

A STUDY MEASURING PRODUCT-RELATED
REACTIONS TO THE USE OF BLACK
MODELS IN ADVERTISING

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A STUDY MEASURING PRODUCT-RELATED
REACTIONS TO THE USE OF BLACK MODELS IN
ADVERTISING

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INTRODUCTION

Background

In response to social pressures and demographic trends, the portrayal and frequency of African Americans in magazine advertisements has significantly developed over the past decades in the United States (Abraham, 2001). This includes the transformation from early character roles in which blacks were stereotyped as comic endorsements to their portrayals as icons in the markets of sports and hip hop music (Coltrane, 2000). The use of African Americans in the media has changed with the social, political, and economic alterations occurring in the United States. It is argued that advertising reflects the values, traditions and lifestyles of the people it is designed to reach. Just as art imitates life, the same can be stated about advertising (Raspberry, 1997).

One motivating factor for using African Americans in advertisements is the economic benefit from targeting the previously ignored black population. Current business trends indicate that the increase in ethnic marketing is parallel to the population shifts in the United States (Holland, 1999). Many companies have acknowledged the potential of targeting ethnic groups. J.C. Penney™, for example, committed to a marketing campaign that promoted their line of clothing with West African themes (Holland, 1996). Another example was Nissan™, which invested millions of dollars in recruiting African American customers including large donations to the NAACP (Walker, 1996).

Prior to the 1960s, African Americans were on the periphery of American culture and advertising practices illustrated this point (Raspberry, 1997). Early research efforts began to measure the frequency of blacks in magazine advertisements. Shuey (1953) first examined this issue, reporting that black models in magazines appeared at a lower frequency level than their respective population percentage. Shuey's study has been reexamined several times by different researchers to measure a change in the frequency of African Americans in advertisements. For instance, a more recent study by Bowen and Schmid (1997) analyzed the commercial content of nine different magazine publications. The findings measured an increase in the use of African Americans to a new level of 10.6 percent, which was more representative with the national population of African Americans as recorded by the U.S. census that year.

Besides mere exclusion, African Americans have also been role-cast in a variety of racial stereotypes (Bristor, 1995). Until recently, African Americans were rarely depicted in respected roles such as teachers, physicians, or clergymen. The only exception is the role of the athletic superstar (Coltrane 2000). Bristor, Lee, and Hunt (1995) found that advertisements reflect this point. In their study, more than 70 percent of athletes in the ads that they examined were African Americans.

Another research concern involves the trend of marketing unhealthy products to blacks that live in poverty stricken communities. This issue was addressed by studies that found that advertisers often use black models for products that are harmful to African Americans. One study found that in Los Angeles, California, 90 percent of billboards in black communities contained black models in advertisements for tobacco products (Boley, 1997). Another study discovered that the magazines targeted to African

American readers such as, *Ebony*, *Jett*, and *Essence* contained 12 percent more cigarette advertisements than *Newsweek*, *Time*, *People*, and *Mademoiselle* (Cummings 1987).

Fortunately, the practice of targeting minorities with harmful products has prompted individuals and organizations to fight against this perceived immoral advertising tactic.

Groups like the National Association of African Americans for Positive Imagery (NAAAPI) have successfully pressured companies to stop advertising, and even to discontinue product production if the harmful item was targeted to African Americans.

One example was the defeat of Uptown Cigarettes, which were the first cigarettes specifically aimed at black smokers (www.naaapi.org, January 10, 2004).

More recently, researchers have conducted studies on the degree of blackness a model has in advertisements. The interest in this topic is based on the assumption that agencies are using African Americans that have predominantly Caucasian features. (Keenan, 1996) Keenan focused on the skin tone, nose width, and lip sizes. His method compared pictures of blacks in editorial pictures of newspapers with blacks in commercial advertisements. The findings show with statistical significance that African Americans in advertisements looked more like white people than the blacks that were featured in editorial pages.

Statement of Problem

Most of the research concerning minorities in advertising is limited to content analysis of frequency, or character portrayal (Stevenson, 1999, Schmid, 2000). Even though these studies provide information for understanding minority presence in the media, the results cannot report the effects of using ethnic models in advertisements and

fail to alleviate the concerns marketers have with using black models in their ads. In order to adequately explore these concerns, researchers must focus on the consumers' response to the use of minority models in advertisements. "How consumers respond to the use of minority models in mainstream advertising is vital to marketers as there are many questions that need answers before embarking upon what some might consider a risky advertising strategy." (Schmid 2000) Without analyzing the perceptions and attitudes of the consumer, researchers have been unable to provide a convincing argument for the increase of African Americans in mainstream advertising. Some notable studies have attempted to address this problem in the past with varied levels of success.

Significance of the Study

The history of studying white consumer responses when exposed to black models was first researched in the mid 1960's (Appiah 1998). In an article by Barban (1969) the term "backlash" was coined for the negative consumer response from white consumers to advertisements that use black models. The issue at hand was finding a feasible way to attract the developing African American community without creating tension with the white consumers. "Researchers tried to discern if whites were alienated by the use of blacks in advertising, and if alienation resulted in reluctance to purchase the advertised product; hence, the term backlash." (Barban, 1969, Schmid, 2000)

Past research efforts concerning white "backlash" in advertising has hardly provided enough significant evidence to draw definite conclusions. Over the last thirty years, a variety of studies have attempted to prove that white consumers do not

particularly mind the ethnicity of the models used in advertisements (Schmid, 2000). The studies focused on different types of advertising including television commercials (Schlinger and Plummer 1972), newspaper ads (Tolley and Goett, 1971), in-store displays (Bush, Gwinner, and Solomon 1976), and magazine advertisements (Barban 1969). They also tested different variables in an effort to expose the legitimacy of “backlash”. Notable studies include the measurements of consumer prejudice (Cagley and Cardozo, 1970), multiple product categories (Muse, 1971), and even the analysis of dilated pupils (Stafford, Birdwell, and Van Tassel, 1970).

In addition to researching white “backlash”, African American reactions have also been measured to better understand their perceptions of ethnic models in advertisements. Some of the research was conducted in conjunction with Caucasian reactions to “backlash”. Barban and Cundif (1964) found that black subjects rated ads that contained African American models more favorably.

Schlenger and Plummer (1972) published a study that examined the reactions of black and white consumers to all-black and all-white cast versions of a television commercial. The African American responses consistently favored the black-cast version in terms of buying attitude, entertainment, and generating empathy (Schlinger, 1972). The authors concluded that advertisers could increase the effectiveness among blacks if the model type was African American.

Schmid (2000) revisited the “backlash” research by updating the ethnic model types to include Asians, blacks, and Hispanics. The researcher concluded that black subjects favored African American models when comparing their evaluative responses on categories concerning lifestyle, appeal, realism, and similarity.

Appiah (2001) published a research study that addressed the effectiveness of cultural cues in advertising. The research focused on advertisements that had embedded black cultural cues (e.g., dress, images, dialect, and symbols). Although, no significant findings supported cultural cues in ads with black subjects, they did identify more strongly with African American models than Caucasian ones.

Generalizations can be made from the studies that include black reactions to the use of ethnic models. The evidence supports the idea that African American subjects prefer models to have similar ethnic backgrounds in the advertisements. However, in the research published about white preferences for model ethnicity, authors generalize their statistics to conclude that whites' have a more neutral feeling toward the use of black models (Barban, 1964, Bush, 1979, Appiah, 1998, Schmid, 2000), or they discredit previous findings that indicate the possibility of white "backlash". Despite the lack of consensus with the research, one variable that continues to surface with contradicting evidence is consumer reaction to product-type (Stafford, 1970, Cagley, 1970, Muse, 1971, Bush 1979, Schmid, 2000).

