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UMI
VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE AFRICAN-AMERICANS' PROCESSING OF PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATIONS VIA THE ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL: IMPLICATIONS FOR SPORT MARKETING

DISSEPTION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Ketra Lekita Armstrong, B.S., M.Ed.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1996

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Dennis Howard, Chair

Dr. Robert Madrigal

Dr. Donna Pastore

Approved by

[Signature]

Advisor

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“A .... mind, once stretched by a new idea never regains its original dimension.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the variables that motivated African-Americans to process the cues and information contained in persuasive communications using Petty and Cacioppo’s (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The ELM provides a general theory of persuasion and communication-induced attitude change. The topic of persuasion was increasing student fees to finance a sport arena. To test the tenets of the ELM, three experiments were conducted involving from 63 to 89 African-American participants in each study.

Experiment One manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the presentation of the source’s position (either the position was stated in favor of the issue or not stated at all). Experiment Two manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the quality of the arguments (either strong or weak) that were used to convey the message the source was presenting. Experiment Three manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the content of the arguments (either culturally-targeted to African-Americans or non-culturally targeted to African-Americans) that were used to convey the message the source was presenting. Also included in the study was a control group, which did not receive any source or message manipulation. It was hypothesized that
ethnic identification would moderate the participants’ responses to the race of the source delivering the messages, and the interactions of the race of the source with arguments of varied quality and content.

The results were obtained by performing a 2 x 2 ANCOVA (with the participants’ ethnic identification score as the covariate) for each experiment. The analyses revealed that the race of the source, the quality of the message, the content of the message, and the participants’ ethnic identification were all variables that influenced African-American’s attitudes toward and/or their means of processing persuasive communications.

The results suggested that the participants reported more favorable attitudes after exposure to the Black source than to the White source. The participants also generated more thoughts for the culturally-targeted message than they did for the non-culturally targeted message. Two Race of Source x Argument Quality interactions were found, which indicated that the participants responded similarly to the strong message, regardless of the race of the source presenting it. For the weak message, on the other hand, their responses were more favorable when the source was Black rather than White. Several Race of Source x Message Content interactions were also found. The nature of the Race of Source x Message Content interactions suggested that participants responded more favorably to the culturally-targeted message when the source was Black. Conversely, they responded more favorably to the non-culturally targeted message when the source was White. The interactions also suggested that the participants’ appeared to carefully scrutinize the messages presented by the White source, as their responses to the White source were largely dependent upon the content of the message being presented. On the
other hand, they did not appear to scrutinize the messages presented by the Black source
to the same degree, as their responses to the Black source were similar, regardless of the
content of the message being presented.

A conclusion supported by this study is that persuasive communications directed at
African-American consumers are significantly enhanced by placing the message content in
a culturally-relevant context and by having the message delivered by a Black
spokesperson. The results suggested that even communications that pertain to sport will
be more effective in reaching African-American audiences when their culture is
acknowledged.
To: Mom, Dad, Rhonda, and Sheryl
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VITA

August 24, 1963 ..................... Born - Tupelo, Mississippi

1986 .............................. B. S., Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi

1987 - 1988 ........................ M. Ed., Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi

1988 - 1989 ...................... Sport Administration Assistant, Southeastern Conference Office, Birmingham, Alabama

1989 - 1990 ...................... Assistant Women's Basketball Coach, Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, Virginia

1990 - 1992 ...................... Assistant Women's Basketball Coach, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana

1992 - 1994 ...................... Graduate Teaching Associate, School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, The Ohio State University

1994 - 1995 ...................... Assistant Athletic Director, Columbus State Community College, Columbus, Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Studies in Sport Management (Drs. Howard, Chelladurai, Pastore)

Minor Field: Sociology (Drs. Curry, Richardson, Gouke)
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Marketing Communications

Marketers engage in communications to stimulate consumer interest in, awareness of, and actual purchase of a product or service (Lutz, 1990). Marketing communications involves a "continuing dialogue between buyers and sellers in a marketplace... a process of presenting an integrated set of stimuli to a market target with the intent of evoking a desired set of responses within that market" (DeLozier, 1976, p. 168). According to DeLozier (1976), being effective in communicating with target markets requires that organizations attune themselves to the market, realigning and adapting their messages according to the changes that market undergoes. Effective communications, therefore, is essential to successful marketing.

Communication basically refers to the transmission of information. It begins with a source, which may be a person, organization, event, or activity with a message that it intends and attempts to share with an audience (Pride & Ferrell, 1993). The source should convey the meaning of the message to the audience by using signals and images that are
referent to the audience. For communication to take place, both the sender and the receiver of the information must share a common understanding of the verbal and written symbols used to transmit the information (Hawkins, Best & Coney, 1992; Pride & Ferrell, 1993).

Through marketing communications, companies and organizations attempt to persuade consumers to purchase their products and services. Persuasion is one of the primary goals of marketing communications. It refers to "the activity of convincing or prevailing upon an individual or organization to bring about an exchange" (Pride & Ferrell, 1993, p. G13). It also refers to "any effort to modify an individual's evaluations of people, objects, or issues by the presentation of a message" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, p. 25)...including any change in attitude that results from exposure to a communication (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b).

One precursor of the degree to which an individual is affected by a (persuasive) marketing communication is the amount of information processing engaged in by the individual (i.e., the likelihood that the individual will elaborate on the information he/she is presented). Petty and Cacioppo (1986a, 1986b) refer to elaboration as the extent to which a person thinks about the issue-relevant arguments contained in a message. When the elaboration likelihood is high people tend to: (a) react to the appeal in the
communication, (b) attempt to access relevant associations, images, and experiences related to the issue from memory, (c) scrutinize and elaborate on the information provided in the communication in respect to what is recalled from memory, (d) make inferences about the merits of the communication, and (e) evaluate the communication, formulating or reinforcing an attitude towards it (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b).

**Persuasion and Attitudes**

To be effective with persuasive communications — thus, enhancing the likelihood of elaboration, requires an understanding of attitudes. An attitude generally refers to positive, negative or neutral feelings or evaluations towards an object, issue or behavior that predisposes an individual to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner (Foxall, 1989; Lutz, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Attitudes cannot be directly observed, but they do serve as guides to an individual's overt behavior. Because they are learned, marketers attempt to create or modify the attitudes individuals have toward their products or services through marketing communications (Lutz, 1990) and promotional activities. "Attitudes may be changed if the attitude object is associated with a relatively strong positive or negative affective cue, or a weaker cue is continually paired with the attitude object" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b, p. 129).
The relationship between attitudes and persuasion have long been of interest to researchers in social psychology (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a; 1986b). A much-debated issue is whether or not attitudes actually serve as precursors to certain behaviors. Fazio (1989) reported that attitudes affect behavior either deliberately or spontaneously. The deliberate process involves consideration of the specific attributes of the object and the potential consequences of engaging in a particular behavior. The spontaneous process, on the other hand, focuses on the attitude toward the object and the activation of this attitude from memory. Fazio (1989) contended that different processing modes that link attitude and behavior are determined by the motivation and opportunity an individual has to process information.

Further evidence of an attitude-behavior linkage was provided by the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbien, 1980). This theory contends that in order to predict a specific behavior, the attitude toward the object as well as the attitude toward the encouraged behavior must be considered. For example, a person may have favorable thoughts toward a particular sports team, but view their expensive ticket prices unfavorably. In this case, their attitude towards actually attending a game may not be favorable due to the ticket prices, not due to their attitude towards the team itself. Thus, the attitude is situation specific. Also included in this theory is a subjective norm, where
the social influences on a person's behavior are considered. In this case, the behavior of an individual is not due to his or her attitude, it is instead due to expectations of relevant others (such as friends and family members). In such a case, an individual who attends sport events may not have a favorable attitude towards the team, but attends the team's games because of family members. Under the Theory of Reasoned Action, behavior may be attitudinally controlled (by the individual) or normatively controlled (due to expectations of relevant others). This distinction is noteworthy because normative strategies employed to change behavior that is attitudinally controlled will not be effective; only attitudinal strategies will be effective for altering attitudinal behavior. For instance, Lutz (1990) noted that an attitude change would involve trying to convince consumers that the mediciny taste they experience when gargling with a particular mouthwash is a good thing. A normative change (on the other hand) using the same scenario (according to Lutz, 1990) would involve trying to convince consumers that dentists and oral hygienists think that people should gargle with a particular mouthwash. These examples demonstrate the importance of knowing which type of control is in effect so that appropriate strategies may be employed. According to Lutz (1990), previous research on the Theory of Reasoned Action has concluded that purchasing behaviors are largely under
attitudinal control. Therefore, in most marketing settings, attitude change strategies will generally be more appropriate than normative change strategies (Lutz, 1990).

Promotions

Promotions are one way marketers attempt to influence attitudes and persuade consumers to buy a particular product or service. The role of promotions is to communicate with individuals, groups, or organizations to directly or indirectly facilitate exchanges by informing, educating, persuading, or reminding them of the benefits offered by a company, its products, or its services (Howard & Crompton, 1995; Pride & Ferrell, 1993). Promotions seek to: (a) provide information (i.e., inform the market about a product or service), (b) increase the demand for a product or service, (c) differentiate the product or service, (d) accentuate the product's or service's value, and (e) stabilize sales (Boone & Kurtz, 1992). Promotions include elements such as public relations, advertising, publicity, personal selling, sales promotion (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 1993; Pride & Ferrell, 1993). These methods allow marketers to communicate with potential consumers via verbal and nonverbal cues, images, and printed and spoken words in an attempt to influence and persuade them.
Sport marketers rely heavily on promotional activities. Mullin et al. (1993) make an important distinction about the role of promotions in sport marketing. They refer to the use of promotions to communicate directly with consumers about sport products or services as the marketing "of" sport. On the other hand, when sport is used as a vehicle to promote other products and services, Mullin et al. (1993) refer to this as marketing "through" sport (Mullin et al., 1993). Whether it be marketing sport products and services directly to the consumers, or using sport as a medium in which to market other products and services, sport marketers must understand the means in which the audience receives and internalizes the cues and information presented in their (persuasive) promotional messages.

Consumers' Motivation to Process Messages

Understanding the effectiveness of persuasive communications requires recognition that human beings cannot possibly process every message they encounter (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b). Research has shown that a number of factors influence an individual's motivation and ability to process messages, among them are: attractive sources (Chaiken, 1980), the use of celebrities or famous athletes (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983), and the race of the source (White & Harkins, 1994). Sport marketers (as they engage in the
marketing of sport) often use popular celebrities to heighten the awareness of a particular sport event or activity. They include sources that are expected to have an appeal that will influence and attract others to the event. Companies and organizations (as they engage in marketing through sport) often use sport personalities and athletes to be their spokespeople. By using them as the sources of their communications, the sport personalities and athletes are also expected to have an appeal that will attract others to want to listen to what they are about to say regarding the particular company or organization. Source cues are expected to motivate individuals to (want to) process information, and are strategically used in promotional messages, gimmicks, activities, and advertisements to influence consumers' attitudes (Hawkins et al., 1992).

In addition to the use of source cues, the content of the message may also serve as a variable that will motivate individuals to (want to) process a message (Pitts, Whalen, O'Keefe & Murray, 1989; Williams, 1992). Messages are delivered with content (verbal and nonverbal) that is tailored to speak to and attract a particular target audience. The content must have some reference point to appeal to the audience and allow for them to relate to it. Hence, marketers also selectively use message cues to influence consumers' motivation to process information (Hawkins et al., 1992).
Another element in a persuasive communication that may influence an individual's motivation to process it is the amount and type of emotional content it contains. The emotional content is a very important characteristic of a persuasive communication. It may influence the persuasiveness of a communication by enhancing the formation of a new attitude or changing an existing attitude by increasing the: (a) communication's ability to attract and maintain the attention of consumers, (b) level of mental processing of the communication, (c) memorability of the communication, and (d) likability of the communication (Hawkins et al., 1992). While source and message cues may be used to increase the emotional content of a persuasive communication, marketers also include pictures, surrealism, and music to enhance the overall persuasiveness (Hawkins, et al., 1992). Sport marketers also include the previous elements in their communications to heighten their emotional content. In addition to source and message cues, they also use music, sounds, and illustrations to highlight the thrill and excitement of a sport event or activity, to appeal to the emotions of the spectators they are trying to lure to the actual sport venue. The emotional content is expected to influence the motivation of the individuals who are deciding on whether or not to attend the particular event or activity.

Regardless of the tactics used to manipulate the effectiveness of a persuasive communication, those involved in marketing products and services must understand the
communication process that underlies the effectiveness of persuasive communications that subsequently result in marketing exchanges. This would suggest that the variables that motivate individuals to internalize and process the information contained in a persuasive communication, as well as the direction and extent of processing they induce, should be identified. Identifying and measuring the impact of those variables that motivate an individual to process a persuasive communication was the focus of this investigation.

**African-American Consumers**

One culture to which marketers have targeted persuasive communications is the African-American (used interchangeably and hereafter referred to as Blacks) community. Blacks are the largest ethnic group in America and worthy of serious attention by marketers in general and sport marketers in particular. With a population base of over 26 million, the Black population in the United States has grown at a rate that is more than twice that of Whites, and comprises approximately 12 percent of the population (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1993; Mallory, 1992; Simpson, 1992). Their annual income has grown sixfold during the last 20 years, with an estimated buying power of $399 billion in 1995 ("Black Buying Power Growing Fast, Study Says", 1994). If Blacks in the United States were considered a separate country, their aggregate Gross National Product would
rank them as the eleventh largest nation in the free world ("Don't Ignore Impact of Ethnic Market on US Economy: NAMD Prexy", 1989). Blacks have also been reported to exhibit consumption patterns that differ from Whites: they are younger, spend a greater percentage of their income on consumer goods, are brand loyal, are status conscious, and are more willing to try new products (Hawkins et al., 1992; Moschis, 1987). Because of these characteristics they have become a very attractive segment to marketers in general. Over $700 million were spent in one year on ads aimed at Black consumers (Mabry, 1992).

According to Anderson (cited in Rossman, 1994), the formula for marketing to Blacks consists of relevance, recognition, and respect. Gardner (cited in Rossman, 1994) also claims that Black consumers weigh who or what the product, service, or advertisement is and what it means to them. Most marketers are inexperienced in reaching Black consumers. However, many retailers and corporations have realized the profitability of marketing to Black consumers and are increasing their awareness of the impact that race, culture, and ethnicity has on consumers' attitudes and behaviors that ultimately influence marketing effectiveness (Rossman, 1994). They are becoming more cognizant of the challenges of marketing and advertising to members of ethnic groups who are viable consumers and who do not want their cultural uniqueness ignored or unnoticed, but
instead want it valued and respected (Pitts et al., 1989; Williams, 1992; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). As a result, marketing communications are beginning to reflect Blacks' emergence as a social and economical force. More and more, advertisements are containing authentic Black music, language, and images to attract Black customers (Mabry, 1989; Pitts et al., 1989; Simpson, 1992; Snuggs, 1992; Williams & Qualls, 1989). Commercials are beginning to contain themes rich in Black cultural images and are carefully designed to emit a promotional message in an appropriate Black cultural context (Pitts et al., 1989).

Blacks are reportedly more generally affected by advertising than Whites, particularly when elements of their culture and ethnicity are contained in the advertisement (Bird, 1993). Mass market advertising campaigns have not been as effective in reaching Blacks as well as those that are targeted to acknowledge their ethnic heritage and reflect the breadth of the Black community (Snuggs, 1992). Although Blacks see the same advertisements and promotions as members of other ethnic groups do, they may not necessarily interpret and process the information in the same manner as others (Rossman, 1994; Pitts et al., 1989).

Black consumers have also been reported to place great emphasis on sports. Sport sociology literature (Coakley, 1990) suggests that because of the visibility, popularity,
and financial success many Black athletes have enjoyed, sport is perceived as a viable way out of impoverished situations for many disadvantaged Black youths. Because of discrimination and unfair play in the working world, (however arguable) sport is perceived as an arena in which Blacks are given a fair chance and an opportunity for fair play (Coakley, 1990).

The 1986 Miller Lite report on sports provided most of what is known about Blacks' vicarious involvement in sport. Using the data obtained from the Miller Lite study, Rudman (1986) concluded that Blacks were more emotionally involved when their favorite team or athlete won, feeling a greater sense of personal victory. When their favorite team or athlete lost, they felt a greater sense of personal defeat. Also revealed was that Blacks were more likely to practice to improve their athletic skills and abilities. Lastly, the study revealed that Blacks were more likely to associate with their sport competitors beyond the actual competition. Although Blacks and Whites exhibited similar responses when socioeconomic factors such as age and education were controlled for, the study revealed that Blacks were still more likely than Whites to incorporate sport into their daily lives and were more strongly affected by the sport outcome of a favorite team or athlete (Rudman, 1986).
Spreitzer and Snyder (1990) also used the 1986 Miller Lite data and extended Rudman's (1986) study. They measured Black involvement with sport via a passive sport involvement index that included seven dimensions: watching sports on television, listening to sports on the radio, reading the sport pages of the newspaper, watching/listening to sport news on radio or television, reading sport books, reading sport magazines, and talking about sports with friends. Blacks scored higher on their sport index than Whites did. A cross-tab of race and gender revealed that Black men scored higher than White men (60 percent and 40 percent, respectively), and Black women scored higher than White women (27 percent and 14 percent, respectively). In addition, Blacks were more apt to encourage their kids to participate in sports and emphasize the positive character building qualities of sport. When the socio-demographic factors such as race, income, age, education, and city size were controlled for, race was the only factor that showed a consistent relation to sport involvement. Spreitzer and Snyder (1990) attributed the main effect of race on sport involvement to the idea of sport being a distinctive part of the African-American culture. They contended that cultures and ethnic groups have expressive spheres and nuances, and sport appeared to be an expressive sphere for the Black culture. Also, Townsend (1984) revealed from this same data set that Blacks fall into the most enthusiastic fan category.
A review of the available literature on Blacks' sport involvement suggests that sport appears to be salient in the lives of Black consumers. Even though the previous studies suggest that race was a critical variable in determining sport involvement, still "race is a factor to which many sport organizations are especially sensitive... the sport marketer should give particular attention to the needs of all groups and race may well be a factor that has not been effectively examined" (Stotlar, 1993, p. 52).

**Ethnic Identification**

This study examined Black consumers from a psycho-social perspective by examining the impact ethnicity has on the cognitive and psychological processes they engage in when exposed to a persuasive communication. Ethnicity refers to a shared cultural heritage (Macionis, 1993). It pertains to membership or identity with a racial, cultural, or national group and observance of that group's values, ancestry, customs, traditions, and language (Hetch, Collier, & Ribeau, 1993; Macionis, 1993). The subjective component of ethnicity (the ascriptions people attach to themselves in relation to their ethnic affiliation) as well as the objective perspective of ethnicity (membership
based on socio-cultural groupings) should be included when trying to understand how
ethnicity affects certain individuals (Desphande, Hoyer & Donthu, 1986; Stayman &
Desphande, 1989).

Typically members of ethnic groups retain practices that were born out of their
ancestral traditions. For American Blacks, this may or may not be the case. The forcible
export of Africans from their native land had a profound impact on the way
African-Americans created cultures and a way of living in a cruel, racist, discriminating
country (Hecht et al., 1993). "Ethnicity and culture become the frames through which we
view African-American communication to understand their experience of social reality and
articulate their perspectives on appropriate and effective communication" (Hetch et al.,
1993, p. 15). "A major issue for many middle and upper class Blacks is the struggle
between assimilation and Afrocentrism" (Rossman, 1994, p. 141). Black consumers may
choose to assimilate and adopt the values and behaviors of the dominant group in society,
or they may retain elements of their African heritage, thus refusing to be assimilated into
the mainstream (Rossman, 1994; Williams & Qualls, 1989). According to Donthu and
Cherian (1992), when ethnic identification is weak, the group's behavior will not differ
from the dominant culture, and when ethnic identification is strong, the group's behavior
will differ from the dominant culture. According to these researchers, measurable differences in ethnicity should also lead to measurable differences in marketing-related behaviors.

Blacks are multicultural beings, as they have the ability to exhibit behavior and attitudes that are referent to two or more cultures. Black consumers who are reportedly high in their ethnic identification may exhibit behaviors that are representative of the Black culture in some situations while exhibiting behavior that representative of the White or mainstream culture in other situations (Williams & Qualls, 1989). The Black consumer market is a heterogeneous one, and yet (according to Williams & Qualls, 1989) models to capture the diversity among Black consumers have received little attention.

Because ethnic identity imparts on an individual's thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors, it also influences the way the individual responds to a communication and processes the information contained therein. Consequently, it would seem logical to expect a person who is highly identified with their ethnic group to respond favorably to cues in a communication featuring a source or message that is relevant to their ethnic group. On the other hand, a person who is not highly identified with their ethnic group may not respond as favorably to cues in a communication featuring a source or message that is relevant to their ethnic group because of the weak identification with them. Therefore, the
intensity of ethnic identification is one variable that may moderate Blacks' response to persuasive communications in general, and to those that are culturally or ethnically relevant in particular. It is a variable that may allow for the intragroup differences and other variations that may exist among Black consumers to be manifested. Furthermore, and as it relates to the core of this study, knowledge of the impact of ethnic identification and other elements that are salient to an ethnic group is necessary when considering appropriate and effective communication targeted to members of that ethnic group (Hetch et al., 1993).

Summary of Introduction

Marketers have recognized the inherent challenges in marketing to target audiences due to the obvious communication gaps that are created by language differences. The challenges of communicating with African-Americans, however, have not been realized because there is not an obvious language barrier. Consequently, marketers continue to strive to identify the most appropriate means of communicating with Black consumers.

Language alone is not the only challenge presented by cross-cultural communication. The cultural and ethnic overtones of a communication may also impact its persuasibility.
While the overall marketing mix may be standardized to reach all consumers, the promotional mix should be tailored to specific markets (Rossman, 1994). To be most effective, the content and presentation (symbols used and values portrayed) should reflect the actual or aspirational culture of the target market (Pitts et al., 1989).

Culture and communication are codependents. Individuals interpret their worlds through their cultural lenses. "Communication is meaningful because of the culture that frames it and culture must be expressed to exist" (Hetch et al., 1993, p. 1). Furthermore, "the significance of goods lies in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning" (Mowen, 1995, p. 703). Messages perceived and meanings derived are moderated by pre-existing cultural norms, values, and beliefs. Consequently, persuasive communications (such as advertising and promotional messages) may be seen as a conduit of cultural transmission and should therefore be reflective of the cultural group being targeted (Williams & Qualls, 1989). Research suggests that the effectiveness of a persuasive communication's appeal may vary from audience to audience (Pitts et al., 1989). Given the increased cultural diversity America is undergoing, (Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1994) marketers, including sport marketers, should increase their awareness of the
impact sociological variables such as race, culture, and ethnicity have on the effectiveness
of communicating with consumers of different ethnic backgrounds, and the resulting
implications for successful marketing strategies and practices.

Theoretical Framework

One conceptualization that may allow sport marketers to evaluate the effectiveness of
their persuasive communications in persuading Black consumers is the Elaboration
Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b). The ELM provides a
general theory of persuasion and communication-induced attitude change. It combines
vital aspects of previous theories on the attitude-persuasion link into one framework. The
ELM outlines two routes that consumers use in processing information en route to an
attitude change: (1) the central route and (2) the peripheral route. When an individual
engages in cogent processing, carefully thinking about, considering and scrutinizing the
true merits of the information presented, he or she is involved in the central route of
information processing. The content and quality of the persuasive message is critical to
this route of processing. If the processing that occurs via this route results in favorable
thoughts, persuasion is likely to occur. If unfavorable thoughts are the products of this
route of information processing, then persuasion is not likely occur.
In contrast, the peripheral route is one in which simple and contextual cues (such as music or an attractive source) induce attitude change without the individual scrutinizing the central merits of the issue-relevant information presented. The attitudes resulting from this route are determined mostly by positive or negative cues in the persuasion context that either become directly associated with the message position or permit a simple inference as to the validity of the message. If the cues have a positive and favorable effect on the individual, persuasion is likely to occur. If the cues do not have a positive or favorable effect on the individual, on the other hand, persuasion is not likely to occur.

One element that is critical to understanding the ELM is elaboration (hence, the name Elaboration Likelihood Model). As mentioned previously, elaboration refers to the degree in which an individual thinks about issue-relevant arguments contained in a message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Elaboration likelihood is posited to be high when individuals are motivated to engage in issue-relevant thinking; and is low when there is little motivation to engage in issue relevant thinking. This model further contends that when the likelihood of an individual to elaborate on issue-relevant information is high, there is a greater chance that the person will follow the central route to persuasion. On the other hand, when the elaboration likelihood is low, the person is more apt to follow
the peripheral route to persuasion. In essence, the elaboration likelihood largely moderates the route of attitude formation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b).

