Minority Presence and Portrayal in Mainstream Magazine Advertising

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Abstract

In the spring of 1997, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* published a study by Lawrence Bowen and Jill Schmid entitled " Minority Presence and Portrayal in Mainstream Magazine Advertising: An Update." The two professors of communication had selected editions from 1987 and 1992 of nine mass circulation magazines with a significant minority readership and coded every advertisement in those magazines for minority presence and portrayal. They found that the use of African-Americans in magazine advertisements had increased since the results of past studies had been published, but that the use of Hispanics and Asians remained minimal. They also found that the majority of the advertisements using minorities used Caucasians as well, and that advertisements featuring only minorities were very rare.

This study was conducted in order to determine if any significant change in the presence and portrayal of minorities has occurred over the past thirteen years. The same magazines as in Bowen and Schmid's (1997) study were chosen, and four issues of each magazine from 2005 were examined and coded for minority presence and portrayal.

This study indicated that the use of African-American models has increased while the use of Asian and Hispanic models remains fairly low. Stereotypes were not so prevalent in this study as they were in the previous study. This study concludes that the values of tolerance and equality are beginning to take root in our society and that increased purchasing power among minorities has forced advertisers to consider them a valuable public.
The Presence and Portrayal of Minorities in Mainstream Magazine Advertising

After reading “Minority Presence and Portrayal in Mainstream Magazine Advertising: An Update” by Lawrence Bowen and Jill Schmid (1997), this study was begun. Using various ethnic groups in mainstream advertising has been identified as a way to overcome racial barriers. However, Bowen and Schmid’s study determined that minorities were hardly ever used in advertisements, and when they were, they were used in background or subservient roles to Caucasians.

Replicating the study of Bowen and Schmid (1997), this study compiled the advertisements of the same mainstream magazines with significant minority readerships. The magazines used were Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Family Circle, Fortune, Good Housekeeping, New Yorker, Sports Illustrated and Time. Bowen and Schmid also chose their magazines from the years 1987 and 1992. This study chose four editions of each magazine from 2005. One thousand one hundred and twenty advertisements were compiled and coded in order to determine if the use of minority models in advertising had increased in the thirteen years since the earlier study. It was expected that the presence of minorities would show an increase in this study because the culture has become more racially mixed since the earlier study. Advertising agencies and companies should use studies such as this one to determine if they are using minority advertisement models in proportion to minority readerships of mainstream magazines.

Hypotheses


H₂ = The portrayal of minority models in mainstream magazine advertisements was more

Definition of Terms

For the consistency of interpretation, the following terms are defined. For the purposes of this study, the term *minorities* refers to anyone who is not Caucasian. For example, any member of the African-American, Asian, or Hispanic population is considered a minority. *Mainstream magazine* is defined as a magazine that represents a wide range of readership and demographic categories. These magazines, when taken as a sample, would represent the majority of America. The term *advertisement* is a public promotion of some product or service, or a notice to attract public attention or patronage.
A History of Minority Presence in Advertising

Magazines, in general, are a product of advertising. The advertising needs of manufacturers and technical developers made magazines the first national medium. It was J. Walter Thompson who first realized the potential that magazines held for advertising (Clark, 1989). In 1883, Cyrus Curtis began publishing *Ladies Home Journal* “…to give you people who manufacture things that American women want and buy a chance to tell them about your products” (Weiss, 1980, p. 18). The development of national markets needed national advertising, and Curtis sold plenty of advertising space for soaps, corsets, toothpaste, etc. and thus kept subscription costs low, at around $1 per year. Curtis subsequently launched *Saturday Evening Post* for men in 1897. By 1905, the magazine was grossing $1 million per year in advertisements. That amount had increased to $5 million annually by 1910 (Weiss, 1980).

Only four magazines in America claimed a readership of over 100,000 readers in 1885, but by 1899, *Ladies Home Journal* had over one million subscribers. Twenty magazines had a combined readership of 5.5 million by 1905 (Weiss, 1980). By the end of the nineteenth century, linotype, better presses, and binding machines enabled magazines to be produced quicker and cheaper and in greater volume. “The magazine world had been transformed: a revolution prodded, celebrated, and paid for by advertising” (Clark, 1989, p. 322). Conde Nast created *Vogue* in 1909 “to bait the editorial pages in such a way to lift out of all the millions of Americans just the hundred thousand cultivated persons who can buy these quality goods” (Clark, 1989, p. 323).

Minorities have been portrayed in magazine advertising since its advent, although
post Civil War, most advertisers created campaigns targeted towards Caucasians. African-Americans were portrayed in advertisements in “demeaning and stereotypical postures that appealed to the white majority” (Praeger, 1994, p. 29). The advertisements of yesterday would spark outrage today. For instance, Lautz Bro.’s and Co. soap was marketed at the turn of the century as the soap that was “Strong enough to make a Negro man white (Moog, 1990, p. 206-207). Aunt Jemima was a “mammy” type icon that has since been transformed into a sophisticated woman. Speaking of Aunt Jemima, Eldridge Cleaver wrote in Soul on Ice, “The myth of the strong black woman is the other side of the coin of the myth of the beautiful dumb blonde” (Praeger, 1994, p. 61).

Although minorities had a small role in earlier advertising, breaking minorities into the editorial pages of the magazines was another task. In 1900, a Chicago photographer, Beatrice Tonneson, was the first to use live models in a magazine spread. Forty years later, magazines began using photographs instead of illustrations on a regular basis. Advertisers soon followed suit. In 1955, the New York Post reported that over 250 African-American models were working in the city, and they were not posing as mammies and bellboys. However, they were posing for “Negro market” magazines and advertisements (Gross, 1995).

Not until 1956 did dark-skinned Eurasian model China Machado began modeling for shows by Valentino, Dior, and Cardin. She was discovered by American fashion designer Oleg Cassini, who began using black models in his fashion shows in the mid-1950s. Cassini said, “I was the first [to use black models] but I get very little credit. I picked the girls myself and used them at shows for out-of-town buyers and press. It cost me a lot of accounts in the South. It was still the time of fashion apartheid” (Gross, 1995,
When photographer Richard Avedon wanted to hire Machado, who was quite popular in New York, to shoot for *Bazaar* in Paris in January of 1959, the magazine refused at first. Avedon threatened to quit and the magazine conceded. Machado continued modeling until 1962, when *Bazaar*’s Nancy White gave her a job as senior fashion editor.

The appearance of minorities on the pages and covers of magazines has given rise to the portrayal of more minorities in advertisements (Gross, 1995).

The 1960s saw the height of the civil rights movement, and ethnic faces began appearing more often in fashion. The new Wilhelmina modeling agency, which needed to differentiate itself from the renowned Ford’s modeling agency, begin to hire “Negro models” despite industry resistance: “Asked in 1969 if they represented a trend, Willie snapped, ‘No, because Negroes aren’t temporary. We’re all people, we live in the same country. Black is beautiful’” (Gross, 1995, p. 235). Some photographers would not photograph African-American models unless the advertisement was for an African-American market. Naomi Sims, Wilhelmina’s first African-American model, started in 1967 and could not get a booking until she made the cover of *The New York Times Magazine*’s biannual *Fashions of the Times* (Gross, 1995). At a time when racial tensions were at their height, racism in magazines was still a problem, but Sims broke through the industry’s color lines.

