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# **Whose work? How UK consumers prefer to see ethnic workers represented in advertising**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Advertising that portrays uncontested ethnic stereotypes is problematic; the skewed portrayal of ethnicity in advertising is linked to viewers' distorted opinions. Since advertising both reflects social values and defines them, advertisers do not merely stimulate patterns of consumption, they influence social conduct. This study offers a newly-inclusive perspective on choices about occupation and ethnicity in advertising, contributing to literature and the use of the projective method in ethnicity, and revealing clear patterns of opinion among 400 young UK consumers. This evidenced racism in the ways that data tended to amplify trends in the observable world, patterns that place White people in high-status work, and Black and West Asian people in lower status occupational roles. The study observed intra-ethnic choices, not only from White subjects to others, but between minority groups. Some minority ethnic groups clearly wanted to see themselves represented more positively, in higher status occupational roles.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study occurs at a salient historical moment, a period of social and economic turbulence within which new cultural scripts emerge. After Britain voted to leave the EU in 2016, ahead of finally leaving on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, a sustained period began when political and media attention focused relentlessly upon division and difference: division from Europe, nationality, and differences between ethnicities and cultures in contemporary British society. Issues of ethnicity and inequality gained further momentum early in 2020, when the global COVID-19 lockdown was punctuated by George Floyd's death at the hands of police in Minneapolis, US. The Black Lives Matter campaign that followed this violent incident sparked protests more widely; in the UK, public sentiment and social action combined to re-ignite a national debate about Britain's colonial history. Under such conditions, discussion about the representation of ethnic minorities in advertising assumed a new centrality.

The representation of ethnic groups in advertising has long been problematic, not least because the advertising industry remains predominantly White (Rittenhouse 2021; NBC News 2020). Long-established concerns around the visibility and proportional representation of minority groups have been joined in the past decade by issues raised from within minority groups about role portrayal and ethnic stereotyping. This focus upon role is, in turn, interpenetrated with portrayals of occupation or wage-earning, which exists as potent symbol of social status,

hierarchy, and assumed power relations. In this study, occupation is used to describe ethnic roles, in order to generate data that concerns the representation of ethnicity in advertising.

The research has two objectives:

- To examine afresh the pattern of ethnicity that is attached to a range of occupations.
- To explore the patterns and any relationships between the ethnicity of the chooser, and the choice made for the occupational role.

The exploratory method adopts a projective technique to develop quantitative data. This offers a departure within the field and was selected for its potential to reveal attitudes or unconscious opinions that may otherwise remain hidden (Steinman 2009). Participants were 400 young adults aged 18-30, who identify as British, drawn into four ethnic groups; White, Black, East Asian; West Asian. In the study task, they chose models from four different ethnic categories, to represent a range of occupations in a fictional advertising campaign. The 18 job titles were all drawn from the UK Standard Occupational Classification set, which describes a hierarchy of occupations.

The contribution is through the introduction of a projective technique (third person technique) into ethnicity research, and the extent to which the described values may not have been revealed through other means. Previous studies have used content analyses to reveal patterns of ethnic representation in advertising (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006; Lee and Joo, 2005; Taylor et al. 2019; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013; Taylor et al. 2005; Bristor et al. 1995; Taylor and Stern, 1997). Some studies examined the opinion of both White and ethnic minorities about those representations (Hazzouri and Hamilton 2019), and the attitudes and behaviours of consumers towards ethnic models (Whittler and Spira 2002; Lord et al. 2019; Hesapci et al. 2016; Forehand and Deshpande 2001; Ting et al. 2015; Rößner et al. 2017), yet this is the first study in advertising that draws attention to the patterns that emerge when different ethnic participants choose how their own ethnic group is represented by occupation. Close attention to the ways that occupational role intersects with representations of ethnicity brings new understanding to the topic, and raises new questions.

This methodological departure develops in tandem with an inclusive approach to enquiry; while several previous studies focus upon Black/White comparisons, we include East and West Asian groups, reflecting the UK context. The moment of the study, its method, and breadth contribute to a renewed focus on ethnicity within advertising in this special issue.

## **THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Ethnicity and advertising in the UK***

Links between ethnicity and advertising are well-established, but prior studies focussed chiefly on the United States and failed to gain traction in Britain. In the post-war period, US marketers directed their messages mainly towards White consumers prior to the 1960s, and advertisers made little of ethnic difference, either in message design or delivery channel. Early attempts at targeted advertising drew criticism since it excluded minority groups from advertising imagery (Barban and Cundiff 1964) but American advertising literature developed to embrace Black, Latino and Hispanic consumption, chiefly due to the economic impact of these groups (Kassarjian 1969; Barban and Cundiff 1964; Sexton 1972; Barry and Harvey 1974; Vasquez-Parraga and Valencia 2017; Burns and Manolis 2015; Torres and Briggs 2007).

The minority population is a smaller fraction of the UK, compared to the US, which may explain why ethnicity research in UK advertising literature has received less attention. The UK's Office for National Statistics records approximately 64.6 million people living in the UK in mid-2014; 56.2 million (87.2%) were White British, 8.4 million (12.8%) from different ethnic groups (Institute of Race Relations 2020).

Britain's colonial history casts a long shadow, with a distinctive legacy of immigration quite different from that of the US, affecting both the attitudes of minorities and the White British population's interaction with them (Burton 2000; Kinra 1997). Yet, while economic evidence and calls for social justice have increased, the subject of ethnicity in advertising practice has remained historically undervalued (Burton 1996). These consumer groups are amply big enough to deserve serious attention (Nwankwo and Lindridge 1998) yet advertisers have neglected ethnic minority consumers, avoiding sensitivities around immigration, even though they hold purchasing power of more than £300bn (De Napoli 2013). Ethnic minorities in UK have further growth potential as a result of equal participation and progression estimated at an additional £24 billion to the UK's economy per year (Office of National Statistics 2018).

British advertising literature reveals instrumental interest in ethnic consumption (Burton 1996; Burton 2000; Kinra 1997; Adam 2017; Nwanko and Lindridge 1998; Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006; Shabir and Reast 2014), and since 2000 the topic has matured further. Advertising associations and some companies have researched to understand the representation of ethnicity in British advertising and attitudes towards role models from different ethnic groups (Fletcher 2003; Credos 2016; Lloyds Banking Group 2018). Marketers and advertisers are aware of the distinctive consumption and spending patterns among BAME consumers but persuasive acts remained problematic, and did not result in targeted national campaigns.

### *Ethnicity and race in advertising*

Contemporary views of race and ethnicity are historically and culturally determined systems of classification, used by science and society to categorise humans. The influence of founding scientists and philosophers, who emphasized the hereditary descent of the human species, was only substantially challenged in the post-WW2 era. Enlightenment thinkers including Immanuel Kant and David Hume had formerly lent weight to the notion that Africans were destined for slavery due to lack of intelligence and morality, while Charles Darwin situated Africans between apes and Europeans (Muehlenbein 2015). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, natural and social science have re-defined race and ethnicity as social constructs, the products of political and scientific frameworks in which White groups define the terms of the difference (Muehlenbein 2015).

The term race especially refers to a group of people that share some socially defined physical characteristics, for instance, skin colour, hair texture, or facial features. Ethnicity, a term that is distinguishable from race, yet often incorrectly used interchangeably with it, refers to a group of people with a common heritage, language, religion, and self of belongingness (Fitzgerald 2018; Nwanko and Longridge 1998; Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). We adopt the term ethnicity in consequence of the descriptor used in the Face Research Lab dataset that is used in this study.

Ethnicity has also emerged within debate as a privileged term, subject to multiple interpretations. Some sources differentiate between groups, others do not, and this can prove

troublesome in both the ontological and practical sense, when designing research instruments or comparing national census data.

***Representation of ethnic groups in advertising: The question of proportion.***

Representation of ethnic groups in advertising is always problematic. When we looked at the numbers historically, in the 1950s only 6% of US advertisements contained Black Americans, but this number increased to 11.4% in the 1990s. While the absolute numbers doubled over 40 years, the proportions consistently under-represent African Americans as a sector of society. In addition, Black Americans were not likely to be used in relation to prestigious brands, and many were portrayed in poverty (Bailey 2006). In the UK proportions are much lower, even as recently as 2011, when TV advertising in the UK was under-representing ethnic minority groups overall; actors from BAME groups appeared in only 5% of 35,000 TV advertisements surveyed (Sweeney 2011). By 2017, the proportional appearance of minority groups seemed to be improving; Lloyds' data found 2.7% of people featured in advertisements were Asian, 3.9% of the people were Mixed/Multiracial and 5.7% of the people featured were Black, although this was based on a more restricted sample than the Sweeney study (Lloyds 2018). Asians remained under-represented, while other groups very slightly over-represented compared to the population at large. The study noted that the chief indicator of difference was skin colour; minority groups were portrayed with a strong British identity; accent and demeanour, clothing style were overwhelmingly those of the majority White group.

The Black Lives Matter campaign created a spike of activity in UK advertising, stimulating appetite for knowledge about White privilege and systematic racism, although it was impossible to predict whether this effect would be temporary (Charles 2020). In the same period, an open letter from more than 200 advertising and media leaders proposed concrete steps to tackle racism, stating: 'As a creative sector, what we do and who we represent has a profound effect on culture, yet systematic inequality continues in our industry. We call on those in positions of influence to harness the cultural power of advertising to bring authentic prominence to the crisis of racial injustice.' (Keifer 2020).

This apparent appetite for change occurs in contrast to persistent, yet evolving, occupational norms within the advertising sector. Even though 42% of marketing professionals believe that the work they produce doesn't reflect today's multicultural society (Marketing Week 2015), marketers are hesitant to use BAME models due to fears of upsetting White majority consumers

(Dwek 1997 cited in Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). Belief persists that if ethnic minorities are included, the dominant group (Whites) will not purchase the product (Knochbloch-Westerwick and Coates 2006; Rubie-Davies et al).

While BAME consumption is increasingly acknowledged, the representation of ethnic groups in advertising has gained less attention. There is a history of BAME representation in advertising that casts roles in stereotypical terms. “Stereotypes are commonly defined as cognitive structures that contain the perceiver’s knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about human groups,” (Peffley et al. 1997, 31). We may raise suspicions that an Anglo-dominated advertising industry acts as a serious restriction on the representation of BAME groups; in 2019, 94.5% of C-Suite executives in the industry were White (Steward 2019). So, despite efforts to cast adverts sensitively, there may be unconscious decision-making in operation (Shabbir et al. 2014).

### ***Representation of occupational groups by ethnicity: The question of occupational role***

Under-representation by proportion is entwined with role representation, leaving minority groups both under-represented by volume, and stereotyped by role, which prescribes particular social and occupational status. It is role, and occupational role in particular, that frames our enquiry.

Several studies have interrogated how advertising portrays ethnicity and role, in ways that combine the proportional representation of minority groups with the social position of the occupation or role portrayed. Sudbury and Wilberforce’s (2006) study revealed 33% of UK advertisements contain Black people, but analysis failed to find one single Black manager or professional in 1852 all people-based advertisements, and fewer than 1% depicted a Black individual in a managerial or professional work role that did not involve singing or dancing or minor roles. Subsequently, Shabbir et al.’s 2014 study found 31.5% of adverts containing a Black actor, greatly in excess of the as 3.3% of the UK Black population at the time, but the same study notes ample examples of racist imagery, and warns that the incidence of Black actors indicates nothing about the depiction of Black people in ads.

BAME consumers have complained about such portrayals, with their emphasis on sporting or comic roles, and usually singing and dancing. This portrays a UK society without BAME workers in White collar roles like doctors, lawyers, CEOs, but not a diverse Britain (Sudbury



and Wilberforce 2006). Ethnic consumers have tended to express less concern about the number of ethnicities in advertising, but more concern about their portrayal; the role played in the advertising is more important (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006; Credo 2016). BAME consumers have been offended by the portrayals of minority groups aren't the principal players, and play mostly lower status roles (Credo 2016). According to Lloyds' Reflecting Modern Britain report (2018), Black people are often shown in limited roles such as teacher, musician, and sportsperson.

