

“WHAT ABOUT THE INTENDED CONSEQUENCES?”

Examining the Effects of Race-Stereotyped Portrayals on Advertising Effectiveness

Guillaume D. Johnson and Sonya A. Grier

ABSTRACT: Research that examines race-stereotyped advertising emphasizes the social impact of these representations and overlooks the potential positive effect on advertising effectiveness. The present research examines the effects of race-stereotyped portrayals on advertising effectiveness among both members and nonmembers of a group that is stereotyped in an advertisement. We integrate research on consumer identity, social categorization, and advertising persuasion to hypothesize the process underlying viewers' attitude formation when exposed to advertising featuring a race-stereotyped portrayal. Results of an experiment conducted in South Africa demonstrate that members of the group that is the subject of the stereotyped portrayal (stereotyped viewers) feel offended. At the same time, results suggest that nonstereotyped viewers experience ambivalence when exposed to stereotyped portrayals. Findings highlight the role of viewers' strength of identification and provide guidance to advertisers with regard to the use of stereotyped portrayals in advertising.

In late November 2010, Duncan Hines released an ad in the United States promoting their “Amazing Glazes” frosting line. The commercial, called “Hip-Hop,” featured chocolate-frosted cupcakes with exaggerated lips and eyes singing and dancing. Although posited as an “entertaining and engaging way” to promote the frosting (Mandel 2010), the ad provoked social controversy. While some felt offended and perceived the portrayal as reflecting the long-standing African-American minstrel stereotype, others described the ad as “funny and cute” and denounced the accusations of racism. In response to the controversy, the company removed the commercial in early December but not before generating more than 19,000 views on YouTube. Similar debates arose in 2010 regarding advertisements by Kentucky Fried Chicken in Australia, Tombola Bingo in the United Kingdom, MetroPCS in the United States, Mont Blanc in France, and Sprite in India. In each case, an ad intended to be entertaining and lighthearted engendered both favorable reactions and accusations of offense and threats of coercive action against the brand (e.g., boycott).

Understanding the processes underlying such ad controversies is critical for advertisers, as diversity has become a defining characteristic of contemporary marketplaces (Brumbaugh and Grier 2006), and as social media such as YouTube enlarge the risk of a “bad-taste” ad generating worldwide debate and affecting consumer response. However, little research has attempted to conceptualize or empirically explain such divergent

responses and their impact on ad effectiveness, despite their consistency and importance. The present study addresses this gap and examines the influence of race-stereotyped portrayals on ad effectiveness as expressed by viewers' attitudes toward the advertising. Although race-related stereotypes in commercials has been a theme of advertising research for several decades, research has primarily emphasized the social impact of such portrayals (e.g., Bristor, Lee, and Hunt 1995; Shuey, King, and Griffith 1953; Zinkhan, Qualls, and Biswas 1990). Researchers have argued that stereotyped portrayals nurture long-held stereotypes and shape intergroup attitudes and relationships (Bailey 2006; Pollay 1986). Despite such criticisms, advertisers continue to use stereotyped portrayals. The present research extends the focus beyond the unintended social impact, to examine the intended commercial impact of the phenomenon.

We first describe the advertising debate pertaining to stereotyped representations and their effectiveness. Next, we develop a framework for understanding viewers' attitude formation when exposed to an ad featuring stereotyped representations. We focus on race-stereotyped ads as demographic changes worldwide highlight the importance for advertisers to manage such portrayals that consistently spark controversy. We propose that viewers' attitudes toward race-stereotyped ads are based on their affective and cognitive reactions, which are influenced by their group membership and how strongly they identify with that group. We empirically examine the framework in an experiment conducted in South Africa. Our results suggest that if race-stereotyped portrayals have harmful social consequences, they might also negatively influence ad effectiveness. Results enlarge the debate regarding ad stereotypes to encompass effectiveness and provide guidance to advertisers with regard to the use of stereotyped portrayals in advertising.

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BACKGROUND

An impressive body of research examines race-related stereotypes in advertising. By the means of content analyses, these studies have served as a “barometer” of the evolution of the representations over time (Zinkhan, Qualls, and Biswas 1990). For example, the depiction of African-American sources went from unskilled laborers (Shuey, King, and Griffith 1953) to racial equality (Crockett 2008) via subtle portrayals of socioeconomic inferiority (Bristor, Lee, and Hunt 1995). Nonetheless, the use of certain stereotypes remains consistent over time. In the United States, such representations include African Americans as athletes and entertainers (Bailey 2006) and Asian Americans as technologically savvy (Taylor, Landreth, and Bang 2005). Furthermore, international research demonstrates similar persistence of racial stereotypes in South American (Rial 2001), European (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006), African (Milner 2007), and Australian (Higgs and Milner 2005) ads.

These observations have led researchers to question the social consequences of these images (Pollay 1986). They argue that advertising’s high accessibility makes stereotyped portrayals influential in spreading racist as well as sexist, classist, and ageist ideologies (Stern 1999). These depictions can influence how members of the group that is the subject of the stereotyped portrayal (*stereotyped viewers*) perceive themselves; they can also shape the perceptions and beliefs of out-group members (*nonstereotyped viewers*) toward stereotyped viewers (Bailey 2006; Bristor, Lee, and Hunt 1995; Robinson, Gustafson, and Popovich 2008). For instance, the predominant depiction of black role models as superstar athletes and entertainers may encourage black youth to believe that their only prospects of success in life are via sport or music (Bristor, Lee, and Hunt 1995); it may also cultivate for nonblack consumers the idea that blacks possess genetically endowed skills (e.g., muscles, rhythm) that are not accorded to nonblacks (Staples and Jones 1985).

