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W. Scott Sanders, Selene G. Phillips, and Cecelia Alexander

The past few decades have seen a shift in the American advertising industry toward greater representation and inclusiveness of ethnic minorities in broadcast and print advertisements. Recent studies have demonstrated that advertising "overrepresents" some minority groups in proportion to their numbers in the entire US population, including Americans of black, Asian, and Hispanic heritage.[1] Frequently, studies that consider minority representation in advertisements fail to consider the presence of Native Americans—or lack thereof. However, studies have shown that Natives are proportionately underrepresented in regard to their actual prevalence within the population.[2] Beyond numerical representation, many studies have also documented that when Natives Americans' images do appear, they frequently portray "noble savages," "bloodthirsty warriors," or historical figures, images which starkly contrast with the lived experiences of contemporary Native peoples.[3] Clearly, these advertisers use Native imagery to associate stereotypical qualities or traits with their products, using this cultural shorthand to aim at members of the dominant culture. We distinguish this practice from advertising that uses Native images that are part of a targeted campaign aimed at an ethnic minority.

Natives make up only 1.2 percent and 4.3 percent of the US and Canadian populations respectively, and at first glance, it may not appear feasible to target advertisements at such a small minority.[4] Despite this, local print and broadcast advertising to Native populations has existed in areas with high population concentrations for years, and small, niche advertising firms exist that cater to firms wishing to target

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Native consumers.[5] While much of the research on Natives and advertising focuses on the stereotypical representation of Natives who serve as stock characters to communicate product attributes to non-Native consumers, Natives are also consumers who are often buying the same products as the dominant culture and, at times, are the professionals who are developing and marketing products. Furthermore, there has been little research considering the implications of Natives as consumers of advertising, perhaps in part due to the historical lack of national advertising campaigns designed specifically for Native audiences. However, the introduction over the past decade of many popular social media platforms may provide a low-cost method to reach a relatively small and dispersed population of ethnic minority consumers.

This article examines Nike's N7 social media campaign, which grew out of its charitable activities. Sam McCracken, a Nike employee and member of the Fort Peck tribes, developed a business plan to financially support health promotion programs for Natives via the sales of Nike products.[6] The N7 Fund, which also accepts private contributions from donors, provides grants to nonprofit community groups promoting sports and physical activities for Native youths to combat diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.[7] In 2007, Nike's Native American division introduced footwear specifically designed for Natives, the Nike Air Native N7, which was initially sold only through Native American community centers and offered to tribal organizations at a relatively low wholesale cost of $42.80.[8]

Subsequently, the Nike N7 product line was expanded in 2009 and made available in commercial retail outlets to all consumers.[9] As of March 19, 2016, Nike N7 products, which draw inspiration from Native American culture and designs, were offered at 101 retail locations in the United States and Canada, including Foot Locker and Nike stores, as well as being available for direct sale online.[10] Nonetheless, N7 products primarily target Native Americans, rather than the general population. Nike's N7 website states, "N7 Fund is committed to inspiring and enabling participation in sport for Native American and Aboriginal populations in North America." The "ultimate goal of N7 is to consider this footprint and to help Native American and Aboriginal youth recognize their proud history and build on it for a triumphant future."[11] This represents a rare, if not unique, instance of a Fortune 500 company conducting a national advertising campaign aimed at Native Americans.

The advertising campaign for the Nike N7 line involves a significant social media presence with few traditional advertisements at a national level, if any. The video content Nike has produced to promote the N7 line is not aired nationally, but rather posted on online video platforms such as YouTube. The Nike N7 campaign thus relies heavily on in-store exposure to products, traditional word-of-mouth, and digital exposure enabled by popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Nike's N7 Facebook page was created in December 2010. Currently, it is updated seasonally in conjunction with changes in the N7 product line and is liked by 57,347 people. Likewise, the Nike N7 Twitter account, created in August 2010, currently is also updated seasonally, although historically it had been more active, with daily posts. The posts on both platforms feature the N7 products often being modeled by the N7 Ambassadors, Native athletes who represent ten different nations and eleven different

sports. These platforms provide a space for interaction about the N7 products where users are able to like, favorite, and respond to posts. In short, social media plays a key role in the company's goal of making Native and non-Native consumers aware of Nike's products and its social responsibility campaign.

This article evaluates the effectiveness of the N7 campaign in the context of theory on targeted marketing to ethnic minorities and of scholarship about the representation of Native Americans in advertisements. A "successful" campaign is defined as being able to successfully reach a nationally dispersed target market of Native Americans and being able to construct and employ messages that are successful in generating engagement. First, this article considers the historical relationship that Native Americans have had with advertising and the various roles Native imagery has played in relation to advertising. Next, it will consider the reasons why large-scale advertising to Native Americans may seem impractical or uneconomical. Finally, to assess whether Nike is able to effectively reach and engage Native Americans via Twitter, we present two studies that provide evidence that the Nike N7 social media campaign has been successful in both reaching and generating engagement with Native consumers. Specifically, study one uses geolocation data collected from Twitter to assess whether Nike has successfully reached Native consumers and evaluates the role that tribal representation of Nike's spokespeople may play in the campaign's success. Study two examines the content of social media posts targeted toward Native consumers and considers which elements generate the most engagement.

