# The Eyes Have It, or Do They?
# The Effects of Model Eye Color and Eye Gaze on Consumer Ad Response

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*Research from the medical, psychological and sociological literature has found significant effects of eyes and eye color: that infants focus in on others' eyes and that eyes affect social tasks, arousal and perceived attractiveness and honesty. These findings suggest that advertising spokespersons' eyes may play an important role in ad viewer responses to the ad. This study examined that idea to find significant effects of eye color on some advertising response variables. Findings from the largely Hispanic sample in this study further indicate that spokesperson eye color should match the eye color of the targeted audience.*

## INTRODUCTION

Lovers gaze into them, singers croon about them and poets adore them—others' eyes. That others' eyes are often the focal point for an observer is verified by research and lore. Notably, singles tend to look for partners with specific color eyes (Good, 2001), some attorneys advise clients to match clothing color to eye color to better draw attention to the eyes and evoke trust, and mothers tell their children to 'look into my eyes when you say that' to assess truthfulness. This focus means that eyes and their color may have special meaning in evoking consumer reactions and are strong conveyers of important social cues (Kampe, Frith, Doland and Frith, 2001; Zorzi, Mapelli, Rusconi and Umilta, 2003). This may explain why consumers spend so much money and time on their eyes to enhance the feature. For example, sales of eye makeup products grew 9.6 percent ($100.7 million) during a 12-week period ending in November 2003 when sales of other makeup products were flat (Prior, 2004). Eye color is also important to many consumers, as evidenced by the color contact lens market. Not only does that market report annual sales of $160 million, an estimated 13 million consumers who do not need vision

correction report that they would buy colored contacts (Bittar, 2002).

Despite this considerable attention of consumers to eyes and eye color, surprisingly little research in any discipline has examined the effects of eyes and eye color on individual response to others' eyes. What has been researched are celebrity endorsers and specific ad model or spokesperson characteristics such as perceived credibility and physical attractiveness (i.e., Baker and Churchill, 1977; Bower and Landreth, 2001; Ohanian, 1990; 1991). This literature leaves little doubt that the endorser in an advertisement is significant in affecting consumer response to an ad; although, past examinations of the specific factors, such as source attractiveness, found mixed results of effects, pointing to other explanatory factors. Instead of the broad, generalized 'attractiveness' variable of spokesperson effects, consumers may respond based on more specific spokesperson's physical characteristics, such as eyes, especially in light of time worn stereotyping about eyes and their relationship to honesty and beauty.

This research is designed to fill this gap in our understanding of ad spokesperson effects by exploring the effects of eyes and eye color on relevant advertising response variables. Results found here should assist advertisers in developing ads containing models that better appeal to their targeted market. The research may also spark an interest in examining effects of other features of an endorser, both inherent and not, that may affect consumer response to an ad and brand. Examples include model ethnicity, facial expressiveness, perceived country of origin based on accent or activities such as smoking, drinking, or even exercising. More importantly, the results will help advertisers in selecting product endorsers for advertisements that will evoke the greatest benefit from advertising dollars spent.

## BACKGROUND

Numerous advertisements that contain spokespersons are headshots where the face and eyes are a dominant feature of the ad and may affect consumer response to the ad. The 'kernel of truth' theory provides a basis for this conjecture. This theory holds that stereotypical beliefs correspond, at least in some degree, with reality (i.e., Feinman and Gill, 1978) such that stereotypes influence perceptions. This might mean, for example, that observers regard red-heads as more hot-tempered, people with large foreheads as smarter or people with large eyes as innocent. American culture has typically defined the ideal woman as blue-eyed and blonde and the ideal man as dark-eyed with dark hair (Feinman and Gill), which may be instrumental in attitude formation about a spokesperson in relation to this culturally idealized model. This kernel of truth hypotheses and the semantic meaning of individual characteristics bestowed by society suggest that spokesperson's eye color may have a significant effect on the attitudes of consumers viewing an ad spokesperson.

