

Nontarget Markets and Viewer Distinctiveness: The Impact of Target Marketing on Advertising Attitudes

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This research examines the effect of target marketing on members of the advertiser's intended audience as well as members not in the target market: the *nontarget market*. The results of 3 experiments show that unfavorable nontarget market effects are stronger for members of nondistinctive groups (e.g., Caucasian individuals, heterosexual individuals) and favorable target market effects are stronger for members of distinctive groups (e.g., African American individuals, homosexual individuals). The results of Experiment 2 demonstrate that the psychological processes by which target and nontarget market effects occur differ by viewer group: Felt similarity with sources in an advertisement drives target market effects for distinctive viewers, whereas felt targetedness drives target market effects for nondistinctive viewers. Finally, Experiment 3 shows that these consumer feelings of similarity or targetedness are associated with underlying processes of identification and internalization. Theoretical implications regarding the impact of distinctiveness theory in consumer persuasion effects and potential social effects of target marketing are discussed.

Imagine you are channel surfing and find yourself watching Black Entertainment Television, a cable channel whose programming and advertising are geared toward a predominantly African American audience. As a middle-aged White person, you are fascinated by what you see, but you do not "get" all that is going on. The show ends and a commercial for Stove Top Stuffing, just what you are about to have for dinner, appears. You are amused and interested to see this advertising appeal that is very different from any you have seen for the brand before. You are confused because they are calling it *dressing*, although the box clearly says *stuffing*. What are your attitudes toward the advertisement and brand now?

Although consumer behavior research has focused on the impact of target marketing on those in the target market, considerably less attention has focused on the impact of target marketing on those not in the target market—the *nontarget market*. From a theoretical perspective, examining attitudinal effects of the nontarget market can lead to a greater understanding of the full range of responses to persuasive appeals (Friestad & Wright, 1994). From a practical perspective, examining the reactions of nontarget market members to advertising intended for others sheds insight on how to better manage multiple segments in an increasingly diverse and behaviorally complex marketplace.

Thus, in this research we investigate the effects of target marketing on consumers not in the intended target market. We propose that the negative effects associated with feeling excluded from a marketer's intended audience have consequences for advertising reactions that differ fundamentally

from a mere failure to achieve favorable target market effects. We call these negative consequences *nontarget market effects* and explore the nature and impact of these effects in three experiments. Experiment 1 demonstrates the basic proposition that nontarget market members respond less favorably to targeted marketing efforts and highlights the moderating condition of viewer distinctiveness. That is, individuals in numerically rare groups are more likely to exhibit target marketing effects, whereas individuals in a majority group are more likely to exhibit nontarget market effects. Furthermore, the results of this experiment suggest that perceptions of similarity to sources in the advertisement, as well as perceptions of inclusion in the target market of the advertisement, are related to target and nontarget market effects. Experiment 2 investigates two ways by which target and nontarget market effects may occur and shows that the distinctiveness of both consumers and advertisement sources influence the specific processes driving target and nontarget market effects. The combined results of Experiments 1 and 2 imply that target marketing induces identification with the sources among distinctive groups and internalization of the message among nondistinctive groups. Experiment 3 confirms that these underlying psychological processes lead to target and nontarget market effects. The implications of the existence of nontarget market effects and the psychological processes that underlie these effects are discussed in the context of our theoretical and practical understanding of consumer response to targeted marketing efforts.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TARGET MARKET AND NONTARGET MARKET EFFECTS

Target marketing refers to the identification of a set of buyers sharing common needs or characteristics that a company decides to serve (Kotler, Armstrong, & Starr, 1991). It has arguably been the driving force behind the success of many well-known brands (e.g., Pepsi, Mercedes-Benz, Miller Lite) and provides the basis of a predominant branding strategy, the user positioning approach, in which the brand is closely associated with a particular user or customer (e.g., Maybelline and the girl next door). Underlying the use of target marketing is the premise that those who are targeted, or spoken to, will have strong affinity for the brand (Aaker, 1999). A number of researchers have examined how various target markets (e.g., older consumers, women, African Americans) arrive at the higher levels of affinity for the brand. For example, research has shown that racial similarity (Whittler, 1989), role congruence (Meyers-Levy, 1989), labeling (Tepper, 1994), intensity of ethnic identification (Williams & Qualls, 1989), shared cultural knowledge (Brumbaugh, 1997), and ethnic salience (Deshpande & Stayman, 1994) all evoke positive effects among the target market. This research has generally demonstrated that the process by which target marketing operates is

driven by consumers' inference of similarity between some characteristics of the advertisement (e.g., source pictured, language used, lifestyle represented) and characteristics of the consumer (e.g., reality or desire of having the represented lifestyle; Gronhaug & Rostvig, 1978). Thus, persuasion is enhanced by a match between the characteristics in the advertisement and those of the consumer, relative to when there is no such match (Whittler, 1989; Whittler & DiMeo, 1991).

In contrast, negative nontarget market effects may occur when the cues in an advertisement are incongruent with some characteristic, need, belief, or value of the consumer. For example, when an advertisement source has characteristics that differ from those of the viewer (e.g., when the advertisement features individuals from a group of which the viewer is not a member), these favorable effects should not accrue. Rather, viewers in the nontarget market may perceive dissimilarity between themselves and the intended target in the advertisement (as conveyed through source or nonsource targeting cues). As a result, individuals may infer that their tastes and preferences are different from that of the intended target and thus fail to adopt the favorable attitude toward the advertisement. Anecdotal evidence suggests that individuals viewing an advertisement that has not been designed to appeal to their market segment are likely to view the advertisement as distracting or irritating (Star, 1989), may feel ignored or neglected (Greco, 1989), or even become alienated or offended (Lipman, 1991). Thus, nontarget market effects are marked not by a failure to achieve favorable target market effects, but rather a decreased preference for an advertisement by people who believe they are not the target of the advertisement.¹

THE MODERATING EFFECT OF VIEWER DISTINCTIVENESS

In the process of creating targeted advertisements, a single large market is divided into separate segments on the basis of a meaningful variable(s). The meaningfulness of the specific segmentation variable is likely to influence the strength of target and nontarget marketing effects. More specific, research on persuasion effects suggests that any variable that leads individuals to make similarity judgments between themselves and an advertisement source (e.g., cultural orientation, Aaker & Williams, 1998; social class, William & Qualls, 1989; ethnicity, Wooten, 1995) should impact the degree to which target and nontarget market effects occur. However, the more personally

¹This research distinguishes between target marketing from the marketer's (actual target market) versus the consumer's (perceived as being in the target market) perspective. Although the two constructs are often highly related, target market effects are only examined from the consumer's perspective in this research. In addition, we focus on negative nontarget market effects (or the decreased preference for an advertisement by nontarget market vs. target market members). Future research is needed to identify the limiting conditions under which positive nontarget market effects may occur.

meaningful the variable, the more likely that similarity with the source will be felt (Tajfel, 1981).

