

BEAUTY ADVERTISEMENTS CONTAINING ETHNIC MODELS WITH DARK
COMPLEXIONS

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ABSTRACT

It was argued that exposure to certain beauty standards may sway preferences for skin color in relation to ethnic women. To test the generalized mere exposure effect this thesis examined the influence of familiarity to women with dark or light skin, on the perceptions of target female attractiveness in media images. The current study tested the hypotheses that exposure to Dark ethnic-female models in advertisements would increase attractiveness and favorability ratings of subsequent Dark models (Dark/Dark), but decrease ratings for Light models (Dark/Light). Conversely, exposure to Light ethnic-female models in advertisements would increase attractiveness and favorability ratings of subsequent Light models (Light/Light), but decrease ratings for Dark models (Light/Dark). The results of the study were consistent with one of the hypotheses. The Dark models received significantly higher scores for attractiveness than the Light models, when initially exposed to Dark ethnic-female models.

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INTRODUCTION

The beauty and fashion industries greatly influence social perceptions of female attractiveness. From a societal view, the images generated within the bounds of beauty and fashion are generally used as the authority on value judgments placed on the physical appearance of women. Media images have been known to influence the construction of self-identity as well as modify audience beliefs (e.g., Gerbner, 1998; Lokken, Worthy, & Trautmann, 2004). The effects of media-reinforced beauty standards on women and girls have been heavily documented. Women often internalize cultural standards and attempt to change their own appearances to approximate an ideal (e.g., Lokken, Worthy, & Trautmann, 2004). When the communicated beauty ideal cannot be achieved, various negative effects are observed at the individual level (e.g., Hofschire & Greenberg, 2002). Because the media can influence public opinion, even community members may contribute to, and reinforce, individuals' negative self-evaluations (e.g., Montalvo, 2004; Rondilla & Spickard, 2007; Tate, 2007).

The mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 1968) is a theoretical perspective that can aid in illustrating how media supported beauty standards may affect women. The mere exposure effect refers to the tendency for individuals to prefer that which they have had frequent exposure to. The media frequently produce images of women exemplifying particular beauty norms. It follows from the reasoning specified by mere exposure, that after a preference has been established for beauty norms, it will lead to a preference and liking for women who accurately resemble the norms.

Beauty and fashion advertisements tend to be largely Eurocentric (e.g., Baumann, 2008). Eurocentric (merriam-webster online, n.d.) refers to the tendency to construe “the world” in ways that reflect European or White-American culture. Eurocentric can also refer to racial physical characteristics that resemble that of Caucasian peoples. When women of color are featured in beauty-based media images – African American, Asian American, Hispanic American – they tend to be shown in a Eurocentric manner (e.g., Banks, 2005; Dillard, 2006; Mayorga, 2007; Rondilla & Spickard, 2007). That is, non-Caucasian women are typically presented with fair skin, light-colored eyes, thin lips, a narrow nose, and straight hair. Thus, the Caucasian models and the ethnic models are depicted as quite phenotypically similar to each other. This representation of ethnic models is disproportionate, in comparison to those in their communities of origin, and may not accurately represent the women in those populations. The majority non-Caucasian, ethnic people have varied skin tones, dark eyes, fuller lips, various nose shapes, and dark hair that is diverse in texture. High frequency use of Eurocentric ethnic women in the media may have significant implications towards establishing a beauty standard for women of color. The mere exposure effect would suggest that high media exposure to women of color with an Eurocentric appearance may create a societal preference for that particular phenotype in ethnic women.

The term *ethnic* in this context is used to refer to racial minorities within the United States, i.e., people who differ ethnically from the White majority population. *Ethnic*, used in this manner is consistent with research by Davidson, Fielden and Omar (2010). In the United States minority ethnic groups tend to be more marginalized,

described by Khittel (2001) as, "any set of persons who are set apart from mainstream society in mass media representations or the depictions of themselves" (Khittel, 2001, p. 3). Dark skinned ethnic women form a marginalized group of people in that media representation of them is limited (e.g., Banks, 2005; Dillard, 2006; Mayorga, 2007; Rondilla & Spickard, 2007). Using Eurocentric models (i.e., with lighter skin) to the near exclusion of other phenotypic models (i.e., with darker skin) reflects the disproportionate skin color depiction of today's beauty media. For the purpose of being consistent, the terms *dark* and *light* skin will be used to represent the darker and lighter ends of the skin color spectrum within individual ethnic groups. Disproportionate skin color depiction in the media can create a communicative association between skin tone and attractiveness for women. Consistent with a Eurocentric bias, the attractive skin color would be fair or very light, while skin colors that are brown or very dark may not be considered very attractive (Baumann, 2008). Researched by Gerbner (1998), cultivation theory promotes the argument that individuals may be susceptible to believing that television is an accurate portrayal of social reality. High frequency TV viewers would be expected to form conceptions of the real world similar to the norms commonly displayed on television (Gerbner, 1998). The media's persuasive effect on public opinion may create disproportionate values placed on ethnic skin color.

Given that media exposure can effect beliefs about what's normative (e.g., Gerbner, 1998), it is hypothesized that the same media may be utilized to increase the acceptability of non-mainstream beauty phenotypes. More specifically, an explanation for the effects of prior media exposure on perceptions of lighter and darker (i.e., more

prototypical) ethnic woman is tested. Guided by this goal, this paper is laid out as follows. First, an overview of the available research, the theoretical framework of mere exposure will be offered as an explanation for the skin-color based beauty standard. Next, documentation of the disproportionate skin color portrayal in the media will be presented. Afterwards, the impact that female color imagery has on the members of several cultural groups will be discussed. Finally, the results of an experiment designed to test the effectiveness of advertisements using women with dark complexions is discussed.

Literature Review

Theoretical frameworks

Mere exposure effect. The mere exposure effect, also known as the familiarity principle, holds that repeated exposure to a stimulus increases likability and preference for that stimulus (Zajonc, 1968; Zebrowitz, White, & Wieneke, 2008). Originally studied by Zajonc (1968) as the exposure-attitude hypothesis, it was found that repeated exposure to faces, used to study interpersonal effects, resulted in higher likability ratings. After a series of these studies, Zajonc concluded that frequency of contact resulted in increased positive assessment. Zajonc explained his findings along evolutionary lines. Zajonc proposed that survival instincts cause one to react with fear or uncertainty when encountering novel objects. However, lack of harm should result in more positive attitudes towards the objects. This explanation was tested further by measuring affective arousal. Substantial skin conductance reactions, indicative of arousal, were observed

when individuals were faced with new stimuli but decreased with each successive exposure (Zajonc, 1968).

Interestingly, the mere exposure effect can be generalized to stimuli that are novel, so long as those stimuli are sufficiently similar to familiar stimuli. The familiar face overgeneralization hypothesis (Zebrowitz, 1997; 2008) asserts that same-race faces are preferred over different-race faces presumably because of the lack of familiarization with other races. They found that subliminal and supraliminal exposure of Caucasians to other-race faces, Asian or African American, increased likability and familiarity for a novel set of other-race faces. Therefore, presumably increasing the frequency of exposure to certain racial characteristics, such as skin color, may increase preferences for that feature.

Ethnic Women and Media Beauty Norms

Disproportionate skin colors in the media. Beauty media -- i.e., that portion of the mass media devoted to stories, information, products, and processes regarding enhancing one's physical appearance -- tends to rely more heavily on lighter skinned ethnic models. Banks (2005) conducted a content analysis of minority representation within two beauty magazines oriented toward teenagers. The skin tones of African American, Latino American, Asian American, and Native American women featured in *Seventeen* and *YM* magazines were analyzed. The women were categorized into three skin tone groups: light, medium, and dark. Results showed that the lighter minority models represented 50% of all minority advertisements, wore more revealing clothing, and held more prominent roles.

Consistent with an apparent ethnic beauty norm, the majority of African American women in the media today generally have Eurocentric, as opposed to Afrocentric, physical features (Dillard, 2006). Through a content analysis of advertisements in *Cosmopolitan* and *Essence* magazines, Dillard (2006) concluded that from 1974 to 2003, both magazines over-represented African American women who had Eurocentric features. These women had very light complexions, narrow noses, thinner lips, light colored eyes, and very long straight or wavy hair. Because these physical features are more commonly seen on *biracial* women (who have significant White ancestry) such features are not typical of average Black women.

Researcher Mbure (2009) performed a content analysis of advertisements within women's magazines targeting African Americans and Africans from Kenya. The magazines used for their analysis were *Ebony*, *Essence*, *TrueLove*, *Eve*, *Vibe Kenya* and *Cosmopolitan Kenya*. The portrayal of Black models' skin tone, hair type and hair length from the two countries (U.S. and Kenya) were examined. Results showed that 56% of the models were light in skin tone, 29.% were medium brown, and 16.% were dark brown. In addition, 64% of the models had long hair, whereas 36.% had short hair. Further, 71% of the models had straight hair whereas 29% had non-straight hair. The non-straight hair category included hair types/styles that were kinky/coily, medium curly, wavy or braided. It is prototypical for Africans and African Americans to naturally have kinky/coily/curly hair. Naturally textured hair typically appears shorter than its true length due to its curving and bending structure. Braids are a culturally relevant hair style for both Africans and African Americans. Natural ethnic hair was underrepresented

compared to Eurocentric long straight hair. It was concluded that, in addition to the representations of skin tone, other racial features such as prototypical hair type and hair length were also unevenly distributed among the advertisements.

