

# EVIDENCE ON THE MARKETING APPROACHES TARGETING GAY AND LESBIAN CONSUMERS

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## ABSTRACT

*Diversity is an important concept in business and marketing and is utilized in campaigns to attract consumers. This study examines the level of diversity in print media that targets the niche market of gays and lesbians. Race and gender are examined to determine if, in fact, marketers are being innovative in reaching this target market, or are we still using an old paradigm. This study, which examined over 3000 models used in gay and lesbian targeted media proves that we still use the old paradigm of white male models in the advertisements that we used in the 1960s.*

**JEL:** M1, M30 M31, M37

**KEYWORDS:** Content analysis, diversity, GLBT, gay, lesbian, print media, niche market

## INTRODUCTION

Diversity as an important concept in business and marketing has been gaining focus in the United States and abroad. Businesses have begun to look at the changing population demographics of their market. The United States is one area of focus, and is increasingly becoming a multicultural society. The population in the United States is changing just as rapidly as the rest of the world. By 2050, half of the United States will be people of color (Johnson, 2008). During the 1990s and beyond, the United States is shifting from a society dominated by whites and rooted in Western culture to a world society characterized by three large racial and ethnic minorities: blacks, Hispanics, and Asians (Riche, 1991).

The United States, with a history of being the world's melting pot, has become a multicultural society. Successful utilization of this diversity has been of strategic concern to business. With the marketplace inundated with new businesses, new products, and revamped products, consumers have multiple options on how to spend their money. How does a business find and keep the consumers who want their products? Even established businesses have to work to keep current customers and attract new ones

The changing face of the marketplace, particularly regarding ethnicity, is impacting marketing strategies with increased target marketing including expanding representation of ethnic groups in advertising (Zinkhan, Quall, & Biswas, 1990; Martin, Lee, & Yang, 2004). The 1960s saw the first integration of ethnic groups when blacks were added to the mainstream marketing strategies. Today there are three target groups being discussed in marketing circles as new niche areas to pursue: Hispanics, Asians, and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) population. This paper focuses on one of these niche areas – the GLBT population.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Target marketing has become an increasingly important marketing strategy, especially given the amount of increasing population diversity (Martin, Lee, & Yang, 2004; Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999). Budford noted, “the more targeted the advertising, the greater response in terms of recall and eventual purchase patterns” (as cited in Sass, 2006). Target marketing, and segmenting of markets, dates back to the mid 1950s. Segmentation is an accepted tool of management and considered one of the foremost means of

operationally defining the marketing concept. Marketers using segmentation strategies attempt to deliver value to a specific subset of consumers who share similar demands (Fugate, 1993). The increased use of target marketing has been touted as an answer to consumer diversity (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999). Effective target marketing is possible with segmentation. The fundamental proposition of segmentation is that not all consumers are equal; consumers have to be diverse in order for segmentation to be cost-effective.

Why target a portion of your total market opportunity? Targeted niche marketing allows the organization to focus on a specific consumer group. Niche groups are easier to understand and, therefore, easier to address their needs than targeting a wider, more diverse group, thereby creating a more effective use of marketing dollars (Nisberg & Nierenberg, 2004).

Why target the GLBT community? The market already exists as demonstrated by commercial interest in the population. This interest is visible in current television shows, advertisements that have targeted the community over the past 20+ years, and the influx of television and radio programming geared toward this audience. Research suggests that some six to ten percent of the United States freely identifies as gay or lesbian (Buford, 2000). This proportion can be as high as twelve percent or more in America's large cities (Buford, 2000). In recent years, marketing and media attention has begun to be directed to gays and lesbians as a distinct consumer group dubbed the "Dream Market" (Penaloza, 1996). As early as 1992, researchers have been discussing the discretionary buying power and brand loyalty of members of the GLBT community (Schwartz, 1992 & Soloman, 1994). The buying power of GLBT consumers is estimated at \$641 billion, just in the United States (GLBT loyalty, 2007). Network television had over 30 openly gay characters appearing regularly on television series as of fall 1997 (A new, affluent, 1998). GLBT consumers buy new products earlier than most, have more discretionary income than average folks and are very brand loyal (Winter, 2004).