When Natives become visible as consumers who are often buying the same products as the dominant culture and, at times, are the professionals who are developing and marketing products, these other relationships to advertising result in increased agency for Natives, including the power to vote with their wallets to reject companies and brands they feel represent them offensively or pander to them. Moreover, a Native consumer base encourages brands to develop products that cater to their tastes and needs. We hope that by highlighting both the successful and unsuccessful components of the N7 campaign we can provide guidance to marketing practitioners who wish to follow Nike's model in developing a Native consumer base and increase Natives power and agency with brands that choose to appeal to them via their collective purchasing power.

Natives' Relationships to Advertising

Historically, the relationship of Natives to advertising in general has been complicated. As previously noted, to a large degree Natives have been conspicuously absent from representation in much print and broadcast advertising. In one longstanding practice, advertisers exploit the psychological principle of association and appropriate Native culture when they incorporate Native imagery, customs, or historical figures to link their product to a stereotypical Native trait or characteristic. As Phillips describes, in *Life Magazine* advertisements from the 1930s and 1940s Native Americans were frequently depicted as hostile or angry and Native weaponry was emphasized.[12] More recently, Merskin notes that numerous trademarks and mascots representing Natives

continue to be used for branded products that range from Land O'Lakes butter and Cherokee clothing to Dodge Dakota vehicles.[13] In the common "noble savage" stereotype, Native Americans are portrayed as primitives separated from the modern world, which relegates them to part of the natural landscape and erases their contemporary humanity.[14]

Natives also produce or commission advertisements to promote products and services that they offer, such as advertisements to develop sustainable cultural tourism or to promote reservation gaming opportunities. Likewise, they create political advertisements to promote and draw attention to issues important to Native nations in local and state elections. This advertising is primarily aimed at non-Natives.

Natives are also the intended recipients of advertising. Much of the academic research on Natives as consumers of advertising has focused on campaigns intended to address health problems on reservations, such as preventing fetal alcohol syndrome,[15] type II diabetes,[16] strokes, and heart attacks within Native communities.[17] Conspicuously absent from academic studies are evaluations of large, national campaigns and those that advertise to the Native community as a consumer market. Thus, we briefly consider the reasons why national advertising to Natives in traditional media may be considered problematic.

Traditional Advertising

Large national and global brands may hesitate to engage in targeted marketing to Native populations for various reasons. First, given that Native Americans comprise a relatively small proportion of the US population, and when coupled with a perception that Native communities are impoverished, brands may believe the return on investment for targeting them is inadequate. Despite this belief, Native Americans wield approximately $100 billion in purchasing power, although this is exceeded by that of African Americans ($1.1 trillion), Hispanics ($1.3 trillion), and Asians ($770 billion).[18]

Second, the cultural diversity of Native American communities makes it difficult to treat them as a single, undifferentiated market segment. Distinct cultures mean that campaigns must either be granularly targeted at specific communities or must find overarching commonalities among disparate groups. Indeed, existing studies of governmental and health campaigns recommend the use of local languages and cultural imagery which narrows the potential audience.[19] Lack of knowledge about Native cultures may also make it difficult for advertisers to develop the cultural competency necessary to create targeted messages. Lacking cultural competency, advertisers may fear being labeled insensitive or racist, which may result in their avoiding the relatively small Native market.

Finally, the distribution of the Native population in the United States may make it difficult to implement large national campaigns intended to target them. Because the Native population is clustered, rather than evenly dispersed across the nation, national television, radio, and print campaigns may be inefficient and wasteful. Furthermore, despite an increasingly urbanized Native population, many live in rural areas with

limited access to broadcast and billboard advertising. Additionally, some Native communities either lack Internet access or have severely restricted bandwidth, resulting in a digital divide. Although mobile phones may serve as the primary method of Internet access for some, including low-income individuals, connectivity may be limited in rural areas. In sum, advertisers may have ignored or even avoided the Native market because it may been considered unprofitable, inaccessible based upon its relatively small size and geographic distribution, and difficult to target via culturally appropriate messages.

Social Media Marketing

Compared to traditional media such as print and broadcast advertising, social media marketing offers a number of benefits that may make it both extremely cost effective and efficient. As a result, it is now possible to market to smaller groups which previously may have been unprofitable. First, unlike face-to-face communities, which are limited by geography and characterized by multifaceted social ties, online communities are unconstrained by geography, and social interaction tends to focus around a small set of shared interests.[20] Thus, a social media campaign may potentially reach geographically dispersed groups that would have been unprofitable to reach via traditional mass media. Indeed, the Nike N7 Twitter account has account followers in all fifty states and the District of Columbia as well as internationally. Moreover, while a message sent via traditional advertising channels is presumed to have a direct effect and is constructed for a mass audience that cannot communicate with either the message creator or other audience members, social media advertising allows brands to leverage consumers' social connections as an indirect conduit of influence.