While individuals may (and often do) engage in both the central and peripheral routes to information processing, the ELM argues that under certain situations the probability of a particular route being induced is increased. According to the ELM, when an issue is relevant to the individual or the individual is highly involved in the issue, he or she is more apt to focus on the quality of the arguments they are presented rather than the peripheral cues in the context. In this instance, the central route to persuasion is likely to be followed. Contrary to this, if the issue at hand is irrelevant to the individual, or the individual has very little involvement with the issue, he or she is more apt to focus on the peripheral cues in the context rather than the quality of the arguments. In this instance the peripheral route is likely to be activated.

Before examining the routes to information processing, it must be noted that the effectiveness of a persuasive communication is dependent upon the individual's motivation and ability to process the information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b; Petty et al., 1983). When motivation and ability to scrutinize issue-relevant arguments are relatively high, the central route is engaged in. On the other hand, when the motivation and/or ability are relatively low the peripheral route occurs.
The ELM recognizes that attitudes are not determined exclusively by either issue-relevant argumentation or simple cue association (Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981). The ELM posits message elaboration along a continuum, yet it does distinguish between persuasion that occurs as a result of issue-relevant thinking from persuasion that results from a cue in the argument that induces an attitude change without argument scrutiny. The variables that impact motivation and ability to process information should, therefore, be identified to allow for a better understanding of which routes will be employed as information is processed (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b).

Of primary importance to marketers, are the consequences of each route. The ELM contends that attitudes formed or changed via the central route are more persistent, predictive of behavior, and resistant to change than are attitudes that are formed via the peripheral route (which are posited to be less persistent, resistant, and predictive of behavior) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b).

The ELM does not designate certain variables as centrally-routed and others as peripherally-routed, instead it recognizes the multiple roles of variables. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a, 1986b) have revealed that variables may serve as a persuasive argument, a peripheral cue, or affect the extent and direction of information processing. One example of the dynamic role a variable may take was cited in Petty and Cacioppo's
(1986b) examination of the impact the number of arguments on elaboration. In their study, when personal relevance of a message was low, increasing the number of arguments in the message enhanced the persuasion of the argument regardless of the validity of the arguments; more arguments were automatically perceived as better. For subjects with high relevance, an increase in the number of arguments enhanced persuasion only when the arguments were compelling; increasing the number of weak arguments reduced persuasion. This study revealed the multiple roles the variable, number of arguments had on persuasion.

The tenets of the ELM, suggest that persuasive communications should be designed to encourage a high degree of elaboration and a central route of processing by the individuals exposed to it to achieve more persistent attitude-behavior linkages. Also, because attitudes may be changed via the peripheral route as well, it is important that the peripheral route is not ignored and the cues in a persuasive context that induce it are also examined. To be effective in communicating with Black audiences, it seems that marketers should increase their awareness of the issues that are relevant and salient to Blacks that will motivate them to engage in elaborate cognitive processing of the information presented, as well as respond positively to the contextual cues. Ethnic
identification was the main variable hypothesized to influence the participants' attitudes and reactions to elements and cues in the persuasive context, as well as the route to information processing they employed.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the most effective means of communicating with African-Americans, specifically using the ELM. This study examined the degree to which the race of the source of a persuasive message and the cultural relevance of the message influence information processing by African-Americans. In this study, the moderating effect of ethnic identification was examined.

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. to assist marketers in their quest to find the most appropriate means of reaching African-American consumers, specifically by examining the impact of the race of a source and the source's interaction with the quality and content of a message.

2. to disclose the variations that may exist among African-Americans in their motivations to process information.
Problem Statement

What variables motivate African-Americans to process persuasive communications?

How does ethnic identification moderate the route to information processing employed.

Research Questions

(1) Will African-Americans respond more favorably to a persuasive communication that features an African-American rather than White source? (Experiment One - Test for Race of Source Effect)

(2) How will the race of the source influence African-Americans' responses to persuasive communications that contain strong or weak arguments? (Experiment Two - Test for the effect of a Source x Argument Quality interaction)

(3) How will the race of the source influence African-Americans' responses to persuasive communications that contain content relevant to African-American culture?

(Experiment Three - Test for the effect of a Race of Source x Message Content interaction)

(4) How will the degree of ethnic identification impact African-Americans' responses to persuasive communications that vary the race of the source, the argument quality, and message content?
Hypotheses

Experiment One

Experiment One manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the presentation of the source's position on the topic (position either presented as in favor of the topic or it was not given at all). The following hypotheses were addressed in Experiment One.

(1) Blacks will have more favorable attitudes after exposure to a communication that features a Black rather than White source.

(2) There will be a positive association between ethnic identification and the participants' attitude toward the topic of persuasion.

Experiment Two

Experiment Two manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the quality of the arguments (strong or weak) that were contained in the message. Ethnic identification was used as a covariate in this experiment because it was thought that it might influence the way strong or weak messages were perceived by Black or White sources. The hypotheses addressed in this experiment included:
(3) The race of the source and the quality of the arguments should influence Blacks' attitudes such that:

(a) no differences will be found in attitudes resulting from exposure to a Black or White source when a strong message is being presented.

(b) attitudes resulting from exposure to a weak message will be more favorable when it is presented by a Black rather than White source.

(4) The effects of the race of the source and the argument quality should influence Blacks' rating of the quality of the message such that:

(a) no differences will be found in the rating of the quality of a strong message presented by a Black or White source.

(b) the rating of the quality of a weak message will be more favorable when the message is presented by a Black rather than White source.

(5) The race of the source and the quality of the message will influence the number of arguments Blacks correctly recall from messages such that:

(a) no differences will be found in the number of arguments correctly recalled from a strong message delivered by a Black or White source.

(b) the number of arguments correctly recalled from a weak message will be higher when the message is delivered by a Black rather than White source.
(6) The effects of the race of the source and the quality of the arguments should influence message processing by Blacks such that:

(a) no differences will be found in the total number of thoughts resulting from exposure to a strong message delivered by a Black or White source.

(b) the total number of thoughts resulting from exposure to a weak message will be higher when the message is delivered by a Black rather than White source.

(c) no differences will be found in the number of positive and negative thoughts that result from exposure to a strong message delivered by a Black or White source.

(d) the number of positive thoughts will be greater than the number of negative thoughts that result from a weak message when the message is delivered by a Black rather than White source.

(7) There will be a positive association between ethnic identification and

(a) the participants' attitude toward the topic of persuasion.

(b) the degree to which participants process the message.

**Experiment Three**

Experiment three manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the content of the message (arguments culturally targeted to African-Americans or non-culturally
targeted). The hypotheses addressed in this experiment included the following:

(8) The race of the source and the content of the message should influence the attitudes of Blacks such that:

(a) attitudes resulting from exposure to a Black source will be more favorable than those resulting from exposure to a White source under conditions of low cultural relevance.

(b) no differences will occur in the attitudes resulting from exposure to a Black or White source under conditions of high cultural relevance.

(9) The effects of the race of the source and the content of the message will influence Black participants' rating of the quality of the reports such that:

(a) the quality of the rating will be higher for a message when delivered by a Black rather than White source under conditions of low cultural relevance.

(b) no differences will occur in the rating of the quality of the message delivered by the Black or White source under conditions of high cultural relevance.

(10) The race of the source and the content of the message should influence the number of arguments Black participants correctly recall from a message such that:
(a) a greater number of arguments will be correctly recalled from a message delivered
by a Black source rather than by a White source under conditions of low cultural
relevance.

(b) no differences will be found in the number of arguments correctly recalled
from a message delivered by a Black or White source under conditions of high
cultural-relevance.

(11) The effects of the race of the source and content of the arguments should influence
Blacks' message processing such that:

(a) the total number of thoughts resulting from exposure to a message by a Black
source will be greater than those resulting from a White source under conditions
of low cultural relevance.

(b) no differences will be found in the total number of thoughts resulting from
exposure to a message delivered by a Black or White source under conditions of
low cultural relevance.

(c) the number of positive thoughts will be greater than the number of negative
thoughts that result from exposure to a weak message delivered by a Black rather
than White source under conditions of low cultural-relevance.
(d) no differences will be found in the number of positive and negative thoughts
resulting in exposure to a strong message delivered by a Black or White source
under conditions of high cultural relevance.

(12) There will be a positive association between ethnic identification and:

(a) the participants' attitude toward the topic of persuasion.

(b) the degree to which participants process the message they are presented.

Operational Definitions:

The following definitions were utilized in the context of this study:

1. **Race** - A group distinguished by genetically transmitted physical characteristics; a
group that is united by a common history, culture, or tradition (American Heritage
Dictionary, 2nd college edition, 1983). Race is posited to be a biological attribute.

2. **Ethnicity** - Traditions, peoplehood, heritage, orientation to the past, religion,
language, ancestry, values, economics, and aesthetics (Hetch et al., 1993).

Membership or identity with a racial, cultural, or national group and observance of
that group's values, customs, traditions, and language. Ethnic groups may be formed
around race, physical characteristics, gender, religion, and geographic locations (Macionis, 1993; Hetch et al., 1993). Ethnicity is posited to be a sociological concept.

3. **Culture** - The complex set of values, beliefs, customs, and meaningful symbols that help people make meaning of their worlds and the things they encounter (Boone & Kurtz, 1992). It is the sum of beliefs, ideals, and traditions that distinguish one group from another and refers to social organization (Hetch et al., 1993) and it encompasses race and ethnicity.

4. **Identity** - orienting self toward a particular ethnocultural framework (Hetch et al., 1993).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The focus of this study was on the effects of the race of the source and the quality and content of arguments used in a persuasive communication on an individual's attitude and motivation to process information. In laying a foundation for this present study, this literature review will present related research on various elements that have influenced persuasion (namely source characteristics and the physical, psychological, and social influences of race and ethnicity). The review of literature will present related studies from a heuristic point of view as well as those that have been examined under the auspices of the Elaboration Likelihood Model because of the core elements that are shared by both conceptual frameworks. While only the findings of some studies will be discussed, other studies will be presented in greater detail because of the implications they have on the purpose and methodology for this present investigation.
Research on Source and Other Peripheral Cues

To begin the conceptual understanding of how cues may influence the persuasibility of a message, a look at Kelman's (1961) identification model of opinion change may be helpful. According to him, attitude change may occur within individual members of a target audience through several processes: internalization (an individual's acceptance of the message advocated by the source because it is congruent with the individual's value system); identification (the adoption of the opinions of the source because of an identification with the source due to physical attractiveness, demographic similarity, or shared similarity of values held); and compliance (a process in which the message source rewards or punishes the audience if opinion is changed to comply with the position advocated by the source). According to Wilson and Sherrell (1993) most of the effects that sources have in a persuasive context may be classified under Kelman's (1961) internalization and identification dimensions.

What Kelman (1961) labels as internalization, the ELM posits as persuasion via the central route. What Kelman (1961) terms compliance and identification, the ELM considers elements indicative of the peripheral route to persuasion. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) assert that the most notable difference in the ELM and Kelman's (1961) model is that Kelman (1961) ties persuasion to the nature of the source. According to Petty and
Cacioppo (1986a) in Kelman's model, expert sources would be expected to produce internalization, attractive sources would be expected to produce identification, and powerful sources would be expected to produce compliance. In the ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b) however, the most critical determinant is not the source. Instead, it is the individual's motivation and ability to process issue-relevant arguments.

Even though this present study was premised on the ELM, Kelman's (1961) contention is beneficial in that it allows for an understanding of how attitudes may be changed. Furthermore, because elements such as identification, internalization, and compliance are applicable to the examination of source effects in the ELM, information related to such is presented throughout the review of literature.

An individual's motivation to process a persuasive communication may be brought on by cues that are immediately noticeable and/or meaningful to the individual such that they focus their attention on those elements (Moscovici, 1980). Various studies revealed that peripheral cues serve as stimuli that will trigger an affective state that becomes associated with an attitude object without actual processing of the argument or the issue-relevant content taking place (Chaiken, 1980; Mackie, 1987; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b; Petty et al., 1983). The simple peripheral cues in the persuasion may serve to affect attitudes and influence the willingness of an individual to accept a message. Instead of
being a result of issue-relevant processing, attitude change occurs because of the 
inferences an individual makes about an argument based on various simple cues in the 
persuasion context. Given the varied nature of cues in a persuasive communication, it 
seems necessary to know which ones the individuals direct their attention to (and place 
emphasis on).

Moscovici (1980), via the Conversion Theory, contended that the focus of attention in 
a persuasive context may vary depending on whether the source is a member of the 
majority or minority. He suggests that if the recipient is presented with a message from a 
minority source with whom he/she disagrees, the recipient will be prompted to focus 
his/her attention on the validity of the behavior endorsed or the position advocated (thus 
systematically evaluating the content of the message through what the ELM would refer 
to as the central route of persuasion). On the other hand (according to Moscovici, 1980), 
if the recipient is presented a message delivered by a majority source with whom he/she 
disagrees, the recipient will be prompted focus his/her attention on source-recipient 
relations to the extent that the recipient compares him/herself to the source and complies 
with the position of the majority without further focusing on the issue (thus engaging in an
activity that is similar to what the ELM would deem the peripheral route to persuasion).

Hence, the focus of attention is moderated by whether the source in a member of the
majority or minority group.

The majority/minority influence on persuasion has been examined by several
researchers (Latane & Wolfe, 1981; Maass & Clark, III, 1984; Mackie, 1987; Nemeth,
1986). It must be noted that in previous research the majority group was defined as one
that contained the greatest number of participants sharing a particular view on an issue. In
a vein different from previous research, participants in this current study may infer and
apply majority and minority status to the sources based on the social categorization of
racial groups in America (Black sources being in the minority, White sources being in the
majority). Ramirez (1977) examined the influence a majority (White) communicator had
on minorities (Chicanos) from a social power perspective that resulted in compliant
behavior (as suggested by Kelman, 1961). In Ramirez's (1977) study, 116 Chicano adults
were given a brief persuasive communication concerning dental hygiene by either a
Chicano or Anglo source. The sources made the same presentation (with either positive
or negative appeals). Results indicated that the participants reacted similarly to the
appeals in the presentation and responded favorably to each communicator. Differences
were found in behavioral measures of compliance, which were disguised by having the
communicator to ask the participants to mail in a questionnaire of attitudes towards
dentists. As an incentive, the participants were told that some disclosing tablets would be
sent to them when their questionnaires were received. Even though the communicators
(sources) received similar scores on the paper and pen measures (as mentioned
previously), the participants complied significantly more to the request of the Anglo
communicator. Both the older and younger Chicano participants were less influenced by
the Chicano communicators.

Ramirez (1977) attributed these results to America's socialization process, and the
degree to which it has sent messages that one's social power and influence is dependent
upon the ethnic group to which an individual belongs. This concept of social power, may
also be applicable to Blacks' exposure to White sources, if the Blacks perceived the White
source as a message from the majority group member, thus being influenced by the
perceived social power the source has. Consequently, the Black individual may accept
and comply with the message the White source is advocating. Furthermore, this may also
suggest (as attested to by Ramirez, 1977) that social characteristics of a source (such as
his or her race, ethnicity, gender, or social status), may serve as peripheral cues that will
activate the peripheral route to information processing en route to attitude change.
In situations where the source cannot be manipulated into groups comprising the majority or minority, or where social power may not be inferred, various other source characteristics have been found to influence the persuasibility of a communication. Wilson and Sherrell (1993) did a quantitative review of studies pertaining to source effects on persuasion to determine the strength and consistency of source manipulations. Their study revealed that source manipulations accounted for an average of nine percent of explained variance among the studies that reported significant findings. They also reported that enhanced credibility had led to greater attitude change, as expert sources had a greater positive effect on attitude change than non-expert sources, and trustworthy sources had a greater positive effect on attitude change than non-trustworthy sources. Petty et al., (1981) revealed that under low involvement situations expert sources were more influential than non-expert sources as the subjects in the study: (a) rated the expert speakers as more qualified and (b) generated more favorable attitudes for the expert than non-expert sources. Famous (celebrity) sources have also been found to be more persuasive than non-famous (non-celebrity) sources under low-relevance conditions (Petty et al., 1983). According to Chaiken (1979), sources that were attractive were more persuasive than unattractive sources. Chaiken (1980) examined the effect of the likability of sources on persuasion and revealed that likable sources elicited more positive than
negative thoughts, while unlikable sources elicited more negative thoughts. Likable sources were also viewed as more attractive, expert, trustworthy, sincere, and unbiased. The effects of source likability, however, were moderated by the level of response and issue involvement. According to Chaiken (1980) subjects with a high degree of personal relevance to a message topic showed slightly greater opinion change when receiving five arguments from an unlikable source than when receiving one argument from a likable source. Subjects with a low degree of personal relevance to a message topic displayed significantly greater opinion change when they received one argument from a likable source (as opposed to five arguments from an unlikable source). Hence the effects of source likability were more pronounced under low-involvement situations.

Further evidence of the effects of source characteristics were provided by Chaiken and Maheswaran (1994). They revealed that heuristic processing of the credibility of the source was a sole determinant of subjects' attitudes, regardless of the strength and ambiguity of the arguments under subjects' low-task importance situations. When the task importance for subjects was high, on the other hand, systematic processing determined attitudes when the unambiguous content of the message contradicted the validity of the credibility of the source. Heuristic and systematic processing influenced attitudes.
independently in situations where: (a) the message content did not contradict the
credibility of the source, and (b) the task importance was high and the message content
was ambiguous.

In an examination of the effect of the modality in which the communication is
transmitted Chaiken and Eagley (1983) revealed that a likable communicator was more
persuasive in videotaped and audio taped conditions. An unlikable communicator,
however, was more persuasive in written conditions. Also, a greater salience of the
communicator cues in videotaped and audio taped modalities induced a heuristic form of
information processing, while a greater salience of the message content in written
modalities induced a more systematic form of information processing.

Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) concluded that people generally rely on simple cues in the
persuasion context such as expertise and attractiveness of the message source when they
are not motivated or able to process the message, or when the issue/message is one in
which they are not highly involved in. They contend that regardless of the message
quality, positive sources will tend to enhance persuasion and negative sources will tend to
reduce persuasion. Under situations where people are motivated and able to process
messages, or when the issue is one in which the person is highly involved, source effects
may instead, serve as a persuasive argument (as opposed to a peripheral cue as mentioned
previously). In this situation individuals may consider the source of the message to assist them in evaluating the issue-relevant information presented. For example, a physically attractive source may offer visual testimony as to the effectiveness of a beauty product, thereby serving as a part of the persuasive argument.

These studies (Petty, Cacioppo & Golden, 1981; Petty, Cacioppo & Schuman, 1983; Chaiken, 1979; Chaiken, 1980; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994) presented evidence that characteristics of the source (although they may interact with other variables such as level of involvement and the medium in which they are presented) may directly affect recipients' tendencies to accept or reject a message's overall conclusion without necessarily influencing their processing of persuasive arguments or issue-relevant information. The greater the number of positive peripheral cues associated with the message, the more apt the individual is to be persuaded in favor of the message (Chaiken, 1980).

Related Research on Race and Ethnicity as Source Effects

As stated earlier, previous research suggests that physical and surface features of a source (such as attractiveness, credibility, popularity, and likability) influence the persuasibility of a communication. Another obvious physical characteristic of a source is the color of their skin, i.e., their race. The race of a source in a communication is very
noticeable, and may have a systematic effect on the persuasiveness of the communication in a positive or negative manner (White & Harkins, 1994; Whittler, 1989). Dembroski, Lasater, and Ramirez (1972) provided evidence of the impact the race of a communicator had on the persuasibility of a message. According to their study of Black junior high students, in comparison to a White communicator, a Black communicator: (a) produced significantly more immediate behavior change, (b) produced significantly more information retention for the affective part of the communication, and (c) generated rather positive evaluations.

White and Harkins (1994) conducted a thorough examination of the effects of the race of a source in the framework of the ELM. They conducted several experiments to examine how the race of the source influenced the elaboration likelihood of individuals exposed to persuasive communications. Because of the shared intent and methodological procedures of White and Harkins (1994) and this present study, a lengthy review of this study will be presented.

In Experiment One, White and Harkins (1994) tested for a cue effect of race by exposing the subjects to either a Black or White source with only their position on the topic known or unknown (as only their race was given). Participants (78 White male and female students) were randomly assigned to one of five conditions in a 2 (Black or White
source) x 2 (position told or not told) design with an attitude-only control group. The

topic under consideration was whether or not students should be required to pass a

comprehensive exam prior to graduation.

Regarding the attitude measure, participants reacted to the Black and White sources

similarly, whether the sources' position was given or not. Neither source led to more or

less persuasion than the attitude only control group. Regarding the thought positivity

index (the number of positive thoughts minus the number of negative thoughts), there

were no significant differences among and between groups. The same pattern of thoughts

was produced by participants regardless of the race of the source and whether or not their

position was known. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986b) if a variable functions as

a simple cue, the effect of that variable on attitude should be observable in the absence of

a persuasive message. Given the results of White and Harkins (1994) experiment one,

race of source did not appear to act as a peripheral cue.

In a second experiment White and Harkins (1994) examined the effect of the race of the

source by manipulating topic relevance and argument strength. Participants who were

lead to believe that the exams they were reading about would be implemented at their

university were considered the high-involvement group. Those who were told that the

exams were not under consideration for implementation at their university were
considered the low-involvement group. These conditions manipulated the topic relevance.

The participants were then told that they would read a report of some background information on the topic, written by another student (who was either Black or White).

To manipulate the argument strength, the reports the participants read contained either four strong or four weak arguments. The participants (160 White male and female students) were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions in a 2 (Black or White source) x 2 (strong or weak argument) x 2 (high or low involvement) between subjects design.

Guided by the expectations of the ELM, the quality of the message should be critical in changing the attitude of the highly-involved participants (supposing they have the ability to process the message). The reverse was expected for those in the low-involvement group, where there should not be differences due to the quality of the argument. Results indicated that participants were more persuaded by the White rather than Black source presenting the same message. Hence, a main effect for race was found. Also, participants were generally more persuaded by strong than weak arguments (confirming a main effect for argument quality). Additionally, the participants who were exposed to strong arguments indicated that the report was more effective, and that the source was more knowledgeable than those exposed to the weak argument. The argument quality effect,
however, was interpreted in terms of an Argument Quality x Involvement interaction: those in the high involvement group were more persuaded by strong arguments than by weak arguments, but under low involvement there were no differences between strong and weak arguments.

Regarding the amount of processing participants engaged in, more positive thoughts were produced after exposure to strong rather than weak arguments. A significant argument quality x involvement x race interaction was found. For the White source, only an involvement x argument quality interaction was found. Participants in the high involvement condition who were exposed to strong arguments generated a higher thought positivity index than those who were exposed to weak arguments. There were no differences in the arguments among the participants in the low involvement group. For the Black source, however, only a main effect for argument quality was found as participants who were exposed to the Black source generated a higher positivity index for the strong arguments than for the weak ones (regardless of the level of involvement/topic relevance).

The results of this experiment indicated that participants may have different reactions to a source based on the race of the source. While the reaction to the White source was influenced by the level of involvement and its impact on argument quality (i.e., the
involvement manipulation dictated whether argument quality affected persuasion), for the
Black source, the level of involvement was not a critical factor, as the participants
exposed to the Black source appeared to be motivated to process the message even under
low involvement. These findings (unlike those in Experiment One) suggested that race of
source may be a motivator in the ELM.

In Experiment Three, White and Harkins tested to see if the results from Experiment
Two were actually due to message processing by including an effect of distraction to
disrupt the participants' ability to elaborate the argument presented in the message (thus
eliminating the argument quality effect). In this study, participants read a report
containing strong and weak arguments while listening to "clicks" recorded on a tape
recorder through headphones. The participants were expected to keep a mental record of
the number of clicks (which were randomly placed over a span of three minutes and
thirteen seconds) they heard. The cassette tapes they listened to consisted of either high
distraction (65 clicks) or low distraction (13 clicks). The participants (120 White male
and female students) were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions in a 2 (Black or
White source) x 2 (high or low distraction) x 2 (strong or weak argument) between
subjects design.
Results indicated that participants who were exposed to strong arguments were more persuaded than those who were exposed to weak arguments (a main effect for argument quality). The authors interpreted this main effect for argument quality in terms of a significant Race x Argument Quality interaction: participants who read a message from a Black source were more persuaded by strong arguments than those who were exposed to a Black source with weak arguments. In contrast, participants who were exposed to messages from the White source were not affected by the quality of the arguments, as they were persuaded equally by strong and weak arguments.

Regarding the distraction, participants who read a message attributed to the Black source were more persuaded under high distraction than those who were exposed to a Black source under low distraction. Those exposed to a message attributed to a White source, on the other hand, were less persuaded under high distraction than those under low distraction. These results yielded a significant Race x Distraction interaction.

