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Black and White Advertising in Fashion Magazines

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Black and White Advertising in Fashion Magazines

by

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Abstract

This thesis consists of a quantitative analysis with respect to black and white advertising in select women’s fashion magazines. There were five research questions outlined.

A code sheet was created to obtain data with regard to factors including: number of black and white and total advertisements, product/service category, setting, advertisement size, percent of black and white of the ad, position, product/user, black and white visual and verbal (words/information), emotional/intellectual appeal. This allowed the research questions to be answered. A qualitative analysis was also performed on repeat advertisements for products that used both color and black and white advertising with regard to the theme, setting, and format. The results indicated that black and white advertising was a small (less than 10%) but consistent part of overall advertising in women’s fashion magazines. However, the largest amount of black and white advertising came disproportionately from only two product/service categories, beauty/personal care and clothing/accessories.

Key Terms: advertiser, issue, publication, partial black and white advertisement, partial page advertisement
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Introduction

Tens of billions of dollars are spent each year just in the United States alone on advertising, including print, television and other media (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000). With such a significant expenditure of resources occurring each year by businesses in an attempt to better market the products and services they sell, it is obvious that the intent is to transform targeted consumers into business customers. Simply stated, businesses spend advertising dollars on the belief that the advertisements are effective at bringing in new customers, otherwise, businesses could not justify such a significant monetary expenditure year after year. Therefore, it is in the interest of businesses and advertisers alike to understand and utilize what makes for more effective advertising so that advertising dollars will be well spent and satisfy the desire for increased business. This will ensure that these advertising dollars continue to be spent freely in the future and without interruption. Any cessation or significant reduction in advertising expenditures would directly impact in a negative way not only advertising firms, but also graphic designers, artists, printing supply companies and media outlets, just to name a few, not to mention the overall economy in general.

As noted, there are many different forms of media used in advertising, from print to television, and even internet advertisements. Although there are likely some generalities and similarities with regard to what would constitute effective marketing in each, many if not most studies have focused on one specific, individual media type. Besides the various individual media types, there are also many variables which have been studied with regard to exactly which factors make an advertisement more or less effective. These include, to name but a few, the relative size of the picture shown to
viewers (Percy & Rossiter, 1983), utilization of graphics as opposed to line art (Lohse & Rosen, 2001), and the use of color versus black and white (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000). These variables have, in turn, yielded sub-variables such as, for example with respect to color, attention-getting color and product-enhancing color (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000), as well as differing color preferences based upon individual consumer characteristics ranging from gender, to age, to race and ethnic background (Cole, Donenberg, Agunga & Rutledge, 2001; Sable & Akcay, 2011).

As a result of the multiplicity of factors, an effective analysis necessarily requires that the focus of this thesis be narrowed in scope. Therefore, this thesis will consist of a content analysis on partial or total absence of total color, that is, black and white, in print advertising involving select, representative fashion magazines and any necessary implications with regard to the use or absence of color. Although a number of studies and experiments have been conducted in this area, research with regard to this topic may best be described as a work in progress since there are so many sub-variables, even concerning color or its absence, and even with regard to print advertising. For example, what has been shown to be effective in marketing various products and services, when duplicated, has been found to be ineffective in advertising a different set of products and services (Lohse & Rosen, 2001). Each study has added to the understanding of color in advertising or the absence thereof, however, it has also been found that any significant extrapolation in this area is generally unwise.

This thesis will explore how and to what extent black and white is currently being used in print advertising in women’s fashion magazines, either alone or in combination with color. It is clear that today the majority of advertisements in the United States are in
color and comparatively few are in black and white. However, black and white advertisements are more economical for businesses because they are cheaper to produce than color advertisements (Lohse & Rosen, 2001). Producing the most effective advertising at what is viewed as the best price is beneficial not only to businesses that advertise but also to those deriving income from the advertising industry since it helps ensure that advertising dollars will continue to flow and possibly increase. To the extent that the cost of effective advertising is lower, a greater number of businesses, using a cost-benefit analysis, are more likely to start and/or continue advertising. Businesses will not advertise, for example, if the advertising costs $10,000.00 but only results in $5,000.00 in additional business. A qualitative content analysis has been conducted to examine the use of black and white in relation to product categories, placement and size of the advertisement, and in the case of repeat/multiple advertisements by a business or its competitor, whether there is a use of both color and black and white advertisements for the same or similar products.

**Literature Review**

As noted, this thesis explores the extent to which black and white advertisements are being used. The advertisements which were analyzed came from three different women’s fashion magazines that were selected based upon criteria described under the Methods section. Recent past issues over the last several years have been reviewed in an attempt to answer the research questions listed below in this section. The current study consists of quantitative as well as a qualitative content analysis on select advertisements that were found to have repeated (have run more than once) as against different advertisements by the same business or its competitor(s). It is axiomatic that if the same
advertisement runs more than once there is at least some confidence that the advertisement is likely to reach its targeted audience and so is somewhat effective at its intended purpose.

