As the population of the United States grows ever more diverse, the body of research from the field of consumer psychology faces some of the same challenges faced in other fields such as educational or counseling psychology, social psychology, and psychiatry (Markus, 2005; Helms, 2005). That is, our knowledge base reflects what we know about White, European Americans, with very few studies providing an understanding of people from diverse populations. For example, in the field of psychiatry, researchers reviewed the best available studies of psychiatric drugs for various disorders and found that just 8% of the patients studied were minorities, with many studies having no representation of minorities at all. For those that did, generally the numbers were too small to tell doctors anything meaningful (Vedantam, 2005). Such a dearth in research can be deadly given the proven differences in impact of certain drugs on certain populations. There are even drugs that have been introduced and targeted to particular populations. Similarly for consumer psychology, for the most part, our knowledge is mainly about White, Anglo European, heterosexual, middle income and above, fairly educated, males. What Pollay (1986) has argued about advertising also is reflective of consumer psychology, namely, “while it may be true that advertising reflects cultural values, it does so on a very selective basis, echoing and reinforcing certain attitudes, behaviors, and values far more frequently than others” (p. 33). A similar expression that further drives home this point is from the book Race and Ethnicity in Research Methods (Stanfield & Dennis, 1993): “Too many studies are published claiming to be ‘American studies’ that are rooted in white populations and samples, with, perhaps, short notes explaining the reasons for excluding people of color, whose presence would just complicate the analysis” (p. 27).

Over the years there have been several efforts designed to identify the extent of research in psychology and specifically marketing and consumer psychology that is devoted to increasing our understanding of diverse populations. For example, in psychology, Graham (1992) conducted a content analysis of over 14,000 articles published in American Psychological Association journals from 1970 to 1989 and found the number of articles dealing with African Americans abysmally low. In
a literature search of the major academic marketing journals (i.e., Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, and Journal of Consumer Research) from 1987–1992, Gilly (1993) found that minority issues received virtually no attention. Only one article could be found in the Journal of Consumer Research that examined Hispanics and none could be found that addressed the needs of African Americans or Asian Americans. Narrowing in on the field of consumer psychology, Williams (1995) conducted a content analysis of journals emphasizing consumer research (i.e., Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Consumer Psychology, and Psychology and Marketing) for all issues until 1994 and found that only 3.4% of the total number of articles had a racial or ethnic minority focus; only 2.3% of the total number of subjects were identified as racial or ethnic minorities.

In preparing the chapter for this volume, we conducted a content analysis to update Williams’ (1995) findings, following the same methodology employed in his content analysis. We especially wanted to see if there had been any significant change in the more recent literature. In other words, we wanted to see if the consumer psychology body of knowledge had become more inclusive of diverse populations. Similar to Williams’ study, our content analysis focused on the Journal of Consumer Psychology, the Journal of Consumer Research, and Psychology & Marketing. Since Williams’ analysis ended with 1994, we examined the 10-year period from 1995 to 2004 and reached conclusions similar to Williams’ (1995) analysis of consumer research studies in the earlier period. Our more recent analysis shows that still little attention is being paid to race/ethnicity in consumer research. In fact, the numbers from our analysis are slightly lower than the earlier time period. As indicated in Table 35.1, we found that only 2.5% of the total number of articles had a racial or ethnic minority focus, compared to 3.4% in the earlier period, and only 2.0% of the total number of subjects were identified as racial or ethnic minorities, compared to 2.3% in the earlier period.

With an increasingly diverse population, it becomes questionable whether theories developed and tested for, by, and of the dominant consumer group (i.e., White, European Americans) can be appropriately applied to ethnic minority consumer groups (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, etc.), who perhaps differ in terms of household compositions, values, lifestyles, self-perceptions, and aspirations (Gilly, 1993; cf. Riche, 1990). Different racial and ethnic groups have different cultural histories and, for a variety of reasons, may respond differently to marketplace questions and attempts by researchers to measure various consumer psychological constructs (Baker, Motley, & Henderson, 2004; Motley, Henderson, & Baker 2003). In fact, a recent Yankelovich Monitor indicates that Hispanic and African American consumers share many points of view that White consumers do not. For instance, they differed in terms of perceptions about participation in activities that celebrate culture and heritage, preserving family-cultural traditions, and in the important attribute they considered in deciding where to shop (Common Ground, 2004; Markus, 2005; Briley & Aaker, 2006).

Since methodological problems with respect to race and ethnicity can occur at all levels of the research process, a significant challenge facing consumer researchers will be to adapt the methods and approaches that have been successful with nonminority populations to the special circumstances of racial/ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, many researchers naively assume that research methods can be transferred wholesale among racial and ethnic populations without taking into consideration these differences (Adams & Adams-Esquibel, 1981; Dauten & Menendez, 1984; Williams, 1995; Garcia & Gerdes, 2004). As noted by Marin and Marin (1991) in analyzing research methods with Hispanic populations, ignoring such differences can lead to findings based on methodology so faulty that it renders the results uninterpretable or misleading.

Darley and Williams (2006) acknowledge that conducting research among and across race and ethnic groups is fraught with many problems, including practical, strategic, ethical, and epistemological issues. They address a number of methodological problems associated with consumer

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research of ethnic minority populations that can arise, and provide a number of recommendations. Attention to these methodological issues will lead to better consumer research on diverse populations and result in advancing our knowledge concerning consumer psychology beyond the dominant population that forms the basis of what we presently know.

In addition to being critical about issues such as functional, conceptual, measurement, sampling equivalence, data collection procedures when researching minority consumers, a more pressing need is for researchers to make a conscious effort to include race, ethnic, and cultural variables in marketing and consumer research. This will help to establish the boundaries and limitations of our marketing and consumer psychology knowledge. One of the first places to start is to define precisely what constitutes a minority consumer and to clearly identify when being a minority versus non-minority makes a difference (Williams, 1995). Thus, in the next section we address issues related to the construction of racial and ethnic categories.

**CATEGORY CONSTRUCTION: RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Race and ethnicity have been used interchangeably to classify and identify people (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). Although related, race and ethnicity are nonetheless different concepts. Race is, in essence, based on socially constructed definitions of physical differences. In contrast, ethnicity is usually defined as membership in a cultural group on the basis of country of origin, language, religion or cultural traditions (Banton, 1987; Baxter & Sansom, 1972; Hutchison, 1988). To be more precise, Hispanics can be Asian, Black, or White, or some combination of any or all of them. Therefore race signifies biological differences whereas ethnicity refers primarily to social and cultural forms of identification or self-identification. Consider the instance of Pedro, one of our former students, who was Peruvian (by culture), Japanese (by biology), and American (via immigration). From just looking at him, one might simply conclude that he was Asian; after just hearing him speak, one might simply conclude that he was Hispanic; and after just observing his behavior, one might simply conclude that he was American. Thus, not only are ethnicity, race, and nationality different classifications, they each may suggest different behaviors and perceptions. And even though racial groups may appear to be mutually exclusive, they often have overlaps. Consider CNN reporter Soledad O’Brien who actively identifies with all aspects of her Australian/Irish (father) and Afro-Cuban (mother) heritage. In response to these classification complexities, the 2000 Census, for the first time ever, allowed individuals to claim multiple racial affiliations. In addition, these racial affiliations are repeated for both Hispanics and non-Hispanics, thus doubling the number of categories from which a respondent may choose. As a form of identification, ethnicity permits the possibility that an individual may belong to more than one group.

Ethnic identification may range from passive acquiescence to active participation and from denial to passionate commitment. Smith (1980) and Weinreich and Mason (1986) suggest that we should understand ethnic identification from three domains: the *natal domain* such as birthplace of self, natural parents and siblings; the *subjective domain* such as self-identification of preferred ethnic group, preferred reference group and real and aspired self-image; and the *behavioral domain* such as language use, participation in cultural and religious activities, and music and food preferences. Collectively, they provide a composite of an individual’s ethnic identity. Some researchers have gone further to suggest subjective self-labeling as the only valid measure of ethnicity because it represents an individual’s internal beliefs and, therefore, reflects one’s cultural reality (Cohen, 1978; Hirschman, 1981).

Even among racial and ethnic group members, there is disagreement as to what is more appropriate when self-selecting a category (Williams, 1995). It is likely that the primary cultural identification may be different from the self-perceived ethnicity. In Jewell’s 1985 study, African American
college students were found to identify themselves using eight different categories: Black, Black American, Negro, Afro American, Black-Negro, Mixed, Colored and Negro-Indian. Many Blacks find the term *African American* to be problematic since technically, the term could also describe Charlize Theron (native of South Africa) or Theresa Heinz-Kerry (native of Mozambique). In a similar vein, Hispanic and Asian Americans are far from being homogeneous. About three quarters of Hispanics are of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and/or Cuban ancestry. Each country of origin carries an accompanying set of unique traditions and way of thinking. Depending on where they reside in the United States, the term *Latinos* is sometimes preferred as a group label. Many Texans and Californians, for instance, prefer the term *Chicano/a* which they believe better reflects their Mexican heritage. Hispanics may further define themselves, in part, through language preference: English-dominant, Spanish-dominant, or bilingual (Vence, 2004). Similarly complex, Asian Americans include individuals from China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, etc. Not only do they have physical differences, their language, religion, and cultural traditions, although similar, are not at all the same. Therefore, for a valid identification of any ethnicity, it is essential to employ a combination of multiple indicators.

Other researchers have suggested that, in addition to the multiple indicator approach, intensity of affiliation should be taken into consideration when measuring ethnic identification. Characteristically, those with a weak identification could be different from those with a very strong identification. Failure to include the intensity of affiliation would render the classification and understanding of an individual’s identity invalid. Research on Jews (Hirschman, 1981), Hispanics (Valencia, 1985; Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986), Chinese (Tan & McCullough, 1985) and Blacks (Williams, 1989) has taken this approach with insightful findings. Stayman and Deshpande (1989) further suggest that the self-selection of ethnicity can also be situation dependent, thus adding to the classification framework another dimension for consideration. Asian Americans seem to possess less ethnic identification relative to Blacks and Hispanics but instead respond favorably to an advertiser’s cultural sensitivity (Karande, 2005).