However, digital tools that enable communication among a brand's consumers may be a double-edged sword. On one hand, social media prevents marketers from having complete control over how the brand is portrayed because consumer interaction co-creates the brand's meaning.[21] Indeed, a small minority of tweets directed to the N7 account directly challenged Nike's sincerity in supporting nonprofit Native American programs. Alternatively, the ease of sharing content using social media allows messages to "go viral" and thus provides an important and powerful indirect mechanism of influence by leveraging social connections to act as a channel for brand messages.[22] In addition, information shared by peers is often seen as more credible and persuasive.[23] For example, one tweet from the Nike N7 account was retweeted 5,928 times, greatly expanding the audience beyond the N7 Twitter followers. When compared to traditional channels, then, social media's potential to generate chains of indirect influence means that brands may expend relatively fewer resources to garner exposure.

Social media campaigns also differ from traditional marketing campaigns in how they use data to construct and target messages. Traditional advertising channels often rely upon broad demographic information to understand the audience of a particular outlet. Furthermore, although it is possible to show that advertising via traditional channels bolsters sales in general, marketers are led to assess traditional advertising channels in terms of reach and exposure because it is difficult to link sales directly

to specific advertisements. In contrast, social media advertising provides many direct measures of consumer engagement with specific messages, such as sharing, favoriting, liking, and replying. Techniques such as URL tracking also allow marketers to ascertain the origin of consumers of the brand by following links to points of purchase. Both types of data help campaigns to identify their most effective messages and allow them to adapt their communication as needed.

Finally, social media platforms provide a channel for access where users have the opportunity to directly interact with the brand, its representatives, and those who create its products and services.[24] McAlexander, Shouten, and Koenig have shown that brand enthusiasts desire interactions with those "behind the brands" and have been known to seek out well-known employees at in-person brand events.[25] Similarly, the many-to-many communication of social media campaigns can allow direct communication between the consumer and the people behind the brand. As a result, relationship marketing, which focuses on long-term consumer loyalty and engagement, via social media goes beyond personalized messaging and rewards authentic human interactions between consumers and brand representatives. The Nike N7 twitter account demonstrates a moderate amount of interaction with brand representatives, as 36 percent of tweets from the brand were replies to other users' tweets. In short, social media allows brands such as Nike to more effectively leverage and track word-of-mouth communication about services and products and to build direct relationships with their most ardent supporters.

The Nike N7 product line and its associated social media campaign demonstrate that Native Americans represent a largely ignored, yet viable, market that can be successfully reached using targeted advertisements and social media. Notably, Natives such as Sam McCracken played a role in developing the N7 campaign; the portrayals of Native athletes are largely positive and nonstereotypical; and the inclusion of ethnic cues that appeal to a shared sense of identity and heritage indicate that the intended audience are primarily Native consumers. As both a culturally sensitive and successful campaign, the Nike N7 ads can be seen as a step forward. However, Nike simultaneously sells overtly offensive paraphernalia (such as Washington Redskins jerseys) to the same group their N7 campaign wishes to court, effectively checking impulses to lionize the company for its outreach to Native Americans. Indeed, a cynical view of Nike's N7 campaign is that it is simply an attempt to develop and exploit a niche market for profit.

When brands and companies market to Natives they are conferring power to them as consumers who may then reject a brand's approach as pandering, insensitive, or offensive. Additionally, if brands wish to create targeted advertising for Native consumers, they must develop cultural competency to understand the values, symbols, and traditions significant to Native cultures. Such cultural competency cannot be learned in a vacuum, which necessitates that Natives be involved during the creative process. Crucially, however, the increased agency that flows to Natives via their power as consumers hinges upon brands' perception that a Native market exists and can feasibly be reached.

STUDY ONE

Rationale

Nike's N7 campaign is designed to target Native populations by promoting health awareness and physical activity on reservations, incorporating Native-inspired product designs, and employing Native spokespersons as "N7 Ambassadors." Although this focused campaign is directed toward Native Americans, the Nike N7 campaign may also appeal to many other sectors of the population. Another major problem with studying data drawn from social media is the prevalence of automated accounts, or bots, which do not represent real human beings. Therefore, it is imperative for any assessment to establish that the campaign is actually reaching its target population. Based on US Census data, we know both the Native and total populations of each state. Therefore, we asked the following series of three research questions to determine if Nike is reaching real human beings of Native descent, and, if so, the extent of that reach as well as the appeal being made by a diverse group of tribal spokespeople.

Research Question One: Do states with higher Native populations have a higher number of Nike N7 Twitter followers than states with lower Native populations?

Due to its relatively low cost and the reduced emphasis on geography, social media may provide an effective and economical method to target geographically dispersed clusters of Native American populations. However, rural Native populations may also lack access to broadband Internet service that is necessary for a social media campaign to succeed in fully engaging its targeted audience. Thus, research question two asks,

Research Question Two: Given the potential difficulties of accessing rural populations through traditional and print media campaigns, do the locations of the Nike N7 Twitter followers show penetration into rural areas?