In the last few years, there has been an increase in corporate attention focused on the homosexual population as evidenced by increased television shows with out homosexual characters, the creation of television networks geared towards this population (QueerTV, PNN, LOGO TV, HERE TV) and increased advertisement by major industries. Several industries have targeted this group for several years already. The automotive industry, namely Subaru and Saturn, started actively marketing to the homosexual community in 1994 (Schweinsberg, Winter, & Zachary, 2004). Tobacco, alcohol, and travel-oriented firms have also been pitching to the market for at least a decade (Schweinsberg, Winter, & Zachary, 2004).

Marzano-Lesnevish (n.d.) describes a composite profile, discussed by Delozier and Rodriguez, of desirable characteristics of the homosexual consumer: being well-educated, high discretionary income, informed socially and politically, and dedicated to career and home ownership. The main desirable traits of the homosexual couple are summed up not in hard numbers, but in "DINKS" stereotype: "dual income-no kids" which assumes there is more discretionary income and more disposable time (Marzano-Lesnevish, n.d.; Buford, 2000). Gay and lesbian consumers are more likely to have time for leisure activities, and are thus especially interesting prospects for products and services that are consumed in units of disposable time, including entertainment, travel and all related industries (Buford, 2000). Puechl (2004) goes on to state that this same research also concluded that approximately 76% of gay and lesbian household incomes were above the national average of \$40,000 per year. So, not only does the GLBT population have more disposable income due to the "DINKS" stereotype, but there is also research evidence that lends credence to the stereotype.

Mass marketing is becoming a thing of the past as businesses realize that one needs to respond to consumer differences with differentiation and segmentation strategies that recognize ethnic minority subcultures are growing in size and have, not only increased purchasing power, but also heightened

political and cultural awareness and ethnic pride (Sheth et al., 1990; Cui, 1997; Penaloza & Gilly, 1999). The 2000 United States Census showed that same-sex households reside in 99% of the counties nationwide, with approximately 25% of the households having children, 20% having someone over age 55 and over 10% having a senior over the age of 65 (Wilke, 2004; Doyle, 2005). Therefore, in this age of global competition, concerns about the bottom line, and looking for competitive advantage in the market place, the question should be “Why not the GLBT community?”

What is the most effective media to use in reaching this groups? While there are some targeted television channels (LOGO and HERETV) and some targeted shows (the LWord), these require the audience to have cable television. There are GLBT targeted radio shows, but it is not nationwide nor 24 hours per day. Print media (magazines and newspapers) is the media of choice for this niche segment. Utilizing niche print outlets allows a company the opportunity to increase the frequency of their promotion being seen by the targeted audience, versus doing a mass-market campaign that may have greater reach but not necessarily the correct audience. This is especially true when targeting culturally diverse markets. Additionally, print outlets are more cost effective than television.

An examination of the reach towards the GLBT population has been limited. This is an important population for consideration as “ads with specifically gay-themed content generated \$212 million in revenue in 2005” (Saas, 2006, 2). The prior research has been somewhat limited due to difficulty in identifying this segment. However, given the buying power of this market segment, it is becoming a market segment of strategic consideration for many corporations. In an era of globalization and increased competition, finding and reaching new consumers is of importance to every business.

