

Title page

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Name: Carolina Costa E Silva

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Tutors: Dr Kirsten Hardie (unit leader) and Annie Grove-White

Title of Investigative Study:

**Television advertising that promotes Black Lives Matters (BLM):
A critical investigation into the complexity of consumer responses
to Nike and ITV advertisements that relate to BLM**

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Abstract-

The aim of the study was to find out why the consumer responses to certain television advertisements created such a mixture of response by looking at it through race and advertising theories. The adverts analysed were from America and Britain which supported the BLM movement and cause. This allowed for an interesting comparison, which was predicted to show a more disapproving audience from the States. To analyse the response, social media reactions were gathered and grouped into four consumer categories; liked the company and the message, liked the company but not the message, disliked the company but liked the message, or disliked both.

The general findings were that there was a difference in consumer responses tended to fit to the four categories, however, more need to be added. The difference between America and British reactions were that there tended to be more categories of reaction for the American viewers whereas, the British tended to completely dislike or completely like the company. This could be due to the larger population size of America or that the Nike advert reached more people online.

Acknowledgements -

Thank you to my old psychology teacher, Mrs Large who sparked a continual love of psychology and all things cognitive. I will never stop learning about us as humans and our innate processes that makes us so interesting. And thank you to Annie and Kirsten for helping the whole of L6 through these strange times.

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Television advertising that promotes Black Lives Matters (BLM):
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Introduction:

During the summer of 2020, Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and riots proliferated throughout the world as a response to the unwarranted death of George Floyd. Black Lives Matter was established in 2013 by three Black women: Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. Its core message was that all lives cannot matter unless Black lives matter due to the need for “an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted” (BLM, 2017). It not only sparked the rebellion against systematic discrimination embedded in many countries but also in companies and brands who had a troubling past with allegations of racism.

This essay investigates television advertising that promotes Black Lives Matter (BLM): A critical investigation into the complexity of consumer responses to Nike and ITV advertisements that relate to BLM. The essay considers the change of attitudes towards race, what the BLM movement is, how organisations are diverse or lack it and the shift in race and representation in advertising. Notable adverts that spoke out against racism and gained retorts from consumers were Nike; “For once don’t do it” and the ITV’s multiple supporting adverts such as “Black Voices” as a way to back Diversities performance on ‘Britain’s got Talent’ (Spanier, 2020). These adverts were chosen for the case studies as they gained media publicity for the said reactions, additionally, due to the similarities in the adverts it creates a control to compare the audience’s reactions through qualitative research. These primary sources will be coupled with online response from their consumers and how they interpreted the adverts, these responses will be analysed using race theory as well as advertising theory. Hypothetically, the expectation of the findings from this essay are that there will be four variations to the consumer response; they dislike the brand and the message, they like the brand not the message, they like the message not the brand or they like both. Additionally, there is expected to be a difference between the responses to American adverts due to the larger population as well as the history of systematic

discrimination and overt racism longstanding in America. British adverts face a similar problem; however, subtle racism is more prominent in the UK (N/A).

The television advertisements were relevant due to the fact that it is adaptable to any platform. Commotion over BLM supporting advertisements extend over social media as a response to the television, the complexity comes from the reasons behind comments from the consumer, certain criticisms came from a personal prejudice, others celebrated the companies move to back the BLM movement and certain judgments called out companies which took a hypocritical stance. In this regard, certain companies faced internal struggles with racial issues affecting employees and interviewees, this discrimination in the organisation manifested itself through a BAME pay gap or the lack of diversity in employees as well as remarks or acts of racism towards people of colour. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic certain responses from the customer created controversy in themselves. The consumer responses tended to manifest themselves better on social media and YouTube, platforms where anyone can express their opinions. The study compares and considers the American and British consumers reactions to television BLM adverts to investigate the difference.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Pearsons Education Limited 2015, pp. 35-39) and Realistic Conflict Theory (RCT) (Pearsons Education Limited 2015, p. 34) are just two of many theoretical approaches for the development of prejudice and discrimination. They give an explanation as to the reasoning behind racial prejudices in individuals. These similar theories for conflict between two groups emanate from the innate competitiveness of humans, RCT explains that this competitiveness arises from a limited supply of resources (such as jobs, houses, etc.) and quickly turns to conflict, which can escalate into prejudice and discrimination (McLeod, 2020). Whereas Social Identity Theory explains conflict through the in-group and out-group mentality. A person will believe what their group instils on the individual by circulating certain opinions round the group, their actions will be based on these adopted opinions as it gives them a sense of belonging. It explains stereotyping, suggesting that our brains find it easier to group people together and thus also exaggerate our differences leading to the basis of prejudicial thinking. The in-group actively seeks the negatives in the out-group to boost their self-value (McLeod, 2019). These race theories can begin to explain some of the complex responses to the TV adverts that promoted BLM.

The prominence of explaining the intricate reactions to positive adverts that support BLM comes from deeply rooted systematic discriminatory thinking that has become embedded in individuals' minds. This issue has to be resolved through educational methods, thus, explaining why prejudicial reactions can be held by certain people and may in turn help them identify and change those beliefs.

