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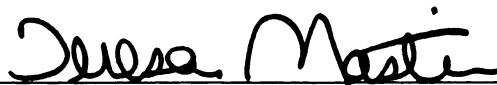
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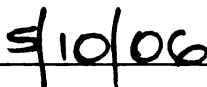
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**AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPOSURE TO ALCOHOL  
ADVERTISEMENTS IN BLACK AND MAINSTREAM MAGAZINES**

**By**

**Kimberly Aneese Greene**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
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## **ABSTRACT**

# **AFRICAN-AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS' EXPOSURE TO ALCOHOL ADVERTISEMENTS IN BLACK AND MAINSTREAM MAGAZINES**

**By**

**KIMBERLY ANEENE GREENE**

Adolescents and their exposure to alcohol advertisements in different forms of media are often discussed, but African-American adolescents are rarely studied. This thesis examined African-American adolescents and their exposure to alcohol advertisements in racially targeted and non-racially targeted magazines. A content analysis of alcohol advertisements in five magazines was conducted. The results indicate that certain appeals and alcohol brands were advertised more, or only, in racially targeted magazines. The findings of this research study have many implications for future studies on African-American adolescents and their exposure to alcohol advertising.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	v
INTRODUCTION .....	1
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	15
METHOD .....	22
RESULTS .....	31
DISCUSSION .....	37
REFERENCES .....	45

## LIST OF TABLES

TOP MAGAZINES READ BY AFRICAN AMERICANS AND ALL OTHER GROUPS, AGES 18-24 .....	23
NUMBER OF ALCOHOL ADVERTISEMENTS PER MAGAZINE PER YEAR .....	31
FREQUENCY OF PRODUCT CATEGORIES PER MAGAZINE .....	32
TOP TEN DISTILLED LIQUOR BRANDS PER MAGAZINE .....	33
ADVERTISING APPEALS PER MAGAZINE .....	34



## **Introduction**

Budweiser, Hennessy, Absolut, Crown Royal and Captain Morgan are extremely familiar names to adolescents<sup>1</sup>; yet, the alcohol industry maintains their advertisements are not directed toward the youth audience. Alcohol advertising continuously draws criticism for allegedly targeting and influencing children and adolescents (Austin and Meili 1994). Communication researchers counter that at worst the alcohol industry is directly targeting youth and at best indirect targeting is at work.

“Indirect targeting occurs when there is no demonstrable evidence of intent to target, but nevertheless a group other than the group directly targeted is reached in a measurable way similar to the group directly targeted” (Garfield, Chung and Rathouz 2003). Alcohol advertisements that grab adolescents’ attention are of particular concern because these youths are tremendously impressionable.

Alcohol advertisements are typically staged in the context of lifestyle images. These advertisements are designed in a manner that portray alcohol drinkers as mature, attractive, and fun loving. These advertisements fail to portray the true-life realities and consequences of excessive underage drinking – sexual aggression, alcohol dependence, the increased likelihood of driving while intoxicated, etc. (Parker 1998). Alcohol advertisements negatively affect adolescents in general; however, existing research indicates that African-American youth are affected and suffer disproportionately.

African-American adolescents are exposed to alcohol advertisements primarily through television, radio, billboards, magazines and in-store displays in their neighborhoods. Although television advertising is an effective way to reach this demographic, magazines are another medium alcohol advertisers use to reach this

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<sup>1</sup> For this paper, “adolescents” and “youth” refer to persons ages 12-20 unless otherwise stated

audience. African-American youth experience alcohol advertisements in mainstream magazines, as well as in Black magazines. One reason this segment group is at a higher risk to drink and abuse alcohol is because of the constant exposure to alcohol advertisements in magazines. The constant viewing of alcohol advertisements leads to unrealistic views of drinking alcohol, which in turn often results in negative consequences for youth who believe these images to be truthful. For example, national survey studies indicate that African-American adolescents stated that alcohol was a factor in their first sexual encounter and alcohol was also a catalyst for other sexual encounters (Santelli, Lindberg, Abma, Sucoff, and Resnick 2000).

This study focuses on the alcohol advertisements featured in popular mainstream magazines read by African-American adolescents. Alcohol brands, types of alcohol, and advertising appeals featured in popular mainstream and Black magazines were examined. Although studies have examined alcohol advertising and youth, few have focused on African-American youth, thus research literature on this demographic is limited.

Generally African Americans use the media as their main source of gathering information about brands and products (Green 1999). They use advertising as one method of obtaining information, especially for new products. It has also been reported that African Americans use different media outlets to learn about occupations and dating behaviors (Bush, Smith and Martin 1999). African-American adolescents are more exposed to alcohol magazine advertisements than the legal drinking age population (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002). For example, in 2003, African-American adolescents saw 77% more alcohol magazine advertising overall than non-African-American adolescents. This is cause for concern because these adolescents view

alcohol advertisements not intended for them. Also, these adolescents are viewing more of these messages than consumers who are of legal drinking age.

### **Literature Review**

African-American youth are indirectly targeted by alcohol advertisers (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002). African-American youth are more likely to see alcohol advertising in their neighborhoods (Alaniz 1998), as well as on television, radio and print media, which put them at risk of being enticed to drink (Lewis 2003). The more adolescents are exposed to alcohol messages in the media, the more likely they are to take their first drink at younger ages and drink more often than adolescents not exposed to alcohol advertising (Lewis 2003).

The alcohol industry is an extremely lucrative business in the United States. In 2001, alcohol sales were \$135 billion (Hingson 2004). To put this in context, food expenditures for the same year were \$844.2 billion (Agriculture Fact Book 2002). Alcohol companies paid more money to place their advertisements in magazines than the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism had in their yearly budget, which was approximately \$288,578,000. (Hingson 2004).

Print media is an especially dominant form of advertising in which alcohol companies promote their products, especially in magazines. This form of advertising continues to be an issue because African Americans are heavy magazine readers, reading more magazines on average than any other segment of the population (Magazine Publishers of America 2004). Approximately 85% of African Americans read 12 magazines per month as compared to 9 magazines read per month by the rest of the U.S.

population (Magazine Publishers of America 2004). Thirty-five percent of African Americans ages 18-20 are among the most frequent magazine readers, versus 19.7% of non-African Americans in these age groups (Magazine Publishers of America 2004). African Americans are the most frequent readers of Black magazines and read many mainstream publications. In 2001, alcohol advertisers spent \$13,974,205 to place advertisements in *Cosmopolitan*; \$3,774,833 to place ads in *Vibe*; and \$1,404,811 to place ads in *Essence* (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002).

In 2000, distilled spirits companies spent 89% of their advertising budget to place advertisements in national magazines (Thomsen and Rekve 2004). This amount of spending can be attributed to the magazine readership of African-American adolescents (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002). In 2001, Miller Lite, Heineken, Tequila and Fosters had youth exposure 70% more than adult ad exposure; for distilled spirits, Kahlua and Amaretto had youth exposure 60% more than adult ad exposure; and youth saw 144% more alcopop advertisements than adults over the age of thirty-five (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002).

In 2003, alcohol companies spent \$326 million to place their advertisements in magazines. Seventy percent of these advertisements were from distilled spirits advertisers (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2004). Distilled liquor companies often place their advertisements in magazines targeted to men, African Americans, and youth 20-24 years of age (Nelson 2005). Some of the most profitable distilled liquor brands include Bacardi, Absolut, Smirnoff, and Jack Daniels. Distilled liquors are hard liquors with an alcohol content of 20% or above, consisting of rums (Bacardi, Captain Morgan, Malibu), cognacs (Martell, Hennessy, Courvoisier), vodkas (Absolut, Skyy, Grey Goose) and gins

(Tanqueray, Beefeater, Bombay Sapphire). These brands appeal to young consumers because of unique and elaborate labeling and packaging (Cui 2000). Distilled liquors packaging consists of clear and colored glass bottles in an array of different shapes and sizes.

Distilled liquors manufacturers are not the only alcohol companies that reach adolescents with their magazine advertising. In 2003, approximately 50% of all alcohol advertisements appeared in magazines read by underage youth (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2005). That same year alcohol advertisements for beer were seen by 48% of the youth population. Beer companies spent \$55 million to place alcohol advertisements in magazines. Out of all the alcohol companies, distilled liquors and brewery companies such as Bacardi, Anheuser-Busch, and Miller, are the most aggressive in their advertising methods to African American and other ethnic youth groups (Green 2002).