Hirschman (1981) measured Jewish ethnicity with a single item such as: “How strongly do you identify with your racial/ethnic group?” Along a different path, Valencia (1985) developed a scale to measure an individual’s “Hispanicness.” However, this approach presents a problem since the mean level and associated variance differ from group to group. As an improvement, Phinney (1992) proposed the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure based on elements of ethnic identity that are common across groups. Since the focus here is on elements that are common across groups, variations within each cultural group are therefore not accounted for and valuable insights could have been lost. A possible solution for this dilemma might be for researchers to start with an etic construct and then seek emic operationalization via multi-item measures. Such an approach will allow for within group accuracy and between group comparability. Meanwhile, the nature of multi-item measures allows the inclusion of elements along different comparison dimensions with varying levels of intensity.

There are two basic approaches researchers in consumer psychology can take in applying theories to diverse populations to expand our knowledge to be more inclusive of these diverse populations. One approach is to take standard theories and constructs that have been applied to the dominant population and see what differences emerge when applied to diverse populations. Typically, this can be done by making sure the study has an adequate sample of subjects from diverse populations so that valid comparisons can be made. As Table 35.1 indicates, consumer psychologists have not had diversity in their research subject samples, have not captured information on race/ethnicity/nationality, or both. Of all of the articles published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, and *Psychology & Marketing* from 1995 through 2004, only 2% of research participants were persons of color (of African, Asian, or Hispanic Heritage). Given that these groups
represent nearly a third of the U.S. Population (and even greater numbers worldwide), it is highly unusual to find research so heavily skewed toward only one group in the population. In our opinion, capturing and analyzing race/ethnicity/nationality as part of a research program is the single most important action that should be taken by researchers who want to insure both the validity and relevance of their research for future generations. That is, most researchers normally include age and gender as at least covariates in their experimental designs to rule out effects that could arise due to these factors but not accounted for otherwise in their research studies. We suggest that it is well past the time for race/ethnicity/nationality to be included in these background factors, as well. In the second approach, researchers can examine typical marketplace response behavior to standard marketing mix variables, i.e., produce, place, price, and promotion, and see if there are differences between the mainstream population and diverse populations. Subsequently, the researcher then can identify and suggest which theories can account for and explain these differences.

EXTENDING DOMINANT POPULATION BASED THEORIES TO DIVERSE POPULATIONS

In this section of the chapter, we identify and summarize a number of the major theories that have been used in consumer research on the dominant population and that have been extended to diverse populations.

Distinctiveness Theory

Appiah (2004) notes that distinctiveness theory maintains that that people define themselves on traits that are numerically rare in their local environment. In other words, a person’s distinctive traits (e.g., African American, redhead) are more salient to him/her than more prevalent traits (e.g., Caucasian, brunette) possessed by other people in the environment (McGuire, 1984; McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978). This is particularly true for people who belong to a racial group that is part of a numeric minority. African Americans, for instance, would be highly aware and mindful of their race in personal and mediated situations as a result of being a numeric minority in the United States. In addition to relatively low numbers of African Americans in the United States, there are also relatively few African Americans in the media, thus contributing to African Americans audiences being more sensitive to their presence in the media.

Applications of distinctiveness theory to consumer behavior have provided a wealth of insights into how social context and individual characteristics jointly influence consumer responses to advertising (Grier & Brumbaugh, 2004). Prior research has shown that members of distinctive groups attend more to targeted advertisements, process and interpret targeted messages differently, and favor targeted ads more strongly relative to non-distinctive consumers (Aaker, Brumbaugh, & Grier, 2000; Deshpande & Stayman, 1994; Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001; Forehand, Deshpandé, & Reed, 2002; Grier & Brumbaugh, 1999; Grier & Deshpandé, 2001; cf. Wooten, 1995). More specifically, for example, Deshpande and Stayman (1994) found that Hispanic Americans living in Austin (where they are an ethnic minority) were more likely to believe that a Hispanic spokesperson was trustworthy than those Hispanics living in San Antonio (where they are an ethnic majority). Similarly, Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier (2000) found that Blacks (a minority group) had more favorable attitudes toward an advertisement featuring Black characters than Whites (a majority group) had toward an advertisement featuring White characters. These are consistent with a larger body of consumer research on spokesperson ethnicity effects in advertising (Whittler, 1991, 1989; Whittler & DiMaso, 1991; Williams & Quali, 1989, Williams, Quali, & Grier, 1995).

Grier and Brumbaugh (2004) further observe that incorporating the distinctiveness construct into research exploring ethnicity, culture, and advertising provides a much-needed theoretical
boost to understanding how advertising targeting culturally diverse audiences works, when it is most effective, and why it occasionally fails to have its desired effects. Given these efforts, we now know that ethnic similarity between the viewer and sources depicted in advertising enhances ad responses among targeted ethnic minorities because similarity judgments are more readily made among these numerically distinctive individuals (Deshpandé & Stayman, 1994) and impact the effectiveness of targeting efforts (Aaker et al., 2000). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the meanings associated with ethnic and other cultural group membership impact ad attitudes favorably among targeted individuals, but unfavorably among non-target majority consumers (Aaker et al., 2000; Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001). Brumbaugh (2002) explains this phenomenon by distinguishing between membership in the dominant culture versus a subculture. In particular, she posits that those of a subculture within the dominant culture possess knowledge about both cultures and may be more positively predisposed to messages from sources of either culture. However, those of the dominant culture only possess knowledge of the dominant culture and will thus only respond favorably to messages from dominant culture sources.

However, Grier, and Brumbaugh (2004) also caution that cultural group membership alone is not sufficient to induce the target market effects advertisers desire, as cultural group membership and distinctiveness are two different entities that act in concert to induce felt distinctiveness that subsequently impacts advertising responses (Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001; Forehand et al., 2002). Notably, the relationships between groups emerge as important in determining when and which group membership is salient and important in drawing on aspects of one’s self identity to create ad meanings (Grier & Deshpandé, 2001). Grier and Brumbaugh (2004) conclude that although integrating distinctiveness theory into advertising research in a multicultural context has yielded these important insights, much work remains to be done and ample opportunities abound for future research.

Categorization Theory and Identification Theory

Spira and Whittler (2004) discuss how categorization theory can be applied to research on diverse consumer populations. They note that an intuitive way to explain the race effect in advertising is that people favor those who are similar to versus different from them. Extending this line of thought, they suggest that it seems logical that this increased liking could lead to more favorable dispositions toward the product endorsed by a similar (vs. different) spokesperson. They then make the connection by noting that these intuitive explanations are aligned with predictions derived from social categorization theory (for a discussion see Fiske & Taylor, 1991). The basic premise of the theory is that individuals assign objects to groups and may apply any affect or beliefs associated with the group to the individual object by virtue of its group membership. The basis for classification may be any important feature that differentiates one group from another, such as race.

In a similar way, identification theory (Kelman, 1961) maintains that people automatically assess their level of similarity with a source during an interaction and make similarity judgments (Hovland & Weis, 1951; Kelman, 1961). This process drives individuals to connect with spokespersons in advertising based on perceived similarities between themselves and the spokesperson (Kelman, 1961; Basow & Howe, 1980). When viewers perceive that the source possesses characteristics similar to their own such as race, they begin to infer that the source will also share other characteristics, all of which lead to greater identification (Brock, 1965; Feick & Higie, 1992). Studies have shown that individuals who are more likely to identify with television characters are more affected by the media content in which those characters are engaged (Huesman, Eron, Klein, Brice & Fischer, 1983).

Identification theory is closely connected to and can have a strong impact on racial identification. For example, Appiah (2004) observes that among Blacks who maintain strong racial identities, awareness of and preference for Black spokespersons is heightened. Racial and ethnic identity
is a person’s knowledge of membership in a social group and the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Phinney, 1992). On the other hand, among Whites, strength of racial identity may play little if any role in how they respond to advertising. Phinney (1992) shows that minority group members consistently place higher importance on their racial and ethnic identity than Whites do. However, when “Whites are the minority, they show traits like ethnic minorities in society” (Appiah, 2004, p. 170). Since majority White viewers are less concerned about and less conscious of race, the spokesperson’s race in an ad does not seem to matter to Whites (Whittler, 1989). What may be more important to White audiences is their ability to understand, relate to, and perceive similarities with Black models in advertising in areas that are not just skin deep.

Appiah (2004) also discusses how identification theory takes into account different types of characteristics that may be the main driver in determining what the basis of identification is by the consumer. For example, Appiah (2004) notes that viewers who do not identify with television models based on race (i.e., skin color) may identify with other characteristics that the models possess. For instance, White viewers may use occupational status or social class cues rather than racial cues to determine perceived similarity between themselves and a source. In fact, many researchers (Coleman, Jussim, & Kelley, 1995; Insko, Nacoste, & Moe, 1983; Locksley, Hepburn, & Ortiz, 1982) argue that characteristics such as personal appearance, dialect style, and socioeconomic status have a greater impact on Whites’ evaluations of a source than does the race of a source. In support, studies on race-class stereotypes reveal that the dominant criterion used by White subjects to evaluate people is occupational (Feldman, 1972) or social-class status (Smedley & Bayton, 1978) and not race. Smedley and Bayton discovered that White subjects rated middle-class Blacks and Whites equally favorably and rate lower-class Whites and Blacks equally less favorably. Similarly, Jackson, Hymes, and Sullivan (1987) found that when evaluating law-school applicants, White subjects evaluated both White and Black applicants equally favorably.

According to Appiah (2004), identification often occurs when individuals infer that their tastes and preferences are similar to those of the source (Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978). For instance, White adolescents may not perceive themselves as racially similar to Black models but may infer that they have other characteristics in common with Black models, and thereby find Black models appealing. For White youth, the simple presence of Blacks in ads may invoke certain race-based stereotypes that characterize Blacks as cool, hip, musical, athletic, and fashionable, many of which are highly desirable among White youth. Additionally, White youth are likely to identify with and imitate attitudes or behaviors of Black models simply because the models are in a particular social group (e.g., professional athlete, actor, and musician) to which they aspire (see reference group theory, Siegel & Siegel, 1957). It is likely that Black viewers also have affinity toward certain models in the media when they observe some commonalities, other than physical attribute such as skin color, with these models.