An analysis of four magazines ranging from 1989 to 1994 was conducted comparing African American skin colors found in advertisements and editorial photos (Keenen, 1996). The advertisement photographs came from two women's magazines, *Essence*, which targets African Americans, and *Glamour*, for general audiences. The editorial photographs came from two business magazines, *Black Enterprise* for African Americans, and *Fortune* for general audiences. Editorial photographs are not used for purposes of promoting fashion or a "look." Keenen (1996) argued that editorial photographs of Black Americans may better represent the physical characteristics of the general Black population. The study was, in part, an indirect attempt to examine the complexions of African Americans in advertisements against those in their community. It was found that Blacks in advertisements had significantly lighter skin and eyes than those in editorial photographs. Furthermore, the models in the Black oriented magazines were significantly lighter than those in the general audience magazines. If skin color was proportionate in the media, one would expect to find skin tone variations in advertisements to be equal to those found among the community.

Research on African American representation in the media has found a sex difference in skin color portrayals (Conrada, Dixon & Zhang, 2009, Keenen, 1996). African American men tend to be portrayed more realistically. Black men in the media are shown in the full range of skin colors, hair textures and facial features that are likely

to be seen in the community. That is, men are seen with having various shades of brown skin, wide noses, large full lips and curly/kinky afro textured hair. The results of a content analysis on Rap music videos, a culturally relevant genre for African Americans, support this (Conrada, Dixon & Zhang, 2009). The analysis revealed that the men in music videos had very Afrocentric racial features, whereas most, if not all, of the women had features that were more Eurocentric in appearance. Furthermore, Keenan (1996) also reported that within advertisements, but not editorial photographs, the women were significantly lighter than the men. Thus, Black men and women seen in the media typically have very different features and skin tones. The evidence suggests that inconsistencies in skin tone between media representations of Black people and their “real life” counterparts tends to focus more on women than men. It can be inferred that ethnic light skin may be more relevant for women than men.

The beauty norm of light skin appears to affect the Hispanic/Latina cultures as well. Through her content analysis of the Hispanic/Latina-oriented magazines *Latina* and *Glamour*, Mayorga (2007) found evidence of unequal skin color representation. In *Latina* the majority of the women (56%) had brown hair instead of the traditional black (31%). The skin tone variances within the magazine revealed higher percentages of lighter tones: light brown and fair being the highest at 60% and 22%, respectively. The darker tones had the lowest percentages: medium brown (14%), dark brown (0.6%), and black skin (0%). The analysis on *Glamour* magazine included all women regardless of ethnicity. Here, Mayorga found that skin tones were 55% fair (including Caucasian models), 29% light brown, 6% medium brown, 4.% dark brown, and 1% black.

An analysis of 20 magazines targeted to U.S. Hispanics/Latinas reported considerable documentation of a higher distribution of light skinned models (Johnson, David, & Huey-Ohlsson, 2003). Out of 1,579 magazine images, 27% of the women had pale white skin, 57% had “beige” skin, 12% had medium brown, 3% had dark brown, and less than 1% had black skin. Spanish language magazines produced 29% of images having white skin and 14% of images with medium brown, dark brown and black skin combined. English/bilingual magazines featured images with 17% of women having white skin and 25% having medium brown, dark brown and/or black skin combined. In fashion magazines 88% of female models were fair or light brown, and in general women’s magazines 81% were fair or light brown. At the two ends of the color spectrum, out of all images, 1,300 were of women with light skin, whereas only 8 photos contained women with black skin.

Research on media portrayal of Asian Americans is limited; however, there is some evidence of a Eurocentric beauty standard. The term Asian American is used in this context to include descendants of Eastern and Southeastern Asia. A critique by Rondilla and Spickard (2007) highlights the controversy over on Asian oriented skin lightening advertisements in Asian media. The Asian models in the advertisements were assessed as performing the function of a “relatable ideal”. The authors described the female models as possessing enough Asian facial features to be relatable to Asian women. Yet, the models were also “White” enough to represent the ideal standard of beauty being presented in that culture.

Lee and Thomas (2012) compared Japanese portraits of women in the Bijin-ga of the Meiji period to those of more modern Bijin-ga portraits. The Meiji period refers to the era in Japan between the years of 1868 and 1912. The modern comparison period refers to the time after World War II to the present. The purpose of the research was to determine if the cultural standards for Japanese female beauty differed between past and current times. The size of the eyes was the primary focus for the comparisons. The researchers found differences between the eye height-to-corneal diameter ratios of the portraits from the two eras. The women shown in the Japanese portraits from the Meiji period had significantly smaller eyes than the portrayals of women from the modern period. As previously mentioned, Eurocentrism can take the form of preference for Eurocentric racial features. The Asian eye shape is very distinct from the European eye, in that it is generally smaller in appearance. The preference for larger eyes, as represented within the modern Japanese portraits, was interpreted by the researchers as an indication of Westernization (i.e. Eurocentrism).

Eurocentric beauty media may communicate to the general public a feminine ideal, a standard of beauty, against which all women may be evaluated. Audiences may interpret the media's current representation of ethnic beauty to mean that light skin and European features are important for women's attractiveness. The possible social influences of media-promoted skin color differentiation can be suggested through the mere exposure effect (Zajonc, 1968). Because beauty concepts are often communicated via a continual media outflow, mere exposure is a good lens for which to examine the possible effects of Eurocentric ethnic beauty, as it focuses on the influence repetitive

exposure to a stimulus can have on individuals. Aligned with the mere exposure effect, Zebrowitz et al. (2008) reported that the tendency for people to like things that they recognize as familiar can operate at the unconscious level. Likewise, repeated exposure to a communicative image is likely to result in attitudes and beliefs that are in alliance with that image. This suggests that viewing images of light-complexioned ethnic women in the media will encourage liking for similar looking women encountered in real life. The general public is exposed to Eurocentric beauty by the media in all forms (e.g., television, magazines, advertisements, films). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that public opinion can be swayed to hold similar color preferences. In accordance with research by Gerbner (1998) sustained exposure to light skin may lead media consumers to trust this depiction of ethnic beauty as being universally accurate. Because the vast majority of ethnic women who appear in advertisements tend to possess a much fairer skin tone, viewers—those who have contact with ethnic minorities and those who do not—could come to view this as the normative portrayal of attractive ethnic women.

The Individual, Cultural Communities, and Society

Within several cultural communities it has been documented that skin color is often disproportionately valued (e.g., Hall, 2002; Hill, 2002; Mak, 1999). Light skin is generally evaluated in a positive manner, whereas dark skin, especially for women, is often times viewed negatively. Because skin tone tends to be valued unequally, this can be described as a bias towards light skin and against dark skin. A bias is the unfair proclivity to be for or against a particular person or group compared to other alternatives (oxford dictionaries, n.d.). This skin tone bias has contributed to substantial negative

social and individual effects (e.g., Sahay & Piran, 1997; Telzer & Garcia, 2009; Thompson & Keith, 2001). The disproportionate skin tone representation in the media can be one potential source for the bias. The following research demonstrates this bias and its consequence for ethnic women.

African Americans. Many African American women are aware of the standard for light skin on Black females within the media. The overwhelming majority, 73% of African American women in Sekayi's (2003) study disagreed with the way the media defines beauty for Black women. In effect, the awareness of color/feature preferences and its consequences for perceptions of one's own physical body, can have a very real impact on the way women feel about themselves. As previously mentioned, Mbure (2009) found that 70% of models in Black oriented magazines wore straight hair, as opposed to traditional cultural hair styles. Sekayi (2003) found that 32% of the women in the sample were ambivalent or displeased with their natural, non-straight hair texture. Thompson and Keith (2001) used data from the National Survey of Black Americans to document how skin tone influenced self-esteem in women. Dark skin was associated with incremental decreases on the 4-point self-esteem scale. Each incremental change on the 5-point skin color scale from light to dark was linked to a .28 incremental decrease in feelings of self-esteem. There were two interaction effects that pertained to female self-esteem. The first was an interaction between skin color and personal income, and the other was between skin color and interviewer rated attractiveness. Afro-American women with average to low levels of personal income experienced decreased levels of self-esteem as their skin tone varied from light to dark. The effect became stronger for

women in the low income category. On the other hand, self-esteem was high among women with high levels of personal income, regardless of how light or dark their skin was. The result was the same for women varying in levels of attractiveness. Afro-American women with average to low levels of physical attractiveness experienced decreased levels of self-esteem as their skin tone varied from light to dark. The effect was stronger for women in the low attractiveness category. Alternately, self-esteem was high among women with high levels of attractiveness, regardless of how light or dark their skin was.

There is awareness among African Americans that color preferences exist within the community. A documentary titled *Dark Girls* by directors Bill Duke and D. Channsin Berry (2011), composed of a series of personal interviews, reports on the trials and tribulations experienced by dark Afro-American women. Common themes included the communal belief that light skin looks better on women than dark skin, which was associated with low self-esteem, teasing from peers, low dating prospects, and feelings of physical unattractiveness among darker women and girls. Coard, Breland and Raskin (2001) studied the perception of skin tone ideals that others may hold, rather than the participants' own preferences. It was found that there is a perceived preference of lightness for women and darkness for men. The male participants indicated that they believed that other men view lighter women as most attractive, and that women view darker men as most attractive. Similarly, women responded that men find lighter women most attractive, and that other women find darker men most attractive. There is evidence that community members do tend to adhere to a color bias as it pertains to attractiveness.

Hill (2002) used data from Wave 1 of the National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA) in 1979-1980 to study the connection between skin complexion and perceived physical attractiveness. The NSBA recorded exclusively Black *interviewer*'s perceptions of target interview person's attractiveness. According to the data, attractiveness scores assigned to the women increased as they went from the darkest to the lightest skin color categories. Further, out of 40 female targets in the "very light brown" category, 20 of them were given the highest possible score on the seven-point attractiveness scale. Contrast this to the 4 out of 91 female targets that received the same score in the darkest skin color category. Further, women in the "very light brown" group were rated .91 points higher in attractiveness than the female targets in the "light brown" group. Although the data is somewhat outdated, it suggests that community members are susceptible to internalizing a color preference for light skin on women.

