relation between individuals and social and cultural institutions and their impact on the appropriation of technology have not been detailed within the current AST and other appropriation literature. Aricat (2015) explains how migrant workers’ acculturation strategies and their socio-occupational challenges within a host society are reflected in their perceptions and use of mobile telephones, indicating technology appropriation’s potential link with acculturation and cultural appropriation. However, Aricat’s work is largely context specific and provides limited scope for generalisation. Furthermore, for all its utility, it makes little contribution with regard to migrant communities’ cultural identity.

Cultural dispositions and expressions are also appropriated by individuals, as they creatively find and make opportunities for presenting themselves in a multicultural environment through adoption and adaptation (Weinberger, 2015). Recent scholarship on acculturation has stressed the importance of social media led interactions within and across communities (Forbush and Faucault-Welles, 2016; Jafari and Goulding, 2013). However, the aforementioned studies consider social media as a platform and do not capture the reciprocal relationship between social media led self-presentation and individuals' actual selves. The missing link between cultural appropriation and technological appropriation does not allow a thorough comprehension of the dynamic inter-relationship between the offline and the online world. Further investigation into people's online self-expression, such as the selfie phenomenon's role in expressing cultural identity in social media, will not only contribute to technology appropriation literature, but will also advance identity and acculturation scholarship.

Our study addresses the above research gap by analysing the appropriation of selfies by young British South Asian adults. This research aims to analyse the selfie phenomenon and its appropriation by examining how individuals' roles and identities within a given cultural environment is reified through the use of technology. In so doing, it examines how and why ethnic minorities' dual cultural identities are expressed through the adoption and adaptation of cultural dispositions in a multicultural society and analyses how the inter-relationship between individuals and their society impacts on the appropriation process. Hence, this study explores an under-explored area: the inter-relationship between cultural appropriation and technology appropriation.

Literature review

This study aspires to advance our understanding of the selfie as a technological application *vis-à-vis* how its appropriation exhibits the cultural identity of young British South Asian adults. The research is distinctive by virtue of its utilisation of two major streams of scholarship: cultural identity and acculturation and technology appropriation. Accordingly, the review of the literature takes cognisance of the aforementioned canons.

Cultural identity and acculturation

Cultural identity is defined as the feeling of belonging to a group defined by certain bonds/linkage such as nationality, ethnicity, religion, generation, etc. (Ennaji, 2005). As consumers are exposed to the interaction between various co-existing cultural attributes, they are likely to exhibit complex and multifarious identities (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). Socio-historic and political background and their influence on the extent of religiosity and consequent liberalism among various religious groups in Lebanon (Cleveland *et al.*, 2013), the conflict between global and local cultural dispositions faced by Danish youth (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006) and the influence of normative political ideologies on African American's shopping behaviour (Crockett and Wallendorf, 2004), for instance, explain how modern consumers are entangled within complex cultural dynamics. In a multicultural environment such as the UK, the identity of ethnic consumers is often examined through their level of acculturation.

The seminal work of Berry (1980) explains four major acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation, which define the bipolar continuum of acculturation. His subsequent works (Berry, 1997, 2009) adhere to the initial model and a more positivist approach to analysing acculturation strategies. However, in multicultural contexts, wholesale acceptance and/or rejection of the host or ancestral culture is overly simplistic, as complex co-existence of ancestral and host cultures' attributes among migrants can be found (Oswald, 1999; Jamal and Chapman, 2000; Weinreich, 2009), calling into question the validity of the bipolar acculturation continuum.

In consumer studies, Peñaloza (1994) suggests four outcomes of the acculturation process in the form of assimilation, resistance, maintenance and segregation. According to Schwartz *et al.* (2010), young Latin American migrants in the USA can at the same time be fluent in both Spanish and English and can demonstrate both individualistic and collective values in different contexts. Their practice, values and identifications can simultaneously manifest Latin, US and/or global consumer culture. Hence, ethnic communities are more likely to have dual or multiple cultural identities. Askegaard *et al.* (2005) emphasise the bicultural identities of ethnic minorities by identifying a new acculturation outcome, termed “pendulism”, which refers to the oscillation between acculturation and maintenance.

Weinberger (2015) has identified “appropriation strategy” for ethno-religious minorities’ (e.g. Jews and Muslims) approaches to celebrating Christmas in the USA. She has defined appropriation strategy as ethnic consumers’ deliberate effort to engage with the mainstream without losing their ancestral identity. This classification is not complete, as it does not explain the various reasons and motivations behind such duality. However, it provides a strong indication that individuals as independent agents try to negotiate the differences between their host and ancestral cultures and consciously or sub-consciously make adjustments. Hence, their cultural disposition is a dialectic outcome of the interaction and friction between the cultural differences.

While the above mentioned dualism and dialectic interrelationships have scopes for further analysis, it would be also interesting to analyse the link between cultural appropriation and technology appropriation. Information systems and consumer research scholarship can be enriched with empirical evidence and conceptual understanding of how individuals’ dual cultural identity is manifested and reified through the use and appropriation of technology. As such, this paper analyses how the appropriation of selfie as a technological application reflects and reifies cultural dualism. The following section looks into the current scholarship on technology appropriation with a view to developing stronger theoretical scaffolding and exploring scopes for future advancement.

Technology appropriation

Technology appropriation is defined as how technology is adopted, adapted and incorporated in daily lives, which involves making use of technology for purposes beyond the original intention of the designers (Dourish, 2003; Salovaara and Tamminen, 2009). The idea that appropriation involves non-linear interactions between users’ situated capabilities and technological applications is built on the structuration theory. Giddens’ (1979, 1984) sociological theory of structuration suggests that social interaction produces and reproduces social structures via the action of social agents. Human agency and structure are inextricably linked with each other. The concept has been widely used in information systems literature to examine the use of technology in organisational contexts. AST (DeSanctis and Poole, 1994) applies structuration theory in a techno-centric manner. The AST literature (Gopal *et al.*, 1992; Chin *et al.*, 1997), mostly driven by positivist philosophy, considers technology as a deterministic tool and assumes that faithful appropriation (use of technology in designers’ intended way) has a more positive impact on the performance/outcome. However, AST is criticised for being too rigid to explain user-end adaptation and the reciprocity of influence between collective and individual capabilities, norms and practices (Isika *et al.*, 2015; Majchrzak *et al.*, 2000). Hence, the dual and reciprocal interaction between technology and users’ situated capabilities are not fully captured by the AST model. Peer influence shapes and reshapes individuals’ capabilities for selfie use and subsequent interaction on social media (Chua and Chang, 2016), and hence the AST model falls short of explaining the appropriation of selfies.