This paper examines a snapshot of print advertising in several national and regional magazines and newspapers geared to the gay and lesbian consumer to determine if there is, in fact, diversity in print advertising directed towards this group. Or are we continuing with the model of 40 years ago where the diversity we have is only found in stereotypical and/or gender specific roles? Given that anywhere from 6-10% of the population is thought to be GLBT, one would assume that the population exists in various ages, ethnicities, cultures, and size. Gender is examined to determine if advertisers target both males and females or one gender over the other. Race is examined, as historically advertising focused first on white males, then white males and females, then African Americans in the late 1960s. Does this favoritism towards white males occur in GLBT advertisements? Print advertisements were slow to add additional ethnicities, and when they were added, the roles given the various ethnic groups tended towards stereotypical (Cohen, 1992; Bristor, Gravois, & Hunt, 1995; Taylor & Bang, 1997; Coltrane & Messineo, 2000; Odekerken-Schroder, De Wulf, & Hofstee, 2002; Bailey, 2006).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Why is it important to examine diversity in print advertisement? Consumer attitude towards an advertisement, and subsequently towards the product or service promoted in that advertisement, are influenced by the ability of the consumer to view themselves as similar or dissimilar to the users of that product or service. The conclusions that consumers make when viewing an ad regarding similarities and dissimilarities, and the ability to imagine oneself comparatively to the ad portrayal can influence the attitude toward the product and purchase intentions (Debevec & Iyer, 1988). “It follows that when consumers of a particular minority perceive a similarity between themselves and an advertising model of a similar background, this judgment will result in self-referencing” (Martin, Lee, & Yang, 2004, p. 28). Furthermore, research has found that “In-group members will evaluate other in-group members more favorably than they will out-group members” (Qualls & Moore, 1990, p. 148). Therefore, advertisements to reach niche target markets should strive to utilize models or symbols that represent the targeted market. In the case of the GLBT market, that requires more thoughtful analysis of what constitutes that target market, i.e. what does that market look like.

The GLBT population does not fit into a single category of gender, race/ethnicity, age, nationality, or socioeconomic status. It is a diverse group of people found in every gender and race worldwide. A content analysis of print advertisements was conducted in order to begin to assess how diverse (or not) the advertising appeals are when targeting the gay and lesbian consumer. Are advertisers reaching lesbians and gays of color in advertisements? What about older lesbians and gays? Are more advertisements geared toward men than women? Historically, the literature review will denote that marketing campaigns in the United States have focused primarily on white males as the main consumer, then moving to white females, allowing African Americans in mainstream advertising in the late 1960s, and other ethnic groups were added slowly over the next several decades. When models of color were utilized in advertisements, they were typically in stereotypical roles and not as the main character. This research will determine if the advertisements in various GLBT publications has followed this trend, focusing on predominantly white males. The publications examined include national GLBT magazines, national gay magazines, national lesbian magazines, and regional GLBT newspapers. To examine further these questions this study will examine the following variables as they apply to the GLBT population: gender, race, and the roles portrayed by models of various gender and race.

The main question driving this research is “Are advertisers adequately and appropriately representing minorities in advertisements targeting the GLBT population”?

The research questions and hypotheses driving this study are as follows:

RQ1: Will there be diversity of models portrayed in print advertising geared towards gays and lesbians as demonstrated by gender, skin color, and age?

Ha1: There is a significant difference in representation based on gender in print advertisements.

Ha2: There is a significant difference in representation based on race in print advertisements.

RQ2: Will there be equity in the roles portrayed by models of various gender, ages, and races/ethnicities?

Ha3: There is a significant difference in the proportion of leading versus supporting and background roles based on race in print advertising.

Ha4: There is a significant difference in the proportion of leading versus supporting and background roles based on race and gender in print advertising.

## **DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

This study examined ten issues each of a national magazine that targets the GLBT audience, three GLBT newspapers, three magazines that target Gay men and three magazines that target lesbians. There is only one national magazine chosen, as there is only one national magazine in the United States that targets the GLBT population. The issues examined were published between the years 2006 – 2008. The sample consists of print advertisements at least ¼ page size or larger, eliminating personal advertisements and business card sized advertisements. This allows for a focus on main advertisements and not personal service advertisements or personal ads. A limitation of the sampling is tied to the volatility of the magazine industry.

### Research Design

Quantitative research gathers data in numbers via set categories predetermined by the researcher.