Results on the amount of thought processing revealed that participants exposed to strong arguments generated a higher positivity index than those exposed to weak arguments. The findings were interpreted in terms of a significant Race x Argument Quality interaction: participants who read a message consisting of strong arguments attributed to the Black source generated a higher positivity index than did participants
exposed to weak arguments. However, participants who read a message consisting of strong arguments attributed to the White source did not differ in the positivity of their thoughts from those exposed to weak arguments attributed to the White source.

For argument recall, participants who read a message attributed to the White source recalled more arguments in the low distraction condition than in the high distraction condition. In contrast, the level of distraction had no effect on the argument recall of those exposed to a message attributed to a Black source.

The ancillary measures revealed that participants who read reports attributed to a Black source indicated that the report was more effective, and that the Black source was more knowledgeable than those who read reports attributed to the White source. Race appeared to influence the participants' perceptions of the message efficacy and the source's knowledge. Argument quality also influenced the participants' perceptions: participants exposed to strong arguments indicated that the report was more effective and that the source was more knowledgeable than did those who were exposed to weak arguments. Another effect of race was found in the participants' perception of how effortful the task was: participants who read the report attributed to the Black source indicated that the task was more effortful than did those who read the same report attributed to the White
source. Under high distraction, participants were reportedly more involved in reading the strong arguments than in reading the weak arguments attributed to a Black source.

This experiment (Experiment Three) replicated many of the findings produced in Experiment Two: (a) participants who read reports attributed to a Black source were more persuaded by the strong argument message than by the weak argument message; (b) those who read the reports attributed to the White source were not affected by the quality of the arguments; (c) participants exposed to a report attributed to a Black source generated a higher positivity index after reading the strong argument message than after reading the weak argument message attributed to the Black source; and (d) the strength of the arguments had no effect on the positivity index of participants who read a message attributed to a White source. The high distraction White and Harkins (1994) expected to disrupt message processing did not occur, however. Under high distraction, participants who read messages attributed to the Black source produced the same pattern of results as were found under low distraction for both attitude scores and thoughts. This suggested that processing apparently took place even under high distraction. In a pretest conducted by White and Harkins, the level of distraction used in their experiment was determined to be strong enough to disrupt any message processing under high involvement.
In response to the results yielded in Experiment Three, White and Harkins suggested that even though high distraction disrupted high involvement processing, it may not have been strong enough to disrupt the processing that stems from exposure to a Black source under low involvement. Also, the level of distraction did not remove the effect of argument quality for exposure to a Black source. As such, a fourth experiment was conducted. Supposing that their interpretation was correct, increasing the distraction should eliminate the effect of argument quality. On the other hand, if the argument quality effect was not the result of processing, then the increase in the magnitude of the distraction should have no effect.

Experiment Four contained the same procedures as were used in Experiment Three except that all participants were exposed to a tape that contained 91 clicks (a marked increase from the 65 high distraction clicks used in Experiment Three). Participants consisted of 60 White male and female students. The results revealed that when the distractor was intensified, there were no significant differences in the attitude and thought measures for participants who were exposed to a message attributed to a Black source whether the argument was strong or weak. The distraction, appeared to have removed the argument quality effect for exposure to a Black source.
To recap this very elaborate study, White and Harkins (1994) revealed that: (a) neither the Black or White source led to more or less persuasion than the attitude only control group (Experiment One); (b) participants who read a report attributed to a Black source may have processed the message even under low involvement (Experiment Two); (c) a distractor disrupted high involvement processing but did not eliminate the argument quality effect that resulted from participants' exposure to a message attributed to a Black source (Experiment Three); and (d) increasing the distractor resulted in equivalent attitude and thought measures for participants exposed to a message attributed to a Black source (Experiment Four). This series of experiments suggest that White participants are motivated to process messages presented by Black sources even when their motivation to do so should be relatively low. White and Harkins (1994) hypothesized two variables that may have influenced this finding: (a) Whites have ambivalent attitudes towards Blacks, and want to be fair and just so they pay attention to messages presented by Black sources, giving the appearance that they are not racist, (b) having a Black person as the source of the message in favor of implementing a comprehensive exam disconfirms the expectancies of Whites, and because of the unexpectancy they are motivated to process the information presented by the Black source.
To further examine White participants' motivation to process messages by Black sources under low involvement conditions, White and Harkins (1994) conducted a fifth experiment. In Experiment Five they manipulated the ethnicity of the source to test the effects of: (a) attitudes towards the source, (b) violations of expectancies concerning the source's ethnicity, (c) violation of expectancies concerning the position taken by the source, and (d) the combination of ethnicity and position.

Pretests were conducted to ascertain participants' expectancies of who (what ethnic group members) would give reports on several topics. On the topic of senior exams participants most expected to see a White student followed by an Asian or Black student, then by a Hispanic or Native American student. Participants expected only the Asian students to be in favor of implementing the exams. In a pretest to determine attitudes toward different ethnic groups, Whites were viewed most positively, followed by the Asian and Native American groups, then the Black and Hispanic groups. The participants (155 White male and female students) were randomly assigned to one of ten conditions in a 2 (strong or weak argument) x 5 (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, or White source) between subjects design. The procedure for this experiment was the same as for
Experiment Two except all participants were under low involvement and the races listed also included Asian, Hispanic, and Native Americans (as opposed to just Black or White as was the case previously).

The results for participants who were exposed to messages attributed to the Black and White sources replicated the ones reported in Experiments One and Two: (a) participants who read a message attributed to a Black source were more persuaded by strong than weak arguments (an effect of argument quality); (b) participants exposed to a message attributed to a Black source generated more positive thoughts for the strong as compared to the weak arguments; and (c) participants who were exposed to a message attributed to a White source was not affected by the quality of the arguments on the attitude measures of thought positivity index. Participants who were exposed to a message attributed to an Asian or Native American student demonstrated no significant difference for argument quality on the attitude measures or positivity index. These findings indicate that expectancy violation did not lead to low involvement processing. Participants exposed to a message attributed to a Hispanic source, however, were affected by the quality of the arguments: they were more persuaded by the strong arguments than by the weak ones. Also, participants exposed to the Hispanic source generated a higher positivity index for the strong arguments than for the weak arguments. These results indicated that the
participants who were exposed to the Hispanic source was processing the messages.

Overall, a main effect for argument quality was obtained: participants exposed to strong arguments were more persuaded and generated a higher positivity index than participants exposed to the weak arguments. Argument quality also impacted the participants' perceptions (as it had in Experiment Two): participants perceived the strong reports as more effective and their sources more knowledgeable than the weak reports.

In sum, expectancy violations did not lead to message processing. This would suggest that even if having a White source to deliver a culturally directed message to Blacks was somewhat of an expectancy violation among the Blacks exposed to it (as could be the case in this present study), this would not necessarily lead to message processing. The authors warned that the results of their study be taken with caution because, (in their study) there was not a direct manipulation of participants' expectancies (unlike in other studies that included a direct manipulation of expectancies and resulting in it having an impact on the outcomes). Instead, the authors attributed the results to the Theory of Aversive Racism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). According to this theory, Whites may have ambivalent attitudes (a combination of egalitarian values and underlying negative racial attitudes) towards Blacks that account for their processing of messages presented by
Blacks under low involvement because they do not want to appear to be racist or unfavorable to Blacks (even though pretest measures suggested that their attitude towards Blacks were somewhat unfavorable).

White and Harkins' (1994) study offered a comprehensive examination of the multiple roles race (as a variable) may perform in influencing an individual's elaboration likelihood. It replicated previous findings that suggested that Whites (even prejudiced ones) did not react adversely to Blacks as the sources of messages (Bush, Hair, & Solomon, 1979; Szybillo & Jacoby, 1974; Whittler, 1989). The authors noted, however, that if their sample included more dominative racists, maybe they would have reacted to Black sources as a simple negative cue. Also, if attitudes towards the sources were manipulated, this could also lead to some different conclusions.

White and Harkins' (1994) research is relevant to the present study inasmuch as it examined race as a variable in the ELM framework with variations of whether the source's position on the issue was presented to participants and the quality of the arguments used to convey a message. A major difference in the two is that the present investigation included all Black participants, and did not contain involvement and distraction manipulations. Still, comparisons may be made with White and Harkins (1994) in several ways. First, this study replicated White and Harkins Experiment One, test of the race of
the source as a peripheral cue. Second, this present study offered information on how
Black participants responded to Black and White sources in general, as well as those
presenting strong and weak arguments under low involvement conditions (which is the
opposite of what White and Harkins, 1994 study did by examining White participants'
responses to Black sources in general and those with strong and weak messages under low
involvement conditions). Third, this present investigation allowed for an examination of
how Blacks respond to Whites delivering a culturally targeted message, which may serve
somewhat of an expectancy disconfirmation as mentioned in White and Harkins' (1994)
fifth experiment.

**Psychological Influence of Race and Ethnicity**

While White and Harkins (1994) suggested that the level of prejudice a person may
have did not (necessarily) impact processing of information presented by a source who is
a member of the group they have prejudices about due to Gaertner and Dovidio's (1986)
theory of aversive racism, other research has suggested that an individual's attitude toward
a racial or ethnic group may indeed reflect in their responses to sources who are also
members of that race or ethnic group (Aronson & Golden, 1962; Whittler, 1989; Whittler
& DiMeo, 1991). Elrich (1973) contends that an individual learns his/her ethnic group's
attitudes, and those attitudes become a vital part of the individual's social heritage and his
or her means of interacting with and responding to others. Hence, even though race is a
biological characteristic, its ascription appears to have some psychological implications
that may impact information processing.

A study by Aronson and Golden (1972) revealed that the racial attitudes of subjects
did influence their reception of a communication. Prejudiced White subjects were less
influenced by a Black communicator than were those who were not prejudice. Ramirez
and Lasater (1977) revealed that evaluation of a minority communicator was dependent
upon the self-esteem of the audience. Subjects (consisting of 159 Whites and 45
Mexican-Americans) who had high self-esteem reacted more favorably to the minority
(Chicano) communicator. On the other hand, subjects with low self-esteem reacted more
favorably to the White communicator. Variables reported as confounding the interaction
between the ethnicity of the communicator and self-esteem of the audience were perceived
power and authority of the communicator. This study gave credence to the notion that
race and ethnicity are salient aspects of one's self-concept. It also embraced the
psychological nature of ethnicity as mentioned by McGuire, Child & Fujiota (1978).
Recognizing that race and ethnicity do have some psychological properties suggests, furthermore, that they could be factors that also influence how those psychological properties are employed as information is processed.

Whittler (1989) and Whittler and DiMeo (1991) examined the impact of racial attitudes on persuasibility. Unlike White and Harkins' (1994) study where the participants were all White, some of the the participants for Whittler (1989) were Black. Whittler (1989) examined the impact of the race of White and Black actors and viewers' racial attitudes on advertisement evaluation. Because Blacks were not used as much as Whites were in advertisements, he thought race could be a salient communicator characteristic. Racial attitudes (in Whittler, 1989) were captured in two dimensions: the level of prejudice Whites had for Blacks, and the level of identification Blacks had with their culture. Whittler (1989) used Chaiken's (1980) heuristic versus systematic model to interpret the results.

Whittler (1989) expected the viewers' racial attitudes to influence the means in which they processed information. According to them, viewers who were less concerned with racial issues (i.e., low-prejudice Whites or low-identification Blacks) were not expected to respond to the race of the source as a salient cue, they would instead, place emphasis on the content of the message they were presented (the type of processing the ELM would
consider as central). On the other hand, high-prejudice Whites and high-identification Blacks who were concerned with racial issues were expected to respond to the race of the source as a salient cue, thus placing emphasis on the source's race as a predominant characteristic (the type of processing the ELM would consider as peripheral). Based on the notion that the race of the source may be considered a characteristic that induces recipients to infer similarity or dissimilarity it was appropriate for Whittler (1989) to employ a heuristic approach. He noted that racially conscious viewers may utilize a "dissimilar-disagree" (Whittler, 1989, p. 290) heuristic and conclude that because the source is not like the recipient, the recipient cannot agree with the behavior or position being advocated. Previous research has also suggested that individuals are more likely to be influenced by a persuasive message if they perceive it as coming from a similar rather than dissimilar source (Berscheid, 1966; Brock, 1965; Burnstein, Stotland, & Zander, 1961). McKirnan, Smith and Hamayan (1983) concluded that intergroup attitudes are a product of assumed cultural similarity.

In explaining how the effects of perceived similarity and racial group membership were manifested in terms of their motivational abilities, Whittler (1989) made reference to Kelman (1961). He suggested that, according to Kelman's (1961) model of identification, racially-concerned Blacks would probably not want to define themselves in relation to a
White source by accepting the position being advocated. Instead, they would exhibit a negative identification, leading them to not be in acceptance of the position. This scenario would be vice versa for a racially-concerned White person. In contrast, if racially-concerned Blacks wanted to feel good about themselves, they may enhance their self-image by identifying with Black sources (who are perceived in a favorable light) considering them as representatives of their own interests and needs. As a result, they agree with the position the source is advocating. This situation is reflective of what the ELM would posit as persuasion via the peripheral route since the position was accepted without scrutiny of the message. The individuals appeared to be motivated by racial similarity and group membership. On the other hand, if racial similarity or group membership was not inferred (thus, these peripheral characteristics were not salient), the individuals may be motivated to scrutinize the arguments in favor of the position and engage in the central route to persuasion.

Whittier (1989) hypothesized the following: (a) the race of a Black actor would induce the participants who were either high-prejudice Whites or high-identification Blacks to process more source characteristics (i.e., heuristic or peripheral processing) than for low-prejudice Whites or low-identification Blacks; (b) more processing of message claims (i.e., systematic or central processing) was expected to occur for low-prejudice Whites.
and low-identification Blacks than for high-prejudice Whites and high-identification Blacks; (c) White participants will evaluate both the advertisement and the product more favorably and will be more likely to purchase the product endorsed by the White actor; and (d) Black participants will evaluate both the advertisement and the product more favorably and will be more likely to purchase the product endorsed by the Black actor.

An interesting result of the manipulation check revealed that the White participants correctly identified the Black actor's race correctly more than the Black participants did (94 and 81 percent respectively). Regarding the degree to which perceived similarity served as a motivating variable, White participants perceived themselves as less similar to the Black actors than they did to White actors. A marginally significant Actor's Race x Product Category interaction was found as Whites perceived themselves as less similar to the Black than to the White actor promoting the more expensive product, while there were no differences in perceived similarity to Black or White actors promoting the inexpensive product. Low-identification Blacks perceived the actors as more similar to themselves than did the high-identification Blacks. While both low- and high-identification Blacks perceived themselves as more similar to Black than White
actors, the effect was larger for high-identification than for low-identification Blacks (hence, an interaction existed between the actor's race and the individual's identification with Black culture).

Regarding symbolic role identification, White participants marginally identified more strongly with White than Black actors, and with the actors promoting the more expensive product (portable word processor) than the less expensive product (liquid laundry detergent). High-prejudice Whites found it more difficult to identify with the Black actor than with the White actor. High-prejudice Whites also found it more difficult to identify with the Black actor than did low-prejudice Whites. The Actor's Race x Product Category interaction was significant for low-prejudice Whites but not for high-prejudice Whites. High-identification Blacks were able to identify more strongly with Black than White actors, while low-identification Blacks showed no differences in their ability to identify with a White or Black actor.

Regarding message processing, participants did not appear to engage in much processing of message characteristics. Therefore, the author concluded that the second hypothesis (which indicated that low-prejudice Whites and low-identification Blacks would engage in more message processing than high-prejudice Whites and high-identification Blacks) was not supported.
On the likelihood of purchase, the actors' race was significant for both Black and White participants. Participants who were exposed to advertisements with Black and White models reported a greater likelihood of purchase than they did those who were exposed to the control advertisements which did not contain models. Hence, the main effect for actor's race was significant for the Black and White participants. Additionally, Black participants reported greater likelihood of purchase when the advertisements contained Black rather than White actors.

In the examination of the participants' interest in obtaining additional information about the products, no significant effects were found for Black participants but a significant three way interaction of Actor's Race x Racial Prejudice x Product Category was significant for Whites. For the less expensive product, low-prejudice Whites showed greater interest in obtaining additional information given by the Black actor, whereas high-prejudice Whites showed greater interest in obtaining additional information for the product endorsed by the White actor.

The means in which the Black and White participants evaluated the messages were influenced by the actors' race. The advertisements with White and Black models also elicited more favorable evaluations than the control advertisements (hence, a significant main effect for actor's race existed for both Blacks and Whites).
Regarding the thoughts generated by participants, the actors' race was not significant. Neither was the White participants' racial orientation. Black participants, on the other hand, listed more favorable thoughts about the advertisement featuring the Black than the White actors. The interaction of the Black actor's race and the participants' identification to the Black culture, however, had little influence on advertisement and product evaluation.

In sum, Whittier's (1989) study showed that prejudiced Whites did not react adversely to Black actors in advertising messages. Instead, white participants reacted as favorably to Black as to White actors since they showed no difference in their responses to the actors on product and advertisement evaluations or likelihood of purchase measures. The only significant differences among Whites' reactions to the Black and White actors were found in the measure of their interest in obtaining more information about the less expensive product. Hence, Whittier's (1989) hypothesis that Whites would evaluate products more favorably and would be more likely to purchase the product if endorsed by a White actor was not generally supported.

The results of this study also showed that Blacks in general, reacted more favorably to advertisements featuring Black actors. Those who were highly-identified with Blacks perceived themselves as more similar to the Black than White actors and identified more
strongly with the Black than White actors. Furthermore, Black participants displayed a
greater likelihood of purchase from the companies that had Black actors promoting their
products.

Whittier (1989) concluded that racially-conscious viewers (those with firmly
established racial attitudes) appeared to use the decision rules such as perceived similarity
and symbolic role identification when viewing advertisements featuring Black actors. He
also concluded that racially conscious viewers were more likely to employ racially focused
heuristics in processing the messages and advertisements than viewers with less defined
racial attitudes.

As mentioned previously, Whittler's (1989) sample included Black and White college
students. Due to the cautions of the behavior of college students and the incongruencies
that exist when they are compared to the general adult populous in experimental settings,
Whittier and DiMeo (1991) basically replicated the protocol of Whittler's (1989) study
with a community sample of White adults. Because of the propensity of the adult
population to have more sociopolitical attitudes, they expected a more distinct pattern of
reactions to exist. Whereas in Whittler's (1989) study White participants reacted similarly
to advertisements containing a White or Black actor, the results of Whittier and DiMeo
(1991) suggested that regardless of their attitude towards Blacks, Whites were less likely
to purchase the products and has less favorable attitudes toward the products and
advertisements when the advertisements featured Black rather than White actors. Whittler
and DiMeo (1991) attributed the differences between these two conceptually similar
studies to the notion that White students had more interaction with Black students in the
classrooms and in social activities, while the White adults may have had limited
interactions with Blacks. Furthermore, Whittler and DiMeo (1991) suggested that the White
participants in their study may have been unaccustomed to seeing Blacks portrayed as
middle class and relatively affluent as they were depicted in the advertisements that they
were exposed to, thus leading them to rate the advertisements, products, and purchase
intentions as less favorable. The authors were fairly confident in obtaining accurate
responses from the participants because they carefully manipulated the experimental
treatment so that the participants would not be able to detect the true intent of the
investigation, and therefore, respond honestly.

Sociological Influences of Race and Ethnicity

In addition to the psychological influences a source of a particular race may have on an
individual, if the source is a member of the individual's (recipient's) group (i.e., same
occupation, age, gender, to name a few), in-group affiliation may also intervene to
judgmental confidence by demonstrating to the perceiver that his or her judgment is supported by others with different perspectives. Citing studies that revealed that beliefs can be more influenced by experts and values more influenced by peers, Goethals and Nelson (1973) asserted that the distinction between a value and a belief issue should be made due to the divergent social forces. The results of their study suggested that although similar others were more influential than dissimilar others, agreement with a dissimilar other provided more social support than a similar other.

The impact of shared category membership has not been examined in either the heuristic model or the ELM (although both models do allow for its insertion as a variable of influence). Mackie et al. (1990) investigated the persuasiveness of in-group messages and how they elicited different processing strategies. In their study, subjects read a message on the topic of standardized testing representing the views of students from their own university (in-group) or students from another university (out-group). Half of the subjects in each condition read a message composed of strong and valid arguments, while the other half read weak and specious arguments. On the premise that receiving a message from an in-group member initiated systematic processing, the authors were expecting to find that subjects would be persuaded by a strong message from the in-group source but not by a weak one. If source membership was used as a heuristic, they were
expecting both the strong and weak messages from the in-group to result in significant attitude change. These expectations were based on theoretical suggestions that receiving a persuasive appeal from another group member will result in reduced persuasion. They expected that messages from the other-group members would be less effective.

The subjects who were exposed to a message regarding the in-group position showed a significant change in attitude toward the advocated position. Subjects who were exposed to the other-group member's speech moved slightly, but not significantly in the direction opposite the one advocated in the message. Hence, a significant effect for source was found. Also, subjects who read the strong message moved significantly toward the advocated position, whereas the subjects who read the weak message did not. A significant main effect for message quality was revealed. In regards to a Source x Argument Quality interaction, in-group sources were effective with strong messages and ineffective with weak messages. The other-group sources were ineffective, regardless of message quality. Regarding the type of message, subjects who received a counter-attitudinal message moved toward the position advocated in the message more so than subjects who read pro-attitudinal messages. This result was interpreted in lieu of restrictions of a possible ceiling effect.
In regards to argument recall, subjects recalled a greater number of arguments from the in-group message as compared to the other-group message, suggesting that in-group messages receive greater processing than other-group messages. Also, messages from the in-group were responded to differently: strong messages from the in-group received more favorable than unfavorable responses, while weak messages received more unfavorable than favorable ones. Messages that were pro-attitudinal from the in-group received more favorable than unfavorable responses. Counter-attitudinal in-group messages, on the other hand, received more unfavorable than favorable responses. These findings suggest that the content of the messages about in-group opinions received a considerable amount of processing.

Regarding reaction to the source, the responses to the in-group source were more positive than negative for those with a strong message, while they were more negative than positive for in-group sources with a weak message. Regardless of the message quality, sources who were members of the other-group received more negative than positive responses, except for those who delivered a strong pro-attitudinal message.

In sum, the results from Mackie et al.'s (1990) first experiment suggested that the content of messages from in-group sources are given more scrutiny than messages from
other-group sources. The authors did note, however, that the subjects may not only be oriented toward messages from an in-group source but may also be prepared to accept them, thus presenting a possible bias to the experiment.

Mackie et al.’s (1990) second experiment investigated the impact of the relevance of the attitude issue to the in-group. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a; 1986b) suggested that personal relevance may be the most important variable that serves as a motivator in affecting the likelihood of message elaboration. Personal relevance subsumes other labels such as issue involvement (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Petty et al., 1981; Petty et al., 1983; White & Harkins, 1994); issue relevance (Mackie et al., 1990; Andrews & Shimp, 1990); ego-involvement (Rhine & Severance, 1970); and personal involvement (Sherif, Kelly, Rodgers, Sarup & Tittler, 1973). Researchers (such as the ones mentioned previously) have often varied personal relevance of an issue or message to manipulate motivation. Personal relevance broadly refers to the amount of direct effect the issue or topic may have on an individual (White & Harkins, 1994). It has been regarded as the extent to which an advocacy has some intrinsic importance or personal meaning to an individual (Sherif et al., 1973). Previous research has revealed that under low-involvement conditions, participants’ thoughts and attitudes toward strong and weak messages are not very different (Andrews & Shimp, 1990; Petty et al., 1981; Petty et al.,
1983; White & Harkins, 1994). There is a difference in the degree to which they respond to peripheral cues, however (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984). In this present study, the degree in which an individual identified with their ethnic group, was hypothesized to moderate the relevance (salience) of the cues that were reflective of their ethnic group. As such, ethnic identification could serve as a personal relevance variable that affected subjects individually.

Regarding the impact of the relevance of a message, Mackie et al. (1990) expected that having an in-group source to deliver a relevant message would induce the participants to systematically process the strong messages (being unaffected by the weak messages). They also expected that having an in-group source to deliver an irrelevant message, would induce the participants to accept the message regardless of its quality. They predicted that messages delivered by the other-group would have a much less effect than those delivered by the in-group.

Results indicated that on the topic reportedly more salient to the in-group, the in-group source was perceived as more qualified to discuss the issue and give their opinion than the other-group source was. A significant Issue Relevance x Argument Quality interaction existed: subjects' attitudes about the in-group relevant issue changed more toward the advocated position when the message was strong than when it was weak, suggesting that
an in-group source received considerable content-focused processing (as was the case in Mackie et al.'s first experiment). For the issue that was not as relevant to the in-group, subjects showed moderate and significant amounts of change towards the advocated position by an in-group member regardless of the quality of the message, suggesting that they were willing to accept the in-group position without careful processing of the content. Also, other-group members were generally less persuasive than the in-group members were. Attitude change produced by receiving a strong relevant message from the in-group was greater than that produced by a weak relevant message from the in-group, a strong relevant message from the other-group, or by a weak relevant message from the other-group.