Orlikowski’s (1992) duality of technology explains the reciprocal influence between technology, society and human capabilities. Orlikowski also identifies technologies’ interpretive

flexibility, which denotes the physical and social construction of a technology during its development and use. In her subsequent work, she argues that technology does not have a stable structure and is subject to perpetual changes (Orlikowski, 2000), calling into question Giddens' (1979) and AST's assumption that technology should be equated with persistent and stable rules and resources. Similar analysis can be noticed in other IS literature that is theoretically motivated by Giddens' works. Lindgren *et al.* (2004), for example, argue that an organisation's structure of core competence (e.g. human resources, learning, routine), individualistic agency (e.g. individuals' competence) and the competence management system have mutual reciprocal influence, which eventually influences the design of future technological intervention. More recent academic works have expanded on Orlikowski's (1992, 2000) arguments and presented conceptual frameworks for technology appropriation (Dey *et al.*, 2011; Carroll *et al.*, 2003). The dynamic nature of the adoption, use, adaptation and rejection of and resistance to technology has been captured in those frameworks. However, those models do not explain the influence of individuals' interaction with socio-cultural and/or occupational structures and how this interaction influences appropriation and/or is reflected through the appropriation process. Carroll *et al.* (2003), for instance, consider social management as a criterion for appropriation, while Dey *et al.* (2011) do not reflect on how social practices give rise to the appropriation of technology. Ylipulli *et al.* (2014) advance Carroll *et al.*'s model for technology appropriation in urban settings. However, their empirical work mostly emphasises on the physical environment and its influence on communal use of technology, rather than beliefs, values and emic aspects of cultural dispositions.

The concept of disappropriation discussed by Dey *et al.* (2011) and Carroll *et al.* (2003) also needs to be revisited. Technology use is neither a monolithic nor a mono-dimensional phenomenon. It involves both appropriation and disappropriation. This issue has also been highlighted in consumer studies: Mick and Fouriner (1998) coined the term "paradoxes of technology", which essentially denotes the notion that people's perceptions and use of technology may not have linear outcomes, as people may have ambivalences regarding the use of technology.

Domestication theory (Silverstone *et al.*, 1992) has also been used to explain appropriation at a more household and familial level. For instance, when a certain piece of technology is introduced into a household, technology appropriation extends the physical boundaries of the household into the outside world (Lim, 2016; Yoon, 2016). Consequently, the individuals within the household take possession of this technology, give meanings to that technology, thus symbolising the values of the owners and users (Lim, 2016). For example, the need for constant and mediated communication between family members may lead to extensive appropriation of ICTs such as smartphones and their apps (Yoon, 2016).

As technology spans different communities, cultures and societies, they may not have a stable and fixed form of use, interpretation and value system, indicating that socio-cultural appropriation is central to the adoption of the diffusion process (Lindtner *et al.*, 2012). However, the current literature lacks theoretical scaffolding in conceptualising technology appropriation as an outcome of individuals' interaction with their socio-cultural surroundings. British South Asian young adults' expression of cultural identity through selfies can offer empirical findings to address the research gap and conceptual deficiency. The following table summarises some of the key scholarly works on appropriation, their theoretical foundations and their scope for further advancement (Table I).

From the literature review, it can be understood that both acculturation and cultural identity and appropriation scholarship have further scope for advancement. The extant acculturation literature does not fully explicate the reasons for and the nature of biculturalism and dual cultural identity. While appropriation of culture

Key literature	Conceptual underpinning	Limitations and scope for further advancement
DeSanctis and Poole (1994) – Adaptive Structuration Theory	The theory is built on Giddens' structuration theory. It suggests that faithful appropriation leads to more effective use of technology. Hence, the spirit inscribed in technology determines its use and leads to emergent structure. Subsequent literature (Gopal <i>et al.</i> 1992; Donner, 2006) advances and applies the theory	The theory assumes a deterministic role of technology and does not entirely support user-end adaptation and changes
Orlikowski (1992) – Duality of technology and technology's interpretive flexibility	While this theory is also built on structuration theory, Orlikowski suggests that technology does not have a stable structure, as its use evolves through the reciprocal and recursive influence between technology, individuals and social structure. Subsequent literature (Carroll <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Dey <i>et al.</i> , 2011) applies this concept to develop appropriation models	A more dynamic nature of technology use and appropriation can be understood from this theory and its subsequent applications in scholarly works. The models do not capture how the socio-cultural changes are reflected in the appropriation process and outcomes
Lindtner <i>et al.</i> (2012) – Cultural appropriation	The concept is rooted in the anthropological study of technology use. They define cultural appropriation as the way people in different socio-cultural backgrounds use and give meaning to technology	Lindtner <i>et al.</i> consider cultural appropriation as an alternative to, not as a subset of appropriation. This is a very narrow perspective that may limit the scope for a more holistic conceptualisation
Ylipulli <i>et al.</i> (2014) – Appropriation of new technology in public urban spaces	This mixed method empirical study attempts to conceptualise the complex nature of technology appropriation	While, the model is quite comprehensive, much emphasis has been placed on the components of the physical environment. Analysis of subtle inter-relations between emic and etic aspects of socio-cultural settings could have bolstered the conceptual underpinning
Aricat (2015) and Bar <i>et al.</i> (2007) – Technology appropriation resonates with socio-cultural and political dynamics	This stream of research considers appropriation as an outcome and reflection of complex socio-cultural and political dialectics. Bar <i>et al.</i> look at technology appropriation as marginalised communities' response to Western innovation. Aricat argues that appropriation reflects migrants' socio-economic status	These articles widen the scope of appropriation studies and place more emphasis on user-end dynamics than on design issues, and lend motivation to our study. However, both articles are context specific and could do more in making general contributions

Table I.
Summary of
technology
appropriation
literature

partly explains the dynamics, further research on this area would be beneficial. The appropriation literature does not fully explain how individual agents interact with socio-cultural institutions and how that interaction is reflected in the appropriation processes and outcomes. Hence, establishing links between the appropriation of culture and of technology could be a key to developing a more holistic understanding of individuals' interaction within a given socio-cultural context, their cultural identity and their appropriation of technology.

Methodology

The research strategy was designed with a view to gain a thorough understanding of young British South Asian adults' appropriation of the selfie on social media and how that reflects their cultural identity. Recourse was made to an interpretivist methodology, which affords the opportunity to identify and analyse "why" and "how" young British South Asian adults define themselves via their use and appropriation of the selfie phenomenon. Hence, the study relies on qualitative data. For this investigation, the primary modes of qualitative data collection included in-depth interviews and netnographic observations. The research was conducted from April 2014 to May 2016. In-depth interviews were done first (for ten months), followed by netnography. The precepts of triangulation were applied as a means to ensure robustness with regard to opinions and perceptions of selfie usage among the target group and, more generally, their engagement with social media in the context of their socio-cultural backgrounds.