Significantly, it has been found that color and black and white advertisements are equally effective at conveying information (Percy & Rossiter, 1983). Nevertheless, color in advertising has been generally found to possess certain advantages over black and white which would account for why today color advertising is the rule and black and white is the exception. These advantages include, among others: products in color advertisements are seen as having higher quality, and, color advertisements produce a more favorable attitude toward the product (Lohse & Rosen, 2001). Also, advertisements using color to substantiate specific information are most likely to be contacted first by consumers (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000). However, it is generally recognized that the perceived advantage that color advertising has over black and white operates at the emotional level (Nolan, 2003; Percy & Rossiter, 1983).

The presence of emotion does not mean that there is not a physiological component to color. It has been found that persons viewing the exact same photographs, some in full color and others wholly in black and white, had physically measurable changes in Chromogranin A and Cortisol, which are two frequently used biochemical markers for measuring the level of stress (Saito & Toda, 2007). The color photographs viewed by these test subjects actually caused these biochemical substances to change, thereby indicating a measurable drop in the subjects’ stress levels. It has also been found and documented that apes when exposed to colorless environments withdrew into themselves in a manner similar to schizophrenics (Engelbrecht, 2003). Therefore, there
is obviously a not-yet-completely-understood biological need for color in everyday life.

There is clearly a need for color in everyday life, however, humans today enjoy a much more colorful environment than when testing began back in the 1950’s when it was found that there was a preference for color over black and white advertisements. It must be remembered that at that time television and many movies were in black and white, as well as most advertising. There was also no computer generated color. The population back then was comparatively color starved, however, that is certainly not the case now since color television, full color movies, computer generated color, and colored advertisements are the norm rather than the exception. In short, the need for color would seemingly be otherwise satisfied through these methods and it may not be as important for advertising as it once was. Color was clearly the exception and not the rule when color testing began in the 1950’s and so it is not unexpected that it would have been received more favorably as an aberration. Therefore, although color is admittedly important to the human condition, in today’s world the reintroduction of black and white in advertising would now be the exception rather than the rule, and as the aberration would tend to stand out as compared with all of the other full color advertisements (Clarke & Honeycutt, 2000, Gonzalez, 2005). Also, it is possible to be over stimulated and distracted through having too much color, which is counter-productive to the message being conveyed, and so black and white advertisements may actually provide a needed respite (Myers-Levy & Peracchio, 1995). Since the goal of advertising is not simply to attract attention but to ultimately sell products, everything that has been learned with regard to color use (or nonuse) should be and likely is being employed in the reintroduction of black and white advertising today.
One of the earliest and most comprehensive studies to focus on color advertising versus black and white was conducted by the Milwaukee Journal in 1957. The questions sought to be answered were “1. Does the addition of color significantly change the reaction to an ad? 2. Is this change favorable to the advertiser?” (Gardner & Cohen, 1964, p.68). The conclusions stated were as follows: “This study goes beyond previous recall studies in exploring the kinds of feelings and evaluations which color evokes. Its implications for the advertisers are that using color gives him an advantage over competitors who use black and white and that color enhances his status in relation to higher status stores…we can be certain that color does make a difference in reaction to an ad…a next step is to investigate the extent to which this difference is translated into buying behavior…” (Gardner & Cohen, 1964, p.70). In other words, the study found that color advertisements were generally seen more favorably than black and white advertisements but if this did not lead to products being actually purchased then the advertisement failed in its purpose, which is to obtain new business customers.

Through studies it has been learned that different colors are viewed more or less favorably than others depending upon the demographics of the targeted group of consumers. With regard to gender, women tend to prefer softer, less saturated colors compared with men (De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001; Nolan, 2003). Color preferences also change with the age of the individual, with children preferring more intense, vivid colors than their adult counterparts (Cole, Donenberg, Agunga & Rutledge, 2001, De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001). Color preferences are also different among different cultures, races and ethnic groups (Sable & Akcay, 2011; Brennan, 2012). The color blue is one of the few colors, or perhaps the only color, with universal acceptability across cultural, racial and
ethnic groups (Sable & Akcay, 2011). To the extent that black and white advertising can be used effectively, then these demographic color preference issues do not pose any potential pitfall as with some color advertising.

As has been observed, beginning even with the 1957 study, simply because the color advertisement attracted viewers’ attention did not automatically translate into increased purchases of the actual advertised products. It was realized that there was a need, therefore, to study not simply whether or not a color advertisement is received more favorably than its black and white counterpart but to also determine if this preference translates into actual business for the company that has chosen to advertise. Growing out of this realization, the distinction between attention-getting color and product-enhancing color has been pointed out; however, the latter is only gradually becoming more fully understood (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000; Garber & Hyatt, 2003). As was stated, “…future research in directional media like the Yellow Pages should carefully distinguish between advertising effects (e.g. attracting attention) and advertising effectiveness (e.g. receiving a call from a customer)…” (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000, p.72). In other words, even if a color advertisement gets greater attention and is perceived more favorably, that is of little consolation if it does not, at the same time, result in the business’ products or services being selected by the consumer. Again, the purpose of advertising is not to provide the consumer with pretty or colorful pictures but to persuade consumers to buy from the business and become its customers.