One meaningful variable is viewer distinctiveness, which refers to the numerical rarity of a particular group of individuals (McGuire, 1984; McGuire, McGuire, & Winton, 1979).² Distinctiveness theory predicts that an individual's distinctive traits will be more salient to himself or herself than commonly held traits because such highly distinctive traits are more central to the self-concept. Thus, individuals who belong to a distinctive or numerically rare group (e.g., Native Americans, professional athletes, handicapped individuals) tend to be highly aware and mindful of the characteristics shared by that group and are more likely to incorporate that group identity into their self-concept than individuals who do not belong to such a group. For example, McGuire, McGuire, Child, and Fujioka (1978) found that of the numerically predominant White students in an American grade school, only 1% spontaneously mentioned their ethnicity in describing themselves, whereas 14% of the minority Hispanic and 17% of the minority Black students did so. These results have been mirrored in studies with other traits, including height, wearing glasses (McGuire & McGuire, 1979), hair color, weight, birthplace (McGuire & Padawer-Singer, 1976), and gender (Cota & Dion, 1986).

In a consumer context, distinctiveness affects how consumers respond to marketing stimuli targeting numerically rare groups (Forehand & Deshpande, 1999; Wooten, 1995). For example, Deshpande and Stayman (1994) found that numeric ethnic composition in a population influenced the salience of a person's ethnicity and, subsequently, the effectiveness of targeted advertisements. More specific, their results showed that an advertisement targeted toward an ethnic minority group is viewed more favorably by members of that ethnic group when they were a minority of their local population than when they comprised a greater proportion of their local population. Although the targeted advertisement enhanced favorable target market effects among all members of an ethnic group, differences in the local demography strengthened that effect for individuals for whom ethnic group membership was particularly distinctive.

We extend these findings to propose that consumer distinctiveness—that is, the numeric minority–majority status of an advertisement viewer—will moderate both target and nontarget market effects. In addition, we propose that the distinctiveness of the advertisement source will influence the extent of target and nontarget market effects. This proposition is supported by the large body of research on minority and majority influence (e.g., Baker & Petty, 1994; Kruglanski &

Mackie, 1990; Mackie, 1987; Nemeth, 1986). Although the literature is mixed in terms of whether minority or majority sources exert greater influence (Latane & Wolf, 1981) and how they exert influence (Maass & Clark, 1983), this research does suggest that targeted advertising featuring minority versus majority sources should lead to different types of effects among target and nontarget market members. More specific, both target and nontarget consumers are likely to respond similarly to advertisements that feature majority sources because they tend to be viewed as representing more accurate and valid viewpoints relative to minority views (Baker & Petty, 1994). In contrast, appeals featuring minority sources tend to lead to more divergent thoughts and less tacit acceptance of the message (Nemeth, 1986) and may induce more enduring attitude change (Mackie, 1987).

This line of research suggests an asymmetry in responses to targeted advertising depending on the numeric status of both the source in the advertisement and the viewer of the advertisement. Because numerically rare traits have a greater influence on an individual's self-concept than do commonly held traits, perceived similarity between a viewer and a source in an advertisement should be stronger when the basis of that similarity is a distinctive versus nondistinctive trait. This heightened perceived similarity should result in stronger target market effects (Aaker, 1999). In other words, target market effects should be enhanced for distinctive viewers who are being targeted on the basis of that distinctive trait than for nondistinctive viewers who are being targeted on the basis of a more common, nondistinctive trait.

In addition to suggesting different reactions to advertising targeting their own groups, distinctiveness theory suggests differences among distinctive and nondistinctive viewers in their reactions to advertisements targeted toward individuals outside their group. In this case, distinctiveness theory predicts a varying effect of minority versus majority group membership based on heightened awareness of dissimilarity (McGuire, 1984). Because advertisements targeting numeric minorities are relatively rare in mainstream media (Ringhold, 1995), such advertisements should be particularly salient to nondistinctive individuals outside that group, inducing stronger perceptions of dissimilarity between themselves and the source. These perceptions of dissimilarity should lead to more unfavorable attitudes toward the advertisement than would occur when individuals in distinctive groups view appeals targeting nondistinctive individuals. In contrast, advertising targeting nondistinctive groups is common in mainstream media and may not be perceived as being particularly salient by either individuals in the target market or those in the nontarget market (Penalozza, 1996). Thus, such advertisements targeting nondistinctive groups should not lead to similarity judgments or induce dissimilarity judgments among distinctive nontarget markets because the prevalence of such advertisements does not make their distinctive trait salient. In fact, members of distinctive segments may make similarity judgments on relevant bases other than their dis-

²The assumption that numeric minority–majority status influences the awareness of the distinctive attribute associated with one's self and others does not exclude the possibility that other factors influence the salience of group identity. Additional factors that make specific attributes distinctive should provoke similar theoretical processes (e.g., social status; Grier & Deshpande, 1999).

tinctive trait and may not feel excluded from the target market (Williams, Qualls, & Grier, 1995). As a result, negative nontarget market effects are not likely to occur for distinctive reviewers relative to nondistinctive viewers.

EXPERIMENT 1: OVERVIEW

Experiment 1 examines the hypothesized asymmetry in target and nontarget market effects due to the interaction between the distinctiveness of the perceived target in the persuasion appeal (i.e., whether the intended target is a minority or majority group) and viewer distinctiveness (i.e., numerical majority vs. minority status of the participant). Thus, Experiment 1 relies on a 3 (viewer distinctiveness: White heterosexual viewers, Black heterosexual viewers, and White homosexual viewers) \times 3 (target distinctiveness: White heterosexual target, Black heterosexual target, and White homosexual target), within-subject factorial design. Viewer distinctiveness is operationalized by using White individuals as nondistinctive viewers (74.8% of the U.S. population; U.S. Bureau of Census, 1994), Black viewers (12.4% of the U.S. population; U.S. Bureau of Census, 1994), and homosexual viewers (2.5%–10% of the U.S. population; Penalosa, 1996) as distinctive viewers. Target distinctiveness is operationalized by selecting three pairs of advertisements pretested to be targeted solely to one of the three target distinctiveness groups. Thus, in this design, hypothesized target market effects occur in the diagonal cells and are compared to nontarget market effects in the off-diagonal cells.

