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## Perceptions of Collegiate and Professional Black Male Athletes Based on the Media

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PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGIATE AND PROFESSIONAL BLACK MALE ATHLETES  
BASED ON THE MEDIA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Mass Communication

in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

by  
Dionell McNeal  
B.A., Louisiana State University, 2012  
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*I dedicate this thesis to my sister Willona, and my mother Elaine for their never-ending support and encouragement. You all were always the motivation I needed. You guys never let me quit and always believed in me when I had no faith in myself.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study focuses on how media usage can affect one's perceptions of Black collegiate and professional male athletes. While early research focused solely on traditional media, this study focuses on social media as well. This study investigates the relationships between the amounts of time spent using traditional and social media, and the perceptions of athletes in regards to their physical capability, the likelihood of being criminals, and prevalence of committing violent crimes.

To explore relationships, this study utilized a total of 145 White participants. Findings showed a positive relationship existed between social media usage and perceptions of criminal-like characteristics. It was found that as social media usage increases, an increase in the perceptions of Black collegiate and professional male athletes having criminal-like characteristics increases as well. Also, results showed that perceptions of criminal-like characteristics, physical prowess, and violent crimes are attributed more to Black athletes than to White athletes. Lastly, findings showed heavy users of traditional and social media attribute more perceptions of criminal-like characteristics than light users of traditional and social media.



## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In August 2011, the media reported details of a bar fight Jordan Jefferson, former LSU quarterback, was allegedly involved in. The media heavily referred to police reports of witnesses who claimed to have seen Jefferson take part in the fight. *The Huffington Post* (2011) referred to a police report of a witness who said she saw “Jefferson kick that man in the face” (p. 2). *The Advocate* (2011) reported a police report where a witness said, “the fight began because the man in the pickup truck yelled for someone to move a vehicle that was blocking his” (p. 2). The media revealed several police reports that involved witnesses claiming to have seen Jefferson take part in the brawl, but failed to mention police reports of witnesses who claimed to have not seen Jefferson involved or begin the altercation. What many stories did not report much is how police failed to interview the bar’s manager who claimed to have witnessed the fight first hand and stated he saw Jefferson “standing alone while stuff was still going on” (Associated Press, 2011, p. 1).

In August 2012, NFL star Chad “Ochocinco” Johnson was arrested for domestic violence. TMZ Sports (2012) reported Johnson was arrested for allegedly head-butting his wife, Evelyn Lozada. Not only did the writer report details of the situation, such as the time the violence occurred and the charge brought against Johnson, but also mentioned his “Maserati,” “receipt for condoms,” and the “massive 10-carat diamond ring,” he bought his wife (p. 1). The article also reported Johnson would be “cooling off behind bars,” making suggestions about his temperament. ABC News (2012) reported a police report where Johnson screamed “I don’t give a [expletive] about my career” (p. 1). The article also reported other factors not having to do with the situation that makes suggestions toward Johnson’s temperament such as, “Johnson was

playing *Call of Duty* during his marriage proposal to Lozado” and “Johnson is known for his crazy antics on and off the football field. He raced a horse in 2007, did an Irish step dance following a touchdown in 2005” (p. 2).

Both of these situations give accounts of how the media portray collegiate and professional Black male athletes. Instead of the media solely reporting the situations these athletes are involved in, media sources often times leave details out, or report other details that can shape the perceptions of viewers, and lead them to make conclusions about the athletes’ characters and temperaments (Davis & Harris, 1998). Media portrayals tend to show deviant stereotypes of Black male athletes as having violent, verbally aggressive and uncontrollable behaviors, as well as showing them as alcohol, drug and money-spending addicts who are sexually promiscuous (Davis & Harris, 1998).

An increase in coverage of Blacks in the media has taken place since the 1960s, serving as visible evidence that denies percepts of traditional racism by showing Blacks in the roles of doctors, lawyers and judges. While there is an increase in successful roles and portrayals, “overt media signals—and equally important, systematic absences from media content—may work against the development of greater interracial empathy and trust,” proving that not enough is said about the good Blacks do as a whole (Entman & Rojecki, 2000, p. 57). Entman and Rojecki (2000) found that the media did not voice enough of the good that Blacks do, especially on certain topics. From their analysis the researchers found that soundbites attributed to Blacks were lacking or not present at all in topics such as health, economics, politics, science, and technology. Results showed that topics that invoked the common experiences and interests of Americans as a whole, and required technical expertise hardly involved Blacks. One topic in which Blacks were

found to have a moderate amount of coverage in was sports, which still holds true to this current decade (Entman & Rojecki, 2000).

Media often highlight collegiate and professional Black male athletes for their athletic ability and popularity in whatever highly-constructed sport they play, often ignoring other positive qualities regarding them (Eagleman, 2011). According to Gonzalez, Jackson, and Regoli (2006), respondents revealed that individuals' perceptions of items that contributed the most to Black baseball players' success were speed and physique. Factors such as access to facilities and intelligence were not considered as contributors to those players' successes. Besides athleticism, the media also heavily show other situations that may occur in these athletes' daily lives, capitalizing on instances in which these men portray what society would deem as bad behaviors (Davis & Harris, 1998). As a result of media portrayals and emphasis on such behaviors, focus quickly turns from these men's athletic abilities, causing viewers to heavily notice the individuals' negative behaviors. According to Keown (2005), *ESPN The Magazine* contained an article about the behavior of Milton Bradley, a Black outfielder for the Los Angeles Dodgers. The article capitalized on and gave several accounts of Bradley losing his temper on the field, being referred to as "an angry black man," and hardly mentioning his athletic skills (p. 57).

The problem at hand is that the beliefs that these men are deviant may tend to cause collegiate and professional Black male athletes to experience social injustice. The social injustice can occur by these men being looked at as uncivil members of society due to media portrayals. In addition, not only collegiate and professional, Black male athletes may be looked at in a certain light, but other Black males, non-athletes, may be generalized to be crude members of society as well. The perceptions of Black male athletes can be formed by viewing messages being disseminated by traditional and social media. Traditional and social media's

portrayals of Black athletes are important in shaping audience perceptions because they teach lessons about these athletes that are powerful and cause users' beliefs and perceptions of these athletes to be cultivated in the same manner. Media portrayals are important in shaping audience perception because the lessons and messages coming from the portrayals align audience perception with what is being portrayed and causes users' judgments and evaluations to reflect the same themes and ideas being conveyed. The purpose of this thesis is to study the perceptions of collegiate and professional, Black male athletes based on media portrayals and to research the relationships between social judgments and frequency of exposure to traditional and social media.

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Cultivation Theory**

Cultivation theory describes the contributions media exposure makes to consumers' conceptions of social reality (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signoielli, 1986). Cultivation theory, derived from the cultural indicators project, is an approach to develop methodologies to focus on publics' conscious selection of messages based on their individual interests in the age of television (Gerbner, et al., 1986). The first prong, the institutional process analysis, looked at the policies that direct the flow of massive media messages. The second prong, the message system analysis, assessed a variety of messages television programming teaches, and subjected them to content analysis to pinpoint features of television. Cultivation theory, the third and last prong of the cultural indicators project, seeks to determine if viewers' perceptions of the world are aligned with the lessons television teaches. This theory assesses the differences between the lessons heavy and light viewers gathered from television. While the development of the theory began with television, scholars have examined the effects in other contexts such as YouTube, TiVo, Hulu, Twitter and Facebook (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).

Cultivation theory does not imply that the effect of media is a one-way process, but intertwined with other influences. "Layers of demographic, social, personal, and cultural contexts also determine the shape, scope, and degree of the contribution television is likely to make" (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 23). Television neither creates nor reflects opinions or beliefs. Institutional needs and objectives help to create messages that "fit into, exploit, and sustain the needs, values, and ideologies of mass publics" (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 23). Television viewing links these mass publics with those messages, thus shaping their attention. Gerbner, et al., (1986) found the following:

Most of those with certain social and psychological characteristics, dispositions, and world views—and fewer alternatives as attractive and compelling as television—use it as their major vehicle of cultural participation. The content shapes and promotes their continued attention. To the extent that television dominates their sources of information, continued exposure to its messages is likely to reiterate, confirm, and nourish (i.e., cultivate) their values and perspectives (p. 23).

Cultivation not only relies on exposure to messages, but the types of messages and the frequency of those types of messages also plays a role in how perspectives are cultivated. The types of messages produced and the frequency thereof links cultivation with message system analysis.

Message system analysis looked at “the most representative, stable, and recurrent aggregate patterns of messages to which total communities are exposed over long periods of time” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 24). These findings are not taken at face value as an explanation for total impact, but the observations of content serves as valid consideration for media influences and further helps explain the basis for assumptions, interactions, and the overall effects for mass publics. For example, a certain percentage of Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics are shown by the media. The majority of characters that dominate prime time are Caucasians, who are often overrepresented as successful and well-to-do people. This portrayal of Caucasians indicates a view that is restricting and limiting toward other ethnic minorities’ rights and opportunities because they may be viewed as not being as successful or completely unsuccessful due to the underrepresentation. While media portrayals may not have to reflect real life situations or statistics, “it is rather that the direction and thrust of cultural amplification or

neglect provide a clue to the treatment of social types, groups and values, and yield suggestions for cultivation analysis” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 26).

Tracking and documentation of the shapes and forms of television have led to the analyses of three modes of cultivation. These modes all rely on the specific findings from message system analysis (Gerbner, et al, 1986). The modes include “the extent to which television teaches various facts about the world, of extrapolations from those facts to more general images and orientations, and the incorporation of the lessons into viewers’ personal assumptions and expectations” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 27). Using large surveys, the extent of cultivation was defined by the difference between heavy and light viewers. Respondents’ tendencies to answer questions on the survey that were aligned with television’s portrayals signify television’s contributions to the perceptions of social reality of viewers. For example, by television portraying older people as more sickly than younger people, heavy viewers are likely to believe older people are in worse health and live shorter lives than younger people. These beliefs and assumptions are contrary to fact (Gerbner, et al., 1986). These assumptions resulted in the formation of what is defined and seen as cultivation indicators, which is now criticized.

Cultivation indicators are elements in media’s messages that reflect our culture. One critique made about the formation of cultivation indicators addressed the meaning of text. For example, Gerbner et al. (1986) incorrectly concluded that because his yearly counts of violent acts consistently show a great deal of violence on television, viewers should be expected to infer that the television world is a mean and violent place, and conclude the same for the real world. Instead, the way those violent acts are portrayed should have an influence on the inferences made by viewers (Potter, 1993). For example, Potter and Ware (1987) found that most violence shown on television is committed by heroes who direct their violent actions toward victims and are

rewarded for doing such. By ignoring this context, it can be concluded that heavy viewing would lead to stronger feelings of a mean world with higher expectations of victimization, but by using this context we can predict that heavy viewing would lead to feelings of aggressive power and righteousness. Another critique of the formation of cultivation indicators focuses on the second mode of cultivation.

The second mode, the extrapolations of those facts, analyzes how the data of messages are transformed into a concrete basis for general assumptions and issues. “The facts (which are evidently learned quite well) are likely to become the basis for a broader world view, thus making television a significant source of general values, ideologies, and perspectives as well as specific assumptions, beliefs, and images” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 28). For example, heavy amounts of the portrayal of men in television does not cause viewers to underestimate the number of women in society, “but it does mean that most heavy viewers absorb the implicit assumptions that women have more limited abilities and interests than men” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 28).