Skin color has been found to create a barrier to increasing one's socio-economic status among darker Afro-American women. Hunter (2002) revealed skin color differences affected the attainment of education and personal income levels for African American women. Skin color was categorized as very light, light, medium, dark, and very dark. Among African American women, for every categorical color change from lightest to darkest, lighter women obtained one-third of a year of more education. A woman's skin color was directly correlated with her chances of marrying a man with higher levels of education. For every increase in light skin color across the categories, the women's spouses had obtained an average of 0.28 more years of schooling. To compare, a very light brown woman was likely to marry a man with a year's more

education than a very dark brown woman with the same background. Education and skin color were also significant predictors of Afro-American women's personal incomes. Every year of education an individual had completed was associated with a \$1,183 increase in annual income. As skin color incrementally lightened across the color scale, income increased annually by \$673. Subsequently, a very light brown woman was likely to earn \$2,600 more a year than her very dark brown counterpart. Drawing from the data, it is suggested that a societal skin color bias may have adverse effects on the life chances of darker women. Wade (2008) stated that "Skin color may also affect the beauty and life chances of other non-African American groups since skin color affects perceptions in India, Israel, Korea, Japan, the West Indies, South Africa, Britain, and South America" (p. 135).

Hispanics. Perceptions of the self and others can be may be influenced by color preferences within the Hispanic community as well. Research by Telzer and Garcia (2009) found that immigrant women with dark complexions tend to experience negative self-evaluations compared to U.S. born women with dark skin. These women reported having "lower self-esteem, lower feelings of attractiveness, and a desire to change their skin to be lighter" (Telzer and Garcia, 2009, p.357).

Uhlmann, Dasgupta, Elgueta, Greenwald, and Swanson (2002) used the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to measure Hispanic American attitudes towards lighter and darker members of their group. The IAT is a test that measures implicit attitudes by using response time and the pairing of positive and negative words with dark or light Hispanic faces. Implicit attitudes are held at an unconscious level and can affect people's

assessment of, and behavior towards, social objects (Uhlmann et al. 2002). Uhlmann et al. (2002) explained that “when [the IAT is] used to measure intergroup attitudes, people typically perform this task more quickly and easily when pleasant attributes share the same response key with pictures of a high status group and unpleasant attributes share the same key with pictures of a lower status group than vice versa” (p. 204). Dark and light Hispanics are culturally referred to by the terms “Moreno” and “Blanco” respectively (Uhlmann et al. 2002). There were two photo/word combination types. One, Blanco images were paired with pleasant words, while Moreno images were paired with unpleasant words. The second pairing was that of Moreno’s with pleasant words and Blanco’s with unpleasant words. It was found that response time was faster for the “pro-Blanco” combination and slower for the “pro-Moreno” combination. The researchers’ took this to imply that Hispanic individuals associate more positive attributes to Blanco’s than Moreno’s. The quicker performance time given to Blanco photos paired with pleasant words was taken by the researchers to indicate a preference for lighter skinned in-group members.

Hall (2002) researched the explicit attitudes Puerto Ricans have towards light and dark skin color. Participants were asked to indicate their skin color ideals. There were five skin color categories with one end of the spectrum being the “lightest” and the other end being the “darkest.” The following represents the highest response percentages for each of the self-report questions. When asked to select the best representation for “pretty skin,” 69% responded the darkest skin. However, 25 % of participants responded that the lightest skin was indicative of pretty women. 29% reported that women like men

with the lightest skin. 51% of participants personally wished they had the lightest skin color. 47% of participants said that the lightest skin color was indicative of smart Puerto Ricans. 44% indicated that snobbish people had the lightest skin color. 44% reported that kind people have the lightest skin tone. When asked what they would like their children's skin color to be, 53% responded the lightest skin. 52% said that their ideal spouse would have the lightest skin. 53% felt that their families should have the lightest skin color. 33% of the Puerto Rican participants felt that their race should be comprised of people with the lightest skin color. When asked about the color of people who are dumb, 41% responded the darkest skin color. However, 43% of participants selected the darkest skin color as the ideal color of their child's spouse. The responses to the first and last items in this set differ unexplainably from the rest of the responses. Although Hall (2002) found somewhat contrasting results, the general pattern fell in the direction of Eurocentrism.

Skin color impairs opportunities for raising economic status among Hispanic women. Hunter (2002) uncovered skin color differences in educational and income attainment for Mexican American women. Skin color was strongly correlated with educational success. On a five-category skin color scale, each level of lighter skin was associated with 0.28 years more of school completed. This translates into a full year of educational difference between two women, one really light and one really dark, with similar backgrounds. Income was correlated with education level. Every year of education corresponded with \$246 more in annual income. In this way, skin color

apparently indirectly affects annual income for Mexican American women by impacting the level of education they achieve.

Asians. Skin color preferences can be as salient within the Asian community as in the Afro-American and Hispanic communities. Sahay and Piran (1997) documented similar results among South-Asian Canadian women. Female participants, Asian-Canadian and Euro-Canadian, labeled their own skin color and then selected their ideal color. The skin color categories were divided into “white,” “light,” “medium,” and “dark.” It was found that the participants wished to be significantly lighter than they actually were. The effect was greater the darker participants were on the color spectrum. Dark skinned South-Asian Canadians reported the strongest desire to be lighter, followed by the medium and light skinned Canadians. However, on average participants desired to belong in the “light” category rather than the “white” category. Further, it was found that medium and dark Asian participants experienced poorer body satisfaction compared to light Asians and Caucasians. Light Asian participants experienced similar levels of body satisfaction as the Caucasian participants. This research demonstrates the effect skin color can have on skin color ideals and body satisfaction.

Krishen, LaTour and Alishah (2010) reported a skin tone preference among Asian American women. Participants were shown two ads – one with a light Asian model and one with a darker Asian model. The ad with the lighter model advertised vitamins that may lighten one’s skin tone, whereas the darker model advertised vitamins that may tan (darken) one’s skin. Participants consisted of male and female Asians, and male and female Caucasians. Out of all the groups, Asian women reported having the strongest

desire to have lighter skin. Asian men showed little desire to lighten their skin. However, Asian men rated the ad with the lighter model the highest in ad appeal compared to other groups. Differences in Asian women's ratings of the ads were non-significant. As indicated by the researchers, Asian women may feel the most pressure to be lighter skinned, while Asian men feel the most approval towards women who are lighter skinned.

Mak (1999) did a study on Hong Kong magazine advertisements. This study was conducted in response to the media's use of light/white Asian faces to sell skin whitening products to Chinese women. In this study, an advertising photo of a Chinese woman's face was manipulated into seven versions. Each version differed in hue, saturation and lightness (HSL) settings. The seven different faces were grouped into paired combinations and participants selected the one they most preferred. Results of this study showed a significant preference, among men and women, for the lighter/whiter face in each pair. Additionally, participants rated their attitude toward the Chinese proverb "Yi Bai Zhe San Chou." This proverb translates into, "Fair skin can hide facial flaws." The finding showed that adherence to the proverb was a strong predictor of the selection of lighter faces. Individuals who strongly believed in the proverb were more likely to show a preference for the fairer faces. The findings provide support that Asian women can be affected by the color preference presented within the media.

Color preference can have negative effects for health and income among Filipino Americans. Kiang and Takeuchi (2009) analyzed data from the Filipino American Community Epidemiological Study (FACES). This data was collected in 1998-1999

from San Francisco, California and Honolulu, Hawaii, by Filipino interviewers.

Interviewer and self-report provided assessment of participant skin tone (very light to very dark) and facial features (very European/ very Filipino, and very non-Filipino /very Filipino). The results revealed that with or without controlling for demographics (i.e. age, education), darker skin tone in women and men was associated with lower physical health. Further, skin color was related to income levels. For women, those who had dark skin and more Filipino facial features earned a lower income than those with light skin and more Eurocentric features. This result was also significant after controlling for demographics. For men, darker skin was associated lower income levels than lighter skin. These findings provide some evidence that skin color may have serious consequences for Asian Americans.

All communities. Research indicates that some women heed the relationship among skin color, perceived physical attractiveness, marriageability, and social status, and attempt to change their circumstances by using skin whitening products in Africa, India, Arab, Latin America, the Caribbean, South East and East Asia despite the extremely dangerous nature of skin lightening creams to their health (Perry, 2005). The active ingredients in products used for skin whitening are very poisonous. Common ingredients that cause harm: Arsenic, Mercury, Kojic Acid and Hydroquinone. Many of these ingredients were banned in countries such as the U.S (FDA), the European Union, Switzerland and Germany. Despite the many documented harmful effects, products with these ingredients are produced in the U.S. and Europe and sold in other countries. Mercury products have been known to cause poisoning, fevers, convulsions, discolored

nails, blue-gray face, and malfunction of the nervous system. Hydroquinone products tend to work the best but exposure to extreme heat, sunlight or used after expiration date can cause hyper-pigmentation (darkening of skin), liver damage and reproductive hazards by way of the bloodstream. Ingredients like these can get into a country's water supply and cause health problems including death (Perry, 2005).