In-depth interviews

In all, 33 respondents were selected using maximum variation purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) so that various linguistic (e.g. Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati), religious (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh) and demographic groups (in terms of gender, occupation and income) were covered.

Both first-generation migrants and British-born South Asians were included in the sample, as education, upbringing and lifestyle are likely to be different for the two groups (Jaspal, 2015). Furthermore, acculturation literature suggests that second generation migrants are more likely to demonstrate cultural duality than the first-generation migrants (Schwartz *et al.* 2010). As such, a good mix of first and second generation migrants can offer different approaches and perspectives to cultural dualism. In the main, this population is more likely to be found within Great Britain's metropolitan areas, particularly English cities. The large South Asian population and their cultural heritage in some of these cities (e.g. London, Leeds and Manchester) have received research attention (Eade, 2014; Kalra, 2014). For instance, the Bangla Town in East London and Rushhome in Manchester not only exhibit the richness of British curry industry, but also demonstrate the development of ethnic habitat, businesses and socio-religious institutions that are often argued to have influence over ethnic communities' cultural identities (Peñaloza, 1994). Furthermore, the large cities have bigger ethnic population than smaller ones and/or semi-urban areas (Demangeot *et al.* 2015). Hence, the South Asian population of the big cities were selected for this research. Our sampling selection takes the following information into consideration (Table II).

Mindful of the above, 33 respondents were selected from the six major metropolitan areas of Great Britain that have large South Asian populations (London and surroundings: 16 respondents; Leeds and Yorkshire: six respondents; Birmingham and the greater Midlands: four respondents; Manchester and the North West: two respondents; Newcastle and the North East: three respondents. Additionally, we also included two respondents from Glasgow.

City	Asian/Asian British population %
Inner London	12.80
Outer London	13.40
West Midlands – Metropolitan (Birmingham)	14.19
Leeds	6.93
Greater Manchester and North West	7.14
Newcastle	7.03

Table II.
English cities with
Asian/British Asian
populations in 2011

Source: www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/may/18/ethnic-population-england-wales

Interview respondents were identified by making initial contact with targeted places of worship (churches, mosques, and temples), community organisations and universities. A list of respondents along with their demographic and ethnic profiles is provided in Table AI. The first author (who is fluent in spoken English, Bengali, Hindi and Urdu) conducted the in-depth interviews. Interviews took places in different locations based on the convenience of the respondents. While most of the interviews were conducted in the respondents' houses, there were also occasions when interviews took place in places of worship and university campuses.

Netnography

Netnography is a pragmatic interactionist research approach which views the online environment as a social world. As such, online data is viewed as a social act demonstrated by online users (Giannelloni and Vernet, 2012; Kozinets, 2010). Kozinets (2010) has defined netnography as a qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to the study of cultures and communities emerging through computer-mediated communications.

This method is found to be a non-obtrusive, less costly and less time-consuming way to comprehend the behaviours of online users (Langer and Beckman, 2005). It allows the researcher to immerse himself or herself into an online community's culture: that is, its values, norms, language and rituals (Kozinets, 2010). This method focusses primarily on issues surrounding the consumer and emphasises revealing complex patterns of consumer behaviour in an online world (Misopoulos *et al.*, 2014).

As Kozinets (2002) suggests, netnographic investigation starts with identifying appropriate online forums for the study. In this study, the interview respondents were followed on social media (Facebook) to observe their interaction and engagement with friends and family members. In total, 23 interview respondents gave permission to follow them on Facebook, as mentioned in Table AI. The purpose was to observe their selfies on social media and resulting interaction with their friends and family members. This would complement their interview response. In his brief netnography, Kozinets decoded the language, observed the consumption desire and analysed online communities' perceptions of brands. In our research, we have defined the scope of the investigation on the basis of research objectives. The respondents' Facebook interactions and their selfie posts were assessed on the basis of the content (which selfies/posts were shared, who was in those selfies), contexts (locations and events) and convergence (how they related to or differed from the real lives of the particular individuals, whom we came to know through the interviews). Furthermore, the interactions resulting from the posts/selfies were investigated by observing the "likes" and "comments".

The researchers followed the procedure adopted by Kozinets *et al.* (2010) to investigate online bloggers. The investigation was not guided by positivist or a priori coding, but it rather undertook an interpretivist and qualitative approach. Observation of respondents' posts and selfies took place over a one-year period so as to provide longitudinal data. In addition, the respondents' posts from the last two years were monitored and a research diary was kept to record noteworthy posts and selfies. With the permission of the respondents, their posts and comments were copied into Nvivo for further analyses. A strict confidentiality protocol was adhered to so as to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

Analysis and interpretation

All interviews were transcribed. Four interviews were conducted in Hindi/Bengali for the convenience of the respondents. Five other interviews involved English-Hindi/Urdu or English-Bengali switching. All of the interviews were translated and transcribed in English. Two of the co-authors have proficiency in Hindi and Urdu and one is a native Bengali speaker.

Translation in qualitative research can be a challenge. There are certain words which have rich meaning in South Asian countries. For instance, *Wilayat* (Urdu), *Vilayat* (Hindi) and *Bilat* (Bengali) mean “foreign country” according to the dictionary. However, the word in its use particularly refers to Britain. It comes from the colonial past, when the word was used to denote Britain as a more civilised and better place. Likewise the word *Apna* (Hindi/Urdu) means “very own”. British Asians normally use this word to refer to their own way of doing something. For instance, they use the word to explain authentic Indian/Pakistani food/recipes. Being mindful of this fact, the translation was checked amongst the co-authors, who foreignized the translation, as suggested by Dion *et al.* (2014). We tried to keep the tone of the statements the same and used some of the Hindi/Bengali words (e.g. *deshi/desi*), as was the case in some other similar research (e.g. Dey *et al.*, 2013; Dion *et al.*, 2014).

The interview transcripts and netnographic data were coded using the NVivo software package. Template analysis (King, 2004) was applied for data management. Template analysis is the system of thematically organising and analysing data. In this research, four broader thematic areas were identified and applied: acculturation, selfie image, use of social media and appropriation. As suggested by Waring and Wainright (2008), the codes that emerged from the data were classified under each of the broader thematic categories and then corroborated with a view to developing conceptual scaffolding. Against each theme, there were two sets of codes. Two researchers were involved in the analysis and coding. Investigator triangulation was conducted by involving one more researcher to check the codes so that manual errors and biases could be minimised (Lewis-Beck *et al.*, 2004; Haring, 2008). While some of the codes were theory driven, others were data driven, as suggested and practiced in previous scholarly works (Chen *et al.*, 2011; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) (Table AII provides a list of codes and their origins). Once the information related to the research objectives had been identified, data were analysed using a constant comparative method (Rocca *et al.*, 2014).