Race Attitudes and Issues:

Race attitudes have always been a complex topic, people of colour and minorities have faced discrimination for centuries. The issue of racism in America has been present since their foundation and prior to that. Their fight for independence from Britain was fought by all Americans and led to the founding fathers creating the declaration of independence as well as paving the way to a new government. Despite the declaration claiming that “all men are created equal” many used biblical scriptures to testify that people of colour were not men (National Archives, 2020). These horrid ideals allowed wealthy white men to continue to use slaves until the civil war 1861–65. The 11 southern states fought for their secession from United States of America due to friction over the use of slaves, they consequently lost the four-year war and no longer had permission for slavery (Weber & Hassler, 2020). What followed was African Americans and their fight for equality facing segregation put in place through Jim Crow Laws and the legalisation of discrimination in the US. It purposefully marginalised people of colour “by denying them the right to vote, hold jobs, get an education or other opportunities”, those that retaliated were often arrested, beaten, or even killed for stepping out of line (History.com Editors, 2018). The new threat to African Americans and subsequently Mexican Americans was the systematic discrimination through the implementation put forward by Nixon and his “War on Drugs”. It ultimately, imprisoned people carrying and selling illegal drugs in the US, however, it was not fairly enforced. It sought to incarcerate “anti-war left and black people”, one of Nixon’s advisors even stated: “We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities.” (Lopez, 2016)

This criminalisation is still present in modern day America with police not supporting BLM but rather “Blue Lives Matter”, even becoming ingrained in African American’s themselves, seeing themselves as the antagonist in their own lives (Thirteenth, 2016).

Britain was not far removed from America’s issues, as they populated America and lead to the decline of the Native American’s and a racial bias towards them. Additionally, slave trade was also present in the UK supplied the commerce to the new America. However, Britain abolished slave trade with the Act of 1807, this does not mean that views shifted instantly (Mohamud & Whitburn, 2018). A more modern example of discrimination in Britain can be seen through the Windrush scandal of 2018, a boat named ‘HMT Empire Windrush’ carried several hundred from Caribbean colonies to Britain during 1948-73. They were regarded as British citizens therefore, not requiring a visa or passport. However, in 2017 information that some of the Windrush generation were being wrongfully “detained, deported and denied legal rights” came to light (The Joint Council of Welfare of Immigrants , 2020). It highlighted the discriminatory and flawed immigration system that was present in the UK. Britain also faced protests and riots in the summer of 2020 in support of BLM, further revealing the existence of racism through many of their stories.

These intertwining histories of discrimination in both countries shows that the issue of racism is still very much present in them, this has led to a need for an intervention through groups like BLM and internal investigations into well-known brands and organisations to expose racism as to set an example.

Black Lives Matter, why we need it:

Britain and America’s past and present issues with racism are evident but not always acknowledged. Countries that relied so heavily on the of other nations and races that led to them becoming the powerhouse’s that they are now, feels forgotten in the modern day (Baptist, 2014). BLM is a movement set on changing this. Yet the fact that the movement itself caused such controversy shows the prevalence of injustice. The reaction to BLM became ““All Lives Matter” and “Blue Lives Matter”” particularly in America, showing the whitewashing of an important issue to make it seem as though it is taking the value away from other people. It villainized the BLM movement as seen when “Milwaukee Sheriff David

Clarke opened his speech by declaring that “blue lives matter”, blaming Black Lives Matter for “the collapse of social order” (Smith, 2017). The constant hostile response reinforces the impression of racism in today society. It further demands for the need for BLM as the issues that history has told, the foundations of racism in both America and Britain that need to be dismantled. BLM allows the public to voice their frustration at the broken system and call for action from our leaders.

Summer of 2020 saw many protests throughout the world, but especially in America. The tensions between protestors and law officers were strained due to the impact of President Donald Trump, he maintained the Nixon mentality and accused protestors of trying to accomplish “the destruction of the nuclear family, abolish the police, abolish prisons, abolish border security, abolish capitalism and abolish school choice “, all of which are false (Massie, 2020). Trump’s intention was for the general public to maintain the criminalising view that the peaceful protestors were inciting illegal actions. However, 93% of all BLM protesters are completely peaceful, with the American police being the hostile component of them (Beckett, 2020). These aggressions included but were not limited to; car ramming, pepper spray, tear gas, rubber bullets, unnecessary use of force and even flash grenades (Amnesty International , 2020). BLM is necessary because this excessive use of force on law abiding citizens practicing their right to protest who were fighting for justice, is unjust. BLM is needed because people of colour have suffered long enough, BLM calls for everyone to help Black Lives so that they can have the same opportunities as their white counterparts.

Organisations and Race:

It is not only governments that face investigation into systematic discrimination, organisations and companies must ensure that their morals are well aligned if they want to avoid controversy. Following the events in America many organisations chose to disassociate themselves from discrimination by issuing statements and support for BLM. But many came under fire regarding their motives and some employees made it clear that they had faced racism of their own from within the company. In a few circumstances the company addressed these issues and stated they would focus on striving towards a better work environment for everyone, for example “Jason Kilar, the CEO of WarnerMedia, explicitly

named racism as a problem in the company and committed to work towards change” (Hudson Banks & Harvey, 2020). With so many internal issues of subtle and systemic forms of racism it is up to the company and organisations to tackle them by asking their BAME workers where the concerns lie. Internal communications are just as important as external, the company must ensure that their internal customers (employees) are satisfied, the external consumers are the ones buying the product or service (Karlsson, 2007).