In 1968, only months after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and during a period of intense racial tension, *Glamour* sought to make a statement by placing Katiti Kironde II on its cover. Afterwards, Ford increased its African-American models by 25%, but within three months had sized down to only six black models (Gross, 1995).
Sims, who had left Wilhelmina for Ford and was making $1,000 a week, made the cover of *Ladies' Home Journal*, the first time a dark-skinned model had appeared in the national magazine (Gross, 1995).

The situation was slightly different in Europe. Anne Klein, Halston, Stephan Burrows, Bill Blass, and Oscar de la Renta joined five French courtiers in 1973 to raise funds to restore the Palace of Versailles. The Americans used a bare stage and thirty black models. Most American designers would not use black models for fear of losing clients, but the Parisians embraced the models and put them to work (Gross, 1995). In England, Donyale Luna, became the first African-American model on the cover of British *Vogue*. Part Irish, part French, part Mexican, and part African-American, Luna was the first African-American model on the cover of British *Vogue*. Luna was a sensation in London and Paris and advanced the minority cause in the magazine industry (Gross, 1995).

Following the success of dark-skinned models in Europe, American fashion began to integrate. In 1974, Beverly Johnson became the first black model on the cover of American *Vogue*, the last major fashion magazine to use an African-American model. By 1975, every major American designer was using black models (Gross, 1995). As the fashion industry became desegregated, the advertising industry began to integrate as well. Jonathon Bond attributes these changes to the hiring of Jews, Greeks, and Italians in the creative departments of New York advertising agencies. He sited an ad for Levy's Rye Bread that read, "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's...real Jewish Rye." The picture showed an Asian man holding a piece of the bread and smiling (Bond, 1998, p. 12, 13).
According to Clark (1989), there were three stages of advertising's influence on magazines and their editorial content. In the magazine's early days, editors selected articles not only based on their appeal to readers, but also based on their influence on advertisers. In the mid-1900s, articles were specifically written to please advertisers. Beginning in the 1970s, magazines were developed for identifiable specialized audiences. These magazines were often created solely to carry advertisements to a specific target market. By the late 1980s, one in five American magazines was targeted at a specific audience, and regional magazines and magazines with precise demographics had become a trend. Consumers were broken into specific socio-economic groups so that advertisers could assess and capitalize on that group’s purchasing power. Consideration was given to economic, demographic and lifestyle characteristics, as well as geographic and psychographic information.

Marketing to Minorities

Due to increased market fragmentation and competition, marketing to minorities has become increasingly important: “Advertisers have been forced to seek out smaller and smaller markets with money to spend. Nowhere is this more marked than in advertising to ethnic groups, which reflects not just a change in status but their (cash) value to the advertiser” (Clark, 1989, p. 183).

It has also become increasingly important for advertisers to refrain from using characters that could be potentially harmful to their product image. Gone is the age of the Frito Bandito, who was phased out in 1971 under pressure from the National Mexican-American Anti-Defamation Committee, or a mammy-type Aunt Jemima, whose kerchief was replaced with pearl earrings and a lace collar in 1989. Advertisers do not want to
alienate large minority markets. In 1989, 25 million African-Americans were estimated to have an annual disposable income of $200 billion. At the time, that was more than the GNP of Denmark, Norway, or Indonesia. The Hispanic population may soon be the largest minority group in the United States. Rapid growth of Asians in America makes them another attractive market. Asians are the fastest growing and most affluent demographic segment, surpassing all other minority groups and Caucasians (U.S. Census Bureau). Their rate of immigration surpasses any other group. In 1997, the segment has $125 billion in annual purchasing power, with a median household income of $44,460 annually, 19% more than the national average (Stern, 1997). In 1990, 41% of Asian-Americans aged twenty-five or older had bachelor’s degrees (22% more than the rest of the population) and 53.3% of Asian-Americans had managerial or professional positions (higher than any other population group).

Industries and advertisers are beginning to take notice of the lucrative minority markets: “Businesses are discovering that previously ignored ethnic groups are growing in market power” (Holland, 1999, p. 1). Addressing the perceived needs of these groups equals success for companies. Specific industries have begun to target minorities. More and more beauty and cosmetic advertisements are targeting African-American women (Frith, 1997). The cigarette and liquor industries are also making a point of targeting minorities. New brands are often aimed towards specific ethnic groups. For instance, a full flavor cigarette brand in a package designed to reflect status and machismo has been created for Hispanics (Clark, 1989). Some companies hold fashion shows in minority neighborhoods with models smoking on catwalks in order to portray elegance.

Liquor companies also target minorities. For example, Martell ran a series that
portrayed a young beautiful African-American woman pouring a brandy and gazing at the reader. “I assume you drink Martell,” the copy says (Clark, 1989, p. 272). Although the main liquor segment is young affluent white males, the African-American liquor market is growing larger. *Amalgamated Publishers, Inc.*, which represented eighty-eight of the nations leading African-American newspapers in the 1980s, specifically sought liquor advertisers. Some publications were practically supported by the industry.

Minorities are also becoming increasingly diverse. Clark (1989) says that “Hispanic” is not a market. Hispanic culture varies between countries. Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans are all vastly different. The same could be said for Asian immigrants – someone from Taiwan is vastly different than someone from Korea. African-Americans and Native Americans are trying to recapture their roots. Advertisers should be conscious of these facts when designing advertisements that appeal to all American subcultures. Unlike past immigrants, today’s immigrants are keeping their language and customs alive instead of forfeiting them to become “American.” For instance, around half of the Hispanic population still speaks Spanish (Clark, 1989). Hispanics have their own TV and radio stations, newspapers and magazines: “To get under the radar of Americans today, you have to think of the country in plural as ‘the Americas.’ This requires a much greater degree of sensitivity than was previously considered” (Bond, 1998, p. 12). Bond (1998) cites the Revlon’s experience with their *Crème of Nature* campaign to emphasize his point. The hair cream was targeted at African-American females. Revlon assumed this product would do well because of the glamour and sophistication of the brand name. (All of Revlon’s campaigns were based on glamour, with glamorous models and the slogan “The world’s most beautiful women wear Revlon.”) However, the product was a huge
flop. KB&P, the agency handling the account, hired an African-American focus group moderator to talk to the target market. The focus groups called Revlon a “big white company.” Why? Although the advertisements included African-American models like Beverly Johnson, they were all lighter skinned and wore hair extensions. The Revlon name on the product was also perceived as detrimental to sales. Revlon had not previously taken time to listen to these consumers. It assumed the all-American Revlon image was for all of America. Revlon should have heeded the statement released in 1970 by Zebra Advertising, one of the first African-American owned and operated advertising agencies in New York City: “Mass advertising is color blind. It approaches the black consumer as if he were somebody’s fair haired boy. It speaks to him a foreign language. It offers him Great White Hopes. It pictures him in off-color unrealistic settings. Companies aware of this have frantically begun coloring mass advertising black. But the result isn’t black. It just looks that way to the people who create it” (Praeger, 1994, p. 167). KB&P recommended removing the Revlon name from the product or diminishing its size. The agency also recommended using a wide variety of black models to display the diversity of the community. These suggestions were greeted enthusiastically by consumers because it showed Revlon was trying to understand them and their needs. They saw this as showing respect for their community (Bond, 1998).

