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# The Use of Fear Appeals in Social Marketing: Analysing the Influence of Racial Characteristics on Attitude Formation in HIV/AIDS Communication

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## BACKGROUND



- Aids pandemic in South Africa is a major concern
- 50% of HIV infections in SA transmitted before age 20; more than 5 million HIV positive people
- Fear appeal approach has not been used in SA for HIV/AIDS prevention communication
- LoveLife SA a multi-million Dollar (US\$12) HIV/AIDS prevention campaign targeted at SA youth
  - ▶ Current loveLife HIV/AIDS campaign not producing expected results
  - ▶ Informational appeal - focus on positive sexuality
  - ▶ LoveLife world's first organisation to have its funding discontinued by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB & Malaria
  - ▶ Reflects concern about effectiveness - failed to achieve original target, reducing number of HIV infected youths to half



## BACKGROUND

- Fear appeals = designed to create anxiety & tension = motivates action
- Increase in various social problems & behaviours, forcing practitioners to reconsider the use of fear appeals in social advertising
- Take into account cultural & economic fabric of society, with different types of people from different races
- Research on race groups:
  - Differ in responses to communication, advertising effectiveness and attitudes towards messages



# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES



**Aim of study was to measure the influence of fear-based advertising appeals (HIV/AIDS category) in terms of impact on behaviour**



## **Research challenge was to:**

- ▶ Assess potential impact of low, moderate & high fear appeal advertising on fear, attitude, threat & efficacy levels
- ▶ Determine influence of racial group on the persuasive power of fear appeal advertising
- ▶ To determine the above through use of selected number of print & television commercials
- ▶ Use Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM) in the SA context to test interventions and evaluate outcomes



# RESEARCH PROCESS



**Phase I:** Comprehensive literature review on the use and effect of fear appeals advertising



**Phase II:** Exploratory study (qualitative research/focus groups), in-depth responses and insight into attitudes, beliefs & behaviour of target segment in terms of fear appeal advertising



**Phase III:** Quantitative phase - measure the behavioural effect of fear appeal advertising amongst the selected target group. A pre-test post-test, 3X2 between subjects, experimental design was used to collect data from 360 respondents



# RESEARCH PROCESS



**Phase III (continued):** Presentation of various fear appeal advertisements (not been seen by respondents previously, except 2 S.A. loveLife ads; to prevent halo effects) was experimental intervention while the likelihood of changing behaviour based on fear and efficacy (as a result of the different levels of fear) was the dependent variable



## Experimental Design

	Low Fear	Medium Fear	High Fear
Print	60	60	60
Television	60	60	60

*Respondents per cell: White male, White female, Black male, Black female, Coloured male & Coloured female*



# METHODOLOGY



## Universe

- HIV/AIDS racial prevalence in SA: Black (18.4%); Coloured (6.6%); White (6.2%) & Indian (1.8%)
- Target group, 18-24 years old; HIV prevalence amongst males are 9.2% and amongst females 33.3 %
- This study used the racial group classification system used by the SA national government
  - ▶ Ethnicity and race seen as related concepts - ethnicity embedded in the idea of social groups
  - ▶ SA's population racial groups: Black African, White, Coloured & Indian/Asian



# SAMPLE



## Convenience sample

- Sample size: 360
- 50:50 male vs female
- 60 per cell x 6 experimental groups
- White, Black & Coloured (main racial groups) males and females (20 each per cell)
- Aged 18 - 24 years
  - ▶ Based on target audience similarity to SA's major HIV/AIDS advertising campaign loveLife
  - ▶ Sexually active
- Western Cape (main urban area in SA)
- Working & students
- Educated (high school), middle to upper income



# EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS



- Respondents were given self-completion questionnaire
- Questions based on risk behaviour diagnosis (Likert scale)
- Completed prior to any intervention
- Same behaviour scale post-intervention
- 3 experimental groups print ad used as intervention
  - ▶ each cell one type of appeal - low, medium or high
- 3 experimental groups television ad used as intervention
  - ▶ each cell one type of appeal - low, medium or high