One critique of the second mode of cultivation lies in determining the overall, general meaning individuals as a whole gather from messages. The television world answer is often times assumed and cannot be answered due to viewers taking into account several other contextual elements, not just frequency when inferring meaning from messages. Also, answer choices are very constraining and leaves viewers no room to explain their interpretations or express what they really feel (Potter and Ware, 1987). Another critique of the second mode of cultivation found in the conceptualization of cultivation indicators lies in the dimension order, the distinction between estimations and beliefs. First, it is important to note that indicators vary along two conceptual dimensions, topic and order. Several topics, themes of everyday life shown



by the media, have been discussed on the operational level. Examples of central core topics conceptualized thus far include crime, violence, and victimization, attitudes about racism, feelings of alienation and anomia, and gender stereotyping. Gerbner, et al. (1986) outlined how to identify cultural indicators, but no one has conceptualized what might be a complete set of indicators. Order refers to the type of measure used in research, demographic measures (first order), and system value measures (second order). First order includes measures that assess age, income, ethnicity, gender and education. An example of a second order includes measures that assess the degree to which one believes in the occurrence of violence for different ethnicities. Cultivation effects differ between first and second order, reflecting a difference in conceptualization. “It points out that cultivation is not limited to the learning of facts (first order), but that it can have an effect at a deeper level of beliefs (second order)” (Potter, 1993, p. 568). Hawkins and Pingree (1982) found that “with first order measures research consistently shows small and significant correlations” that hold true even when controls are applied (p. 228). This means that cultivation effects occur due to estimations of the world being somewhat factual. It was found that second order measures are more strongly related to the amount of television viewing. Cultivation effects for first order are a result of facts and estimations of the world, and the degree of cultivation effects varies depending on the amount of television viewing for second order.

Lastly, the third mode of cultivation refers to respondents’ incorporation of television’s lessons into personal expectations and assumptions. Here, a relationship between general orientations and personal assumptions is built. For example, television may show violence in one way, but the cultivation of expectations depends on the area in which the individual may think to experience personal victimization. “Different groups may hold the same assumptions about the

facts but relate them in different ways, depending on their own situations,” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 31). This supports that one’s incorporation of television lessons also rely on situational and dispositional influences. While cultivation effects are still possible under certain influences, further research has concluded that the some occurrences of cultivation are based on the type of television exposure.

Another critique is found in the conceptualization of television exposure. The problems in this conceptualization are in the assumptions of uniformed messages and nonselective viewing. When cultivation was first studied, the assumption was that all of television’s messages were uniformed was defensible given the small number of network programmers and narrow range of genres. Currently, prime time still includes messages from sitcoms and action/adventure shows, but it is also now composed of messages from sports, home shopping, music videos, stand-up comedy and other genres. Tamborini and Choi (1990) found that not all messages are uniform and that there are large differences in content across different programs. The large differences in content and the differences in genres result in differences found in the cultivation effects.

One genre of programming that received attention within the past few decades is the talk show. Woo and Dominick (2001) researched the relationships between exposure to talk shows and beliefs about premarital sex, frequency of marital infidelity, and running away from home, and found that exposure to talk shows were better predictors of those dependent variables than overall television exposure. Glynn, Huges, Reineke, Hardy, and Shanahan (2007) found that heavy viewers of talk show programs like The Oprah Winfrey Show that depict families and individuals in crisis and in need of support, are more likely to be supportive of activist and interventionist government policies in support of families. Kubic and Chory (2007) found that

exposure to makeover programs was negatively related to self-esteem and positively related to perfectionism and dissatisfaction with one's body. Ferris, Smith, Greenberg, and Smith (2007) examined reality dating show exposure and found that young male heavy viewers were more likely to hold stereotypical perceptions about dating (i.e., men are sex-driven, dating is a game, women are sex objects) than lighter male viewers. Although, researchers are pursuing studies of specific genres under the rubric of cultivation, it is still questionable whether genre-specific effects should be called "cultivation" (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Therefore, cultivation is considered to be absent when relationships are formed due to exposure to a specific genre.

Although observed relationships may reflect selective exposure more than cultivation, it is argued that people, especially heavy viewers, do not watch isolated genres only, and that any impact of individual program types should be considered in the context of the overall viewing experience. For example, Quick (2009) found that viewers of Grey's Anatomy thought doctors were more courageous and tended to have higher patient satisfaction; but, lessons learned about doctors are by no means limited to medical dramas or programs. Genre studies need to develop a stronger theoretical conception of how genre exposure relates to overall exposure (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010).

Barwise and Ehrenberg (1988) found that people have individual habits of viewing and the relationship between amount of viewing of action programs and situation comedies, for example, is not strong, indicating a crossover in the viewing of particular pairs of genres, but not with others. This holds true for heavy as well as light viewers. In addition to the critiques mentioned, other factors affect cultivation effects. Factors include the notions of mainstreaming, across-the-board effects, and resonance.

## **Mainstreaming, Across-the-Board, and Resonance**

Cultivation is not seen as a unidirectional process, but a gravitational one. The pull of the process depends on the different groups of viewers and their diverse styles of life in regards to the mainstream of television (Gerbner, et al., 1986). Mainstreaming represents the assertion that television does cultivate perspectives by providing empirical evidence. Mainstreaming is the cohesion of common attributes of perceptions and values that is cultivated due to the exposure of the various suggestions of television. It involves the expression of the unity of outlooks of heavy viewers in a demographic group whose light viewers hold deviating views. The divergent expressions that may be reduced or diminished in the responses of heavy viewers in the same groups are a result of the differences found in the responses of different viewers in various groups and the differences of association of cultural, political and social characteristics of these groups (Gerbner, et al., 1986).

Data from surveys of the 1975, 1978, 1980, and 1983 National Opinion Research Center were combined to create the Mean World Index which provides support and evidence for mainstreaming. Themes included: “most people are just looking out for themselves, that you can’t be too careful in dealing with them, and that they would take advantage of you if they had a chance,” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 31). Nonwhites were found to view television viewing as an enhancing role in their anxieties, while television viewing was seen as a catalyst in the anxieties of whites. Although the groups differed in terms of race, effects were the same for viewers with similar amounts of television viewing of different groups, thus creating across-the-board cultivation. Light viewers of both groups who did not hold television-related views of personal mistrust and suspicion were “most likely to be influenced toward the relatively suspicious and mistrustful mainstream television view,” (Gerbner, et al., 1986, p. 34). Another theme of the

findings is that light viewers of both groups were viewers who were college educated and did not share television-related views. Overall, the relationship was found to be stronger for heavy viewers of both groups who are more likely to express personal mistrust than light viewers; therefore, supporting across-the-board cultivation. The differences that cultural and social characteristics like race and education bring within the groups also supports mainstreaming.

Like mainstreaming, resonance suggests that cultivation also relies on one's life experiences. However, resonance "suggests that those people whom life experiences are more congruent with the experiences of the television world will be most affected by the television message, rather than least affected" (Shrum & Bischak, 2001, p. 191). When one has direct experiences with crime and violence, heavy viewing of crime victimization can amplify the dosage of the television message, therefore, increasing the cultivation effect. Shrum and Bishak (2001) found that heavy viewers with high direct experiences of crime estimate greater chances of societal crime risk, the percentage of adult Americans that will be involved in crime, personal crime risk, and the likelihood that they will have an interaction with crime outside of their own neighborhood. Resonance predicts that those with more direct experiences will be more affected by television viewing than those with less direct experiences. (Shrum & Bischak, 2001). Although personal experience is a moderator of the cultivation effect, construct accessibility helps to aid in the degree to how fast cultivation initially occurs.

### **Construct Accessibility**

Theoretically, the most commonly cited explanation for cultivation effects is construct accessibility. Construct accessibility is the availability of mental constructs that are formed together to create schemata. Schemata provide the framework that facilitates information processing by allowing individuals to create concepts and evaluations (Domke, Shah, &

Wackman, 1998). Concepts and evaluations formed are developed by making judgments about related or unrelated objects because of having cognitive knowledge structures that are recently and frequently activated. Mental information frequently or recently activated by contextual clues tends to remain on the forefront of one's mental bin making them easily accessible. Schemata provide raw materials for one to establish perceptions of their surroundings into clusters of mental information. According to Levy (2000), schemata help one in the development of mental frameworks for categorizations of individuals based on representations in memory that allows them to process large amounts of information swiftly by capitalizing the most notable social features. These social features are organized into mental clusters of information that allows one to process observed characteristics of other individuals based on what is already imbedded in one's memory.

In certain situations, information cultivated from the media is more recent and tends to be more accessible, connecting construct accessibility and cultivation. Construct accessibility used while processing media's messages incline viewers to rely more on those messages when constructing judgments about the world, based on frequency, recency, and vividness (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). For example, when one develops a thought about a topic that comes from a media source, the construct lies on the forefront of one's mind and is relevant. The more frequent the same topic or a topic that is closely related arises, the more the construct is reactivated. More constructs about the topic are formed and joined with the previous constructs, making it easier to process and evaluate that particular topic. Cultivation takes place because as more topics from the media come about that are similar to one's constructs, the more one's constructs become perceptions and judgments that are aligned with the lessons that come from those topics. For example, if a viewer frequently views television shows that all have the

common theme or topic that Black male athletes are violent, his or her mental constructs that associate those athletes with violence will be readily accessible due to the frequency and recency of the reoccurring theme. The viewer will then join these mental constructs together to form schemata, which will help to process the information and aid the viewer in making a judgment about Black male athletes.

The information gathered from traditional and social media is easily accessible because of overestimations of frequency and probability by the viewer. Heavy users of traditional and social media receive information more frequently making knowledge structures more readily accessible for them than those who are not heavy users (Shrum & O'Guinn, 1993). More viewing can create stronger constructs that can be assessed when social judgments need to be made.

### **Defining Traditional and Social Media**

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009), "social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Context" (p. 61). Social media are a set of online tools that serve as a platform and support social interaction between users and the facilitation of information exchange. Although blogs, virtual social worlds, content communities, and collaborative projects are considered types of social media, this study focuses on social media as social networking sites in regards to crime news, fictional crime dramas, sports news/programming, and sporting events, particularly Facebook and Twitter. Social networking sites are applications that allow users to create personal profiles, invite friends and other users to view these profiles, and send and receive e-mails and instant messages between each other (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009).

Lenhart (2009) found that social networking users are young adults, and three-quarters of Internet users are social network users who are under the age of 25. Raacke and Bonds-Raake (2008) found that college students, both males and females, spent about three hours each day on social networking sites. It was also found that college students who are social network users limit themselves to an average of 10-15 minutes each day (Ellison et al., 2007; Valenzuela et al., 2009). In addition, 18-29 year olds have an 89 percent usage of social networking sites, and 30-49 year olds have a 72 percent usage. Sixty percent of adults between the ages of 50-60 are active on social media, as well as 43 percent of adults age 60 and older (Bullas, 2014). One social networking site that is heavily used by social network users is Facebook.

Facebook, created by Mark Zuckerberg, has grown to 1 billion active users since its creation in 2004 (Bennett, 2014). Users connect with each other by “friending,” which starts a Facebook relationship, writing on one another’s “wall” (profile page), indicating that they “like” other users’ content, sending messages, tagging photos, and joining fan clubs or groups (Hansen et al., 2010). Like many other social networking sites, Facebook imposes restrictive terms of use for its data. Unlike Twitter, Facebook constrains what data can be accessed and the duration that the data may be used. One may extract Facebook data related to his or her own interactions, but even that data may only be used for specific purposes and short periods.

Although the terms of use are restrictive, Facebook still serves as a news source for many. In February 2014, the Pew Research Center published an article about its findings of Facebook and news. Pew found that 64 percent of U.S. adults use Facebook, and 30 percent of U.S. adults consume news on Facebook. Additionally, 34 percent of Facebook news consumers are ages 18-29, and 39 percent are ages 30-49. Also, 57 percent of news consumers on Facebook



consume news about sports, and 51 percent consume news about crime. Another social networking site that is commonly used by social network users next to Facebook is Twitter.

Twitter has over 105.7 million users as reported in April 2010 and is valued at over one billion dollars (Fischer & Reuber, 2010). In 2014, Twitter Inc. (2014) reported having 241 million monthly active users, with 500 million Tweets being sent per day. The social networking site has a profile page that gives the full names, biographies, locations, web pages, number of tweets and followers of users, and the number of users that are followed. Tweets are messages that users can post using a 140-character limit, and followers are users that consume tweets of other users. Unlike other social networking sites, the relationship of following or being followed on Twitter requires no reciprocation (Kwak, Park, Lee & Moon, 2010). A user can follow any other user, and the user being followed need not follow back. Being a follower on Twitter allows users to receive all messages from other users that are being followed and enables them to retweet all messages. The mechanism of retweeting allows followers to spread information and messages of others being followed to others that the creator of the tweet or message may or may not follow.

