

# An Examination of Television Consumption By Racial and Ethnic Audiences in the U.S. Implications for Multicultural Media Planning And Media Measurement

**J. P. JAMES**

Salem State University  
jjames@salemstate.edu

**TYRHA M. LINDSEY-  
WARREN**

Baylor University  
Tyrha\_Lindsey@baylor.edu

Academic and practitioner studies have found that television consumption is highest among American audiences of diverse races and ethnicities. The validity of ethnic-audience ratings measurement in the past has been questionable, predicating diminished multicultural-audience valuation. One result has been less spending in the ethnic broadcast-media landscape, which is hampered by media fragmentation. Using an analysis of Horowitz Research data, a nationally representative dataset that measures multicultural cable viewership, the authors examined the relationship between television viewership and multiculturalism, mediated by programmatic and media-fragmentation influences and covaried by demographics influences.

## INTRODUCTION

“I encourage ethnic media companies, nationally respected researchers and demographers to get together and simply break the code of the Target Rating Point. Properly done, this new statistical model can inform strategic media buying decisions, in a fashion that encourages the idea that good business thinking and multicultural marketing are not mutually exclusive.”

—Jo Muse, *The Shaman Chronicles Book One: The 7 Senses of Multicultural Marketing* (2001, pp. 87–88)

Over the years, there has been controversy over the fact that television-audience measurement has not kept pace with the increasing diversity of the United States. Before 1999, the Nielsen Company excluded less culturally assimilated ethnic minorities from syndicated survey data (D’Rozario & Yang, 2015). In 2006, Nielsen was criticized for surveying too few people of color with its People Meters to provide a statistically significant sample size of ethnic consumers to develop accurate multicultural television ratings (Napoli, 2005). These audience ratings determine how a marketer’s

## Management Slant

- Program genres and media fragmentation (through the use of technology) partially mediate the relationship of television viewership and multicultural consumers.
- Specific program genres predict higher levels of media fragmentation, as demonstrated by the authors’ “multistep mediation” model, which takes into account viewers’ uses and gratifications (e.g. music programming, live sports) and the technology used for daily viewing.
- The media research industry is encouraged to develop a television measurement standard that incorporates the multiculturalism of the audience, the impact of the genre, the use of technology, and the influence of demographics.
- Context planning can leverage diverse audiences for multicultural media scheduling.

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advertising budget is spent to reach ethnic consumers through the planning and buying of media (Rincon, 2012).

Asian-Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics combined represent almost \$3 trillion of discretionary income and constitute nearly 32 percent of the American population (Humphreys, 2015). Advertisers, however, expend less than 10 percent of their aggregated marketing and advertising budgets addressing these ethnic groups (Coffey, 2013; Kantar, 2013; La Ferle and Lee, 2005). In comparison with Blacks and Hispanics, advertisers have paid far less attention to Asian-Americans and their commensurate television platforms; many marketers see the segment as invisible (Coffey, 2013). Reliable television-ratings measurement also is warranted for greater media investment in the Asian-American segment. The lack of a more representative sample size to estimate audience ratings is holding down spending on Asian-American television properties (Coffey, 2013).

### **Media Metrics, Fragmentation, And Ethnic Audiences**

Scholars have been working to break the code of overall media measurement for many years (*e.g.*, Cannon, 1984; Cannon, Leckenby, and Abernethy, 2002; Leckenby and Boyd, 1984; Leckenby and Ju, 1989; Leckenby and Kim, 1994; Leckenby and Kishi, 1984; Leckenby and Rice, 1985). The target rating point (TRP) and the related gross rating point (GRP), reach, and frequency are media metrics the accuracy of which has been debated in the extant literature. A stream of literature states that gross rating points are biased in favor of schedules that have maximum reach at minimum levels of frequency, which can introduce media vehicle bias into media-planning choices (Dickson, 1991; Farris and Parry, 1991). Other scholars have argued that television rates are inflated because many viewers are not fully attentive to the

programming and have suggested using a full-attention cost-per-thousand measure (Bearden, Headen, Klompmaker, and Teel, 1981).

With the ubiquity of digital video recorders (DVRs) and other, similar technology, an adjusted cost-per-thousand has been suggested to place a premium on viewers who watch television advertising versus those who skip through commercials (Wilbur, 2008). This phenomenon of media fragmentation has changed forever the practice of planning, buying, and selling media. In tandem with the media-measurement issues, it creates profound challenges for television properties, which now typically deliver less than one-third of the audiences they did in the past (Nelson-Field and Riebe, 2011; Rubinson, 2008). The 21st-century marketplace is a customer-centric dynamic whereby the consumer has control of marketing communications instead of the one-way monologue of the 20th century (Schultz and Schultz, 1998).

Americans spend 32 minutes a day on time-shifted television (70 percent of homes have a DVR), an hour per day using the Internet on a laptop, and more than one hour every day using a smartphone (Nielsen Company, 2014). Thirty-one percent of video content is not consumed on television; consumers are interacting more with television content on the third or fourth screen (Albert and Jacobs, 2008; Bondad-Brown, Rice, and Pearce, 2012). In 2018, advertiser spending on digital advertising will overtake television and reach \$103 billion, to represent 36 percent of all advertising spending (Thielman 2014).