Very likely as a result all of these studies on color with regard to advertising, color advertisements are dominant in the United States, with black and white advertising definitely in the minority. It is worth noting again that color and black and white
advertising are of equal weight with consumers when it comes to perceived credibility (Lohse & Rosen, 2001). The three functions served by color are to attract attention to the advertisement, enhance the appeal of the product being sold, and to communicate relevant information about the product (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000; Ladkin, n.d.). The first function causes consumers to notice the product being advertised, so called attention-getting color, while the second function actually makes the product seem more appealing, which is termed product-enhancing color. The third function actually communicates relevant information to support the advertisement’s claims, such as with the use of a color picture of fruit in an advertisement by a fresh fruit merchant. This would not be useful for all products and services, and to the extent that the color picture suggests that the claims are inaccurate, the use of color can actually backfire and undermine the credibility of the advertisement (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000).

To the extent that black and white advertising is the exception, as it currently is, it could actually stand out and draw attention to the advertisement as being different from the other color advertisements and possibly effectively serve the first function, attention getting (Clarke & Honeycutt, 2000). However, color still has a possible advantage with regard to enhancing product appeal and communicating relevant information depending upon the product or service being offered. For some products or services, outside of food or other items where aesthetics are used to judge quality, the use of color may not be greatly beneficial to the third function of communicating relevant information (Fernandez & Rosen, 2000). Since the second and third functions have some application one would expect to find when surveying advertisements a greater trend toward color and partial black and white advertisements when compared to total black and white advertisements.
As expected given the movement toward color over the last several decades it was found that color advertisements are dominant throughout the magazines analyzed in this thesis.

The research questions that this thesis set out to answer in fashion magazines are as follows.

**RQ1:** Do black and white advertisements in fashion magazines contain the product, a model or both?

**RQ2:** Are there certain types of products or services which most often use black and white in advertising?

**RQ3:** When black and white is used in advertising is it mostly used alone or in conjunction with color, (i.e. partial black and white), both overall and with prospect to visual elements and verbal?

**RQ4:** Is there a particular placement/position and/or size of the black and white advertisements in the magazines?

**RQ5:** What type of theme (i.e. setting, intellectual/emotional appeal) is seen most often in these black and white or partial black and white advertisements?

**Method**

Fashion trends tend to change more frequently than most products and so it stands to reason that the window for effectively marketing these products is narrower than for many other products. One would expect, therefore, that fashion advertising must necessarily be fast paced and “cutting edge” and “ahead of the curve” in order to be effective. Those publications with longevity, in addition to significant circulation, would seemingly be the best representative indicator. Therefore this report analyzed the advertising in several long standing and/or large circulation fashion magazines as more
likely indicative of the continued viability of black and white advertising, especially with regard to aesthetics-oriented, targeted females. Most fashion magazines are clearly geared more toward females rather than males, and females have been shown to have a greater affinity for color than males (De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001). Therefore, to the extent that black and white advertisements are appearing more (or less) in these types of magazines, it may be more indicative of acceptability (or the lack thereof) even with females who are typically more color conscious than males (De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001).

Sample

The magazines selected, whose advertisements were analyzed, include *Seventeen* Magazine, *Vogue* Magazine, and *InStyle* Magazine. The Association of Magazine Media, MPA, was utilized to determine the average circulation of various fashion magazines and also determined were the dates of first publication (MPA: The Association of Magazine Media, 2011). These magazines were selected based upon their consumer appeal, indicated by their longevity and/or high circulation rates, as being most representative of magazines of this type. *Seventeen* Magazine is the first teen fashion magazine in the United States and was first published in September, 1944. It sells on average 341,743 copies per issue. *Vogue* Magazine is an American magazine and it began in 1892. It has an average readership of 354,625 persons per issue. *InStyle* Magazine is another domestic American magazine whose first issue occurred in June 1994. Although much younger than the other two it has the seventh largest distribution of any magazine in the United States with an average of 565,951 sales per issue. These magazines have millions in combined circulation and likewise include a great deal of advertising (MPA: The Association of Magazine Media, 2011).
Procedure

There were a total of 54 magazines that were collected to find out how many total black and white and partial black and white advertisements were used in the popular fashion magazines *InStyle*, *Vogue*, and *Seventeen*. Six magazines were selected randomly from each year for a total of 18 magazine issues per title. The magazines were collected from the years 2010, 2011, and 2012, and were obtained from private collections. Charts were created in Excel and used to map and code the data. A key code sheet was created and employed to answer the questions used to chart the data.