Besides magazines, alcohol companies further promote their brands by sponsoring events in African-American communities. They often sponsor athletic events, contests, sweepstakes, and musical events, e.g., jazz, rap, rhythm & blues (Hacker, Collins and Jacobson 1987). Some examples of alcohol sponsorships include Bacardi flying banners with their brand logo during Big 10 college football games (Horovitz, Howard and Petrecca 2005), the NASCAR Busch Series sponsored by Anheuser-Busch, and Budweiser promotions during past Olympics and Super Bowl games.

In addition to sponsorships, another way alcohol brands promote their products is through either product placement or using the brand in a lyric of some rap and rhythm & blues songs. Roberts, Henriksen, and Christenson (1999) found that from 1,000 of the

most popular songs from 1996-1997, 47% of rap songs had alcohol references as compared to 13% for country western; 12% for top 40; 10% for alternative rock and 4% for heavy metal. Also 48% of rap songs had product placements or mention of specific alcohol brand names.

One example of this can be found in the 2002 hit song 'Pass the Courvoisier' by Busta Rhymes. The rapper included the distilled liquor brand without any payment from the distiller (Wipperfurth 2005). In the video the brand name and product are shown repeatedly. This type of marketing helps alcohol companies develop a popular following for their brand names that are promoted in rap songs and at the same time is rarely tracked by traditional advertising tracking techniques (Herd 2005).

Constantly seeing alcohol brands throughout different media outlets affects the positive drinking behavior of these consumers as they mature, which leads to negative outcomes including increased risk of suicide, sexual violence, driving under the influence and lower educational standards (Miller 2005). Furthermore, these negative outcomes cause problems for society as a whole, not just the African-American community. For example, each year the economic costs, such as healthcare, alcohol counseling and classes, and rehabilitation treatments, related to alcohol consumption equal more than \$100 billion (Hacker 1998).

Ignoring all of these facts, the alcohol industry, much like the tobacco industry, justify their advertising by claiming that the purpose of its advertisements is to retain product loyalty and induce people to switch brands, not to lure underage customers (Beaver 1997). The industry also argues that alcohol advertising does not influence alcohol consumption in adolescents (Jernigan 2006). This is doubtful considering

numerous alcohol companies advertise their products to youth on college campuses, radio and television, in magazines with high youth readership, and at sporting events and music promotions (Hacker, Collins and Jacobson 1987).

### **Lifestyle Images in Alcohol Advertising**

Every day 7,000 adolescents younger than sixteen have their first alcoholic drink (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2005). Young people have well-developed beliefs about alcohol and the effects of drinking, even before they have any personal experience with drinking alcoholic beverages, due to alcohol advertising (Miller, Smith and Goldman 1990). Alcohol advertising is an additional resource through which youth learn about alcohol and form their beliefs about particular brands (Waiters, Treno and Grube 2001). Young people learn consumption behaviors and the positive social attributes associated with drinking alcohol from advertising intended for adults (Hacker 1998). Alcohol advertising suggests drinking as a positive, normative behavior and promotes an exaggerated view of the degree of alcohol use in society (Cui 2000). Adolescents are exposed to approximately 100,000 magazine advertisements before their eighteenth birthday (Beaver 1997).

Alcohol advertisers have not only been criticized for indirectly reaching young people, but also about the influential appeals used in their advertisements. Existing research on youth and advertising indicates that younger adults, more so than older teens, are more attracted to image or lifestyle advertisements than to product- or quality-oriented advertisements (Covell 1992). Image and lifestyle advertisements focus on appeals such as fun, social occasions, and sexual intimacy rather than the attributes of the brand or product. Lifestyle image advertising associates a product with desirable

attributes other than intrinsic product qualities. These advertisements influence younger peoples' decisions to engage in illegal activities that can endanger their health (Hingson 2004).

Alcohol advertising tends to fall under the category of misleading advertising because the images shown and the net impression of some advertisements are likely to deceive young consumers (Fueroghne 1995). Young consumers primarily have not had personal experience with alcohol before viewing alcohol advertising. Therefore, they perceive the appeal of the advertisement as being true. The net impression, or theme, of these advertisements is to convey drinking alcohol as something to do to have fun with friends or one way to become closer to members of the opposite sex. People in alcohol advertisements are typically attractive, cool and shown having fun.

Research studies have been conducted relating to the phenomenon of advertising and youth impressions of alcohol. Youth who displayed more awareness of beer advertising had more knowledge about alcohol advertisements and slogans, therefore having more positive views on drinking and stating their intent to drink more often as adults than children who lacked awareness about those advertisements (Grube and Wallack 1994). Grant and Dawson (1997) conducted a study concluding that young people who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who wait until age 21 to become drinkers, while those who start to drink prior to age 14 are more likely to experience alcohol related injuries. Also the earlier someone is exposed to alcohol advertising the more likely they are to gain a false impression about drinking and appropriate drinking behavior (Beaver 1997). Hingson (2004) found that adolescents 17 years and older who had their first drink when



they were 12 or younger are ten times more likely to be heavy drinkers having five or more drinks per occasion than those adolescents who waited until they were 17 years or older to have their first drink.

Appeals that are known to work the best for adolescents include the use of humor, celebrity endorsers, animals, and musical artists from the genres of rap and rock music (Grube and Wallack 1994). Alcohol companies, especially beer advertisers, often use these appeals to attract underage audiences (Thomsen and Rekke 2004). Young people remember the elements of these advertisements because they make a lasting impression. It is easier for them to make the link between the advertisement and the brand when these visual elements are used.

Alcohol advertising often emphasizes the good social effects of alcohol, but never the negative consequences such as addiction, accident and injury, and unwanted or unplanned sexual encounters (Parker 1998). The positive aspects associated with drinking alcohol in advertisements convey a lifestyle with alcohol as exciting and attractive. Youth who view these advertisements perceive them as reality. On a more personal level, they may accept televised portrayals of alcohol as a close reflection of their own thoughts or behaviors, or as a perceived similarity (Austin and Meili 1994).

Youth who engage in future drinking may only be doing so to have some of the lifestyle attributes seen in alcohol advertisements. Waiters, Treno and Grube (2001) found in their focus group study that students thought the alcohol advertisements for Budweiser, Busch, Heineken, Michelob and Miller Lite suggested that drinkers of those products would be more successful, find love and happiness, and become more physically attractive to the opposite sex. If adolescent viewers think these images can be obtained by

drinking, serious consequences may arise. Underage alcohol users may place themselves at more immediate risk of alcohol related illnesses and accidents such as single car fatal crashes (Hingson 2004).

### **Advertising to African Americans**

In general, African Americans have positive attitudes about advertising. African Americans are more inclined to believe misleading advertising appeals because they have a positive reaction to advertising and rely on it when making purchase decisions (Bush, Smith and Martin 1999). African Americans value advertising as one way to obtain information about a product, service or brand. African-American consumers are also more likely than the average U.S. consumer to be brand loyal (Magazine Publishers of America 2004).

When sales of alcohol declined among the general population, marketers increased their efforts to further target African Americans (Cui 2000). Alcohol advertisers do so by advertising more in racially targeted media outlets such as African-American sitcoms and magazines (Cui 2000). Although African Americans have always been targets of alcohol advertising, companies hoped to increase the sales contributed by this segment because of their steady increase in buying power. In 2003, African Americans spent approximately \$2.8 billion on tobacco products, \$3.5 billion on consumer electronics, \$18.0 billion on healthcare and the same amount of money, \$2.5 billion, on both alcoholic beverages and non-alcoholic beverages (Target Market News 2004). By 2010, African Americans will spend approximately \$965 billion on goods and services such as clothing, food, electronics and housing (Beirne 2005).

To attract minority consumers and emphasize the power and sexiness of their brands, alcohol companies often develop new products. One example has been the introduction of malt liquor beverages. African-Americans consume 75% of all malt liquor and contribute to a large percentage of sales for some well-known brand names (Franklyn 1987). Examples of these malt liquor beverages include Anheuser-Busch's 'King Cobra', Miller Brewing Company's 'Magnum', Stroh's 'Schlitz Bulls' and Pabst's 'Old English 800' (Cui 2000). These alcoholic beverages contain more alcohol than beer and eventually became known as "power brews" (Hacker, Collins and Jacobson 1987).