While the prevalence of race-stereotyped images in advertising is well documented, less research examines how viewers respond to such advertising (Davidson and Schumann 2005). Research on the effectiveness of stereotyped advertising focuses primarily on gender. These studies report contradictory findings: While some suggest preference for nontraditional representations (i.e., working mother and career woman), some find a preference for traditional portrayals (i.e., housewife and sensual woman), and others report no difference (see Wolin 2003 for a review). Furthermore, research demonstrates the role of gender-related variables such as gender-role orientations (Morrison and Shaffer 2003), career and homemaker orientations (Barry, Gilly, and Doran 1985), and belonging to feminist organizations (Ford and LaTour 1993) in the effectiveness of gender-stereotyped ad strategies. Research also examines a variety of groups beyond gender, such as those defined by sexual orientation (Tsai 2011; Tsai and Lee 2004)

and age (Robinson, Gustafson, and Popovich 2008). Research on responses to race-stereotyped ads mostly investigates the association between Asian actors and their endorsement of stereotypical products in ads (Cohen 1992; Martin, Lee, and Yang 2004; Yoo 2009). These studies show that there is a preference for stereotype/product consistency, as viewers react more favorably to Asian actors promoting stereotypical products (e.g., cell phone) versus nonstereotypical products (e.g., suits and cologne) (Cohen 1992; Yoo 2009). However, there remains a lack of understanding of the processes underlying the influence of race-stereotyped depictions on ad effectiveness.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

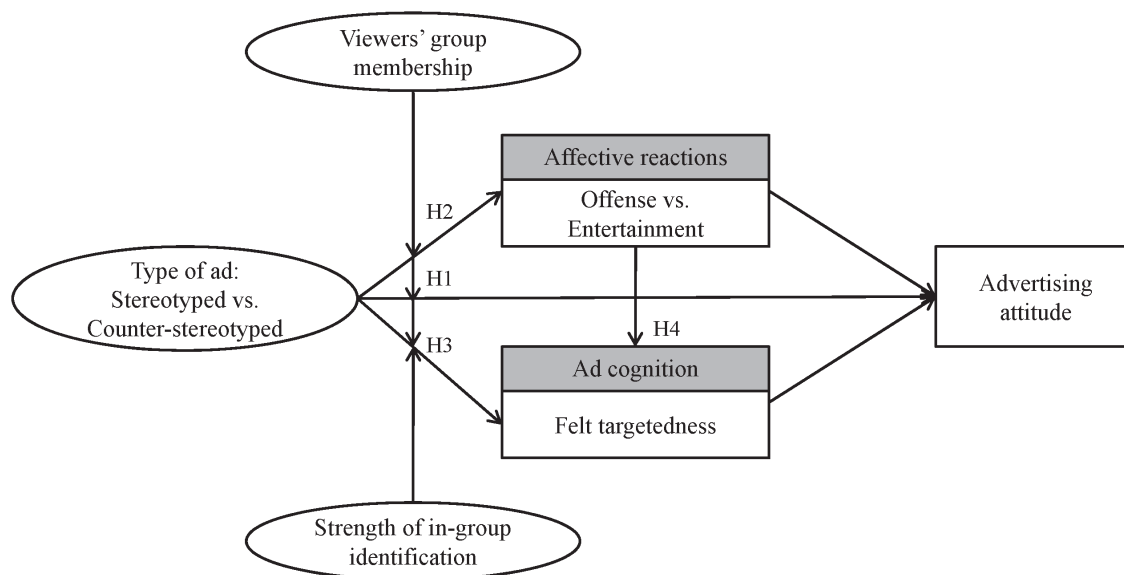
We integrate prior research to develop a conceptual framework to represent the process underlying consumer response to advertising featuring a race-stereotyped portrayal (see Figure 1). We propose that the influence of stereotyped portrayals on advertising effectiveness can be interpreted with regard to consumers’ emotional and cognitive responses toward the ad, depending on their group membership and the strength of their connection with their group membership.

Stereotype and Advertising Attitude

Stereotypes are consensually held sets of beliefs about a particular social group or type of person (Biernat and Dovidio 2000). Ad portrayals featuring stereotypes (*stereotyped ad*) are believed to have an advantage over those inconsistent with preexisting beliefs (*counter-stereotyped ad*), as individuals have better memory for and prefer information that is consistent rather than inconsistent with a preexisting stereotype (Grier and McGill 2000). Indeed, individuals tend to classify others into in- and out-groups on the basis of their similarities or dissimilarities (Hogg and Abrams 1988). After others are categorized into groups, members of groups are seen as similar to one another (Hogg and Hains 1996), differences between groups are exaggerated (Tajfel 1969), and information processing is biased (Grier and McGill 2000).

Research shows how social categorization influences ad effectiveness, with viewers evaluating ads featuring in-group actors more positively than ads featuring out-group actors (e.g., Dimofte, Forehand, and Deshpandé 2003). However, the effect varies depending on three elements: (1) viewers’ group membership (nondistinctive viewers are less likely to show a positive bias than distinctive viewers; see Deshpandé and Stayman 1994); (2) viewers’ strength of in-group identification (weak identifiers are less likely to show a positive bias than strong identifiers; see Whittler and Spira 2002); and (3) viewers’ judgments about whether a given group depiction is stereotypical or derogatory (Dimofte, Forehand, and Deshpandé 2003). The present paper examines this latter variability.

FIGURE 1
Conceptual Framework: Viewers' Responses to Stereotyped Portrayals in Advertising



Research suggests that the observed in-group favoritism effect may not occur when the focal ad is perceived as stereotypical (Holland and Gentry 1997; Qualls and Moore 1990). Holland and Gentry (1997) find that black viewers evaluate more favorably an ad that features African-American jazzmen in a positive way (i.e., musicians in typical nightclub attire with a coat and tie) versus in a negative way (i.e., musicians in “traditional tribal” attire with no shirt, kente cloth, and headband). Similarly, Qualls and Moore (1990) manipulate actors’ perceived socioeconomic status and show that both black and white consumers evaluate in-group actors more favorably when portrayed positively (i.e., high socioeconomic status). Such negative reactions to in-group stereotypes may reflect viewers’ responses to “stereotype threat” (Steele and Aronson 1995) given that the stereotype activated by the ad could be applied to them. Specifically, the activation of the stereotype may encourage viewers who are aware of the stereotyped portrayal to not endorse it and to dismiss the value of the ad.