Findings and analysis

As previously enumerated, we consider the selfie phenomenon as a technological application and seek to identify and analyse the process and outcome of its appropriation by British South Asian young adults. Appropriation involves adoption, adaptation and how people give meanings to the use of a technology while integrating it in their day-to-day lives. As such, we start with assessing users’ perceptions of a technological application that encourages or discourages their initial adoption. Then, we look at the actual use, user-end alterations and disappropriation (as discussed in the literature review). Finally, we analyse how the appropriation of the selfie phenomenon is linked with the acculturation and appropriation of culture.

The appropriation of the selfie

General perceptions and adoption. In terms of the respondents’ general perceptions of selfies, it appears that the selfie phenomenon is an integral part of smartphone and social media use. One respondent was very quick to identify the selfie as the most exciting part of using a smartphone:

Question: Tell me about an exciting part of using a smartphone.

Respondent 23: “Erm.. selfie” (with a big smile). (Both the researcher and the respondent keep laughing about it).

Question: Do you think it is just a social media based fad like ‘ice bucket challenge’?

Respondent 23: Absolutely not. I had my first selfie with my camera long before I started using smartphones. It was about 7 years ago. My wife and I were visiting Germany. We were in a park

and we did not find anyone around to take a photo for us and we tried a selfie and it worked. We gradually got the habit. Instead of disturbing others, we prefer to have our selfie. Smartphones, however, have made it easier and social media has certainly made it more exciting. It is like I am putting a caption, checking in a place and capturing a selfie all at the same time, and most importantly, sharing it with all my friends. These all kind of complement each other and together it is a complete package.

Generally the respondents hold positive perceptions of the selfie phenomenon. Like many other technological applications, the adoption of the selfie is also influenced by functional and social benefits. It has been noted that the convenience of capturing a significant moment and expressing one's own self and one's involvement with an event are regarded as major functional benefits of selfies. The adoption of the selfie phenomenon is also influenced by social relationships and subjective norms. The facility for instantly sharing the same on social media and subsequent interaction with friends and family members provide encouragement and motivation for selfies. Netnographic observation of her Facebook posts supports her claim:

"She got 20 selfie posts on Facebook in the last 4 months. A selfie with her husband received a lot of appreciation from friends and family members. That particular photo has more 'likes' and comments than her other post. She replied to all the comments and appeared to have enjoyed the interaction" – researcher's diary note.

Of the 23 respondents who were followed on Facebook, 19 had posted selfies during the observed period. The use of selfies was more frequent among the female respondents. It has also been noted that the individuals who have more regular interactions on social media tend to post selfies more than the relatively irregular ones. The four individuals who did not have any selfies posted on their own Facebook timelines were tagged/part of selfies taken and posted by others. One of them provided a hint on this during his interview:

Question: Have you ever taken selfies?

Respondent 4: No, my wife does it regularly; it is not my cup of tea.

Question: Why?

Respondent 4: I think it is rather an expression of narcissism and social media addiction. I do not use social media much and selfies do not interest me.

Hence, while some people consider selfies as a social media led fad, others adopt this practice as an integral part of their interaction on social media. The difference in perceptions of selfies further highlights the fact that their adoption and use can have multifarious dimensions and may lead to varied expressions and outcomes. Selfie use and user-end adaptation expand on this notion.

Selfie use, impacts and paradoxes. From the interviews and netnographic observation, it is evident that people share selfies and other posts including photos on various social media platforms and consciously or sub-consciously expect appreciation from their friends. On social media, the appreciation is interpreted in terms of "likes" and complimenting comments. It has been noticed that "selfie" photos on Facebook receive more "likes" and "comments" than other photos. The following excerpt elaborates on that point:

Question: Do you enjoy receiving 'likes' and 'comments' on selfies?

Respondent 13: Yes – if someone likes my selfies or leaves positive comments, it is always refreshing and often rewarding.

Question: Do you like/comment on your friends' selfies?

Respondent 13: Yes I do as well. I regularly engage with my friends on social media. If I like a particular dress, make-up, jewellery or just the location, I do not hesitate to appreciate it.

A British-born respondent considers that selfies become more meaningful to her when they capture her very own self:

Respondent 8: I love taking selfies rather like American-Armenian Kim Kardashian. I do understand, however, that you can make yourself look slimmer and prettier with all the filtering apps so it can deceive people when they see the real you in person, as people cannot distinguish you from the flattering selfies which are put out there on social media.

While for some people, selfies may project their real selves, for others there can be a tendency to use selfies to create a more appealing and attractive impression.

However, the appropriation of selfies involves their continued use, which leads to reciprocal influence between individuals' own selves and what is being projected on the social media. The next section sheds light on this issue by examining British South Asian young adults' bicultural identity and how that is represented by selfies. As one respondent mentions:

Respondent 30: I do not take selfies with everyone or everywhere. I take selfies with the people who are very special to me – for instance, my family members, close friends, favourite colleagues, or some celebrities. Selfie to me is not only just fun: it also projects what I am and whom and where I belong to.

It is also important to mention that selfie use involves paradoxes and dichotomies, as we have gathered evidence of disappropriation. Respondent 16, for instance, thinks that selfie photos make her face look too big, as they are taken from a very short distance, and she has thus stopped using selfies after short trial. This is evidence of disappropriation as discussed in the current literature (Carroll *et al.*, 2003; Dey *et al.*, 2011).

As such, selfie adoption and use is not a linear and monolithic process. Users choose to use and interpret selfies in various ways while appropriating them in their daily lives. While we broadly concur with the existing literature on the above points, we also emphasise that a holistic understanding of the appropriation of a technology requires further examination of its relationship with and outcome on users' socio-cultural lives. The following section sheds light on this issue as it looks into how selfies reflect bicultural identity.

British South Asian young adults' acculturation and the selfie phenomenon

Understandably, due to their education and upbringing, British-born South Asians are more attached to British culture. In contrast to first-generation migrants, they find it easier to integrate with mainstream British society. As one respondent explains:

Respondent 3: I was born in Newcastle. My parents came from Sylhet in Bangladesh. I visited Bangladesh when I was very young and do not have much memories. UK is my country, my home. Most of my friends in the university are of white English origin.