According to the results of a survey administered in 2012 by the Pew Research Center, 16 percent of all Internet users were on Twitter. Additionally, 27 percent of Internet users who are on Twitter are between the ages of 18-29, with 16 percent being between the ages of 30-49. Also, 26 percent of Internet users who are on Twitter are Blacks, making it the largest group of users in terms of race. The same study also found that 8 percent of U.S. adults consume news on Twitter and are found to be younger and more educated than both the population overall and Facebook news consumers. While the number of social network users have increased within the past

couple of years, some media consumers still rely on traditional media as a source of communication.

Traditional media are the conventional forms of advertising and communication such as television, print, radio, direct mail and outdoor (Livesey, 2011). Within this study traditional media will be defined solely as television, and focus primarily on crime news, fictional crime dramas, sports news/programming, and sporting events. The rationale behind this is that television still leads and is the largest medium for media consumption, resulting in a great amount of viewers' perceptions coming from television when looking at traditional media. (Nielsen Wire, 2013). Nielsen conducted a report in 2013 that examined how Americans consumed content over the course of the past year and found that television was the most widely used medium. Traditional television viewing uses up over six days (144 hours, 54 minutes) worth of time per month. Everything else ranging from computers to smartphones uses up a significantly less amount of time (Nielsen Wire, 2013). Following behind television in terms of time consumption is Internet on a computer, with consumption at 28 hours and 29 minutes. Other findings of the report include 289 million Americans are television owners, with 119 million owning four or more television sets.

While all media portray certain images to viewers, new advances in technology have enabled social media also to play a vital role in shaping users' perceptions. While traditional media are controlled and monitored by an organization or an agent, social media allow for a wider range of dissemination of thoughts and presentations. Unlike traditional media, social media does not only allow for managers and agents to control content, but for individuals to act as gatekeepers, monitoring information and shaping other individuals' perceptions. Viewers are turning more frequently to social media as their source of media consumption, finding it more

trustworthy and easier to control (Foux, 2006; Rashtchy et al., 2007; Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). Viewers are constantly exposed to certain situations involving Black male athletes by traditional and social media, but oftentimes do not understand the background of these collegiate and professional athletes. In other words, context is often not provided or even cared about.

### **Collegiate and Professional Athletes**

Research shows that students of color have certain behaviors and underachieve academically as a result of the influences of negative beliefs that are directed toward them or perceived cognitively by them (Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999). When one enters a domain where negative beliefs that serve as risk or threat exists, their self-esteem could possibly be harmed, causing them to perform poorly. Collegiate Black male athletes enter institutions all the time and are mostly expected and encouraged to play sports, leaving them to feel inferior academically and less intelligent than their counterparts (Hall, 2002).

These athletes focus solely on sports and not academics partially due to media portrayals and the encouragement that comes from institutional factors (Hodge, et al., 2008). They rarely encounter Black intellectuals and are repeatedly exposed to media portrayals of role models in sports and other entertainment careers (Taylor, 2000). Portrayals do not solely involve athletes and sports, but other factors such as the financial lifestyle that can be gained from playing sports. According to Edward Taylor (2000):

Adolescents are an easy mark for the blast of advertisements, commercials, and corporate paraphernalia. In the past two decades, the media campaign has become even more focused, intense, and unabashed in catering to youth. Sports images in popular culture are lavish with promises for men (present, but less so, for women)—especially for African American men (p. 75).

These images show the lifestyle and expensive items such as cars, homes, and clothes that can be attained by the financial gains that come from playing professional sports.

Institutional factors such as the encouragement to play sports coming from sport programs and the administrators working at institutions, also play a role in why black male athletes solely focus on sports in college. Teachers, coaches and others at institutions can often encourage and lead students toward certain beliefs about their own academic capabilities. These teachers and coaches exchange social knowledge by building values and beliefs shaped by racial stereotypes, giving students misguided perceptions about their own and others' academic capabilities (Burden et al., 2004; Harrison et al., 2004). When recruiting college athletes, athletic programs often impress a small degree of seriousness on academics to students. For example, when students are being recruited and are touring institutions, the importance of academics is rarely mentioned, if at all, and sports programs are given a higher priority (Benson, 2000). Singer (2005) found that Whites will encourage racial advances for Blacks only when there is also a White self-interest, particularly in the field of sports. For example, when the University of Alabama's Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant and University of Kentucky's Adolph Rupp experienced defeats in sports against teams of Black athletes, both coaches began recruiting athletes to their respective football and basketball teams (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Agyemang, Singer, and DeLorme (2010) found that racism still exists in college sport programs and Black male athletes are the most important stakeholders of these programs and departments because of their talents and likeness that sells to various consumer groups such as the media, donors and fans. Van Rheenen (2013) found that Black student athletes are exploited for their talents by colleges and universities receiving "undeserved benefits from student athletes, using their athletic talents as a

means to the institution's ends of generating revenue and public visibility" (p. 553). In addition to an editorial in the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (2005: 2), he argues

It appears that many of these flagship state universities are admitting Black students who are not academically qualified for even the moderately rigorous curricula at these schools. In many cases, these Black athletes are admitted solely for the purpose of their participation in intercollegiate athletics. The case is strong that these flagship universities are exploiting Blacks for their athletic talents while frequently ignoring their educational needs (p. 558).

Unlike Black college athletes, professional athletes no longer find themselves having to make decisions between academics and sports, but are now using their athletic skills as sports marketing agents. In the past three decades, sports have been used to sell consumer products to men, as well as to create restricted ideals of masculinity. Also, sports have been used to sell sporting equipment for games, but are not being used to sell beer, food, products and other lifestyles (Smith & Beal, 2007). Particularly in the Black community, professional sport is emblematic of the "rags to riches" success story, selling desires as an iconic status that embodies the American dream. "Sport heroes are among the best-paid as wealthiest denizens of the consumer society and thus serve as embodiments of fantasy aspirations for the good life" (Kellner, 2004, p. 306).

Black professional athletes are used as icons of the "good life" and are looked at as the embodiment of successful manhood and masculinity. For these athletes, some of the cultural markers of the good life deal with their characteristics and lifestyles, such as masculinity and economic success. For example, these athletes are heavily associated with a natural physicality, like the natural need to partake in sexual activities (Dunbar, 2000). This causes them to be seen as sexually and expressively free. Also, these athletes embody a masculinity that is seen as a form of emancipation from the middle-class masculinity which involves being referred to as a "rebel" or having an "outsider" image. This masculinity that professional athletes portray

includes toughness, one that excludes emotional control and detachment, but involves somewhat of a flamboyant style (Hooks, 2004). It is one that takes Black hipness, muscularity, and heterosexuality and combines economic success gained through hard work. For example, MTV's *Cribs* portrays the lifestyles of Black professional athletes by displaying their material wealth. Athletes on the show are seen with high status items such as Cristal and Timberland, equating material wealth to successful living. Bourdieu (1984) described the nature of such athletes as using physical competence to gain wealth and pursue self-gratification, while living with resources of the most economically elite.

As critics argue, perceptions and generalizations of users tend to accumulate and crystalize over a period of time into a form of lore. Linda Tucker's (2003), study found the following:

On one hand, lore seems to produce tautologies in which beliefs prompt, license, and modulate actions, which in turn appear to authenticate the group's beliefs... As such, lore is both determinative because it culls and enforces the beliefs on which a group predicates its actions and adaptive because of the ease with which it mutates across time and space in accordance with changes in social, cultural, political, and economic environments (p. 308).

In addition, media portrayals that show Black male athletes in the manner mentioned above tend to populate and remain constant over time, teaching lessons that become lore and influences one's perceptions. The more often the media show Black male athletes for their sexuality, muscularity and being financially flamboyant, the more lore is developed and influences users' perceptions.

This study looks to the cultivation theory, stereotyping and similar research as the basis for the survey that will be used to measure users' perceptions. It focuses on the effect of stereotypes from media consumption may have on the perceptions individuals may hold of Black male athletes.

## **Stereotyping: Crime Perceptions**

A stereotype is an implicit memory effect that allows generalizations about categories of people to be made. Stereotypes are cognitive structures or categories that affect the encoding and processing of information,” (Dixon, 2007, p. 271). Stereotypes cause biases in the way information is processed, usually aligned with the particular stereotype being made or used (Dixon & Maddox, 2005). It causes one to “direct attention to some stimuli and away from others, influence categorization of information, help us fill-in missing information, and influence memory,” (Dixon, 2007, p. 272). According to Shrum (2002), the activation of knowledge constructs produced by the media is likely to link members of groups by stereotypical traits when individuals become categorized as a part of social groups. Although stereotypes can be considered positive or negative, they are all misleading. Prior research indicates African Americans are associated with, if not deemed, as criminals while being shown in television news. Based on crime reports in the Los Angeles area, African Americans were overrepresented as criminals (37%), compared to actual crime reports in the area yielding (21%). African Americans were also underrepresented as victims (23%) when being compared to actual crime reports (28%), (Dixon & Linz, 2000a, 2000b).

Due to the overrepresentation of African Americans as criminals in the news, frequent viewing will increase the availability of such constructs. The portrayal of African Americans in association with criminality can influence memory and judgments of related groups, causing stereotypes to be made (Dixon & Maddox, 2005). Within this study, criminal-like characteristics are defined as traits that produce violent, sexually offensive, abusive and dangerous crimes.

## **Determinant and Moderators of Crime Stereotyping**

Researchers have found that the portrayals of Blacks as criminals on television news have an impact on the perceptions of Blacks and crime-related decisions. For example, Johnson, Adams, Hall, and Ashburn (1997) found that participants were more dispositional in the evaluation of the behavior of a Black male than a White male after viewing a newspaper story featuring a violent crime. Johnson, Trawalter, and Dovidio (2000) also found similar results when exposing participants to violent rap music. Oliver and Fonash (2002) found that participants were more likely to mistakenly recall that non-Black suspects featured in a crime newspaper story were Black.

A moderator of stereotyping is physical appearance. Past social science investigations have focused on the variation of skin tones in regards to social judgments, known as skin tone bias. "Skin tone bias refers to behavior toward members of a racial category based on the lightness or darkness of their skin" (Dixon & Maddox, 2005, p. 1557). Researchers have found that physical appearance tends to play an impactful role on social judgments. Individuals with Afrocentric features such as dark skin tone, full lips, and wide noses are more associated with negative stereotypes and cultural representation (Dixon & Maddox, 2005). Therefore, dark tones are more likely to activate Black stereotypes than tones that are not dark.

The extent that one makes a stereotype is moderated by racism and the level of prejudice (Dixon & Maddox, 2005). For example, Gilliam et al., (1996) conducted a study highlighting a Black male or a White male as the perpetrator within a crime story. The researchers found that White participants with a high level of racism were more than likely to identify the Black male within the story to be the perpetrator of the crime than those low in racism. They also found that White participants with a high level of racism were more favorable of policies that were punitive



when being exposed to the Black male as the perpetrator. In addition to racism and prejudice, Dixon and Maddox (2005) conducted a study exposing participants to Black, White, or unidentified perpetrators, as well as exposing them to Black, White, or unidentified officers. The researchers found that the criminality stereotype revolves around the idea that not only are Blacks more likely to commit a crime, but they are more violent and dangerous, and less likely to commit nonviolent crimes. Other findings include that Blacks are less likely to be victims of crimes or contribute to society in a positive way. Also, even when race is not mentioned, it was found that Whites are more likely to assume the perpetrator of the crime to be Black, and the victim of the crime to be White, and that non-Whites assign harsher punishments and culpability judgments to Blacks than to Whites, creating implications for social injustice.