A similar pattern emerges in the US; a rise in proportion does not coincide with a rise in status. In 1997, Taylor and Stern found that Asian Americans only appeared in 8.4% of the 1,313 adverts, with the Asian group mostly shown in background roles in comparison to other groups, and mostly appearing in connection with technology-based products. A subsequent study (Taylor et al. 2005) found that the proportion of adverts contain Asian Americans had risen to 10.5%, along with 18.5% African Americans and 6.8% Latinos. Such figures are generated from time-bound audits, and the picture is enhanced when we consider the evidence for trends over time.

In the US, Black workers have been decreasingly portrayed in blue-collar roles, and increasingly featured as professionals or entertainers (Stevenson 2007; Shabbir et al. 2014). Where Asian models feature, the stereotype of Asian Americans as a work-centric 'model minority' has strengthened, perpetuating the stereotype of an 'all-work, no-play' attitude, which neglects social life and home settings (Taylor et al. 2005; Shabbir et al. 2014). Hence, Asian Americans are shown as hardworking and technically competent. By contrast, Hispanics are largely unrepresented in terms of working lives in the US (Bang and Reece 2003; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013).

In television advertising, African American males are frequently cast as service providers, entertainers, and athletes, while their White counterparts may more often be represented as professionals such as doctors, managers or higher professionals (Bristor et al. 1995; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013; Adams 2017). Portraying Black people as entertainers or athletes remains open to claims that such images are positive ones, while the opposite is also true; such roles also support prejudicial stereotypes of people who shouldn't be taken seriously, or whose physicality dominates (Barthes 1987 cited in Adams 2017).

### ***Attitudes towards role models in advertising: Theoretical perspectives***

The marketing and advertising industry creates communication that guides, shapes, and at its very best, positively drives culture and society. Advertising is privileged communication that wields considerable power (Lum 2017). It is commonly known to play an important role in economic development; it stimulates societal activities, and even affects how people choose to conduct themselves (Pollay and Mittal 1993; Wang et al. 2009 cited in Ting et al. 2015). In addition, advertising can represent dominant ideology and encourage others to follow (Barnett 1982; Dates and Barlow 1990; Gray 1987 cited in Bristor et al. 1995). In that context, advertising is not only a medium that gives information about the products and the services but is further believed to shape society, acting as a powerful means by which stereotypes of different ethnicities are portrayed. Bang and Reece (2003) have argued that viewers' perception can be distorted by under or wrong representation of minorities in advertising, which is termed a cultivation effect.

Advertising for mass audiences has an historic tendency to use White models almost exclusively. Advertisers may act in the belief that the dominant White group will not buy the product due to the use of minority models (Knochbloch-Westerwick and Coates 2006; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013). Acculturation theory explains this as a process where ethnic minorities assume the behaviours, attitudes and consumption patterns of the dominant group, 'melting' into the larger population (Kinra 1997). The 'melting' perspective partly explains advertising practice which arose from a past era when society was presumed uniform, taking little or no account of targeting culturally distinct groups (Kim and Kang 2001; Lee et al. 2002). Such a nationalistic, Anglo-dominated perspective is, at the very least, questionable.

However, the attitudes and behaviours of White consumers towards Black or other ethnic minority group models is far from negative. White subjects did not react negatively when Black models were included in promotional messages (Barbab 1969; Bush and Hair and Solomon 1979; Schlinger and Plummer 1972; Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). White respondents displayed a positive attitude towards advertisements containing Black models (Muse 1971 cited in Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). Even White respondents who were pre-disposed to racial prejudice showed positive purchasing intentions when exposed to adverts containing Black models (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006).

Non-white consumers respond even more favourably than Whites to advertisements with ethnic cues (Forehand et al. 2001). Black consumers develop positive attitude towards brands and tend to purchase those which use Black actors in their promotion (Torres and Bridges 2007). Also, consumers identify brands as being more ethical if they use ethnic cues in their campaigns (Hesapci et al. 2016).

### ***The role of group identity***

The relative strength of ethnic group identity, or an enduring association between one's ethnicity and sense of self, can affect consumers' responses to marketing (Deshpande et al. 1986, Forehand and Deshpande 2001). This has been tested regarding time pursuits, and in food and drink consumption (Davis and Gandy 1999; Donthu and Cherian 1994; Sierra et al. 2009; Nwankwo and Lindridge 1998; Burton 2000).

Discussion of group identity would be incomplete without reference to social identity theory, which represents a key moment in theory development. Tajfel (1982) initially defined the model by drawing together the external social classifications and the internal factors that relate to group identification. This was subsequently developed to describe Social Identity as a mental sequence; categorisation, identification, comparison.

The relevance here is that in a Social Identity framework context the preference for one's own group is supported by numerous studies (Tajfel 1982). In addition, where intergroup competition (eg for work and other resources) takes place, members of the outgroups become 'undifferentiated items in a unified social category' (Tajfel 1981, 243). In such competitive situations, groups with similar values tended to show more intergroup discrimination than groups with dissimilar ones (Turner 1978, cited in Tajfel 1983). A number of studies point to the ways in which in-group favouritism lends salience to membership of that group for the individual. So, if we choose people like us for high-status roles, we reinforce our own value as a high-status individual. This perspective is salient within this study, as we examine patterns in the way that participants exercise such choices, with reference to a broad explanatory framework that is theorised, observed, and analysed in the context of social identity.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Data collection*

Models were selected from a proven face dataset: Face Research Lab London Set, an open resource for social research. The dataset comprises images of 102 adult faces, self-reported by age, gender, and ethnicity. Attractiveness is predefined, based on ratings from 2513 people using a seven-point scale (from ‘much less attractive than average’ to ‘much more attractive than average’). All models used in this study were rated at an attractiveness score of three. The model ethnicities represent four ethnic categories; White, Black, West Asian, East Asian. We chose four models, two males and two females, from each ethnic group. Models aged 21-31 were selected, so that the ages of the models broadly matched the age of the research participants.

Participants in the study were young adults aged 18-30 recruited from the University of Central Lancashire (Preston, UK) and the University of Westminster (London, UK), who identify as British. Four hundred volunteers participated in the study. As the questionnaire is detailed, the study was administered to groups of 50 or fewer participants at each research session. The researchers explained the research procedure, and the questionnaire was administered face to face. The question set and a colour print out of the models’ face portraits were distributed to each subject. Participants were asked to choose one out of 16 models for each occupation. The same model could be chosen for more than one occupation.

Quota sampling was used to achieve a sample that reflects the ethnic group composition of the UK (adopting Office for National Statistics categories: White 86%, Black 3.3%, West Asian 5.7%, East Asian 0.7%). Study participants were invited to consider a fictitious advertising campaign for a non-gendered technology product, a mobile phone. They were asked to select one suitable model to represent each occupational role, making a choice of models from different ethnic groups. Projective technique (third-person technique) was used to alleviate the risk that participants would be reluctant or unable to expose their opinions on ethnicity due to anxieties about being judged as politically incorrect. Participants may tend to give ideal answers when a more straightforward questioning technique is used (Boddy 2005). Respondents, whether consciously or unconsciously, tend to offer such answers when placed in the role of a research subject. Projective techniques reduce social pressure on participants that may affect their expression of attitudes and behaviours (Steinman 2009).

The occupational categories were chosen from those listed in the British Standard Occupational Categorisation, which is a taxonomy developed for UK Government statisticians and widely adopted by social researchers. It offers nine broad categories of occupation, each containing specific work roles. Each of the nine categories was represented in this question set by two work roles. Researchers selected commonly understood work roles in favour of less familiar specialisms. The work role descriptors and their hierarchical category can be seen in Table 1.

### ***Data set and variable operationalizations***

The dataset consists of 400 participants with 59 percent female and 38.5 percent male. 93 percent of the sample is between 19 to 35 years old. Both model and participant ethnicity are categorized into five groups as White, Black, East Asian, West Asian, and other. Those participants who do not belong to any of the four ethnic groups are categorized as the “other” group (n=36), which largely includes those who prefer not to answer or mixed ethnic groups. As far as the models, the “other” category consists of the participants' responses who choose not to assign a model to a specific work role and select “prefer not to say.”

We use a series of categorical variables in our analyses. For instance, in operationalizing the model ethnicity for each occupational role, the variable (e.g., CEO, Hotel Owner, Doctor) takes the value of 1, if the selected ethnicity is White; 2 if East Asian; 3 if West Asian; 4, if Black; and 5 Other. To examine the relationship between participant and model ethnicity in a meaningful way, the participant ethnicity is operationalized in the same way as the model ethnicity.

### ***Analysis and results***

***Selection of models from different ethnic groups in occupational roles.*** Table 1 reports the observed frequency of choices for all four ethnic groups and all 18 occupational roles included in the analysis. The chi-square tests show that the observed frequencies of different model ethnicities within each occupational role is significantly different from an equal probability expected frequency (i.e., 25%).

Table 1 demonstrates that Black models were less frequently selected for the three highest status occupation categories, except for the police officer role. Black models were

discriminated against by participants in relation to these roles, and the results show a clear pattern of inequity.

The pattern for East Asians was less distinctive, as this group was not the first choice by participants in any of the occupational categories. However, the selection pattern favoured East Asian models over Black models in higher status roles. In the three lowest status occupation categories they were preferred ahead of Whites for all occupational roles except bus driver and security guard, but they were selected less frequently than both Black and West Asian models.

White models were selected less frequently for the three lowest status occupational categories, except for the bus driver (16%) and security guard (25%) roles. In these two categories, West Asians were selected more than any other ethnicities (bus driver, 43%; security guard 44.5%). In the same two roles, East Asians were least preferred. However, we still see a striking preference for non-white workers in the three lowest occupational groups.

**Table 1.** Selection of Models from Different Ethnic Groups against Occupational Role: A Frequency Analysis

<i>Standard Occupation Category (SOC)</i>	<i>Select Occupational Role</i>	<b>Model Ethnicity</b>			
		<b>White</b>	<b>East Asian</b>	<b>West Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>
<i>Managers, Directors, Senior Officials</i>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>	114 28.5%	102 25.5%	138 34.5%	40 10%
	<i>Hotel Owner</i>	120 30%	86 21.5%	120 30%	70 17.5%
<i>Professional Occupations</i>	<i>Doctor</i>	90 22.5%	114 28.5%	136 34%	60 15%
	<i>Solicitor</i>	114 28%	108 27%	112 28%	64 16%
<i>Associate Professional and Technical Occupations</i>	<i>Police Officer</i>	112 28%	38 9.5%	140 35%	108 27%
	<i>Fashion Designer</i>	229 57.25%	81 20.25%	70 17.5%	20 5%
<i>Administrative and Secretarial Occupations</i>	<i>Receptionist</i>	146 36.5%	106 26.5%	62 15.5%	86 21.5%
	<i>Post Office Clerk</i>	54 13.5%	76 19%	182 45.5%	88 22%
<i>Skilled Trades Occupations</i>	<i>Farm Worker</i>	188 47%	60 15%	116 29%	34 8.5%
	<i>Carpenter</i>	176 44%	28 7%	140 35%	50 12.5%
<i>Caring, Leisure and Other Services Occupations</i>	<i>Ambulance Driver</i>	128 32%	76 19%	102 25.5%	92 23%
	<i>Hairdresser</i>	234 58.5%	50 12.5%	36 9%	78 19.5%

<b>Sales and Customer Service Occupations</b>	<i>Telesales Operator</i>	92 23%	98 24.5%	106 26.5%	98 24.5%
	<i>Till Operator</i>	78 19.5%	92 23%	108 27%	122 30.5%
<b>Process, Plant and Machine Operatives</b>	<i>Factory Worker</i>	44 11%	100 25%	144 36%	110 27.5%
	<i>Bus Driver</i>	64 16%	18 4.5%	172 43%	144 36%
<b>Elementary Occupations</b>	<i>Cleaner</i>	58 14.5%	88 22%	164 41%	88 22%
	<i>Security Guard</i>	100 25%	12 3%	178 44.5%	108 27%

Note: The ranking in the SOC is from the highest to lowest status of occupation categories.

Regarding the three occupation categories in the middle (administrative and secretarial; skilled trades; caring, leisure, and other services), we find that White models were more preferred in all but one role, post office clerk. Clear preferences emerge along ethnic lines within these categories, with most preferred choices offering a clear percentage lead over the second most preferred, particularly regarding receptionist, farm worker, and carpenter, in which White models were preferred, and post office clerk, in which West Asians were more preferred.