In-Group Bias Theory

Spira and Whittler (2004) further point out that an important consequence of social categorization is a phenomenon known as in-group favoritism (for a discussion see Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Individuals have a tendency to evaluate people who are members of their own group (the “in-group”) more favorably than those who belong to other groups (the “out-group”). Results from many advertising studies are consistent with this effect: consumers respond more favorably to a spokesperson classified as a member of their in-group than one who is classified as a member of an out-group due to similarities or differences in racial background, respectively.

However, Spira and Whittler (2004) point out that the manifestation of in-group favoritism relies on the perceiver classifying others into in- and out-groups. With respect to a spokesperson’s
race, this means that the viewer of the advertisement must use race as a basis for categorizing the spokesperson. A number of variables that influence the salience or importance of race may influence whether and when it is used as a basis for categorization. One individual difference variable that some marketers have focused on relates to an individual's connection with his or her own ethnic or racial group. The notion is that spokesperson's race may be more meaningful to individuals who feel a strong (instead of weak) affiliation with their own racial group.

Qualls and Moore (1990) suggest that in-group bias occurs is because members of the in-group are perceived to be less different than the evaluator and that the social distance between an individual and the affiliated in-group is less than the social distance between that individual and members of out-groups. As a result of such favoritism towards one's own group, one would expect that White (Black) observers would evaluate White (Black) actors more favorably than Black (White) actors. Worth noting here is that, in the absence of other information, in-group bias theory would argue that, people will rely on their knowledge of members of their own group and on preconceived assumptions and biases regarding out-group members in making comparisons and evaluations of other people. As suggested by the categorization theory described above, of particular importance here then is to understand the role of race in how minority individuals see themselves relative to others.

**Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is discussed extensively elsewhere in this volume, where a “multiple roles for variables” perspective is taken. In this sense, it is very possible and indeed likely, that the role a particular spokesperson plays for one group is likely to be different for another group. Because of differences in source perception being driven by the ethnic background of the recipient or the source (or the interaction of a variety of factors), source can be an additional argument, an inducement to process, a biasing factor, or a cue.

Specifically, the ELM posits yet another role for variables in the persuasion setting: they may bias processing of the message’s arguments (for a discussion see Petty & Wegener, 1998). Spira and Whittler (2004) offer results that suggest that a spokesperson’s race may bias viewers’ message processing (Whittler & Spira, 2002). They found that Blacks who identified strongly with Black culture rated an advertisement as stronger and more persuasive when it featured a Black versus a White spokesperson. On the other hand, Blacks who had a weak identification with Black culture rated the advertisement as equally strong and persuasive given a Black or White spokesperson. It seems as though the Black spokesperson’s race may have positively biased high identification Blacks’ perception of the advertisement.

Spira and Whittler (2004) reason that race might also function as a peripheral cue. However, they also note that ELM holds that variables may have multiple roles in persuasion (for a discussion see Petty & Wegener, 1998), and suggest that race effects do not occur simply through cue processing. Consistent with this postulate, White and Harkins (1994) concluded that source’s race affects the extent of message elaboration. Petty, Fleming, and White (1999) further report findings similar to those of White and Harkins (1994).

**Polarized Appraisal Theory**

Polarized appraisal theory (PAT) (Linville, 1982, Linville, & Jones, 1980) states that because in-group members are evaluated on the basis of a greater number of dimensions than out-group members, out-group members would be evaluated more extremely than in-group members. Such a theory would lead to the prediction that ads featuring Black actors with positive characteristics will be viewed more positively than ads with White actors with similar characteristics by Whites.
Conversely, Black actors who are perceived to have negative characteristics (e.g., Amos and Andy) will be viewed more unfavorably. This theory implies that under certain conditions the use of minority actors would lead to a more favorable evaluation of the advertisement and product.

PAT is based on the premise that because individuals have more complex cognitive schemas for in-group members (i.e., identifying characteristics), it is harder for in-group members to fit such schemas when being categorized and evaluated, resulting in less extreme evaluations of these in-group members. For example, one of the most credible sources in advertising to White consumers in the 1980s was Black actor Bill Cosby. PAT suggests that because Cosby portrays positive characteristics, these characteristics are exaggerated by White consumers so that they evaluate him more favorably than they would a White actor with similar characteristics.

As a cognitive-based theory of stereotyping, two aspects of the PAT proposed by Linville and Jones (1980) and Linville (1982) are essential if the basic underlying premise regarding extreme evaluations of out-group members is to hold true. First is the contention that people have a more complex cognitive schema regarding in-group than out-group members. Linville and Jones (1980) found that White subjects demonstrated greater cognitive complexity regarding Whites than they did Blacks, which resulted in more moderate evaluations of their own group. Second, this conceptualization implies that the lower cognitive complexity for out-group members will increase the variability (i.e., extremity) of their evaluation. This is because people process new information selectively as filtered by their current cognitive schema, which causes an individual's initial conceptualizations of in-group and out-group members to remain relatively stable over time. This also suggests that, people's evaluations and categorization of other people are determined by their initial cognitive structures. As a result of having more information and experience with one's own in-group, evaluations will tend to be more extreme (positive or negative) with respect to out-group members, where less information is available. When Whites are members of the in-group and, thus, have less information and experience with Blacks (members of the out-group), they will evaluate Blacks more extremely (positively or negatively) than they will Whites.

Qualls and Moore (1990) conducted a study using polarized appraisal theory (PAT) as a theoretical framework. The major finding of the Qualls and Moore (1990) study is that in-group bias theory explains the effect of race in consumers' evaluation of advertising more accurately than does polarized appraisal theory. This suggests that, although a single theory may hold promise by itself, issues related to race and ethnicity in the marketplace are complex and may require the application of multiple theories simultaneously to understand their relative impact.

Other-Race-Effect (ORE)

The other-race-effect (ORE) is pertinent for consumer psychologists to understand because it has significant implications for not only multiethnic celebrity facial recognition in advertising, but also for other marketing-related issues, including customer service, direct marketing, and personal selling. In a strict sense, the other-race-effect occurs when people display a differential ability to recognize faces of their own race compared to those of another race (Chance, Goldstein, & McBride, 1975; Bothwell, Brigham, & Malpass, 1989). Researchers have been interested in the phenomenon of differential face recognition for a long time. Other than few exceptions (e.g., Henderson, Williams, Grantham, & Lwin, 1999), little attention has been given to applying this concept to the phenomenon in the marketing literature.

The closest other-race-effect research in marketing was demonstrated in the context of convenience stores (Brigham, Maass, Snyder, & Spaulding, 1982; Platz & Hosch, 1988). Here, if a store clerk does not recognize a repeat customer and therefore fails to establish or maintain some type of ongo-
ing service provider/customer relationship with him or her, it reduces the level of service provided to the customer. As a result, the nature of the overall exchange may be diminished. The repeat customer may spend a great deal of money in the store, but if he is treated as if each time is his first time in the store, then it may lead to feelings of alienation and an increase in customer dissatisfaction.

There have been some recent attempts to examine how the other-race-effect varies across cultures and countries. Henderson, Ostrom, Barnett, Dillon, and Lynch (1997) analyzed differences in the recognition of Black and White faces in the United States and South Africa and found a main effect for subject race as well as race of face. Interestingly enough, in their study they found that Whites were better at recognizing all faces, regardless of the race of face. This finding was contrary to existing research that found just the opposite: Blacks were generally better at the facial recognition task. In addition, they also found that all subjects were better at recognizing Black faces than White faces. Again, this finding was a complete reversal of earlier findings in which White faces were generally better recognized. Also, Henderson et al. (1999) analyzed the expanded other-race-effect concept by examining the differential ability of the majority racial/ethnic group in two different countries/cultures (Chinese Asians in Singapore and Whites in the United States) to recognize Black and White faces. It is worth noting that the application of other-race-effect in cross-country research should inspire the need to apply it in research within the United States, across diverse consumer populations.

**Accommodation Theory and Intercultural Accommodation**

Green's (1999) application of Accommodation Theory to ethnic evaluations of advertising is another area of potentially fruitful research. In essence, accommodation theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals react to communication attempts by persons who differ from themselves. It suggests that as A becomes more similar to B, the likelihood that B will favorably evaluate A is increased (Koslow, Shamdasani, & Touchstone, 1994). Holland and Gentry (1999) introduce the concept of intercultural accommodation in evaluating the impact of cultural symbols (i.e., language, music, art, attire, spokesperson of a similar ethnic background) on advertising effectiveness. The term intercultural refers to the notion that communication occurs between two different cultural groups (e.g., the advertiser, representing the dominant culture, and the African American culture), and the targeted group is expected to react most favorably to advertisements that are culturally accommodating (i.e., featuring models of similar ethnic background or placed in culturally congruent media).

Accommodation theory is applicable to studies examining target marketing and a few researchers have used it in an advertising context (e.g., Holland & Gentry, 1999; Koslow, Shamdasani, & Touchstone, 1994). Koslow and his colleagues (1994) examined the effects of using Spanish versus English in ads targeted to Hispanics. They hypothesized that “because more effortful accommodation results in a more favorable response, increasing the amount of Spanish in an advertisement should increase the positive effects” (p. 576).

The concept can also be applied also to media placement. Hence, placing ads with White models or with Black models in minor or background roles in racially targeted media should be perceived as less accommodating than placing these ads in nontargeted media, resulting in less favorable evaluations. Along the same lines, placing ads with Black models or with Black models in major or dominant roles (as opposed to White models) in racially targeted media should be perceived as more accommodating than placing such ads in nontargeted media, resulting in more positive evaluations. Given the strong African American culture embedded in racially targeted media (e.g., Black models and role models, culturally relevant symbols, language, culturally specific products,
etc.) a large proportion of African Americans seem likely to embrace and identify with certain types of media (e.g., *Ebony, Essence*) and to view being targeted through those media as effortful accommodation on the part of the advertiser. Strength of ethnic identification can be expected to interact with the type of media in which ads are placed.

**Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM)**

According to Friestad and Wright (1994), “one of a consumer’s primary tasks is to interpret and cope with marketers’ sales presentations and advertising” (p. 1). PKM suggests that people’s knowledge of persuasion attempts influences their response to the attempt. Within the model, targets are people whom the persuasion attempt is meant to reach, and agents refer to whomever the target perceives is responsible for making the persuasion attempt.