Through direct address, sports television allows the viewer to create constructs that are affected by the metaphors, descriptors, and analogies commentators make. Through their language, commentators are able to frame events which affect the viewer's interpretation of the program's meaning. The sporting message, which represents athletic competition, gives of the notion of 'us and them' to viewers, causing implications for ethnocentrism and other discourses involving racism (McCarthy, Jones, & Potrac, 2003).

Not only do the media help to activate mental constructs that link members of groups by stereotypical traits in regards to crime, but the media also causes individuals to become categorized as part of social groups in sports, as well. Researchers have argued that sports media has evolved to be a primary agent of stereotyping, involving television commentaries overtly addressing traits and characteristics categorized by race or ethnicity (Davis & Harris, 1998). Unlike film, television which structure preferred positions, sport television operates in a cultural context which may influence viewers' interpretations (Rose & Friedman, 1997).

## **Sport Character Stereotyping**

According to Jackson (1994), the black male athlete can be seen in the media, particularly television, as “comic, violent, savage or primitive and hypersexual” (p. 4). Rainville and McCormick (1997) found that NFL commentary tended to criticize Black players more than European American players, giving them a lesser amount of positive focus while playing. “The announcer is, at the same time, building a negative reputation for the black player by negatively comparing him to other players, making negative references to his past achievements, and depicting him as the recipient of aggression,” (Rainville & McCormick, 1997, p. 24-25). Like other African Americans in general, Black male athletes have been stereotyped and linked with deviant behaviors. The deviant stereotype of these players sees them as being “uncontrolled, excessive, and addictive,” (Davis & Harris, 1998, p. 160). This stereotype is linked to drug addiction, the uncontrolled style of play, and sexuality.

The stereotypes that Black men are oversexed, hypersexual, and unable to control their sexual desires are depicted in the media portrayals of Black male athletes. According to Lule (1995), media coverage of Mike Tyson’s rape conviction is a product of subtle racism that was shaped by black stereotypes.

Just two portraits of Tyson emerged. He was either a crude, sex obsessed violent savage who could barely control his animal instincts or he was a victim of terrible social circumstances, almost saved from the streets by a kindly overseer, but who finally faltered and fell to the connivance of others. Both these portraits demean and debase Tyson, depicting him as a creature helpless either to basic instincts or the machinations of others. Both portraits depict a man without self-control or determination (p. 181).

Cole and Andrews (1996) argue media coverage of Magic Johnson’s contraction of HIV was also influenced by the stereotype that black men are unable to control their sexual desires. The researchers argue the media’s viewpoint of the world of professional sport in this case “is steeped in racially organized fears of black masculinity, sexuality, and miscegenation” (Cole &

Andrews, 1996, p. 162). Like other Black male athletes, media portrayals of Johnson positioned him through 'racial codes of the street,' which depicts him to be compulsive, uncontrolled, and reckless. Implications of the oversexed stereotype and television's portrayals of it are the suggestions that black athletes are "closer to nature," and thus appear "animal-like," (Davis & Harris, 1998).

Television also portrays Black male athletes as being violent based on stereotypes. Research conducted by Cole and Andrews (1996) noted media portrayals of black athletes as being criminalized, violent "thugs." According to Macdonald (1995), mediated portrayals of Charles Barkley are so violent that Nike exaggerated on this notion by featuring him in a commercial saying jokingly, "pardon me, I'm sorry, excuse me" as opposing players fly by the wayside." D.Z. Jackson (1989, p. A28) contended upon this notion of criminality by arguing that Black male athletes are likely to "leave the game with a verbal resume ore worthy of a mugger than a coach." Another example is the portrayal of Glenn Robinson, former player for the Milwaukee Bucks, in a Reebok commercial. Within the commercial, Robinson is explaining the various moves he uses to beat his opponents. All clips of Robinson are also shot in black and white. A metal sign with his painted slogan on it hangs on a playground gate that is slammed shut following his last statement. This commercial shows Robinson in an intimidating manner and is seen as a metonym associated with the violence found in 'the hood' (Lule, 1995).

### **Sport Skills Stereotyping**

According to Buffington and Fraley (2008), Black male athletes are also stereotyped as natural athletes. These natural athletes are portrayed to have superior physical skills such as speed, high levels of strength, and a great jumping ability. While presented to be natural and have great physical ability, they are also presented and less praised in regards to mental skills.

The capitalization of stereotypes in regards to sport skills based on these portrayals tend to lead to stacking. Stacking is the “phenomenon in which a coach assigns athletes to certain playing positions in team sports based on their supposed racial attributes, such as speed and power, rather than their actual achieved performance,” (Rasmussen, Esgate, & David, 2005, p. 429).

Consequently, Black athletes are assigned positions based on their physical ability and prowess rather than those positions involving mental skills, decision-making and leadership skills, and intelligence, which are typically filled by White athletes.

Yetman and Berghorn (1988, 1993) found that the number Black male athletes in central positions in collegiate basketball have increased, but only due to the number of Black male athletes participating in the sport and were not proportional to the number of male athletes entering the sport. Johnson et al. (1999) also argued that racial stereotypes of sport skill are seen in media portrayals. The researchers used photographs to evoke racial stereotypes held by undergraduate students to assess the perceptions of the successes of Black and White male athletes in collegiate basketball. Johnson et al. (1999), Rasmussen et al. (2005, p. 429) found the following:

Based entirely on pictures showing only the head, this study indicated that students attributed the success of White men to hard work and socioeconomic factors whereas they attributed the success of Black men to innate genetic factors.

A study by Mikaela Dufur (1997), found that perceptions of the successes of Black male athletes were due to physical ability. She examined issues of *Sports Illustrated* from different periods of the year to create a content analysis. She found that 57 percent of black athletes were portrayed to have success accounted for by their physical ability including speed or size, and strength. She also found that only 20 percent of Black male athletes were portrayed as having success due to intellect-based characteristics such as leadership, intelligence, work ethic or acquired skills. Van

Rheenen (2013) found by institutions celebrating and commodifying Black athletic performances, the support of “racial hierarchies of intellectual and physical superiority” is still growing (p. 562). This causes performative displays in sport to structure and set boundaries of perceptions of attributes that attend to different groups, reinforcing beliefs of Black intellectual weakness and physical superiority (Van Rheneen, 2013).

## **Hypotheses**

As mentioned earlier, research shows that media portrayals can be powerful influences. The degree to which those portrayals can influence one’s perceptions and cause them to be aligned with the media’s views depends on the amount of engagement one has with the media (Gerbner, et al., 1986). This study examines the perceptions one has of Black male athletes based on the amount of time spent engaging in traditional (television), and social media (Facebook and Twitter). For this study, content for traditional and social media includes crime news, fictional crime dramas, sports new/programming, and sporting events. As stated earlier, criminal-like characteristics are defined as those traits that produce violent, sexually offensive, abusive and dangerous crimes. Physical prowess is the physical ability when playing a sport that includes high levels of speed, strength and power, and accepted body size for the particular sport being played. Research has also examined how Black male athletes are stereotyped in regards to mental sport skills due to media’s portrayals. This study examines the differences in the likelihood that media consumers would perceive Black male athletes in regards to crime-like characteristics and levels of mental skills when playing sports. Rasmussen, Esgate, and David (2005) found that Black male athletes are assigned certain sport positions based on the perception that they are superior in physical prowess, and lacking heavily in terms of sport mental skills. As discussed earlier, mental skills are defined as those skills that require, decision-

making, leadership, and a great amount of intelligence when playing sports. I pose the following hypotheses:

**H1:** The more time participants spend engaging in traditional media, the more likely they will perceive collegiate and professional Black male athletes as having more criminal-like characteristics and physical prowess.

**H2:** The more time participants spend engaging in social media, the more likely they will perceive collegiate and professional Black male athletes as having more criminal-like characteristics and physical prowess.

**H3:** The more time participants spend engaging in traditional media, the more likely they will perceive collegiate and professional Black male athletes as having less mental skills.

**H4:** The more time participants spend engaging in social media, the more likely they will perceive collegiate and professional Black male athletes as having less mental skills.

Previous research has examined the difference between cultivation effects of heavy and light viewers. Gerbner et al., (1986) found that the effects of heavy viewers within a particular group would be different from light viewers within the same group due to the amount of media exposure. The researchers also found that the difference in effects between heavy and light viewers would also be influenced by other factors such as direct or indirect experience, education, social and financial status. Past research has also shown that the program genre and content plays a role in media effects. I pose the following hypotheses:

**H5:** Compared to light viewers, heavy traditional media users will attribute criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes.

**H6:** Compared to light viewers, heavy social media users will attribute criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes.

**H7:** Compared to light viewers, heavy traditional media users will attribute perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes.

**H8:** Compared to light viewers, heavy social media users will attribute perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes.

Previous research also mentioned the extent to which Black male athletes are to commit violent crimes. Dixon and Maddox (2005) found that not only are Blacks more likely to commit a crime, but they are more violent and dangerous, and less likely to commit nonviolent crimes. I pose the following hypotheses:

**H9:** Compared to light viewers, heavy traditional media users will attribute violent crimes to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes.

**H10:** Compared to light viewers, heavy social media users will attribute violent crimes to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### **Participants and Design**

This thesis looks to study the perceptions one has of collegiate and professional Black male athletes based on media portrayals. Therefore, a survey was chosen as the method of choice. The survey method was selected because it can investigate the relationship between the amount of media usage and consumers' attitudes and opinions. This study was an online survey administered partially on the campus of Louisiana State University and through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants who completed the online study on Louisiana State University's campus volunteered and received course credit for their participation. Participants who volunteered through Amazon Mechanical Turk were compensated 50 cents each for completion. The study covered a sample of 145 White participants ranging from the age of 18-71 with the average being 28.19 years old ( $SD = 9.882$ ). Of these participants 57 (39.3 percent) were male and 87 (60 percent) were female (See Table 1). Thirty-six of the participants completed the survey on Louisiana State University's campus, and 109 participants completed it through Amazon Mechanical Turk.

### **Procedures**

To examine the hypotheses proposed, I conducted an online survey. Participants were first asked to answer basic demographic questions assessing variables such as age, race and gender. Confounding variables such as family household income, sport engagement, and racism and prejudice were assessed and used as controls as well (Dixon, 2007). A modified version of the Racial Attitude Questionnaire ( $\alpha = .749$ ) was used to assess and control racism and prejudice,



**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Age	28.19	
Gender		
Male		39.3%
Female		60.0%
Class Rank		
Freshmen		7.6%
Sophomore		8.3%
Junior		14.5%
Senior		25.5%
Master's Degree		27.6%
Doctoral Degree		3.4%
Other		12.4%

as well as the Black Contact Scale ( $\alpha = .844$ ). After answering the demographic questions, participants were instructed to respond to the dependent measures.

### **Measurements**

**Time.** The independent variable for this study was time. Time was operationalized and measured as the average amount of hours one spends using traditional media (television) and social media (Facebook, Twitter). On average, participants reported watching 3.2 hours of television weekly ( $SD=3.10$ ,  $R=15.25$ ). Social media was measured by averaging the amount of hours participants used Facebook and Twitter weekly. On average, participants reported using 1.77 hours of social media weekly ( $SD=2.61$ ,  $R=16.79$ ). Time was also operationalized to obtain groups for heavy and light users of traditional and social media by conducting a mean split for weekly hours of traditional and social media usage, respectively. The group for heavy users of traditional media ranged from the mean of 3.2 hours to the highest

**Table 2: Reliability Index**

	<i>Cronbach's Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</i>
<b>Criminal-like Characteristics</b>	
Black Collegiate Athletes	.922
White Collegiate Athletes	.905
Black Professional Athletes	.926
White Professional Athletes	.91
<b>Physical Prowess</b>	
Black Collegiate Athletes	.803
White Collegiate Athletes	.872
Black Professional Athletes	.904
White Professional Athletes	.743

amount of hours reported, 15.25 hours (M=1.51, SD=.50). The group for light users of traditional media ranged from zero hours to the highest number of hours below the mean, 3.19 hours (M=1.25, SD=.44). The group for heavy users of social media ranged from the mean of 1.77 hours to the highest amount of hours reported, 16.79 hours (M=1.08, SD=.28). The group for light users of social media ranged from zero to the highest amount of hours reported below the mean, 1.76 hours (M=1.07, SD=.27). Items assessed the average amount of time one spends using these channels in regards to crime news, fictional crime dramas, sport news/programming, sporting events, crime news and sports fan pages, and crime news and sports news feed.