Advertising industry executives for racial equality in advertising say they find it disrespectful to members of the ethnic community to expect them to buy products that are not advertised to them. Even when minority models are found in advertisements, Caroline Jones, president of the Caroline Jones Agency, says to shove them into the background still a form of disrespect:
Someone hands you a picture of your high school class. The first thing you do is look for yourself. Then you look for your friends... Then you settle back and enjoy the picture as a whole. If you missed school that day and you’re not in the picture, you’d feel bad. But if someone arbitrarily cropped you out, you’d probably be angry. That’s how many blacks feel about much of the advertising presented about them. (Praeger, 1994, p. 131)

According to Clark (1989), minorities complain that ethnic faces are tucked away in the background of advertisements or used in stereotypical roles. Clark believes that the fault lies in that very few minorities hold power at ad agencies. Pepsi-Co. and Kraft General Foods have instituted special divisions in their marketing department to develop strategies for communicating to target ethnic groups. A large number of companies have turned to African-American owned agencies in order to reach that market. Coco-Cola gave its entire black consumer advertising worldwide to Burrell Advertising of Chicago, the country’s largest black-owned agency. Burrell also manages the advertising for McDonald’s and Procter & Gamble: “Blacks have to be approached as blacks. Black people are not dark skinned white people. There are cultural values which cause us to be subtly different from the majority population,” said Burrell (Clark, 1989, p.p. 183-184). Burrell also believes that African-Americans are more complex and sensitive than Caucasian consumers: “If I can sell to black consumers, I can sell to anybody,” said Burrell (Clark, 1989, p. 184).

Advertisers must pay attention to differences in the Hispanic market. For instance, Hispanics are more likely to favor big name brands and to be brand loyal. Advertisements to Hispanic publications depict family life with women cooking for their men and serving
them drinks. An official at Goya Foods, Inc. once told the *Wall Street Journal* that if their advertisements were translated into English, American women’s groups would be ready to sue the company (Clark, 1989).

Not only is it disrespectful for advertisers to ignore minorities, but it is also disrespectful to use minority models in stereotypical roles. Although advertisers did not invent stereotypes, copywriters do not hesitate to use them. Copywriters know that the public recognize such stereotypes and they hope people will react to them in a predictable way. This is not only true in the African-American musician/athlete role, but also in the roles given to Hispanics and Asians. Cortes (2004) says that Hispanics and Asians are represented by those that have the right “look” not necessarily the right heritage. They appear the way that Caucasians believe they should appear, but members of the Hispanic or Asian ethnic group can tell if the models are not truly Hispanic or Asian. Advertisers also confine minority readers to minority targeted magazines, such as *Ebony*, as if they did not read mainstream magazines at all: “For the most part, advertising appears suspiciously like that same old segregated neighborhood that we knew before the 1960s supposedly brought us integration. …Minorities may seldom be deemed proper for selling cosmetics or shampoo, but they sure can hype sneakers, hamburgers and beer” (Cortes, 2004, para. 4, 5).

Advertisers must not only begin to include minority models in their advertisements, but they must also learn to communicate with minorities in the same dialect. As was previously mentioned, Revlon believed that it was advertising its Crème of Nature product to African-American women (Bond, 1998). However, by using models with light colored skin and hair extensions, they further alienated their target market. In order to
communicate with minority markets, advertisers must seek to understand the way minority groups communicate and speak to them in that way.

Advertisers also need to consider the aspect of identification. In a study entitled “Audience Recall of AIDS PSA’s among US and International College Students,” Jung-Sook Lee and William R. Davie (1997) found that recall was related in part to cultural identity. International students showed the greatest resistance to advertising in general. They found nothing to culturally identify with: “There were no international characters in these spots to enhance identification for those members of the audience... The finding demonstrates the importance of designing messages for cultural out-groups” (Lee, 1997, p. 15).

Corliss Gren (1999) also found in his study “Ethnic Evaluations of Advertising: Interaction Effects of Strength of Ethnic Identification, Media Placement, and Degree of Racial Composition” that how individuals identify with his ethnic group is likely to play a role in how info is processed and how marketing-related decisions are made.

Hazel Warlaumont’s 1997 study on schema-inconsistent advertising also found that designing advertisements that people do not expect gain their attention. Schemata are the expectations that people hold, the patterns of information based on past events or experiences and stored in long term memory. Advertisements must involve the reader. A variety of design elements induce viewer involvement or cognitive effort and time spent with the advertisement: “Foss points out that involvement with the stimuli is necessary in order to make meaning” (Warlaumont, 1997, p. 40). Advertisers know that they must catch a person’s attention and garner his interest to create a desire in order to get the person to take action and consume the product. Since schema-inconsistent advertisements
grab the readers’ attention and pique their interest, advertisers should consider using the unexpected in advertisements.

Consumers often form more positive attitudes towards the brand or product when they become involved with the ad. The longer the individual takes to process information about brands, the more response he will have. Magazines are already conducive to reflection and introspection because the audience is taking time out to sit and read: “Magazines have power because the readers tend to be passionately interested in particular subjects reflected in the editorial content. This is a great place to find zealots for a brand. And unlike TV, which is a passive medium, people who are reading magazines are in a frame of mind to concentrate on what they are reading” (Bond, 1998, p. 152). Audiences can ponder the meaning behind advertisements, and when advertisements are schema-inconsistent, it only facilitates the process:

... involvement can take place when conflicting schema collide, causing an “interruption” in thinking patterns. The resulting conflict resolution can lead to involvement (cognitive involvement and time). The degree of dissimilarity between a person’s schema and message format appears to make a difference in attention, recognition, and memory. (Warlaumont, 1997, p. 41)

Subjects’ schema were more firmly set for advertisements than for other forms of communication. In Warlaumont’s study, 75% of the respondents answered questions about the advertisements they viewed in a connotative manner, indicating “a search for meaning as evidenced by evaluation rather than the literal identification found in denotative responses” (Warlaumont, 1997, p. 41, 46).

Some consideration has been given to why advertisers have not used more minority
models, or why they insisted on confining minorities to backgrounds and minor roles:
“Advertisers may be reluctant to ‘colorize’ because that may alienate the white consumer” (Praeger, 1994, p. 167). Gren (1999) noted that past studies have sampled mass circulation media, not advertisements that are racially targeted, which may affect results.

However, neither of these reasons is substantial. To ignore the buying power of three large ethnic groups in order to cut the risk of alienating some members of another ethnic group is inconceivable: “It makes sense to market to your audience, and if that audience is racially mixed, smart marketers are going to include minorities in their advertising” (Bowen and Schmid, 1997, p. 142).