Williams, Qualls, and Ferguson (2007) apply PKM to better understanding subsistence consumers in the United States. As they note, when identifying subsistence U. S. consumers, it becomes difficult to disentangle this from a discussion of racial/ethnic minority consumers, particularly African Americans and Hispanics. This is because the demographic characteristics of subsistence consumers are highly correlated with the demographic characteristics of these consumer segments in terms of lower household incomes and the likelihood of having finished fewer years of school.

A key question that Williams, Qualls, and Ferguson (2007) assess is: How vulnerable are U.S. subsistence consumers to the persuasiveness of marketing communications? They suggest that the PKM framework offers one approach to assessing the ability of “cognitively vulnerable” consumers, who live at a subsistence level, to cope with persuasive marketing communications. As such, they attempt to identify if low-literate consumers more vulnerable in the marketplace because their cognitive capacity is sufficiently low to preclude their use of persuasion knowledge to draw higher-order inferences about possible ulterior motives of salespeople or to correct invalid inferences. Along with the PKM framework, they provide insight into the coping processes of these consumers by offering several propositions incorporating the select cognitive constructs of self-esteem, locus of control, and powerlessness. Future research should explore other ways in which there may be racial differences with respect to PKM.

**THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF DIFFERENT RESPONSES TO MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS AND STRATEGIES**

In the previous section, we discussed various theories, such as distinctiveness theory, in-group-bias theory, and polarized appraisal theory that typically have been used to conduct research on the dominant White, Anglo European population and highlighted different studies where these theories have been applied to diverse populations. In this section, we focus on marketing mix elements and strategies and how consumer psychology researchers can apply theories to broaden our knowledge base of how diverse consumers respond in the marketplace.

One approach is to consider a typical marketing planning and strategy model and adapt it to emphasize race/ethnic considerations. Figure 35.1 offers such a model. While the major components and flow are essentially what one would find in a typical model focusing on the dominant population, this model has been adapted to specifically consider race/ethnic marketing planning and strategy such as social and ethical dimensions of products targeted to minority consumers (e.g., alcohol, tobacco, certain foods/beverages that exacerbate health disparities, etc.), ethnic product considerations (e.g., cosmetics for different skin tones), pricing consideration (e.g., price responsiveness and brand loyalty), distribution considerations (e.g., emotional responses to retail discrimination), and promotion considerations (e.g., appeal of ethnic spokespersons).
Consumer psychologists can contribute to broadening our knowledge base to be more inclusive of diverse populations by examining the various steps in the marketing planning and strategy process, as illustrated in Figure 35.1, and seeking opportunities to apply theories that have been used to explain mainstream marketplace behavior to understanding marketplace behavior by diverse populations. In this section, we examine several of the steps in Figures 35.1 to suggest how this can be done and highlight some examples of research to support this effort. While there are opportunities for consumer psychologists to contribute to any of the steps in Figure 35.1, in the following discussion we will focus on just a few, namely, selecting specific ethnic target markets, social and ethical dimensions, and each of the traditional four Ps of marketing.

Selecting Specific Ethnic Target Markets

Early in the planning process, one of the first steps a marketer must take is to select the specific target market. Earlier in this chapter, we discussed some of the methodological challenges facing researchers in racial/ethnic category construction and measuring levels of ethnic identity. In ethnic market segmentation, it’s important for the marketer to know precisely who is in the selected segment.

Williams and Qualls (1989) point out that marketing research has been historically deficient in recognizing the diversity among ethnic market segments. For example, they note that models to capture the diversity within the Black consumer segment have received little attention. Williams (1989) reviewed over 50 marketing journal studies covering the period from 1960 to 1987 and concluded that researchers concentrated primarily on low-income Blacks, generally women, in urban areas, and then often generalized results to all Black consumers. In similar studies, Robinson and Rao (1986) and Reid, Stagmaier, and Reagan (1986) reached the same conclusions. While...
minority consumers, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, are overrepresented at the lower socioeconomic levels, there are opportunities for researchers to focus on the heterogeneity among diverse populations, such as the study of middle-class Blacks as opposed to lower-socioeconomic status Blacks (Williams and Qualls 1989).

Ethnic identity is one of those areas where consumer psychologists can pursue research to provide marketers with richer bases for segmenting markets. For example, earlier we mentioned Phinney’s (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure based on elements of ethnic identity that are common across groups. Also, Williams and Qualls (1989) highlight several of the intensity of ethnic identification measures that have been used in previous research to demonstrate the potential for a much greater degree of heterogeneity in segmenting African Americans. These include various psychological measures, such as Psychological “Nigrescence” Scales, the Developmental Inventory of Black Consciousness, Racial Identity Attitude Scale, African Self-Consciousness Scale, and Ethnic Minority Identification Scale. We will further discuss ethnic identity in the context of strength of ethnic identity later in this section under “Promotion.”

Social and Ethical Dimensions

On the one hand, marketers have observed that multicultural purchasing power has continued to expand rapidly, and more and more consumers from diverse backgrounds are moving into the middle and upper income class categories. On the other hand, consumers from diverse populations still are overrepresented in the lower income categories. For example, in 2004, the median income for Black households was about $30,000, which was 62% of the median for non-Hispanic White households (about $48,000), compared to $33,000 for Hispanic households and $50,000+ for Asian American households (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Mills, 2005). We also know that functionally illiterate consumers are disproportionately more highly represented among the poor, and that subsistence market consumers are likely to have finished fewer years of school, be more functionally illiterate, be geographically limited in their consumer experiences, and have fewer opportunities for a variety of shopping experiences (Williams, Qualls, & Ferguson 2007). All of these factors combined limit their opportunities as consumers and often results in their being labeled as being more “vulnerable” as consumers.

Andreasen (1993) has noted that past contributions by the academic community have been limited in attempting to understand issues related to the disadvantaged consumer and there has been a lack of persistence in researching problems that do not lend themselves to easy solutions. Typically, past research on disadvantaged consumers has focused on a number of personal, socioeconomic, and demographic factors that would tend to hamper them in the marketplace, e.g., income, education, occupational status, family size, age, female heads of houses. However, there also has been a long-standing call for a research agenda that also would include internal cognitive factors, such as values, goals, attitudes, etc. (Andreasen, 1982), and this is where consumer psychology researchers likely could make their greatest contributions (Reed, Wooten, & Bolton, 2002).

Getting a better understanding of what constitutes a “vulnerable” consumer is one area for consumer psychologists to consider. Baker, Gentry, and Rittenburg (2005) note that the field lacks consensus as to what exactly consumer vulnerability refers, and it is the misconception of what constitutes real vulnerability that muddies the waters. They observe that consumer vulnerability is a sometimes misunderstood or misused concept that is equated erroneously with demographic characteristics, stigmatization, consumer protection, unmet needs, discrimination, or disadvantage. They attempt to bring some clarity to our understanding of vulnerability by suggesting that multiple and simultaneous internal and external factors contribute to consumer experiences of vulnerability.
One factor that has received attention in recent years is the susceptibility of vulnerable consumer to persuasive communication (Wooten & Reed, 2004), particularly targeted communication about products many consider as having harmful effects, e.g., alcohol, tobacco, low-nutrient/high calorie foods (Lee & Callout, 1994). However, there has been little empirical evidence to demonstrate one way or the other whether targeted disadvantaged consumers are less capable than the general population to cope with persuasive communications (see earlier discussion of PKM as an example of a theoretical framework to examine this issue). In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that low income shoppers are in fact quite sophisticated in their interactions in the marketplace and quite capable of coping with the persuasive efforts of marketers. For example, Williams, Qualls, and Ferguson (2007) observe that it is possible that poor people may have acquired excellent skills to cope with certain kinds of marketing communications, and are sophisticated in their awareness of several persuasive communication tactics. They may be very sensitive to the value received for their more scarce resources, and because of this orientation, may be more motivated to cope effectively with persuasive marketing communications.

However, regardless of the inconclusiveness concerning the susceptibility of certain segments of consumers to persuasive communication, there is no escaping the reality that the disproportionate consumption of certain products, such as alcohol, tobacco, low-nutrient/high calorie foods, can have deleterious effects. Consumer psychologists may be able to contribute to our understanding of what drives the disproportionate consumption of certain products. For example, the percentage of Blacks who smoke tends to vary by age group, with younger Blacks smoking at a lower rate than Whites, and older Blacks smoking at a higher rate. While it is not at all clear as to what accounts for this differential crossover in smoking rates, Moore, Williams, and Qualls (1996) allude to some psychological factors by suggesting that differential coping habits between Blacks and Whites in dealing with day-to-day life circumstances could partially account for the difference. In other words, older Blacks may have to cope with greater effects and stress in society due to greater awareness or at least perceptions of racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

Similarly, in the food and beverage areas, consumer psychologists also can make contributions. Obesity is a huge population health challenge in the United States, and there are differences among racial/ethnic groups, with certain ethnic groups having a significantly higher prevalence of obesity. As a result, the health status of people of color in the United States remains unconscionably low when contrasted with that of the majority population in the United States (Williams & Kumanyika, 2002). Given that the disproportionate consumption of foods that are high in calories, fats, and sugars, along with fast foods and soft drinks, play a key contributing role in obesity, consumer psychologists can explore social marketing interventions to determine which can be most effective in modifying the behavior of consumers from diverse backgrounds.

Because people’s habits and lifestyles, attitudes, and their knowledge regarding health issues are significantly influenced by their cultural background, consumer psychologists will need to view health, dietary, and physical activity behavior through a cultural lens before aiding social marketers to develop more effective programs that are culturally relevant for each market segment. For example, Williams and Kumanyika (2002) discuss how programs to change African Americans’ dietary behavior should recognize that food may be a particularly salient ethnic symbol for people who have experienced severe forms of oppression such as slavery and that making certain types of dietary changes could be particularly difficult for African Americans because of the central place of certain foods that are high in fat or saturated fat or high in salt in their dietary practices. In addition, they indicate that due to the apparent importance of fellowship and sense of community as a part of the eating experience, where and with whom food is eaten may be of equivalent importance to attitudes about specific foods. Behavior change approaches that fail to account for this interpersonal context aspect of eating might fall short of the mark.
The cultural lens concept also applies to specific challenges in changing weight control and physical activity behavior. There are significant differences in body image norms among African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Whites. For example, norms that are associated with generally less negative attitudes about overweight women are more prevalent in the Black community (Kumanyika, 2001), although these obesity-tolerant attitudes may co-exist with dominant values for leanness and thinness. Weight management issues are, therefore, potentially more complicated for Black women than for White women and more challenging for social marketers attempting to reach Black women, as there may be greater ambivalence or uncertainty about the trade-offs involved in losing weight.