Two specific examples of malt liquor advertising occurred in the 1990's when two malt liquor brands were accused of advertising their products toward underage African-American youth. When trying to make their image hipper, Colt 45 developed a campaign in which the actors were 21 years of age or older, but looked relatively younger. Colt 45 also adopted the new slogan in their campaign "Colt 45. It works all the time" in order to target the brand's most important customers: African-American adolescents. The new slogan referred to Colt 45 as a way to get in the mood for sexual encounters. Their campaign led to discussions over the ethics of aiming high-octant malt liquor at young African-American drinkers (Bird 1993).

Similarly in 1996, the FTC investigated Stroh Brewery Company's Schlitz Malt Liquor due to their alcohol advertising because of the content and message in their advertisements. The FTC claimed the advertisements targeted youth under the legal drinking age of 21. Also the advertisements featured all African Americans and some of the actors appeared to be under the legal drinking age (Ingersoll and Beatty 1996). The

message of the advertisement was that Schlitz Malt Liquor would equal good times with friends and fun for drinkers of the product.

African-American actors and actresses are used in advertisements for many different alcohol products, not just malt liquor brands. This is a cause for concern considering the high alcohol content of these drinks and African Americans favorable views toward advertising. African Americans are used in these advertisements because ethnic identification has an important effect on how an audience perceives an advertisement. Identification with their own ethnic group or race is a determinant in how a person interprets the advertising and makes purchase decisions based on that advertisement (Green 1999). Advertisers use this method to ensure more favorable attitudes by consumers about their brands. An individual's positive attitude toward an advertisement is a good forecast of positive feelings toward the brand (Bush, Smith and Martin 1999).

Because thirty-six percent of African Americans are under the age of 21 versus 30% of the general population (Center of Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2003), it makes this ethnic group a prime target for advertising. Also, marketers hope that targeting African-American adolescents will eventually help them reach the more affluent white market (Spiegler 1996). African-American youth are often seen as trendsetters among the teenage market and their styles and trends influence teenagers from other backgrounds. Alcohol advertisers realize that portraying their brand as hip and cool will more than likely attract African-American adolescents, which in turn, will influence other teenagers. Advertisers hope that advertising to African-American adolescents will make these young consumers more familiar with different brands of alcohol. Alcohol companies place

advertisements for their brands in magazines because of African-American adolescents' involvement with magazines.

In 2002, regular and light beer, distilled liquors and alcopops alcohol advertising reached more of the African-American underage audience than it reached African-American young adults ages 21-34 (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2003). The magazines that most exposed young Blacks to alcohol ads were *Sports Illustrated*, *Vibe*, *Cosmopolitan*, *ESPN the Magazine*, *Jet*, *Rolling Stone*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Ebony*, *In Style*, *Playboy*, *GQ*, *Essence* and *People* (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2003). For example, in the October 2002 issue of *Rolling Stone* thirteen pages, or approximately 10% of the magazine, contained alcohol advertisements for companies such as Corona, Jack Daniels and Bacardi (Green 2002).

For African-American youth, this overexposure to alcohol advertisements in magazines is especially problematic because of the positive correlation between alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems. Alcohol is a contributing factor in the top three leading causes of death for young African Americans aged 12-20 years old: homicide, unintentional injuries, and suicide (American Medical Health Association 2003). These causes of death can be attributed to the type of alcohol most offered in these communities and most often viewed in the media (Alaniz 1998). Often stores in these communities use their store fronts to advertise alcohol brands or have point of purchase displays for alcohol brands inside their stores (Alaniz 1998). This knowledge should make advertisers more socially responsible when targeting this demographic group. Young African Americans often see images of sex and strength in alcohol advertisements which often imply that alcohol can improve the drinker's physical attributes. Alcohol

advertisers target African-American youth by predominantly placing advertisements in magazines and on television since these are the two forms of media most often seen by this age group (Center on Marketing and Youth 2003).

Excessive alcohol consumption can cause social problems such as legal issues, alcohol abuse and dependence (Galvan and Caetano 2003). These consequences that are possible outcomes from drinking alcohol are rarely, if ever, portrayed in alcohol advertisements. The depiction of alcohol consumption as a fun social activity is the view many adolescents take from alcohol advertisements. Therefore, consumers get a misrepresentation of all the effects of drinking. The targeting of harmful and addictive products, such as alcohol, at vulnerable consumers (i.e., African Americans) is problematic in nature and will only compound the alcohol-related health problems, particularly when African Americans already suffer disproportionately from alcohol related health and social problems (Galvan and Caetano 2003).

African Americans tend not to receive alcoholism treatment and have less adequate health care resources in general (Galvan and Caetano 2003). Even when drinking habits are similar for African American and White adults, African Americans tend to suffer more from ill effects because of lower incomes and lack of access to health care facilities that provide alcoholism treatment (Caetano and Kaskutas 1996). This holds for a bleak future for African-American adolescents who will abuse alcohol in the future. African-American adolescents and their exposure and experience with alcohol is an issue that needs to be addressed by alcohol companies because without more socially responsible messages this target group will continue to suffer more than other target groups in the general population.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Two theories can be attributed to the preference of lifestyle appeals vs. product oriented appeals. Active viewer theory suggests that adolescents' perceptions of *personal* reality, rewards expected to gain or consequences expected to avoid by drinking, differ from their perceptions of *social* reality, rewards and consequences expected from their actual drinking behavior (Austin and Meili 1994). Active viewer theory defines a child as an active processor of information that the media feeds to them. The more experiences adolescents have with the media, the more likely products being advertised will be included in their schemata, which is an organized way to cognitively interpret stimuli (Peter and Olson 2005). Because adolescents are cognitively aware of advertising, when they see alcohol advertisements, the images and slogans become imbedded in their schemata.

Expectancy theory states that individuals drink alcohol because they associate drinking with a positive outcome (Austin and Meili 1994). They create expectations of what may come in the future if they drink alcohol. If the outcomes are positive, the expectations become more likely and attractive for the individual. Therefore, the individual expects those positive outcomes to be the result of drinking alcohol. For example, "If I drink alcohol, I will be more popular"; "If I drink alcohol I will be happier"; "If I drink alcohol, I will become sexier". For these types of advertisements the use of multiple persons, more than one person in the advertisement, works best in order for the reader to relate to the overall "voice" of the advertisement (Austin and Meili 1994). This way there is a higher possibility of the reader identifying with at least one

person in the advertisement. Based on existing literature surrounding expectancy theory, the following research question is posed:

**RQ1: When human models are featured in alcohol advertisements, will multiple models appear?**

Frequent exposure to alcohol advertising in magazines can negatively affect youth because they are an impressionable audience. Over exposure to alcohol magazine advertisements is especially detrimental to African Americans because they suffer disproportionately from alcohol related illnesses such as heart and liver disease.

Alcohol companies have plenty of opportunities to reach African-American adolescents through their advertising. In 2003, African-American adolescents saw 66% more advertising for beer and ales, 81% more advertising for distilled liquors, and 45% more advertising for alcopops in these magazines than did non-African-American youth. Also 83% of non African-American youth saw 111 alcohol advertisements in magazines, but 96% of African-American youth saw 171 alcohol advertisements in magazines (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2003). In these advertisements, positive appeals would help adolescents further identify with the products and brand. Because of the dominance of distilled liquors advertised in magazines as reported in existing research, and based on African-American adolescents' exposure to distilled liquor advertisements, the follow research question is posed:

**RQ2: Will distilled liquor brands be advertised more than regular and light beer, wine, light drinks, malt liquor and alcopop brands?**

When African-American adolescents are exposed to numerous alcohol advertisements in magazines, it raises the question of the interpretation of these



advertisements. Reader response theory states that the reader acts as an active agent and uses their real-life experiences to form thoughts about the advertisements (Mora and Welch 1997). By doing this the reader is able to contribute something to the advertisement. Each reader brings something unique to the message interpretation process since each reader can create their own opinion about the advertisement (Mora and Welch 1997).