Additionally, when a company declares solidarity with BLM, an ulterior motive comes into question. The company has a product or a service that it generates revenue from. Thus, is this political correctness only being shown for its own benefit or does the company really believe what its advocating? Brand authenticity can be a cause for the complex consumer reaction to a politically correct campaign. The questioning of brand authenticity comes from looking at “continuity *and* credibility (which) are focused solely on the company and its customers, so these actions can be said to have a corporate orientation. Integrity *and* symbolism, on the other hand, are more focused on social issues outside the immediate scope of the company, and so these actions can be said to have a societal orientation” (Menon & Kiesler, 2020). The company must actively be working on bettering themselves if they wish to prevent disputes.

Race and Representations in Advertisement:

Advertisements also face a regrettably long history with racism and derogatory methods of marketing. The old approaches of advertising openly demeaned women and cultural minorities, it regarded the Caucasian man as being the epitome of success as seen in Will Heilpern’s Business Insider article (2016). There was a shift in advertisements after the Civil Rights era 1954-1968 (HISTORY.COM EDITORS, 2017). Many brands and companies changed their obviously offensive methods into more subtle approaches. Adverts began to include the minorities and hold women in a new light, but many slyly undermined them through composition or the message that was attached to the advert (Minato, 2012). This was seen through the way women became a sexualised object, independent of a man but still regarded as an inferior.

The way advertisements were marketed may have even amplified the social discord, in fact fuelling the issue of discrimination. It supported the white supremacy view giving them the feeling of righteousness, creating tension with the minorities and women.

One of the first companies to address social issues by means of advertisements was United Colours of Benetton, they eliminated “pictures of its products from its advertisements” and focused fully on the social issues. It became “radical to the extent that it violates the fundamental principles of traditional product advertising” (Tinic, 1997). Its coverage of the AIDS pandemic and the topic of racism caused huge controversy but ultimately bred the brands link to public issues rather than its product promotion.



Figure 1 – Oliviero Toscani, 1996 and 1991, “Hearts” & “Blanket”, viewed 27/12/2020
<<https://www.vogue.co.uk/gallery/benettons-best-advertising-campaigns>>

Figure 1 shows the radical way that Benetton, or more specifically Oliviero Toscani, liked to advertise the brand. They focused on taboo topics, such as racism, and promoted the brand in support of these matters. The three hearts that show our similarities on the inside suggesting our colour is not what defines us. A similar message but in conjunction with the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and more) community, showing an interracial gay couple with an adopted baby. During the time that they were advertising it was lacking anything to represent both LGBTQ+ and BLM, Benetton allowed them to have a voice through their publications. Their unique stance on societal problems became a stepping stone for other companies to incorporate brand morals into their advertisement.

It is evident that there were issues with race representation and advertisements as the adverts reflected the beliefs of the public, in modern times there tends to be less racist content, thanks to brands such as Benetton. Their controversial methods made way for new

approaches of advertising and the promotion of the brands ethical and moral stance on matters, which would align with that of their consumers.

Case Study One:

Figure 2 – Nike, 2020, “For Once Don’t Do It”, viewed 27/12/2020
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drcO2V2m7lw>>