### The Eyes

The importance of eyes on nonverbal face-to-face communications are widely acknowledged (see for example, Bickmore, 2004), however, an exhaustive search of the academic literature in various disciplines has uncovered relatively few studies designed to determine individual response to the eyes of others. The few extant studies have found for example, that direct eye contact activates a region of the brain involved in social tasks (Kampe, Dolan and Frith, 2001) and that large eyes affect perceptions of attractiveness, arousal (McKelvie, 1993) and perceived honesty (Zebrowitz, Voinescu and Collins, 1996). Other research has found that rhesus monkeys tend to focus specifically on the eyes of observed human faces (Wilson and Goldman-Rakic,

1994), that eyes are an important point of attention beginning in infancy (Zorzi, et al., 2003), that males/females prefer certain eye colors in the opposite sex, (Feinman and Gill, 1978) and that large eyes are preferred and are associated with attractiveness and may even predict some perceived personality attributes (Cunningham, Barbee and Pike, 1990). One study found that girls were slightly more likely to select boyfriends whose eye color matched their fathers' rather than their mothers' eye color (Wilson and Barrett, 1987). Though limited, this eye-related literature suggests the likelihood that the eyes of a spokesperson are highly likely to be noticed and that they will evoke some type of reaction in those looking at others' eyes. Ad response measures most likely affected by eye color are discussed next.

**Advertising Effects**

*Source Credibility*

Though the effects of eyes on consumer responses to advertisements have not been specifically examined in the marketing literature, the spokesperson or source in an ad has received much attention with most of this research focusing on source credibility and attractiveness effects. Source credibility is defined as "a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message" (Ohanian, 1990, p. 41) and is comprised of the three dimensions trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness (see Ohanian, 1990 for a review of each of these dimensions). Each of the perceived source credibility components has been widely found to affect consumer attitudes and behavior (i.e., Atkin and Bloch, 1983; Freiden, 1984; Kahle and Homer, 1985; Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell, 2002; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; Ohanian, 1991).

One of the most studied credibility component in marketing is the overall physical attractiveness variable, beginning primarily with Baker and Churchill's (1977) study of effects of physically attractive models in advertisements. Subsequent related research has found mixed effects of model attractiveness (c.f., Bower, 2001; Bower and Landreth, 2001; Caballero, Lumpkin and Madden, 1989) resulting in even more research to explain the findings. Mixed effects tested include the match-up of product type with endorser attractiveness (Bower and Landreth, 2001; Till and Busler, 2000) and consumer self-image compared with spokesperson's attractiveness (Bower, 2001), again without finding definitive effects of spokesperson's level of attractiveness.

One potential explanation for the mixed effects of model attractiveness on consumer response to an ad is the focus on the more global measure—attractiveness—rather than on specific factors that draw and hold consumer attention as a potential stereotypical indicator or cue of truthfulness and honesty. Previous findings that observers draw conclusions about others' honesty and attractiveness from watching their eyes, the eyes of a model or source in an advertisement may be an important feature critical to ad viewer perceptions of source credibility—their perceived attractiveness, trust and expertise. Accordingly,

$H_1$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect consumer perceptions of the attractiveness dimension of source credibility.

$H_2$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect consumer perceptions of the trust dimension of source credibility.

$H_3$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect consumer perceptions of the expertise dimension of source credibility.

*Mood*

Some of advertising effects arise from the ability of the ad to evoke a mood, where mood is defined as "the consumer's affective state at the time of exposure to the ad stimulus" (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989, p. 54). As Young (2004, p. 208) says, "Ultimately, the effectiveness of advertising must be thought of in terms of the experience it creates for the viewer, and emotion has an inescapable role to play in that experience." The mood states warmth, pleasure and arousal, have each been identified as ad evoked moods with significant impact on ad response variables (i.e., Aaker, Stayman and Hagerty, 1986; Edell and Burke, 1987, Holbrook and Batra, 1987; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; Olney, Holbrook and Batra, 1991). With empirical evidence that eye color may be a basis for attraction between sexes, affects arousal, and is widely referenced in romantic settings and poetry, the eye feature of an ad spokesperson will likely affect ad viewers through ad evoked mood. In testable form:

$H_4$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect the advertisement evoked consumer mood dimension, pleasure.