Cross-Ethnic. Color bias can be observed across ethnic groups as well as within ethnic groups. Most research on cross-ethnic color bias has focused primarily on White-American's judgments and behavior towards African-Americans. Maddox and Gray (2002) researched White American participants' awareness of cultural stereotypes and beliefs about light and dark complexioned Afro-Americans. Individuals were asked to list as many positive and negative cultural traits about light skinned and dark skinned Blacks as they could think of. Results showed that a significant difference was found between listings of darks and lights, dark skin was associated with negative traits and light skin with positive traits. The following lists the results for only the female targets. For a light female, participants were more likely to use the traits attractive and intelligent to describe this target character. For a dark female, participants were more likely to use the traits unattractive, unintelligent, uneducated, lazy, poor, and tough/aggressive to describe this target character. This study demonstrates that African American skin color has cultural significance among Caucasian Americans as well.

Watson, DeJong and Slack (2009) studied Caucasian respondent evaluations of dark and light complexioned Black female spokespersons in print ads. Results of the study showed an interaction effect between high and low prejudiced Whites and

spokesperson skin tone. They found that Caucasians who scored high (compared to low) on a prejudice measure responded less favorably to the dark skinned spokesperson ad on attractiveness, perceived similarity, identification, trustworthiness, attitude toward the ad, and attitude toward the brand. However, high and low prejudiced Whites responded similarly to the light skinned Black spokesperson. The researchers speculated that lighter skinned Afro-American peoples are used in mainstream media to pacify the responses of prejudiced Caucasians. The aforementioned research studies demonstrate that female color preferences can be found across racial/ethnic groups.

As specified by Zajonc (1968), lesser exposure to a stimulus object has been correlated with decreased liking for that object. Furthermore, a low frequency of representation (i.e., less familiarity with the stimulus) in the media could create biased attitudes. Thus, lack of public exposure to women with darker complexions could promote negative evaluations of those women's physical appearances. In effect, skin color bias from the public may be triggered by negative reactions to women that differ from the physical appearances that the public has come to view as normative.

Positive Assessments of Darker Women

As previously stated, the mere exposure effect holds that frequent exposure to a stimulus is followed by increased liking, acceptance, and confidence in that stimulus. The familiar face overgeneralization hypothesis has implications for alleviating color based attitudes. It states that familiar faces are preferred over unfamiliar faces. Zebrowitz et al. (2008) stated, "Since the unfamiliarity of other-race faces contributes to out-group prejudice, increasing the familiarity of other-race faces should decrease

prejudiced responses to strangers of that race” (Zebrowitz et al., 2008, p. 2). Zebrowitz et al. (2008) produced this very effect in their research. Likewise, unfamiliarity of dark skinned women may contribute to out-group prejudice. Increasing the familiarity of dark skinned women should decrease biased observer responses toward strangers of that skin color. The same process that inspires color based attitudes and beliefs might be used to encourage positive appraisals instead. It is reasonable to expect that mere exposure can help *reduce* negative evaluations of darker complexioned women as well.

A study by Boothroyd, Tovee and Pollet (2012) produced similar results concerning positive assessments of larger sized women in media imagery. The effect was produced through one-time exposure conditions. Exposure to 50+ duplicate images of aspirational large women, taken from UK Plus Size clothes catalogues, Miss Plus America finalists and the plus sized Runner up to Miss England, lead to differences in body size preferences. In two of Boothroyd et al.’s (2012) conditions, participants were either exposed to positive images of large women, or positive images of thin women. The images of thin women were taken from UK clothes catalogues, Miss America finalists and Miss England. UK Female participants performed a pre/post-test body preference task. Findings showed, from pre-test to post-test, participants increased their preferences towards thinness when exposed to thin women. Conversely, participants increased their preferences towards largeness when exposed to large women. This serves as an example that exposure to non-traditional beauty phenotypes can influence preferences.

Skin color bias is not fixed. The following is evidence that there are instances when the bias is not present. Sengupta (2000) conducted an experiment to test the effectiveness of advertisements containing African American models of varying skin shades. African-American and European-American women served as participants. Participants viewed an advertisement showing either a light, biracial-looking African American model, or a darker, prototypical-looking African American model. A second factor, whether the advertisement was beauty related or not, was fully crossed with the skin tone of the model. Participants rated the advertisements for source credibility, intent to buy the product and attitude towards the advertisement. No significant main or interaction effects were found. The lighter, more mixed-race looking, Black model and the “classical” Black model were judged virtually equal on all measures. This is interpreted by the researchers to mean that Eurocentric-Black models are not more effective in advertising than Afrocentric-Black models.

Two similar studies were conducted by Watson, Thornton, and Engelland (2010). In study 1, randomly assigned print advertisements featuring the same African American woman differing only in skin color and product type were presented to Black men. Participants self-reported their assessments of model attractiveness, attitude toward the ad, and attitude toward the brand. There was a significant difference between evaluations of the light- and dark-skinned models. The men evaluated the lighter model as more attractive. There was also evidence of a halo effect (Dion, Berscheid & Walster, 1972), as in addition to the lighter model being perceived as more attractive, her advertisement was viewed as more favorable, and her brand more positively than the advertisement featuring

the darker model. However, the study also found that the dark-skinned Black model's average ratings were higher than the midpoints of the scales for all dependent measures. This was interpreted by the researchers to mean that Black males did *approve* of dark models, if not to the same level of light models.

In study 2, the same basic research design was employed, but African American women served as participants (Watson et al., 2010). Contrary to study 1, study 2 found that the Black women rated the dark skinned model higher on attractiveness than the lighter skinned model. There were no significant differences between the light- and dark-skinned models for evaluation of the advertisement or the brand. The authors concluded that African American women did not have a skin color preference when it came to advertisements or brands. Average ratings for the dark model exceeded the scale midpoint for all of the measures. This was taken to mean by the researchers that Black women responded favorably toward both dark- and light-complexioned African American models. Considering Study 1 and 2 together, both African American men and women rated the dark skin model higher than the midpoint on all scales. This implies that dark skin may not always give rise to negative attitudes for ethnic women.

Research Propositions

According to generalized exposure effect, repeated exposure to a stimulus increases liking for that stimulus, as well as similar but not previously seen stimuli. Media tend to promote lighter skinned models and mere exposure would suggest that this should sway preferences toward other women with light skin. Consequently, applying the same reasoning holds that repeated exposure to photos of ethnic women with *dark*

skin tones may increase observer positive evaluations of images of other women with dark skin. The following hypotheses will be tested:

Hypothesis 1: Subjects exposed to a baseline set of *darker* skinned models (Dark Initial Model) will rate more positively the darker skinned models (Dark Final Model) in a subsequent set of advertisements, relative to the lighter skinned models (Light Final Model), on a) model attractiveness, b) attitude toward to the advertisement, and c) attitude toward the product.

Hypothesis 2: Subjects exposed to a baseline set of *lighter* skinned models (Light Initial Model) will rate more positively the lighter skinned models (Light Final Model) in the subsequent set of advertisements, relative to the darker skinned models (Dark Final Model), on a) model attractiveness, b) attitude toward to the advertisement, and c) attitude toward the product.

METHODS

Participants

Two hundred forty three (114 male, 129 female) undergraduate students from University of Hawaii at Manoa served as participants for this study. Professors from the University's Communicology Department announced to students the opportunity to participate in research. Students interested in participating in the research signed up online through Sona-Systems. All students read an informed consent form upon beginning the study. Participants received credit towards course research requirements in exchange for participation.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. The four conditions were as follows: Condition a) Dark Initial Model with Dark Final Model (Dark/Dark) yielded a sample size of 67 (22 male, 45 female). Condition b) Dark Initial Model/Light Final Model (Dark/Light) with a sample of 53 (35 male, 18 female). Condition c) Light Initial Model/Light Final Model (Light/Light) with a sample of 50 (27 male, 23 female). Condition d) Light Initial Model/Dark Final Model (Light/Dark) with a sample of 73 (30 male, 43 female). The majority student population was Asian at 45%, followed by Caucasian at 21%, Mixed Race at 15%, Pacific Islander at 8%, and Hispanic, Afro-American, South Asian and Other at minute percentages.

Instruments

Based on the work by Sengupta (2000), and Watson et al. (2010), the variables that were measured included subjects' perceptions of the models' attractiveness, subjects' attitude toward the advertisement, and subjects' attitude toward the product. Model

attractiveness was measured using a five-item, seven-point semantic-differential scale anchored by *unattractive/attractive*; *not classy/classy*; *ugly/beautiful*; *plain/elegant*; and *not sexy/sexy* (Ohanian, 1990). Subjects' attitudes toward the ad were measured on a four-item, seven-point semantic differential scale: *good/bad*, *like/dislike*, *effective/not effective and interesting/not interesting* (Watson et al., 2010, based on Holbrook & Batra, 1987). Subjects' attitudes toward the product were measured on a modified four-item, seven-point Likert-type scale bounded by *strongly agree/strongly disagree* (Putrevu and Lord 1994). The statements used within the scale are: the decision to buy the product is foolish; buying the product is a good decision; I think the product is satisfactory; I think the product has a lot of beneficial characteristics. Watson et al. (2010) used the same scales to assess perceptions of models' attractiveness, attitude toward the advertisement, and attitude toward the product and found their reliabilities to be between .80 and .89. To avoid demand effects, skin color assessment was not measured directly. To reduce the risk of participants figuring out the purpose of the experiment, perception of model skin color was not requested. Refer to appendices to see scales. Appendix C: attitude towards the advertisement; Appendix D: attitude towards the model; Appendix E: attitude towards the product.