Less research has compared stereotyped versus nonstereotyped viewers’ responses to ads featuring stereotyped portrayals, but that which exists suggests that the two groups may respond differently (Robinson, Gustafson, and Popovich 2008). Robinson, Gustafson, and Popovich (2008) find that the majority of both younger and older consumers dislike ads that ridicule older people. However, while older consumers hold consistent negative attitudes toward those ads, some younger consumers judge those stereotypes inoffensive, as they represent a certain “reality” (i.e., when people grow old they are afflicted with illness, senility, and immobility). In other words, nonstereotyped viewers are less likely to reject the ad, as the activated stereotype matches their prevailing beliefs

about the portrayed social category (Puntoni, Schroeder, and Ritson 2010). Thus, H1, as the foundation for subsequent hypotheses, proposes that viewers’ group membership will predict their attitude toward advertising featuring a stereotyped portrayal.

Hypothesis 1: Viewers who are members of a group that is stereotyped in an ad (i.e., stereotyped viewers) will have a less favorable attitude toward the ad than viewers who are not a member of the stereotyped group (i.e., nonstereotyped viewers).

Attitude Formation

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM; Petty and Cacioppo 1986) is often combined with social categorization to explain how individuals form their attitudes toward in-group versus out-group sources (Whittler and Spira 2002). The ELM considers two distinct paths for attitude formation. A central route involves cognitive effort from the viewers, whereas with a peripheral route, viewers use executional elements around the message (e.g., source’s characteristics, music) and affective reactions to form their attitude. We propose that stereotyped portrayals will activate the peripheral process by provoking affective reactions amongst viewers. We focus on offense and entertainment to explore the affective reactions of stereotyped and nonstereotyped viewers. Consistent with Holland and Gentry’s (1997) finding that a negative portrayal results in less positive responses than a positive portrayal among black viewers, we expect that viewers who are exposed to an ad that stereotypes their social group will feel more offended than when exposed to an ad that features a portrayal inconsistent

with a preexisting stereotype of their in-group (i.e., counter-stereotyped ad).

However, we contend that nonstereotyped viewers will experience a different type of affective reaction than stereotyped viewers, and expect that their reactions will be in line with the advertisers' intended effects when using a stereotyped representation, namely, entertainment. Indeed, advertisers often use stereotypes because of their clarity, conciseness, comprehensibility, and accessibility in consumers' minds (Pollay 1986). Stereotypes have been historically used to entertain an audience—typically the audience that is not stereotyped (Mandel 2010; Motley, Henderson, and Baker 2003). For instance, in the Duncan Hines campaign cited earlier, the advertiser presents the commercial as an “entertaining and engaging way” to promote the frosting (Mandel 2010). Advertisers commonly use stereotyped portrayals in their advertisements, and entertainment value is commonly used by advertisers as a defense for any perceived offensiveness (Gulas and Weinberger 2006). H2 examines this dichotomy between entertainment (intended effect) and offense (unintended effect) from a consumer standpoint. We expect that viewers exposed to an ad featuring a stereotypical representation of an out-group will not feel offended. Thus, the influence of stereotypical portrayal in advertising is driven by different reactions for stereotyped and nonstereotyped viewers:

Hypothesis 2: A stereotyped portrayal will offend stereotyped viewers, whereas the same portrayal will entertain nonstereotyped viewers.

Prior studies show how the group membership of an ad source acts as a motivator variable to increase viewers' message elaboration (Petty, Fleming, and White 1999; Whittler and Spira 2002). These studies highlight the moderating role of viewers' identity in this cognitive process. When exposed to a black source, the cognitive process is positively biased for both black viewers who identify strongly with their in-group and white viewers who are low in prejudice toward black people (Petty, Fleming, and White 1999; Whittler and Spira 2002). Indeed, while the former display in-group favoritism (Whittler and Spira 2002), the latter are motivated to act in a nonprejudicial manner to avoid unfair reactions (Petty, Fleming, and White 1999). We posit that similar effects may occur when stereotyped portrayals are featured in an ad.

Research on gender-stereotyped ads demonstrates the key role of gender identity on ad processing (Ford and LaTour 1993; Morrison and Shaffer 2003; Wolin 2003). Ford and LaTour (1993) find that activist women are significantly more critical of the way women are portrayed in advertising and prefer progressive female-role depictions more than a general sample of women does. Furthermore, research shows that traditional individuals (i.e., masculine men; feminine women) are more likely to keep their behavior consistent with their culture's defi-

nitions of gender appropriateness and therefore respond more favorably to gender-stereotyped ads, whereas nontraditional/aschematic individuals (i.e., feminine men; masculine women) are more likely to cross the traditional gender boundaries and respond more favorably to counter-stereotyped ads (Morrison and Shaffer 2003; Wolin 2003). Indeed, these latter are less likely to conform to social categorization and to process information according to group stereotypes (Bem 1981).

We extend these results to race-stereotyped ads and predict that the ad portrayal, as well as consumers' identity, will influence viewers' perception that the advertiser is attempting to reach them. This belief—called felt targetedness—has been found to be a key cognition variable in ad processing (Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier 2000; Johnson and Grier 2011). H3 proposes that stereotyped and nonstereotyped viewers will respond to the ads differently depending on the strength of their group identity. On the one hand, stereotyped viewers' cognitive response will be affected by the strength of their group identity, as reflected in the case of the activist women. Stereotyped viewers who identify strongly with their in-group will reject the targeting effort of the stereotyped ad in favor of the counter-stereotyped ad. On the other hand, we predict that nonstereotyped viewers' ad response will be affected by the weakness of their group identity. A recent study shows that nonstereotyped viewers' reactions to race-stereotyped portrayals in media depend on their own racial self-concept as directly linked to their acceptance and openness to racial integration (Banjo 2011). Consequently, nonstereotyped viewers who identify weakly with their in-group will reflect aschematic ad processing, as they will be more likely to cross traditional group boundaries and respond more favorably to the targeting attempt of an ad that features a portrayal inconsistent with a preexisting stereotype of out-group (i.e., counter-stereotyped ad) versus a stereotyped ad. These individuals are more likely to *deategorize* and attribute less meaning to social category stereotypes (Brewer and Miller 1984). H3 proposes:

Hypothesis 3: Stereotyped (nonstereotyped) viewers who identify strongly (weakly) with their in-group will feel less targeted by an advertisement featuring a stereotyped portrayal relative to an advertisement featuring a counter-stereotyped portrayal.