The advertising in these representative magazines was reviewed and analyzed at the stated intervals (six issues per year) of each magazine’s publication over the several years (2010-2012) to determine the content and presence of black and white and partial black and white advertisements. Each magazine was analyzed in the following way. The name, month and year and number of pages were recorded on the Excel Code Sheet (see Appendix). Each magazine’s advertisements were reviewed and analyzed and coded using the Key Code Sheet (see Appendix) to determine the type of black and white advertisement it was. The findings were recorded on the Excel code sheet. After all the coding was completed it was compared to the whole (the other color advertisements) to determine the percentage of black and white and partial black and white that is used in the magazines. It is believed that this examination and analysis allowed the questions posed above under the Literature Review section to be answered, including with regard to recent shifts in advertising involving any particular or similar product(s) or service(s). The uniform coding sheet was specifically designed and utilized for this purpose.
Measures

The coding sheet classified each advertisement according to these categories: all black and white (no color); partial black and white; placement of partial color in the foreground or background. It also recorded if the color that was used in the picture was on the product or model or words or a combination. Under several of these categories, further information has been recorded from the advertisements. The coding sheet analyzed the setting of the advertisement such as at work, home, outdoors, etc. The advertisements were reviewed also for overall theme such as product/information (intellectual appeal versus emotional appeal). In each issue the overall total number of advertisements were counted per issue along with the total number of black and white advertisements in order to be able to make a quantitative analysis. These could be empirically identified without any danger of subjective bias. Under all categories the product or service being advertised was identified and listed along with the page where the advertisement appeared in the identified issue. The gleaning of these factors likewise did not pose any danger of subjective bias but could be easily discerned objectively. Through a page by page analysis each category was carefully filled in for each advertisement within an individual issue on a single coding sheet.

All of these categories were designed to provide an overall statistical profile of black and white and partial black and white advertisements in women’s fashion magazines. Special notice was given to repeat black and white advertisements. The advertisements were analyzed according to the Key codes listed: Magazine title, Product/Service Category (there are fifteen categories) Setting, Ad size, Percentage of advertisement that is black and white, Position (location in the front, middle, back)
Product/User, Black and White visual, Black and white verbal (words/information), and Appeal of advertisement to the viewer. The coding sheet and accompanying Excel sheet that were created are located within the Appendix.

Utilizing the product-service description information, a search was undertaken for repeat and comparable advertisements from the same or similar products/services. During the analysis an indicator was used to denote repeat advertisements so that these advertisements could be qualitatively analyzed. The content of those selected advertisements that were repeated was analyzed and compared with regard to the theme, setting and format. A qualitative content analysis was conducted to examine the use of such black and white advertisements in relation to product categories, placement and size of the advertisement, and in the case of repeat/multiple advertisements by a business or its competitor, whether there is a use of both color and black and white advertisements for the same or similar products.

**Results**

This thesis set out to answer the five research questions that were posed. The results with regard to each research question is presented hereafter. Additionally, the graphically depicted supporting data is likewise included to assist the reader.

**RQ1: Do black and white advertisements in fashion magazines depict the product, model or both?**

The advertisements were categorized as to whether they depicted just the product alone, model alone, or both model and product together. It was found that in all three publications, *Vogue, InStyle* and *Seventeen*, the majority of advertisements included both the product and model together as opposed to either the product alone or the model
alone. *Vogue* magazine contained advertisements depicting both the model and product 211 times, compared with 72 advertisements with the product alone, and 16 advertisements showing the model alone. *InStyle* had 174 advertisements showing both the model and product together, compared with 50 advertisements with the product alone, and only 15 advertisements with just the model alone. *Seventeen* magazine used 45 advertisements showing both the model and the product together, compared to 13 with the product alone, and just 4 with the model alone. Therefore the product and model depicted together were the overwhelming rule for black and white advertising throughout all three publications. This is shown in Figure 1 which follows.

![Figure 1](image-url)

*Figure 1*
Clearly, from the data collected black and white advertisements were overwhelmingly and consistently used with both the product and model depicted together. Black and white advertisements are also most often used in women’s magazines to advertise beauty/personal care, as well as clothing/accessories as shown in Figure 2 and as more fully discussed in the following section.

RQ2: Are these certain types of products or services which most often use black and white in advertising?

The product/service category revealed that of the fifteen subcategories, black and white advertisements appeared most frequently for beauty/personal care products and clothing/accessories. As the product/service chart shows, InStyle had 144 ads that involved beauty/personal care, Vogue had 101 and Seventeen had 34, encompassing all of the three years, 2010, 2011, and 2012. The next highest category was clothing/accessories, with InStyle having 80 advertisements, Vogue having 153 advertisements, and Seventeen having 12. These results can be seen on, Figure 2, below. Surprisingly, these two categories combined account for over 82% of all black and white ads, with the combined, remaining 13 categories only accounting for the remainder, about 18%.
Numerous products, especially those in the two largest categories, beauty/personal care and clothing/accessories, have repeat black and white advertising during the 2010 through 2012 period. Repeat black and white advertisements during the period suggests confidence on the part of these businesses that the black and white advertising is effective. For example the following businesses advertised in all three years (2010, 2011, 2012) using black and white advertisements: Clinique, Frieda, Neutrogena, Channel, Chanel #5, Donna Karan Cashmere, Calvin Klein, Condi Nast Store, David Yurman, Black Glama, Versace, Paul Mitchell, Maybelline, White House/Black Market, Givenchy, Orajel, Brahmin, Burberry, Smart Water, Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, Balenciaga Paris, Revlon and Paco Rabanne
The following companies advertised using black and white during two of the three years: Maybelline, Guess, Covergirl, Chase Credit Card, Rolex, Philosophy, True Religion, L’Oréal, Buffalo David Bitton, Clothing, Fendi, Laura Mercier, Salvatore Ferragamo, Ralph Lauren, Coach, Fekkai Hair, Chloe perfume, Tampax, Essie Nail Polish, Clarisonic, Gatorade, Elizabeth Arden, Levi, Macy’s Retail Store, Bali Bra, Vitamin Water, Ebel, Chrysler Car, GNC Nutrition, Red Digital Camera, Giorgio Armani, Victorinox, Rolex, Franco Sarto, and Tiffany & Co.