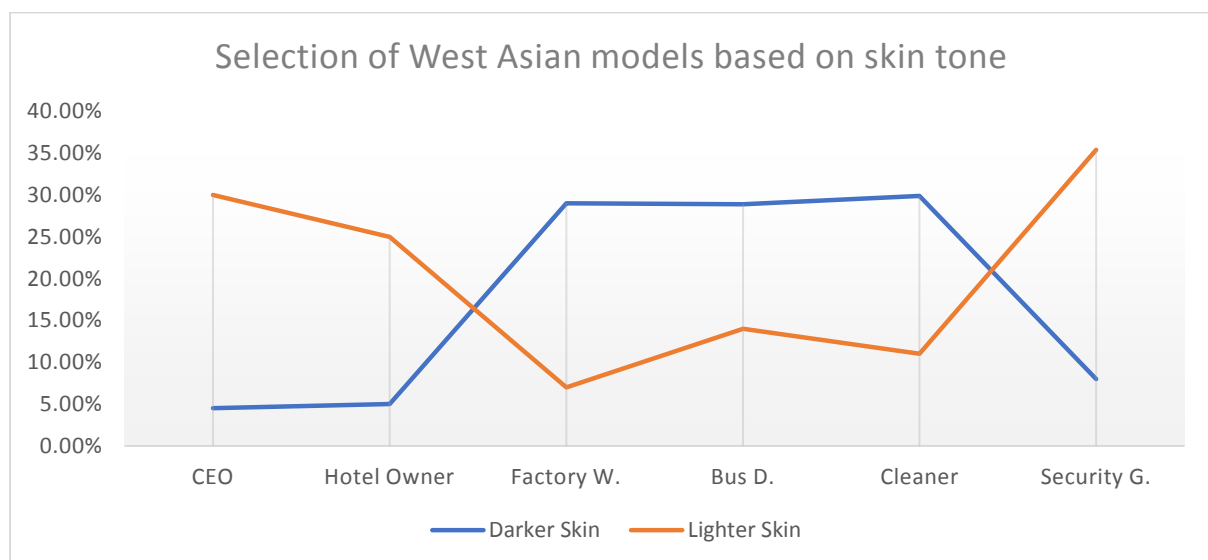
For the three highest status occupational categories, the two most frequently selected ethnicities were White and West Asians except the fashion designer role, where White models were clearly preferred ahead of all others (57.25%). The picture for West Asians appears contradictory, with this ethnicity group selected for both high and low occupational roles. This prompted further analysis and researchers focussed on the pattern of individual models chosen.

The West Asian ethnic category includes Middle Eastern models, who tend to have lighter skin tone than other groups such as Pakistani and Indian models. Both were selected as part of the dataset. Analysing choices model by model, we observed that models with darker skin tone tended to be selected in elementary and process, plant and machine operative roles (cleaner, 30%; bus driver, 29%; factory worker, 29%), while those with lighter skin tone were selected for professional and managerial roles (CEO, 30%; hotel owner, 25%; solicitor, 21.5%). In the doctor role, the situation reverses; West Asians with darker skin tones were preferred (21.5%) over lighter skin tone models (13%). We believe that this may be linked to subjects' social observation; Indian nationals are long established as health professionals in the UK, and the Indian doctor is a cultural stereotype established in popular culture since the 1950s.

In the lowest occupation category, darker skin tone West Asians (30%) were more frequently selected for the cleaner role whereas lighter skin tone West Asians were favoured in the security guard role (35.4%). This may reflect views about the nuances of these roles, their social status and meaning, but full understanding of this distinction is beyond the scope of this study and would require further research.

We conducted an additional analysis to understand the relationship between the skin tone and the police officer and security guard roles. The security guard role showed some similarities with the police officer role, a higher status occupation in the SOC hierarchy. West Asians were the most favoured group as police officers (35%), but 30.9% out of those 35% were lighter skin tone West Asian models. The advantage of skin colour becomes especially clear at this point. Cowart and Lehnert (2018) observed similar results; persons with light skin tone received more favourable treatment and work assignments than persons with darker skin tone, which is suggestive of a hierarchy based on skin tone. If we aggregate results from all models with the lightest skin tone, we see a pattern of colour-based advantage in the selection of White models and models with lighter skin tones for higher status occupational roles (CEO, 58.5%; hotel owner, 75%; solicitor 49.5%; doctor 35.5%; police officer 58.9%; fashion designer, 74.25%) as demonstrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Selection of West Asian Models Based on Skin Tone



*Each ethnic group participants' selection of other ethnic groups for higher and lower status occupational groups.* We looked at patterns in the observed frequencies, and next, we examined the chi-square test of independence between participant and model ethnicity along



with the contribution of each cell to the chi-square statistic. This allowed us to both describe the observed pattern and check for any significant relationships between the participants' own ethnic group and their choice of model for the range of occupations. First, we examine the choices of study participants with White ethnicity, since in the UK, the biggest fraction of the population is White (86%). It remains important to place attention on the ethnic group that exerts the greatest influence in consumer markets, because advertisers consider the views of this group in broad proportion to their economic power. On the other hand, the advertising industry is overwhelmingly White 90% (Credos 2016) and may lack the insight and skills to reach BAME consumers (Credos 2016). Whether consciously or unconsciously, advertisers' work reflects dominant group expectations through advertising, so it is important to determine White consumers' attitudes towards other ethnic groups.

Considering White subjects' views of other ethnic groups, frequency counts reveal a clear pattern. In the four higher status occupations, White participants mostly favoured White models, followed by West and East Asians. There is evidence of discrimination against Black models. We found significant results especially for the CEO and Doctor occupations between participant and model ethnicity ( $\chi^2(4) = 15.9, p < 0.01$  and  $\chi^2(3) = 7.9, p < 0.05$ , respectively). The chi-square contribution of the selection of Black models by White participants is the highest of all four cells. Regarding the doctor role, the chi-square contribution of the selection of darker skin tone West Asian models is the highest. Regarding lower status jobs, we observe that Whites frequently selected non-whites for all four occupations and we found a weak significant result for the Cleaner occupation role between participant and model ethnicity ( $\chi^2(4) = 8.2, p < 0.1$ ).

**Table 2:** White Participants' Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

N= 242 (White participants)		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	76 (31.4)	60 (24.7)	90 (37.1)	14 (5.7)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 15.9*** (0.003)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.7	0	0.5	4.3	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	72 (29.7)	42 (17.3)	78 (32.2)	48 (19.8)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.0* (0.091)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	1.9	0.4	0.8	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	54 (22.3)	64 (26.4)	94 (38.8)	30 (12.3)	$\chi^2$ (3) = 7.9** (0.048)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.4	1.7	1.1	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	74 (30.5)	64 (26.4)	62 (25.6)	40 (1.6)	$\chi^2$ (3) = 3.6 (0.455)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.4	0	0.5	0	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	22 (9.1)	68 (28.1)	86 (35.5)	64 (26.4)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 5.9 (0.201)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.8	0.9	0	0.1	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	36 (14.8)	14 (5.7)	106 (43.8)	86 (35.5)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 5.9 (0.205)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.2	0.9	0	0	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	38 (15.7)	62 (25.6)	92 (38)	48 (19.8)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.2* (0.084)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.2	1.4	0.5	0.5	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	56 (23.1)	6 (2.4)	108 (44.6)	70 (28.9)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 3.5 (0.470)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.3	0.2	0	0.3	

Notes: "Other" category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-White participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how White participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ )

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

Next, we examine the choices of study participants with East Asian ethnicity. In higher status occupational roles Table 3 shows that the Chi-square tests show a significant relationship between participant and model ethnicity for CEO and doctor ( $\chi^2$  (4) = 12.5,  $p < 0.05$  and  $\chi^2$  (4) = 7.8,  $p < 0.05$ ) while a weakly significant and insignificant relationship for hotel owner and solicitor ( $\chi^2$  (4) = 8.1,  $p < 0.1$  and  $\chi^2$  (4) = 2.1,  $p > 0.1$ , respectively). Our findings also showed that Black models were not selected at all for the highest status occupation category and the contribution of these cells to the overall chi-square statistic is the highest ( $\chi^2$  contribution = 2 for CEO  $\chi^2$  contribution = 3.5 for hotel owner, respectively). Frequency counts reveal that East Asian subjects slightly favour Blacks in the doctor role, but the general observable pattern is that this group favours themselves, or White models in high-status roles, except in the solicitor role. For lower status roles, there is a pattern of preference for West Asian and Black models, with no choices for models with White and their own ethnicity in the bus driver and security guard roles.

**Table 3.** East Asian Participants’ Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
N= 20 (East Asian participants)		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	6 (30)	6 (30)	6 (30)	0 (0)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 12.5** (0.014)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.2	0.1	2	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	10 (50)	6 (30)	4 (20)	0 (0)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.1* (0.088)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	2.7	0.7	0.7	3.5	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	4 (20)	8 (40)	2 (10)	6 (30)	$\chi^2$ (3) = 7.8** (0.05)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.1	0.9	3.4	3	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	6 (30)	4 (20)	8 (40)	2 (10)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 2.1 (0.725)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.4	1	0.5	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	2 (10)	4 (20)	8 (40)	6 (30)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 0.5 (0.976)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.2	0.1	0	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (40)	12 (60)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 7.8 (0.098)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	3.2	0.9	0	3.2	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	2 (10)	4 (20)	10 (50)	4 (20)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 0.9 (0.926)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.3	0	0.4	0	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (60)	8 (40)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.4* (0.076)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	5	0.6	1.1	1.3	

Notes: “Other” category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-East Asian participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how East Asian participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01)

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

Then, we examine the choices of study participants with West Asian ethnicity. West Asian choices show a pattern based on frequency count alone. Still, these choices are either weakly significant (i.e., p < 0.1 for CEO and Solicitor) or not significant concerning the higher status occupation categories. As Table 4 demonstrates for West Asian participants the observed frequencies reveal similar numbers for all ethnic group models except Black models selected for the CEO, hotel owner, doctor, solicitor occupations. However, the picture changes when for the lower status occupational roles. Of the four different roles, the relationship between participant and model ethnicity is significant only for the security guard role ( $\chi^2$  (4) = 13.4, p<0.05). As far as the frequencies, the results are consistent across the study, favouring White models for the security guard role. We also observe that West Asians do not frequently select Whites for the bus driver, cleaner and factory worker roles but selecting either their ethnic group or Black models for these occupations.

**Table 4.** West Asian Participants’ Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

N= 76 (West Asian participants)		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	28 (36.8)	12 (15.7)	26 (34.2)	10 (13.1)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.1* (0.088)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	1.9	2.8	0	0.8	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	22 (28.9)	18 (23.6)	20 (26.3)	14 (18.4)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 3.2 (0.523)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.2	0.3	0	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	16 (21)	28 (36.8)	26 (34.2)	6 (7.8)	$\chi^2$ (3) = 5.5 (0.136)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.1	1.9	0	2.6	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	12 (15.7)	24 (31.5)	26 (34.2)	14 (18.4)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.1* (0.086)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	4.3	0.6	1	0.3	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	8 (10.5)	16 (21)	26 (34.2)	26 (34.2)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 2.7 (0.610)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.5	0.1	1.2	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	12 (15.7)	4 (5.2)	36 (47.3)	24 (31.5)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 1.5 (0.823)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.1	0.3	0.4	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	10 (13.1)	12 (15.7)	34 (44.7)	20 (26.3)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 3.3 (0.502)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.1	1.3	0.3	0.6	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	30 (39.4)	4 (5.2)	26 (34.2)	16 (21)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 13.4** (0.009)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	6.4	1.3	1.8	1.0	

Notes: “Other” category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-West Asian participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how West Asian participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ )

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

In the final category, we examine the choices of study participants of Black ethnicity. Black participants chose Black models, clearly in relation to two higher status roles, CEO and doctor. In both cases, the relationship between participant and model ethnicity was significant ( $\chi^2$  (4) = 42.1,  $p < 0.01$  and  $\chi^2$  (4) = 26.2,  $p < 0.01$ , respectively) and the cells with the highest contribution to the chi-square statistic were Black model ethnicity for both CEO and doctor roles. For lower status roles, frequencies reveal that Black subjects favoured West Asians for all four lowest status roles, with only one significant chi-square statistic for the factory worker role ( $\chi^2$  (4) = 15.6,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 5.** Black Participants’ Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

N= 26 (Black participants)		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	2 (7.6)	6 (23)	6 (23)	12 (46.1)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 42.1*** (0.000)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	3.9	0.1	1	34	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	8 (30.7)	10 (38.4)	4 (15.3)	4 (15.3)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 6.1 (0.195)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	3.5	1.9	0.1	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	8 (30.7)	4 (15.3)	2 (7.6)	12 (46.1)	$\chi^2$ (3) = 26.2*** (0.000)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.8	1.6	5.3	16.8	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	12 (46.1)	10 (38.4)	2 (7.6)	2 (7.6)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 9.8** (0.043)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	2.8	1.3	3.8	1.1	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	8 (30.7)	2 (7.6)	12 (46.1)	4 (15.3)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 15.6** (0.004)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	9.2	3.1	0.7	1.4	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	6 (23)	0 (0)	12 (46.1)	8 (30.7)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 2.5 (0.638)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.8	1.2	0.1	0.2	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	6 (23)	2 (7.6)	12 (46)	6 (23)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 4.3 (0.363)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	1.3	2.4	0.2	0	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	4 (15.3)	2 (7.6)	14 (53.8)	6 (23)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 3.9 (0.418)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	1.0	1.9	0.5	0.1	

Notes: “Other” category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-Black participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how Black participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ )

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

As a result, regarding these two occupational roles it is clear that Black and West Asian participants choose models from their ethnicity for high-status roles. This lends weight to an interpretation framed by the effect of Social Identity Theory Tajfel (1982) where West Asian and Black participants positively desire to see their ethnic group represented in higher status roles; CEO and doctor.