Finally, there also are mixed attitudes about physical activity in the Black community that may complicate the efforts by social marketers. There is a substantial amount of data suggesting that usual physical activity levels are lower for Blacks than Whites (Kumanyika, 2001) which may reflect attitudes that discourage physical activity in leisure time. Such attitudes may be shaped by images of Black people doing hard physical labor under conditions of slavery or low paying jobs. For example, Airhihenbuwa, Kumanyika, Agurs, and Lowe (1995), in a focus group study among African Americans, found evidence of a common perception that rest is as or more important to health than exercise. The focus group data also suggested that beliefs about harmful effects of exercise (e.g., as a stressor that raises blood pressure) were common among African Americans. In addition, the concerns about safety in some predominantly, lower-income Black communities may discourage outdoor, early morning, and/or late evening exercise.

**Product and Brand Issues**

Consumer research has documented numerous differences in products and brand consumption between consumers from diverse populations and the dominant population. However, it is not always clear as to what drives these differences. Consumer psychologists may be able to contribute to a better understanding of issues such as brand loyalty and brand switching as drivers of product and brand consumption.

Although African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately 25% of the United States population, they account for a significant portion of consumers in many product categories, in some cases as much as 50%—70%, while spending considerably less in other product categories. For example, *The 2003 Annual Consumer Expenditure Survey* data (United States Department of Labor, 2005) indicated that the average Black household spends a higher proportion of their money on certain items (e.g., telephone services, shoes, children’s apparel, TVs, radio, sound equipment, personal care products and services, women’s and girl’s apparel, and major appliances), and a significantly smaller proportion of their total expenditures on other items (e.g., entertainment, health care, reading materials, household textiles, and small appliances).

An examination of the food and beverage product categories typifies the challenges for consumer researchers. These are excellent product categories to consider because they also relate to the discussion on social and ethical issues above, given that research suggests that products such as carbonated beverages and fast foods are some of the prime contributors to the disparity in obesity rates between minorities and non-minorities (Block, Scribner, & DeSalvo, 2004). Based on usage index data for selected brands in the soft drink and fast food categories, African Americans and Hispanics tend to overindex in these product categories generally but usage can vary significantly by specific brands.

Consumer psychologists will be able to contribute to a better understanding of such product and brand behavior by examining the factors driving these differences, such as cognitive factors that go beyond the income differences that for decades have been the focus of much of the traditional research. Some of the earliest work on Black-White consumption and spending patterns was...
conducted by Alexis (1962). While recognizing that Blacks spent their incomes differently from comparable income Whites, Alexis (1962) attributed this alleged difference in spending behavior to economic and social discrimination. Feldman and Star (1968) compared Black and White consumers with respect to race, income, and eleven aspects of nonfood shopping behavior, and found that substantial differences tended to disappear when income was considered, thus concluding that differences in the consumer behavior of Blacks and Whites are a by-product of socioeconomic factors and not race per se. However, Cicarelli (1974), using the same data, but a different assumption (i.e., he based his analysis on the relative income hypothesis instead of using Black absolute income), indicated that his results revealed that Black-White differences do not tend to vanish as relative income changes. Adding to the debate, Akers (1968) compared Blacks and Whites on ownership of automobiles and concluded that the differences he found could not be explained by the relative income hypothesis. Other consumer behavior theorists have argued that Blacks strive for at least partial cultural assimilation with Whites (Bullock, 1961; Bauer & Cunningham, 1970) and that this effort increases with socioeconomic status (Karon, 1958; Williams, 1985). Consistent with this reasoning, Feldman and Star (1968) found that Black-White differences in shopping behavior were greater among the lower classes. Building on this theoretical and empirical work, Moschis (1985) proposed that “Black/white differences in consumer behaviors are greater among lower-class than higher-class adults” (p. 257).

Another fertile area for consumer psychologists to contribute is in better understanding the concepts of brand loyalty and brand switching as it applies to consumers from diverse backgrounds, especially from a cognitive perspective. Brand loyalty is not a simple concept. There are many different views as to the definition and measurement of brand loyalty. A basic issue among consumer researchers is whether to define the concept in terms of consumer behavior or consumer attitudes. Most studies of brand loyalty and brand switching among consumers from diverse backgrounds stem from self-report measures. There are studies that show Hispanics are less willing to buy new brands (Saegert, Hoover, & Hilger, 1985), have strong brand preferences (Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986) and have high scores on brand loyalty scales (Webster, 1987). However, other studies find that Hispanics are not particularly brand loyal, which has caused some researchers to express skepticism about the brand loyalty of Hispanics. For example, Mulhern and Williams (1995) found evidence based on scanner data of actual purchasing behavior, as opposed to the self reports of other studies, that suggests little difference in brand substitution behavior between Hispanics and non-Hispanics, thus challenging the generally accepted notion of Hispanic brand loyalty. Given the conflicting evidence that exists for brand loyalty among diverse consumers, this may be a prime area to apply consumer psychology theory to advance our understanding of diverse population consumer behavior.

Understanding product and brand issues such as the ones raised above is imperative for consumer psychologists not only because of the growing prevalence of consumers of color in the marketplace, but as Grier, Brumbaugh, and Thornton (2006) point out, originally ethnically-oriented products are crossing over in the mainstream at an increasing rate. In the section below, we discuss pricing issues as they relate to consumers of color.

Pricing Issues

The racial/ethnic characteristics of consumers in a retail market area can dramatically affect purchase behavior in response to pricing. Much of the literature in marketing on ethnicity maintains that consumers from diverse backgrounds are more price sensitive than other consumers (Mulhern, Williams, & Leone, 1998). A review of marketing and consumer behavior textbooks, and the business press, almost universally espouses this assertion. However, empirical evidence is scant and
equivocal. Consumer psychologists may be able to advance our understanding of price response behavior of diverse consumers by exploring the cognitive factors that drive this behavior.

For African Americans, there are many characteristics associated with their shopping orientation. Store attribute preference profiles suggest that they should be more price sensitive than the general population. For example, Wilkes and Valencia (1986) found that African Americans indicate a greater tendency to embrace bargaining as part of their shopping lifestyle than Whites. A study by Deloitte and Touche and Impact Resources, Inc. (1990) found that African American women are primarily motivated by price and selection when shopping. Wilkes and Valencia (1986) found that African Americans spend relatively more money on generic grocery purchases than Whites.

Several studies have found that Hispanic consumers are very price sensitive. Gillette and Scott (1974) found that Hispanics, in response to direct questioning, place more importance on price and promotion than non-Hispanics. Similarly, Saegert, Hoover, and Hilger (1985) reported that, relative to non-Hispanics, Hispanics rate price as more important in shopping decisions. Hoyer and Deshpande (1982) found that Hispanics are more likely to say they buy the lowest priced brand in a category. Saegert and Yokum (1986) found that the reported price paid for several items is lower among Hispanic shoppers. Similarly, Mulhern, and Williams (1994) found price sensitivity is greater in stores located in Hispanic market areas than in those located in non-Hispanic areas.

One of the difficulties in studying ethnic group price response behavior is the interaction between ethnicity and other demographic characteristics, particularly income. As indicated above, both African American and Hispanic households, on average, tend to have lower socioeconomic status and incomes when compared to Anglo households. As a result, the price sensitivity often attributed to African Americans and Hispanics could be a function of income rather than ethnicity. Although a somewhat difficult task, research by consumer psychologists may be able to play a role in teasing out the differences between ethnic groups in price responsiveness due to cognitive factors versus non-cognitive factors such as income. This is similar to the challenge faced by researchers studying tipping behavior and alternative explanations such as price sensitivity. Although there is documented evidence of Black-White differences in tipping behavior, it is not totally clear whether these differences should be attributed to income or other factors (e.g., see Lynn & Thomas-Haysbert, 2003).

In fact, consumer researchers already have made some attempts to tease out income from ethnicity in price responsiveness behavior. For example, Mulhern, Williams, and Leone (1998) investigated the effect of income versus ethnicity on price sensitivity by examining the purchase behavior for groups of consumers that have different levels of income based on demographics surrounding each store. In an attempt to isolate the effect of income on price sensitivity from ethnic effects, they included in their analysis retail stores located in market areas that feature a variety of income levels for different ethnic populations, with varying percentages of ethnic representation in the various market areas. Their results showed that the magnitude of brand price elasticity was directly related to the household income in a market area and inversely related to the proportion of residents in a market area who were African-American.

As opposed to the Mulhern, Williams, and Leone’s (1998) study at the brand level, Hoch, Kim, Montgomery, and Rossi (1995) conducted a similar analysis at the product category level and Hoch et al. (1995) incorporated ethnicity into their analysis by aggregating African Americans and Hispanics into a single composite ethnic group, while Mulhern, Williams, and Leone (1998) separately evaluated how price responsiveness relates to the portion of residents in a market area that are African American and Hispanic. Hoch et al. (1995) found no relationship between income and price sensitivity at the product category level. Thus, Mulhern, Williams, and Leone (1998) suggested
that an income effect may be more likely at the brand level. This is due to the fact that several close substitutes are available, and higher income consumers can better afford higher price brands, and therefore may be less sensitive to price. On the other hand, lower income consumers constrained by a smaller budget may be more inclined to be thrifty and price sensitive. Research by consumer psychologists has the potential to bring greater clarity to understanding price responsiveness by diverse consumers and to assist in resolving some of the conflicting studies.

Distribution Issues

For retailers, demographic changes and growth in multicultural purchasing power is particularly important. For example, according to the 2003 National Shopping Behavior Study from Meridian, a Troy, Michigan-based strategic marketing communications agency, ethnic minority consumers are becoming more important to department store retailers (Henderson, 2004). In the most recent Meridian study, 15% of Hispanics and 18% of African Americans reported spending the most at a department store compared to only 11% of Caucasians. Data from the 2003 study indicates that the African American and Hispanic consumer groups accounted for 25%–30% of department store sales. According to the report, the significant changes in the shopping behavior of these consumer groups and their purchasing motivations require department store management to make meaningful changes to their strategies to effectively accommodate their new customers.