One of the challenges of marketing to "Native Americans" is that a one-size-fits-all strategy is not easily applicable. Many separate nations retain distinct languages, cultures, and traditions. In responding to this challenge, Nike's focus on health serves as an overarching issue salient to Native communities, while at the same time, the campaign ensures that tribal groups are represented and Nike, if subtly, acknowledges tribal nations' individual sovereignty by including N7 "Ambassadors." In marketing terms, it is possible that Twitter users may identify with spokespeople based on shared tribal membership and this may encourage engagement with the campaign; alternatively, given a media environment largely lacking any sort of Native representation, such distinctions may be relatively unimportant to consumers' identification with the spokesperson. We therefore ask,

Research Question Three: Is there a relationship between the number of Nike N7 Ambassadors representing the tribal composition of Native population of a state and the number of account followers in a state?

Study One Methods

Procedure

A Python script was used to collect the public profile information for the followers of the Nike N7 account during October 2015 via the Twitter API and stored in a MySQL database for analysis. The location of N7 accounts followers was determined using followers' self-reported locations on their Twitter profile and a Python program to geocode the locations with the Bing Maps API. This resulted in 9,393 and 6,778 user locations that were determined at the state or county level respectively. The N7 follower geolocation data was joined with publicly available data to create state and county level datasets. The state level dataset consisted of follower counts produced from the geolocation data and data drawn from the 2010 US Census, the 2014 American Community Survey, and Nike promotional material listing the locations of stores selling N7 products (N=50). The county level data set consisted of Twitter user geolocation data and the USDA's rural-urban continuum codes.

Measures

State Population. The total state population is the reported population for each state from the 2010 US Census.

State Native Population. The state Native population is the estimated Native population for each state provided by the 2014 American Community Survey.

State N7 Followers. The number of N7 followers per state was determined using self-reported locations on N7 followers' profiles. A frequency table was subsequently generated using MySQL to provide the total number of followers for each state.

N7 Tribal Representation. Tribal representation is the percent of each state's Native population whose tribal grouping was represented by a spokesperson in the Nike N7 campaign. The total Native population and the population for thirty-six common tribal groups for each state were collected from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2014 five-year estimates. The percentage of the Native population represented by an N7 Ambassador (i.e., spokesperson) for each state was calculated for each tribal grouping in the Nike N7 campaign and summed.

Urban vs. Rural County Classification. The 2013 Rural-Urban Continuum Codes developed by the USDA for economic research determined the urban and rural classification of each county.[26] Counties that were classified as "Metro" (i.e., RUCC 1-3) were considered to be urban while "Non-Metro" counties (i.e., RUCC 4-9) were considered to be rural.

Study One Results

A multiple regression was conducted to determine if the number of followers per state could be predicted by the state's Native population and tribal representation of the Nike N7 campaign over and beyond the variance predicted by the total state population and the number of Nike stores carrying the N7 product line in each state. Exploration of the data led to logarithmic transformation of the total state's population, the state Native population, and the number of followers per state.

Table 1 displays the unstandardized regression coefficients (B), intercept, and the standardized regression coefficients (β) results for the number of followers per state. A multiple regression testing the control variables, total state population, and the number of Nike stores carrying the N7 product line, was significant, $R^2 = .72$, $F(2, 48) = 61.31$. A second analysis examining the state's Native population and N7 campaign's tribal representation for each state was also found to significantly predict variance over and beyond the control variables, R^2 change $= .10$, $F(4, 46) = 51.15$.

TABLE 1

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR PREDICTING
NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS PER STATE

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Intercept	-1.06	.49		-1.60	.42	-
State Pop. (Log)	.44	.08	.46**	.29	.07	.30**
Number of Stores	.88	.12	.60**	.49	.13	.33**
Native Pop. (Log)				.35	.08	.45**
Tribal Repres. (Sqrt)				.16	.18	.06
Adjusted R^2		.71			.80	
F for change in R^2		61.31*			12.25*	

*$p<.05$, **$p < .001$

Research question one asked whether the state's Native population would predict the number of N7 account followers in each state. Indeed, a state's Native population was positively associated with the number of followers indicating that states with higher Native populations had more followers. This suggests that Nike is indeed reaching its target Native demographic.

Research question two asked whether the location of the Nike N7 Twitter followers showed penetration into rural areas that may be less accessible to traditional media campaigns. Chi-square tests were conducted for each state testing whether the N7 Twitter followers were more likely to be located in urban or rural counties than would be expected based upon the known Native population of urban and rural counties in each state.[27] A Bonferroni adjustment was used to control for Type I error since tests were conducted for forty-seven states. Three states, New Jersey, Delaware, and Rhode Island, were excluded from the analysis, as they have no rural counties. Results indicated that eleven states had significantly more urban followers than would be expected based upon the population distribution, while the remaining states were as expected (see table 2). It is noteworthy that many of the states where N7 followers are disproportionately urban are those with large Native populations (e.g., Arizona and New Mexico).