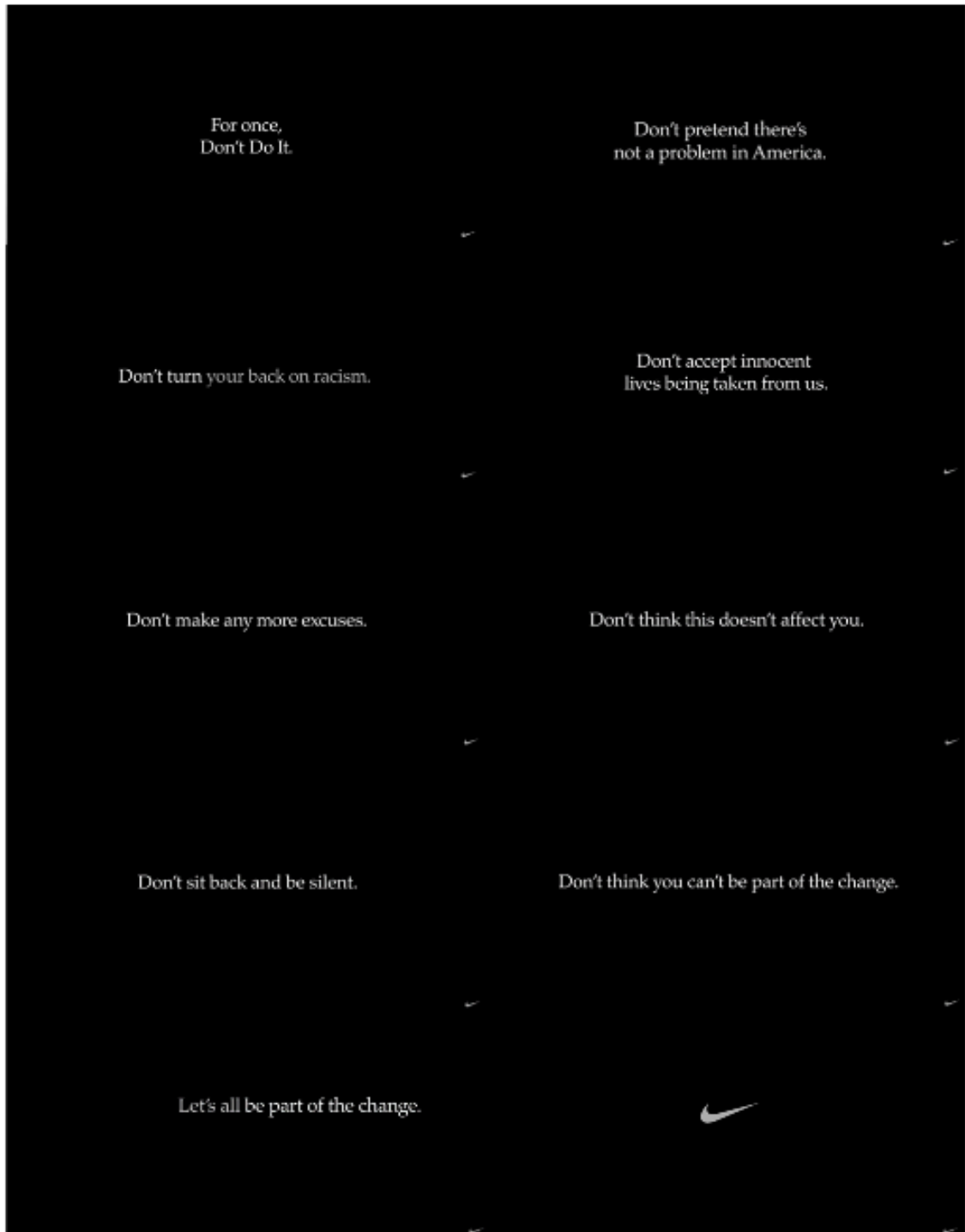


Figure 3- Nike, 2020, "Comments section of Video", viewed 27/12/2020
 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drcO2V2m7lw>

Oh

Oh Breezy 6 months ago

nike you are part of the problem

183

REPLY

View 4 replies

Wilde Channel 1 6 months ago

Says a company that owns sweatshops

61

REPLY

H

Hahn k F 6 months ago

"Don't.. burn down our store"

307

REPLY

View 6 replies

Roast Chicken 6 months ago

Nike's way of saying please don't burn our stores down 🤔

135

REPLY

View 6 replies

E

Emiroviski Kadir 6 months ago

"Let's all be part of the change"

They couldn't use the world solution instead of change because they know all you can do is be part of the problem at this point...

12

REPLY

View reply

SA W 6 months ago

what they really want to say is for protester: DON'T DO(SMASH) IT (Nike's store).

1

REPLY

A Toaster 6 months ago

"We are living in an era of woke capitalism in which companies pretend to care about social justice to sell products to people who pretend to hate capitalism." - Clay Routledge

420

REPLY

View 8 replies

GSU1T Ghost 6 months ago

Two words. Sweat shops

2

REPLY

Slomyy 6 months ago

Nike doing this to stop people from robbing their stores lmao

60

REPLY

View reply

David John 6 months ago

Nice to see corporations capitalizing on this movement, how sweet, im sure they will release some new special edition BLM trainers soon. :)

please stop buying into this. If you want to make a difference just treat everyone the same, dont cheat, dont steal, dont lie, an...

Read more

131

REPLY

View 7 replies

D

D Nogay 6 months ago

Oh but you do know how to brand and sell overpriced athletic gear, made in sweatshops --- good work all white executive leadership team -- headquartered in Beaverton, Oregon (3% black maybe?) and live in towns like their CEO that are 97% white. Yeah, you embrace from your entitled bubble.

18

REPLY

View reply

Figure 4- A Table to show a selection of comments grouped into the categories of consumer reactions- the one below the table is a comment that would require another category. (All racist comments were reported after the screenshot was taken.)