One area in the distribution domain that is receiving increased research attention is consumer racial profiling and marketplace discrimination (Harris, Henderson, & Williams, 2005). This area also offers some significant research opportunities for consumer psychologists. Some of the approaches, methodologies, and theories that are being applied to this domain of research are Implicit Association Test, Power-Responsibility Equilibrium Model, Marketplace Testing Protocols, Aversive Racism, Modern Racism Scale, Social Identity Theory, and Theory of Social Justice (Harris, Henderson, & Williams, 2004). The remaining discussion in this section will focus on consumer racial profiling and marketplace discrimination and how consumer psychologists can contribute to the research base in this area.

For many researchers, “consumer racial profiling” is analogized to law enforcement racial profiling; hence, it would involve suspicion of criminal activity, such as shoplifting in a retail setting. However, Williams, Harris, and Henderson (2006) emphasize that it is important to recognize that in a retail context, many types of marketplace discrimination do not involve suspecting customers of engaging in criminal activity. Hence, they use “marketplace discrimination” as a broader term to capture not only Consumer Racial Profiling (CRP), but other types of discriminatory marketplace situations where consumers do not receive equal treatment for equal dollars. An analysis of federal cases by Harris, Henderson, and Williams (2005) demonstrates that marketplace discrimination can occur in a broad array of places of public accommodation such as hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and service providers, as well as retail establishments including grocery/food stores, clothing stores, department stores, home improvement and office equipment stores. Furthermore, their analysis shows marketplace discrimination impacts members of minority groups beyond those classified as Black/African American, such as Hispanics, Asians, Native, and Arab Americans.

There is mounting evidence that retailers oftentimes fail to provide a “welcoming” shopping environment for consumers from diverse backgrounds. For example, Williams and Snuggs (1997) conducted a mail survey of 1,000 households and found that 86% of African Americans felt that they were treated differently in retail stores based on their race, compared to 34% of Whites. Also, according to a Gallup Poll Social Audit Series on Black/White Relations in the United States (Henderson, 2001), 35% of Blacks say they are treated less fairly than Whites in neighborhood shops,
46% say they are treated less fairly in stores downtown or in malls, and 39% say they are treated unfairly in restaurants, bars, and theaters. This poll also indicated that 27% of all Black respondents, and 41% of Black males between 18 and 34 years of age, felt that they were treated unfairly in the last 30 days in a store where they shop.

Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted on marketplace discrimination to help retailers better understand how they can effectively respond to the changing multicultural marketplace climate, and particularly to issues related to marketplace discrimination. Because so little research has been done in this area, and because retailers are now beginning to pay more attention to this topic, it represents an opportunity for consumer psychology researchers to make a contribution in this developing field. There are only a few published studies on marketplace discrimination. Below is an overview of the major ones

Gabbidon (2003) reviewed the recent literature on Shopping While Black (SWB) and examined legal cases where retailers have been accused of engaging in racial profiling in retail establishments. He concluded that, like racial profiling in automobiles, the concept of Shopping While Black requires serious scholarly attention. Harris, Henderson, and Williams (2005) analyzed 81 federal court decisions made between 1990 and 2002 involving customers’ allegations of race and/or ethnic discrimination in the marketplace and found that as many as 40% of the cases they examined involved allegations that customers were treated as criminals. Two thirds of the cases they examined contained allegations of degradation of goods and/or services. Those cases were almost evenly divided between subtle degradation (28 cases or 35% of all cases) and overt degradation (26 cases or 32% of all cases). Although the cases arose in many different types of retail establishments, a significant number took place in large retail stores. Among the cases (one third of all cases) involving a denial of goods and/or services, 78% contained allegations of overt denial and only 22% were subtle denials. More than one third of these cases (37%) arose in bars and/or restaurants.

Using a similar framework, Williams, Harris, and Henderson (2006a) analyzed federal court decisions involving consumer racial profiling and other marketplace discrimination solely in the State of Illinois, along with state court decisions and complaints brought before the Illinois Human Rights Commission. This “drill-down” approach allowed them to focus on a particular geographic location (i.e., Illinois) and gain some insight as to how the courts and the Human Rights Commission in this location have dealt with marketplace discrimination, and to compare the results to the broader, national Harris, Henderson, and Williams (2005) study. Using the three themes of alleged discrimination (subtle or overt), the level of service (degradation or denial), and the existence of criminal suspicion (present or absent), they concluded that real and perceived consumer discrimination remains a problem in the American marketplace, and specifically Illinois. They also called for further research in order for researchers, marketers, public policy makers, and the law enforcement community to effectively address the issue.

In addition, there have been several studies that have taken a more psychological perspective. For example, Davidson and Schumann (2005) have developed a model of perceived discrimination and have tested it empirically. They use the Cognitive-Emotive Model of Consumer Complaint Behavior (CEMCCB) developed by Stephens and Gwinner (1998) as a useful framework for organizing the constructs and variables involved in perceptions of discrimination in retail settings. In the CEMCCB, the dissatisfying marketplace experience serves as the trigger that activates the appraisal process (Stephens & Gwinner, 1998). In the Davidson and Schumann (2005) model, perceived discrimination is the cognitive appraisal that is triggered by a combination of the target personal factors, situational factors and agent personal factors.

Also, Williams, Lwin, Harris, and Gooding (2007) have developed a conceptual model to measure marketplace discrimination concern among consumers from various multicultural backgrounds using a power-responsibility equilibrium framework. Their model allows the integration
DIVERSITY ISSUES IN CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

of the hitherto unstudied triad of (1) retailer/marketer business policies and actions toward marketplace discrimination, (2) government regulation and public policies toward marketplace discrimination, and (3) consumer responses to marketplace discrimination. In the Williams, Lwin, Harris, and Gooding model, discrimination concern is measured using a validated psychological scale, the Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire (Brondolo et al., 2005).

Finally, Carter, Forsyth, Mazzula, and Williams (2005) explored the psychological and emotional effects of racism for people of color through a phenomenologically based qualitative investigation. Although their study did not focus specifically on a retail setting, the results have implications for retailing. Their analysis attempts to deconstruct racism through a differentiation between two types of racism, and to argue for a distinction that does not currently exist in the literature. They offer a new paradigm for understanding race-based traumatic stress that involves unpacking racism and distinguishing between racial discrimination and harassment. The results of their exploratory investigation support the contention of numerous scholars who claim that racial discrimination and harassment can result in race-related stress reactions. Crockett and Wallendorf (2004) go a step further by suggesting that normative political ideology (which arises, in part, as a response to racism) forms and informs shopping behavior particularly among African American consumers.

Promotion Issues

As our society becomes more multicultural, one would expect to see an increasing representation of people from diverse backgrounds in advertising. However, evidence suggests that people from diverse backgrounds are still underrepresented in mainstream mass-targeted magazines and prime-time television (Green, 1991, 1992; Williams, Qualls & Grier, 1995; Wilkes & Valencia, 1989). Thus, the often-used depiction of America as a “melting pot” may not be accurately portrayed in American advertising and may still support Pollay’s (1986) observation that advertising reflects cultural values on a very selective basis. During the sixties and seventies, as the United States made significant strides in civil rights for people from diverse backgrounds, a number of researchers and advertisers were concerned about “White backlash” (Schlinger & Plummer; 1972; Tolley & Goett, 1971; Stafford, Birdwell, & Van Tassel, 1970). That is, would including more people of color in advertising cause White consumers to react negatively to these efforts? There is evidence that concerns about race in advertising still prevail in the 21st century (Sanders, 2006, Dingle & Harris, 2006).

Spira and Whittler (2004) note that these may be legitimate concerns given the mounting evidence that various source characteristics may influence an individual’s reactions to a persuasive message. For instance, sources that are perceived as more attractive, credible, and similar to the message recipient are more persuasive than their counterparts in delivering the same message (for a review see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). A spokesperson’s race or ethnicity is often one of the most readily apparent physical traits, thus it may likely influence persuasion. In this section of the chapter, we discuss some of the research that has examined individuals’ responses to race or ethnicity in persuasive messages. We consider three areas where consumer psychologists may be able to contribute in advancing our knowledge base in this area, namely, what effect does spokesperson’s race have on viewers’ responses, ethnic importance or identity, and racial prejudice.

**Effect of Spokesperson’s Race on Viewers’ Responses**  
Spira and Whittler (2004) note that most of the research examining race effects in advertising has led to the same general conclusion: viewers respond more favorably to messages presented by a similar- versus different-race spokesperson (for a review see Whittler, 1991, and Snuggs & Qualls, 1987). However, Williams, Qualls, and Grier (1995) point out that responses to a spokesperson’s race may not be as straightforward as many researchers have argued. For example, the findings of most studies suggest that generally when
Black actors are included in advertisements, Black consumers are better able to recall the advertisement content, and have more positive affect toward the advertisement and the actors (Tolley & Goett, 1971; Schlinger & Plummer, 1972; Szybillo & Jacoby, 1974; Kerin, 1979; Whittler, 1989; Whittler & DiMeo, 1991). However, Williams, Qualls, and Grier (1995) point out that several studies on racial inclusion do not support these general findings (e.g., Petrof, 1968; Orpen, 1975; Solomon, Bush, & Hair 1976). When it comes to White respondents, the findings also may not be as straightforward as the general assumption made by researchers. For example, some studies find that White respondents evaluate ads with White models more favorably than ads with Black models (Cagley & Cardozo, 1970; Schlinger & Plummer, 1972; Kerin, 1979; Whittler, 1989; Whittler & DiMeo, 1991), while other studies find that White respondents evaluate ads with Black models as favorably as ads with Anglo models (Guest, 1970; Stafford, Birdwell, & Van Tassel, 1970; Muse, 1971; Tolley & Goett, 1971; Solomon, Bush, & Hair, 1976; Bush, Hair, & Solomon, 1979). Further research by consumer psychologists may increase our understanding of the role of race in advertising by shedding additional light on who is likely to respond to spokesperson's race, how it is manifested, and when this response is likely to occur.