Media fragmentation may be more pronounced among ethnic audiences. It can be argued that the proliferation of the Internet through mobile technology has become a confounding issue in the ethnic-media landscape. This is a legacy of the digital divide, whereby online access was divided strongly along racial and ethnic

lines: between Whites (who had greater access) and Blacks and other minority groups (who had less; DiMaggio, Hargittai, Celeste, and Shafer, 2004). Ethnic consumers are coming to parity in Internet access by consuming more digital media than White audiences through mobile technology (Nielsen Company, 2014). As a result, more advertisers are placing resources in digital media instead of television to reach multicultural segments. For example, 60 percent of advertisers spend more on new media efforts, such as mobile outreach, specifically to reach ethnic audiences (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, and Patten, 2013; Association of National Advertisers, 2012).

Language choice further magnifies the fragmentation issue. Linguistic preferences for television programming among Hispanics are split almost evenly among:

- English only (33.4 percent);
- mostly English and some Spanish (31.9 percent);
- mostly Spanish and some English (21.1 percent);
- Spanish only (12.8 percent) (Ad Age Datacenter, 2014).

More than half of Asian-Americans are more comfortable speaking their native tongue, with 24 percent preferring their indigenous language for entertainment and reading (Kaufman-Scarborough, 2000).

### **Ethnic-Media Consumption And Audience Valuation**

Advertisers historically have discriminated against television platforms and other media that target African-American or Hispanic audiences. Minority television executives contend that advertisers and their media agencies discriminate against ethnic-media properties by demanding discounts or generally spending less on advertising in these platforms (Ofori,

1999). This is evident, given that African-Americans represent approximately 13 percent of the population, yet fewer than 3 percent of advertising dollars are spent on Black media (Humphreys, 2015; Nielsen Company, 2014; Kantar Media, 2014). Hispanics are more than 17 percent of the population but represent only 6 percent of the national advertising spend (Humphreys, 2015; Kantar Media 2014; Rincon, 2012). The greatest disparity between the racial population and media spending is with the Asian-American segment. This segment is just over 5 percent of the population, with less than 1 percent (*i.e.*, 0.07 percent) of advertising spending in Asian-American media (Coffey, 2014; Humphreys, 2015; Kantar Media, 2014).

Minority discounts are the unwritten policy of some advertisers, who purchase media on an ethnically targeted platform at a rate less than what is paid to a general-market-formatted platform with a comparable audience size (Ofori, 1999). The incongruity is based on the cost per point. Advertisers targeting their brands to minority consumers often pay minority-formatted media platforms on the basis of the Hispanic cost per point or the Black cost per point—the cost of reaching 1 percent of the Hispanic or Black population in the metro market (Ofori, 1999). When a minority discount is used, media properties are not evaluated at parity. Unless race or ethnicity is stipulated in the demographics of a media plan, this may disqualify minority groups and related media properties from being included in the media buy—unless the advertiser specifically requests their inclusion (Ofori, 1999).

It historically has not been standard practice for media agencies to propose ethnic media buys as routine parts of general-market media plans. Ethnic-media planning oftentimes is done without the context of the general- or mass-market plan; instead, the primary focus is on ethnic

## **Studies have shown, however, that any product or service that is marketed properly to a minority audience can be advantageous, because racial and ethnic groups tend to be more brand loyal.**

media properties and content (*Adweek*, 2001). This suggests that some advertisers and their media agencies may place less value on or forgo ethnic segmentation.

Studies have shown, however, that any product or service that is marketed properly to a minority audience can be advantageous, because racial and ethnic groups tend to be more brand loyal (Desphande, Hoyer, and Donthu, 1986). The current total advertising spend for U.S. multicultural marketing is approximately \$10 billion (Coffey, 2014; Nielsen Company, 2014; Kantar Media, 2014; Rincon, 2012). Although substantial, this figure is just over 7 percent of the total U.S. spend of \$140 billion (Kantar Media, 2014), which may be the result—in part—of current methods of multicultural-audience valuation.

The burgeoning growth of the ethnic-minority population predicates that marketers reevaluate how they advertise to multicultural consumers as they strive for efficiencies and accountability with their advertising dollars (Henderson and Williams, 2013). The current method of evaluating racial and ethnic television audiences is obsolete and not entirely accurate. For instance, income is not always a true indicator of discretionary income. Ethnicity and income are correlated negatively—the exception is the Asian-American audience, for whom income is correlated with English proficiency (Coffey, 2013; Napoli, 2013).

Because of cultural nuance, ethnically relevant media are suggested to be an advantageous tactic to reach ethnic-minority consumers. The greatest amount of time spent with English-language media

is in broadcast (LaFerle and Lee, 2005), which suggests that English-language television is the best method to reach multicultural consumers. The aforementioned is a media-planning tactic that exemplifies a greater marketing strategy presently debated among advertisers relative to overall ethnic marketing: the total market approach. The total market approach is defined as viewing ethnic and general-market audiences as a single segment and reflecting diversity through culturally nuanced tactics (*e.g.*, Franklin, 2014, p. 259). A study by the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (2013, p. 18) showed that 37 percent of media agencies had implemented a total market approach relative to media-planning and buying activities.