Regarding message recall, subjects recalled more from messages delivered by in-group than other-group sources. Subjects also recalled more from the relevant issue delivered by the in-group than for the other-group relevant issue, in-group less relevant issue, and other-group less relevant issue.

While the authors expected that subjects would show greater systematic processing of the in-group relevant message compared to the irrelevant message when the source of the message was an in-group member, the results indicated that subjects made more favorable than unfavorable thoughts to the strong message about the in-group relevant issue, and
they made about the same number of favorable and unfavorable responses to the strong message about the in-group irrelevant issue. They also made more negative than positive comments about the weak in-group relevant issue and about the same number of each about the weak in-group irrelevant issue. These numbers were not significant, however. Results also indicated that subjects had more favorable reactions to the pro-attitudinal in-group irrelevant issue than they did for the pro-attitudinal in-group relevant issue.

When the message about the relevant issue was counter-attitudinal, more positive than negative reactions were prompted by the strong message, and more negative than positive reactions were prompted by the weak message. For pro-attitudinal messages, this pattern was weaker. Also, there were no differentiation of the weak and strong message that were either pro- or counter-attitudinal irrelevant messages. Generally, more responses of every kind were made about the in-group relevant issue than the in-group irrelevant issue when the message came from the in-group. For the messages delivered by the other group, subjects responded more positively than negatively to the pro-attitudinal in-group irrelevant issue and more negatively than positively to the pro-attitudinal in-group relevant issue.

In regards to the subjects' responses due to the sources, the only significant effect indicated that subjects had produced more negative than positive responses to the other
group source delivering a weak message. For the other conditions, they responded equally with few positive and negative responses being made about the source. In relation to the cognitive responses and attitude change, relevant messages from the in-group were receiving increasing content-oriented processing relative to the other conditions.

To sum Mackie et al.'s (1990) research, the results indicated that when participants listened to relevant issues they were more persuaded by a strong argument by an in-group member, unpersuaded by a weak message from the in-group member, and equally unimpressed by a strong or weak message presented by a member of the other-group. Subjects who were exposed to issues perceived as irrelevant to their in-group accepted the position advocated by an in-group member, whether the argument was strong or weak. Messages that were presented by a member of the other-group that pertained to an issue perceived to be irrelevant to the in-group were ignored.

Mackie et al. (1990) suggested that the differences in the responses provided in these experiments were not largely due to the issues under consideration, as subjects did not report having a greater knowledge of either the in-group relevant or in-group irrelevant issue. Furthermore, the in-group relevant issue did not have more of a personal importance to the subjects than did the irrelevant issue. As demonstrated by the results of
these experiments, a single issue produced different effects depending on whether the messages were delivered by an in-group member or an other-group member.

The results of both of Mackie et al.'s (1990) experiments also suggested that when the topic of a persuasive communication is relevant to a group, the content of messages delivered by an in-group source will receive considerable content-focused processing. Hence, more elaborate and extensive processing of message content depends on the presentation of an in-group relevant message delivered by an in-group member. Strong in-group arguments produced significantly more persuasion than the same arguments from non-group members. The type of content-focused processing the participants engaged in when exposed to an in-group relevant message delivered by a member of the in-group is akin to the systematic processing described by Petty and Cacioppo (1986a, 1986b) that leads to the central route of information processing as suggested by the ELM.

Mackie et al. (1990) further suggested that having an in-group member activated the in-group concept and increased the participants readiness to accept the message. Their experiments revealed the importance of examining how social influences such as group membership impact persuasion and attitude change.

This current study also allowed for an examination of the in-group phenomenon discussed previously by Mackie et al. (1990) if the Black participants in this study also
view the Black sources as members of the in-group. Because this current study examined how Black participants responded to messages delivered by either a Black source (in-group member) or a White source (other-group member), that is either culturally relevant (in-group relevant issue) or culturally neutral (in-group irrelevant issue), comparisons to Mackie et al. (1990) were possible.

Based on the results of Mackie et al (1990) in regards to the influence of in-group members and the typology mentioned previously by Kelman's (1961), Williams (1992) poses a very important question in relation to individuals identifying with a source due to perceived membership based on demographic or ideological similarity: Would an African-American respond more favorably to a White source in a persuasive communication who is obviously demographically dissimilar (i.e., different race), yet represents ideological similarity (i.e., a shared idea or value) more than he or she will to a Black source who is demographically similar (member of same racial group) yet ideologically dissimilar (i.e., having different views on an issue)?

Another way in which race or ethnicity may affect the reception of communications may be in light of a cultural script, as discussed by Trandis, Martin, Lisansky, & Betancourt (1984). They use this term to refer to a pattern of social interaction that is characteristic of a particular social group. Williams & Qualls (1989) asserted that
communications that feature the Black cultural script should also be more effective in reaching Blacks who strongly identify with the Black culture/ethnic group. Also, the degree in which a Black individual identifies with his/her ethnic group may also moderate their response to culturally relevant messages.

In addition to ethnicity being an individual difference variable that may influence information processing and the effectiveness of a persuasive communication among any ethnic group, it has also been reportedly salient to the African-American culture. In a study by Williams and Qualls (1989) which consisted of 80 Black consumers and 80 White consumers, 85 percent of Blacks indicated that they had a strong identification with their ethnic group as compared to only 34 percent of Whites. Also revealed in their study was that 39 percent of Blacks as opposed to 3 percent of Whites consider their ethnic identity more important than their nationality. The contention that ethnic identification among Blacks will decrease as they move up the socioeconomic ladder and obtain a middle-class status (thus becoming more like their White counterparts) was, therefore, refuted in Williams and Quall's (1989) study, as middle class Blacks did retain a strong degree of ethnic identification given their educational level and economic status.

A somewhat different revelation of Blacks' retention of their ethnicity was provided by Jewell's (1985) study of Black college students (who were expected to become
members of the Black middle class). According to her, Black students were rather reluctant to identify with their cultural heritage, and did not acknowledge their commonality with people of color on a broader global basis. She attributed these findings to the educational advancement and other opportunities brought on by the Black social movement and the increased amount of assimilation and acculturation into the mainstream European paradigm that resulted. Rosenberg (1979) shares this view as he suggested that as Blacks' interactions with Whites occur more frequently, their attachment with traditional Black culture lessens and their group identification with Black culture weakens. Given that education has been thought to foster the opportunities for assimilation and acculturation, it was (somewhat) plausible to expect that educated Blacks may display a weaker sense of ethnic identification (Whittler, 1989). On the other hand, it has also been suggested that as the 1990s progress, Blacks are (instead) increasing their ethnic awareness (Hecht et al., 1993; Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985). The movement towards Afrocentrism may have heightened the salience of ethnic identification among Blacks. Given some of the mixed results of the salience of ethnicity to Blacks, this appears to be an area that warrants further investigation.

Williams and Quall (1989) found support for the cultural script phenomenon as mentioned by Triandis et al. (1984). The Black cultural script even had a strong influence
on Blacks who were weak identifiers with their ethnic group. Williams & Qualls (1989) offered support for the situational nature of ethnicity as previously discussed by Stayman and Desphande (1989). Other studies (Desphande, Hoyer & Donthu, 1986; Gurin, Hurtado, & Peng, 1994; Stayman & Desphande, 1989) also reported the varying degree in which ethnicity is salient to minority groups, and has differing effects on the behaviors of the group's members.

The previous research has provided evidence that social forces do impact consumer's reactions to persuasive communications (Mackie et al., 1990). Research has also suggested that individuals are affected psychologically when they process information delivered by members of different race or ethnic groups (Whittler, 1989). Research has also indicated that for Black consumers, the psycho-social implications of ethnic affiliation are noteworthy and have implications for marketers trying to reach this group, sport marketers included.

**Related Research on Argument Quality And Content**

While the race or ethnicity of a source may serve as a powerful motivator for Blacks to process persuasive communications, it is not the only or most important variable. Cognitive processing of information contained in a persuasive communication goes
beyond favoring it because the source is a member of one's ethnic group. There are several other factors that account for the varied responses Blacks may have to persuasive communications. Variables that may motivate Blacks to process information, in absence of a Black source, include the quality and content of the message (Pitts et al., 1989). Marketers often vary the quality and the content of the arguments included in their communications to induce an attitude change. Arguments refer to "bits of information contained in a communication that are relevant to a person's subjective determination of the true merits of an advocated position" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b, p. 133). Argument quality (strong versus weak) was discussed earlier in this review of literature as it was immersed in research on source effects. The remainder of this literature will focus on the content of the argument.

In light of the growing importance of African-American consumers in the marketplace, communications have been carefully designed to present promotional messages with content and in a context that is culturally relevant to African-Americans. The culturally based approach to communication is premised on the notion that communication is most effective when the message content, symbols, is referent to the audience's culture (Pitts et al., 1989; Simpson, 1992; Rossman, 1994). All of the messages that have been reported on in this review of literature were of a general nature, i.e., they were not specifically
targeted to a particular ethnic group. Instead, the content of the persuasive communications reported earlier in this review of literature demonstrated the impact that strong (valid) or weak (specious) arguments had on persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a, 1986b; White & Harkins, 1994). Pitts et al. (1989) provided the closest examination of arguments with content that is culturally-relevant (which is the focus of this present study) as they examined the effect of values in culturally based advertising. Their study included advertisements that were specifically designed to appeal to Black consumers. The commercial advertisements in their study contained a strong major theme and several secondary themes relevant to the context of the Black (cultural) experience. Also included in the commercials were subtle, secondary themes.

To examine how the cultural orientation of the participants (82 Black and 189 White undergraduate college students) moderated the information that they picked up from the advertisements with subcultural themes, Pitts et al. (1989) measured their initial values. They then exposed the participants to an unrelated marketing lecture, showed them each of the advertisements, and asked them to complete a questionnaire for each one. The advertisements (which featured an all-Black cast) were four sixty-second commercials
produced for major national brands by the United States' largest Black advertising agency. The advertisements were selected because they were rich in value and contained strong cultural and social content.

The results indicated that the Black participants responded more favorably towards the commercial messages featuring Black actors than did the White participants. This study was unique in that it examined television commercials that were written and produced by Blacks, were rich in Black culture, and conveyed a message that was placed in context of the Black experience. In the previous research of strong and weak arguments neither was culturally targeted (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 1981; White & Harkins, 1994). Pitts et al. (1989) contended that Blacks are members of a distinctive subculture (possessing a complex behavior, tradition, language, and values). They also suggested that when marketing communications utilize a strong cultural orientation, significant differences in Black and White responses may be manifested.

Statistically significant differences were found between the Blacks' and Whites' perception of the values in each commercial (Pitts et al., 1989). Not only did the (culturally targeted) advertisements elicit a stronger and more positive response from the participants, but they also generated a very different response in regards to perceptions of the values presented in the messages. The value themes of social and personal respect
and achievement were much more apparent to the Black respondents than to the White respondents. While Blacks saw these values in all four commercials, Whites only saw them in one commercial. The value of well-respected was also rated higher by Black respondents than White respondents. Pitts et al. (1989) suggest that unless advertisements use icons and symbols that dramatically stand out in the commercial and are familiar to White audiences, they may not perceive them. In their study, Whites failed to see the cultural richness of the messages, that appeared to be evident to Blacks. Hence, they suggested that Blacks see more and Whites see less. This finding gives credence to Rossman's (1994) assertion that even though Blacks see the same promotions as Whites, they may process them differently. The authors also credited the use of television as a modality that enhanced the effectiveness of their study.

Pitts et al. (1989) examined how an individual's values moderated the degree to which he/she was cognizant of or influenced by cultural values contained in a message. Their study revealed that Blacks do pay attention to cultural details contained in marketing communications. Given that Blacks in Pitts et al. (1989) picked up on even the subtle cultural values presented in the commercials, Blacks in this current study should also be affected by the overt presentation of the culturally relevant (culturally directed) messages. According to Pitts et al. (1989), these findings echoed a sentiment in the marketplace: "to
communicate with maximum skill with a culture, one must be a member of that culture" (p. 325). Hence, to be effective in communicating with a culture, one must understand the impact of cultural nuances on individuals of that culture.

**Summary of the Literature Review**

Because of the lack of congruency and theoretical agreement over how and when variables such as the source, message, recipient, and channel affect attitude change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a) mixed results of race of source effects are not too surprising (White & Harkins, 1994). To synthesize the literature reviewed for this study, the previous research that examined how the race of the source and the viewers' racial attitudes impact information processing and viewers' reactions to cultural, racial, and ethnic cues in a persuasive communication produced mixed results: the race of the source was reported to have impacted information processing (Ramirez, 1977; Whittler & DiMeo, 1991) or to have had little effect on information processing (White & Harkins, 1994, experiments 1, 2, and 3; Whittler, 1989). If race is thought of as an in-group characteristic, a variable representing demographic similarity, or a culturally-relevant variable in this present study, then it is conceivable that results of such an investigation may differ from those presented by Mackie et al, (1990). Regarding the influence of the racial attitudes of the viewers, this also seemed to have had differing effects as it either impacted information processing
(Ramirez, 1977; Whittler, 1989) or did not appear to impact information processing

(White & Harkins, 1994). The literature did provide some information on the impact of
the cultural content of a persuasive communication as it was revealed that Blacks
perceived the cultural value and content of a communication more so than did Whites
(Pitts et al., 1989). Lastly, the significance of the effects varied depending on the samples
used (all White college students, Black and White college students, all Black junior high
students, all White community adults) which may have contributed to the mixed results.

This present investigation combined elements of the studies previously discussed. It
replicated the general protocol of methodological procedures used by White and Harkin's
(1994) to examine information processing via the theoretical framework of the ELM. It
specifically replicated elements of White and Harkins (1994) experiments one and two on
source effects and argument quality effects, except with Black participants. As did
Whittler (1989) and Ramirez et al. (1977), it included a measure of racial attitude, i.e.,
ethnic identification. As did Mackie et al. (1990), this study (indirectly and peripherally)
allowed for the examination of the social impact of group membership on attitude and
persuasion. With the intent of examining ethnic and culturally oriented persuasive
communications, as was the intent in Pitts et al. (1989), this study examined the content of
the message contained in a persuasive communication in light of its cultural relevance and
cultural directedness. Lastly (and unlike any of the previous studies), this study noted implications that will benefit sport marketers who want to better communicate with African-Americans. In sum, this current study contributed to the growing body of research in marketing and consumer behavior that aims to offer a better understanding of how the tenets of culture (particularly race and ethnicity) impact communication and the means in which individuals process persuasive messages.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study employed an experimental methodology to apply the Elaboration Likelihood Model to the processing of persuasive communications among Black students. This study consisted of three experimental groups and one control group. Each of the experimental groups contained a 2 x 2 between subjects design that manipulated treatments that varied the race of the source (Black or White) with their position on the topic stated or not stated (Experiment One); the quality arguments contained in their report (strong or weak, Experiment 2); and the content of the report (culturally directed or non-culturally directed, Experiment 3). Ethnic identification was used as a covariate in each experiment, as well as with the control group. Questionnaire booklets were designed for each of the experimental groups as well as the control group. The treatments contained in each
booklet varied depending on the objective of the experiment. Dependent measures of the students' reactions to the issue under investigation, as well as their cognitive responses to the treatments were obtained in the questionnaire booklets.

Population and Sample

The accessible population universe for this study included African-American students enrolled at The Ohio State University (OSU). At the time of this investigation African-American undergraduate students comprised approximately six percent of the student enrollment, totaling 2,520. Participants were selected in a purposive, non random procedure and would be best described as a convenient sample. In order to obtain an acceptable number of participants to satisfy the analyses requirements from a relatively limited target population, it was necessary to recruit subjects from several different organizations on the campus of OSU. The necessity for maintaining adequate control over the experimental protocol required that the experiments be conducted under group administration conditions. To access the greatest number of Black students, all of the classes in the Minority Advising Program (MAP) of the University College were surveyed as well as several Black student associations.
The frame for the selection of the students in the MAP was obtained by contacting the dean of the University College division of OSU for a listing of classes which consisted mainly of ethnic minority students. The frame for the student associations was obtained by contacting the coordinator of the African-American Student Services for a listing of student organizations and their leaders. Permission to administer the experimental procedure to the students was secured from the dean of the University College and the Director of the African American Student Services.

The MAP program was designed for students who are members of any ethnic minority group. As such, many of the classes contained a large enrollment of students who were not Black. Although the initial intent was to only survey the Black students, to allow for an ease in administration and to prevent any discomfort, the entire class was surveyed. For the purpose of this investigation, however, only the data provided by the Black students were used in the analyses. Thus, the participants for this study were selected in a convenient, purposive manner. The sample (n = 262) was comprised of students in attendance at the MAP classes that were surveyed and the weekly organizational meetings of the student associations attended by the researcher. The use of a relatively homogeneous sample was desired in ELM investigations, given that effects testing is enhanced when subjects are more similar than dissimilar (Calder, Phillips & Tybout, 1981;
Gotlieb & Swan, 1990). The subjects in this study shared a degree of homogeneity largely because they all were undergraduate students at the same university who shared a membership in the same racial/ethnic group.

**Instrumentation**

The main research tool for this study was a questionnaire booklet that was modified for application to four different groups: (a) the control group, (b) the group exposed to source manipulations, (c) the group exposed to source and argument strength manipulations, and (d) the group exposed to source and message content manipulations. The construction of the booklets and the information contained therein was based on the protocols and recommendations of previous ELM investigations (e.g., Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, Rodriguez, 1986; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; White & Harkins, 1994). Items in the booklets included: a cover sheet explaining the study, a persuasive communication with source and message manipulations, attitude measures, a thought listing activity (which included the participants' rating of those thoughts), demographic measures, and several ancillary measures, all of which are pretty standard for ELM inquiry. The
booklets not only contained the dependent measures, but they also contained the independent variables, hence a discussion of the treatments will be included in the discussion of the instrument.

Cover Sheet

The front page of each booklet contained a cover sheet. Cover stories are typically included on the front page of a questionnaire booklet so that subjects are unaware of the true intent of the investigation. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986a), the cover story should not draw undue attention to the subject's attitude toward the persuasive appeal of the study. For the control group, the cover sheet stated:

The Sport Management Department at The Ohio State University is cooperating with the School of Journalism at Ohio State in evaluating editorials that students from other universities wrote concerning the financing sport facilities, while this issue was under consideration at their universities. Some of the students have suggested that increasing student fees would be a good way to generate funds to finance a sport arena. For example, Illinois State University has implemented a $38.52 per quarter increase in student fees to build a new basketball arena. This increase in student fees has been under consideration at several schools and universities, but is not currently under consideration at Ohio State University. We would like to get your opinion on the topic of increasing student fees to finance sport facilities. Please note: Although the completion of this questionnaire booklet is critical for our results, you have the right not to answer any item that makes you feel uncomfortable."
For those in the experimental groups (who were exposed to source and message manipulations) their cover sheet was modified to include the following: "We have been evaluating some of the editorials students have written regarding increasing student fees to finance an arena for a university's sports teams, and would like you to read one of the reports so that we may get other students' reactions to them." After this message, the cover sheet advised the participants of their right not to complete any item(s) they were uncomfortable with (in the same manner as was the other group). The intent of this page was to briefly introduce the purpose of their participating in the study, while not arousing too much suspicion among the students regarding the activity they were about to engage in.

**Treatment (Independent Variables)**

Treatments (manipulations) were not used in the booklets for the control group because they served as the baseline group to which the overall treatment conditions were compared. For those in the experimental groups, the booklets contained manipulated persuasive communications. Three experiments were conducted in this study and contained manipulations of: (a) the race of the source, (b) race of the source and message quality, and (c) the race of the source and message content.
Source Manipulation. The source manipulations varied the race of the person who was pictured as the student who prepared the report the participants were about to read. Photographs were selected from various magazines and yearbooks. The researcher signed the appropriate forms of release of copyright infringement violations, to allow for the photographs to be photocopied, pretested, and placed in each experimental booklet.

To pretest and guard for any confounding or contaminating effects of the photographs selected for this study, a sample comprising 40 students (22 White and 18 Black students) was used to pretest various characteristics of the source. A high school yearbook from 1985 and a 1994 issue of Ebony was used to select pictures of Black and White males. Photographs of five Black and five White men who were comparable in dress and facial expression were selected, photocopied, and placed in a booklet (one picture per page) for participants to rate. The participants were asked to respond on a 5 point Likert-type scale to the attractiveness, trustworthiness, intelligence, and credibility as a spokesperson of each individual. The participants were specifically told to rate the individual not the quality of the photograph. Comparably dressed males with similar facial expressions, and similar attractiveness ratings (on a scale ranging from one to five) were selected. The photographs selected were rated similarly by the Black participants. The mean ratings were 2.5 and 2.6 for the White and Black male respectively.
For Experiment One, the questionnaire booklets contained a picture of either a Black or White male with demographic data (such as race, gender, major, age, and year in college) accompanying the picture. Either his position on the topic of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was stated as being in favor of the increase, or no statement concerning the source's position on the topic was presented. Hence, participants in Experiment One received one of the following treatments: (a) photograph and demographic characteristics of a Black male with position on the issue not stated (b) photograph and demographic characteristics of a Black male in favor of the increase in student fees to help finance a sport arena, (c) photograph and demographic characteristics of a White male with position on the issue not stated, or (d) photograph and demographic characteristics of a White male in favor of the increase in student fees to help finance a sport arena.

The participants were told on the cover sheet that they would receive a report of some background information regarding an increase in student fees to finance a sport facility written by another student. Because they really were not going to be exposed to a report, the following script was inserted (after the attitude measures which will be described later) to eliminate any confusion suffered as a result of not finding an actual report: "Due to
random distribution of the questionnaire booklets, you may be one of the participants who
did not receive an actual report about increasing student fees to finance a sport arena. If
so, please continue on to the next page."

**Source and Argument Quality Manipulations.** For Experiment Two, the questionnaire
booklets varied the race of the source (either Black or White) with the quality of the
arguments used (either strong or weak). In addition to presenting a picture and
demographic profile of a White or Black male as the source of the message (as was done
in Experiment One booklets), also included was either a report that contained four strong
(valid and cogent) arguments in favor of the increase in student fees or one that contained
four weak and specious arguments in favor of the increase in student fees to finance an
arena. Each report was one page in length. Hence, the students who in Experiment Two
were exposed to one of the following conditions: (a) photograph and demographic
characteristics of a Black male presenting a strong message, (b) photograph and
demographic characteristics of a Black male presenting a weak message, (c) photograph
and demographic characteristics of a White male presenting a strong message, and (d)
pictures and demographic characteristics of a White male presenting a weak message.
Petty and Cacioppo (1986a; 1986b) consider strong messages those that contain
arguments such that when subjects are instructed to think about the message, the thoughts
they generate are predominately favorable. Weak messages, on the other hand, are those that result in unfavorable thoughts. The strong and weak arguments used in this study were based on Petty and Cacioppo's definitions and were adapted from published examples of strong and weak arguments used in previous ELM investigations (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986b; Richman, 1989; White & Harkins, 1994). Pretesting results suggested that the strong arguments were perceived as such and received more favorable ratings than did the weak ones. See Appendix A for a copy of the strong arguments, and Appendix B for a copy of the weak arguments.

Source and Message Content Manipulations. Participants in Experiment Three received booklets that contained manipulations that varied the source (either Black or White) and message content (either one that was culturally directed or one that was non-culturally directed). The treatments included a picture and demographic profile of the Black or White sources (as was done in Experiments One and Two) along with a report that varied in its cultural directedness. Culturally directed (used synonymously with the term culturally targeted) was based on the cultural relevance of the content of the report and the means in which it specifically targeted African-Americans. The culturally directed reports were one and one-fourth page in length and were adapted from previous examples of strong arguments (hence, they were cogent) but contained information that explicitly
highlighted benefits to the African-American community. The non-culturally directed reports, in contrast, were also one and one-fourth page in length with strong and cogent arguments, but contained a neutralized version of the information included in the culturally directed one with no mention of African-Americans specifically (for a copy of the reports used, see Appendix C for the culturally-targeted report and Appendix D for the non-culturally targeted report). Hence, the participants in Experiment Three were exposed to one of the following conditions: (a) photograph and demographic characteristics of a Black male presenting a culturally-targeted message, (b) photograph and demographic characteristics of a Black male presenting a non-culturally targeted message, (c) photograph and demographic characteristics of a White male presenting a culturally-targeted message, and (d) photograph and demographic characteristics of a White male presenting a non-culturally targeted message. Pretesting results suggested that the culturally-targeted report was perceived as such, and received more favorable reactions among the pretest participants.