Stimulus Materials

Fictitious ads containing images of Black models were used as the stimulus materials. Twenty-one images of very dark skinned Black women and twenty-one images of very light skinned Eurocentric looking Black women, for a total of forty-two ads were created. African American models were chosen because, as an ethnic group,

they have the largest variation in skin tones of the three ethnic groups presented. Images were taken from photos made public on the World Wide Web. Virtually all of the models wore natural kinky/curly textured hair. Fifteen images from each skin color group were used for the pre-exposure ads, while the remaining 6 images from each group were used as the participant rated ads. Multiple images were used in the exposure and rating sets so that the models were seen as a group. This would reduce any individual model differences that could influence the scores. The images selected to be rated were each chosen for wearing makeup, which was specific for the scale attitude towards the product. Exposure images consisted of both close up face shots, as well as, full body shots, each facing and positioned in diverse ways. The number of face shots, full body shots, and general positioning of models were balanced across both conditions. Rated images were all relatively close up shots generally taken from the chest up, each facing and positioned in diverse ways. General facing and position was balanced across both skin color groups. The selected photos were actual modeling images to standardize attractiveness across all pictures. All fictitious ads were created by placing images onto a background with the words "Fashion Monthly" across the top, "July, 2012" down the left side, and "Kii Makeup: Right for any occasion" along the bottom of the page. Underneath "Kii Makeup" were non-English words that gave the impression of describing the product. Kii facial makeup comprised the product to be evaluated by the attitude towards the product scale. The advertisements did not include an actual image of a makeup product, however, participants were to assess the facial makeup each model was wearing. Refer to appendix to see images. Appendix F: exposure set - dark skin

models. Appendix G: rating set - 6 dark skin models. Appendix H: exposure set - light skin models. Appendix I: rating set - 6 light skin models.

Procedure

This project involved a simple online study. Subjects first gave consent to participate in the study and then filled out simple demographic questions. There were four conditions: a) Dark Initial Models with Dark Final Models (Dark/Dark), b) Dark Initial Models/Light Final Models (Dark/Light), c) Light Initial Models/Light Final Models (Light/Light), and d) Light Initial Models/Dark Final Models (Light/Dark). In the conditions with Dark Initial Models (Dark/Dark and Dark/Light), participants were exposed to a series of 15 fictitious advertisements that consisted of a different African American model with varying levels of dark skin in each ad. Similarly, participants in the Light Initial conditions (Light/Light and Light/Dark) also viewed 15 advertisements of African American models, however each models had lighter skin tones. Participants were instructed to take a few moments viewing each of the 15 ads to become familiarized with multi-ethnic beauty and fashion industries. After exposure to a particular color condition, each group were given instructions to rate six advertisements for a “new magazine” targeting multi-ethnic audiences. Each of the six advertisements employed either dark skinned models (Dark Final Model) or light skinned models (Light Final Model). As an example, in condition b) participants were first exposed to dark models and then rated light models (Dark/Light). Participants were presented with each of the six images, one by one, and instructed to attend to it and respond to a series of questions about their attitude towards the ad they viewed, the model featured in the ad, and the

product (makeup on the model) in the ad. All images appear in the same order to keep the conditions standardized. In total, the viewing and rating of images took approximately ten minutes to complete.

RESULTS

Reliability analyses were performed on the three scales for each of the 12 final models (6 dark, 6 light). Starting with the Dark Final Models group, the reliability for the scale attitude towards the advertisement ranged from .87 to .96, perceived model attractiveness ranged from .93 to .97, and attitude towards the product ranged from .80 to .94. For the Light Final Models group reliabilities ranged from .94 to .98 for attitude towards the advertisement, .94 to .97 for perceived model attractiveness, and .88 to .96 for attitude towards the product. Thus scale reliability was high for all scales.

Hypothesis 1 states that pre-exposure to dark-skin models will increase favorable scores for a subsequent set of dark models (Dark/Dark), and decrease scores for a subsequent set of light models (Dark/Light). To see if exposure to the Dark Initial Models' skin color affected the assessment of subsequent models favorability scores, three one-way univariate analyses of variance tests were performed. Dark Initial Model X Final Model skin color (light, dark) were the two Independent variables with attitude towards the model, the ad, and the product being the three dependent variables. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests, $p < .05$.

Model Attractiveness. The predicted Initial Model X Final Model effects were analyzed. A significant effect was produced for Dark initial model and perceptions of final model attractiveness. The one-way ANOVA yielded a main effect for Dark initial models such that Dark models ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.20$) were rated significantly more attractive than Light models ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.30$), when preceded by Dark initial

models $F(1,118) = 9.20, p < .01, \eta^2 = .07$. Therefore the hypothesis was supported for the attractiveness variable.

Attitude towards the Advertisement. Similar to the first test, the hypothesized main effect for Dark initial Model was produced. The one-way ANOVA yielded a main effect for Dark initial models such that ads employing Dark models ($M = 4.97, SD = 1.20$) were rated significantly better than ads featuring Light models ($M = 4.50, SD = 1.41$), $F(1, 118) = 4.03, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$. Thus, the hypothesis was supported for the advertisement variable.

Attitude towards the Product. Unlike the prior two tests, the hypothesized main effect for Dark Initial Model did not emerge for attitude towards Final Model product $F(1, 118) = 0.20, p > .05, \eta^2 = .00$. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported for the product variable.

Hypothesis 2 states that pre-exposure to light-skin models will increase favorable scores for a subsequent set of light models (Light/Light), and decrease scores for a subsequent set of dark models (Light/Dark). To see if exposure to the Light Initial Models' skin color affected the assessment of subsequent models favorability scores, three one-way univariate analyses of variance tests were performed. Light Initial Model skin color X Final Model skin color (light, dark) were the two Independent variables with attitude towards the model, the ad, and the product being the three dependent variables. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests, $p < .05$.

Model Attractiveness. The predicted Initial Model X Final Model effects were analyzed. No significant main effect was produced for Light initial and perceptions of

final model attractiveness $F(1, 121) = 1.52, p > .05, \eta^2 = .01$. Interestingly, the means were in the opposite direction than what was hypothesized. The Dark final models received a higher mean score ($M = 4.99, SD = 1.10$) than the Light final models ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.20$), even when preceded by Light initial models. Therefore the hypothesis was not supported for the attractiveness variable.

Attitude towards the Advertisement. Similar to the preceding test, no significant main effect was found for Light initial model and perceptions of final model advertisement $F(1, 121) = 2.28, p > .05, \eta^2 = .02$. Comparable to the previous test, the means were in the opposite direction than predicted. The Dark final models received a higher mean score ($M = 4.98, SD = 1.02$) than the Light final models ($M = 4.68, SD = 1.20$), even when preceded by Light initial models. Therefore the hypothesis was not supported for the advertisement variable.

Attitude towards the Product. As with the two previous tests, no significant main effect appeared for Light initial model and attitude towards Final Model product $F(1, 121) = 0.54, p > .05, \eta^2 = .00$. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported for the product, nor the other two variables.

DISCUSSION

The current thesis study was formulated to investigate hypothesized effects arising from the inconsistencies between skin color representation in mainstream beauty media relative to the “real world” skin color of ethnic women. Traditionally, ethnic women with dark skin have been scarce in the media compared to women with light skin. Results of prior research suggest that the color ideal of light skin affects women within African American, Hispanic, and Asian communities. It was argued, using the mere exposure effect, that exposure to certain beauty ideals, such as skin color, will influence perceptions of target persons’ attractiveness levels. Participant perceptions of target person should be aligned with the beauty ideal. The current study tested the hypotheses that pre-exposure to dark African American female models in advertisements would increase attractiveness and favorability ratings of subsequent dark models (Dark/Dark), but decrease ratings for light models (Dark/Light). Conversely, pre-exposure to light African American female models in advertisements would increase attractiveness and favorability ratings of subsequent light models (Light/Light), but decrease ratings for dark models (Light/Dark). The exposure to initial skin color of the models’ was expected to establish a baseline for a “beauty ideal” for the subsequent models.

Three separate ANOVA tests were performed each for Dark Initial Models and for Light Initial Models. The ANOVA’s were conducted to see if the the skin color of the initial models influence perceptions of the skin color of the final models on a) the models’ attractiveness, b) the advertisements, and c) the product being advertised (facial makeup). Findings showed that results were significant for Hypothesis 1 for the

attractiveness variable, and the advertisement variable, but not the product variable. Dark models were rated as significantly more attractive than Light models after being exposed to Dark Initial Models. This outcome garnered a sizable 7% effect size which may convey some precedence for media research. Likewise, the advertisements that featured Dark models were rated as significantly more favorable than the ads that featured Light models after being exposed to Dark Initial Models. This outcome gained a descent 3% effect size which may impart some prominence for advertisement research. This supports research by Zajonc (1968) that mere exposure increases preferences. Further, these findings provide support that even brief exposure can increase preferences. The current study consisted of a “one-shot” design. Participants were exposed to the manipulation one time and data was gathered immediately. In addition, support was found for Zebrowitz’s (1997; 2008) argument that mere exposure can be generalized to other similar stimuli. Viewing images of women with dark skin increased preferences for other different images of women with dark skin.

Findings showed that results were not significant for Hypothesis 2 on any variable. After being exposed to images containing Light models, participants did not view the following set of Light models any more favorable than the set of Dark models. This suggests that exposure to Light Initial Models has little effect on perceptions of subsequent Light models. In fact, a closer look at the average scores revealed that participants gave the Dark models marginally higher attractiveness and advertisement ratings than the Lighter models, even after pre-exposure to Light models. This is worth noting considering that light skin is prototypical in mainstream media. This finding is

contrary to the evidence cited within the literature of the thesis. According to the research, it would be expected that light models would unequivocally trump dark models in the attractiveness/ad scales because of the influence of mainstream beauty ideals. However, the results of this study would suggest that people favor dark skin models to light skin models. In light of the primarily negative findings on color bias within cultural groups, this is an unexpected but positive turn of events for dark ethnic women. This finding is in harmony with Thompson and Keith's (2001) conclusion that highly attractive dark skinned women had equally high self-esteem as highly attractive light skinned women. It should be emphasized that the light models were rated slightly above the midpoint on the attractiveness/ad scales, and thus the overall results were interpreted to mean that participants did view light skin models as attractive, but not as attractive as dark skin models.