$H_5$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect the advertisement evoked consumer mood dimension, arousal.

$H_6$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect the advertisement evoked consumer mood dimension, warmth.

*Advertising Effectiveness Measures*

A number of key measures of advertisement effectiveness related to consumer responses to the ad have been identified and generally accepted in the marketing literature. These outcome measures include attitude toward the advertisement, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intentions (e.g., MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989; MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch, 1986; Brown and Stayman, 1992, to name just a few). The attitude toward the ad measure consists of beliefs and affect toward an ad and its execution and affects brand thoughts and feelings, known as attitude toward the brand (Mitchell and Olson, 1981; Shimp, 1981). Both of these variables have been widely found to affect the consumer behavioral response measure, intent to purchase. Prior research has shown that each of these measures are affected by an endorser or source in an advertisement (i.e., Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell, 2002; Ohanian, 1991; Pornpitakpan, 2003).

Prior eye research suggests that spokespersons' eyes will likely affect these consumer responses to ad variables for several reasons. First, as an important focal point to observers, ad viewers will likely pay strong attention to the eyes of the spokesperson. Second, observers will likely have preferences for specific types of eyes and eye color which may in turn affect response to the ads. If the viewer prefers the eye color of the spokesperson, the attitudes toward the ad and the brand will be enhanced. Finally, the effects of spokespersons' eyes on observers' perceptions of attractiveness and honesty will transfer to ad viewers' attitudes and behaviors about the ad, the brand being endorsed and affect purchase intention. Accordingly:

$H_7$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect consumer attitudes toward the advertisement

$H_8$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect consumer attitudes toward the brand advertised.

$H_9$: A spokesperson's eyes and eye color will significantly affect consumer purchase intentions.

## METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by using a convenience sample because of the necessary time required to view ads and respond to questions about the ads. In a sampling method used extensively by other researchers (e.g. Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault, 1990), students in marketing and management classes of a Southern, predominately Hispanic university were given the opportunity to earn extra credit by administering advertisement portfolios to friends and families. Each participant was given a portfolio of three different print advertisements to evaluate by responding to generally accepted advertising effectiveness scale measures designed to assess attitudes toward the model in the ad, the advertisement itself, the brand advertised and the intention to purchase the brand advertised.

In an experimental design, four different portfolios—three with different eye colors and one with a gaze downward—were developed. Each portfolio contained a different target ad for the fictional product, Sparkle Toothpaste, randomly interspersed with two other ads to disguise the purpose of the research. The target ads were created by one of the authors by taking two digital photographs of the ad model, identical except for gaze direction. In one pose the model looked toward the camera so the eyes were seen in full view and the other virtually identical pose showed the model looking downward so the eyes were not visible. The original color of the model's eyes in the ad was brown and was left untouched for one experimental ad but was digitally colored to blue and to green for the other eye-color experimental ads.

### Scale Measures

Respondents were asked to view an ad then respond to questions about the ad for each or the three ads contained in the portfolio. All questions were from well-established advertising effects scale measures used previously in the literature. All items were measured using seven-point semantic differential scales, except for the warmth variable, that appeared in a seven-point Likert-style, where respondents indicated strength of feeling for each mood adjective listed.

The 15-item source credibility scale was originally developed by Ohanian (1990) as a composite of the three dimensions attractiveness, trust and expertise, each measured by five items. The scale measure was originally found reliable and valid and has been used in subsequent research with similar findings of scale reliability and validity in different contexts (i.e., Pornpitakpan, 2003).