This study utilized content analysis as the primary method of data collection. Why use content analysis? Content analysis has been used for over 50 years in various studies primarily in the field of mass communication and social sciences (Berelson, 1952). The use of content analysis allows for the study of the message itself, rather than focusing on the communicator or the audience (Kassarjian, 1977). The study can focus on the cues, symbols, signs, pictures, graphics, or words within the advertisement instead of the intent of the sender or the action or reaction of the receiver. Content analysis allows for observation and analysis of overt communication behaviors in marketing, as it is an effective research tool when faced with a limited budget. Content analysis has proven to be an objective, systematic and quantitative tool for use in empirical research (Berelson, 1952; Healey & Kassarjian, 1983; Sayre, 1992; Graham, Kamins, & Oetomo, 1993; Naccarato & Neuendorf, 1998; and Carrigan & Szmigin, 1999). It “provides quantified data suitable for statistical analysis” (Philips & McQuarrie, 2002, p. 3). Content analysis is principally useful in detecting frequently and infrequently used portrayals in promotions (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996). Content analysis has been chosen as the method of data collection for this study as the researcher aimed to examine advertisement content targeting the GLBT population in print media for the time period under consideration.

The codebook was developed using information from prior studies on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and role dominance in print advertising. The definitions of the coding form come from a variety of sources including previously published content analysis studies (Neuendorf, 2001; Peterson, 1995; Al-Olayan & Karande, 2000; Stern, Klugman, & Resnik, 1981). Utilizing previously studied definitions increases the validity of the coded content. The coders that assisted in data collection went through a training session and inter-coder reliability was tested and retraining occurred until there was a 90% or higher consistency in inter-coder reliability as demonstrated by Krippendorff’s alpha. The Krippendorff alpha statistic for inter-coder reliability after training was  $\alpha=923$ , thus achieving an inter-coder reliability higher than the required 90%.

## **RESULTS**

The results of this study are important because they add to the understanding of current marketing strategies being utilized to reach this consumer group, as there has not been a lot of published research focused on what has been attempted. The success of marketers in the future depends upon having a greater understanding of their consumers. Various research in the past have noted that this consumer group has significant potential due to disposable income and their buying power, as noted previously. Targeted advertising campaigns are supposedly effective because precise advertising characteristics have been tailored to the characteristics of a targeted consumer segment (Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999). The results of this study demonstrate that the advertising campaigns have a limited view of what a GLBT person looks like in regards to gender and race.

The research started by examining the genders represented in the print advertisements found in the subject media.

Ha1: There is a significant difference in representation based on gender in print advertisements.

In the 100 magazine and newspaper issues examined, the total sample of models used in this study was 3,122. The gender breakdown was males: 1,687 and females 1,435. Examining U.S. Census (2007) data from 2000, it is found that 50.9% of the reported population was female with 49.1% of the reported population being male. Alternative hypothesis 1 examined the distribution by gender of the models in the print advertisements to determine if the distributed mimicked the U.S. Census population data.

The original options in the coding for this part of the distribution included choices of male, female, and unable to be determined. Due to the small number of unable to be determined (n=45), this category was

dropped from the final sample totals. In the distribution shown in Table 1, the genders are not equally divided, as one would expect in a normal distribution.

The US Census data was, for the most part, an equal representation of gender, and as noted, the genders displayed in the research advertising do not mimic the actual U.S. population. The chi-squared statistic ( $\chi^2(1)=20.341, p < .001$ ), demonstrates that the distribution is not equal, and we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Table 1: Gender and Media

<b>a. Gender</b>	Observed N	Expected N	Percentages
Male	1687	1561	54.0%
Female	1435	1561	46.0%
Total	3122		

$\chi^2(1)=20.341, p < .001$

<b>b. Media Name</b>	Male	Female	Total
Advocate	95	20	115
NY Blade	70	30	100
Washington Blade	84	36	120
Watermark	430	200	630

Table 1 part a. shows the observed number, by gender, in all media sources followed in cell 2 of the expected observations and the observed percentages. Part b examines by gender the distribution of models in media that purports to target both genders.