Tajfel’s Social Identity Theory (1982) frames the discussion but exists in tension with the results here, because the key observable effect (ethnic groups choosing their own ethnicity for higher status roles) was partly supported by the data to a statistically significant extent. Nevertheless, one key finding is that Black subjects specifically chose Black models in the CEO and doctor roles, results which align strongly with a social identity interpretation. That result does not extend to a general pattern with the data, either at the level of observed frequencies or within the search for statistical significance. Rather, the pattern is confused and

contradictory, with some clear yet inconsistent patterns regarding ethnicity and occupational role.

We are drawn instead to Tajfel's (1982) acknowledgement of the importance of 'pre-existing' attitudes or stereotypes. A generalised pattern of social reproduction is somewhat observable within the frequency data: broad preferences for White senior roles, and West Asian doctors, for example, are patterns observable in UK social life, and supported by UK Census data on ethnicity and occupation. The existence of pre-existing stereotypes was not specifically tested within the study, but it forms a social background to its subjects.

In consequence, the results offer a complex picture. There is evidence of the desire for social status, formed around social identity that places 'people like me' in high-status roles. A small fraction of that data, concerning Black subjects and Black roles, withstands statistical significance test. To that, we must add that the more general trends within the data reproduce apparently strong patterns of (dis)advantage based on observed ethnicity, for example, darker skin appears linked to lower status work, White models were consistently favoured. We also note a third strand, wherein certain roles, some groups have gone far further than simply representing the observable social world, so that the results accentuate and reinforce patterns of disadvantage, a trend especially observable in the frequency with which West Asian subjects selected same-ethnicity models in lower status roles.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The conjunction of occupation and ethnicity offers a complex and contradictory environment for fieldwork. Our analysis reflects that and draws out two contrasting trends, one emphasising existing dominant social patterns, the other challenging them.

This study evidenced racism in the ways that data tended to amplify trends in the observable world (and, by association, in the mediated world of advertising), patterns that place White people in high-status work, and Black and West Asian people in lower status occupational roles. Such choices were not restricted entirely to White subjects, but are clustered here in responses from White subjects, and are somewhat suggestive of a cultivation effect. Most disappointing of all, the method exposed the strong link between the role of skin colour and expectations around occupational role, in ways that assign lower status to darker skin.

We are also struck by some intra-ethnic choices observed, for example in the frequency with which Black subjects appear to de-select West Asians in both high and low status roles. This is not easily explainable, nor was it statistically significant, but it is an observable pattern that prompts analysis. We are drawn to Taylor's (1978) observation that, in competitive situations, groups with similar values displayed more intergroup discrimination than groups with dissimilar ones (cited in Tajfel 1983, 26), but at this stage that is only a candidate explanation for what may not be reproduced elsewhere. Further research in this area of intra-ethnic attitudes would be required, and could usefully supplement a body of knowledge that is largely couched in terms of the White vs other, in this subject domain at least.

Within advertising practice, we can summarise that this represents the traditional entrenched approach; that these stereotypical representations somewhat reflect observable society, if in an exaggerated form, and that in advertising practice, their use does no observable damage to the client's sales.

We also found evidence of a contrasting trend, more optimistic and aspirational. Under this trend, we saw how some minority ethnic groups clearly wanted to see themselves represented more positively, in higher status occupational roles. There was weak evidence for this across all groups, but it was observed more clearly in specific minority groups who sought higher-status roles for their own ethnic type. We summarise that this view aligns more closely with a social identity perspective, where 'people like us' are preferred, and higher status and more positive roles might be more proportionally distributed. A social identity perspective is not automatically an optimistic perspective since, unchecked, it can amount to an entrenched re-statement of existing social and occupational positions, which are, of course, by no means distributed fairly.

For advertising practice, the implication is that advertisers have evidence to support pursuing a more aspirational vision of a fairer society. The initial rationale for this may be mundane; it avoids continuing to mis-represent various groups, either under-representing by proportion, but specifically under-representing by occupational and social role. We can go further, to suggest what we could reasonably term an extended diversity rationale. The depiction of a broader range of ethnicities in higher status roles could be pursued, with the intention of changing social expectations over time (Cowart and Lehnert 2018). This extended diversity rationale may encourage practitioners towards representing a society that does not yet exist, but which

positive and thoughtful advertising practice might yet support and promote, in ways that are demonstrably evidenced by consumer desire.

### ***Limitations and future research***

Limitations here concern the study's exploratory quality; data is created and analysed to characterise ethnic preferences, but more work would be needed to disclose individual motivations and drivers. Preferences exist, further work could usefully extend this enquiry to underlying causes.

Multivariate analysis resulted in some small sub-group sizes, decreasing the likelihood of statistical significance. Reducing those, for example by restricting enquiry to comparisons between two ethnic groups, could contribute to our understanding of intra-ethnic attitudes with the effect that further statistical significance may emerge.

The apparent impact of skin tone warrants further work to isolate its role in the complex patterns of preference which define and divide diverse societies.

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## APPENDIX

### *Additional analysis*

To better understand the relationship between the overall participant and model ethnicity, we ran Chi-square tests of independence for all 18 work roles included in the dataset. Of the 18 work roles, it turns out that 9 of them demonstrate that there is a significant association between subjects' ethnicity and the model ethnicity they chose for that work role. In fact, we found that for at least one occupation under each occupation classification, participant ethnicity and the chosen model ethnicity are statistically related to each other. Occupations where a significant relationship was found are reported in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Chi-square Test of Independence with Significant Results between Participant and Model Ethnicity

Model Ethnicity in Occupation	Participant Ethnicity				
	White (N=242)	East Asian (N=20)	West Asian (N=76)	Black (N=26)	Other (N=36)
CEO			$\chi^2(16) = 83.748^{***}$		
Doctor			$\chi^2(12) = 39.536^{***}$		
Police			$\chi^2(16) = 50.598^{***}$		
Receptionist			$\chi^2(12) = 44.339^{***}$		
Farm worker			$\chi^2(16) = 43.032^{***}$		
Ambulance Driver			$\chi^2(16) = 50.069^{***}$		
Till Operator			$\chi^2(12) = 31.610^{**}$		
Bus Driver			$\chi^2(16) = 38.550^{***}$		
Security Guard			$\chi^2(16) = 25.862^{**}$		

\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$

We also ran a multinomial logistic (MNL) regression where the dependent variable is the model ethnicity and the independent variable is participant ethnicity. We focussed on the two higher status and two lower status (i.e., CEO, Doctor, Bus Driver, Security Guard) occupational roles where we found a significant chi-square test statistic earlier. MNL regression predicts the likelihood of choosing one category over another based on some determining factors. Hence, our study examines the likelihood of selecting one model ethnicity over another for a specific occupational role based on the participant ethnicity.

Table 7 demonstrates the logistic regression results, which mainly agree with the results in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5. It depicts that all four models are significant and pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> figures indicate an improvement in the fit of each model compared to a null model. Across the different occupations, the base outcome for model ethnicity is determined by the most

frequently selected ethnic group for that role. For instance, for CEO, doctor, and security guard, West Asians are the most frequently chosen ethnic group, hence the base outcome. For the participant ethnicity, the “Other” group was determined as the base group. Hence, all the coefficients are evaluated in comparison to the “Other” category (see the description of the “Other” category under *Data Set and Variable Operationalizations*).

**Table 7.** Multinomial Logistic Regression Findings for the Relationship between Model and Participant Ethnicity

	<b>CEO</b>	<b>Doctor</b>	<b>Bus Driver</b>	<b>Security Guard</b>
<b>Model Ethnicity</b>	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
<b>White</b>				
<i>Base outcome</i>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White	1.439 *	-0.149		-0.068
East Asian	1.609 *	1.098		-16.176
West Asian	1.683 **	-0.08		0.73
Black	0.51	1.791 **		-0.665
Constant	-1.609 **	-0.405		-0.587
<b>East Asian</b>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White	-0.993 **	-0.202	15.597	15.575
East Asian	-0.587	1.568 *	15.273	-0.418
West Asian	-1.361 **	0.256	15.442	16.594
Black	-0.588	0.875	0.348	16.519
Constant	0.588	-0.182	-16.541	-18.465
<b>West Asian</b>				
<i>Base outcome</i>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White			1.079 **	
East Asian			15.681	
West Asian			1.098 **	
Black			0.693	
Constant			0.0002	
<b>Black</b>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White	-0.945	-0.448	0.534	0.377
East Asian	-14.62	1.791 *	15.75	0.405
West Asian	-0.039 **	-0.773	0.356	0.325
Black	1.609 **	2.484 **	-0.048	-0.036
Constant	-0.916	-0.693	0.336	-0.81 *
<b>Model Fit</b>				
Pseudo R-squared	0.063	0.035	0.026	0.032
N	400	400	398	398
Log-likelihood	-512.41	-519.35	-451.326	-449.461
LR $\chi^2$	68.48	37.08	24.13	29.57
Prob.	0.000	0.000	0.019	0.003

\* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01

For the higher status roles such as CEO, we see that Black participants' likelihood of selecting a Black ethnicity (compared to West Asian ethnicity) is significant and predicted to be 1.61 points greater than that of "other" participants. Also, we see that White participants' likelihood of selecting their own ethnicity is 1.43 points greater than that of "other" participants. Similarly, for the Doctor role, we find that Black participants' likelihood of selecting a Black model (compared to West Asian ethnicity) is significant and predicted to be 2.48 points greater than that of "other" participants. In addition, another ethnic group who is likely to choose their own ethnic group for the Doctor role is East Asians, and the likelihood is 1.56 points greater than that of "other" participants. Among the lower status roles, we see that West Asians' likelihood of selecting a model from their ethnic group (compared to White ethnicity) for the bus driver role is significant and 1.098 points greater than "other" participants.