The ad evoked mood variable, warmth, used in this study was measured by the 13-item scale developed and used in Edell and Burke (1987; 1989). The reported reliabilities of this scale were no lower than .89. Olney, Holbrook and Batra, (1991) developed a 12-item mood or 'emotions' scale comprised of the significant dimensions pleasure and arousal. The authors report evidence of the two, six-item dimensions' reliabilities with coefficient alphas of .95 and .97, respectively.

Although a number of scales have been developed to measure the consumer response variables attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention, scales with established usage, evidence of suitable reliabilities, and that best fit the questionnaire design and purpose were selected for use here. The four-item attitude toward the ad measure was taken from Holbrook and Batra (1987) who reported a coefficient alpha for the scale of .99, the ten-item attitude toward the brand measure from Batra and Stayman (1990) who reported an alpha of .97 and the three-item purchase intention from MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986) who found alphas of .88 and .90 for their scale used in two different experiments. Additionally, demographic characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, and eye color were assessed.

## RESULTS

A total of 366 questionnaires were returned by students, however a large number, 144 were discarded because of any degree of incomplete information or questionable response patterns leaving 222 useable questionnaires for analysis purposes. A not altogether surprising rejection rate considering the time required to respond to the questionnaires and the coding heuristic 'if in doubt, don't use.' Respondents with useable questionnaires were generally female (54.2 percent of those responding to the question) and Hispanic (91.2 percent), with 7.0 percent indicating Caucasian ethnicity and .19 percent indicating other ethnic group affiliation. Most of the respondents were high school graduates (80 percent) while 7.9 percent had completed four or more years of college. The average age of respondents was 29.84 years of age (SD = 10.02) and most had brown eyes (84.7 percent) while 4.2 percent of the respondents claimed to have blue eyes, 4.2 percent had hazel eyes and 2.7 percent to had green eyes. The remaining 4.2 percent of respondents indicated eye colors such as black eyes or a combination of colors.

Even though all scales measures used in this study were taken from previous research, scale reliabilities and validity were again assessed and found to provide evidence of scale reliability. The analysis of the Ohanian (1990) credibility scale used to collect data on the participants' perceptions of source attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise showed alpha coefficients of .95, .96 and .97 respectively, indicating high consistency among the items. Ad evoked mood was assessed using the two, six-item-each dimensions of pleasure and arousal, previously devised and tested by Olney, Holbrook and Batra (1991). The reliability analysis of the pleasure dimension yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .95 and a reliability coefficient of .91 was computed from the arousal dimension data. Edell and Burke (1987; 1989) reported that reliabilities of their warmth scale were no lower than .89 and our reliability analysis indicated a higher reliability coefficient of .96. Likewise, the reliability analysis of the other scale measures used in this study provided evidence of internal consistency. The computed alpha coefficient for the four-item Holbrook and Batra (1987) attitude toward the ad measure was .97, the alpha for the 10-item attitude toward the advertised brand (Batra and Stayman, 1990) measure was .98 and the alpha coefficient for the three-item MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986) measure of purchase intention was .96.

Each research hypothesis was evaluated using analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques to determine whether a spokesperson's eyes and eye color significantly affected consumer ad response. Results, shown in Table 1, indicate statistically significant differences at the .05 alpha level in responses to the ad measures pleasure, arousal, attitude toward the brand and purchase intention, providing support for $H_4$, $H_5$, $H_8$ and $H_9$. Significant differences at the .06 to .10 alpha level were also found in the scale measures arousal, attractiveness and attitudes toward the ad, suggesting some support for $H_1$ and $H_7$. An examination of the mean scores by ad color shows that green eyes and brown eyes are the most effective in affecting ad effectiveness measures, more than either blue eyes or no eyes (gaze down condition).