Mediating Process: Felt Targetedness

A final contention in our framework is that the cognitive reaction (i.e., felt targetedness) serves as a mediating factor in the persuasion process. The original ELM considered that persuasion would only occur by one route, that is, that consumers form their attitudes based on either the message or on the executional cues and affective reactions. Further developments of the model show that peripheral and central influences may coexist (Lord, Lee, and Sauer 1995). Furthermore, research finds that ad attitude is directly influenced by both affective

(e.g., Derbaix 1995; Homer 2006) and cognitive reactions (i.e., felt targetedness [Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier 2000; Johnson and Grier 2011]). Consistent with these studies, we expect that both affective and cognitive reactions will influence viewers' attitudes toward the ad. However, we propose that felt targetedness mediates the effect of the affective reactions on ad attitude.

Consumers increasingly consider that the main role of advertising is to entertain them (Austin and Aitchison 2003). Research demonstrates that commercials high in entertainment value encourage consumers to continue to view the ad, whereas commercials high in information value induce consumers to stop viewing (Woltman-Elpers, Wedel, and Pieters 2003). Consequently, we posit that if they feel entertained, viewers will more strongly perceive that they are the intended audience for the ad and this belief will, in turn, increase their positive attitude toward the ad. On the other hand, what is entertaining to some consumers may offend others, especially as advertisers push the limits of taste to entertain (Gulas and Weinberger 2006). For instance, Nivea's recent "Look Like You Give a Damn" ad campaign was removed for provoking social uproar, especially among its intended target audience, that is, African-American males. The ad, which featured a black man ready to throw away a disembodied head with an Afro of his former self and the tag line "Re-Civilize Yourself," elicited significant negative commentary both online and offline (see Hsu 2011). Accordingly, we expect that offended viewers will not have the perception of being "spoken to" by the ad (i.e., felt targetedness), and thus will display a negative attitude toward the ad. The last hypothesis posits a mediating effect of felt targetedness on viewer responses:

Hypothesis 4: Felt targetedness mediates the relationship between viewers' affective reactions and their attitude toward the advertisement.

METHOD

Context

We selected South Africa as an appropriate and dynamic context in which to test our model. During the apartheid era, advertising had to be in accordance with legislation that imposed white domination and stereotyped other groups, especially black South Africans (Sutherland 2004). Advertising was Eurocentric, and black portrayals in mainstream media were controlled by censorship and limited to subservient low-skilled occupations (Frederikse et al. 1985).

In 1994, after the end of the apartheid regime, the portrayals featured in advertising evolved drastically. Advertising content aligned itself with the multicultural doctrine of the "new" South Africa (Johnson, Elliott, and Grier 2010) and the depiction of low-skilled black models dropped considerably in

favor of an overrepresentation of black models in high-status occupational roles (Cassim and Monteiro 2001; Milner 2007). Nowadays, South African advertisers are extremely careful in their depiction of black sources in order to avoid a possible backlash from a population that is increasingly recognized as a critical target market (Cassim and Monteiro 2001).

Despite these efforts, portrayals of black consumers are still the subject of much criticism. The disappearance of systematic blatant racial stereotypes and the increase in the portrayals of high-status occupations are mostly the result of an overrepresentation of black entertainers and athletes, considered a more global and subtle racial stereotype (Cassim and Monteiro 2001; Milner 2007). Research shows that black consumers remain skeptical toward the portrayals used, with a majority of them feeling that their identity is misunderstood and misrepresented by advertisers (UCT Unilever Institute 2006). Black consumers report being especially offended by two portrayals: the conspicuous "fat cat" who has benefited from affirmative action policies and the domestic worker (UCT Unilever Institute 2006).

Design and Stimuli

The design of the experiment was a 2 (type of ad: stereotyped ad versus counter-stereotyped ad) \times 2 (viewers' group membership: stereotyped viewers versus nonstereotyped viewers) \times 2 (viewers' in-group identification: high versus low) between-subjects design.

The stimuli consisted of full-color photographic print ads. To determine which depiction to include, 15 white and 15 black students were asked to list the most common stereotyped representations of black South Africans in advertising. Among the 98 stereotypes listed, the most frequently cited included black models portrayed as singing and dancing ($n = 10$), washing and cleaning ($n = 10$), and working as domestic workers ($n = 9$). Considering the importance of the cleaning thematic, cited by 15 of the 30 respondents (4 respondents mentioned both "washing and cleaning" and "being domestic workers"), we used this portrayal to create the stereotyped ad. Following the frequent mention of the historical dichotomy between black domestic workers and white "Mesdames" or employers featured in advertising, we selected a photograph depicting both black and white models. The stereotyped ad features a young black female wearing a domestic worker's uniform and a graying white woman, while the counter-stereotyped ad depicts one young white and one young black woman wearing casual street clothes (i.e., jeans and a knit top).

Both selected pictures were used to create two ads for two products (see the Appendix). One product was for a washing powder brand, and the other was a television license. While the idea behind the use of two types of product was to test for stereotype consistency (see Martin, Lee, and Yang 2004),

results indicated that the type of product advertised did not significantly influence the variables of interest; therefore, we pooled the data of both types of products for analysis. The ad was embedded in an article about the “retirement” of Paul the “psychic” Octopus after the 2010 South African World Cup. To make the experiment as realistic as possible, this article was selected from a general information newspaper, *The Star*.

Sample and Procedure

The experiment was conducted with 240 students (half black and half white) drawn from the population of a major South African University. Sixty-eight percent were female. Their ages ranged from 17 to 26 years ($M = 20.38$ and $SD = 1.77$). Participants were recruited in class. In the cover story, respondents were told that this study concerned people’s responses to media. This cover story was used to direct some attention away from the ad and create a more externally valid representation of how consumers typically view ads (Dimofte, Forehand, and Deshpandé 2003). The respondents were exposed to only one of the four treatments (i.e., stereotyped ad for washing product or counter-stereotyped ad for washing product, or stereotyped ad for television license or counter-stereotyped ad for television license). After reading the article for about three minutes, participants were given a questionnaire booklet to complete.