Alcohol advertisements are often seen as sales pitches to entice consumers to purchase alcohol brands. Alcohol companies hope that the understanding of these advertisements is strong enough to persuade these readers to purchase the product, thus resulting in brand sales (Green 2002). Eventually after being exposed to either the same advertisements or brands repeatedly, adolescents will begin to recognize the different “voices”, or advertising appeals, between advertisements. These “voices” pertain to appeals displayed in the advertisement such as humor, sexual intimacy, prestige, taste, etc. Adolescents will then begin to identify with the advertisements more and be more easily persuaded to accept those “voices” which will help shape their future behavior (Scott 1994).

If the “voices” adolescents most identify with are telling them drinking is cool, fun and sexy, then they will adopt this same outlook for their drinking behavior in the future. Alcohol advertisements rarely show the consequences associated with drinking alcohol. Even if these consequence messages are present in the advertisement, they do not take away from the net impression and visual appeals in the advertisement (Fueroghne 1995).

Beyond these “voices” placed in advertisements, some African-American adolescents’ first notion of alcohol habits comes from seeing their parents interact with alcoholic beverages. Rodney, Mupier and Crafter (1996) found that one in four African-American adolescents have at least one alcoholic parent. Previous studies on African Americans have noted that communication and interaction with parents is a very important structural variable for this racial group (Bush, Smith and Martin 1999). In their study, the researchers found that parental communication concerning consumption activities has a positive effect on attitude toward drinking behavior. African-American adolescents that see their parents drinking behavior form beliefs about alcohol before exposure to alcohol advertisements. Although African-American adolescents may learn about alcohol consumption behavior from their parents, alcohol advertisements are additional, important sources through which these adolescents learn about alcohol brands and products (Grube and Wallack 1994).

Besides their parents, adolescents do not usually have personal experience with alcohol before viewing alcohol advertisements and form their opinion based on what is depicted in the advertisement. Because of this lack of personal experience, alcohol advertisers usually place tropes in their advertisements. Tropes are anything that stands out in an advertisement that allows the reader to have an unanticipated or unexpected perspective about the advertisement to help the advertisement breakthrough the clutter of other similar looking advertisements (Scott 1994). For adolescents with no prior experience with alcohol, a trope provides them with a way to think about the advertisement from an unrelated perspective not linked to alcohol consumption (Scott 1994).

When brands use celebrity endorsers, it makes it easier for adolescent readers of the advertisement to identify with the message of the advertisement. Since adolescents have prior knowledge of these celebrities, the lifestyles of the celebrity can transfer to the advertisement. The use of celebrity endorsers is important because often advertisers use celebrities to refresh their brands and the celebrities' values transfer to the brand (Erdogan and Baker 1999). In addition, when the celebrities are African American, African-American adolescents can identify with them better because of ethnic identification. Based on the concept of ethnic identification, the following question is posed:

RQ3: When celebrities are featured in alcohol advertisements, are African-American celebrities featured more often in Black or mainstream magazines?

Examples of the positive appeals developed by Cui (2000) include sexual intimacy, pleasure, relaxation, social occasion, fun, comparison, and prestige/quality advertisements. "How to make", employment, and event/contest/promotion appeals were added in this study. These appeals are neutral and are considered neither positive nor negative. The event/contest/promotion appeal was implemented to code advertisements in which alcohol brands were sponsoring or co-sponsoring events, such as music concerts, and contests or promotions, for example, winning prizes for codes found under bottle tops. When looking at these advertisements it became clear that this appeal further aided readers' identification with the brands, especially if they were interested in the event, contest or promotion being advertised. Also, adolescents might be more responsive to this appeal because of their interest in popular culture and the opportunity to win prizes. Adolescents choosing to go to these events advertised will be further exposed to the

alcohol brand through signage at the event. Based on these observations, the following research question is posed:

**RQ4: Will the event/contest/promotion appeal be featured more often in magazines that have higher youth readership?**

Adolescents respond more positively to lifestyle image advertisements because they like to see the positive results of drinking alcohol such as popularity and becoming more attractive. For this reason, appeals with a negative connotation, i.e. responsibility, are not often seen by adolescents. This appeal requires readers of the alcohol advertisements to acknowledge the consequences of drinking and think about situations that could be potentially dangerous due to alcohol consumption. Alcohol companies know that these advertisements will not help sell their products; therefore, these types of advertisements are rarely produced (Garfield, Chung and Rathouz 2003). Given that alcohol advertisers are aware that positive appeals are more attractive to adolescents, the following research question is posed:

**RQ5: Will alcohol companies feature more advertisements that include positive or responsibility appeals?**

Adolescents who have had prior experience with alcohol will look at the advertisements as reinforcing what they believe to be true as far as alcohol being a catalyst for happy social occasions or fun times with the opposite sex. But if the prior experience with alcohol was negative, these adolescents will either not use alcohol, or continue to drink alcohol based upon the severity of the negative consequences encountered (Grube and Wallack 1994). These alcohol advertisements can generate their own idealized images which can, in turn, make readers of the advertisement think that the

product can move them closer to their ideal state of happiness (Hirschman and Thompson 1997). These ideal states of happiness include, but are not limited to, being popular, obtaining more dates, and making new friends. Advertisements then represent the point between imagination and how readers want to view their actual selves (Scott 1994). For adolescents it becomes easy to become engaged in the imaginary and fantasy images portrayed in alcohol advertisements, thus leading them to imitate what is shown in these advertisements.

Alcohol advertisers often dismiss the claims that they promote underage drinking to adolescents. Because of the rarity of showing negative consequences of drinking in their advertisements, often alcohol companies include “drink responsibly” messages in their advertisements. These messages are implemented to counter the accusations that alcohol companies want consumers to abuse their products. Although these messages may not always be fully visible, they give readers of the advertisements a positive outlook on the alcohol company (Roznowski 2005), which suggest that drink responsibly messages will not be prominently displayed. As such, the following research question is posed:

RQ6: When drink responsibly messages appear in alcohol advertisements, are they more often displayed prominently or in the background?

Although many research studies have focused on alcohol advertising in the media, few have focused on African-American adolescents’ exposure to alcohol advertisements in magazines. Existing research has primarily focused on youth as a group and their exposure to alcohol advertising (Galvan and Caetano 2003).

This research examines alcohol advertisements in top mainstream and Black magazines read by the 18-24 demographic during 2000-2005 for the purpose of examining African-American adolescents' exposure to alcohol advertisements. The advertising categories were taken from Cui's (2000) study and three new advertising appeals – employment, “how to make”, and event/contest/promotion were added because of their repeated presence in the magazines. Drink responsibility message was another variable added based on Roznowski's (2005) study, which found consumers have positive reactions toward alcohol companies that include drink responsibility messages in their advertisements.

*Vibe* magazine was an important addition because it has not been examined for alcohol advertisements, has a very high youth and African-American readership, and has not been in circulation as long as the other magazines in this study. This study also looked at the prominence of drink responsibly messages based on their visibility to readers of advertisements.

### **Method**

Content analysis, a systematic analysis of the content rather than the structure of a communication (Neuendorf 2001), was used to examine alcohol advertisements. Alcohol advertisements printed in *Black Enterprise*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Essence*, *Gentlemen's Quarterly (GQ)* and *Vibe* magazines, were coded from 2000-2005. All alcohol advertisements printed in those magazines were examined. Coding for the advertisements were based on Cui's (2000) study, which examined alcohol advertisements in women's mainstream and Black magazines. She found that alcohol advertising and distinct

advertising appeals were more concentrated in Black magazines versus mainstream magazines.

The magazines were selected based on their popularity and high readership among 18-24 college-aged young adults and their availability in hard copy. Media Research Incorporated (MRI) data were used to compile two lists of the top 20 magazines read by the 18-24 year old age group—one list for African Americans and another list for all others (See Table 1).