	LIKED MESSAGE	DISLIKED MESSAGE
LIKED COMPANY	<p>NATHAN DRAKE 7 months ago Love you Nike ❤️ 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Axolot 7 months ago Nike is the best 👍 2 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>just another person 6 months ago THANKYOU NIKE I LOVE U AND WILL BUY ALL UR PRODUCTS NOW THANKYOU FOR SPEAKING OUT AGAINST RACISM AND POLICE BRUTALITY 👍 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>BABLU AJAY 7 months ago Look at Nike Man ❤️ 👍 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>GoldStandard 7 months ago Thank You Nike 🟢 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p>	<p>Brandon Moldenhauer 7 months ago How has Nike fallen so far from God 👍 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Imperfectvaz 1 month ago stfu and stick to making products. 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Man Boudreau 3 weeks ago You are being ridiculous Nike 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Mike Toughpay 2 weeks ago You're not a "victim" because of your skin color. Get over it. 👍 🗨️ REPLY</p>
DISLIKED COMPANY	<p>D Nopay 6 months ago Oh but you do know how to brand and sell overpriced athletic gear, made in sweatshops — good work all white executive leadership team — headquartered in Beaverton, Oregon (3% black maybe?) and live in towns like their CEO that are 97% white. Yeah, you embrace from your entitled bubble. 👍 13 🗨️ REPLY View reply</p> <p>David John 6 months ago Nice to see corporations capitalizing on this movement, how sweet, im sure they will release some new special edition BLM trainers soon. :) please stop buying into this. If you want to make a difference just treat everyone the same, dont cheat, dont steal, dont lie, an. Read more 👍 131 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Emmavivi Kafe 6 months ago "Let's all be part of the change" They couldn't use the world solution instead of change because they know all you can do is be part of the problem at this point.. 👍 12 🗨️ REPLY View reply</p> <p>andrew tobert 7 months ago What is the pay discrepancy between your CEO and the people who make your products? Perhaps you could be part of the change and offer your employees some security? 👍 42 🗨️ REPLY View 3 replies</p>	<p>Jay Deep 1 week ago They are not innocent lives being taken from us 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Jay Deep 1 week ago All lives matter 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Dominic Skinner 3 weeks ago Nah I think ima just do it 👍 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Pinhal Silva 3 months ago All lives matter. No more nike for me 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Isaac Smith 2 weeks ago (edited) Here's another take on Nike's uh... 'ethics'. And this is from the New York Times. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBmC7XZ5Jw 'Don't do it?' Yeah, don't buy Nike products. 👍 1 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Federico Molinari 6 months ago Don't use innocent deaths for marketing! Don't do it! 👍 7 🗨️ REPLY</p> <p>Oh Breezy 6 months ago nike you are part of the problem 👍 183 🗨️ REPLY View 4 replies</p>

Paul O 7 months ago (edited)
Hey Nike it is great that you are doing this and all but I have one question... when are you going to start paying real wages to your employees instead of using sweat shops in China to manufacture your products? You do know the Chinese government's human rights record is pathetic, right? Releasing woke ads like this make you seem, well unmonn, a tad hypocritical.
👍 16 🗨️ REPLY
View 4 replies

The case study for American response was Nike’s “for Once Don’t do it” (Figure 2), the figure shows stills from the YouTube video that was aired in America. A plain, black, and white, advert that does not attract away from the issue at hand, racism. A legible font that conveys elegance sits in the centre of the frame, fading out to reveal more thought-provoking text. Similar to Benetton’s advert, there is no product placement within the advert, it solely focuses on the message. However, the branding throughout and at the end caused some viewers to comment that it was insensitive as it felt as if they were still trying to sell themselves. Additionally, links to Nikes website were provided in the section below the video which angered viewers. But without the branding it would have created even more outrage as it would have felt like they wanted to remain anonymous. The advert calls for viewers to take accountability for any intentional or unintentional racist actions and help in any way they can to change the system.

The advert speaks out against racism as well as the implied issue with white privilege. White privilege is where those who are Caucasian have an invisible advantage in society not only due to covert racism but from the years of systematic discrimination of people of colour that has allowed the white man to dominate so many sectors (Collins, 2018). Not recognising white privilege or refusing to admit the precedence gained from merely being white shows an internal bias within the individual and solidifies the existence of SIT.

When looking at advertising theory the “Lavidge & Steiners Hierarchy of effects model” it is used to show the stages that the consumer covers to get from viewing the advert to buying the product. There are seven stages for the consumer:

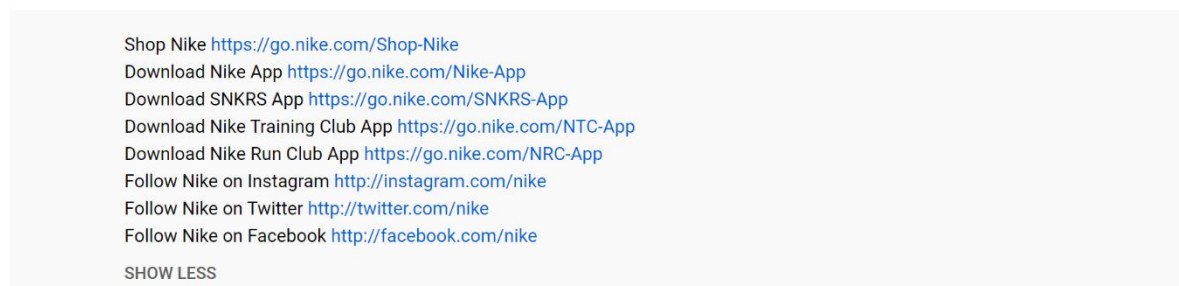
“Advertising may be thought of as a force, which must move people up a series of steps:

1. Near the bottom of the steps stand potential purchasers who are completely unaware of the existence of the product or service in question.
2. Closer to purchasing; but still a long way from the cash register, are those who are merely aware of its existence.
3. Up a step are prospects who know what the product has to offer.
4. Still closer to purchasing are those who have favourable attitudes toward the product- those who like the product.
5. Those whose favourable attitudes have developed to the point of preference over all other possibilities are up still another step.
6. Even closer to purchasing are consumers who couple preference with a desire to buy and the conviction that the purchase would be wise.
7. Finally, of course, is the step which translates this attitude into actual purchase.”