This article specifically examines the relationship between ethnic consumers and television viewership, furthering a body of previous work (Albarran and Umphrey, 1993, 1994; Albert and Jacobs, 2008; Lin, 1999). Overall, Americans watch more than five hours of television every day. African-Americans watch the most television; Whites, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans watch progressively less, in respective order (Nielsen Company, 2014). The rationale for an assessment of television viewership by American multicultural audiences is warranted by the television consumption of the ethnic population.

The advertising and media-research industry's ubiquitous proclamations of the overconsumption of television among the predominant American ethnic groups necessitates an evaluation that goes beyond

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the debated reach and frequency numbers. A thorough evaluation should consider the mediating influence of the programmatic storylines and narratives that multicultural populations might have in their relationship with television viewership. In one study, an advertiser's valuation of an audience's distinct cultural traits and preferences, defined as characteristics and conventions tied to one's ethnic group, was the most common predictor of investment in Spanish-language audiences across all media platforms—more than language preference and social class (Coffey, 2014).

With the rapid growth of digital technology, what influence does media fragmentation—through the audience's use of technology—have on multicultural television viewing? It is important to study ethnic television fragmentation so that advertisers and the media industry can give greater context to the simplistic declaration that minorities watch more television. With this examination, ethnic media spending and the proportion of culturally nuanced creative content may begin to become more representative of the multicultural population and its buying power in the marketplace. The current approach to minority-audience valuation and perception of multicultural marketing is doing a disservice to media companies, advertisers, media agencies, and the American ethnic consumer.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Uses and Gratifications Theory

The theoretical support for this research is rooted in further understanding the behaviors of ethnic audiences in relationship to

their television viewing. An earlier study stated that Blacks and Hispanics had a higher consumption of television than other races and ethnicities (La Ferle and Lee, 2005). Uses and gratifications theory (UGT) historically has best explained overall media consumption (Albarran and Umphrey, 1994; Albert and Jacobs, 2008; Bondad-Brown *et al.*, 2012; Lin, 1999; Rubin, 1983). UGT posits that specific broadcast and digital programming can fulfill one's psychological needs (Albert and Jacobs, 2008). The programmatic UGT factors for television are entertainment, surveillance, escape and companionship, problem solving, and personal identity (Albert and Jacobs, 2008; Lin, 1999).

UGT is more relevant today, given the rise of "computer-mediated communication" (Ruggiero, 2000, p. 3). The aspect of interactivity and the consumer's ability to participate authentically with television programs (*e.g.*, reality-based television shows such as NBC's *The Voice* or ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*) increase audience control, convenience, and a choice set that can fulfill the audience's self-indulgent entertainment needs (Ruggiero, 2000). With this increased interactivity in the media landscape, the applicability of UGT has more significance in describing the psychological needs of today's consumer relative to television viewership.

All audiences, in particular ethnic viewers, also are watching specific genres of television programs for their entertainment value and receiving pleasure from the storytelling. Entertainment products, such as movies, arouse latent whimsical and pleasurable feelings among consumers

and actually may fulfill consumers' salient emotional desires and needs (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). The audience's ability to become so involved in the storytelling in specific genres of television programs is explained best by narrative transportation, which is defined as the process of telling a story whereby the receiver of the narrative becomes involved fully and transported into a fictional world.

The characteristics of the consumer viewing the story are crucial to the storyteller and the overall narrative experience. The demographics of the receiver (*e.g.*, race and ethnicity, dominant-society acculturation, age, gender, socioeconomics, and language preference) are a salient component of narrative transportation from the perspective of the receiver of the story (Green, Brock, and Kaufman, 2004; Van Laer *et al.*, 2014). Demographics, as well as prior knowledge of the story, can lead to outcomes of an altered pleasurable state for the viewer when he or she is experiencing narrative transportation (Green, 2004; Leary and Buttermore, 2003). Early literature on race and ethnicity suggested that once demographic variables are controlled, consumer differences by race and ethnicity became nonsignificant (Cui, 1996; Feldman and Star, 1968; Sojka and Tansuhaj, 1995). As a result, demographics may influence—or covary—the levels of television viewership (McCarty & Shrum, 1993), so it is necessary to consider the effects of demographics with UGT variables (Sheth, 1977).

#### Diffusion of Innovations Theory

UGT and narrative transportation also are related closely to the medium in which ethnic consumers view the storytelling. In today's society, consumers multitask constantly in their everyday life and interact with multiple modalities, such as visual and auditory stimuli through smartphones and tablets. The consumption

of entertainment narratives through new technology—smartphones, tablets, laptops—is explained best by the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1976). The rate of adoption is influenced by multiple perceptions of relative advantage, compatibility, and ease of use over an existing technology, whereby a community chooses to modify this innovation to fit its culture (Trahan, 2013). For instance, 90 percent of Blacks and 86 percent of Hispanics own a cell phone, compared with 84 percent of Whites (Lopez *et al.*, 2013)—a carryover from the digital divide. The high rate of adoption of mobile technology among people of color qualifies them as early adopters (Rogers, 1976).