Stimuli Selection

To enhance external validity, real advertisements were used. A total of 18 print advertisements that targeted each of the three target distinctiveness groups (6 advertisements for each group) were pretested with White, Black, and gay and lesbian participants. From this set of 18, 2 advertisements for each target distinctiveness group were identified as being most strongly associated with that group and least associated with the other two groups by members of all of the groups. Each advertisement targeted a particular viewer distinctiveness group through multiple cues, including sources in the advertisement (i.e., White, Black, or White gay and lesbian sources), advertising copy (e.g., “Coca-Cola salutes Black History this month and always”), and signs or symbols associated with the group (i.e., pink triangle or Kente cloth). The 2 advertisements targeting Black consumers included 1 for a lemon–lime soft drink and 1 for a cable movie service; the 2 advertisements targeting gay and lesbian consumers included 1 for a sporting event and 1 featuring novelty products (e.g., T-shirts, mugs); the 2 advertisements targeting White consumers included 1 for a snack cracker and 1 for blue jeans.

It should be noted that, although this set of stimuli increased the external validity in the experiment, it also made it more difficult to isolate effects attributed to specific targeting cues. To address this limitation, differences in the advertisements (including the products featured in each) were controlled for statistically through the use of advertisement dummy variables in this experiment. Furthermore, in Experiments 2 and 3, we controlled for the number and type of targeting cues by relying on fictitious advertisements.

Participants and Procedures

Sixty-three participants (60% were men; 80% were 18–25 years of age, and 20% were 25–45 years of age) were recruited through Masters of Business Administration (MBA) marketing classes and Black MBA and gay and lesbian graduate student organizations at a private midwestern university in return for compensation to their groups (e.g., \$10 per participant donated to the organization). Predominately White students comprise the MBA class (92%) and gay and lesbian organizations (100%), whereas only Black students comprise the Black student group. Gender and age profiles were similar across the three groups. All responses in Experiment 1, as well as in the subsequent experiments, were collected under private conditions in which participants in a small group session completed the questionnaire by themselves, separated from others by a table or a cubicle.³ Furthermore, participants in the small groups were in the same viewer distinctiveness group to minimize potential situational distinctiveness effects (i.e., effects based on experimental group context).⁴

Each participant was informed that the purpose of the experiment was to obtain reactions to current advertising from a diverse group of consumers and was given a questionnaire packet containing the six advertisements. The first page included the introduction and instructions requesting their reactions to a series of advertisements. Participants were instructed to look at each advertisement as if they were seeing it in a magazine and to move on to the questions when they were ready.

Following each advertisement, participants rated their attitude toward the advertisement ($\alpha = .95$) on 7-point scales: 1 (*very bad*) to 7 (*very good*), 1 (*very unfavorable*) to 7 (*very favorable*), and 1 (*dislike very much*) to 7 (*like very much*). Then,

³This procedure was adopted because prior research suggests that attitudinal responses to majority and minority sources can differ depending on whether attitude measures are taken in public or private (Kruglanski & Mackie, 1990). In this research, participants were run individually in isolated cubicles and were assured of their anonymous participation; thus, the focus is on private attitude change rather than public compliance.

⁴Data from two participants were eliminated because of incomplete responses, and data from six participants were eliminated because they were not from one of our three viewer distinctiveness groups. In total, 330 observations from 23 White, 16 Black, and 16 White gay and lesbian participants were used in the analyses.

to assess who they perceived to be the target of the advertisement, participants were asked to describe the intended target of the advertisement by completing a checklist that included ethnicity (Hispanic, Asian, Caucasian, African American, and other); sexual preference (bisexual; heterosexual or straight; and homosexual, lesbian, or gay); and 13 filler items, including age, gender, socioeconomic background, and education. After participants finished the questions for all six advertisements, they completed this checklist to describe themselves. Finally, to assess if participants' perceptions of distinctiveness were in line with the operationalizations, participants were asked to estimate the proportion of the U.S. population that was White, Black, and gay and lesbian, respectively. The order of advertisements was counterbalanced, and there were no order effects.

Results

To check the target distinctiveness manipulation, participants' estimates of White, Black, and gay and lesbian populations were evaluated. As expected, participants perceived both Black individuals ($M = 21.2\%$) and gay and lesbian individuals ($M = 11.5\%$) to be numeric minorities and White individuals to be a numeric majority ($M = 60.4\%$). To ensure that participants' understanding of the intended target markets matched the three target distinctiveness groups, responses to the target market checklist for each advertisement were compared to the intended target distinctiveness group for that advertisement. All participants correctly identified the intended targets for all advertisements as evaluated through their responses to the target market checklists.

The data were analyzed with a 3×3 within-subject factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) crossing viewer distinctiveness and target distinctiveness. To statistically control for the six different advertisements and products, all analyses included five advertisement or product factors (nested within target distinctiveness groups). Also, to control for repeated measures across 55 participants, all analyses included 52 participant factors (nested within viewer distinctiveness groups). In this design, a significant interaction between viewer distinctiveness and target distinctiveness and a planned contrast comparing the mean of the diagonal cells with the mean of the off-diagonal cells were used to assess target and nontarget market effects. Additional planned contrasts were conducted to

compare the reactions of minority and majority viewer groups to advertisements targeting members of minority and majority groups to assess whether the pattern of responses proposed is evident (Maxwell & Delaney, 1990). See Table 1 for means.

The expected Viewer Distinctiveness \times Target Distinctiveness interaction was significant, $F(4, 329) = 5.93, p < .01$. Consistent with past literature, contrasts showed that individuals who were in the nontarget market had significantly less favorable attitudes relative to those in the target market (target, $M = 4.59$; nontarget, $M = 4.02$), $F(1, 329) = 13.22, p < .01$. Next, analyses to compare the attitudes of Black and gay and lesbian viewer distinctiveness groups with those of the White viewer distinctiveness group within and off the diagonal were conducted. As expected, distinctive participants liked the advertisements targeted toward their respective groups more than nondistinctive viewers liked the advertisements targeted toward their group (distinctive target, $M = 4.75$; nondistinctive target, $M = 4.37$), $F(1, 329) = 2.15, p < .07$, signaling more favorable target market effects among distinctive versus nondistinctive viewers. In contrast, nondistinctive viewers disliked advertisements targeting others more than distinctive viewers disliked advertisements targeting others (distinctive nontarget, $M = 4.18$; nondistinctive nontarget, $M = 3.80$), $F(1, 329) = 4.49, p < .05$. These results indicate that more unfavorable nontarget market effects occur for nondistinctive versus distinctive viewers, as predicted.