# **Whose work? How UK consumers prefer to see ethnic workers represented in advertising**

## **ABSTRACT**

Advertising that portrays uncontested ethnic stereotypes is problematic; the skewed portrayal of ethnicity in advertising is linked to viewers' distorted opinions. Since advertising both reflects social values and defines them, advertisers do not merely stimulate patterns of consumption, they influence social conduct. This study offers a newly-inclusive perspective on choices about occupation and ethnicity in advertising, contributing to literature and the use of the projective method in ethnicity, and revealing clear patterns of opinion among 400 young UK consumers. This evidenced racism in the ways that data tended to amplify trends in the observable world, patterns that place White people in high-status work, and Black and West Asian people in lower status occupational roles. The study observed intra-ethnic choices, not only from White subjects to others, but between minority groups. Some minority ethnic groups clearly wanted to see themselves represented more positively, in higher status occupational roles.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The study occurs at a salient historical moment, a period of social and economic turbulence within which new cultural scripts emerge. After Britain voted to leave the EU in 2016, ahead of finally leaving on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, a sustained period began when political and media attention focused relentlessly upon division and difference: division from Europe, nationality, and differences between ethnicities and cultures in contemporary British society. Issues of ethnicity and inequality gained further momentum early in 2020, when the global COVID-19 lockdown was punctuated by George Floyd's death at the hands of police in Minneapolis, US. The Black Lives Matter campaign that followed this violent incident sparked protests more widely; in the UK, public sentiment and social action combined to re-ignite a national debate about Britain's colonial history. Under such conditions, discussion about the representation of ethnic minorities in advertising assumed a new centrality.

The representation of ethnic groups in advertising has long been problematic, not least because the advertising industry remains predominantly White (Rittenhouse 2021; NBC News 2020). Long-established concerns around the visibility and proportional representation of minority



groups have been joined in the past decade by issues raised from within minority groups about role portrayal and ethnic stereotyping. This focus upon role is, in turn, interpenetrated with portrayals of occupation or wage-earning, which exists as potent symbol of social status, hierarchy, and assumed power relations. In this study, occupation is used to describe ethnic roles, in order to generate data that concerns the representation of ethnicity in advertising.

The research has two objectives:

- To examine afresh the pattern of ethnicity that is attached to a range of occupations.
- To explore the patterns and any relationships between the ethnicity of the chooser, and the choice made for the occupational role.

The exploratory method adopts a projective technique to develop quantitative data. This offers a departure within the field and was selected for its potential to reveal attitudes or unconscious opinions that may otherwise remain hidden (Steinman 2009). Participants were 400 young adults aged 18-30, who identify as British, drawn into four ethnic groups; White, Black, East Asian; West Asian. In the study task, they chose models from four different ethnic categories, to represent a range of occupations in a fictional advertising campaign. The 18 job titles were all drawn from the UK Standard Occupational Classification set, which describes a hierarchy of occupations.

The contribution is through the introduction of a projective technique (third person technique) into ethnicity research, and the extent to which the described values may not have been revealed through other means. Previous studies have used content analyses to reveal patterns of ethnic representation in advertising (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006; Lee and Joo, 2005; Taylor et al. 2019; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013; Taylor et al. 2005; Bristor et al. 1995; Taylor and Stern, 1997). Some studies examined the opinion of both White and ethnic minorities about those representations (Hazzouri and Hamilton 2019), and the attitudes and behaviours of consumers towards ethnic models (Whittler and Spira 2002; Lord et al. 2019; Hesapci et al. 2016; Forehand and Deshpande 2001; Ting et al. 2015; Rößner et al. 2017), yet this is the first study in advertising that draws attention to the patterns that emerge when different ethnic participants choose how their own ethnic group is represented by occupation. Close attention to the ways

that occupational role intersects with representations of ethnicity brings new understanding to the topic, and raises new questions.

This methodological departure develops in tandem with an inclusive approach to enquiry; while several previous studies focus upon Black/White comparisons, we include East and West Asian groups, reflecting the UK context. The moment of the study, its method, and breadth contribute to a renewed focus on ethnicity within advertising in this special issue.

## **THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Ethnicity and advertising in the UK***

Links between ethnicity and advertising are well-established, but prior studies focussed chiefly on the United States and failed to gain traction in Britain. In the post-war period, US marketers directed their messages mainly towards White consumers prior to the 1960s, and advertisers made little of ethnic difference, either in message design or delivery channel. Early attempts at targeted advertising drew criticism since it excluded minority groups from advertising imagery (Barban and Cundiff 1964) but American advertising literature developed to embrace Black, Latino and Hispanic consumption, chiefly due to the economic impact of these groups (Kassarjian 1969; Barban and Cundiff 1964; Sexton 1972; Barry and Harvey 1974; Vasquez-Parraga and Valencia 2017; Burns and Manolis 2015; Torres and Briggs 2007).

The minority population is a smaller fraction of the UK, compared to the US, which may explain why ethnicity research in UK advertising literature has received less attention. The UK's Office for National Statistics records approximately 64.6 million people living in the UK in mid-2014; 56.2 million (87.2%) were White British, 8.4 million (12.8%) from different ethnic groups (Institute of Race Relations 2020).

Britain's colonial history casts a long shadow, with a distinctive legacy of immigration quite different from that of the US, affecting both the attitudes of minorities and the White British population's interaction with them (Burton 2000; Kinra 1997). Yet, while economic evidence and calls for social justice have increased, the subject of ethnicity in advertising practice has remained historically undervalued (Burton 1996). These consumer groups are amply big enough to deserve serious attention (Nwankwo and Lindridge 1998) yet advertisers have neglected ethnic minority consumers, avoiding sensitivities around immigration, even though

they hold purchasing power of more than £300bn (De Napoli 2013). Ethnic minorities in UK have further growth potential as a result of equal participation and progression estimated at an additional £24 billion to the UK's economy per year (Office of National Statistics 2018).

British advertising literature reveals instrumental interest in ethnic consumption (Burton 1996; Burton 2000; Kinra 1997; Adam 2017; Nwanko and Lindridge 1998; Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006; Shabir and Reast 2014), and since 2000 the topic has matured further. Advertising associations and some companies have researched to understand the representation of ethnicity in British advertising and attitudes towards role models from different ethnic groups (Fletcher 2003; Credos 2016; Lloyds Banking Group 2018). Marketers and advertisers are aware of the distinctive consumption and spending patterns among BAME consumers but persuasive acts remained problematic, and did not result in targeted national campaigns.

### ***Ethnicity and race in advertising***

Contemporary views of race and ethnicity are historically and culturally determined systems of classification, used by science and society to categorise humans. The influence of founding scientists and philosophers, who emphasized the hereditary descent of the human species, was only substantially challenged in the post-WW2 era. Enlightenment thinkers including Immanuel Kant and David Hume had formerly lent weight to the notion that Africans were destined for slavery due to lack of intelligence and morality, while Charles Darwin situated Africans between apes and Europeans (Muehlenbein 2015). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, natural and social science have re-defined race and ethnicity as social constructs, the products of political and scientific frameworks in which White groups define the terms of the difference (Muehlenbein 2015).

The term race especially refers to a group of people that share some socially defined physical characteristics, for instance, skin colour, hair texture, or facial features. Ethnicity, a term that is distinguishable from race, yet often incorrectly used interchangeably with it, refers to a group of people with a common heritage, language, religion, and self of belongingness (Fitzgerald 2018; Nwanko and Longridge 1998; Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). We adopt the term ethnicity in consequence of the descriptor used in the Face Research Lab dataset that is used in this study.

Ethnicity has also emerged within debate as a privileged term, subject to multiple interpretations. Some sources differentiate between groups, others do not, and this can prove troublesome in both the ontological and practical sense, when designing research instruments or comparing national census data.

***Representation of ethnic groups in advertising: The question of proportion.***

Representation of ethnic groups in advertising is always problematic. When we looked at the numbers historically, in the 1950s only 6% of US advertisements contained Black Americans, but this number increased to 11.4% in the 1990s. While the absolute numbers doubled over 40 years, the proportions consistently under-represent African Americans as a sector of society. In addition, Black Americans were not likely to be used in relation to prestigious brands, and many were portrayed in poverty (Bailey 2006). In the UK proportions are much lower, even as recently as 2011, when TV advertising in the UK was under-representing ethnic minority groups overall; actors from BAME groups appeared in only 5% of 35,000 TV advertisements surveyed (Sweeney 2011). By 2017, the proportional appearance of minority groups seemed to be improving; Lloyds' data found 2.7% of people featured in advertisements were Asian, 3.9% of the people were Mixed/Multiracial and 5.7% of the people featured were Black, although this was based on a more restricted sample than the Sweeney study (Lloyds 2018). Asians remained under-represented, while other groups very slightly over-represented compared to the population at large. The study noted that the chief indicator of difference was skin colour; minority groups were portrayed with a strong British identity; accent and demeanour, clothing style were overwhelmingly those of the majority White group.

The Black Lives Matter campaign created a spike of activity in UK advertising, stimulating appetite for knowledge about White privilege and systematic racism, although it was impossible to predict whether this effect would be temporary (Charles 2020). In the same period, an open letter from more than 200 advertising and media leaders proposed concrete steps to tackle racism, stating: 'As a creative sector, what we do and who we represent has a profound effect on culture, yet systematic inequality continues in our industry. We call on those in positions of influence to harness the cultural power of advertising to bring authentic prominence to the crisis of racial injustice.' (Keifer 2020).

This apparent appetite for change occurs in contrast to persistent, yet evolving, occupational norms within the advertising sector. Even though 42% of marketing professionals believe that

the work they produce doesn't reflect today's multicultural society (Marketing Week 2015), marketers are hesitant to use BAME models due to fears of upsetting White majority consumers (Dwek 1997 cited in Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). Belief persists that if ethnic minorities are included, the dominant group (Whites) will not purchase the product (Knochbloch-Westerwick and Coates 2006; Rubie-Davies et al).

While BAME consumption is increasingly acknowledged, the representation of ethnic groups in advertising has gained less attention. There is a history of BAME representation in advertising that casts roles in stereotypical terms. "Stereotypes are commonly defined as cognitive structures that contain the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about human groups," (Peffley et al. 1997, 31). We may raise suspicions that an Anglo-dominated advertising industry acts as a serious restriction on the representation of BAME groups; in 2019, 94.5% of C-Suite executives in the industry were White (Steward 2019). So, despite efforts to cast adverts sensitively, there may be unconscious decision-making in operation (Shabbir et al. 2014).

### ***Representation of occupational groups by ethnicity: The question of occupational role***

Under-representation by proportion is entwined with role representation, leaving minority groups both under-represented by volume, and stereotyped by role, which prescribes particular social and occupational status. It is role, and occupational role in particular, that frames our enquiry.

Several studies have interrogated how advertising portrays ethnicity and role, in ways that combine the proportional representation of minority groups with the social position of the occupation or role portrayed. Sudbury and Wilberforce's (2006) study revealed 33% of UK advertisements contain Black people, but analysis failed to find one single Black manager or professional in 1852 all people-based advertisements, and fewer than 1% depicted a Black individual in a managerial or professional work role that did not involve singing or dancing or minor roles. Subsequently, Shabbir et al.'s 2014 study found 31.5% of adverts containing a Black actor, greatly in excess of the as 3.3% of the UK Black population at the time, but the same study notes ample examples of racist imagery, and warns that the incidence of Black actors indicates nothing about the depiction of Black people in ads.

BAME consumers have complained about such portrayals, with their emphasis on sporting or comic roles, and usually singing and dancing. This portrays a UK society without BAME workers in White collar roles like doctors, lawyers, CEOs, but not a diverse Britain (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). Ethnic consumers have tended to express less concern about the number of ethnicities in advertising, but more concern about their portrayal; the role played in the advertising is more important (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006; Credo 2016). BAME consumers have been offended by the portrayals of minority groups aren't the principal players, and play mostly lower status roles (Credo 2016). According to Lloyds' Reflecting Modern Britain report (2018), Black people are often shown in limited roles such as teacher, musician, and sportsperson.

A similar pattern emerges in the US; a rise in proportion does not coincide with a rise in status. In 1997, Taylor and Stern found that Asian Americans only appeared in 8.4% of the 1,313 adverts, with the Asian group mostly shown in background roles in comparison to other groups, and mostly appearing in connection with technology-based products. A subsequent study (Taylor et al. 2005) found that the proportion of adverts contain Asian Americans had risen to 10.5%, along with 18.5% African Americans and 6.8% Latinos. Such figures are generated from time-bound audits, and the picture is enhanced when we consider the evidence for trends over time.

In the US, Black workers have been decreasingly portrayed in blue-collar roles, and increasingly featured as professionals or entertainers (Stevenson 2007; Shabbir et al. 2014). Where Asian models feature, the stereotype of Asian Americans as a work-centric 'model minority' has strengthened, perpetuating the stereotype of an 'all-work, no-play' attitude, which neglects social life and home settings (Taylor et al. 2005; Shabbir et al. 2014). Hence, Asian Americans are shown as hardworking and technically competent. By contrast, Hispanics are largely unrepresented in terms of working lives in the US (Bang and Reece 2003; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013).