**Criminal-like Characteristics.** Perceptions of criminal-like characteristics was used as a dependent variable. Four scales were created to measure those perceptions of Black college athletes, Black professional Athletes, White college athletes, and White professional athletes separately. A 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor

**Table 3: Correlations**

	<i>Pearson's r</i>
Mental Skills	
Black Collegiate Athletes	.513
White Collegiate Athletes	.608
Black Professional Athletes	.607
White Professional Athletes	.575

disagree), to 1 (disagree, strongly disagree) were used for all scales. Items consist of criminal-like characteristics gathered from research literature (Dixon & Maddox, 2005). Items included the extent to which participants thought athletes to be hypersexual, violent, dangerous, threatening and deviant. Examples of items included: *Black college athletes are threatening; Black professional athletes are hypersexual; White college athletes are dangerous; White professional athletes are violent.* See Table 2 for criminal-like characteristics reliability index.

**Physical Prowess.** Perceptions of physical prowess was used as a dependent variable. Four scales were created to measure those perceptions of Black college athletes, Black professional Athletes, White college athletes, and White professional athletes separately. A 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree), to 1 (disagree, strongly disagree) was used for all scales. Items included the extent to which participants thought athletes to be talented and strong. The item which assessed if participants thought athletes showed speed was deleted in order to gain a higher reliability. Examples of items included: *Black college athletes are talented; Black professional athletes are strong; White college athletes are strong; White professional athletes are talented.* See Table 2 for physical prowess index.

**Mental Skills.** Perceptions of mental skills was also used as a dependent variable. Four scales were created to measure those perceptions of Black college athletes, Black professional

Athletes, White college athletes, and White professional athletes separately. A 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 5 (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree), to 1 (disagree, strongly disagree) was used for all scales. Items included the extent to which participants thought athletes to be intelligent and show leadership. Examples of items included: *Black college athletes are intelligent; Black professional athletes show leadership; White college athletes are intelligent; White professional athletes show leadership.* The correlation analyses represent how much of the variation in the athletes' amount of intelligence participants thought to be related to the athletes' amount of leadership. See Table 3 for mental skills correlations.

**Social Reality Judgment.** Social reality judgment was also used as a dependent variable. This was measured by using open-ended items that assessed the percent in which participants thought violent crimes were committed by Black and White athletes in general. Examples of items included: *What percent of Black athletes do you think commit violent crimes; What percent of White athletes do you think commit violent crimes?* Participants reported that 16.86 percent of Black athletes commit violent crimes, and 9.91 percent of White athletes to commit violent crimes.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Several simple linear regression analyses were used to test the strength and accuracy of the relationships predicted in the hypotheses. H1 posits that there will be a positive relationship between traditional media usage and criminal-like characteristics of Black, collegiate athletes and professional athletes. Black, collegiate criminal-like characteristics had a mean of 2.56 ( $SD=.97$ ), and Black, professional criminal-like characteristics had a mean of 2.6 ( $SD=.95$ ) (See Table 4). A simple linear regression showed that traditional media usage did not significantly predict Black, collegiate criminal-like characteristics,  $F(1,143)=1.03, p>.05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0$ . A simple linear regression also showed that traditional media usage did not significantly predict Black, professional criminal-like characteristics,  $F(1,143)=.69, p>.05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = -.002$ . Traditional media usage did not predict degree of Black, collegiate criminal-like characteristics ( $\beta=.03$ ), or Black, professional criminal-like characteristics ( $\beta=.02$ ) (See Table 5). H1 also posits that there will be a positive relationship between traditional media usage and perceptions of physical prowess of Black, collegiate athletes and professional athletes. Perceptions of Black, collegiate physical prowess had a mean of 4.17 ( $SD=.72$ ), and perceptions of Black, professional physical prowess had a mean of 4.33 ( $SD=.70$ ) (See Table 4). A simple linear regression showed that traditional media usage did not significantly predict perceptions of Black, collegiate physical prowess,  $F(1,143)=3.49, p>.05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .017$ . A simple linear regression also showed that traditional media usage did not significantly predict perceptions of Black, professional physical prowess,  $F(1,143)=.35, p>.05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = -.005$ . Traditional media usage did not predict the degree of the perceptions of Black, collegiate physical prowess ( $\beta=-.04$ ), or the perceptions of Black, professional physical prowess ( $\beta=-.01$ ) (See Table 5). Overall, results did not support H1.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables**

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Criminal-like Characteristics		
Black Collegiate Athletes	2.56	(.97)
Black Professional Athletes	2.6	(.95)
Physical Prowess		
Black Collegiate Athletes	4.17	(.72)
Black Professional Athletes	4.33	(.70)
Mental Skills		
Black Collegiate Athletes	3.45	(.85)
Black Professional Athletes	3.58	(.88)

H2 posits that there will be a positive relationship between social media usage and criminal-like characteristics of Black, collegiate athletes and professional athletes. A simple linear regression showed that social media usage did significantly predict Black, collegiate criminal-like characteristics,  $F(1,122)=6.96, p<.01, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .046$ . A simple linear regression also showed that social media usage did significantly predict Black, professional criminal-like characteristics,  $F(1,122)=5.0, p<.05, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = -.032$ . In this instance, social media usage accounts for 4.6 percent of variance in Black, collegiate criminal-like characteristics, and 3.2 percent of variance in Black, professional criminal-like characteristics. Social media usage did predict degree of Black, collegiate criminal-like characteristics ( $\beta=.08$ ), and Black, professional criminal-like characteristics ( $\beta=.07$ ) (See Table 5). H2 also posits that there will be a positive relationship between social media usage and perceptions of physical

**Table 5: Simple Linear Regression Analyses**

	<i>Adj R<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>β</i>	<i>F</i>
<b>Traditional Media Usage</b>			
Criminal-like Characteristics -Black Collegiate Athletes	0	.03	1.03
Criminal-like Characteristics -Black Professional Athletes	-.002	.02	.69
Physical Prowess -Black Collegiate Athletes	.017	-.04	3.49
Physical Prowess -Black Professional Athletes	-.005	-.01	.35
Mental Skills -Black Collegiate Athletes	-.005	.01	.30
Mental Skills -Black Professional Athletes	-.005	.01	.23
<b>Social Media Usage</b>			
Criminal-like Characteristics -Black Collegiate Athletes	.046	.08**	6.96
Criminal-like Characteristics -Black Professional Athletes	.032	.07*	5.00
Physical Prowess -Black Collegiate Athletes	-.007	-.01	.12
Physical Prowess -Black Professional Athletes	.003	-.03	1.4
Mental Skills -Black Collegiate Athletes	-.004	.02	.45
Mental Skills -Black Professional Athletes	-.008	.008	.07

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

prowess of Black, collegiate athletes and professional athletes. A simple linear regression showed that social media usage did not significantly predict perceptions of Black, collegiate physical prowess,  $F(1,122)=.12, p > .05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = -.007$ . A simple linear regression also showed that social media usage did not significantly predict perceptions of Black, professional physical prowess,  $F(1,122)=1.4, p > .05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .003$ . Social media usage did not predict the degree of the perceptions of Black, collegiate physical prowess ( $\beta = -.01$ ), or Black, professional physical prowess ( $\beta = -.03$ ) (See Table 5). Overall, H2 was partially supported.

H3 posits that there will be a negative relationship between traditional media usage and mental skills of Black, collegiate athletes and professional athletes. Black, collegiate mental skills had a mean of 3.45 ( $SD = .85$ ), and Black, professional mental skills had a mean of 3.58 ( $SD = .88$ ) (See Table 4). A simple linear regression showed that traditional media usage did not significantly predict Black, collegiate mental skills,  $F(1,143)=.30, p > .05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = -.005$ . A

**Table 6: Descriptive Mixed-Design ANOVA Main Effects**

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
<b>Within Subjects</b>		
Race of Athlete		
Traditional Media		
Black Athletes -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.6	.082
White Athletes -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.4	.073
Black Athletes -Physical Prowess	4.2	.05
White Athletes -Physical Prowess	4.0	.05
Black Athletes –Violent Crimes	16.8	2.0
White Athletes –Violent Crimes	10.3	1.2
Race of Athlete		
Social Media		
Black Athletes -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.6	.09
White Athletes -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.5	.08
Black Athletes -Physical Prowess	4.1	.06
White Athletes -Physical Prowess	4.0	.06
Black Athletes –Violent Crimes	16.97	2.19
White Athletes –Violent Crimes	9.92	1.3
<b>Between Subjects</b>		
Traditional Media Usage (Attribution to Black Athletes)		
Heavy Users -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.7	.11
Light Users -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.4	.082
Heavy Users -Physical Prowess	4.0	.07
Light Users -Physical Prowess	4.2	.06
Heavy Users –Violent Crimes	14.4	2.2
Light Users –Violent Crimes	12.7	1.8
Social Media Usage (Attribution to Black Athletes)		
Heavy Users -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.7	.13
Light Users -Criminal-like Characteristics	2.3	.08
Heavy Users -Physical Prowess	4.0	.09
Light Users -Physical Prowess	4.2	.06
Heavy Users –Violent Crimes	14.8	2.6
Light Users –Violent Crimes	12.1	1.8

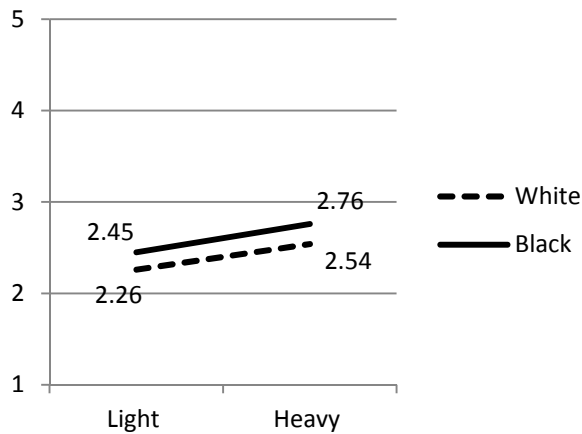


simple linear regression also showed that traditional media usage did not significantly predict Black, professional mental skills,  $F(1,143)=.23$ ,  $p>.05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = -.005$ . Traditional media usage did not predict degree of Black, collegiate mental skills ( $\beta=.01$ ), or Black, professional mental skills ( $\beta=.01$ ) (See Table 5). Results did not support H3.

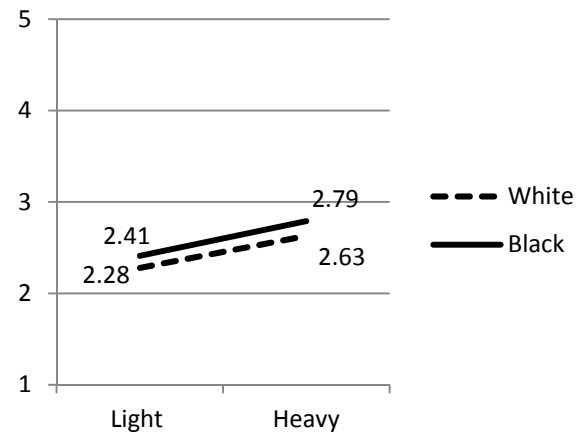
H4 posits that there will be a negative relationship between social media usage and mental skills of Black, collegiate athletes and professional athletes. A simple linear regression showed that social media usage did not significantly predict Black, collegiate mental skills,  $F(1,122)=.45$ ,  $p>.05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = -.004$ . A simple linear regression also showed that social media usage did not significantly predict Black, professional mental skills,  $F(1,122)=.07$ ,  $p>.05$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = -.008$ . Social media usage did not predict degree of Black, collegiate mental skills ( $\beta=.02$ ), or Black, professional mental skills ( $\beta=.008$ ) (See Table 5). Overall, results did not support H4.