As well as their engagement and interaction with their own community, some of the British-born respondents also speak their native language at home. For instance, respondent 19 (a British-born Indian) speaks Punjabi with his family members. Respondent 27 is a third-generation British Pakistani who speaks three languages: English, Punjabi and Urdu. British-born respondents, nevertheless generally have preference for South Asian foods and a taste for Hindi/Bollywood movies and music, although none of them visit their ancestral country frequently. As respondent 27 explains:

Respondent 27: [...] when I was young I went to Pakistan with my parents and grandparents regularly. But, gradually most of my relatives migrated to the UK and we have very few relations back in Pakistan.

On the other hand, first-generation migrants have strong attachment to their home countries. They migrate to the UK for work/study or for a better future. However, they also endeavour to explore and learn British culture. As respondent 16 explains:

Respondent 16: [...] After completing my degree, I decided to stay in this country. I like London and life in the UK. Although I miss my country, and my relatives back home, I consider this to be my new home.

Hence cultural dualism is evident in both first-generation and British-born respondents although they have different nature and orientations.

Contrary to the seminal articles in acculturation scholarship such as Peñaloza (1994) and Berry (1997, 2009), our data do not offer evidence of absolute assimilation or absolute separation. We have found strong evidence to suggest that in a multicultural country such as UK, ethnic community members exhibit cultural duality as part of their acculturation strategies, as they adopt certain traits from the host country and also retain traits of their ancestral countries. Based on these findings, four factors motivating acculturation strategies can be identified: consonances, contexts, conveniences and constraints. These factors determine British South Asian communities' cultural duality and have been identified and termed on the basis of the data gathered in this research (as mentioned in Table AII).

Acculturation by consonances. In this category, the researchers classified respondents who assimilate (or intend to do so) with the mainstream British culture, but at the same time retain ancestral cultural identities on the basis of consonances. We have taken the dictionary meaning of the word "consonance" that refers to agreement and compatibility. The motivation for acculturation strategy is influenced by the agreement and compatibility between the host and ancestral cultures. British South Asians often retain the parts of their ancestral cultural identities which are consonant with British mainstream culture. They also feel more comfortable with parts of the host culture that are consistent with what they experienced and practiced back home. Hence, there is strong evidence of cultural reflexivity, as defined by Askegaard *et al.* (2009), as British South Asians identify and explore their cultural roots and links during their acculturation process.

Cricket, a quintessential English sport, despite having lost its glamour in the UK in recent times (Dobell, 2014), has become more popular in the Indian sub-continent over the years. Eventually cricket secured a strong base among British South Asians, who celebrate the sport as a hybrid identity of their ancestral and international culture. Furthermore, the passion for cricket among some of the Indian and Pakistani respondents is also influenced by Indo-Pak political and cricketing rivalry, highlighting cricket as a significant component of their perceived national identity. One respondent says:

Respondent 27: I grew up in the UK - I have strong interest in football. But when it comes to India vs. Pakistan cricket matches, it is something different. It is a passion, I enjoy the rivalry [...].

Respondent 2: My father is a Newcastle United fan. But I do not follow football. Since my childhood, I have been worshipping Sachin Tendulkar [...].

Like cricket, there is wide appreciation for Bollywood movies among the South Asian communities. Both interviews and netnographic observations can identify the respondents' interest in Bollywood culture. British-born and first-generation migrants both offered similar responses in this regard. There is increasing interest in Bollywood dance (particularly *bhangra*) and music among the wider British population. Most of the respondents in this research follow famous Bollywood stars on Facebook. One of the respondents (respondent 10) took a selfie with famous Bollywood star Raima Sen during her recent trip to Delhi. She tagged her friends (on the Facebook photo) who are fans of the actress.

There is a sense of pride and passion for Bollywood and cricket, particularly when South Asians know that both are accepted amongst the wider British population, as shown in the following excerpt:

Respondent 20: Yes, I am very much into Bollywood culture. Coming to the UK, I can still watch Bollywood movies in theatres. I have been to some Bollywood events organised in local pubs and found bhangra music played in night clubs. People from all communities enjoy them. I was pleasantly surprised to see that a colleague of mine knows some of the Bollywood stars.

Selfies and acculturation by consonance. Respondents' acculturation strategy chooses to retain the attributes, which are consonant with wider British culture. Selfies with famous cricket and Bollywood stars, at cricket grounds and in cricketing clothing endorse, reinforce and reify this identity. Here, selfies are used to express their engagement with the particular ancestral or host country cultural attributes that have mutual acceptance and consonance.

Acculturation by contexts. Acculturation by contexts is noticed mostly at the behavioural level. Oxford dictionary defines context as the circumstances that form the setting of an event and idea. We apply this definition in our research as well. Respondents motivated by this factor, exhibit behaviours in different contexts due to circumstantial requirements. As one respondent says:

Respondent 20: I always put photos, 'statuses' and 'check-ins' on Facebook to let my friends back home know about my life in the UK. [...] [...] Yes, I do a lot of 'selfies' and I am thankful to iPhone for this [...] I take selfies both with my work colleagues and friends and family.

A third-generation Indian respondent (respondent 30) who demonstrates strong assimilation in terms of language and lifestyle also celebrates her ancestral origin. Researchers did not have permission to access her Facebook profile. However, her interview response shows her passion for traditional South Asian dresses. Her opinion in this case explains her appreciation for traditional dresses:

Respondent 30: I do take selfies before going to parties and post them on Facebook.

Question: Do you prefer to take selfies when you are in traditional Indian dress?

Respondent 30: Yes, I do. Because, I do not have many opportunities to wear 'desi' dresses. Normally, during Diwali or wedding parties I wear salwar kameez or sarees.

Yes I wear Western dresses when I go out with my British colleagues.

This is common among quite a number of respondents who exhibit different cultural attributes in different contexts. They celebrate Diwali, but also go to Christmas parties, and their clothing, appearance and behavioural expressions meet contextual requirements. These varied behavioural expressions are also demonstrated through their selfies posted on social media.

Selfies and acculturation by contexts. Selfies in different dresses (Western and Eastern), different locations (nightclubs and temples), with different individuals (colleagues/friends from the wider community, friends/family members from their own community) and their sharing on social media, followed by "comments" and interactions, reify and endorse the multiple identities.

Acculturation by constraints. Some of the respondents in this research appear to integrate in their occupational lives despite keeping their social life restricted to their own community people. We have termed this factor as "constraint" as in limitation or restriction. Immigrants' motivation for selfies often comes from their intention towards separation from the

mainstream culture. Some evidence of separation among the first-generation migrants can be found in the following excerpt:

Respondent 10: I am an avid social media user. I am living far away from most of my friends and family members, and social media is a bridge for me to remain connected with them. When I go out, visit some nice places or perhaps do nothing and chill at home, I want to share the moments with them. That is a reason behind my addiction to selfies and Facebook.