In television advertising, African American males are frequently cast as service providers, entertainers, and athletes, while their White counterparts may more often be represented as professionals such as doctors, managers or higher professionals (Bristor et al. 1995; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013; Adams 2017). Portraying Black people as entertainers or athletes remains open to claims that such images are positive ones, while the opposite is also true; such roles

also support prejudicial stereotypes of people who shouldn't be taken seriously, or whose physicality dominates (Barthes 1987 cited in Adams 2017).

### *Attitudes towards role models in advertising: Theoretical perspectives*

The marketing and advertising industry creates communication that guides, shapes, and at its very best, positively drives culture and society. Advertising is privileged communication that wields considerable power (Lum 2017). It is commonly known to play an important role in economic development; it stimulates societal activities, and even affects how people choose to conduct themselves (Pollay and Mittal 1993; Wang et al. 2009 cited in Ting et al. 2015). In addition, advertising can represent dominant ideology and encourage others to follow (Barnett 1982; Dates and Barlow 1990; Gray 1987 cited in Bristor et al. 1995). In that context, advertising is not only a medium that gives information about the products and the services but is further believed to shape society, acting as a powerful means by which stereotypes of different ethnicities are portrayed. Bang and Reece (2003) have argued that viewers' perception can be distorted by under or wrong representation of minorities in advertising, which is termed a cultivation effect.

Advertising for mass audiences has an historic tendency to use White models almost exclusively. Advertisers may act in the belief that the dominant White group will not buy the product due to the use of minority models (Knochbloch-Westerwick and Coates 2006; Rubie-Davies et al. 2013). Acculturation theory explains this as a process where ethnic minorities assume the behaviours, attitudes and consumption patterns of the dominant group, 'melting' into the larger population (Kinra 1997). The 'melting' perspective partly explains advertising practice which arose from a past era when society was presumed uniform, taking little or no account of targeting culturally distinct groups (Kim and Kang 2001; Lee et al. 2002). Such a nationalistic, Anglo-dominated perspective is, at the very least, questionable.

However, the attitudes and behaviours of White consumers towards Black or other ethnic minority group models is far from negative. White subjects did not react negatively when Black models were included in promotional messages (Barbab 1969; Bush and Hair and Solomon 1979; Schlinger and Plummer 1972; Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). White respondents displayed a positive attitude towards advertisements containing Black models (Muse 1971 cited in Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006). Even White respondents who were pre-disposed to

racial prejudice showed positive purchasing intentions when exposed to adverts containing Black models (Sudbury and Wilberforce 2006).

Non-white consumers respond even more favourably than Whites to advertisements with ethnic cues (Forehand et al. 2001). Black consumers develop positive attitude towards brands and tend to purchase those which use Black actors in their promotion (Torres and Bridges 2007). Also, consumers identify brands as being more ethical if they use ethnic cues in their campaigns (Hesapci et al. 2016).

### ***The role of group identity***

The relative strength of ethnic group identity, or an enduring association between one's ethnicity and sense of self, can affect consumers' responses to marketing (Deshpande et al. 1986, Forehand and Deshpande 2001). This has been tested regarding time pursuits, and in food and drink consumption (Davis and Gandy 1999; Donthu and Cherian 1994; Sierra et al. 2009; Nwankwo and Lindridge 1998; Burton 2000).

Discussion of group identity would be incomplete without reference to social identity theory, which represents a key moment in theory development. Tajfel (1982) initially defined the model by drawing together the external social classifications and the internal factors that relate to group identification. This was subsequently developed to describe Social Identity as a mental sequence; categorisation, identification, comparison.

The relevance here is that in a Social Identity framework context the preference for one's own group is supported by numerous studies (Tajfel 1982). In addition, where intergroup competition (eg for work and other resources) takes place, members of the outgroups become 'undifferentiated items in a unified social category' (Tajfel 1981, 243). In such competitive situations, groups with similar values tended to show more intergroup discrimination than groups with dissimilar ones (Turner 1978, cited in Tajfel 1983). A number of studies point to the ways in which in-group favouritism lends salience to membership of that group for the individual. So, if we choose people like us for high-status roles, we reinforce our own value as a high-status individual. This perspective is salient within this study, as we examine patterns



in the way that participants exercise such choices, with reference to a broad explanatory framework that is theorised, observed, and analysed in the context of social identity.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Data collection***

Models were selected from a proven face dataset: Face Research Lab London Set, an open resource for social research. The dataset comprises images of 102 adult faces, self-reported by age, gender, and ethnicity. Attractiveness is predefined, based on ratings from 2513 people using a seven-point scale (from ‘much less attractive than average’ to ‘much more attractive than average’). All models used in this study were rated at an attractiveness score of three. The model ethnicities represent four ethnic categories; White, Black, West Asian, East Asian. We chose four models, two males and two females, from each ethnic group. Models aged 21-31 were selected, so that the ages of the models broadly matched the age of the research participants.

Participants in the study were young adults aged 18-30 recruited from the University of Central Lancashire (Preston, UK) and the University of Westminster (London, UK), who identify as British. Four hundred volunteers participated in the study. As the questionnaire is detailed, the study was administered to groups of 50 or fewer participants at each research session. The researchers explained the research procedure, and the questionnaire was administered face to face. The question set and a colour print out of the models’ face portraits were distributed to each subject. Participants were asked to choose one out of 16 models for each occupation. The same model could be chosen for more than one occupation.

Quota sampling was used to achieve a sample that reflects the ethnic group composition of the UK (adopting Office for National Statistics categories: White 86%, Black 3.3%, West Asian 5.7%, East Asian 0.7%). Study participants were invited to consider a fictitious advertising campaign for a non-gendered technology product, a mobile phone. They were asked to select one suitable model to represent each occupational role, making a choice of models from different ethnic groups. Projective technique (third-person technique) was used to alleviate the risk that participants would be reluctant or unable to expose their opinions on ethnicity due to anxieties about being judged as politically incorrect. Participants may tend to give ideal answers when a more straightforward questioning technique is used (Boddy 2005).

Respondents, whether consciously or unconsciously, tend to offer such answers when placed in the role of a research subject. Projective techniques reduce social pressure on participants that may affect their expression of attitudes and behaviours (Steinman 2009).

The occupational categories were chosen from those listed in the British Standard Occupational Categorisation, which is a taxonomy developed for UK Government statisticians and widely adopted by social researchers. It offers nine broad categories of occupation, each containing specific work roles. Each of the nine categories was represented in this question set by two work roles. Researchers selected commonly understood work roles in favour of less familiar specialisms. The work role descriptors and their hierarchical category can be seen in Table 1.

### ***Data set and variable operationalizations***

The dataset consists of 400 participants with 59 percent female and 38.5 percent male. 93 percent of the sample is between 19 to 35 years old. Both model and participant ethnicity are categorized into five groups as White, Black, East Asian, West Asian, and other. Those participants who do not belong to any of the four ethnic groups are categorized as the “other” group (n=36), which largely includes those who prefer not to answer or mixed ethnic groups. As far as the models, the “other” category consists of the participants' responses who choose not to assign a model to a specific work role and select “prefer not to say.”

We use a series of categorical variables in our analyses. For instance, in operationalizing the model ethnicity for each occupational role, the variable (e.g., CEO, Hotel Owner, Doctor) takes the value of 1, if the selected ethnicity is White; 2 if East Asian; 3 if West Asian; 4, if Black; and 5 Other. To examine the relationship between participant and model ethnicity in a meaningful way, the participant ethnicity is operationalized in the same way as the model ethnicity.

### ***Analysis and results***

***Selection of models from different ethnic groups in occupational roles.*** Table 1 reports the observed frequency of choices for all four ethnic groups and all 18 occupational roles included in the analysis. The chi-square tests show that the observed frequencies of different model

ethnicities within each occupational role is significantly different from an equal probability expected frequency (i.e., 25%).

Table 1 demonstrates that Black models were less frequently selected for the three highest status occupation categories, except for the police officer role. Black models were discriminated against by participants in relation to these roles, and the results show a clear pattern of inequity.

The pattern for East Asians was less distinctive, as this group was not the first choice by participants in any of the occupational categories. However, the selection pattern favoured East Asian models over Black models in higher status roles. In the three lowest status occupation categories they were preferred ahead of Whites for all occupational roles except bus driver and security guard, but they were selected less frequently than both Black and West Asian models.

White models were selected less frequently for the three lowest status occupational categories, except for the bus driver (16%) and security guard (25%) roles. In these two categories, West Asians were selected more than any other ethnicities (bus driver, 43%; security guard 44.5%). In the same two roles, East Asians were least preferred. However, we still see a striking preference for non-white workers in the three lowest occupational groups.

**Table 1.** Selection of Models from Different Ethnic Groups against Occupational Role: A Frequency Analysis

<i>Standard Occupation Category (SOC)</i>	<i>Select Occupational Role</i>	<b>Model Ethnicity</b>			
		<b>White</b>	<b>East Asian</b>	<b>West Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>
<b>Managers, Directors, Senior Officials</b>	<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>	114 28.5%	102 25.5%	138 34.5%	40 10%
	<i>Hotel Owner</i>	120 30%	86 21.5%	120 30%	70 17.5%
<b>Professional Occupations</b>	<i>Doctor</i>	90 22.5%	114 28.5%	136 34%	60 15%
	<i>Solicitor</i>	114 28%	108 27%	112 28%	64 16%
<b>Associate Professional and Technical Occupations</b>	<i>Police Officer</i>	112 28%	38 9.5%	140 35%	108 27%
	<i>Fashion Designer</i>	229 57.25%	81 20.25%	70 17.5%	20 5%
<b>Administrative and Secretarial Occupations</b>	<i>Receptionist</i>	146 36.5%	106 26.5%	62 15.5%	86 21.5%
	<i>Post Office Clerk</i>	54 13.5%	76 19%	182 45.5%	88 22%
<b>Skilled Trades Occupations</b>	<i>Farm Worker</i>	188 47%	60 15%	116 29%	34 8.5%
	<i>Carpenter</i>	176 44%	28 7%	140 35%	50 12.5%
<b>Caring, Leisure and Other Services Occupations</b>	<i>Ambulance Driver</i>	128 32%	76 19%	102 25.5%	92 23%
	<i>Hairdresser</i>	234 58.5%	50 12.5%	36 9%	78 19.5%
<b>Sales and Customer Service Occupations</b>	<i>Telesales Operator</i>	92 23%	98 24.5%	106 26.5%	98 24.5%
	<i>Till Operator</i>	78 19.5%	92 23%	108 27%	122 30.5%
<b>Process, Plant and Machine Operatives</b>	<i>Factory Worker</i>	44 11%	100 25%	144 36%	110 27.5%
	<i>Bus Driver</i>	64 16%	18 4.5%	172 43%	144 36%
<b>Elementary Occupations</b>	<i>Cleaner</i>	58 14.5%	88 22%	164 41%	88 22%
	<i>Security Guard</i>	100 25%	12 3%	178 44.5%	108 27%

Note: The ranking in the SOC is from the highest to lowest status of occupation categories.

Regarding the three occupation categories in the middle (administrative and secretarial; skilled trades; caring, leisure, and other services), we find that White models were more preferred in all but one role, post office clerk. Clear preferences emerge along ethnic lines within these categories, with most preferred choices offering a clear percentage lead over the second most

preferred, particularly regarding receptionist, farm worker, and carpenter, in which White models were preferred, and post office clerk, in which West Asians were more preferred.

For the three highest status occupational categories, the two most frequently selected ethnicities were White and West Asians except the fashion designer role, where White models were clearly preferred ahead of all others (57.25%). The picture for West Asians appears contradictory, with this ethnicity group selected for both high and low occupational roles. This prompted further analysis and researchers focussed on the pattern of individual models chosen.

