

Effects of Ethnic Identification on Web Browsers' Attitudes Toward and Navigational Patterns on Race-Targeted Sites

Contrary to research that suggests Blacks can only be reached effectively with Black-oriented media, this research demonstrates that there appears to be a subset of the Black population that can be reached equally well with White-targeted media as they can with Black-targeted media. The study findings confirm expectations that Blacks' differential responses to race-targeted Web sites are mediated by their level of ethnic identification. Blacks with strong ethnic identities spent more time browsing a site and viewing each story when the site was targeted to Blacks than Whites. Blacks with strong ethnic identities also rated the site and the stories more favorably when browsing the Black-targeted site compared to the White-targeted site. In contrast, Blacks with weak ethnic identities displayed no difference in their browsing time on the sites and stories or their rating of the sites and stories based on the racial target of the Internet site.

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In the past, marketers directed their media messages toward White audiences with the belief that Black audiences would be reached at the same time. They worked under the assumption that Blacks' responses to White-targeted media and characters did not differ sufficiently enough from their White counterparts to justify separate and targeted messages (e.g., Orpen, 1975). Thus, any attempts to specifically reach the Black consumer market constituted a waste of time and money (Wall, 1970), because many Blacks could be