The following businesses advertised with repeat advertisements during one of the years surveyed: Valentino, TJ Max, Estee Lauder, Honda, Kotex, Algenist, Equipment, Theory, Perricone, M.D., L’Intense, Anne Klein, Revlon, Lexus Car, Fiat Car, Journey Shoes, Snack Well, Dolce & Gabbana, Dove Soap, Nike, ESPN, Kenneth Cole, Miss Me Clothing/ Praha, Woolite, Twizzerman, Ivanka Trump, Endless.com, Joe’s Wild Collection, Joie, Soul to Soul, For All Man Kind, and Juicy Couture.

The repeated, sustained use of black and white advertising by such diverse, well known businesses strongly suggests confidence in the efficacy of black and white advertising. Tellingly, black and white advertisements also increased significantly in all three publications between 2010 and 2011. It also increased, albeit less dramatically, in two of the three publications (except InStyle where it actually decreased) between 2011 and 2012, all as shown in greater detail in Figures 2A, 2B, and 2C.
Figure 2A

Total black and white/partial black and white

InStyle 2010, 2011, 2012
Total black and white/partial black and white

Figure 2A
Additionally, a number of these businesses ran both color and total or predominantly black and white advertisements simultaneously. Some even ran black and white and color advertisements within the same issues. These include, among others, Maybelline, Revlon, Covergirl, Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana, David Yurman, and Yves Saint Laurent. Others advertisers alternated between color and black and white advertisements in succeeding or near-in-time issues, such as Clinique and Fendi.

Upon analysis, these advertisers’ color black and white and color advertisements were substantially similar to each other in size and theme. Not only did they all contain components of the advertisers’ product line, but they often used the same model and setting in both the color and black and white ads. As noted, these advertisements often
ran in close proximity to one another within the same issue, sometimes side by side.
Several examples of these paired, concurrent running black and white and color
advertisements are located within the Appendix.

**RQ3: When black and white is used in advertising is it mostly used alone or in
conjunction with color, i.e. partial black and white?**

The percentage of the advertisements that were black and white are as follows.
The largest grouping (261/600), 43.5% of advertisements, are in the 75-99% black and
white category (i.e. 1-25% color), followed by total black and white at 30.6%. The 50-
74% black and white category was a distant third in all three publications. *Vogue* had
136 advertisements that were 75-99% black and white, *InStyle* had 93 advertisements that
were likewise 75-99% black and white, and *Seventeen* had 32 of the 75-99% black and
white advertisements. *Vogue* had 109 advertisements that were 100% black and white,
*InStyle* had 74 advertisements that were 100% black and white, and *Seventeen* had one
100% black and white advertisement. *InStyle* had 41 of the advertisements that were 50-
74% black and white. *Vogue* had 36 and *Seventeen* had 18 advertisements that were 50-
74% black and white. This data is depicted on Figure 3 below and shows that partial 75-
99% black and white dominated other categories, followed by total black and white in
second place.
The advertisements were also analyzed to see if the advertisement, visually, was all or partially black and white, excluding the words or design. The following observations were made. *Vogue* almost had a split of fifty-fifty for the black and white being all or partial with regard to the visual portion of the ads. Visually, *Vogue* had 151 partial black and white advertisements, and 148 total black and white. *InStyle* contained 140 partial visually black and white and 99 total visually black and white. *Seventeen* magazine had the most difference with 58 advertisements showing (visually) partial black and white as compared to only four showing total black and white. This can be readily seen graphically in Figure 4.
The advertisements then were looked at to see if the words or information in each advertisement was wholly or partially black and white. It was found that this was the mirror opposite of the visual portion. The results showed that there were 184 advertisements in *Vogue* magazine that had the words or information in total black and white, 110 advertisements that had part of the words or information in color and black and white, and five advertisements where the wording or information was either all color or not present at all. *InStyle* had 130 advertisements where the words or information was all black and white, 102 that contained partial black and white (with color), and for seven there was either no depiction of words or information or they were in total color. By contrast, *Seventeen* had more advertisements that showed the word or information to be partial black and white. There were 54 advertisements that included the wording or information in partial black and white (along with color), eight advertisements that had
the wording or information in all black and white, and there were no advertisements that were either devoid of all wording or information or were solely in color. This may be because younger groups prefer more color. (Cole, Donenberg, Agunga & Rutledge; 2001; De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001). Overall, however, total black and white was the clear majority when it came to wording and message with these advertisements. This can be seen in Figure 5.