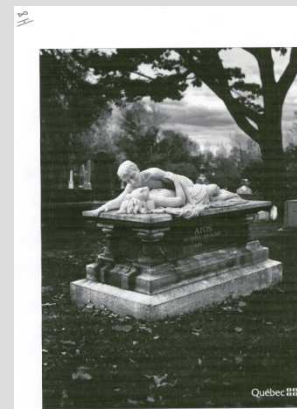
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# Print & Television



# LEVEL OF FEAR PRINT & TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

## Print



Low/  
No fear

High  
Fear

**Tshepo &  
Busi**

**Chain  
Reaction**

**Tsunami**

## Television



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# Summary of Main Findings



# RELIABILITY



- Reliability of mood adjectives to measure fear & attitude confirmed; Cronbach alpha 0.8
- Reliability of Extended Parallel Process Model confirmed
  - ▶ Cronbach alpha tests used on individual questions measuring response efficacy and self efficacy for pre- and post-tests
  - ▶ Scores ranged between 0.6 and 0.7
- Efficacy measures conducted for both condom usage and safe sexual behaviour



## FEAR



**Fear**



**Advert type  
Advert appeal  
Race**

- ANOVA comparisons & univariate tests of significance (all groups) resulted in interaction for fear & advert type ( $p < 0.01$ ); fear & type of advert appeal ( $p < 0.01$ ); fear & race ( $p < 0.01$ )
  - ▶ Fear & advert type: respondents experienced higher fear after viewing television adverts than printed adverts
  - ▶ Fear & type of advert appeal: respondents experienced lowest level of fear for HIV/AIDS from low fear appeal adverts & highest from high fear appeal adverts



## FEAR



Fear



Advert type  
Advert appeal  
Race

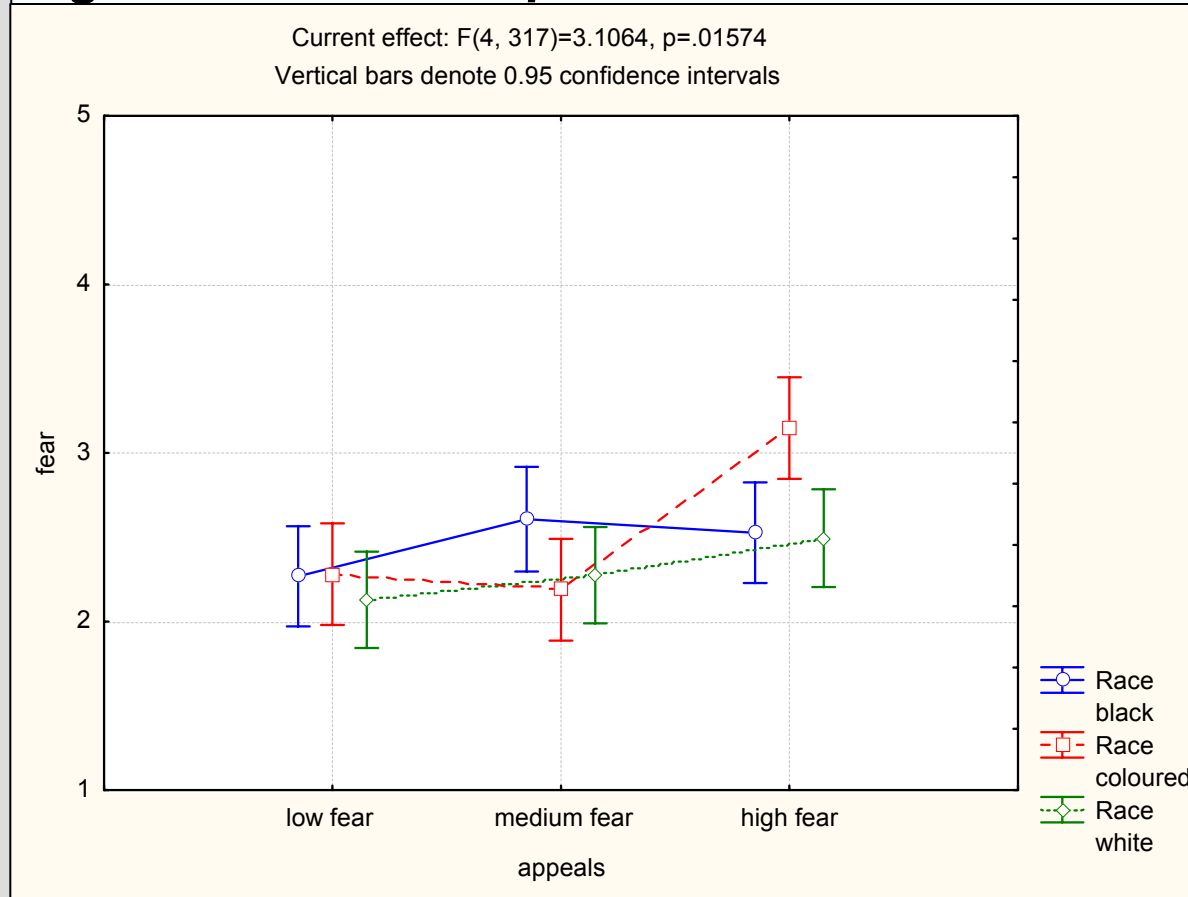
- Figure 1, means plot for fear and race, denotes that all race groups experienced similar levels of fear when exposed to low fear appeals
- **White respondents'** fear increased gradually from low to high fear appeals
- **Coloured respondents'** fear increased substantially after exposure to high fear appeals
- **Black respondents'** fear increased gradually to medium fear appeals and their fear level stayed similar after this