A possible explanation for dark models being perceived as more attractive than light models is because of the novelty associated with their skin color. Dark skin is not routinely seen in mainstream media. The majority participant population were largely Asian, and less so Caucasian. Very dark skin (such that of Blacks) is not common among either group. It has been demonstrated that novel stimuli tend to increase the experience of general physiological arousal (Zajonc, 1968). Arousal-attraction research has shown that feelings of general affective arousal can increase feelings of attraction. Foster, Witcher, Campbell, and Green (1998) found that arousal influenced perceptions of target attractiveness. Within highly arousing situations, individuals tend to view an initially attractive target as even more attractive, and an initially unattractive target as even less

attractive. The dark women in the present study were models, presented in a beauty context, thus their novelty may have been seen as more attractive rather than less. Beautiful women that vary from the familiar may have more positive effects on perceptions of attractiveness.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Implications

Limitation. A possible limitation to this study was that the results obtained from Hawaii college students may not be generalizable to other populations. The results gathered from these participants may not be consistent with those that could be obtained from the mainland U.S. There is a large, multi-ethnic population in Hawaii that may create a more accepting environment for imagery of darker women. Residents of Hawaii come from a large number of Asian and Polynesian ethnic groups, many of whom may have darker skin tones. Additionally, the resident culture and lifestyle in Hawaii may be pro-darker skin because of tanning and the year around sunshine weather.

Future directions. In daily life, most women do not have the appearance of a model. The literature documented hardships experienced by dark women in the real world (e.g., low self-esteem, low socioeconomic status, poisonous skin bleaching practices, etc). An effective study should be to have the same general design, however, it might be more useful to use “average” looking women as the Initial and Final Images instead of models. It would be interesting to see if the study results would be similar to the current study with dark women rated higher than lighter women. Presently, different women were chosen for each skin color category. A future study may be able to photoshop images and use the same photos to make dark and light versions of each

picture to standardize conditions. In the current study, results were positive for dark African American women, future studies should test other ethnic groups as well, such as Asian, Indian, and Hispanic. The present study was conducted using participants varying in ethnic-racial backgrounds. Future studies may find it useful to use participants that are of the same ethnicity as the models themselves. Furthermore, the present study did not request information of participant judgments of skin color. Future studies should ask specific questions about skin color perceptions and attitudes to gauge actual participant reactions. Additionally, a future study would benefit from asking the skin color (i.e. light or dark) of the participants. Then testing whether participant skin color effects perceptions of target person attractiveness.

Implications. This study supplements Sengupta's (2000) findings by demonstrating that darker African American women can be equally or more effective in advertisements as lighter women. Mere exposure to Dark skin lead to a significant favorable score for the advertisement variable with a 3% effect size. The 3% effect size may impart some prominence for advertisement research and advertising companies. Mere exposure to Dark skin produced a significant result for the attractiveness variable with an effect size of 7%. This 7% effect size may convey some precedence for media research and the media industry. Furthermore, this study may also provide some implications for decreasing the color-based self-dissatisfaction found among ethnic women, because darker skinned ethnic women -- at least in the present study -- are indeed found to be as attractive or more attractive than lighter skinned ethnic women.

Conclusion

The present thesis tested the hypotheses that exposure to certain beauty norms produced preferences for those norms. Presently, the norms tested were exposure to the skin color of ethnic-women models and subsequent preferences for the skin color of models. Using African American models, the current study concluded that exposure to dark skin increased preferences for other models with dark skin, over models with light skin. However, exposure to light skin models did not increase preferences for other models with light skin, over models with dark skin. These results suggest that increased exposure to dark or light skin color increases preferences for dark skin, but not for light skin.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

My name is Kayyisa Bermudas, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawaii (UH) conducting research for my thesis. The purpose of this study is to evaluate models that will be included in a culturally and ethnically diverse magazine. Participation in this study will involve the completion of an anonymous on-line (Internet) survey. I am asking you to participate in this project because you are at least 18 years old and enrolled as a student at UH Manoa.

Project Description – Activities and Time Commitment: Participants will fill out a survey that is posted on the Internet. The survey involves viewing a slideshow of models and then filling out some questions about a set of models within advertisements. Completion of the survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Benefits and Risks: I believe there are no direct benefits to you in participating in my research project. However, the results of this project might help me and other researchers learn more about model selection for advertising to diverse audiences. There is little risk to you in participating in this project.

Compensation: As compensation for time spent participating in this study, you may receive class credit.

Confidentiality and Privacy: This survey is anonymous. I will not ask you to provide any personal information that could be used to identify you. Likewise, please do not include any personal information, such as your name, in your survey responses. During this research project, I will keep all data from the survey in a secure location. Only I and my research assistant will have access to the data, although legally authorized agencies, including the University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program, have the right to review research records.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this project is voluntary. You can freely choose to participate or to not participate in this survey, and there will be no penalty or loss of benefits for either decision. If you agree to participate, you can stop at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, you can contact me at kayy@hawaii.edu. You can also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. R. Kelly Aune, at (808) 956-3313 or kaune@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UH Human Studies Program at (808) 956-5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu.

Consent to the Survey: If you consent to participate in this survey then please move onto the next page of the survey. Submittal of the survey will be considered as your consent to participate in this study.

If you DON'T give consent then close this survey now.

Please print a copy of this page for your reference.

Appendix B: Demographics

1. Sex: ___ Male ___ Female

2. Age: ___

3. Which BEST describes your ethnic or racial background?
 - (1) Asian

 - (2) South Asian

 - (3) Pacific Islander

 - (4) African, Afro-American, Black

 - (5) American Indian/Alaska Native

 - (6) Caucasian/White, Non-Hispanic

 - (7) Hispanic

 - (8) Middle Eastern

 - (9) Mixed

 - (10) Something not listed? Please indicate _____

Appendix C: Attitude towards the Ad

Please take a look at the advertisement in front of you. Indicate your perceptions of the ADVERTISEMENT by selecting the corresponding number for each of the items below.

1. Good (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Bad
2. Like (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Dislike
3. Effective (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not Effective
4. Interesting (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not Interesting

Appendix D: Attitude towards the Model

Please take a look at the advertisement in front of you. Indicate your perceptions of the MODEL by selecting the corresponding number for each of the items below.

1. Attractive (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Unattractive
2. Classy (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not Classy
3. Beautiful (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Ugly
4. Elegant (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Plain
5. Sexy (7) (6) (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not Sexy

Appendix E: Attitude towards the Product

Please look at the advertisement for the product Kii Facial Makeup and indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

Response choices:

Agree (5), Somewhat Agree (4), Neutral (3), Somewhat Disagree (2), Disagree (1)

1. ____ The decision to buy this product is foolish.
2. ____ Buying this product is a good decision.
3. ____ I think the product has a lot of beneficial characteristics.
4. ____ I think the product is satisfactory.

Appendix F: Exposure Set - Dark Skin Models

Please take a few moments to view each of the following 15 advertisements to become familiarized with multi-ethnic beauty and fashion industries.

Note: Images are on the following pages.

FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

Kii Makeup

Adiam condimentum
Purus, in consectetuer
Proin in sapien. Fusce
urna magna,neque
eget lacus. Maecenas
felis nunc, aliquam ac,
consequat vitae,
feugiat at, blandit
vitae, euismod vel.



Kii Makeup Right for any Occasion!

Adiam condimentum
Purus, in consectetuer Proin in sapien. Fusce urna magna,neque eget lacus. Maecenas felis nunc, aliquam ac, consequat vitae, feugiat at,
blandit vitae, euismod vel.
Adiam condimentum

FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

Kii Makeup

Adiam condimentum
Purus, in consectetuer
Proin in sapien. Fusce
urna magna,neque
eget lacus. Maecenas
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FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