- (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961)

In simpler terms the seven stages covered are: unaware, awareness, knowing, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. Through the method of advertising both on television and social media (like YouTube) it allowed the advert to raise awareness and knowing of the product, with over 1 million views on YouTube as well as “more than 10,000 retweets and 19,000 likes within the first two hours” on twitter (Pasquarelli, 2020). By looking at the model the advert which had social justice in mind can also be seen to have an agenda to convince people to buy their products. This can be seen through Figure 5, which shows their website and other related links in the descriptive section and some of the comments showing their appreciation to the brand, thus, more likely to buy from them. Furthermore, suggesting that this consumer likes the brand and the message.

Figure 5- the section below the Nike “For Once Don’t Do It” YouTube video.



However, the Hierarchy of Effects model had only one product in mind when showing how consumers move through the stages. As Nike was not directly advertising one product it could suggest that they only wanted to address the social issue and speak up for what they believe, the subsequent footfall for the brand was just an added bonus. This theory does not take into consideration the fact that it is too complex and that consumers can skip steps. Additionally, the factor of cost has not been considered in the theory or the intervention of noise or the fact that sometimes awareness can be a bad thing as some of the consumers were not linked to Nike previously, will not proceed to boycott it as per their comments on the video. All this shows that despite the theory being used regularly in advertising, it is not an accurate representation of the consumer journey and awareness does not always lead to purchasing.

When looking at the comments, the consumer that stands out the most is the one that likes the message but dislikes the brand, they endorse the speaking out about racism, but they do not think Nike has the authority to do so when so much of their brand is built on cheap

labour from foreign countries, or “sweatshops”. One type of consumer that was not expected was one that did not like the brand or message but not due to racism but from disliking their brand identity and how they treat workers, thus they boycott the brand. Another type of consumer was one that liked the brand and the message, but they agreed with the people who spoke out against the child labour as seen in figure 4.

Some comments on the advert were positive as seen in Figure 4, crediting the brand for speaking out against injustice. However, a large proportion commented on how the brand not only uses child labour and owns various sweatshops but also that they are “capitalizing on [the] movement” (John, 2020). This can be described as supporting the advert for the cause but not the brand due to the issues of authenticity.

This links to an advertising theory that suggests that consumers are more distrustful due to advertising deception and “negatively affects people’s responses to subsequent advertising” (Darke & Ritchie, 2007). Consumers are savvier now and will not take things at face value. Other responses were that the company was forceful in its message creating a hostile response as some felt they “do not [need] to be lectured by a multibillion-dollar company about what [they] should do.” — Male 36-49” (Ace Metrix, 2020). This type of hostile response in the consumers can be due to Social Identity Theory and the feeling of being excluded from the in-group that Nike is referring to and thus they create a hostile out-group to reassure their self-worth.

Nike commenting on racism and consequently the issues of diversity could be seen as controversial by many. Their consistent endorsement of diverse athletes and challenging societal concerns has gained support from consumers. However, many of its employees have spoken out about diversity issues within the workplace suggesting that there was “a growing feeling internally that [they] were talking the talk outside but not walking the walk inside”, according to one of the people familiar with the matter”, enforcing the consumer responses which saw the message as hypocritical. Additionally, Nike’s “Diversity task force members wanted sportswear maker to acknowledge its own shortcomings”, further solidifying the internal issues of diversity within the workplace.

Nonetheless, Nike’s management commented that “Nike’s work to address diversity shortcomings was internal and ongoing, and that Nike need not wait until that work was complete to be part of the broader social justice conversations” advocating that the issue of

racism was too significant to not comment on (Germano, 2020). Their stance on racism has been well established with their backing of Colin Kaepernick after he faced criticism for kneeling during the American National Anthem as protest for the racial injustice (Guardian Sport, 2019). Additionally, the widespread coverage of the BLM movement meant not commenting on the issue would have indicated their lack of care for the movement. This would have led to irritated athletes who would no longer advocate the brand. Nike have set on changing the work place however they do not comment on the use of sweatshops in the manufacturing process of their products (Robertson, 2020).

Overall, the responses for the consumer fell under the liking the message but not the brand or disliking both, however, not for the reasons initially thought. Some comments were based on discriminatory biases. Whereas some consumers disliked the brand due to their hypocritical stance on racism despite their notorious use of sweatshops and internal matters of racism within the company. They have stated that despite their issues, which they acknowledge, the social topic was too great to be left unspoken about.