TABLE 2
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS FOR THE URBAN VS. RURAL N7 FOLLOWERS IN EACH STATE

State	N	Urban Followers	Rural Followers	X^2
Arizona	514	412 (8.26)	102 (-8.26)	68.28***
Kentucky	91	71 (3.78)	20 (-3.78)	14.25***
Montana	110	42 (2.21)	68 (-2.21)	14.78***
North Carolina	146	102 (5.68)	44 (-5.68)	32.25***
North Dakota	49	30 (4.13)	19 (-4.13)	17.12***
Nevada	89	80 (3.34)	9 (-3.34)	11.17***
New Mexico	244	183 (6.59)	61 (-6.59)	43.40***
New York	407	395 (6.05)	12 (-6.05)	36.64***
Oklahoma	719	524 (11.52)	195 (-11.52)	132.87***
Oregon	346	308 (7.50)	38 (-7.50)	56.26***
Washington	242	223 (3.69)	19 (-3.69)	13.60***

Note: Only significant results are presented for conciseness. Standardized residuals appear in parentheses next to observed frequencies.
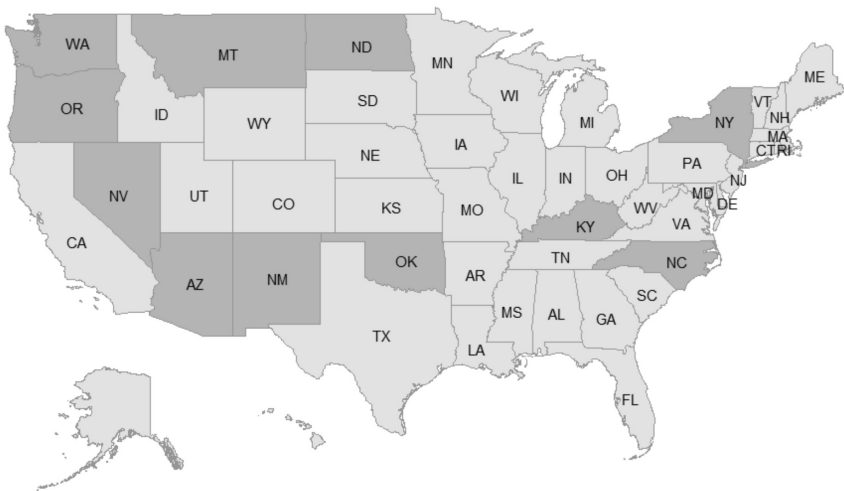
***p < .001.

FIGURE 1. *Urban-Rural Penetration of Nike N7 Twitter Campaign. Darker states indicate a greater number of followers in urban counties than would be expected based upon the known Native populations of urban and rural counties in the state.*

Research question three asked whether the percent of the population represented by a Nike N7 Ambassador of the same tribe would predict the number of followers in each state. The regression analysis indicates that there is no significant relationship between tribal representation in the N7 campaign and the number of followers for each state. This may mean that in a media environment lacking adequate representation of Natives, tribal affiliation is relatively unimportant.

In sum, the results of study one found that Nike has been successful in reaching a Native consumer base, but disproportionate numbers of those consumers live in urban areas relative to the known population distribution of Natives. Furthermore, no association was found between the percentage of state populations who were represented by a spokesperson from the same tribe and the number of followers from each state.

Next, study two will consider how the content of Nike's Twitter posts is tailored to appeal to Native consumers.

STUDY TWO

Rationale

Although there is relatively little research on targeting advertisements to Natives, we can understand from the research on advertising to other minorities how well-constructed, tailored messages should appear. Research on how ethnic minorities respond to targeted advertising has grown out of work on social identity and self-categorization, which maintains that individuals have sets of attributes that they associate with group membership.[28] Although flexible and subject to some variation, collections of attributes define social categories by determining what a prototypical group member should be like. People categorize themselves and others by applying categories that are accessible (i.e., those recently used or important to their worldview) and that provide the best explanation given the scenario. It should be further noted, however, that social categories are not perpetually salient, but rather become important based on the situation and/or contextual cues in the environment.

Perhaps the simplest way advertisements target ethnic minorities is by including minority characters or models. Indeed, even when race appears to be incidental—such as when the advertisement focuses on the product rather than characters or setting—race may serve as a cue to minority consumers in determining whether the advertisement was meant for them.[29] While inclusion is a necessary first step, how characters are portrayed also matters. For example, black and white consumers evaluate characters exhibiting high socioeconomic status more positively than characters exhibiting low status, regardless of the character's race.[30] Likewise, portrayals deemed stereotypical or derogatory are also negatively evaluated by the ethnic minorities portrayed and also may not be viewed as entertaining or attention-grabbing by majority white viewers.[31] In short, ethnic minority consumers respond positively to advertisements that include members of their own group who are portrayed in nonstereotypical, positive ways.