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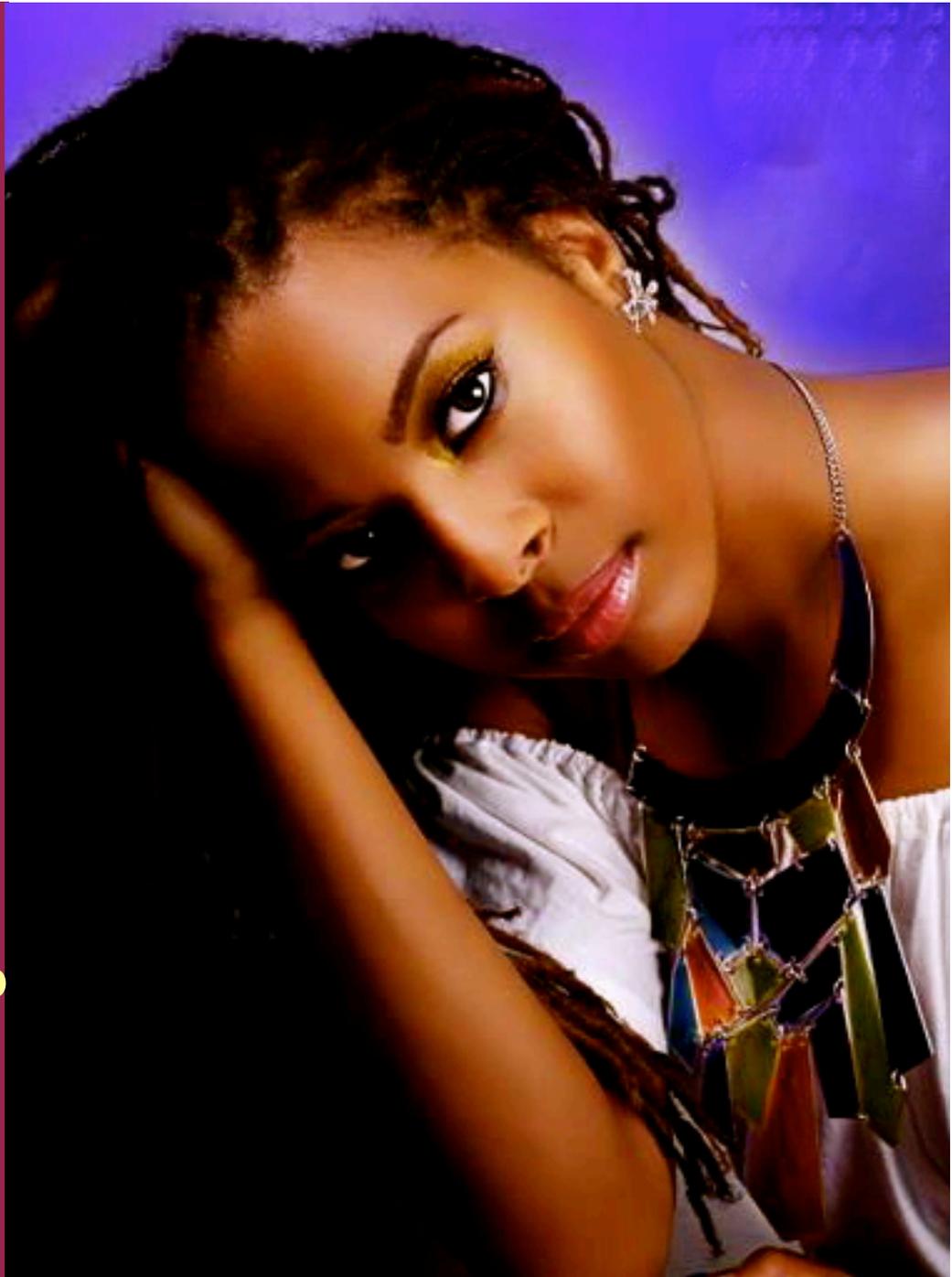
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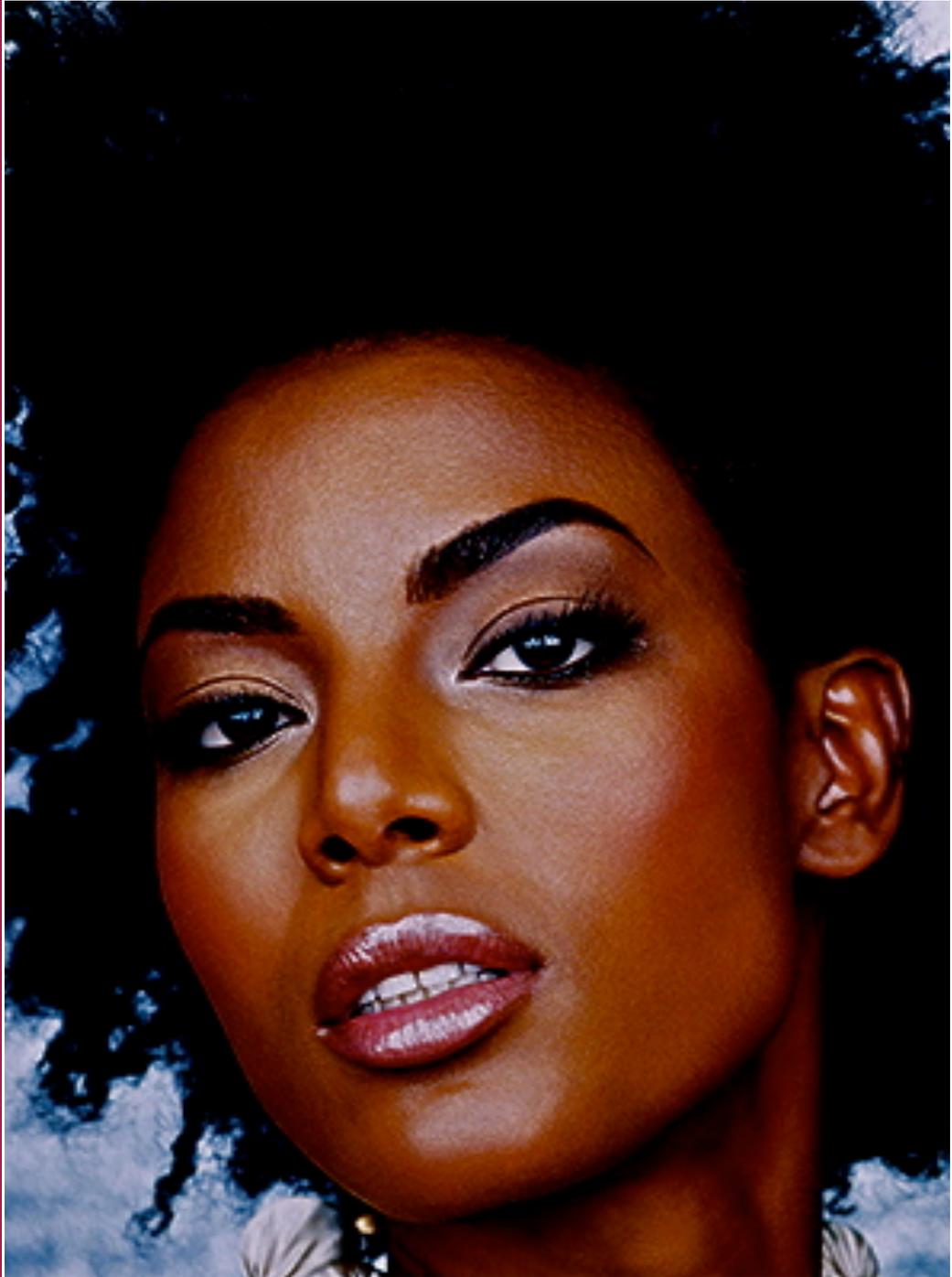
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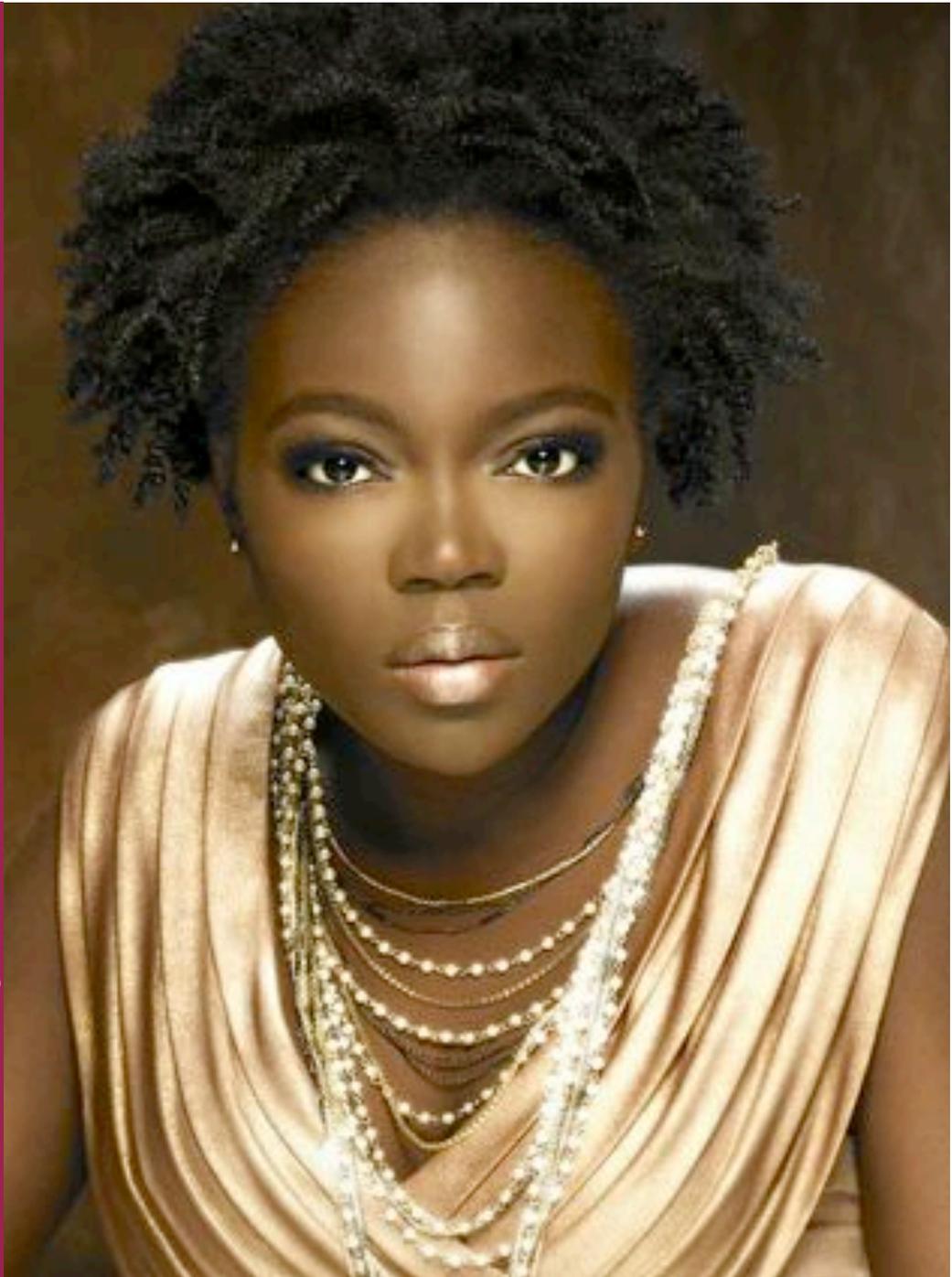
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FASHIONMONTHLY

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FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

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FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012



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Adiam condimentum

Appendix G: Rating Set - 6 Dark Skin Models

A series of 6 advertisements will now be introduced. Please take the time to rate each of them on the various qualities presented. The ads may be featured in an ethnically and culturally diverse magazine.