Measures

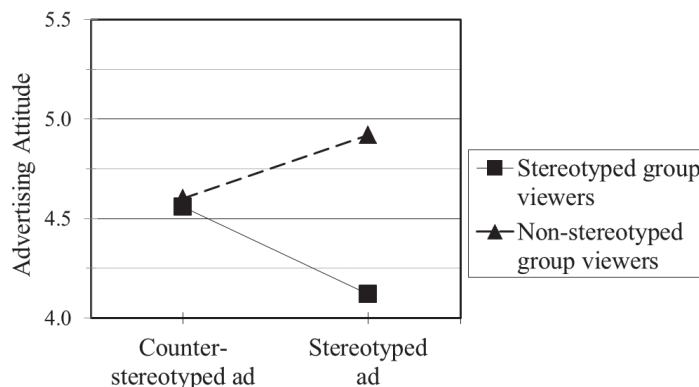
We collected information for four dependent variables (anger, amusement, overall attitude toward the ad, and felt targetedness) and two independent variables (racial group and strength of in-group identification). First, respondents indicated how the ad made them feel: delighted, irritated, bored, satisfied, amused, joy, pleasant surprise, unpleasant surprise, sad, disgust, fear, and anger (Derbaix 1995). All items were measured on seven-point Likert scales ranging from “disagree completely” (1) to “agree completely” (7). However, only the fifth (i.e., amused) and last items (i.e., anger) were of interest for the test of our model, as they were respectively used to operationalize and measure viewers’ level of entertainment versus offense when exposed to the ad. Although single-item measure may lack richness of description and reliability, recent research has (re-)given credit to the use of single-item versus multiple-item scales in specific cases (e.g., Bergkvist and Rossiter 2007). Specifically, single-item measures are recognized as an “indispensable” technique with a good deal of face validity when respondents are asked to self-report specific and discrete emotions, and so are prevalent in the emotion literature (Larsen and Fredrickson 1999, p. 45). In the same vein, recent advertising literature shows that there is no difference in the predictive validity of the multiple-item and single-item

measures (Bergkvist and Rossiter 2007, 2008). Based on our review of this literature, we believe that our current single-item scales are sufficient to measure the specific emotions of anger and amusement.

Respondents also provided their attitude toward the ad using three semantic differential scales anchored with unfavorable/favorable, bad/good, and unpleasant/pleasant (MacKenzie and Lutz 1989). Advertising attitude was the only dependent variable used to operationalize and measure advertising effectiveness, as extensive research establishes that viewers’ ad attitude is related to many other variables, such as ad recall, attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, and brand choice (see Biehal, Stephens, and Curlo 1992). An attitude toward the ad scale was created by averaging the mean scores from the four items ($\alpha = .90$). Participants indicated their felt targetedness (Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier 2000) with three items (i.e., “I feel the advertisement was intended for people like me”; “I do not believe I was in the target market the company created the advertisement for” [reverse coded]; and “the advertiser made that advertisement for people like me”), which were averaged into a single measure of felt targetedness ($\alpha = .87$).

To assess participants’ racial group membership, respondents were asked to identify their racial background by selecting from a list of terms traditionally used to refer to racial categories in South Africa (i.e., black, Coloured, Indian, Asian, white, or others). Only respondents who indicated their group as black or white were included in the analysis. The Multigroup Measure of Ethnic Identity (Phinney 1992) was used to measure viewers’ strength of in-group identification. This scale, used by many advertising studies (e.g., Torres and Briggs 2007), includes six statements assessing racial attachment, happiness with racial group, understanding about the notion of racial background, feelings about racial background, racial pride, and sense of belonging, all on a seven-point scale. An in-group identification scale was created by averaging the mean scores from each of the six items ($\alpha = .91$). The median in-group identification scores for black and white respondents were 7.00 and 6.16, respectively. High and low in-group identifiers scored either above or below the median for their racial group. Although previous experimental advertising studies have also applied a median split to create two groups (e.g., Appiah 2001), dichotomizing continuous data is debatable, as it may lead to the loss of information, lower statistical power, and lower reliability. However, our measure of strength of in-group identification tends to be particularly skewed among black respondents, as more than half the black respondents (62 out of 120 respondents) are in the extreme of the scale, that is, 7. The literature recognizes that such a highly skewed distribution is one of the only possible settings that may justify dichotomization (MacCallum et al. 2002; Streiner 2002).

FIGURE 2
Hypothesis 1: Mean Ratings of Advertising Attitude for Stereotyped and Nonstereotyped Viewers as a Function of the Type of Ad



RESULTS

Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was conducted to determine whether respondents perceived the different stereotyped treatments as they were intended. Respondents provided their perception of the ad using three semantic differential scales anchored with convincing/unconvincing, believable/unbelievable, and non-stereotypical/stereotypical. A three-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted in which viewers' racial group, strength of in-group identification, and the type of ad were used as independent variables and viewers' perceptions of the ad as convincing, "believable," and "stereotypical" were used as dependent variables. As expected, results indicated a main effect of the type of ad on the perceived stereotypicality. Regardless of viewers' racial group and strength of in-group identification, the ad featuring the black domestic worker and the graying white woman ($M = 4.20$) was perceived as more stereotypical than the ad featuring the black and white friends ($M = 3.37$), $F(1, 232) = 15.319, p < .001$. But the type of ad did not influence how much viewers perceived the ad as convincing, $F(1, 232) = 2.552, p > .10$, or believable, $F(1, 232) = .718, p > .30$.

Hypothesis Testing

A three-way MANOVA was conducted in which participants' racial group, strength of in-group identification, and the type of ad were the independent variables, and anger, amusement, felt targetedness, and ad attitude were the dependent variables. This three-way interaction is significant, $F(4, 229) = 2.590, p < .04$.¹ The hypotheses are tested by a series of analyses of variance (ANOVA) and regression analyses. We discuss effects that are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level ($p < .05$).