Respondent 10 in the above statement explains her strong desire to remain connected with friends and family members back home: her use of selfies lends itself to that motivation. All her selfies on Facebook are with members of her own community. However, as an accountant, she is unable to separate herself entirely from the mainstream community. Likewise, respondent 16 is a college teacher, a first-generation immigrant who interacts and integrates with the wider community for her work. Despite separation in their social lives, both of them integrate in their occupational lives. Their interaction on social media nevertheless exhibits their strong desire to adhere to their own communities.

The following excerpt provides us with further evidence of forced integration:

Question: Do you integrate much with your local colleagues/neighbours?

Respondent 4: I do not do much socialisation with my colleagues. I have a good working relationship with them. But I hardly meet them after work, or have any dinner or social events with them [...] I often do not understand their jokes (blushes) [...]. Yes, I know my neighbours; we exchange greetings, and have occasional chat. Kids play together. They are from different other communities – mostly British and African.

The respondent does not seem to be very comfortable in integrating with his colleagues/neighbours. Netnographic observation shows that he had not posted any selfies on his Facebook in the past year; however, his other photographs and interactions were only with fellow Indians and other South Asians.

This is a form of forced integration, where the respondents are required to integrate for occupational/locational (living in the same neighbourhood) reasons.

Selfies and acculturation by constraints. Respondent 16, for instance, took selfies only with South Asian friends, and her social media-based interaction is limited to her own community members, although she has friends and colleagues from other communities. The selfie phenomenon, and its use on social media, reifies and reinforces her strong desire to remain connected with her own community, although in the real world she interacts with wider communities due to situational constraints.

Acculturation by convenience. Integration can also be demonstrated on the basis of convenience. Here, the integration with wider cultural traits is not by force or in a contingent or consistent manner, but rather is driven by convenience. Cultural attributes (from either side) that are convenient are adopted/retained. As a result, integration may lead to duality of identity, which may exhibit paradoxical behaviour. It is a form of selective integration driven by the principles of convenience. We choose to define the word as per the dictionary: “being useful, easy and suitable to someone” (according to the Oxford Dictionary). Hence, acculturation by convenience happens when people choose options that are easy and suitable to their likings, although those may be contradictory and inconsistent with their religious/social/cultural beliefs.

The researchers found differences in religiosity among the respondents, despite the fact that the majority can be identified as moderately to highly religious. As respondent 23 and 17 explain their religiosity:

Respondent 23: I am a proud Sikh. I go to Gurdwara (Sikh Temple) every Sunday [...]. Yes, I know Punjabi and I speak this language at home and at the Gurdwara. Our scripture is written in a language which is similar to Punjabi.

Respondent 17: I go to mosque every Friday. I have learnt Arabic and I can read the Qur'an [...]. At our home we speak Urdu. [...] Yes I am a practicing Muslim.

Question: How would you define your religiosity?

Respondent 17: I try to follow it as much as I can. I do not drink alcohol and I eat only halal.

The above respondents' Facebook pages also demonstrate their religiosity and attempt to express the way they would want fellow community members to see them. Regular religious posts are very common among these respondents. Another respondent's (respondent 16) (Muslim) husband drinks alcohol. However, she is very careful not to post any photos/comments/posts on her or her husband's Facebook account that might give her friends and relatives the impression that her husband drinks. She does not normally take photographs or selfies in pubs or bars.

Respondent 28 wears the Hizab to comply with the stricter version of Islam, but does not mind selfies or photographs. When she was asked about whether or not selfies clash with her religious belief, she said:

[...] taking photos itself is not very Islamic in a very strict sense. However, I don't maintain that stricter version. Culturally, I don't think there's a clash, as it's just another global trend that has become part of our daily lives. Hence, I wouldn't be too worried about selfies or any kind of photography.

We have classified this dichotomous acculturation strategy as "acculturation by convenience". Integration with wider cultural traits is not by force or in a contingent manner, but rather is driven by convenience.

Selfie and acculturation by convenience. As selfies reflect and reify individuals' identities, the respondents are careful in considering the time, place and persons for selfies. In that respect, one may find the acculturation by convenience being applied to individuals' decisions to take selfies and/or to post them on social media.

Discussion

Figure 1 provides a theoretical framework for selfie appropriation in relation to cultural dualism. The appropriation of culture exhibiting dual cultural identity is an outcome of individuals' constant and dialectic interaction with their ancestral and host cultures. Hence, we have three components of this theoretical framework: formation of cultural identity, appropriation of selfies and the inter-linkage between cultural appropriation and technology appropriation.

Formation of dual cultural identity through cultural appropriation

Based on the findings, we have identified four motivating factors of acculturation strategies that lead to cultural duality: consonances, contexts, conveniences and constraints. The British-born respondents show their appreciation and interest in host cultures and they feel more comfortable with cultural attributes that have agreement and compatibility with the wider British community. This also happens for some of the first-generation migrants who choose to integrate with the wider society. As such, some respondents in this research express their pride in Bollywood culture that is recognised in wider British society (as discussed in the findings section). "Acculturation by constraints" refers to the situation when migrants integrate with wider communities for locational, occupational and educational reasons. Unlike "pendulism" (Askegaard *et al.*, 2005), which refers to more volitional and elective decisions to move between the host and the ancestral culture, this group of migrants integrate due to situational "constraints". This classification adds a different dimension in explaining acculturation strategies. The migrants acculturating by

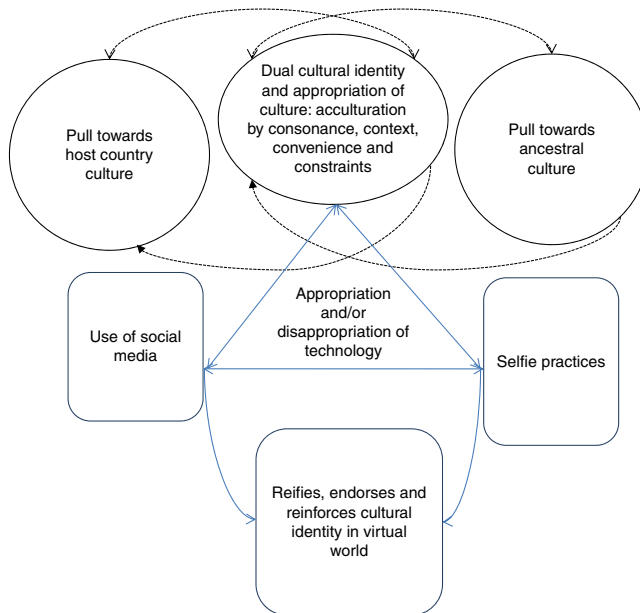


Figure 1.
The expression of dual cultural identity through the appropriation of the selfie phenomenon

constraints are not “separated” from the mainstream in the way Berry (1980) explains. Although they show some kind of “resistance”, as defined by Peñaloza (1994), their resistance does not lead to complete segregation.