Advertising and Ethnic Representation

Advertisers must realize that minority groups do not communicate the same way as Caucasians. As in the earlier example of Revlon’s Crème of Nature, minorities do not accept white versions of themselves. African-Americans communicate differently from Caucasians, and it can be assumed that other minority groups do as well. An ethnic group is not an “aberration of whiteness.” There are distinct cultural groups with distinct communication styles:

With legislation in place to desegregate schools, African-American parents came to understand that access to schools did not automatically equal a good education. The reality was that the dangers their children faced in learning situations, mediated by teachers unprepared to cope with differences in the learning and communication styles of their children, was every bit as damaging as the catcalls and baseball bats of the protesters. (Hecht et al., 2002, p. 199)
Do people assume advertisements with white models are for all people while advertisements including minorities are for ethnic people only? Do advertisers miss key markets by assuming that advertisements for ethnic products that feature ethnic models should only run in ethnic publications? It cannot be assumed that advertisements featuring white models will seem applicable to ethnic consumers.

Other questions that the results raise are, “Are minority markets overlooked unintentionally, or do they seem unimportant?” and “Do advertisements encourage the ghetto mindset by only advertising products such as liquor and cigarettes directly to minorities?”

Do magazines specifically targeted at Hispanics and blacks cut down on the number of ethnic advertisements in mainstream magazines? Do advertisers assume that minorities only read minority publications and ignore mainstream magazines? All but one of the magazines in this study did not included minority readerships in the MRI’s of their press kits. *Sports Illustrated* was the only publication to deem that information essential for future advertisers. Does this influence the number of minority advertisements placed in mainstream magazines? If the fashion gurus learned almost fifty years ago to use minority models, why are advertisers so slow to follow suit? Will archaeologists believe that we were an almost completely white society when they study our advertisements? Advertisements do not represent the census figures of the United States. Marshal McLuhan said, “Historians and archaeologists will one day discover that the advertisements of our times are the richest and most faithful daily reflection that any society ever made of its entire range of activities” (Frith, 1997, p. 1). If McLuhan’s words are true, if advertisements are a reflection of society, then advertisers are painting only
half the picture. According to Carol Weis, author of *The School on Madison Avenue*, advertising sends vastly different messages to each of its target markets. To affluent whites, the message seems to be to buy every luxury and convenience and to enjoy life. To African-Americans, the message seems to be that they can only catch a glimpse of the American dream. A study by students at the University of Wisconsin showed that African-American models are generally used in advertisements for everyday items such as chewing gum and beer (Nebeker, 2002). She says the message to other minorities is that they are unimportant, their money is unimportant, and they are not worth the bother of placing in advertisements: “It’s hardly surprising that they begin to feel resentful or that divisions between black and white, rich and poor, young and old are still so deep in the United States” (Weiss, 1980, p. 92).

In his book *Culture and the Ad*, William O’Barr (1994) asked readers to suppose an advertising museum does an exhibit on “African-Americans in Advertising in the Twentieth Century”: “The images have spoken about race and social status, about equality and the lack there of” (p. 107). The advertisements make minorities stand out as different and outside the intended audience for much of the century. Although the civil rights movement brought economic changes to minorities that increased purchasing power, particularly for African-Americans, little true integration of black and white imagery in general media will continue to promote disenfranchisement and disillusionment of African-American’s in the U.S. (Moog, 1990): “Psychologically, it is important for positive superheroes like Bill Cosby, Ray Charles, and Whitney Houston to be advertised in the general media along with Jell-O and ... Coke. ...But when pictures of superheroes, such as athletes, dominate images of blacks in advertising, unconscious
stereotypes can become even more entrenched” (p. 208).

Minority children need to develop a sense of who they are and what they can become, not just in their community but in the global community: “The characters, the models, and the symbols that represent blacks in advertising have always been important to blacks, because they are aware that they determined how they feel about themselves and their race and how others perceive them as well” (Praeger, 1994, p. 43).

Advertisers must become aware of the problem of presenting homogenized images of people to capture a broader mass market, and of using stereotypes in an effort to reach specific segments of the market. Consumers are growing less willing to buy products if they do not accept images of themselves and of loved ones that the advertisements use. Consumers have a way to mete revenge, and advertisers should listen respectfully (Moog, 1994).

The results of Bowen and Schmid’s (1997) study were disturbing from a communication standpoint. It seemed as though advertisers did not realize that the United States is a nation comprised of many ethnic groups and minorities. They analyzed a total of 1,969 advertisements. Of that number, only 143 advertisements used mixed ethnic groups with a minority model was shown with a Caucasian model. The number of African-American models had risen slightly from 6.8% in 1987 to 10.6% in 1992, but the use of Asians and Hispanics was still quite limited. The use of Asian models had decreased from 2.5% to 1.8%, and the use of Hispanic models had fallen from 1.5% to 0.6%. Of the 143 mixed ethnic advertisements, 56.6% included one minority with a group of Caucasian models. The ratio of Caucasian to minority models was averaged for both studied years at 2.9 to 1. Minority models were used prominently in less than 25%
of the advertisements. The majority of these advertisements showed the mixed ethnic
groups in formal settings, such as at work. Very few showed minorities and Caucasians in
social settings.

Of the magazines studied, all nine had high minority readerships: “According to
Simmons 1993 Study of Media and Markets, the Hispanic readership of Life was 9.9%,
yet the inclusion of Hispanics in Life ’s advertisements was only 0.8%” (Bowen and
Schmid, 1997, p. 142). By contrast, Caucasian representation in advertisements was
substantially higher than its readership. For example, Bowen and Schmid (1997) found
that Life had an 83.2% Caucasian readership, but its advertisements gave Caucasians a
95.9% representation. Only in Time and Sports Illustrated were African-American
models overrepresented, and in Sports Illustrated, the use of African-American athletes
in advertisements resulted in the higher numbers.

Compared to census figures from the years studied, minorities were heavily
underrepresented in magazine advertisements. The use of minorities in single race
advertisements was minimal, especially for Asians and Hispanics. Another problem was
the way minorities were portrayed:

Despite the significant increase in the use of Black adult males in the ads
analyzed, in many cases the portrayal of the Black male could be characterized as
stereotypical. For example, Black males were…shown as athletes. Along with
well-known sports figures like Michael Jordan, Ken Griffey, Jr., and Bo Jackson,
there were also ‘unknown’ athletes dressed as basketball, baseball, or football
players. Often, these Black athletes were shown with White team members.
(Bowen and Schmid, 1997, p. 143)
The study found that African-American models were also frequently portrayed as musicians: “On the face of it, there is nothing inherently wrong with portraying Blacks as musicians or athletes. What it fails to do, however, is to recognize that minority groups have varied interests, skills, and talents” (Bowen and Schmid, 1997, p. 143).