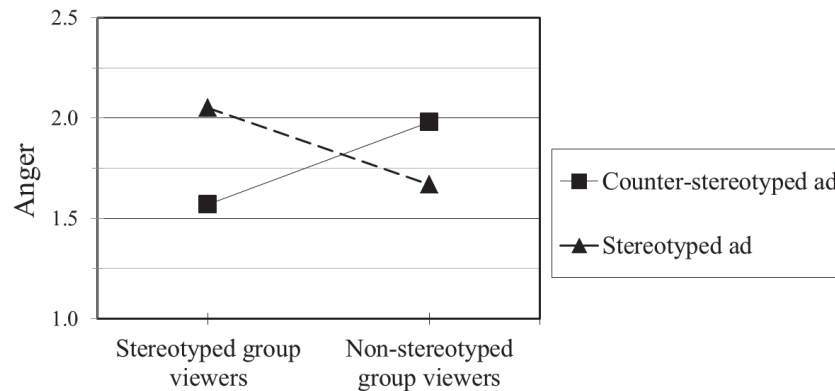
H1 proposes that stereotyped viewers will have a more negative attitude toward an ad featuring a stereotyped representation of their group than nonstereotyped viewers. A three-way ANOVA was conducted in which participants' racial group, strength of in-group identification, and the type of ad were used as independent variables, and ad attitude was used as the dependent variable. A two-way interaction between participants' racial group and the type of ad influences ad attitude, $F(1, 232) = 5.063, p < .03$.

The results (see Figure 2) reveal that when exposed to the counter-stereotyped ad, stereotyped ($M = 4.56$) and non-stereotyped ($M = 4.60$) viewers have similar ad attitudes, $F(1, 118) = .029, p > .80$. Yet when exposed to the stereotyped ad, stereotyped viewers ($M = 4.12$) express significantly less favorable attitude than nonstereotyped viewers ($M = 4.92$), $F(1, 118) = 11.703, p < .001$. Consequently, viewers' group membership predicts their attitude toward advertising featuring race-related stereotypes; thus, H1 is supported.

To test H2, which states that viewers will experience different affective reactions depending on their group membership, two individual three-way ANOVAs were conducted with participants' racial group, strength of in-group identification, and the type of ad as independent variables and anger (and then amusement) as the dependent variable. A two-way interaction between participants' racial group and the type of ad influences anger, $F(1, 232) = 7.134, p < .01$.

The results (see Figure 3) reveal that stereotyped viewers express more anger when exposed to the stereotyped ad ($M = 2.05$) than when exposed to the counter-stereotyped ad ($M = 1.57, p < .03$), whereas nonstereotyped viewers express the same level of anger with both ads ($M_{\text{stereo}} = 1.67, M_{\text{counter-stereo}} = 1.98, p > .10$). Thus, the type of ad predicts anger, but for stereotyped viewers only. But the expected interaction between participants' racial group and type of ad does not influence viewers' amusement, $F(1, 232) = 1.181,$

FIGURE 3
Hypothesis 2: Mean Ratings of Anger for Stereotyped and Nonstereotyped Viewers
as a Function of the Type of Ad



$p > .20$. Further analysis reveals that stereotyped viewers express similar levels of amusement ($M_{\text{stereo}} = 3.65$, $M_{\text{counter-stereo}} = 3.77$, $p > .70$). In contrast, nonstereotyped viewers express a slightly (but nonsignificant) higher level of amusement toward the stereotyped ad ($M = 5.08$) than toward the counter-stereotyped ad ($M = 4.72$, $p > .20$). Hence, H2 is only partially supported as we find that a stereotyped portrayal evokes anger among stereotyped viewers, but fail to show that the same portrayal evokes amusement among nonstereotyped viewers.

H3 proposes that viewers' identity influences their perceptions of being targeted. To test this hypothesis, a three-way ANOVA was conducted in which participants' racial group, strength of in-group identification, and the type of ad were used as independent variables and felt targetedness was used as the dependent variable. A three-way interaction influences viewers' felt targetedness, $F(1, 232) = 6.934$, $p < .01$.

The results (see Figure 4) indicate that stereotyped viewers who identify strongly with their in-group feel significantly less targeted by the stereotyped ad ($M = 2.32$) than the counter-stereotyped ad ($M = 3.24$, $p = .01$), whereas stereotyped viewers who do not identify strongly with their group feel similarly targeted by both ads ($M_{\text{stereo}} = 3.17$, $M_{\text{counter-stereo}} = 3.19$, $p > .90$). However, nonstereotyped viewers who do not identify strongly with their group feel significantly less targeted by the stereotyped ad ($M = 2.98$) than the counter-stereotyped ad ($M = 4.19$, $p < .01$), whereas nonstereotyped viewers who identify strongly with their group feel similarly targeted by both ads ($M_{\text{stereo}} = 2.87$, $M_{\text{counter-stereo}} = 2.93$, $p > .80$). Consequently, viewers' in-group identification moderates both stereotyped and nonstereotyped viewers' felt targetedness; H3 is therefore supported.

H4 suggests that felt targetedness mediates the relationship between viewers' affective reactions and their attitude toward the ad. To test this mediating influence, we follow the

four-step procedure of Baron and Kenny (1986), as reported in Table 1.

First, the relationships a between amusement ($\beta = .334$, $p < .000$), anger ($\beta = -.201$, $p < .01$), and the dependent variable (ad attitude) are established. Then, in the relationships b , only amusement influences the mediator variable (felt targetedness) ($\beta = .134$, $p < .05$); the influence of anger on felt targetedness is not significant ($\beta = -.091$, $p < .10$). Next, the relationship c between felt targetedness and ad attitude is significant, $\beta = .334$, $p < .000$. Finally, when relationships b and c are controlled, the previously significant relationships a between the independent and dependent variables are predicted to be no longer significant (Baron and Kenny 1986). However, a multivariate regression shows that amusement ($\beta = .297$, $p < .001$), anger ($\beta = -.176$, $p < .01$), and felt targetedness ($\beta = .274$, $p < .001$) conserve their impact on ad attitude when b and c are controlled. Consequently, felt targetedness cannot be considered as a full mediating variable (Baron and Kenny 1986), and H4 is rejected.² Further statistical analyses show that anger negatively influences stereotyped viewers' felt targetedness (regardless of the type of ad). Specifically, felt targetedness partially mediates the relationship between anger and ad attitude for stereotyped viewers only. The percentage of the total effect of anger that is mediated is 26.56% (Sobel z -test = -2.23 , $p < .03$).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study demonstrate the fundamental role of viewers' affective and cognitive reactions on the effectiveness of ads featuring stereotyped portrayals. Consistent with prior research (e.g., Holland and Gentry 1997; Qualls and Moore 1990), we find that stereotyped viewers develop negative attitudes toward ads that stereotype members of their in-group. However, the present findings extend prior