H5 posits that compared to light users, heavy traditional media users will attribute criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes. A 2x2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of traditional media usage (heavy and light) and race of athlete (Black and White) on attributions of criminal-like characteristics. The results yielded a main effect for race of athlete with participants attributing more criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes ( $M=2.6$ ,  $SE=.082$ ) than to White athletes ( $M=2.4$ ,  $SE=.073$ ), Wilk's  $\lambda=.95$ ,  $F(1,128)=7.15$ ,  $p<.001$ , partial  $\eta^2=.05$  (See Table 6). A main effect was obtained for traditional media usage. Criminal-like characteristics were attributed more by heavy users ( $M=2.7$ ,  $SE=.11$ ) than by light users ( $M=2.4$ ,  $SE=.082$ ),  $F(1,128)=4.9$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.04$  (See Table 6). A traditional media usage x race of athlete interaction was not obtained, Wilk's  $\lambda=1$ ,  $F(1,128)=.04$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=0$ . Both heavy and light traditional media users attributed more

**Figure 1:** Traditional Media Usage X Race of Athlete Interaction (Criminal-like Characteristics)



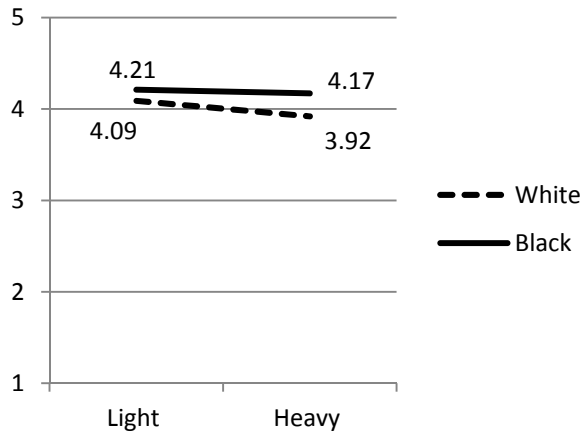
**Figure 2:** Social Media Usage X Race of Athlete Interaction (Criminal-like Characteristics)



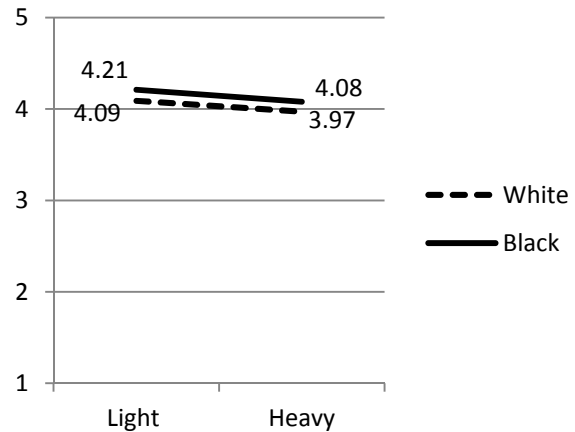
criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes than to White athletes. As Figure 1 shows, heavy traditional media users ( $M=2.76$ ,  $SE=.13$ ) and light users ( $M=2.45$ ,  $SE=.10$ ) attributed more criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes. In addition, heavy traditional media users ( $M=2.54$ ,  $SE=.12$ ) and light users ( $M=2.26$ ,  $SE=.09$ ) attributed less criminal-like characteristics to White athletes. (See Figure 1). This result is showing that while perceptions of lighter users are lower than heavy users, light users make similar associations regarding criminal-like characteristics for both Black and White athletes; heavy users show a similar pattern. Overall, H5 was not supported because there was no interaction.

H6 posits that compared to light users, heavy social media users will attribute criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes. A 2x2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of social media usage (heavy and light) and race of athlete (Black and White) on attributions of criminal-like characteristics. The results did not yield a main effect for race of athlete with participants attributing nearly equivalent levels of criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes ( $M=2.6$ ,  $SE=.09$ ) as compared to White athletes ( $M=2.5$ ,  $SE=.08$ ), Wilk's  $\lambda=.97$ ,  $F(1,110)=3.6$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.03$  (See Table 6).

**Figure 3:** Traditional Media Usage X Race of Athlete Interaction (Physical Prowess)



**Figure 4:** Social Media Usage X Race of Athlete Interaction (Physical Prowess)



A main effect was obtained for social media usage. Criminal-like characteristics were attributed to athletes more by heavy users ( $M=2.7$ ,  $SE=.13$ ) than by light users ( $M=2.3$ ,  $SE=.08$ ),

$F(1,110)=6.01$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.05$  (See Table 6). A social media usage x race of athlete

interaction was not obtained, Wilk's  $\lambda=1$ ,  $F(1,110)=.04$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=0$ . Both heavy and light social media users attributed more criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes than to

White athletes. As Figure 2 shows, heavy ( $M=2.79$ ,  $SE=.15$ ) and light ( $M=2.41$ ,  $SE=.09$ ) social media users attributed more criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes. In addition heavy

( $M=2.63$ ,  $SE=.13$ ) and light ( $M=2.28$ ,  $SE=.09$ ) social media users attributed less criminal-like

characteristics to White athletes. (See Figure 2). This result is showing that while perceptions of

lighter users are lower than heavy users, light users make similar associations regarding criminal-

like characteristics for both Black and White athletes; heavy users show a similar pattern. H6

was not supported because no interaction was obtained.

H7 posits that compared to light users, heavy traditional media users will attribute perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes. A

2x2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of traditional media usage

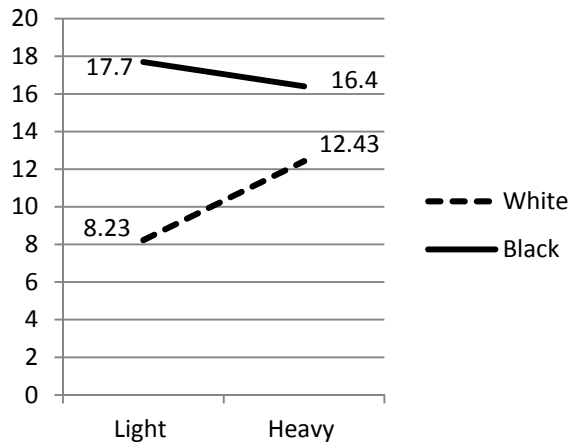
(heavy and light) and race of athlete (Black and White) on attributions of physical prowess. The

results yielded a main effect for race of athlete with participants attributing more perceptions of

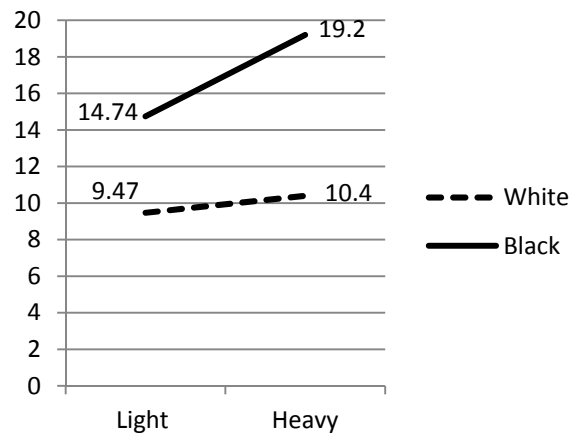
physical prowess to Black athletes ( $M=4.2$ ,  $SE=.05$ ) than to White athletes ( $M=4$ ,  $SE=.05$ ), Wilk's  $\lambda=.91$ ,  $F(1,132)=13$ ,  $p<.001$ , partial  $\eta^2=.09$  (See Table 6). A main effect was not obtained for traditional media usage. Perceptions of physical prowess was attributed less by heavy users ( $M=4$ ,  $SE=.07$ ) than by light users ( $M=4.2$ ,  $SE=.06$ ),  $F(1,132)=1.4$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.01$  (See Table 6). A traditional media usage x race of athlete interaction was not obtained, Wilk's  $\lambda=.99$ ,  $F(1,132)=1.69$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.01$ . Both heavy and light traditional media users attributed more perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes than to White athletes. As Figure 3 shows, heavy ( $M=4.17$ ,  $SE=.07$ ) and light traditional media users ( $M=4.21$ ,  $SE=.07$ ) attributed more perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes. In addition, heavy ( $M=3.92$ ,  $SE=.08$ ) and light traditional media users ( $M=4.09$ ,  $SE=.06$ ) attributed less perceptions of physical prowess to White athletes. (See Figure 3). This result is showing that while perceptions of lighter users are higher than heavy users, light users make similar associations regarding perceptions of physical prowess for both Black and White athletes; heavy users show a similar pattern. Overall, H7 was not supported because no interaction was obtained.

H8 posits that compared to light users, heavy social media users will attribute perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes. A 2x2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of social media usage (heavy and light) and race of athlete (Black and White) on attributions of the perceptions of physical prowess. The results yielded a main effect for race of athlete with participants attributing more perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes ( $M=4.1$ ,  $SE=.06$ ) than to White athletes ( $M=4$ ,  $SE=.06$ ), Wilk's  $\lambda=.96$ ,  $F(1,114)=5.4$ ,  $p<.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.05$  (See Table 6). A main effect was not obtained for social media usage. Perceptions of physical prowess was attributed less by heavy users ( $M=4$ ,  $SE=.09$ ) than by light users ( $M=4.2$ ,  $SE=.06$ ),  $F(1,114)=2.1$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.02$  (See Table 6).

**Figure 5:** Traditional Media Usage X Race of Athlete Interaction (Violent Crimes)



**Figure 6:** Social Media Usage X Race of Athlete Interaction (Violent Crimes)



A traditional media usage x race of athlete interaction was not obtained, Wilk's  $\lambda=1$ ,  $F(1,114)=.191$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.002$ . Both heavy and light social media users attributed more perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes than to White athletes. As Figure 4 shows, heavy ( $M=4.08$ ,  $SE=.11$ ) and light social media users ( $M=4.21$ ,  $SE=.07$ ) attributed more perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes. In addition, heavy ( $M=3.97$ ,  $SE=.10$ ) and light social media users ( $M=4.09$ ,  $SE=.06$ ) attributed less perceptions of physical prowess to White athletes. (See Figure 4). This result is showing that while perceptions of lighter users are higher than heavy users, light users make similar associations regarding perceptions of physical prowess for both Black and White athletes; heavy users show a similar pattern. Overall, H8 was not supported because no interaction was obtained.

H9 posits that compared to light users, heavy traditional media users will attribute violent crimes to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes. A 2x2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of traditional media usage (heavy and light) and race of athlete (Black and White) on attributions of violent crimes. The results yielded a main effect for race of athlete with participants attributing more violent crimes to Black athletes

( $M=16.8$ ,  $SE=2$ ) than to White athletes ( $M=10.3$ ,  $SE=1.2$ ), Wilk's  $\lambda=.88$ ,  $F(1,118)=16.3$ ,  $p<.001$ , partial  $\eta^2=.122$  (See Table 6). A main effect was not obtained for traditional media usage. Violent crimes were attributed slightly more by heavy users ( $M=14.4$ ,  $SE=2.2$ ) than by light users ( $M=12.7$ ,  $SE=1.8$ ),  $F(1,118)=.35$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.003$  (See Table 6). A traditional media usage x race of athlete interaction was not obtained, Wilk's  $\lambda=.98$ ,  $F(1,118)=2.42$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.02$ . Both heavy and light traditional media users attributed more violent crimes to Black athletes than to White athletes. As Figure 5 shows, heavy ( $M=16.4$ ,  $SE=3.14$ ) and light traditional media users ( $M=17.7$ ,  $SE=2.56$ ) attributed more violent crimes to Black athletes. In addition, heavy ( $M=12.43$ ,  $SE=1.82$ ) and light traditional media users ( $M=8.23$ ,  $SE=1.49$ ) attributed less violent crimes to White athletes. (See Figure 5). This result is showing that while perceptions of lighter users are lower than heavy users for White athletes, and higher than heavy users for Black athletes, light users make similar associations regarding perceptions of physical prowess for both Black and White athletes; heavy users show a similar pattern. Overall, H9 was not supported because no interaction was obtained.