![Figure 5](image)

**Figure 5**

**RQ4: Is there a particular placement/position and/or size of the advertisement in the magazine?**

It was found that the predominant position of black and white advertisements was, for all three publications, in the first half of the body of the magazine. *Vogue* had 204 advertisements located in the first half of the body; *InStyle* had 163 advertisements
located in the first half. Likewise, *Seventeen* had 45 ads located in the first half. The second half of the magazine was the second most popular place to insert black and white advertisements. *Vogue* had 85 advertisements located in the second half, *InStyle* had 70, and *Seventeen* had 15. The cover, second cover, third cover and back cover were, quite obviously, not the most popular position to insert black and white advertisements, however, black and white advertisements did appear in small numbers in these locations as well. This can be readily seen in Figure 6.

![Figure 6](image-url)

The advertisements were also analyzed with regard to the most common size for the majority of the black and white advertisements. It was found that the majority of the advertisements were full page ads in all three publications. *InStyle* had 129 full page advertisements, *Vogue* had 143, and *Seventeen* was at 49. Next numerous was the double
page spread, with *Vogue* having 118, *InStyle* at 86 and *Seventeen* with seven. All three magazines were also very close in the sizing of the partial-page advertisements. Also, *InStyle* had 15 multiple page advertisements, but *Vogue* had the most with 29. *Seventeen*, on the other hand, did not have any multiple page advertisements. This data is graphically depicted in Figure 7.

![Bar chart showing the size of advertisements for InStyle, Vogue, and Seventeen from 2010 to 2012.](image)

**Figure 7**

**RQ5:** What type of theme (i.e. setting, intellectual/emotional appeal) is seen most often in these black and white or partial black and white advertisements?

The category “setting” revealed that the most prevalent one for black and white advertisements was within a modeling studio/set. *Vogue* had the most with 139 advertisements set on a modeling set, *InStyle* had 95 advertisements, and *Seventeen* had 21 advertisements. The second highest ranked category with regard to setting for the
advertisements did not fall under any of the eight enumerated categories but were classified as “other”. For many of these advertisements it was hard for the viewer to tell what environment they were set in. They often had no real setting at all. For example, some depicted the product without any background reference like being suspended in place. *Vogue* had 93 such “other” advertisements, *InStyle* had 83, and *Seventeen* had 28. Coming in a distant third were the advertisements set outdoors; *Vogue* had 41 outdoor advertisements, *InStyle* had 29 and *Seventeen* three. This data appears in

![Figure 8](image)

**Figure 8**

The advertisements were then analyzed to see the means by which they appealed to the viewer so as to judge the prevalent theme. The three categories that were charted
were: whether the advertisement appealed emotionally to the viewer; whether there was
an intellectual appeal made for the product so as to make it an informative advertisement;
and whether the advertisement possessed both qualities. The results were the same for all
three publications. It was determined that for Vogue 195 advertisements appealed
emotionally to the viewer, whereas only 19 advertisements could be classified as
informative, and 85 advertisements appealed both emotionally and intellectually to the
viewer. Similarly, InStyle had 115 advertisements that appealed emotionally to the
viewer, only 30 advertisements had stand-alone intellectual appeal, and 94
advertisements appealed to both. Seventeen had 14 advertisements that appealed
emotionally to the viewer, zero advertisements that had an intellectual appeal alone, but
48 had combined emotional and intellectual appeal. This is depicted graphically in Figure 9.

**Figure 9**

**Discussion**

The use of black and white instead of full color is not merely a point of idle curiosity. As previously noted, black and white advertisements cost less than color advertisements (Lohse & Rosen, 2001). Continuing this discussion section with the premise begun in the introduction, the effective use of advertising dollars is important.

Advertising dollars well spent that, at the same time, satisfy the desire for increased business will ensure that these advertising dollars continue to be spent freely in the
future. In other words, to the extent that black and white advertising can be used efficiently and economically, it is in the interest of the advertising industry and businesses advertisers to employ it. It is from this premise that this study should be viewed and will be discussed.

The number of pages from the 54 issues that were reviewed in *InStyle*, *Vogue*, and *Seventeen* totaled 15,448. On those pages there was a total of 7,970 advertisements that were analyzed. *InStyle* for years 2010, 2011, 2012 had a combined total for those 18 issues of 239 advertisements that met the criteria for having either total black and white or partial black and white advertisements. *Vogue* for 2010, 2011, and 2012 had a combined total of 299 advertisements that were also either total black and white or partial black and white. During 2010, 2011, 2012 *Seventeen* had a combined total of 62 advertisements that also met the black and white advertisement criteria. That yielded an overall total of 600 advertisements, combined, for *InStyle*, *Vogue*, and *Seventeen* Magazine, for those randomly selected issues that had total black and white or partial black and white advertisements.