Current Study

This study focuses on the variables of product-type and model race in advertising. By intensifying the focal point on product categories, this study fills the gap of research that examines the idea of "backlash" with white consumers.

To investigate this problem the following questions were addressed:

1. Do the Caucasian consumers' likeability or evaluative responses to magazine ads vary according to the race of the models in the advertisements?

2. Does the likeability of an ad by Caucasian consumers depend on the product-type in the advertisement when testing African American and Caucasian models?

The methodology of the study utilized an experimental design, which continued the trend of previous research. An online experiment was created to provide a new approach from traditional experiments. This allowed the participants to be randomly assigned to different treatment groups and protected the data entry from human error. By testing eight treatment ads from four different product categories, consumers' evaluative responses were analyzed using a semantic differential scale.

Overview

Chapter two addresses the white “backlash” studies by addressing the historical timeline of research, discussing the different approaches, and exploring the significant findings in previous research. Chapter three defines the hypotheses, the measurement instrument, stimulus materials, research procedure, and clarifies the data analyses. Chapter four reports the results of the experiment. Chapter five concludes the thesis by discussing the relevant findings, the limitations to the current study, and the opportunities for future research.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The White Backlash Concept

During the 1960s marketers began to realize the importance of reaching the African American minority in the United States. Blacks were becoming more influential and the threat of boycotts motivated companies to design strategies that would attract the minority segment (Bush, 1979). Before the civil rights movement, blacks were often depicted in stereotypical roles that labeled their place in society as second-class citizens (Kern, 1994, Raspberry, 1997). As the racial climate in the United States began to change, civil rights leaders pressured companies and ad agencies to use African Americans in the mass media more often and in less stereotypical ways (Schlinger, 1972).

The proclamation that, “You must integrate your advertising because it is morally reprehensible to do otherwise,” was argued by trade associations, researchers, and government agencies with increasingly critical attention (Stafford, 1970). Market segmentation had already started to appear in corporate marketing strategies with consideration to income, education, age, and ethnic background (Barban, 1964). However, the drawback was the fear that marketers needed to attract black consumers while preserving the dominant white market (Bush, 1979). Even though African Americans in the early 1970s had the purchasing power of 30 billion dollars, the white consumer market was more than ten times that much (Tolley, 1971). The issue of using blacks in advertisements was divided between moral implications and economic

consequences of alternative strategies (Barban, 1964). As a result, researchers began to understand the value of measuring white attitudes in regards to black models used in advertisements.

Barban and Cundif (1964) are credited with providing the first academic study of the influences black models have over the majority population (Appiah, 1998, Bush 1979, Schmid, 2000). The overall concept of this study was to analyze the subjects' reactions to advertisements with models that were either black or white. The goal was to find a difference in their attitudes toward advertisements that either used white, black, or integrated models. The sample consisted of 181 freshman students from two universities in the southwest. Conclusions were drawn that indicated white students were either neutral or slightly positive when they viewed advertisements that contained black models (Barban, 1964, Bush, 1979). However, because of the sample, the authors noted that, "The research project described here cannot provide definitive answers to the problem of planning and designing advertising for Negro and white markets because of its limited scope and composition of the samples." This study set the foundation for future research projects that studied the white response to black models in advertisements (Appiah, 1998, Bush, 1979, Schmid, 2000).

In a 1969 Barban study the term "backlash" was applied to an anticipated fear that white consumers would respond negatively to black advertisements (Barban, 1969, Schmid, 2000). The study concluded that responses were not statistically different towards white perceptions of integrated advertisements (Barban, 1969).

The simplistic view of white "backlash" did not significantly change through the years of research that developed after the Barban study. Although the term was not

always mentioned, some researchers simply placed the term in quotations when addressing this view (Stafford, 1970, Cagley, 1970, Schlinger, 1972, Schmid, 2000). Lacking a conceptual definition, Barban's "backlash" term has simply come to mean an adverse white reaction to advertisements that use minority models (Schmid, 2000).

Important Backlash Studies

The seventies showed an increased interest in the Caucasian "backlash" concept. The *Journal of Advertising Research* in 1970 published three separate experiments concerning white attitudes in regards to the use of African American models. Guest (1970) published a study that was designed to measure how black models affect company image. The results indicated that there were no differences between white attitudes when white and black models were used in the experiment. (Guest, 1970)

A new variable of racial prejudice was included in the study by Cagley and Cardozo (1970). In this study, the authors categorized their respondents with "prejudice" labels that were established through the experimental questionnaire. Also, the authors used three different product types, which were telephones, vodka, and men's suits. The results of the study implied that agencies that use racially integrated advertisements might experience negative reactions from highly prejudiced consumer markets. Predictably, the high prejudice subjects favored the products that were in all-white ads, while the less prejudiced consumers did not have a preference for model type (Cagley, 1970).

Critics of this study have voiced the obvious flaws in the experimental design. Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) pointed out that, "A repeated measures design was used which allowed each student to see all three of the treatment ads. The same subjects saw

the ads which differed only in the models' race." The structure of the design may have altered the results in their findings. In a post treatment questionnaire 26 percent of the respondents identified the purpose of the study (Cagley, 1970, Bush, 1979).

Another experiment in 1970 reported findings of a study that used a pupillograph to measure the dilation of subjects, when they were exposed to racially integrated advertisements. Stafford, Birdwell, and Van Tassel structured the experiment to include both verbal (interview) and nonverbal (dilation measurements) responses in an effort to create a more representative description of how whites react to integrated advertising (Stafford, 1970). The researchers used lipstick and a car as the two different product types. The authors conclude that whites are generally indifferent to integrated advertisements regardless of product type.

The variable of product type was re-examined when Muse (1971) published a study focused on product related responses to the use of black models in magazine advertisements. The products selected for use in this study were cigarettes, liquor, feminine napkins, and beer. The experiment was set up so that respondents in the control group rated only ads with white models; the experimental group included ads with black models mixed into the four product categories. One product produced a significant level of difference. Feminine napkins rated lower with the black model ads than those with white models (Muse, 1971). Therefore, Muse concluded that, "Perhaps the more personal or involving the product is, the more sensitive the white reader or viewer would be to the use of black models, as for feminine napkins."

A study in 1972 was conducted by Schlinger and Plummer that focused on the consumer responses of television commercials. The study used two television

commercials that were identical except one had an all black cast and the other an all white set of actors. The findings overall showed that white subjects viewed black models in a neutral manner (Schlinger, 1972; Appiah, 1998; Schmid, 2000). However, the findings did indicate a significance difference in the execution and style of the commercials. White women felt that the all white-cast commercial was more professional and sophisticated than the black version (Schlinger, 1972).

With a different approach, Choudbury and Schmid (1974) addressed the issue by testing the subject's recall of the advertisement. After viewing a series of thirteen advertisements, participants were asked to complete a recall test. The results indicated that white subjects were shown to recall black models just as frequently as white models (Raspberry, 1997).

Adding to the research that was limited to television commercials and print media, a new study emerged with the area of interest focused on in-store display advertising. Bush, Gwinner, and Solomon (1976) began to realize that most of the past studies had pertained to print advertisements or television. The researchers felt the need to focus again on "personal" products due to the publications of Stafford, Birdwell, and Van Tassel (1970) and Muse (1971). In their new study of in-store displays, the researchers chose bars of soap to retest the "personal product" hypothesis. Their results indicated that white consumers purchased equally from all displays regardless of the race of the model in the promotional material (Bush, 1976). This study supports the belief that white consumers do not favor Caucasian models over African Americans in advertisements. However, the authors do state that their findings can only pertain to in-store displays, which might distort a comparison to print media (Bush, 1976).