Together, UGT and diffusion of innovations, when controlling for demographics, may work in concert to better explain—or mediate—the relationship multicultural consumers have with television viewership.

RQ Specifically, the researchers posited that multicultural consumers are triggered by the uses and gratifications of television programming, more than whites. Uses and gratifications then entices the multicultural consumer to interact with the programming via technology (diffusion of innovations). As a result, the use of technology (media fragmentation) will have a negative effect on daily television viewership. The exploration of this relationship can have implications for multicultural media planning and ethnic-audience investment.”

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample

The authors were given access to Horowitz Research’s raw data from its 2013

study titled “State of Cable and Digital Media: Multicultural Edition” (Horowitz Research, 2013). Based in New Rochelle, New York, Horowitz Research is a company known for practitioner multicultural cable-television consumption studies and has conducted this particular research study since 1999. In lieu of Nielsen ratings data, which to date never have been subjected to academic analysis, the Horowitz dataset is a robust and representative sample of the U.S. population.

Because this was a multicultural study, Asian-Americans, Blacks, and Hispanics were oversampled. With data collection managed by Horowitz Research, the survey was conducted between January and February 2013 among a national sample of 2,086 heads of television households 18 years of age or older. Potential participants were contacted through 1,267 telephone interviews and 819 online surveys and included multichannel (*e.g.*, cable, satellite, and telecommunications television subscribers) and nonmultichannel subscribers.

A stratified random sample of consumers using cable systems was the primary sampling method. The researchers chose at random 100 qualified sampling points (cities with a population of 50,000 or more) from among all cities with a population of 50,000 or more in the continental United States ( $N = 516$ ), with probability of selection in proportion to population. Quotas of 50 percent men and 50 percent women were set within each sampling point.

For ethnic composition, quotas were set by race and ethnicity. A total of 883 interviews were completed among Hispanic homes, 689 among Black and African-American homes, and 206 among Asian-American homes. Data were weighted to match U.S. Census figures, including ethnicity. Hispanic respondents were surveyed in Spanish or English, depending on their language preference.

Asian-Americans were interviewed in English. (For additional information on the methodology, please review the following website: <http://www.horowitzresearch.com/syndicated-research/2018-studies/state-of-pay-tv-2018/>).

### Data Screening and Descriptives

The variables in the dataset were coded for parametric testing. The dataset then was screened for univariate outliers and normal distribution of the appropriate variables. As mentioned above, the dataset had a total of 2,086 cases; however, some of the variables had missing values. Each variable of interest had 2,086 cases unless otherwise noted. Each variable is described below in subsequent paragraphs and tables.

The mean age of the sample was 46.2 years ( $SD = 16.38$ ). The racial and ethnic makeup was 42 percent Hispanic, 30 percent Black, 17 percent White, and 11 percent Asian. Education composition ( $n = 2,008$ ) was as follows:

- 9.3 percent attended some high school or less;
- 24.3 percent graduated high school;
- 15.2 percent attended trade or vocational school;
- 3.2 percent attended some college;
- 21.5 percent completed college;
- 26.5 percent had a postgraduate degree.

### Operationalization of Variables

**Independent Variable (Multiculturalism).** The independent variable was a dichotomous, dummy variable representing multicultural heritage. It was coded as African-American, Asian-American, or Hispanic =1 and White = 0 ( $N = 2,086$ ; 84 percent multicultural).

**Dependent Variable (Self-Reported Daily Television Consumption).** Participants were asked, “Approximately how many hours, on average, do you watch TV

**TABLE 1**  
Dichotomous Diffusion of Innovations Variables

Survey Question	<i>n</i>	% Answered "Yes"
How many Smart TVs—TVs built with a built-in Internet connection that allows you to access various websites, applications, and services—if any, do you have at home?	1,918	19.9
Do you personally have a PS3 (PlayStation 3)?	2,061	22.8
Do you personally have an Xbox 360?	2,062	24.2
Do you personally have a Wii or Wii U?	2,057	30.0
Do you personally have a Blu-ray DVD player?	2,054	33.3
Do you personally have a paid DVD subscription to Netflix?	2,065	21.5
Do you personally have an online stream service to Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon Prime?	2,067	27.5
Do you personally have an iPod or portable MP3 player that allows you to watch videos?	2,074	33.7
Do you personally own an iPhone, Android, or Windows phone?	2,075	46.5
Do you personally own a desktop computer or laptop?	2,075	77.6

Note: Responses were coded as 0 = no, 1 = yes.

content, including news, sports, TV shows, movies, music videos, etc., on a TV set or any other devices in a typical day? And by that, I mean both day and night" ( $n = 1,829$ ;  $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ).

**Mediating Variable (Uses and Gratifications).** In keeping with previous research (Lin, 1999; Rubin, 1983), the authors coded programming genres within the dataset as dichotomous variables in terms of whether respondents watched a specific genre at least once or twice a week. Research assistants who were unfamiliar with the project and research question grouped the genre variables by UGT factors (See the Appendix).

**Mediating Variable (Diffusion of Innovations).** The dichotomous variables from the Horowitz dataset were grouped together to represent technology consumption and usage (See Table 1).