Discussion

The results of Experiment 1 show that the effects of target marketing are moderated by viewer distinctiveness. Favorable target market effects are stronger for distinctive viewers, whereas unfavorable nontarget market effects are stronger for nondistinctive viewers. This asymmetry was predicted because of the differential importance placed on a trait based on its distinctiveness. More specific, we proposed that numeric minority-majority status drove positive target market effects and negative nontarget market effects via participants' perceptions of similarity or dissimilarity vis-à-vis the intended target. Consistent with identification theory, this notion implies that viewers' interpretation of targeting cues involve their evaluation of whether they are similar to a source in an

TABLE 1
Attitude Toward the Advertisement as a Function of Viewer and Target Distinctiveness (Experiment 1)

Viewer Distinctiveness	A_{ad}					
	Distinctive Target (Black)		Distinctive Target (Gay)		Nondistinctive Target (White)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Distinctive viewer (Black)	4.80	1.24	4.16	1.39	4.21	1.46
Distinctive viewer (Gay)	4.50	1.39	4.69	1.74	3.84	1.60
Nondistinctive viewer (White)	4.39	1.08	3.20	1.37	4.37	1.32

Note. A_{ad} = attitude toward the advertisement.

advertisement (Kelman, 1961). The results of Experiment 1 provide outcome-based support for this premise; the objective of Experiment 2 is to explicitly test the proposed process. In this experiment, we address the question, “If nondistinctive individuals make dissimilarity but not similarity judgments, how do marketers create positive target market effects among such viewers?” An understanding of this process, as distinct from that followed by distinctive individuals, should provide additional insight into the psychology of target and nontarget market effects, as well as the moderating influence of viewer distinctiveness.

Research in persuasion has demonstrated that consumers may feel targeted by or excluded from an advertisement for reasons other than source similarity (Williams et al., 1995). For example, creative cues, such as music type, slang, or tone of appeal, are frequently used by marketers to indicate the intended target. Likewise, media placement indicates to viewers that an advertisement is targeted toward them if it is placed in media they routinely use (Woods, 1993). Because source similarity should be less influential for nondistinctive versus distinctive consumers, these other targeting cues may enhance nondistinctive consumers’ identification with the advertisement and thus drive target and nontarget market effects. In other words, a viewer’s perception that an advertisement is intended for them, which may not necessarily involve a match on the demographic traits used by the marketer, should influence whether the viewer feels targeted by the advertisement and responds favorably (positive target market effect) versus unfavorably (negative nontarget market effect).

This notion of felt similarity with an advertising source suggests how the process underlying target and nontarget market effects may differ for distinctive versus nondistinctive viewers resulting in the observed asymmetric responses. For nondistinctive viewers, similarity with a nondistinctive source is not diagnostic because the group membership is neither salient nor meaningful (McGuire et al., 1979). However, viewers’ subjective evaluation of whether they are the focus of the marketing effort—that is, their feelings of being targeted (felt targetedness)—should influence target market effects among nondistinctive consumers. As a consequence, favorable target market effects should occur for nondistinctive viewers because of felt targetedness rather than felt similarity. In other words, although felt similarity may be sufficient to drive target market effects for distinctive consumers, it may not be adequate for nondistinctive consumers. Experiment 2 was conducted to test this hypothesis.

EXPERIMENT 2: OVERVIEW

Experiment 2 relies on a 2 (viewer distinctiveness: White viewers and Black viewers) \times 2 (target distinctiveness: White target and Black target) between-subjects design to evaluate the proposed asymmetries in the causes of target and nontarget market effects among distinctive minority and

nondistinctive majority groups. Although the independent variables used in Experiment 2 parallel those of Experiment 1, four changes were made in the stimuli and procedure. First, to examine the process hypotheses, participants were asked to rate their perceptions of both felt similarity and felt targetedness. Second, to assess nontarget market effects in a more realistic context, stimulus advertisements targeting either Black or White college students were embedded in a fictitious magazine called *On Campus* that student participants were asked to evaluate. Third, to better isolate the target and nontarget market effects and enhance consistency across the manipulated conditions, Experiment 2 relies on fictitious (vs. real) advertisements. Finally, because the within-subject design of Experiment 1 may have accentuated target and nontarget market effects by making salient differences in marketers’ intended audiences, a between-subjects design is used in Experiment 2 to minimize the salience of targeting manipulation and reduce the chance of demand effects.

Stimuli Development

Two color advertisements promoting spring break vacation opportunities for students were created. To convey the ad’s target, two targeting cues were used. First, we created a nonsource targeting cue: an organization on campus that was pretested to be more associated with Black (White) students. The distinctive (nondistinctive) condition read,

For Spring Break ... Wouldn’t You Rather Be Here? Langley Travel offers many spring break trips, including air fare, cruises, beach rentals and action vacations. Prices start at only \$199 for 5 days, 4 nights. Contact the African-American Student Union (Windsurfing Club) and other student organizations for information on this special promotional offer.

Second, we created a source cue by placing three students in the advertisement. In the nondistinctive target condition, three White students endorsed the brand; in the target distinctive condition, three minority students endorsed the brand. All other aspects of the advertisement, including tropical beach photo, background color, and font, were identical across conditions.

Participants and Procedures

A total of 123 participants (52% were men; 100% were 18–25 years of age; 39 were Black and 84 were White) were recruited via a campus electronic mail notice to participate in marketing research for \$5. All were told that the purpose of the research was to evaluate a prototype of a new magazine for college students. The magazine contained three articles unrelated to the distinctiveness manipulations and two ficti-

tious color advertisements; the first was a filler advertisement, whereas the second was the target advertisement.

Participants were assigned randomly to the target distinctive or nondistinctive condition and asked to read the magazine as they normally do. When finished, participants evaluated each advertisement, the editorial content of the magazine, the magazine’s layout, and their overall perception of the magazine, consistent with the cover story. Next, participants were asked their attitude toward each advertisement ($\alpha = .96$) and then completed three felt targetedness questions (“I feel the advertisement was intended for people like me,” “I don’t believe I was in the target market the company created the advertisement for” [reverse coded], and “The advertiser made that advertisement to appeal to people like me”). These felt targetedness items were evaluated on 7-point scales: 1 (*disagree completely*) to 7 (*agree completely*), $\alpha = .90$. Participants then completed five questions evaluating how similar they felt to sources in the advertisements based on overall lifestyle, cultural background, dress, appearance, and basic values: 1 (*not at all similar*) to 7 (*very similar*), $\alpha = .87$ (Whittler, 1989). To assess who they perceived to be the target of the advertisement, participants completed the checklist used in Experiment 1. Finally, participants completed the checklist to describe themselves and estimated the proportion of the U.S. population that was Black and White.

Results

All participants correctly identified the intended targets for all advertisements as evaluated through their responses to the target market checklists. All participants also recognized that Blacks were a minority group, whereas Whites were a majority group.

Analysis of the results for the filler advertisement (which was for lunch meat and contained only a sandwich; no specific targeting cues) showed that distinctiveness had no effect on felt targetedness or attitude toward the advertisement, $F_s < 1, p_s > .20$. However, felt targetedness favorably influenced attitudes for all viewers, $F(1, 122) = 8.01, p < .05$, indicating that if a participant did feel targeted by the lunch meat advertisement, more favorable attitudes resulted. These results suggested that in the absence of targeting cues, viewer distinctiveness alone does not heighten targetedness or enhance attitudes.