The interest in the marketing fear of "backlash" began to slow down by the end of the seventies. The final study by Bush, Hair, Solomon (1979) answered the question when they stated in their conclusion that, "Marketers should not fear white backlash or any negative consequences from the use of black models in promotional material." In their study they attempted to "remedy the methodological weaknesses" of Cagley and Cardozo (1970), which had found evidence that the level of prejudice might influence the behaviors of white consumers. Additionally, they wanted to address the findings of Muse (1971), which showed that product type could elicit a negative response from white consumers.

Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) fashioned their study similar to the Cagley and Cardozo (1970) experiment. This included an identical semantic differential scale and a measurement device for determining prejudice. The new study addressed the flaws from the earlier study. The main criticism was that a repeated measures design was used which allowed each subject to view all three treatments of the ad (Bush, 1979). To remedy the problem, the researchers made sure that the participants only viewed one of the treatment ads for every experimental category. The product categories were influenced by Muse's (1971) research, which indicated that white consumers' racial attitudes might be product specific. The experimental products were for Kodak cameras, Sears bras, Tylenol, Chrysler automobiles, the Army, and Tampax (Bush, 1979). Findings note some statistically significant results for different product types. Responses were related significantly to the models' race for the Chrysler automobile, the Tampax Tampon, and the Sears bra advertisements (Bush, 1979). The authors state that these results indicate that very personal products (bras and tampons) and "socially

conspicuous” products (automobiles) show a higher level of favorability for white models over African Americans. Bush, Hair, and Solomon conclude that future research which focuses on product type may be useful for understanding whites’ reactions to black models (Bush, 1979).

Unfortunately, the research efforts focused on “backlash” abruptly ended at the end of the 1970s. The previous fifteen years of research did not provide adequate answers to the general concerns regarding "backlash" with white consumers. The majority of the studies lacked focus on issues such as carryover effect and demand characteristics. The only indications of consumer preferences toward the ethnicity of models were in studies focused on different product types. However, some of these studies were argued to have methodological limitations (Whittler and Dimeo, 1991).

More than a decade after the Bush, Hair, and Solomon study (1979), Whittler (1991) re-examined the issue by focusing on the responses of white viewers to advertisements featuring different ethnic actors, including evaluating the participant’s level of prejudice and his ability to identify with the actor. The experiment also compared the difference between two different products, a word processor and laundry detergent. The study found statistically significant differences for the laundry detergent, but not the word processor. "Essentially, high prejudice whites found it more difficult to identify with the black actor than with the white actor, and found it more difficult to identify with the black actor than with low prejudice whites." (Whittler 1991) This study once again raises the belief that maybe there are some occurrences of “backlash” at least among high prejudice Caucasian consumers in regard to product type.

Recent Studies on Backlash

One of the most recent major studies conducted to test the original issue of "backlash" was accomplished by Schmid (2000). The author's intentions were to specifically address the 35-year-old question of "backlash" among white consumers. The researcher complained that current articles simply cite the dated research from the sixties and seventies. Also, Schmid noted that their general conclusions of the previous studies merely stated that blacks could be integrated without causing harm to the advertiser's image (Schmid, 2000). In her experiment, Schmid expanded the models' race to include Hispanics and Asians. In regard to product category, Schmid limited her study to personal hygiene products including toothpaste, shampoo, and perfume to exclude cross product influence. This approach narrowed the scope of previous research that tested how different product categories influence consumers' attitudes. Her findings were mixed, but some significant differences emerged. One product, shampoo, did elicit a significant negative reaction to white subjects. When ads that only contained African Americans were used for Head and Shoulders™ shampoo, the subjects' preference was highest for the white model ad and lowest for the African American model ad. The variable that measured this finding had scale items like, "this ad appeals to people like me," "this ad portrays my lifestyle." and "the people in this ad are similar to me." (Schmid, 2000) The author recorded post-test comments about the ad. Schmid noted the most disturbing came from a student who claimed the all black advertisement was "racially partial" to African Americans. (Schmid, 2000)

After reviewing the past studies concerning Caucasian "backlash" to ethnic models in advertising, it becomes clear that there was not a feeling of consensus among

the researchers regarding this issue. One exception that supports the existence of white preferences for Caucasian models is the research focused specifically on product-type. Muse (1971) compared liquor, beer, feminine napkins, and cigarettes, Stafford, Birdwell, and Van Tassel (1971) compared lipstick to automobiles, Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) compared tampons, bras, automobiles, and cameras, Whittler (1991) compared word processors to laundry detergent, and Schmid (2000) compared shampoo, perfume, and toothpaste.

It is important to continue the study of white “backlash” among consumers for two main reasons. First, evidence has been inconclusive when different product-types were incorporated in study. Could there be a possibility that different product characteristics require advertisements with models similar to the consumer? Second, are the previous findings largely outdated because of the general integration of minorities in advertisements and relevant societal changes? Has the image of minorities in society positively changed with the majority white population? These questions are more important than ever, because of the increase of diversity in the United States. This study addresses these issues by providing updated evidence as modified guidelines are used from previous studies.

METHODOLOGY

The current research project utilized an experimental design to discover a cause and effect relationship between the ethnicity of the model and Caucasian consumers' evaluative responses of an advertisement. Researchers studying consumer reactions to model type have selected various experimental designs as the most common methodology, because experimental research allows measurements to be accurately recorded when the consumer is not exposed to the purpose of the study. In order to extend the findings of the previous studies, it is important to adhere to the common trend of using an experimental design for studying consumer reactions to model type in advertisements.

Variables and Hypotheses

This study adds current information to the issue of white "backlash" in consumers. Past studies, which tested the independent variable of model race, have been inconsistent with their evidence to support or negate this concept. Testing product-type in relation to ethnicity of the model in an ad provided mixed results in the body of literature. The studies testing this variable were Cagley and Cardoza (1970), Muse (1971), Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979), Whittler (1991), and Schmid (2000). In order to validate these findings and add to the body of research, the current experiment followed these previous studies with some slight modifications.

The independent variables for the study were model race and product type. The dependent variable is the likeability or evaluative response of a magazine ad. By analyzing the treatment of the independent variables in relation to the dependent variable, this study tests the following hypotheses:

H1

Caucasian consumers' evaluative response to a magazine ad varies according to the race of the model in the advertisement.

H2

Caucasian consumers' evaluative response to a magazine ad for a "utilitarian product" featuring African American models will be less favorable than those same products featuring Caucasian models.

H3

There will be a difference in Caucasians' evaluative response to "value-expressive products" between advertisements with African American models and Caucasian models.

H4

The evaluative response of Caucasian consumers to a magazine ad for a "high-involvement" product featuring African American models will be less favorable than those same ads featuring Caucasian models.