FIGURE 4
Hypothesis 3: Mean Ratings of Felt Targetedness for Stereotyped and Nonstereotyped Viewers as a Function of the Type of Ad and Their Strength of In-Group Identification

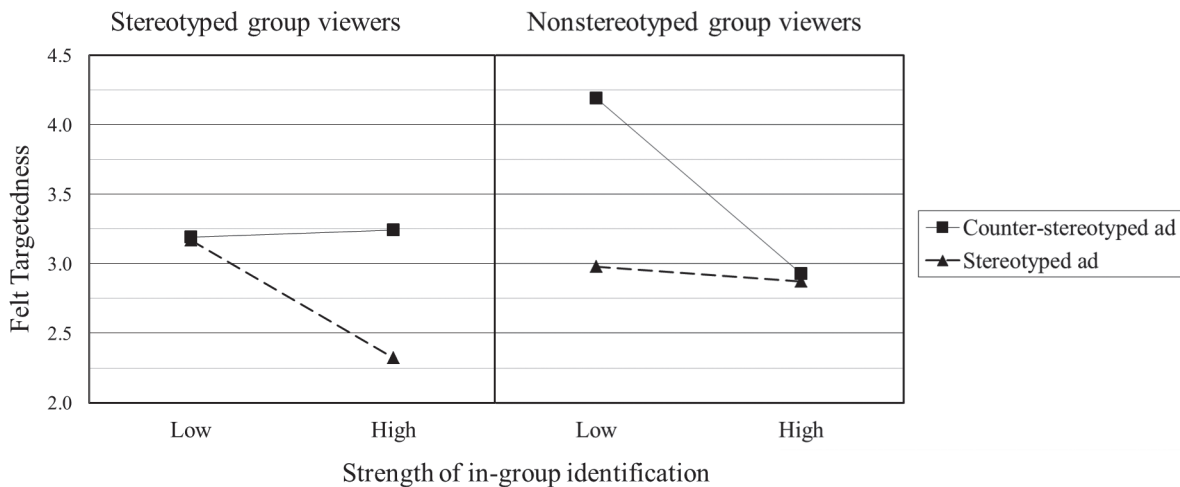


TABLE I
Results of Regression Analyses for Felt Targetedness as Mediating Variable

Paths	β^a	Standard error	t-value
<i>a</i> Amusement → advertising attitude	.334	.043	5.603***
Anger → advertising attitude	-.201	.064	-3.366**
<i>b</i> Amusement → felt targetedness	.134	.056	2.084*
Anger → felt targetedness	-.091	.084	-1.415
<i>c</i> Felt targetedness → advertising attitude	.334	.078	4.698***
<i>a'</i> Amusement → advertising attitude (after controlling <i>b</i> and <i>c</i>)	.297	.042	5.162***
Anger → advertising attitude (after controlling <i>b</i> and <i>c</i>)	-.176	.062	-3.066**

^a Standardized coefficients.
 * $p < .05$.
 ** $p < .01$.
 *** $p < .001$.

research to address the important void regarding the reasons for the formation of the negative attitudes among viewers that are members of a group stereotyped in an ad (Davidson and Schumann 2005). Specifically, the present results show that response to a race-stereotyped representation is driven by specific cognitive and affective reactions depending on viewers' group membership and the strength of their in-group identification.

Results contribute theoretical insights with regard to stereotypes in advertising and inform on the practical consequences of using race-stereotyped portrayals. Marketing practitioners worldwide increasingly acknowledge the critical

economic challenge of racial diversity, and numerous studies have investigated the impact of the ad sources' race on ad effectiveness (e.g., Aaker, Brumbaugh, and Grier 2000; Brumbaugh and Grier 2006; Deshpandé and Stayman 1994; Johnson and Grier 2011). However, while the stereotypicality of these inclusions has been widely criticized, limited research questions the persistence of such a practice and examines the impact of these portrayals on ad effectiveness. The present study extends research on the effectiveness of gender- and age-stereotyped ads to the race domain and examines this element in a non-North American and dynamic context, namely, South Africa. Given the increasing diversity of marketplaces

worldwide, the South African context provides especially relevant insights.

We find that viewers who are exposed to an ad in which their social group is stereotyped experience more negative affective reactions. These affective reactions subsequently have a halo effect on their ad processing. In other words, the offense that stereotyped viewers experience influences their overall ad attitude both directly and indirectly (via their felt targetedness). However, we show that the affect-dominant approach is true only in the case of members of the stereotypically portrayed group.

However, research has not examined the affective reactions of viewers exposed to a stereotyped portrayal of an out-group. Findings show that these viewers do not show differences in offense and entertainment when exposed to a stereotyped ad versus a counter-stereotyped ad (see H2). This result may reflect ambivalence among consumers exposed to an ad stereotyping an out-group (Motley, Henderson, and Baker 2003). Research has characterized consumer ambivalence as occurring when individuals' attitude is affected by multiple emotional states as a result of the interaction between internal (psychological) and external (sociological and cultural) dimensions (Otnes, Lowrey, and Shrum 1997). Of direct relevance, Motley, Henderson, and Baker (2003) showed that both black and white informants suffer psychological ambivalence toward advertising memorabilia featuring stereotypical black sources (i.e., Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben's). While black informants' perception of the memorabilia as a part of black history helped them to cope with their anger, white informants' sentimental bonds with inherited stereotypical memorabilia was challenged by their understanding that some people might be offended by the stereotypes (Motley, Henderson, and Baker 2003).

In the present research, black viewers may not suffer ambivalence, as the ads they were exposed to were "modern" and the portrayals tapped into a stereotype perceived as generally offensive (UCT Unilever Institute 2006). As such, their anger was not buffered and the stereotyped portrayal negatively affected their ad processing. But white viewers' processing may be due to their ambivalence about being entertained by the ad amid a consciousness that some viewers may be offended by the ad. These findings suggest an important area ripe for research. Specifically, understanding the role of attitudinal ambivalence and the factors that drive consumers toward a positive versus negative advertising response appears a fruitful path. In the same vein, future research may examine why some humorous attempts in advertising that features racial portrayals backfire while others do not.