Within the media examined for this study, there are magazines that target one gender over the other and there are newspapers and a magazine that purport to target both genders equally. Table 1b looks at the frequency of gender in those media that target both genders. A quick examination of this table shows that the males are used more often in advertisements than females in magazines and newspapers that target both genders.

Table 1a: Media

Media	Type
Advocate	National Magazine
NY Blade	Newspaper
Washington Blade	Newspaper
Watermark	Newspaper
Curve	National Magazine
DIVA	International Magazine
LN	National Magazine
OUT	National Magazine
Attitude	International Magazine
Instinct	National Magazine

Table 1a lists the media used in this study. Ten issues of each magazine or newspaper published between 2006-2008 were randomly selected. The international magazines are published in the United Kingdom but are readily available nation-wide in the United States.

Table 1a is a listing of the various media used in this study. The top four in the table target both gays and lesbians. The three newspapers utilize a majority of black and white advertisements. The magazines targeting lesbians are *Curve*, *DIVA*, and *LN*. *OUT*, *Attitude*, and *Instinct* target gays.

The next hypothesis, alternative hypothesis 2, examined the representation of people of color in print advertisements.

Ha2: There is a significant difference in representation based on race in print advertisements.

U.S. Census data, as of 2000, makes this a more complicated demographic to count as additional categories were added to the U.S. Census, including Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic whites, and categories for two or more races (U.S. Census, 2007). For purposes of this research, Caucasian depictions in advertisements are assumed to be non-Hispanic whites. Hispanic and Latino measures encompass Hispanic whites, Hispanics and Latinos.

Table 2: Ethnicity of Models in Advertisements

Race/Ethnicity	Observed N
Caucasian	2376
African American	405
Hispanic	245
Asian	67
Total	3093

$\chi^2(3)=2503.398, p < .001$

*This table shows the breakdown by race of models observed in all media for this study. Column 1 is the race/ethnicity, column two gives the total number observed.*

Table 2 shows the break down of ethnicity as found in the coding of the advertisements with some minor adjustments. The original choices of the coding book included the following categories: Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Native American, Other, and unable to be determined. In the original sample, there were ten (10) Native American and twenty-seven (27) unable to determine. Therefore, due to small numbers within these categories, they were dropped from the statistical analysis. The chi-squared statistic ( $\chi^2(3)=2503.398, p < .001$ ) was significant and supports this alternative hypothesis.

The diversity present in the advertisements was next examined in regards to the roles portrayed in the advertisements. This part of the research was driven by the second research question.

RQ2: Will there be equity in the roles portrayed by models of various gender, ages, and races/ethnicities?

In prior research, as discussed in the literature review, models of various demographics (gender, age, and race) differed on use within the advertisement. This earlier research focused on mainstream advertising utilizing various forms of media. This section of the research focused on whether or not there is diversity, as determined by demographic characteristics, demonstrated in the various roles found in print advertisements that target the GLBT community. There are two hypotheses analyzed from this research question.

Ha3: There is a significant difference in the proportion of leading versus supporting and background roles based on race in print advertising.

Alternate hypothesis three examines the ethnicity of the models in various roles portrayed in the print advertisement. This question stems from earlier research in mainstream media that looked at racial diversity in print and televised media to determine if the GLBT targeted advertisements were following the same pattern. This data from the print advertisements studied can be found in Table 3. This hypothesis takes into account character role and the characteristic of ethnicity without regard to gender or age. Following Table 3 is a discussion of some statistical analysis changes that occurred based on the data gathered.