Minority models were also used overwhelmingly in public service advertisements and government sponsored advertisements. Many companies seeking to show their community involvement ran advertisements depicting inner-city minorities cleaning graffiti or winning scholarships. One Toyota advertisement showed an African-American boy holding a fish, and his teacher saying, “This is the first fish Jawan had seen that wasn’t surrounded by French Fries” (Bowen and Schmid, 1997, p. 143). Bowen and Schmid (1997) wrote in their report:

The inclusion of minorities in these ads does not seem to be based on target marketing. Instead, they are being used to establish a company position or positive image. The consumer is led to believe that since the company cares about minorities and their problems we should feel good about the company and show our support by buying its products. At the same time, the message that minorities are in need of some assistance from the larger community is consistently reinforced. (p. 143)

If one were only allowed to view magazine advertisements, he might come to believe that it is a white world, and minorities are allowed to live in it. The advertisements also communicated that the only thing African-Americans are good at are sports and music, and the advertisements communicate that minorities are in need of assistance from Caucasians if they will ever accomplish or achieve anything in life. What
effect does this have on the minority reader? Advertisements that communicate this way can influence a minority reader’s self-concept and self-esteem, and negatively create self-fulfilling prophecy.

*Advertising’s Impact on Society: Theoretical Perspective*

Advertisers must also accept that although they sell a product, they also sell how to look, how to act, and how to be, affecting the consumer’s self-concept. Albert Bandura’s social learning theory states that people learn certain beliefs and behaviors based on observation of other people’s behaviors. Bandura said, “Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action” (Bandura, The Theory in Practice Database, “Social Learning Theory”). As people observe the world around them, including what they see through media and specifically in magazine advertisements, their view of the world is shaped and the way they act and interact with others is formed. Advertisers are not ignorant of social learning theory, although they may not call it by that name: “The most common (and pervasive) examples of social learning situations are television commercials. Commercials suggest that drinking a certain beverage or using a particular hair shampoo will make us popular and win the admiration of attractive people. Depending upon the component processes involved (such as attention or motivation), we may model the behavior shown in the commercial and buy the product being advertised” (Bandura, The Theory in Practice Database, “Social Learning Theory,” paragraph 4). This theory on television commercials
may also be applied to printed advertisements.

George Gerbner's cultivation theory suggests that constant exposure to a specific image of an object can lead to distorted beliefs about that object. As is social learning theory, cultivation theory is also applicable to minorities and their view of advertising. Although Gerbner's theory originally sprang from his study of televised violence and its effects on audiences, the same principles apply with any medium, including magazine advertisements:

   Essentially, the theory states that heavy exposure to mass media ... creates and cultivates attitudes more consistent with a media conjured version of reality than with what actual reality is. The cultivation theory asserts that heavy viewers' attitudes are cultivated primarily by what they watch on television. Gerbner views this television world as 'not a window on or reflection of the world, but a world in itself.' ... Proponents of the Cultivation Theory attempt to show how television cultivates a homogenous outlook on life, revealing a lack of diversity among heavy viewers. (Gerbner, "Cultivation Theory," paragraph 5)

According to Gerbner's theory, people viewing large numbers of magazine advertisements will begin to view the world the way the agencies paint it. When advertisements leave minority models out of the picture, audiences may begin to see the world as monochromatic, and those who are not of the right color will be overlooked in everyday life. When minorities are placed in the background of advertisements or in lower roles than Caucasians, the viewers may begin to believe that minorities are not important in society. Malcolm X stated, "The American white man today subconsciously still regards the black man as something below himself. And you will never get the
American white man to accept the so-called Negro as an integrated part of his society until the image of the Negro the white man has is changed and until the image the Negro has of himself is also changed" (Praeger, 1994, p. 43). Advertisers, in accordance with cultivation theory, play a role in changing audience perceptions of minorities.

Ethnic groups fight not only for fair housing and employment, but also for fair advertising. They recognize the power of advertising to influence race relations and to “ameliorate” the perceptions that minorities have of themselves (Praeger, 1994, p. 131): “Ads don’t just sell goods and services, but also social and cultural texts about ourselves” (Frith, 1997, p. 1). Imagine going through life unrepresented, as if invisible:

When members of a particular subgroup never see anyone who resembles them in advertisements – or in any of our culture’s self-portraits – they get the message that they are nonpersons in the larger society. In their families or in their neighborhoods, they may be the greatest, but when it comes to participating in the images and symbols of success and happiness that are held up – rightly or wrongly – as cultural standards by advertising, they’re nowhere to be seen. Even their money doesn’t count, isn’t solicited. In short, they don’t exist. (Moog, 1990, p. 191)

Not only will including minorities generate a positive human image of that subgroup, but it will also generate a positive human image for the company being advertised. There are mutual benefits to including minority models in advertisements.

The results of the study beg several questions. The first of which is, “What effect does the presence and portrayal of minorities have psychologically on minority readers?” In her book *Values for Interpersonal Communication*, Patricia A. Scileppi (2005) says,
“The starting point for all your interpersonal communication is your concept of self...A communicator who thinks well of himself or herself is likely to think well of others; conversely, if we do not love ourselves, we will struggle at accepting and loving other people” (Scileppi, 2005, p. 212). The way people relate to others is directly influenced by the way they feel about themselves. When minorities see themselves in the background of advertisements, stereotyped in advertisements, and told that they need assistance in order to achieve in life – or worse yet, do not even see themselves in advertisements at all – it affects their self-concept. They are bombarded with advertisements that tell them they are not important and that they cannot accomplish the same goals Caucasians can. The advertisements can cause minorities to feel inadequate in comparison with Caucasians, which in turn may effect communication between racial groups and cause racial tension.

An integral part of self-concept is self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to ones feelings of self-worth. Positive self-esteem is required for a healthy life. Self-esteem, like self-concept, affects the way a person views those around him. A person with low self-esteem feels threatened by others and therefore does not form relationships with others and will communicate with others in a negative manner, if communicating at all. Psychologist Nathaniel Branden said, “The nature of his self-evaluation has profound effects on a man’s thinking processes, emotions, desires, values, and goals. It is the single most significant key to his behavior” (Scileppi, 2005, p. 227). Branden is referring to self-fulfilling prophecy.

Self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when a person expects something to happen, making it more likely to happen. It can originate within the self, or in the concepts of others. When advertisements portray minorities as poor individuals needing a hand up in
life, they will begin to see themselves in this way. If a minority child or teenager never sees pictures of Hispanic doctors or African-American lawyers, he will never set lofty goals to achieve. Others are telling him he cannot make it in life – unless, of course, he is an athlete or musician. If a minority child does not have athletic ability or an ear for music, what is left for him? Scileppi (2005) explains the effects of self-fulfilling prophecy by saying, “The person who conceives himself to be a victim of injustice, one ‘who was meant to suffer,’ will invariably find circumstances to verify his opinions” (p. 228).

Advertisers and editors must realize the effects that their advertisements have on others, particularly on minorities. The advertisements that Bowen and Schmid researched in their 1997 study – a study that was representative of the population – casts minorities as unimportant and unskilled. This can affect the self-concept and the self-esteem of minority readers, causing tension between minority groups and Caucasians. The advertisements also create a self-fulfilling prophecy for minorities to combat. In order for all Americans to realize their fullest potential and to communicate with each other in a harmonious way, advertisers need to begin including minorities in a way more representative of the population and of readerships, and breaking the stereotypical roles that they place minority models in.