Dependent Variables

**Attitude Measures.** According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986a), previous ELM investigations have been concerned with the evaluative aspect of attitude, as opposed to
its cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. They also suggest that when subjects cannot be randomly assigned to all treatment conditions, pre-communication attitude measures and external control groups are often used. Pre-communication attitude measures allow the researcher to determine whether changes in attitudes occur between them and the post-communication measure (i.e., a pretest posttest). An undesirable effect of pre-communication attitude measures, however, is that they commit subjects to their initial attitudes and sensitizes them to the focus of the study (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). This may be minimized by separating the pre-communication attitude measures from the experimental study and varying the appearance of the post-communication (post-treatment) attitude measure. External control groups, on the other hand are less plagued by sensitization and carry-over effects and are used to measure the absolute attitude change by comparing the control subjects' attitudes with the attitudes of the experimental subjects (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). This present study employed post-communication attitude measures, along with a control group.

To measure attitudes, previous ELM investigations (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a; White & Harkins, 1994) have used multi-item semantic differential scales with bipolar adjectives from the evaluative dimension as anchors (such as good/bad). They have also used single-item rating scales (such as strongly agree = "9", or strongly disagree = "1") in which
subjects responded to evaluative statements concerning an issue. In cases where both type of scales have been used (e.g., White & Harkins, 1994), the responses to each have been summed, collapsed, and standardized into one attitude score, to obtain a measure of attitude toward the issue or stimulus (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). The present study also employed two measures to arrive at one attitude score.

For each group, attitudes about increasing student fees to finance a new sport arena were obtained in two measures by having the participants respond to: (a) a 9-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and (b) to several 9-point semantic differential scales (good-bad, beneficial-harmful, wise-foolish, and favorable-unfavorable). These attitude measures were placed immediately after the persuasive communications.

The questionnaire booklets in Experiment One included the following script: "We would like to get your attitude on this issue before you read the report" because they were led to believe (on the cover sheet) that they were about to read a report. This script provided the reason for their responding even though they had not yet received the actual report.

For Experiments Two and Three, the lead-in script was not needed because they actually received a report, and were merely asked to respond to it.
**Report Quality.** Following the attitude measures was a measure of report quality.

Participants in Experiment Two and Three were asked to rate the quality of the arguments used in the report they received by responding to four 9-point semantic differential scales (unpersuasive-persuasive, weak-strong, unbelievable-unbelievable, unimportant-important).

**Thought Listing.** Presented after the report quality measures in the questionnaire booklets was a measure of the amount of cognitive activity the participants were engaging in as they were exposed to the persuasive communication. This activity instructed the participants to list all the thoughts they were having about the topic of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena as they were reading a communication attributed to the source and/or the message. The participants were told that their thoughts could pertain to the source, the message, or anything else going through their mind related to the topic of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena.

Previous studies have set a predetermined number of thoughts for the participants to generate (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984) which allowed for group administration. Others provided a time limit for the participants to abide by as they were listing their thoughts (Cacioppo et al., 1986; White & Harkins, 1994). This study, although employed a group administration format, placed a two and one-half minutes time limit for the participants to
adhere to as they were listing their thoughts. The purpose of this thought listing activity was to allow for a measure of cognitive activity the individual was engaged in while being exposed to a persuasive communication. It was used as a measure of information processing.

The questionnaire booklets for the control group also contained the same thought listing activity described previously. However, their instructions made no reference to a source or message (because they did not receive source or message manipulations); instead, they were asked to list their thoughts about the issue. They were also asked to rate their thoughts in the same manner as the other groups. This activity concluded the items in the questionnaire booklets for the control group.

This study examined two dimensions of classifying responses: (1) based on polarity (the degree to which the statements were in favor of or opposed to the advocated position; (2) based on target (the focus at which the comment was directed which provided information about the effect of the persuasive appeal on the recipients' focus of attention) (Cacioppo et al., 1981).

Participants assisted in assigning the degree of polarity their responses represented as they were instructed to go back and rate each of the thoughts they had listed as either positive, negative, or neutral towards the topic. This rating was done to allow for an
assessment of polarity and the calculation of a positivity index (the number of positive thoughts minus the number of negative thoughts). The target dimension was later determined by neutral coders. The dimensions of target that this study focused on were: (a) issue-relevant (message and topic) thoughts, (b) source thoughts, and (c) other (audience thoughts). Issue-relevant thoughts refer to all the thoughts listed that were related to the advocated topic. A sub-category of issue-relevant thoughts include those that were induced or were reactions to the arguments in a message (Cacioppo et al., 1981; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). Although it is possible to separate issue from message thoughts (as was done in Heesacker, Petty & Cacioppo, 1983), Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) suggest that because message thoughts may spark some issue-relevant thoughts, a more global issue-relevant category is sometimes more desirable. This study utilized the more global issue/content category to include all thoughts that were directed to the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena as well as the thoughts that pertained to the content of the arguments included in the reports (i.e., statements that pertain to the topic of appeal or to the arguments either stated or implied in the message). An example of an issue relevant thought is: "Students are having a hard enough time paying for their education, so fees should not be increased to build a sport arena." Source thoughts are statements that pertain to the communicator and his or her style of communication. This
category included all of the statements that related to the person who prepared the report. An example of a source thought is: "This person is trying to manipulate students." The last category of thoughts were labeled as "other" thoughts. "Other" refer to statements that are unrelated to the issue, message, or source. Roberts and Maccoby (1973) investigated various targets and revealed that message and source targets accounted for most of the responses listed. Frequency counts were used for each of the valence and target categories at the suggestion of Cacioppo et al., 1981 who contend that frequency counts of the items within each category of cognitive response provide a satisfactory measure of the relative prominence or profile of the different cognitive response categories.

Once cognitive responses have been obtained and classified into the appropriate dimensions, they then need to be judged and combined on each dimension to obtain an index of each individual's cognitions (Cacioppo, et al., 1981). Several means of rating the thoughts have been used. One way to rate each of the thoughts is to have judges (individuals who are familiar with the scoring categories, but unfamiliar with the experimental hypotheses) to assign each response to a particular category based on their understanding of the meaning of the response. A second means is to have the subjects rate and categorize their own responses. A third method employs both of the previously
mentioned avenues as it incorporates judges ratings as well as subject ratings. This method minimizes the problems that are inherent in using one method alone. In the present study, the subjects rated the polarity of their thoughts. Paired neutral coders then rated the polarity along with the target of the thoughts. The inter-rater reliability was approximately 70 percent (147/211). In cases where the paired judges did not agree on a rating, a third judge was used. Because the data was collected in several stages, the third judge served as the final coder for the thoughts in the last 51 questionnaire booklets. It must be noted that in situations where discrepancies arose regarding the valence of the thoughts, the third judge relied on the subjects' ratings to make the final determination.

**Argument Recall.** Following the thought listing activity, the participants in Experiment Two and Three (who received the source and message quality/content manipulations) were also asked to recall as many of the arguments made in the report that they could remember (argument recall). Their argument recall score was computed by summing the number of arguments correctly recalled (maximum of four) that were made in the students' report. An argument was considered correctly recalled if it summarized, mentioned, or listed the points stressed in the report.

**Ancillary Measures.** Two ancillary items were included as dependent measures in the present study. One of the ancillary measures involved the participants' rating the
credibility of the source as a spokesperson on the issue, on a 9-point scale (with 1 being the lowest, and 9 being the highest). The second ancillary measure asked the participants to rate how much their attitude toward the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport facility was influenced by the student's report on a 9-point scale (1 being the least amount and 9 being the greatest amount).

**Manipulation Checks:** Items were also included in the questionnaire booklets to check for the effectiveness of the manipulations used in the study. One manipulation check involved asking the participants to rely on their memory only to recall demographic characteristics about the source. A mention of the race of the source correctly, among the characteristics listed, indicated that the source manipulations were successful. The second manipulation check involved asking the participants whether the topic of persuasion (increasing student fees to finance a sport arena) was currently under consideration at their university. A response of "no" indicated that the participants understood the low-involvement nature of the study.

Lastly, the participants were asked to provide some demographic data about themselves (such as their gender, race, age, year in college, major in college, and home town).
Ethnic Identification. The last page of each questionnaire booklet contained an instrument to measure the degree to which the participants identified with their ethnic group. Ethnic identification was a covariate for each experiment. Various methods have been used to obtain a measure of the degree to which an individual identifies with his or her ethnic group. One method is to have the participants self select in a subjective self-labeling technique (Desphande et al., 1986; Hirschman, 1981; & Stayman & Desphande, 1989). This method allows the individual to internalize his/her beliefs and the salience of his/her ethnic affiliation. Another method of assessing ethnic identification is to use multiple-item measures. For example, items such as self-perceived strength of ethnic identification, willingness to marry outside the Hispanic culture, and the dominant language spoken are measures that have been used to ascertain the degree to which Hispanics identify with their culture (Desphande et al., 1986; Stayman & Desphande, 1989; Valencia, 1985).

This study adopted Whittler, Calatone, & Young's (1991) contextualization of ethnic identification. According to them, Black identification basically refers to a Black person's sense of belonging to the Black race and his or her concern with Black issues and causes. Hence, a Black who strongly identifies with the Black culture expresses attitudes and behaviors supportive of the Black community.
Whittier et al., (1991) began their investigation of devising an instrument to assess Blacks' identification with the Black culture with a 35-item scale that included various aspects of Black identification. The 35-item scale was administered to 34 college-aged Blacks. An item analysis yielded a set of 13 items with an alpha coefficient of .82. Results of principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation suggested that two major factors (cross-race attraction and political and social relations among Blacks) accounted for most of the variance. To assess the criterion validity of the 13-item scale, it was correlated with eight measures of reported activities believed to be associated with commitment to Black culture (items such as magazine subscriptions, favorite radio stations, and dating of Whites). The measures were correlated with the Black identification scale (r = .41, p = .008), therefore, the scale appeared to be an adequate measure of Blacks' commitment to Black culture.

Whittier et al., (1991) administered the 13-item scale to 160 Black undergraduate students at an urban, midwestern university. The composite identification index revealed an alpha coefficient of .73. Results of principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation yielded results that were similar to those in the preliminary analysis, as cross-race attraction and political and social relations were the two primary factors (with alpha coefficients of .86 and .59 respectively).
Whittier et al., (1991) also administered the 13-item instrument to 400 Black members of the general population (which yielded 170 usable questionnaires). Confirmatory factor analysis was used for an a priori method of evaluating the hypothesized two dimensional structure produced from the previous investigations. A chi-square value for the model was non significant and showed a goodness of fit index of .96 (the adjusted goodness of fit index was .92). Thus, the authors concluded that the model fit adequately. An examination of the factor loadings suggested that each variable was highly loaded on their respective factors.

Whittier et al., (1991) reported that the validity of the instrument was correlated with a conceptually similar instrument assessing Blacks' racial identity attitudes (the Racial Identity Attitude Scale, Parham & Helms, 1981), and two conceptually different scales that assessed purchase involvement (Slama & Taschian, 1985) and consumer ethnocentrism (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). At the suggestion of Harmon, (1976) factor scores were computed for each instrument, and the similarity of the coefficient of congruency between these factors and those of the proposed Black identification scale were compared. The correlational analysis revealed very low but positive relationships between the cross-race attraction dimension of the Black identification scale and the immersion (r = .22, p<.01) and internalization (r = .13, p<.05) dimensions of the Racial
Identity Attitude Scale (RAIS). The cross-race attraction dimension was also positively related to the consumer ethnocentrism scale (r = .14, p<.05). For the dimensions of sociopolitical support of Black professionals, the correlation was positive with pre-encounter (r = .30, p<.001), encounter (r = .22, p<.01), and internalization (r = .44, p<.0001) dimensions of the RAIS. Sociopolitical support of Black professionals also correlated positively with the Purchase Involvement scale (r = .40, p<.0001).

Whittier et al., (1991) demonstrated that the construct of Black identification was measurable. They employed traditional psychometric scaling procedures (such as internal consistency and exploratory factor analysis) and confirmatory factor analysis to confirm the validity and reliability of their 13-item instrument. They also revealed the two dimensions that largely comprise Blacks' identification with the Black culture.

A comparison to other instruments that were also designed to measure ethnic identity (Baldwin & Bell, 1985; Phinney, 1992) revealed that this instrument also had content validity. The predictive validity of this instruments was also perceived to be adequate because the responses to the items should be fairly predictive and indicative of the degree to which the respondent identifies and affiliates with his or her ethnic group.

Whittler et al., (1991) conceptualized ethnic identification in the same manner as was suggested in this present study. Because it was previously applied to college students
(and yielded a very high internal consistency rating) it was a very appropriate instrument
to measure ethnic identification among the members of the population of interest to this
investigation (who were also Black college students). As a result of the frequency in
which one item (voting for candidates who are sensitive to the concerns of Blacks) was
omitted by the participants in this study (largely because many of them had never voted),
the item was excluded from Whittler, et al.'s, (1991) 13-item scale. Hence, ethnic
identification was calculated by computing the mean of the participant's responses to a
12-item instrument. This measure was coupled with the self-reported ethnicity the
participants listed in the demographic measures in the questionnaire booklets to arrive at a
measure of their ethnic identification.

Pretesting

Following the procedures as set forth by White and Harkins (1994), booklets were
devised containing three experiments: Experiment I: Test of Race of Source Effect;
Experiment II: Test of Source x Message Quality Interaction; Experiment III: Test of
Source x Message Content Interaction. Once the questionnaire booklets for various
experimental manipulations were created, they were subjected to a thorough pretest
procedure. 34 college-aged African-Americans were recruited on a community college
campus to respond to the suitability, utility, and clarity of the booklets. Several
modifications were made to remove and refine items that were unclear and faulty in
wording, as per the responses and suggestions by the pretest participants.

The initial objective of this study essentially was to replicate elements of two
experiments by White and Harkins (1994) that manipulated the race of the source of the
message and (a) the presentation of the source's position on the topic of persuasion, and
(b) the quality of the message (strong or weak arguments) presented. Unlike White and
Harkins' (1994) study, this study consisted of Black participants, placed the topic of
persuasion in a sport context, and did not include any distraction or level of involvement
manipulations. Pretest participants' reactions to the strong and weak arguments prompted
consideration of a third experiment which addressed subjects concern for cultural
relevance. During debriefing, a number of participants expressed concern that the strong
and weak arguments did not address issues that were salient to their culture. Examples of
some of the comments made include: "What are Black people going to get out of this?",
"Let them build the arena, it's for White people anyway?", "Will Blacks be able to get
tickets to the events?" It appeared that participants wanted to know what this topic,
process, and situation had to do with and for Black people. They were more concerned
about Blacks being included and involved in the overall process. They also wanted to see
some way in which the African-American culture would benefit from the arena. In essence, the "strong" arguments were not really considered that strong because they did not include any mention of the Black community directly or specifically. It appeared that if Blacks were not specifically mentioned, it was implied and assumed that they would be left out, overlooked, and not considered (as they had been in previous projects). Hence, a culturally relevant report was adapted from the "strong" report to specifically mention benefits to the Black community, and a third experiment was added.

After reading the culturally-relevant report, some participants were leery of the motive because it was unusual to read a report that strictly highlighted benefits to African-Americans. In response to their suspicion, the context was changed from being a report they would read, to an article that appeared as an editorial in the student newspaper at the university where the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was under consideration. Having the report to appear as an editorial by another student seemed to be a softer and more effective approach. The booklets were also pilot tested (with a sample of 10 African-American students who were currently attending Ohio State University), and it was revealed that the participants responded more favorably to the messages that were culturally targeted.
Even though the issue was intended to be one of low involvement to the participants because it was not currently under consideration at Ohio State University, the topic of money (increasing student fees) may have evoked a high degree of attention (as if it were a high involvement issue) thus negating the potency of the effects of the race of the source. To boost the race manipulations in the study, photographs were added. They appeared to be a more powerful medium than just a descriptive profile which included mention of the race of the student authoring the report.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting any data, permission to conduct this investigation was obtained from the Human Subjects Review Committee at The Ohio State University as well as from the dean of the University College and the Director of the African-American Students Services Association. The researcher used a group administration format to collect the data. The questionnaire booklets (described earlier) were used to collect and store the data for analyses. Some of the previous ELM investigations have used smaller groups (ranging from approximately 1 to 5 participants per group). Given the difficulties in obtaining groups of African-American students, the researcher decided that large group settings would be the most efficient way to administer the questionnaire booklets.
A Black female experimenter conducted the sessions. The MAP sessions were conducted in their respective classrooms, and the Black student associations sessions were conducted in their regular meeting rooms. To motivate participants to want to participate in the study, the researcher made a personal appeal to the class, explaining the nature of the investigation, its purpose and value, and asked the class to spend about 15 minutes or so to complete a questionnaire booklet. In addition to the personal appeal, the researcher read the cover sheet and emphasized the importance of reading the information and instructions carefully. She also reminded the participants of their freedom to omit areas of the questionnaire they were uncomfortable completing. The researcher reminded them that their completion of the booklets would be greatly appreciated. They were also reminded to complete each item so that their information could be used in the final results.

Questionnaire booklets were randomly distributed to each student in the class. The researcher reminded the students that this was to be an individual effort and no talking was allowed. The students were also asked to remain in their seats until the entire class completed the booklets so that the researcher could give them some concluding instructions. As the students completed the booklets, the researcher collected them. After
all the booklets were collected, the students were debriefed as to the true nature of the investigation (the manipulations were thoroughly explained), thanked for their participation, and then dismissed.

**Basic Assumptions**

One assumption of this study was that the participants were responding honestly to the dependent measures and exercised a reasonable degree of integrity as they followed the instructions in the booklets (i.e., not looking back through the booklets to answer the manipulation check questions).

**Limitations**

The possibility of the halo effect poses a limitation on this study due to the following possibilities: (a) the Black respondents may have consistently responded very favorably and enthusiastically to the dependent measures regarding questions that pertained to the Black source, and (b) the presence of a message stimuli designed for Black participants may have resulted in heightened attention by the Black participants, therefore they may have recalled and retained more of the information presented by the culturally directed report.
Some historical conditions (things going on in the "real world" as this study was being conducted) may have interacted with the treatments to limit the external validity of the results. One event that may (or may not) affect this study was the racial divide caused by the verdict of the 1995 O.J. Simpson murder trial. Black participants may have had a heightened sense of racial awareness which may have translated into extreme responses on the ethnic identification scale, and to items that were favorable towards the Black source or the culturally directed message more than would be the case if racial tension was not as high. On the other hand, the Black participants may have been exhausted with the issue of race and may have been turned off by anything pertaining to racial attitudes and issues, thus providing negative or neutral responses to the ethnic identification scale. Another racially charged incident occurring during the time this study was conducted was the much-publicized "Million Man March" on Washington, which was a national plea for at least one million Black men throughout the United States to meet in Washington, D.C. to stage a rally and march as a display of racial solidarity and atonement. The objective of the march, according to the organizers, was to uplift Black men (who on the whole have suffered the greatest injustices in this country), have their spirit, self-esteem, and confidence nurtured, as they began to reclaim their responsibilities as Black men in America. This was reportedly the largest peaceful gathering of Black men ever. If the
students who participated in this study followed this march (actively or passively) they may have a heightened sense of racial awareness that may have influenced how they responded to the dependent measures. One last event happening in the "real world" was that the Ohio State football program was experiencing a tremendous amount of success, making a bid for the national championship. This could have prompted the students to increase their involvement and attachment to the team. As a result, students may have boosted their support for OSU athletics, which may have lead to an increase in their involvement in and enjoyment of OSU sports. If the success of OSU football increased their sport orientation, this may have also affected their responses to the idea of increasing student fees to finance a sport facility.

**Delimitations**

The method in which the subjects were selected to participate in this study also had inherent delimitations. The subjects were purposively selected because of accessibility, and therefore comprised a convenient sample. A delimitation of this sampling procedure is that the results of this study cannot be generalized to other samples of African-American students (such as the entire African-American student population at Ohio State University, or African-American students at-large). Furthermore, because the data were provided by
college students, these results may not be generalized to the adult population (as noted in the differences in the studies conducted by Whittler, 1989 and Whittler & DiMeo, 1991).

Also, because the participants from this study were limited to a large midwestern university, the results may not be generalized beyond the geographical region represented. This caution was made even though a similar study (Pitts et al., 1989) used a split sample of students from a large midwestern city and a large city in the south, and no significant differences were revealed.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study examined the effects of different variables on African-Americans' processing of persuasive communications via the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The topic of persuasion was increasing student fees to finance a sport arena. To test the predictions of the ELM, three experiments were conducted.

Experiment One manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the presentation of the source's position on the topic of persuasion (either presented as in favor of the issue or not given at all). Experiment Two manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the quality of the arguments (strong or weak) used to convey the message the source was presenting. Experiment Three manipulated the race of the source (Black or White) and the content of the arguments (either culturally-targeted to African-Americans or not culturally-targeted to African-Americans) used to convey the message the source was presenting. Also included in this study, was a control group which did not receive any of the source or message manipulations.
To account for the anticipated effect ethnic identification would have on attitudes and message processing, a 2-way ANCOVA was performed initially with ethnic identification as a covariate for each of the experiments. In those experiments where ethnic identification was found to have little or no influence, a 2-way ANOVA was used.

This chapter will discuss the differences between the attitude and thoughts of the experimental and control groups. To account for the anticipated effect ethnic identification would have on message processing, a 2-way ANCOVA was performed initially with ethnic identification as a covariate for each of the experiments. In those experiments where ethnic identification was found to have no influence, a 2-way ANOVA was used. This chapter will present the results that were obtained by performing the respective analyses.

Analysis of Differences Between Control and Treatment Groups

To determine if there were any significant differences between the different treatments for the entire study, a Tukey was performed on the control group as well as for the three experimental groups for the two main categories of the dependent variables: attitudes and information processing.
Attitude. The variables that comprised the attitude score were the participants' rating of their agreement with issue (a 9-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) and four semantic differential scales (bad - good; harmful - beneficial; foolish - wise; unfavorable - favorable; alpha = .92). The overall mean for the study on the participants' attitude toward the issue was 3.90. There were significant differences in the mean attitude scores between each of the groups: control group, M = 2.99; Experiment One, Group M = 3.00; Experiment Two, Group M = 4.31; Experiment Three, Group M = 4.56. Experiment One and the control group participants did not differ significantly in their attitude toward the issue. Exposure to the race of the source in absence of an actual report did not induce any responses that were significantly different from those who received no race of source manipulation. These results were expected, considering no effect was found in the test for the race of the source as a peripheral cue in Experiment One.

Participants in Experiment Two and Three also did not differ significantly from each other. However, they did differ significantly from those in Experiment One and the control group. Participants in Experiment Two and Three (with means of 4.31 and 4.56 respectively) reported more favorable attitude scores than did those in Experiment One.

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and the control group (with means of 3.00 and 2.99 respectively). The results suggested that the groups that were exposed to any type of report (strong, weak, culturally targeted, or non-culturally targeted) reported more favorable attitude scores.

Thought Listing

Total Thoughts. Significant differences were found between the groups in the total number of thoughts generated. The overall mean for the study on total thoughts generated was 3.60. The mean score for each group is as follows: control group, $M = 2.82$; Experiment One, Group $M= 3.98$; Experiment Two, Group $M= 3.65$; and Experiment Three, Group $M= 3.61$. The participants in the experimental groups did not differ from each other significantly in the total number of thoughts generated, even though Experiment One participants reported the highest total. Although the total number of thoughts for the participants in Experiments Two and Three did not differ significantly from the control group, the number of thoughts generated by participants in Experiment One were significantly higher than the thoughts generated by the participants in the control group. Only the group that received the race of source manipulation displayed the most discrepancy in total thoughts generated in relation to the control group (who received no source or report manipulations). These results suggested that the presentation of a topic
of persuasion advocated by a source in absence of a message (i.e., varying whether the position will be presented or not) elicited a greater number of thoughts from the participants. The increased number of thoughts may have stemmed from unanswered questions the participants may have had after receiving no arguments to further explain the source's position.

Thought Positivity. The control group was excluded from the analysis of thought positivity because they were not exposed to the source manipulations. Hence, only the experimental groups were included in this analysis. Significant differences were found between the experimental groups in their positivity index scores. The overall mean for the participants in the experimental groups was -1.46. The mean score for each separate experimental group was as follows: Experiment One, Group $M = -2.29$; Experiment Two, Group $M = -1.10$; Experiment Three, $M = -1.16$. The positivity index scores of the participants in Experiments Two and Three did not differ from each other significantly. However, they did differ significantly from the positivity index scores of the participants in Experiment One. These results suggested that the participants who were exposed to a report (be it strong, weak, culturally targeted, or non-culturally targeted) had a higher positivity index than did those who were not exposed to a report. Hence, exposure to an actual message presented by a source appeared to have increased the valence of the
participants' thoughts. In summary, these results suggested that attitudes are more favorable and more positive thoughts are produced when a message is included in a persuasive communication.