The effectiveness of advertisements, including minority models, also depends upon the strength of the viewer's self-identification with the minority culture.[32] For

example, Whittler and Spira found that black viewers who strongly identified with African American culture were more likely to positively evaluate the product and advertisement when it included black models rather than white models.[33] According to social identity theory, the self-categorization process should enhance the effectiveness of minority models in advertisements by promoting in-group identification, leading to an increased perceived similarity between the viewer and the model. Furthermore, identification with minority models is strongest when the trait used as a basis for categorization is rare.[34]

Most importantly, advertisers may promote self-categorization by increasing the salience of an ethnic or racial identity by including cultural cues embedded within the advertisement which "reflect the values, symbols, ethics, rituals, traditions, material objects and services produced or valued by a member of society, which activate shared cultural knowledge."[35] Thus, advertisements that portray ethnic minorities in a neutral manner devoid of cultural cues and settings may be less effective since this lack will inhibit minority viewer identification. Advertisements that target ethnic minorities effectively include positive portrayals of minority characters and increase the salience of race by embedding cultural cues that encourage self-categorization and identification with the target group. This need to include cultural cues underscores the need for cultural competence in message production: advertisers must be able to identify cultural cues, know what meanings are attached to them, and be able to consciously avoid stereotypes that could be negatively evaluated.

In brief, research on ethnic minorities has shown that shared race models or characters are not enough to activate perceptions of shared similarity and identification. Rather, messages must be constructed with cues to ethnic identity that spur cognition along ethnic lines for identification to occur. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 1a:** The number of ethnic cues present in a tweet posted to the Nike N7 account will be positively related to the number of times that post is retweeted.
>
> **Hypothesis 1b:** The number of ethnic cues present in a tweet posted to the Nike N7 account will be positively related to the number of times that post is favorited.

Study Two Methods

A content analysis was conducted on tweets with images collected during February and March of 2016 from the Nike N7 Twitter account. Additionally, two measures of user engagement, the number of retweets and the number of times a tweet had been favorited, were collected. Retweets and favorites are functionally distinct: retweeting allows a user to share content with others to whom they are linked, while favoriting allows for a user to find and return to content they may wish to view again. Only tweets that originated from the Nike N7 account were considered for analysis, as retweets from other accounts may have a broader audience that could result in greater exposure to the Twitter community, thus affecting engagement metrics.

Procedures

Content analysis for ethnic cues salient to Native identity was performed on the images and their associated texts for one hundred tweets. Ethnic cues were broken into three broad categories. First, model cues are those related to the model(s) or character(s) depicted in the advertisement. Specifically, model cues encompassed the race of the depicted model, whether they wore a culturally specific hairstyle, and whether they had culturally specific body art (e.g., tattoos). Next, product cues involve aspects of product design and aesthetics that suggest that the product is intended for a minority demographic. In the present study, this is operationalized by the use of regional Native aesthetic designs (e.g., Pacific Northwest, Southwest, Woodland, etc.) as well as the incorporation of design elements historically found in Native dress (i.e., feathers and moccasins). Finally, text cues involved appeals to heritage, the use of Native language, or the use of specific tribal names in either the image or the tweet text. The individual tweet, with both text and an associated image, served as the unit of analysis.

FIGURE 2. *Ethnic Cues Present in Tweets. The first tweet contains relatively few ethnic cues while the second tweet contains several.*

Two coders, one of whom is an Ojibwe tribal member and Native studies scholar, met and trained on a sample dataset that was not used in the analysis. The development of the coding scheme was iterative, with coders meeting to develop and resolve coding categories and questions. Particular effort was made to calibrate coding judgments to those of the content-area expert. Once coders were sufficiently trained and intercoder reliability was established, coders subsequently worked independently on the remaining data.

Coding Reliability

Thirty images and their associated text were randomly selected from the dataset and double-coded to establish intercoder reliability. This procedure served as a reliability check for the content-area expert, who was the primary coder. Krippendorf's alpha was used to assess reliabilities of the coding items. Their values may be found in table 3.

TABLE 3
INTERCODER RELIABILITIES (N=30)

Category	Krippendorf's α
Image Type	.84
Image Subject	.94
Ethnic Cues	
Model Cues	
Race	.86
Hair	.88
Tattoos	1.0
Product Cues	
Feathers	1.0
Moccasins	.54
Regional Design	.77
N7 Logo	.80
Text Cues	
Native Language	1.0
Tribal Names	.79
Appeal to Shared Heritage, History, or Values	.73