H10 posits that compared to light users, heavy social media users will attribute violent crimes to Black athletes more often than they will to White athletes. A 2x2 mixed-design ANOVA was calculated to examine the effects of social media usage (heavy and light) and race of athlete (Black and White) on attributions of violent crimes. The results yielded a main effect for race of athlete with participants attributing more violent crimes to Black athletes ( $M=16.97$ ,  $SE=2.19$ ) than to White athletes ( $M=9.92$ ,  $SE=1.3$ ), Wilk's  $\lambda=.86$ ,  $F(1,105)=16.6$ ,  $p<.001$ , partial  $\eta^2=.137$  (See Table 6). A main effect was not obtained for social media usage. Violent crimes were attributed slightly more by heavy users ( $M=14.8$ ,  $SE=2.6$ ) than by light users ( $M=12.1$ ,  $SE=1.8$ ),  $F(1,105)=.72$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.007$  (See Table 6). A traditional media usage x race of

athlete interaction was not obtained, Wilk's  $\lambda=.99$ ,  $F(1,105)=1.05$ ,  $p>.05$ , partial  $\eta^2=.01$ . Both heavy and light social media users attributed more violent crimes to Black athletes than to White athletes. As Figure 6 shows, heavy ( $M=19.2$ ,  $SE=3.64$ ) and light social media users ( $M=14.74$ ,  $SE=2.43$ ) attributed more violent crimes to Black athletes. In addition, heavy ( $M=10.4$ ,  $SE=2.2$ ) and light social media users ( $M=9.47$ ,  $SE=1.46$ ) attributed less violent crimes to White athletes. (See Figure 6). This result is showing that while perceptions of lighter users are lower than heavy users, light users make similar associations regarding attributions for both Black and White athletes; heavy users show a similar pattern. Overall, H10 was not supported because no interaction was obtained.

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

In today's world, Black collegiate and professional male athletes are not only looked at for their overall physical capability within the sports they play, but are also grouped with other situations and occurrences that can be harmful to their image. A lot of the situations, whether dealing solely with sports or not, are created and disseminated by the media. With the advancements in mass communication over the past several decades, the media have a great deal of control of what reaches users. Often times, these situations that are dispersed by the media tend to portray Black athletes in a manner that can make them appear criminal-like, violent and deviant. Studies, such as this one, investigate the overall perceptions of Black collegiate and professional male athletes based on media portrayals. This study gives insight as to what extent these athletes are seen in regards to their physical capability, the likelihood of being criminals, and prevalence of committing violent crimes.

Results for H1, H3 and H4 do not support past literature and rationale in regards to cultivation effects and the amount of time one uses traditional and social media. Gerbner et al. (1986) argued that all television programs are the same in terms of narratives and credibility of their messages. He also argued that media users engage in the media non-selectively. Accepting this assumption, the differences in cultivation effects are a result of the differences between the amounts media users engage in the media. Results for H1, H3 and H4 did not support this rationale because it was found that one's perceptions of an athlete in regards to criminal-like characteristics, physical prowess, or mental skills do not heighten with the increase in traditional media; and, one's perceptions of an athlete in regards to physical prowess or mental skills is not solely correlated with and does not heighten with the increase in social media. Factors other than the amount of media usage help to determine cultivation effects (Tamborini & Choi, 1990).



In today's world, with cable providers offering more than 30 channels and the new advances in technology like social media, narratives and the credibility of messages vary between different programs, eliminating time spent watching television as the sole explanation of the differences in cultivation effects among consumers. Particularly, social media makes it more convenient for consumers to watch what they want, when they want, and increasingly where they want, supporting the likelihood of cultivation (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Bohn and Short (2009) found that television still dominates the flow of words and information that reach viewers. Nielsen Wire (2009) found that television viewing has reached an all-time high and the invention of new technologies like social media only aids in the flow of information by allowing viewers to partake conveniently, not killing cultivation effects, but strengthening them. Brossard and Scheufele (2013) found that social media has powerful effects due to users being able to add meaning to science stories beyond what the author of the original work intended by tweeting, commenting, or posting their thoughts along with the stories. Social media includes most, if not all of television's portrayals on its platform. Social media users can create any message desired involving content shown on television. Ladwig and Anderson (2011) found that the tone of comments users post, civil or uncivil, can significantly affect how audiences think about news items covering nanotechnology as a new technology. Current research supports Gerbner (1990) when predicting that new technologies would not change the content of exposure: "New delivery techniques, none of which produces much new or original fare, provide the appearance of greater and more attractive choices but in fact promote greater concentration" (p. 260).

The results for H2 support the rationale that social media can increase perceptions. For example, within this study it was found that the increase of participants' traditional media usage did not increase the likelihood of participants perceiving Black collegiate and professional male

athletes as criminals, but results showed that participants' criminal-like perceptions of these athletes increased along with their increase in social media usage. While the increase in social media usage was not significant of the increase of participants' perceptions of physical prowess and mental skills, results still show that social media can heighten and increase one's perceptions. This implies that if cultivation effects were found, then greater effects for criminal-like characteristics can occur through social media than traditional media because there are more powerful media portrayals of Black collegiate and professional athletes having criminal-like characteristics generated through social media than traditional media. Media messages through social media portray more Black collegiate and professional athletes as criminals than messages through traditional media.

Results for the last six hypotheses supported past research and rationales in regards to media users attributing more criminal-like characteristics, perceptions of physical prowess, and violent crimes to Black athletes than White athletes. A main effect was obtained when looking at the race of the athlete for perceptions criminal-like characteristics, physical prowess, and violent crimes. In regards to criminal-like characteristics, past studies have found that such characteristics are usually attributed to Blacks more than Whites. It was found that even when a non-Black suspect is mentioned in a crime news story, participants will mistakenly recall the criminal as being Black (Oliver & Fonash, 2002). Blacks are perceived more likely to commit crimes than other races. Blacks are also perceived to commit more violent crimes than nonviolent crimes. The results also showed that participants are more likely to attribute criminal-like characteristics to Black athletes more so than White athletes. .

In regards to the perceptions of physical prowess past studies have also found that such characteristics are usually attributed to Black athletes more than White athletes. Black athletes

are typically stereotyped as natural athletes with a superior physical capability (Buffington & Fraley, 2008). This superior physical capability includes having heavy amounts of strength, speed and jumping ability. In addition, the position that Black athletes play in sports are often times a result of their physicality. While this may seem logical, the implication behind it is not a good one. Although Black athletes are stereotyped as being natural athletes, too much emphasis can be put on this and focus of the athlete in other areas can began to lack. For example, universities' sports programs tend to focus too much on Black athletes' physical capability, and tend to lose focus on academics. In addition to the lost focused on academics, Black student athletes are often times demoralized for their talents by universities who receive undeserved benefits by using athletes' talent to generate revenue and public visibility (Rheenen, 2013). Results for H7 and H8 support the rationale that Black athletes are perceived as having more physical prowess than White athletes.

As stated earlier, Black athletes are perceived to commit more violent crimes than nonviolent crimes, and to commit more violent crimes than White athletes. This in part can be attributed to physical appearance, which helps moderates one's social judgments of others. Dixon & Maddox (2005) found that participants are more likely to link dark skin tones and certain facial feature like, large lips or a wide nose with the appearance of one who violent crimes. It was also found that Blacks are less likely to contribute positively to society, but are more likely to commit violent crimes in comparison. Results support this rationale. It was found that participants are more likely to attribute violent crimes to Black Athletes more than White athletes.

Results supported past research and rationales in regards to heavy users being more likely to experience cultivation effects than light users. Research suggests that users who are

considered heavy users are more likely to experience cultivation effects and hold deviating views than those light users of the same group, known as mainstreaming (Gerbner, et al., 1986). A main effect was obtained when looking at the attributions of criminal-like characteristics of heavy and light users of traditional and social media. Results for H5 and H6 showed that heavy users of traditional and social media attribute more criminal-like characteristics than light users of traditional and social media. Main effects were not obtained for H7, H8, H9 and H10, and suggest heavy and light users of traditional and social media do not significantly differ in their attributions of perceptions of physical prowess and violent crimes.

No significant interaction was found at all within this study. This can partially be explained by heavy and light users hardly differing in their attributions of criminal-like characteristics, physical prowess, and violent crimes to Black and White athletes, respectively. When depending on the traditional and social media usage of heavy and light users, the race of athletes, whether Black or White, did not show any different effects. In other words, when attributing criminal-like characteristics, physical prowess, and violent crimes to athletes based on race, the attributions thereof do not change significantly from heavy and light users of traditional and social media. All perceptions and attributions stand to be primarily equivalent.

Research suggests that heavy viewers of different groups often times have similar outlooks, and light viewers of different groups have similar outlooks, known as across-the-board cultivation (Gerbner, et al., 1986). By viewing Figures 1-4, it is evident that heavy viewers of both groups did not differ that much from one another, as well as light users, in regards to their perceptions of criminal-like characteristics and physical prowess, therefore supporting across-the-board cultivation. This implies that media portrayals of Black athletes are so powerful that heavy users of traditional and social media in one group, often times have no choice but to be

taught the same lessons and gather the same extrapolations from messages as other heavy users in another group, with light users of different groups sharing the same pattern. In addition, the amount of one's media usage is no match for media's powerful messages, all will experience similar if not the same effects. For example, traditional and social media's portrayals of Black athletes having criminal-like characteristics and high amounts of physical prowess are so powerful that both heavy and light users of traditional and social media have no choice but to attribute criminal-like characteristics and perceptions of physical prowess to Black athletes. Figures 5 and 6 shows how heavy users of traditional and social media do not have similar amounts of attributions for both groups, as well as light users of traditional and social media. This implies that heavy users of both groups, as well as light users of both groups have different amounts of attributions of violent crimes due to the differences in media messages received that portray Black and White athletes committing violent crimes. The differences in media messages are a result of the differences in the amounts that the messages portray Black and White athletes committing crimes.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

While this study investigates and provides insight regarding media users' perceptions of Black collegiate and professional male athletes, it does have some limitations. One limitation of this study was the sample size (N=145) being smaller than what was planned. In addition, the sample size resulted in having less power to test the relationships between the variables. This study also took into account and only tested White participants; therefore, this study and the results thereof are not fully generalizable to the entire population. In addition, I believe that only testing White participants did limit the results of the study. Although previous research studies found mostly White participants to be more prejudice in their judgments toward Blacks, the

media does not only send its messages to Whites users, and White users are not the only users that serve as a part of the audience that view media portrayals of Black male athletes. As a recommendation, I suggest that future studies include participants of different ethnicities so that perceptions of Black male athletes based on media portrayals can be more generalizable to the population. One reason for this suggestion is due to the possibility of testing a participant who is not White, who reports Black athletes as criminal-like or violent based on what they gather from the media or what they perceive from media portrayals. Also, testing only White participants could have limited results because participants could have answered test items in a manner that does not reflect what they actually gather from the media, but could have answered in an ambivalent manner that allows them to feel as though they are not being racist or prejudice. Although items were used on the questionnaire to control racism, prejudice and political ideology, these can only account for monitoring a certain amount of racism and prejudice. Testing participants of more ethnicities than just White could definitely broaden the scope to exactly what one can synthesize about Black collegiate and professional male athletes based on media portrayals.

As another recommendation, I suggest that future studies limit the age requirement to 18-24 years old. The reason for this is because of the problem caused within the operationalization of media use for social media. The average amount of hours in which participants used social media was extremely low in comparison to what recent research studies found. This is due to a high number of participants who are older than age 24 and infrequent users of social media. Research shows that the majority of active users of social media are users whose ages are 18-24. Testing a high number of participants outside of this age range will result in low social media usage. In addition, I suggest using a median split instead of a mean split when operationalizing

time for heavy and light users. This will aid in not having an extremely disproportionate amount of heavy and light users.