**Table 1**

**Top Magazines Read by African Americans and all other groups, ages 18-24**

<b>African American</b>		<b>All Others</b>	
<i>YM</i>	1	<i>YM</i>	
<i>Essence</i>	2	<i>Stuff</i>	
<i>FHM</i>	3	<i>FHM</i>	
<i>Ebony</i>	4	<i>Jane</i>	
<i>Vibe</i>	5	<i>Spin</i>	
<i>Maxim</i>	6	<i>Maxim</i>	
<i>Allure</i>	7	<i>Allure</i>	
<i>Teen People</i>	8	<i>Teen People</i>	
<i>Seventeen</i>	9	<i>Seventeen</i>	
<i>Black Enterprise</i>	10	<i>Rolling Stone</i>	
<i>Source</i>	11	<i>Source</i>	
<i>Marie Claire</i>	12	<i>Marie Claire</i>	
<i>Modern Bride</i>	13	<i>Modern Bride</i>	
<i>Jet</i>	14	<i>Vibe + Spin @</i>	
<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	15	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	
<i>Vibe + Spin @</i>	16	<i>Vibe</i>	
<i>ESPN The Magazine</i>	17	<i>ESPN The Magazine</i>	
<i>GQ - Gentlemen's Quarterly</i>	18	<i>GQ - Gentlemen's Quarterly</i>	
<i>In Style</i>	19	<i>In Style</i>	
<i>Rolling Stone</i>	20	<i>Bridal Guide</i>	

Source: 2004 MRI Doublebase

*Cosmopolitan* and *GQ* (*Gentlemen's Quarterly*), had the same number ranking among both groups, 15 and 18, respectively. *Essence* and *Black Enterprise* were ranked

at two and ten for the list of magazines read by African Americans. Although *Ebony* was ranked number four among magazines read by African Americans, it was not included in this study because the magazine was not available in hard copy in either the university or local libraries. Microfilm copies were available but not used because of the poor re-print quality and difficulty in determining black and white versus color advertisements.

Hard copies of the magazines were found at the Michigan State University Main Library and Livonia (MI) Civic Center Library. Missing magazine issues were obtained through interlibrary loan. Photocopies were made of each alcohol advertisement. Although photocopies were not in color, black and white advertisements were noted on the advertisements. The data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 13.0.

The following variables were coded:

*Name of Magazine: Black Enterprise, Cosmopolitan, Essence, GQ, and Vibe.*

Three magazines were chosen based on their popularity among different ethnic and age groups. *Cosmopolitan* launched in 1886 and is a women's magazine that focuses on consumer information, romance, fashion and exercise. It pitches itself as the magazine for fun and fearless females. The magazine has a 24% youth readership<sup>2</sup> (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002).

*GQ* magazine is geared toward men and started in 1931. It features fashion, relationship and men's issues. *GQ* positions itself as the magazine for men who want to 'live smart and look sharp'. *GQ* has 11% youth readership (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002).

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<sup>2</sup> Youth readership is defined as the reading audience between the ages of 12-20.



*Vibe* began publishing in 1993 and offers its readers fashion, rap and rhythm & blues music and artists' news. *Vibe* reaches more African-American youth and people of color ages 18-24 than any of other magazines examined in this study (Mediamark Research Inc 2003). *Vibe* has the highest youth readership of the five magazines, 41%, which makes the magazine ideal for targeting the youth population (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002). Although *Vibe* reaches 61% of African-American youth, it is not marketed as a Black magazine, but rather as a voice for urban music and culture that celebrates multiculturalism. Almost 48% of *Vibe* magazine readers are between the ages of 18-24 and 68.2% of these readers are African American.

*Essence* and *Black Enterprise* identify as Black magazines and cater to culture and issues of specific interest to African Americans, as well as mainstream topics.

*Essence*, launched in 1970, addresses beauty, relationships, and current event issues from the African-American perspective. For the past three decades the magazine has positioned itself as the only magazine dedicated to African-American women and their lives. Seventy-six percent of *Essence* readers are African-American women (Mediamark Research Inc 2005). *Essence* has 17% youth readership (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002).

*Black Enterprise* features current events, money management and career options from an Afro-centric perspective. The magazine began publishing in 1970 and positions itself as a platform for the ideas and ambitions of African-American business people and entrepreneurs. *Black Enterprise* has 11% youth readership (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002) and readers consist of an equal number of men and women between the ages of 18-24 (23%) (Mendelsohn Media Research Inc 2003).

*Month and Year:* These variables were coded to determine if there were seasonal and annual differences for alcohol advertisements.

*Alcohol Product Category:* Relying on Cui's (2000) study as a guide, product categories were divided into six categories: 1) regular beer, 2) light beer, 3) malt liquor, 4) wine and light drinks, 5) distilled liquor and 6) alcopops. Regular beers consisted of beers belonging to traditional beer categories. Light beers are beers with lower cholesterol and fewer calories and carbohydrates. They often have the words "light" or "lite" on the label. Malt liquor has higher alcohol content than beer, usually around 40%. Wine and light drinks are usually made from grapes and other fruits and have an alcohol content of between 10-15%. Examples of wines and light drinks include champagne, table wines, wine coolers and sparkling wines. Distilled liquors are hard liquors with a 20% or higher alcohol content. These liquors usually have the most elaborate packaging of all the alcohol categories and consist of gins, rums, vodkas and cognacs. Alcopops were added because these alcoholic beverages were introduced after Cui's study and are popular among adolescents because of their sweet taste. Alcopops is a relatively new category and consists of sweet drinks with an alcohol content of 5-7%, which is a higher alcohol content than of some beers. Examples of alcopops include Smirnoff Ice and Mike's Hard Lemonade.

*Alcohol Brand Name:* Brand name was coded to determine which brands and alcohol companies advertised the most and least often in the magazines. Existing research indicates that distilled liquor companies, compared to other alcohol companies, advertise more often in magazines that target African-American youth (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002).

*Page Size and color:* Color and black and white advertisements of one half page or larger were examined.

*Human Models:* An advertisement was only counted as having a human model if the whole body could be seen in the advertisement. Body parts such as a leg or a hand were not counted as a human model. For the animal category only real animals were counted; neither cartoon nor fictional characters were coded. Captain Morgan's Parrot Bay rum featured a colorful parrot in some of their advertisements, but this was neither considered a fictional character nor a cartoon. The parrot was seen more as a sketch than as a fictional or cartoon character that would be recognized by adolescents. The use of human models is important since adolescents are attracted to lifestyle image advertising in which they see qualities and characteristics in the models of these advertisements that they would like to have.

*Celebrity Endorser:* Celebrity endorsers were coded no matter their level of stardom. Some of the celebrity endorsers appearing in alcohol advertisements include Busta Rhymes, Fat Joe and Jill Scott from the rap and rhythm and blues music genres, models Veronica Webb and Iman, both African American, and African-American actor and actress Laurence Fishburne and Pam Grier. With the use of African-American celebrity endorsers, alcohol brands not only appeal to African-American adolescents because of the celebrity, but also through the concept of ethnic identification.

*Ethnicity:* The ethnicity of models was determined based on skin color and facial features. Coded racial groups included Black, White, Asian, and Hispanic ethnicities. If both Black and White human models were in an advertisement, the advertisement was

coded as Black and White. If other ethnicities other than Black and White appeared in advertisements, the advertisement was coded as other.

*Gender and Number of People in Ads:* Four categories were coded to examine gender: one person, mixed gender couple, same gender couple, and group of people, which was coded as more than two models.

*Advertising Appeals:* The appeals coded in this study were taken from Cui's (2000) study: 1) sexual intimacy, 2) relaxation, 3) social occasion, 4) prestige/quality, 5) tradition, 6) pleasure, 7) fun, 8) comparison, and 9) responsibility. Three categories were added to this study: employment, "how to make", and event/contest/promotion appeals.

*Sexual intimacy* advertisements feature two people in a close, romantic atmosphere such as dancing in a night club. *Relaxation* appeals depict people in a relaxed, non-stressful atmosphere such as lounging on a beach or resting in bed. *Social occasion* appeals depict people engaging in an informal, fun encounter that is non-romantic such as friends going to dinner.

*Prestige/quality* advertisements project an upscale and superior quality on the alcohol brand. *Tradition* advertisements convey the long history and origin of the product, such as stating how many years the brand has been in existence or the brand's country of origin. *Pleasure appeals* stress the great taste of the product and often show individuals drinking the beverage.

*Fun* appeals feature people in an extremely festive mood such as during holidays. *Comparison* advertisements compare two brands and one brand always claims superiority whether it is in taste, price, packaging, etc. *Responsibility appeals* are used in advertisements that focus solely on being careful when drinking and to drink responsibly

in order to avoid negative consequences. These advertisements typically do not feature human models and rely on a picture of the product and text to convey the message of drinking responsibly.