H5

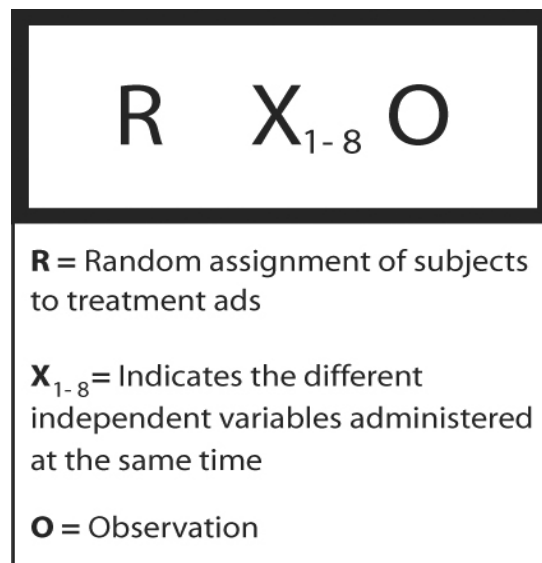
Caucasian consumers' evaluative response to a magazine ad for a "personal product" featuring African American models will be less favorable than those same products featuring Caucasian models.

Experimental Design

The majority of research investigating the concept of white “backlash” with consumers utilized experiments to find relationships between consumer attitudes and the ethnicity of the model in the advertisement. The current study used modified guidelines from previous research to test the independent variables. A 2-factor design accommodated the experiment by studying the two independent variables, which were model race and product-type.

Random assignment of subjects to the experimental groups was determined by a computer random number generator. The treatment of the two independent variables was administered at the same time on the basis of product-type and model race. Observations of the dependent variable were automatically tabulated and recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. The most commonly used notation system (Campbell, 1963) for mass communication studies identifies the structure of the experimental design as follows: (Buddenbaum, 2001)

FIGURE 1



The execution of the experiment was done on the internet to limit human error and facilitator bias. This approach eliminated the concern of human influence by creating a neutral environment for the participants. The university webmaster, under the direction of the researcher, created the website for the purposes of the experiment. To randomly assign the different treatment advertisements, the website was set up to randomly generate a unique advertisement for each student. To protect from the duplication of respondents, each participant was given a unique code that they used to access the website. The participants viewed one advertisement, and therefore, the purpose of the study was disguised.

The advertisements used in the study were created using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator software. The treatment ads were either fabricated with original text and stock photography or modified from existing promotional materials. Additionally, precautions were made to eliminate any methodological flaws from earlier studies. Previous research indicates that hue difference affects the perception of black models (Schmid, 2000). This study addressed this concern by using black models with moderately dark skin. In addition, techniques with the graphic design software created identical product advertisements with the exception of the model race. This included detail to: expression, age, sex, clothing attire, model placement, height, and demeanor.

Recruitment of Subjects

Experimental subjects were recruited during January, February, and March of 2004 from the student body on the campuses of Oklahoma State University – Stillwater, Oklahoma State University – Tulsa, and Tulsa Community College – Metro. In order to

provide a large number of subjects, the sample was conveniently drawn using two different methods. First, students were recruited with the assistance of professors who read an instruction script and handed out pre-printed sheets that contained the experiment's web address and unique individual passwords to interested students. Some of the professors offered extra credit to encourage participation. Students were asked to take the experiment on their own time at either home or a university computer lab.

Second, additional participants were recruited by a neutral individual trained by the researcher, who approached students on campus. The recruiter simply asked students if they would be interested in participating in the study. If students volunteered, identical information sheets were handed out with website address and password. The recruiter was asked to hand out the informational sheets to all students regardless of ethnic background to protect the purpose of this study. This method of recruitment produced 21 percent of the sample.

Procedure

The first web page gave an overview of the study without exposing the purpose of the experiment. Students were asked to enter their individual passwords from the recruitment sheet in a field to begin the study. On the top of the next webpage a paragraph of directions instructed participants to view the advertisement and then scroll down to answer a list of questions. Additionally, the paragraph explained how to use the seven point polar semantic scale. Then the participants proceeded to answer the 12 questions, which measured their evaluative response to the ad.

The subjects' evaluative responses to the advertisements were measured using a seven point semantic differential scale pairing 12 adjectives with polar opposites. See Figure 1 for sample questions. The measurement scale was adapted from Cagley and Cardoza (1970) and Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979), which measured attitudes toward the advertisement, the consumer product, and the sponsoring company. The current study utilized this measurement scale, because of the historical connection and established acceptance. This study confirmed the dependability of the scale by analyzing the reliability of coefficients ($\alpha = .9205$). By utilizing this semantic scale the current study reevaluated the findings from the previous research with similar circumstances.

FIGURE 2

| Evaluative Response of Consumer to Advertisement | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| I feel that this advertisement is: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UNPLEASANT | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | PLEASANT | | | | | |
| BAD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | GOOD | | | | | |
| ORDERLY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | DISORDERLY | | | | | |
| POOR AD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | GREAT AD | | | | | |
| Compared to products that are similiar in price and function, this product appears to be: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| LOW PRESTIGE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | HIGH PRESTIGE | | | | | |
| DISAPPOINTING | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SATISFACTORY | | | | | |
| RISKY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SAFE | | | | | |
| BAD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | GOOD | | | | | |
| I feel that the company, which sponsored this advertisement is: | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| UNRELIABLE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | RELIABLE | | | | | |
| UNFRIENDLY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | FRIENDLY | | | | | |
| REGRESSIVE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | PROGRESSIVE | | | | | |
| MATURE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | YOUTHFUL | | | | | |
| * modified from Cagley and Cordozo 1970. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

When the subjects completed the set of questions that pertained to the advertisement, they were automatically directed to a set of demographic questions. These questions established the subjects' race, sex, age, and year in school. Then a final webpage thanked them for participating in the study.

Advertisements and Product Categories

The study contained a total of eight advertisements for the experiment. (See Appendixes A-H) Four different product categories were purposely selected based on commercial attributes. Each category contained two identical advertisements with the exception of model race. The current study expounds on previous research by including advertisements that cover a variety of product types. The products for this experiment were selected to represent different theoretical concepts. These theories provide a conceptual base for explaining the relationships between the antecedent variables (product-type and model race) and the dependent variable (evaluative response). Previous studies provide categorical definitions for the taxonomies of needs associated with the purchasing habits of consumers (White, 2003).

One typology of product type for this study divides items into two categories, which are based on the consumer's utilitarian needs and value-expressive needs. Utilitarian products either serve a functional purpose or eliminate problems for the consumer (MacInnis, 1989, Johar, 1991, White, 2003). The current study used Coast™ bar soap because of the functional attributes and overall utility of the product. Value-expressive items adhere to expressive needs, which satisfy the consumer's desire to express their self-image (MacInnis, 1989, White, 2003). The value-expressive item used

for this experiment was a Lexus™ SUV. Although this product can serve a utilitarian purpose, the Lexus brand is commercially advertised as a luxury automobile. Research indicates that these items satisfy the desires of self-expression and ego-gratification for the consumer (Ratchford, 1987, White, 2003).

The third product category involved Hillcrest Medical™ clinic, which is a familiar hospital in respect to the geographic location of all the subjects. This product is considered a high-involvement item for the consumer. Issues of trust, confidence, and reliability can be associated with making this decision. One approach consumers use to address these issues involves creating similarity judgments between themselves and the model (Appiah, 2001). The theoretical concept that explains this process is the Identification model. Recent studies have shown that subjects prefer certain advertisements, when similarities are perceived between the model and themselves. The Identification theory maintains that individuals measure their level of similarity with the source when they are exposed to a message (Kelman, 1961, Appiah, 2001).

The last product for this research study was Always™ feminine napkins. This personal item was chosen to make a historical connection with the previous studies that examined the effect of personal feminine products. Muse (1971) and Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) used this product type in their studies and concluded that “personal” products could have a significant effect on consumer preferences for model type. Muse stated that, “Perhaps the more personal or involving the product is, the more sensitive the white reader or viewer would be to the use of black models, as for feminine napkins.” The importance for including a feminine product in the current study was to determine if current consumer perceptions have changed from the previous historical evidence.