Method

Sample

This study sampled the advertisements in eight mass circulation magazines. The selected magazines were *Cosmopolitan*, *Esquire*, *Family Circle*, *Fortune*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Life*, *New Yorker*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Time*. Four issues of each
magazine were selected for a total of thirty-six magazines and 1,120 populated advertisements. The months selected for each magazine were February, May, August, and November because this gave the sample a wide range. However, the October 31 edition of *Fortune* was used and the December 12 issue of *Sports Illustrated* was studied in place of the November editions. This sampling will show the progress that has been made in the thirteen years since Bowen and Schmid’s (1997) study was completed. February was chosen because it is traditionally known as Black History Month and the researcher wanted to know if the use of African-American models would rise in February.

Caucasians readerships for magazines range between 61% for *Esquire* and 78% for *New Yorker*. African-American readerships range between 10% for *New Yorker* and 27% for *Esquire*. The magazine with the lowest Hispanic readership is *New Yorker* with 6.3%. *Sports Illustrated* has the highest Hispanic readership, with 11.8% of its readers being of that ethnic group. Asians have the lowest representation in the readerships of all of the magazines surveyed. *Time* had the highest percentage of Asian readers at 5.4%, and *New Yorker* followed with an Asian readership of 4.9%. *Esquire* has an Asian readership of 3%. *Sports Illustrated* does not count Asian readers, but rather classifies them as “other.” This category, which includes American Indians and immigrants of all races and ethnic backgrounds, constituted 0.01% of *Sports Illustrated*’s readership. The percentage of this readership corresponds to U.S. Census figures on American Indians and immigrants from 2000.

According to the U.S. Census of 2000, the total population of the United States was 281,421,906. Women made up 50.9% of the population while men constituted
49.1%. The median age for U.S. citizens in 2000 was 35.3. In 2000, 75.1% of the population was Caucasian, 12.3% was African-American, and 3.6% was Asian. Hispanics made up 12.5% of the population – more than African-Americans. The median household income in 2000 was $41,994. This means that the majority of Americans would be considered middle class. As occupations go, 33.6% of the population was employed in professional / white collar jobs, 41.6% was employed in service, sales, or office occupations, and 24.7% were employed as blue collar/laborers.

Procedure

Following the model in Bowen and Schmid’s (1997) study, the advertisements were coded for ethnic group (Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian or other) as well as for gender, age group, occupation and product. Age was coded for under 18, 19-30, 31-54, 55+, “mixed age group,” and “not determined” (for infants and toddlers.) Occupation was broken into eight categories: white collar/professional, middle class working, blue collar/laborer, family/kids, celebrity, mixed occupation, other, and unknown. Product categories were as follows – fashion/accessories, personal grooming aids, automobile, tobacco, alcohol, food/drink, retail stores, electronic/computers, home furnishings, travel, entertainment, public service announcements, finance/insurance, medical and other. Bowen and Schmid did not use a medical category in their study, but the number of advertisements for medications, surgeries and procedures was large enough that the researcher believed a separate category should be created.

When analyzing advertisements that used both minorities and Caucasians, the role of the minority models and their relationship to the Caucasians were taken into account. Relationships were coded for formal (e.g. work), informal (social situations) and none or
unable to determine. The level of interaction was coded as none, limited (in the same setting but not conversing, etc.), and high (e.g. involvement in the same activity or face to face interaction). Role centrality of minority models was coded as major, minor, background, or neutral (no specific model occupying a major role).

There were three delimitations in this study. The first was race, because this was a study of the use of minority models in magazine advertisements, and it was also a study of interaction between races. The study was also delimited by occupation, because occupation was chosen as a means for seeing how minority models were represented. The study was restricted to magazine advertisements. This study was limited by the inability to determine a person’s race and the inability to determine a person’s occupation.

The advertisements were coded and placed in an Excel spreadsheet. They were then analyzed using a software program.

Results

Of the 1,120 advertisements surveyed in this study, only 384 contained minorities, 178 of these portrayed mixed ethnic groups, the vast majority of which included Caucasians. Two hundred and twelve advertisements, or 18.9 %, featured only minority models.

February was chosen because it is traditionally known as Black History Month but the use of African-American models did not increase during this month.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Representation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian only</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American only</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic only</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian only</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other only</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Ethnic</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the percentage of advertisements with mixed ethnic and minority groups may seem small, the use of minorities in advertising has steadily increased over the past decade. In 1953, only .05% of advertisements portrayed minority models. By 1986, the percentage had risen to 4.4%, and Bowen and Schmid’s (1997) study, which this study is replicating, found that minority models were used in 10.8% of advertisements in the combined years of 1987 and 1992.

The average number of models per ad was 2.1. The maximum number of models in a single advertisement was twenty-three models, and they were all African-American. The advertisement was for a television series about war in Africa and depicted a group of soldiers.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Models</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2369</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ethnic representation in the study’s sample was not representative of the population. The advertisements overrepresented all ethnic groups except “other,” which was underrepresented by 4.8%. According to the census of 2000, Caucasians comprised 75.1% of the population of the United States. Including mixed ethnic advertisements, Caucasians were included in 81.0% of the advertisements. However, African-Americans made up 12.3% of the population in 2000, but were represented in 18.2% of the sampled advertisements. In 2000, 3.6% of the population was Asian, but the advertisements
represented Asians 7.0% of the time. Hispanics made up 12.5% of the population in 2000, but were portrayed in 13.5% of the advertisements. The only underrepresented ethnic group was the "other" category. People of ethnicities other than those listed above made up 6.5% of the population in 2000, but were represented in only 1.7% of the advertisements.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Representation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mixed ethnic advertisements, as defined by this study, included a white person with a minority. That minority could be African-American, Hispanic or Asian, or be classified in the "other" category. Of the 178 mixed-ethnic advertisements, six contained no Caucasian models, leaving 172 to be analyzed in accordance with the definition in this study. The majority of mixed ethnic advertisements (72.7%) portrayed between one and three Caucasian models. One hundred and nine of the mixed ethnic advertisements, or 63.4%, presented African-American models. Forty-nine (28.5%) used Asian models, and seventy-one (41.3%) used Hispanic models. Seven mixed ethnic advertisements used models classified as "other." These people generally appeared to be Middle Eastern or American Indian.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models in Mixed Ethnic Advertisements</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage of Advertisements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the mixed ethnic advertisements contained one to two African-American models, with one African-American model appearing in 75 of the mixed ethnic advertisements, and two African-American models appearing in 22 of the mixed ethnic advertisements. The most African-American models to appear in a single mixed ethnic advertisement were nine. Forty-one of the forty-nine Asian inclusive advertisements used only one Asian model, and no more than four Asian models ever appeared in a single mixed ethnic advertisement. Fifty-three of the seventy-one Hispanic inclusive mixed ethnic advertisements used only one model, and as with Asians, no more than four Hispanic models appeared at the same time. The seven advertisements that used "other" ethnic models only used one model at a time.