Given the nominal characteristics of the independent variables, the authors used nonlinear principal-components

analysis (Linting and Van Der Kooij, 2012) to determine the nonlinear relationships among the respective UGT and diffusion-of-innovations variables. They used a method prescribed in previous research (Linting and Van der Kooij, 2012) to find single dimensions for uses and gratifications and for diffusion of innovations for further analysis.

The 10 uses and gratifications variables had a Cronbach's alpha of .70, with all component items (in parentheses) loading above .40 (as prescribed by Linting and Van der Kooij, 2012):

- music programming (.56);
- talk shows (.54);
- live sports events (.54);
- sports news (.54);
- reality shows (.53);
- documentaries (.51);
- movies (.48);
- comedy programs (.48);
- news (.47)
- cooking and home-improvement shows (.47).

The authors averaged these variables together to create a continuous (.00–1.00) variable of uses and gratifications ( $n = 1,992$ ;  $M = .60$ ,  $SD = .24$ ).

Similarly, the authors used categorical principal-components analysis to determine the relationship among the diffusion-of-innovations variables, which determined participants' ownership of various media devices. These nine variables had a Cronbach's alpha of .78, with component loadings (in parentheses) above .40 (Linting and Van der Kooij, 2012):

- online streaming service to Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon Prime (.68);
- iPod or portable MP3 player (.64);
- smartphone (iPhone, Android, or Windows phone; .63);
- DVD subscription to Netflix (.61);
- Wii or Wii U (.60);
- Blu-ray DVD player (.58);
- PS3 (Playstation 3; .57);
- Xbox (.55);
- desktop or laptop computer (.53).

The authors also averaged these items together to create a continuous (.00–1.00) measure of diffusion of innovations ( $n = 1,999$ ;  $M = .35$ ,  $SD = .27$ ).

**Covariates.** Five demographic covariates were selected from the Horowitz dataset. In addition to age and education, mentioned above, the demographics were as follows:

- gender ( $N = 2,086$ ; 57 percent female);
- language preference (0 = English, 1 = Spanish;  $N = 2,086$ ; 22 percent Spanish);
- natural-born citizenship (0 = yes, 1 = no;  $n = 2,060$ ; 27 percent not born in the United States).

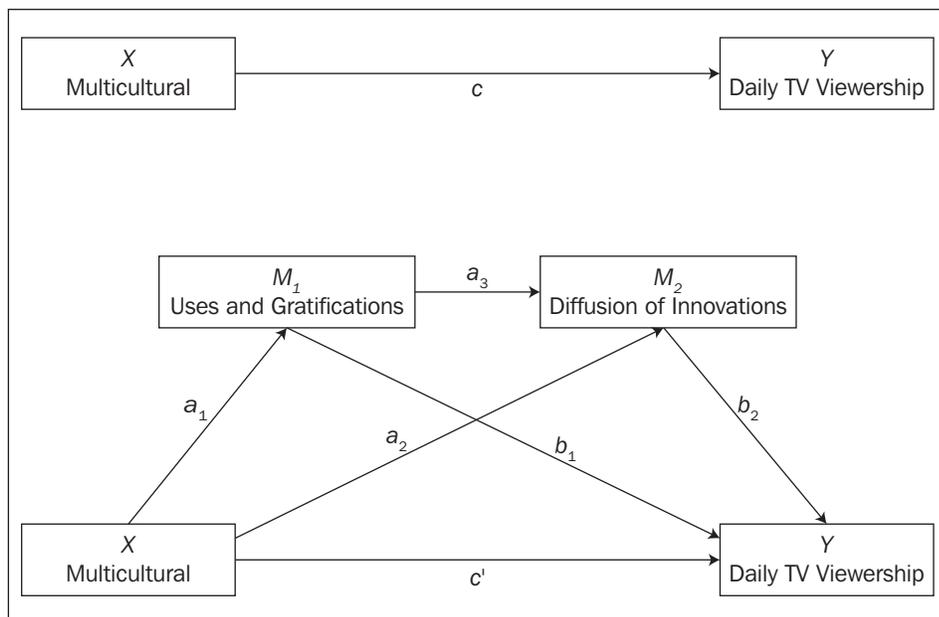
Income was not considered as a covariate because there were many missing cases for this variable—only 1,267 usable observations—which would have reduced further the power of this study. Social-class identification is related most strongly to educational credentials, followed by occupation and income (Coleman, 1983). Given the completeness of the education variable, it was the best proxy of social class in this dataset.

## RESULTS

### Multistep Mediation

Mediation analysis posits how, or by what means, an independent variable ( $X$ ) affects a dependent variable ( $Y$ ) through one or more potential intervening variables, or mediators ( $M$ ): Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The goal of multistep mediation is to investigate the direct and indirect effects of  $X$  on  $Y$  while modeling a process where  $X$  causes  $M_1$ , causing  $M_2$  concluding with  $Y$  as the final consequence (Hayes, 2017)."