# FEAR



**Figure 1: Means Plot for Fear and Race**



- Medium & high fear appeal - respondents more afraid of HIV/AIDS



## ATTITUDE



- ANOVA & univariate tests of significance resulted in interaction for fear appeal & advert type ( $p < 0.01$ ); fear appeal & race ( $p < 0.01$ )
- Respondents' attitude toward adv was more positive after exposure to medium than low fear appeals, as well as for high than low fear appeals.
- Upward trend for attitude from low to high fear appeals stronger after viewing television advertisements.
- Positive trend for attitude towards the advertisement from low to high fear appeals for both coloured and white respondents.
- Black respondents' attitude positive trend from low to medium fear appeals, with a downward trend for attitude from medium to high fear appeals



## SUSCEPTIBILITY AND SEVERITY



- Repeated measures analysis of variance all advertisements & time for severity indicated a non-significant interaction (not strictly 5%)
- The same measures for susceptibility indicated a significant interaction ( $p < 0.01$ )
  - ▶ All respondents experienced higher levels of susceptibility after exposure to television advertisements
- ANOVA comparisons & Tukey HSD post hoc tests resulted in an interaction for time & race ( $p = 0.08$ )
  - ▶ Coloured respondents experienced higher levels of susceptibility than black & white respondents in all groups