A 2×2 ANOVA crossing viewer distinctiveness and target distinctiveness paralleled the results found in Experiment 1. Individuals in the nontarget versus target market had less favorable attitudes toward the advertisement (nontarget, $M = 3.29$; target, $M = 4.37$), $F(1, 122) = 11.52, p < .01$. Furthermore, contrasts showed that favorable target market effects were stronger for distinctive versus nondistinctive viewers (distinctive target, $M = 4.78$; nondistinctive target, $M = 4.14$), $F(1, 122) = 2.74, p < .05$. Nontarget market effects were stronger for nondistinctive versus distinctive viewers (distinctive nontarget, $M = 3.81$; nondistinctive nontarget, $M = 3.08$), $F(1, 122) = 2.74, p < .05$.

To explore whether the impact of targeting on attitudes is mediated by felt similarity for distinctive viewers and felt targetedness for nondistinctive viewers, a series of regressions were conducted (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The first set of equations represents the effect of the targeting manipulation on felt similarity, felt targetedness, and attitude toward the advertisement. The second set examines felt similarity and felt targetedness as predictors of attitude toward the advertisement. The third set includes Felt Similarity \times Viewer Distinctiveness and Felt Targetedness \times Viewer Distinctiveness as predictors of attitude toward the advertisement to examine the moderating role of viewer distinctiveness on the main effects of felt targetedness and felt similarity. The final set of equations includes all independent variables used previously to assess the effects of felt similarity and felt targetedness as mediators of the impact of targeting on attitude toward the advertisement, and impact of viewer distinctiveness as a moderator of these effects. In these analyses, viewer distinctiveness was coded as 1 for distinctive (Black) viewers and 0 for nondistinctive (White) viewers. Also, target distinctiveness was coded as 1 for advertisements targeting distinctive (Black) viewers and 0 for advertisements targeting nondistinctive (White) viewers. Table 2 shows the means in each cell; Table 3 shows the mediation results.

The results from the first set of equations indicate that the interaction between viewer distinctiveness and target distinctiveness was significant for attitude toward the advertisement (2.11, $p < .01$), felt similarity (1.64, $p < .01$), and felt targetedness (2.02, $p < .01$), as expected. The results from the second set of equations show that felt similarity favorably influenced attitude to-

TABLE 2
Attitude Toward the Advertisement, Felt Targetedness, and Felt Similarity as a Function of Viewer and Target Distinctiveness (Experiment 2)

	<i>A_{ad}</i>				<i>Targetedness</i>				<i>Similarity</i>			
	<i>Distinctive Target (Black)</i>		<i>Nondistinctive Target (White)</i>		<i>Distinctive Target (Black)</i>		<i>Nondistinctive Target (White)</i>		<i>Distinctive Target (Black)</i>		<i>Nondistinctive Target (White)</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Viewer Distinctiveness</i>												
Distinctive viewer (Black)	4.78	1.39	3.81	1.25	3.86	1.28	3.89	1.67	4.34	1.40	3.15	1.27
Nondistinctive viewer (White)	3.08	1.68	4.14	1.55	3.16	1.82	5.30	1.28	3.47	1.29	3.91	1.19

Note. A_{ad} = attitude toward the advertisement.

TABLE 3
Mediation Analysis (Experiment 2)

Independent variable	Dependent Variable							
			A_{ad}					
	Targetedness	Similarity	Equation Set					
	Equation Set 1	Equation Set 1	1	2	2	3	3	4
Viewer distinctiveness	-1.41 (.01)	-.32 (<i>ns</i>)	-.76 (<i>ns</i>)	—	—	2.58 (.01)	.80 (<i>ns</i>)	.28 (<i>ns</i>)
Target distinctiveness	-2.14 (.01)	-1.06 (.01)	-.45 (.04)	—	—	—	—	-.12 (<i>ns</i>)
Viewer × Target Distinctiveness	2.11 (.01)	2.02 (.01)	1.64 (.01)	—	—	—	—	.26 (<i>ns</i>)
Targetedness	—	—	—	.34 (.01)	—	.46 (.01)	—	.43 (.05)
Targetedness × Viewer Distinctiveness	—	—	—	—	—	-.42 (.02)	—	-.49 (.01)
Similarity	—	—	—	—	.48 (.01)	—	.31 (.02)	.07 (<i>ns</i>)
Similarity × Viewer Distinctiveness	—	—	—	—	—	—	.39 (.06)	.62 (.01)
R^2	.27	.09	.15	.14	.15	.24	.21	.37

Note. A_{ad} = attitude toward the advertisement. The first number in the table is the regression coefficient with p value in parentheses.

ward the advertisement (.48, $p < .01$) as did felt targetedness (.34, $p < .01$). As predicted, these effects are moderated by viewer distinctiveness. More specific, the third set of equations demonstrates that the impact of felt similarity on attitude toward the advertisement is stronger for distinctive viewers (.70, $p < .01$) than for nondistinctive viewers (.31, $p < .02$). In addition, the impact of felt targetedness on attitude toward the advertisement was significant only for nondistinctive viewers (.46, $p < .01$) but not for distinctive viewers (.04, *ns*), as predicted.

Finally, a model including all independent variables as predictors of attitude toward the advertisement shows that the intended target manipulation no longer impacts attitude toward the advertisement (.26, *ns*), indicating that felt similarity and felt targetedness mediate the impact of intended target on attitude toward the advertisement. Furthermore, as predicted, felt similarity is significant for distinctive viewers (.69, $p < .01$) but not for nondistinctive viewers (.07, *ns*), whereas felt targetedness is significant for nondistinctive viewers (.43, $p < .01$) but not for distinctive viewers (-.06, *ns*).

Discussion

The results of Experiment 2 replicate those of Experiment 1, showing again that target and nontarget market effects exist, but they are moderated by viewer distinctiveness. Individuals in the nontarget market of an advertisement had more unfavorable attitudes toward that advertisement than individuals in the target market, and this effect was stronger for nondistinctive viewers. On the other hand, individuals in the target market of an advertisement had more favorable attitudes toward that advertisement than individuals in the nontarget market, and this effect was stronger for distinctive viewers. More important, the mediation results showed that this asymmetry is the result of different types of feelings generated by distinctive versus nondistinctive viewers. Distinc-

tive target market viewers felt more similar to like-type sources than did nondistinctive target market viewers, and this felt similarity, in turn, favorably influenced their attitudes. In contrast, felt similarity did not differ for nondistinctive individuals viewing sources like or not like them. Rather, nondistinctive target market viewers felt more targeted by advertisements intended for their group than did distinctive target market viewers, and this felt targetedness, in turn, favorably influenced attitudes. These results suggest that distinctive and nondistinctive viewers differ in the process by which their attitudes are formed or altered in response to targeted advertisements. The next step is to understand what felt similarity and targetedness represent in relation to consumer attitudes toward targeted marketing efforts.