The authors submitted the Horowitz data to a multistep mediation analysis using PROCESS, Model 6 (Hayes, 2017). The dependent variable ( $Y$ ) was the



**Figure 1** Multistep Mediation Model of the Relationship Between Multiculturalism and Television Viewing

self-reported hours of television watched daily (See Figure 1). The mediators, in sequential order, were the uses and gratifications ( $M_1$ ) and the diffusion of innovations ( $M_2$ ) variables operationalized above. The independent variable ( $X$ ) was the dichotomous dummy variable representing multicultural heritage.

To rule out confounding effects, the authors included the following demographic variables in the analysis as covariates: gender, language preference (Spanish versus English), native-born citizenship, and level of education. They saved the addition of the age covariate for a second, separate multistep mediation analysis. Given the missing cases, the final sample size for this analysis was 1,617.

The path estimates confirmed a partial multistep mediation process. The total-effect model confirmed a significant relationship between multiculturalism and the hours of television watched daily (Path  $c$  in Figure 1;  $B = 0.52$ ,  $p < .00$ ). The results confirmed that the proposed sequence of mediators—namely, uses and

gratifications ( $M_1$ ) and diffusion of innovations ( $M_2$ )—partially mediated the effect of multiculturalism on the daily hours of television consumed.

The psychological needs of ethnic television consumption were met by uses and gratifications (Path  $a_1$  in Figure 1;  $B = 0.06$ ,  $p < .00$ ), which resulted in a significant effect on the use of technology (diffusion of innovations; Path  $a_3$  in Figure 1;  $B = 0.18$ ,  $p < .00$ ). Last, the use of technology (diffusion of innovations) contributed to the decrease in daily television viewership (Path  $b_2$  in Figure 1;  $B = -0.64$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The 95 percent confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect was obtained with 10,000 bootstrap resamples and supports the partial multistep mediation ( $BX \rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow Y = -0.007$ , 95% CI  $[-0.01, -0.002]$ ).

An additional multistep mediation analysis was performed in which age was added to the model as an additional covariate, accompanying the four existing covariates (gender, language preference, native-born citizenship, and education) from the initial multistep mediation.

**TABLE 2**  
Multistep Mediation Results with Four Covariates  
Model Path Estimates

Model Path Estimates				
Path	Coefficient (B)	SE	t	p
a <sup>1</sup>	0.06	0.02	3.41	<.000
a <sup>2</sup>	0.03	0.02	1.98	.04
a <sup>3</sup>	0.18	0.03	7.05	<.000
b <sup>1</sup>	1.88	0.20	9.54	<.000
b <sup>2</sup>	-0.64	0.19	-3.45	<.001
c	0.52	0.13	4.02	<.000
c'	0.44	0.13	3.52	<.000

Indirect Effect				
Path	Effect (B)	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	SE
X → M <sub>1</sub> → Y	0.10	0.05	0.17	.03
X → M <sub>2</sub> → Y	-0.02	-0.05	-0.003	.01
X → M <sub>1</sub> → M <sub>2</sub> s → Y	-0.007	-0.01	-.0002	.003

Note: Path a<sub>1</sub>: F(5, 1611) = 5.11, p < .001, R<sup>2</sup> = .02. Paths a<sub>2</sub> and a<sub>3</sub>: F(6, 1610) = 29.92, p < .000, R<sup>2</sup> = .10. Paths b<sub>1</sub>, b<sub>2</sub>, and c': F(7, 1609) = 17.72, p < .000, R<sup>2</sup> = .07. Path c: F(5, 1611) = 5.62, p < .000, R<sup>2</sup> = .02. Covariates were gender, language preference (Spanish versus English), native-born citizenship (born in the United States) and level of education. LL = lower level; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper level.

**TABLE 3**  
Multistep Mediation Results with Age as the Fifth Covariate

Path	Effect (B)	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI	SE
X → M <sub>1</sub> → Y	0.10	0.05	0.17	0.03
X → M <sub>2</sub> → Y	-0.005	-0.03	0.004	0.007
X → M <sub>1</sub> → M <sub>2</sub> → Y	-0.005	-0.01	-0.001	0.003

Note: Covariates were gender, language preference (Spanish versus English), native-born citizenship (born in the United States), level of education, and age. Evidence for single-step Mediation with the inclusion of the age covariate: (Path b<sub>2</sub>, B = -0.47, p = .06), F(8, 1608) = 16.18, p < .000, R<sup>2</sup> = .08. LL = lower level; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper level.

Although the indirect effect of the multistep mediation remained significant, with the 95 percent CI not crossing zero (BX → M<sub>1</sub> → M<sub>2</sub> → Y = -0.005, 95% CI [-0.01, -0.001]), Path b<sub>2</sub> was now marginally significant (Path b<sub>2</sub> = -0.37, p = .06). The mediation through diffusion of innovations (BX

→ M<sub>2</sub> → Y = -0.005, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.004]) was no longer significant, because the 95 percent CI crossed zero. The addition of age as the final covariate ruled out multistep mediation. Single-step mediation was significant through uses and gratifications (BX → M<sub>1</sub> → Y = 0.10, 95% CI [0.05, 0.17]).

(Tables 2 and 3 detail the results of both multistep mediation analyses.)

**Practical Outcomes**

Overall, television viewership is a fickle human behavior; thus, it is difficult to predict. One study (Rubin, 1983), for example, had linear regression models of television-viewership motivations with small effect sizes. Other hidden variables that might explain television viewership among multicultural consumers were not discovered in this dataset.