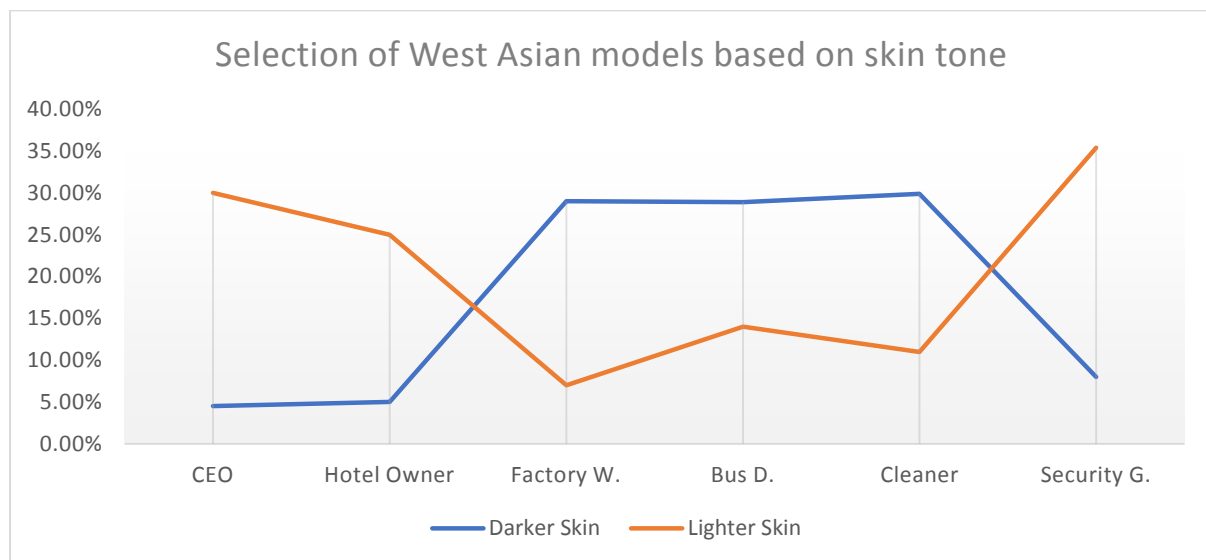
The West Asian ethnic category includes Middle Eastern models, who tend to have lighter skin tone than other groups such as Pakistani and Indian models. Both were selected as part of the dataset. Analysing choices model by model, we observed that models with darker skin tone tended to be selected in elementary and process, plant and machine operative roles (cleaner, 30%; bus driver, 29%; factory worker, 29%), while those with lighter skin tone were selected for professional and managerial roles (CEO, 30%; hotel owner, 25%; solicitor, 21.5%). In the doctor role, the situation reverses; West Asians with darker skin tones were preferred (21.5%) over lighter skin tone models (13%). We believe that this may be linked to subjects' social observation; Indian nationals are long established as health professionals in the UK, and the Indian doctor is a cultural stereotype established in popular culture since the 1950s.

In the lowest occupation category, darker skin tone West Asians (30%) were more frequently selected for the cleaner role whereas lighter skin tone West Asians were favoured in the security guard role (35.4%). This may reflect views about the nuances of these roles, their social status and meaning, but full understanding of this distinction is beyond the scope of this study and would require further research.

We conducted an additional analysis to understand the relationship between the skin tone and the police officer and security guard roles. The security guard role showed some similarities with the police officer role, a higher status occupation in the SOC hierarchy. West Asians were the most favoured group as police officers (35%), but 30.9% out of those 35% were lighter skin tone West Asian models. The advantage of skin colour becomes especially clear at this point. Cowart and Lehnert (2018) observed similar results; persons with light skin tone received more favourable treatment and work assignments than persons with darker skin tone, which is suggestive of a hierarchy based on skin tone. If we aggregate results from all models with the

lightest skin tone, we see a pattern of colour-based advantage in the selection of White models and models with lighter skin tones for higher status occupational roles (CEO, 58.5%; hotel owner, 75%; solicitor 49.5%; doctor 35.5%; police officer 58.9%; fashion designer, 74.25%) as demonstrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Selection of West Asian Models Based on Skin Tone



***Each ethnic group participants' selection of other ethnic groups for higher and lower status occupational groups.*** We looked at patterns in the observed frequencies, and next, we examined the chi-square test of independence between participant and model ethnicity along with the contribution of each cell to the chi-square statistic. This allowed us to both describe the observed pattern and check for any significant relationships between the participants' own ethnic group and their choice of model for the range of occupations. First, we examine the choices of study participants with White ethnicity, since in the UK, the biggest fraction of the population is White (86%). It remains important to place attention on the ethnic group that exerts the greatest influence in consumer markets, because advertisers consider the views of this group in broad proportion to their economic power. On the other hand, the advertising industry is overwhelmingly White 90% (Credos 2016) and may lack the insight and skills to reach BAME consumers (Credos 2016). Whether consciously or unconsciously, advertisers' work reflects dominant group expectations through advertising, so it is important to determine White consumers' attitudes towards other ethnic groups.

Considering White subjects' views of other ethnic groups, frequency counts reveal a clear pattern. In the four higher status occupations, White participants mostly favoured White models, followed by West and East Asians. There is evidence of discrimination against Black

models. We found significant results especially for the CEO and Doctor occupations between participant and model ethnicity ( $\chi^2(4) = 15.9, p < 0.01$  and  $\chi^2(3) = 7.9, p < 0.05$ , respectively). The chi-square contribution of the selection of Black models by White participants is the highest of all four cells. Regarding the doctor role, the chi-square contribution of the selection of darker skin tone West Asian models is the highest. Regarding lower status jobs, we observe that Whites frequently selected non-whites for all four occupations and we found a weak significant result for the Cleaner occupation role between participant and model ethnicity ( $\chi^2(4) = 8.2, p < 0.1$ ).

**Table 2:** White Participants’ Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

N= 242 (White participants)		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	76 (31.4)	60 (24.7)	90 (37.1)	14 (5.7)	$\chi^2(4) = 15.9^{***}$ (0.003)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.7	0	0.5	4.3	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	72 (29.7)	42 (17.3)	78 (32.2)	48 (19.8)	$\chi^2(4) = 8.0^*$ (0.091)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	1.9	0.4	0.8	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	54 (22.3)	64 (26.4)	94 (38.8)	30 (12.3)	$\chi^2(3) = 7.9^{**}$ (0.048)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.4	1.7	1.1	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	74 (30.5)	64 (26.4)	62 (25.6)	40 (1.6)	$\chi^2(3) = 3.6$ (0.455)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.4	0	0.5	0	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	22 (9.1)	68 (28.1)	86 (35.5)	64 (26.4)	$\chi^2(4) = 5.9$ (0.201)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.8	0.9	0	0.1	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	36 (14.8)	14 (5.7)	106 (43.8)	86 (35.5)	$\chi^2(4) = 5.9$ (0.205)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.2	0.9	0	0	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	38 (15.7)	62 (25.6)	92 (38)	48 (19.8)	$\chi^2(4) = 8.2^*$ (0.084)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.2	1.4	0.5	0.5	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	56 (23.1)	6 (2.4)	108 (44.6)	70 (28.9)	$\chi^2(4) = 3.5$ (0.470)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.3	0.2	0	0.3	

Notes: “Other” category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-White participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how White participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ )

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

Next, we examine the choices of study participants with East Asian ethnicity. In higher status occupational roles Table 3 shows that the Chi-square tests show a significant relationship between participant and model ethnicity for CEO and doctor ( $\chi^2(4) = 12.5, p < 0.05$  and  $\chi^2(4) = 7.8, p < 0.05$ ) while a weakly significant and insignificant relationship for hotel owner and solicitor ( $\chi^2(4) = 8.1, p < 0.1$  and  $\chi^2(4) = 2.1, p > 0.1$ , respectively). Our findings also showed

that Black models were not selected at all for the highest status occupation category and the contribution of these cells to the overall chi-square statistic is the highest ( $\chi^2$  contribution = 2 for CEO  $\chi^2$  contribution = 3.5 for hotel owner, respectively). Frequency counts reveal that East Asian subjects slightly favour Blacks in the doctor role, but the general observable pattern is that this group favours themselves, or White models in high-status roles, except in the solicitor role. For lower status roles, there is a pattern of preference for West Asian and Black models, with no choices for models with White and their own ethnicity in the bus driver and security guard roles.

**Table 3.** East Asian Participants’ Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

N= 20 (East Asian participants)		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	6 (30)	6 (30)	6 (30)	0 (0)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 12.5** (0.014)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.2	0.1	2	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	10 (50)	6 (30)	4 (20)	0 (0)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.1* (0.088)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	2.7	0.7	0.7	3.5	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	4 (20)	8 (40)	2 (10)	6 (30)	$\chi^2$ (3) = 7.8** (0.05)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.1	0.9	3.4	3	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	6 (30)	4 (20)	8 (40)	2 (10)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 2.1 (0.725)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.4	1	0.5	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	2 (10)	4 (20)	8 (40)	6 (30)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 0.5 (0.976)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.2	0.1	0	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (40)	12 (60)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 7.8 (0.098)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	3.2	0.9	0	3.2	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	2 (10)	4 (20)	10 (50)	4 (20)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 0.9 (0.926)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.3	0	0.4	0	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (60)	8 (40)	$\chi^2$ (4) = 8.4* (0.076)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	5	0.6	1.1	1.3	

Notes: “Other” category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-East Asian participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how East Asian participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ )

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

Then, we examine the choices of study participants with West Asian ethnicity. West Asian choices show a pattern based on frequency count alone. Still, these choices are either weakly significant (i.e.,  $p < 0.1$  for CEO and Solicitor) or not significant concerning the higher status occupation categories. As Table 4 demonstrates for West Asian participants the observed frequencies reveal similar numbers for all ethnic group models except Black models selected



for the CEO, hotel owner, doctor, solicitor occupations. However, the picture changes when for the lower status occupational roles. Of the four different roles, the relationship between participant and model ethnicity is significant only for the security guard role ( $\chi^2(4) = 13.4$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). As far as the frequencies, the results are consistent across the study, favouring White models for the security guard role. We also observe that West Asians do not frequently select Whites for the bus driver, cleaner and factory worker roles but selecting either their ethnic group or Black models for these occupations.

**Table 4.** West Asian Participants’ Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

N= 76 (West Asian participants)		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	28 (36.8)	12 (15.7)	26 (34.2)	10 (13.1)	$\chi^2(4) = 8.1^*$ (0.088)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	1.9	2.8	0	0.8	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	22 (28.9)	18 (23.6)	20 (26.3)	14 (18.4)	$\chi^2(4) = 3.2$ (0.523)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.2	0.3	0	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	16 (21)	28 (36.8)	26 (34.2)	6 (7.8)	$\chi^2(3) = 5.5$ (0.136)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.1	1.9	0	2.6	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	12 (15.7)	24 (31.5)	26 (34.2)	14 (18.4)	$\chi^2(4) = 8.1^*$ (0.086)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	4.3	0.6	1	0.3	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	8 (10.5)	16 (21)	26 (34.2)	26 (34.2)	$\chi^2(4) = 2.7$ (0.610)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.5	0.1	1.2	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	12 (15.7)	4 (5.2)	36 (47.3)	24 (31.5)	$\chi^2(4) = 1.5$ (0.823)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	0.1	0.3	0.4	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	10 (13.1)	12 (15.7)	34 (44.7)	20 (26.3)	$\chi^2(4) = 3.3$ (0.502)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.1	1.3	0.3	0.6	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	30 (39.4)	4 (5.2)	26 (34.2)	16 (21)	$\chi^2(4) = 13.4^{**}$ (0.009)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	6.4	1.3	1.8	1.0	

Notes: “Other” category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-West Asian participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how West Asian participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ )

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

In the final category, we examine the choices of study participants of Black ethnicity. Black participants chose Black models, clearly in relation to two higher status roles, CEO and doctor. In both cases, the relationship between participant and model ethnicity was significant ( $\chi^2(4) = 42.1$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and  $\chi^2(4) = 26.2$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , respectively) and the cells with the highest contribution to the chi-square statistic were Black model ethnicity for both CEO and doctor

roles. For lower status roles, frequencies reveal that Black subjects favoured West Asians for all four lowest status roles, with only one significant chi-square statistic for the factory worker role ( $\chi^2(4) = 15.6, p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 5.** Black Participants' Selection of Other Ethnic Groups for the two Highest Status and two Lowest Status Occupation Categories