Study Two Results

The Nike N7 Twitter account featured a diverse mix of content, ranging from professional photo shoots of athletes and Nike products to candid snapshots of Nike N7 events. A majority of the one hundred coded images were professionally produced, with either computer-generated or studio backgrounds (N=55) or with athletes engaged in sports (N=16). The Nike N7 logo incorporates a stylized representation of the four directions and four colors—yellow, red, black, and white—encircling the text "N7." This logo is commonly featured on both clothing within the photographs (N=45) or as a graphical overlay (N=36). When photographs featured human subjects (N=53), they were almost exclusively Native American; only two images featured white subjects with no other ethnicities being represented. Thirty-one percent of the products featured designs drawn from traditional geometric, woodland, or Pacific Northwest

designs, while 16 percent featured nontraditional Native art (e.g., a t-shirt with an image of a warrior). When computer-generated backgrounds were used, 47 percent of the images featured designs inspired by traditional regional aesthetics, with 15 percent relying upon nontraditional Native art. Finally, in considering text found within the images or the corresponding tweets, almost half (49 percent) contained an appeal to a shared Native heritage, while only 7 percent explicitly referenced specific tribes.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the impact of a tweet's total number of ethnic cues on measures of engagement on Twitter. Of specific interest was whether ethnic cues embedded within an advertisement could explain retweeting and favoring over and above that explained by the account age at the time of the tweet. The age of the account in months when a tweet was posted is used as a proxy for follower count, since the follower count at the time of each tweet is not available. Additionally, the presence of a human model in the tweet image was controlled, given that it provided an additional opportunity for ethnic cues related to the model. Exploration of the data led to logarithmic transformation of the dependent variables, the number of retweets, and the number of users who favorited the tweet.

Hypothesis 1a held that the number of ethnic cues would predict the number of retweets for a post. Results indicated that after controlling for the age of the post and the presence of a human model in the image, $R^2 = .57$, $F(2, 97) = 66.77$, $p < .001$, ethnic cues within the advertisement were positively related to retweets, R^2 change $= .03$, $F(1, 96) = 6.80$, $p < .05$. Likewise, **hypothesis 1b** posited that the number of ethnic cues would predict the number of times a tweet was favorited. Again, results showed that after controlling for the age of the post, $R^2 = .67$, $F(2, 97) = 102.78$, $p < .001$, ethnic cues predicted the number of times a post was favorited such that posts with more ethnic cues were more likely to be favorited, R^2 change $= .04$, $F(1, 96) = 14.54$, $p < .001$. Thus, the results support both hypothesis 1a and 1b.

After testing hypothesis 1a and 1b, an exploratory analysis was conducted to determine what types of ethnic cues, model, product design, or text cues seemed to be most influential in determining user engagement. Notably, when the categories of ethnic cues are used as predictors, ethnic cues do not explain significantly more variance in the number of times an image was retweeted over the control variables, $F(3, 94) = 2.65$, $p > .05$. In contrast, when compared to the control variables, $R^2 = .67$, $F(2, 97) = 102.78$, $p < .001$, ethnic cue categories are a significant predictor for the variance in the number of times a tweet is favorited, R^2 change $= .03$, $F(3, 94) = 6.70$, $p < .001$. Table 4 reports the regression values for the effects of the different categories of ethnic cues on the number of times a tweet has been favorited. Specifically, both model cues and product cues have a significant positive relationship with the number of times a tweet is favorited.

In sum, the results of study two found that the inclusion of ethnic cues in the form of Native models and products featuring motifs inspired by traditional regional designs were positively associated with two measures of user engagement, retweeting and favoring. Additional exploratory analysis discovered that text-based cues, or the written appeals of the tweets, matter less than cues found within the image itself. In the following discussion we consider the implications of our findings for brands' ability to reach and develop a Native consumer market.

TABLE 4

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR NUMBER OF TIMES FAVORITED (LOG)

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Intercept	-.90	.18		-1.29	.25	
Model Presence	.14	.09	.09	.41	.14	.28*
Age of Post	.05	.00	.81**	.04	.00	.66**
Model Cues				.26	.11	.22*
Product Cues				.19	.05	.25**
Text Cues				-.01	.08	-.01
Adjusted R^2		.67			.74	
F for change in R^2		102.78**			6.70**	

*$p<.05$, **$p < .001$

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to research on Native Americans' relationship to advertising by demonstrating that social media may be effectively used to reach relatively small demographic groups. It further explores the role of tribal association and embedded ethnic cues in Native engagement with the campaign; specifically, it considers how the practices employed by Nike allow it to overcome many of the potential reasons that brands fail to market to Native Americans.

First, advertising to a Native American market may be seen as infeasible because they are a relatively small minority living in far-flung, clustered communities across North America. As a result, large national print and broadcast advertising campaigns may be viewed as inefficient. However, social media marketing is comparatively cheap and reduces the emphasis on geographical distance, a fact illustrated by the N7 account having followers in all fifty states. Study one's results demonstrate that the Native population of a state is highly predictive of the number of Twitter followers the Nike N7 page has in each state. Indeed, with control variables the Native population could account for nearly eighty percent of variance in the number of followers, indicating that social media channels offer an effective way to reach a relatively small demographic spread across the nation.