“Convenience” explains some of the ambiguities and paradoxes surrounding biculturalism and dual or multiple identities. Here we find consumers acting like pragmatic and often opportunist agents who conveniently choose cultural attributes that suit their living in multicultural environments. They can manage to keep the influence of both the host and the ancestral culture to a limited level. However, they show less desire to integrate and assimilate compared to those who show different cultural traits in different “contexts” – our fourth category. This is closer to “pendulism”, although our classification implies a more assertive intent than Askegaard *et al.* (2005) found among their respondents. Furthermore, their interaction in the multicultural environment is not driven by oscillation, but rather by contextually defined expectations.

This quadripartite classification provides further insights into cultural dualism and appropriation of culture as described by Weinberger (2015). The factors of acculturation strategies identified in this research explain cultural dualism and appropriation of culture. The next section investigates how this appropriation of culture relates to the appropriation of technology.

Selfie appropriation

The findings suggest that respondents adopt selfies for hedonic, social and psychological reasons. However, the focus of this study is on how the appropriation of selfies relates to their cultural identity. The complex and often contradictory expression of cultural dispositions, as the findings suggest, are expressed on the social media marketplace through selfies. We argue that the extended “self” of an individual in the virtual world is reified through the selfie. Furthermore, due to the fact that on social media, the selfie comes as a “complete package” with explicit and implicit expression of other tangible features and

physical evidence, it is a reflection of self-identity that is much closer to one's "actual self". For instance, when we see that all the selfies posted by some respondents (acculturation due to constraints) only include their own community members, it appears that their day-to-day engagement with other community members in the offline world may often be enforced by situational/locational reasons. In effect, they desire to adhere to their own community members. Hence, a comparison between their virtual and real-life interactions reveals their acculturation by constraints. At the same time, selfies on social media exhibit their actual intent to belong to a particular community, which they are unable to do in the real world.

Overall, we concur with Orlikowski (1992, 2000) apropos the selfie as a technology that replaces previous social practice. Through the repetitive reproduction of this practice by a large number of the population, the selfie is gradually becoming an integral part of daily lives. This is consistent with socio-cultural theories in which appropriation is seen as the transformative process a technology undergoes, whereby introduction of technology initiates changes in social practice. Again, the use of technology (selfies) itself is supported by other social practices (use of social media) and reifies changes in human and social interactions. As such, the selfie phenomenon is one of those technological applications that become embedded in our virtual and real lives and demonstrate the iterative and spiralling interaction between the two spheres (virtual and real life). Here we concur with the current appropriation literature (Dey *et al.*, 2011; Carroll *et al.*, 2003) in terms of the appropriation process. However, we argue that appropriation and disappropriation are neither binary nor mutually exclusive. Users may appropriate a technological application in a particular context, while disappropriating the same in other situations. When a respondent decides not to have a selfie inside a pub, she disappropriates, but the same respondent exhibits use of selfies in other contexts. It is not only about where and with whom selfies can be taken: it is also important to study the situations and individuals that would be included/avoided when taking selfies.

Link between technology appropriation and cultural appropriation

We extend the concept of appropriation by identifying and analysing how individuals' appropriation in socio-cultural behaviour influences and determines technology appropriation processes and outcomes.

Selfies reify cultural identity. We argue that social media is increasingly narrowing the gap between virtual and real life by portraying more tangible aspects of our real life not only in terms of clothes and fashions but also through their appearance, locational settings and other physical evidence. The popularity of selfie practices inside cars, trains and aeroplanes was noted, as people wanted to share the pleasure of certain special journeys or travelling experiences. Hence, the selfie can work as a tangible expression of a situation, moment, emotion or experience.

Selfies endorse and reinforce cultural identity. The dual cultural identity discussed earlier in this section is constructed in the real world and is often endorsed and reinforced through selfies in the social media. There is iteration between the selfie phenomenon and cultural identity. It was noticed that respondents preferred selfies with cricket stars and Bollywood stars: the selfie creates the identity, and through its sharing in social media and the resulting interaction with friends and family members, individuals' identity is endorsed and reinforced. While the current literature (Ma *et al.*, 2017; Chua and Chang, 2016) also argues that selfies reify consumers' (un)willingness to express the physical environments, our research also brings in the emic aspects of cultural dispositions.

Theoretical contributions

The nature of and motivation for acculturation strategies discussed in this paper explain why and how cultural appropriation occurs and influences cultural identity, particularly in a

multicultural environment, and thereby advance current scholarship in acculturation. Although this research speaks for a specific context of British South Asians' appropriation of selfies in a multicultural environment, the findings and contributions can be generalised. Cultural appropriation can happen even in a more homogenous country where people negotiate between local culture and global culture (Cleveland *et al.*, 2013). It can happen in any situation where people are exposed to multiple cultural attributes and seek to adopt, adapt and adjust cultural dispositions. People's behaviour may be constrained by situational factors, may be in response to contextual requirements, may be driven by the principles of convenience or may be a result of volitional choice – as identified in this paper. Hence, this paper addresses the current knowledge gap by explaining the dualism and paradoxes that constitute cultural appropriation, and in turn shape cultural identity. While our research focusses on social and ethnic culture, similar dichotomies may exist for organisational cultures.

Nevertheless, the major theoretical contribution of this paper comes with the furthering of technology appropriation theory as it integrates cultural appropriation into its dynamics. The current technology appropriation literature (Dey *et al.*, 2011; Carroll *et al.*, 2003; Lindtner *et al.*, 2012) does not fully explain the role of individuals' interaction with socio-cultural institutions in shaping and determining appropriation processes and outcomes. We argue that the appropriation of culture has reciprocal influence on technology appropriation and they reify each other. Hence, the appropriation goes through a spiralling and iterative process of mutual shaping of culture and technology use that leads to the expression of cultural identity in a given context. This is a new dimension added to both consumer studies and appropriation literature. Aricat (2015) and Bar *et al.* (2007) also emphasise cultural expression through technology appropriation – but do not explain the dialectical adoption and evolution of culture through technology use. This paper also argues that appropriation and disappropriation are not binary or mutually exclusive phenomena, but rather depend much on contexts and applications. People may appropriate a technology in a certain situation, but disappropriate the same in other contexts.