Pre-experiment

Before recruiting volunteers for the study, a pre-experiment was administered to indicate any problems with the initial design of the experiment. A one-shot case study was administered to provide any changes that might be required before the actual recruitment took place. Eleven students volunteered for this pre-experiment, this precaution gauged the participants' ability to follow the directions and exposed any problems with the specific advertisements or website design. On average, the subjects took about four minutes to complete the entire process. Afterwards the volunteers congregated in a classroom to discuss the internet experiment with the researcher. The students' remarks were noted and minor changes were made later to the test materials online. However, these remarks did not reveal any changes to the fundamental aspects of the experiment. Additionally, when questioned, the students could not accurately reveal the purpose of this study.

Data Analyses

With the convenience of using computers for the study, the information was automatically recorded in a separate database. This collection method eliminated the common concern of human error associated with traditional experimental studies. An Excel spreadsheet was used to organize the data from the study for later analysis. SPSS for Macintosh analyzed the findings from the study.

To compare the mean scores of the dependent variable (consumers' evaluative response), AVOVAS were calculated between the two groups (Caucasian model and African American model) for all four product-types. To examine the simultaneous effect

of independent variables, the analysis of variance provided the best indicator for significance, because it is one of the most commonly used methods for comparing the means of a relatively small sample. (Buddenbaum, 2001) The findings of the experiment will be discussed in Chapter 4.

RESULTS

This study tested the preference of white consumers, when advertisements for different products either contained African American or Caucasian models. By using an experimental design for this study, the hypotheses were tested by comparing the means of the subjects' evaluative responses between the African Americans advertisements and the Caucasian advertisements. This included the average mean for all four product-types as well as a comparison of individual product categories.

Subject Profile

The sample for this study was 304 Caucasian students from Oklahoma State University - Stillwater, Oklahoma State University - Tulsa, and Tulsa Community College. The sample was conveniently drawn in two methods from the population of college students enrolled in numerous class subjects to include a variety of demographic traits in the spring term of 2004. A total of 376 students participated in the experiment. By conducting the experiment online, students participated at various times on their own between February 4 and March 12, 2004. To prevent individuals from discovering the intended purpose of this study, students were recruited in the same manner regardless of their ethnic background. Due to the nature of this experiment, only Caucasian responses were analyzed, the 64 subjects that indicated other ethnicities were removed from the final data set. Additionally, 7 subjects were discarded from the sample due to missing data on the evaluative response instrument. Female participants made up 58.2 percent

(N = 177) of the study. The subjects' year in school are reported highest to lowest as follows: junior (33.6%, N = 102), sophomore (21.4%, N = 65), senior (19.7%, N = 60), and freshman (18.8%, N = 57). See Table 1 for more demographic information for the sample.

Table 1

Respondent Profile

| Sex | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Female | 177 | 58.2 |
| Male | 127 | 41.8 |
| Year in School | Frequency | Percent |
| Junior | 102 | 33.6 |
| Sophomore | 65 | 21.4 |
| Senior | 60 | 19.7 |
| Freshman | 57 | 18.8 |
| Graduate | 16 | 5.3 |
| Age | Frequency | Percent |
| 18-20 | 136 | 44.7 |
| 21-22 | 81 | 26.6 |
| 26 and over | 51 | 16.8 |
| 23-25 | 36 | 11.8 |

Hypotheses Testing

Overall, the students in the study liked the advertisements in the experiment. The total mean for the evaluative responses was 5.19 on a seven point semantic scale. The subjects favored the white model advertisement for the Hillcrest Medical™ clinic the most (mean = 5.72), followed by the black Hillcrest Medical clinic ad (mean = 5.61). The students' least favorite advertisement was for Coast™ bar soap. The white Coast treatment ad earned a mean score of 4.68. The black ad for Coast soap scored the lowest with the subjects (mean = 4.66). See Table 2 for mean scores of treatment ads.

Table 2

Mean Score of Treatment Ads

| Treatment Ad | Frequency | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|-----------------|-----------|------|--------------------|
| Hillcrest White | 32 | 5.72 | 1.1 |
| Hillcrest Black | 34 | 5.61 | .828 |
| Lexus White | 38 | 5.55 | .946 |
| Lexus Black | 36 | 5.42 | .889 |
| Always White | 32 | 5.03 | 1.01 |
| Always Black | 38 | 5.01 | 1.12 |
| Coast White | 39 | 4.69 | 1.12 |
| Coast Black | 41 | 4.66 | 1.11 |
| Total | 290 | 5.19 | 1.09 |

Two-Way Analysis of Variance Test

To test any main effects of the independent variables and an interaction effect, a two-way ANOVA was used. Each independent variable was analyzed for a main effect. A significant difference was indicated with the variable of product-type ($F = 14.13, p < .0001$). The variable of race, however, was not significant ($F = .364, p = .547$). The interaction effect between the variables was not significant ($F = .063, p = .979$). These findings indicate that the subjects' evaluative response to the treatment ads differed by product-type but not according to the race of the model. See table 3 below.

Table 3

Two-way Analysis of Variance Test

| Main effect | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Race | .384 | 1 | .384 | .364 | .547 |
| Product | 44.705 | 3 | 14.902 | 14.13 | .0001 |
| Interaction effect | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Race and Product | .199 | 3 | 6.624 | .063 | .979 |

The following hypotheses were tested to find differences in the subjects' evaluative responses when comparing product-type and model race. In the experimental design, four categories were included with products that have distinctly different consumer characteristics. As previously mentioned in chapter 3, the products for this experiment were selected to represent different theoretical concepts. These theories provide a conceptual base for explaining the relationships between the antecedent variables (product-type and model race) and the dependent variable (evaluative response). The hypotheses in the study were designed to test these concepts.

To find an overall effect of “backlash”, the first hypothesis grouped all the product categories to test any differences with the variable of model race. Hypotheses 2 through 5 focused on each specific product-type (utilitarian, value-expressive, high-involvement, and personal) to test the interaction with the variable of model race.

H1

Caucasian consumers' evaluative response to a magazine ad varies according to the race of the model in the advertisement.

A total of 149 subjects saw advertisements with African American models. The mean for the evaluative response for all African American ads was 5.15. A number of 141 subjects saw advertisements with Caucasian models. The evaluative response mean was 5.23. An ANOVA was used to test the mean difference between the two groups. The difference was not statistically significant, therefore, the hypothesis was not supported ($F = .421$; $p = .517$).

H2

Caucasian consumers' evaluative response to a magazine ad for a utilitarian product featuring African American models will be less favorable than those same products featuring Caucasian models.

To test this hypothesis, the experiment featured two identical ads for Coast™ soap; one with an African American model and one with a Caucasian model. The African American group had 41 subjects (mean = 4.66). The Caucasian group had 39 subjects (mean = 4.68). This hypothesis was not supported with statistical significance ($F = .007$; $p = .932$).

H3

There will be a difference in Caucasians' evaluative response to value-expressive products between advertisements with African American models and Caucasian models.

The experiment used an advertisement for a Lexus™ SUV to test this hypothesis. A total of 38 subjects saw the white treatment advertisement (mean = 5.55) and 36 respondents saw the ad with the black model (mean = 5.41). The hypothesis was not supported ($F = .334$; $p = .565$).

H4

The evaluative response of Caucasian consumers to a magazine ad for a high-involvement product featuring African American models will be less favorable than those same ads featuring Caucasian models.