Also, I suggest changing the scale for social judgment questions. Social judgment questions were asked on a ratio scale and resulted in too broad of a range of percentages, therefore exaggerating the means. I suggest to ask the social judgments on an interval scale to combat this.

Lastly, I suggest that future studies investigate the social implications for Black athletes being perceived as having high amounts of physical prowess. The reason for this is because there is not an extensive pool of literature in regards to such implications and any social injustices may not be properly combated if so. Also, physical prowess for Black athletes tends to be synonymous and looked at as a form of success. This notion is misleading because it causes one to be blinded by the implications of this success and to fail to realize the negative stigmas such as hypersexuality and being seen as financially flamboyant that may follow.

## **Conclusion**

While attributing perceptions of physical prowess to Black male athletes may not seem completely terrible on the surface, this study shows that sports coverage of Black male athletes may be the most positive coverage the media portrays. In addition, the coverage of Black male athletes as criminals is larger, as this study has shown. However, this study also showed how portrayals of Black male athletes as criminals has lessened through traditional media, but has increased through social media. Results between traditional media usage and criminal-like characteristics were not significant. Non-significant results show that the portrayals of Black male athletes as criminals through traditional media decreasing are positive because they help to decrease the social injustice of these athletes. In contrast, results from this study show that social

media helps to amplify and increase those portrayals of Black male athletes as criminals, thus helping to cause them social injustice. This means that based on social media, society will continue to perceive Black male athletes as criminals. Results between traditional and social media usage and perceptions of mental skills were also not significant. These non-significant results show that perceptions of Black athletes' mental skills do not increase with the increase of traditional and social media usage. This is positive because it shows that there is not a great amount of portrayals of Black male athletes portrayed as unintelligent being generated and shown through traditional and social media.

The findings from this study contribute to current academia and the body of knowledge regarding the stereotyping of Black collegiate and professional male athletes and cultivation effects of traditional and social media. Although findings lack a great amount of positive relationships between the increase in media usage and the stereotyping of Black athletes, it still lends insight to how cultivation effects can be amplified with new platforms of communication such as social media and the implications of stereotyping of Black athletes because of it. The study also lends insight to exactly how powerful media portrayals of Black athletes can be, that all lessons cultivated about Black athletes, regardless of the amount of media usage, heavy or light, will be primarily the same.



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## APPENDICES

Please answer the following questions.

1. What is your age?
  
2. What is your race?
  - White/Caucasian
  - African American
  - Hispanic
  - Asian
  - Native American
  - Pacific Islander
  - other
  
3. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
4. What is your classification in regard to credit hours?
  - a. Freshman
  - b. Sophomore
  - c. Junior
  - d. Senior
  - e. Master's Degree
  - f. Doctoral Degree
  
5. What is your family household income?
  - a. less than \$30,000
  - b. \$31,000 - \$40,000
  - c. \$41,000 - \$60,000
  - d. \$61,000 - \$80,000
  - e. \$81,000 - \$90,000
  - f. \$91,000 - \$100,000
  - g. more than \$100,000
  
6. What political ideology do you best identify with (i.e., conservatism, liberalism)?  
(1,2,3,4,5)

**The following questions deal with your media consumption. The information you give will only be used for statistical purposes and as previously mentioned will not be attached to your name or identity.**



7. On average, how many hours per week do you watch television?
8. On average, how many hours per week do you watch news on television like *CNN*?
9. On average, how many hours per week do you watch fictional crime dramas on television like *Law & Order*?
10. On average, how many hours per week do you watch sport news/programming on television like *ESPN*?
11. On average, how many hours per week do you watch sporting events like *Miami Heat* basketball games?
12. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on Facebook?
13. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on crime news on Facebook?
14. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on fictional crime dramas on Facebook?
15. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on sports news/programming on Facebook?
16. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on sporting events on Facebook?
17. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on Twitter?
18. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on crime news on Twitter?
19. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on fictional crime dramas on Twitter?
20. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on sports news/programming on Twitter?
21. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing videos or reading stories on sporting events on Twitter?
22. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing news-related fan pages on Facebook?
23. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing sports-related fan pages on Facebook?

24. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing news-related feeds on Twitter?

25. On average, how many hours per week do you spend viewing sports-related feeds on Twitter?

**The following questions are hypothetical statements and will be dealing with personal viewpoints that many people would want to be kept private. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND NO INFORMATION THAT CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY YOU WILL BE ASKED. Essentially, you will be anonymous. With that being said, we request you answer the following questions honestly. We want honest answers since we are conducting serious research. The information you give will only be used for statistical purposes and as previously mentioned will not be attached to your name or identity.**

Black Contact Scale

26. How much contact do you currently have with Blacks?

No Contact at All (1,2,3,4,5) Daily Contact

27. How much contact have you had with Black in the past?

No Contact at All (1,2,3,4,5) Daily Contact

28. Think about your closest Black acquaintance and indicate the extent the contact with that person was involuntary or voluntary.

Completely Involuntary (1,2,3,4,5) Completely Voluntary

29. Think about your closest Black acquaintance and indicate the extent the contact with that person is perceived as unequal or equal.

Completely Unequal (1,2,3,4,5) Completely Equal

30. Think about your closest Black acquaintance and indicate the extent the contact with that person was perceived as uncooperative or cooperative.

Completely Uncooperative (1,2,3,4,5) Completely Cooperative

31. Think about your closest Black acquaintance and indicate the extent the contact with that person was perceived as unpleasant or pleasant.

Completely Unpleasant (1,2,3,4,5) Completely Pleasant

32. Think about your closest Black acquaintance and indicate the extent the contact with that person was perceived as not intimate or intimate.

Completely Not Intimate (1,2,3,4,5) Completely Intimate

### Racial Attitude Scale

33. Discrimination against blacks is no longer a problem in the United States.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
34. It is easy to understand the anger of black people in America.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
35. Blacks have more influence upon school desegregation plans than they ought to have.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
36. Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
37. Blacks should not push themselves where they are not wanted.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree
  - Neither agree nor disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly agree
38. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve.
- Strongly disagree
  - Disagree

- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

39. Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect to blacks than they deserve.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

#### Social Judgments Questions

40. What percent of crimes committed in the United States do you think are non-violent?

41. What percent of crimes committed in the United States do you think are violent?

42. What percent of athletes do you think commit violent crimes?

43. What percent of Black athletes do you think commit violent crimes?

44. What percent of White athletes do you think commit violent crimes?

45. What percent of Black professional athletes do you think commit violent crimes?

46. What percent of White professional athletes do you think commit violent crimes?

47. What percent of Black collegiate athletes do you think commit violent crimes?

48. What percent of White collegiate athletes do you think commit violent crimes?

**The following questions are hypothetical statements and will be dealing with personal viewpoints of Black college athletes that many people would want to be kept private. Please tell us whether you personally strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND NO INFORMATION THAT CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY YOU WILL BE ASKED. Essentially, you will be anonymous. With that being said, we request you answer the following questions honestly. We want honest answers since we are conducting serious research. The information you give will only be used for statistical purposes and as previously mentioned will not be attached to your name or identity.**

### Stereotyped Perceptions Questions

49. Black college athletes are hypersexual?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
50. Black college athletes are violent?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
51. Black college athletes are dangerous?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
52. Black college athletes are threatening.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
53. Black college athletes are deviant?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
54. Black college athletes are talented?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
55. Black college athletes are strong?
- a. Strongly disagree

- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

56. Black college athletes show leadership?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

57. Black college athletes are show speed?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

58. Black college athletes are intelligent?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

**The following questions are hypothetical statements and will be dealing with personal viewpoints of Black professional athletes that many people would want to be kept private. Please tell us whether you personally strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND NO INFORMATION THAT CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY YOU WILL BE ASKED. Essentially, you will be anonymous. With that being said, we request you answer the following questions honestly. We want honest answers since we are conducting serious research. The information you give will only be used for statistical purposes and as previously mentioned will not be attached to your name or identity.**

59. Black professional athletes are hypersexual?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

60. Black professional athletes are violent?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree

- c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
61. Black professional athletes are dangerous?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
62. Black professional athletes are threatening.
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
63. Black professional athletes are deviant?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
64. Black professional athletes are talented?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
65. Black professional athletes are strong?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
66. Black professional athletes show leadership?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree

67. Black professional athletes show speed?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
68. Black professional athletes are intelligent?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree

**The following questions are hypothetical statements and will be dealing with personal viewpoints of White college athletes that many people would want to be kept private. Please tell us whether you personally strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND NO INFORMATION THAT CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY YOU WILL BE ASKED. Essentially, you will be anonymous. With that being said, we request you answer the following questions honestly. We want honest answers since we are conducting serious research. The information you give will only be used for statistical purposes and as previously mentioned will not be attached to your name or identity.**

69. White college athletes are hypersexual?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
70. White college athletes are violent?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
71. White college athletes are dangerous?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
72. White college athletes are threatening.



- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
73. White college athletes are deviant?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
74. White college athletes are talented?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
75. White college athletes are strong?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
76. White college athletes show leadership?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
77. White college athletes are show speed?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
78. White college athletes are intelligent?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree

- e. Strongly agree

**The following questions are hypothetical statements and will be dealing with personal viewpoints of White professional athletes that many people would want to be kept private. Please tell us whether you personally strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL AND NO INFORMATION THAT CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY YOU WILL BE ASKED. Essentially, you will be anonymous. With that being said, we request you answer the following questions honestly. We want honest answers since we are conducting serious research. The information you give will only be used for statistical purposes and as previously mentioned will not be attached to your name or identity.**

79. White professional athletes are hypersexual?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

80. White professional athletes are violent?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

81. White professional athletes are dangerous?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

82. White professional athletes are threatening.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

83. White professional athletes are deviant?

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

84. White professional athletes are talented?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
85. White professional athletes are strong?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
86. White professional athletes show leadership?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
87. White professional athletes show speed?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
88. White professional athletes are intelligent?
- a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Neither agree nor disagree
  - d. Agree
  - e. Strongly agree
89. On average, how many hours per week do you a play sport?
90. Have you been an athlete in the past?
91. Are you currently an athlete?
92. Have you been a victim of a violent crime?
93. Have you been a perpetrator of a violent crime?

94. Have you ever witnessed a violent crime?

95. Thanks for completing this survey. Please remember to provide the 6-digit MEL number or survey code on MTurk. Survey code: 3291911

**ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST**



Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair  
130 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.5983  
[irb@lsu.edu](mailto:irb@lsu.edu) | [lsu.edu/irb](http://lsu.edu/irb)

**TO:** Dionell McNeal  
Mass Communication

**FROM:** Robert C. Mathews  
Chair, Institutional Review Board

**DATE:** April 28, 2014

**RE:** IRB# E8767

**TITLE:** Perceptions of Collegiate and Professional Black Male Athletes Based on the Media

**New Protocol/Modification/Continuation:** Modification

**Brief Modification Description:** Change sample to 200 white students reached through the LSU MEL lab

**Review date:** 4/28/2014

**Approved**  **Disapproved**

**Approval Date:** 4/28/2014 **Approval Expiration Date:** 3/23/2017

**Re-review frequency:** (three years unless otherwise stated)

**LSU Proposal Number** (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal:** (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**By:** Robert C. Mathews, Chairman 

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –  
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:**

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects\*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. SPECIAL NOTE:

*\*All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>*

## **VITA**

Dionell McNeal graduated from Louisiana State University in May 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication, minoring in Business Administration. Upon graduating with his bachelor's degree, he enrolled in the master's program at Louisiana State University in August 2012 in the Manship School of Mass Communication. After graduation, he plans to pursue another master's degree in Business Administration and a career in Marketing Communications.