Attitudes are generally thought to be formed through processes of identification or internalization (Kelman, 1961).⁵ Identification occurs when one adopts the position advocated by another because doing so preserves or enhances some aspect of self related to the other advocating the position. For example, a young man may be persuaded by a sneaker advertisement featuring another young man because he feels that the spokesperson has similar needs, goals, and a common lifestyle. In such cases, persuasion may occur because one accepts the message of a similar other and desires to maintain positive self-esteem in light of their shared traits (e.g., Williams & Qualls, 1989). In contrast, internalization occurs

⁵In addition to identification and internalization, processes of compliance can underlie persuasion outcomes. Here, one adopts another's position because of normative rewards that occur because of the attitude change or in fear of punishments that occur because of noncompliance (Kelman, 1958). However, because advertising is generally a privately-accepted message not delivered by powerful others directly related to the viewer, it is less likely that advertising induces attitude change via compliance (relative to identification and internalization); therefore, the compliance process was not explored in this research.

when the attitude advocated is congruent with one's value system and one finds it internally satisfying to adopt it. Thus, a different young man may be persuaded by the same sneaker advertisement because he feels the spokesperson is knowledgeable about which sneakers are most effective on the basketball court. Such expert opinion is thought to influence attitudes via internalization because one's desire to be accurate and correct is confirmed or enhanced by being congruent with the expert (Wilson & Sherrell, 1993).

The results of Experiment 2 suggest that felt similarity and targetedness reflect different mechanisms by which positive target marketing effects may occur. As noted previously, similarity effects occur via an identification process (Kelman, 1961), whereby individuals infer that their tastes and preferences are common to those of the source and, therefore, adopt the attitude or behavior of the source (Eagley, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978). When this source is a character in an advertisement, for example, the tendency to infer similarity with the source should lead to more favorable attitudes (i.e., positive target market effects). Therefore, distinctive viewers' feelings of similarity with sources who share the distinctive, personally-relevant trait should lead to identification with the source. However, nondistinctive viewers should not feel similar because the trait they share is not as personally relevant or salient. Therefore, shared group membership has little influence. Rather, the results of Experiment 2 suggest that favorable target market effects are evoked among nondistinctive target market consumers because the feelings of being targeted prompt them to accept the advertised position as their own. That is, viewers who perceive that an advertisement is designed to resonate with them should base their attitudes more on an assessment of value congruency relative to perceived similarity with the source.

In summary, we hypothesize that target market effects occur for distinctive consumers via identification, whereas target market effects occur for nondistinctive consumers via internalization. Exploring this prediction is the primary objective of Experiment 3. The second objective is to ensure that the results of the previous experiments are driven by viewer distinctiveness, rather than potential confounding variables, such as social category or stigmatization. Therefore, Experiment 3 relies on another operationalization of distinctiveness and includes process measures of identification and internalization.

EXPERIMENT 3: OVERVIEW

Experiment 3 relies on the same design as in Experiment 2, but uses two conceptual replications (termed *tasks* later) to determine the extent to which identification and internalization are the underlying processes driving target market effects for distinctive and nondistinctive individuals. Under the guise of evaluating advertisements for two new web retail outlets, participants were exposed to two advertisements and asked to complete identification, internalization, and attitude measures for each. Viewer distinctiveness is operationalized

differently for each of these two tasks. For the first task, it is operationalized as the school in which an undergraduate student is enrolled. Two schools, nursing and business, each comprise about 10% of the undergraduate population at the school where the study was conducted, whereas the engineering and arts and science schools each comprise about 40%. Thus, viewer distinctiveness was high for students from nursing or business schools, but low for students from the engineering or arts and sciences schools. The second task was identical to Experiment 2 in the respect that distinctiveness is operationalized as a numerical majority–minority ethnic group (for purposes of replication).

Stimuli Development

For the first task, four advertisements promoting a web site where students could purchase textbooks at discounted prices were developed. The sources and text used in the advertisements were identical, except for the textbooks pictured (tailored to each school) and the headline in the appeal (“Hey Nursing/Business/Engineering/Arts & Science Students!”). To strengthen the target distinctiveness manipulation, the website at the bottom of the appeal incorporated the name of the target school (i.e., www.cheaptxts.com/nursing/). For the second task, the two advertisements were those used in Experiment 2. However, to be consistent with the cover story of the experiment, a website address was added at the bottom of each appeal. See Appendix.

Participants and Procedures

A total of 180 participants (55% were men; 98% were 18–25 years of age, and 2% were 25–45 years of age; 21 participants were enrolled in business, 18 in nursing, 78 in engineering, and 56 in arts and science; 11 students were Black, 39 were Asian, and 123 were White) were recruited via campus flier and electronic mail notices inviting them to participate in Internet-based marketing research for \$5. Participants, run individually, were assigned randomly to one of the four advertisements operationalizing target distinctiveness for the first task, and one of the two advertisements operationalizing target distinctiveness for the second task. Participants received an experiment booklet containing the two appeals for their assigned conditions; the questions followed each appeal. After viewing the advertisement, they completed the attitude toward the advertisement measures (Task 1, $\alpha = .81$; Task 2, $\alpha = .93$), seven identification measures (Task 1, $\alpha = .82$; Task 2, $\alpha = .85$; Mackie, 1987; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), and three internalization measures (Task 1, $\alpha = .83$; Task 2, $\alpha = .88$; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).⁶ Finally, participants completed

⁶Four additional identification measures were included in Experiment 3 based on Mackie (1987). However, because these items yielded low inter-item correlations among each other, as well as the three other identification measures (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), they were not used.

the targetedness measures used in Experiments 1 and 2 (Task 1, $\alpha = .92$; Task 2, $\alpha = .95$), measures of attitude toward all target groups, and estimates of the proportion of all target groups at the university as manipulation checks.