The fourth hypothesis tested the category for high-involvement products by using an advertisement for Hillcrest Medical™ clinics. The mean difference between the two groups that saw a black model ($n = 34$; mean = 5.61) or a white model ($n = 32$; mean = 5.72) was not statistically significant. The hypothesis was not supported ($F = .277$; $p = .601$).

H5

Caucasian consumers' evaluative response to a magazine ad for a personal product featuring African American models will be less favorable than those same products featuring Caucasian models.

Always™ feminine napkins were used for this product category. The ad featuring the black model had 38 subjects (mean = 5.01) and the white ad had 32 responses (mean = 5.03). The hypothesis was not supported ($F = .007$; $p = .936$).

The purpose of the research study was to find a difference between the evaluative responses of white consumers when ads either contained African American or Caucasian models. The hypotheses tested the four different product types and the group as a whole. None of the hypotheses were supported with statistical significance, therefore, no differences were found between the ads. The next chapter will discuss the importance and limitations of these findings.

DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss the findings, implications and contributions of the research study. First, an overview of the findings and their implications followed by limitations of the results. The chapter will conclude with concepts for future study.

The main concept tested in this research study focused on the topic of white “backlash” which has been studied since the 1960’s. More specifically, a concern that Caucasian consumers might have negative responses to the use of African Americans in advertisements. Historically, research has been limited and inconclusive even though different approaches were used to test this theoretical concept.

Most researchers in the past reported that white consumers have no preference for model race in advertisements. The majority of the research found few, if any instances of white “backlash” to report in the findings. However, in specific cases, some products were reported to elicit negative responses; Cagley and Cardoza (1970), Muse (1971), Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979), Whittier (1991), and Schmid (2000). These inconsistencies justify a need for further investigation. Why had certain products in the previous experiments shown significant responses of “backlash” when other products showed no difference?

To answer this research question, the current study reexamines the variable of product type, which reported the only significant findings in previous research experiments. By selecting products with significantly different attributes, the current study addressed theoretical concepts that were rarely addressed in earlier studies. The

body of research in the past failed to methodically approach the issue of “backlash” in this manner. Some notable studies narrowed product-type to only two categories, Stafford, Birdwell, and Van Tassel (1970) and Whittler (1991). Other studies included several products, but provided little explanation for the selection type used in the experimental design: Cagley and Cardoza (1970), Muse (1971), and Choudbury and Schmid (1974). Additionally, some studies narrowed the focus to test only one product category: Bush , Hair, and Solomon (1976) and Schmid (2000).

The current study intentionally approached the “backlash” issue by selecting product-types with different consumer good attributes. The basis for this logic was to illustrate that different product-types might require different advertising techniques to appeal to the consumer. More specifically, a model’s race may be important to Caucasian consumers depending on the type of product being advertised. By expanding on product category, the new findings add useful information to the existing body of knowledge, which failed to address this concern.

The approach used in this study incorporated products that had various characteristics including: high-involvement, value-expressive, personal, and utilitarian functions. Individual hypotheses tested the four product types to reveal any indications of preference to model race in advertisements.

Previous research on utilitarian products in the experiments, such as Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1976) soap, Cagley and Cardoza (1970) telephones, and Whittler (1991) laundry detergent, report mixed results. However, generalizations were collectively made that “backlash” did not exist. Whittler (1991) reported that high prejudice students favored white model advertisements over black models in ads for laundry detergent (a

utilitarian product). Since this research experiment was the first “backlash” study in more than a decade, the findings once again raised a concern that maybe “backlash” exists in some Caucasian consumers. The importance for including a utilitarian product in the current study was justified to confirm or negate the data in Whittler (1991), and to make a historical connection to the research conducted in the 1970s. Although the variable of prejudice was not tested, this study found no significant difference when using a utilitarian product. These results confirm the overall findings from previous research for utilitarian products. A model’s race plays little importance to Caucasian consumers when a utilitarian product is used in an advertisement.

Other products contain benefits to the consumer that are different from utilitarian consumer goods. Value-expressive items satisfy the consumer’s desire to express their self-image. (MacInnis, 1989, White, 2003) Previous research included products in this category without specifically defining their value-expressive attributes. Stafford, Birdwell, and Van Tassel (1970) and Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) both used automobiles in their experiments. Significant results were reported for the models’ race by Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) in regards to the Chrysler™ ad. The current study reexamined this product-type by including a Lexus SUV advertisement. This product negated the results of Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979). The findings of this study showed very little difference between the two treatment ads when comparing the evaluative responses. Value-expressive advertisements with black models did not elicit a negative response with Caucasian consumers.

By creating an advertisement for a hospital clinic, the research study addressed a possible preference in model race when the product was categorized as high involvement.

The current research study provides new data, because this product-type was never addressed previously. When dealing with issues of trust, confidence and reliability, consumers are believed to create similar judgments between themselves and the model. (Appiah, 2001) By using an advertisement for Hillcrest Medical™ clinic the current study recognizes a product that requires high-involvement with the consumer. This study predicted that advertisements promoting high-involvement products would show a difference in the evaluative responses between the black and Caucasian advertisements. The results indicated that the participants did not prefer the Caucasian doctor over the African American doctor in this ad. The failure to support this research question reveals a positive indicator that the level of racial preference does not exist with Caucasian consumers in this study even when African Americans are portrayed in an advertisement for a high-involvement product.

Historically, advertisements for feminine napkins have been used in two experimental studies; Muse (1971) and Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979). In both studies significant evidence was found to be more favorable with the use of Caucasian models for this personal product. Although, Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) concluded that overall “backlash” of white consumers appeared to be false, feminine napkins as a product-type elicited a different response. The current study realized the importance of negating or confirming these previous findings. Advertisements for Always™ feminine napkins were included in the study, and provided no statistical evidence for “backlash”. These findings are important because it might demonstrate a shift in attitude with Caucasian consumers when black models are used for personal products.

The present study has provided useful information by addressing previous inconsistencies from the past and by including new product categories that tested additional consumer needs. The findings do not support the belief that Caucasian consumers prefer white models to African American models in advertisements in the case of product-types.

Limitations

Population

The efficacy of these research results is restricted to what can be generalized from the findings. Unless it is assumed that the students in this study are representative of college students in general, standards must limit the findings only to the universe of college students at the three Midwestern universities in the study. Additionally, the sample was drawn from a population of college students that were heavily weighted in the age group of 18 to 22 year olds. Therefore, generalizations should remain within the scope of the population for this study.

Product Brands

The four product groups included in this experiment were intentionally included to cover various types of consumer goods that fulfill different consumer needs. These products included items that are recognized as utilitarian, value-expressive, personal, or high involvement in nature. However, there might have been a problem with using name brand items. Previous research has noted this concern by reporting comments made by subjects during the pre-testing stage. Some may argue that results can be influenced by

an individual's attitude regarding a specific brand prior to involvement in a study.

(Schmid, 2000) Fabricated product brands might have been a better choice to neutralize any existing feelings that participants may have towards specific name brands.

Stimulus Materials

Another limitation is the way the subjects viewed the advertisements. The intention of research efforts was to create a virtual ad that an individual would see in traditional print media. The internet was used for various practical reasons including cost, data accuracy, and collection time. However, it can be argued that viewing a print ad on-line is somewhat of an artificial environment. These results might be different if the subjects viewed the advertisement in a more traditional fashion. Additionally, results might be different if the researchers created television commercials or graphically enhanced internet ads.

Prejudice Level

Previous research has included instruments to control prejudice levels in subjects. Cagley and Cardozo (1970) found differences in high and low prejudice students when only African Americans were used in advertisements. This study was limited by the failure to administer any instrument that measured prejudice levels. However, as in the previous case, these controls can expose the intended purpose of the study to participants. A solution would include an instrument that has been adequately tested to maintain the validity of the results.