Note: Images are on the following pages.

FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

Kii Makeup

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Proin in sapien. Fusce
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FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

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Kii Makeup Right for any Occasion!

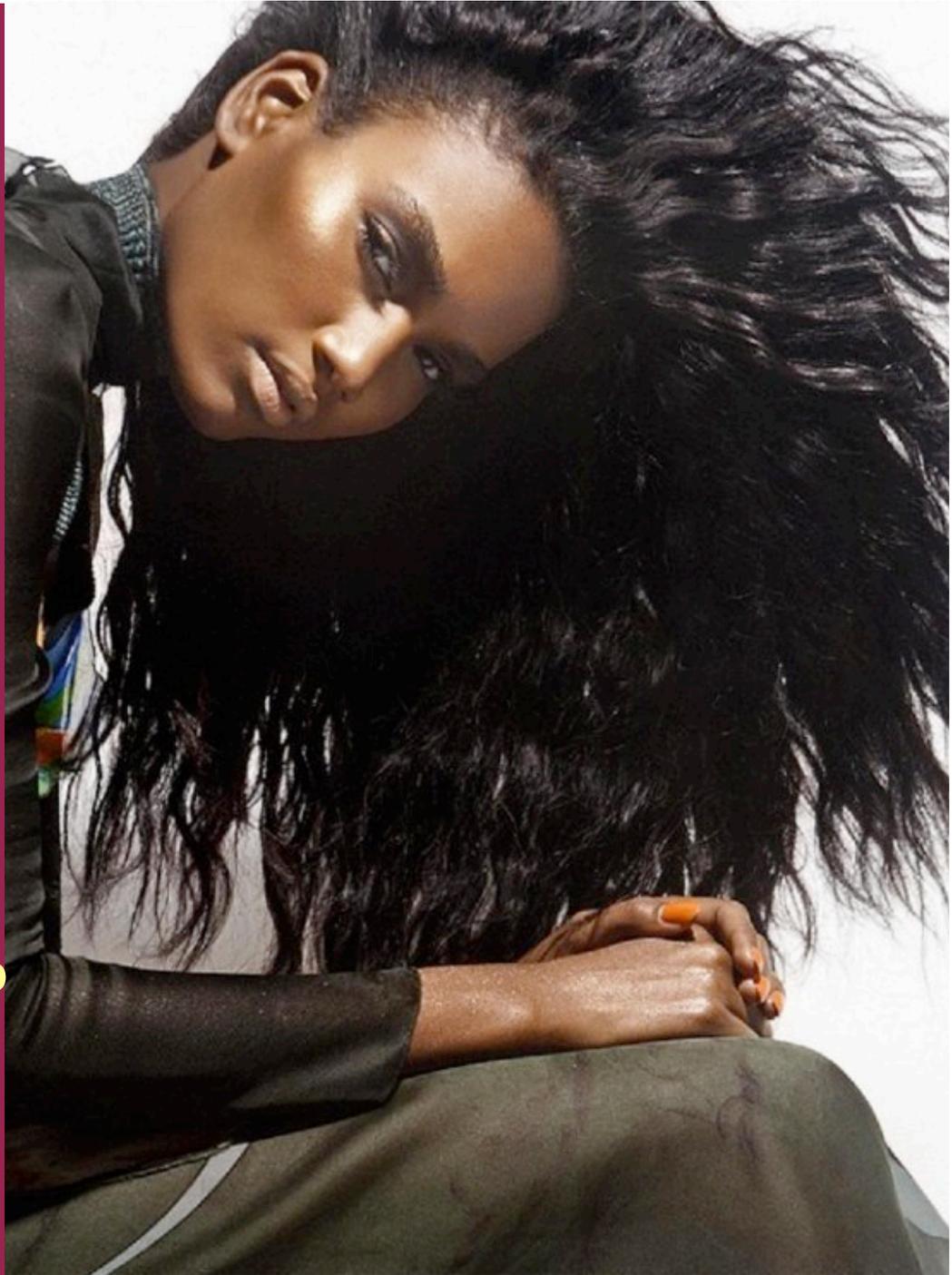
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FASHIONMONTHLY

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Kii Makeup Right for any Occasion!

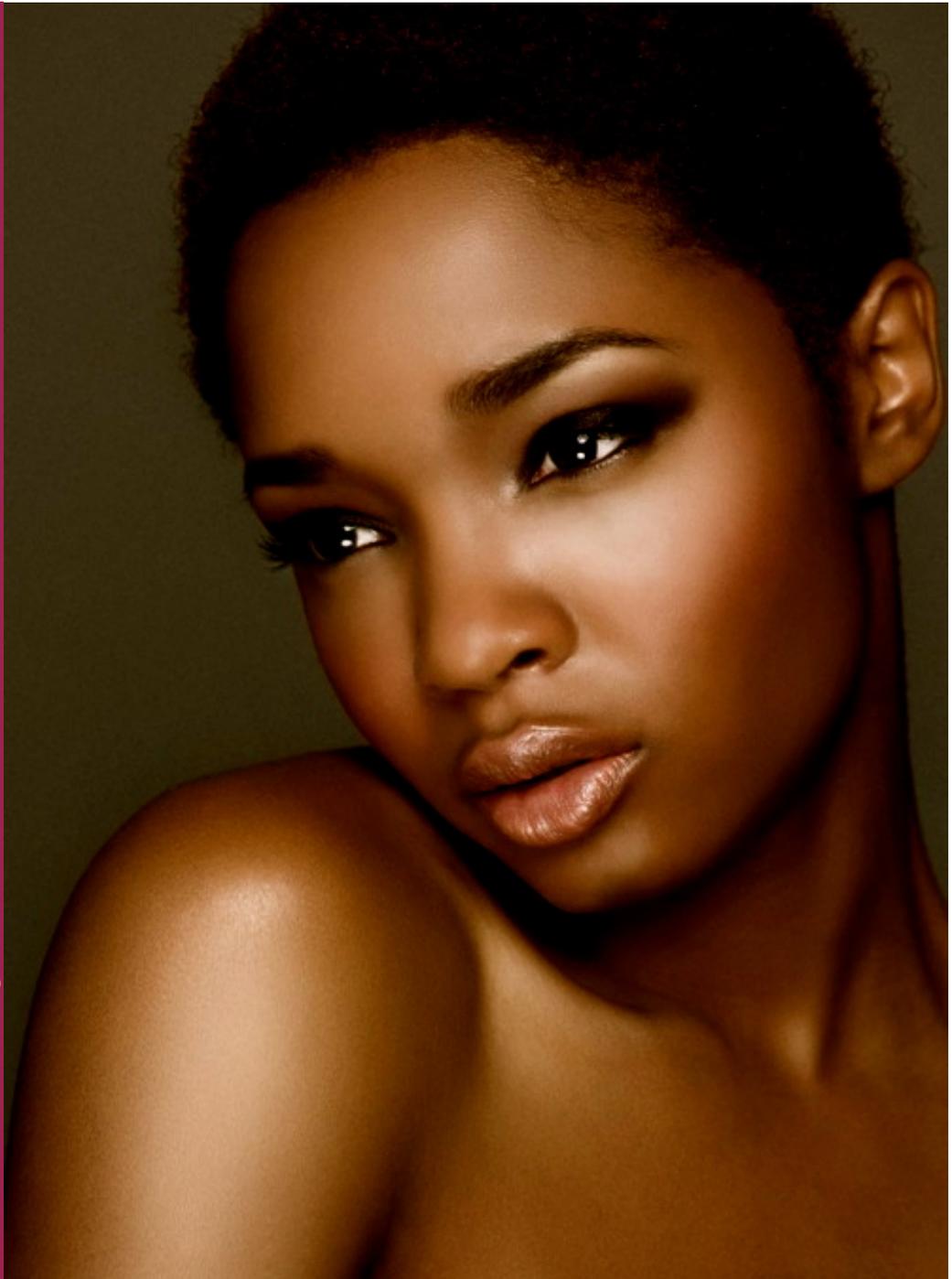
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FASHIONMONTHLY

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Kii Makeup Right for any Occasion!

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FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

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Kii Makeup Right for any Occasion!

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Appendix H: Exposure Set - Light Skin Models

Please take a few moments to view each of the following 15 advertisements to become familiarized with multi-ethnic beauty and fashion industries.

Note: Images are on the following pages.

FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

Kii Makeup

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Appendix I: Rating Set - 6 Light Skin Models

A series of 6 advertisements will now be introduced. Please take the time to rate each of them on the various qualities presented. The ads may be featured in an ethnically and culturally diverse magazine.

Note: Images are on the following pages.

FASHIONMONTHLY

July , 2012

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Adiam condimentum
Purus, in consectetur
Proin in sapien. Fusce
urna magna,neque
eget lacus. Maecenas
felis nunc, aliquam ac,
consequat vitae,
feugiat at, blandit
vitae, euismod vel.



Kii Makeup Right for any Occasion!

Adiam condimentum
Purus, in consectetur Proin in sapien. Fusce urna magna,neque eget lacus. Maecenas felis nunc, aliquam ac, consequat vitae, feugiat at,
blandit vitae, euismod vel.
Adiam condimentum

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