Case Study Two:





Figure 6- ITV, 2020, "Black Voices", viewed 06/01/2021
<<https://www.itv.com/blackvoices/>>









Figure 7 – ITV Press Centre, 2020, Twitter comments underneath announcement of Black Voices, viewed 06/01/2012


<<https://twitter.com/itvpresscentre/status/1282606238505803782?lang=en>>





Tweet












Louise Garnett @louisegarnett1 · Jul 13
 Replying to @itvpresscentre













Matthew Weedon @WeedonMatthew · Jul 13
 Replying to @itvpresscentre and @woodg31
 The great itv switch off begins



 3
  91
 






Starlordkai aka kai @starlordkai · Jul 13
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 The only people watching will be BLM SUPPORTER see your rating go bye bye



 1
  15
 






G Strachan @Forcegayle · Jul 13
 Replying to @itvpresscentre and @ScreenNation
 Can we not commission more black stories? Needs to be done urgently.


 1
  4
 


Gerd Mullah @gerdmullah · Jul 13
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 More medicine. Think I'll give it a miss.



 24
 



Simon Gog @SimonMi52066291 · Jul 14
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 Pushing this in our face is outrageous. If the bbc did this there would be a meltdown. Mute button never been used so much.







 40
 


This Tweet is from a suspended account. [Learn more](#)





This Tweet is from a suspended account. [Learn more](#)

[Show replies](#)



Wes Lentz @Philobedd0 · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 Educated black people hate stuff like this. Believe me. I work with many.





 3
  4
  70
 



M McQu @m1mcq · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 Who ever agreed this needs to be sacked. This is complete bigotry and racist. Totally unacceptable.





 2
  13
  168
 


[Show replies](#)






Tony C @johny10hands · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 You had my attention @itvpresscentre. Right up to the point of mentioning #WhitePrivilege. Now i just turn the tv off when this comes on.



 7
  63
 






SL @SLbirdy · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 Worst thing ITV can do.




 12
 






Luther Blisset @LutherB99406283 · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 Oh just FRO.




 9
 






DazedNConfused @SnarkyDeBastard · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 Well I'm sure that will be mesmerising.




 3
 






Michael Thorpe @ThorpeEnglish · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 Every MP sponsoring ITV's insult to white population are all black. And have done well out of UK's tolerant majority white population. Which I can hear getting more angry by the minute. Labour party is even more finished now

 3
  17
  126
 



voiceofreasoncoyi @lorraine_sawdy · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre and @staffilad
 I have complained to ofcom

 1
 
 42
 


Linda Parish @Linpar · Jul 15
 Fat lot of good they are too. They never seem to do anything.

 2
 
 18
 

[Show replies](#)


caribou22 @caribou22 · Jul 15
 Replying to @itvpresscentre
 "White privilege" is a bogus, Marxist concept. Don't accept it. Shame that ITV have.






 8
  86
 

Figure 6 shows the webpage of the collection of 'Black Voices' adverts that aired on television during July and August, it consists of true stories told by victims of racism, including some high-profile individuals such as 'WILL.I.AM'. The ITV Black voices was created in response to the complaints made by over 24,000 ignorant viewers to OFCOM about Diversity's 'Britain's Got Talent' performance in support of BLM on Saturday 5 September (Waterson, 2020). OFCOM even announced that they would not act on the complaints as "Diversity's performance referred to challenging and potentially controversial subject, and in our view its central message was a call for social cohesion and unity" (Connolly, 2020) solidifying the impression that the consumer responses/ complaints were from personal prejudices.

Similar to the Nike advert, the ITV consists mostly of yellow text on a black background so to not distract from the stories. The YouTube version had the comments turned off by ITV as they felt it was not a matter to be debated about, the adverts were also placed in a specific section on the ITV website and ITV advertised black run and aimed charities for anyone struggling with racism to contact. The aim for the adverts were to allow those who have faced racial discrimination in the UK to share their experience and prove that racism is not contained to America and the UK needs the BLM movement too.

The analysis of the consumer reactions to the 'Black Voices' was harder due to ITV turning off the commenting section on YouTube. The dislike section showed some of the views, with 65 out of 155 disliking the video (ITV, 2020). Twitter was even worse, as seen in Figure 7, it was difficult to find a positive comment. However, throughout media outlets such as Mirror it stated that ITV had been "applauded for searing honesty as viewers are moved to tears" after the viewers watched 'Unsaid Stories' (a mini-series running alongside 'Black Voices') with it documenting praise on twitter for ITV (Sulway, 2020). The complexity in the terms of the consumer response in ITV's case study stems from the bombardment of racist complaints to Diversity's performance. The advert itself gained a mixed review from viewers, however the reviews fell under mainly two categories: dislike of the company and message or liking of both.