The present findings also contribute to our understanding of the influence of viewers' identity. Consistent with previous studies, we found that the group membership (i.e., race) of an ad source acts as a motivator variable (Whittler and Spira 2002). Although stereotyped representation motivates both black and

white viewers' ad cognition, our findings demonstrate that the motivation to process the ad is moderated by individual differences in viewers' identity. Black viewers who identify strongly with their in-group may be individuals concerned with group-relevant issues who take active roles in the social, political, and economic affairs of their community (Whittler and Spira 2002). Consequently, they respond to an ad featuring a stereotyped portrayal of their in-group in a negative manner. However, black viewers who identify weakly with their in-group may be less concerned with such in-group-focused issues and thus less likely to be affected by the stereotyped content of the advertising portrayal.

Results also demonstrate that nonstereotyped viewers who identify weakly with their in-group feel more targeted by an ad that is inconsistent with a preexisting stereotype (i.e., counter-stereotyped ad), whereas there is no difference for nonstereotyped viewers who identify strongly with their in-group. This finding suggests that these nonstereotyped viewers (who identify weakly with their in-group) are more likely to cross traditional group boundaries and respond more favorably to the targeting attempt of a counter-stereotyped ad. These findings reflect the *decategorization* mechanism, as these viewers attribute less meaning to social category stereotypes (Brewer and Miller 1984). Research may further investigate the role of decategorization on ad processing. Future research may also examine the role of empathy toward an out-group to further understand the effectiveness of race-stereotyped ads.

To summarize, stereotyped representations in advertising affect both stereotyped and nonstereotyped viewers. Stereotyped viewers experience offense and negative ad processing, whereas nonstereotyped viewers experience ambivalence and fail to be entertained by the ad. From a practical perspective, this pattern raises important issues for advertisers. Featuring stereotyped portrayals seems to have uncertain positive consequences on ad effectiveness for both stereotyped and nonstereotyped viewers. Thus, advertisers should seriously consider them before launching a campaign, especially since social media such as YouTube increase the risk of a "bad-taste" advertisement spreading worldwide. At a basic level, advertisers may want to avoid using offensive stereotypes. While seemingly obvious, continual marketplace controversies suggest this message is not well known.

Practitioners may want to pretest advertisements among not only the intended target market, but also among viewers in the unintended target market whose group may be stereotyped in the ad. Advertisers need to be alert to any divergence in responses. Similarly, brands cannot target one group in one market and stereotype the same group in another market without facing a risk of contamination. Ways of avoiding such backlash include consultations with community groups and leaders. For example, the advertising agency for the recent Athenos yogurt ad campaign in the United States that stereo-

typically satirizes Greek grandmothers included interviews with members of the Greek community, although the ad is intended to reach a broader audience. Another solution includes the recruitment of advertising staff from the focal group. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data from January 2008, racial diversity in the advertising field (i.e., advertising and PR agencies, media, direct mail, etc.) is minimal, with only 5% African American, 3% Asian, and 8% Hispanic or Latino employees (see Newman 2008). Furthermore, despite many initiatives to increase diversity within the industry (see, e.g., the Madison Avenue Project in the United States), change remains a significant challenge (Bush 2011). Limited racial diversity in the advertising industry hinders the ability of distinctive employees to counter or confront the production of stereotypes, especially when they are in positions of low decision-making power.

One limitation of the study involves the use of a stereotyped portrayal for only one group. Our objective was to specifically examine the stereotyped representation of black sources, as this particular debate has been central to advertising literature for many years (Bailey 2006). Although members of any group may be stereotyped, the stereotyping of black sources has been of particular concern given the lower prevalence of countering positive portrayals (Bailey 2006; Bristor et al. 1995). Nonetheless, future research might examine the impact of the stereotyped representation of white sources as well as other groups beyond race (e.g., older adults, sexual minorities).

In addition, sampling from a young, student population may be debatable (Bello et al. 2009). However, Finchilescu (2005) points out that although students have not directly experienced apartheid, they have developed distorted knowledge and expectations about racial groups through the experience of their elders and the socialization process. As a result, stereotypes and negative attributions continue to flourish (Finchilescu 2005). Recent studies demonstrate the persistence of racial stereotypes among young South Africans (Bhana and Pattman 2010; Daniels and Damons 2011; de Klerk 2011; Nduna and Mendes 2010) as well as in advertising (Milner 2007). A related limitation concerns the type of ads used as stimuli. Although all students likely feel targeted by washing powder and television licenses (and our results show that they feel similarly targeted by both products), the portrayals used may not be those typically directed to this market. Future research could investigate the responses of diverse demographic groups to a broader panel of products and stereotyped portrayals. Furthermore, the actual stimuli manipulation only looks at negative stereotypes and does not control for all possible extraneous variables, such as attractiveness, ages, dress, proportion of space on the advertisement, body language, and so forth. Future research should find ways to control these variables without sacrificing realism. Finally, as the ads were embedded in an article related to soccer (i.e., Paul the 2010 World Cup Octopus), respondents'

appreciation of soccer could have been a helpful covariate to understand the lack of an effect of entertainment.

CONCLUSION

Overall, results provide a basis for understanding consumers' ad processing when exposed to a race-stereotyped ad. Results also highlight both intended and unintended effects of advertising stereotypes and answers research calls to enlarge the debate regarding stereotypes in advertising from a social perspective to a more explicit consideration of their effectiveness (Davidson and Schumann 2005; Tsai and Lee 2004). Consideration of these effects can only enhance advertisers' ability to design advertising campaigns that are both respectful and effective in modern multicultural societies.

NOTES

1. To examine the influence of gender, we also conducted a four-way MANOVA in which participants' racial group, gender, strength of in-group identification, and the type of ad were the independent variables, and anger, amusement, felt targetedness, and ad attitude were the dependent variables. This four-way interaction is not significant, $F(4, 221) = .009, p > .718$.

2. The results of the reverse mediation (i.e., where felt targetedness is a preliminary variable to emotions) are similarly not supported.

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APPENDIX

Study Stimuli

Are you Relaxed?



Pay your TV Licence
and Relax

Customer Care
(011 330-9555)

TV Licences

Are you Relaxed?



Buy *Daz* Washing Powder
and Relax

Available at all major retailers



Are you Relaxed?



Pay your TV Licence
and Relax

Customer Care
(011 330-9555)

TV Licences

Are you Relaxed?



Buy *Daz* Washing Powder
and Relax

Available at all major retailers



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