A review and analysis of the data revealed patterns with respect to these advertisements during this 2010-2012 study period. These findings provide information about how black and white advertising was used, and it will allow subsequent researchers to determine if these patterns are indicative of long term trends. Perhaps the most significant discoveries were with respect to product categories and, also, the concurrent use of color and black and white advertisements. Although perhaps less significant, other patterns clearly emerged as to other factors.
As expected, black and white (including total and partial black and white) were a relatively small percentage (about 7.5%) of total advertisements reviewed. That said, when utilized, black and white advertisements overwhelmingly (71.6%) depicted the product together with a model rather than either the product, or the model, alone. Also, two product categories, beauty/personal care and clothing/accessories, accounted for over 82% of all black and white advertising. The other 13 categories combined accounted only for the remaining 18%. This clearly suggests that black and white advertising currently has limited appeal and its use during this 2010-2012 study period was almost completely dependent upon the two particular product categories. This consistent expenditure for these two categories however, indicates some clear measure of confidence in the efficacy of black and white advertising. Interestingly, black and white advertising increased dramatically between 2010 and 2011 in all three publications. It also increased less sharply between 2011 and 2012 in two of the three publications, but decreased in *InStyle* during this period. This may suggest that black and white advertising is still being experimented with but subsequent studies can use this reported data to determine whether these findings actually indicated part of a long term trend for these product categories.

The largest single category (43.5%) of black and white ads with regard to composition was 75-99% partial black and white (i.e. the remaining 1-25% was in color). However, total black and white was a close second with 30.6%. Partial black and white likewise trumped total black and white with respect to the visual (excluding words and design) portion of the advertisements. However, with respect to wording and information in the advertisements the findings were reversed, with total black and white in the
majority (54%), and partial black and white (mixed with color) coming in second (44%). The remaining 2% contained no verbal message. With partial black and white, quite often it was the product as a visual focal point that was in color and the majority of the verbal message was either in black and white or omitted.

Overall the data suggests that black and white is being used for attention-getting purposes as a contrast to the majority of all-color advertisements (Lamb, 2012). This is supported by the fact that the largest single grouping was 75-99% black and white (43.5%) and the second was total black and white (30.6%). Therefore, nearly three-quarters of all black and white advertisements was 75%-100% black and white as opposed to the 1-24%, 25-49%, 50-74% categories. This means that black and white is used in heavy measure so as to contrast well to full color ads which make up over 92% of all advertising in these publications.

Also indicative of the probability that black and white is being used as a contrast for attention-getting purposes is the fact that individual advertisers alternate between black and white and color ads. These advertisement repeatedly appear within the same issue and often in close proximity to their related color advertisements. It is common for these color and black and white advertisements to appear on consecutive pages. Additionally, as was discussed within the Literature Review section, it is possible for humans to become over stimulated by too much color, and black and white advertisements may offer a needed respite (Myers-Levy & Peracchio, 1995). They may, therefore, be operating at both an emotional and psychological level and offering readers a place to pause.
Interestingly, ads by these same advertisers in both black and white and color were very similar to each other overall. These similar characteristics included theme/setting, size, product category, location in the issue, and product/model content. Even the models used in both the color and black and white advertisements were often the same person, or a physically similar individual. This can readily be seen from the advertising exemplars located within the Appendix. There was no real evidence of advertisers moving away from color to black and white advertisements, or vice versa. Instead the use of black and white advertising definitely seemed to be used in tandem with color advertisements.

The largest number of advertisements appealed emotionally to the viewer (54%), followed by those with combined emotional and intellectual appeal within the same advertisement (37.8%). The smallest grouping of advertisements attempted only an intellectual appeal strategy (8.2%). Therefore, emotional appeal, alone or in conjunction with intellectual appeal, was the overwhelming rule for black and white advertisements within these publications. This may be the result of their being located within women’s magazines since, as previously discussed, color operates at an emotional level and women have a greater affinity for color (and, ergo, emotion) (De Bortoli & Maroto, 2001).

Other seemingly less significant, but clear findings were present that perhaps subsequent researchers may find useful and may build upon. These include the fact that black and white ads were overwhelmingly (68.6%) placed within the first half of the body, with all such ads that were contained in the second half of the body only a distant second (28.3%). There was a near total absence of black and white from any of the
covers. In short, black and white ads were almost exclusively located within the interior body of the magazines, and then, mainly within the first half. Also, the largest number of black and white advertisements were full page (53.5%) followed by double page spreads at 35.1%. Partial page and multiple page spreads were, comparatively, very few in number, even in the aggregate, but were not completely absent. This may suggest that the size of the advertisement matters and black and white advertisements must be sufficiently large in order to stand out.

Additionally, the largest single grouping of advertisements (42.5%) were those with their themes set in a studio. The second largest number was classified as “other”, which included anything besides the eight listed categories, or was otherwise indeterminate, such as where the product appeared suspended in place with no real background or other focal points. The next largest single grouping as to theme, however, was an outdoor setting theme; it was the third most prevalent (12.1%). Again, subsequent researchers building upon this research, may determine that this helped the advertisements serve as a respite and a place to pause from all the color overstimulation or other theories.