Results

The pattern of manipulation checks mirrored those found in Experiments 1 and 2. Participants whose academic school matched the school mentioned in the appeal felt more targeted by the advertisement (target, $M = 4.61$; nontarget, $M = 4.35$; $p < .03$). Similarly, participants whose ethnic group matched the group targeted by the second advertisement felt marginally more targeted (target, $M = 4.50$; nontarget, $M = 4.20$; $p < .07$). As anticipated, there were no differences in attitude toward the different schools (business, $M = 5.05$; nursing, $M = 5.06$; arts and sciences, $M = 5.06$; engineering, $M = 4.83$; p s $> .20$). Attitude toward American White students and American minority students did not differ ($p > .20$), although attitude toward international students was slightly lower (White, $M = 5.24$; ethnic minority, $M = 5.19$; international, $M = 4.95$; $p < .05$). Furthermore, both the business and nursing schools were perceived as distinctive compared to the arts and sciences and engineering schools (business, $M = 16.2\%$; nursing, $M = 11.1\%$; engineering, $M = 29.1\%$; arts and sciences, $M = 43.7\%$; all pairwise comparisons significant at $p < .05$), and American minority students and international students were both perceived as distinctive compared to White students (White, $M = 60.1\%$; ethnic minority, $M = 25.5\%$; international, $M = 14.3\%$; all pairwise comparisons significant at p s $< .05$).

To test the hypothesis that an identification process underlies the persuasion effects for distinctive viewers exposed to a targeted advertisement while an internalization process underlies those for nondistinctive viewers, attitude toward the advertisement was regressed on viewer distinctiveness (a dichotomous variable), identification, internalization, identification by viewer distinctiveness, and internalization by viewer distinctiveness. We expected that the main effects of identification and internalization would be positive and significant, indicating that both lead to more favorable attitudes. However, these main effects should be moderated by viewer distinctiveness. The interaction between identification and viewer distinctiveness should be significant and positive, indicating that identification has a stronger effect on attitudes for distinctive than nondistinctive viewers. The interaction between internalization and viewer distinctiveness should be negative and significant, indicating that internalization has a weaker or nonsignificant effect for distinctive versus nondistinctive viewers.

The results of these regressions (performed with all individuals and only with individuals who felt targeted by the advertisement at 3.5 or higher on the felt targetedness manipulation check for each task) are shown in Table 4 and are consistent

with our hypotheses. As expected, identification had a favorable influence on attitudes in all four models, suggesting that if people identify with the advertisement source, they are likely to adopt a favorable attitude. More important, in three of the four regressions, the interaction of identification and viewer distinctiveness was significant and positive, indicating that identification had a greater influence on attitudes for distinctive viewers compared to nondistinctive viewers. Furthermore, as expected, the interaction of internalization and distinctiveness was significant and negative for all four regressions. The expected positive main effect of internalization was significant only for Task 2, however.⁷ These results provide partial support for the premise that internalization has a stronger impact on attitude toward the advertisement for nondistinctive viewers than distinctive viewers.

Discussion

The contribution of Experiment 3 was twofold. First, the local distinctiveness manipulation used in Experiment 3 extends the generalizability of the results in Experiments 1 and 2, strengthening the premise that viewer distinctiveness (rather than potential confounded variables, such as social category or stigmatization) accounts for the asymmetric attitudinal effects. Second, the analyses complement the findings of Experiment 2, suggesting that identification drives favorable target market effects more for distinctive versus nondistinctive viewers, whereas internalization drives favorable target market effects more for nondistinctive versus distinctive viewers.

Although the influence of internalization on attitudes received less convergent support across both tasks, this unexpected result is consistent with the notion that identification and internalization process can occur simultaneously or hierarchically (Kelman, 1958, 1961). Although internalization may be a primary route of persuasion (as directly supported in Task 1 and indirectly suggested in Experiment 2), processes of identification may also play a role in the persuasion process for nondistinctive viewers. Indeed, Mackie (1987, p. 51) suggested that "the operation of factors such as majority endorsement illustrate difficulties of maintaining such distinctions as those between internalization and identification (Kelman 1958)" and highlights conditions under which internalization and identification can jointly occur. Additional research is needed to pull apart these two processes to better understand when or to what extent nondistinctive individuals may follow an identification pro-

⁷Identification and internalization were highly correlated (Task 1, $\rho = .52$, $p < .01$; Task 2, $\rho = .56$, $p < .01$), and when entered first in the regression model, internalization was positive and significant. However, it became nonsignificant when identification was included in the model, suggesting that the two processes may operate jointly or hierarchically.

TABLE 4
Regression Results for Attitude Toward the Advertisement, Felt Targetedness, and Felt Similarity as a Function of Viewer and Target Distinctiveness (Experiment 3)

	Task 1		Task 2	
	All Observations ^a	Targeted Only ^b	All Observations ^a	Targeted Only ^c
Intercept	2.97 (.00)	2.69 (.00)	1.24 (.00)	2.32 (.00)
Viewer distinctiveness	-1.50 (.03)	-1.44 (.05)	.51 (<i>ns</i>)	-.37 (<i>ns</i>)
Identification	.35 (.00)	.42 (.00)	.68 (.00)	.35 (.02)
Internalization	-.02 (<i>ns</i>)	-.03 (<i>ns</i>)	.11 (<i>ns</i>)	.26 (.07)
Identification × Viewer Distinctiveness	.73 (.00)	.74 (.00)	.15 (<i>ns</i>)	.58 (.03)
Internalization × Viewer Distinctiveness	-.46 (.01)	-.48 (.02)	-.34 (.07)	-.64 (.01)

Note. The first number in the table is the regression coefficient with *p* value in parentheses. Comparisons are based on one-tailed tests.
^a*n* = 173. ^b*n* = 141. ^c*n* = 103.

cess, rather than one that more closely mirrors a process of internalization suggested in this research.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to shed light on the intended and unintended effects of target marketing by examining consumer responses to targeted advertisements among both the target market and the nontarget market. The results demonstrate that favorable target market effects were stronger for members of distinctive versus nondistinctive groups, whereas unfavorable nontarget market effects are stronger for members of nondistinctive versus distinctive groups. Furthermore, these asymmetries are the result of distinct feelings evoked in distinctive versus nondistinctive individuals. Favorable target market effects occur for distinctive viewers because of heightened levels of felt similarity with a source, whereas favorable target market effects for nondistinctive viewers result from felt targetedness based on some aspects of the entire configuration of advertisement cues. Unfavorable nontarget market effects occur for nondistinctive viewers because of perceived dissimilarity with a source, whereas unfavorable nontarget market effects occur for distinctive viewers because of perceived exclusion from the intended target market.

This set of findings suggests that target marketing induces more identification with the sources among distinctive relative to nondistinctive groups but internalization of the message among nondistinctive versus distinctive groups. These results replicate the basic finding that majority sources can influence attitudes via an internalization process (where the audience views the majority opinion as more likely to be correct; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). However, they also suggest that this process occurs only when the viewer belongs to the same majority group as the source. In conditions where the viewer is of a numerically rare or distinctive group, greater persuasion occurs when the source is of the same minority group. In these conditions, an identification process occurs (Kelman, 1961). In this light, our findings conceptually parallel more recent findings in the persuasion literature

suggesting that the determination of whether the majority or minority source is more influential depends on moderating variables, such as public versus private attitudes (Moscovici, 1980), expectations (Baker & Petty, 1994), and attitude type (e.g., old vs. new opinions; Fazio, 1979; Kruglanski & Mayselless, 1987). This research suggests that, in a consumer behavior context, viewer distinctiveness is an important moderator of source effects.