N= 26 (Black participants)		Model Ethnicity				Pearson $\chi^2$ (p-value)
		White	East Asian	West Asian	Black	
CEO	Frequency (% of N)	2 (7.6)	6 (23)	6 (23)	12 (46.1)	$\chi^2(4) = 42.1^{***}$ (0.000)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	3.9	0.1	1	34	
Hotel Owner	Frequency (% of N)	8 (30.7)	10 (38.4)	4 (15.3)	4 (15.3)	$\chi^2(4) = 6.1$ (0.195)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0	3.5	1.9	0.1	
Doctor	Frequency (% of N)	8 (30.7)	4 (15.3)	2 (7.6)	12 (46.1)	$\chi^2(3) = 26.2^{***}$ (0.000)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.8	1.6	5.3	16.8	
Solicitor	Frequency (% of N)	12 (46.1)	10 (38.4)	2 (7.6)	2 (7.6)	$\chi^2(4) = 9.8^{**}$ (0.043)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	2.8	1.3	3.8	1.1	
Factory Worker	Frequency (% of N)	8 (30.7)	2 (7.6)	12 (46.1)	4 (15.3)	$\chi^2(4) = 15.6^{**}$ (0.004)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	9.2	3.1	0.7	1.4	
Bus Driver	Frequency (% of N)	6 (23)	0 (0)	12 (46.1)	8 (30.7)	$\chi^2(4) = 2.5$ (0.638)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	0.8	1.2	0.1	0.2	
Cleaner	Frequency (% of N)	6 (23)	2 (7.6)	12 (46)	6 (23)	$\chi^2(4) = 4.3$ (0.363)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	1.3	2.4	0.2	0	
Security Guard	Frequency (% of N)	4 (15.3)	2 (7.6)	14 (53.8)	6 (23)	$\chi^2(4) = 3.9$ (0.418)
	$\chi^2$ contribution	1.0	1.9	0.5	0.1	

Notes: "Other" category for Model Ethnicity is not displayed in the table to focus on the four ethnic groups and for that reason the sum of the frequencies across each row may not be equal to N.

The selection of non-Black participants is not displayed in the table for an easier interpretation of how Black participants select models from different ethnicities in each occupation.

Pearson chi-square shows the overall test of independence between the participant ethnicity and the selected occupation ethnicity (\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$ )

Chi-square contribution demonstrates the contribution of each cell to the overall chi-square result.

As a result, regarding these two occupational roles it is clear that Black and West Asian participants choose models from their ethnicity for high-status roles. This lends weight to an interpretation framed by the effect of Social Identity Theory Tajfel (1982) where West Asian and Black participants positively desire to see their ethnic group represented in higher status roles; CEO and doctor.

Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (1982) frames the discussion but exists in tension with the results here, because the key observable effect (ethnic groups choosing their own ethnicity for higher status roles) was partly supported by the data to a statistically significant extent.

Nevertheless, one key finding is that Black subjects specifically chose Black models in the CEO and doctor roles, results which align strongly with a social identity interpretation. That result does not extend to a general pattern with the data, either at the level of observed frequencies or within the search for statistical significance. Rather, the pattern is confused and contradictory, with some clear yet inconsistent patterns regarding ethnicity and occupational role.

We are drawn instead to Tajfel's (1982) acknowledgement of the importance of 'pre-existing' attitudes or stereotypes. A generalised pattern of social reproduction is somewhat observable within the frequency data: broad preferences for White senior roles, and West Asian doctors, for example, are patterns observable in UK social life, and supported by UK Census data on ethnicity and occupation. The existence of pre-existing stereotypes was not specifically tested within the study, but it forms a social background to its subjects.

In consequence, the results offer a complex picture. There is evidence of the desire for social status, formed around social identity that places 'people like me' in high-status roles. A small fraction of that data, concerning Black subjects and Black roles, withstands statistical significance test. To that, we must add that the more general trends within the data reproduce apparently strong patterns of (dis)advantage based on observed ethnicity, for example, darker skin appears linked to lower status work, White models were consistently favoured. We also note a third strand, wherein certain roles, some groups have gone far further than simply representing the observable social world, so that the results accentuate and reinforce patterns of disadvantage, a trend especially observable in the frequency with which West Asian subjects selected same-ethnicity models in lower status roles.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The conjunction of occupation and ethnicity offers a complex and contradictory environment for fieldwork. Our analysis reflects that and draws out two contrasting trends, one emphasising existing dominant social patterns, the other challenging them.

This study evidenced racism in the ways that data tended to amplify trends in the observable world (and, by association, in the mediated world of advertising), patterns that place White people in high-status work, and Black and West Asian people in lower status occupational roles. Such choices were not restricted entirely to White subjects, but are clustered here in responses from White subjects, and are somewhat suggestive of a cultivation effect. Most

disappointing of all, the method exposed the strong link between the role of skin colour and expectations around occupational role, in ways that assign lower status to darker skin.

We are also struck by some intra-ethnic choices observed, for example in the frequency with which Black subjects appear to de-select West Asians in both high and low status roles. This is not easily explainable, nor was it statistically significant, but it is an observable pattern that prompts analysis. We are drawn to Taylor's (1978) observation that, in competitive situations, groups with similar values displayed more intergroup discrimination than groups with dissimilar ones (cited in Tajfel 1983, 26), but at this stage that is only a candidate explanation for what may not be reproduced elsewhere. Further research in this area of intra-ethnic attitudes would be required, and could usefully supplement a body of knowledge that is largely couched in terms of the White vs other, in this subject domain at least.

Within advertising practice, we can summarise that this represents the traditional entrenched approach; that these stereotypical representations somewhat reflect observable society, if in an exaggerated form, and that in advertising practice, their use does no observable damage to the client's sales.

We also found evidence of a contrasting trend, more optimistic and aspirational. Under this trend, we saw how some minority ethnic groups clearly wanted to see themselves represented more positively, in higher status occupational roles. There was weak evidence for this across all groups, but it was observed more clearly in specific minority groups who sought higher-status roles for their own ethnic type. We summarise that this view aligns more closely with a social identity perspective, where 'people like us' are preferred, and higher status and more positive roles might be more proportionally distributed. A social identity perspective is not automatically an optimistic perspective since, unchecked, it can amount to an entrenched re-statement of existing social and occupational positions, which are, of course, by no means distributed fairly.

For advertising practice, the implication is that advertisers have evidence to support pursuing a more aspirational vision of a fairer society. The initial rationale for this may be mundane; it avoids continuing to mis-represent various groups, either under-representing by proportion, but specifically under-representing by occupational and social role. We can go further, to suggest what we could reasonably term an extended diversity rationale. The depiction of a broader

range of ethnicities in higher status roles could be pursued, with the intention of changing social expectations over time (Cowart and Lehnert 2018). This extended diversity rationale may encourage practitioners towards representing a society that does not yet exist, but which positive and thoughtful advertising practice might yet support and promote, in ways that are demonstrably evidenced by consumer desire.

### ***Limitations and future research***

Limitations here concern the study's exploratory quality; data is created and analysed to characterise ethnic preferences, but more work would be needed to disclose individual motivations and drivers. Preferences exist, further work could usefully extend this enquiry to underlying causes.

Multivariate analysis resulted in some small sub-group sizes, decreasing the likelihood of statistical significance. Reducing those, for example by restricting enquiry to comparisons between two ethnic groups, could contribute to our understanding of intra-ethnic attitudes with the effect that further statistical significance may emerge.

The apparent impact of skin tone warrants further work to isolate its role in the complex patterns of preference which define and divide diverse societies.

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## APPENDIX

### *Additional analysis*

To better understand the relationship between the overall participant and model ethnicity, we ran Chi-square tests of independence for all 18 work roles included in the dataset. Of the 18 work roles, it turns out that 9 of them demonstrate that there is a significant association between subjects' ethnicity and the model ethnicity they chose for that work role. In fact, we found that for at least one occupation under each occupation classification, participant ethnicity and the chosen model ethnicity are statistically related to each other. Occupations where a significant relationship was found are reported in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Chi-square Test of Independence with Significant Results between Participant and Model Ethnicity

Model Ethnicity in Occupation	Participant Ethnicity				
	White (N=242)	East Asian (N=20)	West Asian (N=76)	Black (N=26)	Other (N=36)
CEO			$\chi^2(16) = 83.748^{***}$		
Doctor			$\chi^2(12) = 39.536^{***}$		
Police			$\chi^2(16) = 50.598^{***}$		
Receptionist			$\chi^2(12) = 44.339^{***}$		
Farm worker			$\chi^2(16) = 43.032^{***}$		
Ambulance Driver			$\chi^2(16) = 50.069^{***}$		
Till Operator			$\chi^2(12) = 31.610^{**}$		
Bus Driver			$\chi^2(16) = 38.550^{***}$		
Security Guard			$\chi^2(16) = 25.862^{**}$		

\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$

We also ran a multinomial logistic (MNL) regression where the dependent variable is the model ethnicity and the independent variable is participant ethnicity. We focussed on the two higher status and two lower status (i.e., CEO, Doctor, Bus Driver, Security Guard) occupational roles where we found a significant chi-square test statistic earlier. MNL regression predicts the likelihood of choosing one category over another based on some determining factors. Hence, our study examines the likelihood of selecting one model ethnicity over another for a specific occupational role based on the participant ethnicity.

Table 7 demonstrates the logistic regression results, which mainly agree with the results in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5. It depicts that all four models are significant and pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> figures indicate an improvement in the fit of each model compared to a null model. Across the different occupations, the base outcome for model ethnicity is determined by the most

frequently selected ethnic group for that role. For instance, for CEO, doctor, and security guard, West Asians are the most frequently chosen ethnic group, hence the base outcome. For the participant ethnicity, the “Other” group was determined as the base group. Hence, all the coefficients are evaluated in comparison to the “Other” category (see the description of the “Other” category under *Data Set and Variable Operationalizations*).

**Table 7.** Multinomial Logistic Regression Findings for the Relationship between Model and Participant Ethnicity

	<b>CEO</b>	<b>Doctor</b>	<b>Bus Driver</b>	<b>Security Guard</b>
<b>Model Ethnicity</b>	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
<b>White</b>				
<i>Base outcome</i>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White	1.439 *	-0.149		-0.068
East Asian	1.609 *	1.098		-16.176
West Asian	1.683 **	-0.08		0.73
Black	0.51	1.791 **		-0.665
Constant	-1.609 **	-0.405		-0.587
<b>East Asian</b>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White	-0.993 **	-0.202	15.597	15.575
East Asian	-0.587	1.568 *	15.273	-0.418
West Asian	-1.361 **	0.256	15.442	16.594
Black	-0.588	0.875	0.348	16.519
Constant	0.588	-0.182	-16.541	-18.465
<b>West Asian</b>				
<i>Base outcome</i>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White			1.079 **	
East Asian			15.681	
West Asian			1.098 **	
Black			0.693	
Constant			0.0002	
<b>Black</b>				
<i>Participant Ethnicity</i>				
White	-0.945	-0.448	0.534	0.377
East Asian	-14.62	1.791 *	15.75	0.405
West Asian	-0.039 **	-0.773	0.356	0.325
Black	1.609 **	2.484 **	-0.048	-0.036
Constant	-0.916	-0.693	0.336	-0.81 *
<b>Model Fit</b>				
Pseudo R-squared	0.063	0.035	0.026	0.032
N	400	400	398	398
Log-likelihood	-512.41	-519.35	-451.326	-449.461
LR $\chi^2$	68.48	37.08	24.13	29.57
Prob.	0.000	0.000	0.019	0.003

\* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01

For the higher status roles such as CEO, we see that Black participants' likelihood of selecting a Black ethnicity (compared to West Asian ethnicity) is significant and predicted to be 1.61 points greater than that of "other" participants. Also, we see that White participants' likelihood of selecting their own ethnicity is 1.43 points greater than that of "other" participants. Similarly, for the Doctor role, we find that Black participants' likelihood of selecting a Black model (compared to West Asian ethnicity) is significant and predicted to be 2.48 points greater than that of "other" participants. In addition, another ethnic group who is likely to choose their own ethnic group for the Doctor role is East Asians, and the likelihood is 1.56 points greater than that of "other" participants. Among the lower status roles, we see that West Asians' likelihood of selecting a model from their ethnic group (compared to White ethnicity) for the bus driver role is significant and 1.098 points greater than "other" participants.