*Ethnic Groups by Product*

As was previously discussed, the portrayal of minorities involves the products that they are advertising. Nebeker et. al. (2002) found that African-American models were assigned to common products such as chewing gum and alcohol. Bowen and Schmid (1997) found that African-Americans were over-represented in public service advertisements, and more likely to appear in advertisements featuring financial/insurance products, automobiles and travel. Asians and Hispanics were also more likely to appear in travel advertisements. Portraying minority models in this way speaks volumes about advertisers’ views of minority status and purchasing power.

Personal grooming advertisements were the most abundant, with 254 in that category. Fashion advertisements followed with 114 advertisements. Medical advertisements added 106 to the total. There were 99 food and drink advertisements, 89
electronics advertisements, 79 entertainment advertisements and 58 financial/insurance advertisements. Forty-seven public service advertisements, 43 travel advertisements and 31 automobile advertisements were added to the mix. Home furnishings, tobacco and alcohol added 18, 16, and 16 advertisements respectively. There were also 131 advertisements that were placed into the “other” category.

With the exception of the tobacco category, Caucasian models never appeared in less than 70% of these advertisements. Caucasians appeared in 68.8% of tobacco advertisements, and appeared in almost 90% of the “other” category advertisements.

The financial/insurance advertisement category featured African-American models in 44.8% of its advertisements. An insurance company was running an advertising campaign featuring a Caucasian man asking an African-American man for financial advice. This campaign was running in the majority of the surveyed magazines, and it ran for the entire year; this is the most likely cause for the high number of African-American models in the financial/insurance category. It should be noted that this man was featured as a white collar worker, and he had the majority role in the advertisements. While this should be considered progress for the portrayal of African-Americans in advertising, it must be remembered that 31.9% of public service advertisements portrayed African-American models. That percentage is higher than any other minority percentage in the public service announcement category. The alcohol, food and drink, and entertainment categories featured African-American models in almost 30% of their advertisements, and almost 20% of tobacco advertisements displayed African-American models. The home furnishings and medical categories used African-American models in 5.6% and 6.6% of their advertisements, respectively. The rest of the categories used
African-American models between 10% and 20% of the time.

Asian models were generally featured in 19.1% of public service advertisements. This is interesting, considering that Asians are the most affluent ethnic group in the United States. It must be considered, however, that not all public service advertisements feature models as people in need of help. Asians appeared in 18.6% of travel advertisements. The Asian presence in all other categories was below 10%. It is interesting that the categories of alcohol and retail stores used no Asian models, and that the categories of home furnishings and tobacco only used one Asian model in one advertisement each. Asians consume tobacco and alcohol, decorate their houses and shop in retail stores. However, these industries did not find it necessary to entice Asians to buy their products with advertisements.

Hispanics were featured in 26.3% of retail store advertisements, 18.8% of both tobacco and alcohol advertisements, and 17.0% of public service advertisements. The high numbers in the tobacco and alcohol categories are consistent with the fact that these industries are targeting Hispanics.

Five “other” minority models appeared in personal grooming advertisements. Three were used in medical advertisements, and two were portrayed in entertainment advertisements. One “other” minority appeared in a fashion, alcohol, food and drink, electronics and public service announcement categories.

*Ethnic Groups by Occupation*

As for the type of occupation featured, 680 advertisements, or 60.7%, were coded as undetermined. One hundred and forty-six advertisements were coded for celebrities, and 126 were coded for family and children. Seventy-eight advertisements featured white
collar workers, 49 displayed middle class/working people and 11 showed blue collar workers. Fifteen advertisements displayed mixed occupational groups and fifteen were coded as other.

Caucasians were pictured in 83.6% of celebrity advertisements and 81.5% of the advertisements featuring white collar workers. Caucasians were not displayed in such large numbers in any other occupational category, although they were featured in 100% of the mixed occupation advertisements. Caucasians were included in 79.6% of middle class/working advertisements. Seventy-seven percent of family and children advertisements featured Caucasians, and 72.7% of blue collar/laborer advertisements portrayed Caucasians. The “other” category presented Caucasians 46.7% of the time.

African-Americans appeared in 46.7% of “other” category advertisements. This is most likely caused by a number of television specials and movies that were advertised that featured African-Americans. These broadcasts included a television special about slavery and a movie about wars in Rwanda and other African nations. The actors and actresses in these movies were not coded as celebrities because none of them were well-known. Surprisingly, 26.3% of middle class/working people were portrayed by African-American models, and 20.5% of white collar workers were portrayed by African-Americans. Mixed occupational advertisements featured African-Americans 26.7% of the time, and the celebrity category portrayed African-Americans 24.0% of the time. Singer Beyonce Knowles was featured in many advertisements, as was Tweet, another African-American singer. Athletes such as Serena Williams were also used in several advertisements. African-Americans were portrayed as blue collar workers in 18.2% of blue collar advertisements, and were placed in 14.3% of family and children
Although Asian models appeared in 20% of mixed occupational advertisements, they were largely featured as white collar professionals (15.4% of white collar advertisements featured Asians). According to Barbara Stern and Charles Taylor (1997) this is in line with demographic information about Asians, showing that at least one minority group was portrayed correctly. Stern and Taylor (1997) contend that Asians are the most affluent demographic segment, with some $125 billion in annual purchasing power. In 1990, Asians boasted a median household income of $44,460 annually, 19% more than the national average, and 41% of Asian-Americans aged 25 and older had bachelor’s degrees (22% more than the rest of the population.) Fifty-three point three% of Asian-Americans had managerial/professional positions in 1990, higher than any other population group. Accordingly, Asians were never portrayed as blue collar workers, or as “other” workers. They were pictured as families with children 8.7% of the time. Considering that Asians come from a very family oriented culture, this number could have been higher. Companies seeking to market themselves as family companies could find Asian models the best way to picture themselves as such. Asians were featured in 6.1% of middle class/working advertisements, and featured as celebrities 2.7% of the time.

Hispanics were featured in 18.2% of blue collar/laborer advertisements and in 14.3% of middle class/working advertisements. They were featured in 10.3% of white collar advertisements. Like Asians, Hispanics are also highly family-oriented. Hispanics were featured in 11.9% of family and children advertisements. Unlike Asians, Hispanics were featured in every occupational category, with the lowest representation being 6.7%
of “other” advertisements. Hispanics were featured in 8.9% of celebrity advertisements.

Minorities classified as “other” were most represented as blue collar laborers (9.1%) and were in 6.7% of both “other” and mixed occupational advertisements. Although “other” minorities were placed in every single occupational category, they were represented in around 2% of the other categories.

*Ethnic Groups by Age and Gender*

The majority of advertisements displayed younger people. Five hundred and fourteen advertisements featured models in the 19-30 age range, and 276 displayed those aged 31-54. One hundred and sixty-seven models were categorized as mixed age group, and 111 were coded as eighteen or younger. Fifty advertisements were placed in the fifty-five or older category, and the ages in two advertisements were not determined. Minorities were more likely to be included in the younger age groups, as well as in the mixed age group.

Caucasians were featured in 86% of fifty-five or older advertisements, and 81.5% of 31-54 advertisements. Caucasians were displayed as 19-30 years old in 80% of those advertisements. Caucasian models aged 18 or younger were in 68.5% of those advertisements. Caucasians were featured in 90.4% of mixed age groups.