Table 3: Social Position and the Ethnicity of the Models Portrayed

Ethnicity		Lead Character	Main Supporting Character	Background	Total
Caucasian	Count (Ct)	1469	725	141	2335
	Expected Ct	1381.5	825	128.5	2335.0
	% w/i ethnicity				
	% w/i social position	62.9%	31.0%	6.0%	100.0%
African American	Count (Ct)				
	Expected Ct	170	195	15	380
	% w/i ethnicity	224.8	134.3	20.9	380.0
	% w/i social position	44.7%	51.3%	3.9%	100.0%
Hispanic	Count (Ct)	9.5%	18.3%	9.0%	12.6%
	Expected Ct				
	% w/i ethnicity	115	120	10	245
	% w/i social position	145.0	86.6	13.5	245.0
Asian	Count (Ct)	46.9%	49%	4.1%	100.0%
	Expected Ct	6.4%	11.3%	6.0%	8.1%
	% w/i ethnicity				
	% w/i social position	31	26	0	57
Total	Count (Ct)	33.7	20.1	3.1	57.0
	Expected Ct	54.4%	45.6%	.0%	100.0%
	% w/i ethnicity	1.7%	2.4%	.0%	1.9%
	% w/i social position	1785	1066	166	3017
		1785	1066.0	166.0	3017.0
		59.2%	35.3%	5.5%	100.0%
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

$\chi^2(6) = 86.466$        $p < .001$

Table 3 ethnicity (column 1) compared to social position within the advertisement (columns 3-6). As noted, 63.9% of all Caucasian models were found in the lead character role, while of all model ethnicities 82.3% of lead characters were Caucasian.

Table 3 examines each ethnicity and the role category with some condensation of categories. As noted previously, the racial category was modified from the original category as noted on the codebook due to the small sample size in some of the subcategories. In addition, the sub category background in social position was compressed to just look at background and not what type of background role the model was displaying due to some background roles having a sample size too small to effectively study. Therefore, all subcategories under background were rolled into one category. The frequencies demonstrated in Table 3 show that the majority of lead and main supporting characters are Caucasian (82.3%, 68.0%, respectively). The chi-squared statistic ( $\chi^2(6) = 86.466, p < .001$ ) was significant and supports this alternative hypothesis.

Multi-Way Frequency and Chi-Squared Analyses

Moving into the final hypothesis, it was apparent that doing chi square analysis was not going to be an adequate analysis of the results to determine whether to accept or reject the hypothesis. A Multi-way Frequency Analysis (MFA) was conducted in order to address hypotheses 4. The MFA was carried out



by utilizing the Hiloglinear program in SPSS. The independent variables race, gender and age along with the dependent variable social position were entered into the MFA.

In order to determine the best model fit to the data in the MFA, a backward elimination of higher order effects was utilized. This backward elimination procedure eliminates the highest order effect from the model, in this case the three-way interaction of race, gender, and social position, and then assesses if a significant amount of prediction of observed cell frequencies was lost by the elimination. If the highest order effect is not significant, then the next highest effect (i.e., all three way effects) is tested. This proceeds until it is determined the highest order effects that explain the data.

The results of the MFA indicated that the three-way interactions of race, gender, and social position indicated that the elimination of the three way interactions would result in decreased prediction ( $c^2(40) = 159.53, p < .001$ ). This indicates that the three way interaction is required in the overall model in order to predict the cell frequencies.

Given that the elimination of the three-way interaction effects resulted in reduced prediction of cell frequencies, it needed to be determined exactly which of the four possible three-way interactions were significant and therefore needed to remain in the overall model. The results indicated that the interactions of gender, race and social position ( $c^2(6) = 39.58, p < .001$ ), resulted in reduced prediction of cell frequencies. Therefore, the three-way interaction needed to be included in the final overall model.

A chi-squared analysis was conducted to assess if the social position of the character would be predicted by the gender of the character. The results indicated that social position is predicted by gender ( $c^2(2) = 22.42, p < .001$ ). As noted previously, these hypotheses examined demographic characteristics of models portraying various roles in print advertising. Alternative hypothesis 4 examines more than one demographic characteristic as they pertain to the role of the model in the advertisement.

Ha4: There is a significant difference in the proportion of leading versus supporting and background roles based on race and gender in print advertising.

Alternative hypothesis 4 examines the role position of the model within the print advertising based on the race and gender of the model.