It is important to consider the degree to which social media is able to penetrate rural areas in assessing reach. Although the Native population as a whole has been rapidly urbanizing over the last few decades, tribal lands lag behind in access to communication services, including broadcast and telephony, and 85 percent of people living on rural tribal lands lack access to broadband Internet.[36] Because social media campaigns deemphasize geography, theoretically they should be as accessible to rural populations as they are to urban ones; therefore, study one also assessed whether account-followers were located disproportionately in urban or rural counties when compared to the known Native population distribution for urban and rural counties

in each state. The results show that although the account-followers of most states were distributed as expected, eleven states had significantly more urban account-followers than would be expected, including states with high Native populations such as Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

This could be the result of other points of contact that build awareness of the Nike N7 product line, such as in-store advertising. Indeed, of the eleven states that had disproportionately urban account followers, nine also had Nike stores that sold the N7 product line. A more troubling interpretation is that the results could indicate a digital divide where rural communities lack access to broadband Internet connections or mobile telephony service—a key internet gateway for impoverished communities. Both interpretations are plausible and highlight that social media campaigns are not magic bullets. Rather, study one reveals that their ability to reach their target market must be considered in the context of larger marketing campaigns intended to promote awareness as well as the telecommunications infrastructure serving the target audience.

Brands may also hesitate to market to Native Americans because it is problematic to treat them as an undifferentiated market segment due to the cultural diversity within the Native community. Indeed, acknowledging this diversity, the existing literature on public health campaigns suggests that messages be tailored to specific tribal cultures. The Nike N7 campaign attempts to surmount this challenge by including a multiplicity of voices in their N7 Ambassadors who are diverse in terms of their sports, gender, and tribal affiliations. Hypothetically, this would increase the likelihood that Native consumers would identify with a Nike representative, but the results of study one indicate that tribal affiliation mattered little. Specifically, the degree to which a state's Native population was represented by a spokesperson in the N7 campaign was unrelated to the number of account followers from that state. Likewise, study two evaluated the effects of ethnic cues on engagement metrics and found that verbal cues did not prove to be a significant predictor, including the explicit mention of tribes. One explanation may be that in an absence of Native representation in national advertising, any positive, authentic cultural representation is sufficient to foster identification and engagement.

Finally, if brands lack competent knowledge of a minority culture, it may likely be difficult for them to create targeted messages. Companies may also be reluctant to engage lest they be perceived as insensitive. The challenge is to create messages that neither pander to any audience segment nor co-opt Native cultural symbols while still including ethnic cues clearly denoting that the product is intended for Native consumers. Study two examined the content of the Nike N7 Twitter campaign, which in addition to its verbal appeals to a shared Native heritage and statements of identity, also contains many ethnic cues in the form of Native-inspired art and product designs. Study two's content analysis found that the number of ethnic cues present in a post resulted in increased engagement in terms of favoriting and retweeting, indicating positive evaluations of the messages.

Although the statistical effect sizes are slight, the result has practical significance nonetheless. Considering the large numbers of people who interact with a social media account, even small effects have large practical consequences. Additionally, the effect

would be expected to be somewhat attenuated because it is likely that a significant proportion of non-Native followers would not directly identify with the campaign on the basis of embedded ethnic cues. Finally, these findings have more general implications for the literature on marketing to ethnic minorities. Previous studies examining the impact of ethnic cues on advertising to minorities have been experiments, due to the difficulty of assessing print and broadcast advertisements in a natural setting. In contrast, because social media posts allow for the direct observation of user engagement with promotional images, they are able to demonstrate the external validity of using ethnic cues.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

There are several limitations to this study. First, it was not possible to directly assess tribal membership of N7 Twitter followers, so the location and the proportion of each state's population that was represented in the campaign by a tribal member was used to assess followers' tribal membership. Clearly this is an imperfect proxy and the results should be interpreted with caution. Second, although the data suggest that many of the N7 account followers were actually of Native descent, there are automated and business entities who follow the N7 account, as well as individuals who are not of Native descent. It is difficult to accurately assess the prevalence of these followers. Finally, this paper defined "success" as the ability to effectively reach and generate engagement with Native consumers. Although reach and engagement are common measures of success in social media campaigns, social media may fulfill many functions and the criteria Nike uses to evaluate its own success are unknown. This is an interesting avenue for future research.

A Native consumer market may ultimately be beneficial to Native consumers by conferring agency on them as holders of collective economic power. However, this depends upon brands believing they can profitably reach and appeal to Natives. The Nike N7 campaign demonstrates that, although small, the Native consumer market is relatively untapped and can be effectively reached using a combination of technological solutions and the creation of tailored content. The results of this study strongly suggest that Nike has been successful in using social media to reach what might be perceived as an inaccessible and unprofitable Native audience. Furthermore, the use of messages with embedded ethnic cues, such as designs with regional Native motifs and verbal appeals to shared heritage, has effectively generated engagement with their social media posts. Additionally, efforts to granularly target specific tribal groups may be currently unnecessary, given the general absence of positive Native representation in national advertising. The findings also provide a note of caution, however: those who live in rural tribal lands that lack access to communication services may be excluded from outreach via social media. Overall, the Nike N7 social media campaign demonstrates that Native consumers can be effectively reached via social media with culturally competent appeals that speak to their heritage and identity.

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