**TABLE 1**
**ANOVA RESULTS OF EFFECTS OF EYE COLOR ON SCALE MEASURES**

| Scale Measure | df | F | Sign. | Ad Eye Color | N | Mean | Std. Error | Sign. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attractiveness** | 3 | 2.315 | .077 | Green | 77 | 3.54 | 1.67 | .949 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 3.11 | 1.59 | .969 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.69 | 1.73 | 1.422 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 2.92 | 1.46 | 1.139 |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Gazedown* | | | | | | | *1.56* | *.048* |
| *Sign. differences between Brown and Gazedown* | | | | | | | *1.83* | *.038* |
| **Trust** | 3 | 1.731 | .161 | Green | 77 | 3.80 | 1.56 | .891 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 3.29 | 1.66 | .947 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.84 | 1.61 | 1.323 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 3.50 | 1.34 | 1.047 |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Blue eyes* | | | | | | | *1.28* | *.046* |
| **Expertise** | 3 | 1.283 | .281 | Green | 77 | 3.65 | 1.58 | .898 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 3.19 | 1.55 | .946 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.51 | 1.61 | 1.322 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 3.25 | 1.37 | 1.073 |
| **Pleasure** | 3 | 3.859 | .010 | Green | 77 | 3.92 | 1.38 | .942 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 3.25 | 1.35 | .989 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.84 | 1.65 | 1.630 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 3.29 | 1.11 | 1.036 |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Blue eyes* | | | | | | | *1.38* | *.004* |
| *Sign. differences between Brown and Gazedown* | | | | | | | *1.59* | *.020* |
| *Sign. differences between Blue and Brown eyes* | | | | | | | *1.69* | *.038* |
| **Arousal** | 3 | 2.909 | .035 | Green | 77 | 3.60 | 1.07 | .728 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 3.23 | 1.20 | .876 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.63 | 1.31 | 1.288 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 3.07 | 0.97 | .905 |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Blue eyes* | | | | | | | *1.13* | *.054* |
| *Sign. differences between Brown and Gazedown* | | | | | | | *1.31* | *.017* |
| *Sign. differences between Blue and Brown eyes* | | | | | | | *1.54* | *.032* |
| **Warmth** | 3 | .292 | .831 | Green | 77 | 2.61 | 1.34 | 1.981 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 2.46 | 1.35 | 2.138 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 2.62 | 1.42 | 3.032 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 2.44 | 1.156 | 2.346 |
| **Attitude Toward The Ad** | 3 | 2.376 | .071 | Green | 77 | 3.68 | 1.89 | .859 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 3.14 | 1.80 | .877 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.84 | 1.87 | 1.228 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 3.01 | 1.69 | 1.057 |
| *Sign. differences between Brown and Gazedown* | | | | | | | *1.65* | *.047* |
| **Attitude Toward The Brand** | 3 | 2.889 | .036 | Green | 77 | 3.86 | 1.67 | 1.901 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 3.19 | 1.75 | 2.136 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.72 | 1.73 | 2.851 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 3.11 | 1.53 | 2.396 |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Blue eyes* | | | | | | | *2.81* | *.018* |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Gazedown* | | | | | | | *3.25* | *.021* |
| **Purchase Intention** | 3 | 3.155 | .026 | Green | 77 | 3.40 | 1.82 | .624 |
| | | | | Blue | 67 | 2.76 | 1.74 | .639 |
| | | | | Brown | 37 | 3.25 | 1.64 | .809 |
| | | | | Gazedown | 41 | 2.50 | 1.66 | .776 |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Blue eyes* | | | | | | | *.872* | *.028* |
| *Sign. differences between Green and Gazedown* | | | | | | | *1.01* | *.008* |