Experiment One

The purpose of this experiment was to test for an effect for the race of the source as a peripheral cue as suggested by Petty and Cacioppo (1986a). It was designed to determine whether the race of the source would influence Blacks to elaborate more and respond more favorably to a persuasive communication that featured a Black source than they would for one that featured a White source, when they were exposed only to the race of the source and his position on the topic of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena.

One hypothesis addressed in this first experiment (Hypothesis 1) was the prediction that there would be an effect for the race of the source on the participants' attitudes. Specifically, it was hypothesized that African-Americans would have more favorable attitudes after exposure to communications that featured African-American sources than they would after exposure to communications that did not feature African-American sources. A second hypothesis (Hypothesis 2) which predicted that there would be a positive association between ethnic identification and the participants'
attitude toward the topic of persuasion was also addressed in this experiment. Whittler (1989) revealed that individuals with firmly established racial attitudes were more likely to employ racially-focused heuristics than individuals with less defined racial attitudes. He noted that racially-conscious individuals appeared to use decision rules such as perceived similarity and symbolic role identification when exposed to source presenting a message in a persuasive communication. Hence, it was hypothesized that the participants' ethnic identification score would influence their responses to the race of the sources.

Based on the protocol of previous ELM investigations by Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) and White and Harkins (1994) the participants in this experiment were exposed to a picture of a Black or White male as the source of a report they were expecting to read. Either the source's position was presented as being in favor of the issue or no position was given. No actual message was presented to the participants. It was predicted that, if the race of the source does serve as a peripheral cue, the participants would process the information and respond to the attitude questions even though they did not actually receive a report.

Previous studies (Whittler, 1989; Williams, 1989) have revealed that ethnic identification does influence the participants' attitudes and thoughts that result from their exposure to persuasive communications that contain members of their ethnic group. On
the basis of the effects ethnic identification is posited to have on the manner in which
Blacks respond to communications (Pitts et al., 1989), the extent to which participants
identified with Black culture was included as a covariate in this experiment. An ethnic
identification score for each participant was derived by calculating the mean of their
responses to a modification of Whittier et al.'s (1991) 13-item scale devised to measure the
degree to which Blacks identify with Black culture.

The participants for this experiment were 63 Black male (n = 13) and female (n = 50)
students. The experiment was administered in a group format and the students were
randomly assigned to one of four conditions in the 2 (Black or White source) x 2 (position
given or not given) between subjects design. The treatments consisted of: (a) a Black
source with his position presented as being in favor of the issue (n = 14); (b) a Black
source with no position on the topic presented (n = 15); (c) a White source with his
position presented as in favor of the issue (n = 18); and (d) a White source with no
position on the topic presented (n = 13). Three of the subjects in this experiment were
excluded from the analyses due to incomplete ethnic identification scores.

A 2-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) performed on the data revealed no
differences in the dependent variables using ethnic identification as a covariate. As such,
ethnic identification was dropped as a covariate, and a 2-way analysis of variance
(ANOVA) was performed to examine the effects of the source and position manipulations without the influence of ethnic identification. Hence, the results presented for this experiment were yielded by the 2-way ANOVA.

**Manipulation Checks**

**Personal Involvement.** This experiment was designed to be one of low involvement for the participants because the scenario described was not currently under consideration at Ohio State University. The participants were asked to respond on a 9 point scale to the question: "Is this increase in student fees currently being considered at Ohio State University?" According to a frequency distribution, 90.2% of the participants responded by checking "no," 9.8% checked "yes" providing evidence that the vast majority of the participants, in fact, carefully read and understood the low involvement context of the hypothetical scenario.

**Race of Source.** The manipulation of the race of the source was checked by asking the participants to describe demographic characteristics of the source in a free recall format: "Relying on your memory only (do not look back to previous pages), what demographic characteristics (background information) do you remember about the person who prepared this report (such as major, etc.)?" A 2 (Black vs. White actual source) x 2
(Black vs. White source's race recalled) chi-square was performed to determine how participants responded to the race manipulation. Almost all of the participants who were exposed to the Black source (96%) correctly recalled the race of the source among the demographic characteristics listed when describing the source. When those exposed to the White source were asked to recall the demographic characteristics of the source, all of the participants (100%) correctly recalled the source's race. None of the participants misclassified the race of the source ($X^2 = 1.02$ (df = 1) $p = 0.13$), providing further evidence that the participants were able to clearly distinguish the racial identity of the source.

**Dependent Variables**

**Attitude Measure.** A composite measure of the participants' attitude toward the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was constructed by calculating the mean of the four semantic differential scales (items such as bad - good; harmful - beneficial; foolish - wise; unfavorable - favorable; alpha = .86) and the 9-point agreement question (in which the participants responded on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree) was calculated. The attitude score was then analyzed in a 2 (Black vs. White source) x 2 (position told vs. not told) ANOVA. This analysis yielded a mean score of
3.00 and revealed no significant differences among the conditions in the participants' attitude towards the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena. No main effect for source was found, $F (1, 59) = 0.02$, $p = .89$, as the participants' did not respond differently to the attitude towards the issue, based on the race of the source to which they were exposed (Black source, $M = 3.01$; White source, $M = 2.99$). In addition, no main effect for position was found, $F (1, 59) = 0.54$, $p = .47$, as participants' responses did not differ according to whether or not they were given the source's position (position given, $M = 3.14$; position not given, $M = 2.84$).

**Thought Listing.** The thought listing measures included the total number of thoughts generated and the thought positivity index (the number of positive thoughts minus the number of negative thoughts). The 2-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences in the groups on the number and valence of their thoughts.

The total number of thoughts generated was calculated by adding the number of thoughts for all of the categories (source positive, source negative, source neutral, issue positive, issue negative, issue neutral, other positive, other negative, other neutral). There were no significant differences between the groups in the total number of thoughts generated. The mean number of thoughts generated was 3.94. No main effect for source
was found, $F(1, 62) = 0.56, p = .47$ (Black source, $M = 3.77$; White source, $M = 4.18$).

In addition, no main effect for position was found, $F(1, 62) = 2.85, p = .10$ (position presented, $M = 4.39$; position not presented, $M = 3.53$).

**An index of thought positivity** was computed to assess the valence of the thoughts listed. It was adopted from the positivity index used by White and Harkins (1994) in their ELM investigation. It was calculated by subtracting the number of negative thoughts (source negative, issue negative, other negative) from the number of positive thoughts (source positive, issue positive, other positive). No significant differences were found between the groups in their thought positivity index. The mean score on the thought positivity index was $-2.29$. No main effect for source was found, $F(1, 62) = 3.40, p = .07$. The participants generated similar positivity indices regardless of the race of the source to which they were exposed (Black source, $M = -1.77$; White source, $M = -2.77$).

Similarly, no main effect for position was found, $F(1, 62) = 0.02, p = .90$ (position given, $M = -2.23$; position not given, $M = -2.30$).

**Ancillary Measures.** Significant differences were found only in one of the ancillary ancillary measures. The mean credibility rating of the source as a spokesperson on the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was 4.98. No main effect for the race of the source was found, $F(1, 54) = 1.93, p = .17$. The race of the source did not
have a significant impact on the participants' rating of the source's credibility (Black source, $M = 5.37$; White source, $M = 4.61$). However, knowing that the source's position was in favor of the issue influenced the source's credibility rating, $F (1, 54) = 6.27, p = .02$. The source received a higher credibility rating when his position on the topic of persuasion was not presented ($M = 5.69$) than when it was presented as in favor of the issue ($M = 4.34$).

No significant differences were found in the participants' ratings of how much the student's report influenced their attitude toward the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena ($M = 1.88$). No main effect for the race of the source was found, $F (1, 60) = 0.24, p = .63$. (Black source, $M= 2.17$; White source, $M= 1.94$). Also no main effect for position was found, $F (1, 60) = 0.23, p = .63$ (position given, $M = 2.116$; position not given, $M = 1.93$).

**Discussion - Experiment One**

The purpose of this experiment was to determine if the race of a source served as a simple cue in the absence of a persuasive message, as suggested by Petty and Cacioppo (1986a). To accomplish this task, elements of White and Harkins' (1994) experiments one and two were replicated exclusively with Black participants. According to Petty and
Cacioppo (1986a) and Hawkins et al. (1992), source characteristics often influence individuals' attitudes and motivate them to process information. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) suggested that one way to test for a cue effect is to expose participants to the source with only his or her position on the topic known. If race actually served as a peripheral cue, differences would emerge between the sources, even in the absence of a persuasive message.

The results of the manipulation check suggested that the race of the source was a salient characteristic (90% of the participants mentioned it among the characteristics listed when they described the source in a free recall format). However, no main effect for race was found. The results of this experiment suggested that, while participants were cognizant of the source's race, the race of the source did not influence their attitudes on the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena more or less favorably.

The results determined that the race of the source did not serve as a peripheral cue, in the absence of a persuasive message. Neither of the hypotheses was supported by the results of this experiment. The race of the source did not influence attitudes. These findings were replicated White and Harkins' (1994) analyses which revealed equivalent
results under similar conditions for a sample of White students. Interestingly, the findings from both studies run counter to Petty and Cacioppo's (1986a) contention that source characteristics may serve as a peripheral cue in the ELM.

In addition to the race of the source not influencing the participants' attitudes, the race of the source did not influence the source's credibility rating. Source credibility was, instead, influenced by the source's position on the topic of persuasion. The credibility of the source was rated higher when no position on the issue was presented. This finding suggested that the participants did not have a very favorable attitude toward the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena (as revealed by their mean attitude of 3.00 -- on a scale ranging from 1 to 9, with 9 being the most favorable). As such, they rated the source who was in favor of the issue as less credible (because a position was taken that was not congruent with theirs). Their evaluation of the credibility of the source was influenced more by ideological similarity (shared position, attitude, or idea) as opposed to racial similarity.

Also the hypothesis concerning ethnic identification was not supported by the results of this experiment. The results suggested that ethnic identification did not have any significant effects on the participants' attitudes, thoughts, or evaluations. Previous studies have revealed that participants were highly identified with their culture (i.e., Williams,
1989), and that their identification influenced their cognitions and evaluations (i.e., Whittier, 1989). These results were not replicated in this present experiment, as identification with their ethnic group did not significantly influence the participants' responses to the racial cue in the persuasive communication.

These results of ethnic identification not being a significant covariate may be attributed to the increased amount of acculturation and assimilation into the majority European paradigm the students have been subjected to (as discussed by Jewell, 1985), which may have made them somewhat reluctant to express the degree to which they identify with their ethnic group. Furthermore, according to Rosenberg (1979) as Blacks' opportunities for integration with Whites increase, their attachment to nuances of traditional Black culture and their group identification tends to decrease. Lastly, as Whittier (1989) notes, ethnic identification may be more discernible among older adults who are firm in their racial and ethnic beliefs, more so than it would be for college aged students (as was demonstrated in Whittler and Dimeo, 1992).

In sum, the participants in this experiment were not significantly influenced by their awareness of the race of the source of whose message they anticipated reading. These results did not confirm Kelman's (1961) model of attitude change, wherein racial similarity would serve as a means in which the participants would identify with the Black source,
and/or internalize the information presented en route to an attitude change or an acceptance of the advocated position. Nor did these results affirm the contention of the ELM that source characteristics may serve as a peripheral cue. Instead, these results suggest that elements besides the race of the source may influence the means in which participants react to persuasive communications.

Experiment Two

In addition to examining the effects source characteristics have on message processing, previous ELM investigations have also examined the effect of argument quality. Since a race of source effect, in absence of a message, was not found in the previous experiment, the results suggested the need to examine other elements along with the race of the source, such a message/report. By coupling a source with a message, this experiment provided an examination of another possible function of the effect of the race of the source (as suggested by Petty & Cacioppo, 1986a). These researchers posited that the race of a source would may act as a variable that influenced message processing when accompanied by an actual report. To test whether the quality of the arguments contained in a message would make any significant differences, the arguments contained in each message were varied to either be strong or weak.
This experiment hypothesized that the dependent variables would be influenced by a two-way Race of Source x Argument Quality interaction. No differences were expected due to the race of the source when a message containing strong arguments was being presented. Differences were expected due to the race of the source when a message containing weak arguments was being presented, as the race of the Black source should serve as a peripheral cue. The hypotheses addressed in this experiment included:

(Hypothesis 3) The race of the source and the quality of the arguments should influence Blacks' attitudes such that:

(a) no differences will be found in attitudes resulting from exposure to a Black or White source when a strong message is being presented.

(b) attitudes resulting from exposure to a weak message will be more favorable when it is presented by a Black rather than White source.

(Hypothesis 4) The effects of the race of the source and the argument quality should influence Blacks' rating of the quality of the message such that:

(a) no differences will be found in the rating of the quality of a strong message presented by a Black or White source.

(b) the rating of the quality of a weak message will be more favorable when the message is presented by a Black rather than White source.
(Hypothesis 5) The race of the source and the quality of the message will influence the number of arguments Blacks correctly recall from messages such that:

(a) no differences will be found in the number of arguments correctly recalled from a strong message delivered by a Black or White source.

(b) the number of arguments correctly recalled from a weak message will be higher when the message is delivered by a Black rather than White source.

(Hypothesis 6) The effects of the race of the source and the quality of the arguments should influence message processing by Blacks such that:

(a) no differences will be found in the total number of thoughts resulting from exposure to a strong message delivered by a Black or White source.

(b) the total number of thoughts resulting from exposure to a weak message will be higher when the message is delivered by a Black rather than White source.

(c) no differences will be found in the number of positive and negative thoughts that result from exposure to a strong message delivered by a Black or White source.

(d) the number of positive thoughts will be greater than the number of negative thoughts that result from a weak message when the message is delivered by a Black rather than White source.
(Hypothesis 7) There will be a positive association between ethnic identification and

(a) the participants' attitude toward the topic of persuasion.

(b) the degree to which participants process the message.

Participants were told that they were going to read a report prepared by a student at another university when the topic of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was under consideration. The reports that the participants received differed in the quality of the information they contained (strong, cogent arguments or weak, specious arguments), yet they presented arguments in favor of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena. If the race of the source was the most critical cue in the persuasive communication, the quality of the arguments would not have an impact on the participants' attitudes and information processing. On the other hand, if the argument quality was more critical, it was predicted that a race effect would not be found.

The participants for this experiment were 72 Black students (male, n = 30; female, n = 41; one participant did not respond to the gender question). They were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions in a 2 (Black or White source) x 2 (strong or weak arguments) between subjects design. The experimental conditions were as follows: (a) a Black source presenting a strong report containing strong arguments; (b) a Black source presenting a report containing weak arguments; (c) a White source
presenting a message containing strong arguments; and (d) a White source presenting a report containing weak arguments. Each cell contained either 17 or 18 participants.

A two-way ANCOVA was performed on the data to examine the effects of the source and message variables above and beyond the effect of ethnic identification as a covariate. Subsequent analyses excluded ethnic identification as a covariate, and examined the effects of the source and message manipulations on the dependent variables. A comparison of the analyses revealed that ethnic identification significantly enhanced the effects of the variables on the dependent measures. As such, the results presented for this experiment were obtained by a 2 (Black or White source) x 2 (strong or weak report) analysis of covariance (ethnic identification as the covariate) unless otherwise noted. The mean scores presented are the least squares means (they have been adjusted for the effects of the covariate).

Manipulation Checks.

Personal Involvement. The same involvement check described in Experiment One was also used in this experiment. The participants responded on a 9-point scale to the same question: "Is this increase in student fees currently being considered at Ohio State University?" According to a frequency distribution, 74 percent of the participants
responded "no" to this question, 20 percent responded with a "yes," and 6 percent
did not respond at all. These results suggested that a substantial majority of participants
understood the intended low involvement condition of the hypothetical scenario.

Race of Source. Participants were asked to recall the demographic characteristics of
the student reporter. A 2 (Black vs. White actual source) x 2 (Black vs. White source's
race recalled) chi-square was performed to examine the effectiveness of the race
manipulations. Eighty-eight percent of the participants correctly recalled the race of the
source among the demographic characteristics listed when describing the Black source.
Eighty-five percent of the participants correctly recalled the race of the source among the
demographic characteristics listed when describing the White source. Participants did not
misclassify the race of the source ($X^2 = .13$ (df = 1), $p = .72$).

Dependent Variables

Attitude Measures. Attitude scores were obtained in the same manner as described in
Experiment One. The semantic differential scales (bad-good; harmful - beneficial; foolish
- wise; unfavorable - favorable) received a Cronbach Alpha of .88. The analysis revealed
significant differences in the participants' attitude toward the issue of increasing student
fees to finance a sport arena ($M = 4.31$). No 2-way interaction between source and
argument quality was found, $F(1, 70) = 0.07, p = .79$. A main effect for the source was found, $F(1, 70) = 4.08, p = .048$. The race of the source significantly influenced the participants' attitudes toward the issue, as the participants who were exposed to the Black source responded more favorably to the attitude measures ($M = 4.67$) than did the participants who were exposed to the White source ($M = 3.96$). A main effect for the quality of the report on the participants' attitude toward the issue was also found, $F(1, 70) = 5.54, p = .02$. Those who received a report with strong, cogent arguments responded more favorably to the attitude measures ($M = 4.79$) than did those who were exposed to the report with weak, specious arguments ($M = 3.84$).

**Report Quality.** A composite measure of the quality of the reports was constructed by calculating the means of the four semantic differential scales (persuasive-unpersuasive, strong-weak, believable-unbelievable, important-unimportant; alpha = .90). Significant differences were found between the conditions on the ratings of the quality of the reports ($M = 5.00$). No 2-way interaction was found, $F(1, 70) = 2.47, p = .12$. In addition, no main effect for the race of the source was found, $F(1, 70) = 3.03, p = .09$ (Black source, $M = 5.33$; White source, $M = 4.66$). A main effect for the quality of the
arguments was found, $F(1, 70) = 22.43, p = .000$. Participants rated the message containing strong, cogent arguments of higher quality ($M = 5.94$) than the message containing weak, specious arguments ($M = 4.03$).

**Argument Recall.** The 2-way ANCOVA revealed no significant difference in the number of arguments recalled by the participants in each group ($M = 1.62$). No main effect for source was found, $F(1, 71) = 0.12, p = .73$. Participants recalled a similar number of arguments regardless of the race of the source (Black source, $M = 1.69$; White source, $M = 1.64$). Also, the quality of the arguments did not make a significant difference in the number of arguments recalled, $F(1, 71) = 0.55, p = .46$ (strong report, $M = 1.56$; weak report, $M = 1.78$).

**Thought Listing.** The thought listing activity consisted of the components that were described in Experiment One to assess the total number and valence of the participants' thoughts. In addition the target (central or peripheral) of the participants' thoughts were also examined.

The total number of total thoughts were generated in the same manner as described in Experiment One. No significant differences were found ($M = 3.65$). The race of the source did not influence the total number of thoughts generated, $F(1, 71) = 0.76, p = .38$.
(Black source, $M = 3.44$; White source, $M = 3.86$); nor did the quality of the arguments, $F(1, 71) = 1.25, p = .27$ (strong report, $M = 3.89$; weak report, $M = 3.42$).

The thought positivity was computed in the same manner as described in Experiment One. Significant differences were found between the groups ($M = -1.12$). A significant 2-way interaction between the race of the source and the argument quality was found, $F(1,71) = 8.70, p = .004$; see Figure 1. This interaction indicated that the quality of the arguments made a significant difference in the positivity index score that resulted from the participants' exposure to the weak message delivered by the Black or White source (with means of -.72 and -2.78 respectively; $t(32) = 2.87, p = .0001$). The thought positivity resulting from exposure to a strong report by a Black or White source was not influenced by the quality of the arguments contained in the message (Black source, $M = -.89$; White source, $M = .00, t(31) = 1.27, p = .21$). This interaction also revealed that the thought positivity index resulting from exposure to the White source was dependent upon the quality of the arguments contained in the message (strong, $M = .00$; weak, $M = -2.78$, $t(34) = 3.98, p = .000$). On the other hand, the quality of the arguments was not a determinant of the thought positivity index that resulted from exposure to a Black source (strong, $M = -.89$; weak, $M = -.72$).
The target of the thoughts was classified as central and peripheral as was described in Experiment One. Central thoughts refer to those that are issue-related, while peripheral thoughts refer to those that are source-related. For the central thoughts, no significant differences were found, \( M = 3.33 \). The race of the source did not make a difference in the number of central thoughts, \( F(1, 71) = 0.49, p = .49 \) (Black source, \( M = 3.14 \); White source, \( M = 3.53 \)). The quality of the arguments did not make a difference in the number of central thoughts, \( F(1, 71) = 1.04, p = .31 \) (strong report, \( M = 3.56 \); weak report, \( M = 3.11 \)).

No significant differences were found in the number of peripheral thoughts generated by the participants, \( M = 0.24 \). No significant differences were found due to the race of the source, as participants responded similarly regardless of the race of the source they were exposed to, \( F(1, 71) = 0.86, p = .36 \) (Black source, \( M = 0.19 \); White source, \( M = 0.28 \)). In addition, no effect was found for the quality of the arguments, \( F(1, 71) = 0.40, p = .84 \) (strong report, \( M = 0.22 \); weak report, \( M = 0.25 \)).

Ancillary Measures. Some significant differences were found in some of the ancillary measures. Significant differences were found on the participants' rating of how credible the source was as a spokesperson for the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena \( M = 4.92 \). A significant 2-way interaction was found between the
race of the source and the quality of the arguments, $F(1, 70) = 3.97, p = .05$; see Figure 2. The interaction indicates that there were no differences in the credibility rating of the Black or White source presenting a strong message (means of 6.11 and 5.35 respectively; $t(33) = 1.19, p = .24$). Differences were found in the credibility ratings of the source presenting a weak message: the Black source received a higher credibility rating than did the White source (means of 5.22 and 3.00 respectively; $t(34) = 3.94, p = .000$).

The Race of Source x Argument Quality interaction also indicated that the White source's credibility was premised on the quality of the arguments in his message (strong, $M = 5.35$; weak, $M = 3.00$; $t(31) = 3.94, p = .000$). For the Black source, his credibility rating was not dependent upon the quality of the arguments contained in his message (strong, $M = 6.11$; weak, $M = 5.22$; $t(34) = 1.46, p = .15$).

Significant differences were also found among the groups in the degree to which they were influenced by the source's report ($M = 3.45$). No 2-way interaction was found, $F(1, 70) = 0.001, p = .97$. A main effect for the race of the source was found, $F(1, 70) = 4.91, p = .03$. The participants were more influenced by the Black source ($M = 3.86$) than they were by the White source ($M = 3.03$). A main effect for the the quality of the arguments also influenced the participants rating of how influential the sources' report was, $F(1, 70) = 10.68, p = .002$. Participants who received a report with strong
arguments were more influenced by the student's report ($M = 4.20$) than were those who received a report with weak arguments ($M = 2.72$). Also, the participants' ethnic identification score was significant as a covariate, $F (1, 70) = 4.86$, $p = .03$ (a one unit change in the participants' EIS resulted in a change of .27 in the degree to which the participants were influenced by the student's report).

**Discussion - Experiment Two**

The purpose of this study was to expand on the test of the race of the source effect by adding a report, and varying the quality of the arguments contained therein. Hence, the objective was to examine how the race of the source would influence argument elaboration when coupled with a message.

As was the case in Experiment One, the manipulation check suggested that the participants in this experiment were aware of the source's race. Unlike in Experiment One, however, a main effect for the race of the source was found on the participants' attitudes towards the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena. Participants responded more favorably to the attitude measures when they were exposed to a Black rather than when exposed to a White source. These results suggested that the race of the source did serve as a peripheral cue. This finding may be explained by the effect of the in-group phenomenon discussed by Mackie et al. (1990). Mackie et al. (1990) suggested
that having an in-group member as the source of a message may activate the in-group concept, and increase the participants' readiness to accept the message. It may also demonstrate that the race of the source serves as an acceptance cue as suggested by Petty and Cacioppo (1986a).

In addition to the race of the source influencing the participants' attitude toward the issue, it was also a critical factor in how much their attitudes were influenced by the student's report. The participants reported that the Black source was more influential than the White source. This finding reiterated the main effect for the race of the source on the participants' attitudes. The main effect for race in this experiment replicated one of the findings in White and Harkins (1994, Experiment Two) where the White participants were more persuaded overall by the White rather than Black source. The results of this experiment suggested that the race of the source did serve as peripheral cue in the ELM as suggested by Petty and Cacioppo (1986a).