*Employment* advertisements feature the alcohol brand listing reasons why the company is a great employer and provides a website for those interested in employment opportunities. *“How to make”* advertisements give the reader recipes and directions on how to make alcoholic drinks with the alcohol brand being advertised. *Event/contest/promotion* advertisements link the alcohol brand with an event, contest or promotion such as music concerts and holiday or sporting events.

Advertisements not falling under these categories were coded as cannot tell/other. This category included advertisements with abstract pictures and no text or advertisements just featuring a picture of the product with no text. There was no way to determine which appeal these advertisements were using. When human models were featured the picture was the primary element used to rate the advertisement; if no human models were included, the text was used to rate the advertisement.

*Responsibly Message:* This variable was coded to determine if alcohol companies included “drink responsibly” messages in their advertisements. The alcohol industry is self-regulated and codes have been implemented to require that 50% of an alcohol company’s advertisements reach legal drinking age consumers (Federal Trade Commission 1999). There is no standard code for implementing drink responsibly messages in alcohol advertisements, but many alcohol companies do so in order to avoid criticism.

Examples of drink responsibly messages include “Please enjoy our product responsibly” and “Please drink responsibly”. If drink responsibly messages were included in the advertisement, the visibility of the message was also coded. In order for drink responsibly messages to be considered visible, the message had to be clearly portrayed in the advertisement with a graphic font size of 10 or larger. Also the color of the text could not blend into the background and the message had to be horizontal, not vertical along the side of the page. If visual responsibly messages give readers a more positive outlook on the brand (Roznowski 2005), then advertisers should make sure their advertisements reflect a clearly visual drink responsibly message. When drink responsibly messages are not clearly visible in an advertisement, the reader only focuses on the appeal presented and not how to use the product responsibly.

*Inter-coder Reliability:* Two coders established inter-coder reliability. Ten percent of the advertisements were coded to establish inter-coder reliability. Every tenth advertisement was used to compute inter-coder reliability and these advertisements were included in the sample. Scott’s pi inter-coder reliability statistic was used to determine reliability for each variable. Magazine title, month, year, page size, human models versus animals, alcohol brand name, drink responsibly message, ethnicity and number of people in advertisements received a score of 1.0. There were discrepancies for four of the advertising appeals, alcohol product category and the use of a celebrity in an advertisement. The Scott’s pi reliability statistics for these variables were: prestige/quality, .92; celebrity and alcohol product categories, .94, and pleasure, social occasion and tradition variables, .98.

## Results

### Frequencies

A total of 1,491 alcohol advertisements were analyzed from all six magazines for 2000-2005. *Black Enterprise* and *Vibe* both had similar average monthly page counts at 183 and 184. *Essence* had an average page count of 209. The magazines with the highest average page counts were *Cosmopolitan* and *GQ* with 280 and 304 pages respectively. The most popular months for alcohol advertisements were November and December, which can be attributed to the holiday seasons. Most of *Black Enterprise*, *Essence*, and *Vibe*'s alcohol advertisements appeared in December.

The number of alcohol advertisements were approximately the same in 2000 and 2001, then slightly increased in 2002, but continued to decrease from 2003-2005. Although none of the magazines had a continuous decrease in alcohol advertisements, the advertisements in *Essence* either stayed the same or decreased from 2000-2005. *GQ* had the largest decrease in alcohol advertisements from 113 advertisements in 2000 to 14 advertisements in 2005, while *Vibe* doubled its number of alcohol advertisements from 24 in 2000 to 50 in 2005 (See Table 2).

**Table 2**

**Number of Alcohol Advertisements per Magazine by Year**

Magazines	Year						Total
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
<i>Black Enterprise</i>	48 (24%)	28 (14%)	32 (16%)	33 (17%)	30 (15%)	29 (14%)	200 (13%)
<i>Essence</i>	27 (28%)	22 (24%)	15 (16%)	13 (14%)	13 (14%)	4 (4%)	94 (6%)
<i>Vibe</i>	24 (8%)	57 (18%)	55 (17%)	75 (23%)	59 (18%)	50 (16%)	320 (22%)
<i>GQ</i>	113 (21%)	112 (21%)	122 (23%)	80 (15%)	96 (18%)	14 (2%)	537 (36%)
<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	75 (22%)	77 (23%)	74 (22%)	50 (14%)	33 (10%)	31 (9%)	340 (23%)
Total	287 (19%)	296 (20%)	298 (20%)	251 (17%)	231 (15%)	128 (9%)	1491 (100%)

Distilled liquors appeared in 86.1% (N=1284) of magazine advertisements (see Table 3). Although *Essence* had the least amount of alcohol advertisements analyzed, distilled liquors accounted for 90% of its alcohol advertisements. *Cosmopolitan* was the only magazine to advertise alcopops, and featured the largest number of light beer advertisements. Nearly half of all malt liquor ads appeared in *Vibe* (See Table 3).

**Table 3**  
**Frequency of Product Categories per Magazine**

Magazines	Product Category						Total
	Regular Beer	Light Beer	Malt Liquor	Wine and Light Drinks	Distilled Liquor	Alcopops	
<i>Black Enterprise</i>	28 (14%)	7 (3%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	163 (82%)	0 (0%)	200 (13%)
<i>Essence</i>	5 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	85 (91%)	0 (0%)	94 (6%)
<i>Vibe</i>	29 (9%)	11 (3%)	15 (4%)	5 (2%)	260 (82%)	0 (0%)	320 (22%)
<i>GQ</i>	23 (4%)	4 (1%)	4 (1%)	27 (5%)	479 (89%)	0 (0%)	537 (36%)
<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	11 (3%)	14 (4%)	13 (4%)	3 (1%)	297 (87%)	2 (1%)	340 (23%)
Total	96 (6%)	37 (2%)	32 (2%)	40 (3%)	1284 (86%)	2 (1%)	1491 (100%)

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the top ten alcoholic beverage brand advertisements printed in the magazines—all are distilled liquors. Hennessy and Courvoisier, two of the more expensive alcohol brands from the list, advertised most often in *Vibe*. Remy Martin, Courvoisier, Hennessy and Martell, all cognacs, all offer regular and more prestige products for their brands ranging from \$25 to \$1,500 dollars. Absolut and Skyy, both vodkas, are in the \$20-\$30 dollar price range, while Bacardi, Captain Morgan and Crown Royal are in the \$10-\$30 price range. Tanqueray is priced between \$25-\$40 dollars.



**Table 4****Top Ten Distilled Liquor Brands per Magazine**

	<b>Magazines</b>					
<b>Brands</b>	<i>Black Enterprise</i>	<i>Essence</i>	<i>Vibe</i>	<i>GQ</i>	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	<b>Total</b>
Bacardi	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	43 (22%)	61 (27%)	37 (20%)	141 (18%)
Hennessy	31 (24%)	20 (31%)	33 (18%)	22 (10%)	10 (5%)	116 (15%)
Absolut	38 (29%)	9 (14%)	23 (13%)	24 (11%)	11 (5%)	105 (14%)
Skyy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	27 (14%)	4 (2%)	47 (26%)	78 (10%)
Captain Morgan	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	32 (14%)	37 (20%)	69 (8%)
Martell	29 (22%)	0 (0%)	19 (11%)	14 (6%)	0 (0%)	62 (8%)
Courvoisier	0 (0%)	7 (11%)	29 (17%)	20 (9%)	0 (0%)	56 (7%)
Crown Royal	17 (13%)	14 (22%)	0 (0%)	17 (8%)	5 (3%)	53 (7%)
Remy Martin	2 (2%)	7 (11%)	11 (5%)	6 (2%)	27 (15%)	53 (7%)
Tanqueray	13 (10%)	8 (11%)	0 (0%)	24 (11%)	5 (3%)	50 (6%)
Total	130 (17%)	65 (8%)	185 (24%)	224 (28%)	179 (23%)	783 (100%)

As previously mentioned, distilled liquors advertised the most in all the magazines. Martell, Hennessy, Courvoisier, and Remy Martin are all cognacs. Captain Morgan and Bacardi are rums. Seagrams is a brand of gin; Jose Cuervo is a brand of tequila; and Jim Beam is a brand of whiskey. Absolut and Hennessy were consistently advertised throughout *Black Enterprise* and *Vibe*. Although *Vibe* doesn't identify as a Black publication, the fact remains that 61% of its readers are African-American adolescents. Bacardi appeared 60 times in *GQ*, the most impressions of any brand. *Vibe* and *GQ* were the only magazines to have seven alcohol brands appear more than 21 times in their magazines. A majority of Martell, Absolut, and Hennessy advertisements appeared in Black magazines.