Conclusion

Our research has analysed how selfies reify, endorse and reinforce cultural identity in virtual world. However, scholarly debate and discussion on the inter-relationship between offline and online world is far from over. Future research can examine how and to what extent selfies or other forms of social media-based self-expression reflect acculturation towards global consumer culture and/or promote or inhibit cross-cultural interaction. The selfie phenomenon being a global social media-based phenomenon can explain how technology use and appropriation transcend geographic and cultural borders. Future research can also delve into acculturation in social media marketplace.

Practical implications

First of all, this paper offers useful means for segmenting ethnic customers. The concept of acculturation by consonances would be useful for South Asian brands such as Patak's, Cobra and Kingfisher that have acceptability amongst the wider British population. Their brand identities, South Asian origin and presence in British society would resonate with the dual cultural identity of British South Asians. Acculturation by contexts can be used by the fashion industry. Ethnic clothing and jewellery brands such as *Khadi* can highlight the contextually appropriate use of their products. International airlines companies, hotels and tourism industry may also benefit from this particular pattern as ethnic consumers falling in this category are not rigid to any particular cultural disposition. Acculturation by constraints can provide a useful understanding for Government and not-government organisations that promote cross-cultural interaction to combat social exclusion, ethnic

segregation and religious extremism. People may suffer from segregation and separation even if they live and work with wider communities. Finally, religious brands and products (such as sweets in Diwali, juice during Ramadhan) can target the acculturation by convenience. Businesses can also try different approaches for their different product categories. BBC Asian Network have different sets of programmes – their *Bhangra* fusion and Bollywood music normally target both first and second generation migrants, while their classic Hindi/Urdu songs attract first-generation migrants.

Furthermore, our research suggests selfies reflect the cultural duality and thereby can be used for both customer segmentation and communication/engagement. Customers' selfies on Facebook/Instagram hence can be used to analyse their cultural identity. As such, managers who apprise themselves of the selfie phenomenon of the ethnic group are better placed to meet their consumer needs. Account, therefore, should be taken of their bicultural identity that is shaped by demonstrable traits apropos religiosity and social, communal, and familial bonding. Selfie practice can bolster the co-creation of brand identity and provide opportunities to identify synergy between brands' and their target consumers' images. It is also important for companies to be aware of the paradoxes and dichotomies. Selfies in certain places (e.g. pubs and nightclubs) may not be appreciated by certain quarters of South Asian communities.

Limitation

The research did not engage with the most vulnerable and marginalised members of British South Asian communities, and hence this paper is unable to explain their cultural identities. It does not cover minors or senior citizens either. Future research could investigate how the selfie phenomenon exhibits the cultural identity of the host community and/or other ethnic minority communities in Great Britain. It would be fascinating to see whether or not the host community demonstrates dual and multiple cultural identities due to their regular interactions with a number of migrant communities. Research could also be conducted on the South Asian diaspora in other countries such as the USA and Australia to examine how their cultural identity in the social media marketplace is exhibited.

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Respondent No.	Age/gender	Occupation	Location	Ethnic origin	British born (Y/N)	Consent given for Facebook access (Y/N)
1	18-25 (F)	Student	North East	Pakistani	Y	Y
2	18-25 (M)	Student/ graduate	North East	Indian	Y	Y
3	18-25 (M)	Management trainee	North East	Bangladeshi	Y	Y
4	30-35 (M)	Engineer	Birmingham	Indian	N	Y
5	35-38 (M)	Self employed	Midlands	Bangladeshi	N	Y
6	30-35 (F)	Self employed	Birmingham	Indian	Y	N
7	25-30 (F)	Housewife	Midlands	Indian	N	Y
8	30-35 (F)	Researcher	Manchester	Bangladeshi	Y	Y
9	25-30 (M)	Restaurant worker	Manchester	Pakistani	Y	Y
10	30-35 (F)	Accountant	Leeds	Indian	N	Y
11	35-40 (M)	Lecturer	Leeds	Indian	N	Y
12	25-30 (M)	IT professional	Leeds	Indian	N	Y
13	18-25 (F)	Student	Leeds	Bangladeshi	Y	N
14	18-25 (M)	Student	Leeds	Pakistani	N	Y
15	35-40 (F)	Housewife	Leeds	Indian	N	Y
16	30-35 (F)	College teacher	London	Bangladeshi	N	Y
17	18-25 (M)	Student	London	Pakistani	Y	Y
18	18-25 (M)	Student	London	Pakistani	Y	Y
19	18-25 (F)	Student	London	Indian	Y	N
20	30-35 (F)	Office admin	London	Indian	N	Y
21	25-30 (M)	Researcher	London	Sri Lankan	N	Y
22	35-40 (M)	Doctor	London	Bangladeshi	N	Y
23	25-30 (M)	Retail services	London	Indian	Y	Y
24	30-35 (M)	Restaurant worker	London	Bangladeshi	N	Y
25	25-30 (M)	Nurse	London	Indian	N	N
26	35-40 (M)	Self employed	London	Indian	N	N
27	35-40 (M)	Self employed	London	Pakistani	Y	Y
28	18-25 (F)	Housewife	London	Pakistani	N	N
29	35-40 (M)	Office manager	London	Bangladeshi	Y	Y
30	25-30 (F)	Housewife	London	Indian	Y	N
31	30-35 (F)	Doctor	Glasgow	Bangladeshi	N	N
32	25-30 (M)	Student	Glasgow	Bangladeshi	N	N
33	35-40 (M)	Self employed	London	Pakistani	N	N

Table A1.
Demographic and
ethnic profiles of the
participants

Table AII.
List of the themes and codes used in this research (not all applied in this paper)

Themes	Codes (bottom up/inductive)	Codes (top-down/deductive)
Acculturation	Consonance (cricket, bollywood) contexts (dresses, festivals, language) convenience (religiosity, dietary preference, socialisation) constraints (interactions, socialisation)	Food, religiosity, national identity, communal interaction, family influence, motivation to integrate, diaspora identity
Selfie image	Selfie for consonance, selfie on contexts, selfie as convenience, selfie as constraints	Duality of technology, paradoxes of technology, dual identity
Use of social media	Reflection of real life, pretentious and exhibitionism, conformity to trend, hedonism, likes and follows, interactions and engagement, Cricket, Bollywood, Western music	Cultural identity, religiosity, national identity, communal interaction, diaspora identity
Appropriation	Selfie reemobidment, materialisation engagement and interaction, adaptation	Reification, endorsement, reinforcement, paradox, structuration

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