The manipulations for argument quality were apparently effective, as the arguments that were strong and cogent: (a) elicited more favorable attitude responses, (b) were perceived as being of better quality; and (c) had a significant impact on the degree to which the participants' attitudes were influenced than did the arguments that were weak and specious.
A hypothesis was provided for each major dependent variable. However, the overall nature of the hypotheses basically suggested that for strong messages, the race of the Black or White source would not make a difference in the dependent variables because the participants will focus on the strong, cogent arguments. On the other hand, for weak messages, the participants will not focus on the arguments presented but would, instead, rely on the race of the Black source as a positive peripheral cue as they responded to the dependent measures.

Two significant 2-way interactions were found that offered support for the overall hypothesis for this experiment. There were no differences in the thought positivity that resulted from exposure to a strong message presented by a Black or White source. For the weak message, the thought positivity index was significantly higher when the message was presented by a Black source. This interaction suggested that for the weak message, instead of relying on the arguments, the race of the Black source served as a positive peripheral cue as the participants processed the information. Further evidence of the race of the Black source serving as a peripheral cue was revealed as participants objectively scrutinized the arguments in the message by the White source as they listed the thoughts they were having; whereas, for the Black source, the argument quality did not make a
difference in message processing. This suggested that the race of the White source may have served to motivate the extent of message processing (as differences were revealed when the message presented by the White source was strong or weak).

The other Race of Source x Argument Quality interaction was found in the participants' rating of the source's credibility. The results mirrored the ones found in the previous interaction for thought positivity. No differences were found in the credibility rating of either source when a strong message was being presented. However, for a weak message, the credibility was significantly higher when the source was Black. This finding suggested that the race of the Black source served as a peripheral cue, as participants may have relied on it to evaluate the message with weak arguments. Furthermore, the interaction indicated that the participants were objectively evaluating the messages presented by the White source because differences were found due argument quality. For the Black source, they appeared to rely on his race as an acceptance cue for their evaluation of his credibility, disregarding the quality of the arguments contained in the message. These findings suggested that the Black source may have served as a positive peripheral cue, and the White source may have served as a motivator of the extent of message processing en route to evaluating the credibility of the source. Hence, the
results of this experiment demonstrated the various functions the variable race of source may serve in a persuasive communication regarding the participants' attitudes, message processing, and evaluations.

The interactions found in this experiment for the race of the source and the quality of the arguments replicated the findings of previous ELM investigations. For example, the findings of White and Harkins (1994, Experiment Two) also revealed a Race of Source x Argument Quality interaction, as the (White) participants responded favorably to the Black source if the message was strong (as opposed to weak), but their response to the White source was not dependent upon the message quality.

Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) contend that two of the ways information processing may occur are: (a) relatively objective processing or (b) relatively biased processing. Relative objective processing is a means whereby the participants show greater differentiation of strong and weak arguments. Relative biased processing, however, does not reveal such distinctions. The Race of Source x Argument Quality interaction found in the participants' positivity indices, suggested that they were engaging in more objective evaluation and thinking about the information presented by the White source. They appeared to consider the quality of the arguments they were presented only when exposed to the White source.
Although ethnic identification did not have any significant influence in the previous experiment, it was significant as a covariate in this experiment. Using ethnic identification as a covariate significantly enhanced the effects of the source and message manipulations on the dependent measures. The results of this experiment did offer support for the hypotheses that predicted that there would be a positive association between ethnic identification and the participants' attitudes toward the topic of persuasion and the extent of their message processing. When ethnic identification was excluded in the analyses, and a two-way ANOVA was performed, several of the main effects for the race of the source were not found. This revelation supported Whittler's (1989) contention that participants' racial attitudes may influence how they respond to heuristics such as Black or White sources.

The nature of this study did not allow for an examination of the differences between those who were highly identified with their ethnic group and those who were not highly identified with their ethnic group. Nonetheless, the effects of ethnic identification in this experiment suggested that ethnic identification is a variable that may significantly influence the means in which Blacks respond to cues in a persuasive communication, particularly when source cues are presented.
Experiment Three

The results of previous studies suggested that Blacks are more affected by message content that is reflective of their culture (Rossman, 1994; Pitts et al, 1989). If the cultural content serves as a cue or motivator for Blacks to process information, significant effects on their attitudes and thought listings due to the cultural content of the message should be found. In the context of the ELM, the cultural content of the report may be considered personally-relevant information because it specifically addresses issues of concern to the African-American community. Therefore, it should elicit more favorable responses and more issue-relevant thinking. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) suggested that personal relevance (which in the context of the ELM may also subsume other labels such as issue involvement and personal meaning which basically implies that the issue has some significant consequences for the individuals) may be the most important variable that affects an individual's motivation to process a persuasive message. Petty and Cacioppo (1986a) further contended that increasing the personal relevance will result in an increase in the participants' motivation to process the issue relevant arguments they are presented.

The purpose of this experiment was to extend the previous experiment which revealed that the race of source did function as a motivator of the extent and direction of processing strong and weak arguments presented by Black or White sources. The intent
of this experiment was to build upon the effect for the strong message found in the previous experiment to determine whether adding cultural relevance to a strong argument presented by a Black or White source would have an impact on the processing of the information. This third experiment varied the content of the arguments to either be culturally-targeted to African-Americans or non-culturally targeted to African-Americans. Both the culturally targeted and non-culturally targeted messages were comprised of strong, cogent arguments.

This experiment hypothesized that there would be no differences in the dependent variables due to the race of the source when a culturally-targeted message was being presented. For the non-culturally targeted message, differences would be found in the dependent variables because the race of the Black source would serve as a positive peripheral cue. The hypotheses addressed in this experiment included:

(Hypothesis 8) The race of the source and the content of the message should influence the attitudes of Blacks such that:

(a) attitudes resulting from exposure to a Black source will be more favorable than those resulting from exposure to a White source under conditions of low cultural relevance.

(b) no differences will occur in the attitudes resulting from exposure to a Black or
White source under conditions of high cultural relevance.

(Hypothesis 9) The effects of the race of the source and the content of the message will influence Black participants' rating of the quality of the reports such that:

(a) the quality of the rating will be higher for a message when delivered by a Black rather than White source under conditions of low cultural relevance.

(b) no differences will occur in the rating of the quality of the message delivered by the Black or White source under conditions of high cultural relevance.

(Hypothesis 10) The race of the source and the content of the message should influence the number of arguments Black participants correctly recall from a message such that:

(a) a greater number of arguments will be correctly recalled from a message delivered by a Black source rather than by a White source under conditions of low cultural relevance.

(b) no differences will be found in the number of arguments correctly recalled from a message delivered by a Black or White source under conditions of high cultural relevance.
(Hypothesis 11) The effects of the race of the source and content of the arguments should influence Blacks' message processing such that:

(a) the total number of thoughts resulting from exposure to a message by a Black source will be greater than those resulting from a White source under conditions of low cultural relevance.

(b) no differences will be found in the total number of thoughts resulting from exposure to a message delivered by a Black or White source under conditions of low cultural relevance.

(c) the number of positive thoughts will be greater than the number of negative thoughts that result from exposure to a weak message delivered by a Black rather than White source under conditions of low cultural-relevance.

(d) no differences will be found in the number of positive and negative thoughts resulting from exposure to a strong message delivered by a Black or White source under conditions of high cultural relevance.

(Hypothesis 12) There will be a positive association between ethnic identification and:

(a) the participants' attitudes toward the topic of persuasion.

(b) the degree to which participants process the message.
The same protocol that was used in Experiment Two was also used in this experiment. Participants were told that they were going to read a report prepared by a student at another university when the topic of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was under consideration. The reports that the participants received differed in the content of the information contained therein. One report contained arguments that mentioned benefits to the African-American culture specifically (culturally targeted report) and the other contained the same arguments, yet they did not specifically mention African-Americans (non-culturally targeted report). If the race of the source was the most critical cue in the persuasive communication, the content of the arguments would not have an impact on the participants' attitudes and information processing. On the other hand, if the argument content was more critical, a race effect alone, would not be found.

The participants in this experiment were 89 Black male (n = 22) and female (n = 65) students (two of the students did not provide their gender). They were randomly assigned to one of four experimental treatments in a 2 (Black or White source) x 2 (culturally targeted or non-culturally targeted report) between subjects design. The experimental conditions were as follows: (a) a Black source presenting a message that was culturally-targeted to African-Americans; (b) a Black source presenting a message that was not culturally-targeted to African-Americans; (c) a White source presenting a
message that was culturally-targeted to African-Americans; and (d) a White source presenting a message that was not culturally-targeted to African-Americans. The cell sizes for the conditions range from 20 to 28 participants.

A 2-way ANCOVA was performed on the data for this experiment using ethnic identification as the covariate. The analysis revealed that ethnic identification was not significant as a covariate. One plausible explanation for this finding was that the effect of ethnic identification may have been subsumed in the content of the culturally-targeted message. As such, ethnic identification was excluded from the analysis and a 2-way ANOVA was performed examining the effects of the source and message manipulations without the influence of ethnic identification. The ANOVA revealed that the source and message manipulations made significant differences in the dependent variables without the influence of ethnic identification. Hence, the results of this experiment were obtained by a 2 x 2 ANOVA, unless otherwise noted.

Manipulation Checks

Personal Involvement. Participants were asked to respond to the question "Is this increase in student fees currently being considered at Ohio State University?" A frequency
distribution revealed that 94 percent responded "yes," 6 percent responded "no." These results provided strong evidence that participants comprehended the low involvement condition of the hypothetical scenario.

**Race of Source.** The same race check used in Experiment Two were used in Experiment Three. A 2 (Black vs. White actual source) x 2 (Black vs. White source's race recalled) chi-square was performed. Eighty percent of the participants correctly recalled the race of the source among the demographic characteristics listed for the Black source (20 percent of the participants made no mention of race among the demographic characteristics listed when asked to describe the Black source). Ninety-four percent of the participants correctly recalled the race of the source among the demographic characteristics listed for the White source (6 percent of the participants made no mention of race among the demographic characteristics listen when asked to describe the White source). None of the participants misclassified the race of the source. \( \chi^2 = 3.46 \) (df = 1) \( p = .06 \).

**Dependent Measures**

**Attitude Measures.** The attitude was calculated in this experiment in the same manner as was done in the previous experiments. The variables that comprised the attitude score
received a Cronbach Alpha of .94. The mean attitude score for the group was 4.56. The analyses revealed a significant two-way interaction between the source and report content, \( F(1, 87) = 9.23, p = .002; \) see Figure 3. This interaction indicated that there were no differences in the participants' attitude after exposure to a Black or White source presenting a culturally-targeted message (means of 5.21 and 4.20 respectively; \( t(38) = 1.44, p = .16 \)). However, participants attitudes were more favorable after exposure to a White rather than Black source when a non-culturally targeted message was being presented (means of 5.43 and 3.67 respectively; \( t(45) = -3.24, p = .002 \)). The interaction also revealed that the content of the message made significant differences in how the participants responded to the sources. For the Black source, attitudes were more favorable for the culturally-targeted rather than non-culturally targeted message (means of 5.21 and 3.67 respectively; \( t(39) = -2.09, p = .043 \)). For the White source, attitudes were more favorable for the non-culturally targeted rather than culturally-targeted message (means of 5.43 and 4.20 respectively; \( t(36) = 2.32, p = .03 \)).

**Report Quality.** Report quality was computed in the same manner as described in Experiment Two. A composite measure of the quality of the reports was constructed by calculating the means of the four semantic differential scales (persuasive-unpersuasive, strong - weak, believable - unbelievable, important - unimportant; alpha = .93). The
analyses revealed a significant two-way interaction between the race of the source and the content of the message on the participants' rating of the efficacy of the content of the message they received, $F(1, 87) = 5.48, p = .02$ ($M = 5.53$); see Figure 4. The interaction indicated that no differences were found in the participants' rating of the quality of the non-culturally targeted message presented by a Black or White source (means of 5.37 and 5.65 respectively; $t(36) = -.45, p = .66$). However, the participants rated the quality of the culturally-targeted message significantly higher when it was presented by the Black rather than White source (means of 6.50 and 4.63 respectively; $t(38) = 2.69, p = .01$).

As mentioned previously, report quality was comprised of four items (its strength, persuasiveness, believability, and importance; alpha = .93). Significant differences were found only in one of these items, the believability of the report. A significant Race of Source x Message Content interaction was found, $F(1, 87) = 6.47, p = .01$. Participants' rated the culturally targeted report as more believable when it was delivered by the Black source ($M = 6.80$) than when it was delivered by the White source ($M = 4.35$). For the non-culturally targeted report, their believability ratings were similar, regardless of the race of the source (Black source, $M = 5.92$; White source, $M = 6.00$).

**Argument Recall.** The analyses revealed a significant two-way interaction between the race of the source and the content of the message on the number of arguments the
participants correctly recalled from the report they received, $F(1, 88) = 4.02, p = .048$; see Figure 5. The interaction indicated that the participants recalled more arguments from a message presented by a White source when the message was non-culturally targeted rather than culturally-targeted (means of 1.95 and 1.00 respectively; $t(38) = -2.45, p = .02$). The number of arguments recalled correctly after exposure to a Black source were not dependent upon the content of the message, as participants responded similarly to the non-culturally targeted and culturally-targeted message (means of 1.46 and 1.60, respectively; $t(44) = .37, p = .71$).

**Thought Listing.** The thought listing consisted of the same variables presented in Experiment Two to assess the total number, valence, and target of the participants' thoughts.

The total number of thoughts were calculated in the same manner as described in Experiment One. The mean number of thoughts generated by the participants was 3.61. No two-way interaction was found between the race of the source and the content of the message, $F(1, 88) = .55, p = .46$. No main effect for the race of the source was found, $F(1, 88) = .50, p = .48$ (Black source, $M = 3.42$; White source, $M = 3.83$). A main effect
for the content of the report was found, $F(1, 88) = 7.87, p = .01$. The culturally-targeted message elicited a greater number of thoughts ($M = 4.33$) than did the non-culturally targeted message ($M = 3.02$).

The thought positivity index was calculated in the same manner as was described in Experiment One. No significant differences were found in the positivity index for each condition ($M = -1.16$). The race of the source did not influence the participants' thought positivity index, $F(1, 88) = 0.02, p = .90$ (Black source, $M = -1.13$; White source, $M = -1.20$). Nor did the content of the report did not make any significant differences in the thought positivity index, $F(1, 88) = 0.06, p = .81$ (culturally targeted report, $M = -1.23$; non-culturally targeted report, $M = -1.10$).

To examine the target of the participants' thoughts, central (issue-related) or peripheral (source-related) classifications were devised, as was described in the previous two experiments. No significant differences were found in the number of central thoughts ($M = 3.08$). The race of the source did not make any significant differences in the number of central thoughts produced by the participants, $F(1, 88) = .52, p = .47$ (Black source, $M = 3.21$; White source, $M = 2.93$). Also, the content of the report did not make any significant differences in the number of central thoughts produced, $F(1, 88) = 3.13, p = .08$ (culturally-targeted report, $M = 3.53$; non-culturally targeted report, $M = 2.71$).
For the peripheral thoughts, on the other hand, a significant two-way interaction between the race of the source and the content of the message was revealed, $F(1, 88) = 6.63, p = .01$; see Figure 6. The interaction indicated that there were no differences in the number of source-related thoughts produced after exposure to the non-culturally targeted message by a Black or White source (means of .18 and .38 respectively; $t(26) = -0.75, p = .46$). On the other hand, participants generated significantly more source-related thoughts after exposure to the culturally-targeted message when it was presented by the White rather than Black source (means of 1.35 and .20 respectively; $t(38) = -4.11, p = .000$).

The interaction also revealed that, while the content of the argument made a difference in the number of peripheral thoughts generated after exposure to a White source ($t(39) = 2.65, p = .01$), the number of peripheral thoughts generated after exposure to the Black source was not dependent upon argument quality ($t(45) = .17, p = .87$).

Peripheral thoughts included the thoughts directed toward the source that were positive, negative, or neutral. Since significant differences were found in the number of peripheral thoughts, a breakdown of this variable was done to further examine the nature of the source-related thoughts the participants generated. The breakdown suggested that the majority of the neutral and negative thoughts directed toward the source was elicited
from exposure to the White source presenting the message that was culturally targeted to African-Americans.

**Ancillary Measures.** Some significant differences were found in the participants' responses to the two ancillary measures. The mean score on the participants' rating of how credible the source was as a spokesperson on the topic of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was 4.88. A main effect for source was found, $F (1, 85) = 4.83$, $p = .03$. The Black source received a higher credibility rating ($M = 5.42$) than did the White source ($M = 4.29$). No effect was found for the content of the report, $F (1, 85) = 0.37$, $p = .55$ (culturally targeted report, $M = 4.66$; non-culturally targeted report, $M = 5.06$).

The analyses revealed a significant two-way interaction between the race of the source and the content of the message on the degree to which the participants' attitudes were influenced by the student's reports, $F (1, 86) = 4.84$, $p = .03$; see Figure 7. The mean rating was 3.91. The interaction indicated that (although not statistically significant) participants were more influenced by the culturally-targeted report when it was presented by the Black rather than White source (means of 4.63 and 3.60 respectively). They were more influenced by the non-culturally targeted report when it was presented by the White rather than Black source (means of 4.57 and 3.11 respectively).
Discussion - Experiment Three

The purpose of this experiment was to extend the finding for the message with strong arguments in the previous experiment (Experiment Two) and examine the participants' reactions to the same message except that it contained content relevant to their culture and ethnic group. Instead of manipulating the strength of the arguments contained in the message, the content of the message was a modified version of the strong arguments used in Experiment Two, and contained arguments that were either culturally-targeted to African-Americans or non-culturally targeted to African-Americans. Hence, this experiment compared the participants' reactions to a strong message in general (non-culturally targeted) to a strong message directed at the African-American culture (culturally-targeted).

The intent was to determine: (a) the effect of the cultural content on their attitudes and thoughts, and (b) how the participants would react to having a Black or White source as the presenter of a report that contained content specifically targeted to their culture (i.e., an examination of whether the race of the source would function as an additional persuasive argument).

The nature of the hypotheses was such that there would be no differences in the dependent variables as a result of exposure to a Black or White source presenting a
culturally-targeted message. The cultural relevance of the message should be the focus of the communication. On the other hand, it was expected that there would be differences after exposure to a Black or White source presenting a non-culturally targeted message. Since the message was one of low cultural relevance, the race of the Black source should serve as a peripheral cue and influence the participants' responses. The results of this experiment provided mixed and partial support for the hypotheses.

The participants' attitudes toward the issue of increasing student fees to finance a sport arena was influenced by a Race of Source x Message Content interaction. There were no differences in their attitudes resulting from exposure to a Black or White source presenting a culturally-targeted message. This finding confirmed the hypothesis (8a). Differences were found in the participants' attitudes resulting from exposure to a non-culturally targeted message presented by a Black or White source, however, the difference was opposite the direction hypothesized. The participants' attitudes were more favorable when the message was presented by a White rather than Black source. Hence, the race of the Black source did not serve as a positive peripheral cue as was hypothesized (Hypothesis 8b). The interaction indicated that the participants were processing the messages presented by the sources because of the differences in the content of the messages being presented.
The participants' rating of the quality of the message was also influenced by the Race of Source x Message Content interaction. The rating of the quality of the culturally-targeted message was higher when it was presented by the Black rather than White source. This finding did not support hypothesis 9a, as no differences were expected. Having a Black person as the presenter of a message that was specifically targeted to African-Americans may have validated the arguments contained in the message (which was evidenced as a breakdown of the variables that comprised message quality revealed that the participants rated the culturally-targeted message more believable when presented by a Black rather than White source). For the participants' rating of the quality of the non-culturally targeted message, no differences were found between the Black and White source (even though the White source was rated of slightly higher, though statistically insignificant). This finding also did not support the hypothesis 9b which predicted that the race of the Black source would serve as a positive peripheral cue. Hence, this Race of Source x Message Content interaction on message quality was not in the direction hypothesized for either the culturally-targeted or non-culturally targeted message. This interaction was also opposite the one found previously on the participants' attitude.
A Race of Source x Message Content interaction also influenced the number of arguments correctly recalled. Although not statistically significant, participants recalled more arguments from the culturally-targeted message presented by the Black rather than White source; for the non-culturally targeted message they recalled more arguments correctly when the message was presented by the White rather than Black source. This interaction provided support for Hypothesis 10a (no difference for the culturally-targeted message), yet it did not support Hypothesis 10b (the Black source would elicit a greater number of arguments recalled for a non-culturally targeted message). This interaction also revealed that the content of the message did not influence the number of arguments recalled correctly from a message presented by a Black source; however, the number of arguments recalled correctly from a message presented by a White source was significantly greater when the message was non-culturally targeted rather than culturally-targeted.

The interaction hypothesized for message processing (Hypotheses 11a, b, c, and d) was not supported. The culturally-targeted message did elicit a greater number of thoughts. This finding reiterated the contention that African-Americans will respond more favorably to messages that contain content relevant to their culture (Rossman, 1994; Pitts et al., 1989). However, no significant differences were found in the positivity of the thoughts.
generated. Also, no differences were found in the number of central (issue-related thoughts) produced. An interesting two-way interaction was found, however, on the number of peripheral (source-related) thoughts. The participants generated more peripheral thoughts after exposure to the culturally-targeted message presented by the White rather than Black source. A closer examination of the valence of the thoughts revealed that the White source presenting a culturally-targeted message elicited more negative and neutral source-related thoughts. For the non-culturally targeted message, there were no differences in the number of peripheral thoughts generated for the Black or White source.

Also revealed in this interaction, the number of peripheral thoughts resulting from exposure to a Black source was not premised on the content of his message, as the number was similar for the culturally-targeted and non-culturally targeted message. On the other hand, the number of peripheral thoughts for the White source was dependent upon the content of his message; a greater number of peripheral thoughts were produced when the message by the White source was culturally-targeted rather than non-culturally targeted.

Differences were also found in the ancillary measures. The Black source was rated as a more credible spokesperson on the issue. For the degree to which the participants'
attitudes were influenced by the student's message, a significant Race of Source x Message Content interaction was found. No significant differences were found in the degree to which the participants' attitudes were influenced by the culturally-targeted message presented by the Black or White source (even though the Black source was rated as more influential). Also, no significant differences were found in the degree to which the participants' attitudes were influenced by the non-culturally targeted message presented by the Black or White source (even though the White source was rated as more influential).

The results of this experiment suggest that for many of the dependent measures, the participants appear to objectively scrutinize the message by the White source, because their responses differ depending on the content of the message. In many instances, it was apparent that participants did not objectively scrutinize the message delivered by the Black source to the same extent they did for the White source. These results indicate that the race of the source may have served different functions. For the White source, it may have motivated objective processing, whereas for the Black source it may have motivated biased processing.

This experiment suggests that depending on the race of the source, there may be actually two strong messages being presented. For instance, the culturally-targeted message is perceived to be "strong" if presented by a Black source, yet "weak" if
presented by a White source. On the other hand, the non-culturally targeted message (low cultural relevance) may be perceived to be "strong" if presented by a White source, yet "weak" if presented by a Black source. This line of thinking would support the findings that revealed more favorable responses to the Black source when the message was culturally-targeted, and more favorable responses to the White source when the message was non-culturally targeted.

The 2-way ANCOVA did not yield any significant findings with ethnic identification as a covariate, hence support for Hypothesis 12 was not supported. Because the nature of the culturally-targeted messages enabled the participants to demonstrate the salience of culture to them as they responded to the dependent variables, ethnic identification may have been subsumed in the content of the culturally-targeted message. Hence, no differences due to ethnic identification was found. Instead, the ANOVA allowed for the effects of the variables without the influence of ethnic identification to be manifested.

The Source x Report Content interactions found in this experiment provided mixed results in support of the hypotheses. It may be partially explained by the in-group/message relevance phenomenon discussed by Mackie et al. (1990). Their results suggested that when participants listened to relevant issues they were more persuaded by a
strong message by an in-group member, unpersuaded by a weak message from the
in-group member, and equally unimpressed by a strong or weak message presented by the
member of the other group. The participants in this experiment did respond more
favorably to the culturally targeted message (comparable to Mackie et al.'s relevant issue)
if it were delivered by the Black source (comparable to Mackie et al.'s in-group member).
They responded less favorably to the White source (other-group member) delivering a
cultural message (relevant issue). They may have perceived the non-culturally targeted
report as "non-relevant" because it was not specifically addressed to them. At any rate,
their more favorable responses to the Black source with the culturally targeted report, as
well as their similar ratings to both races for the non-culturally targeted report replicate
some of the findings of Mackie et al.'s (1990).