Alternative hypothesis 4 stated that social position within the print advertising will be predicted by the race and gender of the character. This hypothesis was supported by the three-way interaction of race, gender and social position in the MFA ( $c^2(6) = 39.58, p < .001$ ). An inspection of Table 4 reveals the nature of the three-way interaction.

Male Caucasians had a greater proportion of lead character roles (67.1%) when compared to female Caucasians (57.3%); however, they also had a less proportion of main supporting character roles (28% versus 35.3%).

African American males had a less proportion of lead character roles (40%) when compared to African American females (48.8%); however, they also had a greater proportion of main supporting character roles (60% versus 43.9%). African American females also had a greater proportion of background character roles (14.9%) when compared to African American males (0%).

Hispanic males had a greater proportion of main supporting character roles (53.8%) when compared to Hispanic females (43.5%). Finally, Asian males had a less proportion of lead characters (50%) when compared to Asian females (57.1%) and a greater proportion of main supporting character roles (50%)

versus 42.9%). The latter result should be interpreted with caution, as there were only 35 Asians in the sample.

Table 4: Social Position of Character in Print Media as a Function of Gender and Race

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Social Position</i>	<i>Race</i>			
		<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Asian</b>
Male	Lead Character				
	Count				
	Expected Count	878	70	60	11
	% within SP	815.3	109.0	81.0	13.7
	% within race	86.2	6.9	5.9	1.1
		67.1	40.0	46.2	50.0
	Main Character				
	Supporting Character				
	Count	366	105	70	11
	Expected Count	441.7	59.0	43.9	7.4
	% within SP	66.3	19.0	12.7	2.0
	% within race	28.0	60.0	53.8	50.0
	Background Character				
	Count	65	0	0	0
	Expected Count	52.0	7.0	5.2	.9
% within SP	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
% within race	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Female	Lead Character				
	Count	583	100	55	20
	Expected Count	562.0	113.2	63.5	19.3
	% within SP	76.9	13.2	7.3	2.6
	% within race	57.3	48.8	47.8	57.1
	Main Character				
	Supporting Character				
	Count	359	90	50	15
	Expected Count	381.1	76.7	43.1	13.1
	% within SP	69.8	17.5	9.7	2.9
	% within race	35.3	43.9	43.5	42.9
	Background Character				
	Count	76	15	10	0
	Expected Count	74.9	15.1	8.5	2.6
	% within SP	75.2	14.9	9.9	0.0
% within race	7.5	7.3	8.7	0.0	

Table 4 looks at gender and race as it applies to the social position portrayed in the advertisement. Column 1 looks at gender, column 2 is position, and columns 3-6 look at the breakdown by race. The table shows that 57.3% of lead characters are Caucasian women while 76.9% of all Caucasian females can be found in the lead character role.

## **FINDINGS**

This study looks at two general research questions and four hypotheses. The first segment of this study examined the diversity of advertisements as evidenced by gender and race. Secondly, the roles of models in the advertisements were studied based on the demographics examined in the first section. Roles include main character, main supporting, and background. In summarizing the findings, it became evident that diversity in gender and ethnicity was not as commonplace in current advertisements targeting the GLBT population as originally thought.

Research question one was broken into two hypotheses. Each one of these hypotheses looked at a demographic feature, or a combination, of the advertisements in question. The study concluded that there was significance in the race and the gender of the models. This research question demonstrated that there were more men shown in advertisements, and that these men were predominantly Caucasian. These findings are similar to findings discussed in the literature review.

Research question two focused on the demographic categories from research question one, with the added component of the social position role the models held within the print advertisement. The three-way interaction demonstrated significance. The three way interactions between the variables of social position (role), gender, and race are necessary for prediction of position. Furthermore, the hypothesis demonstrated further that gender, race, and age play a role in the position of models in the advertisement. For example, male Caucasians are more likely to be main characters in advertisements.