In regards of why so many complained about 'Britain's Got Talent' performance as well as the later adverts, race theory can provide some insight. SIT in combination with RCT explains it well, suggesting the increased tension between the groups (in this case the viewers have

group themselves based on skin colour) is due to the media attention that BLM and people of colour are having, in a sense the white viewers (a small minority of them) feel they are losing the competition for attention. Thus, they belittle the BLM movement and complain about the supporting performance and subsequently the 'Black Voices' adverts that later aired. This belief is present in the specific group due to the circulation of ideas in a persuasive manner, to such an extent that it becomes ingrained in the group mentality (Pearsons Education Limited 2015, 2015). Aversive Racism Theory "complements Social Identity Theory ... by further identifying when discrimination will be manifested or inhibited", it states that changing social norms will prevent discrimination towards minorities (Bond, et al., 2010), which suggests why the advert had less criticism on YouTube compared to Nike's. However, it is clear that due to the multitude of discriminatory comments on twitter towards ITV's adverts suggest that this behaviour is being rewarded within certain communities and thus, continuing inequitable actions and the reason behind prejudicial thoughts. Moreover, despite RCT explaining the reasoning for the response being due to conflict, SIT incorporates it into its theory suggesting that initial groups create prejudice which conflict and competition then exaggerate leading to discriminatory behaviours. Therefore, this theory is more appropriate for the analysis of consumer comments.

In comparison many of Nikes consumer did like the advert but not the message, others did not like the brand but liked the message, and there were many that did not like the brand or the message. In ITV's case they gained lots of twitter backlash, as seen in Figure 7, the majority were dislike of the message leading to a shift in loyalties, thus, prompting a dislike of the brand. This is yet again explained by SIT and Aversion Theory suggesting that Britain has a huge underlying issue with subtle racism and the in-group mentality that certain white factions are enabling discriminatory behaviours.

There was not much debate about ITV as a company, or any diversity issues as the responses from the consumers, the majority of the responses were based of personal prejudices. The brand itself has not had any recent history regarding its BAME employees, in fact "BAME employees in the upper quartile has increased from 10.6% in 2018 to 12.3% in 2019" showing they are actively working on reducing the ethnic pay gap within their company (ITV plc , 2019). ITV have also made a pledge for on screen and off-screen diversity and inclusion (ITV , 2020). Therefore, the category of consumer response of, dislike the company but like

the message, was not shown as the message incorporated the company's manifestos and thus, meaning that their message was in line with company ethics.

Additionally, with ITV being a Freeview channel and creating different types of content it is very difficult to find opinions from consumers broadcasting their love of the actual company, but rather for certain shows or events that ITV broadcast. It was harder to gain the insight to consumer reactions for this reason. The fact that it is a Freeview channel and thus available to anyone who pays the TV licences means that those in Figure 7 which boycotted ITV will still be supporting ITV as a company. However, ITV losing viewers could have a detrimental impact as certain shows "get re-commissioned or cancelled", thus, shifting loyalties can impact TV channels and how much freedom they can have in the creation of their shows (Ling, 2018). On the other hand, Shifting Loyalties Theory suggests that despite companies building a strong sense of brand loyalty they also want consumers to change their allegiances "to try something new, to disavow an old loyalty in favour of a new product" (Dougcube, 2012), therefore, suggesting that those that have changed their preference in TV channels, was a pre-planned strategy from ITV and they do not mind losing viewers which hold discriminatory values.

The complexities behind the responses this advert received was grounded mainly in race theory. The consumer reactions tended to be on opposite side of the spectrum, with many either liking the brand and message or disliking both, the middle ground was lacking. This suggests that consumers felt very strongly about their opinions and enforcing the SIT and RCT theories for racism. As oppose to the Nike advert, it is clear that the British public feel more strongly regarding the matter, with people being either prejudice or for the BLM movement, suggesting that the difference in the in and out groups create tension. To reduce tension the groups must collaborate towards a superordinate goal (McLeod, 2019).

Conclusion

To conclude, the consumer responses can be grouped into the four categories, but there are more types of consumers than originally thought. There are complex reasons for the responses and sub categories may need to be added, such as consumers which liked the brand and message but see that the brand has some issues that need to be addressed, or the consumer that dislikes the message which led to them disliking the brand/company. Additionally, not all the consumers that dislike the brand and message are discriminatory, some are boycotting the brand due to the company's ethical practices, like Nike using sweatshops yet still commenting on a racial issue.

The difference between American and British response is very distinct despite the adverts being relatively similar, Americans have more categories of consumers and therefore create more types of responses. Whereas the British tend to keep to the extreme responses, either completely positive or overtly negative. Evidently from both countries, racism is still present, and they affect the way consumers react to adverts addressing social issues. However, in America's case the complexity of consumer is even more problematic due to the larger audience as social media has broadened the range of people adverts can reach. Thus, many of the views of the advert may have not been the intended audience, therefore, they would likely leave a bad response as a comment and can explain why there were more variations in reactions.

To improve the study, there needed to be more analysis into all social media platforms responses for a more holistic view of reactions, however, it is harder to distinguish countries as the advert now reach such a large audience regardless of the topic.

Additionally, Nike's advert was focused on American views and ITV towards the UK, however, people in Britain also shop Nike but the American viewers cannot access ITV without being in the UK. Thus, when comparing the audience's based on location it is not completely reliable as many of the comments in the YouTube for Nike's video could have been from all around the world where as the majority of ITV responses were from the British audience.

From the investigation its clear to see that racism and prejudice is present in both the UK and America, a change of attitudes is needed. The basis of judging a person based on the

colour or ethnicity is ludicrous and following the race theories it was clear that both adverts were trying to bridge the divide between the groups. We have to better ourselves and others by ensuring we accept everyone without boundaries.

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