The results of Mackie et al. (1990) also suggested that when the topic of a persuasive
communication is relevant to a group, the content of the messages delivered by an
in-group source will receive considerable content-focused processing. This experiment
did not replicate Mackie et al.'s (1990). The race of the source and the content of the
report did not have a significant effect on the amount of content-focused thoughts
genenerated (also referred to as central processing in the ELM).
The cultural content of the report may also be likened to personal relevance (having some personal significance for the individual) as described by Petty and Cacioppo (1986a). They contend that increasing the personal relevance of a message should also induce an increased focus on issue-relevant arguments in a message. The results of this study did not confirm Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) contention. There were no significant differences in the number of issue-relevant (central) thoughts generated by the participants as a result being exposed to the culturally-targeted reports (which were relevant to the African-American culture).

Instead, significant differences were found in the number of peripheral (source related, non-content focused) thoughts generated by the participants. Participants produced more peripheral thoughts for the White source with the culturally-targeted rather than non-culturally targeted message (more specifically, they generated more negative and neutral source related thoughts for the White source with the culturally targeted report). The number of peripheral thoughts for the Black source was not influenced by the content of the report, as the ratings were similar.

Not only did this Source x Message Content interaction influence the participants' attitude (evaluation) of the issue, their means of processing the information, and the degree to which they were influenced by the information, but it also appeared to have
influenced the amount of information they retained (recalled). While the influence of the Race of Source x Message Content interaction must be acknowledged, these results did provide some support for the contention that personal (cultural) relevance is an important cue in motivating Blacks to process persuasive communication.
CHAPTER V
GENERAL DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine variables that influenced Blacks' processing of persuasive communications. The study was premised on Petty and Cacioppo's (1986a) Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion. They suggested that there are several ways in which a variable may influence message processing en route to persuasion occurring. The variable may act as a: (a) peripheral cue; (b) persuasive argument; and (c) motivator of the amount and direction of message elaboration (either in an objective manner or biased manner). Different elements of this study allowed for an examination of each of these possible options. More specifically, this study examined the effects that the variable race of the source had on message processing when African-American participants were presented with manipulations of: (a) whether the source's position on the topic of persuasion was presented, (b) the quality of the message being delivered by the source, and (c) the content of the message being delivered by the source.
This chapter considers the results of the study from two primary perspectives. First, it examines the implications of the findings for the ELM theory, discussing the extent to which experiments support or disagree with current tenets of the Elaboration Likelihood Model. Second, the findings will be discussed in the context of their practical implications and their meaning for designing effective marketing communications programs for reaching African-American audiences.

**Implications for Elaboration Likelihood Model**

The ELM contends that persuasive communications may lead to persuasion by influencing attitudes. The ELM also suggests that there are two routes information may travel en route to an attitude change or formation. One route is the central route, in which individuals are motivated to process information, and they engage in careful scrutiny of the arguments presented. In the central route, the strength of the arguments used to convey the message should determine the amount of elaboration the participants engage in, as well as the extent of persuasion that occurs. Attitudes formed via this route are more persistent, more resistant to change, and more predictive of behavior.

When subjects lack motivation or ability to process a message, the message travels the peripheral route. In this route, individuals are not highly-motivated to process
information, consequently, they do not engage in careful scrutiny of the arguments presented. Attitudes may change and persuasion may occur without consideration of argument quality or content. Contextual cues such as source characteristics determine the persuasiveness of the message. Attitudes formed via this route are less persistent, less resistant to change, and less predictive of behavior. Hence, the basic thrust of the ELM is to specify the conditions under which a person is likely to elaborate on a persuasive message.

The ELM suggests that in absence of a message, source characteristics may serve as a peripheral cue, and differences will be found due to the knowledge of the sources' race. Experiment One was designed to test for the race of the source as a peripheral cue. The results determined that simply being aware of the source's race (with his position on the topic stated or not stated) was not enough to influence the participants' attitude toward the issue or the means in which they processed the message they were presented. In absence of a report, they responded similarly to both the Black and White sources.

Previous studies (Chaiken, 1990) revealed that the visible appearance of sources (such as their level of attractiveness) served as peripheral cues in persuasive communications. In this particular study, the race of the person originating the message (conveyed by photographs of Black and White sources) did not have the appearance effect suggested by
Chaiken (1990). The race of the source did not serve as a peripheral cue in influencing the participants' attitudes or thoughts. Hence, the ELM prediction for the race of the source as a peripheral cue was not supported. This finding was not too surprising as America has long suggested that people be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character; hence, the focus should be on the message and not the messenger.

Once the sources were associated with a particular position on an issue conveyed in a strong or weak report prepared by a source (Experiment Two), or a culturally-relevant or non-culturally relevant message in a report prepared by a source (Experiment Three), significant differences due to the source's race were unveiled. In Experiment Two the attitudes were more favorable after exposure to the Black rather than White source. Also, the participants reported that their attitudes were more influenced by the report prepared by the Black rather than White source. These findings supported the contentions of the ELM that the race of the source would serve as a peripheral cue in influencing the participants' attitudes. Also in accord with the ELM, the message containing strong arguments had a more positive effect on attitudes than did the message containing weak arguments.

Two Race of Source x Argument Quality interactions were found in this experiment, which offered further support for the ELM. No differences were found between the Black
or White source in the participants' positivity of thoughts and their evaluation of the
source's credibility, when a strong message was presented. When the message was weak,
however, the race of the Black source served as a peripheral cue, as it elicited more
positive thoughts and apparently was relied on to evaluate the credibility of the source.
Also revealed in the Race of Source x Argument Quality interactions was that participants
were objectively processing the information presented by the White rather than Black
source. This experiment demonstrated two of the functions the race of the source could
serve in the ELM: (1) as a peripheral cue, and (2) a motivator of the extent and direction
of message processing. In addition, this experiment revealed that ethnic identification was
an important covariate to consider because it significantly enhanced the effects of the
source and message manipulations.

When the content of the reports was changed from strong and weak arguments to
culturally targeted and non-culturally targeted arguments (as was the case in Experiment
Three) results differed even more in relation to the confirmation of the predictions of the
ELM. Unlike the previous studies, this experiment contained information that may have
been perceived as one of high involvement to the Black participants in this study because
the issue was relevant to the African-American culture. The Race of Source x Message
Content interactions offered mixed support for the ELM. Even though the attitudes
resulting from exposure to a culturally-targeted message were more favorable for the Black rather than White source, the difference was not statistically significant (a finding which supported the ELM). However, the attitudes that resulted from exposure to a non-culturally targeted message were significantly more favorable when the source was White (a finding that does not support the ELM, since the race of the Black source should serve as a positive peripheral cue). The interactions found in this experiment also suggested that for many of the dependent variables, the participants processed the messages presented by the White source more objectively than they did those by the Black source. This confirmed the finding in Experiment Two that the race of the source served to motivate the degree to which attitudes were influenced and processing and evaluation occurred. Additionally, this experiment found that the culturally-targeted message received more favorable responses when the source was Black rather than White. Interestingly, and somewhat surprisingly, the responses to the non-culturally targeted message were more favorable when the source was White. These results suggested that the race of the Black source presenting a message targeted to African-American culture served as an additional argument to validate the merits of the message. Using a White source to
present a message that was not specifically targeted to African-American culture -- which may have been assumed to be directed primarily at the dominant (White) culture -- may have also served as a persuasive argument to validate the claims being made.

The results of this experiment also suggested that the cultural content in the message elicited a greater number of thoughts. The careful consideration of the message that had personal/cultural implications for the participants was expected because it may have been important for the participants to have a reasoned position on the issue that contained information salient to them. As suggested by Petty et al. (1981), the personally/culturally-relevant content may have invoked a self-schema and this framework of self-relevant cognitions may have increased not only motivated, but also increased their ability to evaluate the implications of the message arguments. The cultural relevance may have activated a self-schema that influenced attitudes favorably, resulting in findings in support of the ELM. Also, ethnic identification was not significant as a covariate because it may have been subsumed in the content of the culturally-targeted message.

Petty et al. (1981) suggested that some variables might have differential effects under varying conditions (i.e., both low- and high-involvement). This study demonstrated that the race of the source may be one such variable.
In sum, this study offered mixed support for the ELM. Petty et al. (1981) contended that mixed pattern of results of attitudes and message elaboration may be due to moderators other than personal relevance or issue involvement. They also contended that "future research could profitably be aimed at uncovering moderators other than personal involvement of the route to persuasion" (p. 854). They suggest that variables may be within the persuasion situation, or within the message recipient. This study provided evidence of both. The results replicated some of the findings of the effect of cues within a persuasion situation (such as race of source, argument quality, and message relevance -- which may be akin to culturally-targeted content) revealed in other ELM and information processing investigations. It also provided evidence (in Experiment Two) that ethnic identification may serve as a variable within the message recipient that may impact their responses to persuasive communications.

**Ethnic Identification**

The effect of ethnic identification as a covariate was not widespread in this study. With the exception of the effects revealed in Experiment Two, ethnic identification was not as potent in influencing the participants' cognitions and attitudes as previous studies have
posed it to be. The results of this study did not reveal the diversity that may exist within the African-American culture. Participants in this study did not differ significantly in the degree to which they identified with their ethnic group.

Four possible explanations exist for the limited impact of ethnic identification. First, the limited variation in the ethnic identification scores among participants reduced the possibility for any widespread effect. Also the limited effects on the dependent variables due to ethnic identification may stem from the fact that America is trying to increase its sensitivity to cultural diversity and how it impacts people who are members of different ethnic groups. The content of the questions that comprised the ethnic identification scale was very forthright on racial issues. In order for differentiation to be manifested, the participant would have had to respond in a polar opposite manner. Again, due to the increased attention to cultural diversity in the community at large and in the schools and universities in particular, the participants' view about their association with members of other ethnic groups may not have been as discriminating as was revealed in earlier studies.

A second explanation for the limited effects due to ethnic identification was that the sample of participants in this study was not representative. They were obtained in a
purposeful, convenient manner. A larger representation of African-Americans may have revealed significant differences on how their ethnic identification influenced their responses to cues in a persuasive communication.

Third, the mean age of the participants in this study was 19. As suggested by Whittler (1989) and Whittler and DiMeo (1990) college students and older adults differ in the degree to which they are influenced by their racial attitudes. An older sample of African-Americans may have been more firm in their beliefs and attitudes that pertain to members of other racial/ethnic groups, thus ethnic identification may have been significant as a moderator of their attitudes and thoughts.

Finally, the nature of the methodology employed in this study did not allow the researcher to identify different levels of the degree to which participants identified with their ethnic group at the outset, and then block on those levels.

The series of experiments that were conducted in this study did provide some evidence for the multiple of functions variables may have in the ELM. The results of this study provided some answers to the research questions posed at the outset. The race of the source, the quality of the report, the content of the report, and the participants' ethnic identification were all variables that influenced Blacks' processing of persuasive messages to some degree. This study attempted to integrate elements of previous studies to
examine the means in which Black consumers responded to persuasive messages. This study was unique in that it contained a sample of Black students, ascertained the degree to which they identified with their culture, and exposed them to a message that contained cultural content that was relevant to their ethnic group. The results suggested that sociological factors such as race, culture, ethnicity are important variables to consider when trying to persuade Blacks. In a more global interpretation, this study suggested that persuasive (marketing) communications should contain messages with strong cogent content with cues and meanings that are also reflective of the culture of the target audience.

Implications for Sport Marketers

The results of this study have implications for marketers in general and sport marketers in particular. The means in which sport facilities are financed have long been of concern to sport marketers. The hypothetical issue in this current study suggested increasing student fees to finance a sport arena. An application of the results of this study would suggest that to persuade Black students on this issue, the message will be most effective if delivered by Black sources, containing some cultural frame of reference to which Black consumers can relate. It must also suggest ways in which the African-American
community would benefit from such an arena. Mass market campaigns have not been as
effective in reaching African-Americans as those that were targeted to their cultural
uniqueness. Even on an issue related to a sport facility, this finding is applicable.

The Black consumer market is a substantial market with increased buying power.
Research has suggested that sport is more salient to the Black culture than it is to the
White culture (Rudman, 1986; Spreitzer and Snyder, 1990). For these reasons, sport
marketers must increase their awareness of the most effective means of attracting this
market segment.

The low attendance of Blacks' at professional and Predominately White Institutions' sport events is one indication that sport marketers may not be actively or effectively trying to reach this segment. On the other hand, their record-breaking attendance at Historically Black Colleges and Universities' (HBCU) sport events suggests that they are viable sport consumers. Given the cultural distinctiveness of the environment of HBCU sports, their attendance rates also suggest that they may be seeking a cultural experience as a part of their sport experience. Since it would not be feasible (or even possible in some instances) to change the culture of the sport product itself, the price, and place the sport events are held, the one element of the marketing mix that may be most easily manipulated is promotions (which include advertisements, public relations, sport sponsorship, etc.).
Advertisements and promotions are means in which sport marketers communicate with their audiences. One of the main objectives of promotions is persuasion. Hence, sport marketers must increase their understanding of the cognitive and evaluative processes individuals engage as a result of exposure to their persuasive marketing communications.

From a global interpretation, the results of this study suggest that Black participants will generate more favorable attitudes if the advertisements and promotional message contains strong, cogent arguments, with a Black person as the source (spokesperson). In order for a message presented by a White spokesperson to be positively received by a Black audience, the message must contain arguments that are valid and cogent. On the other hand, if the source is Black, the quality of the message does not make much difference in the relative number of positive thoughts they will generate in response to it.

If the content of the message is changed to one that contains some cultural relevance, the attitudes will be even more favorable, particularly if the source is Black. Hence, sport marketers should devise advertisements and promotional messages that acknowledge the effects of the race of the source, message quality, and message content if they are to more effectively reach Black consumers.
Some sport organizations have increased their awareness of the salience of race, culture, and ethnicity to Black consumers. Companies that have acknowledged and respected the Black culture in their advertisements and promotions have reaped the benefits of their patronage. One sport organization that has made Black consumers a prime target is NIKE, Inc. They have designed advertising campaigns that include elements reflective of Black culture. Their advertisements allow for Black consumers to identify with the elements contained therein. From a theoretical framework, they communicate with Black consumers by promoting salient features of their culture. Their advertisements allow for an identity confirmation of this target market.

ESPN is another sport entity that has increased its efforts to reach Black consumers. They now televise a weekly program entitled "Black College Sports Today", in which they air and discuss pertinent sport stories that occur on Historically Black College and University campuses. These are just a couple of pragmatic applications that suggest that sport marketers should realize the impact culture has in their effort to attract Black consumers.

According to the demographic changes that will impact society, an increase in the members from other ethnic groups besides Blacks will also occur (i.e., Hispanics and Asians). In response to the increased cultural diversity America will undergo, sport
marketers must increase their knowledge of multicultural marketing. The essence of marketing is communication, and communication is cultural. Being effective in marketing to a particular cultural or ethnic group requires an understanding of how the elements that are salient to that culture influence their response to communications. This study has suggested that culture and ethnic identification do significantly influence Blacks' responses to marketing communications.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study examined the cues in a persuasive communication that was presented in a written modality. Since marketing communications are also in the visual format, similar examinations are needed that manipulate the race of the source and message characteristics in audio and visual modalities.

While the results of this study did replicate some findings of previous studies, the sample was not a representative sample. Therefore, the results may not be applicable to African-Americans in general. A replication of this study should be conducted with a larger, representative sample of African-Americans. This will allow for comparisons to be drawn from using Black college students as opposed to Black adults and/or the Black population at large (various ages).
The instrument used in this study did not reveal much diversity among the participants. A more effective methodology may be to measure ethnic identification then block on each level (high and low), randomly distributing the treatments to members of each.

Another improvement to this current study should directly manipulate the level in which the participants are involved in the issue, by including a situation in which the topic of persuasion is under consideration at the participants' university. Also regarding the manipulations, future research should examine the effects of changing the order of the presentation of the cues in the persuasive communication. For instance, being exposed to a Black or White source at the outset may have influenced the means in which they processed the information depending on the affect that each source elicited. Future research should vary the order of the cues by presenting the salience of the issue or the report before exposing the source.

Also, in response to the increase in the number of ethnic groups projected and the need for multicultural marketing, it would be beneficial to examine how members of other ethnic groups may respond to the cues in this current study. Marketers should be careful not offend other markets as they are trying to reach a particular market. Using a Black individual as the source of a message, has not necessarily caused a backlash of Whites' responses to them (Pitts et al., 1989). The question to be answered next, is "How will
members of other ethnic groups respond to communications that are culturally targeted to African-Americans."

Along the line of inquiry mentioned previously, a study designed similar to this one is needed for other ethnic groups (i.e., Asians, Hispanics, Appalachian, Whites, and Native Americans) to reveal the variables that influence their processing of persuasive communications.
LIST OF REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

STRONG REPORT
In my search for some information on financing sport facilities, I found several reasons why the university should increase student fees to help build an arena for its sports teams. The university officials will make every attempt to ensure that not only will the university's sports teams and the city at-large benefit from such an arena, but also the students enrolled in the university.

Building a new sport arena will provide a boost to the economy because the construction and operation of it will provide jobs for many. Athletic Business, a journal specializing in the design, construction, and financing of sport facilities, conducted a nationwide survey of cities that had recently built a new sport arena and compared their economic ratings before and after the facility was in operation. Their study revealed that the economic rating of those cities had increased an average of 27% as a result of the new sport arena. This university expects similar results after the arena is built here.

In addition to the economic value of sport arenas, they also offer a place to conduct large scale programs and entertainment events. According to Special Events Report, cities that have recently built a new sport arena have held 40% more special events than cities that do not have a sport arena. Events to be held there could include: concerts featuring popular performers, nationwide job fairs, graduation ceremonies, Greek shows, musicals, art exhibits, and other special events for student organizations.

Another benefit of having a new sport arena is that it will provide a venue for the university to host some of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championships. The NCAA play-offs have become a very prestigious sport events since the major networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and ESPN) have been broadcasting them. It is a big honor for a university to host the NCAAs because it showcases the campus to the rest of the country. It will also allow students to have the opportunity to get a taste of the thrill and excitement of big time sports right here on this campus.

Because student fees will be used to build the sport arena, students will be given access to the tickets for the events that will be held there. The tickets will be reasonably priced so that students can afford them. The tickets will also be distributed throughout campus and to local vendors to allow for an ease in students having access to buying them.

From the information I gathered, increasing student fees to build a new arena for the university's sports teams is a very good idea because, not only will it benefit the university and its sports teams, but will also benefit the community, and the students enrolled in the university.
"In my search for some background information on financing sport facilities, I found several reasons why an increase in student fees should be implemented to help build a new arena for the university's sports teams. First of all, the appearance of a campus is very important to the university and its students. College campuses are usually comprised of old buildings that are not very attractive. Having a building such as a new sport arena would add to the attractiveness of the campus. The new sports arena would be constructed with bright attractive colors, with a stunning modern geometrical design to make this campus more beautiful. Students may feel a greater sense of pride in being on such a beautiful campus. It may even make others want to come and see it.

Having a new sport arena will allow for many people to gather on campus in one setting that is well ventilated. The new arena will have an air flow system that will ensure greater climate control so that students can enjoy watching the university's teams in competition as well as the other events that will be held there.

Several other schools and universities have already implemented an increase in student fees to finance an arena for their sports teams. Increasing student fees, therefore, appears to be a viable means of generating the needed cash. So, another reason for this university to increase student fees to finance an arena is to allow the university to also be at the forefront of one of the latest trends in financing sports facilities. Some professors at universities where the increase has taken place felt that high school students were impressed by a university that kept pace with current trends. This is definitely becoming a popular trend.

Having a new sport arena will also benefit students. Most students don't mind paying a slight increase in fees because fees have traditionally been increased over the years anyway. If increasing student fees will allow for the university to have an arena for the sports teams, it should be done because it is a part of tradition that students contribute their part to the university.

For all of these reasons, increasing student fees to build a new arena for the university's sports teams is a good idea."
APPENDIX C

CULTURALLY- TARGETED REPORT
"In my search for some information on financing sport facilities, I found several reasons why the university should increase student fees to help build an arena for its sports teams. The university officials will make every attempt to ensure that not only will the university and its sports teams benefit from such an arena, but also the African-American community and the African-American students enrolled in this university.

Building a new sport arena will provide an economic boost to the African-American community because the construction and operation of it will provide jobs for African-Americans. *Athletic Business*, a journal specializing in facility management, conducted a nationwide survey of cities that recently built a new sport arena and compared their economic ratings before and after the facility was in operation. Their study revealed that the (non-custodial) employment among African-Americans in those cities increased an average of 27%, as a result of the new arena. Also reported was a 60% increase in contracts issued to Black vendors and Black-owned businesses for services the arena needed. This university expects similar results after the arena is built here.

In addition to the economic value of the sport arena, it will also offer a place to conduct large scale cultural and entertainment events that will be attractive to African-Americans. According to the latest issue of *Special Events Reports*, cities that have recently built sport arenas have held 40% more entertainment events targeted at African-Americans than cities that do not have large sport arenas. Events to be held there could include: concerts by popular African-American artists (such as Stevie Wonder and Anita Baker); a nationwide job fair for African-Americans interested in working with Black-owned businesses; cultural events that celebrate African-American Heritage such as a jazz, rhythm and blues festival or gospel extravaganza; African-American art exhibits; Greek shows; and other programs and special events for Black students.

Another benefit of having a new sport arena is that it will provide a venue for the university to host more Black College sport events. Black College sports are becoming very popular. With the Black Entertainment Television (BET), CBS, NBC, ABC and ESPN broadcasting them, they are gaining national attention. It is a big honor for a university to host a Black College sport event because it showcases the campus to the rest of the country. It will also allow African-American students to have the opportunity to get a taste of the electrifying half-time shows featuring the battle of the Black College bands that have long been a highlight of watching Black college sports, along with the camaraderie of being around other African-American sport spectators, right here on this campus.
Because student fees will be used to build the sport arena, African-American students will be given access to the tickets for the events that will be held there. The tickets will be reasonably priced so that students can afford them. The tickets will also be distributed to many of the popular African-American businesses and outlets to allow for an ease in African-American students having access to buying them.

From the information I gathered, increasing student fees to build a new arena for a university's sports teams is a very good idea because, not only will it benefit the university, it will also be beneficial to the African-American community."
APPENDIX D

NON-CULTURALLY TARGETED REPORT
"In my search for some information on financing sport facilities, I found several reasons why the university should increase student fees to help build an arena for its sports teams. The university officials will make every attempt to ensure that not only will the university's sports teams and the city at-large benefit from such an arena, but also the students enrolled in the university.

Building a new sport arena will provide a boost to the economy because the construction and operation of it will provide jobs for many people. *Athletic Business*, a journal specializing in the design, construction, and financing of sport facilities, conducted a nationwide survey of cities that had recently built a new sport arena and compared their economic ratings before and after the facility was in operation. Their study revealed that the economic rating of those cities had increased an average of 27% as a result of the new sport arena. This university expects similar results after the arena is built here.

In addition to the economic value of sport arenas, they also offer a place to conduct large scale programs and entertainment events. According to *Special Events Report*, cities that have recently built a new sport arena have held 40% more special events than cities that do not have a sport arena. Events to be held there could include: concerts featuring popular performers, nationwide job fairs, graduation ceremonies, Greek shows, musicals, art exhibits, and other special events for student organizations.

Another benefit of having a new sport arena is that it will provide a venue for the university to host some of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championships. The NCAA play-offs have become a very prestigious sport events since the major networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and ESPN) have been broadcasting them. It is a big honor for a university to host the NCAAs because it showcases the campus to the rest of the country. It will also allow students to have the opportunity to get a taste of the thrill and excitement of big time sports right here on this campus.

Because student fees will be used to build the sport arena, students will be given access to the tickets for the events that will be held there. The tickets will be reasonably priced so that students can afford them. The tickets will also be distributed throughout campus and to local vendors to allow for an ease in students having access to buying them.

From the information I gathered, increasing student fees to build a new arena for the university's sports teams is a very good idea because, not only will it benefit the university and its sports teams, but will also benefit the community, and the students enrolled in the university.
APPENDIX E

FIGURES
Figure 1. An illustration of the Race of Source x Argument Quality interaction found in Experiment Two in the participants' positivity index score.

Figure 2. An illustration of the Source x Argument Quality Interaction found in Experiment Two in the participants' rating of the credibility of the source.
Source x Report Interaction

Figure 3. An illustration of the Race of Source x Message Content interaction found in Experiment Three in the participants' attitude score.

Source x Report Interaction

Figure 4. An illustration of the Race of Source x Message Content interaction found in Experiment Three in the participants' ratings of the quality of the report they received.
Figure 5. An illustration of the Race of Source x Message Content interaction found in Experiment Three in the number of arguments correctly recalled by the participants.

Figure 6. An illustration of the Race of Source x Message Content interaction found in Experiment Three in the number of peripheral thoughts generated by the participants.
Figure 7. An illustration of the Race of Source x Message Content interaction found in Experiment Three in the degree to which the participants were influenced by the student's reports.