A lifestyle appeal was used most often, prestige and quality, 32.6% (n=486), in the magazines' alcohol advertisements, which supports Covell's (1992) study which

found that young adults favor lifestyle image advertisements rather than product or quality oriented advertisements (Table 5). The prestige and quality lifestyle appeal accounted for 37% of advertisements in *GQ*, and was the most advertised appeal in every magazine except *Cosmopolitan*. *Cosmopolitan* advertised two appeals equally, sexual intimacy and pleasure, which accounted for 40% of the advertisements. *Cosmopolitan* advertised the responsibility appeal more than any other magazine.

**Table 5**  
**Advertising Appeals per Magazine**

Advertising Appeal	Magazines					Total
	<i>Black Enterprise</i>	<i>Essence</i>	<i>Vibe</i>	<i>GQ</i>	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	
Sexual Intimacy	21 (10%)	14 (15%)	40 (13%)	63 (12%)	70 (20%)	208 (14%)
Relaxation	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.5%)	13 (2%)	13 (4%)	29 (2%)
Social Occasion	18 (9%)	5 (6%)	21 (7%)	43 (8%)	20 (6%)	107 (7%)
Tradition	33 (17%)	9 (9%)	19 (6%)	63 (12%)	23 (7%)	147 (10%)
Prestige/Quality	95 (48%)	31 (33%)	119 (36%)	201 (37%)	40 (12%)	486 (33%)
"How to Make"	0 (0%)	8 (9%)	24 (8%)	43 (8%)	59 (17%)	124 (9%)
Pleasure	23 (11%)	15 (16%)	42 (13%)	41 (8%)	70 (20%)	191 (12%)
Fun	0 (0%)	6 (6%)	23 (7%)	47 (9%)	38 (11%)	114 (8%)
Comparison	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (2%)	16 (3%)	1 (0.5%)	24 (2%)
Responsibility	4 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (2%)	10 (0.6%)
Event/Contest/Promotion	2 (1%)	4 (4%)	22 (7%)	7 (1%)	1 (0.5%)	36 (2%)
Employment	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.2%)
Can't Tell/Other	1 (0.5)	1 (1%)	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (0.2%)
Total	200 (13%)	94 (6%)	320 (22%)	537 (36%)	340 (23%)	91 (100%)

For women's magazines, the prestige/quality appeal appeared in one-third of *Essence*'s alcohol advertisements, but only accounted for 12% (n=40) of *Cosmopolitan*'s advertisements. *Vibe* used this appeal in 36% (n=119) of its advertisements. The pleasure

appeal which focuses on product taste can entice youth to take their first drink of alcohol, especially if the advertisement describes the taste in a very visual manner. For the magazines with the highest percentage of youth readerships, *Vibe* and *Cosmopolitan*, the pleasure appeal was the second most advertised appeal in *Vibe* (13%) and appeared in 20% (n=70) of advertisements in *Cosmopolitan*. This appeal and the sexual intimacy appeal tied for the most appearances in *Cosmopolitan* alcohol advertisements.

Alcohol advertisers are not only telling readers about the taste of their products, but also how to make great tasting drinks with their products as. Another appeal, “how to make”, which has not been researched in other alcohol studies, appeared most often in *Cosmopolitan*. Both the pleasure and “how to make” appeals were featured most often in *Cosmopolitan*. *Black Enterprise* was the only magazine to advertise employment opportunities with alcohol companies.

### **Research Questions Analysis**

RQ1 asked if more than one person would be in advertisements featuring human models. Human models were not used in a majority of the advertisements, but when they were both males and females were featured in 19.7% (n=293) of the advertisements. For advertisements with only one person, males appeared slightly more often than females, 16.6% (n=247) and 14% (n=217) respectively. *Essence* had the highest percentage, 53% (n=23), of alcohol advertisements featuring more than one person.

African-American models (28.6%, n=427) were featured more often than White models (6.2%, n=242). Hispanic (n=3) and Asian (n=3) models were rarely featured. *Cosmopolitan* featured human models in 62% (n=211) of its alcohol advertisements and *Black Enterprise* and *GQ* used human models in 50% (n=99, n=271, respectively) of their

alcohol advertisements. *Vibe* featured African-American models in 28% (n=39) of the advertisements that had human models.

RQ2 queried whether distilled liquor brands would be advertised more than other alcohol brand categories. More than 80% of all the magazine alcohol advertisements were for distilled liquors. This is consistent with previous research studies conducted by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, which reported that adolescents were over exposed to distilled liquor advertisements. While Bacardi, Remy Martin, Courvoisier, Captain Morgan and Skyy advertised more in the mainstream magazines, Hennessy, Absolut, Crown Royal, Martell and Tanqueray advertised more in the Black magazines.

RQ3 considered whether African-American celebrities would be featured more often in Black magazines. Celebrities appeared in 7% (n=104) of alcohol advertisements. *Vibe* featured a majority of the celebrity related alcohol advertisements, 12% (n=37) followed by *Black Enterprise* 15% (n=30). African-American celebrity endorsers that appeared in *Black Enterprise* included Mos Def and Issac Hayes; in *Essence* both Veronica Webb and Jill Scott appeared in alcohol advertisements; and Busta Rhymes, Pam Grier, and Iman were featured in *Vibe*'s alcohol advertisements.

RQ4 questioned whether the event/contest/promotion appeal would appear in magazines with higher youth readerships. *Vibe* had the largest percentage of alcohol advertisements that featured events, contests or promotions. This appeal accounted for 7% of *Vibe*'s advertisements, that is, 22 out of a possible 36 of these advertisements appeared in the magazine. Therefore this appeal was advertised most often in the magazine with the highest percentage of African American and youth readership.

*Cosmopolitan* had the second highest youth readership; however, the magazines featured only one event/contents promotion alcohol advertisement.

RQ5 examined whether positive appeals would be advertised more than responsibility appeals. Responsibility appeals were featured in less than 1% of all advertisements. Responsibility appeals only appeared in *Black Enterprise*, *Essence* and *Cosmopolitan*. This appeal accounted for 2% of advertisements in *Black Enterprise* and *Cosmopolitan* and 1% of advertisements in *Essence*.

RQ6 queried whether drink responsibly messages would be visible in alcohol advertisements. Although drink responsibly messages were in a majority of advertisements, only one-third of these messages were clearly visible. *Cosmopolitan* had the highest percentage, 35% (n=120), of visible drink responsibly messages in alcohol advertisements, while *Vibe* had the smallest percentage, 18% (n=58).

## **Discussion**

Underage drinking and alcohol use is cause for national concern (Federal Trade Commission 1999). By advertising in magazines, alcohol companies are not only reaching adolescents, but also have the ability to leave positive images about their brands with this impressionable audience.

The results of this study support that advertising companies continue to use lifestyle images and positive advertising appeals such as sexual intimacy and prestige/quality to convey positive, fun, and quality images for alcohol products and brands. These findings support exiting research (Cui 2000), which states that lifestyle image advertising is most appealing to adolescents. These findings are disconcerting

when considered in the context of African-American adolescents' disproportionate exposure to alcohol advertisements. That is, expectancy theory proposes that individuals associate drinking with positive outcomes.

African-American adolescents were bombarded with images for distilled liquors, which accounted for over 85% of the advertisements analyzed. This high percentage of distilled liquors is in agreement with previous studies conducted by Alaniz (1998), Galvan, Frank and Caetano (2003), Garfield, Craig, Chung and Rathouz (2003), Green (2002), and Hingson (2004), which addressed the prevalence of hard liquor advertising targeted to African-American youth. Distilled liquor brands such as Martell, Hennessy and Absolut advertised most often in Black magazines and are particularly noteworthy because they contain more alcohol than beer, wine, light drinks, malt liquors or alcopops.