Importance of Study

Given the previous limitations, the current study seems to validate that young consumers do not favor Caucasian models over African American models. First, the methodology used in this research study was modified to fix fundamental flaws from previous research. For instance, Cagley (1970) had conducted the study using a repeated measures design. This allowed students to view both treatment ads containing black and white models. A post interview revealed that 26 percent of the students understood the purpose of the study. Additionally, the majority of the previous studies required many students to see multiple advertisements, which could have damaged the validity of the findings. To fix this threat of validity, the current study utilized a design that only allowed participants to view one advertisement. This ensured the protection of the intended purpose being exposed.

Additionally, a computerized random generator was used in the experiment to assign students different treatment ads on the internet. This allowed for a neutral assignment of stimulus materials to the participants. More over, technology has allowed ads to seem identical with the exception of the models' race. Earlier studies were conducted without this necessity. By using stock photography, the current study was able to control variables better than previous experiments by matching position, expression, and age of the models in a way that earlier studies had failed.

By addressing the limitations expressed in earlier studies, the findings in this study provide current information on white "backlash" that has been out of date and inconclusive. However, the current findings lead to questions that need to be discussed. Why did the study fail to support earlier findings when significance was reported with

certain products? For instance, why does the new study show neutral conclusions in the participants' evaluative response when the advertisement uses feminine napkins. Muse (1971) and Bush, Hair, and Solomon (1979) found a negative effect with African American models by using similar products. Does this mean that Caucasian students are more accepting of minorities than in the 1970s? Would the findings of this study be similar if an older sample was used in the study? Arguably, the current study promotes the idea that racially integrated advertising has indeed been positive by disputing earlier evidence supporting white "backlash" in consumers.

Additionally, the current study included an advertisement for a medical clinic, which traditionally employs a majority of Caucasian doctors as employees. Why were the subjects' responses similar between the two treatment ads for such a high-involvement product? Can the evidence in the current study support the contention that Caucasian consumers ignore the ethnicity of the model even in occupations that are traditional dominated by white professionals? Additional research efforts would be useful in specifically addressing this issue. There are many opportunities that still exist in future academic research concerning the use of minorities in advertisements.

Implications for Future Research

Understanding consumer attitudes and responses towards the use of ethnic models in advertisements is crucial for the continual integration of minorities into mainstream media. This study focuses on one part of a very complex issue affecting advertisers, marketers, and academic researchers. Consensus on the issue of white "backlash" is limited to generalizations, which fail to address specific questions.

First, there is a need for additional studies which focus on product type. The questions raised in this study expanded previous research by testing theoretical concepts, which might explain Caucasian consumers and their evaluations of advertisements. A specific direction for future research concerning white “backlash” might be additional industries that have not yet been researched. Specific examples could include: fast food restaurants, financial institutions, vacation destinations, or legal services. By broadening the types of products tested in research studies, data will either find instances of consumer prejudice or the studies will support or negate the belief that “backlash” does not exist with the majority of Caucasian consumers.

Another need for future research specifically addresses the use of name brand products compared to fabricated brands. Previous studies have included this limitation in their experimental designs. Measurements of consumers’ evaluative responses would become more accurate if this factor was eliminated. A possible research question might ask if models in advertisements of unknown brands carry more importance in selling the message. If this is found to be true, then do consumers’ evaluative responses of advertisements depend on the perceived similarity of the model?

Furthermore, research needs to readdress the issue of white “backlash” by focusing on new innovative products or services. Similar to product brand, a familiar consumer good might influence the results of the study. There are many questions that address this concept. For instance, if the product is unfamiliar to the consumer, does the model’s race affect the overall effectiveness of the advertisement? Do advertisements, which display new innovations of technology, require models that appear to be more

reliable with the consumer? As products become more complex and unfamiliar with the consumer, advertisers need to focus on the credibility of their message.

Additionally, the vast body of research concerning the evaluative response of Caucasian consumers has been limited to experimental designs. Although this method provides the only way to test cause and effect of research participants, other research methods may provide useful information for the “backlash” issue. For instance, qualitative studies like focus groups and interviews might provide insight to the attitudes and opinions of Caucasian consumers when they view advertisements that contain African American models. There are definitely some possibilities in qualitative research because researchers have seldom utilized this approach.

Also, research needs to focus in future studies on relatively new minority groups in the United States. An example would be an experiment that includes testing the evaluative responses of Americans that are Middle-eastern in descent. These studies would provide useful information by measuring the attitudes of other minority groups and report any differences in their attitudes towards model race.

Conclusion

This study addressed the issue of white “backlash” with consumers by re-visiting historical studies and providing new product-types that had never been tested. The findings are as important now as when the issue was first addressed in the 1960s. The past provided specific examples of consumers’ preference to race when different products were tested; however, these findings were outdated and in some cases methodically

flawed. The current study addressed these flaws and reevaluated the “backlash” issue in a period when the United States is more racially integrated than ever before.

The findings showed that Caucasian consumers find no difference in ads containing white or black models across all product-types. Based on the findings of the current study, there is no evidence to support the idea of Caucasian “backlash” when advertisements contain African American models.

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APPENDIX A

Advertisement for Hillcrest Medical™ clinic - African American Model

Nobody knows
more about your children than you.



Nobody can
treat them better than us.

Meet Dr. Rebecca Williams, a 15 year veteran in the field of pediatrics. She has learned everything from treating minor sprains to diagnosing serious heart conditions. Additionally, she has also learned to never ignore the concerned look on a parent's face.



Hillcrest
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

APPENDIX B

Advertisement for Hillcrest Medical™ clinic - Caucasian Model

Nobody knows
more about your children than you.



Nobody can
treat them better than us.

Meet Dr. Rebecca Williams, a 15 year veteran in the field of pediatrics. She has learned everything from treating minor sprains to diagnosing serious heart conditions. Additionally, she has also learned to never ignore the concerned look on a parent's face.



Hillcrest
HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

APPENDIX C

Advertisement for Lexus™ SUV - African American Model



READING ABOUT GREAT ADVENTURES
IS ONE THING.
BEING ABLE TO WRITE ABOUT THEM
IS QUITE ANOTHER.

There are two kinds of adventurers in the world: those who seek their thrills from a book and a leather chair. And those who prefer to go out and author the stories themselves. But must the desire for true adventure mean giving up comfort? This question was considered when we designed the new Lexus GX. The result, we think you'll find, is an invitation to experience life's adventures without leaving luxury behind.




THE PASSIONATE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION.






APPENDIX D


Advertisement for Lexus™ SUV - Caucasian Model



READING ABOUT GREAT ADVENTURES
IS ONE THING.
BEING ABLE TO WRITE ABOUT THEM
IS QUITE ANOTHER.