One specific area where the role of race is likely to influence the response of viewers is the use of celebrities in advertising. Research suggests that this special class of Black models is particularly effective in stimulating attention and recall (Williams, 1987). Henderson and Williams (2004) explored the implications of the other-race-effect (see earlier discussion in this chapter) and celebrity advertising. They point out that very few studies have addressed the issue of race/ethnicity with respect to celebrity spokespersons (Drugas, 1985). Williams and Qualls (1989) found that the intensity of Black consumers’ ethnic identification was positively related to their responses to ads featuring African American celebrities. DelVecchio and Goodstein (2004) found that matching viewers and endorsers’ ethnicity and other-group orientation adds significantly to the explained variance in ratings of endorsers, thus highlighting the need to consider the perceived ethnic-identity of both endorsers and audiences in future research. Marketing News reported that celebrity athletes and celebrity entertainers were the most likely advertising spokespersons that would cause Black consumers to buy a product (Survey Measures, 1981). One study indicated that Black consumers were at least twice as likely as Whites to rate celebrities as being more believable than noncelebrity endorsers (Hume, 1983). This area may offer further opportunity for study by consumer psychologists.

Ethnic Importance or Identity Appiah (2001) points out that strength of ethnic identity may have a significant effect on consumers’ evaluations of advertisements, yet this is a concept that is often overlooked by researchers. (see earlier related discussions in this chapter on ethnic identity and strength of ethnic affiliation). Ethnic identity is defined as a person’s knowledge of his or her membership in a social group and the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Phinney, 1992; Reed, 2004). Strong or high ethnic identifiers should display attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with the core cultural values (e.g., customs, language, dress, foods, religion, product use, and media use) of their ethnic group, which should thereby lead to a preference for advertisements and other media that depict these cultural values. In contrast, consumers who maintain weak or low ethnic identities should display attitudes and behaviors that are less consistent with traditional cultural values and closer to those of the dominant culture. Compared to strong ethnic identifiers, weak ethnic identifiers should demonstrate less of a preference for advertisements and other media that depict their cultural values.

Williams and Tharp (2002) point out that when individuals identify as members of a particular ethnic group, they typically practice and retain the customs, language, and social views of the group. Still, not all individuals within a particular minority culture share all its values and expressions of behaviors. As a result, there may be different degrees of affiliation within the minority culture. For instance, some consumers from diverse backgrounds may feel a strong identification with
being African American, Hispanic, Asian, etc., while others may feel a lesser affiliation with those cultures and may in fact feel more at home with mainstream Euro-American values and beliefs.

Researchers believe that advertisements targeting minorities appeal to the target audience more when race-specific cultural cues are used in the advertisements (Pitts, Whalen, O’Keefe, & Murray, 1989). This may be particularly true for minorities with strong ethnic identities. For example, Williams and Qualls (1989) found that for certain advertising appeals, the responses of middle-class African Americans were closer to those of middle-class Whites than to lower socioeconomic status African Americans. However, they also found that middle class Blacks with high levels of strength of ethnic identification were influenced in their behavior on other dimensions that made them closer to lower socioeconomic Blacks with high levels of ethnic identification.

In another study on ethnic identity, Whittler and Spira (2002) exposed Black consumers to a print ad that featured either a Black or a White spokesperson and contained either strong or weak product claims (Whittler & Spira, 2002). Their results showed that Blacks responded more favorably to an advertisement featuring a Black rather than a White spokesperson, and these effects were moderated by identification with Black culture: high identification of product and spokesperson evaluations were more favorable given the Black versus White spokesperson, whereas low identification evaluations did not differ by the spokesperson’s race. This result indicates that the effect of race is not the same for all ad viewers.

Forehand and Deshpande (2001) investigated ethnic self-awareness instead of ethnic identification in their examination of consumer responses to targeted advertising. They differentiated ethnic self-awareness from ethnic identification by noting that the former is a relatively temporary state that may be elicited by external factors (i.e., ethnic primes) while the latter represents a more enduring association. The distinction is important because elements of advertisements (e.g., cultural symbols) may serve as ethnic primes that influence ethnic self-awareness. Forehand and Deshpande’s (2001) results indicated that exposure to an ethnic prime increased Asian consumers’ ethnic self-awareness and thereby positively influenced their responses to an Asian spokesperson and the advertisement in which the individual was featured.

**Racial Prejudice** Spira and Whittler (2004) suggest that a related individual difference variable that may moderate the influence of the spokesperson’s race is racial prejudice. In this case, it is the viewer’s feelings toward the spokesperson’s racial group in general that may influence the viewer’s reactions to both the spokesperson and the advertised product. For instance, Spira and Whittler (2004) believe that not all Whites will react negatively or less favorably to a Black rather than a White spokesperson. For Whites, who may not feel a similar sense of connection to being “White” as Blacks may to being “Black,” the propensity to exhibiting such reactions may be linked to feelings of prejudice toward Blacks rather than to feelings of affiliation toward Whites. They tested this notion by exposing White consumers to an advertisement that featured either a White or a Black spokesperson (Whittler & DiMeo, 1991). Ten items from The Subtle Derogatory Belief Scale of the Multifactor Racial Inventory (Woodmansee & Cook, 1967) were used to measure the racial prejudice of Whites toward Blacks. They found that prejudice did moderate White evaluations of the spokesperson. Low prejudice Whites perceived similarity to the spokesperson and their ability to identify with her was unchanged whether the spokesperson was Black or White, whereas high prejudice Whites perceived themselves as less similar to the Black than White spokesperson and were less able to identify with her.

Other issues related to racial prejudice are discussed elsewhere in this volume, where reference is made to some of the current work in psychology involving prejudice, discrimination, modern racism scale, aversive racism, etc., that can be applied to consumer research. Much of this work is applicable for advertising. For example, Sargent (2004) considers how the Implicit Association Test (IAT) can be used to help resolve some of the inconsistencies in studies examining the impact
of White racial prejudice on their evaluations of advertisements featuring Black or White individuals. He concludes that the effects of stigmatized sources in persuasive appeals may be more complex than previous analyses suggest. Whereas explicit, self-report measures of racial attitudes might appear to account for little variance in responses to advertisements featuring Blacks, Sargent (2004) argues that implicit measures may prove more useful and calls for future studies that should address these issues so that a comprehensive understanding of the effects of stigmatized sources can be developed. Also, Livingston (2004) explores the issue of nonconscious bias and unintentional discrimination in advertising. He suggests that because a firm’s primary objective is typically profit generation rather than social reform, advertisers may consciously depict minorities in stereotypic roles simply because it sells. He further observes that stereotypic portrayals of musical, happy-go-lucky African Americans enjoying chicken wings may serve the added psychological function of providing comfort and security to “traditional” audiences by affirming their cultural worldviews as opposed to challenging them (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991).

DIVERSITY IN CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY—MOVING BEYOND RACE AND ETHNICITY

This chapter has focused primarily on diversity issues related to race and ethnicity, mainly because in the past this is where most of the attention has been focused and where most of the research has been conducted. However, we argue that any definition of diversity must be one that incorporates all types of consumers and should extend beyond just race and ethnicity. Therefore, diversity issues in consumer psychology should not only focus on consumers who are White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Asian-Indian Americans, etc., but also should include consumers who are old, young, Christian, Muslim, the gay and lesbian community, both male and female single-parent households and families, religious groups, the mobility-disabled segment, biracial and multiracial consumers, selected age segments such as mature consumers, Gen X, Gen Y, etc. Also, in addition to issues related to racial and ethnic discrimination, prejudice, and bias, the issue of sexism should be considered.

Historically, these “other” diverse segments have not been primary target segments for marketers and advertisers due to size and purchasing power. However, just as more and more attention has been given to racial and ethnic segments due to their significant growth in size and purchasing power, similar trends are occurring among these other diverse segments. In the 1960s, we saw the beginning of a consistent stream of research assessing African Americans, followed in the 1980s by research examining Hispanic Americans, and then in the 1990s studies focusing on the representation of Asian Americans. More recently we are beginning to see an expansion of research to include these other diverse segments. We feel that this is necessary if we are to understand the changing face of the contemporary consumer and to really come to understand what diversity means in the 21st century.

We advocate that consumer psychologists should be in the forefront of examining issues related to our more inclusive consumer society and should recognize that diversity includes “everyone.” In the remaining part of this section of the chapter, we briefly highlight research that is being conducted in each of the following “other” diverse areas: gender, sexism, sexual orientation, disability, and religion. Due to space considerations, we do not consider research in the cross-cultural area, i.e., those studies looking at consumers and cultures beyond the United States.

Gender-Related Research

Wolin (2003) undertook a comprehensive oversight synthesis of three decades of gender-related advertising research from 1970 to 2002. She found that the spokesperson gender effects research indicates that controversy exists, and that the gender advertising response research shows that gender differences in advertising responses exist. She further asserts that while it is clear that levels
of masculinity and femininity exist, typically in advertising research it is not necessary to evaluate
gender or gender role attitudes as a self-assessed continuous variable because the results are genera-
ally identical whether gender is operationalized as a binary or continuous construct.

Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran (1991) explored differences in male and female message process-
ing strategies. Their findings suggest that whether gender differences in processing occur depends
on the nature of the response task and the level of cue incongruity contained in the message. They
note that differences in the accessibility of message cues and in the genders’ likelihood of using
alternative processing strategies seem likely to account for these findings.

Stout and Villegas (2004) use the selectivity hypothesis (Meyers-Levy, 1989) to provide an
explanatory framework for understanding gender differences in communication design. This model
proposes that the main source of differences between cognitive abilities of males and females is the
different configuration and use of the brain's cortical hemispheres. They use this framework to
investigate hypotheses about gender differences in information processing of Web-based messages,
with particular attention to interactivity, networkability, sensory vividness, and modifiability.