African-American models were generally pictured as 18 or younger (22.5%). They were in 18.5% of age 31-54 advertisements, and in 15.2% of the age 19-30 advertisements, but only in 6.0% of 55 and older advertisements. African-American models were featured in mixed age groups 28.1% of the time.

Asians were distributed much the same as African-American models. Asians were portrayed in 10.8% of 18 and younger advertisements. They were featured in almost 5%
of age 19-30 and age 31-54 advertisements, but only in 8.0% of 55 and older advertisements. They were portrayed in 16.8% of mixed age advertisements.

As with the other minority groups, Hispanics were featured in the 55 and older category only 2.0% of the time. Unlike the other minority groups, however, more Hispanics were featured in the age 19-30 (13.6%) and age 31-54 (12.7%) groups than in the 18 and younger group (11.7%). Hispanics were displayed in 19.2% of mixed age group advertisements.

Those models categorized as “other” appeared most frequently in mixed age groups (3.6%) and as 18 or younger (2.7%). They only appeared in four advertisements, or .8%, that featured 19-30 year olds, and were not represented at all in the 55 and older category. They were featured in 1.8% of age 31-54 year old advertisements.

Almost half of the advertisements – 48.8% - portrayed female models only. Advertisements with only male models made up 27.1% of the sample, and advertisements with mixed gender groups made up 23.4%. There were eight advertisements, or 0.7%, in which gender could not be determined.

*Mixed Ethnic Groups by Role Centrality*

Twenty of the mixed ethnic advertisements (11.6%) showed the African-American model(s) in the majority role. Five showed Asians in a majority role, and nine showed Hispanics in the majority role. Both groups were generally used in advertisements that classified role centrality as “neutral.” The “other” category models also appeared most frequently in neutral positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Groups by Role</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interaction in Mixed Ethnic Groups

Interaction setting was also important to this study. Only sixty-eight of 1,120 advertisements (6%) showed Caucasians and minorities interacting informally. In forty-four advertisements, African-Americans were pictured interacting formally with their Caucasian counterparts. It is important to note that they were interacting informally in forty of those advertisements. However, it should also be noted that twenty-five of the advertisements featuring African-Americans depicted no interaction between the Caucasian model and the African-American model.

The majority of Asian models also appeared in formal settings, with twenty advertisements using Asian models depicting this interaction setting. Fifteen appeared informally in advertisements with Caucasian models.

Only in the Hispanic category did more models appear informally than formally, with thirty-four of the advertisements showing informal settings as opposed to twenty-two showing formal settings. This may, however, be attributed to the fact that many of the advertisements depicted a woman lying in the arms of a Hispanic man.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Groups by Setting</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interaction level was also important in this study. The way the Caucasian models and minority models interacted said much about the advertisers view of race relations or
racial tensions. While forty-one advertisements showed no interaction between minorities and Caucasian models, fifty-four showed limited interaction and seventy-seven, or 44.8%, showed high interaction levels. Bowen and Schmid (1997) study found that 18.5% of advertisements showed a high interaction level between minorities and Caucasians.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Groups by Interaction Level</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Limited</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Discussion

It is not surprising that the presence of minority models has increased and the minority portrayal has improved since Bowen and Schmid (1997) compiled the data for their study. The ideas of tolerance and racial harmony have been preached and have begun to take root during the thirteen years between Bowen and Schmid’s data collection and this study. As understanding between ethnic groups grows and as minorities – particularly Hispanics - move closer and closer to becoming the majority in the United States, the use of models from various ethnic groups should move towards equilibrium.

Another reason may be the increased purchasing power of minorities. William M. O’Barr (1994) noted that African-American purchasing power drastically increased in the years following the Civil Rights Movement, and the purchasing power has continued to climb. As was previously mentioned, Stern and Taylor (1997) found that Asians are the most affluent demographic group, with a 19% higher annual income than the national average in 1990. As Hispanics continue to immigrate to this country and grow as an
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ethnic group, they are taking higher paying jobs and opening their own businesses, increasing their purchasing power.

There were many advertisements that showed every minority group. For instance, Dove is running a campaign called “Real Beauty” that features the photographs of several women, and each ethnic group was represented in those advertisements. However, there was no interaction between ethnic groups since the models were in mug shots. Other advertisements featured groups of people that had every ethnic group involved in an informal way, but those advertisements were few and far between. There were also several advertisements for various perfumes that showed mixed ethnic couples that were involved romantically. Usually, the picture showed a white woman with a Hispanic man. This could be the play on the old stereotype that Hispanic men are passionate lovers, but it at least broke through ethnic boundaries on a romantic level.

The research shows that perceptions of African-Americans are becoming increasingly positive. Many African-American models were featured in white collar roles and in majority roles. Many of them also had high levels of interaction with Caucasians, although the interaction was usually formal in nature. The use of African-American models corresponds the readership of the mainstream magazines.

Caucasians readerships for magazines ranged between 61% for *Esquire* and 78% for *New Yorker*. African-American readerships range between 10% for *New Yorker* and 27% for *Esquire*. The magazine with the lowest Hispanic readership was *New Yorker* with 6.3%. *Sports Illustrated* had the highest Hispanic readership, with 11.8% of its readers being of that ethnic group. Asians had the lowest representation in the readerships of all of the magazines surveyed. *Time* had the highest percentage of Asian readers at
5.4%, and *New Yorker* followed with an Asian readership of 4.9%. *Esquire* has an Asian readership of 3%. *Sports Illustrated* does not count Asian readers, but rather classifies them as “other.” This category, which includes American Indians and immigrants of all races and ethnic backgrounds, constituted .01% of *Sports Illustrated*’s readership. These readerships corresponded to U.S. Census figures from 2000.

Women were portrayed more frequently in advertisements, giving a fairly accurate picture of true life, with 50.9% of the U.S. population being female. Advertisers do not advertise to the largest age group, just as they do not represent races as they really are. The median age for U.S. citizens in 2000 was 35.3. The majority of advertisements pictured those aged 19-30.

Hispanics are represented less in mainstream magazine advertisements than African-Americans, even though the 2000 census found that 12.3% of Americans are African-American and 12.5% of the population is Hispanic. This could be due to the fact that the magazines had a lower Hispanic readership than African-American readership.

The median household income in 2000 was $41,994. This means that the majority of Americans would be considered middle class. The advertisements were accurate in portraying most models this way. As occupations go, 33.6% of the population was employed in professional/white collar jobs, 41.6% was employed in service, sales, or office occupations, and 24.7% were employed as blue collar/laborers. Again, the magazines were accurate in depicting people in this fashion.

Because the percentages closely correspond, advertisers could use minority models in relation to census information or magazine readerships in order to give a true picture of life in the United States. To define life in any other way is inconsiderate to
minority groups and is false advertising of true life.
References


Slater, M., Rouner, D., Domenech-Rodriguez, M., Beauvais, F., Murphy, K., & Van Leuwer, J. (1997). Adolescent responses to TV beer ads and sports
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