In summary, partial black and white (75-99%) was the most prevalent advertisement followed by 100% black and white, but all black and white advertisements only amounted to about 7.5% of overall advertisements. Black and white ads ran concurrently with color advertisements by the same advertisers and the two categories were similar in theme, setting, size and placement, and often even used the same model in black and white and full color ads. There was no apparent movement to/from black and white. Black and white advertising, therefore, seems to be used in contrast to color so as
to draw attention to the advertising and to perhaps provide a respite and a place to pause from color overstimulation.

**Conclusion**

Black and white, including total and partial, was found to be a small but consistent (7.5%) portion of overall ads, but these were overwhelmingly (82%) focused in only two product/service categories (beauty/personal care and clothing/accessories). Subsequent studies can determine if this continues into the future. It was also found that overall, black and white advertising was used in conjunction with, rather than to the exclusion of, full color advertisements by many of those same advertisers. In short, there was no discernable movement to/from black and white advertising vis-a-vis color but subsequent research building upon these findings can determine if this remains true outside of this 2010-2012 period. Subsequent research can ascertain whether and to what extent black and white continues to be used in tandem with color.
References


Fernandez, K.V. & Rosen, D.L. (Summer, 2000). The effectiveness of information and


Appendices

*Key Codes*

**Magazine Title:**
(1) Vogue  
(2) InStyle  (3) Seventeen

**Product/service category:**
(1) beauty/personal care  (9) home appliances/furniture  
(2) child-related  (10) retail stores  
(3) household cleaning products  (11) computer/electronics  
(4) clothing/accessories  (12) non-profit organization  
(5) financial services  (13) tobacco/alcohol  
(6) food/non-alcoholic drinks  (14) automotive & accessories  
(7) health care  (15) other ______________

(8) leisure/travel

**Setting:**
(1) work  (5) socializing  (9) other ______________
(2) office  (6) exercise
(3) home  (7) modeling set
(4) outdoors  (8) recreation/travel/leisure

**Ad Size:**
(1) double page
(2) full page
(3) partial
(4) multiple page

**Percentage of advertisement that is black and white**
(1) 1-25%  
(2) 25-49%  
(3) 50-74%  
(4) 75-99%  
(5) 100%
**Position:**
(1) Cover
(2) Second Cover
(3) Body first half
(4) Body second half
(5) Third Cover
(6) Back cover

**Product/user:**
(1) Product alone
(2) Model alone
(3) Both product and model

**Black and white visual**
(1) All (2) Partial

**Black and white verbal (words/info)**
(1) All (2) Partial

**Appeal:**
(1) Appeals emotionally to the viewer.
(2) Intellectual appeal of product/informative ad
(3) Both
## Excel Code Sheet

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DELIŞH
FROM PAT MCGRATH

Get in the mood for nude!
It’s the color on everyone’s lips, so lighten up in Delish #255!

Vogue, April 2012, Covergirl, back cover spread, color advertisement
COVERGIRL LIP PERFECTION PRESENTS
THE RUNWAY SHADES FROM PAT MCGRATH

Sixteen of the season’s most fashion forward shades have been plucked from
the Lip Perfection Collection by one of fashion’s top makeup artists, Pat McGrath.
Our silk moisturizing complex helps these runway favorites condition while they color.

GET PAT’S RUNWAY LOOK IN THIS
EXCLUSIVE STEP-BY-STEP VIDEO

Vogue, April 2012, Covergirl, back cover spread, partial black and white advertisement.
InStyle, March 2012, Yves Saint Laurent, page 13, total black and white advertisement.
NEW REVOLN GROW LUSCIOUS PLUMPING™ MASKARA

Conditioning formula helps strengthen and plump lashes up to 200% instantly for maximum volume.

Our precision tapered brush grabs every lash, individually, and coats it to plump perfection.

Vogue, July 2011, Revlon, pages 64-65, partial black and white advertisement

Vogue, July 2011, Revlon, pages 68-69, color advertisements
Seventeen, October 2012, Maybelline, pages 11-12, part black and white & color advertisements
24HR intensity. Tattoo tenacity.

Dare to wear our longest-lasting shadow.

NEW COLOR TATTOO™ 24HR CREAM GEL SHADOW

Our ink technology creates super-saturated color. Cream gel smooths on for vibrant color that does not fade. Dare to get inked. In 10 shades.
January 22, 2013

Lauren Elizabeth Necaise  
Lauren.Necaise@eagles.usm.edu

Dear Lauren:

Your prospectus, “Black and White Advertising in Fashion Magazines,” has been approved. If the topic or the nature of your research changes, you should prepare and submit a revised prospectus that accurately describes the project.

In addition, when preparing the thesis, please adhere to the guidelines that are posted on the Honors College website at www.usm.edu/honors. And be sure to check the link to the Senior Honors To-Do-List to ensure you meet prescribed thesis and graduation deadlines.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paula Mathis  
Coordinator of Senior Honors

cc: Leah P Holmes  
Leah.Holmes@usm.edu

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