*Vibe* was an interesting case in this study. This relatively new magazine was introduced in the 1990's and has not been examined in terms of alcohol advertisements. Although more than half of its reading audience is African American, it does not market itself as a Black magazine because it focuses more on pop culture and music. Nonetheless, based on its high African-American youth readership, *Vibe* should obviously be classified as a Black magazine. This magazine is a unique print medium for alcohol advertisers because it gives them the opportunity to reach a great number of African-American adolescents. With the excessive amount of alcohol advertising, use of positive appeals, and lack of drink responsibly messages, *Vibe* has great potential to influence the drinking behavior habits of African-American adolescents.

In regard to using the event/contest/promotion appeal, *Vibe* surpassed the other magazines by far, 7% (n=22) of its advertisements. The appeal appeared in 1% (n=7) of

the advertisements in *GQ*; 4% (n=4) of advertisements in *Essence*; 1% (n=2) of advertisements in *Black Enterprise*; and 0.5% (n=1) of advertisements in *Cosmopolitan*. By advertising this appeal so often, the *Vibe* readers learn that alcohol companies sponsor popular events, contests or promotions that are appealing to them. In addition, readers are encouraged to consume the sponsoring brand of alcohol, which will potentially move them one step closer to obtaining event tickets, winning a contest, or obtaining promotion items.

Although the responsibility appeal was rarely advertised in the magazines, *Vibe* had no responsibility appeal advertisements. This finding is especially troubling when one considers the high percentage of African-American youth who read the magazine. *GQ* also did not advertise this appeal, but has a much lower youth readership, 11% compared with *Vibe*'s 41% youth readership. *Cosmopolitan* acknowledged the youth readership on their magazine by featuring five responsibility advertisements during the six years examined.

Alcohol companies fight claims that their advertisements attract youth by placing drink responsibly messages in their advertisements. Although Roznowski (2005) discussed drink responsibly messages in her study, the visibility of these messages were not analyzed. In this current study, three criteria were established to explain the lack of visibility of drink responsibly messages in alcohol advertisements. First, the advertising text is so small it cannot be seen without close examination. Second, the color of the text for the drink responsibly message blends in with the background of the advertisement. Third, the type is parallel to the left side of the page, which requires readers to tilt their heads to read the message.

Although 75.5% (n=1125) of the alcohol ads had drink responsibly messages, only 29.2% (n=435) of these ads were clearly visible. Roznowski (2005) found that consumers have more positive reactions to alcohol companies who include drink responsibly messages in their advertisements. However, adolescents are less likely to favor these advertisements, which is likely an indication as to why alcohol companies have not increased the visibility of drink responsibly messages in their advertisements.

The lack of clearly visible drink responsibly messages in the advertisements are problematic because this indicates that adolescents viewing these advertisements are primarily being exposed to alcohol's positive attributes. This practice is especially troublesome in *Vibe* since this magazine had the smallest percentage of clearly visible drink responsibly messages and the largest percentage of youth readership. This sends a message to African-American adolescents that drinking is a social norm. More specifically, if the voice of the advertisement is portraying drinking as harmless and drink responsibly messages are either not present or not clearly visible; readers are more likely to associate drinking with positive outcomes.

Although human models were not frequently used in the magazines' alcohol advertisements, when used, in both mainstream and Black magazines they were more often African American. The use of African-American models more than other ethnic groups can be linked to the concept of ethnic identification (Green 1999). Alcohol advertisers believe African-American adolescents will identify more with advertisements featuring models that look similar to them. The use of African-American models help African-American adolescents relate to the images and messages portrayed in the advertisements.



Mainstream magazines had the highest percentages of African-American models. For advertisements featuring human models, 75% (n=197) of the human models in *GQ* and 78% (n=166) in *Cosmopolitan* were African American. Thirty percent (n=39) of the human models were African American in *Vibe*. African-American models appeared in 20% (n=20) of *Black Enterprise*'s alcohol advertisements and 12% (n=5) of *Essence*'s alcohol advertisements.

As mentioned earlier, brands often use celebrities as a trope to encourage adolescents to identify with advertisements (Erdogan and Baker 1999). By using popular emerging and established celebrities, these alcohol brands transfer celebrities' lifestyles to products. Furthermore, since African Americans use media as information resources (Green 1999), celebrities appearing in the advertisements function as information agents.

The use of celebrity endorsers in advertisements is appealing to adolescents (Grube and Wallack 1994). This study's findings support Grube and Wallack (1994) work, which maintains that celebrity endorsers popular with adolescents are most often featured. African-American adolescents had the most exposure to these types of advertisements because the majority of celebrity alcohol advertisements were in *Black Enterprise*, *Essence*, and *Vibe*. Of these magazines, *Vibe* had the largest number of celebrity endorser advertisements (n=37). Celebrity endorsers appearing in *Vibe* included music artists such as Fat Joe, Busta Rhymes, Mos Def and Jill Scott, models Veronica Webb and Iman, and actors Issac Hayes and Laurence Fishburne.

This finding, combined with the fact that African-American models are used most often in alcohol advertisements, helps solidify the link between the celebrity and the brand. When alcohol advertisers use African-American celebrities in their

advertisements, they depend on the celebrity to feature as a trope (Scott 1994). When popular actors, actresses, rap and rhythm and blues artists, and models are used in these advertisements, African-American adolescents are more likely to relate to the advertisements.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

*Ebony* magazine was not examined in this study. Because *Ebony* is read by a large percentage of African-American adolescents, an examination of the magazine could have added depth to this research study. Future studies for this topic should include *Ebony*.

Another limitation to this research study is the lack of qualitative data. It would be beneficial to conduct focus groups, surveys, experiments and/or in depth interviews with African-American adolescents and young adults. These qualitative measures could provide key insights regarding consumers' brand choices and preferences, drinking behavior, and recall of specific magazine alcohol advertisements.

For future research it would be interesting to compare alcohol advertisements in *Vibe* with other music magazines such as *Spin* and *Rolling Stone*. Since *Vibe* classifies itself as a music magazine, it would be a valuable exercise to determine whether the number of alcohol advertisements and appeals are comparable since a majority of *Spin* and *Rolling Stone* magazines' adolescent readers are not African American.

### **Implications**

To address the problem of underage drinking and the overexposure of African-American adolescents to magazine alcohol advertisements, there have been suggestions

regarding enforcing stronger code standards in the alcohol industry. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) has suggested that alcohol companies refrain from advertising in media venues where more than 10% of the audience is under the legal drinking age of twenty-one (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth 2002). This would help solve the problems associated with the claim made by the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (2005) that 50% of alcohol advertisements appeared in magazines read by underage youth. Since all of the magazines analyzed for this study have youth readerships between 11% and 41%, this rule would eliminate alcohol advertisements in these magazines, which would reduce African-American adolescents' exposure to alcohol advertisements in these magazines

Regulations, such as specific advertisement placements, should also be enforced regarding the number of responsibility appeal magazine advertisements alcohol companies should produce each year. Because African Americans are over exposed to lifestyle image appeals in alcohol advertisements, they need to see advertisements that counter these images. Viewing advertisements that show the consequences and realities of excessive drinking will help adolescents have a more realistic view of alcohol consumption. Requiring alcohol companies to produce responsibility appeal advertisements would help ensure that the alcohol images seen by African-American adolescents are more balanced.

In addition to more strict regulations on responsibility appeal advertisements, all alcohol companies' magazine advertisements should contain some form of the "drink responsibly" message. Not only should all advertisements carry this message, but they

should be completely visible to the reader. African-American adolescents need to be reminded that when they choose not to drink responsibly dire consequences can occur.

The purpose of this study was to provide insight regarding the disproportionate amount of alcohol advertising seen by African-American adolescents in mainstream and Black magazines. The results of this study indicate that there is a need to conduct alcohol advertising research that focuses solely on African-American youth. A primary purpose of future research should be to develop communication campaigns designed to dispel existing misinformation surrounding the outcomes of excessive alcohol drinking and to encourage more stringent restrictions on alcohol advertisements placed in magazines that target adolescents. Such measures may work toward reducing the disproportionate impact alcohol related diseases have on members of the African-American community.

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11

12

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