Sexism-Related Research

Livingston (2004) reports on studies of the systematic bias in the way in which women are spatially
depicted, referred to as “face-ism,” or the level of facial prominence by computing the ratio between
the distance from the top of the head to the lower point of the chin, over the distance between the
top of the head and the lowest part of the body that is depicted in the frame or photograph (Goff-
man, 1976). The more the frame is occupied by the face, the higher the level of face-ism. He notes
that differences in face-ism between men and women were attenuated in more “feminist” outlets
such as Ms. and Working Women, compared to more traditional periodic publications such as Time
and Newsweek. Based on such fi ndings, Zuckerman and Kieffer (1994) reason that differences in
face-ism are determined to some extent by individual differences in creators’ attitudes toward the
targets that are being depicted, but, nevertheless, maintain that differences in face-ism are the
result of nonconscious rather than conscious bias. They argue that, “in all likelihood, the values
one holds can affect the level of face-ism in the picture one produces without awareness or inten-
tion” (Zuckerman & Kieffer, 1994; p. 91). Livingston supports this reasoning and observes that
while individual differences in stereotyping or prejudice toward women may affect face-ism, it
does not seem to be the case that photographers or camera people consciously produce these facial
prominence eff ects. However, notwithstanding, Livingston (2004) also notes that differences in
face-ism can have an insidious eff ect on social perception, i.e., faces high or low in face-ism actu-
ally cause members the social groups to be perceived more or less stereotypically. Specifi cally, high
face-ism reinforces judgments of power and dominance. Livingston (2004) also reports on studies
by Zuckerman and Kieffer (1994) that empirically demonstrate this eff ect of face-ism.

Livingston (2004) also reports on research evidence that exposure to bias in advertising can lead
to increased stereotyping and discrimination. For example, Rudman and Borgida (1995) found
that exposing men to sexist advertising caused them to perceive female job candidates more ste-
reotypically (Rudman & Borgida, 1995). Their results were consistent with Glick and Fiske’s (1996)
model of benevolent sexism which posits that sexist attitudes may be characterized by positive
affect toward women mixed with negative beliefs toward the competence of women. In other words,
sexist men like women (usually more than they like men), but they don’t necessarily respect women.
In addition to sexist perceptions, research by Rudman and Borgida (1995) showed that exposure to
sexist ads actually increased the incidence of sexist behavior toward women.

Finally, there is evidence that exposure to sexist advertising can impair women’s academic per-
formance. For example, research by Davies, Spencer, Quinn, and Gehardstein (2002) found that
exposure to sexist television commercials made women more susceptible to “stereotype threat” effects (Steele & Aronson, 1995), which occur when activation of negative stereotypes about one’s group disrupts performance on tasks that are behaviorally relevant to the stereotype (see Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson 1995 for discussion). The stereotype examined in this study was the belief that women are not good at math. These researchers found that women exposed to sexist ads did worse in math compared to women exposed to counterstereotypic ads. They also showed less interest in careers involving math compared with women shown stereotypic ads.

Vargas, Sekaquaptewa, and von Hippel (2004) investigate how people think about outgroup members and assess the stereotypic biases that people show when they process information about these groups. They use two examples of stereotypic biases to assess how prejudice might be manifested as biased information processing, namely, the Linguistic Intergroup Bias (LIB) and the Stereotypic Explanatory Bias (SEB). These measures do not, like traditional prejudice measures, require respondents to indicate what they think about the outgroup; rather, these measures operationalize prejudice in terms of encoding processes, or the proclivity of an individual to think in stereotype-congruent ways. Using these types of measures, they design and conduct a series of studies to predict prejudice towards women, or sexism. Their results suggest that implicit prejudice/sexism measures reliably predict cognitive and behavioral responses to outgroup members, while more explicit measures, such as the Attitudes Towards Women Scale (ATWS), do not.

Sexual Orientation-Related Research

Greenlee (2004) focuses on the communications strategies available to mainstream marketers targeting the gay and lesbian community via gay- and lesbian-oriented print media. He provides a research agenda designed to provide insight for mainstream marketers as they attempt to secure a portion of the gay and lesbian consumer market. Greenlee (2004) also presents a five-stage hierarchical advertising strategy model for targeting the gay and lesbian market through gay- and lesbian-oriented print media. The model suggests various strategies marketers can use to communicate varying degrees of marketer commitment and openness toward gay and lesbian issues.

Oakenfull (2004) examines the advertising strategies that are available to advertisers in pursuit of the gay market, and reflects on the issues that advertisers must consider to carefully balance gay goodwill with the potential stigma attached to courting the gay market. A framework based on sexual orientation, gay identity, and attitude toward homosexuality within which advertisers may identify the appropriate message and medium for their target market is presented. Drawing from subculture research, advertising strategies that may allow marketers to target gay and “gay-friendly” consumers without risk of alienating heterosexual consumers who may disapprove of such a strategy are considered. Oakenfull (2004) also presents a framework to aid advertisers in identifying the most effective strategies in terms of content and media placement for reaching gay and lesbian consumers.

Disability-Related Research

Baker and her colleagues have written much in this area (Baker, 2006; Baker & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2001; Baker, Stephens, & Hill, 2001). In addition, Sargent (2004) reports on studies that show that people often act on socially unacceptable motives (e.g., prejudice) under conditions of attributional ambiguity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1977; Snyder, Kleck, Strenta, & Mentzer, 1979). In other words, when a socially unacceptable motive is but one of a number of plausible explanations for a particular behavior, people are more likely to act on that motive. For example, Sargent (2004) describes the Snyder et al. (1979) study that presented individuals with a choice between two seating
areas, in either of which they could view a film while seated near another person. In one area, the potential seating partner appeared to have a physical disability (implied by leg braces and Canadian crutches). The person in the other area did not. Snyder et al. (1979) found that participants who believed that different movies would be shown in the two seating areas were more likely to choose the nondisabled partner than participants who believed that the same movie would be showing in each area. Snyder et al. (1979) assumed that many participants were motivated to avoid sitting near the disabled person, but they deemed this avoidance motive socially unacceptable, and only acted on it when their choice could be attributed to a preference for one movie over another. Put differently, the existence of attributional ambiguity (in the different movies condition) may have lowered participants' concern with appearing prejudiced against the disabled. In contrast, low ambiguity (in the same movie condition) maintained or heightened their concerns with appearing prejudiced.

Religion-Related Research

Vargas, Sekaquaptewa, and von Hippel (2004) report on a series of studies they conducted where they developed an implicit attitude measure that relied on the tendency for people's attitudes to color the way they perceive events. The measures consisted of a series of brief vignettes, each of which described a different individual engaging in ambiguous, or inconsistent behaviors. One of the vignettes was used to assess attitudes toward religion, describing a woman who didn't go to church once the whole time she was in college, but who claimed that she was still a very religious person. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which the target was religious. According to the logic behind this measure, these behaviors should fall in latitudes of rejection for both religious and atheistic people, alike. As such, the targets should be perceived as relatively atheistic by religious people, and as relatively religious by atheistic people. Vargas, Sekaquaptewa, and von Hippel (2004) found this to be the case, as perceived religiosity reliably predicted self-reported behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON DIVERSITY ISSUES IN CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

In this final section of the chapter, we list a number of recommendations to consider in broadening our knowledge base so we truly can say that what we know about consumer psychology is not just about White, Anglo European, middle-income and above, straight, males. To a certain extent, scholars in the related fields of anthropology, sociology, and the nonconsumer domains of psychology, such as cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, etc., have a much longer and richer tradition of research that takes into consideration issues related of diversity (Henderson & Motley, 2004). The following list of recommendations, drawn largely from Lee, Williams, and La Ferle (2004) and Williams (1995), are designed to assist consumer psychology researchers to close that gap. The reader is referred to these sources for a more in-depth discussion of these recommendations.

Recognize Within-Group Variations/Avoid Fallacy of Assuming Group Homogeneity

Researchers need to go beyond broad categories of African American, Hispanic, Asian American, etc., and begin to recognize the richness of within-group segmentation. Rather than treating racial/ethnic segments as one homogeneous, monolithic group, it behooves researchers to pay close attention to how these within-group differences manifest themselves in marketplace behavior. Researchers need to be aware that generally there are more within-group differences than between-group differences. Based on the characteristics used to define race, which is nothing more than a socially constructed category (Williams & Tharp, 2002), there actually are more similarities than differences (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993).
Consider Multicultural Individuals

The Census Bureau in 2000 recognized the increasing racial/ethnic diversity of the American population and for the first time allowed people to identify with more than one race (Williams & Tharp, 2001). As more people of mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds start giving equal weight to each of their respective racial and ethnic heritages, it becomes increasingly difficult to place people into discrete racial/ethnic cells. Some research already has suggested that individuals can be “multicultural” in the sense of exhibiting behavior and attitudes from extensive life experiences in two or more cultures (Williams & Qualls, 1989; Luna & Peracchio, 2002, 2005). Future research should recognize that individuals can simultaneously belong to more than one group and reflect the complexity of their psychological dispositions and behaviors.

Conduct Research That Is More Inclusive

Future research on diversity should study not only people with different ethnic origins but also should expand to include those with different value systems, conduct historical and sociological analysis to provide a better understanding of how various groups emerge as target markets, and broaden traditional theories which were developed based on limited populations (Brumbaugh & Grier, 2006).

Expand Acculturation Research

For years, research on diversity issues has employed acculturation as a theoretical framework. In considering one perspective of acculturation that refers to the process by which aspects of two cultures mingle and merge, the notion of what gets changed in what situation and how forms the basic premise for acculturation studies in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, communication, and marketing. To be thorough in the scope of our investigation and to be relevant, future acculturation research needs to expand beyond simply studying immigrant groups. The traditional notions of a culture’s powerful force and the dominant paradigm of assimilation may need to be reconsidered (Luna & Gupta, 2001). Factors such as country of origin, generations, life stages, and even sexual orientations will all impact on how the process of acculturation takes place and evolves.

Expand Policy Implications Research

Future research needs to examine diversity issues within the context of socio and political environments in order to fully assess the impact of public policies on citizens belonging to different groups in the United States.

More Precise Category Construction and Measurement

There is significant research needed on precisely defining the nature of consumers from diverse backgrounds to clearly identify when being a minority versus being a non-minority makes a difference.

New Paradigm for Comparative Studies

It has been common for research on consumers from diverse backgrounds to be criticized for excluding a comparative White sample. The implicit assumption is that diverse consumers are not relevant enough to stand on their own in analysis unless they are compared with Whites. Instead of comparing ethnic minorities to Whites, Jackson (1991) postulates that the comparative research
framework needs to be applied more vigorously to the heterogeneity among ethnic minorities themselves. Currently, journal editors and manuscript reviewers are not receptive to such comparisons, but with changing consumer demographics it is our hope that the new paradigm of comparative studies will allow researchers to conduct studies to examine within group differences of a specific diverse consumer segment, and that such studies will receive the same intellectual respect as traditional comparative studies.

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