

MODEL ETHNICITY AND PRODUCT CLASS INVOLEMENT:
ATTITUDE OF WHITE AMERICANS TOWARD ADVERTISEMENTS
FEATURING ASIAN-INDIAN MODELS

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ABSTRACT

Studies show that ethnicity of the spokespersons in advertisements play an important role in shaping attitudes and perceptions about the advertised products. Studies involving black, Hispanic and white models in ads have found race/ethnicity to impact credibility and likeability of the product and model. Factors such as product congruence and product class have also shown to impact attitudes of consumers. Although studies that have looked at impact of ethnicity on attitudes on various audiences, few studies have explored the impact of using Asian-Indians models in advertising on attitudes of white Americans. In addition, there has not been any study that has looked at the interplay between ethnic advertising and product class involvement on attitudes of consumers. This study examines the impact of using Asian-Indian models in different products class ads on the attitudes of white consumers.

The study did not find any difference in the attitude of white consumers toward advertisements featuring Asian-Indian models compared with advertisements featuring white models. Also, the study did not find any interactive effects between the two independent variables -- ethnicity and product class. A post hoc test on gender, however, showed that white American males had a more favorable attitude toward white models than toward Asian-Indian models. Interestingly, white American females had a more favorable attitude toward Asian-Indian models than toward white models.