## **LIMITATIONS**

There are several limitations to this study. The first one is that the print media sample included magazines and newspapers. Some of the magazines specifically target one gender. Only one magazine bills itself as targeting both. This is a limitation when looking at the demographics in research question one. Secondly, this target market has a limited number of national publications with large circulations. This hampers the ability to make far-reaching conclusions. Third, this study examined the advertisements of the past two years. Advertisers generally advertise long term in GLBT publications to demonstrate loyalty to the market segment, in hopes of gaining the population's trust. Therefore, the business may be running the same or a similar advertisement over several months. A longer look at advertising could have given a more diverse view of the variables examined.

Next, advertisements had to meet certain criteria to be included in this study. However, advertisements for videotapes, movies, theater productions, and albums were not excluded from the study. These advertisements have a tendency to use models that represent the product, not necessarily target the consumer group. Additionally, the coder questions assumed a basic knowledge of marketing concepts, especially as it related to target market. The coders ranged in age and marketing experience constituting another limitation for this study. Finally, as with many media enterprises, the GLBT publication world is condensing with fewer owners of more publications. This can contaminate the advertisement sample as similar advertisements can be found in same-owner publications. A more diverse field of publications that limited publication ownership would enhance this study.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS**

Marketers use knowledge of the targeted segment to create campaigns that carry a particular message for the targeted group. Advertisements targeting niche groups are uncommon in mainstream media (Ringhold, 1995). Having an appropriately diverse presence in GLBT oriented media, participating in GLBT community events, and contributing to various social causes of importance to this community may prove to be effective tools for building long lasting relationships in the GLBT community. Prior research

has demonstrated that gays and lesbians can be very brand loyal to a brand that is loyal to them (Miller, 1990; Tuten, 2005).

This study demonstrates that advertisers and marketers today are following the patterns learned from the past 40 years – all consumers are Caucasian males between 20 -35 years of age. One age group, one ethnicity, or one gender does not represent the GLBT population. It is a multicultural cosmopolitan population that varies in age and gender. That fact may be what makes it so hard to appropriately target this niche market. The population, by virtue of the identifying characteristic being sexual orientation, does not fit into a pre-existing mold that advertisers and marketers are used to working with. Basic demographics will not adequately reach this group at this time. Attempting to reach this group requires marketers to take the time to learn about the consumer and their culture. This population represents a group that is being tolerated more in society today, as evidenced by the increased number of out characters in television and movies. Another demonstration of this tolerance is the inclusion of GLBT engagement announcements in major newspapers, and the increase in domestic partner benefits being offered by employers. Additionally, there is the increased visibility of GLBT members working to change laws they find discriminatory around the country. Marketers need to be aware of the limitations of their current advertisements. They are attempting to box in what a GLBT person looks like, when in fact, this is one group that marketers could easily include various ages, genders, ethnicities, and sizes, and while doing so may increase the consumer loyalty due to presenting a more accurate representation of that group.

#### Future Research Implications

Additional research is needed in this area. The GLBT population has not been widely covered in the literature as of this time, yet it is a specific target market that is gaining interest in the business world due to its size, disposable income, and various other demographic features. This study demonstrates that while American GLBT publications are limited, there are international ones that can be used to compare advertising practices. Further research in how gay men or lesbians are portrayed in targeted advertisements worldwide is of importance in this global economy. It may be easier to study one gender or the other instead of attempting to generalize to the GLBT population, as there are more gay or lesbian specific magazines than there are ones targeting the GLBT population as a whole. It would behoove organizations to know if the GLBT population had similarities on an international scale. This could affect marketing options (global campaign or a local one).

The GLBT consumer group is measurable, accessible, differentiable, and actionable. As noted previously, the 2000 United States Census showed that same-sex households reside in 99% of the counties nationwide, with approximately 25% of the households having children, 20% having someone over age 55 and over 10% having a senior over the age of 65 (Wilke, 2004; Doyle, 2005). Therefore, in this age of global competition, concerns about the bottom line, and looking for competitive advantage in the market place, the question should be “Why not the GLBT community?”

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