Given this limitation, the results of this analysis provide support for and answer the research question of uses and gratifications and diffusion of innovations—with controls for demographic influence—mediating the relationship of multiculturalism and television viewership, better explaining the behavior of multicultural television consumption. Multicultural consumers watch television for the uses and gratifications they receive from watching particular genres of television programming. This predicates a use of technology and results in less television being consumed.

An example is the ABC network's show *Scandal*. A prime-time drama with a strong African-American following, the show is a trending topic on Twitter at times correlating to its time slot (Cabosky, 2016). Partial multistep mediation exists (Path c, B = 0.52, versus Path c', B = 0.44); however, the mediation of uses and gratifications (Path b<sub>1</sub>, B = 1.88) explains a majority of the indirect effect of multicultural television viewership.

Last, the influence of age appeared to have a significant demographic influence on ethnic television viewership. When age was added to the multistep mediation model as a fifth covariate, diffusion of innovations became marginally significant (Path b<sub>2</sub>: Age, B = -0.37, p = .06), from being highly significant without age (Path b<sub>2</sub>: B = -0.64, p < .01). Age—in tandem with

the other covariates and mediating variables—had a spurious influence on the relationship of diffusion of innovations to daily multicultural television viewership. A key takeaway from this analysis is that a total market approach—instead of a siloed, ethnic-media approach—to multicultural media planning is important, because programmatic genres, technological media fragmentation, and the influence of demographics have been demonstrated to explain the influence of television viewership among ethnic consumers.

## DISCUSSION

### Implications for Practice

All successful media planners ensure that their media plans have the best media mix in the most efficient manner. Given the challenges of measurement of ethnic audiences, the results of this study demonstrate that content across all broadcast and cable networks—regardless of ethnic specialty—should not be overlooked because of erroneous measures or perceptions. These findings suggest the importance of the context-planning discipline in a media agency as it relates to media planning for ethnic groups. The role of the context planner is to represent the media of interest from the consumer's perspective. Context planners ensure that media plans are grounded in consumer insight, are diversified relative to modality, and inspire creative media solutions, while maintaining the integrity of both the brand and the communications-campaign idea (Hatcher, 2005).

Media strategy focuses solely on the most efficient media-vehicle selection. For multicultural media planning, ethnic media is siloed, and, many times, minority-targeted platforms only are considered for multicultural audiences. It makes sense intuitively that American racial and ethnic groups do not consume ethnic media

solely unless they are isolated linguistically (Coffey, 2008).

The results of this research demonstrate that program genre best explains the relationship racial and ethnic groups have with television, which makes the practice of minority discounts tantamount to discrimination. In television, a target rating point—or any commensurate media gauge—should be a standard unit of measurement, whether one is examining a general market or an ethnic-media broadcast property. Genre platforms should be evaluated instead of networks—in particular for ethnic consumers—hence the role of and the need for context planning. A total market approach to media planning, whereby multicultural and general-market segments are viewed as one segment with cultural nuance addressed in the tactics, is appropriate to improve targeting, message rotation and scheduling, media buying, and return on investment metrics for the ethnic population.

The study suggests that client-side multicultural marketers and media agencies impose a spillover approach as a method of implementing the total-market approach toward media planning and buying. For instance, on minority-formatted networks, the culturally relevant creative messaging—in the context of culturally nuanced programmatic storytelling—will be trafficked to air. As evidenced with this research, ethnic groups are watching television genres on general-market television networks.

The authors suggest that media planners adopt a methodology of percentage of rotation of culturally nuanced commercials, which could be based on the percentage of ethnic viewership of a program or of the population. The result is creative spillover between general and multicultural markets and between digital and broadcast modalities. This is where a context planner, versed in multicultural nuance, can

inject a multicultural consumer strategy into the media-planning and -buying process that sets the course for greater media engagement with ethnic audiences.

### Limitations

Because the Horowitz data were collected for a practitioner-based study, there are limitations. The dataset was not designed for academic analysis. As previously mentioned, there were hidden variables that showed up as noise and missing cases for variables (*e.g.*, income) that better might explain or covary television viewership and multiculturalism. Despite this limitation, significant relationships explaining ethnic television viewership were discovered.

The responses in this dataset were also all self-reported survey data. A previous study (Nisbett and Wilson, 1977) referenced the challenge of self-reported data. Participants in Nielsen Media Research's samples were aware that they were part of a study, however. This can lead to response bias in viewing habits (Aswin, Mittal, and Vasudevan, 2016; Givon, Davidman, Lodzki, and Sherman, 2013), which is common for news and prime-time programming. Although both noise and response bias are imperfections, subsequent research can work to mitigate these shortcomings.

Related future research on the topic of noise can delve into uncovering other mediators and covariates that explain the relationship ethnic consumers have with television. By incorporating experimental design and qualitative methods, researchers may investigate direct questions related to viewership behavior that were missing from the Horowitz dataset. The authors anticipate that the results from this additional research will complement the analysis in this article and create a more complete picture in understanding ethnic television viewership.