Surprisingly, considering the folk culture of the importance of 'looking' into a speakers' eyes to assess truthfulness, spokesperson eye color had no significant effects on either the trust ($p$=.161) or the expertise ($p$=.281) dimension of source credibility dimensions, though credibility effects may be assessed more by expression than by eye color. Our results of marginal significance of eye color on the source credibility dimension attractiveness ($p$= .077) suggests that 'beauty may be in the eye of the beholder' and partially in the eyes, or eye color, of the observed. Importantly, spokesperson eye color was found in this study to significantly impact attitudes toward the brand ($p$= .036) and purchase intention ($p$= .026). These effects may work largely through emotions evoked by the ad as opposed to perceptions of spokesperson's credibility, considering the significant effects of eye color found on both mood dimensions pleasure ($p$= .010) and arousal ($p$= .035).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was an initial attempt to identify viewers' reactions to ads based on one specific, dominant trait of a model in an ad—the eye color and gaze of the ad's model. Rationale for this study comes from research in other disciplines that has identified eyes as a primary focus for humans from infancy (and even nonhumans). This other research has found that people have preferences for certain eye colors and that eye color may be important in attracting the opposite sex. This prior evidence suggests that the eye color of the model in an ad may have a significant affect on consumer response to the ad directly or through various factors such as source credibility or mood variables such as arousal. The objective of this study was to determine the influence of eye color and eye gaze on multiple ad viewer response measures, including source credibility, the mood variables pleasure, arousal and warmth and attitude toward the ad, the brand and purchase intention.

Eye color was found to have no significant affect on the credibility measures trust or expertise and only marginally on the attractiveness dimension of the variable. Both mood dimensions, pleasure and arousal, were significantly impacted by model eye color, however, with green eyes and brown eyes, as opposed to blue eyes and gazed down eyes, evoking the strongest responses of these mood variables. Eye color in this study had no significant effects on the warmth variable, where the warmth items were measured using a Likert-type scale response format while the other scales were assessed using a semantic differential scale. Even though both types of scales were in the same direction (lower numbers indicating less 'felt' of the adjective named), the difference in measurement may have confused respondents and confounded results. Most importantly though in our study, ad model eye color significantly influenced viewer attitude toward the brand and purchase intention, and marginally influenced attitude toward the ad. These findings should tell advertisers to pay special attention to the eyes and eye color in ads with spokespersons.

Interesting results also arise from an examination of the means for the eye colors by response variable. On all scale measures, brown and green eyes were most preferred by our sample respondents and blue eyes or the gazed down condition were least preferred. For the variables trust, expertise, and pleasure, no eyes (gaze down) were better than blue eyes, though only slightly more favorable in the case of pleasure and expertise. This finding does not necessarily tell advertisers to use brown or green-eyed models in ads; but more likely suggests a strategy of matching the eye color of the ad to the predominant eye colors of the targeted audience. After all, the sample in this study, who by far responded more favorably to brown and green-eyed models,

was predominantly Hispanic, who generally have brown eyes as an ethnic characteristic. In fact, 84.7 percent of our sample reported having brown eyes.

Distinctiveness theory may be used to explain the general effects of spokespersons' eyes and eye color and our study participants' ad responses. In essence, distinctiveness theory explains that consumers are more likely to focus on characteristics of others that correspond with their own distinctive, salient traits (Deshpandé and Stayman, 1994). The theory has been used in consumer behavior and advertising research generally to find relationships between salience of self and spokesperson ethnicity (e.g., Deshpandé and Stayman, 1994; Forehand and Deshpandé, 2001) and social status (Grier and Deshpandé, 2001). If a spokesperson's eyes are prominently brown in an ad, and especially salient in relation to the observer's own distinctive brown eyes, then the physical feature may favorably affect consumers' response to that ad. Though future research should examine this contention, distinctiveness theory may explain the preference of this study's sample for brown and green eyes. Additionally, the general lack of appearance of blue eyes in the sample population, or its association with Caucasian stereotyping, may diminish their possible influence on specific mood and ad response constructs.

Besides examining in-group, out-group eye color as indicated by distinctiveness theory, future research may explore effects of other model or ad characteristics in conjunction with the ad. For example, should an ad spokesperson for a blue colored shampoo also have blue eyes? or would eye color that contrasts markedly with the rest of the ad be more effective? Even though our study found significant effects of eye color on ad viewer response, future research should examine the level of effects in relation to other variables. For instance, should an advertiser dispense with a spokesperson simply because of eye color? or is the 'likeability' of the spokesperson enough to overcome any negative effects of eye color? Put in the context of our study sample, should advertisers targeting Hispanic consumers completely avoid blue-eyed models altogether?

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