In addition, this research extends the work on distinctiveness theory by showing that viewer distinctiveness impacts the interpretation of, processing of, and reaction to persuasion appeals (Forehand & Deshpande, 1999; Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Wooten, 1995). These findings demonstrate that target marketing operates through different mechanisms for distinctive and nondistinctive individuals. That is, whether similarity or targetedness is felt by target and nontarget members appears to influence the nature of the consumer's subsequent processing of the advertisement. Additional investigation of the antecedents and consequences of differences in the use of source and nonsource cues among distinctive versus nondistinctive consumers is needed to lend additional theoretical insight.

From a more applied perspective, these results suggest that because feelings of similarity with the source drive favorable target market effects for distinctive viewers, advertisers courting minority segments may consider paying particular attention to the selection of sources in advertisements that have the most impact on the intended target segment. In contrast, sources appear to play a less pivotal role for nondistinctive individuals; therefore, advertisers may need to be more mindful of the nonsource targeting cues they choose to include in advertisements aimed at majority segments. These findings also imply that combining distinctive sources with other targeting cues that attract nondistinctive viewers may be an effective way of reaching both distinctive and nondistinctive individuals. Thus, through careful strategy, an advertiser may be able to reach multiple target segments with one advertising appeal.

However, these results also highlight a potential downside to targeting minority (relative to majority) groups: Feeling excluded from the target market appears to lead to less favorable advertising responses, but only among nondistinctive in-

dividuals. That is, reduced levels of persuasion occur when a member of a numerical majority group views an advertisement featuring a minority group member. Furthermore, although some research shows that people process stigmatized sources such as gays, lesbians, and African Americans similarly (Petty, Fleming, & White, 1999), our results also suggest that potential backlash effects may vary depending on the specific market being targeted.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has several limitations that afford areas for future research. More important, these findings contribute to our understanding of the processes underlying responses to targeted marketing among both target and nontarget market consumers. However, minimal attention was paid to the practical and theoretical considerations of the nontarget market effects. For example, what are the commercial and social effects of the observed processes, and what can be done to limit negative effects? Although considerable research has highlighted potential consequences of target marketing (e.g., perpetuation of social stereotypes and exploitation of vulnerable consumer segments; Ringhold, 1995; Smith & Cooper-Martin, 1997; Spradley, 1993), this stream in general, and this research in particular, have not yet determined the best way to limit these potential negative consequences. Insight into how to acknowledge and communicate with particular groups who may benefit from and appreciate targeting efforts (Elliott, 1994; Penaloza, 1996)—while minimizing negative effects—is needed for marketers who target multiple segments.

Furthermore, such marketplace targeting conflicts need to be considered conceptually in light of recent research on the Persuasion Knowledge model, which suggests that consumers understand marketing tactics and may react negatively to communications that are seen as manipulative or inappropriate attempts to persuade. Friestad and Wright (1994) distinguished between targeting efforts that are seen as welcome or appropriate attempts to serve a target market and those that are viewed as manipulative or inappropriate. This research suggests that target market members may not necessarily perceive target marketing to be an inappropriate tactic and thus may respond favorably toward targeting efforts. However, more research on how different viewer groups use targeting cues to decide if targeted communications are welcome or exploitative is needed.

Another limitation of this research lies in the set of targeting cues used in the research. Although similar to those used by advertisers, these cues were somewhat simplistic. Future research is needed to further examine multiple bases of similarity, including combinations of demographic, psychographic, and cultural variables (Aaker & Williams, 1998). To illustrate, exploring responses to advertisements targeted toward yuppies versus buppies, both within those segments as well as among others not in those target markets,

would allow for an understanding of the interaction of ethnicity and socioeconomic variables. In addition, other types of targeting cues, such as media placement (e.g., *Ebony* magazine vs. *People* magazine), humor type (e.g., sarcasm vs. slapstick), music type (e.g., rap vs. classical), and colors in advertisements (e.g., bright vs. dark) need to be examined to determine conditions under which nontarget market effects may be minimized (e.g., media placement) or enhanced (e.g., source or language in copy).

Finally, this research focused on the positive impact of target marketing on those in the target market and the negative impact of target marketing on those in the nontarget market. However, the opposite pattern of results also merits examination. More specific, under what conditions will target marketing have a negative impact on target market members and a positive impact on nontarget market members? For example, the affinity of Generation-X members to the “offbeat and unusual” suggests that targeting this market directly may have a negative impact, whereas a more indirect approach (e.g., one that appears to target another market) may prove more effective. Furthermore, under what conditions will creating and nurturing the perception of an existing nontarget market benefit, rather than limit or hurt, marketers’ objectives (Turow, 1997)? Addressing these questions would demonstrate that continued progress in understanding the dynamics of target marketing are enhanced by investigations of the nontarget market.

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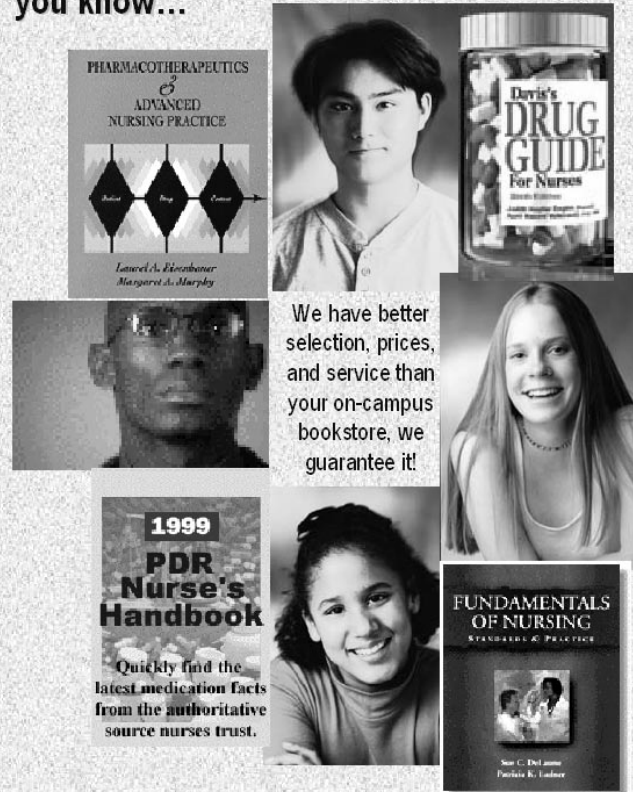
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