# EFFICACY CONDOM USAGE



Time



Fear

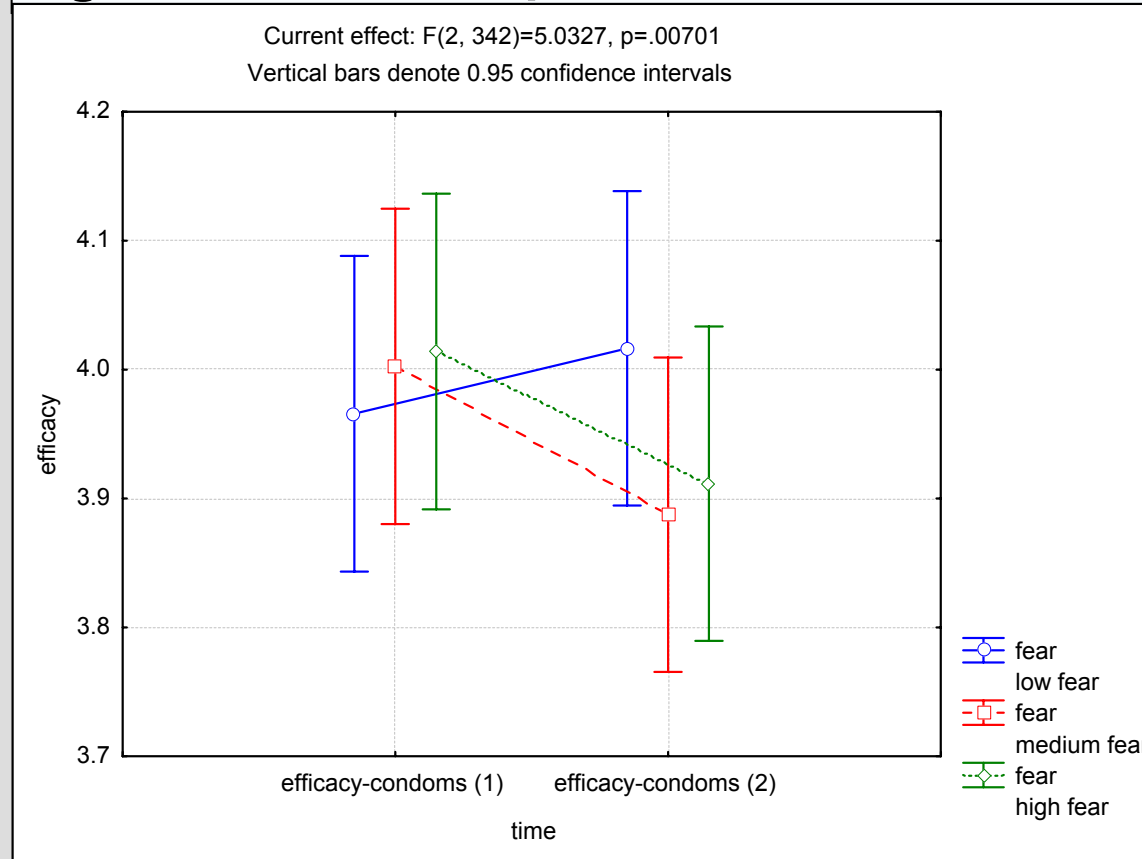
- ANOVA comparisons & Tukey post hoc tests;  
interaction for time & fear ( $p < 0.01$ )
  - ▶ Figure 2, means plot for time and fear illustrates efficacy showed a downward movement after exposure to medium and high fear appeals
  - ▶ Upward movement when exposed to low fear appeals



# EFFICACY CONDOM USAGE



**Figure 2: Means Plot for Time and Fear**



- Medium & high fear appeal – efficacy down



## EFFICACY SAFE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR



- ANOVA comparisons & Tukey HSD post hoc tests; interaction for advertisement, fear and race ( $p < 0.01$ )
  - ▶ Coloured respondents in four of the six groups had lower efficacy levels
  - ▶ Black and white respondents had similar efficacy levels in the same groups
  - ▶ No significant time effect was noted - efficacy in terms of safe sexual behaviour didn't change after exposure to various fear appeal advertisements



## CONCLUSIONS

- Racial characteristics play major role in reaction to fear appeals.
- Low levels of fear for HIV/AIDS from low fear interventions, medium & high fear attitude change & likelihood of adopting safe sexual behaviour.
- Targeted advertising campaigns for racial groups:
  - ▶ **Black and white respondents** require higher fear appeal messages to increase perceived vulnerability to HIV/AIDS
  - ▶ Have high efficacy levels - combined this will direct positive behavioural changes
  - ▶ **Coloured respondents** higher levels of fear after exposure to high fear appeals - are motivated to act.
  - ▶ Have lower efficacy perceptions - don't think they can practice safe sexual behaviour - need messages that increase perceptions of efficacy



**Thank you !**