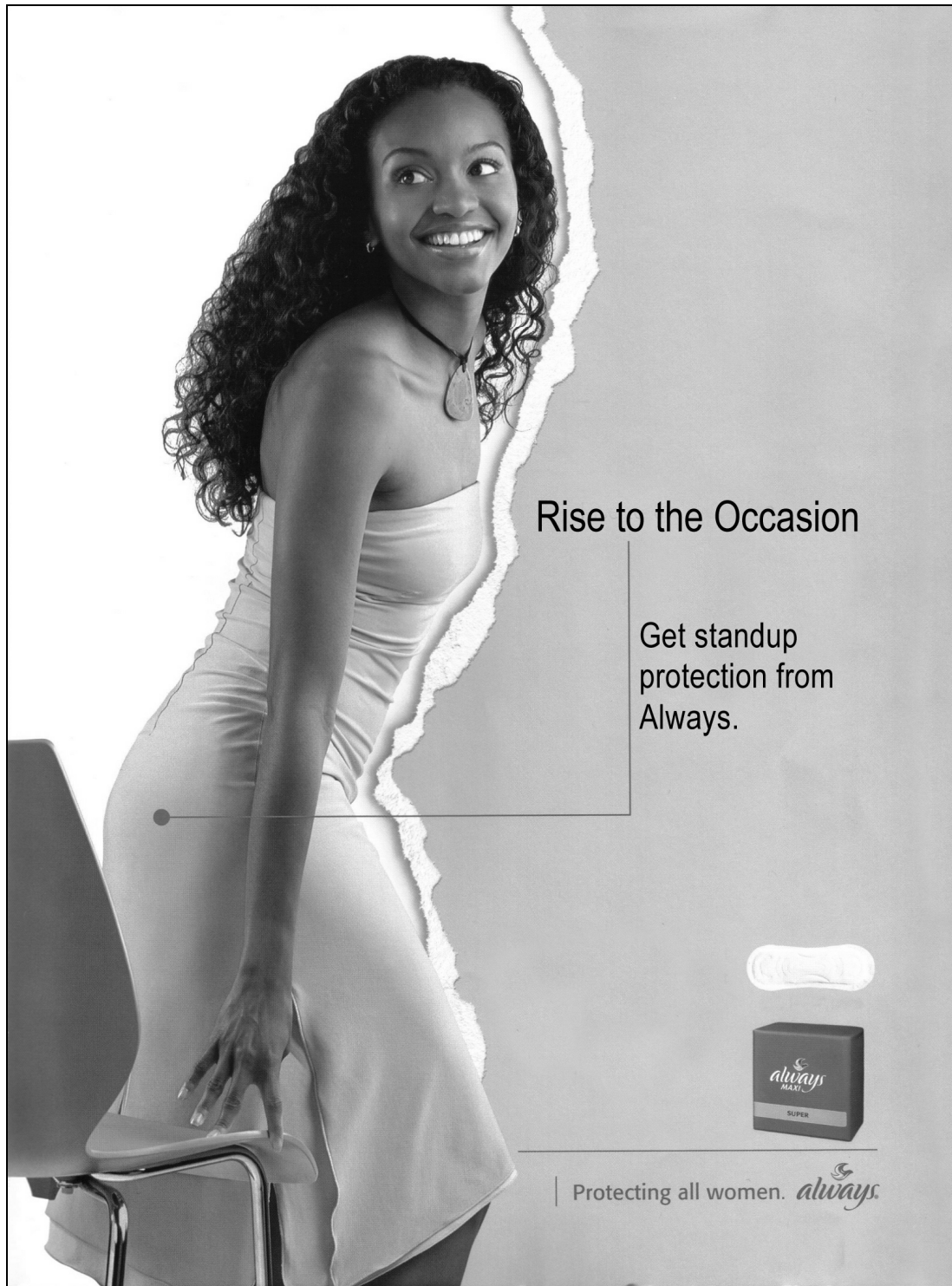
There are two kinds of adventurers in the world: those who seek their thrills from a book and a leather chair. And those who prefer to go out and author the stories themselves. But must the desire for true adventure mean giving up comfort? This question was considered when we designed the new Lexus GX. The result, we think you'll find, is an invitation to experience life's adventures without leaving luxury behind.



THE PASSIONATE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION. 



APPENDIX E

Advertisement for Always feminine napkins- African American Model



Rise to the Occasion

Get standup protection from Always.



Protecting all women. *always.*

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of an African American woman with long, curly hair, smiling and looking over her shoulder. She is wearing a strapless, light-colored dress and is seated on a modern chair. The background is a light gray with a white, torn-paper-like border separating the woman from the text and product images. The text 'Rise to the Occasion' is positioned to the right of the woman. Below it, a line points to the text 'Get standup protection from Always.' To the right of this text, there is an image of a single Always Super feminine napkin and a box of Always Super feminine napkins. At the bottom right, the text 'Protecting all women. always.' is displayed with the Always logo.

APPENDIX F

Advertisement for Always™ feminine napkins - Caucasian Model



Rise to the Occasion

Get standup protection from Always



Protecting all women. *always.*

APPENDIX G

Advertisement for Coast™ bar soap - African American Model

Your wake up call.



Revive yourself in the morning.

APPENDIX H

Advertisement for Coast™ bar soap - Caucasian Model

Your wake up call.



Revive yourself in the morning.

APPENDIX I

Recruitment Information Sheet

You are invited to participate in an advertising study at Oklahoma State University. The study is designed to measure consumers' perceptions of different advertising techniques. By taking part in this study, you will help provide information that is needed to test theories in the areas of design and layout. All data gathered in this study will be generalized and reported in summary form. Your individual responses will be confidential, which means that they will neither be provided to any organization outside the university, nor be used for any purpose outside the research study description.

The website for this study can be located at:

<http://www.osu-tulsa.okstate.edu/survey/>

In order to maintain the validity and confidentiality of the results, an individual password is required by all participants.

Your password is:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Ryan Sullivan, at rsulliv@okstate.edu

APPENDIX J

IRB Form

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 12/11/2004

Date: Friday, December 12, 2003

IRB Application No AS0447

Proposal Title: Measuring Product-Related Reactions to the Use of African American Models in Advertising

Principal
Investigator(s):

Ryan Dabo Sullivan
5669 S. Boston Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74105

Jami Armstrong Fullerton
OSU-Tulsa 700 N. Greenwood
Tulsa, OK 74106

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved *

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact me in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, colson@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Ryan Dabo Sullivan

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY MEASURING PRODUCT-RELATED REACTIONS TO THE USE
OF BLACK MODELS IN ADVERTISING

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Education: Received Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 1999. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Mass Communications at Oklahoma State University in July, 2004.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University, Student Union Marketing Department in 1999; Employed by Russell Kauffman Communications as graphic Artist in Tulsa, Oklahoma 2000; Worked as energy marketer at Williams Companies in Tulsa, Oklahoma 2001-02.

Name: Ryan Dabo Sullivan

Date of Degree: July, 2004

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A STUDY MEASURING PRODUCT RELATED REACTIONS TO
THE USE OF BLACK MODELS IN ADVERTISING

Pages in Study: 62

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Mass Communications

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine Caucasian consumers' evaluative responses to the use of African American models in advertisements. The current research study reexamined the concept of white backlash, which is a negative reaction by white consumers to the use of black models in advertisements. Since the 1960's, research has been nonconclusive and debatable among academic scholars. This study focused specifically on four product-types, which were either utilitarian, value-expressive, personal, or high-involvement in nature. Participants in the study were 304 students at three Midwestern universities with similar geographic locations. An experimental design on the internet was used to conduct the research. Four different product-types were used with a total of eight advertisements. Each product had two identical advertisements with the exception of the models race: one Caucasian model and one African American model. A measurement tool with a seven point semantic scale was used by pairing 12 adjectives with polar opposites. The study focused on significant differences between product types in regard to ad appeal, company image, and product brand.

Findings and Conclusions: Participants evaluative responses to the use of black models in advertisements were not significantly different from responses to white models. Regardless of product-type, the findings indicate that the sample responded equally to advertisements regardless of the race of the model in the advertisement. This research study provides evidence to dispute the concerns advertisers might have with using minorities in advertisements.