**CONCLUSIONS**

These results of this study suggest a challenge for networks such as ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox to attract the English-speaking Hispanic, Asian, and Black audiences through genre. This has been evidenced with shows such as “Modern Family,” “Fresh off the Boat,” and “Black-ish”—general-market programming that resonates with and is viewed primarily by ethnic consumers. Advertisers also must understand the population growth and spending potential of the major American ethnic groups.

Because ethnic groups many times are viewed as monolithic audiences in a media-planning context, the findings from this research should prompt advertisers to segment ethnic audiences by demographics, psychographics, and attitudes—just like they do for the overall, general-market population. This, in turn, will challenge media agencies to find the very lucrative, appropriate, and brand-loyal ethnic audience through the appropriate television programming and not relegate multicultural media planning solely to ethnic-media networks. In the final analysis, all media companies need to deliver ethnic audiences through content and programming to sustain their advertising revenues.

The answer to the research question posed in this article also has implications for media-measurement models. There is a significant programmatic and technological fragmentation component that influences multicultural television consumption. A prior author (Muse, 2001, p. 87) posited the idea of a “multicultural group rating point” (James and Swartz, 2005). Commensurate research in this area could assist media-research companies to develop a media-measurement standard that incorporates an influence of multiculturalism, uses and gratifications, diffusion of innovations, and other hidden

demographic factors and variables discovered in subsequent research. This outcome would be similar to the suggestion of a previous author (Wilbur, 2008) relative to media fragmentation caused by DVRs.

The phenomenon of greater ethnic television consumption and the subsequent ethnic-media fragmentation is not unique to the United States. The rise of ethnically targeted media in the United Kingdom presents a similar challenge. A study by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (2014) demonstrated that fewer than 20 percent of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom solely watched general-market television. Another 16 percent watched only ethnic programming. This left another 64 percent of Britons who consumed both ethnic and mainstream television.

Media fragmentation is also an issue given that the Black and minority-ethnic audiences consume more digital media than the White British audience (Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, 2014). It can be argued that many of these minority groups might feel misrepresented and disenfranchised by programming in the British mainstream media. The rise of new, ethnically driven media channels and content, as it relates to television consumption in the United Kingdom and other countries, presents an opportunity for further study of ethnic television viewership in these nations.

Whether in the United States or abroad, understanding ethnic audiences in terms of their television consumption is of high importance so that media agencies can deliver these populations efficiently to advertisers. As evidenced in this research, television plays a substantial role in American society—especially among minority segments—as a medium to communicate entertainment, information, and news. Minorities, in addition, overwhelmingly patronize programming on networks that may be hampered by minority discounts,

because it is their choice of programming (Ofori, 1999). The practice of minority discounts has implications for all Americans, however. With decreased incentives to broadcast a diversity of ideas, including programming of interest to minorities, all Americans receive a narrower range of information and perspectives. Media planners and advertisers must prohibit practices that discriminate against ethnic consumers in the media marketplace, while continuing to make strides in deploying programming that is responsive to the needs of all segments of society. **JAR**

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**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**J. P. JAMES** is an assistant professor of marketing at Salem State University. James conducts research on multicultural marketing and marketplace diversity. He has been published in the *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *Journal of Management Policy and Practice*, and *Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, among other journals

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**TYRHA M. LINDSEY-WARREN** is a clinical assistant professor of marketing at the Hankamer School of Business at Baylor University. Lindsey-Warren’s research streams are rooted in storytelling and its effects on millennials, empowerment, health edutainment, movies, media, and advertising. She also spent more than 15 years working as a practitioner for the likes of Quincy Jones\*David Salzman Entertainment, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and UniWorld Group. Her work has been featured in the *Journal of Cultural Marketing Strategy* and the book *Entertainment Values* (Palgrave UK).

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**APPENDIX**

Genre Variables Grouped by Uses and Gratifications Theory Factors

Entertainment	Surveillance	Escape/ Companionship	Problem Solving	Personal Identity
Live sports events (n = 2,055) 55.9 percent (yes)	News (n = 2,066) 86.4 percent (yes)	Movies (n = 2,064) 80.4 percent (yes)	Documentaries (n = 2,062) 64 percent (yes)	Religious programming (n = 2,070) 31.4 percent (yes)
Sports news (n = 2,066) 47.9 percent (yes)	Talk shows (n = 2,065) 48.9 percent (yes)	Comedy programs or sitcoms (n = 2,060) 68.7 percent (yes)	Programs for children (n = 2,070) 40.1 percent (yes)	Programming from a foreign country (n = 2,053) 23.3 percent (yes)
Dramas (n = 2,071) 63.9 percent (yes)		Soap operas/telenovelas (n = 2,069) 29.1 percent (yes)	Cooking/home improvement (n = 2,058) 54.4 percent (yes)	
Original series (e.g., HBO) (n = 2,064) 36.4 percent (yes)		Reality shows (n = 2,069) 51.1 percent (yes)		
Music programming (n = 2,059) 42.7 percent (yes)		Travel and tourism (n = 2,060) 41.5 percent (yes)		

Note: Data were drawn from participants' answers to the following question: "For each of the following types of television programs, please tell me if you watch it at least once or twice a week" (0 = no, 1 = yes).